



Seth Derish

## SECRET POLICE

# Alleged SAVAK agents face charges

By Seth Derish

CHICO, CALIF.

**T**WO FORMER IRANIAN STUDENTS believed to be connected to the Iranian secret police, SAVAK, are facing unprecedented charges for an attack on Iranian dissidents at the state university here.

Abolfazi "Kyu" Ghamasari and Behdad Bahmanou are now on trial in Oroville, the Butte County seat, charged with conspiracy to commit murder, assault with a deadly weapon and filing a false police report.

The charges stem from an incident Jan. 10, in which Ghamasari allegedly led a local Iranian activist, Abdullah Malekoshoarai, into a trap at a student apartment complex in which Bahmanou fired five shots at him.

Bahmanou and Ghamasari, however, subsequently filed a police report claiming that five Iranian males had attacked Ghamasari and that Bahmanou had come to his defense.

"I feared he [Ghamasari] would be killed," Bahmanou told police, "so I shot four or five times in the air to scare them off. And it worked."

Police investigated the matter and found four uninvolved witnesses who stated that Bahmanou had fired directly at Malekoshoarai. Three days later Ghamasari and Bahmanou were charged.

Ghamasari and Bahmanou were released three days after their arrest in lieu of \$20,000 bond each on their own recognizance.

The 38-year-old Ghamasari has been in the U.S. for almost eight years. Non-Iranian sources have indicated that he is the local "conduit" for bringing money into the community to promote the government of the Shah of Iran. Ghamasari, according to one source, arranged to send Iranian students to the pro-Shah demonstration held at the White House last Nov. 15.

The Iranian Student Association claims that Ghamasari also spies on them and turns the information over to SAVAK.

Both Ghamasari and Bahmanou, who had not been connected to SAVAK prior to the shooting, deny any connection to the secret police force.

The district attorney's idea of a quiet trial failed when Iranian students from throughout the state demonstrated May 12 at the duo's arraignment. Likewise, the first day of the trial on June 26 found a demonstration by 75 Iranian students and a packed courtroom of prospective jurors and spectators.

Judge Lucian B. Vandergrift became upset by the bullhorn-carrying Iranians outside his courtroom and told spectators, "Our system wants to be fair with everyone. Your activities can only promote a mistrial." He said that the Iranians outside "don't understand the American way" and that their actions would leave a "distasteful" image of Iranians and Iran.

The judge called an early recess and or-

dered sheriffs to quiet the disturbance. The Iranians dispersed when confronted by baton carrying police but later returned to resume demonstrations, this time without their bullhorns.

District Attorney Leo Steidlmyer is having trouble with astutely conservative Judge Vandergrift. On two separate occasions Steidlmyer has been threatened with contempt of court by Vandergrift.

The DA is worried that the demonstrations and presence of ISA members in the courtroom is hurting his prosecution. One member of the jury was in the Air Force 30 years and visited Iran for 95 days at the invitation of the Iranian government.

Defense lawyers for Ghamasari and Bahmanou have attempted to portray the ISA as subversive and "un-American." They have asked Malekoshoarai about his studies in Seattle—especially if he took classes in "Marxism" and continually prod him into making political speeches.

The DA objected to this line of ques-



Mark Thaimon

Top: Abolfazi Ghamasari (on right), accused of being an agent of the Iranian secret police, with his lawyer at his May 12 arraignment. Above: Anti-Shah protestors at the opening of the trial June 26.

tioning, but was overruled by the judge.

The defense attorneys are also trying to pry into the inner workings of the ISA and its parent organization, the Federation of Iranian Students U.S. (FISUS). On one occasion they had a witness identify ISA members in the audience by name and asked if they belonged to FISUS. The witness gave only their first names and would not say if they belonged to FISUS.

Defense attorneys have subpoenaed a

film from a local TV station of the May 12 demonstration to see Malekoshoarai's involvement in it. Iranian activists, however, are fearful that their faces might be identified by the Iranian government through the film. If they are connected with anti-Shah organizations they can face from three to 15 years in prison if they return.

Seth Derish is a free-lance writer in Chico, Calif.

## CITIES

## Killing of black leader arouses N.Y.

By Josh Martin

NEW YORK CITY

**O**N JUNE 14, 1978, A LEADER of the black community in Brooklyn's Crown Heights area was killed during a confrontation with police, an incident that threatens to spark the beginning of a long, hot summer.

The death of Arthur Miller, a 35-year-old contractor, is but one of several unexplained deaths of blacks at the hands of New York City's finest. Past deaths prompted accusations by blacks and liberals of police brutality. But protests were scattered and short-lived. Miller's death, however, has unified various interests in the city that are now raising serious questions about the role and record of the police as impartial guardians of public safety.

The facts of the case in point, so far as they are known, run roughly as follows:

Arthur Miller got into a dispute with police who were trying to arrest his younger brother Sam for littering and unlicensed operation of a car. Although Sam had a record of several license suspensions, he told Arthur that the police had no right to arrest him. "I'm not going," he is reported to have said to Arthur as cops came forward to arrest him. "I've paid these summonses."

Arthur stood by Sam and questioned the action of the arresting officers. The questions and answers soon became a heated argument, and one of the four policemen present called for reinforcements. Eleven more police officers showed up. It was 15 to two.

No one has conclusively established how the violence broke out, or what were

the exact circumstances of Miller's death. These things will probably never be known. Nine of the 15 police involved have refused to comment on their role in the murder. And New York City's Chief Medical Examiner Michael Baden has said that there is no way to tell whether a forearm or a cop's night stick caused the com-

### The death of Arthur Miller is but one of a series of deaths at the hands of police.

pression wound (i.e., strangulation) that killed Miller.

#### Squeeze on Koch.

The Miller case raises thorny legal and political questions. First and foremost, the case puts the squeeze on Mayor Ed Koch, whose promise to put blacks in responsible positions in his administration, made repeatedly during last year's election, has for the most part been unredeemed. Koch must decide whether to support the police department, or, by bucking it in the interests of justice, to incur the wrath of conservative elements that backed him last year (in part on the basis of his law-and-order style support of the death penalty).

Secondly, there is the question of meting out punishment to fit the crime. Three weeks after a black man was killed (indirectly) for littering and license violations, under conditions implicating 15 policemen in his murder, police sources state that "no disciplinary action has

been taken against any police officer at this point."

Police Chief Robert McGuire did, however, order an investigation into the police role in Miller's death, charging Inspectional Services Bureau Chief John Guido (among others) with responsibility to also look into "allegations of corruption" stemming from the case.

This last order carried with it the implication that police may have been taking payoffs or asking favors, presumably from Miller.

Brooklyn District Attorney Eugene Gold began presenting evidence to a grand jury July 3, but many in the community are skeptical that the outcome will be anything but a whitewash of police activities. They argue that the large number of witnesses (40) and experts called to testify doesn't guarantee a full-scale investigation that produces meaningful results.

However, Gold, in an unusual move to ease tensions of the frustrated black public, has said he would seek a Supreme Court ruling to permit release of the grand jury minutes to the public—solving one dilemma while creating another.

"I'd like the community to feel that everything we could do has been done," Gold told reporters. But in the process of doing this, the district attorney may be sabotaging the cause of justice, for any indicted officer could easily and successfully plead that his right to a fair trial was compromised by such publicity.

#### Community leader.

There is further irony in Miller's death. A business man as well as a community leader, he was about to celebrate the rebirth of his neighborhood, whose main shop-

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# IN THE WORLD

## LEBANON

# Rightist massacre may spark new war

By Our Correspondent

What had begun in mid-June as a battle between two right-wing Christian organizations has threatened to erupt into full-scale war, with more than 100 killed in Beirut in fighting between the Kataeb party and the predominantly Syrian Arab Deterrent Force. But what was the relation between the two earlier intraright battles at Ehden and Baqibeck and the fighting in Beirut? In the following analysis of the Ehden massacre, a veteran Middle East correspondent suggests an answer.

**F**IFTY THOUSAND PEOPLE ATTENDED the funeral of the more than 20 persons—including Tony Franjeh, son of former president Saïghman Franjeh, his wife and three-year-old daughter—massacred in Ehden in north Lebanon in mid-June by the Kataeb (Phalangists) party's elite and most disciplined troops, the SKS.

Muslims and Christians came from all parts of Lebanon not to pay tribute to the dead scion of the Franjeh clan, an undistinguished and corrupt politician, but to make plain their revulsion over the barbaric crime (the bodies, including that of the child, were riddled with bullets and mutilated) and their rejection of the Kataeb drive to dominate all Christian Lebanon.

Apparently stunned by what even they called "the earthquake" of popular reaction, Kataeb leaders claimed their troops acted without their authorization. But the assault on Ehden came only hours after the Kataeb politbureau met to decide on a plan to deal with the situation in the north; the operation involved 600-800 men, use of heavy artillery, etc., and could not have been executed without the knowledge and consent of Bashir Gemayel, chief of the Kataeb's Military Council, as well as of the United Forces of the Lebanese Front.

The massacre was timed to coincide with Israel's handover of the "security belt" that it established inside Lebanon to the rightist Christian forces in the South rather than to the UN. These forces are composed of some 500 "regulars" of the old Lebanese army and 2,000 or more Kataeb, Chamounist, and other militiamen and have been under the command of Major Saad Haddad of the old Lebanese army. They are allied with Israel, which for over two years has organized, trained and armed them. In handing over the "security belt" to them, Israel made clear it wanted to maintain *de facto* control of south Lebanon.

When the Lebanese government ordered these forces to allow the UN troops to enter the region, Haddad and the "regulars" indicated they would comply. (The Lebanese government has continued to pay the salaries of the "regulars" even though under Lebanese law any trafficking with the Israeli enemy is treason.) But the militiamen refused to allow UN troops to enter.

The day after the Ehden massacre, Bashir Gemayel publicly applauded their defiance, thus underscoring the link between developments in the north and south and confirming a Kataeb plan to establish a Christian Lebanon, stretching from north to south, dominated by the Kataeb and inevitably dependent on the Israelis.

### Clashes with Syrians

The Ehden massacre climaxed a succession of armed clashes and assassinations involving constituent organizations of the Catholic Maronite, far rightist Lebanese Front. The Front's three pillars are the Kataeb, former president Camille Chamoun's National Liberal Party (NLP) and until a



## The Kataeb party wants to rule Lebanon. As a first step, it must defeat rival Christian factions and drive out the Syrians.

few months ago the Zghorta-based clan headed by ex-president Franjeh. The Chamoun and Franjeh organizations are feudal groupings around a *zaim* (feudal lord and military protector). Although also a clan party dominated by the Gemayel family, the Kataeb is at the same time the largest and most structured Lebanese political party. Wealthy financiers, businessmen, lawyers, university professors and students constitute the party elite; lower middle class people, workers, small struggling farmers of Mountain Lebanon, the "Mountain Boys," provide the bulk of its storm troopers, the base.

The Lebanese Front claims to represent all Christians. It doesn't, but through its military muscle it has frightened any Christian opposition into silence. Its military forces, even the Kataeb's military forces alone, far exceed the government's.

The new army-information was supposed to be built on an equitable balance among the sects, but the Front has succeeded in staffing it from top to bottom with its own adherents and sympathizers. The largely Syrian Arab Deterrent Forces (ADF) remain the government's only recourse, but since the start of the year the Kataeb and the NLP have been engaged in a policy of provoking the Syrians, risking ever more dangerous confrontations to try to force the withdrawal of Syrian troops. After heavy clashes with Syrian troops in February and April, the Front took over security duties in large parts of the Christian zone from which, with Syria's agreement, the ADF was virtually excluded.

During and since the civil war the Front has built its own administration in the Christian zone, a fact underlined by its regular monthly collection of protec-

tion money from residents. Penalty for non-payment has been a car, home, shop or office blown up and sometimes worse.

Once the Lebanese Front assumed responsibility for law and order, Christian smugglers and racketeers operated unchecked. Quarrels among gangs of freebooters, usually attached to one or another of the rightist parties, produced some of the gun battles and bombings that have occurred with growing frequency in Christian areas. Bigger and fiercer battles pitted Maronite rightist parties against each other. In a clash in May, the Kataeb levelled to the ground the NLP party headquarters in East Beirut. Such battles usually close schools, shops and businesses and send residents to their cellars.

The rift between former president Franjeh and the Front developed over a number of issues. He opposed the "protection money" racket. Cynics said it was because he did not get his cut. Others noted that the modern American gangster-type operations of the Kataeb and the NLP violated deeply rooted traditions of political feudalism, which take seriously the *zaim's* responsibility to his clientele.

Always friendly to Syria and an old personal friend of Syrian President Assad, Franjeh also strongly objected to the Kataeb-NLP efforts to force Syrian withdrawal. He opposed the Kataeb-NLP alliance with Israel, refusing to have anything to do with it. And he could not countenance the Kataeb drive—in its own words—"to replace feudalism in the north with a party regime," that is, to extend Kataeb domination over Franjeh's domain.

Members of the U.S. peacekeeping force move in on the heels of Israeli troop withdrawals. According to the U.S., the Israelis turned over 14 positions to the UN, but left 20 for the Christian right.

The Kataeb drive into the north began during the civil war when it conquered the largely Greek Orthodox district of Kura, just below Zghorta, and "cleaned out" this longtime stronghold of the progressive Syrian Social National Party (SSNP). After the war the Kataeb moved into other northern villages and towns beginning with Basharri near Zghorta in the hope of exploiting traditional Basharri-Zghorta rivalry. (This proved to be a miscalculation: after the Ehden massacre Basharri stood with Zghorta.)

This Kataeb infiltration coupled with Franjeh's warnings that he would quit the Front if it opted for confrontation with Syria provoked the formation of a new political force. The Coalition of Maronite Deputies which included a third of the Maronites in parliament, has as its stated aim speeding national reconciliation and supporting legality as represented by President Sarkis. Its emergence suggested substantial discontent among Maronites with the hardline and provocative policies of the Lebanese Front, although the group was careful to point out that it did not oppose the Lebanese or any other Front.

The Franjeh-Kataeb dispute took a violent turn early in May when a bomb planted in a car parked in the center of Zghorta exploded wounding 40 people. This declaration of war was followed by a Syrian-arranged reconciliation between Franjeh and Rashid Karame, Sunni political boss of Tripoli and former Prime Minister, and by reports of a possible reconciliation between Franjeh and Abdullah Saade, SSNP leader and native of Kura. For the Kataeb this was treachery, a defection from the Front demanding the most severe punishment lest other defections follow.

Although Franjeh himself was hospitalized with a minor heart attack, the Kataeb and the Franjeh clan were soon in-

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