

The Influence of Maoism in Iran

Post-WWII: the world was a bipolar system → the U.S. vs. the USSR.

The Middle East: a land of resources and geopolitical significance.

1953 Iranian coup overthrew the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, the U.S. and UK put the shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, back to power.

- **The Tudeh Party of Iran** – a pro-Soviet communist political party in Iran – did not do much for the people → Some **Iranian students abroad** in Europe and America were disappointed.

China: 1961-1989 Sino-Soviet Split & anti-Imperialist rhetoric & a rapid expansion in military capacities.

- Many poems on *Remin Ribao*, a mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, shared the anti-U.S., anti-imperialist rhetoric.
- Mao's anti-imperialism speeches circulated around the world and gained popularity.

In the early 1960s, Iranian student organizations abroad formed the **Confederation of Iranian Students, National Union**, one of the major driving forces of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, according to Professor Afshin Matin-Asgari.

- Chinese Maoism appealed to many young activists in the Confederation of Iranian Students.

Later in 1963, Iranian students decided to **visit China**.

- A small group of Iranian students met with the Chinese Communist Party, and the **CCP agreed to provide financial support** for them.

After they returned to Iran, these young revolutionaries (who were also Tudeh youth wing members) formed a Maoist group – **the Revolutionary Organization of the Tudeh Party (ROTPI)** – and split from the Tudeh Party.



In the late 1960s, the ROTPI-led Maoist movement gained increasing influence and popularity.

In the 1970s, **China established closer relations with the U.S. and the shah.**

→ conflicts and confusion among Iranian Maoists.

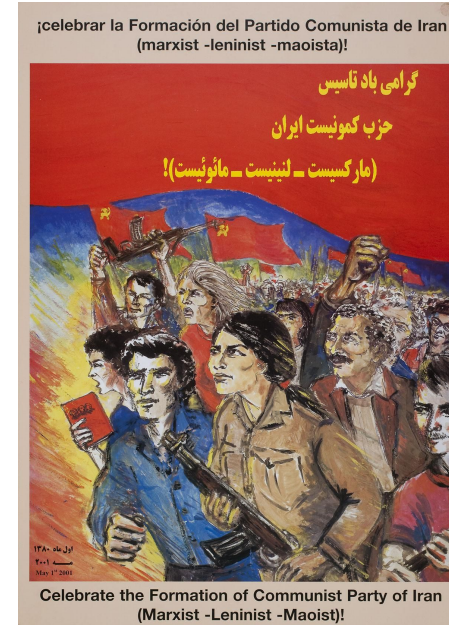
→ the influence of Maoist movement diminished, the ROTPI quickly folded.

Conclusion

1. China was primarily interested in its internal political campaigns and the propaganda war against the USSR in the 1960s, aside from providing some Marxist training and a moderate amount of \$ to some of the Iranian Maoist revolutionaries, the CCP did not help Maoist followers win the Islamic Revolution.

2. China's changes in political stance triggered serious conflict and confusion among the Maoists around the world.

3. Anti-Chinese sentiment emerged among the winning Islamists who did not believe in Maoism after the 1979 Iranian Revolution.



In 2001, the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist - Leninist - Maoist) was established.