

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *A Guerrilla Odyssey: Modernization, Secularism, Democracy, and the Fadaï Period of National Liberation in Iran, 1971—1979* by Peyman Vahabzadeh

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engage with Tehran when it has shown signs of moderation, especially under Rafsanjani in the early 1990s and after the election of Khatami in 1997. Chapter 8 examines the rise of the “new political class” of hardliners, which was bolstered by the victory of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2005 elections. Arjomand provides an interesting analysis of the relationship between populism, revolutionary revivalism, and the military-security complex. The 2009 presidential elections and the Green Movement are also briefly discussed here. Chapter 9 turns to the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khamenei, and shows how the growth of his extraconstitutional authority, especially since the 2009 elections, has injected instability into the Islamic Republic. In Chapter 10, “The Hardliners, Foreign Policy, and Nuclear Development,” Arjomand returns to Tehran’s foreign policy and provides a broad history of the factional politics behind Iran’s nuclear policy. This chapter should be particularly interesting for students of international relations because it discusses Tehran’s nuclear program in close connection with the country’s domestic politics and state power structure.

With an engaging overview of the ideological transformations and political changes since 1989, *After Khomeini* offers an accessible and yet sophisticated analysis of Iranian politics in its postrevolutionary reconstruction phase. The book constitutes a major contribution to the study of Shi’i Islam and constitutional politics and is a well-informed addition to literature on the comparative sociology of revolutions. I recommend Arjomand’s volume to all scholars and especially to students of the Middle East.

PEYMAN VAHABZADEH, *A Guerrilla Odyssey: Modernization, Secularism, Democracy, and the Fada'i Period of National Liberation in Iran, 1971–1979* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2010). Pp. 289. \$29.95 cloth.

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The role of the revolutionary Marxist left in the 1979 Iranian revolution has been a subject of controversy for the past thirty-one years. Some have supported an urban myth that the left played a pivotal role in the revolution that brought the Islamists to power, while others have argued that although the left played a role in the antishah struggle, it was far from a pivotal one. Numerous scholarly studies have attempted to address this controversy, and the book under review is the latest addition to the literature. By focusing on the largest revolutionary Marxist guerrilla organization, the author attempts not only to document the history of the Organization of Iranian People’s Fada’i Guerrillas (henceforth Fada’iyan) prior to the revolution but also to examine the contributions and shortcomings of its key theorists and, perhaps most important of all, the relevance of their ideas in a post-Marxist-revolutionary age.

The book consists of eight chapters, but its overall structure can be viewed as constituting three sections. The first two chapters, comprising a general historical background of Iran with a focus on leftist movements from the 1953 coup up to the late 1960s and a history of the Fada’iyan in the 1970s, constitute the first section. Here the author has utilized a large body of the available primary and secondary sources as well as a collection of interviews with personalities who worked closely with the Fada’iyan or who were members of the group in the 1970s. The interviews the author managed to conduct, undoubtedly through much time and effort, are the most important addition to the source base of previous works on the subject. The importance of the interviews is mainly due to the reluctance of many former and current militant activists to go on record about their activities or record them on their own. The

chapter on the history of the Fadaiyan is a meticulous documentation of events, personalities, and challenges that the organization faced, along with its internal dynamics. This chapter, however, misses an opportunity to set the issue of the internal purges of the Fadaiyan in the 1970s straight. The author could have also discussed the theoretical context in which the line between security concerns and political differences was blurred, leading to the assassination of a number of cadres. This tendency was a Stalinist practice established well before many Fadaiyan cadres were even born. The assassination of Abdollah Panjehshahi in 1976, about which the Fadaiyan had kept silent for years, is a good case in point. Despite the fact that explanations of this assassination remain inadequate and contradictory, the author seems to accept those given by his interviewees at face value.

Chapters 3 through 7 can be viewed as constituting the second section of the book because they represent the author's impression of key Fadaiyan theorists as well as his analysis of theoretical differences between the Fadaiyan and other militant organizations. The author attempts to deconstruct the main elements of the theories put forth by the Fadaiyan theorists in order to show the differences between them as well as their relevance for a future generation. The book relies here on major available primary sources and does a good job at "deconstruction." Although the contributions of these theorists have been studied before, the author's approach in trying to find contemporary relevance is both innovative and intriguing.

The last two chapters, constituting what can be viewed as the final section, are basically the author's reflections on the project and his endeavor to bring all of the important conclusions and observations into a holistic overview.

The book is a most welcome addition to the study of the Marxist left in 20th-century Iran. The left undoubtedly played an important role in Iran's recent history, and the Fadaiyan was a generation's response to the challenges of liberation movements, secularism, and democracy. The author does a fine job in both recording and putting in perspective the Fadaiyan, the most important and largest of the guerrilla organizations in Iran. The book would appeal to those interested in Iran's 20th-century history and the history of communist movements in Iran. It would also be suitable for graduate courses on the intellectual history of the 20th-century Middle East. Since the Iranian Revolution, much attention has been paid to religious thinkers and their activities. This book brings leftist intellectual revolutionary thinkers to the forefront and as such would fit well in any course on modern Iran.

ALEXANDER MURINSON, *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan: State Identity and Security in the Middle East and Caucasus* (New York: Routledge, 2010). Pp. 233. \$130.00 cloth, \$130.00 e-book.

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Turkey's quasi alliance with Israel, formed in the 1990s and sustained throughout the first decade of the 21st century, came to an abrupt end on 31 May 2010, when a group of Turkish Islamists and a number of European sympathizers tried to breach Israel's blockade on the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. As a consequence of skirmishes between the Israeli army and sympathizers of Hamas on the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara, nine Turks were killed by Israeli soldiers. This incident is bound to poison Turkish–Israeli relations for years to come.

In *Turkey's Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan*, Alexander Murinson presents an in-depth analysis of the Turkish–Israeli–Azerbaijani entente and particularly warns of the looming crisis