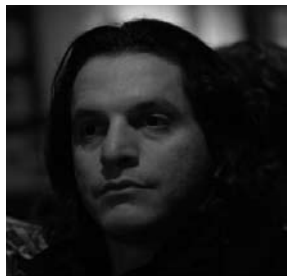


INTERNATIONAL INSIGHTS GUEST SPEAKER SERIES: IRAN IN CRISIS

Gamma Omega cordially invites you to our first members-only online lecture of 2010 as we welcome Siavash Sartipi, an Iranian dissident living in exile, **Saturday Jan. 30 at 5 p.m. EST on Skype.*** He will be speaking with us about his life and escape from Iran, as well as the current state of the Iranian regime and opposition “green” movement. He will answer your questions live following his presentation. Only 25 attendees may attend at one time on a first come, first served basis. New members are highly encouraged to attend this event, as it will count towards Society participation. We look forward to meeting you.



Siavash Sartipi
Entrepreneur,
writer & activist

I was born in Täbriz(1968), the capital city of East Azerbaijan in Iran to five brothers and one sister who were already waiting for me eagerly. My Father was a landowner, the territory which was our property, fields and villages, was three hours drive in those times. I spent many days of my childhood in those fields, trying to understand the secrets of nature, something which still fascinates me and remains mysterious. 1979 brought an early end to my comfortable childhood as revolution in Iran made us leave our home in Azerbaijan and flee to Tehran, the whole family being chased by the regime.

The least of the consequences were the imprisonment of one brother for more than 3 years and my father for about 6 months. My brother was condemned by Islamic Court and was supposed to be executed if we couldn't pay Diyeh, the compensation to be paid to the family of member of Pasdaran, the Revolutionary Guards of Islam, who was killed in a fight. We could only save his life by barrowing huge sums of money (we did not have our own property or bank accounts anymore).

I visited the Persian speaking school in Tehran after finishing primary school in Tabriz. In Tehran, I had to cope with the burden of Persian language which was for me the first foreign language, Azeri being my mother tongue. I had to adapt myself to survive. I became used to switching between languages, which helped me to familiarize myself with other cultures very easily. Even though I read non-Iranian literature for the first time in Persian, I consid-

ered Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer my best friends after reading repeatedly their stories and I was deeply sad following the hardships of Oliver Twist. Language was never a barrier blocking my way.

This understanding helped me survive the brutality of the Islamic revolution and 8 years of war. I was soldier for a few months before being able to take off that bloody uniform and sit down at the library of the Tabriz University. I learned English and French in a private language school under bombs which fell on our heads without warning. I started to publish my first books of translation at 20, translating literature and psychology from English and French into Persian and contributing to numerous literary magazines. As a student I founded translation group at a literature facility which succeeded with about 70 members (also from other universities of Iran) and published many members' texts in Tehran magazines before being forced to stop by the Jihad Daneshgahi, the Islamic control institution inside the university.

I left university without getting my degree, refusing to write the translation exams, which included the translation of Leader Khomeini's words into Persian. There were courses about Islam which were compulsory, even if you were studying French Literature. I lived afterwards mostly in Tehran writing and publishing, working with dissident writers, translators like Mohammmd Jafar Pouyandeh, who was later kidnapped and assassinated (1999) by the intelligence service (at which time I was living in Frankfurt).

Needless to say, the censorship

was too suffocating for me to be able to put up with the repressions and threats of the regime.

I left Iran in 1994, walking over the border, climbing the mountains on Iranian side and descending on Turkish side with a clandestine guide who charged a hefty fee. In a way, this was my first long distance tour, and it still continues in my work.

I arrived in 1995 at Frankfurt Airport from Istanbul with a fake French passport, and was accepted as political refugee in Germany. I started my life in Europe in the city of Giessen. In 1997 I moved to Frankfurt, got a room in commune and lived together with five German students, which would turn out to be the best possible German language education. In 1998 I started working as an airport assistant and city guide and Rhine tour guide for American or English-speaking Asian groups and then later, French groups. In 2000 I received my guide certificate from the Tourist Office of Frankfurt, 2002 in Mainz, and 2003 in Wiesbaden.

Meanwhile I continue to write. I published a Persian literary magazine in exile introducing particularly the life and works of Marquis de Sade. I wrote my first stories and started my first novel in German, which I finished in 2009, titled Fremdenführer.

In 2004 I founded the company Save&Travel (www.saveandtravel.eu) which functions as a tour guide supplier cooperating with travel industry wholesalers, including several renowned tour operators.

In 2009 I moved to Bavaria, living in Starnberg Landkreis, next to Munich.

The future is full of promise.

Please log on to Skype at least 10 minutes prior to the event. If you cannot attend, you may send your question ahead of time to apus.sir@gmail.com and it will be asked on your behalf. An mp3 file will be available to members only of the lecture. Members must be registered with OrgSync by Jan. 29 to participate.

*System Requirements:
Skype, headset with microphone and high-speed Internet access



Username: apus.sir

