

An Iranian View of The Nuclear Controversy

by V.B.

The discussion between the IAEA and Iran, under pressure from the United States and Israel, reminds me of the movement in Iran for the nationalization of oil. At that time, 1951, Iran cancelled its contract with Britain; Dr. Mohamed Mossadegh made the proposal to Parliament, which accepted it; and thereafter Iran's oil industry belonged solely to a national firm. The British took the case to the UN Security Council, which supported its position. Then, the entire Iranian nation—politicians, religious leaders like Ayatollah Kashani, and students—supported Dr. Mossadegh, who went to the international court in the Hague. His success there was supported officially by the Iranian Parliament in 1951.

In a similar fashion today, the entire Iranian leadership, from the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, to President Khatami, along with parliamentarians, students and scientists, are united around the commitment to develop nuclear energy. Their view is: we have the right, we have the technical ability, we have the scientists, so why should we not have the technology?

Under the Shah, in 1974 work began on a nuclear plant at Bushehr, under a contract signed by Iran and the German Ministry for Research and Industry. It was to be Iran's first nuclear plant. There was a big campaign for nuclear plants, and there was talk that Iran was to get 15-20, and thereby fully implement industrialization. The Shah talked about developing a great civilization in Iran. Later, the Shah signed a contract with the United States for eight reactors, with a contract pledge to use the technology for peaceful purposes only. About two months later, Iran made a deal with France for four plants, paid for with oil. These facts and figures were recently republished by an Iranian newspaper, *Jomhuriislami*, on Oct. 1.

However, Iran was not allowed to participate in the construction, installation, or functioning of the plants; only the foreigners were allowed. The technology constituted no threat, since the Iranians had no influence over it or access to it, and the Shah was firmly in the U.S. camp. Clearly, the West did not want to export the technology and scientific know-how.

Now, years later, the propaganda has changed its line: "Nuclear energy is a danger. Iran has enough gas and oil, so it does not need nuclear energy. This is dangerous; they want to build nuclear weapons." This, despite the fact that the Iranians are cooperating with the IAEA, and every year, sev-

eral times a year, inspections take place—more so than in any other country! For Iranians, it is clear what this means.

In Iran, the reputed dangers of nuclear energy, for the environment etc., are well known. And caring for the environment is an important factor in the country's culture, where nature is so highly revered. Particularly the Sun, which regulates the times for prayers for Muslims. The Sun is more important for us than for the Green Party in Germany. Everyday, we have to observe the Sun, we live with nature every moment. But we learn from the Quran and our literature, that Man has the right to use nature, and that God created nature for Man.

General Support for Nuclear in Iran

Students from several technical universities, as reported on Sept. 17 in the Iranian media, sent a letter to the government, urging it to proceed without fear, even in light of threats by the U.S. and the IAEA. They emphasized that, aside from Israel, also Pakistan and India have nuclear weapons, and have not signed the NPT. There is discrimination, therefore, against Iran. The British and the United States have pushed through their policy with the IAEA. As former President Ayatollah Rafsanjani stated, the problem is not nuclear weapons. The problem is that imperialist countries do not want to allow Islamic countries to develop.

This time, the Americans and Europeans have to note that what is happening in Iran has implications for all Islamic and non-aligned nations. Many Islamic countries, politicians, and intellectuals have expressed their support for Iran's peaceful use of nuclear energy. As reported by the Egyptian press on Sept. 15, Amira Arshadi, a member of the Arab Writers Union, wrote that for over 20 years, the United States has tried to convince the Arabs that Iran represents a danger. But international treaties and contracts must apply to all. The IAEA must not act in such a way as to cause Iran to abandon the treaty. Ahmad Sabet, a political science professor in Cairo, stated his agreement with Iran's position on the IAEA resolution, saying Iran could take the case to the court at The Hague, according to Kayhan, on Sept. 15.

Furthermore, Iranian parliamentarians argued that if signing the NPT cannot protect Iran from U.S. threats, then it may be better to leave the treaty agreement altogether. On Oct. 1, one Parliamentarian from Yazd stated that if Iran were to sign the additional protocol to the NPT, the United States would continue to pressure the country, and utilize the protocol to interfere in Iranian internal politics.

All Iranians are opposed to outside interference in this program, whether from the United States or elsewhere; they know that the aim is to prevent Iran from developing by itself, and becoming fully independent. As some politicians in Iran have stressed, if the United States presents a resolution against Iran to the UN Security Council, and pushes through sanctions, then there will be the third Iranian revolution, and all economic and scientific engines in the country will turn on.