

Taleghani murdered?

A turning point in the recent developments in Iran was the sudden and mysterious death of the influential Ayatollah Taleghani Sept. 9. Just a week following his reported "heart attack," his son, a prominent leftist in Teheran, told the press that his father had been poisoned, an explanation for Taleghani's untimely death which the Kuwaiti daily *Al Qabas* also printed last week.

The death of Taleghani represents a profound lesson to the more moderate elements within the opposition that overthrew the Shah of Iran and backed Khomeini. Taleghani and prominent members of the National Front accepted Khomeini as a legitimate opposition figure thinking that they could make a deal with Khomeini. Khomeini's political track record since his collaboration with Ayatollah Kashani and the Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1950s which led to the overthrow of the republican revolutionary Premier Mohammed Mossadegh has shown that he has functioned only as a tool of Anglo-American neocolonial policy for the Mideast—a fact Taleghani and the Front could not deny. Moreover, Taleghani and his more moderate allies themselves have flirted with the Anglo-American-Zionist establishment which controls Khomeini.

Taleghani was considered by sources with inside information on the politics of the Islamic regime to be the only viable challenger to Khomeini's authority within Iran, and yet he was known to have backed away from a showdown with Khomeini. The respected French journalist Paul Marie de la Gorce wrote in *Le Figaro* Sept. 10 that following Taleghani's death the last vestiges of secular, prodemocratic opposition to Khomeini have disappeared. Taleghani was known to be working with the National Front and the National Democratic Front in building a coalition against the Khomeini program for theocratic dictatorship. Only following his death was it revealed that he was the head of the Revolutionary Council and had exercised a moderating influence over the body by keeping its members from criticizing the nominal secular government in Iran headed by Premier Mehdi Bazargan.

Taleghani's death is the culmination of a brutal crackdown on all forces opposing Khomeini which has been engineered by Ayatollah Khalkhali and his allies who have consistently played on the octogenarian Khomeini's paranoia and psychological weaknesses in order to enforce their tyrannical policies. Iranian sources confirm that as early as May of this year this extremist clique began to gain psychological control over Khomeini, a fact which was to a great extent responsible for the bloody public political executions of which Khalkhali personally took charge. Similarly, it was Khalkhali and Interior Minister Shamran who took full responsibility for the genocidal assault on Iran's Kurdish minorities, a policy which Taleghani was known to have opposed, rather seeking some kind of accommo-

Kuwaiti press accuses Iran of fronting for Camp David

In a groundbreaking commentary Sept. 17, Kuwait's *Ar-Ra'y al-'Amm* newspaper accused Iranian Ayatollah Mohammed Montazeri, an advocate of "exporting" Iran's revolution abroad, of "serving the Camp David plot by dragging the Middle East into the abyss of communal division, thereby enabling Cairo to play the rule of policeman in the region," according to an account covered by the KUNA Kuwaiti news agency.

The newspaper further said: "These threats not only serve the Camp David aims, but will also plunge the Arab area in bloodshed and communal strife, particularly the Gulf area where external forces would exploit the explosive situation and troubles to carry out their repeatedly declared goal of military occupation. . . . Montazeri's threats have a communal character, which implies the exploration of massacres and the pitting of the sons of one religion against each other."

dition with the restless minorities in Iran to avoid the very real threat of a partition of the country.

Next target: Bazargan

Within days following Taleghani's death, members of the Revolutionary Council launched their first public attacks on the cabinet of Premier Bazargan. Both Ayatollah Montazeri and Banisadr called upon the population of Iran to "uproot the Bazargan government." Bazargan, a long-time close political ally of Taleghani, has repeatedly attempted to resign because the Revolutionary Council's pervasive control in Iran, through the militant local Islamic Committees known as "Khomitehs," has made it impossible for his government to rule. As a result the Bazargan government has slowly been falling apart. Only last week the Education Minister resigned, and this week the Defense Minister General Riahi finally stepped down after numerous threats that he would do so.

This slow dismemberment of the Bazargan government at the hands of Khomeini and his extremist clique of advisors marks the end of any pretense of democracy by Khomeini's Islamic Republic. Following the Education Minister's resignation, the Council announced the nationalization of all private schools and universities within Iran and launched an unprecedented purge of Teheran University, the center of pro-Taleghani sentiment and one of the last holdouts of various leftist groupings which have been working with the National Front against the Islamic Regime.