

Iranian Revolution: Your memories

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I lived in Iran for 5 years during the Shah's regime and got caught up in the Revolution when Ayatollah Khomeini returned from Paris. Thousands of people were jubilant, partying in the streets. I was unable to leave, the airport was closed. It was very frightening being an English girl in her early 20s in Tehran at that time. Revolutionary Guards burst into my house, forced open my cabinet and smashed my drinks outside. I was pinned up against the wall of my own home, with a rifle at my shoulder. I was accused of being a "British pig spy". I thought I would be killed. I thanked God I could speak French. They loved the French people who had harboured Ayatollah Khomeini in exile all those years. They thought I was French. I was safefor now at least.

Angela Morgan, Chesterfield, Derbyshire

I lived through it. I was a primary school student. Schools were closed every now and then. There was a fair amount of chaos and martial law. I clearly remember that we had to line up in the cold winter for petrol and that there was considerable shortage of fuel due to the so-called revolutionary activities. There were frequent power cuts too. When the Shah left, everyone was happy in the street. (some of this actually sounds like a mild version of what is happening today!) People were giving sweets away and you could see them flicking their car headlights and wipers as a sign of jubilation. I guess little they new what tyranny was awaiting them!

Ali, Tehran

I was a teenager in London when the Iranian revolution happened and believed anyone would be better than the Shah. Khomeini told us he would have nothing to do with ruling the country and we believed we would have more liberties without the Shah; I as a secular Iranian believed Khomeini. It did not take us long to see how we were deceived. I for one, am sorry to have misjudged the Shah & prefer him to the mullahs who have ruined the country. At the time of revolution, it would have been impossible for me to imagine that one day my opinion of the Shah would change so much and most of it is attributable to what has happened to Iran now.

Nina, Washington, DC

I am a 17 year old Iranian girl. Thanks to the revolution I have never been able to go to my country. My image of Iran is the images I see of my parents' black and white photographs: of fashionable women - not one with a headscarf - men in smart suits and beautiful buildings. My mother came to this country before the revolution for private schooling. She tells me of people's positive reactions when they heard she was from Iran, and the pride she used to feel because of it. The other day I told someone I was Iranian. The response: "Where is your headscarf?". Thanks to this regime I have never been able to feel such pride. Thirty years of Islamic tyranny have abolished the memory of Iran's 2500 years of beautiful history.

Negin Armand, London, United Kingdom

I was five. I came back from kindergarten and I saw my father holding the old radio and listening to the news. He was crying! I asked why and he said: "A very bad thing has happened my daughter, a very bad thing." We didn't leave Iran after the revolution. My memories of Iran before it are so faded or come from my parents' pictures. All I know is Iranians did not and do not deserve to live like this. Iran does not deserve to be treated like this. I've lived in the US for 7 years now but my heart still beats in Iran and always will.
F, Baltimore, U.S.A.

We only wanted the right to live in an Islamic society, where we could practice moderate Islam freely. After voting for democracy in 1953, the Shah continued to run the country in the interests of a minority. The revolution was bloodless and a revolution of the people. God bless Imam Khomeini
Syed Shah, Tehran, Iran

I worked in Iran in 1979 and 1980. As a young woman with a young son in school it was interesting. Of course life was different then and for the middle class Iranians the return of Ayatollah Khomeini was a memorable event: indeed the bazaari were fed up with the privileges of the Shah's family. Ugly purges took place, people: doctors, dentists (Bahai) were arrested. Names of the streets were soon changed, women barred from most offices, my working permit no longer extended. On September 21st the Iraqi airplanes bombarded Tabriz and reluctantly we foreigners had to leave.
France Betbeder, Paris

I was eight when the Revolution started in my country. We used to live freely. I was forced to go to a boarding school in France, and didn't see my mother for six years, and my father for 18 years ! It is difficult to be an Iranian abroad. But I stay very proud of being Iranian, and mostly Persian. Because I come from a country with +5000 years of history, and those mullahs are just the second invasion of the Islamicisation of Iran. When you are in Iran, everybody is "Islamic" in public, but at home they all have their Aragh (local vodka) and party like the rest of the world.
PersaBCN, Barcelona, Spain

My father, a deeply religious man, begged my brothers not to join the revolution and street protests. Although my father did not like Shah's policies, he insisted there was nothing Islamic about Khomeini either. But my brothers did their own way. It was fun to have a gun and to protest and set fires. My brothers repented years later. This Marxist revolution (with a religious mask) took away our religion, and completely destroyed our values and our innocence. They brainwashed me for years in schools. You don't know what it means to be deceived in the name of God.
Hassan

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