

Post-Revolutionary Iran

Edited by
Hooshang Amirahmadi
and Manoucher Parvin



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Introduction: From Ideology to Pragmatic Policy in Post-Revolutionary Iran

Hooshang Amirahmadi

Few revolutions have shocked the world with such intensity and created so many imponderable questions as the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The rapid speed at which the Revolution took place and its predominantly Islamic character still remain sources of mystery even to well-educated students of Iran. Equally obscure are the multiple roots of the Revolution and its largely spontaneous, but well-orchestrated, mass character. Although a growing literature has shed light on many aspects of these and other similar questions, our knowledge of the state and society in post-revolutionary Iran and the probable future direction of the Islamic Republic in matters of domestic transformations and international relations remains largely inadequate.

Aside from the scarcity of information, the major factors contributing to this problem include the conflicting policies and practices of the Islamic government and their diverse interpretations by scholars and political analysts. Although the inconsistencies in government policies are rooted in factional politics, the ongoing war with Iraq, and the unsettled state of the Revolution, disagreements among observers of Iran arise largely from ideological differences. Consequently, a generally accepted analysis of post-revolutionary Iran has not yet emerged.

The primary purpose of this book is to analyze transformations in the ideological, political, and socioeconomic structures of post-revolutionary Iran and to discuss government policies in order to shed light on the nature and direction of the state and society in the Islamic Republic. Clearly, the complexity of the issues discussed in this book as well as the ideological differences among the authors prevent a definite conclusion from emerging. In addition, the analyses are constrained by inadequate information about the inner workings of the Islamic Republic and about the many causal-consequential networks affecting post-revolutionary Iran.

Nevertheless, the chapters, most of which were written by young scholars with fresh insights and some of which are based on recent on-site research, present interesting, even controversial, conclusions. Three major themes recur throughout the chapters: (1) the enormous changes in the material and intellectual aspects of life in post-revolutionary Iran when compared to pre-revolutionary times; (2) the severe domestic and foreign-policy problems requiring immediate solutions; and (3) the gradual shift of the Islamic state from its initial ideological commitments to more pragmatic policies.

Among the many implications of these and other findings, one is crucial: The state must balance pragmatism and its initial revolutionary promises in order to maintain its stability. This may prove difficult, though not impossible, given the resource constraints, the war, the lack of a unified front for attacking the enormous socioeconomic and political problems, conflict with imperialism, and dependency on the world market. Various chapters also indicate why these and other factors are increasingly forcing the Islamic Republic to abandon its initial ideals and accept technocratic solutions to domestic and international problems.

Part One focuses on politics and ideology; the chapters in the second part provide the link between ideology and practice that is the focus of the third part. Although a single explanatory framework has not been imposed, most of the authors have adopted a critical method in an attempt to analyze carefully the successes and failures of various policies and practices. In addition, the authors have assessed the national and global factors that are influencing the behavior of the Islamic Republic and, where appropriate, the consequences that have followed.

Chapter 2, by Hamid Dabashi, concentrates on the specific conditions that led to the transformation (by the 1950s) from Islam as a religion to Islam as a largely secular ideology. The factor most responsible for this transformation was the breakdown of the balance between politics and ethics in Muslim communities, largely as a result of Western penetration. The writings of Jalal Al-i Ahmad, 'Ali Shari'ati, and Murtada Mutahhari as the chief architects of the "Islamic Ideology" in Iran are analyzed to reveal the roots of the new ideology. Although Ayatollah Khomeini was not a contributor to the "Islamic Ideology," the concept has been institutionalized by the Islamic Republic along with *Husayniyah Irshad* and the *Mujahidiyn-e Khalq*. Dabashi concludes by assessing the perils and promises of this new ideology, arguing that the novelty is torn by inherent contradictions between faith and ideology. While the transformation of Islam into an ideology has been noted by others as well, Dabashi's argument is uniquely revealing; it also provides a good account of "Islamic Ideology" up to and through the Revolution.

Ideological transformation was by no means a unique experience of Islam, as indicated in Chapter 3 by Val Moghadam, who focuses on the ideology and practices of the Iranian Left. Specifically, she offers a historical/critical analysis of the Left's acceptance and application of dependency theory—that is, of Third Worldism as an ideological/practical guide, particularly

during and after the Revolution of 1979. A major consequence was the subordination of democratic and socialist aims to anti-imperialist politics. Moghadam concludes that this strategy, coupled with inappropriate tactics and other unfavorable factors, led to the defeat of the Left. Among other causes, she lists the Left's lack of theoretical preparedness to deal with complex revolutionary issues, the Shah's repression, uneven socioeconomic development in Iran, the Left's failure to advance an alternative to the Islamic Republic's populism, and the lack of unity among the many small Left groups.

Despite the Left's relative neglect of democracy as an important political demand, different sectors of the society continued to struggle for its realization. In Chapter 4, Assef Bayat examines the relationship between labor movements, democracy, and politics in post-revolutionary Iran. He argues that, through the organization of Workers' Councils, or *Shurahs*, the Iranian workers were able to provide conditions conducive to the growth of a workplace democracy, which had been completely absent under the Shah. Yet, owing to internal contradictions arising from the conflict between the short- and long-term interests of the councils on the one hand and the state's repression on the other, the *Shurahs* did not survive long enough either to become institutionalized or to create economic democracy. As a result of this failure, the *Shurahs* were further unable to influence the consolidation of political democracy in the country. Bayat concludes that grass-roots organizations are essential for the democratization of Iranian society.

The politics of the Islamic Republic are further examined in Chapter 5 by Nader Entessar, who focuses on the role of the armed forces in pre- and post-revolutionary Iran, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). The Imperial Army, he asserts, played two major functions, both of which delegitimized it in the eyes of an absolute majority of Iranians: to secure the Shah's authoritarian rule, and to safeguard the Gulf region for the United States. Coupled with lack of leadership within its ranks and its dependency on the United States, the Imperial Army's illegitimacy led to its speedy disintegration during the revolution. The Islamic Republic, argues Entessar, quickly moved to transform the Iranian armed forces from a dependent military to a citizen army by purging high-ranking Imperial officers and by recruiting from the religious population. In the process, the new armed forces became Islamicized and politicized to a degree unprecedented in the contemporary history of Iran. Entessar details these developments along with his discussion of the creation of the IRGC as a countervailing force. He concludes that the Islamic Republic has been successful in creating a remarkably able and efficient armed forces capable of containing both internal uprisings and external challenges to the Republic.

The part of the book devoted to politics and ideology ends with Chapter 6 by Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ali Mohammadi, who move us from domestic to international politics. The authors examine a number of political cartoons from issues of *Imam* magazine throughout the period 1980-1984 to indicate both the Islamic Republic's image of the outside

world and its foreign policy. The magazine is published by the embassy of the Islamic Republic in London and is aimed at a foreign audience. It is designed to neutralize what the Republic considers the "news imperialism" of the Zionist-dominated mass-media machinery of the West. The cartoons are as offensive as they are defensive and reactive. According to the authors, they illustrate the nonaligned foreign policy of the Islamic Republic and its bipolarized image of a world dominated by superpowers. The United States and Zionism are closely identified with one another and are portrayed as the most vicious of all earthly satanic forces. To the educated Western audience, argue Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi, most of the cartoons appear one-sided, negative, and conspiracy based; in addition, they fail to convey a meaningful understanding of international events and relations. On the contrary, their real effect is to cut off crosscultural communication.

The second part of the book, which is concerned with the implementation of Islamic ideology, links the first part on politics and ideology to the third part on policies, international relations, and socioeconomic transformations. In Chapter 7, Sohrab Behdad examines the factional politics surrounding national-development planning in the context of an Islamic economic model and gives an outline of the processes that led to the formulation of the First Islamic Plan. He argues that, while such an economic system is compatible with the working of capitalism, the Iranian conception of it originated with Islamic radicals and tends to be populist in its orientation. This tendency, however, is vehemently opposed by many Grand Ayatollahs who fear that national-development planning might lead to an impermissible extension of the state into the private sector. In the face of growing socioeconomic problems, the war, and the declining oil revenues, the two tendencies have resulted in a pragmatic solution that prescribes a mixed planned economy and belittles Islamic economics. Behdad asserts, however, that as the convergence is far from complete, little planning might be expected for some years to come.

Chapter 8, by Hooshang Amirahmadi, further investigates the unsettled state of debate on a development strategy in the Islamic Republic. After documenting the extent and type of war damage, Amirahmadi evaluates the reconstruction strategy and activities of the government. His analysis reveals the existence of extensive human, material, physical, and financial damage and, in so doing, underscores the need for an immediate and comprehensive reconstruction plan. Amirahmadi argues that the reconstruction activities of the Islamic government focus primarily on private housing and infrastructure, lack clear direction, and are largely unplanned. These inadequacies are rooted mainly in the war itself and in disunity of perspective among Islamic policy-makers regarding a suitable development and reconstruction strategy. The two dominant and opposite ideological tendencies are identified as "Islamic traditionalist" and "Islamic modernist." Whereas the first advocates large-scale government intervention and planning, the second emphasizes the role of the individual and comes close to the position of nineteenth-century liberalism. Nevertheless, in the face of growing problems

of various types and magnitudes, the two ideological positions are converging in the direction of the more pragmatic/technocratic tendency.¹ Amirahmadi advances a number of critical ideas to be incorporated into a self-reliant reconstruction strategy; he concludes, however, that so long as the war continues, recent attempts to formulate a suitable unified strategy, even if successful, would not improve the quality of reconstruction activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In the third part, the contributors focus on the policies, socioeconomic transformations, and international relations of the Islamic Republic, themes introduced in previous chapters. In Chapter 9, Akbar Aghajanian presents an overview of social and legal changes in the Islamic Republic and examines the consequences of such changes, along with the impact of the war with Iraq, on population dynamics in Iran. His analysis reveals an increase in divorce, a decline in actual age of marriage, an upsurge in polygamy cases, and an increasing birth rate. The combined effect of these trends has been a high rate of population growth. If the current official ban on family planning continues, the population growth rate will lead to an even larger labor force and a sharper reduction in family income. In the face of declining oil revenues and a faltering war economy, the consequences of these trends might prove devastating.²

The themes of change and policy are also the focus of Chapter 10, by Manoucher Parvin and Majid Taghavi. The authors offer a broad comparison of land reform programs (LRPs) under both the monarchy and the Islamic Republic, and discuss their impact on production and productivity in agriculture. The Shah's LRPs, they maintain, aimed at the extension of dependent capitalism into rural areas and at its expansion in urban centers through large-scale industrialization. As a consequence, subsistence agriculture was undermined, and tillers became wage earners in urban industries. In the early years of the Islamic Republic, all attempts to reform land tenure were branded as non-Islamic and were blocked by the Council of Guardians. The indecisiveness in this area prevented the state from achieving its goal of agricultural self-sufficiency. Since 1985, however, a number of LRPs have been enacted in the Islamic Republic to correct such deficiencies as low productivity and ownership disputes, which are crippling agriculture in the country.

In Chapter 11, Michael Renner points out the international factors influencing domestic policies and changes. Specifically, he investigates the major determinants of the Islamic Republic's oil policies and indicates the nature and extent of its dependency on the world market. Among the issues discussed are the goals of the 1979 Revolution, certain aspects of macroeconomics including foreign trade and balance of payments, the war with Iraq, the structural changes in the world oil market, and the Islamic Republic's relations with OPEC and Saudi Arabia. Renner concludes that because the Islamic Republic has failed both to stimulate nonoil exports and to diversify the economy, it continues to depend on oil and, hence, on the world economy. This dependency has been exacerbated by the war with Iraq and the collapse

of world oil prices beginning in 1986. Under pressure from these and other factors (including the growing domestic problems), the Islamic Republic has gradually developed a more pragmatic oil policy.

In Chapter 12, Mehrdad Valibeigi sheds additional light on the international relations of the Islamic Republic. The author gives an overview of the trade relations between Iran and the United States, and discusses the impact of the hostage crisis and the subsequent freezing of Iranian assets by the Carter administration. He argues that the financial strains caused by the Iran-Iraq war and the technical dependency of Iran's industries and military on U.S. markets are major factors compelling the Islamic Republic to continue trading with the United States despite apparent hostilities between the two countries. The United States, he maintains, has encouraged such relations because of its strategic interests in the region, and because it continues to consider Iran a regional power as well as an anti-Soviet state. The recent Irangate controversy is a vivid illustration of Valibeigi's conclusion that the mutual desire for continued economic relations will persist.

In the concluding chapter, Hooshang Amirahmadi extends the analyses of the book by bringing the many disparate facts and ideas about the Iranian Revolution, as well as the middle-class revolutions elsewhere in the Third World, into a single comprehensive/comparative framework. In attempting to explore the causal-consequential networks responsible for the roots of these revolutions and their characters, perils, promises, achievements, shortcomings, and constraints, he crosses disciplinary and ideological boundaries and identifies a host of national and international factors. He also insists that, for a deeper understanding, we must think about and research post-revolution Iran in comparative terms, along empirical/historical lines, and in the context of the contradictions between imperialism and the Third World revolutions. He concludes that, given the present international arrangements and domestic politics in the Third World, the middle class revolutions have no real chance to realize their utopia in the form of a middle class post-revolutionary society.

In sum, post-revolutionary Iran has undergone significant socioeconomic, political, and ideological transformations with legal, material, intellectual, and institutional consequences. Many pre-revolutionary organizations, ways of life and of thinking, productive factors, and human relations have changed; some, in fact, have been totally eradicated and replaced by wholly new ones. Although the government has taken an active role in reshaping the society and the state in an Islamic image, its policies have been limited by such national and international factors as the dynamics of the Revolution itself, the war, the politics of opposition, the leadership's inability to formulate a coherent development strategy, and imperialistic interventions. In most cases, the desired policies had to be relinquished or adapted only after significant modifications. Post-revolutionary Iran is thus neither a wholly Islamic community nor a society with predominantly secular values. Rather, it is a blend of the two.

The constraints, in combination with the factional infighting, have also resulted in conflicting pronouncements and policies on the part of the state.

As a result, prediction of the state's future direction has become most difficult, if not impossible. However, a number of developments at the national and international levels indicate that the Islamic government is moving away from its initial ideological commitments toward a more pragmatic "quick fix" approach to the enormous problems of the country. Irangate and the current crisis in management-type state budgeting are two consequences of the new directions being taken. A reasonable answer to the question of whether this pragmatism will be reversed or consolidated has to await two important developments in the Islamic Republic: termination of the war, and the resolution of factional politics. The enormous energy and intelligence that a lasting peace would generate could put a temporary end to ideological disputes and strengthen the position of the technocratic elements within the government. In the meantime, however, the Islamic Republic must continue its struggle against the tension between ideology and pragmatism.

Notes

1. Factionalism within the Central Council of the Islamic Republican party (CCIRP) was the main reason for its eventual dissolution. The action is intended to mitigate factional infighting and to facilitate the state's pragmatic direction.

2. Since this chapter was written, the 1986 national census has been completed. Although details have not yet been made public, preliminary results indicate an annual population growth rate of 3.57 percent per year over the 1976–1986 period, with poorer regions growing at even higher rates. In 1986, about 78 percent of the country's population of 48,181,463 were six years and over; and, of these, only 28.5 percent were employed and 62 percent were illiterate.



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PART ONE

Politics and Ideology



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2

“Islamic Ideology”: The Perils and Promises of a Neologism

Hamid Dabashi

There is, however, another religion and that is ideology.

—'Ali Shari'ati

Introduction

The Islamic Revolution in Iran is the most recent institutional expression of that massive transformative movement through which Islam has been redefined from a universal religion to a political ideology with universal claims. The key expression that captures this metamorphosis is *Islamic ideology*. To be sure, this ideology, in all its political and revolutionary dimensions, is not a uniquely Iranian or Shi'ite phenomenon. The conceptual and semantic roots of the metamorphosis are already present in the work of such architects of the revolutionary pan-Islamism as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Muhammad 'Abduh (1849–1905), Rashid Rida (1865–1935), and Abd al-Hakim Khalifah. The latter even published a book entitled *Islamic Ideology*.¹

The primary and most articulate proponent of this concept in Persian (*ideologi-i Islami*) was 'Ali Shari'ati (1933–1977). The Iranian roots of the concept in modern history, however, go back to Jalal Al-i Ahmad (1923–1969). Murtada Mutahhari (1920–1979), too, found the concept quite useful and sought to elaborate it further. The term has also been widely used in the literature of Mujahidin-i Khalq organization. But the official usage has been nowhere more widespread than in the organs of the Islamic Republic of Iran itself. In fact, among both the established revolutionary forces and those opposing the Islamic Republic, the term *Islamic ideology* has been so widely used that no one stops to question its conceptual legitimacy.

The massive redefinition of Islam from a religion promising other-worldly salvation to an ideology harboring this-worldly utopia is perhaps the single most important feature of Muslim collective consciousness in modern times. The following is an attempt to examine the specific mechanism and dynamism

of this revolutionary transformation of a basically metaphysical discourse into a patently political semantic. The term *Islamic ideology* represents a revolution in both Islamic thought and action, and is undoubtedly a neologism. It does not exist in any classical Islamic text or context. The term has been widely circulated only since the turn of the century. Most recently, it was applied to the ideological foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

A few conceptual clarifications are necessary at the outset. *Islam* and all its derivatives refer to the body of doctrinal beliefs that emanates from the Quran and its ancillary human counterpart, the prophetic (and, for the Shi'ites, the Imamite) traditions. This doctrinal apparatus constitutes the foundations of both the Islamic culture and civilization. As such, Islam postulates an atemporal frame of metahistorical reference. Human experience in the Islamic context begins in pre-eternity (*azal*) and leads to post-eternity (*abad*). *Ideology* and all its derivatives refer to a set of interrelated conceptions and notions of political commitment and mobilizations that seek to (1) provide an interpretation of the existing relations of power and (2) chart the course of actions to alter them. At this conceptual level, then, the term *ideology* also encompasses *utopia*, defined by Karl Mannheim² as an intellectual commitment to negate and alter existing conditions.

In its revolutionary posture, as during the 1979 Revolution, the *Islamic ideology* was utopian. It emerged not as the dominant ideology of the dominant class but as the utopian aspiration of a revolutionary movement. Through this ideology, contemporary realities were seen as indications of an inevitable cataclysm. The *Islamic* aspect of this ideology was construed in patently religious symbols that were employed in its constructions of "reality." But in the course of the revolutionary movement, and as the Islamic aspect of the uprising gradually assumed an upper hand, the utopian design of a better future became the ideological posture of an existing condition.

Roots of the Neologism

The term *Islamic ideology* conceals more of its conceptual origin than it reveals of its political agenda. In its concealment, the term embodies the most integral self-contradiction animating the cultural revolution that Islam is now experiencing. The political agenda it reveals shall extend beyond one specific revolutionary event, such as the 1979 episode in Iran.

Though conceptually a neologism, the Islamic ideology is the end result of forces that have been operative at least since the turn of the century. A massive and multivariate exposure to what Marshall Hodgson called "the great Western transmutation" brought to the Muslims' collective consciousness selective elements from the Western ideological experience, in contradistinction to the equally selective reminiscences from their own past.

The Islamic ideology was created partly in response to the accusation that Islam itself, being "the opium of the masses" as well as a "false consciousness," systematized the dominant ideas.³ In Iran the Islamic view

of Marxism has superseded the Marxist understanding of Islam. Ironically, the "ruling intellectual force"⁴ of pre-revolutionary Iran was not the prerogative of "the ruling material forces of society."⁵ Quite to the contrary, it came from the most unproductive force of society: the alienated intelligentsia. The Islamic ideology was in fact (or at least in part) an Islamic response, however convoluted, to the dominant secular ideas of pre-revolutionary Iran.

The age of the Islamic ideology is predicated on a long process of disruption of the balance between the Islamic stipulations of ethics and politics. This process is a universal one, but for Islam it has been the result of a combination of external factors and internal tendencies. A widespread political subjugation to alien forces, a vast hegemonic ascendancy of diverse ideological outbursts from the European age of revolution, and a bewildered Muslim intellectual elite in search of some sense of revolutionary identity are among the constituent forces that have precipitated the transformation of the Islamic culture, following that of the West.

The disintegration of the balance between Islamic piety and Muslim communal life was the most important outcome of this transmutation. Being a Muslim increasingly became a matter of private piety. Historically valid social and political institutions began to lose their foundations of legitimacy. New and more powerful doctrines of institutional legitimation began to restructure the Islamic culture and character.

Islamic ethics and politics became bifurcated, and Muslims became secluded in their private pieties. The newly created political and economic problems persisted and intensified. At this point, the spirit of Islamic politics, segregated from its ethical counterbalance, assumed specific doctrinal ends that were of alien origin. The Islamic encounter with the West, particularly with its ancillary exaltation of European ideological movements, introduced political concerns that were peculiarly occidental and of no immediate relevance to Muslim societies. Such alien conceptions and concerns as church-state relations, the class struggle, capitalism, socialism, imperialism, dialectic materialism, liberalism, democracy, nationalism, equality, parliamentarianism, and colonialism abruptly imposed themselves on the bewildered and passive-aggressive mind of the Muslim intelligentsia. These concerns, thus implanted in Islamic soil, could not but engender two concomitant ideological movements: (1) the extension of European political doctrines that best articulated the above concerns in Islamic societies and, hence, constituted the origin of similar conceptions and concerns in the Muslim world; or (2) the enunciation of a mixture of such alien conceptions and concerns with patently Islamic symbols as those articulated by al-Afghani, 'Abduh, Rida, and Shari'ati.

Although these two ideological movements in the Islamic world were almost concomitant, the former—the patently "secular" ideologies—proved to be less successful than the latter. The political and tactical failures of the secular ideologies ultimately lent further legitimacy to ideological movements in Islamic disguise. The most obvious and immediate diagnosis of this failure of secular ideologies concerns their inability to engender and

validate enough legitimating common symbols among their purported constituencies to move and mobilize those constituencies toward a set of fabricated goals. But those ideological movements that dressed up the political concerns of the patently Western origin with the traditional symbolics of the Islamic posture proved to be infinitely more successful. It is within this latter disposition that the Islamic ideology found its proper context. In order to legitimate its attempted appropriation of power, the mixture of Western political concerns and common Islamic symbols created its own doctrinal basis: the Islamic ideology.

Thus, the Islamic ideology is the logical, and perhaps inevitable, outcome of (1) a deep and pervasive segregation of Islamic ethics and politics; (2) the creation and continuity of an independent and unbalanced Islamic body politic; (3) a superimposition of Western ideological concerns on a susceptible and autonomous Islamic body politic; and, finally, (4) the need for this combination of Islamic political and Western ideological concerns to formulate a doctrinal legitimacy.

Architects of the Islamic Ideology in Iran

The doctrinal and political legitimacy of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was based on at least three organically different, yet organizationally inter-related, planes: (1) patently secular ideologies, (2) the Islamic ideology, and (3) the *welayat-i faqih* (the guardianship of jurisconsult). The last element, primarily an articulation of Ayatollah Khomeini (b. 1902), is based on some essential tendencies in Shi'ite juridical history. (The specific nature and organization of this doctrinal force is a separate question and cannot be dealt with here.) The first element, the secular ideologies, is equally important and should be carefully examined. But our main concern here is with the major components of the Islamic ideology.

One of the principal figures who articulated the shift from the secular to the Islamic symbolic context is Jalal Al-i Ahmad, who began his political activity as a deeply religious man. His religious devotion had a lasting effect on his entire life, particularly on his early political consciousness. From this background he became attracted to two major secular, and patently anti-clerical, movements: nationalism and socialism. The first attraction was reflected both in Al-i Ahmad's interest in the ideas of Ahmad Kasravi (d. 1946) and in his deeply nationalist orientation. Nationalism, however, proved to be only a stepping-stone (perhaps with some lasting effect) to the next phase of Al-i Ahmad's political engagement—namely, socialism, which was institutionalized in the Tudeh party, under the ideological banner of which Al-i Ahmad pursued his political concerns. Al-i Ahmad's disenchantment with the Tudeh party, whether merely ideological in nature or based on a deeper metaphysical reorientation, paved the way to his last position on matters of politics. *Gharb-Zadigi* ("Westoxication"), a product of this period, was the most articulate formulation of the Islamic ideology short of coining this conceptual category.⁶

Having deeply experienced the fundamental problems of Western secular ideologies in mobilizing a Muslim nation for political purposes, Al-i Ahmad tried to demonstrate how the same political ends could be formulated and achieved by utilizing the Islamic sources of revolutionary symbols. He recognized that the primary task of a revolutionary ideology was to communicate its political concerns to its constituency. Toward that end, the most important element is the orchestration of a set of common symbols (i.e., indications of collective mythologies), that encompass the messenger, the message, and those who are addressed. Socialism, perhaps even more than nationalism, drew on symbols that were plainly European (or, more precisely, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French) in origin: class struggle, proletariat, bourgeoisie, capitalism, and so on. For Muslims, however, these were alien ideological categories, incapable of striking a chord in the minds and souls of their recipients. But if rebellion was the purpose, there was a more immediately accessible channel of communication: the Shi'ite collective memory. In this connection, the supreme symbols of suffering, injustice, perseverance, rebellion, and the final establishment of the "peace of the rightly guided," constituted the marrow of public piety. Here was a vast ocean of indigenous collective symbols, neglected almost to the point of nullity, and the secular ideologues had been importing nearly meaningless slogans.

Gharb-Zadigi represents a turning point in Iranian political culture. Though primarily a scathing attack against the westernization of Iranian culture, the book also has a hidden agenda: a return to common (i.e., Islamic) thought. It begins with a diagnosis of a "disease" called "Westoxication" and concludes with references to Albert Camus's *The Plague*, Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, and Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*; yet the very last words are from the Quran (LIV:1) "The hour drew nigh and the moon was rent in twain."

In a revealing misreading of Ingmar Bergman's film, in which the central figure of "death" is confused with "Satan," Al-i Ahmad sees himself (along with Albert Camus, Eugene Ionesco, and Ingmar Bergman) as a visionary of the coming apocalypse. the sign of the apocalypse, in Al-i Ahmad's reading, was "the machine." Rejecting the imported Western symbols which could best be described as identified with the "machine," he put forth his argument for a complete reversal of the common "Islamic" frame of reference and, hence, for his concluding return to the Quran. But this return was intended for a specific purpose—politics. As "Westoxication" was a by-product of political hegemony, its rejection was the manifesto of a political program—the Islamic ideology.

Al-i Ahmad, however, remained deeply influenced by his years as an active member of the Tudeh party. This influence resulted in a rather cursory familiarity with, and thus utilization of, Shi'ite symbols. *Gharb-Zadigi*, after *Khasi dar Miqat* ("Lost in the Crowd"), perhaps the most religiously charged book written by Al-i Ahmad, is poorly informed by religious sources. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Al-i Ahmad either suppressed his religious knowledge or was insufficiently informed. Having been deeply moved by the

Tudeh party (i.e., by the institutional expression of the most blatantly secular movement of his time), he probably could not utilize all that was at his disposal from Islam to bid for the Islamic ideology.

That task remained for 'Ali Shari'ati, the most articulate proponent of the Islamic ideology. Shari'ati's formulation is a comprehensive one that, among other things, sought to equate specific Quranic terms with "ideology." *Al-millah*, the Quranic term for "people" or "nation," came closest in meaning to "ideology," he believed; it expressed the same "common school of all prophets."⁷ "The Book" (i.e., the Quran) could also be taken for the Islamic ideology.⁸ But equally applicable are the highest symbols of authority in Islam: faith (*al-din*), prophethood (*nubuwwah*), and messengership (*risalah*).⁹

Shari'ati wished to distinguish between *maktab* ("school") and ideology. The former refers to the school of philosophy articulated by al-Farabi or Ibn Sina,¹⁰ but the latter encompasses a doctrinal movement. "Muhammad establishes an ideology," claimed Shari'ati.¹¹ This ideology, if propagated, would bring forth revolutionary figures such as 'Ali, Husayn, and Abu Dhar.¹² Here, *maktab* engages the mind, whereas ideology directs the action.¹³

Through a series of dichotomous statements comparing and contrasting "science and philosophy" with "ideology," Shari'ati articulated what he meant by the Islamic ideology: Philosophy and science are concerned with "phenomenology," whereas ideology evaluates what is right and what is wrong. Philosophy and science do not advance further than "understanding"; ideology "leads." Philosophy and science justify "the values"; ideology annihilates and creates values. Philosophy and science "describe and discover you"; ideology "creates you." Philosophy and science bring forth philosophers and scientists; ideology brings forth "revolutionary intellectuals."¹⁴

After contrasting the active ideology with the passive knowledge, Shari'ati articulated a series of conceptual categories that constitute the "common language" (*zaban-i mushtarak*) of Islam and ideology: "Armed struggle" is *jihad*; "the people" are *nas*; collective ownership is divine ownership; "leadership" is *imamah*; the demeaning life of the bourgeoisie is this-worldliness; and "the government of the people" is *ijma*.¹⁵

Through a dual metamorphosis of conceptual and existential identity, socialist ideology for Shari'ati became ideology *par excellence*, and Islam became the supreme ideology. Thus, Islam is socialism, and both converge in ideology—or, more precisely, in the Islamic ideology.

Shari'ati's ideological semantic, which is almost exclusively revolutionary Marxist in nature, encompasses message, commitment, responsibility, armed struggle, the masses, the elimination of classes, man as the god over nature, elimination of private ownership, collective ownership, alienation, the low bourgeois life, economics as the foundation of ethics and spirituality, and classless society.¹⁶ Each of these ideological categories, according to Shari'ati, have their precise equivalent in Islam.¹⁷ Thus Islam is an ideology; it is the semblance of Marxist ideology. Muslim intellectuals need not adopt the alien doctrine of an atheist orientation, which creates the discomfort of misplaced piety.

The Islamic ideology is both revolutionary *and* Islamic. This existential conjunction closely articulates the collective therapy of "getting even with the hegemonic West," on both the material and the intellectual fronts. Materially, the quasi-colonial rule of the native dictator—"the puppet of imperialism"—will be challenged and overcome, thus reflecting a rebellious rejection of the economically and politically domineering West. Intellectually, a metamorphosis of Islam into the most "scientifically based" ideology would rob the occident of its crowning achievement in its age of enlightenment. Just as Marx turned Hegel's dialectics upside down and called them materialist dialectics, so Shari'ati turned Islam upside down and called it the Islamic ideology.

Whereas Al-i Ahmad envisioned the Islamic ideology as a rebellion against the West and Shari'ati articulated it in comprehensive political terms, Mutahhari tried to extend it to the very heart of Islamic jurisprudence and philosophy so as to give it an intellectual legitimacy. Nothing less than the Shari'ah, Mutahhari argued, was the Islamic ideology.¹⁸

Mutahhari's definition of ideology reflects his attempt to mobilize public pieties:

What will give unity, direction, and shared aspirations to the man of today, and *a fortiori* to the man of tomorrow, what will serve as his touchstone of good and evil, of musts and must nots, is an elective conscious, inspirational philosophy of life armed with logic—in other words, a comprehensive, perfect ideology.¹⁹

A comprehensive and perfect ideology—namely, the Islamic ideology—is thus the only prelude to a total and perfect society. Mutahhari posited the totalitarian adoption of this ideology (i.e., the intellectual imagining of the utopia to come) in direct response to the other one, which was secular and imported: Marxism. His dual purpose was to attack and impede all intellectual manifestations of the total secular ideology, and to propagate the total Islamic ideology. His *'Ilal-i Girayish bi Maddigari* ("The Causes of Attraction to Materialism")²⁰ as well as his substantive notations to 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Hussayn Tabataba'i's *Usul-i Falsafah wa Rawish-i Realism* ("The Principles of Philosophy and the Realistic Method") were directed specifically against the total secular ideology at both its political (Marxist) and philosophical (materialist) levels.²¹ The formulation of the total Islamic ideology was concomitant with Mutahhari's rejection of any mode of secular ideology.

Mutahhari's main objective was to give the Islamic ideology a philosophical (i.e., rational) grounding; but it is in precisely this respect that he differed from Shari'ati. By classifying human actions as "pleasure-oriented" and "goal-oriented," Mutahhari argued that insufficiency of reason directs the course of human conduct.²² Ideology, he maintained, is the suprarational legitimacy of "a comprehensive, harmonious, and concrete design whose central object is to perfect man and secure universal happiness."²³ This grand design is ideology. But there are two types of ideologies:

human and corporate: human ideologies are addressed to the human species, not to some special nationality, race or class, and have for their motive the salvation of the whole human . . . species. Corporate ideologies (on the other hand) are addressed to a certain group, class or stratum and have for their motive the liberation, or the hegemony, of that group.²⁴ . . . Beyond all doubt, Islamic ideology is human and arises from the primordial nature of man.²⁵

By directing the Islamic ideology to reflect on three subjects that are Quranically stipulated as "useful and fruitful to reflection upon"²⁶ (i.e., "the nature," "the history," and "the inner being of man"),²⁷ Mutahhari gave the doctrine its most elaborate philosophical and theological groundings.²⁸

By addressing, and further legitimating, the neologism of the Islamic ideology in a juridical and philosophical language, Mutahhari, who was significantly more erudite than either Shari'ati or Al-i Ahmad in his understanding of the traditional Islamic sciences, engineered the intellectual foundation of the concept into the very germane conceptual apparatus of Islamic thought. His was by far the most elaborate doctrinal systematization of the Islamic ideology. Yet, he would probably never had used the term if Shari'ati had not demonstrated its political potential, or if Al-i Ahmad had not provided for its logistic necessity.

Islamic Ideology Institutionalized

The conceptual elaboration and institutional propagation of the Islamic ideology were influenced by a number of ad hoc organizations. *Anjuman-i Mahanih-yi Dini* ("Monthly Religious Society"), a short-lived institution led by Mutahhari, was perhaps one of the most influential of these organizations.²⁹ From 1960 to 1963, the society actively expounded its ideas through its organ, *Guftar-i Mah*. Other principal figures associated with the Islamic Revolution, such as Muhammad Ibrahim Ayati and Sayyid Muhammad Beheshti, were also active in this organization.

Perhaps the most successful institutional expression of the Islamic ideology was the Husayniyah Irshad. A key individual in this organization was 'Ali Shari'ati. Established in 1965, Husayniyah Irshad was the institutional extension and elaboration of the Monthly Religious Society. Although the organization ostensibly revolved around *Husayniyah* (in that it was devoted to the commemoration of Husayn, the martyred third Imam of the Shi'ites), the adjective *Irshad* ("guidance") reflected its propagandistic purpose.

As one of the primary architects of Husayniyah Irshad, Mutahhari clearly articulated the purpose of this organization:

The Husayniyah Irshad . . . knows its task to be to introduce *Islamic ideology* (to the youth) such as it is. This institution deems it sufficient to unveil the beautiful face of the beloved martyr of Islam (Imam Husayn) in order to transform the love-seekers into restless lovers.³⁰

In addition to these two ad hoc organizations, mosques (the established institutions of public sermons for religious ceremonies, especially in the

three months of Muharram, Safar, and Ramadan) gave momentum to the revolutionary appeal of the Islamic ideology. The prestige and fame of the organizers of these institutions encouraged the religious community to respond favorably to the call for an Islamic ideology. The intellectual dimensions of this ideology were elaborated in other institutional settings, including the department of theology at Tehran University (where Mutahhari taught) and the Madrasah-yi Fayziyyah (theological school) at Qum. Mutahhari also held extensive dialogues with Western-educated professors and students from Tehran University at his residence in Tehran.³¹

The most militant organization to proclaim successfully the institutional legitimacy of the Islamic ideology was the guerrilla movement of the Mujahidiyn-i Khalq organization. Its militancy demonstrated the most essential component of the Islamic ideology—physical force. This force took the form of massive mobilization, along with the legitimate (i.e., considered to be legitimate) use of violence.

From the ideal to the real, the Islamic Republic and the Islamic Republic party are the highest institutional achievements of the Islamic ideology. Indeed, the former is the Islamic ideology incarnate, wherein the perils and promises of the neologism have assumed concrete and dogmatic expressions. In its passage from mobilization to establishment, the Islamic ideology now faces the paradox implicit in its very inception. The dialectic of contradictions that animated the Islamic ideology engenders, as perhaps it must, the newest phase of its self-denial.

Concluding Remarks

Faith and ideology, one sacred and the other secular, are associated with completely separate sets of symbols, which are organized in such a way as to move their constituencies to active obedience. Indeed, the two sets of symbols are essentially contradictory. The legitimating symbols of both the organization of society and the specific direction of social action, faith, and ideology are founded on a revelatory language and a rationalizing semantic, respectively. Faith, as a metaphysical expression of authority, is revealed; ideology, as a politicizing doctrine of rebellion, is rationally derived. If faith, as Marx argued, is a superstructural ideologization of the existing material conditions, then ideology, in its utopian or revolutionary form, is indoctrination by some remote abstraction that necessitates a complete reversal of the status quo. Labeling faith as the "conservative or reactionary ideology" and the diverse doctrines of rebellion as elements of the "revolutionary progressive ideology" does not alter this dichotomy. This manifesto can perhaps move and mobilize, but it fails to separate the two claims to total obedience. The dual claims draw on their respective motifs of command and obedience—two separate sets of motifs that, in essence, are contradictory and mutually exclusive.

The contradiction between faith and ideology is at the root of the current Muslim predicament; the *Islamic ideology* is its symptom. The two claims