

The following is translated from an interview with Imam Khomeini granted before his departure from Iraq, which first appeared in Le Monde, Oct. 17, 1978.

A television news team under the direction of Maurice Seveno filmed an interview with the Ayatollah Khomeini on Septemebr 21 at Nadjaf in Iraq. The film was confiscated by the Iraqi authorities, but the producers who were detained in prison for three days were able to save the tape of the interview. They refrained from any publication of this interview for as long as the Ayatollah should reside in Iraq so as not to put him in a difficult position with the Iraqi authorities. Since the religious leader of the Shi'ites is presently in France, we now publish extracts from this interview which bears directly on current events. *Le Monde*



Q. You often speak of an "Islamic government" for Iran. What do you mean by that? Do you mean that the religious leaders themselves should take over the government?

A. No, we do not intend to take over the government. But religious leaders direct the people in order to define the goals and the demands of Islam. Since the majority of the Iranian people is Moslem, an Islamic government also means that it is a government supported by the majority.

During the first stage, our objective is to make the country independent, and to eliminate foreign control, as well as those internal factions which are paid by foreign interests. Today, our country is enslaved in every respect of its life: political, economic, cultural and military. We must, therefore, expel the exploiters and colonizers whoever they may be. Subsequently, we will have to devote all the rich resources of our country to bettering the lot of our people, who are today oppressed workers living in sickness and poverty.

The second stage will see the complete purging of the ministries, the administration, and of public associations; the weeding out of traitors, the corrupt, and those who are only out for their own profit. All responsibility must be put in the hands of competent, honest and patriotic people.

Other stages will follow gradually. But above

all, if the Islamic government is to achieve its goals, it is essential that the Pahlavi dynasty be removed. No reform is possible while this dynasty and its servants remain.

Q. What other economic reforms do you envisage?

A. A national and Moslem government would provide itself with the means to pull the country out of its economic crisis. It would be easy, for example, to put an end to abuses such as the following: the Pahlavi Foundation (created by the Shah) draws cheques for a million dollars or more on the public treasury in order to cover the needs of American ambassadors and influential figures who constitute a powerful pro-Iranian pressure group in Washington.

Beyond that, the bureaucracy will be reduced, which will make considerable savings possible. Finally high priority will be given to restoring the functions of the peasantry, which were being destroyed under the "White Revolution of the Shah and the United States".

Q. How do you explain that the Iranian people take to the streets following your appeals?

A. It is because the people consider us to be

servants of Islam and of the country. It is because we explore the problems which arise in the depths of the nation: it is because we give voice to the aspirations of the people. This nation is well aware that everything which comes from the Shah and his repressive government apparatus works against the interests of Islam and of the country.

Q. What do you think of the rumor that the Shah will retire, and that his son will succeed him?

A. Our opinion on this subject is that of the Iranian people: no satisfactory solution to the Iranian political problem is possible without the removal of the Pahlavi dynasty, whether it be represented by the present Shah or by his descendents.

Q. What do you think of Ali Amini's declaration of September 12, as reported in *Le Monde*, and according to which, he would ask you for a truce in order to resolve the political deadlock in Iran in case he should be entrusted with forming a government?

A. In order to resolve the current crisis in Iran. We need men who have popular support. Those who don't have that support cannot succeed.

Q. On what conditions could you accede to such a request?

A. No conditions can be negotiated and no delay is acceptable if as a result, the present regime would survive and the dynasty remain. No plan which envisages the continuation of the present regime is acceptable either to us or to the nation.

Q. President Carter styles himself the champion of human rights. How do you explain that he supported the Shah after the "Black Friday" massacre on September 8?

A. For months now massacres have been perpetrated in all Iranian towns. Thousands of victims were counted during the last demonstrations in September in Tehran. Some have suggested a figure of 10,000, and Mr. Carter, who does not hesitate to give vigorous support to this or that prisoner in the Soviet Union, has been in complete support of the Shah as regards these various massacres. The



same thing goes for the government of Communist China, whose president, in spite of all this violence, visited the Shah to go through the streets of Tehran. The Kremlin leaders have the same attitude.

Q. The Shi'ite religion is often presented as being reactionary and hostile to progress. The status of women, wearing of the chaddor [veil], attacks on banks and cinemas, are cited as proof. What is your position on that?

A. The Shah's regime, by means of spending large amounts of money, has enlisted the support of the Western press. He has also launched a propaganda campaign in order to mislead public opin-



ion outside the country, and to hide essential problems, chief of which is an end to foreign control.

It is the Shah who has deprived everybody, men and women, of their rights, and who has stifled their aspirations. It is he who, in order to distract the attention of young people from the essential problems of the nation, encourages the showing of certain stupefying and degrading films. The films, which the Shah allows to be shown, are intended to turn young people into good-for nothings. It is for this reason that Moslems judge these films to be contrary to the interests of the country, and that they attack movie theaters which show them. To say nothing, of course, of the provocation of the

theater in Abadan.

The same thing holds true for the banks, the agents of usury and speculation, which are destroying our economy. It is for that reason that people set fire to these agents of impoverishment and economic collapse, although the religious leaders have never called for that. In an interview with an Italian journalist, the Shah declared that women should only be the objects of sexual attraction. It is this concept which leads women to prostitution and reduces them to the status of sexual objects. Religion is opposed to this view of women, and not to their liberty and emancipation. The fact that women from all levels of society took part in the recent demonstrations, which we are calling the "referendum of the streets", shows the falsity of these allegations. Women fought side by side with men in the struggle for their independence and their liberty.

Q. What relations would you like to see established between Iran and Western nations, in particular France, in the light of the role they have played during recent events?

A. What we expect from the powerful nations is that they recognize our right to true progress, and that they realize that the use of force in preventing the emancipation of the peoples of Africa, Asia, or Latin America will, in the long run, work to their own ruin.

France has a role to play in establishing the foundations of true progress in our country and those countries whose position is similar to ours. In my opinion, Western prosperity cannot be maintained at the cost of impoverishing the rest of humanity. We ask all the great, free nations to help liberate us from those who want to enrich themselves by pillaging our resources.

Q. If the Shah keeps his promise of holding "free elections", which candidates will you support?

A. By accepting the principle of free elections, the Shah would, in fact, be yielding to popular will, as manifested by the mass demonstrations in Tehran and throughout the cities of the country. He would effectively be abdicating. The people have already voted against him.