

(Video) MEK, Iran's History

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- MEK Iran
Founding

The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI / MEK Iran) was founded by Mohammad Hanifnejad, Said Mohsen, and Ali-Ashgar Badizadgan on September 6, 1965. MEK'S founders were all engineers who were former members of the Freedom Movement (also known as the Liberation Movement), created in May 1961 by Mehdi Bazargan.¹



Founders of the PMOI

Founders of MEK.

The Freedom Movement advocated for the "democratic principles enshrined in the fundamental laws of 1905-09 [Iranian] Constitution." From its birth in 1961 until 1963, the Freedom Movement held meetings and was allowed to publish a newsletter that supported "political freedom and the separations of power."

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NCRI

On June 5, 1963, massive demonstrations took place in Iran to protest the arrest of Ruhollah Khomeini, who had delivered a scathing speech indicting the monarchy. The Shah's police responded with "massive firepower, in what has become known as the Khordad Uprising. Because it supported the demonstrations, the Liberation Movement

was banned. Other pro-democratic organizations were also forbidden. Bazargan was sentenced to ten years in prison.

The three young engineers realized that duplicating the actions of the Freedom Movement would lead to the same calamitous conclusion, so two years later, they came together to develop

a new blueprint for democracy and freedom in Iran.

The three engineers formed a discussion group with their trusted friends to develop a new strategy. Most of these group members were professionals living in Tehran, who met twice a week to discuss religion, history, philosophy, and evolutionary theory.

These early meetings of the MEK Iran culminated in their interpretation of a true Islam: an inherently tolerant and democratic faith, which is fully compatible with the values of modern-day society. The MEK spent six years formulating its progressive view of Islam and developing a strategy to replace Iran's dictatorial monarchy with a democratic government.

Iran's fundamentalist mullahs believe that the interpretation of Islam is their exclusive domain. The MEK Iran rejects this narrow view, along with the clerics' reactionary vision of Islam. The comprehensive interpretation of Islam, as described by the MEK, proved to be more appealing, persuasive, and successful than any of the past attempts.

1) Much of the information for this website is derived from "Enemies of the Ayatollahs," by Mohammad Mohaddessin, Zed Books, London, 2004.

Imprisonment & Executions | MEK Iran Founders

The MEK was penetrated by SAVAK, the Shah's secret police before it could become operational. SAVAK discovered a safe house and was able to identify several members, who were interrogated and tortured. This led SAVAK to additional members who were also arrested.

By September 1971, SAVAK had captured and imprisoned about 150 MEK Iran members, including the group's founders and members of the Central Committee. Sixty-nine Mojahedin was brought before military tribunals and charged with overthrowing the monarchy, among other offenses.

The trials of MEK members were initially open to the media. The MEK was unknown at this time, but the resistance organization rapidly became a household name, which was lauded to bring democracy and freedom to Iran. Media coverage was terminated once members publicly disclosed that they were tortured while in the custody of SAVAK.

The regime executed or imprisoned all of the MEK's leadership, including its founders and members of the Central Committee, but [Massoud Rajavi](#). He received a death penalty like others, but Massoud Rajavi's brother, Dr. Kazem Rajavi, organized an international campaign from his home in Geneva to commute Massoud's death sentence to life imprisonment. Top French officials intervened as well, and Rajavi's sentence was commuted.

The MEK struggled without a leadership structure, and the remaining organization was taken over by pro-communists. These usurpers took the organization's name and remaining assets.

Low-level MEK Iran members were offered the choice of either supporting the new leadership and ideology or being expelled. Some of these members were murdered.

MEK Role in 1979 Revolution in Iran

Massoud Rajavi was freed from prison after serving seven years of his sentence. His release occurred on January 20, 1979, four days after the Shah fled Iran. Mr. Rajavi was among the last group of 162 political prisoners to be released.

Four days after leaving prison, Mr. Rajavi gave a speech at Tehran University, where he discussed the MEK's history, his reverence for freedom, and bringing democracy to Iran. Thousands of people attended his address. This event marked the new beginning of the Mojahedin National Movement.

U.S. President Jimmy Carter set the '79 Revolution into motion years earlier by adopting a foreign policy that emphasized human rights. The Shah, worried that his poor human rights record would damage relations with the U.S., took steps to downgrade incidences of terror. He ended the torture and execution of his opponents, among other measures. For the first time in 25 years, Iranians could demonstrate in public without being arrested, tortured, and executed.

A broad range of political organizations, including the MEK Iran, came together to overthrow the Shah. The MEK viewed the ousting of the Shah as an extension of the 1906 Constitutional Revolution and the Mossadeq national movement in 1950, which had the objective of bringing freedom to Iran.

The mullahs had a different goal. The clerical establishment supported the Shah during the 1906 Revolution and in the Mossadeq national movement. The mullahs had their reservations on plans for modernizing Iran, including their objection to the rights of the vote for women, but they remained loyal until just before the revolution.

The Iranian people had longed for freedom for many years. They saw the results of Carter's human rights policy as an opportunity to protest the Shah's dictatorial regime.

Khomeini's Deceit

Khomeini misled the Iranian public, giving them false hope of replacing the Shah's monarchy with a democratic government. Fundamentalist mullahs believe "all means are justified in the service of God." This includes lying to Iranians about the structure of the new government. The mullahs pursued their own interests under the pretext of Islam, rather than support the aspirations of the public. In doing so, the mullahs betrayed Islam and the people's sentiment.

Khomeini misled the Iranian public by allowing them to believe they could replace the Shah's monarchy with a democratic government. The fundamentalist mullahs' belief that "all means are justified in the service of God" included lying to Iranians about the structure of the new

government. The mullahs used the pretext of Islam to pursue their own interests instead of the desires of the public. This self-interest by the mullahs was a betrayal of Islam and the people's sentiment.

Khomeini regularly utilized the strategy of "khod' eh," which means tricking one's enemy so they misjudge events. This helped him to minimize opposition by students, intellectuals, minorities, Iran's middle class, and others.

One example of this is when Khomeini falsely assured women that they would have equal rights. He also stated that the new government would support a free press, which was untrue.

Khomeini also used the strategy of "tanfih" to deceive the public. Tanfih means to mask one's true beliefs when faced with a hostile environment. Khomeini decreased public attacks against the U.S. to lull Americans into a false sense of complacency. He endorsed Mehdi Bazargan, a long-time pro-democracy activist, when he formed a provincial government, knowing that he would serve for a minimum term.

Khomeini used generalities when he spoke of a new government, and he refused to give details about programs or pledges. He lied when asked about the role of clerics in government, saying that the "clergymen, like other sectors of society, would have representatives." 1

Khomeini's deceptive strategies and lies served their purpose. The public mistakenly viewed Khomeini as an elder statesman who opposed the Shah's oppressive monarchy. The people believed they would be allowed to choose a new government after the Shah was deposed.

The Shah was diagnosed with cancer in his final months of rule and had to undergo chemotherapy. This diminished his ability to control events and hold on to power. Finally, on January 16, 1979, the Shah departed Iran never to come back.

Khomeini returned from exile to Tehran two weeks later. He found that the mullahs were well organized and had largely escaped SAVAK's wrath. According to Mr. Rajavi, "[T]he Shah did not destroy the religious institutions. He compromised with them, and they with him." 2 In contrast, many of the leaders who supported democracy and freedom were leaving them unable to fill the vacuum left by the Shah's absence effectively.

According to Mr. Rajavi, Khomeini almost immediately "began to monopolize power and concentrated everything in the hands of the clerics around him." 3 "He rejected the election of a constituent assembly and instead formed a clergy-dominated Assembly of Experts. He also imposed the velayat-e faqih constitution [government based on a Supreme Leader] on the Iranian people. Step by step, the fundamentalists' ogre began to wipe out the achievement of the revolution and solidify an autocratic theocracy in the name of Islam." 4

1 Mohaddessin, Mohammad. (2004). Enemies of the Ayatollahs. London: Zed Books.

2 Mujahidin's Masud Rajavi: "We are the only real threat to Khomeini". MERIP Reports. March-April 1982.

3 Mohaddessin, Mohammad. (2004). Enemies of the Ayatollahs. London: Zed Books.

4 Ibid.

Renewal & Hope

After Khomeini returned to Iran, he sent his son, Ahmad, to meet with Massoud Rajavi. Ahmad offered Mr. Rajavi a proposal, on behalf of Khomeini: "If you support the Imam and oppose his opponents," he said, "all gates will be open before you, and you will receive everything you want."¹

Mr. Rajavi rejected the offer, explaining that MEK Iran supported the establishment of a democratic government. Mr. Rajavi added that he would pledge the full support of the Mojahedin if the Ayatollah followed this path.

Mr. Rajavi announced MEK Iran's political platform for a new Iranian government in a speech at Tehran University on February 23, 1980. In his speech, Mr. Rajavi established the MEK as the main opposition party to Khomeini and the fundamentalist clerics. As explained by Mohammad Mohaddessin the Chairperson of the Foreign Affairs Committee of [the National Council of Resistance of Iran \(NCRI\)](#):

"Rajavi's speech at Tehran University was, in fact, the Mojahedin's anti-fundamentalist manifesto. The prestige and credibility that years of struggle against the Shah bestowed on the MEK made it a prime candidate to challenge the mullahs' power in the country. The MEK's emphasis on political freedoms as the most important issue of the day put it on a collision course with Khomeini and his supporters, including the KGB controlled Tudeh Party."²

Just weeks after the Shah's overthrow, the mullahs began a secret campaign of low-level violence against the MEK, using Hezbollah gangs. These "club-wielders" attacked MEK offices, rallies, and supporters.

As MEK Iran grew in popularity, the Hezbollah thugs increased the brutality and frequency of their assaults. The MEK refused to engage in violence in response, choosing instead to focus its attention on a peaceful struggle for democracy and freedom in Iran. The MEK's strategy was to avoid a full-scale confrontation with the regime for as long as possible.

During this period, "The MEK became identified for its steadfastness against the religious tyranny and the regime's efforts to impose its fundamentalist Islam on the country," according to author Shaul Bakhash.⁴

Presidential Election

One year after the revolution, in January 1980, Iran organized its first presidential election. Since Mr. Rajavi's release from prison, MEK Iran had made great strides in rebuilding the organization. It now had branches and offices in more than 250 cities. Its newspaper, The Mojahed, had the largest daily circulation in the country of its newspaper, reaching nearly 600,000 people.⁵

Mr. Rajavi announced his candidacy for president, receiving widespread support from a diverse array of Iranians, including other parties, ethnic and religious minorities (Kurds, Sunnis, Christians, Jews, etc.), students, young people, secular groups, and women.⁶

Khomeini, fearing Mr. Rajavi might win the election, issued a fatwa a week before the presidential election, vetoing Mr. Rajavi's candidacy. Banned his participation because he had not voted for the new constitution that created an authoritarian theocracy.⁷

Forced to withdraw from the race, Mr. Rajavi vowed that the MEK would continue to pursue its political goals within the constraints of the constitution and the new legal system.

The mullahs applied increasing pressure on the MEK, prohibiting Mojahedin representatives from appearing on university campuses. In dozens of towns, Hezbollah club-wielders "attacked and looted Mojahedin headquarters, student societies, and meetings."⁸ "In February 1980, 60,000 copies of The Mojahed were seized and burned."⁹

Hezbollah wounded an estimated 700 MEK Iran supporters in an attack on the MEK headquarters at Qaemshahr, and another 400 were assaulted in Mashad.¹⁰

Mullahs traveled from town to town, spreading vicious lies about the MEK. Cleric Hojjat ol-Eslam Khaz'ali, for example, told a congregation in Mashad, "Even if they [MEK] hide in a mouse hole, we will drag them out and kill them...We are thirsty for their blood. We must close off their jugular."¹¹

Majlis Election

After being refused the opportunity to run for president, Mr. Rajavi submitted his candidacy for a seat in the Majlis, Iran's parliament. The mullahs rigged the vote tally in the first round to prevent Mr. Rajavi and other MEK candidates from winning a seat.

MEK Iran (PMOI) denounced the election and documented widespread "rigging, fraud, and violence." Ballots for Mr. Rajavi were diverted to Islamic Republican Party (IRP) candidates. People without proper identification were allowed to vote and Islamic militants forged the ballots of other voters. Lists of IRP candidates were distributed at some polling stations, violating election law.¹²

Khomeini told Iranian citizens that anyone who failed to support candidates who favored an Islamic government would be considered a sinner.¹³ He also manipulated the election by only promoting IRP candidates prior to the campaign and then prohibiting all electronic media coverage during the campaign. This lack of exposure disadvantaged opposition candidates.¹⁴

The people staged demonstrations in protest of unfair and illegal election tampering. The government bowed under pressure to set up a commission to investigate the vote-rigging and fraud, but nothing resulted from this action.

[1]Mohaddessin, Mohammad. (2004). Enemies of the Ayatollahs. London: Zed Books.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Bakhash, Shaul. (1984). The Reign of the Ayatollahs. New York: Basic Books. New York, 1984.

5 Mohaddessin, Mohammad. (2004). Enemies of the Ayatollahs. London: Zed Books.

6 Amendment for Sunni Moslems, Khomeini (sec) Makes Concession to. Ethnic Regions. Reuters, The Globe, and Mail. January 21, 1980.

7 Mohaddessin, Mohammad. (2004). Enemies of the Ayatollahs. London: Zed Books.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Cheating Charged Iran Election May Be Declared Invalid. Reuters, The Globe, and Mail. March 17, 1980.

12 Iranians Return to Polls Today. The Globe and Mail. May 9, 1980.

13 Parliamentary Vote Turnout Suggests Win by Iranian Clergy. Washington Post. March 15, 1980.

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