

Exclusive interview

Iran's Aryana seeks exile unity

by Robert Dreyfuss

"They want to turn our country into a silent and cold cemetery, a backward society, as in the era of the *Djahliyya*, the Age of Ignorance before the arrival of Islam."

The quotation is taken from the manifesto of Gen. Bahram Aryana, former Supreme Commander of the Imperial Iranian Armed Forces, who despite his 74 years of age is trying to forge a unified movement out of the many competing groups of Iranian exiles opposed to the fascist regime of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Although he is not well known in comparison to exiled Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar and Gen. Gholam Ali Oveissi, Aryana just might succeed in becoming the catalyst that can put an end to the divisions in the ranks of the exiles and prepare them for the coming fall of the Khomeini regime.

Now in residence in Paris, General Aryana gave an interview to the *Executive Intelligence Review*, one of the rare interviews that he has given since the rise to power of the Khomeini forces.

Picking up a Persian-language document on the table in front of him, General Aryana began reading out a list of the leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood secret society presently ruling Iran. "The first is Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, the so-called president of Iran," declared the general. "The others are Hossein Fatemi, Mohammed Mokri, Ali Tehrani, Sadegh Tabatabai, Mehdi Bazargan, the former prime minister of Iran, Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, Reza Sadr. . . ." The list goes on. "And now we come to the military 'brothers.' These are the Muslim Brothers belonging to the armed forces: General Qurani, the first chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces under Khomeini, General Abbas Gharabaghi, the famous traitor, Mahmoud Amini, Falahi Taleghani."

The general paused. "And then you have Fardoust. The famous Fardoust." Gen. Hossein Fardoust, the deputy director of the Savak secret police and its Special Intelligence Bureau under the shah, betrayed the shah by covertly joining the Khomeini camp before the revolution and now, it has been reported, is serving Khomeini as a key intelligence aide. "Fardoust is a freemason from the same lodge as Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani. It is a branch of the Grand Lodge of London with Rostow Azzam as master. Its grand master is Edward Green."

Succinctly, General Aryana outlined the means by which the Muslim Brotherhood and the freemasonic cult of British intelligence installed the Khomeini mullahs in Iran. Most Iranians, in fact, who have positions of authority in Iran are quite familiar with the role of the British freemasons in Iran since the 19th century, when the top British secret agent Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani organized the first real "pan-Islamic" movement. The present Khomeini regime is merely an appendage of that long-standing apparatus.

Who is Aryana?

Certainly, General Aryana has the credentials to be an authority on the question of Iranian politics. Until ten years ago, when he resigned and left Iran in the aftermath of a dispute with the shah, Aryana was the No. 1 military officer in Iran and commander of the shah's entire armed forces. Today, he is the highest-ranking officer still living, far outranking General Oveissi and others in the exile movement. Although until now he has not taken a very active role in the opposition to Khomeini, he is said to be extremely well liked and respected among officers of all ranks.

"Aryana is one of the few top officers who is not tainted with scandals of corruption and of obsequiousness toward the shah," said a former Iranian foreign service officer. "He is clean."

Should Aryana now step forward into the center of the anti-Khomeini forces, there is no question that he would command an instant following. At present, Aryana is said to be making preliminary contacts with officers in Western Europe and the United States, as well as with other leaders of the anti-Khomeini resistance, to prepare a carefully organized counterrevolution.

What, Aryana was asked, do you think of the declaration of the general staff and chief of staff General Gharabaghi in February 1979, hours before the Khomeini takeover, that the Iranian armed forces would remain "neutral" in the struggle that followed?

The general answers in a measured fashion. "As you know, I was not there. As I explained to you, I have been based in Paris for the past ten years. I am not very well informed about these events. But I consider them to be a great betrayal. It is a great betrayal from General Gharabaghi. Why 'neutralize' the army? The army had been created for that very day, to face such a day. This was a great betrayal."

And the Americans? he is asked. Do you believe that they also contributed to this treason?

Aryana is very cautious in his reply. "I did not say anything about that because, as I told you, I was not there. I know only what I have heard, what I have read in the press, what I have been told. But it is only my opinion. And that is not enough." ■

Recently, in a proclamation circulated among exile Iranians, General Aryana announced the formation of the Movement for the Liberation of Iran (MLI). Addressed to soldiers and politicians, businessmen and workers, intellectuals, students, and professionals, the Aryana manifesto called for defending the integrity of Iran's borders, reestablishing order, reconstituting the armed forces, saving Iranian culture, renewing the sovereignty and inviolability of the law, and rebuilding the ruined economy of Iran.

"These last few weeks," says Aryana, "numerous groups of patriots, politicians, intellectuals, and some of my colleagues in the armed forces have made contact with me."

Of course, the crucial question is: does Aryana—and the others—have a chance to succeed? According to reliable reports from Iranian sources, Aryana, despite long-standing ties to American military circles and to European, especially French, military people, is not receiving any substantial support or even encouragement from the United States. Many Iranians have reported that the Carter administration has succeeded in deterring any circles in Washington—whether covert, CIA-type forces or even private and semi-official organizations—from making systematic contacts with the Iranian exiles. A systematic effort is underway in Washington to dissuade Americans from seeking contact with the opposition to Khomeini, such is the fear that such contacts might upset President Carter's long-sought pact with the Iranian mullahs and "Islamic fundamentalism."

Recently, he is reported to have received official French government security for his own protection.

According to Iranians who know him, Aryana is a scholar and a political scientist as well as a soldier. Strongly influenced by Napoleon, Aryana has cultivated for himself the nickname "the Napoleon of Iran." His major treatise at the Sorbonne many years ago was *Napoleon and the East*.

Perhaps more relevant to his present situation, Aryana is also reported to be an expert on the subject of Hasan ibn al-Sabbah, the greatest Persian political-military genius of all time. A scientist, musician, and doctor, as well as a military man, the 12th-century Hasan ibn al-Sabbah built one of the most magnificent political cadre organizations ever established in world history, a movement that almost succeeded in its Grand Design: the elimination of the reactionary Persian feudal aristocracy and the establishment of an alliance with the humanist forces in Christian medieval Europe.

Today, the Persian feudalists have returned with a vengeance in Khomeini's regime. Perhaps the method of Hasan ibn al-Sabbah, if it were understood by more Iranians, and for all of the Khomeini pestilence.

Southwest Asia

Is Pakistan's Zia on the way out?

by Daniel Sneider

Washington is awash with rumors that Pakistan's military dictator, Gen. Ziaul Haq, is about to be overthrown. One top Washington policymaker close to the situation, when asked about the coup rumors Sept. 12, replied: "You are the twelfth person in the last few days to ask me that."

The rumors, while unconfirmed by any reliable source, are taken seriously. General Zia's regime, a military dictatorship based on "Islamic fundamentalism," is understood to be fundamentally unstable, with almost no base of significant popular support within the country. While ruthless repression of anti-government political activity has kept Zia in power, the anti-Zia feelings of the population have increasingly defied the threat of repression over the past few months.

In Washington and London, where the rumors have also been circulating for weeks, there are many in policymaking circles who are considering the removal of Zia as the only alternative to a bigger blowup down the road that will "get out of control." According to one Washington source, there are two alternatives being considered: one, that the Pakistani military, Zia's only reliable base of support at present, move to replace Zia in a quick coup; the second, that Zia move to widen the base of his regime by bringing in civilian leaders from the opposition political parties, now all banned.

In the last few days there are reports that General Zia has attempted to move along the latter path. According to reports from Pakistan and informed sources in New York, Zia hopes to put together a new "civilian" government before the end of the month when he will depart for a visit to the U.S. The London *Guardian* reported Sept. 13 that Zia had held meetings with political leaders, including two prominent rightwing leaders of the party of executed Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, offering them positions in a new government. There is no indication however that such a move will have any more than transparently cosmetic success, particularly since the most popular Pakistan Peoples Party of Bhutto has disowned any such deal with the hated murderer of their beloved leader.

Decisions by Washington and London, principal