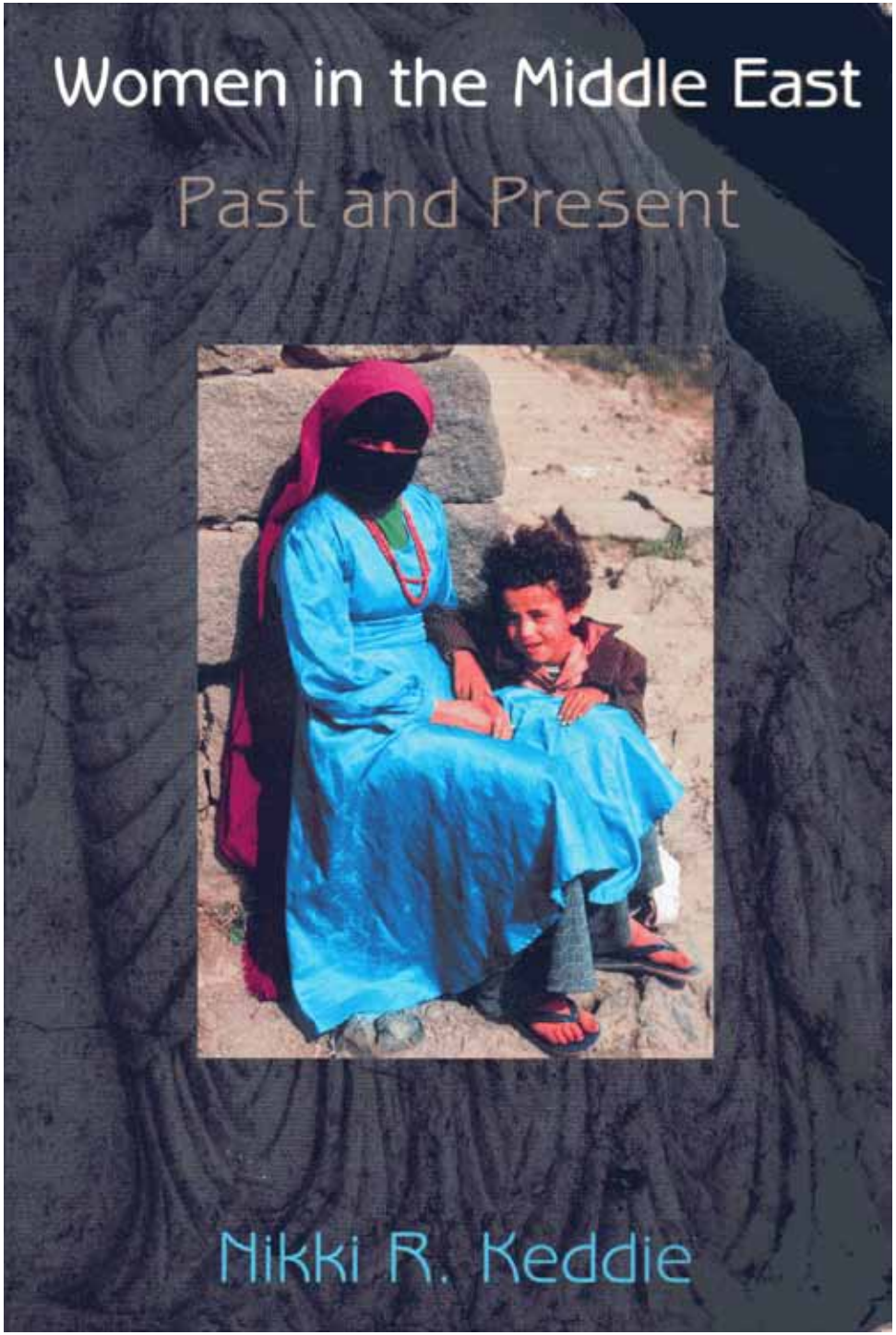

Women in the Middle East

PAST AND PRESENT

Nikki R. Keddie

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PART 1

Autobiographical Interview

NIKKI KEDDIE, born in Brooklyn in 1930, specializes in the history of modern Iran. She studied history and literature at Radcliffe College, Harvard University, and received her Master of Arts Degree at Stanford University and her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. She taught European history at the University of Arizona, Tucson, Western civilization at Scripps College in Claremont, and modern Middle Eastern history at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she is professor of history. She has received a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship; she has been president of the Middle East Studies Association and a guest scholar at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars. She currently lives in Santa Monica, California.

Interviewed at her home in Santa Monica on January 7, 1990, by Farzaneh Milani and on April 22, 1990, by Nancy Gallagher.

FM: *Can you tell us about your early years?*

NIKKI KEDDIE: My parents named me Anita [Ragozin], but I grew up being called Nikki. When I was three, my family—I have a brother two years older than I—moved to a small town in upstate New York where my father was the manager of a textile plant. We stayed there until I was six, when we moved back to Brooklyn where I went to public school and then a private school, City and Country School. I now learn that it is the oldest remaining private, progressive school. It had its seventy-fifth anniversary this year. It was a very good school; it had the idea of learning by doing. We did all sorts of projects: there was a theme each year such as the Middle Ages with manuscript production, or the Renaissance with printing. It was the best school I've ever attended, and a lot of people who went there ended up having fairly important positions. I guess the most important is a friend in the Chinese foreign service, now ambassador to Great Britain. When I was about ten we moved to Manhattan. Before that I used to commute on the subway from Brooklyn to this school. I went to a very good high school. Horace Mann-Lincoln, also quite a well-known progressive school. It belonged to Teachers' College of Columbia University, which closed it down a couple of years after I was there. I was interested in history even then.

My parents were very interested in intellectual things although they were not professionally intellectuals. My mother had wanted to be an

engineer. When she was twenty, she came to the United States from Russia. She had had to stay home in Bessarabia (Moldava) during World War I, although her family had gone ahead, because they didn't have enough money to guarantee her immigration. She went to the University of Wisconsin and wanted to become an engineer, but they told her that women couldn't be engineers in the U.S. (although they could even in prerevolutionary Russia), so she majored in mathematics, although she did not do it professionally. From time to time she worked, mainly as a translator from Russian into English. She translated the first edition of Vasiliev's important history of the Byzantine Empire. My father read a lot. We always had books at home, and we saw a lot of theater when I was a child. My parents were very permissive. I remember mainly eating hot fudge sundaes, reading comic books, and listening to the radio a lot. My parents really didn't bother me about it which maybe is an indication that you really don't have to push your kids if you have a general environment that encourages education.

I didn't start reading fiction and poetry until I was a junior in high school, and then I got very interested in Russian literature. But already when I was eleven I said that I wanted to do a report about some other part of the world, not Europe, so I did one on the Mongols, which I remember as being taken from one book, because the school's sources were limited. But I did get interested in the idea of looking beyond the West. We made up and put on plays at City and Country—I don't for the life of me know how it was done, because there was no script. It was some sort of cooperative project. These plays were usually historical, and often quite distant in time or place. There was one on the fourteenth-century English peasants' revolt in which I was King Richard II—on the wrong side. My brother was in one on India in which he was Nehru. This was before Indian independence. My class did one on China in World War II, so whoever was guiding us was guiding us not only toward history and politics, but also to areas other than Europe.

In 1947, I went to Radcliffe. At that time all the classes were coeducational, except for sections of elementary classes, but Radcliffe still had a separate identity [from Harvard] and gave separate degrees. I majored in history and literature, which was a combined honors major. You picked either a period or a country and the major would cover anything cultural in that period, including art and philosophy. It was a very good major. I picked nineteenth-century European history and literature. Their nineteenth century went from 1789 to 1939—a very long century. At that time I was interested in Italian history and did my B.A. thesis on the Italian socialist party.

Even before Radcliffe, I was very involved in left-wing politics. I grew up in the far Left. I was influenced by my parents, who were leftists, especially my mother, so I wasn't rebelling. If grade school was ice cream sundaes and radio programs, then college was definitely political activity. It is interesting that people in the far Left were pioneering in subjects that did not become part of the national agenda until the 1960s. We worked for special efforts to admit more blacks to universities and to get them better jobs, and we fought for women's rights. Most people stress all the negative things about the far Left, its very naive acceptance of things that were going on elsewhere, but what we actually did wasn't, in the great majority of cases, to support the Soviet Union, but rather to work for peace and for issues like civil rights and women's rights. We helped set up the first NAACP chapter at Harvard and Radcliffe. I was involved in a temporarily unsuccessful but ultimately successful struggle to open the undergraduate library at Harvard, the Lamont Library, to women.

They had done an incredible thing. They built a new Harvard library, and although the old library, the big Widener Library, was then open to women, the new undergraduate library, where they put practically all the books that were of interest to undergraduates, was not open to women. This was particularly hard because at Radcliffe at that time we lived further away from campus than the Harvard people did, but most of our classes were on the Harvard campus and you had to walk over there. You might have an hour between classes, and exactly what you wanted to do was to go to the library and read books for your courses in that hour. There was only one little crummy place where you could go with your own books. It was a really discriminatory thing. And when we approached them, they said the exclusion of women was in Thomas Lamont's will. It actually wasn't in Thomas Lamont's will; he didn't say to bar women. All he said was that it was to be a library for the use of Harvard undergraduates. If they were going to bar Radcliffe people, they should have barred Harvard graduate students or faculty members and anyone who was not a Harvard undergraduate. And they said, "Women and men in the stacks together make noise or they do terrible things." They judged that partly on the basis of summer school when women were allowed. They said it had been noisier then, but that was because the Lamont Library was the only air-conditioned place on campus so people came there to cool off. We didn't succeed when I was there, but within a few years the policy changed.

I might add that while I was at Radcliffe a couple of Harvard friends who had decided to go on to graduate school changed from the European field to the Far East, and that may have given me some of the idea to study non-Western history. Already by the time I left, I thought I might want to switch to what we might now call (or what we would have called a few years ago) the Third World. I had the feeling that the Third World was less studied and hence a more interesting area.

Then I came to Stanford, where I got my M.A. in one year. I went there because my husband had a job at Stanford as an instructor of Western civilization. I had got married when I was nineteen. I was an undergraduate in history and literature, and he was a graduate student in history. We were in the same kinds of political activities. At Stanford I did an M.A. thesis titled "The Philosophy of History of Giambattista Vico." I really didn't like Stanford very much then. It is much better academically now. At that time the historians and the fellowship office treated me as second-class, as some kind of beginner who couldn't take graduate seminars yet, and they said they couldn't give me a fellowship or even tuition because my husband was teaching there (at $3,200 a year!). So I switched to Berkeley. It was the only other possibility because my husband was teaching Western civilization at Stanford, and I couldn't leave the area.

Berkeley is a good school, and I loved going there, even though they didn't have anyone who taught Middle Eastern history. The only places that had Middle East programs were Princeton and Michigan, and Princeton didn't admit women at that time.

FM: *So you commuted to Berkeley?*

KEDDIE: For two hours each way because I didn't want to drive. I took a car from home to the train, then a bus, and finally a trolley. My former husband had only a three-year contract at a time when jobs were very hard to get, and I think that it was a lot of strain on him, especially when he approached the end of his contract. He had favored my going to Berkeley and not Stanford, but it was a strain. The first year I commuted two hours each way three days a week. The second year I wanted to take seminars, which were in the late afternoon or evening, so I stayed in Berkeley three days a week, and I think that made it more strained. I think there were other causes that helped break up the marriage.

Then I moved up to Berkeley and became involved almost immediately with the person who became my second husband. That was a rebound thing. You often lose judgment when you are young. I know practically nobody who confirms the view of youth as being the greatest time in your life. I think the younger years are years in which you often feel yourself kind of pushed around by emotions and hormones and things you cannot control.

FM: *How long did you stay in Berkeley?*

KEDDIE: I stayed in Berkeley until 1957. I got my degree very young, when I was twenty-four, in 1955. I wouldn't take that date too utterly seriously because I had had only a year of Persian and two of Arabic at that point, and didn't really know Persian yet. I did a thesis that didn't involve Persian language material. If I had waited until I had learned Persian better, it would have taken me longer. However, they scarcely taught Persian at Berkeley then, so I had to wait until I could take it elsewhere.

FM: *So at Berkeley you decided to study Iran?*

KEDDIE: Yes. I didn't have any ties to Iran, which everybody seems to think is very peculiar. At the time, Iran was in the Mossadeq period, which was especially interesting. Iran also appealed to me as a country with a very long cultural tradition, like Italy. It had an ancient history with a lot of artistic and literary achievements and was politically interesting. So I chose it.

FM: *Were you working with someone at that time?*

KEDDIE: There wasn't anybody at Berkeley. That was also peculiar because most people seem to think they have to work with somebody who knows something about their field. I worked mostly with the late Joseph R. Levenson in Chinese history. He was a very brilliant and fascinating historian. He did critical intellectual history. He was a real genius. Most unfortunately, he died at the age of forty-eight.

I knew people mostly in Japanese and Chinese history, but I had the feeling that because there were so many good smart people in Japanese and Chinese history, it would have been harder to get a job in those fields, especially as a woman. Also, I wasn't convinced I could master Chinese: it is hard to remember characters and also to look up things in the dictionary when there is no alphabet.

FM: *How did you choose your dissertation topic?*

KEDDIE: I didn't have the possibility of doing a monograph, partly because even if I had known enough Persian at that time, there was extremely little Persian language material in this country. R. K. Ramazani remembers that I wrote him a letter asking to borrow his copy of Kasravi's classic history of the Iranian constitutional revolution, *Tarikh-i mashruteh-ye Iran* (History of the Constitution of Iran).[1] I couldn't go abroad, because, for political reasons, I couldn't get a passport. So I chose a very general topic, the impact of the West on modern Iranian social history. I am sure it would embarrass me if I reread it, but some people still comment on it. I kind of knew that it wouldn't work as a general book, although interestingly enough, in the back of my mind I had the idea that twenty-five years later I could use a lot of the material in a general book, and indeed I did. That is one reason I was able to get *Roots of Revolution* out so quickly.[2] That is a completely different book, but on the earlier period the dissertation research was helpful.

FM: *You had started learning Persian?*

KEDDIE: Yes, they had Professor Walter Fischel at Berkeley who mainly taught Arabic, but who knew some Persian. I had taken Arabic, two years, especially with William Brinner, who was a fine teacher, and I took more later. Actually I think by now I've had more Arabic than any other language, which doesn't mean I know it terribly well. In addition to what Persian I took at Berkeley, I also worked with a tutor. I took an intensive

summer course at Harvard, and later I worked on it with a tutor when I went to Iran in 1960.

FM: *After you graduated from Berkeley, what happened?*

KEDDIE: I didn't have a teaching job right away. I had a one-year research job in Berkeley concerning India and Pakistan. My second husband had a job in Oakland, and we thought we might stay in Berkeley, so I got a secondary credential. Actually, I never got the credential because I never wrote away for it, but I could have. I did all the coursework, and did my practice teaching in high school, in world history and world literature. I was even a secretary in a real estate office for a month. We were also cook-managers one summer in a Yosemite high camp. I used to be a very good cook. Then my husband's situation changed. He had a job that involved physical labor, and he injured his back so he couldn't continue. At that point he was willing to leave Berkeley. For a few months we went to Tucson, Arizona, so he could help his father with a vitamin business. I thought I could spend most of my time doing research. When we arrived in Tucson, his father said he could pay him only two hundred dollars a month, which wasn't as bad as it sounds now, but you couldn't live on it so I had to get a job. As there was nothing appropriate, I took a half-time job as secretary to the dean of the Graduate Division of the University of Arizona.

My academic teaching career started when a professor in the history department there died from a heart attack, and they needed somebody to take over his courses immediately—in European history, twelve hours a week. He didn't have to teach twelve hours a week, but they gave me twelve. So I took over all these courses in history and political science. That was a great break for me because I was writing around for jobs, and I certainly improved my chances after I started teaching. I ended up with four job possibilities. This was a period before jobs were advertised, and you were not supposed to write around. Your professor was supposed to recommend you for jobs he had heard about. I wasn't on particularly good terms with the professor who chaired my dissertation committee, and he wasn't in my field anyway. So I wrote about seventy-five letters to places in general. As three out of the four jobs that came through were from people I knew, I am still not sure it was useful to write around broadside to people I did not know. I got an offer from Scripps College in Claremont to teach what was essentially the third year of Western civilization, though it had a Third World component. My then husband wanted to go back for his Ph.D. in economics, which he could get in Claremont, so we went there in the fall of 1957. Then there was another chance—I am sure lots of people have chancy histories, but women probably more—because in my fourth year at Scripps, Professor Gustave von Grunebaum came out and gave a talk there. I talked to him and later gave papers at a couple

of conferences in the Los Angeles area—one at UCLA, which he attended. He was also an editor of *Comparative Studies for Society and History* and had read an article I had submitted to the journal and that was published there.[3] He was a remarkable man in many ways and, unlike most of his peers, didn't care what credentials you had. I would have had a very hard time getting a job at most major universities in the Middle East field, because I didn't have people in the field to recommend me, but he didn't care about things like that. He was very good at spotting people and didn't worry about the proper lineages. He also didn't discriminate on the basis of color, nationality, or gender.

I was at Scripps for four years, one of which I spent in Iran. The first two I was teaching in a Western civilization program, and then I did Asian history. We had two historians: the other did America and I did the rest of the world. I began publishing. I wrote one article based on my research job in Berkeley called "Labor Problems in Pakistan," published in 1957, and not very relevant to anything anymore. I have another article, which I don't think anybody reads, but it is really one of my best articles. It was published in 1959 in *Diogenes*, the international journal of UNESCO, and is a general analysis of Asian intellectual history. It discusses and compares major intellectual trends in different Asian countries, based especially on their different relationships to imperialism.[4]

Meanwhile, it had become possible to get passports because there was a Supreme Court ruling in 1958 which said that the government couldn't deny passports. So my husband and I decided to try to go to Iran. He was willing to do his economics thesis on Iran. So we applied for grants and went to Iran for 1959–60. During that year we found no other American scholars doing research in Iran, though there might have been some archaeologists. It is really amazing to remember when one thinks of the 1970s, when American scholars seemed to be everywhere in Iran.

My topic was the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11. A number of people who have subsequently decided on this topic have come to the same conclusion as I did, that it is a topic which has a huge amount of material in Persian and English, and you really can't master it all unless you are willing to devote very many years to it. But at the time nobody knew that, so I ended up going to Iran with this topic in mind. Indeed I have a lot of research notes on it, concentrating on the prerevolutionary period, especially the Tobacco Movement of 1890–91, which started out as an article and then became a book. As of 1990 no Western scholar had covered the Constitutional Revolution. (More recently Vanessa Martin, Mangol Bayat, my former student, and Janet Afary have done more general works on this revolution.)[5]

It was very interesting to be in Iran, and quite adventurous at that time. We were part of a small group that somebody had dubbed "AWOPs" or

"American without privileges." Practically every American in Iran had either duty-free entry of goods—groceries were sent in from Europe—and/or commissary privileges, which even Fulbright fellows got. We had very little money, and it was hard to live with American habits on the Persian market. In 1960 there were very few Iranian canned or processed foods, and meat was not always safe, even when cooked.

I wouldn't say it was harder being a young American woman in Iran than it was in America. It was hard to be taken seriously in both places. When I had my business cards made in Iran, I said I was an assistant professor, and they made it sound like I was an assistant to a professor, which was the European system. I should have just put *ustadh* (university teacher), but I didn't, and people kept asking me what professor I was assistant to. It took me months and months to get the late Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh to see me, but when he did, I got a lot of good interviews. It was he who first told me that many intellectuals who pretended to be religious Muslims really were not, and gave details regarding men he had known during the Constitutional Revolution.

It was kind of rough, but in America it wasn't much better. Often only the really big people—not only von Grunebaum at UCLA and H.A.R. Gibb at Harvard but also Vladimir Minorsky, Maxime Rodinson, Claude Cahen, Albert Hourani, and Bernard Lewis with whom I began friendships between 1959 and 1963—took me seriously.[6] Those who didn't tended to be those just a couple of years older than I was, or older academics insecure about their own scholarship.

In Iran there were a number of people, such as Taqizadeh, who at first didn't take me seriously, but in the end I was able to get through to many of them. I certainly didn't have a bad time with anybody, except one old man who told me I was dressed wrong. It was very hard to adjust to the fact that there were very different mores among different Iranians. When we came to Tehran in September of 1959, there were all these women walking around with skirts above their knees, which wasn't what I expected. In fact, it was the first time I had ever seen it. I thought it was some kind of a local thing, but it turned out that a major Paris designer had just come out with skirts above the knee. He was the most famous designer, and people used to say, "He comes out with something in Paris and the next week it is in Iran," even though it wasn't yet accepted in Europe. You had women with beehive hairdos, wearing miniskirts and very high-heeled shoes with very pointed toes. Taqizadeh had given me a whole list of people to try to talk to, but somehow it hadn't registered that there was some kind of religious connection for the man who objected to my sleeveless dress, which was common summer attire in Tehran. It was quite interesting in retrospect: I went in a dress with a full skirt well below the knees, and he went on and on about how I should not dress like that, it excited men too much.

I started out not liking Iran much, but I ended up really liking it, partly because it was strange and hence interesting to me.

Then I had one more year at Claremont during which there was an academic crisis in my life. Luckily it turned out fine. I had just learned I was to be terminated at Scripps (partly because the other historian found me uppity), and the next morning the phone rang. It was von Grunebaum offering me a year's position at UCLA. This kind of juxtaposition doesn't happen very often, but you sometimes make up for your bad luck with good luck.

There had been a woman, Marie Boas Hall, before me in the UCLA history department, but there were some real antiwoman people in the department, some very openly and others not openly. There was a group called the History Guild, which I hadn't known anything about. It is made up of historians of all the different schools of southern California. Women were not allowed to become members until Marie Boas applied, and, after arguments, it changed its membership policy and admitted her. I was still at Claremont when I began receiving invitations to the Guild. I attended a meeting that was held at Claremont. A member of the UCLA history department, when I said I was coming to UCLA, commented, "You know what I think about women and academia . . ." I said, "No, I don't." And he said, "I don't think they belong there, but it's all right for them to come to parties." He added, "I quit this organization when they let in their first woman, and I'm just now coming back." I hadn't realized he had quit over the admission of his own colleague.

When there aren't a lot of women at a school, it is rather isolating. On the other hand, I knew quite a few historians, mainly because I go to international conferences. People noticed me more because I was a woman.

When I was at Scripps, I was divorced from my second husband. That marriage had been a mistake from the beginning.

NEG: *As you mentioned, research carried out on your first trip to Iran resulted in the book entitled* Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892.[7] *Would you consider the book to be a narrative history?*

KEDDIE: I think the tobacco book is pretty much narrative history though I try to bring in social, economic, and religious trends. The first book on Jamal al-Din al-Afghani is mostly an intellectual analysis, rather than a narrative.[8] The second book on Afghani, the long biography, is mostly narrative, but I don't think of myself as a narrative historian.[9] My articles are not narratives, and in many ways I have always been most interested in the kinds of problems and analyses I stress in my articles.

I also wrote some early analytical articles: "Western Rule vs Western Values," "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," and "Symbol and Sincerity in Islam."[10] The books are also concerned with answering problems, but you often have to have more narrative in a history book. In the articles, I was dealing with new approaches to intellectual history problems and with the relations between Islam and politics. I was, strangely enough, one of the first to ask, "Why did the Iranian religious class, the ulama, uniquely in world history put themselves on the side that was opposed to the rulers, to the shahs (I am not talking about the current situation, but rather the pre-1914 era) and actively participate in an antigovernment revolution"? It was a unique phenomenon. In "The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran," I suggested reasons for the unique position of the Iranian ulama.[11]

In trying to explain a figure like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, a topic that I got into from these questions about the Iranian religious classes, I discovered that a whole series of people considered to be Islamic religious figures involved in these radical movements were not very religious at all. Afghani is not the only one. A couple of participants in the radical wing of the Babi movement probably were freethinkers identifying themselves with the religious opposition. Afghani himself is a very complicated figure. He was certainly not in a traditional religious mold at all. If anything, he was something like an Islamic deist. Aristotelian-based or Platonic-Aristotelian-based philosophy was important in Iran much later than in other parts of the Middle East. Afghani had grown up in this tradition and in the tradition of some of the radical religious movements of Iran. These movements would come out with a new synthesis that tied religion to more rationalist ideas as well as to a political activism of a new kind. I would say that Afghani and that kind of person whom we see again in a new guise today, such as Ali Shariati, come out of this tradition. At the same time I tried not to get away from economic and social forces working on these people, and on political events, although that was not my main focus. My approach to Afghani was earlier suggested in Albert Hourani's *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* and Elie Kedourie's and Homa Pakdaman's work, but mine was more extensive and had some new ideas.[12]

I try not to simply summarize what various intellectuals have said nor to analyze the influence of some past people on the person I was studying. I have tried rather to put the person in the political context in which he was living. At the time, this approach to intellectual history was reasonably new in Western and Chinese intellectual history. It is not so special now. If you want to reduce it to a single sentence, it is bringing these newer methods of social and intellectual history into Iranian history and breaking with older philological or simply straight narrative traditions.

But it is also important to know what questions are important, like the ones about the relations of the Iranian ulama to politics.

I worked on the Afghani book for a long time, from 1963 to 1971. It was published in 1972. After that I worked for a time on articles and edited books.[13] I think editing books is important, by the way. From early 1971 there were a few years when I was in a really deep depression and didn't do much of anything. I had the idea of doing a general book on modern Iran, but I thought I would wait until the shah fell or died. In this period I wrote an article called "Is There a Middle East?" in which I tried to say that the concept of the Middle East shouldn't be reified.[14] In some ways, it is part of the Muslim world, in some ways part of the Mediterranean world. I said that the term does make sense as a kind of a series of concentric circles. The areas closest to the Mediterranean that have more trade and agriculture tended to develop more than the semiarid and the very arid areas. The three areas have interdependent economies. The very arid areas form a kind of border, not only in Africa, but Arabia and Afghanistan, delimiting the Middle Eastern cultures, so in some sense there is a Middle East as a cultural unit. The presence of, and frequent conquest by, nomadic tribes from the more arid areas is also an important characteristic of the Middle East.

My next project was *Roots of Revolution*, which came out in 1981.[15] I called the book an "interpretive history," though today the word "interpretive" like the word "discourse" has been ruined by people who mean something postmodern and relativistic. I meant that I was trying to get at history in a way that brings in interpretations and not just narrative history. It is deliberately doing something that people tend to do anyhow, which may be part of the reason it has been successful: it emphasized those factors that looked important in the 1980s, such as religion and politics. I was conscious of doing that. It is possible that they won't look as important in the 1990s.

NEG: *Has the current interest in social history and the Annales school influenced you?*

KEDDIE: I suppose that the people who do social history have influenced me to try to look at what identifiable groups of people do, instead of looking entirely at individual intellectuals, or individual powerful people. To me social history is the kind of history that deals with such groups as workers, peasants, nomads, ulama, women, or ethnic groups, and I think I have done that in my writing to a considerable degree. I have studied the nomadic way of life and the interaction of nomads with other groups. I think it is one of the distinctive things about Middle Eastern history that many historians now don't like to write about because they don't like to make Middle Eastern history look somehow inferior to or different from Western history. So they don't talk much about nomads. I think, to the

contrary, that the heavy presence of nomadic tribes since particularly the eleventh century with the Turkish invasions was of major historical importance. I think there was even before the eleventh century a decline in productivity in the soil with erosion, desiccation, and salination. This is one reason why settled agriculture declined and the area was open to conquerors and dynasties of nomadic origin.

I don't think that the big questions of why there wasn't economic development and why there was economic regression can be discussed without attention to the nomads and the underlying geographical and ecological phenomena such as the declining fertility of the soil. I have written an article suggesting that geography and technology are neglected fields of Middle East history.[16] I think that for the world in general, but particularly for the Middle East, historians tend to deal with the kinds of things they are familiar with in their own lives, like intellectuals and politics. People have gone into new areas recently, but these are partly based on interest groups such as ethnic groups or women. Technology really hasn't been stressed. Yet I think technology, ecology, and geography and their interaction with human beings are extremely important. They help explain why the Middle East was the earliest developing area. The Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations developed because of the great river valleys and the relative ease of irrigated agriculture. At a later stage when the northern Europeans mastered the heavy plow and knocked down the forests with iron tools, those areas became much more productive. I am greatly oversimplifying the argument, but you can read a thousand history books without learning about the influence of geography and technology. I think it is terribly important, even though it is not an area of primary research for me, and I want to encourage people to work on it.

I am interested in economic history, though not so much of a quantitative type. I go to a lot of international economic history conferences, so I have some idea of what economic historians are doing, and I guess it is the less quantitative, more social history–oriented kind of economic history that I appreciate more. I am not conscious of having been influenced by the Annales intellectuals. I have read some Braudel and Marc Bloch. I think the Annales work is very good. It gets into new areas of history, but in general I would say that Marxism has had a much greater influence on me than has the Annales school.

NEG: *Could you assess how Marxist thinking has influenced your writings?*

KEDDIE: Marxism, which of course is interpreted differently by different people, provides an analysis that combines both structural and historical features and emphasizes explanations for change—all matters of interest to historians. It is also, in principle, universal and not racist or sexist, even though Marx himself and many of his followers were often both. In

principle, however, it stresses the importance of circumstances, and not innate superiorities and inferiorities, in determining the lives of people and peoples, and says that some nations advanced more quickly basically for economic reasons, and not because their people were superior. This approach long made it attractive to Third World intellectuals also. Marxists in fact tend to underrate the differences among societies and cultures, and this is one reason many intellectuals turned to more nuanced and culturally oriented views. Others were disillusioned by the political failures or even the crimes of self-styled Marxist regimes, especially after they took power. But the basic idea, based on fundamental interactions of groups of people with their environment and with developing and changing technologies and ideologies, remains important for understanding history.

Part of my own formation comes from the fact that I have learned a great deal from living in other countries. In addition to a total of three years in Iran and many months in other Muslim countries (mostly for my work on Afghani and for current work on Islam and politics), I have spent a great deal of time in Europe. I spend most summers there, primarily in London, which I find an excellent place to work. Also as a result of an invitation from Claude Cahen, professor of Islamic history, and Gilbert Lazard, professor of Persian, I was visiting professor for two years (1976–78) at the Sorbonne, at the University of Paris III, which has a Middle East program. Luckily I had an excellent French teacher in high school who was French and who insisted we speak only French in class—a radical idea at the time. I have also attended a number of international conferences. Hence I am in touch with the excellent group of French social scientists who work on Iran: Bernard Hourcade, Yann Richard, Jean-Pierre Digard, Paul Vieille, and others. I also know many scholars who concentrate on the Arab world in France, England, and Italy, as well as many persons from the Middle East and Pakistan. However, I identify more as a historian, influenced by anthropology and sociology, than as an area specialist. In fact, the majority of my friends are non–Middle East specialists, particularly historians and social scientists.

I have found it useful and interesting to spend time abroad. In Pakistan, for example, I met many brilliant, courageous, and strong women, including Asma Jahangir, a leader of the Women's Action Forum and of human rights groups, and Abida Husain, now Pakistan's ambassador to the United States. Many of the friends I made in Iran are now in the U.S., so I think of them now as American friends.

Among my activities have been photography, sometimes professionally, and videotaping interviews. I have taped interviews with activist women and with a number of interesting Muslim personalities worldwide. I have even given courses on photography, audiotaping, and videotaping for his-

torians, because I think these are increasingly important, especially in fields like women's history, where written documentation is limited.

NEG: *How would you assess current trends in historical writing?*

KEDDIE: Economic history has been strong for a number of years and continues to be. I think it is important to grasp that economic history can shed light on social structures. In Europe the congresses of economic historians are always interesting. Their participants continue to break new ground, as in ecological history and world economic history. The main current trend, which I think is trendier in the United States than in Europe, is deconstructionist discourse. I'm mildly sympathetic to some of the elements of deconstruction. To take a thing apart, to see how it sits within society, and to identify the forces that lead people to state certain things intellectually is valuable. The trouble is that so many of the people going into it get carried away until that is all they talk about and they seem not to believe in reality any more. They believe in texts and in deconstructing texts. Even though a lot of the people who do it are on the left, I think it is essentially reactionary, noncommunicative, and elitist. It gets some intellectuals into a little elite group who communicate only with each other, It gets them away from thinking that the world and its problems are real. I think Michel Foucault's work is better because it is more rooted in reality. It suggests new ways to understand prisoners or mad people, for example. But much of his history is empirically wrong. What deconstructionists do often seems an intellectual game, though I imagine they don't see it that way.

NEG: *When did you become interested in women's history?*

KEDDIE: In 1969 or 1970 when I was compiling articles for *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis*,[17] it suddenly occurred to me that I had done the whole book without having an article on women. I immediately approached E. W. Fernea, who agreed, with Bob Fernea, to write an article for the book. This interest in women was part of the general atmosphere of the times. I had read Robert Briffault's *The Mothers*, about matriarchies, which almost nobody reads any more and is probably mostly inaccurate.[18] I had also read Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex*, when it first came out.[19] I had read Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* when it first came out. I went out and bought a copy and thought it was great.[20] So I'd read some things on women, but I can't say that I brought them into my own work much until other people also became interested in working on women. Before that, like a number of other women, I would have felt that a woman writing about women would be considered second-class. One of the professors I knew at Berkeley assumed that I would be writing about women for my dissertation, and I was quite indignant. I don't think I was entirely wrong. I think writing about women was regarded as a second-class thing to be handled only by second-class people. In a conference I once brought up something about women and some man said, "Oh, I can see why *you* brought it up." Many people avoided the topic until there was a group that was willing to push against the barriers, to say, "Women are important." And there were not that many women historians around.

In the early 1970s I began to think women were something to pay attention to. When I saw how many interesting papers on women were being given at places like the Middle East Studies Association, I thought that the time had come to put together a volume on women in the Muslim world. Lois Beck also had this in mind. We were corresponding about something else, and it came up so we decided to edit the book together.[21] I got into the topic of Middle Eastern women early, but I have not done heavy primary research. As with a number of other subjects, I have had general ideas that have proved useful to other people. By the way, my true métier is as an editor. I do that better than anything else. I have recently coedited, with Beth Baron, a new book entitled *Women in Middle Eastern History.*[22]

NEG: Has the rise of the Islamist movements affected your work?

KEDDIE: In my early article "The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran," I predicted that the power of the ulama is going to decline.[23] I wasn't alone in that. I have been writing about religion and politics since almost my first publication, so I had the background to analyze how social, political, and psychological factors have contributed to the new Islamic movements.

NEG: *Could you assess the Orientalist debate as of 1990?*

KEDDIE: I think that Edward Said's book *Orientalism* was an important work around which to center a debate and to make people think of the problems in Western approaches to the Middle East. I think that it is important to point out that Western scholars, coming in large numbers from colonialist countries, tended to have prejudiced attitudes toward Orientals, as well as toward a lot of other people. The book is very well written. I think that has had some unfortunate consequences. I think that there has been a tendency in the Middle East field to adopt the word "Orientalism" as a generalized swear-word essentially referring to people who take the "wrong" position on the Arab-Israeli dispute or to people who are judged too "conservative." It has nothing to do with whether they are good or not good in their disciplines. So "Orientalism" for many people is a word that substitutes for thought and enables people to dismiss certain scholars and their works. I think that is too bad. It may not have been what Edward Said meant at all, but the term has become a kind of slogan.

Then there is the interesting critique that some Arab leftists such as Sadik Jalal al-'Azm and others have brought forth, saying that Said has

created a kind of monolithic Western Orientalism, an essentialist entity, from which there was almost no deviation.[24] Al-'Azm stresses what could be called the "essentialism" of Said. He points out that Said talks about Orientalism as if it were the same thing from the Greeks to the present, and that he makes an entity of Orientalism although he objects to people making an entity of the Orient. I think that is an important critique. While Said's book is important and in many ways positive and informative, it may also be used in a dangerous way because it can encourage people to say, "You Westerners, you can't do our history right, you can't study it right, you really shouldn't be studying it, we are the only ones who can study our own history properly."[25] This is a trend among Middle Eastern intellectuals. It is not founded exclusively on Said's book, but it does make use of it, even though Said himself does not take this position.

Said's book seems to have had more of an impact in other Asian fields than in the Middle East field. The problematic seems to be somehow more exciting to them, maybe in part because it doesn't get quite as directly involved in problems such as the Arab-Israeli dispute that polarize the Middle East field. Having said that, let me add that I think that the general ideas that people hold about Orientalism would have been fairly similar even if the book had not existed. I don't believe that someone writes a book and then everybody changes their views. I am glad the book was written, and it has contributed to very important international and interdisciplinary debates, but it should be read along with its critics.

NEG: *Could you assess the role of Gustave von Grunebaum?*

KEDDIE: I think one of the really unfortunate things in our field—and maybe it is this way in all fields—is that the giants of the recent past tend to be largely forgotten as soon as they are dead, if not before, especially if what they have written isn't what is now considered fashionable or central. There is also an optical illusion, in the sense that much of what these people have contributed is not recognized because it has entered so much into the field that people do not realize how novel a contribution it was. They are criticized when they are in error, but their achievements are forgotten. So Middle Eastern history has become a field without its own history. It is too bad. In my field, who talks about Minorsky, a true giant? Who in the younger generation talks about Gibb? These people are much more important than most of the people who have criticized them. It is the same for von Grunebaum. Few people talk about him, though he was such a remarkable person. I don't mean only his intellectual work, although *Medieval Islam* is a truly great book, a kind of integrated cultural history.[26] He was somebody who could administer a major center, building it up from nothing at UCLA, and at the same time carry on his scholarly work. Abdullah Laroui, a Moroccan historian, carried on a discourse critical of von Grunebaum, but he was very well aware that he

was a great man and scholar. And von Grunebaum could appreciate and help scholars who criticized his work, and tried hard to get Laroui to stay at UCLA. Now there is no mention of von Grunebaum or the other scholars who have died in the past two or three decades, nor even of the true early giant Ignaz Goldziher, the Hungarian-Jewish Arabist and Islamist. I think that is really mistaken.

NEG: *Could you comment on Marshall Hodgson's work?*

KEDDIE: I read his book when it was in the form of a manual for Chicago students. But the thing that got me really interested in Hodgson was his brilliant article on conceptualizing world history. He thought that it was best perhaps to divide world history into four major civilizational areas: the East Asian, the South Asian, the Middle Eastern, and the Western or European. Then he said if you wanted to take two of these four that would go together most closely in terms of their influences and culture, it would be the Middle Eastern and European. And I think that is absolutely true. Middle Eastern and European civilizations were both influenced by Greek logic and by monotheism. We are used to thinking of these two civilizations as enemies, but their cultural backgrounds have more similarities than do South Asian or East Asian civilizations.

NEG: *Is the political activism of your early years reflected in your work?*

KEDDIE: Clearly I am concerned about greater egalitarian justice for all groups in society, and that probably shows in my work. Even when I write about intellectual history, I don't just talk about the self-development of the ideas of elite intellectuals. Somebody like Afghani is interesting because his ideas caught on with large groups of people, not so much in his own time but afterwards. Some elements in his thoughts are very important today.

I suppose my political point of view is now confused and skeptical. I think that is true for a lot of people. But I can be clear about what I want to fight against: war, prejudice, poverty, ignorance, disease, inequality, and unequal treatment.

NEG: *What is your current project?*

KEDDIE: I am currently working on a comparative historical study of Islamic militant movements, and for this I've traveled all the way from Senegal to Sumatra over a number of years. I have studied Islamic movements from the eighteenth century to the present. I am also putting together an article called "Why Has Iran Been Revolutionary?" And I am editing a new journal, called *Contention*. It addresses itself to debates in all fields of academic endeavor. It is written in comprehensible language, as people write for the *New York Review* or magazines like *Natural History* or *Science*, for people who are interested in knowing about the central issues in other disciplines or between disciplines. People are interested in scholarly debates. For example, in the *American Historical Review*, the

section that my colleagues will read and talk about is the Forum, where people write letters back and forth debating issues. I am getting a lot of enthusiastic interest, and prominent scholars like Eric Hobsbawm, Ernest Gellner, Paul Ehrlich, and David Landes are writing for us.

NEG: *Could you comment on the current development of Iranian studies?*

KEDDIE: On the one hand it is a rapidly growing field, which is very encouraging; on the other hand, I see hardly any American students in it any more. This is not surprising, because they feel that they have to go to Iran in order to study the field and that is more difficult now. It is the fashion of our times to think one must travel to an area, though for historians this could be delayed until after the Ph.D., as it was for me. And look at many of the great nineteenth-century scholars who never went anywhere, yet they learned languages much better than we do. Someone has said in relation to southern California that Iranian studies has become a kind of ethnic studies program like a other ethnic studies programs. I think a mix of students is better. But there is a positive side to this Iranian majority because we have a large number of students who are doing very good work. They can combine what they know from their own culture with recent Western scholarship. Some of the Iranian scholars who were originally going into science or engineering have been traumatized by the revolution and have decided instead that they have to understand their own society. So they are Iran-oriented rather than Middle East-oriented. Ten years ago most Iranian students had difficulty with English, but now they have graduated from places like Beverly Hills High School and write better than 90 percent of the American students. I also have had a few Japanese students, a Dutch student, and a few American and Israeli students. The students today are outstanding in the sense that many of them turn out publishable and published work even before their Ph.D. comprehensive examinations.

NEG: *Do you have some advice for students who are only beginning to consider specializing in Middle Eastern history?*

KEDDIE: I think they should go in two, apparently contrary, directions: on the one hand they should stress their language training much more than most of them do, in both the Middle Eastern languages and the European languages, and on the other hand they should keep up with main currents in European history because it is more developed. Then they can concentrate on the history of the Middle East. There is a kind of dichotomy among the younger historians, between their general theoretical outlook and the limited nature of the work they do. We are not seeing many big synthetic works. Maybe it is harder to do now, but we don't see the von Grunebaums, the Hodgsons, people coming up with new ideas for a real synthesis. Of course you can't encourage everybody to do that

because not everybody can. I would like to see students concentrate more on material, technological, geographical, and ecological questions. Hardly any primary work has been done on them. Certainly political, socioeconomic, and women's history are important, but many people are working in these areas. Almost no one is doing the kind of work pioneered by Richard Bulliet's *The Camel and the Wheel* and by Andrew M. Watson's *Agricultural Innovation in the Early Islamic World*, and we cannot really understand the rise and decline of Middle Eastern states without more such work.[27] Finally, in a period when the supply of Iranian history students is exceeding demand, they should get training in subjects such as Pakistan, Central Asia, Russian and the Turkic languages, comparative women's history, religious studies, and other fields. This may lengthen their training, but it will increase their chance for employment.

Notes

1. Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e mashruteh-ye Iran* (History of the Constitution of Iran) (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publications, 1951).
2. Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
3. Idem, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 6, no. 3 (1962): 265–95.
4. Idem, "Western Rule vs Western Values: Suggestions for a Comparative Study of Asian Intellectual History," *Diogenes* 26 (1959): 71–96.
5. Vanessa Martin, *Islam and Revolution: The Iranian Revolution of 1906* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1989); Mangol Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution: Shi'ism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1909* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–11: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
6. Vladimir Minorsky, *Medieval Iran and Its Neighbours* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1982).
7. Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892* (London: Frank Cass, 1966).
8. Idem, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968).
9. Idem, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani": A Political Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972).
10. "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," and "Symbol and Sincerity in Islam," *Studia Islamica* 19 (1963): 27–63.
11. Idem, "The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran," *Studia Islamica* 29 (1969): 31–53.

12. See Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962); Elie Kedourie, *Afghani and 'Abduh: An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam* (New York: Humanities Press, 1966); Homa Pakdaman, *Djamal-el-Din Assad Abadi, dit Afghani* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1969).

13. The books I edited in the 1970s are *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions since 1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972), and *Women in the Muslim World*, coedited with Lois Beck (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).

14. Nikki R. Keddie, "Is There a Middle East?" *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 3 (1973): 255–71.

15. Idem, *Roots of Revolution*.

16. Idem, "Material Culture, Technology, and Geography: Toward a Holistic Comparative Study of the Middle East," in *Comparing Muslim Societies: Knowledge and the State in a World Civilization*, ed. Juan Cole (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 31–62, first published in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (October 1984): 709–35.

17. Idem, ed., *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis*.

18. Robert Briffault, *The Mothers: A Study of the Origins of Sentiments and Institutions* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927).

19. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1953).

20. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963).

21. Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie, eds., *Women in the Muslim World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

22. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron, *Women in Middle Eastern History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

23. "Roots of the Ulama's Power."

24. Sadik Jalal al-'Azm, "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse," *Khamsin* 8 (1981): 5–25.

25. Nikki Keddie, "The History of the Muslim Middle East," in *The Past before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, ed. for the American Historical Association by Michael Kammen (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 131–56.

26. Gustave von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: A Study in Cultural Orientation* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1946).

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PART 2

Supplement to the Interview

WRITING IN 2005, I can add something regarding a few events in the past fifteen years, and also include some experiences that I found too delicate or painful to talk about in 1990. First I will give a brief chronology of my academic life, which may help to situate the events discussed above and below. I attended Radcliffe College, taking classes at Harvard University, from 1947 through 1950, finishing in an accelerated three-year program, and getting my degree in 1951. I was at Stanford for the year 1950–51, when I got my M.A., and at Berkeley 1951–55, when I got my Ph.D. After a year's research job I taught at the University of Arizona in the spring of 1957 and at Scripps College, Claremont, California, 1957–61. I have been at UCLA since 1961, taking advantage of an early, phased, retirement program in 1993. I have had several fellowships, from the American Association of University Women, the Social Science Research Council, and the Guggenheim Foundation, some of which enabled me to go to Iran in 1959–60, 1973–74, and a few summers, and I went to Europe and to various Muslim countries in Asia and Africa over several summers. In the fall 1970 I was visiting associate professor at the University of Rochester, and 1976–78 I was visiting professor at the University of Paris III. In the early 1980s I spent several months in Washington, DC, on a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship, and on another I went to Bellagio, Italy, for a month in 1992. I have received several lifetime awards and honors for my research and mentoring, most recently the international Balzan Prize in 2004, which has enabled me to create fellowships for scholars of women and gender in the Muslim world. The fellows for 2005–6 are A. Holly Shissler and Nayereh Tohidi.

In 1993 the University of California proposed the third and most favorable round of an early retirement program, which saved them money from their general funds and was also favorable to eligible faculty. I along with most history colleagues in their sixties accepted this program, which allowed us to teach for several additional years and to keep supervising graduate students. I have had truly outstanding and interesting graduate students, the most recent of whom got his Ph.D. in 2005, while the last candidate has now returned to finishing her dissertation. Nearly all my Ph.D.'s have published significant books and have good jobs. This has been a source of great satisfaction.

I have continued research, writing, and participation in conferences (of which I have planned four over the years—all published after editing).[1] In the 1990s I also took a few drawing and painting classes, going back to something I did when very young. In this period I published several books and articles, and those published since 1995 are listed in the following bibliography. Two of my Ph.D.'s, Rudi Matthee and Beth Baron, published a book in my honor with chapters by my Ph.D.'s and friends, all of very high quality.[2]

I have also decided to include some words about areas that I touched only lightly in my 1990 interviews—political and sexual harassment and health problems. These certainly produced much stress and distress and made my scholarly and teaching life more difficult over the years, though they may also have added to my resolve to keep up my efforts and not give in to obstacles.

As I discussed in the interviews, I was for several years involved in left-wing politics. In my years at Radcliffe, 1947–50, this was as a member of the Communist Party, which I, like many others, then saw mainly as a promoter of a more just and egalitarian socialist society. When I left Cambridge for Stanford, party membership was supposed to be transferred by the mechanism of tearing a dollar bill in half, keeping one half and having the other half go through whatever hands were needed to get it to someone empowered to reestablish contact with me in California. For unknown reasons this transfer did not go through as planned; I did not try to rejoin the party, and over the years I developed major principled differences with it.

When I went to U.C. Berkeley, I applied too late to get a fellowship, but the next year, 1952–53, I had my undergraduate adviser, H. Stuart Hughes, with whom I had been on very good terms, write a letter for me for a fellowship, which I got, and I was told this was the best letter they had ever seen for an undergraduate. The next year I applied again and used Hughes again as a reference. In the meantime Hughes had been denied tenure at Harvard and had come to teach at Stanford; there was a job opening in his field in Berkeley, where at that time conservative professors were powerful in European history. I had very little contact with Hughes at Stanford, and my only political contact was my request that he sign a petition against the death penalty for the Rosenbergs—a request he denied. Hughes now wrote a letter with the same academic enthusiasm as before, but ending, according to what a friendly Berkeley faculty member told me, "My only objections are political. She was known at Radcliffe as a leader in Communist-based organizations. I have seen no evidence since coming to Stanford that she has changed her views." (No political comments were requested or were normally included on such letters.) At U.C. Berkeley in the early 1950s, soon after their big loyalty

oath fight, and in a department with several conservatives, this letter caused me a lot of trouble with some members of the faculty, especially my dissertation adviser, whom I never used for recommendations. I later learned that some professors who had been supporting Hughes as a future colleague now stopped supporting him. I also saw it as a huge personal betrayal, seemingly done in the hope of possible personal advantage.

In the early 1950s, when I was living in Berkeley, two men from the FBI came to my door. The policy recommendation on the left was then not to talk with the FBI in these circumstances, as one risked inadvertently giving away harmful information about oneself or one's friends. I had not yet heard of the idea of saying, "I will be glad to talk with you as soon as we can make an appointment with my attorney present," which those who used it said never resulted in further questioning. I therefore said I did not want to talk, and one of them said they had wanted to talk to me about the internment camps formerly used for Japanese-Americans that were now being prepared for occupation (this was true), and which camp I wanted to go to! This was very upsetting at the time, when many of us seriously thought we might end up in jail or in camps based on our past or present activities.

I was constantly worried about possible political discrimination in getting and retaining academic jobs, and I did run into major problems, some of them coming well after the heyday of McCarthyism and the House Un-American Activities Committee. As was clear from points raised in my encounters with the government, part of the reason I continued to be targeted later than most other academics was that my mother had worked many years for the Soviet-American trade organization Amtorg.

In the spring of 1959, when I was teaching at Scripps, a man came to my door with a subpoena to appear before the Un-American Activities Committee on a future date, at what would have been one of its last big public sessions and was in fact later cancelled, so that I became probably the only person in this wave of subpoenas who actually had to deal with the committee. My ex-husband and I were planning to go to Europe, then Iran for a year. I phoned Jerry Pacht, an attorney whom I knew from my activities in the grassroots California Democratic Council; he said I should tell my college president right away, and recommended Fred Okrand, an ACLU lawyer. My Scripps college president was somewhat shaken, but said it would be all right if I could say I was not then a Communist and some other things, which though true I was not sure I could say without giving up my Fifth Amendment rights. In these years nearly everyone called before the committee had to take the Fifth Amendment barring self-incrimination, given that if one took the preferred First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of speech and assembly, one was likely to end up in jail, like my friend Chandler Davis. If one took the Fifth

Amendment, however, one was not free to answer those questions one chose, as this risked waiving one's Fifth Amendment rights.

My further problem was that I and my then husband were planning to be in Iran at the time the committee met. We were soon going to New York on our way abroad, and my father recommended hiring Leonard Boudin to represent me there. He arranged to have the committee counsel depose me in New York in place of the whole committee. Boudin said it would probably not be bad, and recommended that I could answer that I was not a Communist and not a spy without waiving Fifth Amendment rights, and meeting my college president's request. This turned out to be possibly worse than if I refused to answer anything, as the counsel immediately asked whether I had quit the party, and quit spying, after getting the subpoena, and Boudin said not to answer, so it looked as if the answer might be yes. Boudin said when we emerged, "That was rough," which I thought he should have expected and prepared for better. However, as the hearings were then cancelled, they did not make my testimony public, though I did not know for months that this would not be done. It was in the year after my return that I learned that Scripps was not going to extend my contract, and though there was a conflict with an older historian at Scripps involved, it was probably also connected with this political history.

Another behind-the-scenes crisis occurred beginning in the spring of 1963, in my second year at UCLA. I had been brought to UCLA as a visitor in the fall of 1961, and the appointment was supposed to be made into a tenure-track one the next year. This was delayed for reasons unknown to me, but probably because I had an enemy in the department who was leaving after the 1961–62 academic year. My political problems became intertwined with issues of salary and rank unfairness, which may have had a gender discrimination component. There was (and is) a step salary system at U.C., and I argued successfully that as I had been brought in very low, at step one assistant professor, I should at least go to step two for my second visiting year. When my appointment was made into a tenure-track one, however, it was, to my great surprise, put back to step one, though the History Department chair agreed to put through a change to step two when I complained. This had to be approved by the administration, but it should have been automatic, as I had had my Ph.D. for eight years, had published several articles and was working on a book, and had taught successfully at university level since 1957. Step two was itself lower than most people with a similar record had. I was less concerned with salary than with proximity to tenure.

Soon after I received notice of my Guggenheim Fellowship in spring 1963, I got a request from Chancellor Franklin Murphy's office that I make an appointment to see the chancellor, with no indication as to what

it was about. I made the appointment, and Chancellor Murphy was there with Vice-Chancellor Foster Sherwood. Chancellor Murphy began with a short speech saying he was an educator, but the Regents, based on university policy, had asked him to ask me one question only, and if my answer was all right I would have no further trouble. He then asked me if I was a member of the Communist Party, and I said no. He asked Vice-Chancellor Sherwood whether he had anything else to ask, Sherwood said no, and Murphy reiterated that would be the end of it. I soon went on to Harvard and Europe on my Guggenheim Fellowship, not totally reassured. I did not know until several years later, when the case of Angela Davis's appointment at UCLA established the point, that it was illegal even to ask a faculty member or proposed appointee this question. At that time the practice of asking the question, and also the faculty Academic Senate rule against appointing Communists, were ended. In my case, however, the question was asked and answered.

Meanwhile, the supposed routine administrative agreement to correct my step salary from step one to step two did not go through, and Professor Gustave von Grunebaum, the prestigious director of UCLA's Near East Center, on a trip to Europe told me that Vice-chancellor Sherwood had not been satisfied, and I would be asked some more questions on my return. I was extremely upset during my months abroad. When I returned to UCLA in the fall of 1964, I learned that the FBI had come to the chancellor with several charges against me, and that despite the chancellor's promise, Vice-chancellor Sherwood had used this to deny my step increase and intended to keep doing so in the hope I would leave. The social science dean was delegated by Sherwood to quiz me about the charges, which he said were in the following categories, with my comment summarized.

1. My mother had been a Communist and had worked for a Soviet organization. (True, and the latter was open and legal.)
2. I had been a Communist at Harvard and initiated a transfer membership to California. (The transfer was not accomplished.)
3. My Italian then boyfriend was a Communist. (He had been very briefly some years before but had quit.)
4. I had dated Soviet embassy couriers while in Iran 1959–60. (A total invention; I was married, not dating anyone. Possibly originated with a "man in Havana" delegated to spy on me who found I was only doing research about the early twentieth century.)

The dean said he was satisfied with my answers and all would then go well; I noted that it was not even charged that I was a Communist or had been one recently. A routine step increase, now to step three, was again denied by the vice-chancellor, and I was told by my department chair that Sherwood was still was trying to get me to leave. I decided to look for a

job offer with tenure (by then it was 1965, and I had a book in press and many articles published). I got two tenure offers, from the University of Washington and the University of Colorado. The UCLA History Department voted to advance me to tenured associate professor with only one dissenting vote. This time the all-UCLA faculty committee said it was too big a jump to go from a low step to tenure, and offered me the top step, step four assistant professor, without tenure. I was about, unwillingly, to go to the University of Washington, but also made an appointment with Chancellor Murphy to see whether anything could be done.

Chancellor Murphy insisted he had not known what the vice-chancellor was doing, but defended Sherwood's acts as having been motivated by the good intention to defend him, Murphy. He said that when I made the appointment with him, he had consulted with Prof. von Grunebaum, who had spoken strongly in my favor, and if I was all right with Prof. von Grunebaum I was all right with him. (I had tried unsuccessfully to get von Grunebaum to talk to Murphy about my case, and Murphy's interview with von Grunebaum was not about me but about an offer von Grunebaum had from Harvard; Murphy brought my name up because I had made the appointment to see him.) I pointed out that the charges against me did not say that I had been a Communist since undergraduate times, or that I had violated any university policy. He replied using the analogy of homosexuals who, he said, one would not want teaching at the university. When I asked why not, he said because they could wrongly influence impressionable young undergraduates. If one heard that someone had been frequenting a homosexual bar and otherwise behaving like a homosexual, one could with reason question that person. (I later heard from a knowledgeable faculty member that there was apparently at that time an unofficial and unwritten university policy, which went beyond the UCLA campus, that if there were complaints that a faculty member was homosexual, that person would be interviewed and, if judged to be homosexual, encouraged to leave on pain of disclosure.) Murphy then said that he, with Sherwood's concurrence, had agreed I would go to step four the next year and tenured associate professor the following year, automatically and without further review, and I accepted this.

When Murphy was satisfied regarding politics, he moved over to the couch next to me and began touching me, making various physical and verbal advances, and invited himself to my apartment for a drink. I rejected all this and found it deeply upsetting on top of all my job uncertainties. In the wake of Anita Hill's testimony against Clarence Thomas, sexual advances by a man, especially one with power, to a female employee have come to be widely known and sometimes addressed as sexual harassment, but neither the term nor any redress was generally available before that. The promotion did go through, and most of my subsequent academic problems have been due to one or two people's antipathy to me, which may not have been based on politics.

The other area that has, since age forty, caused me traumas and difficulties has been my health, which has social and political aspects, as most of my major health problems have apparently been the result of medical and dental treatments. I had mood problems, including a long depression, after treatment of an eye ailment with cortisone in 1970, although my depression fortunately ended with better treatment after a few years and has not since recurred. More recently I needed a major back operation in 1994, which reduced but did not end my back pain. Soon after that, a persistent burning mouth and other pains were diagnosed after tests by a complementary medicine M.D. as being due to very high levels of mercury, which in my case I find impossible to bring out of my system without suffering weeks of debilitating symptoms. The most plausible cause, as I had no other special exposure to mercury, was so-called silver dental fillings, which many people and dentists can handle without trouble, but others cannot. In the course of seeking relief for my symptoms, I noticed and also read that various unexplained painful syndromes and symptoms with probable environmental causes—which especially affect women, children, those exposed to modern wars and weaponry, and poor and nonwhite people and nations—have not attracted much medical research compared with that given to developing profitable drugs for groups that have money to pay for them. This is part of a general relative neglect of environmental causes of illness and insufficient attention to the negative effects of powerful drugs like cortisone. Only now are the bad effects of some recent drugs beginning to get significant attention, but few seem interested in the well-documented negative effects of older drugs like cortisone or of treatments like mercury-laden amalgam fillings. My ailments have cut down my travel, though I have been able to continue research and writing.

Since the largely successful struggles for women's rights that began in the sixties and became stronger afterwards, I have rarely felt discriminated against as a woman, although rank and salary studies at universities including my own show that discrimination continues in those areas. My own rank and salary, having started far too low, probably never caught up with what faculty members with similar records received. It is an ironic paradox of recent decades in America that while discrimination against women, Jews, African Americans, and homosexuals has decreased, largely owing to struggles by these groups, other areas of American life have gotten worse—notably the income gap, the availability of good jobs, and the brutalities committed in the name of the "War on Drugs" and now the "War on Terror." My activities on such questions are now mostly limited to public talks, signatures, and donations.

On the political front we are also seeing a revival of targeting unpopular groups, dubious trials and prison sentences, attacking liberals as unpatriotic or treasonous, and guilt by association, not to mention the holding of persons without charges, lawyers, or trials. This new McCarthyism is tied to what appears to be an endless "War on Terror" rather than the Cold War, but its effects on civil liberties are similar. Regarding women, some women's rights in the United States are now under attack, and it appears that in occupied Afghanistan and Iraq women's rights are losing out to U.S. expediency and to Islamist and tribal forces, for all our words about democracy.

For all its difficulties, my life has been one of major satisfactions, and I am often mindful that my current physical sufferings are far less intense than those of many people throughout the world. I have the satisfaction of my friends and relatives, and of my works' influence on many people in Iran and in the West regarding Iranian and Middle Eastern history and women's studies. Naturally not everyone agrees with my scholarly views, but out of criticism and dialogue comes a better understanding of humanity.

Notes

1. The conferences published after editing changes are *The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Eric Hooglund (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986); *Neither East nor West: Iran, the Soviet Union, and the United States*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Mark J. Gasiorowski (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); and several papers on comparative fundamentalism published in *Contention*, nos. 11–12 (Winter and Spring 1995). Most of my edited and coedited books, including the two on women cited in notes 13 and 21 to Book Three, Part 1, were not based on conferences.

2. *Iran and Beyond: Essays in Middle Eastern History in Honor of Nikki R. Keddie* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2000).