

Iranians expel three journalists

From Reuter in Tehran

Iran expelled three Western correspondents yesterday after a call from the unofficial Head of State, Ayatollah Khomeini, to be more revolutionary. Two of the journalists are British — Mr Towyn Mason of the BBC and Mr Andrew Whitley, of the Financial Times. His assistant, Ms Elizabeth Hyams, also said she had been told to leave.

The third was a Frenchman, Mr Jerome Dumoulin, of the Paris magazine L'Express, who received the expulsion order less than 48 hours after arriving in Iran. All were ordered to depart as soon as possible in separate meetings yesterday with Dr Ali Behzadnia, foreign press director of the Ministry of National Guidance.

Mr Mason was told that the authorities objected to the general tone of BBC broadcasts about Iran. Mr Dumoulin was criticised for an Express article about life after the revolution. Mr Whitley, who

had been in Iran for two years, was ordered out without explanation.

Dr Behzadnia said that the expulsions were a revolutionary decision which overruled any legislation already in force, a reference to restrictions on the foreign press issued last week.

The authorities also announced yesterday that they intended to expel two West German journalists who went to cover events in Kurdistan without obtaining Government credentials.

The Tehran Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor, Ayatollah Azari Qomi, announced yesterday that 26 newspapers and magazines had been closed by the authorities. The press purge began at the weekend after a fierce attack by Ayatollah Khomeini on opposition parties and newspapers. He said that the government, Revolutionary Guards, and army had not been revolutionary enough and must start taking revolutionary action.

Ayatollah Qomi was quoted by State Radio yesterday as saying that opposition groups had abused the freedom the February revolution gave them.

He described the boycott of the recent Constitutional Council elections by groups such as the Fedayeen guerrillas and the centrist National Democratic Front (NDF) as shameful. He accused the NDF of being responsible for 300 people injured in a rally last week to protest against restrictions on the press.

In the latest move against Left-wing political parties the authorities sealed the offices of the pro-Soviet Tudeh (Communist) Party. The whereabouts of its leadership were unknown, yesterday. The move followed the banning of two of the party's newspapers by the Islamic Revolutionary Prosecutor.

In the Kurdish border town of Paveh, the scene of bloody fighting between rebels and Revolutionary Guards at the

weekend, an Islamic Court presided over by Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali sentenced 13 insurgents to death on charges of waging war on God and his representatives. Five other rebels were executed by firing squad in the nearby city of Kerman-shah.

Sources in the Kurdish stronghold of Mahabad reported clashes between Kurdish forces and Revolutionary Guards. Guerrillas of the banned Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) clashed with Government forces using artillery and tanks near the town of Miandoab north of Mahabad. Skirmishes also took place in other areas.

● In Stockholm a Foreign Ministry spokesman said that the ousted Shah of Iran has asked the Swedish Government for political asylum.

The request was made informally through private contacts and will not be dealt with until the Shah sends a formal, written application.

