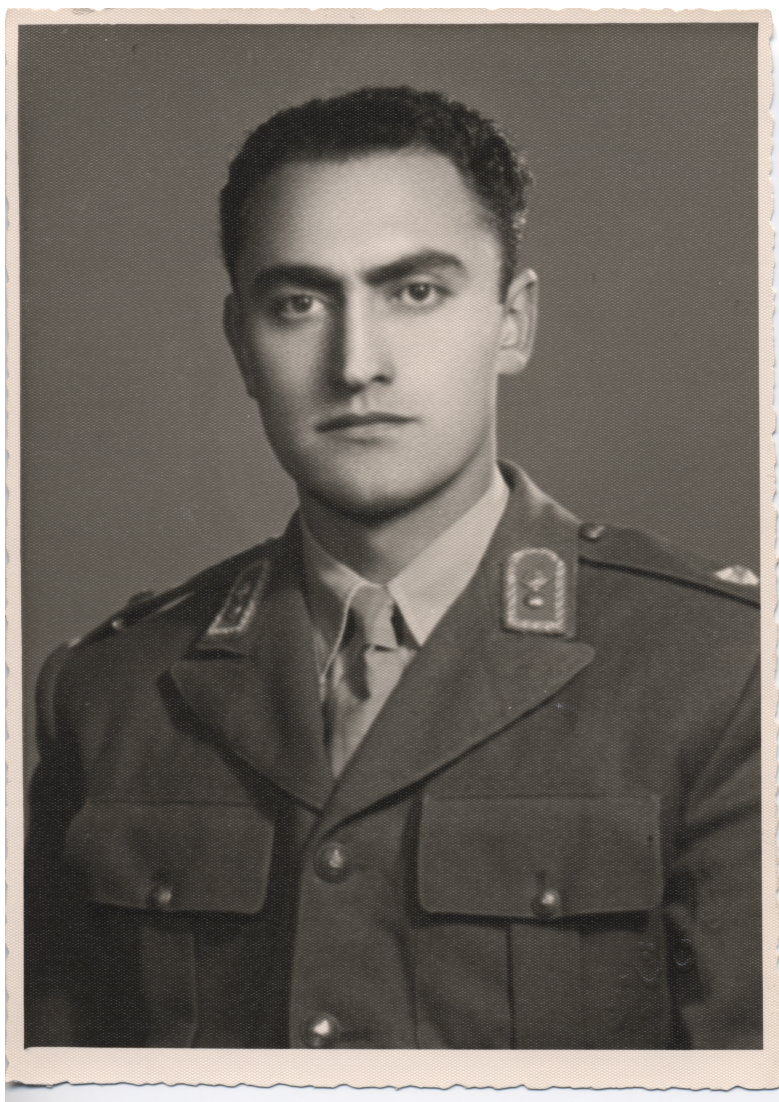


**Letters from Prison**  
**Jafar Vakili**  
**October 26 –November 6, 1954**



## **Jafar Vakili**

Jafar Vakili, born in 1923, was an officer of the Iranian army and a member of the underground Tudeh Party Military Organization. He joined the Party and became a member of its military organization in 1948. He was sent by the Iranian army to France in 1950 for training with the elite mountain infantry of the French Army. He met Touran Mirhady in France. When he returned to Iran, he was appointed by the Tudeh Party Military Organization to its six-member leadership secretariat. This leadership group is referred to as the “secretarial committee of the organization,” in the letters. The committee was divided into two three member subgroups with different responsibilities (as you will note in the letters). Jafar Vakili was arrested on August 23, 1954 and was executed on November 8, 1954.

## **Touran Mirhady**

Touran Mirhady, born in 1927 to a German mother and an Iranian father, left Iran in 1945 for her undergraduate studies in Educational Psychology in Paris. Within a couple of years, she became active in the student movements of the Left, Iranian and French, and joined the Tudeh Party. She was introduced to Jafar Vakili by a fellow Iranian student in 1950 when they were both in France. Joined the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in 1948-49. Participated in the Conference of the Women in Asia (held in Peking, China) in 1949. Worked for a year for WIDF in East Berlin after the headquarter was moved from Paris. Returned to Iran in 1951-52. Joined the women's organization of Tudeh party. They married semi-secretly in July 1952 in Iran.

## **The letters**

Jafar Vakili managed to smuggle six letters out of prison between October 23, 1954 and November 6, 1954 before he was executed on November 8, 1954. By the time the letters were written the process of their interrogation and trial, including the appeal process was essentially completed. Five of these letters were addressed to Touran Mirhady. You will notice that the first letter is addressed to “My sister.” In order to protect his family, he had not revealed to the government that he was married and had a child. Touran Mirhady visited him in the prison as his sister. The letters, written on cigarette papers, were hidden in a briefcase, in shirts, ... and given to Touran Mirhady. After the first letter, when he becomes certain that the smuggling operation is successful, he addresses the letters directly to Touran Mirhady. The sixth letter is addressed to one of the members of the central committee of Tudeh Party and is a letter to the Party on behalf of himself and other officers who were being executed along with him.

The bold parts of the letters were removed in 1980 publication of the letters by Touran Mirhady.

The original copies of letters one to five letters are were deposited at The International Institute of Social History (IISG) in Amsterdam, the Netherlands in July 2018. They are currently kept at the institute as “Jafar Vakili Papers.”

Some minor (hopefully) clarifying comments are put in square brackets [ ... ] within the letters.

### Letter 1 (Morning; October 26, 1954)

**My dear sister - Here is an account of what has happened to us:** One of the members of our organization called Abbasi gets arrested. He knows everything. He resists under torture for a few days but eventually gives up the names of all members of the secretarial committee of the organization and those in charge of his branch. **Of the five members of the secretarial committee (the sixth person, Roozbeh is not arrested) only** Mohagheghzadeh and I resist and deny everything. **Mobasheri has given them what they could not discover on their own: the secret key to decode the organization's coded notebook. Mobasheri showed weakness from the beginning and attempted suicide (slashed his vein) but they saved him.** They beat me a few times with a wire whip so hard that I was hospitalized for ten days. Under the blows I did not even groan but afterwards I got severe chest pain and convulsions. My back was injured, and my body got a sensation similar to poisoning. I was taken to the medical clinic, but they came again and transferred me to the prison. - Send me the summary of the news. I love you.

(Afternoon; October 26, 1954)

Interrogation begins. Azmoodeh, brigadier general Keyhankhadive, and a few other officers form a committee of interrogators. **Mobasheri is first. During the interrogation, he shows weakness again and tells them everything from the beginning to the end. He confesses that the Party was spying for the Soviet Union! He reveals the real names of members of the leadership. Mohagheghzadeh and I first deny [party] membership but then they show us the handwriting of Mobasheri and later bring us face to face with him. I realize that there is no point denying and decide to confess so that I do not implicate those who have not been named and to prevent the mischaracterization of events.** At this point I have seriously prepared myself for death and have no hope. During the interrogation, occasionally I may have even gone overboard. Interrogation involves cursing and hitting. There has not been a day that I have gone for interrogation and not returned with a bloody face. Perhaps no one has been hit and cursed during interrogation as much as I have. But none of this breaks my resistance. The last thing they ask me about is the organization of non-commissioned officers, which was separate from our organization, and I was in touch with their leader. They have uncovered enough documents about that organization. Azmoodeh wants me to reveal the names of their leaders and he beats me extensively that day. Finally, he threatens to send me to the torture chamber if I do not reveal the names. I don't say anything and stay undeterred. Azmoodeh tells me several times that the only way to save myself is to tell the truth and to express remorse. He asks me to write down if I have anything as my last defense. I say I have nothing to write. Azmoodeh goes ballistic. The next night they take me to the torture chamber and I am the only one who has been brought here before and after interrogation. But there I do not say anything more than what I have already said during the interrogation. They also torture other members who resist. They flog them and suspend them from the ceiling with handcuffs, pull their balls and pull out their fingernails. The strongest people resist for some time and finally give up. **Mobasheri has written a letter stating that he gave the government the secret key upon the condition that they do not execute anyone and Bakhtiar and Mobaseri promised so on behalf of the Shah! Mobasheri and Siamak express remorse during interrogation. In court, everyone expresses remorse and some drag the Party into the mud.** During the first session of the trial, I let my court-appointed lawyer talk and I do not say more than a few words. But I pretend to be supportive of the constitutional regime. Abbasi, who had provided them with our names, was not brought to the court and they are planning to free him. Those responsible for what has taken place are: In the first place, the central committee, secondly, the three members of the secretarial committee (**Roozbeh – Mobasheri - Siamak**) - in the third place, the other three members of the secretarial committee - in the fourth place, other people in positions of responsibility along with general membership of the Party.

The central committee is responsible because they knew about the arrest of Abbasi but they decided not to alert us. Furthermore, in the past year they dragged us from one mistake to another which has resulted in conviction for those arrested. In my view, they are not competent to lead the movement and they are not open to accepting criticism either. This was the summary of what has happened.

During this time, I have managed to keep my spirit up except for a day and a night when I heard some news that made me think that the two people whom I love more than anyone else in life were in danger. I will let you know about it if I live. **This information should not be shared until our fate is decided.**



**Letter 2 (Morning; October 29, 1954)**

**One of the comrades called Younesi, who has also seen Mrs. Pouria, says that during visitation day Mobasheri told his wife that Roozbeh is an agent of the government. Roozbeh was very close to Abbasi and has resigned from the Party three times. So, while this sounds very strange to me, it should be considered as extremely important. Since he is in charge of the Party's intelligence operation and personally knows all the top leaders, he can singlehandedly destroy the Party. Don't mention the issue of his resignation to anyone. Akram knows Mrs. Mobasheri and she can verify [this information] with her. Pass on this information to Akram and her husband as soon as possible.** The possibility that someone within the top leadership of the Party is collaborating with the intelligence services of the government cannot be discounted. Since after the 28th of Mordad [the day of the coup d'état], during the most critical periods, whenever a decision was made, we would find out that the government was already aware of it. Yet the issue was discussed only between a few people.

Some of the books that were brought from France are with Captain Yavari, who is in hiding. If there is a way to contact him, ask him to give you the books; as a reference tell him that he had asked Hamid to take the books away from him since he was concerned they would be damaged by mice. You can also take the names of a few books as added reference.

Do not think of remaining unmarried for the rest of your life as your kind and affectionate heart needs affection. I think that as long as the status of the central committees has not become clear and they have not shown that they are willing to respond properly to criticisms and proven in practice that they can reliably lead the movement you should reconsider continuing your activities blindly or if your hands are tied. This is very important not as it relates to you but as it relates to the people who are active under you. You should feel this responsibility deeply in your being and not take it lightly. Only after my death and remembering all the unforgettable times we had together-that I am sure will be extremely painful for you for the rest of your life and remembering what talented people have perished and what families were destroyed, only then will you fully realize what it means to be careless with responsibility and with properly leading those who have innocently put their fates in the hands of leaders. Of the books and pictures that I have in the house take whichever you like. We have a few books held by Mohsen Khan.

Comfort [my] mother; continue visiting our house even after you get married. Try to prevent the disintegration of my family if my father dies, take good care of Pirooz, kiss papa and maman [your parents]. You were an angel and I did not appreciate you as I should have.

My love for you was and is far more than I showed. You generated indescribable emotions in me. I have loved you more than all and everyone. I am pleased that I will die before you. Know that until the last moments of my life I remained loyal to the Party and during the whole period of imprisonment I did not once express revulsion or loathing [towards the Party]. My defense in the Appeals Court was strong, forceful and very moving. Comrades told me that [they thought] few lawyers could have defended me and them as well as I did. Azmoodeh introduced me to the committee of the investigators as a monster and to the court as the spokesperson for the organization. During the interrogation, I wrote that I considered the Shah to be a traitor etc. Azmoodeh was stunned since I was the first one according to him who showed audacity. I will die holding your pure love. Forgive me for all the moments that I caused you pain. – I love you.

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Our execution sentence was confirmed by the Appeals Court. They did not reduce anyone's sentence. According to the law we have 10 days to appeal this decision. The appeal needs to be accepted by the Shah. The previous group that had appealed immediately was instantly turned down and they executed them right away. Therefore, we will appeal on the last day of the appeal period, but it is possible they will execute us before the end of the appeal period.

### Letter 3 (November 1, 1954)

My dear Touran

I want to say a few words about our fervent love, a love based on shared politics, boundless affection and devotion, and built upon mutual trust and respect for each other's character. Nothing in our life together was one sided, since one sided respect and forgiveness could not sustain and strengthen our exceptional love. The following unforgettable memories are reflections of our genuine and honest love. A love that might be a model for the lives of others: **The forests of Paris, the riverbanks of the Seine, the Shahabad Valley, the Valley of Loure, our trip to Pahlavi and Tabriz. In Darakeh Valley you are sitting on a rock and I am kneeling in front of you and singing: O chère T. je t'adore! We go on an outing with Fereydoon: you sing, and he plays the accordion. We go to Evin with Shirin, and you now have turned into the shape of a ?<sup>1</sup> Our dear Pirooz is born and I, brimming with happiness, come to see you with a vase of flowers.**

**Your birthday arrives and you cover me with kisses near Amaniye Hill and I express my ardent love for you. After the extreme distress I experience when I receive the [false] news of your arrest I come to see you with a cake, full of joy. You are lying on the bed and I am sitting on a small stool and cover you with kisses from head to toe. You say that this stool should be called the lovers' stool and it should be recommended that others get one as well. Finally, the last three days we spent together that demonstrated how willing we were to work together in our daily life. And hundreds of other unforgettable memories ...**

I am certain that your love for me was not only not less than my love for you but was even more which led me to love you more and more each day. You were in every way more honest and sincere than me. You were an angel that I did not appreciate as much as I should have. I loved all members of my family intensely, but you occupied a whole different place for me. Your love has always given me strength and spirit. Since my arrest your love has been one of the most important elements that has allowed me to keep my honor. I die with my faith in the Party and in your love and with peace of mind. My only regrets are that I could not be more useful to society, that I did not see Pirooz grow up, and that I am leaving you and other members of the family with unbelievable pain. Our love is a new type of love that belongs to the new [socialist] humanity. Our love will live forever. When bullets tear through my body, your bright, honest, and angelic face will be in front of my eyes and will give me courage. Keep these pages that I have written during the last days of my life in a safe place as a memory of our love and read it anew every so often. I worship you and our dear Pirooz, and I wish to kiss you from head to toe.

Your Jafar

I am certain you will continue the struggle with more intensity since a new motivation has been added to your other motives: to avenge the murder of the one who worshipped you. Be unforgiving with the mistakes of others and in particular with those in charge. We, from top to bottom, took responsibility lightly. Pay attention to the lives of those who have trusted the organization since their fate is inseparable from the fate of the movement.

One should be prepared to face more repression in the future so that our tragedy is not repeated. If after some time you realize that the leaders and those higher up do not have a principled way of responding to constructive

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<sup>1</sup> He is referring to Touran being pregnant (turning into the shape of a question mark).

criticism, are not willing to mend their ways and you are not able to perform your responsibilities properly due to these difficulties, resign from your position immediately and continue the struggle as a simple individual, so that if a tragedy similar to ours is repeated you would not have had a hand in it. Also, if you see that the organization continues to be controlled by an incorrigible group that sooner or later will lead it to destruction, resign and continue your activities as an individual, since you will be more useful to the movement. What happened to us can be instructive from this perspective. We were the crème de la crème of the army that are perishing as a result of carelessness and mistakes of our leaders. We are ourselves also responsible. But the responsibility of our carelessness too lays with the leaders who did not train us to be vigilant.

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**Morning, November 1, 1954**

They executed six of our comrades who were tricked by Azmoodeh as they had asked for the final appeal on Monday morning: Mohebi, Kalali, Bayati, Mehdian, Kalhori, Behnia. Our time will be up on Sunday. So, they will execute us on Sunday or Monday but there is a chance that they will do it earlier. It is hard to wait for death. Some have lost their morale, but I am trying to give them heart and encourage them to resist to the last minute. The Prince Alireza incident<sup>2</sup> has had a reverse effect on our fate. If you find out that they do not allow visits, send a letter. I keep myself occupied with the images of our happy memories. I love you.

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<sup>2</sup> He is referring to the death of Shah's brother, Prince Alireza, on November 2, 1954, in a plane crash.

(۲) شود : جنگل و باران  
کف در رودن ، دره شاه آباد  
دره لود و درخت پسته  
دره دره که تروی غلغله  
نشسته ای ، من جوی قزوین  
زردام و سوادیم :

O chère T. et  
adieu - با فردین گشت  
سودم : تو بخانه داد اگر درون  
منته : با تیرین دادن سودم  
تو تکی ؟ یا تیرا اگر دای  
سودم غزل ایضا تیرین  
نقش تیری با تیران گل

Letter 4 (November 5, 1954) Letter 4 (November 5, 1954)

Now the idea that most likely a betrayal led to our arrest is gaining strength among the comrades and even in me. Two years ago, prompted by Roozbeh and after Roozbeh's resignation from the Party, Abbasi resigned from the Party. The two of them did not get along with the leaders [of the Party] and were even hostile to them. Roozbeh is very selfish and does not consider anyone worthy but himself--while his real worth is less than that of Mohagheghzadeh. Abbasi always considered his friendship with Roozbeh above performing his party duties.

Before our arrest we had received the news that they were torturing Abbasi at the police headquarters to get him to reveal where Roozbeh was staying.<sup>3</sup> Now, it is not clear why instead of revealing Roozbeh's location he gave up the whole organization. Roozbeh was very keen to become the leader of our organization. The Central Committee imposed him on us [as the leader of the organization] one more time a few months after the 23rd of July 1954<sup>4</sup> in spite of the fact that he had not been with the organization for two years. This was done against opposition by a number of us, including serious opposition by me.

After Abbasi's arrest the documents were removed from the two houses.<sup>5</sup> One should ask Mokhtari and Mohagheghzadeh who ordered the documents to be returned to the two houses a few days before our arrest. Capitan Jamshidi says that three or four days before our arrest one of the comrades from the second armored division reported that Abbasi had said that he would soon reveal everything.<sup>6</sup> It is not clear why the three-members of the secretarial committee [of the organization]<sup>7</sup> did not do anything in response to this report. In the last week prior to our arrest, Siamak was not in the capital and I guess it was only Roozbeh who had seen the report. We, the other three members of the secretarial committee, had not been involved in these matters in recent months; the other three members of the secretarial committee were directly in charge.

Abbasi could have gotten himself out of being tortured by giving up only one of us. It is not clear why he gave up all of us. Roozbeh regularly came to one of the two houses on Tuesday evenings and Abbasi was fully aware of this. He gave us up on Wednesday morning when there was no longer any danger for Roozbeh. So, you see that there are indications to suggest a betrayal was involved. Check every part of the shirt.<sup>8</sup>

Younesi says that four months ago Capitan Yaseri told him of having seen a report in the army intelligence center that Dr. Kianouri was going to Capitan Mobasheri's house that night. By chance he runs into Mrs Mobasheri in Toopkhane square and tells her about the report. This can be verified by checking with Mrs. Mobasheri; and if it is true it can be very important, since other than a few high-ranking members of the Party, no one else was aware of these interactions.

Comrades of the central committee and executive committee [of the Party] are drowning in their own personal grudges and self-interested calculations. They often compromise the interests of the movement and subordinate

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<sup>3</sup> The military organization of the Tudeh Party had members at all levels of the army and the police. These informed the Party about what was going on within the army and the police.

<sup>4</sup> The date of the coup d'état.

<sup>5</sup> Documents refer to the coded notebook of the organization and the two houses refers to the houses Roozbeh frequented.

<sup>6</sup> Apparently, the Party had access to Abbasi during the time he was being tortured.

<sup>7</sup> Roozbeh, Siamak, Mobasheri.

<sup>8</sup> He must have hidden other parts of this letter—the longest of the six letters he managed to get to Touran Mirhady—in some part of a shirt.

it to their own interests. I am not saying this only now that I am in prison. They were repeatedly criticized but they did not listen. Unfortunately, I don't have the time to tell you everything. You may imagine that I am very upset because I am being executed. Not at all. But whenever I think about the destruction of an organization that was the result of the efforts of hundreds of comrades, an organization that was a strong bulwark in the heart of the enemy, an organization that had unparalleled cohesion; whenever I think about the disintegration of hundreds of families, it burns my heart.

On many occasions, we expressed strong criticism, said that the leadership should be strengthened and proposed various solutions, but they responded that there was no need for it, that the Party was well led and that under the circumstances it was not possible to do any better. In one meeting, I made a serious proposal that a system of control from below be established and that the Central Committee give us its plans for the future and a report of its past activities. The other comrades, while they agreed with me, did not follow up, and Azar<sup>9</sup>, despite my repeating the proposal, ignored it and gave a non-answer.

I should have resigned then, since, while I am not directly responsible for this disaster, I am somewhat responsible. When they were torturing the comrades in their cells and their cries of pain would rise up, it was as if they were twisting a knife in my heart. I only came to understand the meaning of responsibility when it was too late. These same comrades would blow kisses to me the next day as I passed in front of their cells which itself was very painful for me.

I understood the meaning of responsibility when they read me the execution sentence of a simple member of one of the branches. You told me that one of the [unintended] benefits of our tragedy is that the names of people like Attarod<sup>10</sup> will become immortal. Only those who have not yet learnt the true lessons of our disaster and have not yet fully understood the meaning of responsibility, and take the future of the movement too lightly, would say such things.

You do not know what good the organization had already accomplished and what it was capable of doing in the future. Our organization was the strong bastion of the Party at the heart of the enemy. We attracted a hundred people a year on average. Given that the total number of officers is not more than eight thousand you can imagine what an incredible force the organization could have turned into in a few years. At any rate, those of you who remain behind should learn the lessons. If you think that you are not more than a pawn, come out and continue the struggle individually as you will be more useful that way. Don't lose your life for nothing.

I think you will be exposed to less danger and you will advance more rapidly if the organization<sup>11</sup> severs its ties with the Party at the level of local committees and stays in touch with the Party only at the level of the central committee with someone like Zare----if Zare does not allow meddling in the affairs of the organization that would turn it into an appendix of the Party. In reality the goal is to become a much more independent organization and follow the directive of the Federation<sup>12</sup> to develop plans for expansion and advocacy. Try more and more to use legal forms of struggle. If under the current circumstances it is difficult to organize around achieving a particular

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<sup>9</sup> The member of the Central Committee who was in contact with the leadership of the military organization of the Party.

<sup>10</sup> An officer who was executed on 19 October 1954.

<sup>11</sup> He means the women's organization of the Tudeh Party to which Touran Mirhady belonged. (I found out for the first time on this trip that she had a leadership role in the organization.)

<sup>12</sup> A reference to The International federation of women organizations, an international communist organization of women initially based in Paris that later moved to East Berlin. Touran Mirhady was active in the organization and was an Iranian representative in the organization.



demand, there exists ample basis for awakening and alerting women to their basic rights which is the first step on the road to struggle. Put your energies into such efforts.

Take the dressers home and use it but be aware that its code has been discovered. It is good for keeping books and magazines. By the way, not all agents of the government know its code.

I did not ask for forgiveness in my defense. If they later try to fabricate some nonsense in our names do not believe it. Only our handwriting and the recording of our voices can be considered as evidence. Anything else would be forgery.

My brief biography - I entered the military high school in the sixth grade. I came in third at the end of the year. The first was Prince Abdolreza and the second Prince Gholamreza.<sup>13</sup> In the first year [of the military academy] I was first and in the second year I was second in the army corps. In the second year, they cheated me out of what I deserved. In the year 1948 I took a course in mechanized [military operations] and came in first. In France, I completed a course in infantry and mountain training. The army headquarters has issued a letter [about my successful performance] that is at home. -- From 1947, given my interest in reading, and prompted by no one, I started reading leftist material. In September-October 1947 I joined the organization,<sup>14</sup> was appointed the person in charge of the members in Khuzestan and went to Ahvaz; I was in Khuzestan until August 1949. Then, I came to France. After returning from France, I was elected to the six-member leadership committee of the organization, [a position I held] until the day I was arrested. You know of my activities in recent years. Azar knows that *New Democracy* was translated by me.

**Of the twelve people in our group, everyone except Mohebi remained faithful to the party to the end.** What they said in court should not be the basis for judging them. Before the sound of bullets tore through our hearts, we heard the chanting of slogans by the six members.<sup>15</sup>

Dear Mother and Father, love and appreciate Touran and Pirooz on my behalf. Touran is an angel worthy of respect and worship. Give her whatever she wishes from what I own. From my military jacket and pants make clothes for Pirooz. Give all my pictures to Touran. Touran will make duplicates of the pictures that are in high demand.

Kiss [your] mother and father warmly on my behalf. I loved them dearly like my own father and mother. Their kindness and help will be present with me to my last moment.

During my interrogation, after receiving some information from one of the two people in the Bolourian house who had been arrested, and after consultation with Mokhtari and Mohaghegh, I gave the address of the house of a non-military comrade that had been vacated. You should know that giving the address of this vacated house led to the comrade being exposed but on the other hand prevented major damage.

Send a copy of the program received from F. to Hossein.

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<sup>13</sup> Prince Abdolreza and Prince Gholamreza were Shah's brothers. He is implicitly saying that they came first and second due to their relation to the Shah.

<sup>14</sup> He means Tudeh Party's military organization of officers.

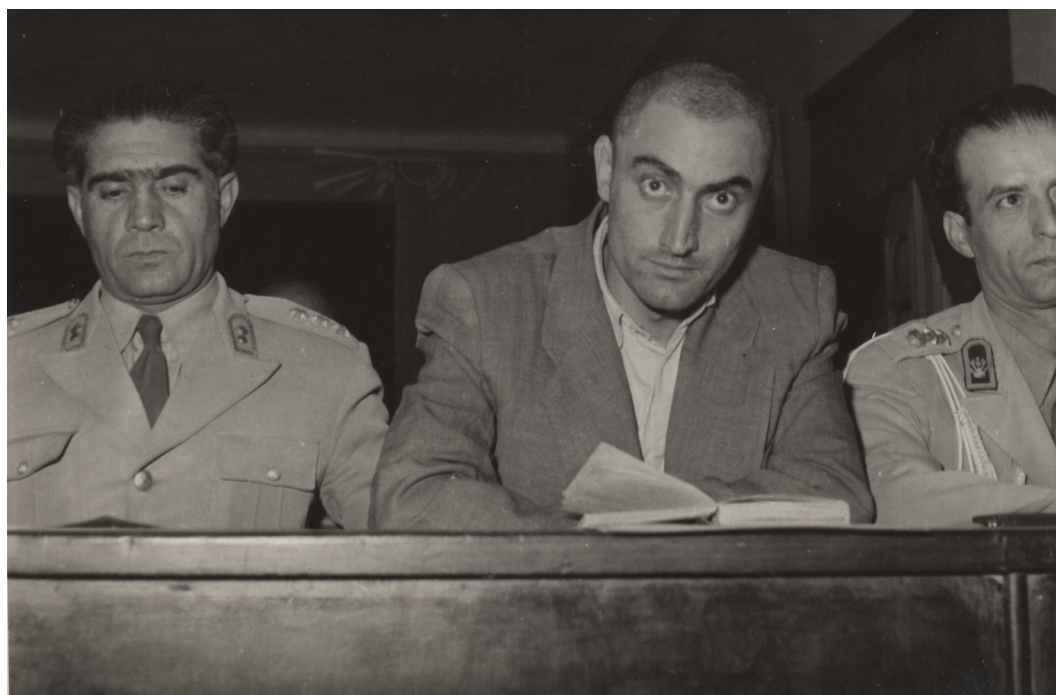
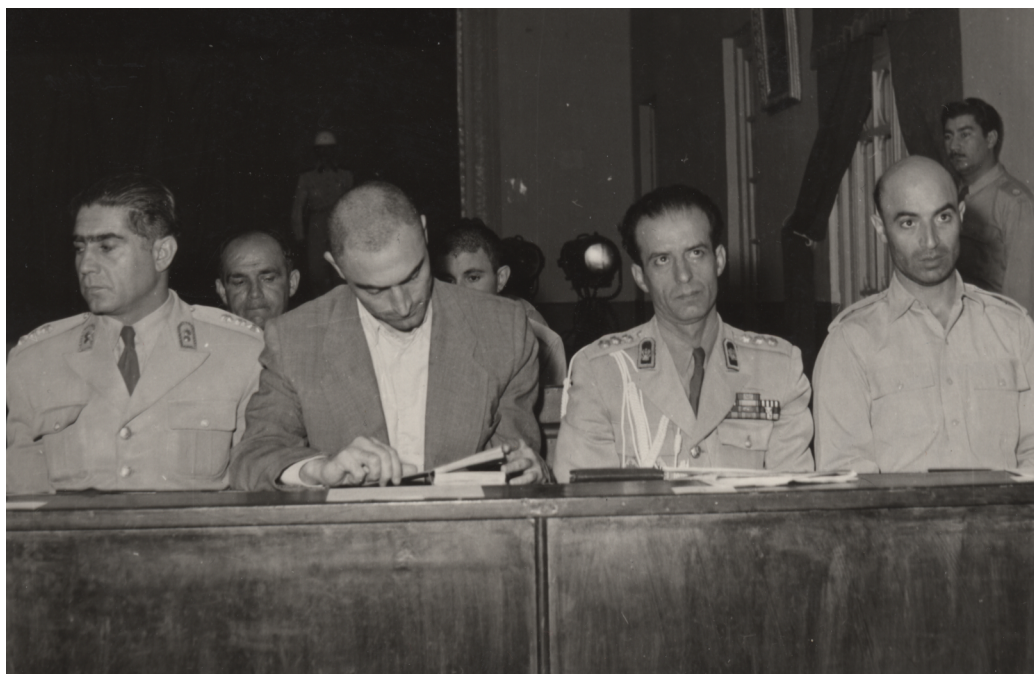
<sup>15</sup> He is referring to the six members who had asked for the final appeal that was immediately denied as pointed out in letter 3.

Did you receive the previous letter (12 pages)? Correct it as such: after hearing the news that you were not arrested ...

The last article I wrote was about self-education/self-transformation and Hossein had written that it will be published in the next few days in the [training] publication [of the Party].

If there is any message for Sabzevari send it sometime today, I may be able to give it to him. I talked to him yesterday.

I want you to promise me that you have forgiven me for all those times that I made you unhappy and that you will never think about those moments after I am gone. There is a chance that they may delay our execution due to the mourning period of the [Shah's] court though there is a very slim chance for this. You should continue your efforts [to change the execution sentence] until the last moment when you become completely sure of our death. On Saturday night come here under the pretense of giving me a shirt and tell me about what happened.



## Letter 5, November 6, 1954

The legal clauses applied to our case were clause 1 of the punishment law for those acting against the national security of the country, the last part of clause 62 of the general punishment law and clause 67 of the same law; clause 317 of the law of the army and clause 419 of the same law. In our first trial, it was established that the latter clause does not apply to us. About clause 317, I referred to the fact that we had no plans against the monarchy, and in the unlikely event that we did, according to clause 318 of this law and clause 20 of the general punishment law, the 317 clause applies to us only if the purported armed activities [against the monarchy] had already started.

As to clause 62 of the general punishment law, I said: you say that we have weakened the allegiance of the officers and our members to the country, but you have no proof. Because, even if we have advocated for communism it comes under clause 1 of the punishment law for those acting against the national security of the country. If your argument is that we have advocated against the shah and the heads of the army, you cannot equate advocating against individuals with advocating against the country. If you are referring to my articles, then you should punish me based on the law for the press – I rejected clause 1 of the punishment law for those acting against the national security of the country by referring to the supreme court opinion that did not consider the ideology of the Party to be communist. As for advocating against the Shah, I said that one should separate the Shah from monarchy, namely, being against the Shah is not the same as being against monarchy. This was the summary of my defense.

They did not give us pen and pencil to prepare our defense until the last day. And they did not provide us with any resources. During the first trial the court-appointed lawyers did not talk to us except for a few minutes before the start of the trial. During the Appeal trial, we saw them only at the trial. We are entitled to have five to ten days after the appointment of the defense lawyers to go over the case with them. They did not allow this and did not even abide by the five-day minimum time period. The defense lawyers, except for a couple of them, did not have any legal knowledge and they often openly or implicitly argued against us. Our trial was made secret so that no one could hear our just arguments.

On top of that, Azmoudeh<sup>16</sup> called us libertine, profane, spies, and traitors to the country from the court podium, all of which we rejected. After the end of the Appeal trial, Azmoudeh was openly talking to the judges and dictating matters to them. In spite of the fact that brigadier general Kihankhadiv was appointed as the interrogator, Azmoudeh personally interrogated the leading members [of the organization], beat them and subjected them to the worst possible verbal abuse. After the execution sentences were handed down Azmoudeh was trying to trick our officers to immediately apply for the final Appeal and he tried to beat Colonel Jalali who was not willing to do so. These facts should be made public so that people know about them.

Tell the wife of Colonel Afshar that he was loyal to the Party and to his love for her until his last minute; he expects her to raise their children well and wishes her a fulfilling life. Find out from my father about a retirement salary and let Mrs. Afshar know.

We all made our final appeal at 4 o'clock in the afternoon [today]. We are in good spirits. Today, the only thing that I am not thinking about is death. The pleasure of yesterday's visit has been with me all day today. Your angelic face is in front of my eyes all the time. In my imagination, I continuously kiss you without getting enough. Pirooz appears before my eyes time and again eating and playing with his feet. I think about the incredible feelings

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<sup>16</sup> The prosecutor. He was also the prosecutor in prime minister Mossadegh's trial.

and the strength your love generated in me. It is most likely that they will execute us tomorrow morning, there is a small chance they will do it the morning after. I love you and send kisses to you and Pirooz. Think of your health and freedom!<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> They were executed at 4 am on November 8. One of the six officers, Younesi, was not executed due to his disability.

## Letter to the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party (November 6, 1954)

Dear Hossein,<sup>18</sup>

I am writing this letter in the final days of my life on behalf of the martyrs [of the Party] to the comrades of the central committee. Our comrades remained loyal to you and the Party to the end. We are saddened by our death for some reasons and happy by it for others. We are saddened because we can no longer be useful to the Party and happy because we are dying a very honorable death. You should not judge the comrades based on what they said during the trials. They misinterpreted the directive of the Party that they should renounce the Party after being arrested.<sup>19</sup> The six members who were executed last week were in good spirits; and before the harrowing screech of the bullets tearing through their bodies reached us, the sound of them chanting slogans moved and excited us.

Hold dear the memory of the martyrs [of the Party]; comfort their bereaved families; and help prevent the disintegration of their families as much as possible.

Consider the following as our last words/will: know Fascism, prepare the Party for harder blows and take all necessary precautions. Fight vigorously against spies and traitors and consider this as one of your most important responsibilities. Be ever more careful in selecting members and leaders. Encourage a system of control, in particular control from below, and allow it to flourish. Strengthen the leadership in any way you know. Subordinate any personal interests to the interest of the Party. Be role models and living examples in this regard. To the extent possible, regularly provide a report of your past activities and your future plan to the lower organs of the Party and ask them to discuss and criticize them. Make a serious attempt to improve the training of yourselves and that of the other comrades. Expand and promote collective leadership in the Party. I repeat one more time, gain a better and better understanding of Fascism and prepare the Party for struggle in a Fascistic environment.

Tomorrow we will bravely face the firing squad and will die with complete confidence in your eventual victory. On behalf of the martyrs, I shake your hands warmly and wholeheartedly and embrace you.

To your success!

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<sup>18</sup> Alias of one of the members of the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party, Nouredin Kianuri, who was in contact with Major Vakili.

<sup>19</sup> Apparently, the Tudeh Party had instructed its members to recant if arrested, hoping that a wholesale renunciation would lead to lighter sentences.