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Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 37/81)

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NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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AFGHANISTAN

HUMAN RIGHTS CORRESPONDENTS VISIT RADIO FREE KABUL

Paris LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR in French 12 Sep 81 pp 35-37

[Report by Bernard-Henri Levy: "This is Radio Free Kabul"]

[Text] On his return from Afghanistan--where, with Marek Halter and Renzo Rossellini, he went to deliver to the Afghan resistance fighters the three radio broadcasting stations purchased with funds collected by the Human Rights Committee--Bernard-Henri Levy lets us take a look at his notebook. Here we will see that he did not try to adorn the truth: yes, Afghan resistance is going through a particularly delicate phase; yes, it appears confused, torn, divided into rival, hostile, and fratricidal clans among whom it is difficult for a Westerner to get his bearings. That is the way things are--but that is no reason to stop supporting its fighters.

First Day

"People in France often ask: What are the Afghans waiting for before they unify their resistance?"

"Tell the French that they can just keep on waiting; the Afghans will never unite."

"Because it is too early?"

"Because it makes no sense."

"But what about your clans, your tribes, your countless divisions?"

"That is our strength. Our soul. Those are the only things in this world for which we are ready to die."

"Much more so than for the Afghan nation?"

"There is no Afghan nation. Apart from Babrak Karmal, nobody here is ready to defend the Afghan nation."

"Yes, the party leaders, you heard them just like you heard us."

"Those parties mean nothing. They represent nothing. I hope you realized that; they are organizations of exiles, of profiteers, of parasites, compared to the true Mujahedin who had remained in the interior."

The man who talked this way, I want to make it perfectly clear, does not look like a leader of a band, obtuse, and fanatical. With his smooth face, his emaciated cheeks, his dark and unusually long hair, he makes us rather think of an Afghan double of our own Antonin Artaud. He comes from a family of traditional "literati"; he concentrated on Persian studies rather than the disciplines of Western culture and he was one of the most-heard journalists of the press in Kabul. Today, 20 months after his escape, he is a member of those young valley fighters who, when they are not out in the field, to fight among their own people, wander off to Peshawar, with anger in their hearts and with nothing in their pocketbooks, to seek the weapons their men need.

His name? It matters little. For the purpose of our story here, we will call him Amin. It suffices to note that he is one of those very rare persons whom we met just a few hours after we got off the plane in Pakistan, that is, Marek Halter, Renzo Rossellini, and I, myself, with three radio transmitters, destined for the resistance, in our baggage. But here he was, with us, at the headquarters of a party which he despises with all his heart, tolerating the insolence with which the faction sentinel, who tries to search him, making for himself and us a difficult passageway through the crowd of ragtag warriors who press around the fence; as we got off the airplane, he told us with every aplomb of a Parisian intellectual: "We have promised the men and women of France, who contributed their gifts toward the purchase of these three radio sets, to hand them over to an organization that is representative of the entire Afghan resistance."

Second Day

But where, the devil, is that "representative organization" whose appearance we have once again been waiting for, all day long, from one command post to the next?

This is probably not the Revolutionary Islamic Movement of Mohamed Nabi Mohamedi, which was bubbling over as we arrived there, where the big event of the moment seemed to be the effort to expose the "agents" of Hezbi Islami (The Party of Islam) who were able to infiltrate last night with the group of fighters who had returned from the province of Kunduz.

Nor was it Hezbi Islami either, of course, that is, the super-religious and notoriously fanatical organization where a young "revolutionary cadre," bothered by one of our questions, pointed an accusing finger at us, imitating, without knowing it, the photo of the ayatollah hanging over his head, to tell us in a menacing tone: "Israel is not a country; we do not want aid from Israel; those people are Zionist agents."

After that we might perhaps have been touching bases with the liberal and democratic National Liberation Front of S. Mudjadedi, if we had not discovered--as our host just wanted to show us a map of the country--that the borders of Afghanistan, in his mind, stopped at the borders of the Pashtoon tribes, superbly ignoring the entire northern half.

Finally we arrived at the National Front run by the sympathetic Sayed Ahmed Gailani, accompanied of course always by Amin; we got there at the moment when the master of the house, an authentic "descendant of the Prophet," was saying his last prayer of the day; here we above all witnessed the following extraordinary scene: the holy man suddenly turned toward the commander and suggested to him that he entrust him with the 100 Kalashnikovs which he would soon receive from a "distant emirate," adding in a half-whisper, when he saw that the other fellow was getting his hackles up: "I know that you are not one of us. But I also know that you are a good Muslim. I only ask a sermon on the Koran in return. And I want you to go everywhere throughout the mountains to announce to your warriors that they should fight for Sayed Ahmed Gailani, the descendant of the Prophet."

This scene of course is not lacking in character. It tells us a lot about the strange relationships between these parties in exile and the resistance fighters who are autonomous and heroic and who have remained out in the countryside. But the fact is that, for the moment, it hardly speaks for "unity," for a "serious effort," for the kind of ideological "coherence" which we had expected in our candor. After returning empty-handed and perhaps somewhat discouraged from this brief adventure in the London of Free Afghanistan, we began to ask ourselves whether we should not yesterday already have listened more to the lessons given us by Major Amin.

Third Day

"Now, pay attention! You have the town of Mazar-I-Sharif opposite, Sheberghan on your right, and if you look carefully, you can see the Russian border 50 kilometers to the rear. You must not forget to climb as high as possible. You think of the depth of the field. If you can, you avoid vertical lines. We will be waiting for you at 95 kilohertz. From that you can calculate the length of your antenna. And, I remind you, you have 15 minutes to broadcast."

No, this is not the first broadcast from Radio Free Kabul. We did not have the time, during the night, to transport all of our equipment to Mazar-I-Sharif, along the Soviet border. This happened in the tribal zone, this no-man's land between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which is forbidden to foreigners but also to policemen. Here, among these rocks and jagged crags, protected against indiscreet looks and ears, Renzo Rossellini decided to stage the first dry-run, on a real-life scale, of a broadcast together with the eight Afghan technicians.

But this is also the place where Marek and I suddenly met those famous technicians who had been hidden from us for the past 2 days. With Akbar, the "boss," an electronics engineer trained in the United States; with Attak, his deputy, a simple electrician, who sententiously keeps repeating that "those apparatuses, like this one, are worth 1,000 Kalashnikovs"; with Sadek, the former announcer of the government radio in Kabul who, right now, on the slopes of the ravine, in a very strong but civil manner asked us whether we were friends of "Monsieur Leon Zitrone"; with Tamin, Ali, Aziz, Kader, and finally Abdullah, who had never seen a radio transmitter in their life and for whom, today, after 8 days of intensive training which preceded our arrival, frequency modulation no longer holds the slightest secret.

None of us, I believe, were really given over to the fetishism of technology. But it is here, on these arid rocks, facing those eight men, that we learned, as we went along, that all of them--what a miracle!--belonged to different tribes, regions, and parties, it is only here that we finally understood: first of all that the air of Peshawar certainly was not good for us; second, that resistance unity, if it is built someday, will come about only out in the field; third, that the only way to return to the Afghans what belongs to the Afghans perhaps after all is to go to Afghanistan.

Fourth Day

You can really find everything at Dara, that village which is so unique in the world, where artisans sell, make, and forge all the weapons of the world, both possible and imaginable.

A venerable merchant, for example, who came on foot from Kabul, to fix the submachine gun which, he said, a Russian soldier on leave had given him.

A younger fightingman, wearing a superb multicolored turban, who had come down from the mountain to obtain more ammunition for the leather cartridge belt across his chest.

A young man with steady eyes and a fuzzy red beard which had turned henna, who came to protest "to Abdallah Makbar and Sons" to the effect that, on the Chinese rifle, of which they had made a perfect copy for him, they forgot to show, in addition to his name, the original Chinese ideographs.

And then, in the midst of all this, in a far-west uproar and a cheap setting, we found three somewhat dishevelled intellectuals who were hotly debating the question of whether it is "ethical" or not to finance the purchase of weapons which, the day after, would be issued to the three technicians who agreed to lead us here.

Fifth Day

Amin appeared that morning and, in a somewhat threatical manner, introduced us to Abdul, the top sharpshooter of his friends whom, he told us, he was giving the job of protecting us.

Abdul, the sharpshooter, who was fascinated by the very strong glasses worn by one of us, managed to take a look through them and, transfigured, he shouted: "By Allah, the Merciful, I can see now!"

Once again we looked just about ridiculous, with our huge chasubles, our bulging pants, and our turbans on our heads, resembling those "Pashtoon notables sitting in the back of a Toyota."

This Toyota took us on the road to the north, to those famous, terrible, and redoubtable police stations where the good Pakistani cops watched us as we passed by, looking a bit dull.

Finally we crossed Bajawar, the last tribal agency before the law of the jungle, which we were told was infested by the local Hezbi and where we were able to make our last purchases, in the bazaar, encountering only friendly looks.

Was this our great departure or was it just a grand illusion?

One thing is sure: a trip through Afghanistan also has its funny side. And, as far as I am concerned, in any case, it is only now--as evening had finally come, with "polao" and mutton, established in the "guest house" next to the big stone farmhouse where we found refuge, that I began to realize that, in just a few hours, we would be secretly crossing the border of a country at war with our "1,000 Kalashnikovs," as our electrician Attak put it.

Sixth Day

This time, things were getting complicated. For 4 hours we had been bouncing along difficult goat trails that took us up to the border crestline. Then we went down the other slope along somewhat wider trails, lined with evergreen trees which were becoming increasingly numerous as we approached the valley down the hill. After crossing the Khunar, on a wooden raft mounted on inflated goat skins and pulled by a rope stretched between the two banks. We had at last taken the "grand road" of Djalalabad, that track which is strewn with stones, bringing us to the edge of the Pech valley, where the vegetation suddenly turned green. Nevertheless, I would say, that things were getting complicated because one must agree that the country in which we were and in which we had been walking about for several hours looks like anything but Afghanistan.

Here is what I mean: It looks like anything but Afghanistan, the way it had been described to us and the way we had been expecting to find it. What we found, in effect, was a country that was amazingly calm, peaceful, and tranquil. We saw long stretches of desolate countryside, totally silent, where even the people looked as if they were made of stone. There were less bomb craters, for example, or rocket debris than abandoned fields or vast, deserted farm houses with the doors swinging in the wind. Instead, above all, there was that ceaseless, tumultuous, and almost feverish shuttling of men whom, last winter already, the journalists discovered on their way through, a rather unique flow of guerrilla fighters in a hurry or smugglers who, without stopping, greeted each other with a brief "Salam aleikum," mumbling through their teeth. This went so far that, if our companions had not pointed out to us, up on the high ground, some villages which were still under the control of the Hezbi, we might have believed that we were in a quite unreal, phantom country where the most discrete, the cleanest, or the most neutral of neutral bombs had just wiped out everything to the very last traces of life.

But there was one sign among many others which, in this guerrilla zone, was quite unmistakable: the fact that we were able to march in this fashion, from morning until night, without really running into a single friendly farm, a shelter where we would have been able to catch our breath. Here is another terrible and pathetic thing: that old Arbab, the "big father of waters," which we crossed by ferry at a nearby village, where they told us how the "Communists" came one night, poisoned the narrow canal around which life had been organized, and thus in a few days emptied the village when everybody left. There is a third village on the

other bank, a little further away; it is Chigal, the dead town, with its mosque intact, its long dirt streets covered with weeds, and its houses made of mud bricks similar to the dirt and dust in the streets. But I was forgetting the essential thing: along the main road, there were tank tracks several weeks old and half way toward the river, there was the ruin of a fort which had been destroyed a long time ago; I must say that we did not even find the shadow of an enemy soldier.

Should we believe one of guides who told us by way of explanation: "The Russians are cowards who never leave their barracks out of fear of running into a patrol of Mujahedin?" Should we believe the second one when he objects: "They did come out, last month, when they wanted to retake the forts of Asmar, Nari, and Barikot[1], and if you do not see them anymore, it is because unfortunately there is nothing left to retake, everything has been destroyed?" Or should we once again believe Amin, when he shows us quite clearly that "Afghanistan is not Vietnam," that "the Red Army is not an army of GI's," and that it has learned "to control the country without having to be everywhere all the time and be seen by everyone?" What we saw in any case is the mark of a new, subtle, and really diabolical strategy: to rule without managing anything; to remain there without showing themselves; to starve the people, to empty the land, to turn the land into a desert by presenting a grand military spectacle in an economical fashion[2].

Be that as it may, war being what it is, it must be admitted, that for the time being, the strategy in question did not harm our designs too much. It was amid relative quiet, as a matter of fact, that we were able, on the crest, to turn the radios over to Ishak and Safi, the two khans who had come to meet us. Without too much apprehension we saw half of our escort leaving us and then, with the technicians, they took the precious radios to a safer place. We arrived here, at this refuge, almost after an easy walk; this is where we are to hear the first real broadcast.

Sixth Night

It is not yet midnight. We had just managed to lie down, stretching out on our "charpoi" mats. A child, furtive and serious at the same time, entered with a platter, with tea, griddle-cakes, and balls of brown sugar. Standing still at the door, he says: "It is time to get up; they are waiting for you outside."

They were indeed waiting for us outside. But instead of the two guards, whom we had left outside, we now saw scores, perhaps 100 individuals, standing around in the night, like an army of shadows, yet made of flesh, wearing the big, earth-colored robes, within whose folds we can sometimes guess the presence of a rifle. There were children among them and also some women and, somewhat further away, the group of "greybeards," the venerable old members of the tribes. "My brothers," Amin said simply, with a broad gesture, "they have come to listen; they will go up with us."

We climbed up with them, behind them, stumbling after them, on the trail that was only poorly illuminated by the moon. With each step, they miraculously managed to avoid the ever-present rocks, helping us along, moving the black column all along the slope. Finally the circle reforms around an old transistor from which we

suddenly hear the magical voice coming from the other valley: "This is Radio Free Kabul. First broadcast by the free Afghans. The Afghans speak to their brothers in Afghanistan."

And then, suddenly, there was imprudence. The crowd made an irreparable mistake. Before anybody could stop them, one, two, three, and then ten of our commrades raised their weapons to the sky and fired a salvo of joy. The group broke up and without a word, without making a noise, went down the slope. The night, it is sometimes said, belongs to the Mujahedin; the trouble is that, during that night, the Mujahed were just 800 meters from a little Soviet fort.

The rest was almost beyond description. We returned in the middle of the night along the trail we had taken earlier. During the night we quickly had to cover the entire distance we had covered all day long, before. Quickly we found the ferry, fortunately, and, early in the morning, we were barely able to avoid a reconnaissance helicopter. We marched until we were dead-tired, our muscles tight, the blood pounding in our heads, loosing track of time until the crest was just a line on the horizon.

Seventh Day

"So, you are a deserter?"

"No, we do not desert any more. The barracks are locked. The soldiers have been disarmed. And when they go out to shoot, they do so with Soviet machine guns at their backs."

"Still, you are here."

"Yes, but that is something else again. That is because we paid. So they let me escape."

"How did that work? Who paid?"

"My family, of course. They paid the Afghan officer at my garrison."

"Does that happen often?"

"I think so. They were recruiting us by force. They put us into uniform. They transported us by aircraft to the other end of the country. And then they talked to the family and fixed the ransom."

We heard the beginning of this unique tale while sitting calmly on the hood of the Toyota. The road from Badjawar to Peshawar as a matter of fact will just shortly, before our eyes, in a few minutes, be flooded with water rushing down from the mountains. This is the moment when the heros come out, when the women shed their veils, when the cowherd runs after his cow and the refugees come out of the camps to pick up a little bit of dead wood swept along by the torrent. For us, this is the time at least, without reservation and without any afterthoughts, to listen to the story told by the little soldier from the Asadabad garrison.

Eighth Day

This was a quiet day, without any stories. Rossellini returned to Dara to see if someone could build a safety system capable of turning the transmitters on at a distance, between two popguns. Marek Halter remained at Peshawar to translate the cassettes in which Bukovskiy, Maksimov, and some others addressed the Soviet soldiers. Together we finally finished the "chart" draft which tomorrow we would present to the brand-new Afghan committee of Radio Free Afghanistan.

Ninth Day

There are those who are still worried about those Russian cassettes which--"dissident" or not dissident--will disseminate the voice of the Soviets in the country.

There are also those who are quite justifiably concerned with pursuading the Pakistanis and who suggested that a recording studio, which we were going to leave behind us, should be set up in the tribal zone.

There was also the statement by Amin, broadly outlining the technical, political, and military aspects of the "program schedule" which, according to him, is to be started up quickly.

There were the remarks by Abdul, the elite sharpshooter, thanking the French government for having, through us, aided the Afghan people and then we, a little bit embarrassed, said that "the French government" unfortunately was not much right here.

Then there was our pledge to continue the fight, to spread the solidarity campaign in Europe, to do everything we could so that scores of new transmitters would be able next year in Kabul to relay the voice of liberty.

Only one question remained: after returning to Paris, will we know how to keep the promise we made to the Afghans--as we were able, at Peshawar, to keep our promise to the French, perhaps not too badly after all[3]?

FOOTNOTES

1. According to our information, gathered on the spot and from witnesses, very severe clashes took place around these frontier forts during last July.

2. This stretegy was analyzed by Gerard Chaliand, in his "Rapport sur la resistance afghane," Berger-Levrault, 1981.

3. To enable Radio Free Kabul to continue, send your donations to the Comite Droits de l'Homme, 152, rue du Chateau, 75014 Paris.

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AFGHANISTAN

CORRESPONDENT DESCRIBES DEVELOPMENTS IN HOSTILITIES

Milan PANORAMA in Italian 5 Oct 81 pp 90-100

[Report by Carlo Rossella]

[Text] PANORAMA's correspondent was one of the few to experience at first hand the way things were in Kabul with the Afghan leadership group after the Soviet invasion. What are they thinking inside those government buildings, under the watchful eye of the Red Army? Will the guerrillas win? Or will the tanks crush them all?

I. Situation in Kabul

By 10 o'clock at night in Kabul you can't hear so much as a sigh. The curfew is rigorous. Only the military and government officials, in their white Niva sedans given them by the Soviets, can move about. The movie houses, most of them showing smash-hit Indian cartoons, close at 9. The restaurants douse their kebab grills even earlier. Receptions at the embassies start at 5:30 and end promptly at 8. Anyone who has to stay home must be content with television. Every evening Kabul's 700,000 citizens can watch the animated cartoons, films, and political documentaries flown in daily from the Soviet Union. In a city without bookstores, TV is a potent educational tool in the hands of Babrak Karmal's regime. The enchanted silence of an evening without traffic is broken now and then by the sound of far-off cannon-fire, or by machinegun fire on the outskirts of the city.

There are two versions as to where the gunfire comes from: one is the one you hear in the streets ("It's the war between the Mujahim and the Shuravi -- the Russians"), and then there's the official version. Questioned about the gunfire, the policeman on guard at the now-deserted Intercontinental Hotel told PANORAMA: "They're building a big new road, and blasting the rock." Pressed to explain the machinegun fire, the policeman replied: "They're building a little street and breaking up the ground with air hammers."

It is no secret from anybody that the guerrillas are sniffing round the edges of Kabul, even though the authorities say those who do are merely isolated suicide units. The Mujahim come down into the city to hit

safe targets: a party official, a union organizer, a mullah who supports the regime, a schoolteacher conspicuous for his zeal in the literacy campaign, perhaps an occasional Soviet patrol. There can be no large-scale, spectacular actions in a city watched around the clock by Afghan troops and by the "limited contingent" of Soviet troops.

And yet, in spite of the tight controls, Kabul is still the central target for anti-government instincts and stirrings. On Tuesday 8 September, a few hours after the call to mobilization for every male from 25 to 35, students, men and women alike, spontaneously formed processions along the Parwan road and in the old city, around the Enquelab high school, chanting "Russia, get out! We'll take care of our own country!" The police and the army let them march, while youthful party activists tried to convince their peers of the need to enlist new recruits to replace the 10,000 troops who were about to be mustered out.

Then on Saturday 5 September, in the face of a general shutdown by the city's shopkeepers to protest the call to arms, armed party militia made the rounds of all the shops. A few shopwindows were shattered, but in most cases -- after interminable argument -- the shops opened again. "In the days of Hafizullah Amin, before the second revolution on 27 December 1979, the students and shopkeepers would have come to grief," the proprietor of the Antique Shop on Chicken Street told PANORAMA, "but this regime is betting on talking to the people; they want to broaden their consensus, to win the people's sympathy."

Put into power with the telling support of the Soviets, Babrak Karmal, leader of the "Parcham" (flag) wing of the People's Democratic Party (the bloody dictator, Amin, belonged to the "Khalq" wing), did and is doing everything he can to achieve party unity by doing away with the long-standing feud between the two factions, and to unify the nation. Both goals are on the outer fringes of possibility. Karmal himself is thoroughly aware of that. After Amin's elimination, many of his men -- those who had not been deeply compromised by the repression of his regime -- kept their positions at the summits of government and of the party. One of those purged, Assadullah Sarwari, who headed the secret police, was appointed ambassador to Mongolia. Others, like Mohammad Aslam Watanjar, Communications Minister under Amin and now under Karmal, have never left off criticizing the Parcham wing's policy decisions, beginning with the Soviet military intervention so offensive to so much of the citizenry.

In a long talk with PANORAMA about the state of the party, Dastaghir Panchiri, 48, a member of the politburo and head of the central control commission, admitted -- albeit with a plethora of diplomatic euphemism -- that there was still conflict between Parcham and Khalq. Said he: "People bring their own class personalities with them into the party. There are not many workers there. Party members are an aristocracy made up of petit-bourgeois intellectuals. We have to fight for unity every single day."

Organized along classical socialist lines (Central Committee, Politburo, general secretariat), made up of trained cadres (18,000 members), run by full-time salaried officials, maintaining close ties with the various

trade and professional organizations, with women's groups, religious organizations, and the unions, and playing a conspicuous role in a National Patriotic Front made up of various social forces, according to a technique perfected in the Third-World countries that are building on the Soviet experience, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has never called itself a Marxist, much less a Leninist party.

PANORAMA got an explanation of this anomaly from Haider Massoud, Deputy Minister for Information: "Socialism is not on the agenda in Afghanistan. Our revolution is nationalist and democratic and anti-feudal, not socialist."Recalling the excesses committed in Amin's time, when the president used to read the Soviet ambassador lessons on the principles of Leninism and when the national flag was replaced with a Bolshevist-style red banner, Panchiri added: "In its political action the party must make allowances for religion, habits, tribes, and nationalities, and above all remember the high percentage of illiterates and the need for clear, unambiguous, non-traumatic talk." It is no accident, for example, that Babrak Karmal, a Marxist veteran, always begins his speeches in the name of Allah, attends the mosques, praises the great ancestral traditions of the people -- doing his level best to shake off the charge that his regime is "atheistic, bolshevist, and anti-national," as the Mujahid propaganda artists so assiduously charge.

In the immediate aftermath of the coup there were many Afghans who did not believe Karmal's professions of faith; now, however, popular consensus behind his government seems to be building -- albeit at a moderate rate. The government-built mosques are beginning to fill. The country schools, one of the guerrillas' prime targets, can count a few more pupils, in spite of guerrilla threats against those who send their children to the government's schools. Farmers are attending government-sponsored extension courses in greater numbers. In the major cities military control, incessant propaganda, and government investments are beginning to win new support for the regime.

Pledged to fight the Mujahim with an ill-trained, undisciplined army riddled with desertion (hundreds of young men who answered the call to arms have left Kabul and gone home to their mountain villages), the Afghan government, which just a few days ago set up a national defense council to improve the anti-guerrilla effort, is centering its attention -- so as to boost its prestige among the people -- on the schools (hundreds of youngsters are being sent to study in the Soviet Union), on agriculture, and on technical and economic progress. Pervasive for at least 20 years in all Afghan ministries, Soviet civilian advisers have concentrated their efforts on precisely these sectors. "The Soviets are very generous with their economic aid; agriculture, industry, construction, and social amenities are the sectors where they routinely spend millions of dollars," PANORAMA heard in confidence from Sultan Ali Kishtmand, Afghanistan's prime minister and the regime's top technocrat. Soviet experts, as Abdul Hakim, deputy Minister for Agriculture, confirmed, are to be found, for instance, in many of the 1,200 government-founded cooperatives. "It was a tremendous effort," says Hakim. "Our people were used to feudalism, and totally lacking in anything like a cooperative mindset."

After the fiasco of Amin's agrarian reform program (distributing land to the peasants), a good 195,000 small farmers agreed to join the new units and, according to Hakim, the plan's target of increasing production by 3 percent has been reached "despite attacks by counter-revolutionaries on the trucks carrying farm products to their local collection centers." According to many of the Western experts in Kabul, the Afghan economy is not doing at all badly, despite the war. Kishtmand confirms their opinion. Says he: "The market is thriving, prices are stable, and the balance of payments shows a surplus." In the colorful bazaars of Kabul the "nan," the traditional Afghan sweetened bread, sells for 3 afghani (75 lire) a kilo. Mutton costs 100 afghani a kilo (2,500 lire). Milk sells for 10 afghani per liter (250 lire). The average worker earns 2,000 afghani per month (50,000 lire), while a top government official takes home 7,000 afghani (175,000 lire). These are incomes on which one can subsist in what is still a primitive economy (there is full employment, for instance, partly because 2 million Afghans have fled the country). Based on small tradesmen, on the crafts, and on barter, the economy is thriving in a capital which has no sewers and reeks of hashish, where the latter-day blue-collar neighborhoods have almost all been built (with prefabricated construction) by the present government. Will economic and military efforts, literacy campaigns, and Soviet investments manage to increase the Karmal regime's prestige among the tribes and nationalities, and to dry up those waters in which so many guerrilla fish now swim so merrily? That is a question a lot of people are asking in Kabul.

According to Western analyses, the Afghan question is destined to remain an open one for some time to come. One thing, though, seems to be sure: the Soviets will never abandon the Afghan regime to its own resources, and -- no matter what it costs -- they are very unlikely to pull out of Kabul before they have a complete guarantee of a free and peaceable existence for their "brother regime." Even in Moscow these days, the Afghan experts at the Far East Institute, while they admit that Karmal is in trouble, and that he has his work cut out for him in his pursuit of popular consensus, view his leadership group as the protagonist in a long and exhausting march that may, when it is over, produce "good results." The Soviet experts compare it with the almost 10-year struggle against the Emir of Bukhara, who was finally defeated by the bolsheviks. Europeans in Kabul, though, tend to quote a 300-year-old Gurmukhi prophecy, which goes: "Punjabey Roose avayaga, purian atta wakagaya." What does it mean? Some day the Russians will come into the Punjab, and flour will be sold in bags.

2. Allah Is Great. Brezhnev, Though....

Standing guard over him is a special squad of Soviet soldiers. They wear olive drab uniforms, without insignia. Babrak Karmal, 64, president of Afghanistan, lives all by himself in what used to be the imperial palace in midtown Kabul. He doesn't sleep much. He reads a lot of books, mostly on economics. In an imposing room still redolent of the ancient palace, among Oriental rugs and gilt mirrors, PANORAMA interviewed him. Here is what he had to say.

Question: They are writing in the West that Babrak Karmal's regime could not last 48 hours without the Soviets to prop it up. Is that true?

Answer: I know they are talking nonsense like that. But let's talk facts. The Soviets' "limited contingent" is here on the basis of an agreement between our countries and on the basis of a specific article -- article 51 -- of the United Nations Charter. There is an undeclared war being waged against us, supported by Pakistan with the backing of the United States, China and such reactionary Arab states as Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Question: The guerrilla war the Mujahim are fighting is a tough one. How long do you think it will last.

Answer: Without support from the reactionary powers it would sputter out within a few months. Unfortunately, though, there is very strong outside support.

Question: And so...

Answer: Bandit incursions across our borders continue. They come in small groups of 10 or 20 people. They work as terrorists.

Question: Is it true that they control whole provinces?

Answer: There are districts where they maintain a presence. Our armed forces destroy them every day. But there is something you should know. In Afghanistan, down through history, there has never been full authority for any central government over the entire extent of our territory. Now for the first time there is a State determined to impose that authority.

Question: The government has drafted ten levies. What does this gigantic recruiting effort mean?

Answer: We have an undeclared war to fight. Reagan has said openly that America is helping the bandits. Pakistan, directly or indirectly, is challenging Afghanistan. We are determined to defend and clean up our territory, and this latest draft was levied to enable us to resist any aggression.

Question: Does that mean that the war will be fought by the Afghans, rather than by the Soviets?

Answer: The Soviets' "limited contingent" is here to help us and to control aggression from abroad. But the fight against mercenaries within our borders is for the Afghan army to fight.

Question: When will the Soviets pull out of Kabul?

Answer: We want to settle that through diplomatic channels. We have asked Pakistan and Iran to sit down with us at the negotiating table. We have agreed to mediation by the United Nations. But Pakistan and Iran have not replied, and are still supporting the counter-revolutionary gangs. That means that the imperialists, the Chinese hegemonists, and all their allies do not want the Soviet contingent to leave. Because -- make no mistake -- the Soviets will leave when any and all interference with us has stopped. Every nation must be free to determine its own destiny. All that is written in the United Nations Charter. So it is for the Afghan people to decide, and nobody else.

Question: In other words, you would oppose any negotiations that would cast doubt on the legitimacy of the Kabul regime.

Answer: Absolutely. It was the people who made the revolution, not I. I am equally opposed to certain plans, such as the one proposed by Lord Carrington...

Question: Why?

Answer: Because it is not for the European Community or for other countries to meddle in our internal affairs. We rejected the Carrington plan because it was designed to make the Afghan situation an international issue.

Question: What sort of society are you trying to establish in Afghanistan?

Answer: We are now going through the democratic revolution phase. We must establish a genuine political, economic, and social democracy. We are determined to abolish any and all kinds of oppression, despotism, and exploitation.

Question: You talk of democracy, but are you ever going to have free and open elections, open to all political parties, as the Western systems do?

Answer: We are already planning for elections. We have a tradition here called "jirga" (a kind of council made up of wise men and of individuals deemed typical of Afghan society: Ed.). We shall set up village and district and city and provincial jirgas. Anybody who is against imperialism, anybody who is for the revolution will be eligible for election. And then we have established the National Front, a mass organization where there are voices for the writers and workers, journalists and peasants, organized labor and the Muslim clergy who are not members of the party.

Question: Your regime is trying hard to reconcile Marxism with the Koran. Doesn't this look to you like a flat contradiction?

Answer: My ideology is that of the party and of the working class, but as it applies to our society. Our party, our government, and I

myself have a profound and sincere respect for the traditons and the religion of the people. We allow nobody to engage in anti-religious propaganda. We respect the tribes and the ethnic and national groups. Afghanistan is a Muslim, nonaligned nation.

Question: Yet it is also a country practically isolated from the international community...

Answer: We have a lot of enemies, but then we have a lot of friends, too...

Question: In recent months you have struck up a close friendship with Indira Ghandi's India. How in the world did that happen?

Answer: India is a traditional friend of ours. India and Afghanistan both want a return to the peace and security of our region that has been troubled by the American attempts to use Pakistan as a policeman by stuffing it with bases and weapons. Right now, India's role is of vital importance to us. The next few months will give you some idea of what that means.

3. With Ivan in Kabul

> This is a look at the way the 80,000 Soviet soldiers in this country have been living since they occupied it on 27 December 1979. They fight a while. They work a while. And they shop in the bazaar -- with a wary eye out for ambush.

Planned initially, according to Western ambassadors in Kabul, with crucial input from Vassilli Safrontchouk, the number-three man in the Soviet embassy in Afghanistan, the Afghan diplomatic offensive against Pakistan and Iran enjoys the natural support and full backing of Moscow.

The Soviets have made India fertile ground through Sha Mohammad Dost, the Afghan foreign minister. And now Indira Ghandi is canvassing the non-aligned nations on behalf of Babrak Karmal's repeated requests for a three-way Iran-Pakistan-Afghanistan confrontation under the United Nations umbrella.

In Moscow, though, PANORAMA managed to discover that other very discreet diplomatic moves were made by the Soviets to stage negotiations on the Afghan question that would guarantee the existence of the present regime there. Active -- among others -- in this area has been Vsevolod Benevolensky, deputy director of the Oriental Studies Institute of the USSR's Academy of Science.

Late in August or early in September Benevolenski, his boss, and his colleagues spoke with several diplomats in the Chinese embassy in Moscow, and made contact with two Iranian political figures: Amadi, who is departmental director at the Foreign Ministry, and Malaek, adviser to the Prime Minister on political matters. A diplomatic solution just

might let the USSR cut back and, once it has specific guarantees, actually withdraw its 80,000-man "limited contingent." At the CPSU Central Committee offices in Moscow they tell you: "We shall leave Afghanistan when the Afghans ask us to." Soviet leaders know, though, that nobody is going to ask them to leave for quite some time to come.

Meanwhile Ivan, the ordinary soldier in the Red Army, will just have to stay in Kabul. In their summer khakis and their canvas cowboy hats, the soldiers in the army of the USSR are extremely young, and straight out of basic training. They come from every one of the Soviet Socialist Republics, but in the cities the ones you see are mainly tall, blond youngsters from the Baltic states or Finland. Out in the country, though, most of the troops are Uzbeks, Tajiks, Cossaks,or Kirgiz. Life in Afghanistan is deadly monotonous for them. They muster at 0500. They have breakfast, then set off for the area of operations or for the constructin sites. They go back to the big barracks in town, or to their posts in the mountains.

Red Army headquarters in Afghanistan, according to Western sources in Kabul, have split the country up into five operational zones, each of them in turn broken down into several peripheral headquarters. The service branches in Afghanistan in massive numbers are the air force, the Blue Berets, the infantry, and, more numerous than any others, the engineers. Soviet soldiers build houses, schools, roads, hospitals, and even a railroad, the first in Afghanistan, which someday will link Kabul with Tashkent.

Mainly, though, the Red Army is engaged in expanding its own bases. In the Khari Khana district, some 10 kilometers outside Kabul, something that can only be described as a complete fortified town is going up. In town, the soldiers are seen only aboard trucks, jeeps, and armored vehicles. At night they are stationed at all the major intersections. Late in the afternoon, with their Btr-60s, they show up on Chicken Street, Kabul's main shopping center, to buy or to trade their own products for those of the local shopkeepers. Their wares are vodka, caviar, cans of food, leather belts, automobile spare parts, and gasoline coupons, and they buy Afghan hats with the fur side in, jeans, leather jackets, Rayban sunglasses, and sometimes even hashish.

PANORAMA talked to a soldier named Sasha, a 20-year-old laborer from Leningrad: "Shopping is our only amusement in Afghanistan. For the rest of the time, we either work or fight." Soviet tactics, as PANORAMA learned at first hand, is designed to get "maximum results with minimum losses." The Red Army in Afghanistan is aiming at control of the cities and of the major lines of communication, particularly the road that leads north, toward the USSR, which is the Red Army's supply lungs. A full-scale military offensive during the summer months was mounted in the Panshir Valley north of Kabul on the Pakistani border, an area which, sooner or later, and whatever the cost, the Soviets are determined to win control of so as to stop -- or at least slow -- the more massive guerrilla infiltration efforts. Right now they are fighting at Kandahar, which is a fairly big town.

When the Soviets move into a zone of operations they do it with columns of armor, especially with their little BMD tanks or their BTR-60 armored personnel carriers. When a convoy is attacked they call in the Mi-24, Mi-24d, MI-25, or Mi-6 helicopters. The Red Army moves in as a rule only when Afghan troops find themselves in trouble. In the most serious cases they bring in airborne troops in their enormous Mi-6s. They are deployed on the peak of a mountain, and slowly move down into the valley, mopping up the whole area and forcing the guerrillas to defend themselves on two fronts.

While the Red Army has the upper hand when it encounters the guerrillas in the open, it does not have so easy a time of it when it has to cope with sudden raids by the Mujahim commandos on the major communication arteries and in the impassable mountain terrain.

In Afghanistan the guerrillas swim through the people like fish through water, and it is hard for the Soviets to predict their moves and countermoves, their surprise attacks and hit-and-run assaults. What is more, petty terrorism scares Ivan. His comrades who die or are wounded in Afghanistan fall mainly during unsuspected ambushes, or even at the point of a knife. Since the beginning of armed intervention in Afghanistan the USSR has lost no more than 1,500 men, according to reliable Western sources in Kabul. Many of them died in combat. Others succumbed to disease, particularly viral hepatitis. PANORAMA saw 32 ambulances enter the Red Army hospital in Kabul on an ordinary September afternoon, Most of those in them were sick, not wounded.

If Ivan dies in Kabul, his body is sealed into a zinc coffin (craftsmen in the old quarter of the city make them in Afghanistan). And in the USSR, above his grave alongside his name, his photograph, and the dates of his birth and death, there is the inscription: "Fallen in a military maneuver zone." Nobody, not even his family, needs to know that this particular Red Army soldier died in Afghanistan. A disciplinary regulation says that no recruit may tell anyone where he is. When his parents write to him, they use the equivalent of an APO number.

There are a lot of soldiers in Afghanistan, though, who break the rule and tell their mothers, brothers, and best friends about their experiences. PANORAMA found out, while talking with several Soviet soldiers in Kabul, what they wrote in their letters: Accounts of their daily lives, complaints of homesickness, but mainly social and political analysis. Ivan the soldier is politically literate, and propaganda has convinced him that he is "fighting to help a friendly country to progress." One Uzbek soldier wrote to his mother: "Can you imagine? There are still women here who wear veils, and children who go barefoot!"

Others talk about the guerrillas: "They blow up schools and shops." Still others promise to get their money's worth for what they have earned in Afghanistan and to bring home fine gifts and a "dublonka" (a sheepskin overcoat with the fleece side in). Of course there is the

fear of being killed or wounded, or even falling into the hands of the Mujhadim "who don't take prisoners."

Subject at home to their officers by a harsh hierarchical relationship, the Soviet soldiers in Kabul allow themselves considerably more freedom. You see shirt collars unbuttoned, shoes half-heartedly shined, and occasionally even a schoolboy escapade. They are still talking in Kabul about the particularly hot and dusty night when there was a full moon, when two soldiers were caught taking a dip in the swimming pool at the French ambassador's residence. The man who saw them reported: "They were doing a first-rate crawl."

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IRANIAN JOURNALIST DESCRIBES PRISON ORDEAL

PM061527 Paris L'EXPRESS in French 2 Oct 81 pp 49-51

[Interview with Iranian journalist Siyavush Bashiri by Christian Hoche in Paris: "Iran: A Condemned Man Tells His Story"--date not given]

[Text] [Bashiri speaking] It was the 10th of August 1980. I think it was a Sunday. Night had just fallen over Tehran--a warm and silent night. Since being fired as an editorialist on the newspaper ETTELA'AT I knew that my life was in danger. What was my crime? At the shah's request I had written a book on the Pahlavi monarchy which was the first volume of a 30,000-page encyclopedia on Iran's history. Ayatollah Do'a'i, nicknamed "Lafayette," the newspaper's new boss, had threatened me. When he was in exile with Khomeyni at Neauphle-le-Chateau, he was caught redhanded stealing from Galeries Lafayette. Ayatollah Montazeri was forced to pay a Fr 4,000 fine to get him out of that mess. Hence the nickname...

For several months I worked clandestinely with journalists, writers, and intellectuals, denouncing the Khomeyni regime. For instance, we collected proof that the top clerical bodies were misappropriating money from the central bank's coffers. Ayatollah Montazeri and his son, Ahmad Khomeyni (the imam's son) and Ayatollah Shahab Eshraghi among others were involved. Many other clerics were also involved and they were and still are turning the plundering of the country into a government system.

On 10 August 1980, therefore, I had hidden in the house of some friends as I did almost every evening. Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali, chief of the antidrugs-drive and the Isalmic courts' prosecutor, was having people arrested and executed arbitrarily. At around 2300 hours some Pasdaran (revolution guards) surrounded my hiding place. They broke down the door, fired several rounds into the house and arrested me. The insulted me and took me to Qasr prison. To the north of the capital it was called the Khalkhali prison because the ayatollah was there for a long time. I was trembling with fear.

The next day at 1900 hours I was subjected to my first interrogation. Opposite me were two of the Islamic courts' inquisitors: Safa Tahmasebi and Mohammad Rezvani, a member of the Tuden (Iranian Communist Party), who is responsible for the death of 450 people (note 1) (he is now being held in Evin prison).

Rezvani: "Where are you hiding your weapons? Confess. We know that you are working for Bakhtiar, the shah and the Feda'yan-e Khalq. You will tell us eventually, you'll see!"

I did not answer for the simple reason that I was not a terrorist. Rezvani ordered me to be taken to Mashallah Qassad, one of the leaders of the students' committee at the U.S. Embassy. Qassad and his thugs beat me from 1900 hours to 0400 hours: they hit me in the kidneys with the butts of their rifles and kicked me in the face. To end with they gave me 100 lashes with an electric cable. I was covered with blood and in a comatose state. I was already a physical wreck. There was a terrible buzzing in my head. At dawn they dragged me into a 40 square-meter cell in which 80 poor devils were packed. They had heard my cries. One of them tried to ease my pain with a dirty rag soaked in oil.

One File Per Arrival

On Monday 11 August, the 'Eydi Fitr Festival (last day of Ramadan), my companions were anxiously listening to the groans which could be heard in our building. "Haj-aqa," one of them shouted. This is the name given to Khalkhali. Everybody held his breath. Almost every day in midafternoon he personally chose future victims for exceution. His timetable had scarcely varied since he set up his headquarters at the prison. From 0800 to 1400 he sat in Parliament. Then he returned to Qasr and sat in the court where he has amassed silk carpets stolen from condemned people. He rested there for a good hour and then went to his room. It was there that he sat in judgment. At dawn the Pasdaran unloaded truckloads of prostitutes, homosexuals, drug-addicts, "counterrevolutionaries," big bourgeois, Baha'is, former officers and so forth. Mohammad Rezvani drew up the same file for each "arrival." All that was missing was the sentence opposite the names. Khalkhali dealt with that. The door of the room opened: Immediately the Pasdaran pushed a good 20 prisoners in, most arrested for drug trafficking. The prisoner was forbidden to speak. He could not even give his name. Rezvani went up to Khalkhali, whispered a few words in his ear and, "In the name of God the almost and merciful," the ayatollah passed sentence: immediate execution, 10, 20 or 30 years' imprisonment. This mockery of a trial lasted between 3 and 5 minutes. Khalkhali mopped his brow. Then, singing and accompanied by the warders, he would visit the "political prisoners" cells. He chose his victims at random with a snap of his fingers: "You, get out. You must go." There was no appeal against the verdict. A few hours after that lottery they were shot.

The day after my arrest, when the others in my cell, which had been christened "the antechamber of death," heard Khalkhali snapping his fingers and speaking in his falsetto voice, they prayed quietly. Suddenly a small, ugly, plump figure appeared, shifting from one foot to the other: Khalkhali. He looked around. He snapped his fingers. Seven people, including me, were picked out in that way. Among us was Gen Mohammad Shahnameh, who was responsible for the capture of Navab-safavi, founder of the Feda'yan-e Eslam (Muslim Brothers, Iranian branch).

The Kurd's Will

Before we left everybody gave us a long embrace. With an impatient gesture a Pasdaran ordered us to follow him to a small room to write our wills. That was

the rule. Any condemned man had to write his last wishes before dying. Of course they were never passed on to the family. If somebody left a certain sum of money to his wife and children, the Pasdaran gave him a 24-hour reprieve. Indeed the next day they accompanied the prisoner to his bank and drew the money out of his account. In fact all that money was paid into Khalkhali's personal account. The condemned man knew nothing about that and was convinced that he had escaped execution. I remember that one day a Kurd named Parviz Manaseki, had left almost Fr 70,000 to his children in his will. The usual scenario took place: 24-hour reprieve, withdrawal from the bank account and return to the prison. At dinner time two Pasdaran rushed toward him. In his terror he choked. He was led, or rather dragged, to the firing squad.

But that Monday 11 August I could not believe that I was going to die. How could I be executed before first being tried? Five of the seven condemned people were sobbing. A small trader from the bazaar had even collapsed. He was incapable of writing and asked me to write his will while the Pasdaran stood behind us cleaning their guns.

"I am going to kill you!" a young revolution guard screamed at General Shahnameh. Each Pasdaran chose his target. Since I remained standing, confidently, they demanded that I write a few lines to my family. I wrote these words: "Tortured, not tried, innocent."

My will, like the six others, was taken to Khalkhali. One by one we entered his room. He was alone and muttering something, I did not know what. He has a strong Turkish accent and he asked me without looking up:

"Don't you want to ask me for anything? Don't you want to see your children?"

"You know very well that my children are living in Paris. But I would just like to ask you to allow General Shahnameh's family, who are weeping in the parlour, to see him one last time."

"Son of a whore, son of a bitch, you must be joking."

The conversation last barely 1 minute. I was thrown out of the room. We were kept in a narrow corridor for almost 2 hours. One of the condemned men asked for some water, he was refused. "No water for the corrupt on earth," a Pasdaran said.

At 2100 hours Khalkhali came out of his room and gave the order for us to be led into the courtyard in the center of the prison. We took about 10 steps toward "Allah Akbar" wall, the red wall of the executed. Suddenly Khalkhali signaled to the warders with a snap of his fingers. About turn, back to the cell, but I was the only one concerned. As I passed he stopped me. "I must torture you before you die," he said. He smiled and ordered 100 lashes. I staggered. There was a concrete bench in the courtyard which was used for the torture. Men and women were laid down on it without distinction as soon as they entered Qasr. The punishment was always the same: 100 lashes. Only the instrument of torture differed: an electric cable 3 cm in diameter for the men, a watering hose for the women, whose legs were covered with a gunny bag. Islamic morality had to be observed. Many had their arms or ribs broken. Some were left paralyzed because they received no medical treatment.

Twenty Minutes to Die

When I lay down on the bench for the second time in 24 hours I looked at the sky: it was black. After a few seconds, when I received no lashes, I asked why I was not being beaten. A policeman who, like all the police, hated the Pasdaran, had taken pity on me. He helped me to put my shirt back on, which made Khalkhali angry. He hit me in the face with a big wooden ruler and shouted: "We'll meet again." I was thrown back into the "antechamber of death" and my comrades crowded round me to kiss me. They could not believe their eyes. Neither could I. At that very moment all the lights went out. It was time for the executions, which usually take place between 2200 hours and midnight. They never take place at dawn. From our cell window we could see "Allah Akbar" wall, hear the guns being loaded, the cries of the condemned men and, suddenly, the shots. The next day we could see the Pasdaran spreading whisky and vodka to try to remove the smell of blood. They did so in vain.

At 2310 hours my six fellow prisoners entered the courtyard. Powerful searchlights were turned on the wall. Their hands were not tied. Those who did not have a piece of material or a handkerchief did not have their eyes covered. Hajji Ahmad the leader of the firing squad, is proud of his mission: he executes people in the belief that he is serving Islam. He is doing so very badly because his men do not know how to shoot through the heart. One condemned prisoner, riddled with bullets, took 20 minutes to die. General Shahmaneh was there, holding his head high. When the automatic weapons were fired a prisoner scratched a little mark on the wall: the 427th mark...

Some 2 days later I was summoned by Khakhali again. "Khomeyni has told me that I should kill 100 people a day. I am killing between 10 and 20 out of the goodness of my heart."

This time there could be no miracle. Khalkhali condemned me to death. The searchlights were switched on. At the end of the yard was the red wall and the Pasdaran. I brought up the rear of the condemned men. Mr Iravani, a big Tehran capitalist, was beside me. My mind went blank, I can't remember any more. But I can still see Hajji Ahmad taking aim with his machinegun 10 meters away from me. I was looking death in the face. The guns fired. Men fell. I remained standing. Was I alive or dead? My heart began to race. A Pasdaran pulled my arm. My right cheek was burning. I ran my hand over it, it was red with blood. My shirt was soiled. I had been splattered with Mr Iravani's blood as he fell. The Pasdaran refused to allow me to wash my face.

Stench and Smell of Garlic

Some 3 days after my imprisonment I was summoned again. Alone. Mohammad Rezvani and Mashallah Qassad were waiting for me in the courtyard. They immediately asked me for Fr 3.5 million otherwise I would be executed. I told them that I did not have the money. Qassad pressed the barrel of his gun against my forehead. I had seen a condemned man killed like that the previous day at 0900 hours. I begged them to believe me. After 10 minutes they gave in and insulted me.

That was to be the last time I saw them. I did not see Sadeq Khalkhali again either. I was immediately transferred to Evin prison where I was subjected to two interrogations which concentrated on two obsessions: weapons and money. Then I returned to Qasr after 14 days. There was a change of scene! I was imprisoned in another building, in prison number 7. Meanwhile I learned that the Islamic Court had sentenced me to 3 years imprisonment. How? Why? I will never know. But I am sure of one thing: in that building designed for 400 prisoners (1,800 had been packed into it) I breathed more easily already. Nonetheless, the standards of hygiene were terrible. Our mattresses were swarming with fleas, our hair with lice. We had to relieve ourselves in our mess tins. The food was revolting. Moreover our rations were to be cut by half when the war with Iraq broke out. All the prisoners consumed an enormous amount of garlic to treat their illnesses. But the stench was so bad that it covered the smell of garlic. In winter the cells were icy cold, in summer they were suffocating. Despite everything we stuck together.

There were all kinds of people in prison number 7: two of Bakhtiar's cousins, a large number of doctors, deputies including Senator Homayuni, some officers and "common law" prisoners. There were also a few foreigners, notably Germans, French and English. I do not know why there were being held with us. But above all the Pasdaran had imprisoned mullahs. Around 10 of them, former Islamic judges, each responsible for the death of 150 people, quarrels with Khalkhali. The disagreements related solely to the division of the money stolen from the people sentenced to death! The prisoners cursed them. On the other hand they respected and even protected 60 or so religious dignitaries, supporters of ayatollahs Qomi and Shari'at Madari, who are completely opposed to Khomeyni. They include Allameh Vahidi Mazandarani, Ojjat ol-Eslam Ra'issi Gorgani, Hajji Ghavam-khataib and Ayatollah Mowla'i, a childhood friend of Khomeyni. It was through them that I learned that Sadeq Khalkhali had formed a pretorian guard of 5,000 men, extremely well trained and equipped. The ayatollah chose them himself from the students in Qom's theological schools and universities. Those chosen are all members of the Feda'yan-e Eslam organization. Every 2 weeks a team of 200 students arrives at Khalkhali's new residence in Shemiran, in Tehran's northern suburb. For 2 weeks, under the guidance of military instructors, they receive a very thorough training, usually reserved for paratroopers. Their "boss" is Lt Col Hamid Ta'ati, one of the "toughest" members of the former imperial army rangers. The existence of these "Islamic rangers" is a very closely-guarded secret. I was able to check all that when I was released from prison.

On Orders From the Imam's Office

One day, when Bani-sadr had just revealed the use of torture to the whole world, Khomeyni's supporters started opening the prisons. I was filled with wild hope. But I remembered that one Hajji Kushesh, prisoner number 28114, who was shot in August 1980 had received notice of his release 4 months before his death...On my file the following was written, underlined in red: "This prisoner must not be released, on orders from the imam's office." My prison comrades went on hunger strike in solidarity. Finally on 6 February 1981, the prison council director summoned me. He was about to be fired. He told me: "Since you are a writer

and can bear witness, I will have you released tomorrow. Leave Iran as soon as possible because your file will follow you always."

He kept his promise. The next day I was released. Some 48 hours later a new warrant was issued for my arrest. I did two things before fleeing via Turkey. I telephoned my mother but she had died of grief 6 months earlier when she was told that I had been shot. I then hid my shirt which was stained with Mr Iravani's blood. It is one of the many proofs of Khomeyni's crimes. Today the only memory I have is that of my suffering.

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PARIS MAGAZINE INTERVIEWS BANI-SADR

JN051110 Paris AL-WATAN AL-ARABI in Arabic 2-8 Oct 81 pp 42, 43

[Interview granted by former Iranian President Abolhasan Bani-Sadr to AL-WATAN AL-ARABI in Auvers-sur-oise--date not given]

[Excerpts] [Question] How can the massacres committed since the eruption of the first revolution up to the second revolution in Iran be justified in the name of Islam?

[Answer] They cannot. It appears to me that these massacres are being committed to take vengeance on Islam in the name of Islam. Islam as a religious call is a real revolution and could be the greatest revolution ever known to the world. Khomeyni, however, is taking vengeance on Islam. Khomeyni's theory is that Islam can never be applied except in crises. For the sake of applying Islam, Khomeyni is pursuing violence to confront the crises. Khomeyni believes only in violence and nothing else.

[Question] Does this mean that the bloodbaths will continue?

[Answer] Regrettably yes. Iran is now disintegrating because the present regime is impotent to solve the political and economic problems. The regime has no choice, because if it allows the opposition to express their ideas, it would mean its end.

[Question] There is a U.S. theory that the Iraqi-Iranian war must continue for the longest possible period because this would facilitate U.S. intervention in the Gulf when the time comes.

[Answer] I believe that the Americans wish to prolong the war because this is part of their Middle East policy as a whole.

[Question] You do not accept the theory that Khomeyni's downfall would serve Soviet interests?

[Answer] The Soviets do not benefit from the vacuum in Iran. The Tudeh Party does not exist as a popular base. It has lost many of its assets since the eruption of the revolution due to its participation or collusion in chasing the opposition. I want to say that the Soviets are currently gaining nothing. If Khomeyni falls, the Americans might prepare some kind of intervention.

[Question] Do you expect a [words indistinct] based on liberalism; the second is one of extremism; and the third is being prepared. What are we observing in Iran today? Two extremist parties are liquidating each other. The first party is the Islamic Republic Party and the other is Mojahedin-e Khalq. When the two parties are exhausted, everything will be ready for the third stage--the American stage.

[Question] Why is it American, and not Soviet, for example?

[Answer] This is simply because the basic Iranian structures are still American and the ruling forces, or those who can rule, depend on U.S. aid.

[Question] Do you expect a military coup d'etat?

[Answer] Why not?

[Question] If you were in a position to end the war through negotiations would you begin these negotiations [words indistinct] is of the Algiers agreement.

[Question] Cannot this agreement be overlooked?

[Answer] No. This agreement can only be overlooked by means of force. Also, any forcible concession could cause subsequent wars and these could be waged either by the Iraqis or by us. This means open war.

[Question] Did you meet with Hani al-Hasan, Yasir 'Arafat's envoy, on the occasion of his meeting with Mas'ud Rajavi?

[Answer] Of course, I have met him.

[Question] How do you explain Tehran's current relations with the PLO and particularly with Fatah?

[Answer] I do not believe that the PLO wants to cooperate with Khomeyni. The PLO's relations with the present regime are purely formal.

[Question] But the Palestinians did not choose to cooperate with the opposition?

[Answer] They do not hide their feelings toward the opposition. Hani al-Hasan's visit to Auvres-sur-oise confirms this reality.

[Question] What about your personal relations with Fatah? Also, are you in agreement with Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat]?

[Answer] I am in agreement with the Palestinian issue and I believe there is nothing that can dissociate us from the Palestinian struggle. We both belong to one culture--the Islamic culture. We also are in solidarity with the Palestinians.

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TUNISIA

NEW LAW PROMOTES MORE VIABLE, DECENTRALIZED EXPORT INDUSTRIES

Paris MARCHES TROPICAUX ET MEDITERRANEENS in French No 1869 4 Sep 81 p 2269

/Text/ Just before the year 1972 began, the Tunisian Investment Code, dating from 1969, seemed inadequate and unexciting to the planners. It was clear that only a valid legal instrument could stimulate foreign and Tunisian capital to invest for the conquest of foreign markets.

Law 72-38 of April 1972 instituted a particular regime on exporting industries. This is what industries are called whose entire production is destined for export. This law, a creator of jobs, aimed principally at setting right the chronic disequilibrium in the balance of trade. It offered great advantages to investors such as tax exemptions, easing of constraints in matters of currency exchange, and in repatriation of benefits and exemption from customs duty in the importation of raw materials and semimanufactured products used in their production.

After 9 years, the balance sheet of this sector shows that of the 781 projects approved by the Agency for the Promotion of Investments (API) from 1 January 1973 to 30 December 1980, of the total, 276 enterprises are presently operational. We must add to this number 7 companies under provisional decree for commercial reasons, 21 having asked for reconversion under Law 74-74 relating to investments in the manufacturing industry (of which 9 are Tunisian and 12 have Tunisian participation), and 26 companies closed as a result of various difficulties.

The 276 businesses employed, at the end of the past year, 27,251 people for an investment on the order of 85 million dinars (1 Tunisian dinar = 11 French francs). Forecasts reckoned on the creation of 68,687 jobs and an investment of 257 million dinars. Of the 276 companies operating today, 203 were created during the first 5 years (1973-1977), the 73 others formed during the period 1978-1980. The reason for the slowdown can be found in the world economic climate and in Europe's protectionist measures in regard to products coming from Third World countries. The EEC's restrictions on imports, implemented in 1977 and aiming essentially at combatting the wave of cheap imports from Asia, were a blow to the Tunisian textile industry.

For the 8 years (1973-1980), the losses can be counted, on the average, at 3 companies a year and 3,440 jobs. The Agency for the Promotion of Investments undertook great efforts to help businesses in difficulty. Thus, the startup of a dozen projects.

The Contribution of Exporting Businesses to the Tunisian Economy

Export businesses represent only 4.6 percent of the total number of manufacturing companies started during the same period 1973-1980 (6,000 units). But they created 16 percent of the total number of jobs in this sector.

In comparison to the results realized from industries licensed by Law 74-74 of 3 August 1974 relating to the conditions and advantages applicable to investments in manufacturing firms, the rate of realization of these licensed projects remains weak when it pertains to the export business (36 percent of the total number of projects, 33 percent of the sum of investments, and 40 percent of the jobs forecast). More rapid in their realization, enterprises of this type often encounter great obstacles before even seeing the light of day.

Although preferring urban areas offering, in general, better operating conditions (infrastructure, transportation, communication, etc.) 34 exporting firms were created outside the capital and the coastal areas (12 percent). This is important, for Tunisian authorities are anxious to create jobs in the less favored regions of the country and devote much effort (at great sacrifice) to decentralization and stopping rural exodus.

Statistics show that 87.6 percent of the export businesses are concentrated in the cities and coastal regions: Tunis (103), Sousse (24), Monastir (38), Nabeul (44), Sfax (14), Bizerte (18). The dry interior areas benefit only lightly from these installations: Zaghouan (13), Beja (6), Kef (4), Jendouba (2), Kasserine (1), Sidi Bouzid (1), Kairouan (1). The other coast doesn't profit from it either: Mahdia (3), Gabes (3). Law 72-38 doesn't give any specific privileges to decentralization, in contrast to Law 74-74 and new measures taken by the government in April 1981.

The principal provisions of the law of 23 June 1981 (OFFICIAL BULLETIN of 26 June) encouraging investments in manufacturing industries and industrial decentralization were analyzed in our 14 August edition (MTM, n° 1866, p 2099).

The 276 businesses realize about 10 percent of Tunisia's total currency receipts, including those coming from tourism and services, and they leave in the country a net added value of 50 million dinars per year.

The third benefit of this activity is the technological contribution. After a clear preference was shown at the beginning for the textile and hides sectors, we are witnessing a slowing down of this tendency and an orientation towards other sectors, chiefly towards the mechanical, electric, and electronics industries.

Promoters favored the industries which were easy to start and those requiring a large manpower factor. The current tendency is rather the installation of more viable export companies and of a greater technological contribution.

Distribution by Nationality

The promoters of manufacturing export companies are, by more than half, Tunisian or with Tunisian participation: 134 projects (48.4 percent of the total). The totally Tunisian enterprises represent 20.6 percent of the total with 57 units, of which 46 are in the textile sector. Seventy-seven (77) are with Tunisian participation (27.8 percent), 51 of which are in textiles and 9 are in the mechanical and electronics sectors.

The other units which are foreign, or in association with other countries, are distributed as follows: German, 64 (41 in textiles); French, 20 (11 in textiles); Benelux, 36 (24 in textiles); Arab or Arab/other countries 4 (currently just starting); others, 18 (14 in textiles).

Those businesses which are French, or partially French, total 70 projects (25.3 percent), with 7,573 jobs (27.5 percent), and those which are German, or partially German, number 83 units (30 percent), employing 9,809 people (36.6 percent). The other principal nationalities are Dutch, Italian, English, Japanese, Swiss, and American.

Sectors of Activity

Of the 276 enterprises created, 187 (68 percent of the total) are concentrated in textiles and 21,384 people (77 percent). These firms specialize in the manufacture of all kinds of clothing, knitted goods, lingerie, undergarments, swimsuits, furs, wigs, embroidered goods, caps, etc.

The mechanical and electric industries are in second place with 28 units, employing 2,455 people. These units are devoted to the manufacture or installation of such things as conveyor belts, transistors, batteries, coils, measuring tools, potentiometers, circuit-breakers, etc., and to construction with metals.

In third place is the leather and shoe sector with 21 projects and 1,765 jobs. These firms specialize in the manufacture of shoes, boots, soles, fancy leather goods, handbags, etc.

The chemical industries include 5 units (1.8 percent) and 568 employees (2.1 percent) and orient their activities towards granular phosphates, triphosphate of soda, ammonia, and rubber.

The remaining 35 firms employ 1,349 people and are involved in diverse activities such as furniture, crafts, and pottery, but especially coral and diamonds (cutting, polishing, and mounting).

Distribution by Nationality of Projects Under Way to 30 December 1980

Nationalities	Number	%	Jobs	%	Textile Industries	%
Tunisian	57	20.7	4,143	15	46	80.7
Tunisian-foreign	77	27.9	8,516	30.9	51	62.2
West German	64	23.2	7,076	25.7	41	64.1
France	20	7.2	1,478	5.4	11	55
Benelux	36	13	4,314	15.7	24	66.7
Arab or Arab/Foreign	4	1.4	currently under way			
Foreign or Mixed Foreign	18	6.5	2,044	7.4	14	77.8
Total	276	100	27,571	100	187	67.8

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