

Khomeini and the Iranian revolution: his ideas and acts

SILVIA SEYEDIN
TEHRAN, IRAN

Introduction

In autumn 1978, Iran faced serious problems. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's forced modernization and his clear commitment to the West, primarily the United States, launched mass demonstrations. By the end of the 1970s, the shah had abolished the secular opponents of westernization, including opposition political parties, assemblies and newspapers. However, he failed to calm the voice of the Mullahs who were able to speak to ordinary people – those who had already become disillusioned with the Shah's repressive regime and turned to religion – while preaching in the mosques. The unity of the Church and society was successful, thanks to an outstanding public figure, Ayatollah Khomeini.

Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini was born in 1902 in the village of Khomein, Iran. The male members of his family were respected Shiite theologians and jurists – ayatollahs – for generations, and he continued this tradition. He went to theological school, and around 1922 he moved to Qom, the 'city of the priests', where he lived until 1964. He taught Islamic philosophy and ethics in the town's Koran-school, and despite his young age, he was already mentioned as a prestigious theologian. He condemned the Pahlavi dynasty's westernized modernization; therefore, between 1964-1979, he was sent into exile several times. At first, he fled to Turkey, then to Najaf, the site of holy Shia shrines in Iraq, where he continued his opposition activities. When the Algerian contract was signed between Iraq and Iran in 1978, he had to leave. Continuing his exile, that same year he went to the hosting France where, under the moderate conditions, he could prepare for his big comeback.¹ From France, he sent his rousing ideology and inspiring messages to people to prepare for the showdown with the monarchy. Khomeini wanted an Islamic republic with less rigid religious rules than Saudi Arabia, but completely different than the Shah's vision.²

¹ http://www.ng.hu/Civilizacio/2004/06/Khomeini_Ajatollah_elet_es_halal_ura;
<http://www.c3.hu/scripta/beszelo/99/10/18udvar.htm>, <http://www.biography.com/people/ayatollah-ruhollah-khomeini-13680544#political-and-religious-leader>,
http://www.iranchamber.com/history/rkhomeini/ayatollah_khomeini.php

² *The Economist* (1979).

1. Khomeini's French exile

Khomeini's messages from France were conveyed to the people via one of the most popular Persian journals, *Ettelaat*. On October 26, 1978, Khomeini sent a message saying he did not accept peace with the Shah and would continue to fight until the monarch left the country. He stated that he and his followers would not retreat a single step until they got what they wanted. According to him, the people of Iran would fight until they achieved an Islamic Republic.³ On the 28th of October, a new speech from Khomeini was sent to the Iranian people, in which he encouraged them not to give up; otherwise, he said, they could not achieve freedom. He also asked the military leaders to stop the killings and encouraged them to unite with the people to relieve the government from power and free the political prisoners.⁴ A day later, Khomeini stated again that no one should step back and called for unity in the nation.⁵

As a result of the public protests, the Shah fled Iran on January 16, 1979 in order to "recreate". The news was published on the front page of *Ettelaat* and *Kayhan*.⁶ In the meantime, the government appointed Bakhtiar as prime minister, and he continued the release of political prisoners. Despite this and other concessions and promises, the priesthood sent a letter from Qom which stated that the majority of the Mullahs did not accept the legitimacy of the Bakhtiar government.

The *Kayhan* newspaper's reporters visited and interviewed Khomeini in France, where they inquired about his future plans. In the interview, Khomeini said that after his return to Iran the first tasks would be to advise his people and to make a speech in Tehran's cemetery, Beheste Zahra, in memory of those people who gave their lives for the revolution. About the composition of the future government, he simply said that most of them would not come out of the ranks of the clergy, but that they could also have a candidate. When the reporter questioned him about the main lines of the Islamic Republic, he was not able to answer. He only declared that Islam would provide freedom and would deal with economic and most social issues, too. He also stated that religious minorities would be respected. His opinion about censorship was that if journalists write about things that are harmless for the people, they can freely do so, but they may not pen harmful things. He also determined the approval of Marxists and Leftist activities depending on the possible harm they could cause the people; if they caused harm to them, they would be stopped; if they do not harm and only speak their minds, there was no problem with that. To the question of whether each party can operate freely, he responded, "yes, every man is free, except for those who are not with the country". About the situation of women and their involvement in the leadership of the country, he said that Islamic law does not say anything special about them and, "now is not the time to talk about this". However, he could ensure that women would have the right to vote or to receive votes, because they had a great role in the revolution. In addition, he explained: "We give every kind of freedom to women, but we stop them from becoming immoral, and men also will be freed from immorality."

³ *Ettelaat*, 26.10.1978.

⁴ *Ettelaat*, 28.10.1978.

⁵ *Ettelaat*, 30.10.1978.

⁶ *Ettelaat*, 16.01.1979, *Kayhan*, 16.01.1979.

He then stated:

“Islam is developed. The development does not mean what some women or men think: to go dancing or to the movies. This development is what the western countries have created for us, so that we are left behind, and do not grow. They are free to do right things, to go to college and act decently. Everyone in the country can do this freely. But if they want to do illegal things that harm people or the country, we are stopping them from doing so. And that is why we are going to develop.”

Khomeini sought to continue the current foreign policy relations at that time with all countries, except Israel, South Africa, and those who supported racial discrimination. At the end of the interview, he said that the Shah would not be coming back anymore, that there would be no dictatorship, and that if the army was against them in Iran, they would fight.⁷

The *Ettelaat* interviewed Bakhtiar on the 28th of January regarding Khomeini's return. From the moment he became prime minister, and even before that, he repeatedly stated he would welcome Khomeini at any time. On the 28th of January, however, he did not think it would be a good idea for Khomeini to come to Iran during that mess. He would gladly be welcomed after they put things in order. However, he promised he would ask Khomeini's views in relation to the affairs of the country. Khomeini responded that he was willing to talk to him only in the case of his resignation.

On the 29th of January, the airport opened for Khomeini.

2. Khomeini's return and first statements

On the first of February, Ayatollah Khomeini arrived in Iran. The news was published on the front page of *Ettelaat* with the biggest existing letters. The newspaper wrote that 15 years earlier, when everything was quiet in Iran, Khomeini had been exiled to Turkey by the Shah; now he had returned as a face known to the world and as the leader of the revolution. He arrived together with 150 reporters and 50 faithful followers. Five thousand policemen and commandos followed him from his home in Paris to the airport. The passengers were controlled in the best way possible like never before in France; they were scanned five times.⁸ Khomeini saw a lot of problems in the country after his return. In his view, the removal of the Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi from power was only the first step on the road to victory, because the conditions for the establishment of the Islamic Republic were to be created. Khomeini refused to cooperate with prime minister Bakhtiar whose first step – according to him – could only be resignation.⁹ Thus, the arrival of Khomeini in Iran created dual power in the country.

On February 4th of that year, the Hungarian newspaper *Népszabadság* also published a story about the arrival of Khomeini with coverage by László Róbert from Tehran. The reporter believed that since the Shah's departure, the most important date in contemporary

⁷ *Ettelaat*, 03.01.1979.

⁸ *Ettelaat*, 01.02.1979.

⁹ “Én vagyok a nép szószólója.” Interjú Khomeini ajatollahhal. *Nemzetközi Szemle*, 1979/3. pp. 48-50.

Persian history was the first of February – Khomeini’s return. László Róbert received the honor of being one of the 150 journalists who arrived at Tehran’s Mehrabad Airport together with the Ayatollah. Fifty Iranian adult family members were also on board. In the last hour before the flight, it was decided that, because of various anonymous, threatening phone calls from Paris and Tehran, children would not be allowed on the plane. After landing in Tehran, the journalists exited the plane first, and Khomeini was the last to step off, back in Iran after 15 years in exile.

People greeted him with confidence and full of hope, waiting for a more equitable, more moral, more democratic, and therefore more humane life. The 78-year-old Khomeini was escorted off the plane in Tehran by his son. The charismatic, ringleader face of the imam did not show obsession, only fire and endless determination, according to László Róbert. Then, together with Khomeini, they drove towards the Beheste Zahra cemetery, 17 kilometers from the airport, where the Ayatollah had planned a speech. According to the description of László Róbert, young people threw their bodies onto and clung to the top, trunk, and hood of the car to protect Khomeini from any snipers. Around the Sahyad monument, which the Shah had built for the 2500th anniversary of the empire, notably for his glory, and which had been for 10 days – and ever since – called Freedom Square, the spontaneous and yet disciplined delirium could be heard. Fifty thousand volunteer “guards” from Shiite religious organizations took care that the wave of humanity gathered to greet the Ayatollah, whose triumph moved at least three, maybe four million people (by rough calculations) to assemble, was not provoked into chaos. At the same time on other main streets of Tehran, demonstrations of the government’s power were held with tanks, but the noise of flapping tracks was drowned out by the crowd’s cries of “Allahu akbar!” and “Marg bar Shah!”.

The next day, after a press conference in the lobby of Tehran’s Hilton Hotel, Róbert met with an American adviser who told him that the biggest mistake of the White House was to believe the Shah’s claim that the anti-communist nationalism in Iran had a higher potency than the Shia religion along with the dissatisfaction of the individual worker, peasant, and intellectual strata. According to the reporter, the vast majority of the Iranian people stood behind Khomeini; the Shah did not constitute a significant factor, even if a part of the army still wanted to be loyal. Bakhtiar could only have hope if he was willing to compromise in such a way that would be accepted by the utterly-determined Khomeini. Otherwise, it could not be ruled out that Khomeini would call for jihad.¹⁰

On February 3rd, the Ayatollah announced that if a peaceful transition was not possible jihad would be declared. Then he added that the new government would soon be introduced and, if necessary, would also use weapons. Bakhtiar stated that the government would seek advice on religious, but non-political issues from Khomeini.

On the same day *Ettelaat* published the speech given by Khomeini in the Beheshte Zahra cemetery, in which he thanked the persistence of those who participated in the revolution and offered condolences to the families of fallen victims. In addition, he asserted the illegitimacy of the Shah and his government:

¹⁰ Róbert, László: Khomeini Teheránban. *Népszabadság*, 04.02.1979.

“The parliament was set up by weapons at that time, and the members were elected by force, not by votes. They were forced to vote for Reza Shah; therefore the kingdom has been illegitimate from the beginning... It is not possible for people from 80 years ago to make choices for 80 years later. This is another reason why Mohammed Reza Pahlavi’s reign is unlawful.”

He also talked about the economic situation:

“The whole economy is in ruins and chaos... As long as people don’t help each other, we cannot rebuild this economy. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi devastated our agriculture. He forced people to leave their lands and end cultivation, because he wanted Iran to become the market outlet of the United States and Israel, who was created by the United States, to sell wheat, rice, and eggs in the country.”

Moreover, he mentioned culture and education:

“Our culture is lagging, our young people are not fully trained, and after many years spent studying in Iran, they now have to go abroad to continue their studies there. We have had universities for more than fifty years. It is a scam that we are still not well-developed. All of this happened because alcohol shops were opened instead of bookstores, and because of other things, like discos and nightclubs... the modernity that comes from Europe to the east – primarily to Iran – will not improve us, but will lead to destruction.”

Khomeini, of course, also talked about the main source of income, oil, saying:

“All of our oil was sold to strangers [United States], and in exchange we bought weapons and built military bases for them... it has already been more than 50 years that we are under oppression. We have not had newspapers, a government, radio or TV. No one could talk, not even the mullahs.”

Finally he called on the army to stand next to the revolution and liberate themselves from the bondage of foreign powers (USA):

“Mr. General, you do not want to be independent? Do you want to be a slave? I advise you to come into the arms of the people who want to be independent, and they also want an independent army. Do not stand under the United States or others... join because Islam is better than disbelief. Your own people are better than foreigners... We want the country to be strong, strong, but to work for the people, not for another country.”¹¹

On February 4th, the arms purchase contract with the United States was cancelled, and the next day Khomeini – before the entire collapse of the army – appointed Bazargan as

¹¹ *Ettelaat*, 03.02.1979.

prime minister. He was chosen because he was the most venerated among top military leaders and the citizens. Khomeini was also afraid of these two strata. Bazargan was obliged to submit to the will of Khomeini, but as a reformist politician he did not agree with the Ayatollah on many things. He denounced the retaliation against the supporters of the old regime, the purges carried out in the ranks of armed forces and government officials, and the “anarchy” to which the “Islamic committees” and the Revolutionary Guards activities led. Bazargan took action against the radical change in the socio-economic system, the Islamic draft constitution developed by Khomeini’s adherents. Above all, he wanted to normalize the inter-state relations with the United States, who continued to supply tools and advise the Iranian armed forces.

This time, however Khomeini’s will prevailed more and more. Bazargan’s government announced the country’s resignation from CENTO and nationalized banks and major industries.¹² After the US saw that “it was losing”, they changed policy and began supporting the temporary government of the Islamic Republic lead by Bazargan.¹³ A day later, Khomeini declared that if the government resigned, the country would be “tidied up”.¹⁴

Between February 8th and 12th, serious clashes occurred between the army and the people, because Bakhtiar did not want to leave. The people purposed to overthrow of the government, but the army stood behind Bakhtiar. On February 11, an armed action in Tehran developed into a popular uprising and extended to the whole country, causing the downfall of Bakhtiar’s government and leading to the dissolution of both houses of parliament when the people occupied the government building. Bakhtiar was arrested, and military leaders were executed. On the cover plate of the *Kayhan* newspaper issued on the first of February was seen: “The monarchy is overthrown”.

On the 19th of February, *Kayhan* published an article about Yasser Arafat’s visit to Tehran. The Palestinian delegation was welcomed by the public, and the key of the Israeli embassy was symbolically handed over, which then became the embassy of the Palestine Liberation Organization.¹⁵

The new government tried to recall the Shah to be held liable. At the same time they entered into negotiations with the United States about recovering the Shah’s assets. On the 6th of March they segregated the once coeducational schools and started to use Islamic decoration in their buildings.¹⁶ On March 8th, International Women’s Day, Khomeini determined how the Islamic hijab¹⁷ should look and asked women to wear it. The chador¹⁸ was not required, only hijab. He also asked help from men to make women wear it. As a result, there were large protests in several cities, primarily initiated by secular women.¹⁹ At

¹² Alijev (1979).

¹³ Rouleau (1980).

¹⁴ *Ettelaat*, 06.02.1979.

¹⁵ *Kayhan*, 19.02.1979.

¹⁶ *Ettelaat*, 06.03.1979.

¹⁷ A covering for head and shoulders, worn by Muslim women.

¹⁸ A long, usually black cloth or veil that envelops the body from head to foot but does not cover all the face.

¹⁹ *Ettelaat*, 08.03.1979.

the time, many women did not even think that wearing hijab was really mandatory. Many thought it was merely a joke, but later on, it was proven that the Ayatollah really meant it.

On March 11, Khomeini gave ground and announced that wearing hijab was not obligatory for women. There was a lot of pressure on people, and an internal battle raged. Violent actions were taken against those women who did not wear hijab. Many senior people from the period of the Shah were executed, and Israel and the United States were proclaimed as "Satan". All countries broke off external and economic relations, so there was not enough material for such industries as construction and clothing. At this point, there were still fears that the revolution would be overthrown. Allegedly, there were plans for Khomeini's assassination, too.²⁰

It was declared in March of that year that, from that time forward, the consumers will directly receive the oil, eliminating the intermediaries who, as members of the International Oil Consortium, had robbed the country for a quarter of a century. Those agreements concluded with the consortium were dissolved. According to the agreements, the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) had committed itself to coordinate its plans with the consortium, to apply their engineers and officials, and to entitle them for 20 years to distribute four-fifths of the Iranian oil in foreign markets for 1,6 dollars per ton cheaper than the world market price. 40% of it, the US monopolies enjoyed. Iran's petroleum policy was characterized by its participation in the joint actions of OPEC and thus agreed with the increase in oil prices. On the other hand, Iran refused to support any strong anti-imperialist force. For example, during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the Shah did not support the oil embargo announced against the West. Tehran did not hide that they supplied oil to Israel and the Republic of South Africa. Together with the growth of dependence on the US and Western Europe, the imperial government in 1977 gave up on the principle announced by itself that the oil prices should follow the import prices, inflation, and the decrease of the USD's purchasing power. Khomeini ranked the dissipation of oil reserves and the overwrought oil extraction among the old system's anti-national acts from which the gun purchases were financed.

Starting from March 1979, the actual needs of the country's foreign currency determined the export. Oil extraction was reduced to 150 million tons, i.e., 60% of the extraction amount, before the oil workers' general strike in autumn 1978. The oil for weapons deal was terminated. Also, the elimination of deliveries to Israel and South Africa was officially announced. "The Iranian oil is the wealth of the nation; it can no longer serve Western monopolies' and local businessmen's enrichment. We will never recognize the contracts that have been forced upon us, as if we were someone's colony," said Hassan Narzih Hassan, director of the National Iranian Oil Company.²¹

According to Khomeini, structural reforms were not necessary, because he thought that, as soon as the system got rid of the corrupt elements of the old regime, the leaders would be morally valuable, and the people in power would not abuse their position. By many people, Khomeini was considered to have utopian ideas. It was thought that once people realized there was no reasonable basis for his thoughts, that his ideas could not be

²⁰ Ettelaat. 11.03.1979

²¹ Andreaszjan (1979), p68

translated into practice, Khomeini would disappear slowly with what he brought. This, however, was not the case.

3. Establishment of the Islamic Republic, Khomeini's first measures

After the victory of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini could begin to build power. As soon as the provisional revolutionary government led by Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan started to work, everyone thought – and not without reason, because the imam had said it himself – that he would only want to stay in the background. His statement that he would not fill any position in the government was true, because he raised himself and the priesthood not to the government, but above it. The administrative system was reorganized as if the revolutionary government had an almost purely formal role. Khomeini often undermined the authority of Bazargan's government. Bazargan opposed the veiling of women, among other things. Another problem was that the prime minister failed to subject the ubiquitous revolutionary committees, or those who were popularly called the "Khomeini police", to the government. These committees were led by local mullahs or already tried God-fearing people, and were present in all municipalities, cities, factories, districts, and all major streets of Tehran. They mainly used as their base the old buildings of the SAVAK or the villas of those who had fled. They arrested everyone who was suspected of cooperating with the Shah, of committing a moral sin, or of fueling a conspiracy. They chased away the robbers and observed the neighbors, too. The government had no control over their activities. They searched Bazargan's house, expecting to find Bakhtiar there, the last prime minister appointed by the Shah and Bazargan's personal friend, but they were not successful.²² The real power was concentrated in the hands of the Revolutionary Council, which consisted mainly of mullahs and the most reliable supporters of Khomeini. On the 30th of March, 1979, a referendum was issued on whether to accept Iran's form of state as an Islamic republic. About 18 million people took part in the referendum, 96% of the entitled (in the elections held in the Shah's time more than 12 million people had never participated). 97% of the voters voted yes to the Islamic republic. The elections were free, and anybody older than 16 years was eligible to vote from any Iranian location of their choice. Electoral lists were not compiled;²³ however, the choices were very limited. Khomeini could not imagine a third way. People had two choices: vote on the Islamic republic and throw the green voting paper into the ballot box or vote against it and throw the red ballot into the box. Yet, there were those whose needs were not satisfied with these two options. Despite the many different opinions and ideas, the outcome of the referendum was positive for Khomeini, so Iran was proclaimed an Islamic Republic on April 1st. Inside the country a complicated and contradictory situation emerged: in the name of the "Islamic Revolution" and religion, actions were taken not only against the supporters of the Shah, but also against left-wing forces, such as the Tudeh Party. Inter alia banned its newspaper, closed its headquarters, and executed party members. They also deployed armed forces against ethnic movements – *despite Khomeini's promise that the*

²² Gielzynski (1979).

²³ Gielzynski (1979).

*minorities would be protected.*²⁴ Then, Khomeini began to completely reorganize the state. He created the state order based on the 'velayat fakih' concept, which meant that the leadership of the religious legal scholars would cover both spiritual and political leadership. Of course, all this was done in the spirit of Islam. "As the Islamic government is the government of the divine law, which is the best known by legal religious scholars, to deal with governance is the task of only the legal religious scholar, since he is able to follow the divine law."²⁵ The main idea of the concept is that the management of religious intellectuals is headed by a respected legal scholar of religion, whose role is supervision. A significant part of the old elite and the intellectuals fled the country. The new Shiite leadership – partly to meet the needs of the masses and partly in line with the principles of Islam – focused on improving living conditions, full employment, and economic independence as long-term objectives. Ayatollah Khomeini prohibited the inclusion of external loans, and the Iranian Constitution included a separate article, stating, "it is necessary to prevent foreign economic domination over the country's economy."²⁶

Subsequently, a new Constitution was drawn up. It differed from the one existing in the Shah's dictatorship from 1905. Instead of the word Shah, prime minister was used in it. They did not want the Islamic republic to be based on a contract, but on God, and the law was intended to be God's command. According to Khomeini, the Islamic government was not a constitutional government, where the law depended on the approval of some individuals or the majority. The Constituent Assembly's duty was to determine the framework in which the fixed laws would be applied, rather than the creation of a consensus or regulatory document for the future government's activities.

Khomeini did not want a parliament that records laws, but one that would develop programs to enable the application of divine laws. Therefore, the government could not be constitution-based in the sense of the western word.²⁷ In addition, he doubled the power structure, leaving the issues of authority and responsibility unclear. Thus, a paradoxical situation was engendered in which a democratic parliamentary system was created with free elections held every 4 years with the electoral eligibility rights of women (with the proviso that a woman could not be head of state) and an elected President and Prime Minister. However, all of these were overseen by the religious scholars and the 12-member Guardian Council to ensure it all complied with the requirements of Islam. To draw an analogy, one can say that this is equivalent to the Constitutional Court, but Guardian Council's power was much stronger and more diverse than the Constitutional Court's.

After receiving Khomeini's approval, the drafted constitution was delivered to the Assembly of Experts, who verified its accordance with the ideas of the Islamic Republic. The Majles' laws could be vetoed by the already mentioned Guardian Council in case they were not consistent with the Sharia. This Board of Mullahs was also appointed by Khomeini. The Supreme Leader, the fakih, stood above both the parliament and the Guardian Council and could veto any candidates who ran for the position of president or for a place in the Majles. There was no question of who would be the Supreme Leader. The

²⁴ Alijev (1979).

²⁵ Rostoványi (2004), p. 335.

²⁶ Iranian Constitution, Article 43, Paragraph 8. in N. Rózsa, Erzsébet: *Az Iráni Iszlám Köztársaság – a siita modernizációs kísérlet.* 2010.

²⁷ Kotobi-Vandoorne (1979).

Assembly of Experts agreed that this post should be filled by Khomeini; thus, it became clear that he did not want to stay in the background, but wanted instead to move all threads as the head of Iran. The members of the revolutionary government protested against this, saying that Iran will sink back into a dictatorship, but Khomeini repressed these attempts using the Revolutionary Guards (the private army of the Ayatollah recruited in mosques), who participated in the retaliations together with the already-mentioned militias, the committees. The intimidated people were herded towards Islam. Whoever did not live according to its rules was arrested as enemies of Islam and were convicted and executed by the revolutionary courts. The fortunes gained via the Shah's family were confiscated in order to be distributed among the poor, but the poor never received them. Instead, the money was left in the hands of the sequestrators.²⁸ Khomeini did, however, announce in a radio speech before his return to Qom that water and electricity would be free for the poor. He also requested banks to grant loans without interest.²⁹ No one knew what to do with this statement. They could not put it into practice because of the lack of specific implementation steps and assigned responsibility. Thus, this ideal was not realized, either. Khomeini continued to support the national industry; however, industries chaining Iran to countries abroad were not supported, because Khomeini thought its income flowed into the pockets of foreign capitalists and local thieves, such as the Shah who had betrayed his country and his people.³⁰

Khomeini's plan for the overly-armed Iranian army was to leave it strong enough to meet the realities of what was necessary to maintain internal order and suppress any unrest. In addition, he said that their country cannot be the depot of alien weapons, which Iran did not need at all. About the religious minorities, he stated that they would not be required to participate in the defense of the country, and while some would pay income tax, they would be exempt from other tax payments (khoms³¹ and zakat), because these are reserved for the Shiites.³²

The supreme leader announced that elections would be free, but Islamic criterion would be imposed, to which the candidates must adapt. This was intended to prevent a small group from slipping in at the expense of the masses. He was not willing to tolerate the Marxists in the government, arguing that in comparison with the vast masses of people they were just a drop in the ocean, so their will could not be imposed on the people. However, at that time he was of the opinion that their views could be represented freely. According to him, the inherent right of thought and freedom of expression should not be withdrawn from even one citizen or one group of citizens, and neither that right to express their opinion even if it differs from the state power's view. It was unacceptable, however, for anyone to go against Islamic values, endanger public order, or undermine state authority. He thought that if the Communists really wanted to work in the interests of the Iranian people, they would want Iran to be in an Islamic republic, for anyone who loved this country, who wanted to make it stable and independent, must be willing to be in an Islamic republic. In this speech,

²⁸ Rostoványi (2004).

²⁹ Kotobi-Vandoorne (1979).

³⁰ *Nemzetközi szemle* (1979).

³¹ People's earning's fifth-best must have been distributed among the poor "Seyed" people (descendants of Mohammad).

³² *Nemzetközi szemle* (1979).

referring to the spirit of a totalitarian system, he clearly expressed the belief that whoever was not with them was against them. Anyone who did not think like Khomeini, was a "SAVAK agent", an "agent of foreigners", or a "counter-revolutionary". Theoretically, the freedom of expression existed in the system, but when the Marxist-Leninists wanted to explain their views to Khomeini, he accused them of hampering the revolution. Freedom of the press existed in theory, but the newspapers could not publish "articles contrary to the people's feelings". Moreover, the radio and television could only broadcast texts of religious content; foreign reports were censored.³³ The new regime's foreign policy was characterized by independence. Iran in the Cold War did not want to belong to either of the two opposing parties (US and USSR); therefore, it isolated itself from them and, at the same time, from other countries, too. Ayatollah Khomeini proclaimed the then-president of the US Jimmy Carter to be "Satan" and his country to be the "Great Satan" who must be eliminated.³⁴ He sought to reinforce relations with other countries, especially with Islamic countries, and with all the countries of the world he sought balance on the basis of a mutual non-interference principle. One thing, however, was clear: he wanted to break all ties with Israel, because he did not see any legal basis for the existence of the country. According to him, Palestine belonged to the Islamic region and must be returned to the Muslims.³⁵ He thought that all the great powers were pursuing the same imperialist policy and talked about the independence and freedom of the people merely to better disguise their colonialism. Carter's praise of the Shah for his progress in the field of human rights provided excellent arguments for Khomeini to expose the hypocrisy of this political game.

Even at that time it could be seen that Iranian-American relations would come to an end, but still the United States did not take this threat seriously. After all, the Imam had imagined that the revolution would spread to other countries. He hoped that if Islam took root, the whole of humanity would join it.

Conclusion

Khomeini's ideas seem utopian, and the Ayatollah believed the Islamic Revolution was going to spread all over the world. Even though these and many other of Khomeini's ideas were not realized, the state order he established, which was based on the concept of 'velayat fakih', has been and still is a working system in Iran, and many people remember Khomeini positively and even with fondness.

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³³ Kotobi-Vandoorne (1979).

³⁴ Rostoványi (2004).

³⁵ Kotobi-Vandoorne (1979).

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