

treason: "The gathering of Savak members, counterrevolutionary groups, and bankrupt nationalists around the president are a particular cause of concern."

Then, Nabavi directly attacked Bani-Sadr. "We realize that there have been moves aimed at weakening and overthrowing the government. The president himself has had a hand in these," he said. Khalkhali accused Bani-Sadr of treason, and there continue to be rumors that Bani-Sadr will be put on trial.

But Bani-Sadr—whose position improved somewhat after a March 16 threat to resign—is making some kind of counterattack over the economic issue. Citing figures that appear shocking even to veteran observers of the Iranian revolution, Bani-Sadr showed that the productivity of the Iranian economy is collapsing so fast that the country cannot survive much longer without a peace settlement with Iraq and a reconstruction program. Since then, however, the IRP clergy have made new efforts to isolate Bani-Sadr, not because they fear his personality, but because they fear that he might be used by the armed forces as a vehicle for increasing the military's influence in the government and then eventually staging a coup.

For instance, *Mizan*, the pro-Bani-Sadr newspaper published by former Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, who is the leader of the so-called liberal faction, was closed down this week, and its editor, former Commerce Minister Reza Sadr, arrested.

"The disagreement within Khomeini's group is now taking the form of a fatal wound that will eventually lead to the destruction of the regime," said Radio Iran on March 15. "The past threat and the present silence by Khomeini on the subject of the attacks on each other by the Bani-Sadr and Beheshti groups show that he is unable to use his influence over his lackeys."

Islam, but their trials, their tortures, their decisions, the confiscation of personal wealth, are against the Islamic law. Often, the Islamic tribunals are directed by people who don't know Islam, who are corrupted, without mercy, and the great majority of their decisions have no value. . . .

In order for the country to escape from the crisis, it is necessary that all the revolutionary organizations that exist in Iran be dissolved, for they are corrupted, including the *komitehs* [Islamic security forces] and the *pasdarans* [guardians of the revolution]. . . .

The true clergy doesn't want power, it does not approve the clergy that governs us. The true work of the clergy is to give its opinion to the people and to enlighten them. True Islam is the religion of pardon and of mercy, as the Prophet showed when he pardoned his greatest enemies.

## Interview

# Shahpour Bakhtiar discusses Iran



*The following is an EIR interview conducted by Robert Dreyfuss on April 9, 1981, with Dr. Shahpour Bakhtiar, the former Prime Minister of Iran. Dr. Bakhtiar headed the Shah's government in Iran for 40 days in January-February 1979, just before the return of the Ayatollah Khomeini and the coup d'état that overthrew Bakhtiar and ended Iran's monarchy.*

*During his tenure, Dr. Bakhtiar fought the efforts of Khomeini's mullahs, and predicted that if the mullahs took over Iran, only chaos and destruction would follow. But Bakhtiar was unable to persuade a sufficient number of so-called moderates to support his government, and he was faced with traitors inside the Iranian military command who, in collaboration with the Anglo-American secret services, were working behind-the-scenes to bring Khomeini to power. In addition, the British and American ambassadors in Teheran and Gen. Robert E. Huyser, President Carter's special envoy, deliberately worked to undermine Bakhtiar's government.*

*Since then, Bakhtiar has been a leader of the Iran exile movement. He is now living in Paris.*

**EIR:** It's been more than two years since the mullahs took over Iran. So far, the Iranian resistance has not developed a unified leadership, and personal differences seem to keep the exiles divided. Is it possible that this will change in the near future?

**Bakhtiar:** As far as I am concerned, after the mullahs

took power, and also much before, I had denounced unequivocally the horror that would result after their seizure of the country. That forecast of what would result has been confirmed absolutely, and the result in the country as a whole is well known to have occurred exactly as I had predicted, economically, socially, and from the standpoint of security.

When I left Iran 20 months ago to come to France, there was absolutely no resistance. There were angry people, and they became more numerous; but no one then dared say anything to Mr. Khomeini about his system. I was the first to say it energetically and, again, unequivocally. Since then, as things began to worsen, certain people were tempted, as we say, to jump on a moving train and to rush to the rescue that a victory would mean, if there is to be such a victory. In this, there were people who had collaborated with Mr. Khomeini and who now find themselves pretending to take part in the resistance against him. I don't want to name names; you can guess who they are yourself.

Thus, I consider that all those who collaborated with the enemy, that is to say Khomeini, should not be in the first ranks of the resistance. They could, under exceptional circumstances, contribute some service to the country. But, as you remember, in the days of General de Gaulle, one of Pétain's ministers named Duchaud, who had collaborated with Vichy and then went to Algeria in 1943—well, he was shot the next day. That is why—for many people—there are rules to abide by.

Also, there are personal squabbles. Again, I do not want to name anyone. But there are people who have pretensions which are absolutely ridiculous and who are backed by certain personalities in New York who give them money and push them to liberate their country. These people are not very popular inside the country but they work in such a way as to prevent the unification you are talking about. [Princess Ashraf Pahlavi, the twin sister of the late Shah of Iran, lives in New York and provides financial support to Iranian exile movements—ed.]

In a word, when I started, there was no one. And today, I believe without any doubt that I am still way ahead of those who pretend to be able to lead the country to freedom.

**EIR:** There has been some hope among Iranian exiles that the new administration of Ronald Reagan will act in the belief that the regime of the mullahs is not in either the American or the Iranian interest. What do the exiles want from the United States?

**Bakhtiar:** First, let me say this. I wouldn't say only exiled Iranians—the great majority of all Iranians have had more than enough of Khomeini and his regime of mullahs, and even those so-called moderate mullahs, those who have no turbans, who call themselves “mod-

erate personalities.” I must say that both inside and outside of Iran, if there was freedom the majority would vote against Khomeini.

As for the Carter administration, it was, I must say, extremely weak as far as general policy decisions are concerned. And, as we explained during the hostage crisis, if you have hostages held by the Khomeini regime it is your right to do as you wish, but by all means do not constantly flirt with the mullahs in the hope—by the way useless, as you have seen—that they will cooperate. Because they will not. And, of course, they did not free the hostages until the day Reagan was sworn in as President. They found themselves faced with a man who was stronger and more determined. I can thus say that a clear and determined policy is always a much more profitable one.

**EIR:** There have been reports of tension between your movement and the monarchy. Can you see the monarchy and the democratic movement cooperating in a future government?

**Bakhtiar:** I have always maintained, in the good tradition of Mossadegh, that the monarchy is not in itself a bad thing, a bad regime. What is essential in a country is to have certain liberties, a national sense of progress.

From the geopolitical standpoint, it is probably desirable that a constitutional monarchy—and I do say constitutional—be established without the bad aspects that we have known in Iran. I am not opposed to monarchy, but I say simply that constitutional law—which, by the way must be changed, moderated—must be fully applied. Above all, there must be no dictatorship of any sort.

Of course, there is no comparison between the regime under the Shah and the one under Khomeini. The Khomeini regime is infinitely disgusting, more so than any regime. It is inhuman, it is an anti-Iranian regime. From every aspect, it is not even a regime—it is chaos and a disaster.

**EIR:** What is your evaluation of the situation inside Iran? Would a political victory by President Bani-Sadr be useful in any way to weaken the power of the clergy?

**Bakhtiar:** Once Khomeini is gone, these people will be wiped out—unless the Western world, and I do not want to name any country, continues to flirt with these people again, in the hope that they can do something.

What we want, simply, is to be left free in the choice of our own government. Unfortunately, during the past two years the Western world has done all that it could, more or less directly but discreetly, to support and maintain Mr. Khomeini. You know this probably better than I do.

As for the army as a whole, they cannot but have disgust for Khomeini and for the little games of Mr. Bani-Sadr, who claims to be a partisan of the army. This

is a game that is simply grotesque. Bani-Sadr has been the head of the Revolutionary Council that has condemned to death and executed senior officers and young officers without trial. As for Bani-Sadr personally, he is an insignificant personality and he has no weight.

**EIR:** There are reports that many of the leading Iran clergymen oppose Khomeini. Is this true?

**Bakhtiar:** Yes, discreetly and without a lot of fanfare, there are those who are against him, like Mr. Shareatmadari and Mr. Qomi. These people are sincere—but since there is an atmosphere of lies and terror they cannot speak out.

**EIR:** In your view, who bears the primary responsibility for bringing Khomeini to power? Many Iranians believe the saying that “under the beard of the mullahs it says Made in England.” Our magazine has repeatedly exposed the role of the British and Jimmy Carter in supporting Khomeini’s rise to power. What do you think?

**Bakhtiar:** I cannot say in a firm way. Evidently the weak points of the old regime has made this possible. But what Iran was seeking was not a Khomeini-type regime, but a regime where fundamental liberties would be respected and where social inequalities would have disappeared, in a democratic and nationalist manner. The Iranian people, at least, did not want a mullah government. Never! Even the people who today yell “Khomeini!” are generally illiterates who have managed to find some interests in the new regime.

Otherwise, as a whole the people wanted a lot of change; this is normal, and I participated in it for a number of years. But no one wanted Khomeini or other loudmouths.

As for your own analysis, I really do not have enough information to judge. I know one thing, however: that is the fact that the Western powers as a whole, and especially in a visible manner at the end of my government and more so in the last six months, have willingly supported the access of Khomeini to power—led by the BBC [British Broadcasting Company].

**EIR:** Concerning the war with Iraq: do you see any prospect for a settlement? What will be the effect of a settlement on Iranian internal politics?

**Bakhtiar:** One thing is certain. A victorious army would be dangerous for Khomeini, and a defeated army—by turning around—would also be dangerous. In consequence, Iran finds itself in a state between war and no war, that is to say, this funny kind of war that we are now witnessing.

**EIR:** How do you see Iraq’s motives in beginning the war?

**Bakhtiar:** The problem is simple. There are two factors

to be distinguished.

Iraq is an aggressor without doubt. But I have to say why, because, ever since the first day, Khomeini has said in a very direct fashion that he wanted to destroy the political system in Iraq and that he wanted to impose his archaic conceptions of government across the whole region. So, he systematically destabilized the region by exporting the so-called revolution he created in Iran, and this exasperated the government in Iraq.

Again, I have condemned the war and I see Khomeini as a cause of the war. Not only that, but after many years of misunderstanding we had succeeded in having correct relations with Iraq. So Khomeini is responsible—but that does not mean I approve of Iraq’s actions.

Also, there is the Iranian army which has been destroyed and thrown into a state of disintegration by the mullahs. This is a fact, and it has not gone unnoticed around us in Iraq. Therefore, the temptation was very strong. So, the army is weak and Khomeini is poisoning them, and then you have the start of the war—no need to look any further.

**EIR:** What do you think of the policy of the Soviet Union toward Iran? And what would be your policy toward the Soviets if you gain power?

**Bakhtiar:** I would say that under the cover of Khomeini in Iran, there is a good opportunity for the Soviet Union to help the regime and to increase its own influence. But I think that the Soviet leadership is really waiting to see what the future will bring before they make any decisions.

Concerning my policy, I consider that any independent country has to consider first its own national interests, without contradicting that of any other people. In that perspective, we must have the best of relations with all countries, and particularly with our neighbors.

**EIR:** In the past two years, the mullahs have destroyed more than industry and agriculture. They have also deeply wounded Iran’s cultural life, in particular destroying education and science and ruining much of Iran’s youth. In rebuilding Iran, how do you view the problem of culture?

**Bakhtiar:** The Khomeini plague has to be considered as a black parenthesis in the history of Iran. It is the contrary of the national values and humanist sentiment, the great moral principles that were always the leitmotifs of our civilization. They must again be put forward; consequently, I find irrefutable the mission of reconstruction, not only of the economy of Iran but also the return of those values with even more freedom and vitality.

Of course, we cannot live without Western technology; we have some already, and we must pursue our agriculture and industrial development.