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INTERVIEW WITH MATIN DAFTARI

develop into from
first para

You were also widely known
as not only ^{as} Mosadeg's
grandson, but his political
follower and heir.

As a lawyer,

Q.

~~Let's start with the question of the revolution itself.~~ You
played a very important part in defending human rights in the
~~whole many~~ years before the revolution. And you played an active

part in the revolution itself, as did other secular and socialist
forces. And yet, by August 1979, ^{I heard} the crowds in Tehran were
shouting ~~Margbar Imperialism, Margbar Matin Daftari,~~ ^{as I} ~~as I~~ ^{heard to you}

~~remember, coming out of the Friday mosque, and you were driven~~
~~underground.~~ ^{Mosadeg's name has been expunged by Khomeini from official history.}

~~The question many people ask is, assuming the Iranian
revolution was in general progressive, it was a good thing. And
socialists should not have supported the Shah. Given that fact,~~

starts

~~was the later clerical dictatorship, was this inevitable, or~~
could an alternative outcome have been fought for if ^{progressive groups} ~~people~~ had
had more foresight or more political force? ~~How do you evaluate~~
~~this question?~~

A. ~~To give you a short answer I think~~ ^{as} ~~had~~ the people had ^{greater} ~~great~~
foresight, especially the intellectuals ~~in Iran,~~ ^{gy} as did the clerics,
the situation would not have been the same. ~~because, as I have~~
~~in fact, some have tried to go back on the situation, I've definitely~~
~~come to the conclusion that~~ ^{gy} ~~the clerics~~ were more organized and
better prepared from at least two years ^{beforehand,} ~~ahead of the whole thing.~~

~~of its finishing or its starting?~~

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~~From~~ ^{time} ~~some~~ ~~where~~ in March 1977, ~~when~~ they started organizing their Islamic committees, associations, ~~even in the US and Europe.~~ ^{and} ~~And~~ ^{and abroad.} ~~Within Iran,~~ ~~without others knowing,~~ they were preparing ~~where.~~ The intelligentsia ~~in Iran,~~ the secular intelligentsia, all it was doing ^{only} was thinking of fighting the Shah, rather in a dispersed ^{FFuse} manner, although it was organized ~~below~~ within ~~their~~ organizations such as the Writers Association and, ~~later~~ ~~on,~~ the Association of Iranian Jurists, which was the result of these movements then. And a few other movements ~~as such,~~ but they were not at all, they did not have enough foresight. As I remember it, right ~~in fact,~~ up to the day when Khomeini arrived in Iran, and introduced Bazargan as his prime minister, no-one had ~~ever~~ ^{at} thought that ~~the~~ religious government ^{was} is seriously going to come about, although there were religious factions in Iran who were ~~producing and introducing~~ ^{pushing} the slogan ^{of religious government.} ~~and pushing for it,~~ → over in small groups, ~~jumhuriye islami or hukumati islami,~~ both. I mean sometimes this, sometimes that, eventually they decided upon ~~that [the former].~~ ~~No one ever thought that they would be this~~ ~~organized.~~ No one thought that they would be already discussing the takeover during the last six months, perhaps with certain people coming from, I mean, how can we describe them, representing the American side of the affair, which has I think come out now in the biographies and memoirs - people like Yazdi, like Beheshti, like Goltzadeh, like Bazargan. Shamran, I don't know, he was always in the background.

~~When you say the American side, what do you mean? Do you mean that~~

they were discussing with the Americans, or they were doing what the Americans wanted?

I think what was happening was this. The Americans, when they decided and they found, I mean they discovered finally for themselves that the Shah could not be saved. They tried to find an alternative and to support that alternative. And they thought of an alternative which could be anti-communist, anti-Soviet, and would somehow save some of their interests in the area. And the best alternative who had already been somehow organized as well, which they could find, were the people who later on, after the 22nd of Bahman took over the government. It was these people.

Even after this period of the 22nd of Bahman one could say that what Khomeini has done since, he had written in his book, Islamic. Was it that people didn't read his book, or that if they knew what he was saying, they didn't take him seriously.

→ *Khomeini's on Islamic government*
 Many people had not read his book. Many people did not take him seriously. ~~And there were~~ Others who thought, ~~well, it is a~~ *that there was* ~~general~~ national front of all Iranians fighting ~~dictatorship~~ and the Shah, ~~so they~~ should move ahead together, ~~and eventually when~~ you arrive at a point, I mean the people who were too optimistic - ~~They thought that when we arrive at a point when the Shah is gone,~~ ~~all those who were involved in overthrowing him would decide upon~~ →

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~~a new regime through some sort of democratic process and means,~~
~~such as a constituent assembly. And one of the reasons why~~ all
 factions, more or less, ~~accepted or were silent~~ towards the sudden
 appointment of Bazargan as ~~prime minister~~ and the declaration
 that a revolutionary council already exists, ~~which~~ was ~~the fact~~ ~~that~~
 Khomeini clearly ~~told everyone~~ and officially declared that
 Bazargan's ~~main~~ job ^{was} ~~could be~~ to start working for the establish-
~~ment of a~~ constituent assembly representative ~~of all Iranians.~~
Democratically elected with universal suffrage. And he betrayed
 the people in this respect.



~~Both of them. I mean Bazargan tried his best not to do it, I mean to
 do it in fact, not to comply with the wishes of Khomeini - first
 coming with the democratic Islamic republic, then having to go
 back on that, coming with preparations for a constituent assembly,
 but at the same time, trying to prepare his own model constitution
 for the assembly. Eventually deciding that what Khomeini says
 should be accepted and obeyed and establishing that particular
 assembly which he called _____ or College of Experts~~

premised.

destroyed much of SAVAK, destroyed much of the army, brought a lot of arms into the hands of the militant freedom fighters which in fact turned to become some sort of guarantee for the safety of the later opposition to Khomeini.

So the mullahs Khomeini did not support, did not want the 21st of Bahman, this wasn't that type of mass insurrection to finish off..

No, I don't think so.

→ RM

Q There is another question, of course, about that period, again, maybe an unfair question, but Looking back on it, ^{wouldn't} surely the interests of the secular and democratic forces in Iran, ~~the interests of the Kurds, of women, even of Mullahidip,~~ would have been better served if Bakhtiar had remained in power? He would have created a ~~democratic~~ liberal bourgeois regime, ~~but~~ he would have deflated Khomeini and he would have created ~~the~~ conditions in which, ^{his government} ~~if he was stable for a year or six months,~~ the left could have developed. ~~Wouldn't it have seemed better to have supported Bakhtiar against Khomeini, to have had a liberal transition to a democratic bourgeois society, rather than attacking Bakhtiar and, in fact, handing victory to Khomeini.~~

A. No, ~~I think it could not happen at all~~ ^{not have} ~~And I can tell you why~~ ^{ed} very simply because Bakhtiar came into power believing ~~that~~ ^{The reason is that} he could

Save

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the Pahlavi regime and ~~ending~~ the 1906 constitution, the key point of which, ^{stipulated} ~~in fact~~, was that monarchy in Iran is a permanent ~~matter~~ ^{until} the appearance of Mahdi. ^{This} ~~is~~ society which was going

through a very strong revolutionary process, ~~in a society which had been fed up with the dictatorial and terror of the dictatorial monarchy and in a society which~~ ^{could} no longer could tolerate that this

type of regime, and wanted something new, Bakhtiar, with his archaic methods ~~at the time~~, and with his support he tried to give an upper crust of the society, or an upper cloth

the society, coming out in support of the constitution. ~~And he did not, in fact,~~ ^{nothing} except having ^e the Shah leave the country, ^{and that} which

was all under a general agreement with the Shah, with the Americans and with Khomeini, ~~and the rest,~~ ^{he} and refusing ^{ed} to hand over the media ^{the} radio and television to the democratic organizations.

~~Leaving it in the hands of the army, saying in a sort of particular absolutism that in no country in the world the media has been in the hands of the people. I mean, with all these points, and many other things,~~ ^{to p. 9} he could not have survived, and no one could

have supported him because the people would not have supported him.

~~Let me give you a very vivid example of Bakhtiar's time. You know the people at Iran television and radio system were all on strike in support of the revolution. The army, the military organization, the military government of Tehran had taken over the ^{and} ^{radio and TV} headquarters.~~

When Bakhtiar came, the press, which ~~was~~ ^{had been} also on strike, ~~was~~ ^{reappeared} naturally came out again. But what was important to the people in general was not the press itself, which could be ^{only} circulated among those who could read and write. ~~It was the audio visual~~

omit?
Yes

SKIP

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~~media~~
~~contraptions, which Bakhtiar didn't use himself, and didn't allow~~
~~the others to use. The Council which had been formed by the~~
~~strikers in the radio-television system, was saying and wanted,~~
~~as a condition to come back to work, that they would be given~~
~~a free hand to decide upon the programs. But since they thought~~
~~they should have some sort of coordination with others, and~~
~~with the people in general, and they felt that the real repre-~~
~~sentation of the type of coordination that they would have they~~
~~would find it in the Bar Association, in the Association of~~
~~Iranian Jurists, in the Association of Iranian University~~
~~Professors, in the Writer's Association, in the Committee for~~
~~the Defense of Political Prisoners and a few other organizations~~
~~like this, they had proposed that a council should be formed~~
~~represented by members chosen by these five, six associations,~~
~~with only two persons from their own council on that council~~
~~which would decide upon the programs of the radio and television~~
~~and would run the thing democratically in accordance with the~~
~~trends of the revolution. And all the strikers' associations which would were~~

~~have been involved, in this affair of running the television~~
~~system were secular associations, although there were some funda-~~
~~mentalist members within them. They never had a majority and~~
~~nothing near a majority in any of these secular associations and~~
~~democratic associations. Bakhtiar, to the end, insisted on~~

~~of the radio and television himself, with the men that he didn't have.~~

~~And the strikers were not prepared to cooperate under that system~~

omit?

remaining council

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without there being any legitimate instructions to resist it

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any more. They had thought of something like, for example, the BBC, ~~but~~ in conjunction with the ^{employees'} associations ^{if implemented,} ~~named~~. ^{entirely} That would have changed the situation ^{very much}. Because, when, on the 11th February 22nd of Bahman people went and took over the television there ^{you already had} ~~the~~ ^{provisional government} ~~which~~ ^{could} ~~officially~~ ^{take control} ~~come and take over,~~ ^{and} ~~a~~ ^{this} ~~provisional government~~ ^{which} ~~had been~~ created under such circumstances that no one could make the

omit?

objections to it that they were making to Bakhtiar. ^{The failure to democratise the media therefore prepared the ground for the clerical takeover.}

~~One last thing on this period. Did you ever meet Khomeini yourself? Did you ever try to meet him?~~

I have never met Khomeini. And I've never asked to see him.

...

I had in fact the chance to see him while he was in Paris. He arrived in Paris when I was in America. And I flew from America to London, this is off record.

O.K. should we go on to the second part about the National Democratic Front. How you set it up and. If you could just say how it was established, the meeting and what the groups were that joined it.

~~which was no longer a democratic instrument which was promised~~

Q. ~~The real question I would put to you is this. Delcourse, The liberal forces and the secular forces and the progressive forces, and progressive secular forces in Iran were weak. The Mujahidin were~~ (a)

~~... as if the intelligentsia has such a role in Iran that they could have stopped this tidal wave, even if they had wanted to. Or do you think there is something they could have done?~~

Well, you see ~~The distinction~~ I was ^{want} trying to ^{distinguish} make ~~was~~ between an organized group and an unorganized majority. ~~You might have known, The people who were involved, and who were leading the movement within Iran, were mainly the intellectuals, in the form of the Writer's Association, the university people, professors and students, with their organizations, the jurists and lawyers, and later on the judges and doctors, from one part or another and workers in the oil fields and in some factories, as well as government workers, in all government offices and company workers in many of the other commercial institutions. They had organized their strike committees, and they had even organized their central committee of all strikes, for coordinating strikes, and for general collaboration. But these all happened far too late, and it happened, not in the way it should have happened. because I said, this majority, which was also followed by a whole lot of people who wanted only, I think, to get rid of a dictator, rather~~

also very weak at that time. ~~Even if they had had foresight,~~
Even if they had known that Khomeini was a clerical fascist, and
that he understood political power, there was ~~very~~ little they
could have done about it. ~~It is~~ ^{is} not as if the intelligentsia
has such a role in Iran that they could have stopped this tidal
wave, even if they had wanted to. ~~or do you think there is something~~
~~they could have done?~~

Well, you see ^{I want} the distinction I was trying to ^{distinguish} make ^{is} ~~was~~ between an
organized group and an unorganized majority. ~~You might have known,~~
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Writer's Association, ~~the university people,~~ ^{organizations of} professors and
students, ~~with their organizations,~~ the jurists and lawyers,
~~and later on the judges and doctors,~~ ^{There were also} ~~from one part or another and~~
workers in the oil fields and in some factories, as well as govern-
ment workers, ~~in all government offices and company workers in~~
~~many of the other commercial institutions.~~ They had organized
their strike committees, and ~~they had even organized~~ their central
committee ~~of all strikes,~~ ~~for~~ for coordinating strikes, ~~and~~
~~for general collaboration.~~ But these ~~all~~ happened far too late,
And ~~it happened,~~ ⁱⁿ not ^{by it} the way ~~it~~ should have happened: ~~because~~
~~As a result,~~ this majority, ~~which was also followed by a whole lot of~~
~~people who wanted only, I think, to get rid of a dictator, rather~~

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~~than anything else. And no one had thought of an Islamic government~~
~~It was planted upon them. The advantage that Khomeini and his~~
~~people had was that they were not in Iran, they were outside Iran.~~
~~And they managed to introduce slogans into Iran from outside~~
~~which could not be repeated by those in Iran for security reasons.~~
~~And for inability to combat the SAVAK internally, whereas they~~
~~could say "Death to the Shah", Shah, from outside~~
~~and the Shah should go, where the internal organizations could~~
~~not repeat. And this was the slogan which was the slogan of the~~
~~people, and would have come eventually whether Khomeini had said~~
~~it or not. But since he was the first person who said it; since~~
~~his fundamentalists had already organized themselves into groups,~~
~~and since they had already organized themselves within the establish-~~
~~ment also, into certain cliques, so they were better organized,~~
~~that's all, I think. It wasn't the wish of the people that an~~
~~Islamic government should come into being. The desire of the people~~
~~was to get rid of the dictator, to get rid of the Shah and to~~
~~establish some sort of sovereignty for themselves. But the tide~~
~~of events gradually turned matters into a situation that we saw~~
~~later. And in fact, no one believed that what happened would~~
~~actually happen. Even people who did not trust Khomeini, or did~~
~~not think Khomeini can be a real national leader, would have~~
~~never thought that he would eventually want to become a dictator~~
~~in the form of , although he had written a~~
~~book on that subject. But most of the things that he said in~~

Paris and in some of his declarations, although they did not specifically overrule his intentions as, for _____ farqih, but they somehow intimated that he would go along with the wishes of those in opposition in general. And it was generally also thought that after all he's a mullah and a mullah has to talk like a mullah. And these are his, in fact, thoughts as a mullah, but once he's in a coalition or a government, he would have to abide by that coalition, and he has shown the tendency that he would. I mean even those who did not trust Khomeini, would come to this judgement, eventually, many of them, actually.

→ And the minute that ^{Khomeini} ~~he~~ arrived, of course, many realized, ~~but although~~ many did not realize, that he ^{was} ~~is~~ going to polarize the political line-up in Iran, ~~and he was going to move the~~ society in ~~general~~ towards a rightist, ~~reactionary~~, and perhaps, fascist ^{direction} with the help of the reactionary left, ^{particularly the} ~~which one would call~~ Tudeh Party. From the very beginning, ~~people, for example, like~~ ^{vallah Paknejad} Shok ^{Najat}, had realized this very clearly and he ~~was~~ ^{has been} talking about it. And that was one ~~of the~~ reasons why many people, including myself, ^{he} ~~and him~~ and ^{B Manouchehr Hezarkhani} ~~Mizan Khani~~ thought of forming the National Democratic Front, ^{to} ~~to~~ stop this polarization. You mentioned something about August 1979, after the march, you ~~went me to...~~

One thing I know as a lawyer, you are particularly in touch with, in the last months of the Shah's regime, with the release of

Q. The NDF was founded at a meeting held at Ahmadabad, outside Tehran, in early March 1979. This ~~had been~~ ^{was} where Mosadegh ^{had} lived and it constituted an assertion of his legacy. How did the establishment of the front come about?

(13)

A. The meeting ~~to~~ was organized by some of the friends who had been working with me, ~~I mean I've been working with them, in fact,~~ in different matters such as the political Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, ~~and~~ ^{and} another group that we had formed, ~~of which I was a part,~~ ^{when} to publish a bulletin ~~to give news to people in case of~~ the newspapers, which were on strike. ~~The Bulletin was called~~ "Solidarity" and it was supported by the Writer's Association and the Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners, as well as the professors association. And people like Azar Hani and Pak Daman were working with this, representing those two organizations. ~~And a few others who got together and decided that~~ ^{we} Now that ~~the regime,~~ the Shah's regime ^{was} gone and the anniversary of Mosadegh's anniversary, ~~the anniversary of Mossadegh's death~~ ^{was} near, ^{we decided,} there should be some sort of occasion upon which all ~~forces,~~ all advanced and progressive forces who were involved in this ~~new~~ revolutionary process, ^{and} should gather in Ahmadabad (?) especially those who had ^{in 4-} left the ^{shah's} prisons of the Shah, should gather ~~to~~ and pay their respects, ~~to the man.~~

Meanwhile, ~~there were discussions among those who were organizing~~ ^{meeting also discussed} this ~~concerning~~ Khomeini's acts ^{ions} and Bazargan's compliance with these ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ ^{the trend} moving towards a type of political monopolism, ~~and~~ particularly the way ~~and~~ the secretive way that their Revolutionary Council was formed and imposed, ~~and~~ the way their prime minister was appointed, and the way groups supporting Khomeini attacked all secular people who participated in marches, even ~~anonymously~~ ^{secretly}

a few
~~as several~~ weeks before Khomeini's arrival, ~~but~~ after the release
of the first group of "dangerous" political prisoners. ~~We had~~
~~experienced this in person. Especially~~ On the day of Arabeen
~~when~~ they even tried to run over ~~many~~ women that participated
in the march ⁽⁹⁾ together with teachers and other groups of demo-
cratic organizations. They tried to ~~crush~~ some people even by
~~running over them~~ in a bus, in that march. ~~And~~ Everyone thought
that this type of political monopolism ^{was} going to lead the
society towards a type of reaction ^{and} fascism, as well as ^{to} polarizing
the political line ^{of} of the society. ~~And this, particularly,~~
~~was~~ ^{Shokrolah Paknejad's} Shokrolah Najafi's idea at the time. ~~And~~ Therefore we thought
of forming a platform which ~~is~~ ^{was} acceptable ^{to} by all political groups
and which can be presented at Ahmad Obat, ^{at this anniversary meeting} which would be the
~~best occasion,~~ ^{considered} because we thought that Mossadegh ~~was~~ a symbol
of democracy in Iran and a symbol of political cooperation of
all forces, ~~irrespective of their political tendencies and~~
~~secularism in some points.~~ And the occasion would be the best
occasion to make the invitation for the formation of a front

Sorry. Secularism in some points, but Mossadegh was not an
Islamic nationalist, was he? I mean he was a Muslim but he
believed in ...

No. He was a secular man. He believed in secularism and he
believed in a division of ecclesiastics from the state and that's
why he could not continue with people like Kashani., and with the

and they were among the general committee for the solidarity of all strikers. And they were represented there. And one of the aims was to save that committee also.

The committee was called ?

Komiteh Hambastayieh Ettazab

And this was nationwide?

This was a Tehran wide committee with certain contacts and liasons for example with the oil fields.

And politically it was controlled by who? Or was it not

It was politically controlled by the secularists, but not by one organization. Now, for example, the Writer's Association or the Iranian Association of Jurists, the lawyers, they were asked to send representatives to this committee.

It wasn't just white collar workers also industrial...

No, no. It was everyone. It was a general solidarity committee between all strikers in Greater Tehran. I mean, to safeguard all these things, this front was formed. It's platform was published.

I don't know if you already have it. The general idea was that certain personalities and people who had been active in different

~~ways~~ before the downfall of the Shah would participate in this front. Smaller political organizations which had been formed recently, or had existed abroad and had arrived in Iran ~~or were in Iran already~~, could participate in it. ^{two} And this was rather successful, ~~because~~ many small organizations came, ~~exiled groups~~ also in the form of the Unity of the Left, which was quite a big group at the time and other small groups such as the League of Iranian Socialists, Khalil Malaki's movement, and Jaami which was another movement, and a few other smaller movements, they joined. And the ^{National Democratic} Front was formed in coordination with both the Fedayiis ^{etc} and the Mujahids, ~~because they had also seen the platform beforehand.~~ They ~~had~~ approved the platform and they ~~had~~ agreed to have some sort of liason with the Front, and coordinate certain matters with the Front. And, of course, ~~after the front was formed, finally, they also sent letters of congratulation to the front.~~

~~Rajavi spoke on the platform with you didn't he, at Ahmad Abad.~~

~~And also what happened at Ahmad Obad was that we felt at the time that the progressive forces and the real forces which brought about this revolutionary process which led to the final downfall of dictatorship, but not the absolute establishment of Iranian independence from all foreign interference, I mean this was the feeling at the time, imperialism in view, we felt they were comprised of the Fedayiis, the Mujahids and the progressive~~

to mention, that brings us to the events of Ayan Degan
As I see it, it wasn't just the issue of Ayan Degan because the
climate in which Ayan Degan was suppressed was the climate of
the faked elections for the majlis. I mean the key issue was
democracy and not censorship, if I might put it that way.

~~The key issue absolutely was democracy and not censorship.~~

In August 1979, five months later

Q

~~What were the circumstances in which the National Democratic
Front was suppressed and in which you went underground / What
were the political reasons for that confrontation. Who were
your allies, who supported you and who didn't. There may
be a reason why you don't want to answer that question.~~

A. Q

~~No, I can answer that question. There is no reason why I
shouldn't. The main question was democracy, as you already
talked about and the betrayal of the Iranian people by the regime
which had promised a constituent assembly and eventually decided
either upon just imposing a type of undemocratic constitution
upon the people, or doing something through a College of Experts
which they eventually did. At the time, we in the National
Front were very much concerned about this situation. We were
also very much concerned about certain actions of the regime,
indirect actions of the regime by organizing groups which they had
at hand, the so-called "hezbollahi" to suppress the free press,~~

^{harass}
~~to take over some of the free press, and to press some of the~~
~~democratic institutions which were helping with the establishment~~
~~of democracy in Iran and which had helped in the past with~~
~~overcoming the dictatorship such as the Bar Association, ~~and~~~~
~~the Writer's ^{Union} and the ^{associations of the} university and the students. We were~~
~~also very ~~much~~ concerned with the way the regime had reacted~~
~~towards the aspirations of the Iranian nationality ^{ies} groups and~~
~~the peoples, such as the people of Kurdistan, and mainly the people~~
~~of Kurdistan and the aspirations of other groups such as the~~
~~Turkmen. We had ^{felt the same} also been ~~concerned~~ about the actions of the~~
~~government and ^{and} the attitudes of the government towards the~~
~~rights of women in general and in particular the ~~beginning~~ which~~
~~was started by ^{elimination of} suppressing women judges, and the existence of~~
~~women as judges as an Islamic ~~and in certain other areas such~~~~
~~as sports, ~~such as matters concerning dresses~~ and the general~~
~~appearance, hijab and a few other points like this. ~~and~~ ^w ~~we~~~~
~~thought the best way of keeping the Iranian people on the left~~
~~informed ^{and} and on the move ^{and} on the alert, ~~on the move to somehow~~~~
~~overcome these difficulties created by the government would be~~
~~through a free press. ^{was} ~~and~~ ^{we were determined to} to hang on to a free press~~

side 12

^{very}
~~with ~~your~~ ~~clutches~~ and with your teeth. We had organized a~~
~~council of solidarity of the Iranian nationalities and peoples~~
~~in the National ~~Front~~, in the National Democratic Front. ~~We had~~~~
~~We were trying to organize a council of solidarity of all women's~~

democratic movements in Iran, ~~but with the first council we were more successful than with the second one, which led to the formation of~~

~~and we held a conference of the Iranian nationalities which was held in the headquarters of the National Democratic Front.~~ ^{in June 1979}

~~with representatives from different political organizations present, Kurdish, Turkeman, Baluchis, and Arab organizations present.~~ ^{political organizations were present.} The

main outcome of this conference which was held in early summer in Tehran, was ~~that~~ ^{that} a congress of the peoples of Iran,

~~or the nationalities of Iran with the participation of all nationalities and organizations of Kurdistan, and different~~ ^{political the nationalities}

~~cultural organizations of the Turkemans and others, and political organizations such as the Fedayeen and possibly the Mujahidin~~ ^{and possibly with them}

which was a very important possibility as well as other political groups and democratic organizations should ^{to} be held in Mahabat ^{in Kurdistan}

on the 3rd day of Shahrivar (23rd of August) ^{23.} which was to be held there. ^{But before that date a political crisis broke out in Tehran.}

~~had felt, and had decided not to participate in the elections for the College of Experts for obvious reasons, that they thought this College would not be representative of the Iranian people.~~ ^{boycott}

~~the candidates are chosen from beforehand, and those other candidates presented by other political organizations, because of the way the election was going to be held, and because it actually,~~ ^{held in early August.}

~~the whole idea of a College of Experts was against all democratic principles, and was not going to create a democratic constitution~~

~~for Iran as we wanted, we decided not to participate in the elections in any form or way.~~

^{In this context proposed} The ~~idea~~ ^{idea} of this Congress in Mahabat, was somehow judged by the Khomeini camp ^{to be a threat - it would!} that it is going to be more

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~~principles, and was not going to create a democratic constitution for Iran as we wanted, we decided not to participate in the elections.~~

~~in any form or way.~~ ^{In this context proposed} The ~~idea~~ ^{idea} of this Congress in Mahabat, was somehow judged by the Khomeini camp ^{to be a threat - it would!} that it is going to be more

representative of the Iranian people. ~~It is not going to be a~~
 college of experts, ~~but~~ ^{than the} college of peoples and political organizations
 zations which ~~so far they had not themselves allowed~~ to gather
 under the same roof. It ~~is going to~~ ^{was} ~~receive~~ ^{would} recognition by a
 lot of people in Iran and ~~it is going to be a competitive assembly~~ ^{was} ~~to~~ ^{would} their college of Experts in Tehran. To ~~paralyze~~ ^{pre-empt and paralyze us} this, the
 best way to paralyze this was to in fact paralyze the free press,
 which could publicize this. ~~And that was why they attacked~~ ^{the independent}
~~the Ayan Degan.~~ ^{press, not in particular the daily paper} ~~And they took over the Ayan Degan press.~~ ^{the Ayan Degan} Because
 taking the Ayan Degan press ~~wasn't stopping~~ ^{and in so doing} not only Ayan Degan
 which had the ~~biggest~~ ^{a daily} circulation ~~of up to~~ ^{of up to} one million copies.
 They ~~would have also stopped~~ ^{and also a new} the new Kayhan (paper which was called
 the Kayhan Azad, ^{of} The Free Kayhan), ~~they would have stopped~~
~~Nadai Azadi~~ ^{Nada-ye} ~~which was another daily paper in this camp,~~ ^{in this group}
 and ~~they would have stopped~~ ^{the weekly (Freedom)} our own organ, Azadi, ~~and apart from~~
 these, other newspapers were on the program also to be attacked.
 But the main and the most important attack was on Ayan Degan because
 of its press which was the only rotary press. I think, rotary
 press which could print newspapers in great numbers and volume
 in short time. Apart from this there only existed two other
 similar printing presses in Iran, in ~~Kayhan~~ ^{Keyhan} and in Ittilaat,
 both of which had been taken over already by Bonyada Mustazzafin.

The issue in which they actually took over Ayan Degan, the formal
 issue, there was an article about which question? I can't remember?

Was it an article about ~~elections?~~

I can't remember what it was but it was just an excuse. But the whole thing was this, because later on, when we responded with a great protest in march, which was just going to be a simple protest march, with thousands, hundreds of thousands of people participating in it, towards the prime minister's office. It was going to be an innocent protest march appearing there and presenting a protest to the prime minister who was Mr. Bazargan.

And of course, other interpretations were made, as you may know, by the regime at the time of the march. But later interpretation which was made after the orders for my arrest, and claiming that there was a general plot to separate Kurdistan from Iran, and making an

example indirectly of the Congress, which was to be held in Mahabat. The thing was such that first they attacked the papers first, then they expecting or not expecting resistance in the form of a march, they attacked us, then they attacked the Fedayeen and the Mujahidin central offices to put them out of business.

Lower after this process they attacked Kurdistan. And that was the time when Khalkali appeared on the scene and started massacr

of the Kurds began. So the events of August 1979 condensed the issue of democracy (take the elections), press freedom (the closure of Ayandegan) and the rights of nationalities. What it is is the perfect demonstration of the role of, that democracy and the rights of the nationalities are linked, closely linked in Iran. You can't have one without the other.

August 1979 was the turning point. We were able to carry out some activities ~~underground~~ but decided in March 1980 that no more public ~~actions~~ ^{and stopped producing our paper} were possible. We saw the need to form a broad front with other anti-dictatorial groups. We ~~supported~~ ^{supported} ⁽³²⁾ the Mojahidin and Center, in 1981, joined the National Resistance Council. (D)

This was exactly our idea, because we felt that these two are absolutely linked and we also felt that the rights of ^{the} nationalities, once recognized, and established, because of its particular nature, will ^{would} also help to be a guarantee for furthering democracy in Iran, ^{and encourage} for decentralization. In a country like Iran where centralization means more autocratic and bureaucratic as well as dictatorial rule. This situation which I have described very briefly,

We in the National Democratic Front ^{considered August 1979 to be} ~~declared~~ ^{like that of August 1953} as a second ~~1953~~ ¹⁹⁵³ coup, ^{that overthrew Mosaddeq}.

More or less in the same period as the coup d'etat in August 1953. And it was marked by us as the second August coup d'etat, because it was the nature of a

coup d'etat, organized and picking out the key points. Although the only political organization which ^{at that time} realized that the resistance ^{was necessary} ~~should be put forward~~ ^{to} bring ^{regime's} the plot into the open was the National Democratic Front. ~~The only organization~~

which organized the march was the National Democratic Front. No solidarity ^{with} in the march was expressed by any other political organization. But since it was a popular movement, ~~it was~~

it was a movement which was felt, the necessity of which was felt by everyone concerned and everyone who would lose as a result of the coup d'etat which was in process, ^{I am} happy

to say that the members of ^{many} other political organizations participated in the march, without the knowledge and ~~without~~ ^{approval} approval of their own organizations.

(D) ~~the only~~ ^{I don't know if there's anything more you want to say on that}

Fred.

28

Matin Daftari Interview

Q. Your central ^{message} ~~argument~~ concerns the relevance of Mosadeghian ~~to contemporary Iran~~. Yet ~~the~~ many ~~do~~ question the validity of Mosadegh's policies, and raise ~~many~~ ~~a~~ number of questions ~~about~~ ~~the~~ ~~idea~~ that ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~about~~ ~~the~~ ~~final~~ ~~crisis~~ of Mosadegh's government in August 1953: ~~Among~~ ~~the~~ ~~points~~ ~~raised~~ ~~is~~ that (he) could have got a settlement of the oil dispute, if he had been shrewder ~~about~~ ~~the~~ ~~oil~~ ~~dispute~~. Why ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~he~~ ~~able~~ to build a political organization, ~~and~~ ~~did~~ ~~he~~ ~~not~~ ~~undermine~~ ~~his~~ ~~support~~ following in the country, ~~by~~ ~~failing~~ ~~to~~ ~~solve~~ ~~the~~ ~~oil~~ ~~crisis~~, and relying too much on his own personality? ~~What~~ ~~do~~ ~~you~~ ~~see~~ ~~the~~ ~~lessons~~ ~~of~~ ~~that~~ ~~period~~? ~~What~~ ~~did~~ ~~he~~ ~~himself~~ ~~say~~ ~~when~~ ~~he~~ ~~was~~ ~~alive~~?

A. It is ~~rather~~ ~~difficult~~ ~~to~~ ~~comment~~ ~~in~~ ~~a~~ ~~few~~ ~~words~~, ~~to~~ ~~answer~~ ~~such~~ ~~a~~ ~~wide~~ ~~range~~ ~~of~~ ~~questions~~. The bulk of the history of the Iranian movement which has happened in a few months or a few years, and the analysis is extremely difficult. ^{Mosadegh's} In ~~my~~ ~~opinion~~, ~~from~~ ~~that~~ ~~view~~, a part of the failure, ~~is~~ ~~not~~ ~~to~~ ~~call~~ ~~it~~ ~~failure~~ ~~quite~~ ~~one~~ ~~component~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~events~~ ~~which~~ ~~led~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~coup~~ ~~d'etat~~ in 1953 are attributed to great changes in the world, ^(situation at that time) ~~politically~~, ~~and~~ ~~changing~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~main~~ ~~countries~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~, I mean, among ~~the~~ ~~newly~~ ~~emerging~~ ~~the~~ ~~Republicans~~ ~~and~~ ~~Eisenhower~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~US~~ ~~of~~ ~~November~~ ~~1952~~ ~~defeat~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~elections~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~US~~, ~~the~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Labor~~ ~~Party~~ ~~in~~ ~~Britain~~ ~~is~~ ~~office~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~majority~~ ~~in~~ ~~Britain~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~takeover~~ ~~is~~ ~~the~~ ~~official~~ ~~in~~ ~~office~~ ~~in~~ ~~Britain~~ ~~in~~ ~~1951~~.

settled in the Soviet Union, ~~and~~ long enough for the West to ~~have~~ ^{with} a free hand in the area a ~~series of~~ ^{The Coup of August 1953} ~~concerned~~ ^{secured} in this context. ~~And what about?~~ ~~the British, the~~ colonialists in, with the democrats out there, and the Republicans closer to these measures and all that, and a strong man like Eisenhower. I mean such things, I think were very important at the time.

He thought this?

Well, he thought these were important. ~~But of course there were not~~ ^{A major} ~~the only factor.~~ ^{was} The internal factor existed with the Tudeh Party, at that time much stronger than ~~it is now~~ ^{now} ~~ever to become.~~

What did he think of their role?

A. Well he thought ^{that the} Tudeh Party ~~simply~~ ^{was} somehow infiltrated by the British influence and British ~~agents~~ ^{He used} in his trials as ~~you might have seen~~ ¹³¹ the term "Tudeh-Ingles" which is a term which had found a place in ^{the} Iranian political vocabulary, also of Tudeh Party as ~~they called them~~ ^{there were the}. Then ^h miscalculations of the Tudeh ~~party~~ and the way they behaved, ~~example~~, by trying to organize ~~labor~~ ^{in the} against the Mossadeq government, ~~and~~ ^{they were} in favor of the ~~profit~~ ^{in the} ~~strikes~~ ^{in the} ~~in the~~ ^{in the} tobacco monopoly works, ~~in the~~ ^{in the} railway works and ~~factories~~ ^{in the} ~~factories~~ ^{in the} The government factories. ~~Trying to~~ ^{they were} weaken Mossadeq. ~~Which was aided~~ ^{in the} ~~by~~ ^{in the} ~~the~~ ^{in the} factors that

we mentioned, as Tudeh-Nafti, or the British hands and those working for Ayatollah Kashani at the time too. These were some of the things they did and at the same time, the machinery existed before the coup d'etat, practically, ~~xxxxxx~~ but it didn't work - you know it just waited to be arrested. That was another fault. You know, Kianuri (?) comes forward with certain points - I think Kianuri or some other Tudeh party writer, recently - but, contacting Mossadeq, which I heard that only one person [inaudible question] No, no. Kianuri, Kianuri comes in, I mean some recent publications of Tudeh party trying, in these publications they try to in fact give excuses and reasons for their actions during the coup d'etat. Among other things they say they contacted Mossadeq, which they did, but the last minutes when everything was gone. In any case, they didn't need to contact

~~_____~~. They had a good political organization, with a military ^{cadre} ~~organization~~, and they could ^{have} come out in favor of Mossadeq as an organization. ~~_____~~ ~~_____~~ had apparently contacted Mossadeq, which wasn't Kianuri and wanted arms, which Mossadeq did not give or did not have to give, in any case. That was at the last hours, on the actual day of the coup ~~ist~~ d'etat. That's about all I should say.

In general, the Tudeh Party, especially in the earlier days of Mossadeq, and somehow in the latter days, did not go ahead ~~an~~ hand in hand with the movement. It's generally proved - in public opinion as well as historical facts which have come out now - you could see that they in fact did help ~~advantage~~ ~~_____~~ but there were three

main ^{internal} factors ~~_____~~, and I wouldn't ^{not} say ^{that the} Tudeh was ^{as} important as the other two which helped ^(ing) to accelerate the coup d'etat, ~~_____~~ ^{These were} the Islamic fundamentalists and the imperial court. →

them actively participated in the coup d'etat. The fundamentalists in the form of ^{Fedayan} ~~Islamic~~ Islam - people like Khomeini and the chief of the Fedayan Islam, Navob Syabi, and the whole crowd of them.

Was Khomeini with them?

Khomeini was closely allied with them at the time, from what we have understood now, but he was not a known name at the time in Iran.

~~When we had Ayatollah Khomeini and then we had the imperial court, and all its allies. Therefore, I think~~ This coup d'etat came ^{about} as a

result of the alliance between the Islamic movement ~~and the imperial court.~~

^{and} ~~the imperial court.~~ And ~~in the form of a triangle, one corner, the moderates - Ayatollah Kashani, in another corner the~~

~~extremists - Fedayan Islam, and in another quarter the imperial~~

~~court and all its allies. That's how the coup d'etat succeeded -~~

~~with the help of the imperial court, as well. But thinking that~~

Mossadeq could ^{not} have ^{not leave} solved the oil problem and come to some sort of agreement, ~~I think is right, I think~~ it was not possible.

That's why we had the coup d'etat. The main concern of Mossadeq was not the oil question as ^{such} ~~the oil question~~. He saw the oil question in the light of his slogan of Freedom, Liberty and Independence ¹⁾

~~meaning democracy and anti-colonialism.~~ He thought the solution would only come together with the eventual establishment of his objectives. That's why he gave up at one point completely all negotiations as ~~such.~~ He did not give up

~~negotiations in general.~~ He was always ready to negotiate. But he did not count on negotiations and that's why he launched his ~~reforms eventually~~ preliminary ^{social} reforms ~~at that time~~. That's why he began his policy of economy without oil and ~~that's~~ why he asked for special powers from the Parliament, ~~in order to be able to legislate prior to sanction by Majlis, temporary measures.~~ ~~These are all points which indicated that~~ Mossadeq had a long-term policy for developing Iran, and ^{for} developing Iranian independence and democracy in Iran. ~~He did not, after his experience with the Stokes mission and later on, the international bench discussion, and other negotiations, he thought that that would - to wait for any measures to finally establish his objectives is wasting time, and wasting the time of the people in Iran. You would find two definite periods in the life of Mossadeq's government in Iran:~~

- 1) up to the point when he asked for actual powers, delegation of powers from the Majlis, and when he began his reforms, and his policy of economy without oil, and previous one before that. You will find the main opposition in Iran is formed against him when he actually began his program. And the program - which was an initial program, provisional program - in fact could be the first keystones, foundation stones of Iranism - in my opinion - socialist state.

Yes, but he didn't see it that way?

I think he did. He never uttered it, because Mossadeq felt he should not enter the game of ideology in Iran. I remember one day talking to him. News had come that Kenyatta had formed, after the independence of Kenya, news had come that Kenyatta had formed his political party. That was how many years ago - 20? He said, this is his mistake and Kenyatta will lose now. I said why? He said, look they think they're independent; they're not. They think they've got rid of colonialism; they have not. They've just won their initial battle and their nation - at least the progressive forces in their nation, or the democratic forces in the country - they need a unified leadership which does not enter any particular party or ideological arena, but would in practice do the things which would establish the welfare of their people. This was his actual analysis at the time of Kenyatta, and he himself, saw himself in that, in those shoes always. That's why Mossadeq was never the founder of any political party in Iran., although he himself, in his youth, had tried to participate in political parties, which were formed after the constitutional revolution. He believed in the formation of political parties in Iran. He encouraged everyone to establish political parties and to encourage others to join political parties. He was one of the persons who, in fact, indirectly, in many manners, encouraged the third force in Iran - Nerwi Savand, Maliki and his friends. He though that Malkki and his friends, he told me once, that the right wing in the National Front ~~were~~ were criticizing greatly Mossadeq's

letters to the Jamiye Socialista Iran, who had just had a congress. That was in the 1960's, early '60s, from his place of detention in Ahmad Obat, he'd written a letter to them and commending their work. The right wing in the National Front was ~~critical of~~ ^{critical of} him silently, not quietly.

I talked with them, and I spoke to Mossadeq. He said this is the only wing, although they have not accepted them into the Second National Front, I mean the national front which was later known as the Second National Front, when we formed the third, this is the only wing which has something to say.

Interesting.

And you would find exactly from the minute Mossadeq begins his reforms, he never started a land reform program, there was never a land reform by Mossadeq, as such, and land reform was Shah's game. He was distributing his own villages, through his own instruments, as a game. He was trying to get Mossadeq into that type of land distribution program, which he never accepted. Very strongly, he stood against it. This was one of the points which gave rise to certain criticism of him, or certain superficial leftist thinkers criticizing as being perhaps pro-landowners and all that, but I think he did this at the time when he felt ... from superficial leftwing critics, I mean critics within Iran, and at the time Iranians. I do not mean later analysis of the situation outside Iran, because these things have never actually been properly analyzed anywhere,

even within Iran many people don't know what has happened in that period.

There is no good book on the period - it's a battlefield of myth about Mardad, but about many other things as well.

The only thing I would say to the spirit of Kenyatta is that perhaps Kenyatta made a mistake, but on the other hand, if Mossadeq had had more of a political organization, he might have been able to resist the court and the fundamentalists more. The conventional analysis of him as having a popular following, but without organizing that popular following, seemed to be true. The fact is, people make

Mardad is a very important date in the Iranian calendar, but there wasn't much resistance, was there, on that day?

If it was a coup d'etat and, which did not bring, as a result of lack of certain organizational matters, I mean the only organized group was Tudeh Party, which could have come out and they didn't. There were other organized groups too, who came out, but too late, because they were all taken by surprise as a result of this coup d'etat. It's very difficult to say whether if Mossadeq had an organization as such and he had headed a political party, the coup d'etat would not have come. I do not accept that argument. No because knowing Iran and knowing the way Iranian politics were carried on at the time, and how ready Iranians were to be organized within political groupings, because Tudeh Party had taken a very important part bulk of Iranian intelligentsia at the time, as its members. The remnants were

divided among smaller groups, within the National Front - the biggest being the Third Force who had just suffered a break with the Toller's Party of Baghai, treasons on that side you know. Then there were smaller groups who didn't actually count. The bazaar was, as such, behind Mossadeq, but could never go further than a guild organization. You could not count on bazaar as people who could actually be organized within political parties. Then, being summer, the university was not open, and the students in fact, organizations were not ready at hand at the university, mainly at their homes, or gone on holiday, or in their home towns. ^{Tehran} ~~the~~ ~~Iranian~~ University is a very important organization always behind Mossadeq. Of course, the Tudeh Party having also some influence there, important influence there at the time. It was very difficult to say that you know. It's very difficult to say that with an organization, Mossadeq would not have fallen, because Mossadeq had just suffered quite a bit by the trends leaving the National Front, mainly the Islamic fundamentalist trend leaving the National Front in the form of, under the leadership of Kashani. It had suffered the break by Baghai and his allies, who actually had perhaps certain connections that haven't come to open yet for anyone, but, and these are many of the things that would have counted. The traditional organizations in Iran were to be counted on only through mosques which could not come out, as such, on the day of the coup d'etat, many of their leaders being involved in the coup d'etat itself, you know, in the form of Kashani, and others keeping silent. I think it's mainly the result of the reforms.

~~And of course, other factors, etc.~~

Q.

When Mossadeq looked back on this period, did he think he'd made any mistakes?

A.

Well, ~~it's very difficult to express any opinion on that.~~ What mistakes actually could he have committed? ^{then} under the circumstances? ^{used} in ~~Iran~~. He ^{only} had certain tools in his hands, and he ~~was using~~ them. ~~All that he didn't use, he didn't have in his hands.~~ He was trying to educate the country by allowing the country to practice democracy, and he thought ^{that the} exercise of democracy ~~could~~ ^{would} build the country, ^{and} ~~it~~ ^{so help} ~~it to~~ ^{more} become ~~somehow~~ independent. He believed in a democratic society, and he thought he should do his best ~~to go towards that goal.~~ He thought that he should not compromise because ~~his government was a different kind of government; although he was prime minister, he was not an~~ ~~prime minister, coming into power through the usual channels.~~ He was a prime minister brought forward by the people, and therefore, he could not compromise as an ordinary government could do on many ^{issues} ~~issues~~. He thought that he was carrying the weight of a heritage, and ~~adding~~ ^{contributing} to it, and ^{that he} should ~~do this in order to~~ ^{preserve} this heritage for ~~the~~ future generations, rather than ~~to~~ ^{making} somehow ~~stabilize~~ curb it by ~~making~~ compromises. →

~~The only thing he could have done was certain compromises, and he didn't compromise, no.~~ He was realistic as a statesman, with Iranian politics, he ~~was realistic as far as the power politics~~

were concerned. He had his realism of the truth of what was going on in the then world, but at the same time he felt that he should put the foundations of independence, and strengthen those, instead of, with compromises, allow the continuity of the ancien regime.

What you have said, you of course think is in his favor, I think it's in his disfavor. I think the fact that he didn't make compromises that he lost everything, is a mistake. Ultimately he was overthrown, and if you say he might have saved himself through compromises, or he could have at least tried to make some compromises, surely that would have been better, particularly as now, even the legacy which he has given to future generations is very clouded because Khomeini has very deliberately set out to obscure the memory of Mossadeq, . It's often said as a criticism of Iranian politicians that they don't know how to compromise. Sometimes compromises are not a good thing, sometimes they are. The main question was a factual question: Did he, himself, when he sat down at the table at , did he say, I made this mistake or that mistake? Your implication is he didn't.

Well he did not make any statement to that point, that's what I remember, but I should make a quick comment on what you said. You know the heritage he left behind, the legacy, I think has not been obscured by Khomeini. I also think that the only thing that the Iranians right now can rely upon, and would give them mind and thought and energy to fight Khomeini, is that legacy rather

stet

~~nothing like~~ The only ~~form of~~ opposition ~~is~~ ^{to Khomeini} ~~that~~ ^{is} ~~can be created~~ on the basis of ~~the~~ ^{Mossadeq's} legacy ~~of~~ ^{right now} against ~~the~~

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What is the ~~legacy of~~ ~~the~~ ~~period~~ What are the political principles ^{that} that you feel can be ^{most useful} used in the present situation?

~~I would say~~ ^{progress} progress ~~is~~ against regression; knowledge ~~is~~ against absolute ignorance; democracy ~~is~~ against autocracy ~~and~~ authoritarian ~~government~~ fascism in the form of Khomeini's phalancian, ~~which~~ ~~we~~ ~~would~~ ~~like~~ ~~to~~ ~~describe~~ ~~him~~ ~~it's~~ ~~very~~ ~~difficult~~ ~~to~~ ~~describe~~ ~~him~~ ~~in~~ ~~any~~ ~~terms~~ ~~of~~ ~~isms~~ ~~and~~ ~~such~~ ^{And} ^a quest for independence in the ~~face~~ ^{that} of Mossadeq did it, ~~in~~ ~~an~~ ~~ideal~~ ~~way~~ but ~~is~~ ^{radical} a humanitarian way, ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~is~~ ~~thinking~~ of the welfare of the people and at the same time of their liberties. ~~These~~ ~~concern~~

~~both~~ ~~individuals~~ ~~as~~ ~~well~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~society~~ ~~as~~ ~~a~~ ~~whole~~. His example ~~being~~ ~~the~~ ~~only~~ ~~example~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~modern~~ ~~history~~ ~~of~~ ~~Iran~~ ~~on~~ ~~which~~ ~~people~~ ~~can~~ ~~go~~ ~~back~~ ~~and~~ ~~relate~~ ~~to~~ ~~others~~; ~~an~~ ~~experience~~ ~~which~~ ~~Iranians~~ ~~still~~ ~~think~~ ~~can~~ ~~be~~ ~~repeated~~ ~~they~~ ~~still~~ ~~have~~ ~~hoping~~ ~~for~~ ~~repetition~~ ~~of~~ ~~what~~ ~~they~~ ~~think~~ ~~did~~ ~~exist~~ ~~in~~ ~~their~~ ~~country~~ ~~and~~ ~~could~~ ~~exist~~ ~~which~~ ~~gives~~ ~~them~~ ~~hope~~. It's very difficult for me to describe this ~~it's~~ ~~just~~ ~~like~~ ~~an~~ ~~abstract~~ ~~painting~~ ~~at~~ ~~times~~, ~~which~~ ~~has~~ ~~a~~ ~~message~~ ~~for~~ ~~you~~, ~~which~~ ~~has~~ ~~much~~ ~~more~~ ~~to~~ ~~give~~ ~~you~~ ~~than~~ ~~a~~ ~~realistic~~ ~~painting~~, ~~you~~ ~~know~~. But you have to have the eye to see it, and it's very difficult to describe.

run on

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I'm sure you're right that the legacy of Mossadeq ~~is~~ has not been obscured. Khomeini has tried to obscure it, but ultimately will fail.

And the only opposition Khomeini has found is the legacy, ~~is~~ than any thing else, I mean what other opposition has he found?

Well the Mujahidin don't regard themselves as inspired by Mossadeq do they? They now make MOssadeq one of their heroes but This is a quite recent development.

Why do they make him a hero?

This is your influence?

No, not necessarily. It's their own analysis. It's not my influence, I mean, I could talk about Mossadeq, but it's their own analysis. This is what they find in the Iranian society. Of course, the Mujahidin are not very far away from Mossadeq, because Mujahidin if you go back to their history, what's their starting point?

The early 1960s.

What do they come out of?

They came from Nezaad Azavi.

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What was Nezhad Azavi?

Well, part of the National Front.

Well, I mean, not a part of National Front, but of National Front and the Mossadegist movement, although an Islamic movement, but Mossadegist.

Yes, there's isn't much that separates them, there's the small matter of Khodar between -- I mean Mossadeg was religious, but he was not religious in politics.

He was ^{also} secular. Mossadeg very clearly believed in the separation of religion and state, ~~but of course he did not advocate the separation of religion and politics.~~ He himself was a secular politician and all his measures were secular measures. ~~Therefore,~~ ~~mean, this is interesting about the political legacy.~~ His legacy exists evdrywhere. ^{cross the whole political spectrum} That, ~~is not, just, a religious~~ ~~statement,~~ ^{in fact this} clarifies the ~~point~~ Mossadeg did not form a political party and did not actually advocate one particular ideology in a party program. ~~You look at the political line-up, the progressive political line-up, as well as the right, the honest right. You can be right and not be at the honest right.~~ Mossadeg has a place ^e on every inch of this ^e political ~~line-up~~ ^{spectrum}

ends

~~And this you think is a good thing?~~

Well, for the present fight it's a good thing, and this is what he meant, because he felt that as long as the goals, the initial goals of the Iranians are not actually established, this has to go on and this should be some sort of movement which could have its umbrella over the heads of all those moving underneath, whether they realize it or not. And they would realize it at some point. He felt that at a certain point, when you reach your goals, your primary objectives, then, of course, this will be a part of your history. And he would go into the history. But I think he's not yet in history, he's still present. He's dead but he's present, as a leader. I mean, the regime in Iran does not tolerate his name on the street. Why doesn't it? If he was dead and he was a part of history, they ~~wouldn't~~ would tolerate it. Because it wouldn't hurt anyone. You would find the total amount of opposition which has come against Khomeini, effective opposition, ever since he came forward, and he came forward with his monopolism, how did it come? Factors which end up, eventually somewhere with Mossadeq. Even in the person of Bani Sadr. Even in the person of Bazargan. Bazargan, I consider him as an opposition within the establishment, a loyal opposition. But even the loyal opposition within ~~the~~ the establishment takes it points from - it's said by that line, you know. Look at the cross-section, look at the line-up.

So you see a future for Mossadeqism in Iran, as well as a past.

Why do you want to call it Mossadeqism? It's his ideas, it's a legacy, it's a way of conduct for up to a point when you gain your initial independence and freedom and all that. I see a present and a future up to the point that, up ~~to~~ to the minute that we actually gain our initial objectives. It doesn't make any difference whether you like.... [interruption].

I mentioned the point about superficiality. I meant superficial analysis.

Are there any other major things you want to say?

The point about this land reform business and Mossadeq, if you want to elaborate it sometime, I'm ready to do it. Remember, Mossadeq felt that before people can manage their land, they should be allowed to manage themselves, and learn to manage themselves. Meaning that taking democracy to the villages and allowing the people in villages to actually decide for themselves what is happening in their own life and in their own area. He had two main measures in Iran which I think were the hardest against the Iranian landowners. One, he abolished all taxes on land - traditional taxations, you know, where landowners used to tax the villages from their earnings. For example, they had to supply him with hens, with eggs, and things like this, with meat, with fruit. ~~And~~ It was called taxed, it wasn't roshvet, no. The landowner had the right, for example, to take one egg out of every ten that the villager produced for himself, with his own resources,

because he owned the village. These are feudal rights, more or less. He abolished those straightaway. And then he thought of keeping the landowner of the land as the manager, and cutting down on his revenues, so he took twenty percent of his revenues and gave it straightaway to the villages, 10 percent for them to use in whichever way they liked, the other 10 percent went to a village fund. The government was obliged to add the equivalent amount and give technical aid to the villages to work with that money on village development. They formed an elected council in the village with two representatives, or three representatives of the villages, one representative of the government, and one representative of the landowner.

These were the plan, or this was carried out?

This was carried out, but halfway, because the coup d'etat came. But in certain villages I even saw reports of the success of some of these councils. And they would decide, I mean the things that always were decided upon by the landowner, ~~it~~ was now being decided upon by the village council, with the villagers having a majority there, and the government representative there to supervise. I mean, things like needing water reservoirs, planting trees, building the wells, building schools, local schools, building mosques, public facilities in the village itself. Then they would have a council for a group of villages which was called Behestan., with representatives of villages, all the villages. And this was now representatives of only villagers, and one representative of

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the government. Then you had the district council, and so on up to the ~~the~~ Shahrستان council. In each case, they had to decide about development in the area, with funds received from villages and with funds given by the government and with the technical aid of the government. In this way, he thought -- and at the same time the talent that the landowner ~~could~~ had acquired through years of experience of managing the land remained there, as a partner, as a bigger partner, taking the greater part of the share in fact, on the land, which would not bring about a setback for the agricultural production, which was so badly needed because of the policy of the oilless economy, or economy ~~ix~~ without oil.

This has never been written up, has it, this village councils program.

[tape ends]

I think its, the second law is called banune izviade daramatarustayan or something like that (!) I can't remember the name now. I can find the text of the law for you.

You say it was passed towards the end of ~~19~~ 1331, which is the beginning of 1953, or end of 1952.

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political prisoners. Now you said that the SAVAK released the Muslim political detainees, but not the leftwing, the Mujahidin.

Can you give us some details of that. Because this is very interesting.

In certain contacts that were made with the authorities within the Shah's establishment and SAVAK, as early as autumn and late summer 1978, we were told in particular that we should not worry too much about the release of political prisoners because every political prisoner is going to be released except for 200-300 persons who were dangerous political prisoners. And they will remain in jail and they will never be freed from the jail. And these political prisoners, later on... I mean what I mentioned just now, are the exact words of the Chief of SAVAK, who had been mentioned at the time, who was General Mogghadam. What happened later, but October almost every political prisoner except those 300 were released. And before that, starting from 1977, they had gradually begun releasing political prisoners, and releasing those who had been sent into exile from the religious center in Qom, who had still one or two years left of their period of exile in different cities. And by that October, there was practically none left. I mean, no political prisoners from the fundamentalists left within the prisons.

200-300

And the political prisoners were all from the left of the Mujahidin.

They were all from the left from the Fedayeen from the Mujahidin,

from Peykar, from ... few people from Tudeh, like for example, that doctor, Khavari, I've forgotten his first name, I think it was Ali. Dr. Khavari was one of those who was still in prison, but all the other Tudeh ones were also released.

And you, do you think that made a difference to the ultimate outcome of the struggle. Or do you think that if people like Rajavi and Najaad and the others had been released,...

You see they were released in two groups. There was one group of 78-80 which included Pak Najad. This list was compiled earlier, before Bakhtiar's arrival, under our pressure, by the then Minister of Justice. And when Bakhtiar came into power, when he became prime minister, he promised that he would release all the other political prisoners, but he couldn't, in practice, because he could not find the proper list to release them. And the activities at the bar association and the sit-in strikes for days at the Palace of Justice in the bar association, and the activities of the afamilies, and the information they supplied, eventually, ... As a result of this activity, the list was eventually compiled, of the other two hundred. And they were released in the middle o Bakhtiar's time. I can't remember the exact date, whichen included people like Rajavi, Bani, and so many other famour names, that were the leaders of the Fedayeen and the Mujahidin. But I believe, that had these people been released earlier, people like Pak Najad, Bani, Rajavi, etc. had they been released

earlier, the situation would have been very, very much different.

Because they understood Khomeini?

They understood Khomeini, they understood all these... We, who were outside, we didn't know what was going on in the prisons. We had no contact at all with the fundamentalists except those who were within different democratic associations such as the Jurists Association. [Taleghani?] Taleghani was not a fundamentalist, as such. Except those, who were in, for example, the Jurists Association, but they were acting as only jurists, and they were not showing their cards at all. And the minute they felt, as early as say early January 1979, the fundamentalists were working within different democratic associations. They all left and they went to do their own particular political jobs. And some of them even came to us and said that, for example, the Association of Iranian Jurists has done its purpose, why don't you dissolve it? Even before the Shah's downfall. But before that we knew very little about the fundamentalists, and their organizations.

Nabavi, for example. Nabavi was telling you to dissolve...

No. Nabavi was not. Our own colleagues in the association whose numbers were small, but later on we discovered that they are fundamentalists and they've just been working with us up to a point and from the time that they felt it's no longer necessary

to work with us and the government is theirs, they left us completely. We became absolutely secular from then on, because we no longer had... No, Nabavi said something else, but let's clarify this. You know, there were about 40 mullahs who were sent into exile into various cities of Iran by SAVAK for security reasons from Qom. In Qom, they were together, having, say, academic discussions. And being together they could not have anything more than academic discussions. Once they were spread all over Iran and having the possibility of moving freely within the area where they were exiled, they could organize themselves and have better contact to the people and the masses in the area they were staying in. In 1956 they were all relieved of their exile, and they could go back to their own centers. And from then on we see gradually...

You mean 1977.

1977, yes. from then on, gradually, all fundamentalists, if you examine the lists, were released from jail. People like Pak Najad, and Rajavi who knew the fundamentalists in jail, and who knew their ideas and who could tell us about them, we had no contact whatsoever with them. And they were in jail, and they were in jail until the last few weeks before the downfall of the Shah and after the departure of the Shah from Iran. And therefore, the people outside knew very little about the fundamentalists and their ideas and their activities and why they were in prison

and what they were doing in prison and the divisions they tried to build in prison between the secularists and themselves, godless and themselves, communists and themselves, Mujahids and themselves and we did not have this experience or any information of this experience, outside, to know that these people cannot/^{act}and are not prepared to act within a coalition against the Shah. And they would only move up to the time when they are sure that the administration and the regime is theirs in the form of a sectarian fundamentalist regime which we saw later on. And therefore, some of these people whom we did not recognize as fundamentalists, but we recognized as lawyers with strong Islamic beliefs, and good freedom fighters, or good civil rights activists, who were within the Jurists Association, a few within the Writer's Association, a few within the universitarians association, etc., early in January when they felt that the situation was ripe for them to separate themselves completely from all other activities, they did, and they left us alone. For example, we had one and a half of them in our executive committee of seven in the Iranian Association of Jurists. I talk of one and a half, because one of them was an absolute fundamentalist, and the other one was in Bazargan's crowd, half way here, half way there. They both stopped coming to our meetings from then on. One of them was Mr. Zavarei, who was recently a candidate for presidency, and the second one I prefer not to mention, because he later on reformed himself. That was the actual situation. Mr. Nabavi, who had been associated

with us in the National Front Students Organization, which was the only students organization. It was the national organization of students in Iran and it was a front of students of all political tendencies and Nabavi was a part of that and he was a very close associate of mine. And later on he went to jail. When he came out of jail, he'd become a fundamentalist. We didn't know about it. When he visits us, he tells us, "Don't bother about the release of the rest of the political prisoners,". That was before the Shah fell, yes. And when political prisoners, I mean the 300 were released, early, 80 something of them, early in Bakhtiar's period, and some of them in the middle of Bakhtiar's period, it was too late for them to get organized. But still, I believe their release had an impact on what happened in February, meaning on the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd. They intervened and they led different groups in Tehran and all over the country and they led much of the masses who were leaderless in Tehran, in order to destroy some of the institutions which the fundamentalists had agreed already with some of the people within the Shah's establishment, and had agreed already with some of the advisors, which had arrived from the US, to keep intact, and in fact in the course or in the process of a quiet and bloodless takeover of the government, with Bazargan coming in as prime minister, and gradually Bakhtiar fading out. And the revolutionary council taking over, and the chiefs of all the different departments staying absolutely in obedience and coming forward. But the movement of the people during those three days destroyed much of the things -

Fedayan Islam and all other fundamentalist factors of his own time. And that's why all these fundamentalist factors of his own time actually cooperated with General Zahedi and the coup d'etat in 1953. I mean let's clarify this point. I didn't mean "to some point" I meant definitely. Why I used to some point I can't remember. But we felt that on that day in March that was the fifth of March I think would be the best occasion to make an invitation for the formation of a front the aims of which would be primarily to stop polarization, secondarily or parallel to that, to safeguard whatever had been gained as a result of this revolutionary process. Which meant, first of all, freedom of expression and press, freedom of assembly and a few other things which followed it and were at the side of it, the democratic associations which were able to be formed during the Shah's day such as the Jurists Association, the Universitarians, etc. which we felt were the backbone of any could act as the backbone of any democratic society and also to build some sort of coordination among all the progressive and democratic forces in the Iranian political line-up. In the middle, moving as far possible to the right and to the left.

What about the worker's councils. Were they a significant force in the democratic movement or were they just so local that they really weren't, they were not something you could relate to.

We could relate to some of them, yes. They were not that local

mullahs represented by Ayatollah Taleghani, the other political prisoners represented by a man like Mr. Taher Ahmad Zadeh whose sons were Fedayiis and who lost their lives during the Shah's days.

He was a minister in Mossadegh's government wasn't he?

No. Taher Ahmad Zadeh was from Mashad and a small businessman and he could be representative of several walks of life because of his past prison record. And myself, chosen by our friends to make the invitation there for the formation of the front. We thought this circle could represent all those who had been active in the past in fighting the Shah and bringing what was brought forward and taken over by the Islamic fundamentalists, and rightly. And this was a place that we could tell the nation that any Revolutionary Council should be a representative Revolutionary Council representing all organizations, that is, those present at Ahmad Obat in the council. And we also felt that those who would have to be present there should be those who had not been present in the past. And they should be those who have been away in Iranian prisons and had not been able to pay their respect, or to in fact show their solidarity with the ideas of Dr. Mossadegh and with his aspirations. And we thought that when Mossadegh, some of his last words was that the future of Iran is in the hands of the Iranian youth. And he felt that the Iranian youth will find

its way eventually and will overcome what was imposed upon the nation by the coup d'etat in 1953. And he felt once the reformist process of the Shah is over, that would be the time that the youth of today who begin actually the fight, will be able to bear the fruits. And we felt that these people who were the representatives of that youth, who actually consciously or unconsciously had acted on the line that Mossadegh had anticipated, should be there in order to show that its all one movement and one united movement towards the goals of the Iranian people. And we felt that those who have actually collaborated with Khomeini and who had accepted to be within his government are no longer Mossadeghists as such and have lost their credit within this movement to be represented at this meeting.

Wasn't Bazargan there thought?

Bazargan was at the meeting, but he did not speak. There was Mr. Sanjavi at the meeting - he did not speak.

The first test you had was the actual issue of the Islamic Republic which came up three (a few) weeks later. What was your position on that, on the setting up, the referendum on the Islamic Republic?

Let me add something to what I was saying before, you know, because we missed out the National Front completely. At this very same

meeting we felt that National Front by having compromised with Khomeini has lost its credibility and has deviated from the line of Mossadegh's aspirations, which was the establishment of a universal democracy in Iran, and pluralism, secularism, and respect for the absolute sovereignty of the people. And we felt that the National Front is no longer in Mossadegh's camp at the time. And we felt that Khomeini's camp means polarization, Mossadegh's camp means unity of action of all walks of life. Of course they gradually, later on, moved out one by one.

Bakhtiar has some very funny things to say about that. I mean when he is speaking about them what he says is very interesting. What attitude did you take to the referendum on the Islamic Republic - it must have been the beginning of .

Unlike Khomeini, we, our analysis of what happened which led to the fall of the Shah was this, that no revolution had happened, but the general uprising in the midst of a revolutionary process had brought the final downfall and the destruction of some of the institutions which were anti-people institutions. But we felt that this uprising or grand movement of the people, tiam as we called it, and not engelab, this speeded up the whole process to the point where it was a general, in fact, expression of vote by the people against monarchy and it finally turned away the monarchy from Iran. But all the same we felt that any type of future referendum if held in Iran should be

firstly for further confirming this vote and secondly, confirming the new regime that the Iranians would want to have as against that which would be a republic the nature of which should be decided by constituent assembly. What Khomeini did in his referendum was he made two choices: first do you wish the former regime to return, somehow it meant this, two, would you like an Islamic Republic? It wasn't an Islamic Republic or not, it was monarchy or Islamic Republic. It was very cleverly organized and most undemocratically organized because it was obvious that the absolute majority of the Iranian people no longer would want the monarchy, they would want to participate in some sort of referendum, and under the circumstances where hiyajjan feelings prevailed rather than thinking in a scientific political sense - people would want to participate in this referendum to make sure something else is coming. And he banked on this feeling and he worked on this feeling in order to bring about a referendum which would somehow give legality to his idea of Islamic Republic which would otherwise not have received the amount of votes it received in that referendum. We knew this from beforehand. And therefore, we could not participated in such a referendum. We boycotted it. I would say in this referendum at least 90 percent of the people voted, of those who could have voted, but of course they were overeager to gather votes that they even filled up some of their boxes with extra votes to make it more than 100 percent.

Unless there's something in between that you particularly want

There's a lot more to say, but I think this is a very...

I always thought of Ayan Degan as separate from the Kurdistan thing, but as you say the two were actually directly related. Perhaps we could not go on to discuss the Shulaya Mogghadamat itself. There are other things that have happened in between, but. The National Democratic Front still exists as an organization.

Yes. The National Democratic Front continues its activities after the second August coup d'etat, as we've marked it but eventually towards the beginning of 1980, its council and its executive members, in fact its leadership, decided that the first thing that should be accomplished in Iranian society before everything else, and above everything else, in the program of the National Democratic Front is to work further for establishing a greater front of all political forces which are progressive and which are democratic and which can combat the reactionary regime, which is leading the country towards some sort of Nazism and which will soon in fact diminish all existing liberties, if there are any still, to absolutely nothing, nil. And from then on, the first step which was taken towards this goal was the proposal put forward to Mr. Rajavi that as a leader of one of the bigger political organizations in Iran, with popular following, he should present himself as a candidate for presidency. And the support for his candidacy was given by the National Democratic Front, by the political factions in Kurdistan, by the

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The support for his candidacy was given by the National Democratic Front by the political factions in Kurdistan, by the Fedayeen and by a few other political organizations in existence. And we thought this can be the first step, having a symbolic candidate for presidency can create a point of unity for all these organizations and others who have not come within this coalition for this particular election. We further tried to organize some sort of action group in which the Mujahidin were the main partner and which were represented on a special council where we and the Kurds and other democratic personalities and factions were also present. In coordination with the Mujahidin we tried to establish this council in order to bring about some sort of unity in the elections which were going to take place. Again for the purpose of furthering the idea of a greater front and solidarity among these groups which we felt was necessary. By the time the elections were over and we did not have any candidates of our own in those elections, we felt that we should support other people's candidates and the only candidate that we had was Dr. Reza Khani and supporting other candidates from other all political groups in order to build this solidarity and make a formation for the beginning of this solidarity in action. Towards the end of the Iranian year which means March 1980, the leadership of the Front came to the conclusion that under the circumstances, considering that political - open political activity is becoming rather difficult and distribution of

newspapers with the pressure and the suppression by the regime has become even more difficult. It decided to close down its paper, Azadi. And it decided to stop all open political activities and it only decided...

But you were already banned as an organization, weren't you?

We were indirectly banned, because it happened all in Bazargan's regime. Our paper, for example, was banned, but we still published it - like many others whose papers were banned, and they still published it. Because, at the time, we decided this was a coup d'etat, this was illegal, and whatever actions decided by the regime during this period and after that period would be arbitrary actions and we are not going to abide by any arbitrary actions at all. Because we do not recognize any legality for this regime and its actions which are arbitrary. Orders for arrest are arbitrary, therefore we should go underground and not comply with it. Orders for the closure of newspapers are arbitrary, we should not comply with it. And many other orders - orders for closing down your offices are arbitrary, you should not comply with it. And you should wait

for them to come and find you. I mean, these were our decisions. And in these decisions, of course, there were other political organizations which shared the same ideas at the time. Let's go back to our main line - as I said, in March 1980 we decided we cannot afford to have any further open activities. The Front should go underground as much as possible, and it should only take one thing into its hands and work on one point only, and that point is the establishment of the solidarity front of all political organizations. And we felt that if we managed to accomplish this one thing, we have actually paid all our debts to the society and the revolution. And that would be the beginning of furthering the revolutionary process. And from then on, that has been our activity and all our members and all our leadership has been as a group and as individuals commissioned by the group, fulltime, have considered their fulltime job and activity to work on the formation of this solidarity front.

You have this shorai ...

Shari Mutadi Chap , for Democracy and Independence. The United Council of the Left.

Is this the committee or is this something separate from the committee?

No. The leadership of the Front is separate from this Shora. This shora has been formed with the cooperation of one of the factions of the NDF and that is the Unity of the Left. And the Unity of the Left...

Is this Bahnan ?

That is Bahman Niruman and his friends. I mean they're one of the factions which are in the Front. They in fact came to the conclusion that the left in Iran should reorganize itself, and go over all the past discussions and form a program in accordance with the realities of the Iranian society. And this was not only their idea because there were many individuals in the leftist movement in Iran and many small groups and organizations had come to the very same conclusion. They eventually got together and formed this council and of course, once this council was formed and the program was drawn up, then it was the time when Bani Sadr was falling and their activities were limited to small publications internally within themselves. But they're

a well organized leftist group in Iran, feeling and thinking that socialism cannot advance without democracy and socialism cannot remain and be preserved without democracy. And it is first democracy, then independence, then socialism.

Now, you in the name of the National Democratic Front have joined the (United Council of the Left) - obviously if you don't want to answer these questions...

Reading through the Shuraia program there are a number of things that strike one. First of all, they don't just want a democratic republic, they want a democratic Islamic republic. And at least Rajavi and Bani Sadr believe in the Islamic character of any future Iranian Republic. Now there are strong reasons for saying it ^{as much as} and/they're ^{against} the dictatorship of Khomeini, as long as you believe in the role of Islam in politics in the way they do, you will have dictatorship because religious thinking - Islamic, Christian, Jewish, is authoritarian thinking. Secondly there are many features of Islam which are inconsistent with any liberal society, it has to be said. What do you feel about this call for a democratic Islamic republic? Do you think it's something you can work with?

I can answer your question up to a point, why not. First of all, the council for National Resistance, or how do we translate it - the National Resistance Council, we have felt, and we have seen as the result of our work for the formation of that bigger solidarity front which we've been working on ever since the coup d'etat in August 1979. And we consider ourselves, before even joining it, we considered ourself as a part of it. And the coalition that we were envisaging could not include anyone else primarily but the Mujahidin and the Kurdish Democratic Party and ourselves and a few other factions and personalities and then many others which we could reach and draw to the coalition. And this coalition and, or this solidarity front, the bigger front which we had talked of, in the course of events, as a result of the suppression of Bani Sadr, and the suppression of Mujahidin, and the start of the executions and the forced departure of Bani Sadr and Rajavi from Iran, for the reasons which they have already described themselves, which we won't have to talk about...These turn of events eventually brought our work to a point that we felt that under this title and name and circumstances, the Front is being formed. Whatever they have said about whatever you mentioned, such as the program and the title of a future government, etc., we have considered as we considered ourselves as a

natural member of the Council , without even joining it, we have considered as proposals for this type of discussion in the future. And not as concrete platform of the council itself. And when we joined it, as you see it in the paper that I gave you, we joined it with our reservations on all these points, and we joined it clearly clarifying the important points which can be considered as joint ideas, or joint ends for a front. We considered the front or the council as the body which is going to first overthrow Khomeini, and second, to establish security for the Iranian people, by establishing democracy through a constituent assembly. And whatever else should be, in fact, created and brought forward by a constituent assembly which is elected as a result of universal suffrage of the Iranian people - everyone included.

Even - they, of course, excluded people who collaborated with the Shah and people who collaborate with Khomeini, and one only assumes from their text that they will define who collaborated, so they can exclude many people. Most of the population of Iran, they could exclude...

We don't accept such general exclusions. We feel that once

the Khomeini regime is overthrown, and once a council such as the National Resistance Council is going to act in the interim period which should take a very short time, to establish a constituent assembly, it should do one thing: to first declare a general amnesty which would clearly define its boundaries.

I mean, not like the general amnesty that Khomeini has been declaring that after each amnesty no one actually knew whether he was included or not - and everyone could be further prosecuted.

Because we feel that the new Iran should be built by all Iranians because much of it has been destroyed by Khomeini. And every Iranian who takes part in this rebuilding of its society and country should be absolutely certain that no one is going to bother him any more about any past records. We also feel that the Iranian people have seen too much bloodshed and therefore, the new people who come forward and, naturally, they come forward because the people have trusted them and have helped one another to come and take over. Therefore, these people should make the people understand that in rebuilding Iran we have no time for revenge and bloodshed any more. And therefore in order to safeguard these points, we should repeal capital punishment in all forms of it so that it cannot be misused even for the, any

criminal form, classical criminal form for which a necessity had been formed in the past, felt in the past. And we also feel while the general amnesty is declared, while bloodshed is stopped and capital punishment is repealed effectively, those criminals who have directly been acting against humanity, against the lives of Iranian people and who have been directly concerned with the crimes of the two regimes, who are excluded from the general amnesty, by this for example I mean the chap who is involved in accomplishing things in an executionary manner, in an executive manner, not an executionary manner and he's merely an ordinary man who says,

he should not be involved. Those who have directly been involved in the crimes, like in the Nazi Germany after the fall of Hitler. Those have to be prosecuted and in my belief they have to be prosecuted because of the mistrust, and the distrust that the world has had in the past and because what has happened in Iran has concerned humanity at large. I think that they should be prosecuted under the observance of international bodies who are competent in doing so. And they should be given every means for their defence. And these are the only persons and characters which can be excluded from any process which is going to establish

democracy in Iran, unless they are acquitted in the courts of the prosecution. Because I feel, and I personally believe that any statement at large that such and such a group should be excluded without specifying how and without specifying the instruments and the persons themselves, once and for all, this can be an instrument of misuse in the hands of those who can misuse power. When we establish laws and when we establish regulations, we establish them in general for being put into effect by the worst people and not by the best people. And therefore, we should make all guarantees. If I am specifying something and I consider myself as an honest man, which I am perhaps, I should think of the dishonest man who is going to use this. The same as Khomeini has used the same influence, the same instruments. He has used the same instruments in all his elections by providing something for overseers over the candidates, and approving the candidacies before the candidates can appear as candidates. And in his past few elections for presidency and even Bani Sadr's election for presidency, they forced Rajavi to withdraw. As a result of the same instrument. When I go, personally, and the National Democratic Front and its associates, including the United Council for the Left, when we talk of universal suffrage

we mean universal suffrage in its classical sense.

The problem is...first of all there is just so much hatred in Iran now, real hatred of everybody who's suffered in their lives, that they want to take revenge. There is a lot of cruelty, I mean, the people who have had cruelty done to them, are not necessarily very nice people themselves. You see this in many countries. The second problem is that the Mujahidin are courageous heroic sincere people, but one thing you can't say about them, they're not democratic in their internal organization or in their way of thinking. They are like a very orthodox communist party in this sense, that they are highly centralized, they've never had a congress, they've never had elections. O.K. they've been underground, but never mind, they've come out of the underground, they exist on a basis of high authoritarian control and their way of thinking is very dogmatic if one talks to them. This is the worry. I mean the personality of Rajavi is no guarantee about the democracy of his organization. And in private, he has said that he wants power in proportion to the number of martyrs he has given. And that means, if they're talking about, and that means they want most of the power for themselves. I don't think there's any...I think that they are part of the'

opposition. They have fought Khomeini. But I don't think, given what they've said and given what one can feel about them that their own democratic credentials are very high. We have seen one dictatorship replaced by another one. One can fear that they will do the same thing themselves, even if they now sincerely believe they won't. There is no...I mean the best guarantee is probably that they have to rule with other people, they can't rule on their own, but I feel that ^{if} they could rule on their own if they'd try and do so. That would be my sense of it. Maybe this is not something we should discuss, but it's a worrying feature. And there's too much...Rajavi leaves so many things vague, and ultimately it's do you trust him? And well, I trust him, fine, I trust him now. But you know, in the future it's very difficult.

Well, I think that, I know very little about the internal organization of the Mujahidin. But I know two facts: that the leadership has been acting democratically within itself and there's not a one man rule in the Mujahidin amongst the Mujahidin. This I know for a fact. And decisions have been made in the leadership in a most democratic fashion and after consultations and

discussions with others also, and even outside the Mujahidin. And, two, in several dealings that we've had with them in the past, in the course of elections in particular, and in some other matters, they have acted democratically, as democratically as expected from any political organization. Especially on that election council which was formed in 1980. And a third thing that I can add to this is that the Mujahidin have in the past never promised things that they could not do and they have never been dishonest about their doings and promises and they've never tried to fool another organization or to lead any other organization, such as, for example, in our dealings as the NDF with them, astray. They've been clearcut in their thoughts and in their statements and very blunt and nothing ever behind the scenes or any skeletons in the closet. We've never seen anything like that. And these are the things that we can judge upon. What has happened in other places and what the trend of history has been in general in the Third World, well that is one thing, what we can judge upon right now is another thing.

How strong do you think the regime now is? One gets the impression it may be stabilizing, but what do you think.

I think the regime is no longer strong in the way that it was when the people supported it. Since it's backward and reactionary, and archaic, therefore it cannot restrengthen itself through progress either. Through certain artificial and primary economic measures, perhaps it can lengthen its life in certain economic deals, but I don't think it can turn to become an established regime economically unless it completely revises itself and becomes a progressive regime in all respects which are respected from a progressive regime. And the only reason why it exists and it can go on in one way it is the certain loose institutions it has built for itself for the suppression of others, such as Islamic groups and different organizations, such as its committees. And second, because the alternative for this regime, although it exists, and although it is strong because it had the support of the people and it has a large military organization in the Iranian cities, on the Caspian forests

What's happenning in the Caspian forests, you mentioned something?

You also mentioned something about it, about the suppression.

They exist when they are going to be suppressed.

Who are they?

Mujahidin, there are certain groups affiliated to the left of the NDF on one side, which are much smaller, and there are other smaller local groups all over the country, anywhere from Astarat, Havalesh to Fari.

So these are in the traditionally more secular part, northern part of the country, there is an autonomous guerrilla movement operating. Since when have they been operating, since the fall of Bani Sadr?

Since the fall of Bani Sadr, yes.

And this is something substantial.

This is something fairly substantial.

Nothing has been publicized about it at all.

Nothing, anywhere, has been publicized about it, no. But I mean it publicizes itself in the region. And everyone in the region

knows that they're there. By the amount of food which is taken away by them from lorries moving on the roads. They buy them of course.

So this armed opposition is growing.

And since its strong because it has its armed men also in Kurdistan, but it is not ready and politically yet organized, because the movement inside Iran is only active within the military groups. And active outside the military groups in the way that no one is afraid of the regime any more. Criticism exists everywhere. The public appearances critically, exist everywhere. People sheltering armed men, exists everywhere. People not giving away others, exists everywhere. These are the only reasons why the regime has managed to exist so far and may exist still for some time and may remain still for some time.

What about the religious establishment, and the bazaar. They're not actively opposing, but do you think they are capable of moving at a certain time?

Well I think there is a faction within the mullahs themselves,

within the ayatollahs themselves and the religious, ecclesiastical groups who feel that their existence as an establishment is at stake. And in order to save themselves, they feel that something should be done against this regime and something should be done also to separate the ecclesiastical world from the state. And opposition exists from among these people, some of them reactionaries and some of them progressive. Also opposition exists among certain tribal groups which have their formations in the south - Kashkais and Boir Ahmads, and not only Boir Ahmads, but all the Mamasani tribes. That's in the Fars province and adjoining Khuzestan, the Mamasani tribes, which are united under the Boir Ahmads. And opposition does exist among the religious people in the bazaar. Many of the people in the bazaar, although some have flourished even under this regime, because of certain transactions, they feel that that will not have any stability anymore. And, above all, not only stability in their businesses, stability in their business is not as important as their personal security is important to them. So they have been putting up resistance and I believe they have been financing quite a lot of political movements in Iran. And bazaar has been responsible for much of the financing of political movements within Iran and abroad. Everyone excluding Bakhtiar.

For the legal side of it, one thing you should take in mind

that Iran is a Nazi regime, the Iranian regime is a Nazi regime, legally. And, although, its laws are Islamic laws, it's adhering to the Nazi principle of innocence as against the general principle of law which says nothing is a crime unless those provided before-- hand, in the law and clearly defined. The Nazi principle used to say that nothing is a crime except those recognized as a crime by a court of law. But in Iran they've even gone further than the Nazi regime. They say nothing is a crime except those considered as a crime by a pasdar, by a committee man, by a prosecutor and by a judge, by an Islamic judge. Therefore, Iranians under the circumstances, cannot program their lives legally to act accordingly, to know what action they take, or what move they do, during the day, can comprise a crime, whether small or big, or not.

It's completely arbitrary.

Absolutely arbitrary.

So in no sense can it be said that Islamic law is being implemented.

And in no sense can it be said that Islamic law is being implemented

hard and fast within certian boundaries, clear for the people.

Even if it was there would be problems...

Yes, I agree with you.

Yes. Still it would be clear, it would be known.

And the known laws of the land are not clarified either. So I mean if you want to further specify matters I'm ready for that.

ENDS