



Witness Statement of Sayyed Mahmoud Roghani

Name: Sayyed Mahmoud Roghani

Place of Birth: Rey, Iran

Date of Birth: 1943

Occupation: Electrician

Interviewing Organization: Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC)

Date of Interview: June 9, 2009

Interviewer: IHRDC Staff

Witnesses: None

This statement was prepared pursuant to an in-person interview with Mr. Mahmoud Roghani. The statement consists of 103 paragraphs and 22 pages. The interview was conducted on June 9, 2009. The statement was approved by Mahmoud Roghani on April 13, 2010.

Statement

1. My name is Sayyed Mahmoud Roghani.¹ I was a member of the Tehran Provincial Committee of Tudeh Party when I was arrested on February 6, 1983. I knew that I was under surveillance before I was arrested. Cars that belonged to the Islamic Republic forces were tailgating me everywhere. I was followed whether I was traveling on foot, by bicycle or by car to the Provincial Headquarters of the Tudeh Party in Tehran. In addition, two persons in a Paykan car were constantly monitoring my street in Amirabad in Tehran three weeks before I was arrested.
2. At the time, there was a major debate in the Provincial and Central Committee of the Tudeh Party about whether we would be attacked very soon. The Soviet Union had provided some information to the Party about an imminent attack. I remember the first time the Central Committee and Provincial Committee of Tehran discussed the issue of being attacked was four months before the mass arrest of the party members in 1983. In Tehran's Provincial Committee, we discussed the danger but concluded that the party members should not go underground. I remember Kianouri², the leader of the Party, said in a meeting in the Central Committee that the polit bureau had decided that Party members should not conceal its activities until they were attacked. He argued that it would be to the Party's advantage if we could publish our "*Mardom*"³ newspaper for one more day. Besides, Kianouri believed that going underground would harm the Party as it would provoke the regime into targeting the Party's members and increase its suspicion that the Party had some secret plan.
3. Two weeks before my arrest, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Council (IRGC) had visited my uncle's home inquiring about me. I was surprised that they had gone there as they knew where I lived. (Lajavardi⁴ had asked us officially to send him our residential address. We complied with his order.) I reported to Mr. Hajari, the head of the Tehran Provincial Committee, that they had gone to my uncle's home looking for me and asked his advice. We deliberated about this incident and finally concluded that they wanted to find out my reaction. If I attempted to hide myself, they would arrest me and claim that Party members were hiding. Hajari advised me to report at the 10th *Kommittee* and to inquire why they had asked for me at my uncle's home. I decided to follow his advice and to report at the 10th *Kommittee*. I packed some clothes in a small bag as a precaution in case I was arrested.
4. I had a responsibility at the Labor Branch of the Tudeh Party in Tehran. Before reporting to the *Kommittee*, I went there to delegate my responsibilities. There I met Ezatullah Zare who was the head of our branch in Tehran. He was my direct supervisor in the Party too. I briefed him on my decision and Hajari's advice. He said I should not do it as the government had already arrested some Party members like Fariborz Baghai and some others whom were not released. He told me to wait and call Javanshir and ask his opinion. Later, Javanshir came and strongly advised me not to hand myself over. He said that the outcome of such an act was not certain and nobody knew what was going to

¹ This statement is not an endorsement of the Tudeh Party. By telling my story, I hope to shed light on a period in the history of Iran. I'm no longer a member of the Tudeh Party and I no longer believe in Communism.

² Nur al- Din Kianouri was the first Secretary of the Tudeh Party from 1978 to 1983.

³ *Mardom* was the name of the Tudeh Party's official publication.

⁴ Assadullah Lajjavardi was the general prosecutor of the Revolutionary Court at the beginning of the revolution and later was appointed head of Evin prison. He was assassinated on August 31, 1998 in Tehran when he did not have any official position.

happen to me and whether I would be released, remain alive or not. He added that if they intended to arrest me, they would do it as they had done with others. Thus, I decided not to report to the *Kommittee*.

Arrest

5. On 6 February 1983, they came for me at my home. I was helping my daughter get ready for school. The door bell rang. Looking down from a window, my wife said that IRGC officers were behind the door. I understood they had come to arrest me. Kianoori had instructed us to not resist and to hand ourselves to government officers who wanted to arrest us. He had also instructed us to defend the Party in detention and in prison as the Party was legal and had not committed any unlawful act.
6. Anyhow, I quickly tore up some papers on which the names and address of some of my colleagues were written and flushed them down the toilet. I put some other papers in my wallet and gave it to my wife to deliver to Zare. I opened the door. Two plain-clothes officers entered the house. One of them was armed. My wife asked what they wanted from me. They said that I had to accompany them to the base to answer some questions. I asked if they had an arrest warrant for me. They replied that they had. They showed me an arrest warrant signed by the General Prosecutor of Tehran permitting them to detain me instantly wherever they found me. My young daughter was brushing her teeth. She was shocked when she saw them armed in my home. The man who was armed aimed his gun at me and threatened me not to make any unusual moves. (Later, when I was beaten with a cable, my blindfold moved a bit upward, and I noticed that these two persons were there too.)
7. Then, the two IRGC officers who were inside my home ordered the other two officers who were waiting outside to take my books, series of *Mardom* newspapers and some other items that I don't remember now to a Chevrolet that was parked outside my home. They also ordered me to move. My wife asked them when I would be released. They replied that they had a few questions for me and I would be freed afterwards. But I told my wife that they were not telling the truth because they would not come for minor interrogation with an arrest warrant from the General Prosecutor of Tehran. My wife gave me some money and we left my home.
8. I entered the car and sat in the back seat between two IRGC soldiers armed with *Kalashnikovs*. The two other persons sat in front and one of them drove the car. When I looked back at my street, I thought it was my last look. On the way, an IRGC officer showed me Ehsan Tabari's picture and asked whether I knew him. I said I did and then he asked where he was. I told them that I didn't have that information. Then he showed me Zare's picture and asked whether I didn't know this one either. I said that I knew the earlier one and I knew him. His name is Zare. Then the officer asked where he was. I said that I had no idea.
9. Then, we moved towards Kashawarz intersection and stopped for a short while in front of a cinema. I was told to bend my head, put it between my legs and not to look up again. They covered me with a coat. The car started moving fast from one street to another so that I would lose my sense of direction. After a while, I thought we reached a vast yard. I heard women and boys' voices there.

10. I recognized one of the voices. It was Nahid, wife of a friend of mine. She was shouting at the IRGC officers asking why they were arresting her husband and what she could do with her two children in her husband's absence. I heard her saying that her husband had not committed any crime. Meanwhile, I heard Mehdi Kayhan's voice. He was a military officer in *Khorasan* province. He had joined Azarbaijan's branch of the Party and had been in the Soviet Union for some time. After the Revolution he returned to Iran. Mehdi Kayhan was talking with the IRGC officers and pleading for permission to use the restroom. I heard him saying, "Brothers, I've prostate and I need to go to the restroom." Apparently, the IRGC officers did not let him use the restroom.
11. I thought every member of the Tudeh Party was arrested. They took me out of the car but the coat was still over my head. There were many prisoners. They were taking each one of us separately through a corridor. Finally, they took the coat off my head and covered my eyes with a military blindfold. It was a rough cloth and irritated my eyes. Then, I was taken to a van. Prisoners called the van "*Khorkh* " (*growl*) because it made a snoring kind of sound. I heard many other familiar voices inside the van like Farzad's. He was sitting next to me. He hit me with his elbow and asked "Is it you, Mahmoud?" and I said "yes, it is me."
12. The car set off and after a while we went downhill. I didn't know where it was. The car stopped and they asked us to get out of the car. Then they lined us along a wall and took pictures of each one of us. We were each given two blankets and a small pillow. They took all our clothes. I was suffering from sinusitis and therefore, I was wearing hat. That day I wore a hat which was made of Afghan wool. They took it from me and gave me a shirt.
13. Later, I realized I was in *Komitee Moshtrak*. It was very cold when I was arrested. The temperature was below zero. They made me to sleep in the hall. Cold air entered the hall every time somebody opened the door. It was very cold and I trembled all night. I soon got bronchitis.
14. From there, I was transferred to Ward 4. Again, I was made to sleep in the hallway. I had two blankets. I put one blanket under me and used the other blanket to cover myself. When I was sitting, I had to face the wall blindfolded. To use the restroom, I had to ask permission. Usually, they allowed me to use the restroom two or three times a day. I ate my food from a plastic plate. I did not have permission to move or talk with anybody. The next day, when they took me to restroom in the morning, I tied the blindfold looser so I could move it up with my eyebrows if I needed.
15. Later, an interrogator came and asked my name. I heard him asking other prisoners similar questions. When other prisoners replied, I recognized some of the voices. For instance, I heard Jafar Sadei-e Waten who was an old comrade of mine in the Tudeh Party and Manouchehr Behzadi and Kiomers Zershinias. We were all in the hallway.

Interrogation and Torture

16. Interrogation began. There were two torture rooms at the ground floor of every ward that were constructed during the Shah's time. I guess our ward was in a four or six floor building. During the interrogation, I was in Ward 1, Ward 2 or the hallway of Ward 4.

17. The first time I was taken to the torture room, I felt it was a very dangerous place. The entrance had a bar which forced me to raise my foot half a meter to cross it. Right after that, there was a narrow iron door that they locked behind us. Then, there was a small room through which we could hardly pass. Then, there was another door that was similar to the one before. When they locked both doors, it was impossible for any sound to escape. The room did not have any windows. Once I pulled my blindfold up with my eyebrows and looked around. I was in a circle-shaped room. There was an iron bed in the room. They made me lie facedown on the bed. They tied my feet and hands with electrical cables and then lashed me with a whip. (I was an electrician. I knew the size of the lines. When they beat me, I knew what size the cables were. They beat us with 2.5 by 4 or 4 by 4 lines.) They chose the size of the cables according to their purpose. If they wanted to create pain, they chose the thicker cables and when they wanted to create burning feelings, they chose a thinner size. Most of the time, they beat us on the soles of our feet but sometime, they missed the target and hit other places. They did not hit my back because one of them sat on my back. The first time they hit me, they covered my mouth with a blanket; sometimes they pushed our socks into our mouths. They told me before lashing that if I wanted to confess, I should open and close my fingers.
18. On the first day, they told me that they wanted no information from me but they showed me a decree and said that, according to the decree issued by an Ayatollah (I have forgotten the name they said). They would lash us 30 times to welcome us and to make us understand how it feels. It was very painful. I endured it as there was no other way for me to avoid it.
19. In the early days of the revolution, a very prominent theoretician from the People's Fedayeen Guerrillas Organization⁵ published a book that mistakenly had written "after 30 lashes, you won't feel the pain. Therefore, you must never worry about the torture!" I can tell you with certainty that I could feel the pain after 1000 lashes. After each lash, my hair stood up from pain.
20. Anyhow, I endured the 30 lashes. I was thinking that they would not beat me anymore because they did not want anything from me. I was responsible for a labor committee in Tehran. But I was wrong. They took me to another room and made me sit on a school chair and asked me to introduce myself, describing who I was, what activities I was engaged in, etc. I took the pen and started writing about myself.
21. I called the IRGC officer "brother" because we, the members of the Tudeh Party, were their supporters and tried to help them get established. More than any other movement, we campaigned for them and took the brunt of the hardship and advocated for them. I said "Brother! You claim there is not torture in the Islamic Republic and the Constitution prohibits it; what was the act you did with me a while ago?" He said, "Look! You seem like you don't know where you are?" I said, "No, in fact, I don't know". He said, "Really! Don't you?" I said, "Honestly, I don't know." He said, "You are in an IRGC military base. This sort of kidding is for outside. Here, you must say what you are asked to say. What we did to you was just a welcome treat. If you don't answer, you will be offered full treats." I said, "Brother, after all you said you are revolutionary and bringing the revolution to this country. It was SAVAK, the former intelligence bureau of the monarchy system who was torturing, but now..." Suddenly, he slapped me so hard on the face that I saw thousands of stars sparkling in front of my eyes. As I moved to gain

⁵ A banned leftist Marxist organization that was founded sometime before 1979 in Iran.

- control of myself, I was assaulted by many people. They hit me, kicked me and punched me. When I was holding my head, they hit me in the stomach, when I was holding my stomach; they hit me on the head. Beating continued for a while. I called and asked “why are you hitting me?” One of them said, “You don’t get it. We can change the Constitution, the law and the rubbish things in there.” I said, “Brother, I got it. Stop it here. What was your question?” My interrogator said, “Now you became a good boy. Write who you are, what you were doing in the Party, and what your plan was to overthrow the government.” I said, “Brother, please stop it here. Whatever we wanted to do, we did not want to overthrow the government. We fought with anti-revolutionary people. I tried to break the labor strikes in favor of the establishment. (I was representing the Party in Tehran’s factories. Often Javanshir gave me a call informing me that, for instance, Iran-National Factory, wanted to go on strike the next day. Go and speak with the labor association to stop the demonstration, because it is time for construction and any sorts of strikes benefit the enemy.)
22. In response, the interrogator told me that, “We’ll find out very soon. It’s not what you think. We have all the information about you. You were thinking that you are facing a few Hezbollahi kids. You were wrong. We’ve been following you for years. You were one of those who evaded the pursuit. Our brothers were exhausted following you.” I started writing about myself. When I finished writing he told me, to go to the hallway and sleep there. I left.
23. The next morning during breakfast, I pushed up my blindfold with my eyebrows and saw Jafar Sadai-e Watan. He was sitting next to me. Jafar was a lovely, honest person who loved the Tudeh Party. I saw his feet. They were wounded. Cable marks were visible on his feet. He astonishingly signaled to me asking what was going on. He was not expecting this kind of treatment from the Islamic Republic. Like most of us, he was thinking that we would be subject to an ordinary interrogation. In fact, we were misled by a trickery game the Islamic Republic played with the Soviet Union. We believed that our comrades in the Soviet Union were behind us and that the Islamic Republic would not dare to treat us rudely. I showed him my feet. He was surprised. Then, I saw that Hamid Mohammadzadeh was sleeping further up from us and next to him was Manouchehr Behzadi. Behzadi was a member of the polit bureau of the Party. He had not been taken for interrogation up before then. The rest of us were cadres of the Party. For instance, I was advisor to the Central Committee and Jafar Sadai-e Watan was an ordinary cadre.
24. If the prison employees and wardens discovered that I had lifted up my blindfold, they would have hit me with cables or kick me. Unlike the monarchy system prison employees, the Islamic Republic prison employees treated us like the enemy. They assisted the interrogators in interrogating and torturing us. For them, we were dirty infidels.
25. I think it was on the second day of my arrest that a guard gave me a tour in the Ward. He asked me to pull up my blindfold. I did and saw that Azatullah Zare was sleeping. Then he took me to the interrogation room. I heard Amoi-e’s voice there. When I moved further up, I saw his feet were bandaged to his knees. He seemed to have been beaten badly. I was moved to another interrogation room. I heard Houshang Asadi’s voice there. He was arguing with interrogators and defending himself that he was not a spy. Then, I was taken to the basement. There he showed me the solitary cells. I saw Kianoori there. I also saw Kihan, Asaf and many other Tudeh Party members in other parts of the prison. I realized that the party had received a heavy blow.

26. A few days passed. They increased the pressure on me. They wanted me to write more and more. Finally, I ran out of topics. Then, they took me to a room and insulted me. One of them said, "Mother...! What you have written are defenses for your party's activities." I said, "In fact, no, they were my defenses for the activities I have done to support the Islamic Republic." My interrogator said, "You have written that you tried to break the labor protest. We don't want that. Forget that rubbish. Tell us about the plan for overthrowing the government." Then he said, "You were responsible at the labor branch. Tell us what your plan was to bring the laborers to the street to demonstrate against us." I said, "I swear that we didn't have such a plan. I had harsh arguments with the laborers for not working harder. We stood against labor to serve you!"
27. During interrogation, "blindfold and slapping" was constant and very troubling. The blindfold pressed my eyes hard and it was very painful when they slapped it. I could not understand which direction the slap was coming from. When they were slapping me with all their might, it seemed like thousands of splendid stars were falling from my eyes. Signs of mistreatment were visible in my eyes years after release from prison.
28. Then my interrogator said "Mehdi Kyhan has repented and wants to give an interview. Likewise, Asaf and Hajari. Why don't you give an interview?" I said, "I don't know what to say in the interview?" He said, "You must write and say what the nature of your relationship with the Soviet Union was. You have enough information about this as you were the contact person between the two sides." I said, "Honestly, I've never met a Russian so far and don't know what they look like." He got angry and insulted me using very offensive words and finally said, "You are playing with me, son of a bitch." I said, "Believe me; I've not passed by the Soviet Union Embassy yet. I occasionally went to the Iran-Russian cultural house to watch movies during the monarchy system." But they kept their pressure on me.
29. They hit me very badly alleging I was a Russian spy and pressed me to give a video interview. I was thinking if I, who was a cadre of the Party, break and interview, it would cause others to break and finally the leadership would break. Thus, I decided to resist and not to agree to an interview. When they pressed me for an interview, I kept saying that "What have I done to say at my interview? An interview is for anti-government elements. I'm a member of the Tudeh Party who supported you and fought against all other leftist groups. I fought for you with my family. Now you want me to come and confess I was wrong. No, I won't do that."
30. Finally I reached my limit. I could not bear it any more. My feet were bloody. When they lashed me, blood streamed from my feet. They treated my feet in the interrogation room and hit me again. They were breaking me. When they treated my feet, I was thinking that they would let me go but when they resumed the hitting, I was crazy. Ten days passed like this. I understood they would not let me go unless I confessed and gave an interview.
31. Nonetheless, I believed that they would kill a person who gives an interview because they could not let others know how they got the interview. Also I didn't want to break the spirit of other party members. So I decided to commit suicide.

Attempt to Commit Suicide

32. I decided to end my life with something sharp. But I could not find anything. They took me three times to restrooms every day. I looked in the garbage bag for something sharp like pieces of glasses, iron and etc. to cut my vein, but I could not find anything. Finally, I broke the cover of my toothbrush which I had paid for from my own pocket. It had a hard cover. I broke it to find a sharp edge. I rubbed it hard on my vein but it was unable to cut my vein. I told myself "how unlucky I am that I am having trouble committing suicide."
33. On the 10th day, I found a solution. There was a window above the toilet in the restroom. I thought if I could reach to the window and wrap one leg of my underwear around the grip and the other one around my neck; I could successfully put an end to my miserable life. I pondered well about my decision. At around 11 o'clock at night when everybody was asleep and nobody was going to the restroom, I called the guard and asked him to allow me use the restroom. He did.
34. I went to the restroom to try my plan. In a glance, all my life passed before my eyes. I wrapped my underwear around the grip and the other end around my neck. I stopped breathing. When I could not hold my breath anymore, I released myself. I didn't understand anything after that. I remember seeing ghostly pictures moving around me. I felt terribly thirsty. I could not describe how thirsty I felt. Then I felt somebody was calling Asaf next to me. I was thinking that Asaf was there. I shouted "Asaf, I want water. Give me water. I'm dying. Please give me water." Then, I felt somebody giving me an injection. I fell unconscious and did not understand anything after that. I was in a strange situation. I was unable to comprehend where I was and what I was doing. There was darkness everywhere.
35. When I regained consciousness, I was calling the name of any person whom I knew in my life to give me water. For instance, two weeks before being arrested, I went to Dr. Bani Tarafi's clinic. Bani Tarafi spent 20 years in prison during the monarchy system. He was an old member of the Tudeh Party. I went to Ahwaz city to supervise the labor activities in the city. Bani Tarafi was living there. So I stopped by his house to pay him a visit. When I was unconscious, I was calling on Bani Tarafi to give me water. I thought I was still in his clinic. They did not give me water. They gave me an injection to keep me quiet. I was calling my daughter to give me water. It was a horrible situation. I was extremely thirsty.
36. I opened my eyes and noticed a guard was sitting behind a desk. I understood that he was in charge of our ward. I was surprised that I was there. The guard asked, "Well, Sayyed, tell me, why did you attempt to commit suicide?" (My family name is Sayyed, which means descendent of Muhammd, the Prophet.) Like an intoxicated person, I said, "Get lost, and damn you." I would not dare speak rudely with him when I was in a sound mind. He said, "Well, we'll meet each other in a while". Then I saw the person who had come to my home to arrest me. I saw him once earlier when he was lashing me. (During the lashing, I moved my blindfold up a little with my eyebrow and saw him. He was a strong, tall and ugly person. He had a scar on his face. He came closer to me and said "Well, Mr. Roghani, tell us why you attempted to commit suicide." I said, "I had no other option. You have put me under huge pressure and mistreated me very badly. There was no option left for me. What have I done to face that much pressure?" He said, "Now we'll find out". He opened my hands. Then, I found out that my hands and feet had been tied to the bed. I tried to move them, but I could not. They were numb.

37. He left and brought our ward's doctor. The doctor was from Balochistan and his name was Dr. Shahchi. I don't know whether he was a monarchist or not. He was first sentenced to capital punishment but later his sentence was changed to life imprisonment. He was responsible for the health of the prisoners. Dr. Shahchi came and massaged my arm and helped me stand up. I realized that I had very bad back pain. But I felt very thirsty. I told him to give me water. A guard brought some water but Dr. Shahchi recommended not drinking water because my throat was filled with blood. He said that I should gargle with salt and water and then drink water. When I went to gargle, I found out that my throat had become flat and there were a lot of clotted blood in my larynx. After gargling, I was returned to the hallway. They gave me lunch. Then I realized that it was the next day's lunch time. I had attempted to commit suicide the night before. I had been unconscious for almost a day. I asked my doctor why I had been unconscious for such a long time. He said that I was given morphine. He stood there while I ate my lunch. It was bean soup. I ate it slowly. Then I smoked a cigarette and fall asleep.
38. After my failed suicide attempt, I felt that I would be relieved from the pressure. I thought that my interrogators might say that I was a crazy person. Under pressure I would commit suicide again. I thought they might leave me alone for sometime. But I was wrong.
39. The next day was Friday. Around 8 o'clock in the morning they came for me. I remember the time and the clock because I was listening to 8 o'clock news on radio. The radio said that they have captured a great many people in connection with espionage. I understood that they would not release me and my Tudeh Party comrades. They had a long term plan for us. I was taken again to the torture room. I could not believe it. They tied me to the bed again. One of them pushed my sock into my mouth and sat on my back. He again reminded me that if I wanted to confess, I was to open and close my fingers. Then they started beating me. When one of them became tired, the next one took his turn. However, in the beginning before they started beating me, they politely asked each other to take the first turn - as if they were eating kabob.
40. After praying and reading some verses from the Quran, one of them took the lead. I felt that the ten days of torture that I have suffered before was insignificant compared to that day's torture. Believe me, many times during the beating, I held my breath to suffer a heart attack. I happily embraced death. Finally, after many rounds of lashings, they told me to name the ten colonels with whom I was in touch.
41. A colonel had come to my home twice. He wanted to know why the Tudeh Party was supporting the Islamic Republic. I reported his visit to Kianoori and Hajari. Kianoori wanted to meet him in person but the colonel did not want to meet him. I was surprised because I had never spoken about the colonel with my interrogators before. I asked myself whether it was Kianoori or Hajari that betrayed me. I was anxious. I said that I had been in touch with only one colonel. They hit me from morning to noon. My feet were bloody. My body was trembling. Then, they handed me a pen and paper and said to write whatever I knew about that colonel. I wrote that the colonel did not endorse any political view. He wanted to know why we were supporting the Islamic Republic. Apparently, the interrogators knew that I didn't have any more information about that colonel. They might have compared my confession with that of Kianoori and others. Then they let me go that day.

42. The pressure on me decreased. There was some information that I still withheld and did not share with them. I think they knew that I had not exposed everything I knew but let me go for a while. Randomly, they called me and asked some questions to keep me under pressure. For example, two or three months later, they called me and tied me to a bed again. It was not serious. They asked me who was the contact person between the Tudeh party and Fedayan Party (the Majority). I said I had no information. My interrogator asked whether I was not the head of the labor section of the Party. I said that I only conducted joint meetings. He said, "This is the contact person. What does contact mean? You were the contact person."
43. A few more months passed. Dr. Shahchi came and gave me my broken teeth that he had kept in cotton. He said, "Keep them as souvenirs from your time in prison." After my failed suicide attempt, they had broken my teeth to give me artificial breathing because my jaws were locked.

Prison Situation

44. It is important here to say some words about an incident that later became known as the "coup." The government claimed that the Party wanted to overthrow the government. This claim goes back to April 27, 1983 when the government struck the second blow to the Party. One day the guards came and locked the doors from the inside with large locks. The doors opened like table drawers. Nobody could open them from outside. I was in cell 10 ward 2 of *Komitee Moshtrak* and next to me was Reza Sheltok, a military officer of the Tudeh Party who had been in prison for 25 years during the monarchy system. The main corridor had many sub-corridors. The solitary cells were located in these smaller and narrower sub-corridors. There were around two or three cells in every corridor. The main corridor ended in a torture room.
45. The guard came and warned us "to keep quite." He said "From now on, I should not hear your voices." There was absolute silence in the ward. I could hear the footsteps of the clerics and the wardens in the ward. They stopped in front of each room. We could hear doors being unlocked and prisoners being taken to the torture room. A few minutes later, we could hear shouting and screaming. Sometimes we could hear the sound of the whipping, too. I didn't know why they left the door of the torture room open. During those nights, the torture continued throughout the night. I don't think they were interrogating. They were just beating the prisoners on those nights.
46. I was taken two times for interrogation at that time. They asked me about the "coup" and the reason we wanted to overthrow the government. My interrogators said, "You were supposed to bring the workers to the street to support the coup. You have had a maneuver in this regard." I said, "It was true that we (the Tudeh Party) had organized workers to come out to the street but in fact, it was an anti-coup maneuver. We did it because we thought that if supporters of the monarchy attempted a coup, we should bring workers to the street to oppose them and support the Islamic Republic."
47. I was under huge pressure to give an interview at this time. Finally, I agreed to an interview. I asked what I should write and say at my interview. The interrogators said they would not dictate to me. I should write about my activities myself. I had a cellmate whose name was Ali Police. He had given up in prison and was a *tavvab*. (Ali Police was a former military person in the *Komala* Party. He told me that he was arrested with a car

loaded with ammunition and weapons.) I think the authorities had put him in my cell to indirectly urge and guide me through my confession writing. I started writing about myself and my activities. I handed my writings to my interrogator. The interrogator looked at them and said he did not need that information. He said he had written some questions in red under my confession. I should answer those questions. One of the questions was “the purpose of sharing information with the Soviet Union?” I said, “I didn’t share any information with the Soviet Union.” My confession papers went back and forth many times like this. Finally, Ali Police told me that “what you are writing here is a story. You must link the incidents and your stories to the Soviet Union and the Russians.” I did not write my confession according to Ali Police’s suggestions. I think they gave me my confession three times with highlighted questions in red. I avoided answering them. Finally, they stopped and I was relieved. I remember that, by then, Kianoori, Amoui and Hajri had given interviews but I heard only Kianoori’s confession. I must admit that I was not tortured as badly as others. I saw how badly they treated Shaltoki. He was taken out every night and beaten severely.

48. The emergency situation continued for two weeks. It was a horrible time. One night I remember they were hitting a woman. She was shouting and screaming. Ali Police, a *tavvab*, got annoyed and said, “Rascals, does anybody hit women like this?”

Some Memories from *Komitee Moshtrak*

49. After two weeks, the emergency situation ended and the doors were opened. One day I saw Lajjavardi. He went to Shaltoki’s cell and very politely asked “Do you need anything, Mr. Shaltoki?” Shaltoki like a defeated and crushed person said, “No sir, I don’t.” Then Lajjavardi said, “It seems like you don’t have a pitcher. I’ll tell them to give you a pitcher.” He went away. Two days later Mr. Shaltoki’s interview was broadcast from the prison speakers.
50. I was transferred to cell 28 which was next to Hajjari’s cell. One day a woman was tortured in the torture room. I saw a guard came running out of the torture room. Another guard asked him why he was running. The first one said, “She is bleeding. I’m going to bring cotton.” Meanwhile, a kid was crying there. The guard was telling the kid “Son of bitch. Keep quiet. I’ve brought a balloon for you.” But the boy kept crying. I heard him say that “I don’t want a balloon. I want my mummy.”
51. Another time, they lined us up to take a shower. We had 20 minutes every week to take showers. I moved my blindfold up and saw a tall person from a distance. He was Javanshir. When we were lined up for showers, we put our hands on the shoulder of the person ahead of us. I moved up the line and put my hand on his shoulder. When I got to him, I said “it’s me Javad.” He asked how I was and I told him that I was fine. We went to two bathrooms that were next to each other. The wall was not high enough and there was a half meter space between the wall and the ground. We could see each others head and below the knee. Water pipes were going through the bathrooms and there was a hole that pipes were passing through from one room to another. There was a guard across from us. He was monitoring us. I peeked through the cavity between the two bathrooms and started speaking with Javanshir. I saw handcuff marks on his hand. I asked him what the marks were. He asked me if I had seen my own face. I said there was no mirror that I could see. He asked what happened to me and to my teeth. I said that I had tried to hang myself. He said that it was crazy to attempt suicide. I said they put a lot of pressure on me

- to give an interview and that I could not tolerate the torture anymore. I told him that I thought they would kill us anyhow, so why should I betray myself. He said that I was wrong because they would execute only military officers of the party and political activists would not be executed. I was surprised. I asked myself how he had this information that he expressed with such a confidence!
52. Two weeks later, I was behind Hajari in line for taking a shower. We were made to sit next to the wall until our turn came. I told Hajari about my conversation with Javanshir. He said Javanshir was wrong and that they would execute all of us.
53. The next time, I read on the toilet wall that the 18th plenum⁶ was held and Ali Khavari was elected as the new general secretary of the Party. The next time when we were taken for a shower, I spoke with Hajari again and told him that I read such a thing the other day. He was surprised and said, "it is going to be a disaster. God save us."
54. I don't remember the date, but once I was transferred to a cell next to the toilet. This cell was larger than the other cells because two persons could comfortably sleep in it and four persons could sleep tightly next to each other. A military official of the Tudeh Party was with me in this room. His name was Shahruxh Jahangiri. He spoke with me in detail about the Party's military structure and the connection the Party had with the Soviet Union. Recently the Party had established a media section that was collecting information from all branches. Hussain Qalambur and Baqerzadeh were responsible for filtering the news. They sent the important news to Kianoori and Kianoori subsequently sent the information to Soviet Embassy through a third person.
55. In December 1983, before I was taken to Evin, my interrogator⁶ called me and handed me a questionnaire that had more than 100 pages with four pens and said "start answering them." I noticed that I had answered the majority of the questions earlier but they had organized the questionnaire into around 100 sections and each section had around 80 questions. I crossed out some of the questions and wrote that I had already answered some of them. I was summoned to the interrogation room and threatened. An interrogator said, "Look, you have to provide detailed answers to all of these questions either in your room or here. It is up to you, otherwise...!" I started answering them, I wrote until my fingers became swollen.
56. At this time I was living with Shahruxh Jahangiri in one cell. He was responsible for military affairs of the Party. (We had three officials for military affairs and one of them was Jahangiri). A guard called him and he went out and came back after a while. He said, "Mahmoud, they asked me for an F 14 pilot. I don't know anybody. How can I find one for them?" He continued that he had said that he'd tell them whatever he knew but to not hit him because they had hit him 15 lashes at the beginning. Later he was transferred to Eshratabad prison and executed.
57. I had my first visit with my family a little more than a year after my arrest. For the visit, the guards transferred me from *Komitee Moshtrak* to a dancing studio that belonged to an Armenian woman. My family brought candy and cigarettes for me.

Transfer to Evin

⁶This term is often used by communist parties to refer to a deliberative assembly of the communist party members

58. Later they told me, Azin (Mahmoud Etemadzadeh) who was a writer, Hajari and Mehdi Hassani to pack all of our items. They took us in a car that we called “*khorkh*”⁷ to Evin. We were sent to different wards there. I was sent to solitary cell 268 (or 368). The prisoners called the general wards “*Shokalatiha*” (chocolate wards). I heard Zare’s voice from a cell across from me. Later, I listened to Dr. Shahchi’s conversation with the prison authorities about the fact that Zare had an ulcer and his stomach was bleeding. He could not eat. Later I found out that Zare was given an injection every time before he ate.
59. I was living with a Mujaheed in one cell in Evin. His name was Mehran and he was a member of the military affairs of the MEK. One day, a guard came to my room and asked if I wanted to buy books. I wanted to read something and it was not important what it was. I paid for it from my pocket money. It was a picture book. I saw that it was a propaganda book that the Islamic Republic had published to demonstrate the atrocities by the MEK. I was surprised when I saw my cellmate’s picture in the book. Then he told me that he had emptied four machine gun cartridges of bullets into IRGC officers who were in a pool. There were pictures of three IRGC officers that my cellmate claimed he had tortured and killed with cyanide injections.
60. Everyday, a guard took Mehran to an interrogation room to help them interrogate other MEK prisoners. He usually came back to the cell around 7:00 PM. He was a strong believer and kept a fast every day. He was 24 years old and a student of information technology before being arrested. I used to save some food for him to break his fast. He requested that I get up at midnight and eat with him. He sang songs for me.
61. One day he did not return. I had kept some food for him. He did not return the next day or the day after that. At that time, I received Islamic Republic newspapers every day. I read them regularly to find out if his name was among the list of executed people. His name was not there. His clothes were still in the cell.
62. One night he came back. He had grown a long beard and was very exhausted. I asked him where he had been. He said, “I don’t know. They moved me around.” Then, he looked at me and went and stood behind the door’s small window so that nobody could see us. He moved his shirt upward. His body was extremely bruised. He then moved his pants down and showed me his feet. Likewise, they were blue. He was in extreme pain. I got hemorrhoids in prison and visited Dr. Shahchi to get injections to stop the bleeding. Although my bleeding never stopped in prison. Anyhow, once a week I visited Dr. Shahchi. Mehran looked at me and said, “May I ask you a favor, please? Make an excuse and go to Dr. Shahchi and ask him to give me a painkiller injection so that I sleep well tonight.”
63. I agreed. I knocked on the door and asked the guard to take me to Dr. Shahchi. I explained the situation to Dr. Shahchi and he agreed to help him. He said that he’d come to the door and call my name but instead of me, Mehran should put his back towards the door and he would give him the pain killer injection. After some pleasantries with the guards, Dr. Shahchi came and gave Mehran an injection. He ate some food and fell asleep. The next day, I asked him what happened to him. He said that they made him deliver speeches for MEK members in different cities. I asked why he was beaten so badly. He said that he did not betray two teachers that he knew and therefore he was

⁷ *Khorkh* means rattling in Persian.

- subjected to further interrogation and beatings when the government discovered this new information.
64. The next day when he woke up for breakfast, he hugged me and cried and said that “Mr. Roghani, I’m certain that I’m going to be executed very soon. Forgive me if I had made any mistakes.” Then he said that he hoped I would be released and see my children. Later, he gave me his watch as a memento.
65. The next day in the morning, Haj Mojtaba, deputy of Lajjavardi (the warden of Evin) came to our ward. Haj Mojteba was a stout person and he had a knife and an ulcer scar on his face. I knew he had come to take Mehran to be executed as ordinary guards had taken him before. Mojtaba entered the cell and looked around like a butcher and told Mehran to come with him.
66. I peeked through the door small window and saw there were guards lining the hallway. Half an hour later, I heard the guards shouting “Allah-o akbar.” My turn came to use the restroom. A guard asked me if I knew what happened to my cellmate. I said, “No, brother.” The guard said, “Oh, what a dance he was doing when we pulled him up on the tree in front of the prosecutor’s office.” He told me this very indifferently and proudly. I was quite surprised. Although people like Mehran were not different from my guards. Mehran and his colleagues also planted bombs inside stores and killed many innocent people including children and women.
67. In February 1984, I was transferred to the Sanitarium and from there I was moved to room 63 of *Amozishgah* (vocational center). There, I was mixed with other prisoners. I met Hedayatullah Moalem and Nasrat Darvish and Kesra Akbari. In *Amozishgah*, I had regular visits with my family and my family was allowed to deposit 200 Toman (Iranian currency) in my account every month.

Trial

68. My first trial took place in the prosecutor’s office inside Evin in the summer of 1985. The prosecutor’s office was located in the first building on the right side of Evin from the entrance. It was just before ward 209. Next to ward 209 was an old building made of bricks. *Amozishgah* was located on the way to the hills inside Evin. Next to *Azmozishgah* was the Sanitarium which was a newly built complex and had 400 solitary cells.
69. I was in *Amozishga* when they took me to court. I did not see my charge sheet. I did not know what I was charged with. Nayyeri was the presiding judge at my first trial. The trial was conducted in an ordinary room. Nayyeri was sitting behind a desk and there were many chairs around the table. There was one other person in the room. Apparently, he was the clerk as he was busy taking notes of the proceeding. Nayyeri asked me a few questions such as what my position in the party was and whether I wanted to organize a military group. I said I did not. He said that I had confessed during my interrogations that I had been in touch with a military officer. I said it was not true. Then he told me that I , member of the Tudeh Party, had a general charge of “spying for the Russians.” He said that, for us, you are all spy unless we are proved wrong. You are guilty unless proven innocent. My trial took about five minutes and then I was returned back to room 63.

70. After a few days, I was summoned to the prosecutor's office again. When I got there, I was informed that the presiding religious judge had sentenced me to execution. I informed my family of the sentence and they went to Qom and spoke with officials there (apparently with Ayatollah Montazeri). Then, I was tried for the second time. Still, I had not seen my charge sheet.
71. My second trial took place in the summer of 1986 in the same place. I was living with Kianoori and Hajari in one cell at this time. My judge was named Montezami. (Don't remember his first name) He had a puffy stomach and his eyes were like a dark crow's. There was nobody in the room apart from him. He asked me if I accepted the interviews. I asked him if this was a court of justice. He said it was. I said I did not know what I was charged with and did not know how to defend myself. He said that I was accused of spying and then asked again if I accepted the interviews. (He was referring to Kianoori and Shaltoki's, the two prominent leaders of the Tudeh party, interviews). I said I did not. He asked whether I believed that the interviews were taken under torture. I said I did. He asked whether I was tortured. I said I was and asked him if he wanted to see bruises on my feet. During the trial, some people came to ask him questions. Some others came to recommend prisoners. I remember one of them called him Haj Montezemi. I think my trial lasted 10 minutes- but five minutes of it passed as he spoke with others. At the end, Haj Montememi turned towards me and said, "You are weak and broke soon because you do not believe in God. The beatings are not torture but Taziz (punishment)." There were not many executions in 1986. Therefore, I dared to say something which I would not before. I said "Sir, if somebody subjected you to these sorts of Taziz for 24 hours, you would deny the righteousness of all the prophets." He got very angry and said "You cursed, dirty person!" He got up from his chair and came towards me and slapped me hard on the face. Then he kicked me and threw me out of the room. A few days later, I was called again to the prosecutor's office and was informed that I was resentenced to capital punishment.
72. Like before, my family went to Qom and claimed that I had not seen my charge sheet. Hajari, Kianoori and others also urged me to write a letter to officials and claim that I had not seen my charge sheet and to ask for a retrial.
73. During this period, they gave us more freedom. For example, they opened the doors of the cells and converted the ward into one large general ward. We could leave our cell and meet with other prisoners. I met Amir Nike Ayen and Azetullah Zare there. For seven months, they kept the door open and then the prisoners went on strike and protested against the poor quality of the food. Before the beginning of the strike, I was taken to a solitary cell for two weeks. Then, I was moved to the general wards of Sanitarium. I was there till 1988 along with Hajari, Baqerzadeh, and Zoulqader.
74. Interrogations never ceased while I was in prison. When I was in the Sanitarium, I was taken every two weeks for interrogations. They asked me questions such as whether I accepted the Islamic Republic, my party and similar questions. Sometimes they gave us questionnaires to fill out. Questionnaires began in 1984 but the closer we got to 1988, they became more regular - almost once every week. They asked us questions and wrote the answers. Once I was taken out for this kind of routine interrogation. There was an old man ahead of me. His name was Bahram Danish. He had given an interview before. When he was taken in, they asked him if he was willing to give an interview. He said he was not. They reminded him that he had already given an interview. He said, "If you revive that situation, I'll give again." At that time, the Tudeh Party had changed its policy

- and called for overthrowing of the regime. They asked me if I agreed with the Party's call to overthrow the government. I said, "I disagreed. It was their call and had nothing to do with me."
75. My third trial began in 1987. Moqtadai-e was the chief judge this time. He had a secretary who attempted to implicate me with the crime of supporting Mosediq. Moqtadai-e introduced himself and continued that I had claimed that I had not seen my charge sheet. Then he asked that how I had been tried so far? I said, "You know much better. They called me and took me to a courtroom for trials that lasted only five minutes. They asked me some questions that had no connection with my charges." Then, he told his secretary to give me a copy of my charge sheet and told me to appear before him the following week.
76. A couple of days later, they brought my charge sheet to my room. I wrote my defense with the assistance of Kianoori, Hajari and Zare. There were twenty-one charges against me. Only the first one – "apostacy"- was subject to a death sentence. They brought this charge against me after an interrogator asked me whether I was Muslim during an interrogation session. I said I was. Then he asked whether I prayed. I said I did not. Then he asked for how long. I replied that I did not remember but probably since I was 15 or 16 years of age. I did not know the consequences of that interrogation.
77. I handed my defense to the secretary the next week on my trial day. I claimed at my defense that I had never prayed in my whole life. My father was a member of the Tudeh Party; he drank liquor and did not believe in God. One other charge was "attempt to organize a military group." I rejected it and said that I met the colonel and reported it to Kianoori. I had no further contact with him.
78. Maqtadai-e, my judge, said that I had been sentenced to capital punishment for the first charge. He said that he believed I was telling the truth about my father. Then he took me out of the court room and said "if you promise to pray and perform your religious duties, I will sentence you to 15 years imprisonment." I promised that I would do so but I did not keep that promise.
79. Around this time, they took me to another ward called *Wazaret* (the Ministry). It belonged to the Ministry of Intelligence. It was a multi-floor complex near the Sanitarium. It had a large hall at the top floor. The prison officials had made some room there too. Partavi was living in one room there. He had a large library. There were libraries in other rooms too. Dr. Jodet, Kyhan and Ali Galaviz (all senior members of the Tudeh Party) were busy translating some texts there.

Emergency Situation

80. From there, I was transferred back to room 368 of Sanitarium. It was a 3 by 4 meter room, and had a toilet and a shower. We were 15 people in that room. We did not have a radio but had a small black & white TV. The guards controlled the channels from outside. I remember we had TV until Imam Khomeini appeared on TV and said that he was drinking poison. A few days later, they came and took the TV. I think it was around July 21 but I'm not sure. Baqerzade, a member of the Tudeh Party, said that they would clean

- up the prisoners from now on. We did not know anything about the MEK's military operation.
81. We did not know anything about termination of visiting rights. Before the massacre started, when our visitation time arrived, we got ready to go to visit but they told us that there were no visits that day. Similarly, the half an hour we had to get fresh air was terminated.
82. A week before the executions started, I was in room 400 with 15 senior members of the Tudeh Party including Hajari, Mohammad Ali Amoui, Sabir Mohammad Zadeh, Asif Rezemida, Hedayat-ullah Moalem, Massoud Akhgar (chief editor of Donya magazine), and Amir Nikayeen, and some other people whose names I've now forgotten. I saw the guards weld the iron window shades shut from the outside.
83. The day after they took our TV set, Esmayeel Zolqadar, a military officer who was imprisoned during the monarchy system, and I had our dentist appointments. This was the last time they took us out for dental check ups. I think it was on August 19 or 20, 1988. At the dentist's office, we ran into a non-political prisoner to whom we had become somewhat close. He was in charge of planting flowers in the area and he sometimes left cigarettes in the bushes for us. He was in charge of cleaning the area and was not blindfolded. He came and sat beside me and Mr. Zolfaghar. He said, "Sirs, I should tell you something so that you become cautious. A commission has been appointed by Imam Khomeini; it is at the discretion of the commission to order anything from execution to release. They will ask three questions: are you a Muslim or not? Do you believe in the Islamic Republic or not? Do you believe in your party or not? Goodbye and take care." He made these comments and left.
84. On the way back to our cell, Zolqadar and I saw that a lot of luggage had been thrown in a solitary cell. I saw the name Hossein Ghalanbar on one of them. I realized what the man in the dentist had told us was true. When we got to our room, the 15 of us analyzed the situation. We concluded that Baqerzadeh was right and that the authorities wanted to clean the prisons. While eating, Mr. Hajjari said: "my friends, I want us to sit and discuss what we should say if they take us to court." There, they told me that since I already had my sentence, I was not in a military organization or in hiding, I had not left the country, I was not in prison during the Shah's time (all of these were negative points), and moreover I had a son and a 15-year sentence, I had to give the right answer to all their questions. In my ward, Moalem Hedayatollah who was the member of the central committee, and Saber Mohammad Zadeh and I decided to answer this way. Hajari said that they would execute him anyway whether he gave the right answer or not. Others agreed with him and so they decided to say "no" to the questions.
85. One night we heard female voices from downstairs shouting that they were killing everybody. We were convinced they were executing prisoners.

The Executions began

86. Two days after this incident (August 21/22), Haj Reza, supervisor of our cell, came and said "Mr. Kiomars Zarshenas, with all his possessions!" which meant to pack his belongings and leave with them. Usually they announced the person's name in advance

- and only after the person got ready, they opened the doors and took him. But this time, Haji Reza came into the room himself and greeted everybody. The door was ajar and I could see many guards moving around the hall. I went to help Kiomars and handed him a match and told him to keep it with him for lighting cigarettes. Haj Reza grabbed the match from my hand and then offered a cigarette to me. Meanwhile, he examined the match to find any clue that it was for secret communication. Then he asked if he could have the match because he did not have one. I asked Haji Reza where they were taking Kiomars and if they were going to take others as well. He said that they were simply changing his room. Kiomars said, "Sir, why are you giving misleading directions. Just say you want to take me to be executed."
87. They took Kiomars away. Many guards were in the hallway. It was a precaution - if the prisoner resisted, the guards would subdue him. About an hour later, Haji Reza came for me (August 21/22). I was about to pack my luggage when he said that it was not needed. He took me to the hallway, offered me a cigarette and said, "Mr Roghani! Kiomars is writing" meaning he was writing his will. I asked why. And he said, "Well, he just is." And then he added that many other prisoners who were there would soon do the same and that only Moalem, I and some others had a chance. He said that I would be done if I answered incorrectly. I asked what an incorrect answer was. He warned me to be cautious and not give incorrect answers in court. He added that it was a serious matter and he took a risk in telling me. Then he told me that I should tell everyone to write a letter and demand amnesty. There might be a chance or that would be the end of us. I asked Haji Reza why he was concerned about me. He said that he read my case and he knew that I had two kids; I had not left the country; I was not in prison during Shah's time; I worked in the worker's branch. He said that I had a better chance of surviving because I had a 15-year sentence. Having a sentence was a positive point. The rest had not been sentenced. Moalem had gone to court twice; he also was a worker and so had a chance too. The rest had university education, had lived in socialist countries, and had not been sentenced. As a result, their chances of survival were less. Haji Reza said that he felt sorry for my kids and that the issue was serious. He said I should make no mistakes. I said that I would convey his message.
88. When he said that Kiomars was writing his will, I became choked with tears. I entered my cell. Hajari came toward me and put his hands on my shoulders. He knew how I felt. I told him about what Haji Reza had told me. Hajari (who was my direct supervisor in the *velayati* committee) said: "you are the only one among us who has a chance of staying alive and getting the news out. Don't be afraid of saying that you are a Muslim and that you believe in the Islamic Republic. And don't be scared to say that you know nothing about the Party." I agreed. Amoui was there, too. He still lives in Iran
89. We were all sitting the next day (August 23). We had just had our lunch when a guard came and announced everyone's name except Amoui's, Saber Mohammad Zadeh's and mine. Everyone else was told to pack his belongings and leave. We knew what was happening. Haji Zade had informed us before. We helped them pack. I did not have the power to walk. We had lived together in one place for all these years and now they were leaving one by one and had to say their last goodbyes to us. They kissed me and said goodbye. Hajari said, "Remain strong. All of us die one day, in one way or another." Nik Ayeen put his head on my shoulder and said, "Kiss your daughter for me." I was tense and my brain did not work. I later understood that he meant that I should stay alive. After all of them left, Saber and I cleaned up. Saber was a strong person. Our room was large.

We were in room number 400. After that, a guard came and called Saber to leave with all his belongings. Amoui and I were the only ones left.

90. At night they brought food but who felt like eating? I asked Amoui to eat a bit. Six months had passed since I had last smoked. Amoui asked, "Mahmoud, do you smoke?" I said, "Amou, do you smoke too?" He said, "No. but when I see that our guys are depressed, I give it to them. Do you want one?" I said, "Yes" and added, "They are going to kill us anyway. We can smoke one cigarette". We then tried to sleep but who felt like sleeping? We would turn from one side to another. Amoui asked if I was awake. I said, "I am, who would feel like sleeping?" He said, "Take this valium and sleep". I said, "No, never mind". He said, "Well, if they want to kill us tomorrow, at least you should have got a good night sleep". I then took the valium and fell sleep after an hour. The same happened the next day. I told him that valium is addictive. He said, "You are not thinking about addiction under these conditions, are you?" I woke up the next day and told Amoui that I wanted to exercise. By then I was smoking packs of cigarettes.
91. After three or four days, they called Amoui and me and told us to leave with our belongings (probably August 26/27). We were afraid, but we kissed each other and said goodbye. The doors opened but instead of taking us down the steps, they took us one floor up to room 368. They opened the door and I saw Heybattollah Moyini there. He asked if we had heard about the executions. I said I had and continued that they had taken the guys from our ward. He said that from his cell, they had taken Fadayan members like Farhad Dadgar for execution.
92. They had their TV but its power was cut. A while before, I had picked up some paperclips from the prosecutor's office. Heubattolah said, "I wish we could watch the news and see what is happening outside." His cell had a toilet that had power. I plugged the pins and was able to turn the TV on. We saw on TV that the regime was talking about its success in the Mersad war.
93. On August 30, they took me and Heybattollah to court. Amoui, Heybattollah and I were all in one room. The guard came and called Heybattollah's name and mine. We asked whether we should bring our belongings. He said no. In the hallway, we saw that many were waiting in a long line. We joined the line. We entered ward 209. I talked to Heybattollah while waiting in line and told him that I would answer the questions this way. He said, "I will tell them that I am not a Muslim and I don't believe in them; they can do whatever they want." As we were approaching ward 209, I saw two armed guards. I realized that they did the executions there. They took us into the ward in groups. When we got to the top of the stairs, they lined us along a wall. There was a door that led to Evin's clinic and I noticed that the door was locked from the outside. Then, one of the guards gave a key to another one. The guard took the key and opened the door from the inside. Then the second guard gave another key to the first guard and he unlocked the outside lock. The guards did not have the keys to their assigned areas. If one guard wanted to go in or out, another guard had to give him the key. When the door opened and I entered, I heard the voice of Haji Sharifi and Haji Mousa in the hall. They were guards from the *Kommittee Moshtarak*. I noticed that they brought the guards from the *Kommittee Moshtarak* to ensure the security of those awaiting execution. The guards at Evin were not in charge of security. I saw people sitting in corners and writing. All of them were young. I was wearing a blindfold but I could pull it up with my eyebrows secretly and see around. I saw Haji Mojtaba. He was in charge of ward 368. He took Mehran Asdagi from Ward 368 and executed him. I could see him beating our guys. He

kicked their heads, beat them and yelled asking why they turned their heads and coughed. Coughing meant that you were trying to deliver a message. They took Heybat and I to another area where there was a pillar and some steps that went down. Apparently, that area was the place where they hung prisoners from cranes. We stood there. They said, "Sit on the ground with crossed legs and face the wall." My back hurt. I heard the voice of Haji Sharifi and he quietly asked me how I was. I said, "I am not bad," and added that, "I have a backache and can not sit with crossed legs". I asked him if I was allowed to stand. He said that it was allowed as long as I faced the wall. He warned me to make sure that Haji Mojtaba could not see me; otherwise, he would beat me. Haji Mojtaba was the security officer of Evin prison. Then he came and asked, "Do you have kids?" I said, "yes, two." He said: "thank god" and added, "Do you have a sentence?" I said: "yes, 15 years." He said, "thank god." Then he said in a quite voice, "Mr Sayyed, be very careful not to give wrong answers, ok?" I had attempted to commit suicide before. Now because of that, they respected me.

94. I could hear beating sounds from downstairs. I could even hear the sounds of lashings. Haji Sharif went in and out. I said that I wanted to go to the washroom. I was a bit curious and wanted to see what was happening there. I could hear a lot of moaning. I could hear screams and the sound of cables. He took my hands and took me down the stairs. Someone yelled where he was taking me and he responded. This person was ugly and cruel but because of his religious beliefs, he respected me because I was a Sayyed (descendant of the prophet Mohammad). I saw that there was a lot of noise and chaos. The sound of cables and screams could be heard clearly. I returned and Heybat was no longer there. They had taken him to be executed. I heard a voice from inside the court, saying that his hands had not touched a surgery knife for several years. The voice was familiar. I soon realized that it was Fariborz Baghayee. I had not seen him for five years.

The Death Commission

95. Then my turn came. They asked me to remove my blindfold. I did. There was a large table. Four or five people were sitting around it on chairs. I knew Nayyeri because he was at my first trial. I also recognized Eshraghi because he used to come to prison and I had been told that his name is Eshraghi. Eshraghi had served time in the Shah's prisons. The prison Chief – Haji Reza – whom we saw everywhere, was also there. I did not recognize the rest.
96. When I sat, Nayyeri asked for my name and personal information. Then he asked whether I was a Muslim. I said yes. Then he asked: "do you believe in the Islamic Republic?" I said yes. He asked: "do you believe in your party?" I said no. After these three questions, they asked me other questions too. Then he asked if I had kids. I said, "yes, two". Then, he asked whether I had been outside the country? I said that I had not. He asked whether I was in prison during the time of the Shah. I said I was not. He noted all these factors. He asked, "How long is your sentence?" I answered. Then he asked, "Why don't you pray in prison?" I saw that the situation was getting worse. I said, "Well, you see Haji Agha. Where I live, no one prays and praying alone is a bit difficult." I then heard that Eshraghi whispered to Nayyeri, "Haji Agha, this is the third case who talks like this". Nayyeri did not say anything first. Then he told me, "I will send you to a ward where everyone prays. You should commit to bear 10 lashes if you do not do religious obligations". I said, "that is good, Haji Agha". They also asked me about the issue of overthrowing. I said I did not

believe in it. Nayyeri asked all the questions. Then they got from me a commitment that I would do the religious tasks or else bear lashes.

97. Then he asked one of the guards to come and take me away. I put on the blindfold. From there, they took me to a room that had light granite stones to get some air. Some of my Tudeh friends were there. I really felt terrible. One of them asked what the matter was. I said that they executed everyone. He said it was not clear. Then Doctor Baghayee came. He gave me a cigarette and we smoked together. Jordan asked me about the questions I had been asked. I told him. Then I asked him what questions he had been asked. He said that he was asked the same questions. Jordan said, "I told them that I had been honest with them and I now tell them the truth too. I am eighty years old. If I tell you that I pray, it will be flattering. I don't pray and I am not a Muslim." He said that they later sent them here to take them to the court later. According to the laws of *Sharia*, a mature person must confess three times that he is not a Muslim and turned away from Islam in order to have the sentence of *Mortad* (apostasy) issued against him. For this reason, they had given them three chances to rethink their position and return. Jordan insisted that he would not back down. At that point, Baghai'e turned to me and said these people are done. They have sent them out three times and each time they have emphasized that they are not Muslims. They are done.
98. They took me and Fariborz Baghai to the 209 Solitary Ward. The cells were 2 by 3 meters. There was a shirt and pair of trousers in the cell. It had a small restroom in the corner. We were there for four days. Food and water were scarce. Then they took me to Ward 2 or 4. (I don't remember well). I saw Hamid Reza, step brother of the King, and Amir Entezam. A number of Tudeh Party members and Fedayan (the Majority) recognized me. We sat together and started talking. My hair was long and my beard had grown. However, I saw there was a person whose hair and beard were in shape. He was Amir Entezam. The head of the ward came to me and said that Mr. Einte zam wanted to talk me. I went to see him. He asked the head of the ward to give him his bag. He took a towel out of his bag and gave it to me. I took a shower and then the two of us spoke with each other. Amir Entezam asked me to introduce myself. I did. He said that he disliked the Tudeh Party from the beginning. Nevertheless, he enjoyed talking with them. Because they are the only logical people among the leftist organizations. I briefed him that they had executed a huge number of the prisoners. He said that it was not true. The government just wants to break the spirit of the prisoners. He continued that, until the United States was behind him and the Soviet Union behind us, they would not be able to touch him and us. I told him that it might be true about him but it was not true about us. Then, I asked him if he was a member of the CIA. He said it was absolutely ridiculous. He said that a journalist called Monica came to see him and he did an interview with her because he was the spokesperson of the government. Then the Tudeh Party spread the rumor that he was member of CIA. He said that he told the court, "You have committed two wrongs. First you made my wife suspicious of me and second you made her husband suspicious of her".
99. Two days later Dr. Baghai also joined us in that room. We were there for two weeks. Then I was transferred to Ward 2, known as the ward of Kianoori. I saw Kianoori, Amoui, Partavi, and Siamak Dashti. Later Dr. Baghai also came there. There was a general from the air force, a pilot of F5 whose name was Mehdi. Mehdi told us that we should not do something to make him report us as he was assigned there to monitor us.

100. Occasionally, I performed my Islamic duties. I often visited Partavi's room. I saw he was working a transcript. I had a chance to look at it briefly. Later I saw a book about the Tudeh Party in Germany. I purchased it and saw that it was the book that Partavi was writing in prison.
101. The situation gradually improved. We had good food and had access to showers. We could go out for fresh air. I had family visits too. I and Amoui were in one room. Kianoori and the general were in the other room.
102. Time passed. One day in the afternoon, they called me and said that I had a phone call. I thought the interrogation had resumed. It never came to my mind that they wanted to release me. I was thinking that I'd be in prison for 15 years. When I got there, they asked me for the phone number of my home. I gave it to them. A guard said to tell my family that I would be released with bail and that they should make the necessary arrangements for my release. I called my home and a lady replied. She said that my wife had moved from the house. (Later I found out that my wife had escaped to Russia and the landlord had expelled my grandmother from the house.) Then the guard asked to give him another phone number. I gave him my brother-in-law's phone number. They called him and gave him the message.
103. A few days later, I was taken along with many other prisoners in front of the Majlis. There Kianoori and Babak Zahrai-e delivered a speech. I was sitting on a chair listening to the speech when suddenly someone hugged and kissed me. She was my eight years old niece. She was crying and kissing me. Still we were not freed. Then we were released. When I wanted to walk towards my family, I saw a lady that was throwing flowers at us. She was saying that her son was killed but thanked god that at least some prisoners were still alive and were released. Then, we were freed.

The End