

By the end of September, only one of the original National Front leaders remained an active member of the cabinet, Bazargan himself. Ayatollah Taleghani, considered by many to be the unifying force of the opposition movements, suddenly died, and many believed by poisoning.

Just prior to Bazargan's resignation, the National Iranian Oil Company, the last institution to escape the purges, was suddenly hit with purges.

The chairman of the company, Hassan Nazih, was suddenly requested to appear before an Islamic trial for embezzling funds from the oil company. Nazih, like Bazargan's first foreign minister Karim Sanjabi, had been an outspoken opponent of the Revolutionary Council. He and minister without portfolio Darius Farouhar were the last of the National Front leaders to be ousted by the Council.

Their departure followed by Bazargan's and the dissolution of the cabinet, signals the complete takeover by the extremists within the Council of all government bureaucracy. The question now is how long these fanatics can maintain control before even their base of power, the urban slum dwellers and the discontented peasants, begin to resist the economic collapse Khomeini's Islamic Republic has produced.

—Judith Weyer

Eyewitness report: 'Iran is living hell'

We present here excerpts taken from a series of interviews with Iranians who have recently returned to the United States from Iran. In each case the individuals interviewed agreed that conditions in Iran today are no better if not worse than under the regime of the Shah.

Q: *You were in Iran in August; at that time how were Iranians viewing the Khomeini government?*

A: I suppose you would have to ask yourself which Iranians. The people in my family are fairly well off; they own a factory. Like a lot of upper-middle-class and even upper-class Iranians, they supported Khomeini. There was such deep-seated hatred against the Shah. People were desperate for an alternative.

Now people like my family are disgusted. Nothing, not one thing has changed for the better. In fact last week, I talked to my family who told me that there are shortages of food turning up all over the country. The mullahs cannot run that country.

There were very high expectations on the part of all Iranians that things would get better with the Shah out. Now people are scared; they see Khomeini adopting the same tactics of repression that the Pahlavis used.

What worries me is that the middle-class Iranian businessmen, desperate for a return to normality, will accept any alternative if it is not Islamic. By that I am referring to the possibility of Admiral Madani taking over the country. He is very, very clever and calculating, but he would rule with an iron fist. I think it could be brutal.

Q: *What about the poorer classes in Iran—they are the real support for the mullahs—are they as disillusioned?*

A: That is a very different problem. You cannot imagine the control those mullahs have over the illiterate slum dwellers and peasants. They still support Khomeini. But unlike my family, they had nothing to lose. As long as they have their medicine man, their mullah, I think they will tolerate a lot.

When I was there I made a special trip to a terrible slum in north Teheran in the area not far from the estates where many wealthy Iranians live. I had not been back for eight years, but I remembered those slums. That's why I became a doctor. I was shocked when I returned. Nothing has changed. Khomeini has done nothing for those people. He has done nothing to resolve the crime and corruption that comes out of those slums. There are still the drugs—that is how they pay for their food, since they have no money. There is still the prostitution. I was enraged, and I asked myself what was this revolution for?

Q: *Did you talk with officers from the Iranian army while you were there?*

A: Oh sure, many of my relatives were officers. They will never obey Khomeini no matter who Khomeini appoints defense minister or chief of staff. They look at Chamran as a joke; he has no military experience.

The one thing all the remaining army officers know, and I heard this again and again, is that NATO had a hand in creating this mess. It had to have been General Huyser who aided Gharabaghi in restraining the Iranian military and allowing for the Khomeini takeover. At the time, some of the officers wanted to believe that Khomeini would give the National Front a chance. Now they see they were very stupid, and they are very bitter. They will never fight for the Islamic Republic.

Q: *If the military is out of the picture, what is the Islamic Guard and can they be trained to run the sophisticated equipment that the Iranian military operated?*

A: The Guard range in age from 15 to 25. Many of them are illiterate; they know how to operate a machine gun. They are not trained in anything beyond fighting in the streets. Khomeini pays these young guards very,

very well. He also still pays the military, hoping he can buy them off.

There are arms everywhere now. No one goes out at night in Teheran. The city is ruined. Khomeini pays off whoever he had around him.

It is one giant welfare state. With all that money from oil, there is no economy. The state hands out money to the unemployed, and there are a lot of unemployed. Everybody is talking about Madani. They think he will run the country.

Q: *What about the opposition to the Islamic regime, are they preparing for a fight?*

A: When I was there I went to a number of places where I thought I might find some of my friends in the leadership of the National Front. They were nowhere to be found. In a certain sense Teheran is like a ghost town. You don't see the Mujahedine or the Fedayeen, you don't see the Front. They have fled. I heard that Matin-Daftari fled the country. Nassan Nazih fled up into the north. That seems to be where a lot of the opposition is now, mainly in Azerbaijan. Shariatmadari will protect the opposition. If civil war breaks out, I think it will come from the northern provinces. If you take the Kurds, the Turkomans, the Azerbaijanis, plus the various guerrilla groups that have broken with Khomeini, that is a fairly big force. At some point I really believe that the simmering fighting going on against the Islamic Guard will blow up. The only thing that worries people over there is what will the United States do and what will the Soviets do? We remember 1946 when the United States and the Soviets divided the country ... it could be much more serious this time.

Q: *While you were there, did you see any renewed efforts to begin economic development?*

A: No, I saw one shutdown construction project after another. They are just as Banisadr (assistant economics minister—ed.) describes. They look like big carcasses looming over the horizon. Everyone is unemployed. The Revolutionary Council cannot decide what it wants. The only one who seems to know is Banisadr, who is working to turn Iran into the Kampuchean model, back to the land and breaking down the cities. Iran is not a small country. You can't do something like that. So all the literate people, professionals, we are now exiles, we have no country. I couldn't stay there. I have a vision of what I want my country to be. I want development, education. But never with this Khomeini in power. He will destroy Iran. I believe he will provoke a long and bloody war.

Khomeini's secret SAVAMA is the Shah's SAVAK

Like SAVAK, the feared secret service that ruled Iran under the regime of the deposed Shah, the secret police of the Ayatollah Khomeini have been given free rein to carry out their activities inside the borders of the United States. According to highly placed intelligence sources, exiles here, and law enforcement officials, the shadowy intelligence service of Khomeini—the SAVAMA, for “National Information and Security Organization of Iran”—has an extensive presence in North America among both students and businessmen. Many exiled opponents of the Khomeini regime are said to live in fear of harassment and even assassination by agents of the mullahs.

According to informed sources, the American operations of the SAVAMA are run directly out of the offices of the Iranian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and its consulates, particularly San Francisco. Coordinating directly with the Embassy and its officials is the U.S. Indianapolis-based Muslim Student Association, which includes among its membership many pro-Khomeini Iranian students.

Even more alarming is that hundreds of former officials of the SAVAK organization, which was supposedly dismantled after the Khomeini takeover in February, have simply blended into the structure of the new SAVAMA.

Several U.S. agencies, including the FBI, the Justice Department, the CIA, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service are reportedly collaborating, secretly, with the SAVAMA.

Call for investigation

At a Los Angeles press conference Oct. 26, the Fusion Energy Foundation, a private, nonprofit scientific institution, called for an investigation in California into the activities of the so-called Muslim Students Association (MSA). Nicholas Benton, Southwest coordinator for the FEF, called for the investigation after an attempted disruption of an Oct. 16 forum sponsored by the foundation at the University Hilton Hotel near the University of Southern California.