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When We Read Frantz Fanon and Were Latin Americans: The Real and Imagined Translation and Circulation of Third-World Revolutionary Works among Leftist Groups in Iran between the 1953 Coup and the 1979 Revolution

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ENG **Abstract.** This article[1] analyses the real and imagined translation and circulation of Third-World revolutionary works among leftist groups in Iran between the 1953 coup and the 1977-1979 revolution through the cases of Frantz Fanon and Latin America. On the one hand, Frantz Fanon was instrumental in favouring a unique Iranian understanding of the Third World, based on a recasting of the idea of *mostad'afin* (oppressed). On the other hand, people in Iran during the period under consideration published pamphlets as "white covers" or tended to avoid direct references to local issues, preferring to speak in allegories, use double-meaning words, or write or translate books on similar matters in other countries or times. In numerous cases, and when dealing with the Global South and armed revolution, these books and pamphlets were translations of works from, or made allegorical reference to, Latin America.
Keywords: Iran, Latin America, *mostad'afin*, Frantz Fanon, Ali Shariati, translation, global Sixties, Islamicate and Ibero-American worlds.

ES Cuando leímos a Frantz Fanon y éramos latinoamericanos: la traducción y circulación real e imaginada de las obras revolucionarias tercermundistas entre los grupos de izquierda de Irán entre el golpe de 1953 y la revolución de 1979

Resumen. Este artículo analiza la traducción y la circulación real e imaginaria de obras revolucionarias del Tercer Mundo entre los grupos de izquierda en Irán, desde el golpe de 1953 hasta la revolución de 1977-1979, a través de los casos de Frantz Fanon y de América Latina. Por un lado, Frantz Fanon fue decisivo a la hora de favorecer una interpretación iraní única de la idea de Tercer Mundo, basada en la reinterpretación de la noción de *mostad'afin* (oprimidos). Por otro lado, la gente en Irán durante el período considerado publicaba panfletos como "portadas blancas" o tendía a evitar referencias directas a cuestiones locales, prefiriendo hablar en alegorías, utilizando palabras con doble sentido o, más bien, escribiendo o traduciendo libros sobre cuestiones similares en otros países o épocas. En numerosos casos, cuando trataban sobre el Sur Global y la revolución armada, estos libros y folletos eran traducciones de obras de América Latina o hacían referencia a ella de forma alegórica.
Palabras clave: Irán, América Latina, *mostad'afin*, Frantz Fanon, Ali Shariati, traducción, sesenta global, mundo islámico e iberoamericano.

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[1] This article was written in the framework of the project "Nuevos actores en las relaciones internacionales contemporáneas durante los procesos de descolonización de África, Asia y América Latina (1810–1990). Redes políticas, alianzas y cooperación Sur-Sur", supported by the Madrid regional government (Comunidad de Madrid-Spain) under the Multi-annual Agreement with the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, V PRICIT, SI1/PJI/2019-00493.

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Introduction

This article analyses the real and imagined translation and circulation of Third-World revolutionary works among leftist groups in Iran between the 1953 coup and the 1977-1979 revolution through Frantz Fanon's and Latin America's cases. The expression "imagined translation"[2] has received increased attention in recent years in academia, and it is used for texts that we read and imply that they were "originally" in a different language. These texts evoke another language and invite us to imagine the original text that we read as a translation of a preceding text. In this article, I use the term both with reference to the purported translation of original works that do not in fact exist, but also for translations of original works that exist but whose translator is uncertain and/or misidentified and still strongly associated with the translation to the point of overlapping and to a certain extent overshadowing the original author.

On the one hand, Frantz Fanon, the Martinique-born anti-colonialist intellectual and member of the Algerian National Liberation Front, was instrumental in promoting a unique Iranian understanding of the Third World, based on the recasting of the idea of *mostad'afin* (oppressed). On the other hand, people in Iran during the period under consideration both published unauthorised works clandestinely as so-called "white cover" (*jeld-e sefid*) or tended to avoid direct references to local issues and preferred to speak in allegories, using words with double meanings or writing or translating books about similar issues in other countries or times. In numerous cases, and when dealing with the Global South and armed revolution, these books and pamphlets were translations of works from, or made allegorical reference to, Latin America.

The role of Frantz Fanon in Iran has been addressed in a number of articles and book chapters, but not from the perspective offered here.[3] In the case of Ali Shariati, the renowned sociologist of religion and revolutionary and one of the most influential Iranian intellectuals of the 20th century, his role and thought in the advent of the Islamic revolution in Iran have received much attention in academia, and Ali Rahnema has authored an authoritative biography of him.[4] When it comes to the role of Latin American revolutionary works and ideas in Iran between the 1953 coup and the 1977-1979 revolution, this has never been addressed as the main topic of research in articles or monographs. Nevertheless, this issue has been covered either tangentially or with some substance by a few researchers in their works on the history of Iran's left, in particular, the Tudeh party, Iran's communist party. Research on this latter issue has been carried out primarily through PhD dissertations, as is the case with Sepehr Zabih,[5] Ervand Abrahamian,[6] and Maziar Behrooz.[7] Peyman Vahabzadeh dedicated a monograph to Iran's Marxist guerrillas[8] and to the figure of Mostafa Sho'aiyan (1936–1975),[9] and, more recently, Ali Rahnema published a well-documented study on Iran's Marxist revolutionaries that facilitated this research and of which numerous references will be made in the text and footnotes.[10] While all these works on Marxism in Iran cover either tangentially or with some substance some aspects of Latin America's revolutionary thought in Iran, they never explicitly deal with Frantz Fanon or the issue of "imagined translation".

Mexico for Iran: Speaking in Allegories, Iran's Political Language and Culture

During a meeting with a group of young Iranians on April 27, 1998, the current Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ali Khamenei, affirmed that if they read today the books on Latin America and Africa that he and other Iranians used to read when they were young, such as those authored by Franz Fanon and other writers, they would be able to understand how their situation was at that time. According to Khamenei, in Iran before the revolution, no one dared to write about the real situation of the country; rather, they read authors such as Fanon, wrote about countries such as Chile and Mexico, or about African countries, and self-identified with the situation of Latin Americans and Africans. In Iran before the

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2 The terms used to describe this phenomenon are numerous and, in addition to "imagined translation", scholars speak of "translation with no original", "pseudotranslation", "fictious translation", "assumed translation", "original translation", "transmesis", *seudotraducción*, *pseudo-traduction*, and *traduction supposée*.

3 Farzaneh Farahzad, "Voice and Visibility: Fanon in the Persian Context", in *Translating Frantz Fanon Across Continents and Languages*, ed. Kathryn Batchelor and Sue-Ann Harding (New York & London: Routledge, 2017), 129-50, 135; Lotfollah Meisami, "Negāhi be āsār-e Fanon dar Irān", *Cheshmandāz-e Irān*, no. 77 (Esfand 1391-Farvardin 1392 [March 2013–April 2013]); Sara Shari'ati, "Fanon'i ke ma mishnāsim", *Cheshmandāz-e Irān*, no. 77 (Esfand 1391-Farvardin 1392 [March-2013–April 2013]); Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, "Who Translated Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* into Persian?", *Postcolonial Politics*, October 25, 2020; Seyed Javad Miri, "Frantz Fanon in Ali Shariati's Reading: Is it Possible to Interpret Fanon in a Shariatian Form?", in *Frantz Fanon and Emancipatory Social Theory: A View from the Wretched*, ed. Dustin J. Byrd and Seyed Javad Miri (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 184-216.

4 Ali Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shari'ati* (I.B. Tauris: London, 1998).

5 Sepehr Zabih, *The Communist Movement in Iran* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966) and Sepehr Zabih, *The Left in Contemporary Iran* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1986).

6 Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

7 Maziar Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause: The Failure of the Left in Iran* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

8 Peyman Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey: Modernization, Secularism, Democracy, and the Fadai Period of National Liberation in Iran, 1971-1979* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010).

9 Peyman Vahabzadeh, *A Rebel's Journey: Mostafa Sho'aiyan and Revolutionary Theory in Iran* (London: OneWorld Academic, 2019).

10 Ali Rahnema, *Call to Arms: Iran's Marxist Revolutionaries. Formation and Evolution of the Fada'is, 1964–1976* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2021).

revolution, people tended to avoid direct references to local issues. They preferred to speak in allegories, using double-meaning words or writing or translating books about similar issues in other countries or times.

An example relevant to this essay is two Mexicans who are the protagonists of a short story in the form of an interview for a magazine between an established and experienced forty-three-year-old writer and a thirteen-year-younger critic-intellectual on the socio-political situation in Mexico titled "Return to Utopia" (*Bāzgasht be "Nākojāābād"*). The short story was published fictionally as a translation by the Marxist guerrilla Amir-Parviz Puyan[11] (1946–1971)[12] in the second issue of the literary review *Green Seasons* (*Faslhā-ye Sabz*) in late 1969.[13] While the piece appears authorless, the translator is acknowledged as Fellow Citizen (*Hamshahri*).[14] The short story was later again published as a translation in Tehran under the title *Return to Utopia: A Conversation between Simon La Marte and Emmanuel Arterey* (*Bāzgasht be Nākājāābād: Goftegu-ye Simun Lā Mārte va Āmānu›el Ārterey*) during the revolutionary turmoil by Ahiya' in 1978–79 (/1357),[15] again without the mention of the author. The translator this time was acknowledged as Ali Kabiri, a pen name. In addition to this, the short story was also published, without the mention of the date and place of publication, together with a second literary piece titled "Should We Return?" (*Bāzgardim?*) with the title *Return to "Utopia" and Should We Return?* (*Bāzgasht be "Nākojāābād" va Bāzgardim?*) by Nashr-e Hamshahri —probably a reference to the fictional name used for the first publication in *Green Seasons*— but, this time, with the real name of the author appearing on the cover together with his portrait (Figure 1).

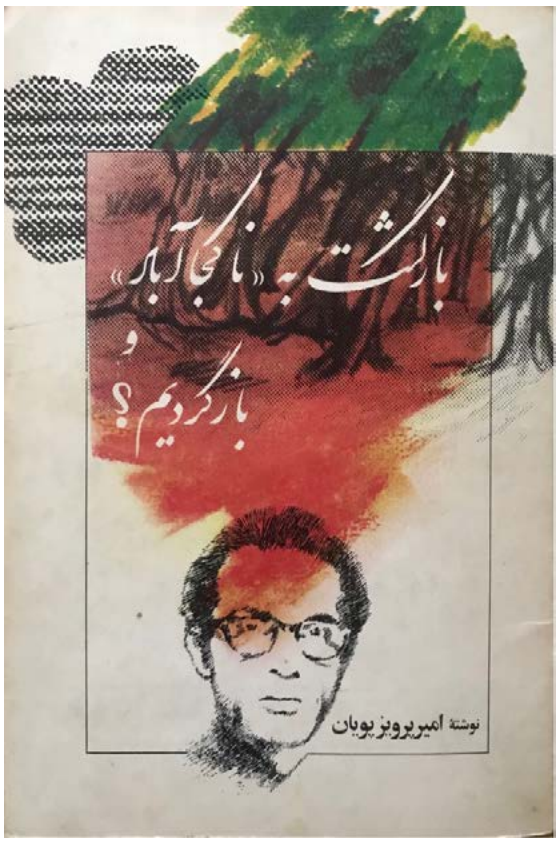

Figure 1. Cover of the Persian book *Return to "Utopia" and Should We Return?* (*Bāzgasht be "Nākojāābād" va Bāzgardim?*) published by Nashr-e Hamshahri.
Photo: Raffaele Mauriello.

11 Amir-Parviz Puyan was an Iranian Marxist theoretician, revolutionary guerrilla, co-founder of the Organization of Iranian People's Fada'i Guerrillas in Iran, and author of an influential theoretical essay titled *The Necessity of Armed Struggle and a Refutation of the Theory of Survival*. Before moving to Tehran and founding the Fada'i, together with Masoud Ahmadzadeh-Heravi he led a group of young activists, known as the Ahmadzadeh-Puyan group, opposed to the Shah based in their native city of Mashhad and from religious and National Front backgrounds. He was killed on May 24, 1971, a month after the Fada'i was officially established, during an armed action against the SAVAK.

12 There is some discrepancy among the sources as regards Puyan's year of birth. While Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 44, reports the year 1947, Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 15, reports that he was born on September 16, 1946.

13 On the dating of the publication, see Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 25.

14 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 25.

15 Since 1925 Iran has used, with a small and partial interruption between 1976 and August 1978 when it adopted an "imperial" calendar, a solar calendar that takes its origin from the year 622 CE. The first day of the year is set as the first day of spring. Therefore, the year 1357 in the Iranian calendar corresponds to March 21, 1978–March 20, 1979. In this article, when information is based on primary sources in Persian that provide only the year, I report the corresponding years in the Gregorian calendar but also mention the Iranian year in parenthesis.

The protagonists of "Should We Return?", first published in the same issue of *Green Seasons* together with "Return to Utopia", are again Simon La Marte and Emmanuel Arterey, and the events take place in Mexico. In this case, the form is a literary review written by Arterey on one of La Marte's works.

The two literary pieces are preceded by an anonymous Introduction that presents the author's brave, epic-creating (*delāvar-hamāse-āfarin*) life and briefly explains Puyan's revolutionary ideas. Moreover, on the back cover of the volume, there is a poem by the lyric poet Dr Esmail Khoi (1938–2021). A founding member of the (leftist) Writers Association of Iran, Khoi was renowned for his defence of intellectual freedom, both under the monarchy and — later, in exile — under the Islamic Republic, and for the use of a unique symbolism in his poetry, developed in particular to circumvent censorship.[16] He was a sympathiser of the Organization of Iranian People's Fada'i Guerrillas (*Sāzmān-e Cherikhā-ye Fadā'i-ye Khalq-e Irān*, OIPFG or Fada'i)[17] and a close friend of both Puyan and Masoud Ahmadzadeh-Heravi (1947–1972).[18]

Finally, and more recently, the two literary pieces were published in 2016–2017 (/1395) by Roozamad[19] in a volume edited by Younes Ourang Khodyui, titled *A Leaden Sunday: In Memory of Amir-Parviz Puyan* (*Doshanbe-ye Sarbi: Yādmān-e Amir-Parviz Puyān*), which collects several of Puyan's works.

Puyan was drawn to Marxism by the example of Fidel Castro[20] and wrote a seminal book entitled *The Necessity of Armed Struggle and the Refutation of the Theory of Survival* (*Zarourat-e Mobāreze-ye Mosallahāne va Radd-e Teori-ye Baqā*). As is the case with the work authored by Ahmadzadeh and analysed later on in this article, the pamphlet on guerrilla warfare authored by Puyan was written in the spring and late summer of 1970 and was among the most essential works in Persian promoting armed revolutionary Marxism in Iran and was instrumental in attracting university students to armed struggle.

Return to Utopia aims to convince the reader of the righteousness of armed struggle by examining two opposing views among the opponents of the Shah's regime: radical revolutionaries calling for action versus progressive intellectuals who opposed the regime yet found revolutionary action in Third World countries futile. The protagonists of the conversation are two Mexicans, Simon La Marte and Emmanuel Arterey, and the dialogue is written in the allegorical style typical of the critical literature published at that time to avoid censorship. Ali Rahnema has suggested that Arterey represents Puyan's own political ideas while La Marte represents the ideas of Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923–1969), the Iranian literate worldly renowned for his foundational work *Occidentosis* (*Gharbzadeghi*),[21] or at least Puyan's understanding of Al-e Ahmad's political thought.[22] In this short fictional dialogue, Puyan also addresses the issue of failed revolutions and the dilemma of taking up arms. For this purpose, another "Mexican" character enters the stage. Pablo is the protagonist of one of La Marte's books. He is a Mexican guerrilla fighter who had launched an unsuccessful insurrection. La Marte attributes Pablo's failure to the fact that his aim was unattainable because his enemies possessed overwhelming power and cleverness, and his friends had betrayed him, an apparent reference to the experience and situation of Iran's Marxists under the Pahlavi dictatorship. According to La Marte, Mexico (i.e., Iran) was not ripe for a guerrilla insurrection, and Pablo should have chosen a less fatal path.

Perhaps no one better represents the ambiguities of real and imagined translations and the strong tendency to speak in allegories in Iran's political language and culture in the 1960s and 1970s than Ali Shariati. His ideas had a profound impact on Iran's revolution, and he is considered by many to be Iran's Frantz Fanon.

Reading and Translating Frantz Fanon in Tehran: The "Third World" as the "World of the Oppressed"

In 1961, Frantz Fanon published *Les damnés de la terre* (*The Wretched of the Earth*). This work had a profound impact on anti-colonial intellectuals and activists in what was then known as the Third World. It played a decisive role among Iranian leftist intellectuals in the 1960s (mainly in the original French or in English translation) and in the 1970s (in Persian translation), thanks, certainly, to its own value but also to the Iranian radical leftist intellectuals with whom it became associated. This happened, paradoxically, even though the Persian translation of the work has remained shrouded in mystery.[23] In Iran today, *Les damnés de la terre* is associated with Ali Shariati (1933–1977), the Sorbonne-educated Iranian sociologist who came to embody and exemplify the composite character of the Shia Islamic ideology-cum-Marxism of the 1977-1979 Revolution and who is considered by many to be the most critical Iranian intellectual of the second half of the twentieth century, along with Jalal Al-e Ahmad. However, Shariati most probably did not translate the volume but only the Introduction written for the French edition by Jean Paul Sartre.

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16 "Esmā'il Khu'i, Shā'er va Nevisande-ye Irāni, dar Tab'id Dargodhasht" ("Email Khoi, Iranian Poet and Writer, Dies in Exile"), *BBC Persian*, May 25, 2021, www.bbc.com/persian/iran-57237855.

17 This was the most important Marxist guerrilla group in Iran's history, cofounded by Puyan.

18 Masoud Ahmadzadeh-Heravi was an Iranian Marxist theoretician, revolutionary guerrilla, and author of several essays on guerrilla warfare, the monarchy, dictatorship, and the nature of capitalism; among them the highly influential *Armed Struggle both as a Tactic and Strategy*. In his native city of Mashhad, together with Amir-Parviz Puyan, he led a group of young activists, known as the Ahmadzadeh-Puyan group, opposed to the Shah and from religious and National Front backgrounds. In 1964 he left Mashhad to study Mathematics at the University of Tehran where he contributed to the foundation of the Fada'i. He was executed in prison aged 27 on December 4, 1972, for his political activities.

19 Nashr-e Roozamad is a small publisher established in the last decade specializing in literature, philosophy, linguistics, and the arts.

20 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 485.

21 On Al-e Ahmad, see Hamid Dabashi, *The Last Muslim Intellectual: The Life and Legacy of Jalal Al-e Ahmad* (Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 2021).

22 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 26.

23 Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, "Who Translated Fanon".

Moreover, he was not the only noteworthy intellectual and revolutionary ideologue who claimed to have translated Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre,* or rather to have contributed to it. Indeed, considering the different accounts of the translation, it appears that this might have been more the result of an uncoordinated collective effort than a single-person achievement.[24]

Possibly the first translation of *Les damnés de la terre* was undertaken by Abolhasan Banisadr (1933–2021). According to his own account, he had read the book following Shariati's recommendation. The work was published in two parts, the first in 1966–67 and the second in January 1969, under the title *Duzakhiyān ru-ye Zamin* by Mosaddeq Press in Hamburg, and was then sent to Iran, where it was published in a single volume.[25] Banisadr, who was studying in Paris at the time, would later become the first president of the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran. He served between January 1980 and June 1981, when he fled the country for Paris, having been impeached by the parliament after losing the support and trust of Ruhollah Khomeini, not least because of his close ties with the People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran or Mujahedin-e-Khalq (*Sāzmān-e Mojāhedīn-e Khalq-e Irān*, abbreviated Mujahedin).[26]

Even the book's publication in Iran remains a mystery. The oldest "official" publication I could track was done in Ahvaz by Enteshārāt-e Talāsh. The date reported on the volume is Azar 14, 1336 (December 5, 1957). This clearly cannot be the case. While the catalogues of several libraries in Iran list the same year, 1336 (1957–58),[27] others list 1356 (1977–78) with[28] or without a question mark,[29] or don't report the year.[30] This could imply that the volume was in fact published on Azar 14, 1356 (December 5, 1977).

More generally, the publication has some of the characteristics of unauthorised works that circulated under the counter before the revolution, published clandestinely and in some cases in the artisanal form of photocopies, as so-called "white cover" (*jeld-e sefid*). White covers came with no formal publication date or mention of the publisher's name, and when they did, in most cases, it was not real. Moreover, when the publications were translated books, the translator's name was also omitted.

In this respect, however, the name of the translator of *Les damnés de la terre* appeared on the literally white cover of the edition published by Enteshārāt-e Talāsh, and it was Ali Shariati (Figure 2). The translation included Sartre's preface to the French edition and a short essay titled "On Fanon and His Thought" (*Dar bāre-ye Fānun va Andishehā-ye U*), which served as a foreword to the book. Finally, the publication clearly indicated that it was the result of the combination of two different parts (*joz'*) or volumes/tomes (*jeld*), 1 and 2.

24 Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, "Who Translated Fanon"; Farahzad, "Voice and Visibility", 135; Lotfollah Meisami, "Negāhi be āsār-e Fanon dar Irān"; Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian*, 127; Shariʿati, "Fanon'i ke ma mishnāsim"; etc.

25 Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, "Who Translated Fanon".

26 The Mujahedin was established in 1965, five years before the Fada'i, as a Marxist-Islamist opposition group to the Shah. As observed by Abrahamian, "It was the first Iranian organization to develop systematically a modern revolutionary interpretation of Islam", Ervand Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1989), 1. It contributed to the success of the revolution as an ally of Khomeini and became a major force in Iranian politics after the revolution. However, it soon fell afoul of the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran and even fought against the country alongside Saddam Hussein as an exiled group based in Iraq. It has been on and off the list of terrorist groups of the US, UK, and EU and in the last decades mostly served as a pawn of the US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel in their policies against Iran in addition to becoming cult-like.

27 This is for example the case of the Public Library of the Mirdamad Cultural Institute in Gorgon.

28 This is for example the case of the Public Library of Hazrat-e Āyat Allah al-'Ozma Hā'iri (Fayziyye School) and the Central Library of Islamic Studies in Qom.

29 This is for example the case of the Library and Documentary Centre of the Iranology Foundation in Tehran.

30 This is for example the case of the Islamic and Iranian history specialized library in Qom.

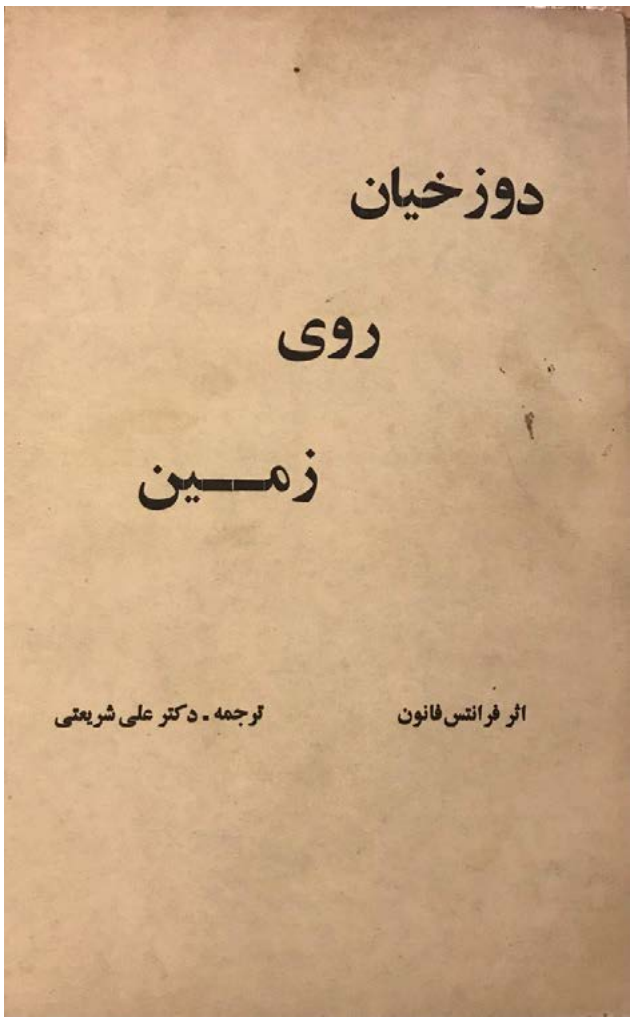

Figure 2. Cover of the Persian translation of *Les damnés de la terre* published by Enteshārāt-e Talāsh.
Photo: Raffaele Mauriello.

The book was later published by Enteshārāt-e Amir Kabir[31] in 1979–1980 (/1358). In the early years of the Islamic Republic, other editions were published by Enteshārāt-e Magidi in 1982–1983 (/1361), and Enteshārāt-e Niloofar[32] in 1982–1983 (/1361) and 1989–1990 (/1368). Beyond *Les damnés de la terre*, the impact of Fanon in Iran is also evident in the number of his works translated and published in Persian, both before and during the revolution. The translation and publication of Fanon's works continued also after the revolution.[33]

The edition published by Amir Kabir identifies Bani-Sadr as the translator of the volume. In contrast, the one published by Niloofar and Majidi identifies Shariati as the translator of Sartre's Introduction, leaving the translator of the volume unidentified. Moreover, the edition published by Amir Kabir in some ways identifies the original translation with the one published by Mosaddeq Press by reproducing the original cover of the latter's edition at the beginning of the volume. The translation published by Niloofar has a small Introductory note by the publisher, which

31 One of Iran's most important private publishers and the country's biggest private sector publisher in Iran before the revolution, Enteshārāt-e Amir Kabir was established in 1949 by Abdol Rahim Jafari. Soon after the revolution, his founder was arrested and imprisoned for eight months, and his property sequestrated. The Amir Kabir Publishing House was confiscated by court order and transferred to the Organization for the Promotion of Islam (*Sāzmān-e Tabligāt-e Eslāmi*). Although the company is still active, its prominence nowadays does not match the one achieved as an independent publisher before the revolution. See EIr, "AMIR KABIR PUBLISHERS," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2012, available at www.iranicaonline.org/articles/amir-kabir-publishers (accessed on January 21, 2022) and Farid Moradi, Laetitia Nanquette, Masoud Hosseinipour, Ali Amiri, Dilshad Rakhimov, B. Biniaz, *Publishing in Persian Language in Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Europe and United States* (Paris: International Alliance of Independent Publishers, 2013), 44.

32 Established in 1977–1978 (/1356), Niloofar is a major Iranian publisher specializing in literature, and in particular literary translations, and has published some prominent works of world literature. See Moradi, Nanquette, Hosseinipour, Amiri, Rakhimov, Biniaz, *Publishing in Persian Language*, 49.

33 Fanon's works published in Iran include *Pour la révolution africaine. Écrits politiques* (*Enqelāb-e Āfriqā*, in English *Toward the African Revolution*), *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Pust-e Siyāh, Surathā-ye Sefid*, in English *Black Faces, White Masks*) and *L'An V de la révolution algérienne*, also published as *Sociologie d'une révolution* (*Esta'mār Mira*, in English *Studies in a Dying Colonialism* also published as *A Dying Colonialism*), translated from English by Mohammad Amin Kardan and published by Enteshārāt-e Khārazmi in 1970, 1974 and 1977–1978 (/1356) respectively. *L'An V de la révolution algérienne* was also translated by Khosrow Golsorkhi [Katuziyan] as *Vāpasin-e Dam-e Esta'mār* and published by Toos in 1973–1974 (/1352) and by Nur-Ali Tabande from French as *Barresi-ye Jāme'eshenāsi-ye Yek Enqelāb Yā Sāl-e Panjom-e Enqelāb-e al-Jazāyer* and published by Daftar-e Nashr-e Farhang-e Eslāmi in 1957–58 (/1336) and later, revised, by Haqiqat in 2006 (/1384).

states that the book is the result of the comparison between several exemplars, which all had some problems and inadequacies, and it is, in particular, based on the volume published by Enteshārāt-e Talāsh, whose year of publication is identified as 1977. Strikingly enough, when it comes to the issue addressed in this article, the cover chosen by the publisher, Majidi, clearly emphasises the relevance of Latin America to the discourse put forward by Fanon, at least in relation to Iran's political culture (Figure 3).

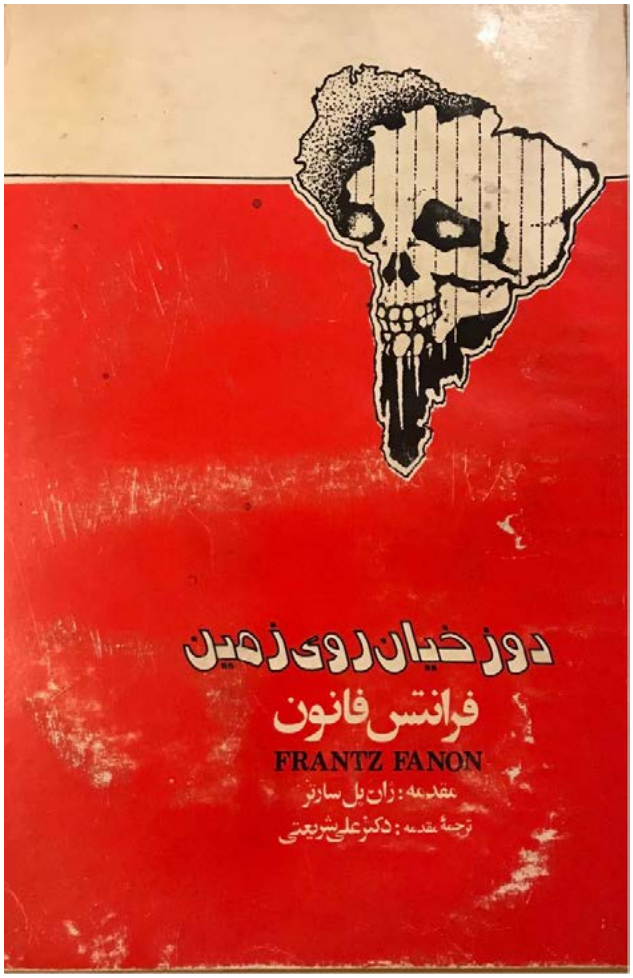

Figure 3. Cover of the Persian translation of *Les damnés de la terre* published by Majidi.
Photo: Raffaele Mauriello.

When it comes to the association between the translation of *Les damnés de la terre* and Shariati, we move into the field of informed hypothesis that, however, needs further investigation and possibly access to still-unreleased material, such as Shariati's personal handwritten notes. What is important for this article is that whoever translated the work into Persian, *Les damnés de la terre* became associated with Shariati and linked to his thought and his myth.

Shariati spent an essential part of his life in Paris. He arrived in France's capital in late May 1959 and lived in the city until the late spring of 1964,[34] at the time of the Cuban Revolution (1953–1959), the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962) and the Vietnam War (1955–1975). He closely followed those events and even organised demonstrations in support of the Algerian cause, and in one instance, was hospitalised for three days to recover from head wounds received during a protest. Once back in Iran in 1972, Shariati was arrested by the Shah's security forces and was released only in 1975, then kept under house detention until 1977. His release happened following a petition from the Algerian government. In this respect, it is worth noting that, on one hand, following Algeria's independence in 1962, Pahlavi Iran quickly established relations with the North African country, an oil exporter and future OPEC member (joined in 1969). This relationship played a crucial role in reaching the Algiers Agreement (1975) between Iraq and Iran regarding their border dispute along the Shatt al-Arab waterway. On the other hand, some members of the Algerian government were familiar with Shariati from his time in Paris.[35]

As we have seen, Shariati was exposed to the ideas of Frantz Fanon and, in addition to *Les damnés de la terre*, some sources report that he also translated *L'An V de la révolution algérienne* into Persian.[36] He was also under the

34 Rahmena, *An Islamic Utopian*, 88–131.

35 Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 109,

36 Rahmena, *An Islamic Utopian*, 127. However, according to, Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 465, Shariati more simply "started to translate Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* and the *Fifth Year of the Algerian War"*, without specifying whether he completed or not these two tasks. In this respect, the Persian translation of Abrahamian's work, carried out by Ahmad Gol-Mohammadi and Mohammad-

influence and allegedly translated works of Che Guevara —he reportedly translated *La guerra de guerrillas* (*Guerrilla Warfare*) into Persian[37]— and Jean-Paul Sartre —whose work *What is Poetry?* he translated into Persian[38] and who famously stated that "I have no religion, but if I were to choose one, it would be that of Shariati's". Other thinkers relevant to Shariati's intellectual outlook include Raymond Aron, Jacques Bergue, Roger Garaudy, George Gurvitch, Louis Massignon, Gerges Politzer, Amar Ouzegane and Muslim figures such as Fatima, Imam Ali, Imam Hussein, and Abu Zar Ghafari. Shariati famously described the latter as the forefather of all post-French Revolution egalitarian schools and translated a book from Arabic about him, adding his own reflections and a compelling subtitle, *Abuzar Ghafari: The First God-Worshipping Socialist*.

Through a novel interpretation of Shia history, Shariati laid out the ground for a discursive link between leftist and Islamist ideologies and articulated an Islamic radical project. The result was that the Shia belief in *entezār* (waiting for the coming of the hidden Imam) became the active involvement in the struggle between the oppressed (*mostad'afin*) or disinherited (*mahrumin*) and oppressors to fight injustice and establish a divine classless society. Therefore, in Shariati's language, the "Third World" was the "World of the Oppressed", the world of *les damnés de la terre*. This view of the Third World, shared by Shariati with other Shia thinkers —and in particular with Musa al-Sadr, who popularised it in Lebanon[39]—would become mainstream in Iran's political language and culture at least until the end of the 20th century and found its way well into the first quarter of the 21st century. It would lead to an alternative vision of world affairs centred on the opposition between oppressors (*mostakberin*) and the oppressed (*mostad'afin*).[40] It is worth recalling that the 1979 revolution turned a more than two-millennia-old monarchy into a republic and ushered in a social revolution. To revolutionary Islamists, it became a symbol of what the Soviet, Chinese, and Cuban revolutions had represented for revolutionary Marxists.

It is reported that, having translated Fanon's *L'An V de la révolution algérienne,* the Iranian intellectual invited the Martinican to write a preface to it, something that never materialised.[41] More importantly, while translating this work, Shariati wrote three letters to Fanon, challenging him on the question of religion and revolution.[42] Fanon was convinced that, to fight against Western imperialism successfully, the people of the Third World had to abandon their religions. Shariati, on the contrary, believed that people of the Third World could only fight imperialism by regaining their cultural identity and pointed out that, in some countries, this was interwoven with religious traditions; therefore, they had to return to their religious roots to be able to challenge the West.[43] Shariati strongly believed that Third World nations would be able to defeat imperialism, not lose self-esteem, and overcome social alienation, only if they rediscovered their roots, national heritage, and popular culture.[44] He expressed this idea in particular in a series of lectures entitled "Return to Oneself" (*Bāzgasht be Khish*), where he affirms that:

> Well, here I want to turn to a fundamental question, a question that is currently raised by intellectuals in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and recently also in Iran: the question of the "return to oneself" (*bāzgasht be khish*). ... On the basis of the same cry (*shā'ār*) that all religious and nonreligious intellectuals such as Amar Ouzegane, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, and Eugène Ionesco have accepted, in particular since World War II, they are convinced that every society, based on its [own] history and culture, should become intellectual and, relying on [its] history, culture, and popular (*'omum*) language, should play its intellectual role and [convey] its message (*resālat*); on the basis of these very three cries (*shā'ār*).
>
> Now, the issue of the "return to oneself" (*bāzgasht be khishtan*) isn't a cry that in the world have raised the religious [intellectuals], but rather the progressive nonreligious intellectuals raised it for the first time, such as Aimé Césaire in Africa, Frantz Fanon, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Leopold Senghor, the Algerian writer Kateb Yacine, and Jalal Al-e Ahmad in Iran. ... They are prominent personalities of the world intellectual movement and among the anticolonial leaders in the Third World, accepted by all movements. ... It is on these bases that when the issue of the "return to oneself" (*bāzgasht be khish*) is raised ... we have [all] reached the shared understanding that this issue converts itself from a "return to oneself" (*bāzgasht be khish*) to a "return to one's culture" (*bāzgasht be farhang-e khishtan*) and to recognize the self (*khishtan*) that we are. And, in this search, we reach [the conclusion that it is a] "return to the Islamic culture and Islamic ideology" ... Now I want to clarify that "return to oneself" (*bāzgasht be khish*) is everyone's cry, it is both the cry of Aimé Césaire in Africa and of Frantz Fanon in the Antilles islands in South America.[45]

Ebrahim Fattahi, is even more explicit and mentions that Shariati translated these two works only partially (*be surat-e nātamām*), Ervand Abrahamian, *Irān beyn-e do Enqelāb* (Tehran: Nashr-e Ney, 1998-99), 573.

37 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 465, and Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 107. However, according to Rahmena, *An Islamic Utopian*, 112, the contention, expressed in *Yādnāme-ye Shahid Javid: Ali Shari'ati* (1365), 31, that the work, published as a series of articles by *Irān-e Āzād*, was translated by Shariati is unfounded.

38 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 465.

39 Raffaele Mauriello, "Musa al-Sadr e il risveglio shi'ita", *GNOSIS. Rivista italiana di intelligence*, no. 27/4 (2021), 152–65.

40 Raffaele Mauriello and Seyed Mohammad Marandi, "Oppressors and Oppressed Reconsidered: A Shi'itologic Perspective on the Islamic Republic of Iran and Hezbollah's Outlook on International Relations", in *Islam and International Relations: Contributions to Theory and Practice*, ed. Deina Abdelkader, Nassef Manabilang Adiong and Raffaele Mauriello (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 50–71.

41 Rahmena, *An Islamic Utopian*, 127.

42 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 465.

43 Shariati expressed this thought in his lectures collected in *Eslāmshenāsi* (n.p., 1972), Lesson 13, 15–17. On this, see also Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 465.

44 Shariati expressed this thought in his lectures collected in *Tamadon va Tajadod* (n.p., 1974), 1–29. On this, see also Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 469–70, who first translated part of this passage.

45 Ali Shariati, *Bāzgasht be Khishtan, Bāzgasht be Kodām Khish?* (Daftar-e Tadvin va Enteshār-e Majmu'e-ye Āsār-e Barādar-e Shahid Doktor

It is worth mentioning that the volume used to extract the quote translated above ends with the translation of the *Testament* of Frantz Fanon. According to Shariati's daughter, Sara, his father was looking for a "third way" within the framework of the search for identity in non-Western societies, or the Third World, as a major component of the anti-colonial struggle. In this search, he was influenced by the independence wars in Vietnam, Cuba, Congo and, above all, Algeria and by the theses developed by Frantz Fanon and Amar Ouzegane (1910–1981),[46] with which he became familiar during some seminars held by the French (born in Algeria) Islamic scholar and sociologist Jacques Augustin Berque (1910–1995).[47] According to Sara, it was under the influence of the idea expressed by Fanon in *Les damnés de la terre* of the necessity for the Third World to develop a new thinking and to set on foot (*mettre sur pied*) a new human being that her father began translating the book.[48]

On the other hand, Shariati agreed with Fanon's criticism of institutionalised Marxism and Marxist parties. Like Fanon, Shariati underlined that these parties did not support national liberation movements and did not realise that, at the time, the main struggle was not between capitalists and workers but between imperialists and the Third World.[49] This last issue was at the centre of the revolutionary theories of armed struggle that were being discussed by Iran's guerrilla revolutionaries, who were reading widely on Latin American revolutionary theory and to whom I will turn later on in this essay.

Khomeini is Shariati, Shariati is Fanon, and Fanon is Imam Ali

The penetration of Fanon's thought in Iran via Shariati was so strong that it also affected the leader of the 1977–1979 revolution, Ruhollah Khomeini. He incorporated into his political language Fanonist concepts, imagery, and expressions such as "the downtrodden (*mostad'afin*) will inherit the earth", "the people will dump the exploiters onto the garbage heap of history", and "the country needs a cultural revolution" and more generally started referring to the whole Iran as "the nation of the *mostad'afin* (*mellat-e mostad'afin*)".[50]

According to Abrahamian, Khomeini had rarely used the word *mostad'afin* in the past, particularly in the Fanonian sense of "wretched" or "oppressed masses", and adopted this meaning following Shariati and his disciples' translation of *Les damnés de la terre* as *Mostad'afin-e Zamin*. In this respect, however, it is worth noticing that all translations of Fanon's work to which I had access rather use the word *duzakhiyān* for *damnés*/wretched, not *mostad'afin*. Most probably, while on the one hand, Khomeini adopted the Fanonian sense of the word *damnés*/wretched, he consciously used *mostad'afin* instead of *duzakhiyān* because the former had an established place in the Shia tradition.[51]

Worth noting is the hypothesis, again advanced by Abrahamian, that the Mujahedin reinterpreted and changed the meaning of the word *mostad'afin* from "the meek" to "the oppressed masses" long before Khomeini and his students.[52] However, it is unclear whether this is also the case for Shariati and his disciples. According to Abrahamian, although it has usually been assumed that the Mujahedin's founders were Shariati's disciples, the former "developed their ideas not only independently of Shariati but also a few years before meeting him".[53]

The superposition between Fanon and Shariati became so strong that some have argued for an interpretation of Fanon in a Shariatian form.[54] More generally, the superposition of the wretched/downtrodden/disinherited between Fanon and Shia political culture and language became so entrenched that it led to confusion, or even errors. An illuminating example is provided by the (mis)interpretation of a mural painted on the walls of a building in Tehran. The mural was dedicated to the memory of a tragic event that occurred in Gaza on September 30, 2000, when a French television crew recorded the dramatic gunning down of a boy named Mohammad by Israeli soldiers while his father tried in vain to protect him with his own body behind a small rock while screaming to the soldiers to stop shooting (Figure 4).

'Ali Shari'ati da Urupā, 1978), 11–3.

46 Amar Ouzegane was an Algerian politician and 1934 became secretary of the Algiers branch of the French Communist Party. When in November 1936 the newly established Algerian Communist Party celebrated its first congress, Ouzegane was elected as secretary of the party. However, he later broke with the party and in 1948 was expelled for his "nationalist deviations" and joined the National Liberation Front (FLN). He later became a member of the first Algerian National Assembly served as Minister for Agriculture and Land Reforms in the first government formed after Algeria's independence and later held other positions in subsequent governments. During the fight for his country's independence, he was jailed for several years and, during his incarceration, he wrote the work *Le meilleur combat* (The Better Struggle), where argued in favour of fusing socialist and Islamic thinking.

47 Sara Shariati, "Shariati, le dissident", in *Les mondes chiite et l'Iran*, ed. Sabrina Mervin (Paris and Beirut: Karthala-ifpo, 2007), 327–46, 330–1.

48 Shariati, "Shariati, le dissident", 330.

49 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 468.

50 Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 47; Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 534.

51 For the place of *mostad'afin* in the Shia tradition see Mauriello and Marandi, "Oppressors and Oppressed Reconsidered", 50–71.

52 Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 96.

53 Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 103.

54 Miri, "Frantz Fanon in Ali Shariati's Reading".

Figure 4. Mural in Tehran dedicated to the memory of a young Palestinian boy killed by Israeli soldiers in Gaza.
Photo: Raffaele Mauriello.

In addition to the image of the young boy and his father, the mural features the Dome of the Rock and the Palestinian flag in the background, bayonets bearing the Star of David on one side and the logo of the mural's sponsor, the Lebanese party-movement Hezbollah. Moreover, it has an inscription above the scene that reads: "The enemy of oppressor (*zalim*) and the supporter of the oppressed (*mazlum*)". In her volume on contemporary Iranian art, Talinn Grigor attributes the words to Frantz Fanon.[55] In fact, they are from a hadith attributed to the first Imam, Ali, and the hadith is collected in the major work attributed to him, *Nahj al-Balāgha*.[56] Moreover, this hadith has been used as one of Ali's sayings in contemporary history by prominent religious figures such as Ahmad Montazeri, at one time the designated successor to Khomeini as leader of the Islamic Republic and among the most important Shia scholars of the second half of the last century, who, for example, quoted it during a meeting with students.[57]

Through a personal reading of Fanon and the real or "imagined translation" of his works, Shariati was instrumental in revolutionising Shia political language and culture. While he worked on his personal project that would lead him to become the embodiment of the revolutionary (Muslim) intellectual in Iran, other militant leftist readings were underway among some groups of the opposition to the Shah. For the latter, the focus was on the struggle between imperialism, (pre- or dependent) capitalism, and dictatorship on the one side and the communist party, proletariat class and, in the eyes of many of those under Latin American influence, the vanguard guerrilla on the other side.

Enter Cuba, Castro, and Guerrilla Warfare: Iran's Militant Left and Latin American Revolutionary Theory

Between 1964 and 1966, Iran's communist party, the Tudeh (established in 1941), witnessed some breakaways following both the tragic consequences of the 1953 coup against Mosaddeq and the Sino-Soviet dispute. From these splits, two new Maoist formations, the Revolutionary Organization of the Tudeh Party of Iran (*Sāzmān-e Enqelābi-ye Hezb-e Tude-ye Iran*, ROTPI), established in February 1964, and the Tofan Marxist-Leninist Organization (*Sazmān-e*

55 Talinn Grigor, *Contemporary Iranian Art: From the Street to the Studio* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 59.

56 A hadith is a saying of the prophet Muhammad and, in the case of Shia Islam, also of the Imams, the twelve spiritual and political successors to the prophet. Hadiths constitute the major sources of guidance and law-making for Muslims in addition to the Koran.

57 Ahmad Montazeri, "Report of the Meeting between Students and Hojjatoleslam val-Moslemin Ahmad Montazeri" (*Gozāresh-e Didār-e Dāneshjuiyān ba Hojjatoleslām va-l-Moslemin Ahmad Montazeri*), *amontazeri.com*, December 21, 2011, accessed April 8, 2021, https://amontazeri.com/statements/325.

Marksisti-Leninisti-ye Tufān, Tofan), established in 1965, debated the value of a reformist or revolutionary approach to opposition politics. The first group was sympathetic to the Cuban revolution, although apparently without having much real knowledge about it. It was made mostly of young Tudeh students based in Western Europe and active in the Confederation of Iranian Students—National Union (*Konfederāsiyun-e Jahāni-ye Mohasselin va Dāneshjuyān-e Irani—Ettehādiye-ye Melli*, CISNU).[58] CISNU, Iran's national union of students, formed in 1962 and described as the largest, longest-lasting and most effective Third World student movement of the 1960s, was characterised by anti-imperialism and a marked radical internationalist perspective.[59]

ROTPI argued for the necessity of a revolution and expected it to begin in the villages, then spread throughout the countryside, and finally reach the cities. Tofan, on its part, in the homonymous party's periodical organ *Tufān,* underlined that it expected the revolution to start in the cities and argued that the notion of starting a revolution in the countryside was marked by "Castroist deviations".[60] Superseding the initial sympathy for Cuba, ROTPI would develop strong relationships with China and Albania and send some of its members to China for training and to collaborate on the Persian-language broadcasts of Radio Beijing.[61] Moreover, it would receive $20,000 annually from China.[62] However, the group's pro-Cuba sentiments during its early years were very important. This is indicated, for example, by what occurred when, in 1965, the second split in the Tudeh took place. Three high-ranking members of the party were expelled for Maoist views, and the trio joined ROTPI, trying to assume its leadership. However, the pro-Cuban sentiments of the youngest generations of Marxists represented a significant element of friction, running counter to the trio's unrelenting Maoism.[63] Expelled from ROTPI as well, they would establish Tofan and continue to debate the relevance of the Cuban experience to Iran. Relevant to the topic addressed here is also the fact that, in 1966, when ROTPI sent a fourteen-member team from Europe to Cuba for military training, the group included two members of CISNU, the couple Pari Hajebi and Hasan Qazi.[64] When the members of the group returned to Europe, they brought military training with them but were also convinced that the Cuban model was not appropriate for Iran.[65] As we will see, however, this was not what other young Iranians based in Iran thought.

Without doubt, Cuba and Latin America were on the minds of the thirteen armed young men who, on the eve of February 8, 1971, attacked a gendarmerie post in Iran's north village of Siyahkal. This event, whose imagery was to be strongly linked to a cubist painting by the socialist political activist and intellectual Bijan Jazani[66] (1937–1975), formally marked the beginning of guerrilla warfare (*jang-e pārtizāni*) in the country.

In the 1960s, the Maoist factions had become hegemonic within the Iranian student movement and, more generally, within the non-Tudeh Iranian left. However, in the early 1970s, both in Iran and within the Iranian diaspora, they gradually lost their hegemony to a growing Third Worldist Marxist tendency that drew inspiration from Latin American revolutionary movements and identified with Cuban-style guerrilla armed struggle, which became paramount in the mid-1970s.[67] The anti-Stalinist trend within the Iranian left that would lead to the preponderance of Third Worldist Marxism among militant Iranian students was pioneered by the formation in 1947 of the Third Force (*Niru-ye Sevvom*), again as a splinter group of the Tudeh Party.[68]

The process that led to the Siyahkal incident and the roots of the guerrilla movement in Iran date back at least to 1963, when the country's armed forces crushed a demonstration for the religious occasion of Muharram, thereby unintentionally persuading some younger members of the Iranian left to seek alternative methods of struggle. In fact, reading Iran's Marxist guerrilla literature, the pivotal moment may have taken place a decade earlier, in 1953, when the newly formed CIA (USA) along with MI6 (UK) orchestrated a coup against Iran's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammad Mosaddeq, to reinstate the Shah.

In the following years, these young leftist members of the opposition to the dictatorial monarchy — mostly college and high school students but also doctors, teachers, and other professionals — established secret discussion groups. They began re-reading about revolutionary experiences in Russia and China, dedicated increasing attention to the victories of national liberation movements in Cuba and Algeria, and denunciated the "imperialist" war in Vietnam — all events labelled as "revolutions".

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58 Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 40. His take is based on Hamid Shokat, *Negāhi az darun be Jonbesh-e Chap-e Irān: Goftegou bā Mehdi Khānbābā-Tehrāni* [A Look from Within at Iran's Left Movement] (Saarbrücken: Baztab Publications, 1989), 133.

59 Manijeh Nasrabadi and Afshin Matin-Asgari, "The Iranian Student Movement and the Making of Global 1968", in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*, ed. Chen Jian et al (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2018), 443–56, 443.

60 "The Revisionists and the Revolutionary Organization" (*Reviziyunisthā va "Sāzmān-e Enqelābi"*), *Tufān*, no. 40 (December 1970), Third Period: 3–4.

61 Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 40.

62 Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 88-89, based on Shokat, *Negāhi az darun be Jonbesh-e Chap-e Irān*, 271–2.

63 Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 41–2.

64 Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student*, 92–3.

65 Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student*, 92–3.

66 Bijan Jazani was among the founders of OIPFG together with Puyan and Ahmadzadeh. He had previously established the Jazani-Zarifi group together with Hasan Zia-Zarifi (1937-1975). The Jazani-Zarifi group carried out the Siyahkal operation in February 1971 which is considered the start of the period of guerrilla armed struggle in Iran. A graduate in philosophy, Jazani is regarded as one of Iran's major Marxist theorists. In his youth, he had been a member of the Tudeh's Youth Organization. He was arrested in 1968 and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. While in prison he authored numerous writings, among them *Chegune Mobāreze-ye Mosallahān-e Tudehi Mishavad* (How Armed Struggle Becomes a Mass Movement). He was assassinated in prison in 1975 along with six other members of the Fada'i.

67 In the case of Iran's radical student movement, see Nasrabadi and Matin-Asgari, "The Iranian Student Movement", 446; and Afshin Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2002), chaps. 8 and 9.

68 Nasrabadi and Matin-Asgari, "The Iranian Student Movement", 446.

Moreover, they began translating works by Ernesto Che Guevara, Frantz Fanon, Régis Debray (1940–),[69] Carlos Marighella (1911–1969),[70] and Võ Nguyên Giáp (1911–2013),[71] among others, as well as those by Lenin and Mao Zedong. In 1966, a group of professionals, including doctors and teachers, was arrested in three cities (Tehran, Kerman, and Enzeli) for advocating violence and setting up a secret organization. Among the accusations, there was also that of having translated pamphlets on Cuba.[72]

The Latin American trend within the Iranian opposition to the Pahlavi state was already in the making in the early 1960s. In those years, the so-called Jazani Group was established by Bijan Jazani, Dr Heshmatollah Shahrzad, and Manouchehr Kalantari to prepare for armed struggle against the Pahlavi state. In 1966, this group entered what Rahnema has identified as its second phase and combined forces with the so-called Sourki Group. The latter was led by Abbas Sourki, a political science student and employee of the Central Bank of Iran who, in 1958, had established the Combatants of the Tudeh Party (*Razmavārān-e Hezb-e Tudeh*) and reactivated it in 1965, a few years after his release from prison. This group had begun discussing guerrilla warfare in Iran by studying literature on guerrilla warfare in Cuba.[73]

Having to deal with the increasing consolidation of the Shah's power and its police state based on the repression carried out by the SAVAK,[74] in the 1960s, a growing number of Iranian Marxists and, later, also Islamists began to turn to armed struggle as the only way to confront the increasingly dictatorial imperial regime. In the 1970s, their struggle would take the form of a full-fledged guerrilla movement.

Being characterised by the strong cultural and identity role of Shia Islam, Iran in the 1960s saw the establishment, in addition to the Marxist guerrillas, of a parallel guerrilla movement known as Mujahedin. This was characterised by the fusion of Marxist and religious (Islamic) elements, an element that, as we have seen, marked also the thought of Ali Shariati and Banisadr. Like the Fada'i, the Mujahedin spent much time reading as much as they could on the recent and ongoing "revolutions" in Algeria, Cuba, and Vietnam, including Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare*, Marighella's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*, Debray's *Revolution in a Revolution*, and Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*.[75] However, and in contrast to the Fada'i, they adopted Amar Ouzegane's *Le meilleur combat* as their central handbook.[76] Despite this, the general impact of Latin America's revolutionary processes and imagery on their thought is manifest even in their major work, *Nehzat-e Huseyini* (Huseyn's Movement), where they declare that:

> The [seventy-three] Shii martyrs [martyred on the plains of Karbala in 680 CE] were very much like the modern Che Guevara. They accepted martyrdom as a revolutionary duty and considered the armed struggle against class oppression as their social obligation. (Parenthesis added)[77]

Moreover, as pointed out by Abrahamian, from Latin America the Mujahedin learned how to use the arguments about Third World dependency and the polemics of the New Left, such as the preference for spontaneity over organizations, guerrilla over trade unions' activity, radical intellectuals over industrial workers, and uncompromising zeal over tactical alliances.[78] Above all, they learned the value of armed over political struggle and how to disrupt and overthrow a military regime with a vanguardist, highly dedicated group of armed revolutionaries.

In this framework, and like the Fada'i, the Mujahedin established relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and went to Lebanon to get training from the Palestinians. Moreover, they sent a small group of volunteers to help the Zhoffar rebels in Oman.[79] In this respect, they developed a similar internationalist perspective, going beyond the division between Muslims and non-Muslims. When it comes to Third Worldism, according to Abrahamian, the Mujahedin believed that its advocates, in terms of a "third road" towards economic development,

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69 Régis Debray is a leading French intellectual who served as an advisor to President Mitterrand. His life has intersected with key moments of the twentieth century, in particular in connection with his journey to Cuba and intellectual involvement in the revolution of the 1960s. He was tortured and imprisoned in Bolivia while in search of Ernesto Che Guevara. His work *Révolution dans la révolution? Lutte armée et lutte politique en Amérique Latine*, first published in 1967, became a handbook for guerrilla warfare and revolution, read alongside the works of Che Guevara and other Latina American revolutionary intellectuals.

70 Carlos Marighella was a Brazilian politician and guerrilla of Afro-Italian origins and one of the main organizers of the armed struggle against the military dictatorship installed in Brazil in 1964. At the height of armed actions against the dictatorship, in 1969, Marighella launched his *Minimanual do Guerrilheiro Urbano*, a 26-page document in which he presents the characteristics and essential actions for the formation of the urban guerrilla. The pamphlet is an essentially practical text that became a reference for urban guerrilla warfare in several countries during the long 1960s.

71 Võ Nguyên Giáp was a Vietnamese political and military leader whose mastering of guerrilla as well as conventional war tactics led to the Viet Minh victory over the French and later to the North Vietnamese victory over South Vietnam and the United States. He studied at the Lycée Albert-Sarraut in Hanoi, received a law degree from Hanoi University in the late 1930s, and later became a professor of history at the Lycée Thanh Long in the same city. He authored a manual of guerrilla warfare based on his own experience titled *People's War, People's Army* (1961).

72 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 482–3. Already in 1964 fifty-seven youngsters has been arrested for buying weapons and establishing a secret party. Moreover, in 1969 a group of Tudeh members robbed a bank to finance guerrilla warfare but were all arrested before launching any operation. In the same year, a group of professors and university students were arrested trying to cross the Iraq border to join training camps of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO, founded in 1964).

73 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 141. Based on Mahmoud Naderi, *Cherikhā-ye Fadā'i-ye Khalq*, vol. 2 (Tehran: Moassase-ye Motāle'āt va Pajouheshhā-ye Siyāsi, 1390 [/2011-2012]), 64–5.

74 Iran's intelligence service, established in 1957 with the help of the CIA and Mossad.

75 Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 89.

76 Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 89. It is worth noticing that, according to Abrahamian, 107, among other books Ali Shariati also began a translation of this work, and praised its author as a major Muslim-Marxist.

77 Quoted in Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 94–5.

78 Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 100.

79 Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 63.

were perpetuating false hopes and that Asian, African, and Latin American countries had only one choice when it came to development: a socialist road.[80]

The attempt at fusing Islam and Marxism did not always go well. By the end of 1973, the Mujahedin were deepening their Marxism and reading more and more about the Cuban, Vietnamese, and Chinese revolutions. This led to a split within the group, and by mid-1975, most members had declared themselves Marxist-Leninist and had reached the conclusion that Islam hindered their struggle. The Marxist-Leninist Mujahedin even tried to merge with the Fada'i, but the operation failed, and the former accused the latter of maintaining their "Castroist roots" and refusing to denounce Soviet imperialism.[81]

As already noted, Iran's guerrilla movement was particularly inspired, as elsewhere, by Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Carlos Marighella, and, although not a Latin American, Jules Régis Debray, who at the time was intellectually involved with Latin American guerrilla movements. This influence was evident not only in Iran but also among Iranian leftist students in Europe. According to Rahnema, this is exemplified by Parviz Nikkhah (1939–1979) and his colleagues associated with the Revolutionary Organisation of the Tudeh Party (ROTP), for whom the Cuban experience, as well as Algeria, attracted them to armed struggle.

Among the three Latin American revolutionaries, while Marighella has fallen into oblivion, Che Guevara and Castro have retained, to the present day, a prominent role in Iran's political culture, and arguably this is also the case, although less so, of Debray.

Reading and Translating Che Guevara

In January 1963, *Irān-e Āzād*, the organ of the Paris-based National Front (*Sāzmānhā-e Jebhe-ye Melli-ye Irān dar Urupā*), began publishing excerpts of Ernesto Che Guevara's *La guerra de guerrillas* (*Guerrilla Warfare*).[82] The translation was done by a member of the journal's editorial board, Ali Shakeri, who used the pen name Hamoun, from the French edition of the book published in April 1962 by the left publishing house Éditions Maspero.[83]

In Iran, the first edition of Che Guevara's *La guerra de guerrillas* in English, published in 1961 by Monthly Review Press, was available for sale in Tehran as early as 1963.[84] By December 1966, a Persian translation of *La guerra de guerrillas* was being circulated among students at Tehran's Polytechnic University.[85] According to Rahnema, Ghafour Hasanpour (1942/43–1971), an eminent member of the Jazani Group, translated it into Persian.[86] Hasanpour was particularly interested in Latin America, and when recruiting new members, made reference to the experience of the Cuban revolution and the guerrilla war in the Sierra, as well as to the urban guerrilla experiences in other Latin American countries.[87]

The translation into Persian of another work by Che Guevara, "Cuba, ¿excepción histórica o vanguardia en la lucha contra el colonialismo?" (Cuba: Exceptional Case or Vanguard in the Struggle Against Colonialism?) is reported to have been undertaken already by the spring of 1966. Guevara's work had been published in Spanish in *Revista Verde Olivo* in April 1961 and in English by *Monthly Review* in July-August of the same year. As mentioned by Rahnema, Mohammad-Majid Kianzad, a member of the original Jazani Group, remembered coming across a handwritten translation of the work. Even though the handwriting was by Safâi-Farahani's, according to Kianzad, most probably the former was not its translator.[88]

In addition to the above, Che Guevara's "Message" sent at the end of 1965 to the fifth meeting of the *Conferencia de Solidaridad de los Pueblos de África, Asia y América Latina* (better known as *Conferencia Tricontinental*), held in January 1966, was also translated into Persian. The "Message" had been published in La Habana on April 16, 1967, as a supplement of the magazine *Tricontinental* with the title "Crear dos, tres ... muchos Vietnam. Mensaje a los pueblos del mundo a través de la Tricontinental". The translation was done by Houshang Vaziri and published in the September 1967 issue of the monthly magazine *Ferdowsi*. It featured two pictures of Che Guevara. Moreover, the issue of *Ferdowsi* included a three-page article on Vietnam titled "Dead End in Vietnam", a reflection of the highly internationalist and Third-Worldist climate of that time that associated the revolutions in Cuba, Algeria and Vietnam.

Several other writings of Che Guevara appeared before the revolution. Some of his articles and letters, including "What is a Guerrilla?" (*Pārtizān Kist?*), "Crear dos, tres ... muchos Vietnam. Mensaje a los pueblos del mundo a través de la Tricontinental" (*Payām-e be Conferāns-e Uspāl: "... Do, Se, Chand Vietnām Bepā Konim"*) and "Letter to Fidel Castro" (*Nāme be Fidel Kāstro*), were collected and published in an 82-page book apparently in 1978 as a "white cover" under the title *A Selection of Che Guevara* (*Montakhabāt-e Che Guwārā*) for the fiftieth year of his birth (Figure 5).

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80 Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, 125.

81 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 495.

82 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 112. The excerpts appeared in a series of numbers between January 20, 1963 and August of the same year.

83 Éditions Maspero was founded in 1959 by the French author and journalist François Maspero (1932–2015) and served as an inspiration for radical left until its closure in 1983 when the Édition La Découverte took over from it. Maspero publications played a critical role in the far Left in the 1960s and 1970s, by publishing works of Frantz Fanon, James Arthur Baldwin, Malcolm X, and Che Guevara, anthologies of classic labour-movement works, Althusser's 'Théorie' collection, or the journal *Partisans*, where authors such as Régis Debray or Bernard-Henri Lévy made their debut.

84 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 112–3.

85 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 113.

86 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 151

87 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 116.

88 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 113.

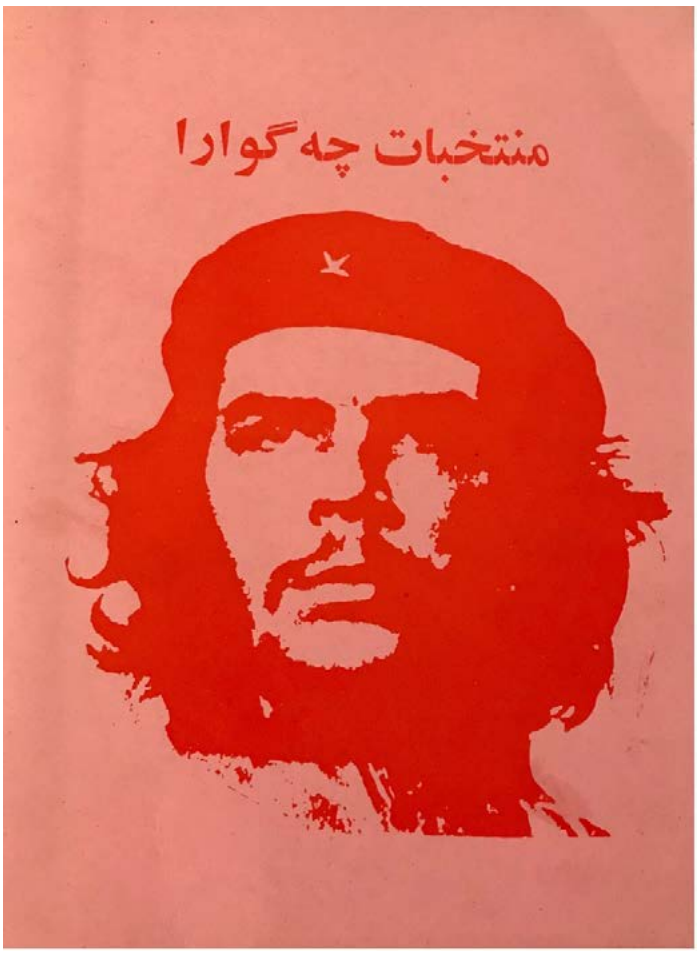

Figure 5. Cover of a "white cover" publication titled *A Selection of Che Guevara* (*Montakhabāt-e Che Guwārā*), published for the fiftieth anniversary of the guerrilla's birth.
Photo: Raffaele Mauriello.

Reading and Translating Jules Régis Debray

As we have seen, in the 1960s, the translation and circulation of works by Latin American revolutionaries among Iran's Marxist guerrilla groups was paramount. Masoud Ahmadzadeh, a key figure of the Fada'i, in 1967 formed a secret circle to discuss works of Che Guevara, Jules Régis Debray, and Carlos Marighella. Remarkably enough, according to Behrooz, the group formed by Ahmadzadeh, Puyan, and Abbas Meftahi (1945-1972) had, in addition to English, also learned Spanish.[89] The result was that in the Summer of 1970, Ahmadzadeh wrote a 47-page theoretical pamphlet arguing for the necessity of guerrilla warfare, *Armed Struggle: Both a Strategy and a Tactic* (*Mobāreze-ye Mosallahāne: Ham Estrātezhi ham Taktik*), which became the Fada'i's main theoretical work for several years, before the group adopted Jazani's theses.[90] In this work, Ahmadzadeh makes ample reference to the Cuban Revolution and "the Cuban way". He affirms that he became familiar with the Cuban experience by reading Debray's *Révolution dans la révolution? Lutte armée et lutte politique en Amérique Latine* (*Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*), published in France in 1967 by Maspero. He dedicates two sections of *Armed Struggle* to the examination of Debray's work, including numerous long quotations. The work appears to be the most critical influence in Ahmadzadeh's pamphlet, and the Iranian guerrilla borrows vocabulary and metaphors from it. According to Rahnema's reconstruction, Ahmadzadeh became aware of *Révolution dans la révolution?* through his comrade Bijan Hirmanpour. The latter had bought the book, in the English translation published by Monthly Review Press in July-August of 1967, at the Jahan or Gutenberg bookstore in Tehran.[91] Reportedly, Ahmadzadeh also undertook, in the summer of 1968, translating the book into Persian. The work was finalised in early September of the same year, in collaboration with the core members of the revolutionary Marxist group based in Mashhad, comprising Ahmadzadeh, Pouyan, Bahman Ajang, Hamid Tavakoli, and Sa'id Ariyan. Most of the translation work, however, had apparently been carried out by Ahmadzadeh and Ajang.[92] It circulated as a "white cover" and was later translated also by Ali Maqami and published during the revolution in 1978–1979 (/1357) by Derafk (Figure 6).

89 Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 44.
90 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 484–5.
91 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 45–7.
92 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 46.

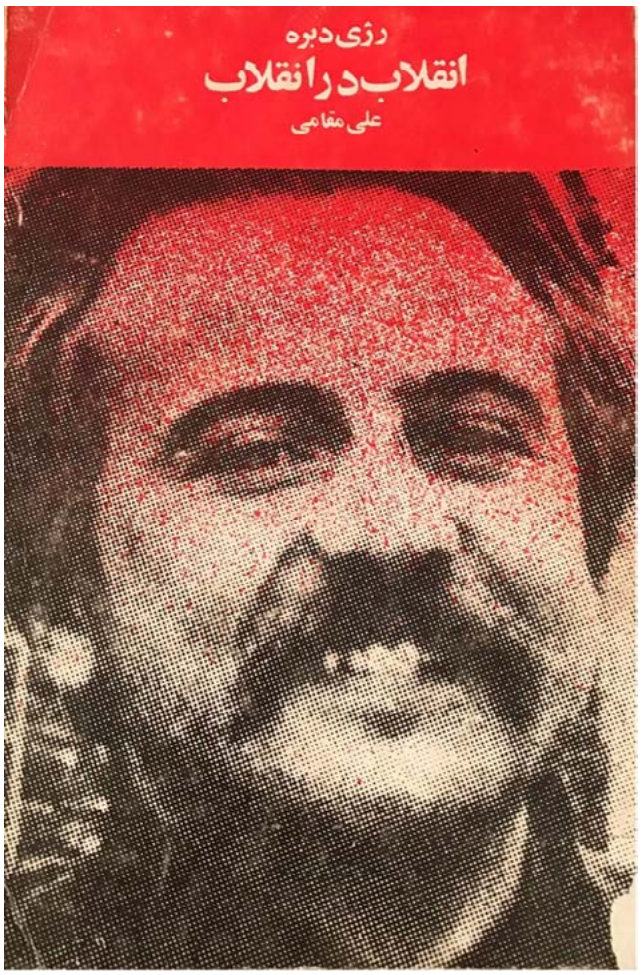

Figure 6. Cover of the Persian translation of Jules Régis Debray's *Révolution dans la révolution?* translated by Ali Maqami and published by Derafk.
Photo: Raffaele Mauriello.

As Ahmadzadeh mentioned, at the beginning, he hadn't given the Cuban experience the credit and attention it deserved due to theoretical preconceptions and a lack of precise knowledge of conditions in Latin America. However, after a re-reading of the Cuban experience via Debray, he had reached the conclusion that it was only through armed struggle undertaken by a vanguard that it would have been possible to show the masses that the struggle had started and that its progress required their support and active participation. In Iran, as in Cuba, the specific conditions had necessitated a vanguard organization to lead the revolution. Hence, the revolutionary struggle and theory needed to be adapted to the situation in Iran. Ahmadzadeh, moreover, postulated that to foster a revolution in Iran, the armed vanguard would have to be composed of revolutionary intellectuals; neither the working class nor the peasants were in a revolutionary state of mind. It is worth noting the specificity of the Latin American communist parties, as Ahmadzadeh underscores. He noticed how the fact that they operated in countries that possessed formal political independence didn't give them the opportunity to lead a war of national liberation.[93] This represented something they shared with the situation in Iran and differentiated them from the Chinese and Vietnamese parties.

In addition to several references to Debray's *Révolution dans la révolution ?*, in *Armed Struggle: Both a Strategy and a Tactic,* Ahmadzadeh makes reference to an article entitled "The Venezuela Experience and the Crisis of Revolutionary Movement in Latin America". The article had been written by Edgar Rodrigues, the pen name used by Antônio Francisco Correia (1921-2009), the anarchist Portuguese historian who, in early 1950, moved to Brazil, escaping the dictatorship of Salazar.[94] Moreover, he also makes reference to an article by Cléa Silva titled "The Errors of the Foco Theory". Silva is the pen name used by Vania Bambirra when in 1967 she published a pamphlet criticising Debray's *foco* theory; a criticism that Ahmadzadeh discusses and rejects.[95] A year later, the article appeared in the July-August 1968 issue of *Monthly Review* titled *Régis Debray and the Latin American Revolution,* together with other articles that debated and critically assessed Debray's *Révolution dans la révolution ?*, published the year before (1967).

93 Masoud Ahmadzadeh, *Mobāreze-ye Mosallahāne: Ham Estratezhi ham Tāktik* (*Armed Struggle: Both a Strategy and a Tactic*) (n.p., Summer 1970). Translated and published in English as *Armed Struggle: Both A Strategy and a Tactic* (New York: Support Committee for the Iranian Peoples' Struggle, 1977).

94 On Antônio Francisco Correia, see José Maria Carvalho Ferreira, "Edgar Rodrigues: Um anarquista entre duas pátrias [parte 1]", *Verve*, 25 (2014), 13–29.

95 On Vania Bambirra, see Laura Briceño Ramírez, "Vania Bambirra y la alternativa insurrecional a inicios de los años 70", *Izquierdas*, 28 (Julio 2016), 93–113.

The *Monthly Review* articles from the same year were put together with book reviews that had appeared first in the *New York Review of Books*, *New Politics* and *Caribbean Studies,* and a lecture given at the University of Manchester and published as a volume edited by Leo Huberman and Paul M. Sweezy. The authors of the essays represent a kind of selected who's who of the leftist academic and intellectual milieu of the late 1960s in the Americas and Europe: Leo Huberman, Paul M. Sweezy, André Gunder Frank, S. A. Shah, Cléa Silva, William J. Pomeroy, Julio Aronde, Simón Torres, Robin Blackburn, Eqbal Ahmad, William Appleman Williams, Donald McKelvey and, in the case of the edited volume, also Perry Anderson, Juan Emilio Bosch Gaviño, James Petras, and Peter Worsley.

We don't know which of the publications of Silva's article Ahmadzadeh read, but in *Armed Struggle* he also makes reference to "the Cuban comrades" Simon Torres and Julio Aronde. This means that, in addition to Cléa Silva (Vania Bambirra), he also had access to the articles written by two Cuban revolutionaries whom the Argentinian historian Néstor Kohan identified as pen names used by aides of the office of Manuel Piñeiro Losada —better known as Barbarroja and a leading figure in the Cuban Revolution.[96] If Ahmadzadeh had access to the edited volume, he would also have read Juan Emilio Bosch Gaviño, for a brief time the first democratically elected president of the Dominican Republic, before his removal in a coup.

Beyond the circle of the Fada'is, Régis Debray would soon become a known figure in Iran's political culture. This at least since April 4 and 5, 1971, when his name appeared along those of Herbert Marcuse, George Habash, and Tran Van Don in articles published by the daily *Keyhan,* intended to minimise the importance of the attack on the gendarmerie post village of Siyahkal (February 8, 1971).[97]

Among his works published in Iran, the publication in autumn 1979 of *La Guérilla du Che,* first published in Paris in 1974, translated by Abbas Khalili and published as *Jang-e Cheriki-ye "Che"* by Enteshārāt-e Maziyār (Figure 7), is also relevant.

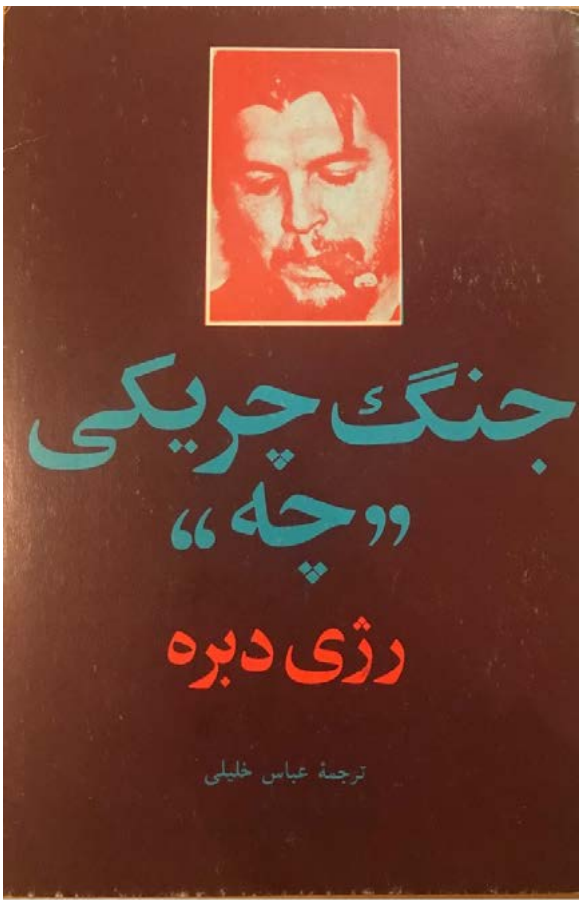

Figure 7. Cover of the Persian translation of *La Guérilla du Che*, translated by Abbas Khalili and published as *Jang-e Cheriki-ye "Che"* by Enteshārāt-e Maziyār.
Photo: Raffaele Mauriello.

96 See Rafael Rojas, "Socialistas en Manhattan. La Revolución Cubana en Monthly Review", *Prismas–Revista de Historia Intelectual*, vol. 17, no. 1 (Jun 2013), 117–136, 131. Manuel Piñeiro Losada was responsible for the Cuban intelligence services, specifically the Department of the Americas, and, furthermore, the husband of Marta Harnecker, another influential Latin American intellectual.

97 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 9.

Reading and Translating Carlos Marighella

As we have seen, beyond the founding events and figures of the Russian revolution, the ideas of Mao and events of the revolution in China, and the independence war in Vietnam and Algeria, between the 1950s and 1970s Che Guevara and the revolutionary experience of Castro in Cuba resonated vividly within Iranian political circles and Iranian revolutionaries found themselves particularly attracted to the experience of Latin American revolutionaries. This also included those of the Uruguayan National Liberation Movement (Tupamaros) and Marighella's National Liberation Action in Brazil.[98]

In 1967 and 1968, the daily *Ettelā'āt* reported the news of the guerrilla activities in Bolivia, Uruguay, Brazil, Peru, and Venezuela at different times.[99] By October 1968, the monthly magazine *Ferdowsi* was reporting on the Latin American guerrillas' change of tactics from rural and forest areas to urban areas, and a month later, *Ettelā'āt* began reporting on the activities of the National Liberation Action in Brazil.[100]

In June 1969, Marighella published his *Minimanual do Guerrilheiro Urbano* (*Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla*), where he argued for the utility of the urban *foco*.[101] A year later, revolutionaries in Iran were referring to his methods and to the tactics employed by the Tupamaros at the same time.[102]

Marighella's work was translated into Persian from English under the title *Ketāb-e Rāhnamā-ye Jang-e Cheriki-ye Shahri* by a member of the National Front Outside of the Country: Middle East Branch (*Jebhe-ye Melli-ye Khārej az Keshvar, Bakhsh-e Khāvar-e Miyāne*).[103] This means that most probably the first translation of the work into Persian was undertaken and published outside Iran, as was the case with some other works by Latin American Marxist revolutionaries. As reconstructed in detail by Rahnema, in September 1970, a short advertisement appeared on the second page of the first issue of *Bakhtar-e Emruz*, the organ of the National Front Outside of the Country: Middle East Branch, where the publication was announced. The third issue of the magazine printed a synopsis of the work.[104]

Apparently, Iranian revolutionaries undertook another, possibly partial, translation of Marighella's *Minimanual do Guerrilheiro Urbano*, published in Baghdad. Houshang Nayyeri remembers receiving, along with other members of the National Front Outside of the Country: Middle East Branch, a Persian translation of Marighella's work titled *Jozve-ye Rāhnamā-ye Jang-e Cheriki-ye Shahri*, a translation that, thanks to Nayyeri and Saffari-Ashtiyani, found its way to Iran when they, around October 1970, returned from Iraq, where they had gone to obtain arms (Figure 8).[105]

98 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 112; Bahrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 140.

99 *Ettelā'āt*, Farvardin 14, 1346 (April 3, 1967); Mehr 6, 1346 (September 28, 1967); Tir 18, 1347 (July 9, 1968); Shahrivar 31, 1347 (September 22, 1968): Mehr 2, 1347 (September 24, 1968). Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 116.

100 *Ettelā'āt*, Azar 25, 1347 (December 16, 1968), Shahrivar 15, 1348 (September 6, 1969) and Shahrivar 18, 1348 (September 9, 1969). Rahnema, *Cal to Arms*, 116.

101 *Foco* theory (*foquismo*) is a doctrine of revolution drawn from the experience of the Cuban revolution predicated on three main tenets: that not all the conditions for making a revolution have to be in place to begin it, the rebellion itself can (and should) bring them about; the countryside Latin America is suited for armed combat; and guerrilla forces are capable of defeating an army in particular conditions.

102 *Faslnāme-ye Motāle'āt-e Tārikhi*, Special Issue on the Cherikhā-ye Fadā'i-ye Khalq, no. 57 (2017): 232. Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 116.

103 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 127.

104 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 127.

105 Seyed Hamid Rowhani, *Nehzat-e Emām Khomeyini*, (Tehran: Mo'assase-ye Chāp va Nashr-e 'Orouj, 1381 [/2002-2003]), vol. 3, 411, 1123. This is based in Houshang Nayyer's interrogation reports. Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 128.

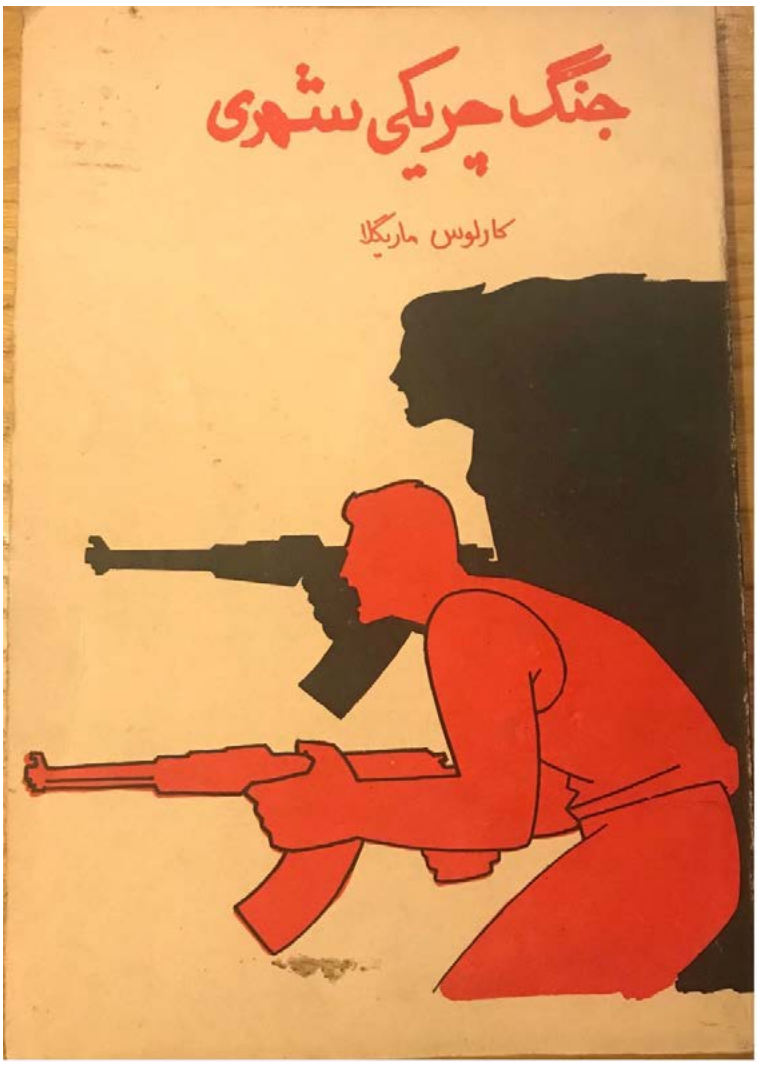

Figure 8. Cover of the Persian translation of Carlos Marighella's *Minimanual do Guerrilheiro Urbano.*
Photo: Raffaele Mauriello.

On December 14, 1970, Ghafour Hasanpour, a key figure of the Fadåi movement, was arrested in Tehran. Among his belongings, Iran's security services (SAVAK) found a two-page document called *Jozve'-i barāy-e Cherikhā-ye Shahri* (A Pamphlet for the Urban Guerrilla).[106] This means that by December 1970, the revolutionaries in Iran had access to at least parts of, and possibly all of, Marighella's *Minimanual*. And indeed, as Rahnema shows, when the urban leadership team of the newly constituted People's Fadåi Guerrillas met in Tehran on May 17, 1971, the four attendees, Amir-Parviz Puyan, Masʿoud Ahmadzadeh, Hamid Ashraf[107] (1946–1976), and Eskandar Sadeqinejad,[108] adopted the organizational blueprint of Marighella.[109]

On July 16, 1972, Ashraf was carrying explosives on a motorcycle that involuntarily exploded. He was injured but managed to escape the scene. When the security services arrived on the scene, they found a copy of Marighella's *Minimanual* published by the bi-monthly magazine *Tricontinental*.[110]

As observed by Behrooz, Marighella's thought was particularly relevant to Iran's Marxist guerrilla because it represented one of the very limited cases of an entirely urban guerrilla experience, although an unsuccessful one.[111] The experiences of Cuba, China, and Vietnam all relevantly involved rural areas and the support of a sympathetic

106 Mahmoud Naderi, *Cherikhā-ye Fadā'i-ye Khalq, az Nākhāstin Koneshhā ta Bahman 1357* (Tehran: Mo'assase-ye Motale'āt va Pajouheshā-ye Siyāsi, 1387 [/2008-2009]) vol. 1, 182.

107 Hamid Ashraf was famous for his organizational abilities and led the Fada'i between 1972 and 1976, when he was killed by the SAVAK seemingly while trying to escape capture after the safe house where he and a number of members of cadres of the Fada'i were staying was surrounded. He authored two important essays titled *A Three-Year Review* (*Jam'bandi-ye Se Sāle*) and *An Analysis of One Year of Urban and Mountain Guerrilla Warfare* (*Tahlil-e Yek Sāl Mobāreze-ye Cheriki dar Shahr va Kuh*).

108 Eskandar Sadeqinejad was a metalworker, member of the Syndicate of Mechanical Steel Workers, among the first graduates of the Tehran Mountaineering Association, and cofounder of the Mountain-Climbing Organization of the Syndicate of Metal and Mechanical Workers (*Sāzmān-e Kuhnavardi-ye Sandikā-ye Felezkār va Mekānik*). He joined the Jazani-Zarifi group in 1968 and through it the Fada'i. He was killed by the SAVAK in 1971 in an attack on the safe house where he was hidden.

109 Hamid Ashraf, *Jam'bandi-ye Se Sāle* (Terhan: Enteshārāt-e Negāh, 1357 [/1978-1979]), 23. Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, 128.

110 Naderi, *Cherikhā-ye Fadā'i-ye Khalq*, vol. 1, 450.

111 Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 140.

peasantry. However, this element was generally absent or largely peripheral in Iran, where the peasantry has lacked revolutionary potential and, in the twentieth century, urban areas have been the determining factor in major political change.

Conclusions

As an opponent of the Shah's regime, a former president, and the current Leader of the Islamic Republic, Ali Khamenei has been a key figure in Iranian politics over the last fifty years. He is also one of the few remaining activists of the 1977-79 revolution and a primary definer of Iran's contemporary political culture and language.[112] In 1998, he urged young Iranians to read the books on Latin America and Africa that shaped his own generation before the revolution, illustrating how this revolutionary canon has endured—not just as oppositional memory, but integrated into the official political rhetoric of the Islamic Republic. His remarks were addressed to a group of young Iranians on the roles of Frantz Fanon and Latin America, as well as Africa, in the formation of the political culture of the revolution and the Islamic Republic, which should not be underestimated.

Indeed, as detailed in this article, the real and imagined translations and circulation of works by Frantz Fanon on the one hand and by Latin American revolutionaries on the other had a significant influence on the ideas of Third World and revolution in Iran between the 1953 coup and the 1979 revolution. The significance of this influence becomes even more relevant when we consider that, in both Frantz Fanon's case and that of Latin America, it spread in particular among Iran's university students and intelligentsia.

In this respect, a study carried out by Abrahamian on the formation of the guerrilla groups in the 1970s —among whom, as we have seen, Latin America's revolutionary thought had a noteworthy impact—, based on information available on 172 Fada'is and 30 Marxist Mujahedins who died during that period, indicates that in the first case 42.5 percent and in the second case 50 percent of those killed were college students, with the rest being made significantly of engineers (11 and 6.6 percent respectively) and teachers (9.9 and 10 percent respectively), but including also housewives, office workers, conscripts, intellectuals, doctors, and workers.[113]

By questioning why those who joined the Marxist guerrilla movement did so, Rahnema described them as "the cream of the cream" of Iranian university students — the educated, the socially and politically aware, and the future builders of their country.[114] It is challenging to assess the accuracy of this judgement, but it clearly helps explain why Latin America has remained a consistent and significant, albeit not mainstream, element of Iran's political culture and visual imagery, not only between 1953 and 1979 but also after the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and up to the present day.[115] This survival in the 21st century is characterised by nostalgia amid the global crisis of revolutionary movements: figures once emblematic of counter-power, such as Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, now appear in dominant discourse, where the political establishment positions itself as heir to reinforce the (new) status quo. Meanwhile, clandestine classics continue to circulate, as seen in the 2016-2017 republication of Amir-Parviz Puyan's works, offering younger generations a revivable legacy in times of crisis—though its meanings oscillate between dissent and official legitimation.

Oppressed by a police state and dictatorship and preoccupied with developing a revolutionary approach relevant to their country, Iranian revolutionaries looked at the experience of other countries, both past and present. In the case of the Iranian guerrillas, beyond the tradition of Leninism and, even more so, the relevance of Maoism, many looked to Latin America.

Preoccupied with whether insurrection was or was not the people's job, Iranian revolutionary theorists found a solution in the Cuban experience. They argued that the vanguard could (and should) initiate it. A South-South connection was established with what, at the time, was a relatively faraway and little-known place.

This article focused on the aspirational influence, via real and imagined translations, of Frantz Fanon and Latin American revolutionary political culture on the development of a specifically Iranian concept of the Third World and on leftist guerrilla groups in Iran between the 1953 coup and the 1979 revolution.

Taking as a reference the four-kind model proposed by Langland for the translational connections of the so-called "global sixties", the South-South connection addressed in this article was aspirational primarily, as part of a larger struggle of the Third World against imperialism, but also literal,[116] as indicated by the case of some members of ROTPI and/or CISNU that at that time travelled to Cuba to get political and military training.[117]

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112 Seyed Mohammad Marandi and Raffaele Mauriello, "The Khamenei Doctrine: Iran's Leader on Diplomacy, Foreign Policy and International Relations", in *Islam in International Affairs: Politics and Paradigms*, eds. Nassef Manabilang Adiong, Raffaele Mauriello and Deina Abdelkader (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 18–38.

113 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 480–1.

114 Rahnema, *Call to Arms*, xx.

115 Raffaele Mauriello, "El muralismo y la *Guerra de las imágenes* en México e Irán. Representación, imaginario y memoria de la revolución", in *Una vieja amistad. Cuatrocientos años de relaciones históricas y culturales entre Irán y el mundo hispánico*, eds. Fernando Camacho Padilla and Fernando Escribano Martín (Madrid: Sílex, 2020), 459–483; Eadem, "The Visual Culture of the Revolutionary Processes of Latin America in the Islamic Revolution of Iran: The Street and the Studio", *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity*, Vol. 12, N. 2 (October 2024), pp. 203-236; and Eadem, "Latin America's Visual Culture and Art in Iran in the Advent of the Islamic Revolution: Lost and Hidden Murals of Iran's 1977–1979 Revolution", in *Mapping South-South Connections during the Decolonization Process and Cold War (1810–1990): The Islamicate and Iberoamerican Worlds*, eds. Raffaele Mauriello and Fernando Camacho Padilla (Leiden: Brill, 2026).

116 Victoria Langland, "Transnational Connections of the Global Sixties as Seen by a Historian of Brazil", in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties: Between Protest and Nation-Building*, eds. Chen Jian, Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young, Joanna Waley-Cohen (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 15–26, 18–21.

117 Relevant in this respect are the memoirs of some members of ROTPI edited and published in recent years as interviews by the historian and former Marxist political activist Hamid Shokat, such as those of Mohsen Rezvani, Iraj Kashkuli, and Kurosh Lashai. They all spent some

Although the Iranian Marxists failed to become a mainstream force and secure power, they left a significant mark on the revolution and on its political culture, bringing new ideas to the social arena and, in the case of Iran's Marxist guerrillas, representing a significant conduit in the integration of Latin American revolutionary culture in the country. This culture would leave an enduring influence on the victorious Islamic movement. This legacy persists as a nostalgic yet ambivalent resource in contemporary Iran, woven into both hidden transcripts of resistance and the language of power. For many Iranian revolutionaries based in Iran, particularly in the 1970s, it made just as much sense to identify with Latin America as with Russia, China, Albania, Algeria, or Vietnam, and, in some cases, arguably more so.

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