



# SEPARATING CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES



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After the defeat of Operation Forough Javidan (aka the Eternal Light and/or Mersad) (August 3-7, 1988), Massoud Rajavi, who was in charge of the operation, instead of accepting responsibility and responding to his erroneous analyses, held a series of meetings for the failure of the operation in the spring and summer of 1989, in which he laid the blame on the warriors of the so called "National Liberation Army" and members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK/MKO). His point was that "you", the warriors, thought of your spouses, instead of fighting the enemy with all "your" might. Even if you did not have a spouse, you were thinking of your imaginary spouse. Therefore, you did not give your whole existence to me. The cause of that failure is you! And solution?! "Eternal divorce of men and women"; both in practice and

in mind"! Without making the issue of ideological divorces public, with the announcement of Maryam Rajavi becoming the first person in charge on October 17, 1989, the ideological revolution (second stage) was officially announced.

The inner world of the Mujahedin, if examined at all, is still a mystery to Western observers, and it is the Mujahedin's deliberate policy that sustains it. For this reason, little importance has been given to this aspect of their organization. However, cult culture is one of the most dangerous forms of society. Firstly, because the most basic human rights deprive members of even the right to think. The Mujahedin have carried out forced marriages and later forced divorces, separated children from their parents, and placed them under the care of their supporters in various countries.

The sacrifices that each member of the group had to make were expressed in a series of "ideological revolutions" led by the group's leader (Massoud Rajavi). The leadership called on members to disassociate themselves from any physical or emotional attachment in order to increase their "fighting capacity." In the case of married couples, this stage of the "ideological revolution" required them to divorce their emotional ties with their spouses. Massoud Bani-Sadr reports on how this process took place

1

during the "ideological meeting of" high-ranking and executive members "after the defeat of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization in Iran:

The first thing I had to do in Baghdad was watch the videotape of an ideological meeting for "executive and high-ranking members." The meeting, called "Imam Zaman", began with a simple question: "To whom do we owe all our achievements and everything we have?". Rajavi did not claim to be the Imam of our time as I thought, but only said that we owe everything to the Imam of our time... The aim was to show that if there is more unity, we can reach Tehran. Our leader, as he was with the Imam of Time and God; He was willing to sacrifice everything he had (which he was all of us!) To God, claiming that all he had in mind was to do what God wanted him to do. We were expected to conclude that there was no barrier between Rajavi and Imam Zaman. However, there was a barrier between us and him [Rajavi]... Which prevented us from seeing him clearly. This "barrier" was our weakness. If we recognized our weakness, we would see why and how we failed in Operation Forough Javidan (Mersad) and elsewhere. Massoud and Maryam [Rajavi] had no doubt that the guardian in all our cases is our current wife.

The organization's order for "mass divorce" caused a great deal

of psychological distress and confusion. Massoud Bani-Sadr describes the atmosphere inside Camp Ashraf during this period:

The atmosphere of the camp was completely different... The misery was unceasing... Everyone seemed to be in the new phase of the "ideological revolution." The only legitimate discussion was about the revolution and the exchange of relevant experiences. Nothing else mattered. There was no outside world. . . Even poor single people had to divorce their weaknesses, without knowing what those weaknesses meant. Apparently, the answer was to divorce all the women or men they loved. Only later did I realize that the MEK was seeking not only a legal divorce but also an emotional or "ideological" divorce. In my heart, I had to divorce Anna [his wife], and in fact, I had to learn to hate her as a barrier between our leader and myself.

Rajavi announced at that meeting that as our "ideological leader" he had ordered the mass divorce of our spouses. He asked everyone to hand over their rings. It was the strangest and most disgusting meeting I had ever attended. It lasted almost a week. Rajavi told his followers that the defeat of the Forough Javidan (Mersad Operation) was not a military mistake, but was rooted in the members' thoughts about their spouses. Their love had weakened their will to fight. In 1990, all the women in the camp

TerrorSpring



were ordered to get a divorce - and the women replaced their wedding rings with pendants on which Massoud's face was engraved. The couples separated and their children were sent to "to be adopted" by MEK supporters in Europe.

In essence, the next phase of the MEK's ideological revolution was one year after the divorce of the families to destroy family bonds completely. Under the pretext of the war in Iraq, Massoud Rajavi ordered that all children be sent from Iraq to Europe, the United States, and other countries. About 800 children were sent from Iraq to other countries and handed over to Mujahedin supporters in those countries.

MEK commanders called on all members to expose sexual misconduct publicly. Manouchehr Abdi, 55, who also left the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK/MKO) in Albania, said, confessionals were held every morning. He says that even the feelings of love and friendship were illegal. "I have to admit that I missed my daughter," she says. They would shout at me, they humiliated me, they said that my family was the enemy and that nostalgia for them was to strengthen the hands of the mullahs in Tehran.

Batool Soltani joined the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization in 1986 with her husband and infant daughter. At first, her family was able to live together, but in 1990, she says, she was forced to divorce and she abandoned her five-year-old daughter and newborn son, who had been sent abroad to be brought up by MEK supporters. Soltani claims that she has been forced to have sex with Massoud Rajavi several times since 1999.

In fact, the Ideological Revolution turned the Mujahedin into unusual and confusing creatures. The idea that made the MEK a cult stems from internal developments in 1985. Whatever the outcome of these issues, it is clear that the Mujahedin is not a normal organization.

Elizabeth Rubin, an American journalist, gave mysterious reports

3

during her visit to the Mujahedin camp. She describes entering the camp, which was mostly made up of women:

You feel like you have entered the imaginary world of female worker bees. Of course, there are men around. About 50% of the soldiers are men. But as I turned around, I saw women dressed in khaki clothes and flowery scarves walking back and forth along the streets in white vans or army green trucks, staring forward, a little dazed or sometimes purposeful.

"The MEK is the only army in the world whose command corps is made up mainly of women," said Elizabeth Rubin.

Many analysts, including Rubin, describe the MEK as a cult and point to the group's loyalty to the Rajavis. Older women were reportedly forced to divorce their husbands in the late 1980s, and younger girls could not marry or have children.

"Rajavi liked to have women around him and reformed the command structure to replace men with women, this time calling it the 'Constitutional Revolution,'" she said. He [Massoud Rajavi] was also politically savvy, adding a fascinating flavor to their public relations in the West.

In an interview with Elizabeth Rubin, 19-year-old Sahar says: "My mother was pregnant at the time of her arrest and I was born in 1983 in Evin Prison. When I was one year old, my father was

executed for supporting the Mujahedin. Now I drive a Cascavel (a Brazilian armored car). My mother is at another camp. This was one of the reasons I decided to join the army.

"Most of the girls I met grew up in Mujahedin Ashraf schools, where they lived apart from their parents," Rubin said. Family visits were allowed on Thursday and Friday nights. When Irag invaded Kuwait, many of these girls were deported to Jordan and then smuggled to various countries - Germany, France, Canada, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the United States, where they were taken care of by Mujahedin supporters. When they were 18 or 19 years old, many of them decided to return to Iraq and fill the ranks of the youngest generation of Mujahedin. "Decided" is probably not the right word, though, because from the day they were born, these girls and boys were not taught to think for themselves, but to blindly follow their leaders. Nadereh Afshari, a former MEK member, told me, "every morning and night, children between the ages of 1 and 2 had to stand in front of a poster of Massoud and Maryam, greeting them and praising them." Afshari, who was based in Germany and was responsible for receiving MEK members' children during the Persian Gulf War, said that the MEK members did not accept her when the German government tried to attract MEK's children to its education system. Many children were sent to Mujahedin schools, especially in France. Afshari continued: The Rajavis saw these children as soldiers of the next generation. They wanted to brainwash them and control them. This may explain the pattern of their story and life: a journey to power and enlightenment in the way of self-sacrifice inspired by the light and wisdom of Maryam and Massoud. Amin Golmaryami is one of the children who was a victim of the ideological revolution in the Mujahedin and one of those who was separated from his family and sent to Europe.

In an interview with Amin Golmaryami, the German magazine "Dit" acknowledged that five pieces of evidence against the MEK had been upheld in a German court.

The court confirmed that what the MEK claimed to justify the smuggling of MEK children from Iraq to Europe in 1991 was not true. In fact, the group leaders did not want to save the children's lives, but their goal was to destroy the family structure. The court found this to be perfectly acceptable, based on investigations and analyses by the journalist.

The court confirmed that Amin Golmaryami was a child soldier who was taken to Iraq by MEK agents, where he received military training based on available documents and the testimony of other former children soldiers.

The court confirmed that Amin Golmaryami did not visit his

mother immediately after entering the Iraqi MEK camp (Camp Ashraf). It took him two weeks to meet with his mother in the presence of other female members who were watching them. In fact, MEK agents promised Amin that they would take him to Iraq to stay with his mother for a short time and then they would return to Europe, but according to Amin and other child soldiers, they were not allowed to visit their parents for more than once a year in Camp Ashraf.

Amin Golmaryami came to Germany as a child. He says that when he was 15, he was taken from Cologne to Iraq with many other young people \_ to a military camp run by an Iranian group called the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK/MKO). He is the first victim of this political cult to make his story public in his own name.

He rarely speaks German with an accent, yet occasionally uses words in his native language, Persian. They are not difficult to translate, they are more difficult to explain: Almaas-e Ensaani, for example, means "human diamond". This is one of the main ideological concepts of the MEK that he fell into as a child, says Golmaryami: "The idea behind this is that everyone has a diamond inside them that has been damaged." It is the person himself who is to blame for his desires – like the love for the family. All this must be ignored. Only through loyalty to a leader can



6

TerrorSpring

one be "cleansed." This explanation is also recounted by other witnesses.

Amin Golmaryami was born in 1985 in the city of Abadan in southwestern Iran. His parents were former MEK members. In 1979, they and other opposition groups overthrew the Shah of Iran. However, the subsequent Islamic government did not allow the Mujahedin-e Khalq to have a share in the government and persecuted them. The MEK then carried out attacks on government employees and eventually fled into exile, most of whom fled to Iraq.

When a US-led alliance invaded Iraq in 1991 during the Second Gulf War, the MEK used the flow of refugees to send hundreds of children abroad. Today, the MEK says they did it to save them from bombs and war, but it was also to break the family structure and strengthen the fighting spirit. Amin Golmaryami and his two brothers Alireza and Hanif were there.

Amin Golmaryami remembers the journey in pieces. "My mother stood in front of the bus for a long time, crying and waving," he said. They were taken to Germany. He and about 150 other children came to Cologne. Golmaryami was housed in a place in the Meschenich region, he recalls it as a dilapidated half-finished house. The children were there as young asylum seekers

7

unaccompanied and under the care of Mujahedin-e Khalq staff and trustees. Ten of them slept in one room. Golmaryami says: I missed my mother very much. Some were beaten, and many had nothing to eat. Amin went to school and quickly learned German. Most of the Iranian children were older than him and attended Martin Luther King Jr. High School in Cologne-Wieden. One of the teachers at the time recalled: The children were "happy and hardworking". But there was also something fanatical about them. Some worshiped the leader Massoud Rajavi and his wife Maryam "like gods."

He once stayed with a German school friend and was surprised that his parents both kissed him goodnight. "It was then that I realized my life was very different", he says.

From the mid-1990s, some teachers noticed that the MEK children had suddenly disappeared from Cologne. 14-, 15-, and 16-year-olds suddenly did not show up for classes.

Amin Golmaryami says that in 1999, his 18-year-old brother Hanif also disappeared. Hanif ordered Amin and their third brother Alireza to go to a secret meeting point in Westfriedhof, Cologne, to say goodbye to each other. Hanif said: I am going to Iraq. His destination was the headquarters of the Mujahedin-e Khalq, a military camp called Ashraf. The cadres had promised him that he



would meet with his mother there. Amin Golmaryami says that he was shocked and shed tears when he heard these words. Hanif Golmaryami, who now lives in Canada, says he missed her mother badly at the time and longed for motherly advice and hugs. The MEK cadres had assured him that if he did not like Iraq, he could return in a few weeks, and he believed them.

Amin once again saw his brother Hanif in a propaganda video shown to him and other children by the cadres: Hanif was marching in a parade Iraq. Eventually, he was convinced that he should follow the same path as his brother Hanif, and eventually he and his older brother, Alireza, went to Iraq.

Amin was afraid that his whole family and all his friends would gradually leave him. To be forced to stay alone in Germany. He envisioned Iraq as a large holiday camp. He was originally a minor, and he says, "they manipulated me."

Upon entering the camp, he decided to leave, but his brother stopped him. Little by little he adapted to the situation, woke up at 4 in the morning, marched, and learned to shoot and drive a tank. And two weeks later he met his mother while the women accompanying him were spying on him.

After that, he only had the opportunity to meet his mother once a year, and he gradually hated his mother. He says he still feels







the consequences of not having a normal family.

Other children who were separated from their families in the MEK's camp include Hanif Azizi. He grew up in a military camp in the Iragi desert. His parents were soldiers of the Mujahedin-e Khalg Revolutionary Movement in Iran. After his father was killed in the war, Hanif, who was nine years old, was sent to Sweden with his brother. He is having a hard time adapting to the new country. For the first two years, they were with a family of Mujahedin supporters, but due to domestic violence and lack of love, the Department of Children and Adolescents removed them from the family and gave them custody to a Swedish family. As a teenager, he was in contact with the Mujahedin insurgent movement again. Eager to socialize and meet his mother, he went to Iraq to join the MEK. There he was brainwashed and decided to join the Mujahedin. But he was allowed to return to Sweden to settle some issues and to bring his younger brother back to the Mujahedin. As he waited to return to Iraq with the Mujahedin, talking to different people and thinking about what had happened to him, he realized that his decision to return to the Mujahedin in Iraq was not his own, but influenced by them. This is how he changed his mind and decided to stay in Sweden. He is now a police officer in Sweden.

The Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK/MKO) is accused of separating hundreds of children living in the MEK's camps in Iraq from their parents and sending them from Iraq to various countries between 1990 and the beginning of the 1970s. The number of these children is estimated between 700 and 900 people. By doing so, the Mujahedin deprived the children of their parents and destroyed the family structure. The Mujahedin Organization has never published any report on the fate of these children and the situation of many of them is unknown.

The Mujahedin is also accused of illegally returning dozens of the same children from various European countries to Iraq for several years by deceiving them and promising that these children could go to Iraq to see their parents. Their departure from Iraq has forced them into the army. Some of those children in the military now talk about what happened to them through interviews or memoirs.

Conclusion: About 700 to 900 children under the age of 1 to 17 were separated from their families under the pretext of the war in Iraq and the protection of children in the Mujahedin Organization and were sent to European countries and other countries. During the distant years, many of the parents of these children lost their lives and were never able to see their children again. Some of these children, wishing to see their parents again and being deceived by Mujahedin supporters, returned to the Mujahedin camp after many years and underwent special care and brainwashing. Some of them also saved themselves and turned their backs on this dreadful organization forever. The fate of some of these children is unknown. Although "liberation and equality of women's rights" was both a political goal and a strategy in the MEK, it forbade women and mothers from their most natural right, namely motherhood and love, and for many years forbade women, children, and, of course, fathers. He tortured them with brainwashing and sheer obedience and gained the will and decision-making power.



11

