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## BY AN EYE-WITNESS: THE WORK OF AZADEH AKHLAGHI

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## PORTFOLIO

## BY AN EYE-WITNESS THE WORK OF AZADEH AKHLAGHI

AROLA VALLS BOFILL · AZADEH AKHLAGHI  
*University of Barcelona, Spain      Visual Artist*

On June 20, 2009, philosophy student Neda Agha Soltan was shot and killed by a Basij paramilitary officer in the city of Tehran during the electoral protests. Her death was broadcast on YouTube through the camera of a bystander, allowing real-time witnessing of the young woman's demise. This event serves as the conceptual trigger for the artwork "By an Eye-Witness" by artist Azadeh Akhlaghi (Shiraz, Iran, 1978), in which she examines the documentation of past deaths that establish a genealogical relationship where violence and trauma emerge as defining tropes in the modern history of Iran.

With this series, Akhlaghi opens the possibility for her own generation, born around 1979 and known as *Nasl-e sevvom* or the third generation (which has only known the official version of national history), to embody their collective memory and challenge the post-revolutionary imagery of the country.

The artist, whose practice explores media such as video, photography, and cinema (having worked as an assistant director to Abbas Kiarostami and Manijeh Hekmat), adopts for this series a strategy of staging events that span a 90-year time frame (1908-1998), from the Constitutional Revolution to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, including the Iran-Iraq War. All depicted scenes feature the violent, traumatic, or controversial demise of poets, journalists, students, intellectuals, or political activists, whose deaths have marked a turning point in the country's historical trajectory. What would have been the impact of these deaths if, at that time, mobile phone cameras had existed? How has the omnipresence of photography changed the recording of events we experience? These are some of the questions that Akhlaghi's work poses, urging us to listen to the voices that fill the blind spots of institutional archives (which have shaped the official history of the country) by leading us to the realm of the sensible and lived experience.



*Baghe - Shah, Tehran - Jahangir Khan Sur-e-Esrafil, Nasrollah Malek-al-Motekallemin / 24 June 1908*  
Azadeh Akhlaghi, from the series *By an Eye-Witness*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.





There are many inconsistent narratives. But as we have heard it from Mirza Ali Akbar Khan Ardaghi himself, who had been chained in Bagh-e Shah with those two and other prisoners, we quote his account here.

He says: "We spent a restless night on that Wednesday. We woke up at dawn. The Cossack soldiers took chained prisoners out in groups of eight, and after they brought one group back, they took the next one out. Haji Malek-al-motekallemin and Qazi, my brother, were opium addicts. They gave them some. After a while, two guardsmen came to take Malek and Mirza Jahangir-khan; they pulled them out of the line, then put a chain around their neck and told them to come along. It seemed to me that both of them knew that this was the end and they were going to execute them.

*Before stepping out of the door, Malek recited these lines with his strong beautiful voice:  
We who were the court of justice, see what has befallen us / Imagine what will befall the court of injustice*

Having recited this poem, he left the room. We were totally devastated, and our grief increased much more when they brought back the chains that they had put around their necks, and threw them on the pile of chains in the room. There was no doubt in our minds that those poor fellows had been killed."

Mamontov writes: "Their fate was sealed very simply. They took them to the garden and kept them beside the fountain. Two executors put ropes around their neck and pulled the ropes in opposite directions. Blood gushed out of their mouths, and then, the third executioner stabbed their chests with a dagger. The chief editor of the newspaper was also killed in the same way."

[Ardaghi:] And that was when they took all of us who were 22 prisoners chained to each other out and in that miserable condition stood us to take some photos. [...] Just imagine our plight and the shame we felt in the presence of each other. And they kept torturing us the whole time.

Ref. ↑  
Kasravi, Ahmad  
The History of  
Iranian Constitutional Revolution Vol. 2  
Tehran: AmirKabir Publishers 13th edition  
1977. (in Persian) pp. 657-663

جهانگیرخان  
صوراسرافیل

JAHANGIR - KHAN  
SUR - E - ESRAFIL

نصیرالله  
ملک المتکلمین

NASROLLAH  
MALEK-AL-  
MOTEKALLEMIN



.....  
**۱۲۸۷**  
**۳ تیر**  
**1908**  
**24-JUN**

در این باره سخنان پراکنده بسیار است. ولی ما چون داستان را از میرزا علی اکبرخان ارداقی، که خود در باغشاه با آن دو تن و با دیگران هم زنجیر می‌بوده، پرسیده‌ایم همان گفته‌های او را می‌آوریم. می‌گوید: «شب چهارشنبه را که با آن سختی به پایان رسانیدیم بامدادان از خواب برخاستیم و قزاقان هر هشت تن را به یک زنجیر بسته بودند بیرون می‌بردند و چون آنان را برمی‌گردانیدند هشت تن دیگری را می‌بردند. حاجی ملک‌المکملین و برادرش قاضی به خوردن تریاک عادت می‌داشتند برای هر دو تریاک آوردند. و چون اندکی گذشت دو تن فراش برای بردن ملک و میرزا جهانگیرخان آمدند و ایشان را از قطار بیرون آورده به گردن هریکی زنجیر دستی (شکاری) زده گفتند: برخیزید بیایید، گویا هر دو دانستند که برای کشتن می‌برندشان.

———— ملک دم در با آواز دلکش و بلند خود این شعر را خواند: ———  
 ما بارگه دادیم این رفت ستم بر ما      بر بارگه عدوان آیا چه رسد خذلان

این را خوانده پا از در بیرون گذاشت. ما همگی اندوهگین گردیدیم و این اندوه چند برابر شد هنگامی که دیدیم آن دو فراش زنجیرهایی را که به گردن ملک و میرزا جهانگیرخان زده و ایشان را برده بودند برگردانیده در جلو اتاق به روی دیگر زنجیرها انداختند و ما بی‌گمان شدیم که کار آن بیچارگان به پایان رسیده.» [...] مامون‌توف نیز می‌نویسد: «سرگذشت این دو تن بسیار ساده بود. امروز ایشان را به باغ بردند و پهلوی فواره نگاه داشتند. دو دژخیم طناب به گردن ایشان انداخته از دو سو کشیدند. خون از دهان ایشان آمد و این زمان دژخیم سومی خنجر به دل‌های ایشان فرو کرد. مدیر روزنامه را هم بدین سان کشتند.»

[ارداقی:] و این هنگام بود که همه را که بیست و دو تن بودیم با زنجیر و آن حال آسیب‌دیدگی برده، نهاده پیکرها از ما برداشتند [...] و باید اندیشید که ما چه رنجی می‌کشیدیم و چه شرمندگی نزد هم می‌داشتیم. در این میان شکنجه و آزار هم دریغ نمی‌کردند.

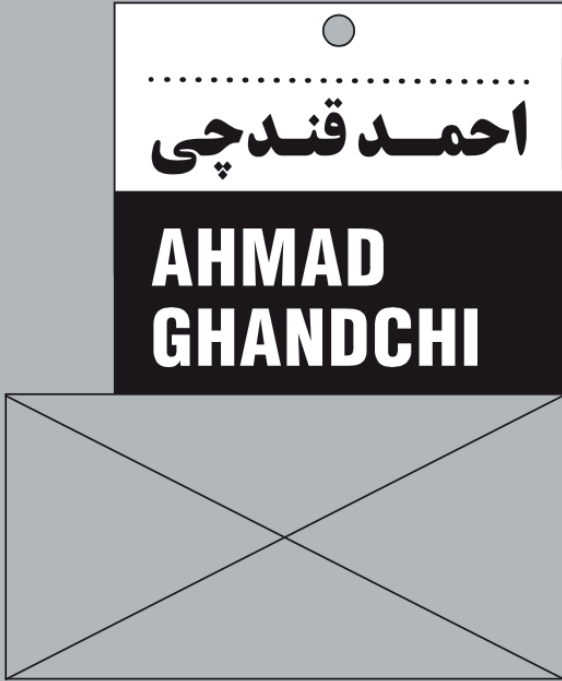
منبع  
 کسروی، احمد  
 تاریخ مشروطه‌ی ایران  
 ج ۲، تهران  
 انتشارات امیرکبیر  
 چاپ سیزدهم، ۱۳۵۶  
 صص ۶۶۳-۶۵۷



*Faculty of Engineering, Tehran University – Azar Shariat Razavi, Ahmad Ghandchi, Mostafa Bozorgnia / 7 December 1953*  
Azadeh Akhlaghi, from the series *By an Eye-Witness*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.







About 10 A.m, we heard the untimely ring of the faculty bell and rushed out. I had been teaching his civil engineering course when two soldiers and the soldiers had pointed out two students to the officer and said that the commander had ordered the soldiers to arrest them.[...] They had the dean of the faculty, and he had the bell rung in protest. On hearing the bell, I shouted "Down with the martial law! In this atmosphere of suppression and under the circumstances, it is not possible". Then he had thrown away his books and had gone to the corridor. I shouted down with the Shah, down with Zahedi the dictator, hail to Mo

The campus was full of armed soldiers. The commander ordered the students to continue to shout slogans against the Shah. The commander threatened the students with shooting at the students inside the campus, let alone, inside the building. But the students refused to shoot, and suddenly the clamor of students mingled with the roar of guns. The students were not wounded tried to help the wounded who could move to leave so that the others could escape and some were lying on the floor. Azar was one of the students who in spite of the danger who stabbed his leg with his bayonet and he fell down, but to the very last moment

In the corridor, blood was mixed with the hot water gushing from pipes. The scene was a horrible scene! Those of us who were alive fled.

THE CORONER OFFICE ANNOUNCED THE THREE TEHRAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Ref. → ↓  
Ettela'at Daily  
8 Dec 1953

1. Mostafa Bozorgnia, the student, entered his right chest and died completely and he died as the result of the back of his right shoulder.

2. Shariat Razavi, the other student, disintegrated his right thigh and died. Furthermore, a bullet cannot be the cause of his death.

3. The other victim, Ahmad Ghandchi, died of his viscera. Since Yesterday, the representative of Military Pro

Ref. ↑ The Coroner Office's report on



ut to the corridor. We found out that Professor Shams Malekara  
their commanding officer had come into the classroom and  
ese had been the guys who had mocked and insulted them.  
dragged the students out. Professor Shams had informed the  
bell, one of the students had gone up a desk and had shouted:  
the shadow of military boots of armed soldiers no education is  
dor with other students. They started an indoor demonstration,  
saddegh and demanded the release of their fellow students.

ts to leave the faculty building, but the students ignored him and  
at they will be shot at, but nobody believed that they might start  
t the students did not know that he had already received the order  
The soldiers had invaded the building. Some of the students who  
they wouldn't be arrested. Some were grappling with the soldiers  
of having been shot in chest and arm, was tussling with a soldier  
oment he didn't stop shouting "down with the Shah".

ced radiators and the red current was running downstairs. It

**STUDENTS' CAUSE OF DEATH AFTER CONDUCTING THE AUTOPSY:**

dent of the engineerig department passed away after a bullet  
exited from his left armpit. The bullet broke his arm's bone  
he result of severe bleeding. A bayonet was also pushed into  
r which penetrated 15 cm in the body and caused a deep scar.

student, died primarily of a bayonet struck which totally  
n, cut off his arteries, caused severe bleeding which led to  
ullet hit his right arm and produced a cutaneous scar which  
eath.

Ghandchi, died after a bullet penetrated his stomach and tore  
he Coroner Office examined the corpses at the presence of the  
secutor's Office, but the official report is yet to be provided.

*how three students of engineering department of Tehran university were martyred.*

.....

مصطفی بزرگ نیا

MOSTAFA

BOZORGNIA

← Ref.

Shariat Razavi, Gholam Reza

*Memoirs of an Odd Physician*

Tehran

Ghasideh-sara Publishers

2005. (in Persian)

pp. 16-20

ISBN. 964-8618-31-3

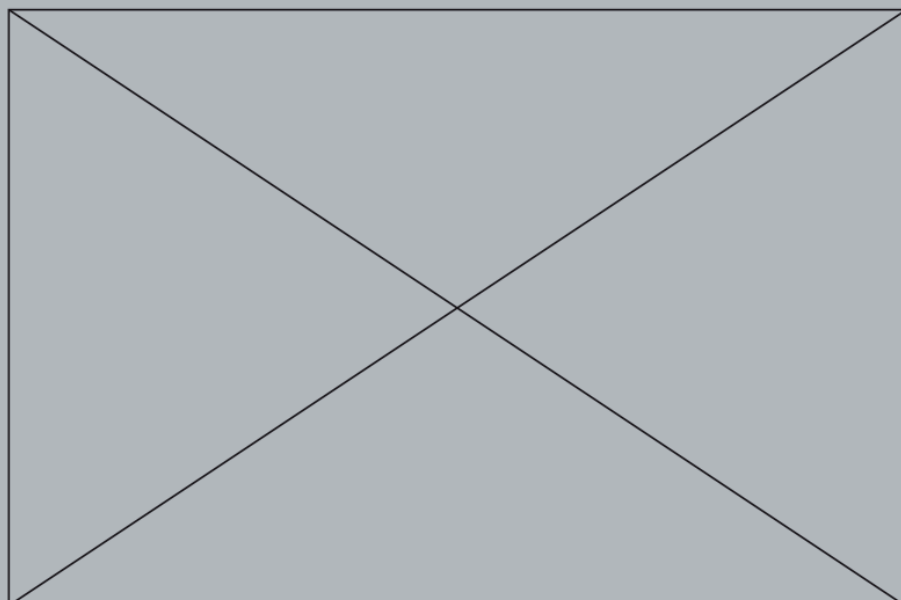


*Atlantic Hotel, Tehran – Gholam Reza Takhti / 7 January 1968*

Azadeh Akhlaghi, from the series *By an Eye-Witness*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.







تاریخ وقوع: ۱۳۴۶/۱۰/۱۷ تاریخ گزارش: ۱۳۴۶/۱۰/۱۹  
محرمانه کشتی ایران

ز تاریخ ۱۳۴۶/۱۰/۱۵ در هتل آتلانتیک اقامت داشت ماده‌ی سمی خودکشی نمود و موقعی که نماینده و انتظامی از اتاق نام‌برده بازدید می‌نمایند از جیب کت ی‌آید که در آن نوشته است در جریان مرگ من هیچ‌کس خود معرفی و در تقویم بغلی وی ضمن بررسی مشاهده مسرم اختلاف خانوادگی داشتم چندین مرتبه به مادر من اظهار داشت من از ابتدا با این ازدواج موافق نبودم چه‌گذا ازدواج کرد و حال زندگی‌ام مثل یهودی سرگردان برای کالبدشکافی به پزشکی قانونی حمل گردیده است.

سند ۶۹ خیلی محرمانه منبع: ۴۰۲ تاریخ وقوع: از چند روز قبل تاریخ گزارش: ۱۳۴۶/۱۰/۲۶  
موضوع: شایعات در مورد مرگ تختی

[...] عده‌ای از مردم نیز اظهار می‌دارند چه دلیل دارد که پزشکی قانونی نوع سمی که تختی به وسیله‌ی آن خودکشی کرده تاکنون افشا ننموده و اضافه می‌کنند که جسد تختی را در هتل به طرزی یافتند که پتو بر روی خود داشته و چنان چه سم خورده باشد مسلماً تشنجاتی به وی دست می‌دهد و در این جا این سؤال پیش می‌آید که به چه ترتیب پتو را بر روی خود کشیده است.

منبع: فاطمی نویسی، عباس زندگی و مرگ جهان پهلوان تختی در آیین‌های اسناد  
جهان کتاب ۱۳۷۷ بخش اسناد، صص ۳۵-۶۹ شابک: ۹۶۴-۹۰۳۱۱-۴-۶

Takhti, the Iranian champion wrestler had been staying at Hotel Atlantic since 05 Jan 1968 and on the night of 07 Jan 1968 committed suicide by taking poison. When the attorney representative together with the police inspected the room, they found his last will and testament in the pocket of his coat in which he had written that no one was to be blamed for his death and he had assigned his brother as his executor. In his pocket was also found a calendar in which he had written that because of his marital problems, he had gone to his mother-in-law several times and she had told him that she was against their marriage from the beginning and she still wondered why her daughter had married a pauper. The body of the deceased was then taken to the coroner's office for autopsy.

Document No 35 Top Secret Source: anonymous  
Date of event: 07-01-1968 Date of report: 09-01-1968  
Subject: Suicide of Gholam Reza Takhti, the world champion wrestler

The news of Takhti's suicide was circulated quickly. After his body was taken to the coroner's office, a crowd of members of National Front, merchants of Bazaar, athletes and ordinary people gathered in front of the office. Different comments were made, but they were all on the basis that "Takhti hasn't committed suicide; he has been killed". There were others who said "He was not a mere child, he wouldn't commit suicide over petty marital differences. He could easily divorce her, if he thought she had been unfaithful to him. [...] They sure have poisoned him somewhere else and then transferred the body to the hotel room". [...] During the funeral, some people started murmuring "Our Takhti has been killed", and the slogan spread over quickly and the whole crowd chanted it.

Document No 36 Top Secret Source: No 581  
Date of event: 08-01-1968 Date of report: 09-01-1968  
Subject: Suicide of Gholam Reza Takhti, the world champion wrestler



سند ۳۵ خیلی محرمانه منبع: اتنه  
موضوع: خودکشی غلامرضا تختی قم

تختی قهرمان کشتی ایران ا  
و در شب ۱۳۴۶/۱۰/۱۷ با م  
دادستان در معیت مأمورین  
وی وصیت نامه‌ای به دست م  
مقصر نیست و برادرش را قیم  
می‌شود که نوشته چون با ه  
همسر مراجعه کردم. ایشان به  
و نمی‌دانم چرا دخترم با تو بچ  
شده است. ضمناً جسد نام برده

سند ۳۶ خیلی محرمانه منبع: ۵۸۱ تاریخ وقوع: ۱۳۴۶/۱۰/۱۸ تاریخ گزارش: ۱۳۴۶/۱۰/۱۹  
موضوع: خودکشی غلامرضا تختی قهرمان کشتی ایران

۳۴۶  
ادی ۱۷  
968  
7-JAN

موضوع خودکشی غلامرضا تختی قهرمان سابق کشتی به سرعت در همه جا پخش شد. بعد از آن که جسد او را به پزشکی قانونی منتقل کردند گروه زیادی از عناصر جبهه‌ی ملی، بازاریان، ورزشکاران و مردم رهگذر در جلوی پزشکی قانونی اجتماع کرده بودند. در این اجتماع اظهار نظرهای مختلفی می‌شد که همه‌ی آن‌ها در اطراف موضوع «تختی خودکشی نکرده بلکه او را کشته‌اند.» دور می‌زد. گروه دیگری می‌گفتند: «تختی بچه نبود که بر سر یک مقدار اختلافات جزیی خانوادگی دست به خودکشی بزند او یک قهرمان بود و اگر زنش بد یا منحرف می‌بود طلاقش می‌داد. [...] حتماً او را در جای دیگری مسموم کرده‌اند و بعد جسدش را به هتل آتلانتیک آورده‌اند.» [...] هنگامی که جسد تختی به گورستان منتقل می‌شد ابتدا چند نفر شعار «تختی ما کشته شد.» را زمزمه کردند و بعد این شعار به طور ناخودآگاه همگانی شد و همه‌ی مردم این شعار را می‌دادند.

Some people are also asking  
y the coroner hasn't revealed  
autopsy results including the  
e of poison he has supposedly  
en to kill himself. They say  
en the body was discovered, he  
s covered up with a blanket. But  
e were poisoned, he would have  
l convulsions, so one could ask  
v he could have covered up his  
ly with the blanket.

Ref. <  
Fateminevisi, Abbas  
*The Life and Death*  
*of the World*  
*Champion Takhti*  
*in the SAVAK Documents*  
Tehran  
Jahan Ketab Publishers  
1998. (in Persian)  
pp. 35-69  
ISBN. 964 - 90311-4-6

Document No 69 Top Secret Source: No 402  
Event: a few days ago Date of report: 16-01-1968  
Subject: rumors about Takhti's death

8  
Champion wrestler



*Evin Hills, Tehran – Bijan Jazani / 18 April 1975*  
Azadeh Akhlaghi, from the series *By an Eye-Witness*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.





**NINE PRISONERS WERE KILLED IN AN ESCAPE ATTEMPT.....ETTELA'AT DAILY**

On Thursday, 18 April 1975, nine prisoners were killed when they attempted to escape. These prisoners attempted to escape during a prison transfer and were all killed. Their names are as follows: Mohammad Choupanzadeh, Ahmad Jalil-afshar, Aziz Sarmadi, Bijan Jazani, Hassan Zia-Zarifi, Kazem Zol-Anvar, Mostafa Javan Khoshdel, Mashouf Kalantari, Abbas Souraki.

[Tehrani, the SAVAK agent:] after the assassination of general Reza Zandipour, the chief of the security committee, in April 1975, SAVAK set out to take a horrible revenge; the plot was so confidential that even the agents involved were not briefed and didn't know about the operation until the very last minutes. On April 17 or 18, Reza Attarpour (alias Dr. Hossein-zadeh, the notorious SAVAK interrogator) asked me to have Kazem Zol-Anvar transferred from Qasr prison to Evin prison. I did the necessary paperworks and had the documents signed. We went to Evin. The prisoners were to be handed over to Shabani (Hosseini) and Nozari. We waited for them in Akbar Evini's Coffee-house. The minibus carrying the prisoners arrived with Colonel Vaziri in uniform in it. He sent the guard away, and we drove the prisoners up to the hills surrounding the Evin prison. We had them sit on the ground in a row, blindfolded and handcuffed. Then Attarpour began his speech: "Just as your comrades and collaborators, whom you mastermind and have contact with from within the prison, execute our friends and colleagues, we in our turn have sentenced you to death."

BIJAN JAZANI AND SOME OF THE PRISONERS  
BEGAN TO PROTEST VEHEMENTLY, BUT  
ATTARPOUR OR COLONEL VAZIRI, I AM NOT  
SURE WHICH, STARTED SHOOTING AT THEM  
WITH A UZI AND THEN HANDED THE MACHINE  
GUN TO US ONE BY ONE. I WAS THE FOURTH OR  
THE FIFTH WHO TOOK THE GUN AND FIRED;  
BY THE WAY THEY WERE ALREADY DEAD. I AM  
NOT SAYING THAT I AM NOT GUILTY, FOR I  
WAS SURE A COLLABORATOR IN THIS MURDER.  
THEN SAADI JALIL ESFAHANI WENT OVER WITH  
THE MACHINE GUN AND BEGAN TO FINISH  
OFF THOSE WHO WERE STILL ALIVE. [...]

Afterwards, Rasouli and I burned and destroyed the hands of the blindfolds of the martyrs and carried the bodies to the military hospital and Hosseini and Rasouli took them to the military hospital. The next day, Attarpour wrote the text to be published in the newspapers, saying 9 prisoners were shot dead by the guards who attempted to escape during a prison transfer. He had made several blunders in the text: firstly, none of them was shot in the back as they had not been fleeing. Secondly, the transferring procedure was such that any attempt to escape was out of question.

↑	→	Ref.
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## "Tehrani, The SAVAK Butcher, Confesses."

Ettela'at Daily

22 May 1979

P.3



منبع ↓ روزنامه‌ی اطلاعات ۳۱ فروردین ۱۳۵۴ ص ۱ P.1 20 April 1975 Ettela'at Daily

## نه زندانی در حین فرار کشته شدند

پی  
جز  
JAN JAZANI

روز پنج‌شنبه ۲۹ فروردین، ۹ زندانی در حین فرار کشته شدند. این زندانیان در حین جابه‌جایی آن‌ها از یک زندان به زندانی دیگر اقدام به فرار نمودند که همگی کشته شدند. نام‌های این افراد به شرح زیر است: محمد چوپان‌زاده، احمد جلیل افشار، عزیز سرمدی، بیژن جزنی، حسن ضیا ظریفی، کاظم ذوالانوار، مصطفی جوان خوش‌دل، مشعوف کلانتری، عباس سورکی.

[تهرانی مأمور ساواک:] بعد از ترور سرتیپ رضا زندی پور، رئیس وقت کمیته‌ی مشترک در اوایل فروردین ۵۴، ساواک به قصد انتقام جویی، نقشه‌ی وحشتناکی طرح کرد که همه‌ی عوامل اجرای آن تا آخرین دقیق اجرای نقشه از چگونگی آن آگاه نبودند. پنج‌شنبه ۲۸ یا ۲۹ فروردین بود که رضا عطارپور (دکتر حسین زاده‌ی معروف) از من خواست ترتیب انتقال کاظم ذوالانوار را از زندان قصر به زندان اوین بدهم. من هم نامه‌اش را نوشتم و به امضا رساندم. به زندان اوین رفتیم و قرار شد شعبانی (حسینی) و نوذری زندانیان را تحویل بگیرند. ما نیز به قهوه‌خانه‌ی اکبر اوینی رفتیم و به انتظار نشستیم. مینی بوس حامل زندانیان، در حالی که سرهنگ وزیری با لباس ارتشی در اتومبیل بود رسید و سربازی را که آن جا پاس می‌داد مرخص کرد. زندانیان را به بالای ارتفاعات بازداشتگاه اوین بردیم و در حالی [که] چشم‌ها و دست‌های شان بسته بود، آن‌ها را ردیف روی زمین نشانیدیم. بعد عطارپور برای شان سخنرانی کرد و گفت: "همان‌طور که دوستان و همکاران شما که شما رهبران فکری آن‌ها هستید و از زندان با آنان ارتباط دارید، همکاران و دوستان ما را اعدام می‌کنند و از بین می‌برند، ما نیز شما را محکوم به اعدام کرده‌ایم."

بیژن جزنی و چند نفر دیگر، شدیداً اعتراض کردند اما نمی‌دانم عطارپور یا سرهنگ وزیری با مسلسل یوزی به روی آنان آتش گشود و مسلسل را یکی یکی به ما داد. من نفر چهارم یا پنجم بودم که مسلسل به من رسید و وقتی من هم شلیک کردم دیگر آن‌ها زنده نبودند. البته نمی‌خواهم بگویم که در کشتن آن‌ها دخالت نداشتم، چون نفس عمل مهم است که من هم در این جنایت عمل کردم. بعد هم سعدی جلیل اصفهانی با مسلسل، بالای سر آن‌ها رفت و هر کدام شان را که نیمه‌جان بودند با مسلسل خلاص کرد. [...] پس از این ماجرا من و رسولی چشم‌بند و دست‌بندهای شهدا را سوزاندیم و از بین بردیم و اجساد را داخل مینی بوس گذاشتیم و حسینی و رسولی اجساد را به بیمارستان ۵۰۱ ارتش منتقل کردند. روز بعد، متنی به وسیله‌ی عطارپور برای روزنامه‌ها تهیه شد که در آن عنوان شده بود این ۹ نفر در جریان انتقال از زندان به زندان دیگر، قصد فرار داشتند که مورد هدف گلوله‌ی مأموران قرار گرفتند. این متن به دو دلیل بسیار ناشایانه تهیه شده بود اولاً همه‌ی آن‌ها از روبه‌رو هدف گلوله قرار گرفته بودند، پس قصد فرار نداشتند. ثانیاً نحوه‌ی انتقال زندانی طوری نبود که بتوان قبول کرد که قصد فرار در بین بوده است.

منبع ↑ "تهرانی، جلال ساواک، اعتراف می‌کند" روزنامه‌ی اطلاعات ۱ خرداد ۱۳۵۸ ص ۳





*Majnoon Island, Iraq – Mehdi Bakeri / 14 February 1985*

Azadeh Akhlaghi, from the series *By an Eye-Witness*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist.





Ref. →  
 Nazemi, Ghasem  
*Goodbye Commander* | Tabriz  
 Setad Congereh Shohada Publishers  
 2004. (in Persian)  
 pp. 119- 123  
 ISBN. 964-06-6303-04

[Mehdi Bakeri's last speech:] Dear brothers! We have a very hard mission ahead. [...] If from a platoon only one man survives, he must resist to the end. If from a 300 hundred company only one man survives, he must resist to the end. Even if your commander is killed, do not say that we no longer have any one to command us, do not falter, this is the temptation of the devil. [...] Don't shoot before you are ordered to. Even if you are wounded, bite on something so that you won't cry out loud as crying out is a sign of weakness.

**[Martyr Ghanbarlou:] In the heat of the battle, commander Mehdi fell. I ran to him and turned his body. He was shot in the forehead and was bleeding. I called him, kissed him, screamed. No reaction. He was martyred. [...] I thought, what are we going to do now? I told the other fighters, let's go back. I carried the body to the boat. [...] I laid it in the boat and drove into the Tigris River. They were shooting at us from all directions. We could do nothing but pray. The boat was riddled with bullets. Meanwhile, an Iraqi came to the river bank and fired an RPG at us. The boat exploded. I don't remember anything; I just remember that I found myself in the water, alone. The boat was on fire. I watched while the bodies of Mehdi and other comrades were burning in the boat. At nightfall we went back to that point. There was no trace of the bodies.**

Ref. ↑ Akbari, Ali *He could not stay alive* | Tehran | Siam Publishers | 2009. (in Persian)  
 pp.108-110 | ISBN. 978-964-8026-10-8

[Mostafa Al-Mousavi:] I remember the last time that I told him to go back, he replied "Asghar is gone, Ali is gone, and everybody is gone. What is left for me back there? What is the point in going back?"

Ref. ↑  
 Khezri, Farhad  
*I told Majnoon to stay alive* | Tehran  
 Revayat Fath Publishers  
 2001. (in Persian)  
 pp. 53-55  
 ISBN. 964-90935-9-1

۱۳۶۳  
 ۲۵ بهمن  
 1985  
 14-FEB

سته ی  
 آن یک  
 که این  
 مجروح  
 ماست.

دی  
 ری

MEHDI  
 BAKERI



← منبع

ناظمی، سید قاسم

خدا حافظ سردار / تبریز

ستاد کنگره‌ی شهدا و سرداران شهید

آذربایجان شرقی

صص ۱۱۹-۱۲۳

۱۳۸۳-۶۳۰۳-۰۶-۹۶۴ شابک

[آخرین سخنرانی مهدی باکری: برادران! عملیات، عملیات سختی خواهد بود. [...]] اگر از یک د سی نفری، یک نفر بماند آن یک نفر باید مقاومت کند. و اگر از گردان سیصد نفری یک نفر بماند نفر باید مقاومت کند. حتی اگر فرماندهی شما شهید شد، نگویید فرمانده نداریم و سست شوید و سوسه‌ی شیطان است. [...]] تا موقعی که دستور حمله داده نشده، کسی تیراندازی نکند. حتی اگر شود باید دستمال در دهانش بگذارد، دندان‌ها را به هم بفشارد و فریاد نکند. فریاد نشانه‌ی ضعف ش

.....  
مهدی باکری

[شهید قنبرلو:] درگیری شدت بیشتری پیدا کرده بود که ناگهان آقا مهدی نقش زمین شد. دویدم سمت او و او را برگرداندم. تیر خورده بود به پیشانی‌اش و از آن خون بیرون می‌زد. هر چه صدایش کردم، بوسیدمش، فریاد زدم، فایده‌ای نداشت. آقا مهدی شهید شده بود. [...]] به خودم گفتم حالا چه کار کنم توی این بی‌کسی و تنهایی؟ به بچه‌ها گفتم بلند شوید برویم عقب. آقا مهدی را بلند کردم بردم رساندم به قایقی که آن جا بود. [...]] آقا مهدی را گذاشتیم توی قایق، زدیم به دجله حرکت کردیم رفتیم. به قایق و ما و آب از هر طرف تیر می‌زدند. آرپی‌جی هم می‌زدند. ما هیچ کاری از دست‌مان برنمی‌آمد جز دعا. دشمن قایق را زیر رگبار گرفته بود، به طوری که بدنه‌ی قایق سوراخ سوراخ شده بود. در این گیرودار، یکی از عراقی‌ها آمد کنار دجله و با آرپی‌جی خود قایق را نشانه گرفت و بعد شلیک کرد. قایق منفجر شد. از انفجار چیز زیادی در ذهنم نیست. فقط یک دفعه خودم را در آب احساس کردم و کسی را همراه خودم ندیدم. بر اثر بنزینی که در باک قایق بود، قایق آتش گرفته بود. با یک دنیا غم و درد سوختن آقا مهدی و چند نفر دیگر از بچه‌ها را مشاهده می‌کردم. بر اثر اصابت موشک، قایق به سمت شرق دجله رفت و قایق سوخته در نقطه‌ای از خشکی متوقف شد. به دلیل شدت و حجم آتش دشمن، نتوانستم خود را به قایق برسانم. شب به همراه چند نفر از بچه‌ها به آن جا رفتیم اما اثری از آقا مهدی و بقیه نبود.

۸-۱۰-۸۰۲۶-۹۶۴-۹۷۸ شابک | صص ۱۱۰-۱۰۸ | ۱۳۸۸ | تهران: صیام | نمی‌توانست زنده بماند | اکبری، علی | ↑ منبع

← منبع

خضری، فرهاد

به مجنون گفتم زنده بمان

تهران: روایت فتح

صص ۵۳-۵۵

۹-۱-۹۰۳۵-۹۶۴ شابک

[مصطفی الموسوی:] یادم هست آخرین باری که به او گفتم: «برگرد عقب» به ترکی گفتم: «اصغر گدیپ، علی گدیپ، اوشاخلار هامسی گدیپ، دای منه نمنه گالیپ، نیه گلیم؟» می‌گفتم: «اصغر رفته، علی رفته، بچه‌ها همه شون رفتن، برای من چی مونده، برای چی برگردم؟»





## PORTFOLIO

# INDEPENDENCE DAYS

## THE WORK OF MARYAM JAFRI

ANA CATARINA PINHO  · MARYAM JAFRI  
 IHA, University of Lisbon, Portugal Visual Artist

Maryam Jafri has worked across varied media including video, sculpture and photography, to interrogate cultural and visual representations of history and political economy and their impact on everyday life. Her works often combine found and original material, whether in installation or moving image. As stated by the artist, her practice is grounded in an engagement with the formal and conceptual qualities of each media, periods of extensive research and planning, and the mysterious but crucial role played by forces that lie outside deliberation and preparation such as accident, chance, and intuition.

Jafri's work, "Independence Day 1934-1975" (2009-2019), reflects her interest in heritage, archives, and the role of photography in shaping national narratives during the decolonization of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. This project comprises over 60 archival photos from more than 30 archives, depicting the first Independence Day ceremonies of various nations across these regions. Notably, the photos are primarily sourced from public archives within the respective Asian and African countries. The first Independence Day, including its ceremonial events, is portrayed as a series of codified rituals and elaborate speeches enacted in both public and elite spaces. These events, including the swearing-in of new leadership, document signings, VIP parades, stadium salutes, and inaugural addresses, are orchestrated by the departing colonial powers. Despite their diverse geographical and temporal origins, the photographs reveal striking similarities, highlighting a political model exported from Europe and replicated globally. The photo installation is arranged as a typology, positioned between a grid and a storyboard, exploring the transitional twilight period when a territory becomes a nation-state—a topic often overlooked in colonial and post-colonial studies. The artist book *Independence Days* (2022) emerges as an expanded version of the "Independence Day 1934-1975" photo installation. Published by Buchhandlung Walther König, the book

juxtaposes 234 photographs over 10 years of research in several archives across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, including many from rare and at-risk collections.

More recent works by Jafri, such as “Disappearance Online” (2021), address the digitization of historical images and its implications for cultural memory and copyright law. This project traces the status of key historical images from national archives in Iraq, Syria, and Jordan, examining their presence, absence, and non-appearance in both public and commercial image banks. This work complements her earlier project “Getty vs. Ghana” (2012). While browsing the Getty Images website, Jafri discovered several historical photographs from Ghana, copyrighted by Getty, which also existed in the Ghana Ministry of Information archives. These images, documenting Ghana’s independence on March 6, 1957, mark the first instance of sub-Saharan Africa’s liberation from Western rule. Jafri’s investigation revealed errors and manipulation of the original photographs, ranging from accidental to deliberate. “Getty vs. Ghana” juxtaposes these overlapping images to address contemporary issues of copyright, digitization, and foreign ownership of national heritage.

Jafri’s work highlights the lasting influence of archives and emphasizes the importance of critically engaging with historical narratives. Her artistic inquiries prompt us to reconsider our approaches to remembering, interpreting, and representing the past, advocating for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of our shared histories.

*Sri Lanka – Ghana - Botswana 1948-1966.*

From the photo series “Independence Day 1934-1975” (2009-2019) Maryam Jafri.

Courtesy of the artist.









The left image is from the Ghana Ministry of Information, the right from Getty Images. The Ministry identifies their image as G/1180/1, Getty identifies theirs as 50405305. The caption accompanying the Getty image states *Duchess of Kent (L) dancing with Ghana Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah (C) at the Ghana independence ceremonies*. A special note accompanying the Getty image states: *No resale application use without the prior permission of Time, Inc. Contact your local office to see if we can clear this image for you*. The back of photo G/1180/1 bears a purple stamp stating *Copyright Photographic Services, Ministry of Information, PO Box 745, Accra. All rights reserved*. The Ghana Ministry of Information charges \$4 per photograph for reproduction and licensing. Licensee must credit the Ministry.



The left image is from the Ghana Ministry of Information, the right from Getty Images. The Ministry identifies their image as G/1180/1, Getty identifies theirs as 50405305. The caption accompanying the Getty image states *Duchess of Kent (L) dancing with Ghana Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah (C) at the Ghana independence ceremonies*. A special note accompanying the Getty image states: *No resale application use without the prior permission of Time, Inc. Contact your local office to see if we can clear this image for you. The back of photo G/1180/1 bears a purple stamp stating Copyright Photographic Services, Ministry of Information, PO Box 745, Accra. All rights reserved. The Ghana Ministry of Information charges \$4 per photograph for reproduction and licensing. Licensee must credit the Ministry.*

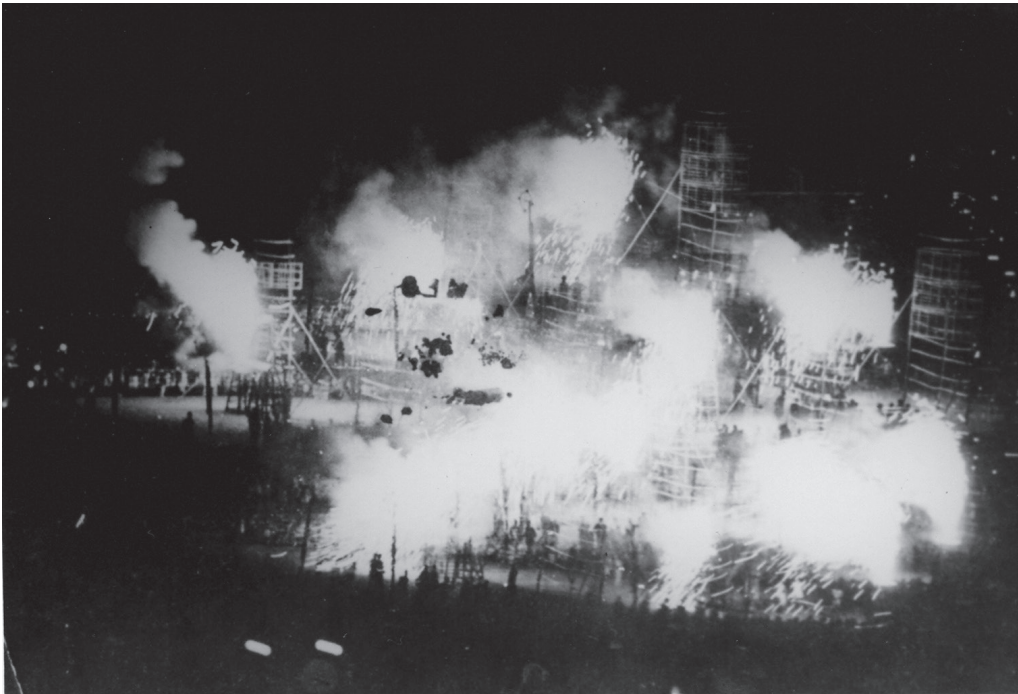
**Maryam Jafri, *Getty vs Ghana* (2012), detail.**  
Courtesy of the artist.



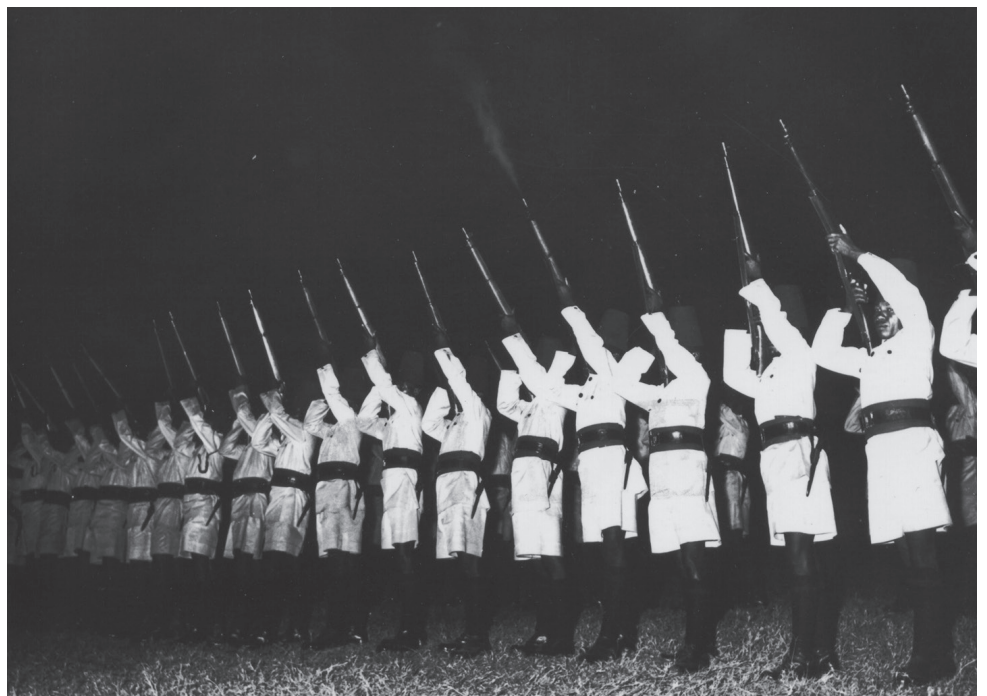




*Burundi-Syria-Burkina Faso 1946-1962.*  
From the photo series "Independence Day 1934-1975" (2009-2019), Maryam Jafri.  
Courtesy of the artist.







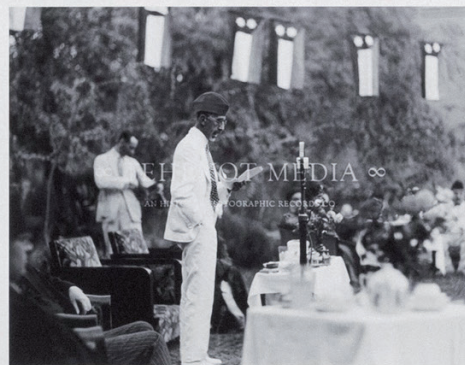
*India-Philippines-Tanzania 1947-1961.*  
From the photo series "Independence Day 1934-1975" (2009-2019), Maryam Jafri.  
Courtesy of the artist.





The top image shows Faisal I of Syria at the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 with French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau. Shortly after this photograph was taken, Faisal I founded the National Museum in Damascus, where this photograph now rests in its archives. Faisal reigned as King of Syria for five months before being deposed by the French in 1920. The bottom image shows Faisal I, ex-King of Syria, being crowned by the British as Faisal I, King of Iraq. Low-resolution versions of the 1921 coronation image circulate widely online, but the photograph is presumed destroyed after the burning of the Iraq National Library and Archive under the US-led invasion. According to US authorities, senior staff from the Library of Congress would aid their Iraqi counterparts to rebuild the library just as the National Endowment for the Arts would spearhead the resurrection of Iraq's devastated museum sector. However, after an initial visit by a team from the Library of Congress in October 2003, no further contact has been reported.

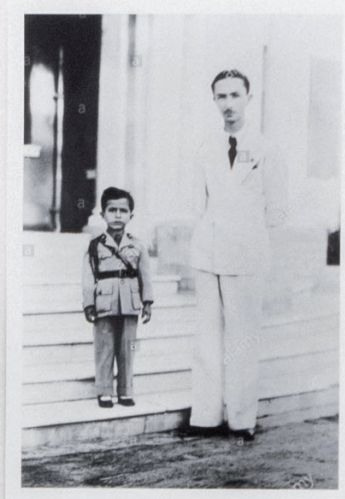
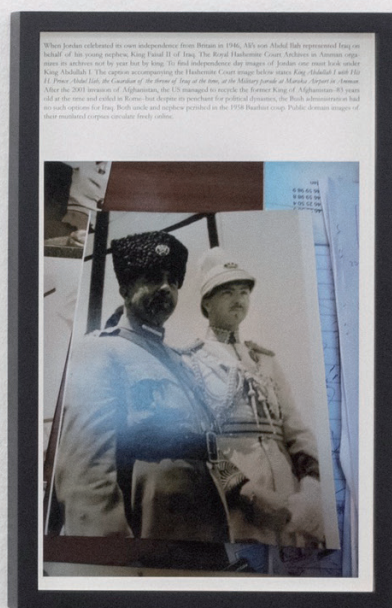
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In 2010, South Carolina-based Tehrkot Media began selling images online allegedly depicting Iraq's 1932 independence from Britain. Best known for turning Alexander Gardner's photographs of the US Civil War into an app, Tehrkot Media pitched itself as a boutique stock photo agency specializing in historical imagery and an alternative to behemoths such as Getty Images and Alamy. A 2012 screenshot shows King Faisal I of Iraq ostensibly broadcasting Iraq's independence. In 2013, Tehrkot Media went out of business and the image disappeared from the internet. No further information is provided on the current status of the image and an online search reveals no results, not even at the wayback machine. At the Library of Congress, a photograph from the same event is available as a public domain image. The caption states *King Faysal (Faisal) I of Iraq (left) probably with his brother Emir Abdullah of Transjordan, at the palace, Baghdad, Iraq*. However, the man with Faisal is not his brother Abdullah but instead his other brother, ex-King Ali, who had fled from Mecca after being deposed by the House of Saud. Both Faisal and Ali died not long after this photograph was taken, officially of natural causes. Abdullah would go on to become King of Jordan.

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When Jordan celebrated its own independence from Britain in 1946, Ali's son Abdul Ilah represented Iraq on behalf of his young nephew, King Faisal II of Iraq. The Royal Hashemite Court Archives in Amman organizes its archives not by year but by king. To find independence day images of Jordan one must look under Abdullah I. The caption accompanying the Hashemite Court image states *King Abdullah I with His H. Prince Abdul Ilah, the Guardian of the throne of Iraq at the time, at the Military parade at Maraka Airport in Ammam*. After the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the US managed to recycle the former King of Afghanistan—83 years old at the time and exiled in Rome—but despite its penchant for political dynasties, the Bush administration had no such options for Iraq. Both uncle and nephew perished in the 1958 Baathist coup. Public domain images of their mutilated bodies circulate freely online.

Maryam Jafri, *(Dis)appearance Online* (2021).  
 Installation view: The Blaffer Museum, Houston (2021).  
 Courtesy of the artist

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