



# The Tudeh Party of Iran at 80: A Critical Re-Appraisal and Re-Evaluation



Institute for Iranian Studies  
University of St Andrews

Conference Programme

29 March – 1 April 2021

Please visit <http://mihan.org.uk/TudehAt80/> for Webinar Registration and Youtube live and on-demand content.

*Asterisks (\*) denote presentations that will be delivered in Persian*

29 March 2021 – 18:00 BST

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## Keynote

### The Tudeh Party in the 1940s as a Social Movement

By: **Ervand Abrahamian**

*Distinguished Professor of History; Baruch College; Graduate Center of the City University of New York*

### Panel Discussion:

**Touraj Atabaki**

*Senior Researcher; International Institute of Social History, Emeritus Professor of History, Middle East and Central Asia; University of Leiden*

**Stephanie Cronin**

*Elahé Omidyar Mir Djalali Research Fellow, St Antony's College, Faculty of Oriental Studies; University of Oxford*

**Afshin Matin-Asgari**

*Outstanding Professor, Department of History; California State University Los Angeles*

**Nasser Mohajer**

*Independent Scholar*

### Chair:

**Ali M. Ansari**

*Professor of History and Founding Director of the Institute of Iranian Studies, University of St Andrews*

30 March 2021 - 15:00 BST

## The Women's Organisations of the Tudeh Party: 1941-1953

Chair: Shahrzad Mojab

*Professor of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education, Institute of Women and Gender Studies;  
University of Toronto*

### The Women's Organisation of the Tudeh Party, 1943-1949\*

By: Mahnaz Matin *Independent Scholar*

Abstract:

تشکیلات زنان در تیرماه 1322 بنیان نهاده شد؛ به ابتکار شماری از زنان هوادار حزب توده‌ی ایران که خود در مهر ۱۳۲۰ به وجود آمده بود.

به رغم اینکه مسئله‌ی زن و برابری حقوقی زن و مرد یکی از بندهای برنامه‌ی حزب توده بود، این حزب در آغاز پیدایش‌اش، زنان را به عضویت نمی‌پذیرفت. اما برنامه‌ی حزب که از حقوق زن سخن می‌راند، چنان جذابیتی داشت که شماری از زنان تحصیل‌کرده و فعال جامعه، از پی‌ریزی تشکیلات زنان استقبال کردند و به این کار همت گماشتند.

تشکیلات زنان، پس از فعالیتی سه‌ساله، در پی سرکوب جنبش آذربایجان در آذرماه 1325، به مدت 16 ماه از حرکت بازماند. در فروردین 1327 دوباره آغاز به کار کرد؛ اما در بهمن همان سال، در پی ترور نافرجام شاه، همچون حزب توده‌ی ایران و تمام سازمان‌های وابسته به آن، غیرقانونی شد.

در رساله‌ای که ارائه می‌شود، چرایی و چگونگی پیدایش تشکیلات زنان در بستر تحولات اجتماعی و سیاسی پس از شهریور 1320 و خلع رضاشاه پهلوی از سلطنت ایران، مورد بررسی قرار می‌گیرد. پایه‌گذاران و اعضای اولیه‌ی تشکیلات، شناسانده می‌شوند. مبانی نظری و برنامه‌ی عمل آن تشریح می‌گردد و درک و دریافتش از مسئله‌ی زن و راهی که برای اعتلای موقعیت زن ایرانی در آن دوره‌ی تاریخی پیشنهاد می‌کرد، ارزیابی می‌شود. فعالیت‌های تشکیلات زنان، گستره‌ی تأثیرگذاری اجتماعی آن و اقشاری از زنان که سازماندهی‌شان را مد نظر داشت، مرور خواهد شد. نقاط قوت و نیز کمی‌ها و کاستی‌های تشکیلات زنان را در حد توان، تحلیل خواهیم کرد و به عوامل تعطیل موقت آن و گذار به سوی ایجاد سازمان ملی زنان ایران، نگاهی خواهیم انداخت.

### The Women's Association of the Tudeh Party of Iran, 1949- 1953: The National and Transnational Struggles of a Left Feminist Group

By: Elaheh Habibi *PhD Candidate, CNRS France*

Abstract: The women's movement in Iran has been the subject of a number of recent studies which have mainly focused on the emergence of women's organisations in the early 20th century. However, these studies confine their discussion of the women's movement entirely to its Iranian context and subsequently ignore their transnational dimensions. Focusing on the transnational activities of the Women's Association (WA), a leftist feminist organisation founded in the 1940s, my paper criticises this methodological nationalism in the mainstream historiography of Iran. This paper will discuss the history of this organisation with special attention to the WA's relationship with the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF). The WIDF was the most influential international women's organisation of the post-1945 era yet remains little known among Western feminist historians. The WA actively participated in different congresses and conferences held by WIDF. Specifically, in my paper, I will be looking at the WIDF reports from congresses held in 1948 and 1953; the WA's journals "Women's Awakening", published in 1944, and "Women's World", published in 1951, 1952, 1953; and memories and autobiographies of founding members of the organisation in order to draw attention to the historical importance of this academically neglected women's organisation. I argue that the WA gave a new direction to the Iranian women's movement by actively participating in the WIDF. Considering that the history of the women's movement in Iran cannot be written without addressing the transnational context, my paper sheds new light on the little recognised transnational dimension of women's movement historiography in Iran.

# The Tudeh Party and the Revival of the Social-Political Life of Women in 1320s (1941-1951) \*

By: Saideh Torab *Islamic Revolution Research Institute*

**Abstract:** The secular policies of Reza Shah and limiting the clergies in Iran was an opportunity for Iranian women to make a significant change in their social and political lives. The government, as well, made some efforts to play a role in the new social-political developments concerning women, including providing equal educational opportunities and amending the family law. However, following Mohammad Reza Shah's coming into power at the time when Iran was being occupied by the allied forces of World War II, the freer political space opened as a result, and the increase in the activities of new political parties and groups, provided conservatives and religious groups with the chance to coordinate attacks on the issues concerning women's rights. It was in this atmosphere that the Tudeh Party was formed and later became the most important and influential political force in Iran during the years between 1320-1332 (1941-1953). The Tudeh Party made many efforts to extend its influence as a political party to all social classes in Iran. It seemed that in leftist views women are considered as an important and influential force. For this reason, besides including the aim of realizing women's political and social rights among the general goals of the Party and establishing women-specific organizations, the Tudeh Party emphasized the need for paying attention to the unity and cohesion in the Iranian women's fight against reactionism. The Organization of Iranian Women led by Maryam Firouz was one of those institutions founded with the aim of organizing and leading women's activism. This organization was in a way the representative of the women's branch of the Party. In this essay, we attempt to show how and to what extent women were active and had influence at different levels in the Tudeh Party. Our research methodology is descriptive-analytic, and the data is collected from primary resources, documents and the press. The main question that we will attempt to answer in the paper is this: despite the progressive resolutions made by the central committee of the Tudeh Party regarding women's rights, how successful was the Party in realizing and advancing these resolutions? To what extent was the Tudeh Party influential in advancing the Iranian women's movement for equal rights?

**30 March 2021 - 18:00 BST**

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## **The Transnational Dimensions of the Tudeh Party**

**Chair: Bianca Devos**

*Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Marburg*

### **A Witness Account of Tudeh Activism in Western Europe**

By: Farhad Fardjad *Former Senior Tudeh Party Cadre in Western Europe*

### **Czech Mates: The Relationship between Iranian and Czechoslovak Communists**

By: Emily Jane O'Dell *Associate Professor; Sichuan University-Pittsburgh Institute*

**Abstract:** Relationships between Czech and Iranian Communists have received little attention in scholarship, yet points of contact between Czech and Iranian Communists during the Cold War illuminate significant events in Iran related to Soviet interference, the struggle for autonomy in Kurdistan, and the Iranian Revolution. Iranian mullahs, U.S. intelligence officers, and Kurdish leaders with Tudeh Party ties referenced the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in their discourse on Iranian political events during the Cold War. The Tudeh Party of Iran used Prague as a base from which they planned their strategies in Iran to overthrow the Shah. In Iran, the Organization of Tehran University Students was closely affiliated with the International Union of Students in Prague, which granted a scholarship to Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) from 1973 until his death in 1989. Points of contact between Iranian and Czech leftists during the Cold War, as well as the related struggles of the Tudeh Party and Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, are best understood through the life and experiences of Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, who traveled back and forth between Czechoslovakia and Iran as a young militant and later as the Secretary General of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran.

### **The Tudeh Party of Iran and the Chinese Communist Party: Propaganda and Party Politics**

By: William Figueroa *Graduate Student, Department of History, University of Pennsylvania*

**Abstract:** This paper explores the relationship between the Tudeh Party of Iran and the Chinese Communist Party between 1949 and 1961. During this time, Tudeh leaders traveled to China in solidarity with the Chinese revolution, and members of the Tudeh youth organization participated in international conferences that emphasized a participatory Pan-Asian project of political reform, economic development, and decolonization. Their positive portrayal of the Chinese revolution, propagated in Tudeh newspapers and public demonstrations against the Korean War, stood in stark contrast to the "Red Scare" rhetoric and pro-Chiang Kai-shek position adopted by the Iranian state.

This paper will analyze how the Tudeh and the CCP used one another to bolster their reputation with a domestic audience through propaganda and self-fashioning. It will also explore the underlying political and social factors that caused the rise and fall of Tudeh-CCP relations. Most studies of the Tudeh focus on their relationship with the Iranian state or their exile in the West. A study of Tudeh-CCP relations allows for the exploration of questions of identity, self, and the other with regards to an Eastern rather than a Western reference point. The Tudeh Party's fascination with China indicative of a desire for a revolutionary model and a growing voice critical of politics-as-usual, especially in the aftermath of the 1953 coup and domestic repression. At the same time, the relationship was equally at the mercy of shifts in Sino-Soviet politics. Based primarily on an analysis of Iranian and Chinese periodicals and newspapers.

# **Between Accra, Leipzig, and Saigon: The Exiled Tudeh Party of Iran and Global Decolonisation, 1957-1967**

By: Leonard Michael *PhD Candidate, School of History; University of St Andrews*

Abstract: The struggle against colonialism had been an important part of the political identity of the Tudeh Party of Iran since its foundation in September 1941. This paper will focus on the development of the party's perspective on anti-colonial struggle during the first wave of global decolonisation after the Second World War (1957-1967). This decade, which saw the independence of 52 formerly colonised territories, did not only bring about significant transformations on a global level, it also was a time of re-orientation and re-organisation for the Tudeh, which had been forced into exile following the coup d'état of August 1953. By drawing on its various publications and selected archival material, this paper will explore how the exiled party, whose leadership had been based in the East German city of Leipzig since 1957, situated Iran within the global decolonisation movement, and how its visions for the country's future informed its engagement with national liberation movements around the globe.

## The Impact of the Tudeh Party in the Literary Sphere

Chair: Saeed Talajooy

Lecturer, School of Modern Languages; University of St Andrews

### The Image of the Tudeh Party and its members in the novels of Simin Daneshvar\*

By: Asgar Asgari Hasanaklou Academic Member; Kharazmi University, Tehran

Abstract:

سیمین دانشور در سه رمان سوشون، جزیره سرگردانی و ساربان سرگردان در پی بازنمایی تصویر ساخته‌های آشکار و پنهان قدرت در جامعه ایرانی است. یکی از این ساخته‌های قدرت در جامعه ایرانی، حزب توده بوده است. دانشور هنگامی رمانهای سه‌گانه فوق را نوشته بود که حزب توده هم در زمان پهلوی و هم در سالهای پس از انقلاب، حزبی غیرقانونی بود ولی پیروان و هواداران بسیار داشت و توانست با اتحاد با نیروهای سیاسی دیگر نقش بی بدیلی در عرصه سیاست در جامعه ایرانی به عهده بگیرد. در این مقاله، هم تصویر حزب توده و شخصیت‌های هوادار این حزب بررسی می‌شود و هم تأثیر آنها بر جامعه ایرانی و تغییر حکومتها. دانشور با توجه به اینکه در کنار آل احمد، یکی از مهمترین مراکز نقل و روشنفکری ایران است، شناخت دقیقی از این حزب دارد و دیدگاه‌های خود و گروه همفکرانش را در آثارش بازتاب می‌دهد. نگاه دانشور به حزب توده با تلقی آل احمد از این حزب شباهتهایی دارد که در این مقاله به این موضوع نیز پرداخته خواهد شد. طیف‌های مختلف حزب توده و گرایش‌های گوناگون آن از هواداران سرسخت تا توده‌ای‌های مذهبی نیز در رمانهای دانشور حضور دارند که در این مقاله به این طیف‌های گوناگون خواهیم پرداخت. کلمات کلیدی: حزب توده، رمان فارسی، سیمین دانشور، جامعه‌شناسی رمان.

### An analysis of the political leanings of Mehdi Akhavan Sales\*

By: Kulthum Miriasl PhD student in Persian Language and Literature, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran

Abstract:

از مهمترین جریان‌های سیاسی در تاریخ معاصر ایران که تأثیری انکارناپذیر بر عرصه‌ی هنر و ادبیات و گسترش تفکرات چپ و مارکسیستی در آثار انتقادی و ادبی در طول چند دهه داشت، حزب توده بود. اخوان‌ثالث از جمله شاعران بزرگ معاصر است که با فعالیت در حزب و نشریات وابسته به آن تحت تأثیر اندیشه‌های حزب بوده است. در این پژوهش در پی پاسخ به این پرسش هستیم که آیا آرای انتقادی اخوان در عرصه‌ی ادبیات و نقد ادبی متأثر از ایدئولوژی‌های حزب توده بوده و آیا این تأثیرپذیری منجر به دفاع وی از شیوه و سبک نیمایوشیچ و تقابل با دیگر جریان‌های شعری شده است؟ گره‌خوردگی و پیوند ادبیات و سیاست و تأثیر اندیشه‌های چپ و مارکسیستی در آرای اخوان‌ثالث در تعریف وی از هنر و شعر، رسالت ادبیات و هنرمند و نقد شعر بازتاب یافته است. اخوان در آرای خود اصالت را به محتوای اثر ادبی می‌دهد و ادبیات را امری ملنزم و برخاسته از اجتماع و شرایط اقتصادی می‌داند و هنرمند را زبان توده‌ی مردم. توجه وی به ادبیات دغدغه‌مند تقابل و طرد دیگر جریان‌های شعری کلاسیک مدیحه‌سرا، رمانتیک فردگرا، جریان موج نو و پیروان هنر برای هنر و ادبیات زیبای فارغ از محتوای اجتماعی سبک هندی را موجب شد تا جایی که وی تنها شعر اصیل را شعر اجتماعی با رویه‌ای سیاسی معرفی کرد و نیمایوشیچ را ناجی شعر در بن‌بست مانده‌ی فارسی.

### The Tudeh Party's Ideology in the Works of Ahmad Mahmoud\*

By: Arezou Shahbazi PhD Candidate in Persian Language and Literature; Alzahra University, Tehran

Abstract:

این مقاله به بررسی چگونگی بازتاب ایدئولوژی حزب توده در آثار یکی از شناخته‌شده‌ترین نویسندگان معاصر ایران به نام احمد محمود (۱۳۱۰-۱۳۸۱ ش.) می‌پردازد. حزب توده از آغاز شکل‌گیری تا امروز تاریخ پرفراز و نشیبی را از سر گذرانده است. این حزب که اولین اعضای آن را افراد سیاسی و نظامی تشکیل می‌دادند با تبلیغ افکار و عقاید خود افرادی از طبقات گوناگون جامعه را به خود جذب کرد. از جمله این گروه‌ها شاعران و نویسندگانی بودند که آزادی قلم و بیانی که حزب در دستور کار خود داشت برای آنها آرمانی و جذاب می‌نمود؛ زیرا پس از خفقان و سانسور دوره رضاشاهی این گروه به چنین آزادی‌هایی نیاز داشت. اغلب داستان‌های احمد محمود به سبک رئالیسم است. وی در برخی از رمان‌هایش که همسایه‌ها مهمترین آنهاست، بخشی از تاریخ ایران را در سال‌های ملی‌شدن صنعت نفت روایت می‌کند. این پژوهش به شیوه تحلیل محتوا در پی پاسخگویی به چگونگی بازتاب ایدئولوژی حزبی در شخصیت‌پردازی و گفت‌وگوهای میان شخصیت‌های داستانی این نویسنده است. براساس نتایج پژوهش به نظر می‌رسد محمود با وجود دوری‌جستن از ایدئولوژی حزب توده و انتقاداتی که به ساختار آن داشته است، نتوانسته از تأثیرات آن برکنار بماند.

# Critique of the Mass Society in Iranian Modern Fiction: Tabari's Jackal King

By: Reza Najafzadeh *Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations; Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran*

**Abstract:** In leftist social thought, the critique of fascism and mass society has been one of the main categories. From the point of view of the left epistemology, Ehsan Tabari has written the most serious and numerous works belonging to this spectrum. Tabari has put literary and historical research at the service of the critique of colonialism and the critique of mass society, connecting philosophy and literature to the ideology of struggle. The story of Jackal King (Shoghal Shah) is one of the most radical texts that identify reactionary authoritarianism and justifies and recommends the revolutionary struggle. The text is in fact a left-wing example of Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and the date Tabari cites to finish writing, is a few days before *Animal Farm* was published. The fiction is written for children, and, in contrast to the detailed story of Jones's tyranny, tells the story of the rule of repression, uprising, and overthrow briefly. Jackal King symbolically tells the story of a foreign colonizer's domination of a rich country. The narration can be interpreted in the form of the dialectic of power and resistance. Tabari's narration indicates a dominant attitude in the protest social thought of the 1940s to 1970s. This revolutionary thinking emphasizes the role of external factors and focuses on the character of the revolutionary intellectual as a "vanguard" of subversive struggles. Inevitably the "revolutionary vanguard" had the primary responsibility of informing the society, leading the movement, and forcibly transferring it to the ideal state. But the question is how much this revolutionary consciousness could influence the critique of mass society in the service of establishing endogenous and emancipatory consciousnesses. This study intends to study the revolutionary narrative of Tabari's fiction based on creative hermeneutics and historical sociology.



**31 March 2021 - 18:00 BST**

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## **The Tudeh Party's Early Years: 1940-1949**

**Chair: Oliver Bast**

*Professor of Iranian Studies, Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris*

### **The Tudeh Party in British Policy, 1941-1949**

By: Rowena Abdul Razak, *University of Oxford*

**Abstract:** This paper examines the Tudeh Party within British policy from the party's foundation at the start of the Allied occupation of Iran until it was made illegal. It looks at how policy was shaped to both accommodate and counter the party's influence not only in Iran but in Britain's wider empire. It charts how British diplomats in Iran and policymakers in London viewed the Tudeh and the ways in which the ever-changing geopolitics of the region shaped how they reacted to the party's ideological development: from anti-fascist front to threat, especially with regards to Britain's oil interests in the Persian Gulf. This research views the party outside of the commonly accepted paradigm as a Soviet tool and while I do not deny the link between the Tudeh and Moscow, I present a more nuanced and thoughtful appraisal of its early years by viewing it through the lens of the British. Building on the works of Ervand Abrahamian and Fakhreddin Azimi, this paper goes into more detail about the individuality of policymaking and offers new ways to see the party on its own terms, partly through its ability to instigate workers' activism and inspire other communist movements in the empire. The paper is divided into two distinct time periods: during the war and after, examining the effects of the war and the early Cold War on British policymaking, firstly under the wartime coalition government of Winston Churchill and secondly under the Labour government of Clement Attlee. It situates the party within the crisis of empire and reveals how policy towards the party reflected the debates over Britain's place in the post-war world and in post-occupation Iran, resulting in clashes with the party over labour issues and stewardship for political change in Iran.

### **The Tudeh (Masses) Party and the Failed Massification of the Labour Militancy in the 1940s**

By: Abbas Shahrabi *MA Student; University of Tehran*

**Abstract:** Inspired by the concept of 'the political composition of working classes' and Sergio Bologna's work on the political composition of working classes and theory of party in post-WWI Germany, I intend to present a labour history of Tudeh Party in 1940s, as against presentations which insists on the role of foreign forces or intellectual or aristocratic elite. Through an analysis of political composition of the urban labour in 1920s-1940s and political practices and discourse of Tudeh Party, I am going to discuss how the party was built in response to the changes in the political composition of the working classes in that period, how it was bounded within the technical and political limits of that composition, and what was the party's role in transformations of the urban labour force in 1940s. By political composition of working classes, I mean a historically particular assemblage of working classes' workplace organization, cultural identity, norms of consumption, and terms of class struggle. Through a concise examination of Iranian economic development in first half of 20th century, I claim that the dominant political composition of the urban labour, following Italian Workerists' periodisation of capitalist development in the West, could be designated as 'professional worker,' which is characterised by its dominance on labour processes due to the unremarkable share of fixed capital in industrial investments and trade-unionism as the most remarkable form of labour militancy. I contend that although activities of Tudeh Party was conditioned by the political composition of the labour, it usually acted counter-productively in cases when working

classes were self-organising toward a new composition. Instead attempting at organising the labour toward more militant compositions, Tudeh activists embedded the professional composition of the labour in state apparatuses.

## **Convergence and Divergence of the Social Forces with the Tudeh Party in the South Oilfield Regions in the 1320s (1941-1951)\***

By: Reza Sehatmanesh *Assistant Professor of History, University of Jiroft*

**Abstract:** The statement of the question; the Tudeh Party is the most organized political party in the contemporary history of Iran. Founded in 1320 (1941), the Party had branches and offices in most regions in Iran. However, the Party's activities in the south oilfield regions were of paramount importance, since the largest working class population in Iran was concentrated in these regions. Moreover, the southern regions had a tribal and nomadic social structure, and the influential Bakhtiari and Arab tribes were active in the political and social arena in the region. Therefore, the main research question is whether these social forces in the south oilfield regions were following or confronting the Tudeh Party. **Methodology;** the present study is a historical study. The main data are collected from primary resources, documents and the press and processed by the historical explanation methodology. **Findings;** due to the prevalence of the working class structure in the south oilfield regions, the Tudeh Party enjoyed widespread sympathy in the regions. Thanks to this fact, during the 1320s, the Party succeeded in challenging the government and the heads of the Oil Company and making significant progress in improving the workers' condition. The government and the heads of the Oil Company used the Bakhtiaris and Arabs to confront the Party by undermining its social status in the region. Moreover, recruiting workers from other regions of Iran and even hiring non-Iranian workers deepened the extensive political, social, and cultural contrasts and these factors were significant in neutralizing the Party's plans. However, it seems that the major role involved in making the divergence from the Tudeh Party was played by the external interventions, especially the interventions of the heads of the Oil Company and the United Kingdom's agents who had extensive influence among the tribes in the South.

**1 April 2021 - 15:00 BST**

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## **Disputed Heroes: The Tudeh Party and Its Officers' Organisation**

**Chair: Stephanie Cronin**

*Elahé Omidyar Mir Djalali Research Fellow, St Antony's College, Faculty of Oriental Studies;  
University of Oxford*

### **Major Jafar Vakili and the Tudeh Party**

By: Pirooz Vakili *Independent Scholar*

**Abstract:** This paper presents, as a historical document and for the first time in English translation, six letters that were written and smuggled out of prison undetected, by Major Jafar Vakili, a secretary of the Officers' Organization of the Tudeh party, during the last days of his life. Major Vakili was executed with four other officers on November 8, 1954. When Major Vakili's wife, Touran Mirhady, published the letters for the first time in 1979, the Tudeh Party, in its official newspaper, "Nameh Mardom," cast doubt on the authenticity of the letters and accused Touran Mirhady of having fabricated them. In this paper, in addition to the original letters of Major Vakili, an account of the historiography of the Tudeh party as it relates to him, his letters, and to a lesser degree, to his wife, Touran Mirhady is included. To the extent possible, only background information and context are provided, and the author has deliberately attempted to let the documents speak for themselves.

### **The Khosrow Ruzbeh Dossier: New Findings**

By: Nasser Mohajer *Independent Scholar*

**Abstract:** The focus of this talk is Khosrow Ruzbeh, a military officer, instructor at the Military Academy of Tehran from 1937 to 1945 and author of several books and a public intellectual. He was also one of the leaders of the Military Organisation of the Tudeh Party of Iran. His arrest in 1949, much-debated trial and escape from prison placed him at the centre of attention of Iranian public opinion. Ruzbeh was executed in 1957 after having been arrested the previous year.

This talk will provide new findings on several controversial episodes in Ruzbeh's political life, such as the claim, first made by the royal court and then repeated in many studies, that Ruzbeh was the mastermind of the assassination of the journalist Mohammad Massoud. It will therefore critically assess the validity of adopting intelligence and interrogation reports as well as monographs directly produced by security agencies as reputable and reliable historical sources.

### **From Khosrow Ruzbeh to Hafizullah Amin: The Tudeh Party of Iran and the Partito Comunista Italiano, 1976-1979**

By: Siavush Randjbar-Daemi *Lecturer, School of History, University of St Andrews*

**Abstract:** This talk will provide a discussion of salient points in the relationship between the Tudeh Party of Iran and the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI). Based on archival material from the PCI archive held at the Istituto Gramsci in Rome and relevant material from both the Tudeh Party and PCI press, the talk will evaluate the evolution of the relationship between the Tudeh Party and the West's largest and most prominent communist party during the period which spans the inauguration of the statue in honour of Khosrow Ruzbeh in 1976, which arguably marked the high point in the ties between the two, and the sharp contrasts which emerged by the end of 1979, when a senior PCI cadre held a confidential meeting with the Tudeh Party First Secretary Nureddin Kianuri in Tehran in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

**1 April 2021 - 18:00 BST**

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## **The Tudeh Party Before and After the 1979 Revolution**

**Chair: Afshin Matin Asgari**

*Professor, Department of History; California State University Los Angeles*

### **Disowning the Past: A Micro-history on the Communiqué of the People's Fadaï Guerillas Regarding the Tudeh Party**

**By: Peyman Vahabzadeh** *Professor, Department of Sociology; University of Victoria, Canada*

**Abstract:** The People's Fadaï Guerrillas or PFG emerged in 1971 and garnered a reputation as the most admired leftist group, and rose to immense popularity in the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution. In 1975, a PFG team assassinated a former, high-ranking Tudeh Party member and SAVAK agent Abbas Shahriyari, followed by an extensive communiqué. This paper offers a close double-reading—as a political statement and as a literary text—of PFG's text about this operation. This 1975 communiqué indeed is multifaceted in terms of its aims: it celebrates an assault against Iranian security; it dismisses the Tudeh Party as passive and thus undeserving to be called "leftist"; and it announces the re-foundation of the Iranian communist movement. Equally, the communiqué is built on an impressive use of literary devices to reaffirm its political points. By all measures, this communiqué and the micro-history surrounding it, is a generation's reassertion of its decision to embark on armed struggle and to disown the shameful past of its "parent" generation.

### **The Tudeh Party's Position on the Leading Role of the Combatant Clerics in the Iranian Revolution**

**By: Kamran Geshnizjani** *Researcher; Tarbiat Modares University*

**Abstract:** The main aim of this talk is to analyze how the Tudeh Party formulated and framed the central role of Ayatollah Khomeini, and more generally the Combatant Clerics, during the course of the Iranian Revolution (January 1978 to February 1979). Contesting the dominant view in the existing literature, which is mostly based on what happened in aftermath of the Revolution and emphasizes the supporting position of the Tudeh Party on the leading role of Ayatollah Khomeini, I will focus on and highlight the changes in the Party's stances concerning this issue during the revolutionary period – from ignoring to reluctantly accepting to almost fully supporting.

This analysis is based on a qualitative content analysis of the issues 184 to 224 of Mardom (organ of Central Committee of the Tudeh Party), and issues 2 to 73 of Navid (affiliated with the Tudeh Party). According to the findings, the formulations of the Tudeh Party from the clerics-led revolutionary movement (January 1978 to February 1979) went through three different stages. First, from January to August 1978, they largely ignored the crucial role of the clerics in the movement and portrayed the protests as a popular movement against the Shah's regime with the same demands as those of the Party. At the second stage, from August to October 1978, they reluctantly moved toward accepting the leading role of the Ayatollah Khomeini, while at the same time downplaying this leading role and framing it as something transitory. And finally, at the third stage (from October 1978 to February 1979), despite some independent positions and dim protests against the "monopolization" of the movement by the clerics, they almost fully support the leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

# The USSR and the Tudeh Party after the Islamic Revolution of 1979: Ideological Cohesion and Operative Controversies

By: Denis Volkov *Associate Professor and Leading Research Fellow; HSE University, Moscow*  
*Moscow State Linguistic University*

**Abstract:** Few would deny the protracted close ties of the Iranian left with the USSR, the foundations of which were laid as early as the participation of Russia's social democrats and Bolsheviks in the Mashruteh. The 1917 developments in Russia and the early Bolshevik policies toward Iran raised new hopes in the Iranian left, especially the Iranian communists. However (with the exception of a few years immediately after 1917) from the second half of 1920 to the demise of Soviet ideology in the late 1980s, the USSR's inner strategic and tactical attitudes toward Iran's communist movement significantly diverged from what was perceived by the Iranian communists themselves. During this entire period, the USSR was uninterested in full-scale support of the Iranian communists and used them merely as one of its foreign policy tools, mostly against the influence of Western powers, following the old Great Game practices and mentality. The late USSR's strategic considerations and mode of action toward the Tudeh party after 1979 are of particular historiographical interest. The paper argues that the USSR's final decision – economically and politically justified – on the formation of its foreign policy toward the Islamic Republic of Iran, taken in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic Revolution, was to downgrade support of the Tudeh even further, and to secure the preservation of the new regime as long as it continued its anti-Western rhetoric, did not interfere with the affairs of the USSR's South and kept the Americans far away from at least the Soviet-Iranian border. The paper draws on most recent secondary sources, but primarily on archival documents, as well as memoirs and private notes of the USSR's politicians, scholars and intelligence officers of the time.