

8 July 1953

THE OPIUM GOVERNMENT

As difficult as it may be to find anything good to say about Ahmad Qavam, it must be admitted that he had one positive goal and really tried to attain this goal. This goal was to rid Iran of the malignant cancer of opium. The decree issued by his cabinet forbade the growth, sale and use of opium and thousands of patriotic Iranians were delighted to hear of this step.

Only those of our countrymen who have traveled abroad are aware of the fact that foreigners despise Iran - and with good reason - for one thing alone. That thing is the fact that the opium habit grips 70 per cent of our population including that same percentage of our cabinet ministers. How, the Europeans wonder, can any country with a claim to culture and civilization practise self-drugging and self-corruption on such a scale. Thus, those foreigners believe that only the most backward of peoples still drug themselves with opium and hashish and that their governments must be equally backward in allowing such practices to continue.

One man alone stands between the Iranian people and their real desire to rid the country of opium. This is dictator Mossadeq whose moral sense is unfortunately non-existent and who must have the revenue which opium will bring in. As a doctor of something or other Mossadeq must know of the evil effects of alcohol and opium on the human system. He must also have heard in his simple youth that the use of drugs is forbidden by Islam.

Let us look briefly at the case against alcoholic products. You all know that a sound, carefully planned bill to prohibit the production, sale and consumption of such poisons was prepared two years and more ago and was approved by a committee of the Senate and by one of the Majlis. Why has not it been enacted into law? Or why did not Mossadeq use his full powers to put it into effect? Again, the answer is money. Mossadeq worships money and money alone and he cannot bear the thought of giving up the revenue deriving to the government from taxes on alcoholic poisons.

Instead, we present to the world our Opium Government whose aim is to produce more opium with each passing year. Thus the dictator's people can be drugged into a state of non-opposition and thus the world's pharmaceutical market can be flooded with Iranian opium. Of course, Iranian opium is of a very high quality - so high that much of it is smuggled out of Iran with the connivance of the government and this traffic brings in even higher returns.

Probably few of our readers follow carefully the manner in which the dictator sells his huge supply of opium. We cannot refrain from informing our readers that in Farvardin of this year our Ambassador at Washington was instructed to dispose of 550 cases of opium at the very best price he could obtain. Word soon came back that this quantity had been sold for \$1,100 a case. All praise for such a transaction. The price obtained shows that Saleh is a clever trader and the fact that he did so well at the job shows that he is indeed capable of taking over the government as Mossadeq's successor.

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Since foreign exchange is so scarce in Iran these days - (Why is that the case, Dr. Mossadeq?) - the fact that Saleh gathered in \$609,000 was certainly a cause for rejoicing. This figure does sound large to us until we start comparing it to other things. Mossadeq's opium production, although expanding every year, cannot now bring in more than two or three such sales in one year. On the other hand \$609,000 is about what the USSR spends in one month in Iran to support the Tudeh Party, the Soviet Front organizations and newspapers and to pay off its spies and its agents within the Mossadeq government. Also, we might point out that \$609,000 is far less than the £300,000 a day which the dictator Mossadeq promised Iran would have as its income once the oil industry had been nationalized.

The Opium Government has already expressed its dissatisfaction with the activity of the long established Anti-Opium League of Iran and one day we may find that they have been sent to jail for their efforts. Certainly they will be arrested if they are bold enough to send one more report on the subject of the government sponsored production of opium in Iran to the Opium Control Administration of the United Nations. The United Nations has already gone on record with a condemnation of Iran and has pointed out in very clear and simple terms that Afghanistan, a very near neighbor of Iran, absolutely and completely forbids the production, sale and use of opium within its frontiers. May Mossadeq learn from the Afghans if not from his fellow Iranians.