

The Influence of the Tudeh Party on Contemporary Iranian Literature

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Abstract

One of the influential tools in shaping thoughts is the utilization of literary content. Following this premise, the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party established specific principles and foundations to shape and disseminate literary content, which they communicated to their followers. Similarly, the leaders of the Tudeh Party in Iran endeavored to extend the approved characteristics of the Communist Party within contemporary Iranian literature by adhering to these guidelines. Leveraging the newspapers and publications at their disposal, they successfully aligned many poets and writers with their cause. The editors of these publications translated the theories of Marxist theorists, as well as the stories and poems of writers from the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries, to propagate these perspectives among Iranian writers. Priority in selecting Iranian literary works was given to those who were in some way supporters of the Tudeh Party or whose content aligned with the objectives of Marxist literature. The leaders of the Tudeh Party utilized various methods, including publishing articles on literary theory, introducing and promoting party-approved books, presenting Soviet writers as exemplary models, and highlighting Iranian authors whose ideas were endorsed by the party.

Keywords: Tudeh party and *Contemporary Iranian Literature*, *Marxist teachings and literary publications*, *Tudeh party and poets and writers*, *The influence of left views on contemporary literature*.

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The Tudeh Party was formed on the 7th of Mehr 1320 SH (September 29, 1941), thirteen days after the abdication of Reza Shah and the release of twenty-seven of the "Fifty-Three" Marxist members imprisoned in 1937. The party had four initial and primary objectives: securing the release of the remainder of the "Fifty-Three" members, obtaining official recognition of the Tudeh Party as a legal organization, launching a newspaper, and formulating a program that, unlike previous non-religious programs, would attract democrats, socialists, veteran communists, young Marxists, and even non-Marxist radicals without provoking opposition from religious scholars (Abrahamian, 2018, p. 347). The publication of the newspaper "Siyasat" marked the initiation of one of the party's primary objectives, gradually leading to the proliferation of newspapers affiliated with the party. At its peak, the party's main organ, "Nameh-ye Rahbar," had a circulation of over 100,000, three times that of the semi-official newspaper "Etela'at" (Abrahamian, 2011, p. 209).

The content of these newspapers promoted specific themes, and members of the Tudeh Party, along with the editors, demonstrated their spiritual connection not only through the translation of Marxist theorists' writings but also through the translation of stories and poems by Soviet or Eastern European writers. Literature served as a tool for serving the party's ideals and doctrines, with the substance and aspects of literary works being of utmost importance.

The present research examines how The Tudeh Party's cultural perspectives influenced contemporary Iranian literature by analyzing journals affiliated with the party published between 1327 and 1330 SH (1948–1951 AD). The journals studied include "Siyasat," "Nameh-ye Rahbar," "Mardom," "Nameh-ye Mardom," "Mardom Baray-e Roshanfekran," "Mardom-e Mahane," "Mardom-e Adineh," "Razm," "Razm-e Adineh," "Azhir," "Payam-e No," "Sogand," and "Soroush-e Fars", which were subjected to a descriptive analysis.

2. Literature Review

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One of the most crucial tools for influencing ideologies is the utilization of literary products and content. Based on this, Marxist intellectuals and

leaders of the Soviet Communist Party established specific principles and foundations for shaping and producing literary content, leading to what is now known as socialist literature or socialist realism. In Marxist criticism, the characteristics of this method of producing literary texts are examined. The leaders of the Tudeh Party in Iran also sought to extend the approved characteristics of the Communist Party within contemporary Iranian literature by following the guidelines of the Soviet Communist Party. Leveraging powerful propaganda tools such as newspapers and publications, they succeeded in aligning many poets and writers with their cause. Tudeh Party leaders employed various methods, including publishing literary perspectives of the party in the form of articles, critiques, and introductions to party-approved books, as well as promoting Soviet writers as superior models and highlighting Iranian authors endorsed by the party

3. Results

Literature has always been a tool for political parties to promote their ideologies and teachings, and the Tudeh Party in Iran was no exception. The editors of party-affiliated publications, due to their ideological alignment with Soviet principles, prioritized the publication of works by prominent authors from the Soviet Union. Subsequently, priority was given to works by authors who were sympathetic to the party's ideology or whose content was somehow in line with party teachings. These publications constantly expressed their expectations from literature and of writers and poets and thereby invited others to adhere to their demands. The expression of the demands and expectation took shape through various means such as publishing articles, direct expressions of expectations, critiquing books and authors not aligned with the Party's teachings, and, at the same time, highlighting state-approved ideas in the lives and works of Iranian and foreign writers.

Some authors received more attention from Party leaders than others; however, only works that either aligned with the party's teachings or were neutral in content were published, with the latter being published solely for the purpose of encouraging authors to produce works aligned with the Party teachings. Writers and poets of interest were also divided into several categories: those who were supporters of the Party and produced and published works in line with the Party's ideology, such as Abutorab Jali, Mohammad Ali Afrashteh, and Fereidoon Tavallali; writers and poets who were intellectually drawn to the Party at the outset but were not contributors to Party publications, with only some of their works conforming to Party

teachings, such as Sadegh Hedayat; writers and poets who were not alive at the time and their works were selectively chosen for publications to portray an image consistent with their objectives, such as Parvin E'tesami; and, finally, writers and poets whom the Party sought to recruit and interpret their works according to its teachings but ultimately failed to attract, such as Nima Yooshij.

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