

Khomeini's myth in Europe

**How Third Worldism influenced the European understanding of the
Iranian Revolution (1st January 1978 – 4th November 1979)**

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Abstract

At the beginning of 1978, the Shah of Iran was considered, by the Western powers, as a solid sovereign and a useful ally of the West. The events that led to the Iranian Revolution proved them wrong. The *ayatollah* Ruhollah Khomeini, took power in February 1979 and implemented the first theocracy of the modern era. Nevertheless, a relevant part of European public opinion was strongly supportive of the Iranian revolution and of Khomeini's movement. More precisely, it was supported by left-leaning opinion makers.

This research will analyse the behaviour of the European left-leaning public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution. The goal is to understand why and how this specific part of public opinion was supportive of a reactionary and clerical movement such as Khomeini's. This analysis will be connected to a specific ideology: Third Worldism. The importance and relevance of this specific perspective will be analysed to see if and how the left-leaning opinion makers shaped the understanding of the revolution through an ideological lens and influenced the comprehension of the events that were taking place in the Middle Eastern country.

These are the three countries that will be analysed to give a proper definition of the European perspective: Italy, France and England. These choices have been made considering the importance of Italy and France for the spreading of Third Worldism in the continent. England has been chosen to check if even the British perspective (different from the one on the continent) was influenced by the Third Worldist ideology.

The influence of Third Worldism on the left-leaning public opinion will be investigated through the main left-leaning newspapers in each of the chosen countries. More precisely *Corriere della Sera*, *Le Monde* and *The Guardian* along with *The Observer*. These newspapers have been chosen because they were the most read newspapers, in their respective countries, with a left-leaning perspective. At the same time, they did not represent the radical left. This choice was made to comprehend the diffusion of Third Worldism in the part of the public opinion that was left-leaning but not necessarily supportive of a specific ideology already.

The analysis will follow the chronological evolution of the opinion of each newspaper separately. Then, the outcome of each part will be compared to the others, in order to define if there was a common pattern in these three countries.

CONTENT

Introduction - p. 4

PART 1

Research Outlines:

1. *Defining time, space and subject – p. 5*
2. *Historiographical contextualization – p. 6*
3. *Research questions – p. 9*
4. *Methodology – p. 10*
5. *Primary sources – p. 11*
6. *Research relevance – p. 12*

Historical context

1. *A brief introduction to the history of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran and of the Iranian revolution of 1978-1979 – p. 13*
2. *Italy in the late 70s and its relation with Iran – p. 17*
3. *France, the influence of colonial past (and present) on the left-leaning public opinion – p. 18*
4. *England and its invasive relation with Iran – p. 19*

PART 2 - THE ANALYSIS

The Iranian revolution in the pages of the *Corriere della Sera*

1. *How the “Corriere della Sera” initially described the situation in Iran. 1st January 1978 - 7th September 1978 – p. 20*
2. *A twisting editorial line: from the reportages of Michel Foucault to the interviews of Oriana Fallaci – p. 21*
3. *What was the perspective of the left-leaning Italian public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution? – p. 33*

The French debate on the Iranian Revolution

1. *The opening perspective of *Le Monde* on the Iranian situation – p. 34*
2. *The expansion of the debate after the “Black Friday” – p. 38*
3. *The aftermath of the revolution in the pages of *Le Monde* – p. 47*
4. *What was the perspective of the left-leaning French public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution? – p.*

The British case and the differences from the continent

1. *The Iranian revolution in the pages of The Guardian and The Observer – p. 51*
2. *What was the perspective of the British left-leaning public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution? – p. 57*

PART 3 – RESEARCH OUTCOME AND CONCLUSION

- *What was the influence and the relevance of the Third Worldism perspective on the left-leaning European public opinion in regards to the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979? – p. 58*

Introduction

In the wake of January 1978, the situation in Iran was, apparently, stable. The Shah Reza Pahlevi, a long-term ally of the United States, was promoting his modernization policies known as the ‘White Revolution’ and the U.S. President Jimmy Carter spent New Year’s Eve, between 1977 and 1978, celebrating with the Iranian sovereign:

Iran, because of the great leadership of the Shah, is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership and to the respect and the admiration and love which your people give to you.

This toast made by President Carter marked instead the beginning of demonstrations and revolts in Iran that started just a few days after the visit of the American president. Several problems were affecting the Middle Eastern country, mostly related to the unexpected effects of the modernization process and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor in the country. As for every revolution, what happened in Iran was the result of long ongoing processes, while clearly, the U.S. president had not a proper idea of what was happening in Iran. Most Western countries did not expect the outcome of the Iranian revolution. The *Ayatollah* Ruhollah Khomeini was the leader of the opposition to the Shah. Once the cleric took power in February 1979, he transformed the country into a theocracy. Every decision of the government and all candidates to any high institution of the country needed to be vetted and approved by the authority of the Supreme Leader, Khomeini himself. A reactionary and repressive machine was settled in the country by the *ayatollah*, with a similar and opposite structure to the one of the Shah. All democratic aspiration died.

Even if unexpected, the signs of this possible outcome of the revolution were quite clear. Khomeini was a member of the clergy, and he never hid his dislike for democracy¹. His vision, expressed in the text *velayat-e faqih*² (The Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist), was that the only legitimate government on earth was the one that respected the will of God, and the only rightful interpreters of this were the senior of the Shia clergy, the *Ayatollahs*.

Nevertheless, a substantial part of the European public opinion was captured by the figure of Khomeini during the Revolution. Several newspapers and opinion makers supported with their analysis and coverage of the battle of the *Ayatollah* against the Shah. Moreover, most of the support came from the left and the radical left. How was it possible that supporters of self-determination and the freedom of all peoples were mesmerized by this member of the clergy? Was this perspective shared in the same way by the public opinion of the different European countries? What is the relevance of the European left-leaning public opinion on this subject? Did it influence the developments of the Iranian revolution?

These are the puzzling questions that will be considered in this research. The purpose is to give the reader a proper understanding of the relation between European public opinion (that will be faced considering some specific countries) and the Iranian revolution.

¹ Farian Sabahi *Storia dell'Iran* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2006), 163-166

² *ibid.* p. 282

PART 1

Research Outlines

1. *Defining time, space and subjects*

As for all research, it is necessary to be clear on the period that will be analyzed, on the subject involved and on the space considered to be relevant. These three aspects, at the same time, need to be justified in a way that can give the reader the relevance of the research itself.

The most important aspects that will be considered are related to selected European countries and Iran. The analysis will take into account the Iranian revolution, and therefore it is not possible to avoid a general description of the events that took place in the Middle Eastern country. A brief, but fundamental, historical introduction to the situation in Persia will be given. To understand the European perspective, first, we have to understand what was happening in that country during those troubling times. Nevertheless, the research will not concern nor analyze the Iranian Revolution itself in any great depth, for its motivations and developments would require a different setting.

Which European countries are the most suitable for our purpose? First, we have to consider France as one of the most prominent actors. There are several reasons to choose this country as being very relevant for the European perspective. The *Ayatollah* Khomeini spent part of his exile (between 7th October 1978 and 1st February 1979) in a small village near Paris, Neauphle-le-Château. The presence of the leader of the Iranian opposition on the French soil should not be underestimated. The support, the attention of the media and the protection that the members of the Shia clergy received in France are part of the success of Khomeini³.

The second country to consider is Italy, for a specific reason. During the second part of the 70s, a significant movement becomes more relevant in the country and spread all over Europe: Eurocommunism⁴. This new European perspective of Communist ideology less bounded to the USSR and more careful in considering the problem of the Third World countries, had some important effects on the consideration of the several uprisings and revolutions that were taking place at the time in the different parts of the world, from South America to the Middle East. Therefore this country seems an important one to define the perspective of the leftist movements and opinion makers in regards to the Iranian revolution.

The last European country that will be taken into account is England. The reason for this inclusion is the fact that analyzing the public opinion of this country can help us determine a fundamental aspect. If the document and the literature show that there is a pattern between the expressions of continental Europe and England in relation to the Iranian revolution, then this perspective can be perceived as a proper European one. Considering the fact that the communist party has never been as important (or successful) in the political and media system of Britain, the pattern will probably be related to a leftist opinion movement not necessarily related to the Communist perspective.

³ Sabahi, *Storia dell'Iran*, 158

⁴ Silvio Pons "The rise and fall of Eurocommunism" in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler & Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 45-65

Now that the subjects of the research are clear we have to define the period that will be considered for our analysis. The riots in Iran started at the beginning of January 1978 and, with several stops in the middle, continued until the 1st of February 1979, when the *Ayatollah* Khomeini returned to Iran after sixteen years of exile⁵. Our research will continue even after the success of the revolution. The implementation of the theocratic regime in Iran is indeed an important part of the research that will help determine if and how the different public opinions changed during the consolidation of power of the revolutionary forces. Therefore the analysis will be conducted until the 4th of November 1979, the day of the beginning of the hostage crisis. The crisis itself will not be part of this work, mostly because it is not relevant to our goal. Hence, the period to consider is the one between the start of the first riots in Iran (January 1978) and the hostage crisis (4th November 1979).

2. *Historiographical contextualization*

The literature regarding the relationship between the European press and the Iranian revolution appears to be very limited. Most of the publications relate to Michel Foucault's production related to the Iranian Revolution⁶, but not much more. Nevertheless, there is a specific field of interest, connected to this research, and an historiographical context that suits our purpose for the analysis: the one related to Third Worldism. This concept is a fundamental one to understand how the left-leaning opinion makers were shaping the European perspective. In order to give the reader a proper understanding of the subject analyzed in this research, it is necessary to address four fundamental points. What Third Worldism is, so that the reader can relate to a clear definition of the subject. Where it comes from, so that the history and development of this paradigm can help to comprehend properly the origin of this phenomenon. What the main points are, and limits of this perspective. How does Third Worldism fit into this research?

It is possible to define Third Worldism as an ideological perspective. Its content has been duly described by Andrew Nash (2002) as follows:

Third Worldism can be defined roughly as the political theory and practice that saw the major fault-line in the global capitalist order as running between the advanced capitalist countries of the West and the impoverished country of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and saw national liberation struggles in the Third World as the major force for global revolution.⁷

It is important to notice that Third Worldism ideology was a matter of perspective. By this, it is meant that Third Worldism was both an ideology *of* Third World countries and *about* Third

⁵ Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 161

⁶ Janet Afary & Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution. Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005); Renzo Guolo and Pierluigi Panza, ed., *Taccuino Persiano* (Milan: Angelo Guerrini e Associati, 1998)

⁷ Andrew Nash "Third Worldism" in *African Sociological Review* 7, No. 1 (2003): 95

World countries⁸. That is to say that there were liberation movements that expressed their beliefs according to the Third Worldist paradigm and, at the same time, there were politicians, journalists and opinion makers in the West that were using the Third Worldist paradigm to analyze and understand what was happening in the so called non-aligned nations.⁹

The historical development of this world-view is a fundamental aspect that can help the reader understand how and why it spread in the left-leaning public opinion of Western countries. Third Worldism was born from the Marxist ideology during the mid-fifties, proposing an alternative to the Marxist orthodoxy.¹⁰ During the mid fifties, different events and new points of view were indeed influencing the development of Marxist ideology and weakening the Soviet myth: the 20th congress of the CPSU (1955) that took distance from the actions and policies of Stalin¹¹; the start of the ‘Hundred Flowers’ campaign¹² during ‘56 and ‘57 by the Chinese government, which supported the national route to socialism in Third World countries; the development of the national way to socialism by the European communist parties that rose in the perspective of the Eurocommunism;¹³ the Bandung conference (1955) in which gathered Asian and African countries and decided to condemn colonialism in all its manifestations¹⁴, with an implicit condemnation even to USSR’s foreign policy. All these events gave the necessary support to the spreading and development of the Third Worldist ideology in Europe. Third Worldism developed and spread in France between 1955 and 1965¹⁵. The wider diffusion of this ideology in the rest of the European countries took place during the war in Vietnam and was still an important aspect that defined the Eurocommunist perspective during the late 70s. A new radical left, as defined by Kalter (2016)¹⁶, agreed with this perspective, much like the leader of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) Palmiro Togliatti, which stated in 1956:

In the rest of the world there are countries that want to start building socialism without a Communist party in power. In still other countries the march toward socialism calls for concentrated efforts from very diverse movements... the whole system has become *polycentric* and within the same Communist movement one cannot speak of a single guide, but of a process which realizes itself following often different routes.¹⁷

The acceptance of such a new way of understanding the international situation can be explained through the historical development of Third Worldism itself. The loss of prestige of the USSR and the development of autonomous national liberation movements created the perfect

⁸ *ibid.*

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Gérard Chaliand “D’un mythe à l’autre” in *Le Tiers Monde et la gauche* (Seuil: Paris,1979), 109

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² ““Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend” is a quotation from Mao Zedong, which was promoting the national way to socialism of the countries of the Third World in opposition to the centralized perspective of the USSR, for a more detailed analysis of this policy check Dennis Doolin, “The Revival of the “Hundred Flowers” Campaign: 1961” *The China Quarterly*, No. 8 (1961): 34-41

¹³ Giuseppe Morosini “The European Left and the Third World” in *Contemporary Marxism* No. 2 (Winter1980), 67-80

¹⁴ di Nolfo E. *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali* (Milan: Laterza, 2008), 964

¹⁵ Morosini G. “The European Left and the Third World” in *Contemporary Marxism* No. 2, (Winter 1980), 69

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Togliatti P. *Sul movimento comunista internazionale* (Rome, Editori Riuniti 1964), 116 in Morosini “The European Left and the Third World”, 69

environment for the shift in the left-leaning perspective to a more suitable theory to understand the world.

Now that the description of the content and the development of the ideas related to Third Worldism are clear, it is useful to see what are the main points and the weaknesses expressed by this theory. Third Worldism sees the liberation movements, in countries not belonging to the Communist nor the American sphere of influence, as a force capable of giving the impulse to achieve a more just society and express a national way to fight capitalism. Moreover, the example provided by these countries could help defining new strategies to fight capitalism even in the First World.¹⁸ It is important to notice that this perspective is double faced: if on one side there is the discovery of a different path from the European one to arrive at a more just society, on the other, there is a reduction of the Third World to a single stereotype analyzed through the categories of the Western world.¹⁹ Hall (1992) described this simplification as a typical one used even before by the Europeans, when they tried to understand the Americas after their discovery in 1492: '[Europeans] sought to fit the New World into existing conceptual frameworks, classifying it according to [their] own norms, and absorbing it into western traditions of representation'²⁰. Therefore, it is possible to state that, most of the time, the analysis of the problems and events of several countries belonging to the Third World were seen as one and the same, regardless of the traditions, cultures, and religions that characterized every single nation.²¹ Moreover, there is another dynamic that is a relevant part of this ideology: a categorization of the different aspects of the world in two sides: black or white, good or bad. This is the common pattern in most of the supporters of the Third Worldist perspective, a division of societies into two parts, the one supportive of the liberation and real development of the country, and the other supportive of capitalism, fascism, and imperialism.²² The latter, most of the time was supported directly or indirectly by the US and their proxies. Some authors even claimed that Third Worldism rose together with, and in opposition to, global fascism.²³ Now that the description of Third Worldism is completed, it is important to stress the main points that will be analyzed in the research. First of all, it will be fundamental to see if and how the sources are supporting the Iranian liberation movement, without a proper analysis of the content and the goal of the different parts that composed the movement itself. This is important because it can show the decision of the various authors to embrace the Third Worldist ideology without addressing some other problems related to the perspective of the liberation movement itself, like would they respect human rights once gained power? Would they implement a democratic system in the country? Would Iran be in a better economic and social situation after the success of the movement? The second point to notice is if and how the sources show a use (or abuse) of categories that relate clearly to a black and white world. An example is the use of terms such as fascism and anti-fascism very easily. If the Shah is continuously addressed as a fascist (or similar terms that indirectly express the same concept) and the opposition as anti-

¹⁸ Kalter *The Discovery of the Third*, 3

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Stuart Hall 'The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power' in *Formations of Modernity*, ed. Stuart Hall & Bram Gieben (Oxford: The Open University, 1992), 293-294

²¹ Flavio Fiorani 'Analisi di un mito: il terzo mondo' in *Studi Storici* 19, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1978): 239

²² Rajeev Patel & Philip McMichael 'Third Worldism and the lineages of global fascism: the regrouping of the global South in the neoliberal era' *Third World Quarterly* 25, No 1 (2004): 231-254

²³ *ibid.*

fascist, it will be possible to frame the source into the Third Worldist paradigm. Third, it is important to stress the comparison made with other countries. The equation between different nations with not much in common if not the struggle against a regime is a typical aspect of Third Worldism. If it is present in the sources that will be analyzed, it can show the way this paradigm used to compare (sometimes inappropriately) cases to stress the point of the global fault lines as expressed by Nash in the previous quotation.

It is important to clarify that these points are what the research is looking for. More precisely, the purpose is to find out how often and with which degree of acceptance, the Third Worldist perspective was shared by the opinion makers of the three European states here taken into account.

Why is this paradigm relevant for our research? there are several reasons. Iran was a Third World country which had a sovereign considered to be a servant of Western powers even by his own people. Therefore what is important to understand is if and how the left-leaning opinion makers were influenced by Third Worldism when they were analyzing the development of the Iranian revolution. Were the left-leaning opinion makers using an oversimplified, black and white, perspective in favor of the Iranian opposition, just because they were the opposition to the Shah? Were the Western categories, expressed in the Third Worldist paradigm, useful to properly understand the possible outcome of the revolution properly? Why did the left-leaning opinion support the religious movement? In the Part related to the analysis of the three European countries here chosen, this research will check the effect of Third Worldism on the European opinion makers and public opinion, so that it will be possible to consider how biased the analysis of the revolution was and why it happened.

3. Research Questions

With all the elements settled, it is possible to express the research question that will lead to the analysis:

What was the influence and the relevance of the Third Worldism perspective on the European left-leaning public opinion in regards to the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979?

In order to give a proper answer to this main question, it is necessary to take into account some other sub-questions that will have two different purposes: to specify accurately the several aspects involved in this research; to lead the analysis and create a logical structure for it. These sub-questions are specifically related to the three European countries previously considered. The reason why the research will proceed this way is related mostly to the chosen structure: it is necessary to consider every single country separately in order to make a final comparison between the different outcomes. Therefore the sub-questions are expressed as follows:

- a) What was the perspective of the left-leaning Italian public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution?*

- b) *What was the perspective of the left-leaning French public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution?*
- c) *What was the perspective of the left-leaning English public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution?*

Now that the research questions are expressed, it is still necessary to define the methodology and sources that will be used to analyze the situation

4. *Methodology*

Once specified the general aspects of the research, it is necessary to express which type of methodology will be used during the analysis itself.

This case is complicated by the fact that the main issue, the Iranian Revolution, is considered in relation to the public opinion of some other countries, Italy, France, and England. Hence, it is necessary to examine the use of comparative politics as a method for this research.²⁴ Comparison represents the main framework of analysis for political science²⁵. In the case of research based on of three different countries, this approach will be fundamental to properly describe the outcomes of the research properly and check if there is a pattern that can express in a complete way the situation of the public opinion in France, Italy, and England. But what is the content of this mechanism? It is a theory based on three main and related elements²⁶:

- a) The study of one or more foreign country, isolating them during the analysis, in order to understand a specific phenomenon that is taking place there at a chosen time.
- b) The development of a systematic comparison between the selected countries, so that it is possible to highlight similarities and differences in regards to the considered phenomenon.
- c) Once the similarities and differences are understood, it is possible to define rules and standards related to the specific phenomenon and give a proper conclusion to the research.

A careful reader probably has understood already that we have all the necessary elements required by this method: a specific phenomenon (the leftist public opinion on the Iranian revolution); several countries (England, France, and Italy).

It is important now to define how we will produce the analysis of each country and which kind of documents we will use.

²⁴ Hans-Dieter Klingemann & Robert E. Goodin *A New Handbook of Political Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 307-399

²⁵ B. Guy Peters *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The New Institutionalism* (London: Continuum International Publishing, 2012), 10

²⁶ Klingemann *A New Handbook of Political Science*, 309-310

5. Primary Sources

As stated before, the use of primary sources is fundamental to giving a proper description of the historical events and phenomena, according to the narrative history paradigm. Therefore it is time to determine which kind of sources are the most suitable for our purpose. It is important to remember that the analysis concerns the left-leaning public opinion of the three countries. To understand this perspective, the use of newspapers seems to be the best way to determine how this specific public opinion was shaped. The reason why it is assumed as the best way is the fact that the Iranian revolution was a complicated subject that required both information and analysis. Therefore, the newspapers as media outlets were probably the main source, for the population of the previously chosen countries, to understand properly the development of a nation that rarely appeared before in any media outlet.

The questions that now need to be addressed is which newspapers have been chosen as sources and on which criteria the choice is based.

In regards to Italy, the main source will be the *Corriere della Sera*. It was the most important and appreciated Italian newspaper. The orientation of the *Corriere*²⁷ at the time was leaning to the left²⁸.

In regards to France, we will consider *Le Monde*. It was one of the most read French newspapers and left-leaning. The attention for international events and the contribution of several authors and intellectuals expresses the relevance of this newspaper for our research. At the same time, Michel Foucault was part of the debate over the Iranian situation even in this newspaper, defining an interesting connection with the *Corriere*.

Lastly, we have to consider England. For this country, we will use the articles of The Guardian and “the Observer,” considering the fact that they are part of the same editorial group and shared a left-leaning perspective both on the interior and foreign affairs.

The choice of these three newspapers is based on four main reasons: 1) they were the most read newspapers, in their respective countries, with a left-leaning perspective; 2) the absence of a strong bond with any political party will make even more relevant the potential discovery of connections with Third Worldism. If we consider, indeed, other possible choices, like Italian Communist Party’s newspaper “l’Unità” or the Maoist newspaper founded by Sartre “Libération”, there is clearly an immediate connection to Third Worldist ideology, and the research on these sources would hardly add something new to the academic research, considering the fact that the Radical left was much more clearly connected to the expressions of Third Worldism; 3) The similarities between those three media outlet, would probably suit better for a logical comparison between them than a broader choice of newspapers with fewer aspects in common; 4) Given the extent of this work, a deeper analysis of the debate in fewer newspapers appears to be more useful and relevant than a more superficial one on a higher number of them. The articles will be chosen for this research according to some specific criteria: the articles need, of course, to be related to the Iranian revolution, and this includes both pieces that were merely reporting news and articles that were expressing an analysis; once all the

²⁷ From now on, in order to avoid waste of space, the research will use the shorter *Corriere* to refer to the *Corriere della Sera*.

²⁸ Valerio Castronovo & Nicola Tranfaglia, ed., *La stampa italiana del neocapitalismo* (Bari: Laterza, 1975), 520

sources are analyzed and clear it will be possible to determine what editorial line was chosen by each newspaper in a given period. According to these criteria, more than 500 articles have been collected, coming from the *Corriere*, *Le Monde* and *The Guardian*. Nevertheless, not all the articles will be quoted in the footnotes, but only the ones that represented and illustrated best the editorial line of each newspaper. Moreover, cartoons can be a useful tool to understand the perspective and the editorial line of a newspaper. Therefore this research will consider and frame into the essay all the relevant cartoons that can help to comprehend more properly the direction taken by each newspaper.

6. *Research relevance*

How all this can be considered as a relevant field of research and why are probably the questions that our reader wants to be addressed. In order to answer them, it is necessary to add some specifications.

As written before, our investigation relates to the influence of Third Worldism on the European left-leaning opinion makers. Therefore, the aspect that it is necessary to discuss is how the Iranian revolution of 1978-79 in the Middle Eastern country can be a good case to comprehend to which extent the perspective of Third Worldism was still influencing the European left-leaning public opinion. There are several reasons: some authors believe that the main influence of Third Worldism on public opinion was between the mid 1950s and the mid 1970s, considering that the Iranian revolution took place some years after, it is important to understand if this paradigm was still influencing the European opinion makers; continental Europe was the most affected by Third Worldism, but in relation to our case we should consider if England was affected too, in order to understand how much shared was this worldview; the Iranian case can probably demonstrate that if there was ideological support to the opposition to the Shah, related to Third Worldism, the outcome of the revolution was opposite to the one desired by the left-leaning European opinion. This latter consideration has to be considered as the most relevant: the contradiction between the expected outcomes of the revolution and the implementation of a theocracy can properly express the sometimes stereotypical perspective of the Third Worldist point of view, and therefore express how much an analysis can be biased by an ideological penchant such as Third Worldism.

Historical Context

1. A brief introduction to the history of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran and of the Iranian revolution of 1978-1979

It is now necessary to rapidly describe the history of Iran under the Pahlavi dynasty and during the immediate aftermath of the revolution. This is relevant for different factors. The first one is to comprehend how Iran arrived to have a successful revolution. The second is to give to the reader the possibility to know the main events in the country, in order to later understand the analysis made by the European newspapers. The last one is that this information is relevant not only for the sake of knowledge but because the chronological succession of these events influenced, and sometimes changed, the way the European opinion makers addressed and analyzed the situation in Iran. Hence, even the analysis of the articles published in Europe will be driven by the change in the perspective that derives from these events.

Iran is an ancient country with a proud history of independence. Known as Persia until the beginning of the nineteenth century, it has never been colonized by Western powers²⁹.

Between 1925 and 1979, the Pahlavi dynasty ruled the country. Reza Shah Pahlevi, a prominent member of the army, took control of Iran in 1925 with the idea of catching up with the modernization policies inspired by the West. Similarly to what Ataturk did in Turkey³⁰, Reza Shah Pahlevi tried to improve the industrial sector, reshape the culture of the country fighting against the power of the Shia clergy and implement economic and diplomatic relations with the Western nations. Reza Shah was succeeded by his son Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in 1941, because of the action of the allied powers during WWII against the Iranian sovereign who showed a clear sympathy for Hitler's regime. A stop in the power of the Pahlavi dynasty occurred during the brief period of the premiership of Mossadegh in 1952-53³¹. The history related to this prime minister is fundamental to understanding the feeling of both the Iranian and the international public opinion in relation to the Middle Eastern country. Mossadeq had a plan of nationalization of Iranian oil that he implemented against the will of the Shah. The prime minister created the National Iranian Oil Company and withdrew the concessions given to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, managed by the British³². The Iranian leader had the support of the International community after a speech addressed at the general assembly of the UN, in which he accused the British to be unfairly involved in Iranian domestic affairs.³³ Mossadeq continued to implement his policies arriving at an institutional crisis with the Shah, but the

²⁹ Sabahi *Storia dell'Iran* p.

³⁰ Touraj Atabaki & Erik Jan Zürcher *Men of Order. Authoritarian Modernization under Ataturk and Reza Shah*, (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 44 and following

³¹ Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 113-122

³² *ibid.* 117

³³ *ibid.*

Iranian people were on the side of the prime minister. The British, along with the Americans, decided to retaliate and get rid of the problem by supporting a coup in Iran against Mossadeq and put the Shah back in charge. The success of this operation had two effects, the first was to restore an allied government of the West in power, the second was to give to the Iranians, and the rest of the world, the idea that Reza Pahlavi was just a puppet in the hands of the Anglo-Americans. This outcome was a fundamental basis for the development and spreading of Third Worldism in Iran and in other countries in relation to Iran. The feeling of the Iranian people was that the U.S. proved that they were not interested in supporting the development of foreign countries. They proved to the world (and it was not the first nor the last time) they cared only about their economic and political interests, and they were ready to support dictators, to go against the will of the people of a foreign country and to get involved in domestic affairs of other nations.

The top-down policies of modernization desired by the Pahlavi continued after the coup. From the 60s on, a new campaign supported by the Americans was implemented in the country by the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and it was called the 'White Revolution'.³⁴ Six were the points of this 'Revolution': the main one was a land reform, meant to redistribute the land to farmers and expand this way the middle class; the other five were the sharing of the revenues from the industrial sector with the workers, a privatization of the industries that were controlled by the state, the nationalization of woods and pastures, a change in the electoral system and the improvement of the educational system³⁵. The first and main point, the land reform, had some unexpected counter-productive effects. Instead of increasing the welfare of the poorest part of the society, its trickle-down approach increased the gap between the rich and the poor³⁶. The following chart can explain how this reforms affected the population of Iran.

³⁴ Sabahi, *Storia dell'Iran*, 131

³⁵ Sabahi, *Storia dell'Iran*, 131

³⁶ "the White Revolution and the subsequent oil boom produced widespread resentments by drastically raising but not meeting public expectations. It was true that social programs made strides in improving educational and health facilities. But it was equally true that after two decades, Iran still had one of the worst infant mortality and doctor-patient rates in the Middle East. It also had one of the lowest percentages of the population in higher education. Moreover, 68 percent of adults remained illiterate, 60 percent of children did not complete primary school, and only 30 percent of applicants found university places within the country. Increasing numbers went abroad where they remained for good. By the 1970s, there were more Iranian doctors in New York than in any city outside Tehran. The term "brain drain" was first attached to Iran." Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* 141-142

Urban household expenditure (decile distribution in percent)⁹

Decile (poorest to richest)	1959-1960	1973-1974
1°	1.7	1.3
2°	2.9	2.4
3°	4.0	3.4
4°	5.0	4.7
5°	6.1	5.0
6°	7.3	6.8
7°	8.9	9.3
8°	11.8	11.1
9°	16.4	17.5
10°	35.3	37.9

As is evident from this chart³⁷, the widening of the gap between rich and poor happened at the same time as the “White Revolution” and considering the fact that the goal of these top-down reforms was the opposite, it became a problem for both the government and the Iranian people. Several forces were already acting against the Shah: the National Front, which was the union of the democratic and non-religious parties; the *Ayatollahs* and the clergy; the Iranian Communist party that was called *Tudeh*. It is important to take in mind this division of the forces that constituted the opposition, mostly because it is not always made clear, as will be discussed, in the articles published in Europe. Sometimes the reference is to a general opposition, compromising the possibility to understand the different perspectives of the several forces implicated in the revolution.

The worsening of the situation in the country led to the first demonstrations in January 1978. If the riots and the succession of deaths in the first half of the year was a bad but not helpless situation for the government, three main events changed radically the outcome of the yet-to-be revolution. The first one was the fraudulent fire set on the Rex theater of city of Abadan. This event occurred in August 1978. The secret police of the Shah, the SAVAK (*Sāzemān-e Eṭṭelā'āt va Amniyat-e Keshvar*, "National Organization for National Security and Information")³⁸, was blamed for the attack. The opposition to the Shah claimed that the secret police started the fire to blame the clergy and their supporters so that the opposition would be discredited. Actually,

³⁷ *ibid.* 141

³⁸ To know more about the SAVAK and its infamous brutal methods see Carl A. Wege “Iranian Intelligence Organizations” In *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 10, No. 3, (1997): 287-298

there is historical evidence that the clergy supporters indeed set the fire³⁹. Nevertheless, most of the Iranian population believed the claims of the opposition and the riots became more and more relevant for the situation in the country.

The second event is directly related to the previous one. The continuous demonstrations arrived at their highest with the general strike called by the entire opposition for the 8th of September. The day before the Shah declared the martial law in the whole country, in order to stop, eventually with violence, the growth of the opposition. The 8th of September will be remembered as “Black Friday”, because of the fact that the Shah let the military forces shoot against an unarmed crowd in Teheran⁴⁰. The tensions that derived from this massacre worsened an already unstable situation. Some authors⁴¹ consider “Black Friday” as the point of no return for the government of the Shah, whose destiny was then signed.

The last fundamental event was the uprising that took place during the Islamic month of *Muharram*. The *Ashura* is the most important day of celebration for the Shia Muslims⁴², during the month of *Muharram*. In 1978 it happened to be the 10th of December. What is important to notice, is the fact that the biggest uprising was called for the most sacred day in the year, definitively sealing the leadership of the religious movement inside the opposition⁴³. As a matter of fact, the *Ayatollah* Khomeini was already the most trusted and followed political figure of the opposition to the Shah. He was in exile from Iran since 1963 and stayed for the longest part of this period in the city of Najaf in Iraq, where he first expressed the theories contained in the book *Velayat-e faqih*. The Shah, during October 1978, decided to send him even further in order to get rid of the religious man. But it was a terrible mistake for Reza Pahlevi. Khomeini did indeed go further away, but in France, where the attention of the media and the protection granted by the Western states made him even more powerful and influential⁴⁴.

The revolution, in the end, left to the Shah only one option: to flee the country. During January 1979 Reza Pahlavi, sickened by cancer, went abroad and asked for sanctuary in the US. The first of February 1979, Khomeini made his triumphal return to Iran, after sixteen years of exile.

³⁹ Sabahi, *Storia dell'Iran*, 159; Desmond Harney, *The Priest and the King: An Eyewitness Account of the Iranian Revolution* (London: Tauris, 1999), p. 25; Abrahamian *A History of Modern Iran*, 159

⁴⁰ Sabahi, *Storia dell'Iran*, 158

⁴¹ see footnote 43

⁴² ‘The most sacred event in the holy calendar – Ashura in the month of Muharram– was commemorated to mark the day in AD 680 when Imam Hussein had knowingly and willingly gone to his martyrdom in the battle of Karbala in order to fulfill God’s predetermined will. Shi’is memorialized Karbala, Ashura, and Muharram much in the same way as traditional Catholics commemorate Christ’s Easter Passion at Mount Calvary’ Abrahamian *A history of modern Iran*, 5

⁴³ ‘Shi’a Islam is a major but non-dominant branch of Islam, and Iran is the only nation-state where Shi’a rather than Sunni believers are in the majority. As a religious world-view, Shi’a Islam arguably has especially salient symbolic resources to justify resistance against unjust authority, and to legitimate religious leaders as competitors to the state. The founding myth is the story of Husayn’s willing martyrdom in the just cause of resisting the usurper caliph, Yazid. And legitimate authority in the Shi’a community has long been shared between political and religious leaders, neither of whom can unambiguously claim to represent fully the will of the “Hidden Imam,” a supreme leader who went into transhistorical occultation in the ninth century. The Shi’a “clergy,” “13 or ulama, are trained to interpret Islamic law for believers, and they can claim, as well or better than monarchs, to represent authentically the will of the Hidden Imam.’ Theda Skocpol “Rentier State and Shi’a Islam in the Iranian Revolution” *Theory and Society* 11, No. 3 (May 1982): 273

⁴⁴ Sabahi, *Storia dell'Iran*, 158

Questioned about what he felt about his return, he answered ‘nothing’⁴⁵ to underline once again his submission to the will of God.

From that moment on, the *Ayatollah* worked to implement the government that he believed to be the only legitimate one, a theocracy. In March 1979 a referendum to approve the new constitution took place in Iran, and it was supported by the 98% of the voters (the legitimacy of the plebiscite is yet to be decided). This way Khomeini became the Supreme Leader of Iran, a non-elected life-lasting office.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, some significant reforms were implemented by his leadership even before, like the imposition of the mandatory veil for all the women in public places⁴⁷. The position taken by the newly established Islamic Republic went in a direction opposite to democracy. Different members of the former opposition were arrested, exiled or even killed by the decision of Khomeini, and what once was a non-violent movement became a repressive government, putting an end to the hope (or maybe illusion) for an actually free Iran.

2. *Italy in the late 70s and its relation with Iran*

Italy is a country that faced some hard times during the 70s. The second half of the 70s saw some significant developments on an institutional level. The political elections of 1976 gave a great result the Italian Communist party (PCI) and, for the first time in Italian history, there was a chance for the PCI to be an (external) part of the government along with the Christian Democrats (DC) whose members have been prime ministers since the beginning of the Italian republic. This choice had the name of “historical compromise.”⁴⁸ The external support given by both the PCI and the Socialist Party (PSI) to the DC, gave to the three governments that took place during the legislature the name of “National solidarity government.”⁴⁹ The relevance of this aspect is not related only to mere knowledge, but to understand the fact that there was, because of the historical compromise, a strong disagreement between the different parts of the Communist area, and therefore different perspectives on the ideology itself. Moreover, some terrorist groups were operating in the extremist left, mainly the Red Brigades, which in 1978 managed to kidnap and kill the former prime minister and president of the DC party Aldo Moro⁵⁰. This fact strengthened the bond of the parties that were supporting the national solidarity government, considering the fact that they had to face a real and dangerous threat to the republican institutions themselves.

Italy has had a history of good relations with Iran, since the 50s, mostly thanks to Enrico Mattei, president of the National Hydrocarbon Authority (ENI) in Italy from 1957 to 1962.⁵¹ But if on one side this aspect was good on an institutional level⁵², on the other the Italian public opinion

⁴⁵ *ibid.* 161

⁴⁶ see footnote 3

⁴⁷ Sabahi, *Storia dell'Iran*, 257

⁴⁸ Paul Ginsborg *La storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi. Società e politica 1943-1988* (Turin: Einaudi, 1989), 509

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Aurelio Lepre *Storia della prima repubblica, l'Italia dal 1943 al 2003* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2004), 284-287

⁵¹ Giuseppe Mammarella & Paolo Cacace *La politica estera dell'Italia. Dallo stato unitario ai giorni nostri*. (Bari: Laterza, 2010), 206

⁵² *ibid.*

and opinion makers knew Iran just as a country with plenty of oil reserves, and there was no knowledge about the culture or the events of the Middle Eastern nation before the starting of the revolution.⁵³ Therefore, it is even more important to check how the Italian press was describing Iran during 1978-79 because this information was completely shaping the perspective of the public opinion on the subject.

Another aspect that appears to be relevant is related to the political situation in Italy. As stated, the 'historical compromise' changed the institutional scenario in Italy, with the PCI externally supporting a government for the first time since 1948. The dislike for this situation expressed by the U.S. president Carter was clear in his policy of 'non-disturbance but non-indifference.'⁵⁴ To have a Communist party supporting a U.S. allied government was not what the American administration wanted. This fact was perceived by the left-leaning public opinion as an undue disturbance (regardless of the name of the policy) on matters that related only to Italian domestic affairs.⁵⁵ Why is this relevant? Because this fact led that part of the public opinion to understand and support the perspective of those populations and movements that were fighting around the world against the American action in domestic affairs of other states. And Iran was not an exception, mostly because of the support of Jimmy Carter to the Shah.

3. *France, the influence of colonial past (and present) on the left-leaning public opinion*

France has had a long history of colonialism around the world. Even if Iran has never been a relevant country for French colonialism, the relation with former French colonies shaped the way French opinion makers described and analyzed the events taking place in Iran in 1978-79. The importance and development of Third Worldism in France have been described by Kalter (2016) as structured in three specific periods: emergence, development, and decline.⁵⁶ The first one, which took place between 1956 and 1961, when Jean-Paul Sartre put a milestone in the definition of Third Worldism when he supported the independence of Algeria during the war with France.⁵⁷ The second moment, the development, was marked by the protest against the Vietnam War and the student movement of 1968. Again the attention to Third World countries was a core value for the emerging new left in France. The Third and final one was the phase of decline between '68 and the mid-seventies. The development of this movement was incredibly relevant for the interpretation of what was happening in the former colonial dominion of the Western countries. The support given to the liberation movements around the world by the French left-leaning public opinion was quite remarkable; it influenced the development of similar intellectual trends in other European countries, like Italy.

⁵³ Carlo Panella *Ayatollah Atomici, tutto quello che non ho capito della rivoluzione iraniana 1978-1979* (Milan: Mursia editore, 2010)

⁵⁴ Cesare Merlini, ed., *La politica estera dell'Italia. Cinquant'anni dell'Istituto Affari Internazionali* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2016), 226

⁵⁵ *ibid.* 227

⁵⁶ Kalter, *The Discovery of the Third World*, 8

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

4. *England and its invasive relation with Iran*

The relation between England and Iran has been a complicated one. During the nineteenth century, the ‘Great Game’ between Russia and England for the control of central Asia put Iran in a strategic position and, therefore, under an enormous pressure to support the British interests in the region.⁵⁸ The special treatment reserved for the British gave them the possibility of having control over different fields of Iranian politics, from finance (with the creation of the Imperial Bank of Persia under British tutelage⁵⁹) to the oil sector. The influence of the U.K. in Iranian domestic affairs continued during the twentieth century. They were directly or indirectly involved in most of the fundamental turning points in Iranian history: the coup of Reza Pahlavi in 1925, his abdication in 1941, the coup against Mossadeq in 1953.⁶⁰ It is therefore understandable how worried was the Iranian people of a possible British plot to stop the revolution of 1978-79. Mohammed Reza Shah had the support of the British government until his last days in power. Moreover, the plan of the British government to have an official visit of the royal family in Iran was still in place in December 1978.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the revolution stimulated a domestic debate in England in regards to the kind of relation the country had with the Shah. The more Reza Pahlavi was merciless suppressing the demonstrations with violence, the more the relationship between the Labour government and the Shah became complicated. In a moment when the problematic outcome of the British colonial history became a very debated field of interest, the development of the Iranian revolution became an important subject for the British public opinion, and the newspapers played a relevant role in the construction of an empathetic sentiment for the Iranian people. It is at this moment that the debate on the Third Worldism became relevant for this research.

⁵⁸ Christopher Rundle “Reflections on the Iranian Revolution and Iranian-British Relations” in *Durham Middle East Paper*, No. 68 (March 2002): 15

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ Tore T. Petersen *Anglo-American Policy Toward the Persian Gulf 1978-85* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academy Press, 2015), 32

PART 2 - THE ANALYSIS

The Western liberal Left needs to know that Islamic law can become a dead weight on societies hungering for change. The Left should not let itself be seduced by a cure that is perhaps worse than the disease.

"Atoussa H." Iranian feminist, in response to Michel Foucault, November 1978⁶²

The Iranian revolution in the pages of the *Corriere della Sera*

1. *How the Corriere della Sera initially described the situation in Iran. 1st January 1978 – 7th September 1978*

As specified in the first part of this research, the analysis of the Italian left-leaning opinion makers will concern the “*Corriere della Sera*.”

The way in which the newspaper described the situation in Iran changed along with the succession of events in the Middle Eastern country. At the beginning of the period taken into consideration, most of the articles published by the *Corriere* were just reporting news on the events in Iran, avoiding to express a clear position on them. A first example can be the article related to the general situation in the Middle East, where the Shah was described as a fundamental interlocutor of the West.⁶³ The attention is initially given to the peacock throne as a symbol of stability and a potential partner for the West to achieve peace in the region.⁶⁴

After these articles, the Italian newspaper started to describe (but still not analyze) the riots that were taking place in Iran⁶⁵. The stability represented by the Shah started to crumble.

If the consideration of Iran remained for some time related to the economic and political exchange with Italy,⁶⁶ a new interest in the region rose in the newspaper. On the 8th of May, the news correspondent of the *Corriere* in Iran, Dino Frescobaldi, described the main concerns of the Shah for the Persian situation, the religious fanatics, and the leftist radicals:

“Red subversion” and “black reaction” are the forces that from different position but on converging lines undermine the order. For the Shah and his government, there is no doubt about the fact that those are the same elements of a plot to destabilize the regime and bring turmoil in a key region for the world [...] therefore official sources denounce the “Islamic Marxists” taking for granted an alliance between Marxist radicals and religious

⁶² Afary *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, opening page

⁶³ “Carter e lo Scià: per i palestinesi una federazione con la Giordania” *Corriere della Sera*, January 8, 1978

⁶⁴ “Lo Scià e Sadat oggi ad Hassuan” *Corriere della Sera*, January 9, 1978; “L’avallo dello Scià alla politica di Sadat” *Corriere della Sera*, January 10, 1978

⁶⁵ “Gravi incidenti nell’Iran del Nord” *Corriere della Sera*, February 19, 1978

⁶⁶ “Forlani a Teheran visita lo Scià” *Corriere della Sera*, May 1, 1978; “Un ruolo all’Italia nei piani dello Scià” *Corriere della Sera*, May 3, 1978

fanatics.⁶⁷

What is notable from this article is the skepticism expressed by the author in relation to this alliance between the Marxists and the clergy, that appeared hardly believable. Even if the aspects of Third Worldism are not yet clearly expressed in the articles of the *Corriere*, it is important to remember that the use of a specific perspective is a process that developed slowly but continuously. For now, it is possible to notice that the description of the Shah was shifting from robust and stable governance to a more paranoid and bloody regime, which had a propensity for using violence against its own citizens in order to stay in power. More precisely, Reza Pahlavi became to be pictured as a fascist, and this process became more explicit after one of the most important events for the proper beginning of the revolution: the fire set at the Rex Theatre of Abadan. The Italian newspaper understood the relevance of the event and started to describe with more accuracy the developments of the Iranian situation. The *Corriere* interviewed Karim Sandjabi, one of the leaders of the National Front, who compared the fire of the cinema to the burning of the Reichstag in 1933: 'It is like the fire set to the Reichstag, which the Nazis plotted to get rid of their enemies. Dark times are coming to Iran'⁶⁸. Moreover, the *Corriere* decided to publish an interview to Shariat-Madari, one of the leaders of the *Ayatollahs* which said: 'This is a fascist regime, and the people are tired of it.'⁶⁹ These interviews of the leaders of the opposition can be considered as the expression of the new position that the newspaper was taking, which is to say, to underline (and maybe support) the reasons for the revolution. The problematic aspect of this choice is the fact that there is, until this point, a lack of the analysis of the project that the religious movement was promoting. A lack that will be covered, as we will see, by the reportages made by Michel Foucault just a month later.

2. A twisting editorial line: from the reportages of Michel Foucault to the interviews of Oriana Fallaci

As stated before, the "Black Friday" has been one of the most relevant events and probably the one that started the revolution. The *Corriere* decided instead to interview Reza Pahlavi:

- [Interviewer] Is there a relation between the modernization process and the current

⁶⁷ "Sovversione rossa" e "reazione nera" sono le forze che da posizioni diverse ma su direttrici convergenti insidiano l'ordine. Per lo Scià e il suo governo non c'è dubbio che si tratti degli elementi di uno stesso piano per destabilizzare il suo regime e portare lo sconvolgimento in una regione-chiave per il mondo [...] perciò le fonti ufficiali denunciano i "marxisti islamici" dando per scontata un'alleanza di fatto fra estremisti marxisti e fanatici religiosi' in Frescobaldi D. "Estremisti di sinistra e fanatici religiosi preoccupano lo Scià" *Corriere della Sera*, May 8, 1978

⁶⁸ 'E' come l'incendio del Reichstag che i nazisti architettarono per sbarazzarsi dei loro nemici. Tempi bui attendono il paese' Renato Ferraro "L'atroce rogo del cinema di Abadan "è come l'incendio del Reichstag" dice l'erede politico di Mossadeq" *Corriere della Sera*, August 22, 1978

⁶⁹ 'questo regime è fascista e il popolo è stanco di sopportarlo' Renato Ferraro "Nasce da un luogo santo dell'Islam la contestazione che assedia lo Scià" *Corriere della Sera*, August 25, 1978

uprising?

- [Shah] Yes, it is possible, if we add some elements like the international subversion [...]
- [I] Someone here talked about international conspiracy...
- [S] I cannot say that yet: we need proofs [...] nevertheless there are many rumors of weapons coming from abroad. An incredible amount of money has been spent. Where did it come from?⁷⁰

The suggestion of an international conspiracy against the Shah appeared to be - again - hard to believe, and the effect was probably to perceive the sovereign of Iran as a paranoid leader, incapable of taking responsibility for the unexpected outcomes of his policies. It is possible to state that from “Black Friday” onwards, the position of the *Corriere* became much clearer and a fundamental character emerged for the perspective of this newspaper, Michel Foucault. He was a famous French writer and philosopher whose interests were strongly connected to the development of the then contemporary society. He paid much attention to the study of totalitarian institutions such as asylums and prisons. He was part of a philosophical tradition of skeptical analysis of the reality and society and was very much appreciated by the left-leaning intelligentsia and public opinion of several Western countries.⁷¹ The famous French philosopher was sent by the *Corriere* as a correspondent to Iran to analyze the situation and write reportages that were then translated into Italian.⁷² Before the beginning of the analysis of his writings, there are a couple of aspects that need to be noticed: the *Corriere* was the newspaper that published the articles, and therefore they did not appear in their entirety in French, *Le Monde* and *Le Nouvel Observateur* published part of them,⁷³ even if the *Corriere* put at the beginning of Foucault’s articles a tagline saying ‘Teheran’, those articles were written in Paris. They were the result of two different trips of Michel Foucault in Iran between the 16th and the 24th of September and between the 9th and the 15th of November.⁷⁴ There is another issue that needs to be addressed: why this research is analyzing the production of a French philosopher in the Italian part. The fact that the articles were published in an Italian newspaper is one of the reasons why this research will include the analysis of Foucault’s perspective in the Italian part. This does not imply that the French philosopher received less attention in his own country, but that the debate on his position started with the publication of these articles in Italy. The second reason is that the impact of the analysis written by Foucault was fundamental in Italy to determine the orientation of the public opinion. The *Corriere* shaped their editorial line on the Iranian revolution in accordance with the perspective expressed by Foucault, and the editorial group which owned the newspaper was already planning to publish a book collecting all the articles written by the French philosopher (a project aborted after the unexpected outcome of the revolution). Moreover, some Italian journalists stated that the Foucault’s perspective was shared by them and that was the most suitable way to understand the Iranian

⁷⁰ ‘- C’è un rapporto fra il processo di modernizzazione e l’agitazione in corso? “Sì, è possibile, con l’aggiunta di certi elementi come la sovversione internazionale” [...] - Qualcuno qui ha parlato di complotto internazionale ... “Non so dirlo ancora: bisognerebbe avere le prove [...] Certo vi sono molte voci di armi che arrivano dall’estero. E’ stato speso un denaro pazzesco. Da dove è venuto?”’ Dino Frescobaldi “Intervista al Corriere nella residenza imperiale di Teheran. Lo Scià confessa i suoi errori” *Corriere della Sera*, September 21, 1978

⁷¹ Faubion J. “Michel Foucault” in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Michel-Foucault> [consulted 15th July 2017]

⁷² Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 181

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

events.

The goal of this collaboration between Foucault and the *Corriere* was expressed by the Italian newspaper in an article that stated they wanted to ‘start a series of original reportages and independent both on the style and on the political evaluation.’⁷⁵ The articles written by the French philosopher were published between the 28th of September and the 13th of February, covering the entire period of the Iranian revolution. One important element shared by most of these articles is the focus on religion, and, in the first one, this theme is described as the main bond within the Iranian people: ‘since the beginning of Islam, and especially since the murder of Ali for the Shi’ites, the killing of a Muslim by a Muslim, [...] preserves the power of the religious scandal, that implies political and juridical scandal too.’⁷⁶ The author immediately identified the connection, in the Muslim culture, between religion, politics and law, a connection that represents the typical vision of the supporter of the *sharia*, the Islamic right, and therefore of a theocratic perspective. What today’s reader can likely note, is the absence of a critic to this point of view, that Foucault decided to describe in order to properly picture the beliefs of the religious opposition to the Shah properly. But what does this aspect tell us? Even if it is just the first article, it is possible to underline a sort of appreciation for this strong bond in the Shia culture. Looking back at the points discussed in the introduction as those most relevant to determine the appreciation for Third Worldism, it is possible to state those movements that are fighting against a fascist/imperialist government could be fascinating for some authors, regardless of the possible undemocratic (and in this case even theocratic) outcomes of their fight. How is it possible to state that? One of the main principles on which contemporary Western democracy is based is the separation of powers, a unique source for every institution is clearly the opposite of democracy. By this, it is not meant that Foucault was undemocratic or supportive of a theocratic regime, but that he believed the uprising of the opposition was more relevant in itself than the possible undemocratic outcome coming from their perspective. This does not represent an acritical acceptance of the Third Worldist perspective, but a clear connection to it.

The second article was published a few days later, and in it, there is an interview with a member of the opposition. The reason behind the decision of Foucault to interview this person is the fact that he wanted to understand a perspective that was not biased by the western culture.⁷⁷ The author commented the position expressed by the interviewee saying that the greatest problem caused by the Shah was his failed attempt to modernize the country through the methods previously used by his father and Ataturk: secularization, nationalism, top-down modernization.⁷⁸ But not even one of these aspects fitted the Iranian culture, whose main bond is Shi’ism. The attempt made by the Shah to substitute this bond with the Aryan myth⁷⁹ was even less effective, and Foucault expressed his own opinion on this subject as follows:

Because it was the Shi’ite religion that in fact constituted the real principle of national consciousness, Reza Shah, in order to dissociate the two, tried to propagate a notion of

⁷⁵ note on the side of Michel Foucault “L’esercito, quando la terra trema” *Corriere della Sera*, September 28, 1978

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Michel Foucault “Lo Scia ha cent’anni di ritardo” *Corriere della Sera*, October 1, 1978

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ di Nolfo, *Storia delle Relazioni Internazionali*, p. 1287

"Aryanness, " whose sole support was the myth of Aryan purity that reigned elsewhere. In the eyes of the people, what did it mean to discover one fine day that they were Aryans? It was nothing more than seeing the two-thousand-year-old monarchy being celebrated today on the ruins of Persepolis.⁸⁰

Continuing on this line of interpretation, Foucault stated that the project of modernization was perceived by the population as something that was not part of their way of life, corrupt and made just in the interest of some foreign imperialist country. While, always according to Foucault, the western perspective was completely opposite: they believed that the Iranian people were not mature enough to understand and accept the benefits of modernization. The French philosopher described this western perspective as ethnocentric, and unfit to understand the real difference of this Iranian revolution:

Therefore, I beg of you, do not tell us any more about the fortunes and misfortunes of a monarch who is too modern for a country that is too old. What is old here in Iran is the Shah. He is fifty years old and a hundred years behind the times. He is of the age of the predatory monarchs. He has the old-fashioned dream of opening his country through secularization and industrialization. Today, it is his project of modernization, his despotic weapons, and his system of corruption that are archaic. It is "the regime" that is the archaism.⁸¹

The two quotations here transcribed clearly express the position of the philosopher, the Shah and his project of modernization was based on a western perspective that was not shared by the Iranian people, and hence the sovereign himself was a stranger in his own country, incapable of understanding the real needs and the culture of Iran. This idea was quite strong but nevertheless properly expressed the difficult situation of the peacock throne properly and probably led the readers to perceive the departure of the Shah as the only possible solution to the Iranian crisis. There was another relevant aspect in Foucault's analysis that requires some specification. The French philosopher defined Shi'ism as an ancient force and the only one capable of confronting unpopular and ineffective modernization. It is instead more likely that modernization was the real cause of this resurgence of a religious feeling. The destruction of the community relations of a traditional culture, caused by the top-down policies implemented by the Shah, is the cause and not the effect of the success of the religious movement.⁸² The revolution started because of the absence of a traditional social structure, leaving the Iranian people without a community base and hence creating radical opposition to the Shah.⁸³ Related to this interpretation is an interview made by Foucault in the following article. An Iranian sociologist described to the French philosopher the increasing success of religion as 'value as a refuge.'⁸⁴ Foucault did not believe this analysis and stated that the interviewed 'erred (out of discretion, perhaps, in front of the European that I am) by an excessive Westernness.'⁸⁵ What

⁸⁰ Michel Foucault "Lo Scià ha cent'anni di ritardo" *Corriere della Sera*, October 1, 1978, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 196

⁸¹ *ibid.* p. 198

⁸² Renzo Guolo & Pierluigi Panza, ed., *Taccuino Persiano* (Milan: Angelo Guerrini e Associati, 1998), 80

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ Michel Foucault "Teheran: la fede contro lo Scià" *Corriere della Sera*, October 8, 1978

⁸⁵ Foucault M. "Teheran: la fede contro lo Scià" *Corriere della Sera*, October 8, 1978, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 200

is interesting to underline is the stress that the philosopher put in this perspective: the Iranian is too Western while the European is the one that can understand more properly the real value of religion in a Middle Eastern country. This consideration creates an oxymoron in the Third Worldist perspective, or maybe express properly the problem lying beneath the surface of this ideology.

Foucault's perspective of the Iranian revolution became even more interesting when he started to describe another aspect related to the religious movement, the idea of 'Islamic government.' In order to describe this concept, the author used a series of comparisons and references that can help us to comprehend what is the meaning of this revolution for the French philosopher. Moreover, these comparisons have some aspects that can fit in the Third Worldist perspective:

When the mosques became too small for the crowd, loudspeakers were put in the streets. These voices, as terrible as must have been that of Savonarola in Florence, the voices of the Anabaptists in Munster, or those of the Presbyterians at the time of Cromwell [...] They seemed to evoke neither withdrawal nor a refuge. Nor did they evoke disarray or fear.⁸⁶

The first thing that has to be underlined is the highly pertinent comparison with Savonarola. The philosopher expressed a sense of appreciation for the religious sentiment because of the fact that was a true sentiment and not a refuge as described by the Iranian sociologist. And because of this, he compared this sentiment to the one of Savonarola, a Dominican known for the bonfire of vanity in Florence, when he burned all the things that were considered the expression of vanity, including several books. The hard thing to understand, at this point, is if it is possible that Foucault did not realize how much opposite to real freedom this sentiment was. The comparison with Savonarola seemed to suit perfectly with the Iranian situation, but the support for this movement expressed by Foucault is certainly surprising. How could he not see the reactionary perspective of such a movement? Probably, as it has been stated, there was a sort of fascination of Foucault for the novelty of this revolution, that was never seen before. Even more likely, the obvious comparison with the Reform in Europe during the XVI century can be connected to some Marxist thesis of the Anabaptists as the embryonic expression of would have become clearer during the following centuries: the achievement of freedom for the people through revolution. A second consideration that should be made is the normalization of the religious movement operated by Foucault for the Italian public opinion. The concept that he seemed to express was that there was nothing to fear about the clergy, which, though its austerity, was openly and non-violently fighting to overthrow the dictatorial regime of the Shah. The article continued with a description of Shariat-Madari, the most prestigious Iranian *Ayatollah* and representative of the moderate conservative wing of Shi'ism. The clergyman expressed to Foucault some fundamental ideas of his creed: the justice as a concept written in the Qur'an because 'It is justice that made law and not a law that manufactured justice'⁸⁷ and, especially, the importance of the defense of the community of the believers even through martyrdom. This concept is vital for the religious perspective, and Khomeini will make it even

⁸⁶ *ibid.* 201

⁸⁷ Michel Foucault "Teheran: la fede contro lo Scia" in *Corriere della Sera*, October 8, 1978, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 201

more relevant during the years in which he stayed in power.⁸⁸

Martyrdom, as a concept, has had a profound influence on the developments of the Iranian revolution, but the main purpose of Foucault is to express the commitment that the members of the religious movement had in relation to the revolutionary cause. Still, Foucault clearly stated that Shi'ism was not an ideology nor an expression of the already known revolutionary perspectives, but:

It is today what it was several times in the past, the form that the political struggle takes as soon as it mobilizes the common people. It transforms thousands of forms of discontent, hatred, misery, and despair into a force. It transforms them into a force because it is a form of expression, a mode of social relations, a supple and widely accepted elemental organization, a way of being together, a way of speaking and listening, something that allows one to be listened to by others, and to yearn · for something with them at the same time as they yearn for it.⁸⁹

There are some relevant implications related to this description. The concept of martyrdom has probably influenced the development of fundamentalist Islam not only in the Shia world but even in the Sunni one and it became a well-shared *modus operandi* of several organizations⁹⁰. The following article is again related to the concept of 'Islamic government', and to the opposite perspective of the key actors in the revolution: Khomeini and the Shah, 'king and the saint, the armed ruler and the destitute exile, the despot faced with the man who stands up bare-handed and is acclaimed by a people'.⁹¹ This description clearly expressed the perspective in relation to the two different messages proposed by the two political figure, the winning, vague and fideistic 'Islamic government' and the losing, violent 'modernization.' Even more relevant is what, according to Foucault, the 'Islamic government' is not: 'One thing must be clear. By "Islamic government," nobody in Iran means a political regime in which the clerics would have a role of supervision or control'.⁹² The outcome of the revolution proved how much wrong Foucault was about it. Probably he did not know, or not considered relevant, the *Velayat-e faqih*.⁹³ The French philosopher saw two possible definitions for this 'Islamic government': a utopia with no negative connotation or an old idea projected into the future, the teleological perspective of a return to the origins as the final goal, taking back Islam to the prophet's time.⁹⁴ Foucault probably saw in this specific revolution a way to fight oppression but did not understand the similar oppressive content of expressed by Khomeini. Here it is possible to notice, once again, the bond with the Third Worldist paradigm of the support for the liberation movements, regardless of the outcome of the revolution itself. Still, it is important not to conclude that Foucault had an acritical acceptance of such perspective.

The article published the 5th of November can be helpful to understand more precisely why the

⁸⁸ William Griffith, "The revival of Islamic Fundamentalism: the case of Iran" in *International Security* 4, No. 1, (Summer, 1979) 132-138

⁸⁹ Michel Foucault "Teheran: la fede contro lo Scià" in *Corriere della Sera*, October 8, 1978, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 202-203

⁹⁰ Panella, *Ayatollah Atomici*, 5-45

⁹¹ Michel Foucault "Ritorno al profeta?" in *Corriere della Sera*, October 1978, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 87

⁹² Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 206

⁹³ See footnote 5

⁹⁴ Michel Foucault "Ritorno al profeta?" in *Corriere della Sera*, October 22, 1978

French philosopher believed what he believed in relation to the Iranian revolution. The main issue, in Foucault's opinion, is the absolute novelty of this revolution: it was different from the Chinese and the Cuban because of the absence of a proper management structure: neither the '68 movements because the goal is clearer in Iran, to get rid of the Shah.⁹⁵ The absence of violence, the support of the revolution by all the different components of the Iranian society (from the students to the merchants in the bazaar, to the workers of the oil sector) probably contributed to lead Foucault in believing that the outcome would have been different. The perspective expressed by Foucault became even more surprising, for a contemporary reader, when the *Corriere* published a new article the 19th of November.⁹⁶ the subject is again martyrdom and is related to the celebration of the month of *Moharram*. Foucault described the feeling of the Iranian population for the coincidence of the revolution with the most sacred celebration of the Shi'ism as follows:

But the feeling of sinfulness that could remind us of Christianity is indissolubly linked to the exaltation of martyrdom for a just cause. It is a time when the crowds are ready to advance toward death in the intoxication of sacrifice. During these days, the Shi'ite people become enamoured with extremes.⁹⁷

It is interesting to notice the accuracy of the description made by Foucault and the contemporary absence of a critical analysis of what such a strong belief means in the long term. This consideration should be remembered even because the same perspective is expressed by the French philosopher in the following article. In this new piece, there was a description of Khomeini and his leadership. After a brief *excursus* of the history of Iran, the French philosopher described the reasons why the *Ayatollah* was capable of achieving such a great success in his country: he was not there and hence is not involved directly with the events even if he was recognized as the main leader of the opposition; he 'did not not say anything'⁹⁸ except for a total opposition to the Shah; Khomeini was not a politician, he was the meeting point of the 'general will'.⁹⁹ This description expressed the great esteem that Foucault had for the religious leader and his charisma. He was a myth for the opposition and capable of leading millions of people to protest, regardless of the fact that they were real believers or not. Once again it is possible to notice the great comprehension that the French philosopher had for the Iranian situation along with his support for the religious movement, strongly influenced by the bias of the Third Worldist perspective. How is it possible to notice this? Paying attention to the exaltation made of the religious leader of the opposition. Foucault understood the great political skills that Khomeini had, and they were related to the fact that he was never expressing a clear perspective of the future Islamic government. How could he not be suspicious of such unclear plan? Probably because he supported, as has been previously noted, the cause of the opposition, even if in doing so there continued to be a possibility of the implementation of an oppressive

⁹⁵ Michel Foucault "Una rivolta con le mani nude" in *Corriere della Sera*, November 5, 1978

⁹⁶ Michel Foucault "La rivolta dell'Iran corre sui nastri delle minicassette" in *Corriere della Sera*, November 19 1978

⁹⁷ Michel Foucault "La rivolta dell'Iran corre sui nastri delle minicassette" *Corriere della Sera*, November 19 1978, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 216

⁹⁸ Michel Foucault "Il mitico capo della rivolta nell'Iran" in *Corriere della Sera*, November 26, 1978

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

government.

In November 1978, another the news correspondent and famous Italian journalist Alberto Cavallari¹⁰⁰ wrote an article that strongly disapproved the Italian, and European, position in relation to the Iranian case, which had a clear title ‘Europe has to choose a bloodless oil’:¹⁰¹

What Europe could, and should, do while more news about riots arrive, along with purges inside the regime, is to push the Americans in order to avoid the transformation (like in the case of Prague) of ‘order’ into a gory reconquer [...] The price of oil has increased more and more since 1973. But we have to refuse to pay it even more with complicity.¹⁰²

This hard line against the Shah is the clear expression of the editorial line of the *Corriere* in this period. Moreover, some other articles were published sharing the same perspective. Renato Ferraro, another correspondent, wrote an article with the title ‘The medieval two thousand of the Shah.’¹⁰³ And alongside the article, there was a picture of Reza Pahlavi toasting with Jimmy Carter. This piece reconstructed the bloody history of the Shah, accusing him of being a cruel dictator who implemented his modernization policies with barbaric means and repression. These, according to the author, were the reasons why most of the population hated him and his policies.

The attention for the Iranian opposition led to a report¹⁰⁴ on the conference made in Rome on the 26th of November 1978 by Banisadr, an influential economic adviser for Khomeini. This reportage included some of the most relevant contents and goals of the opposition movement. More precisely, the Koranic law as an expression of economic equality for the population, and Islam as a constitutional basis for the participation of the people in the government and the sharing of natural resources¹⁰⁵. These are two of the main principles on which the future ‘Islamic government’ will be based. What is important to underline is the *camouflage* of important democratic aspects in a state that would clearly be a confessional based one. Equality is not the principle but the outcome of one of the possible interpretations of Islam. In this scenario, Islam is the one and only principle on which the future government would have been based on. But the author of the article did not pay much attention to this aspect, and what the public opinion had probably understood was the democratic purpose of the religious movement. In the month of December, as seen, the tension between the opposition and the government is at its highest level. The sacred month of *Moharram* was used as a way to galvanize the masses. The *Corriere* continued in its support to the opposition through articles that discredited the action of the Shah and of the Americans. On the 13th of December, two articles were published one next to the other: ‘Carter believes that the Shah can pass the test’¹⁰⁶ and ‘the army shoots

¹⁰⁰ Franco Contorbia, ed., *Il giornalismo italiano 1968-2001* (Milan: Mondadori, 2009) 4:1868-1869

¹⁰¹ Alberto Cavallari “Che l’Europa scelga un petrolio senza sangue” in *Corriere della Sera*, November 8, 1978

¹⁰² “Ciò che l’Europa potrebbe, e dovrebbe, fare mentre giungono notizie di nuovi scontri, accompagnati da “purghe” all’interno del regime, è premere sugli americani perché “l’ordine” non si trasformi (come a Praga) in riconquista sanguinosa [...] il prezzo del petrolio ha raggiunto prezzi sempre più cari dopo il ‘73. Ma ci si deve rifiutare di pagarlo ancora più caro con la complicità.” Alberto Cavallari “Che l’Europa scelga un petrolio senza sangue” in *Corriere della Sera*, November 8, 1978

¹⁰³ Renato Ferraro “Il Duemila da Medioevo dello Scia” in *Corriere della Sera*, November 8, 1978

¹⁰⁴ Renato Ferraro “Come sarà l’Iran islamico” in *Corriere della Sera*, November 26, 1978

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Ugo Stille “Carter ritiene che lo Scia possa superare la prova” in *Corriere della Sera*, December 13, 1978

in Isfahan: at least 35 dead'.¹⁰⁷ There was clearly the intent to express the fact that the Americans were supporting a bloodthirsty dictator that continued to kill his own people with no regrets. Here it is possible to stress the Third Worldist idea of a fight between fascism and liberation movements, and the support that the former were receiving by the U.S. administration.

The clear editorial line expressed by the *Corriere* is shown by these articles and the following of Foucault's perspective to support the position of the religious movement. To express how important the position of the French philosopher was for the Italian newspaper, Cavallari wrote an editorial to state it:

through its pieces, and especially through the investigative reports made by Michel Foucault, [the *Corriere*] immediately focused on the aspect of Iranian fake modernization, and on the Shi'ite religious rebellion as an authentic event, not fanatic nor regressive.¹⁰⁸

This words are fundamental for our research for several reasons: they explicitly prove the relevance and the influence of Foucault's articles for the Italian opinion makers and hence for the Italian public opinion; they express the conformity of the *Corriere* to the Third Worldist perspective; they did not understand (in February 1979) the real goal of Khomeini and his followers, the creation of a theocracy. All these reasons appear to give to this research a confirmation, at least for the Italian case, of the bias that influenced the analysis of the Iranian revolution. Still, it is relevant to consider how this perspective changed when Khomeini started to implement the theocratic regime in his country. This is mostly because it dissolved all the expectations and the analysis made in relation to the Iranian case.

The last article published in the *Corriere* by Foucault was the 13th February 1979, hence after the arrival of Khomeini in Iran. The French philosopher enthusiastically described the great achievement of the Iranian revolution enthusiastically: 'This nonviolent uprising of a whole people that overthrew an all-powerful regime - an incredibly rare outcome for the twentieth century - faces a decisive choice.'¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the Third Worldist perspective returned even in this article, in relation to the opposition made by the U.S. to the revolution. The American administration failed, anyway, even when they tried to be deceptive:

Rather than support at arm's length a dying regime, with which they were all too compromised, they prefer to allow the development of a Chilean-type situation, to allow the sharpening of the internal conflicts and then to intervene.¹¹⁰

The reference to Chile is clearly part of the Third Worldist paradigm, where the 'good' revolutionary forces were obstructed by the regime supported by the Americans. This fact can remind to the reader one of the main points expressed in the first part of this research about Third Worldism: the comparison between very different situations. In this case, the comparison between Chile and Iran, seen as the expression of the same phenomenon. Still, the future

¹⁰⁷ "L'esercito spara sui dimostranti a Isfahan: almeno 35 le vittime" in *Corriere della Sera*, December 13, 1978

¹⁰⁸ Alberto Cavallari "CHI HA PAURA DELL'AYATOLLAH?" in *Corriere della Sera*, 4th February 1979, p. 1

¹⁰⁹ Michel Foucault "Una polveriera chiamata Islam" *Corriere della Sera*, February 13, 1979, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 241

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 240

implementation of a theocracy in Iran is not part of Foucault's perspective (yet). The enthusiasm for this new, non-violent, religious, liberation movement probably affected the capacity of the French philosopher, along with many others, to perceive the real goal of Khomeini. Even more relevant is the influence that these analyses had both in Italy and in France, where his articles were published too. Many journalists were already following the perspective expressed by Foucault and many readers shared his ideas. It is not possible to precisely quantify the influence of this paradigm of analysis, but still, it is possible to say that it was very relevant for the left-leaning public opinion in Italy, considering the attention given by the *Corriere* to Foucault's articles and the high number of readers this newspaper had.

It is possible to separate the editorial line of the *Corriere* into two periods. The first one was the moment when the Italian newspaper expressed a Third Worldist perspective and a support of the opposition to the Shah. This first period was characterized by the analysis of Foucault as described before. The second one, during which the editorial line changed, was characterized by the fact that Khomeini came back to Iran and implemented a theocratic regime in the Middle Eastern country. The critics expressed by the *Corriere*, and its news correspondent, to Khomeini's policies, increased day by day until the apogee: the interview of the journalist Oriana Fallaci to the *Ayatollah* Khomeini in September 1979. The analysis will proceed chronologically in order to let the reader understand accurately the changing perspective expressed by the *Corriere*.

The first article to express doubt in regards to the policies of Khomeini and his new government was published on the 26th of February. The journalist Renato Ferraro described the visible change, due to the new regime, as follows: '[in the television] grim images of martyrs are the break between the endless *Ayatollahs*' speeches: Shariat-Madari with his unalterable smile, Talegani who focus his threatening sight to the public.'¹¹¹ The idea of the author is that with the accomplishment of the revolution, the *Ayatollahs* are reshaping Iran into a confessional country. Therefore the great support expressed for the 'Islamic government' seemed to be starting to crumble.

Ettore Mo, another special news correspondent for the *Corriere*, started as well to describe the changes in the Middle Eastern country. In the streets 'appears to be no space but for his [Khomeini's] portraits'¹¹² like in an Islamic "1984". A Picture of Farah Diba's portraits strained with both swastikas, and Stars of David were published in the newspaper¹¹³, to express the new authoritarian lead of the regime.

A marginal but interesting fact was reported the 4th of April in the pages of the Italian newspaper. Michel Foucault was attacked in Paris by some people that were against Khomeini's government. Those people apparently claimed to have committed this crime because the French philosopher 'supported the purpose of the religious movement.'¹¹⁴ Obviously, in here, there is another proof of the vast importance that Foucault's articles had for the public opinion. So

¹¹¹ "immagini macabre di martiri della rivoluzione fanno da intermezzo a interminabili allocuzioni degli *Ayatollah*, anche loro sempre gli stessi e sempre uguali: Shariat-Madari dall'inalterabile sorriso, Talegani che punta minaccioso sugli spettatori il suo sguardo" Renato Ferraro "La rivoluzione ha perduto il sorriso nell'Iran "che è tutto una moschea"" in *Corriere della Sera*, February 26, 1979

¹¹² Ettore Mo "Come si vive in Iran dopo la rivoluzione con gli occhi dell'*Ayatollah* sempre addosso" in *Corriere della Sera*, February 27, 1979

¹¹³ *Corriere della Sera*, March 2, 1979

¹¹⁴ "Foucault aggredito da avversari di Khomeini" in *Corriere della Sera*, April 4, 1979

important that the philosopher had to pay some sour consequences for what he wrote. The critics expressed to the new regime continued on the *Corriere* with an article wrote by Dino Frescobaldi. He said that the new regime was comparable to the previous one for the use of violence and torture.¹¹⁵ Moreover, the journalist continued his piece describing the abuse of special courts to condemn political enemies, just like many other dictatorships. The relevance of this juxtaposition could not be clearer. This is the end of the Third Worldist perspective for the newspaper, precisely because what was described as the worst enemy, is now a comparison term for the regime. The religious fundamentalists, once they had taken power, were acting in mirror images to the Shah. A series of articles were expressing the new point of view of the Italian newspaper. Here the titles will be quoted to give a general impression to the reader of the new trend: ‘21 men of the Shah executed’¹¹⁶; ‘Iran, an execution every ten hours’¹¹⁷; ‘The shots in Tehran are a symptom of weakness’¹¹⁸; ‘Khomeini wants his Nuremberg.’¹¹⁹ In addition to these critics, the *Corriere* paid attention to the developments related to women’s conditions. The worsening of their position was evidenced by the loss of rights, implemented by one law after another. Division of the beaches by sex,¹²⁰ mandatory veil in public spaces and impossibility to perform public office.¹²¹ Prostitution, drug dealing and homosexuality became capital crimes, while music was forbidden because it was ‘the opiate of the youth.’¹²² Even more important, for the perspective expressed by the *Corriere*, was the censorship of press: ‘A new law has been implemented, it strangles any freedom of information and produces an iron-made press embargo.’¹²³ In August a clear definition to what was happening in Iran was given: ‘Khomeini is establishing a personal dictatorship in Iran or, even, religious Islamic totalitarianism.’¹²⁴

What this climax of descent had its most critical moment with the interview made by the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci, to the *Ayatollah* Khomeini. Some aspects are worth to be noticed before the analysis of the content of the interview: Fallaci was given the opportunity to interview the *Ayatollah* because of the fact that she interviewed in a very critical way the Shah himself some years before. Her script was often used by the Iranian opposition to attack the Shah for his policies.¹²⁵ Fallaci decided to use the means of the interview, instead of an analysis to have the chance to ask directly to Khomeini an answer for all his dictatorial actions. Fallaci was an expert of the Islamic world and, as seen, had previously interviewed important Middle Eastern leaders, from Arafat to the Shah.

The introduction to the interview is already very disapproving. The journalist defined the *Ayatollahs* as ‘hierarchs of a clergy used to take advantage of ignorance and to manipulate it in

¹¹⁵ Dino Frescobaldi “Nuovi allarmi dall’Iran” in *Corriere della Sera*, April 15, 1979

¹¹⁶ “Fucilati ieri 21 uomini dello Scià” in *Corriere della Sera*, May 9, 1979

¹¹⁷ “Iran: un’ esecuzione ogni 10 ore” in *Corriere della Sera*, May 10, 1979

¹¹⁸ “Le fucilazioni a Teheran sono segno di debolezza” in *Corriere della Sera*, May 13, 1979

¹¹⁹ “Khomeini vuole la sua Norimberga” in *Corriere della Sera*, May 14, 1979

¹²⁰ “Iran: spiagge separate per uomini e donne” in *Corriere della Sera*, June 11, 1979

¹²¹ Sabahi, *Storia dell’Iran*, 257

¹²² “Khomeini: “La musica è l’oppio dei giovani”” in *Corriere della Sera*, July 24, 1979

¹²³ Ettore Mo “L’ultimo bavaglio imposto dall’Ayatollah” in *Corriere della Sera*, August 14, 1979

¹²⁴ “Khomeini sta instaurando una dittatura personale in Iran o, addirittura, un totalitarismo religioso islamico”

Francesco Alberoni “Iran, la grande illusione” in *Corriere della Sera*, August 25, 1979

¹²⁵ Oriana Fallaci “Intervista a Komeini” in *Corriere della Sera*, September 26, 1979

the mosques.’¹²⁶ The first question is abruptly *in medias res*:

- Many people describe you as a dictator. Actually, the new master. How do you answer me: do you feel sorry or you just do not care?

On one side I feel sorry [...] on the other I do not care because I know that this kind of maliciousness is part of human behaviour and comes from our enemies. Because of the path that we are following, a path against the interests of the superpowers, I believe it is normal that the slaves of the stranger sting me with their poison and throw any kind of slander to me.¹²⁷

The *Ayatollah* was clearly using the language of Third Worldism to express the righteousness of his actions. But the Italian journalist continued to chase him to have some real answers for his dictatorial behavior. She described the fanatic support of the masses to Khomeini as similar to Italian fascism,¹²⁸ but Khomeini replied that the only fascism in Iran was the one implemented by the Shah. Clearly, Fallaci is trying to use the same categories applied by Third Worldism but reversed. Khomeini did not want to be pictured as a fascist because the fascists are the people supported by the Americans, while he is the leader of a liberation movement. The Italian journalist continued her inquiry asking about the democratic rights promised by the *Ayatollah* that were never delivered to the Iranian people. The answer of Khomeini was almost always the same; he blamed the U.S. and conspiracy theories against him. He described himself as an inconvenient leader for the powerful western countries, and therefore every single accusation against him was not true, but just a way to discredit him made by imperialist powers and their slaves. This kind of belief did not leave any space for a proper and constructive analysis of what was happening in Iran. Therefore, the only possible outcome of a fight between a stubborn journalist and an immovable priest was just a sudden end. Fallaci criticized the imposition for women to wear a veil in public spaces: ‘Anyway my point does not concern only a garment, but even the meaning it represents: that is to say the segregation implemented against the women after the revolution.’¹²⁹ Khomeini’s answer to this accusation was very aggressive, as well as Fallaci’s reply:

- All that does not concern you. Our habits does not concern you. If you dislike the Islamic garment, you are not obligated to wear it. Because the Islamic garment is for young and decent women.

- Very kind of you. And considering what you are telling me, I immediately take off this silly, medieval rag.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁷ “- [...]molti la definiscono un dittatore. Anzi, il nuovo padrone. Come mi risponde: che ciò le dispiace o che la lascia indifferente? Da una parte mi dispiace [...] Dall’altra invece non me ne importa nulla perché so che certe cattiverie rientrano nel comportamento umano e vengono dai nostri nemici. Con la via che abbiamo intrapreso è normale, una via che va contro gli interessi delle superpotenze, è normale che i servi dello straniero mi pungano col loro veleno e mi lancino addosso ogni sorta di calunnie” Oriana Fallaci “Intervista a Komeini” *Corriere della Sera*, September 26, 1979

¹²⁸ *ibid.*

¹²⁹ “E comunque non mi riferisco solo soltanto a un indumento, ma a ciò che esso rappresenta: cioè la segregazione in cui le donne sono state rigettate dopo la rivoluzione”, Oriana Fallaci “Intervista a Komeini” *Corriere della Sera*, September 26, 1979

¹³⁰ “- Tutto questo non la riguarda. I nostri costumi non la riguardano. Se la veste islamica non le piace, non è obbligata a portarla. Perché la veste islamica è per le donne giovani e perbene. - Molto gentile. E visto che mi dice così, mi tolgo subito questo stupido cencio da medioevo.” Oriana Fallaci “Intervista a Komeini” in *Corriere della*

And so she did. The Italian journalist described the gaze that Khomeini gave her as ‘an enquiring gaze that made me feel naked.’¹³¹ Clearly, after this exchange of insults, the interview finished. There are some relevant aspects to notice from this interview. First of all this interview represented the first real attempt to make Khomeini accountable for the policies he implemented. Second, the Third Worldist ideological use of words was exposed: the abuse of the term fascism; the reactionary outcome of the revolution; the undemocratic perspective of Khomeini. This sort of clash of civilization between Fallaci and the *Ayatollah* express clearly the fact that not all the liberation movements born in the Third World could match with the Western principles or become a possible example for the First World.

3. What was the perspective of the left-leaning Italian public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution?

The analysis for the Italian part of this research has been completed. Therefore, it is possible to give an answer to the sub-question related to this country and reported as the title of this paragraph. There were three main periods that were analyzed in this part: the first one saw the rise of the Third Worldist perspective; the second was marked by Foucault’s writings which determined the supremacy of this interpretation over any possible other in the pages of the *Corriere*, as clearly stated by Cavallari in an article; the third and last period had to face Khomeini’s government, hence the perspective changed, Third Worldism was slowly but fully abandoned. What is possible to say is that the influence is not a measurable concept but can be verified by the opinion of the different authors and journalist who worked on the subject of the Iranian revolution. Clearly, Third Worldism had a fundamental influence during the first and second period considered, it created a suitable framework for the analysis of the Iranian revolution, and the Italian public opinion was strongly influenced by it. Nevertheless, when Khomeini ascended to power, this scheme of interpretation showed all its weakness, mostly in relation to the lack of understanding of the fundamental figure of Khomeini. Hence, during the third and last period reality crushed completely the framework created according to Third Worldism. However, what is important to remember is the fact that the adhesion to such perspective was not immediate, and the degree of acceptance and aspects shared of Third Worldism by the opinion makers never reached an absolute and total agreement, if not when Cavallari clearly stated that Foucault’s opinion and Third Worldism were the editorial lines that the *Corriere* followed.

Sera, September 26, 1979
¹³¹ *ibid.*

The French debate on the Iranian Revolution

1. The opening perspective of *Le Monde* on the Iranian situation

Le Monde, was one of the most popular newspaper in France during the 70s. It was characterized, at that time, for a position against the centrist president Giscard d'Estaing, and a more favorable one for the leftist parties.¹³² In the case of this research, there is an important aspect that will be discussed and analyzed, in relation to this newspaper, that was not found in the others: the use of cartoons. It appears to be relevant the fact that *Le Monde* published several cartoons in relation to the Iranian situation, mostly because sometimes a cartoon can express more directly the sentiment and the perspective of the author than a written text.

Just like the *Corriere*, the French newspaper *Le Monde* did not start its analysis of the Iranian situation abruptly. The articles initially published concerned, most of the times, the events that were taking place in the Middle Eastern country avoiding to take an immediately clear position. In January 1978, the attention to the facts coming from Iranian is very limited. The first article published is a concise one, which states that the Iranian police opened fire on the people three days before.¹³³ Considering that even the subsequent articles express a minimal amount of analysis,¹³⁴ it was still not clear the position that the newspaper will take in regards to the crisis in the country.

It is possible to state the same even for the month of February. One thing that is worth to highlight is the use by members of the Iranian government, as we have seen for the *Corriere*, of the word 'Islamic Marxists' to describe the opposition.¹³⁵

A first aspect that can be defined as a first attempt to express a position by the newspaper is the article published the 8th of March 1978. In that article, there is a transcription of the comments made by a French lawyer who spent two weeks in Iran to understand the situation, while working for some associations related to the opposition.¹³⁶ The lawyer stated that the situation in the country is that of a people that 'is no more paralyzed by the fear.'¹³⁷ and hence ready to fight for what is rightfully theirs. It is after this first attempt to define a proper position that the French newspaper decided to publish the first article signed by the special news correspondent in Iran, Jean Claude Guillebaud.¹³⁸ This piece is the first proper analysis given by a journalist of *Le Monde*. Even in this news item, we find an open critic to the arbitrary association made by the Shah between 'radical Marxists' and 'religious fanatics.' This fact is described by the author as a lie that is no more believed by the biggest part of the population. A second

¹³² Raphaëlle Bacqué "Le jour où... « Le Monde » choisit de torpiller Giscard" *Le Monde*, July 26, 2014

¹³³ "La police ouvre le feu sur des manifestants dans la ville sainte de Qom" in *Le Monde*, January 12, 1978

¹³⁴ "Le comité pour la défense du droit de l'homme tient sa première session publique à Téhéran" in *Le Monde* January 15-16, 1978; "Le commerçants du bazar de Téhéran ont fait grève" in *Le Monde*, January 22-23, 1978

¹³⁵ "L'émeute de Tabriz a fait cinq morts et vingt-cinq blessés" in *Le Monde*, February 21, 1978

¹³⁶ R. D. "Un avocat parisien estime que les opposants ne sont plus paralysés par la peur" *Le Monde* 8th March 1978

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

¹³⁸ Jean Claude Guillebaud "Une seule cible" in *Le Monde*, April 6, 1978

interesting sentence to underline is the one that describes the Shia and its clergy: ‘it would be wrong to forget that Twelver Shiism is even the place of encounter for the ‘reformist’ or ‘progressivist’ trend.’¹³⁹ On the same page is the comment related to the fact that people are looking at religion and Marxism as good valor’s to fight capitalism, corruption and a top-down modernization that was useful only for those who were already rich.¹⁴⁰ These elements can clearly be framed into the Third Worldist paradigm as previously described. And from this article on, the importance of this ideological perspective was continually increasing. During the month of May, the rising attention for the Iranian situation was testified by the increasing amount of articles, analysis, and interviews published by the newspaper. The first piece was, indeed, an interview to the *Ayatollah* Khomeini¹⁴¹. The simple choice to interview the leader of the opposition appears to be relevant because it gave more international attention to the leader of the opposition. An interesting paragraph is the one related to the idea of a state that Khomeini had:

Our ideal would be the creation of an Islamic state. Nevertheless, our first goal is to reverse the autocratic regime. During the first period, it will be necessary to create a power that can answer the essential needs of the people. [...] The regime that we will establish will never be a monarchy.¹⁴²

The fact that the interviewer did not ask some more questions about what did the *Ayatollah* mean when he said that he wanted an Islamic state, is important. Apparently, there was a much stronger interest in describing all the unjust actions of the Shah and of the U.S. As Khomeini stated ‘we will never accept a regime with a liberal face and a dictatorial content.’¹⁴³ An aspect that was noticed before is how the Shia clergy was capable of using the language of the left to promote religious ideas.¹⁴⁴ Paying due attention, a careful reader can indeed recognize the fact that Khomeini is talking most of the times about the people, their struggle against a western imposed regime and their national way to achieve a more just society (the Islamic state). This could be one of the reasons why there was so little interest in understanding more properly what was meant by Islamic state.

The other articles published in May kept the editorial line started by the previous articles: denunciations of crimes committed by the government¹⁴⁵ and the ineffective policies of the Shah.¹⁴⁶

During the month of June, the special news correspondent, Jean de la Guérivière, wrote a three-part article that analyzed the situation in the Middle Eastern country. The first article¹⁴⁷ is a

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ George “Les dernières émeutes sont les prémices d’une gigantesque explosion” in *Le Monde*, May 6, 1978

¹⁴² *ibid.*

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Paola Rivetti “La rivoluzione mancata. Della presenza e della scomparsa dei movimenti marxisti in Iran” *Critica Marxista*, No. 2-3 (2008): 103-112

¹⁴⁵ P. de V. “Plusieurs avocat ont dénoncé l’aggravation de la répression visant les intellectuels” in *Le Monde*, May 10, 1978; “Iran - des prisonniers politiques dénoncent la torture” in *Le Monde*, May 28-29, 1978

¹⁴⁶ “Nouvelles émeutes en Iran” in *Le Monde*, May 11, 1978; “La situation demeure tendue à Téhéran” in *Le Monde*, May 16, 1978

¹⁴⁷ Jean de la Guérivière “L’Iran à la cote d’alerte - I. le tract et le bâton” in *Le Monde*, June 7, 1978

general description of the hard situation in which the Iranian people had to live. What the author wanted to underline is the opposition between the peaceful protests of the opposition and the bloody repression of the government, the contradiction between the promised liberalization of the Shah and the use of the army to control the people, that became an ‘ordinary repression.’¹⁴⁸ The second article of the series is entitled ‘the derrick and the plough’.¹⁴⁹ The name was not chosen randomly. The article stated, once more, another contradiction in Iran, the difference between the situation in which most of the people lived - a subsistence economy of farmers - and the incredible profits gained by the state through the exportation of oil. The main problem was that most of these profits went to the rich or to maintain the enormous army of the Shah. Even here the lens used by the author is that of picturing the Shah as a careless dictator incapable of doing the best for his people and ruling thanks to the military support.

The third and last article of the series contained an interesting comparison. Entitled ‘the veil and the mask.’¹⁵⁰ the author dedicated a long part of the article to the Shia religion. After he described the different religious - and hence political - leaders (from Khomeini to Shariat-Madari) Guérivière wrote: ‘there are, indeed, some analogies between the “moderate” Shi’ism and the Hinduism of Mahatma: the exaltation of the traditional values, refusal of a “destructive”

modernism.’¹⁵¹ The juxtaposition of these two different realities is, once again, a possible reference to the Third Worldist paradigm. By this, it is not meant that there was no possible comparison between the Iranian non-violent religious movement and Gandhi’s struggle for India’s freedom. But, at the same time, the outcome was different. India became the most populated democracy in the world, Iran, precisely following the Shia leaders, became the first Islamic republic of the modern era.

During the month of July, the attention for the events in Iran decreased. This is due to two specific situations: the football world cup (football is the most played and followed the sport in Iran) and the reduction of political demonstrations. Nevertheless there some short articles were published in relation to the evolving situation and some riots around the country.¹⁵²

In August, the tension rose again, along with the attention of the French newspaper to the Iranian situation. The Shah announced his intention to go to elections in June 1979 that would have been ‘a 100% free’¹⁵³ a promise that both the Iranian people and the French newspaper struggled to take seriously.¹⁵⁴ The riots did not stop after this declaration, on the contrary, they grew. At Isfahan, the Iranian government decided to

implement the martial law in order to take back the city to order. This decision did not stop the



¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ Jean de la Guérivière “L’Iran à la cote d’alerte - II. le derrick et la charrue” in *Le Monde*, June 8, 1978

¹⁵⁰ Jean de la Guérivière “L’Iran à la cote d’alerte - III. le voile et le masque” in *Le Monde*, June 9, 1978

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

¹⁵² “Iran - Téhéran va acheter soixante-dix avions F-14 supplémentaires aux États-Unis” in *Le Monde* 22nd-23rd July 1978, p. 5; “Iran - Émeutes à Machad” in *Le Monde*, July 26, 1978

¹⁵³ ““Libéralisation” à Téhéran?” in *Le Monde*, August 12, 1978

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*

demonstrations, and the riots expanded to Teheran.¹⁵⁵ The critics of the contradictory measures implemented by Reza Pahlavi were expressed properly by another special news correspondent in Iran, Jean-Claude Guillebaud. The main problem of the Iranian regime, according to the journalist, was the fact that those liberalization policies promised by the Shah were too late to stop the uprising of a people in revolt.¹⁵⁶ Again, the author underlined the adverse effects of the top-down policies of the peacock throne on a still religious and agricultural society.¹⁵⁷

As explained in the historical introduction, one of the main happenings that changed the course of the events in Iran permanently has been the fire set in the Rex cinema of Abadan. The government and the opposition blamed each other for the crime, and *Le Monde*, from the following articles, seemed to believe the opposition's version¹⁵⁸. Some articles in the following days described the tension and the riots all over the Middle Eastern country, others, the international support received by the Shah from China¹⁵⁹ and Saudi Arabia.¹⁶⁰ The effect on this international support to the Shah's regime, anyway, was not helpful enough to restore the order or to gain the support of the international public opinion. Two cartoons were published during late August on *Le Monde*. The first one appeared in the newspaper the 29th August¹⁶¹, and it represented, as it is possible to see on the side, the Shah rolled up by a minaret, which had, at the top of it, a muezzin screaming on his face. The representation clearly referred to the ability of the religious movement to leave no free space to the king and constrict around him like a python. The author, Plantu, was probably against the action of the Shah, who was represented standing like a statue with a wicked expression, completely ignoring the screaming of the muezzin. This metaphor is a critic to the Shah too, who remained unperturbed even when his people are screaming in his face.

¹⁵⁵ "Les émeutes en Iran" in *Le Monde*, August 16, 1979

¹⁵⁶ Jean Claude Guillebaud. "Une 'libéralisation' trop tardive en Iran" in *Le Monde*, August 18, 1978

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ "IRAN - l'opposition rejette la responsabilité de l'incendie d'Abadan" in *Le Monde*, August 22, 1978

¹⁵⁹ "La Chine manifeste à son tour son soutien au chah" in *Le Monde*, August 26, 1978

¹⁶⁰ Jean Gueyras "L'Arabie Saoudite apporte son soutien au chah d'Iran" in *Le Monde*, August 25, 1978

¹⁶¹ Cartoon by Plantu in *Le Monde*, August 29, 1978

The second cartoon is completely different. This time the Shah is walking along with Hua Guofeng, the president of the Chinese Communist Party that came to visit Iran to show his support to the sovereign¹⁶².



The Chinese leader had a cartoon bubble in which the author, Konk, wrote; ‘Later on, I will go to Nicaragua to say hello to our friend Somoza.’¹⁶³ Several elements in this cartoon are relevant for this research. First of all, there is a critic towards the action of the Chinese government, which is supporting the Shah. Moreover, we can see a clear comparison to another dictator, Somoza, which expressed the Third Worldist perspective very openly. That is to say, the author is juxtaposing two entirely different realities (the Iranian one and the Nicaraguan one) as an outcome of the same situation. The Shah and Somoza are just part of a general scheme of control decided on an international level. They are the expression of the same phenomenon of oppressors against oppressed, regardless of the completely different

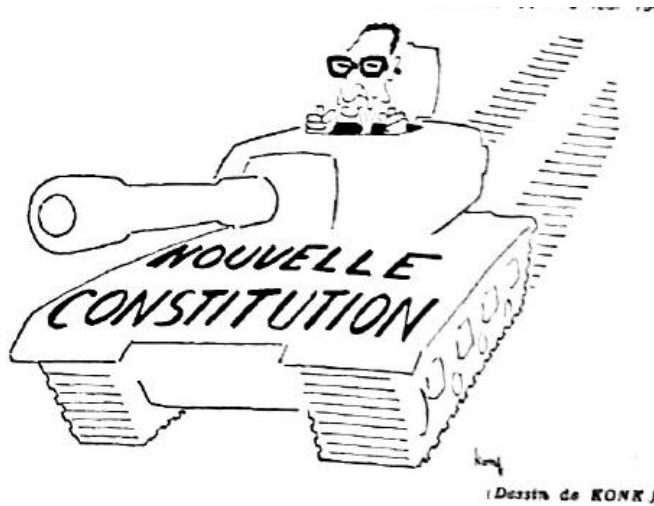
history, culture and tradition. As stated at the beginning of this paragraph, a cartoon can be a very powerful means to spread a message, and this one, in particular, seems to be excellent. In just one sentence there is the expression of a very common thought of the period: the everlasting fight against power and the support that dictators were giving each other, because of the fact that they were the expression of the same phenomenon, and as seen this is one of the main points that distinguish the Third Worldist perspective.

2. *The expansion of the debate after the “Black Friday”*

¹⁶² Jean Gueyras “M. Hua Kuo-Feng à Téhéran” in *Le Monde*, August 30, 1978

¹⁶³ Cartoon by Konk in *Le Monde*, August 31, 1978

The position of *Le Monde* became apparent as time went by. A general trend of considering the development in the Middle Eastern country as a concrete manifestation of the Third Worldist ideology spread even more because of two reasons: the bloody repression implemented by the



Iranian regime during the “Black Friday”; the legitimacy given to the Third Worldist perspective by the reportages of Michel Foucault. *Le Monde* was indeed one of the newspapers that cooperated to the project of the *Corriere*. And even if the articles published in the Italian newspaper were not released in *Le Monde*, this aspect did not stop the rise of a debate - in the pages of the French newspaper - on the opinion expressed by Foucault.

The first article published after the events of the “Black Friday” describes the chaotic situation in the country after the bloody repression and the implementation of martial law¹⁶⁴. The article is integrated by a new cartoon from Konk, in which the Shah is represented while driving a tank that had a writing over it which stated ‘new constitution.’¹⁶⁵ The reference is to the promised liberalization policies and the military repression operated by Reza Pahlavi. The message is even clearer: it is counter-productive to listen to the words of the Shah; he would promise something and do the opposite.

The criticism of the action of the Shah continued in the following article, published the 11th of September¹⁶⁶. the author defined what happened during the “Black Friday” as the action of a ‘firing squad’ against unarmed students and protesters. This crime was therefore perceived as very cruel, because of the absence of any possible excusal of the action of the military. The sense of betrayal and anger was properly described by the author, that defined (along with the member of the opposition Baktiar) this event as follows: ‘the irreversible has been

¹⁶⁴ Jean Gueyras “La loi martiale est proclamée en Iran” in *Le Monde*, September 9, 1978

¹⁶⁵ Cartoon by Konk in *Le Monde*, September 9, 1978

¹⁶⁶ Jean Gueyras “Le massacre des manifestants à Téhéran met fin à la politique de ‘libéralisation’ en Iran” in *Le Monde*, September 11, 1978

committed.¹⁶⁷ Even this article was integrated by a very meaningful cartoon¹⁶⁸. In this case, the Shah is represented as a butcher playing with a knife in his hands and wearing an apron covered in blood. The cartoon bubble, in this case, said: 'I had to save the democracy.' Once again the cartoon had the power to highlight with one sentence the contradiction of the Iranian regime. Clearly, the perspective of the readers of *Le Monde* was, at this point, completely against the Shah and his bloody policies. Nevertheless, the information on the perspective of the opposition was still lacking.



Another interesting cartoon was published a few days later, this time with a new character, the U.S. president Jimmy Carter¹⁶⁹. The American leader is pictured while giving a cup on which is written Iran, to a furious cat and the cartoon bubble stated: 'there are the human rights, but there are even the Inc.' The meaning was clear, the support of the U.S. administration to a fascist government is related to the economic interests of



America . The oil in the region was a precious resource that, and even the human rights are not as relevant. It is important to remember that one of the main points of the electoral campaign of Jimmy Carter was the respect for human rights; this is why he became the target of those mockeries. He was supporting a regime that constantly violated human rights, the Iranian regime. Once again the paradigm of Third Worldism is clear, the action of the U. S. administration seemed to be a confirmation of the support that the Americans were giving to dictators around the world.

Another Cartoon came out the 16th of September¹⁷⁰, in which was represented the Shah in a painting and the Iranian people in another one just next to him, with a black band on the side to express the grief of the population. The Shah became the symbol of the careless dictator, ready to kill his own people just to stay in power.

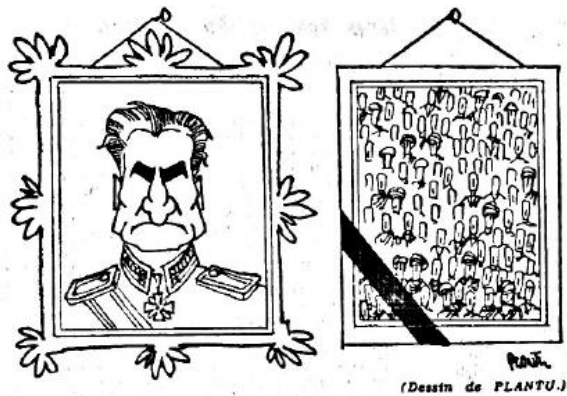
¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Cartoon by Chenez in *Le Monde*, September 11, 1978

¹⁶⁹ Cartoon by Chenez in *Le Monde*, September 12, 1978

¹⁷⁰ Cartoon by Plantu in *Le Monde*, September 16, 1978

The abundance of cartoons that were drawn in this period can be explained by the rising interest in regards to the Iranian situation and even to the clear position expressed by *Le Monde* in regards to the approaching revolution, a Third Worldist position.



The Iranian crisis had another effect too. It stimulated a debate between the French Socialist Party (PS) and the Communists. Lionel Jospin, member of the PS, wrote a letter that was published in *Le Monde* the 21st of September¹⁷¹. He was responding to some critics expressed by René Andrieu, member of the French Communist Party (PCF), which stated in an article published on “l’Humanité” that the PS was faking its criticism of the Shah while attacking the Iranian opposition

during a discussion in the European Parliament. What is relevant for this research is not only the fact that there was a domestic discussion in France about the Iranian situation, but even that ‘supporting the Shah’ was becoming an unbearable accusation for any party. In the letter, Jospin stated that: ‘every Nicaraguan, South African, Iranian activist knows that the strength of solidarity comes from its unity, the arguments between parties that are their friends irritate them.’¹⁷² In this sentence it is clearly expressed that the fight of the oppressed is the same all around the Third World, it is a struggle against the oppressors that are, even them, all similar. Therefore it is possible to confirm that even politics in France was effectively involved in the debate related to the Third Worldist perspective. The answer to this letter, published on the 22nd of September¹⁷³, continued to argue that the PS was not putting in enough effort to support the Iranian opposition, expressing this in a way that framed it as a struggle to determine who was more supportive of the Iranian opposition: Our only goal was to affirm with sensation solidarity against the crime’.¹⁷⁴

During the month of October, a new series of three articles by Gueyras was published in the French newspaper. The analysis concerned the situation in the aftermath of “Black Friday”. The first two articles, published at the beginning of the month¹⁷⁵, continue to argue the incompetence of the government in relation to the situation in the country and the maturation of the opposition, capable of expressing a real alternative to the mismanagement of the Shah. The last one, which had as a title “hooray for Khomeini”,¹⁷⁶ Expressed how the people and the different parts of the opposition were rallying around the *Ayatollah*. Most of the people interviewed by the French journalist were passionate about Khomeini. One of them said to Gueyras: ‘I beg you, tell the truth to the world. Tell that we cannot stand this situation anymore, we are choking under the government of oppression. Tell to them especially that Khomeini

¹⁷¹ Lionel Jospin “Contre le Chah ou contre le PS?” in *Le Monde*, September 21, 1978

¹⁷² *ibid.*

¹⁷³ René Andrieu “Le P.S. et l’Iran” in *Le Monde*, September 22, 1978

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Jean Gueyras “L’Iran après le Vendredi Noir - I. Faillite d’une politique” in *Le Monde*, October 3, 1978; Jean Gueyras “L’Iran après le Vendredi Noir - II. Le nouveau réalisme des modérés” in *Le Monde*, October 4, 1978

¹⁷⁶ Jean Gueyras “L’Iran après le Vendredi Noir - III. ‘Vive Khomeini!’” in *Le Monde*, October 5, 1978

came to give us the spirit of life'.¹⁷⁷ The support for the clergyman was overwhelming, and the Newspaper was able to show it to the French public opinion. And once more, avoided discussing the anti-democratic perspective of Khomeini properly.

Several articles were published during the month, an interview to Khomeini¹⁷⁸ and some others related to the development of the situation in the country.¹⁷⁹ But the most relevant for the analysis is the last one, published the 31st of October in which there was an interview to the former Iranian colonel Amin-Rahimi. In this interview, he made a comparison between France and Iran. He argued that the situation in the Middle Eastern country is like the French one in 1789: 'I believe that we will have the support of the French people, whose ancestors took the Bastille.'¹⁸⁰ This sentence had the clear intent of captivating the support of the French people in the struggle against the Shah, but it contained even a dark, ironic aspect (not meant by the Amin-Rahimi). After the guillotining of the French king, Robespierre took power and implemented a system still known as "the Terror". It is important to keep this in mind because some other articles compared the French and the Iranian revolution, juxtaposing Khomeini and the Jacobins.

During November a good amount of articles were published in relation to the situation in Iran. Two important events took place in this month, the initial dialogue between the Shah and the moderate members of the opposition, and the following choice of the peacock throne to nominate prime minister his chief of defense staff. Two clearly opposite decisions. The first article of the month is an interview to Karim Sandjabi, leader of the National Front, who described which kind of government they were proposing: 'a nationalist, socialist and democratic government [...] Now, since 90% of Iranian are muslims, this government will be islamic. [...] When the Ayatollah Khomeini demands freedom, justice and independence, he is demanding nothing else but us'.¹⁸¹ What Sandjabi stated was expressing the common goal of the opposition against the Shah. He, therefore, claimed that there was no difference between the perspective of the democratic Front National and the religious movement of Khomeini. This fact could not have been more confusing for the French public opinion. The necessity of a common cause for the opposition was hiding the real differences between the different parties. The attempt to achieve a truce between the Shah and the opposition was happily welcomed by *Le Monde*.¹⁸² But when the Shah decided to put a military chief in charge of the government, new critical articles and cartoons were published in the pages of the French newspaper. The articles kept the editorial line defined previously, as well as the cartoons. Nevertheless, it seems always interesting to see how the drawings represented the situation in Iran, mostly for the immediate (in the meaning of non-mediate) way those representations were able to express a concept easily.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ "Aucune solution n'est possible en Iran sans la disparition de la dynastie Pahlavi" in *Le Monde*, October 17, 1978

¹⁷⁹ "Des journalistes en grève dénoncent le rétablissement de la censure" in *Le Monde*, October 19, 1978; "La crise en Iran" in *Le Monde*, October 24, 1978

¹⁸⁰ Paul Balta "Nous sommes en 1789" in *Le Monde*, October 31, 1978

¹⁸¹ R. Delcour "Le gouvernement que nous souhaitons pour l'Iran serait sans doute islamique mais aussi démocratique et socialiste" in *Le Monde*, November 1, 1978

¹⁸² P. B. "Le chah serait prêt à rencontrer M. Sandjabi, chef du Front National" in *Le Monde*, November 4, 1978; Paul Balta "Le chah continue ses ouvertures vers l'opposition modérée" in *Le Monde*, November 5-6, 1978



The first cartoon¹⁸³ appeared the 7th of November and represented the Shah playing a chess game alone and pointing a gun to the chess pieces. The unnecessary use of violence in a game of strategy is a very strong criticism of the behavior of the Iranian sovereign. The main critic is the same as it was in the cartoons published in September after the Black Friday. The abuse of violence in a context where it was not required.

The second cartoon¹⁸⁴ was published a few days later. This time the Shah is a baby in the arm of the chief of defense staff. Here it is a recognizable critique of the

Iranian leader, capricious as a child, which hides himself in the arms of the military power. Even this is a *leitmotiv* of Third Worldism. Dictators around the world are hiding in the arms of the army because that is the only way they know to stay in power. The situation was worsening even more, because of the fact that the workers of the oil sector decided to start a strike and hence interrupt the first resource of the regime.¹⁸⁵ All the other articles published during this month are on the same page as the other seen before¹⁸⁶. This fact proves that there was a well defined editorial line for the French newspaper. Moreover, this line was shared by the journalists and the members of the PS and the PCF, as seen previously. The paradigm of interpretation expressed by Third Worldism was definitely a very strong one in France, at least for the case analyzed. Nevertheless, there was an outsider voice that published a series of articles in *Le Monde*, the one belonging to Maxime Rodinson. He was a Marxist historian, a leading expert in the field of the studies related to the Islamic region and societies and a respected opinion maker for the left, mostly, but not only, because of the strong support, he showed in relation to the Palestinian cause.¹⁸⁷ His articles had a specific aim: to answer the articles written by Michel Foucault.¹⁸⁸ They indeed had two very different perspectives on the subject of the Iranian revolution, but still, they agreed on the fact that this revolution was completely different from the one previously seen.¹⁸⁹ Even if Rodinson wanted to answer to the

¹⁸³ Cartoon by Konk in *Le Monde*, November 7, 1978

¹⁸⁴ Cartoon by Konk in *Le Monde*, November 9, 1978

¹⁸⁵ Paul Balta "Le premier ministre d'Iran dénonce le "coup mortel porté à l'économie" par la grève du secteur pétrolier" in *Le Monde*, November 2, 1978

¹⁸⁶ Paul Balta "Iran - l'Arrestation de M. Sandjahi donne lieu à des spéculations sur les intentions réelles du chah" *Le Monde*, 14th November 1978, p. 4; Balta P. "La peur règne à Abadan" *Le Monde*, November 16, 1978; Paul Balta "Iran - l'université a été le principal centre d'opposition au régime" *Le Monde*, November 18, 1978

¹⁸⁷ Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 99

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 100

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

analysis expressed by the French philosopher, he decided never to mention him in his articles, but to make clear references to what was written by Foucault in his reportages.



The first article by Rodinson to come out ¹⁹⁰ tried to analyze generally the differences between the Islamic and the Christian culture in relation to politics. The aim was to understand a phenomenon that, according to the author, was spreading in the Islamic world, religious fundamentalism. In Rodinson's perspective the overlapping of religion and politics in the Islamic world was a historical result of the way Islam expanded and integrated every aspect of the society:

These rules [the general provisions of Islam] were completed by different traditions from very different origins, based on the different nations and peoples conquered by the Muslims. But each and every one of those was made sacred through a, direct or indirect, connection to the Word of God, following the original principle that the Law of Islam had the will to structure the whole social field.¹⁹¹

The analysis of Rodinson connected this call for an all-embracing perspective to the expansion of the religious movements all over the Islamic world and did not see this aspect as something that would have led to democracy. What he believed was that the aim of the religious movement in Iran was not democracy but the overcome of the Shah and total control over the society. As such, the purpose of the *Ayatollahs* surely was not democratic. Such a perspective appeared to contradict the Third Worldist paradigm, and, moreover, the critic came from a respected leftist scholar and intellectual. This fact is relevant because demonstrate that the editorial line of *Le Monde* was not entirely determined by Third Worldism.

The analysis of Rodinson continued in the following article. This new piece was a more general description of how politics in the Islamic countries was influenced by religion¹⁹². A fundamental aspect was the 'Muslim nationalism,' a developing trend that expressed a new perspective in the Islamic world. More precisely the content of this point of view is that Islam represents the real connection and ideology for the oppressed people of the Middle East. The absence of a process of secularization in those countries fortified the idea that the values expressed by Islam were the right one to oppose to imperialism and colonialism from both the West and the Soviets. This new incarnation of religion as a political force 'where God is not

¹⁹⁰ Maxime Rodinson "Réveil de l'intégrisme Musulman? - I. Où Dieu n'est pas mort" in *Le Monde*, December 6, 1978

¹⁹¹ *ibid.* 4

¹⁹² Maxime Rodinson "Réveil de l'intégrisme Musulman? - II. La politique selon le Coran" in *Le Monde*, December 7, 1978

dead¹⁹³ represented the real novelty of what was happening in Iran. Moreover, Rodinson described the political project of these forces as follows:

But the dominant trend is certainly a type of archaic fascism. By this I mean a wish to establish an authoritarian and totalitarian state whose political police would brutally enforce the moral and social order. It would at the same time impose conformity to religious tradition as interpreted in the most conservative light.¹⁹⁴

The clarity of mind of Rodinson in understanding the future developments of the Iranian revolution is unique within the publications of *Le Monde*. He was able to comprehend perfectly the outcome of a possible successful revolution in Iran. The term ‘archaic fascism’ properly addressed the theocratic government that Khomeini would have established in the Middle Eastern country, once in power.

The analysis of Rodinson continued in a third article published on the 8th of December. In this part, the author described the historical relationship between the Crown and the Shi’ite clergy in Iran. The long alliance between these two institutions started in XVI century and continued until the XIX. The loss of power descending from the modernization of the country, along with the long-time independence of the clergy, motivated the *ulema* (the Shi’ite priests) to oppose the policies of the Shah¹⁹⁵. It is interesting to notice that this historical reconstruction went against the Foucault’s perspective and the Third Worldist paradigm. The French philosopher, along with other analysts, described the Shia as the only real power in the country in contact with the population because of the fact that religion was the only real bond between Iranian people. Rodinson, instead, suggested that the success of the clergy was due to its lack of power and the allegiance with the secular forces.

Another important part of the last article signed by Rodinson is the one dedicated to the ‘Islamic government.’ As seen, this term is a fundamental one for the opposition and Michel Foucault, in his articles, described it under a very positive light. Rodinson, on the opposite, analyzed the meaning of the possible outcome of an ‘Islamic government’ starting from the perspective that the Islamic fundamentalism is more ‘spectacular’ than the others. Stoning to death adulteresses and whipping the wine drinker were accepted practices for the extremists.¹⁹⁶ Therefore, considering that the provision for a good government in the Qur’an remained general, an Islamic government controlled by the extremist clergy would have led to the previously defined ‘archaic fascism’. Once again, Rodinson was able to understand the real goal of the religious movement led by Khomeini. The mottos screamed in the streets had a limited importance, considering that the real challenge was related to the proper implementation of the ‘Islamic government’.

The analysis written by the French historian proved an important point: despite the shared Third Worldist perspective, there was someone capable to give a deeper analysis of the real interests of the religious movement. Therefore, not all the liberation movements were necessary to

¹⁹³ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Maxime Rodinson “Réveil de l’intégrisme Musulman? - II. La politique selon le Coran” in *Le Monde*, December 7, 1978, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian revolution*, 233

¹⁹⁵ Maxime Rodinson “Réveil de l’intégrisme Musulman? - III. Entre archaïsme et modernisme” in *Le Monde*, December 8, 1978

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

support. Even more relevant is the fact that Rodinson was able, thanks to his knowledge and his analytical skills, to understand this point much before the conquest of power by Khomeini. *Le Monde* changed indeed its editorial line (even if Rodinson already broke the line of Third Worldist opinion makers) in relation to the Iranian revolution, but only after the implementation of a theocratic regime in Iran.

The absence of any support to the perspective expressed by the French historian was clear from the other articles (and cartoons) published. In order to prove this, it is important to look at the



sources. First of all, a new cartoon was published.¹⁹⁷ It represented the *Ayatollah* Khomeini sitting quietly under a tree with a bomb switch just in front of him. The reference is to the power that the member of the clergy had at the time. Though he was quiet, he had the power to blow up the government in Iran. This representation resembled a bit the idea of similarity between Gandhi and Khomeini, two strong and steady saints capable of galvanizing the masses thanks to their calm but stubborn approach. Once again, there was a Third Worldist perspective in the representation of the Iranian events. Moreover, the articles published between December 1978 and January 1979, continued to express the same concept. For example, an article

published the 13th December with the title 'The crisis in Iran, a multitude of demonstrators'¹⁹⁸ or some others supporting the victorious outcome of the revolution for the opposition, and, last but not least, a new cartoon representing the Shah as a solitary chess king on an empty



chessboard.¹⁹⁹ The representation gave the perspective of the doomed sovereign, now lacking any kind of support.

The journalists and analysts that supported the Third Worldist perspective had their best moment in this period. The victory of the opposition against the fascist regime of the Shah represented fundamental proof in support of their beliefs.

¹⁹⁷ Cartoon by Chenez in *Le Monde*, December 13, 1978

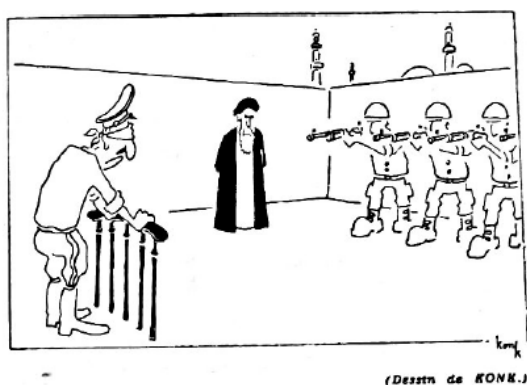
¹⁹⁸ Paul Balta "La crise en Iran - une marée de manifestants" in *Le Monde*, December 13, 1978

¹⁹⁹ Cartoon by Konk in *Le Monde*, January 4, 1979

3. The aftermath of the revolution in the pages of *Le Monde*

The support for the opposition by *Le Monde* did not last for long after the ascension to power of Khomeini. Nevertheless, this process was not immediate. In the first half of February 1979, the French newspaper celebrated the victory of the Iranian revolution. The astonishing rise to power happened in two days: 'The world has witnessed in 48 hours the funeral of a monarchy, the end of a power which affirmed his legitimacy and the paralysis of an army which was considered undefeatable by the sovereign.'²⁰⁰ Another aspect to highlight is how the article just quoted ended: 'Bye bye Carter'.²⁰¹ So, the Third Worldism was still an important part of the editorial line for the French newspaper.

The first information about the executions ordered by the new Islamic regime arrived in the second part of February.²⁰² And with it, a first cartoon that expressed some criticism against the



Ayatollah Khomeini was published.²⁰³ Within, it is possible to notice the clergyman watching a platoon ready to execute a sad general. What is clear is that now Khomeini has become bloodthirsty as the Shah was before him. This first proof of a change in the editorial line of *Le Monde* was not isolated, and the following articles and cartoons proved it.

Still, an interesting expression of the Third Worldist perspective was expressed the 1st March

1979. An article signed by two feminist anthropologists²⁰⁴ expressed a specific point of view in relation to the mandatory veil for women in public spaces in Iran. The title was 'The Veil Is Not Only a Mark of Oppression'²⁰⁵ and the main thesis expressed was that the veil made possible for women 'to affirm their role as activists, equal to that of men.'²⁰⁶ This sympathy for the new government continued to be expressed by some intellectuals, but the process was reversing regardless: the minority was then represented by the Third Worldist. A new cartoon answered properly to the claim of the two feminist authors. Published the 13th of March²⁰⁷, the new drawing saw Khomeini putting his hand over a veiled woman. Moreover, the woman is even wearing a striped robe and a star on which was written 'woman'. There was, in this cartoon, a clear reference to the striped robe and the star which the Jews interned in concentration camps during World War II had to wear. By consequence, Khomeini with the disposition of the mandatory veil for women was compared to the Nazis. An unambiguous message of disapproval for the Islamic government was transmitted by this cartoon. Khomeini

²⁰⁰ Paul Balta & D. Pouchin D. "Les chefs religieux ont paru débordés par les groupes de guérilla" in *Le Monde*, February 13, 1979

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, 3

²⁰² Paul Balta "Quatre généraux sont exécutés à Téhéran" in *Le Monde*, February 21, 1979

²⁰³ Cartoon by Konk in *Le Monde*, February 21, 1979

²⁰⁴ Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 109

²⁰⁵ Desmet-Grégoire & Nadjmabadi "Le voile n'est pas seulement une marque d'oppression" in *Le Monde*, March 1, 1979

²⁰⁶ Desmet-Grégoire & Nadjmabadi "Le voile n'est pas seulement une marque d'oppression" *Le Monde*, March 1, 1979, translated in English in Afary & Anderson *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution* p. 109

²⁰⁷ Cartoon by Plantu in *Le Monde*, March 13, 1979

became the enemy of freedom and human rights. Along with this cartoon, an article was published which criticized the actions of the *Ayatollah* and supported the women's demonstrations against the new law.²⁰⁸

During the month of April, new articles came out in the pages of *Le Monde* expressing the authoritarian drift of the Islamic government. The first one was related to the new rise of executions in Iran.²⁰⁹ In it, there was a quote from Khomeini that stated: 'the criminals must be killed without trial.'²¹⁰ The absence of the rule of law was clear. The same issue was discussed in a later article, which described the summary trials without appeal and how it became the new



(Dessin de PLANTU.)

normal in Iran, approved by both Khomeini and the Prime Minister Bazargan.²¹¹

The distaste for the policies of the Islamic government became more and more shared by intellectuals and journalists. It was at this point that Michel Foucault decided to reply to the critics expressed from various experts (and particularly from Rodinson) to his analysis. The French philosopher wrote an article for *Le Monde* the 11th of May, which had the following title: 'Is it useless to revolt?'.²¹² before the start of the analysis of this article, there is an aspect worth to notice. The simple necessity felt by Foucault to answer to his

critics express the mutation happened inside the left-leaning public opinion: *excusatio non petita, accusatio manifesta*.

The content of the article expressed a new perspective of the French philosopher and an answer to Rodinson's articles:

On what, if not on religion, could the disarray and then the revolt of a population traumatized by "development," "reform," "urbanization," and all the other failures of the regime, lean on? This is true, but could the religious element be expected to quickly efface itself for the benefit of more substantial forces and less "archaic" ideologies? Probably not, and for several reasons.²¹³

Foucault continued to support the idea of the authenticity of the Iranian revolution as a new phenomenon and an expression of freedom for the people, at least in regards to what the Iranian people wanted to achieve through the uprising.

²⁰⁸ Jean Gueyras "Les manifestations de femmes amènent l'Ayatollah Khomeiny à nuancer sa position sur le 'voile islamique'" *Le Monde*, March 13, 1979

²⁰⁹ "Les exécutions ont repris après publication du 'code pénal islamique'" in *Le Monde*, April 7, 1979

²¹⁰ *ibid.*

²¹¹ "Le premier ministre, M. Bazargan, aurait déclaré 'pleinement approuver' les procès sommaires" in *Le Monde*, April 13, 1979

²¹² Michel Foucault "Inutile de se soulever?" in *Le Monde*, May 11, 1979, translated in English in Afary, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution*, 263

²¹³ *ibid.*

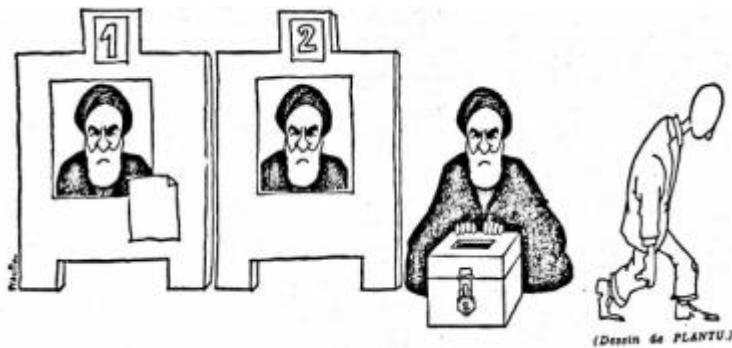
The spirituality of those who were going to their deaths has no similarity whatsoever with the bloody government of a fundamentalist clergy. The Iranian clerics want to authenticate their regime through the significations that the uprising had.²¹⁴

It is possible to state that the French philosopher changed his idea in relation to Khomeini, but not of to the revolution itself. The outcome was unexpected but this does not imply that it is useless to revolt. Is it possible to connect this new perspective to the Third Worldist paradigm? It is, in some aspects. More precisely, the firm belief that the French philosopher had in the importance of uprising, regardless of the outcome, can be connected to ideology behind the general support to all the liberation movements in the Third World.

This article signed the end of the editorial line related to Third Worldism. All the following pieces were deeply critic to the Iranian new regime. The Third Worldist perspective did not have any more relevance in the analysis of the Middle Eastern country.

From June on, several articles tried to explain how the situation was developing in Iran. Eric Rouleau, the special news correspondent, wrote a series of five reportages to give the idea to the reader of what was happening in that still mutating country.

The trend was settled, and all the articles analyzed for this research continued to express the undemocratic evolution of the situation in Iran. To conclude the findings related to the French



part a last cartoon will be considered. Published for the number of 5th-6th August 1979²¹⁵, this drawing is connected to the irregularities that took place during the elections in Iran for the constitutional assembly. The Image represents the absence of choice for the electorate in the Middle Eastern country. The two

possible choices are Khomeini or Khomeini, and he was also the one taking care of the votes. This cartoon clearly stated the dictatorial outcome of the Islamic government. There was no possible alternative for the people that fought for freedom.

4. What was the perspective of the left-leaning French public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution?

Now that the analysis of the French perspective is completed, it is possible to answer the second sub-question, the one related to France and reported in the title of this paragraph to remind it to the reader. As seen, *Le Monde* had a developing editorial line in relation to the Iranian situation. The first period saw an increasing Third Worldist approach that became dominant during the second period. Nevertheless, Rodinson expressed a different opinion on the matter in a period

²¹⁴ *ibid.*

²¹⁵ Cartoon by Plantu in *Le Monde*, August 5-6, 1979

when all the authors and journalists were supportive of Third Worldism and Foucault's perspective. The ascension to power by Khomeini led to a change in the editorial line, even though some authors continued to believe that the Western perspective was necessarily biased (i.e. the two feminist anthropologists who believed the veil was a revolutionary symbol and not an oppressive one). The implementation of a theocratic system in the Middle Eastern country determined an unchangeable shift in the beliefs of the French public opinion. An aspect that is important to notice is how often cartoons were used in the French newspaper and how precisely they followed the editorial line, becoming a fundamental tool to understand and clarify the changing perspective of both the opinion makers and, by consequence, of the public opinion. In the end, it is possible to say that Third Worldism has been a fundamental framework used by the authors and intellectuals to understand the Iranian situation with a very relevant exception, represented by Maxime Rodinson. However, this framework did not survive the 'reality check' when the *Ayatollah* turned out to be a dictator.

The British case and the differences from the continent

1. *The Iranian revolution in the pages of The Guardian and The Observer*

As seen in the first part of this research, the British had a complex relationship with Iran. The invasive actions implemented by the British government during the first half of the twentieth century necessarily influenced the perspective and the analysis made by the British opinion makers, were they journalists, politicians or otherwise. Moreover, England was less influenced by Marxism and Third Worldism, if compared to the continent. Therefore, it is important to understand how much the latter ideology was present in the newspapers, in order to check if there was a general European pattern in relation to the Iranian revolution.

As for the newspapers previously considered, the first months of 1978 were characterized by the publication of articles that reported the news without a deep analysis of the reasons of the uprisings in Iran. A first example of this kind of articles was the one published in mid-January in *The Guardian* which stated the beginning of the clash between the regime and the religious movement.²¹⁶ It is possible to state the same for the publications during the month of February 1978. Pieces describing the management of the riots by the Iranian government appeared in the pages of the British left-leaning newspaper. ‘Tabriz count riot costs.’²¹⁷ ‘Amnesty can bring new trouble to Iran.’²¹⁸ ‘Iran will crack down after riots’²¹⁹ these were the titles of the articles published in February both in *The Guardian* and “the Observer”.

In March 1978, a first article, which expressed a partial analysis of the events taking place in Iran, was published in *The Guardian*. This piece compared the use of torture in several countries of the Third World and the justification given by the relative governments for this behavior:

Present dictators from Iran to Latin America genuinely believe that Marxists and left-wing organizations actually initiate discontent, and that all would be well in their societies if only the “subversive” could be destroyed.²²⁰

The association made between the action taken by South American dictators and the Shah, can be seen as a first expression of the Third Worldist paradigm in the pages of the English newspaper. As described before, this kind of comparison between very different countries was a typical aspect of Third Worldism and had a lack of understanding the different roots that caused the behavior of the different dictators. However, Third Worldist perspective remained an isolated during the beginning of 1978. Most of the articles written by the news correspondent remained focused on the mere reporting of the events, avoiding a more critical discussion.²²¹ During the month of April, some articles reported the news, while some others started to express

²¹⁶ Liz Thurgood “Shah and Moslem leaders clash in rising chorus of dissent” in *the Guardian*, January 17, 1978

²¹⁷ Liz Thurgood “Tabriz counts riot costs” in *the Guardian*, February 21, 1978

²¹⁸ Liz Thurgood “Amnesty can bring new trouble in Iran” in *the Guardian*, February 22, 1978

²¹⁹ William Branigin “Iran will crack down after riots” in *the Observer*, February 26, 1978

²²⁰ Ruthven Malise “Ruled by terror” in *the Guardian*, March 2, 1978

²²¹ UPI “Iranian riot toll is disputed” in *the Guardian*, March 13, 1978; UPI “Iran clamps down on rioters” in *the Guardian*, March 30, 1978

a more accurate analysis of the causes of the uprisings. According to the special news correspondent in Teheran, the Shah had ‘no one but himself to blame’²²² for the complicated situation: he was the author and the main supporter of a series of ruinous policies. However, the attention for the religious opposition remained limited to a superficial description. The leaders were described as capable of galvanizing the crowd, but their demands were not clearly analyzed by the English newspaper.

In May, a letter from a reader was sent to the editor of *The Guardian*. It appears to be a useful source for this research, mainly because it expressed a perspective from the English public opinion. Even more relevant is the fact that this letter supported the Third Worldist perspective:

One cannot come to an accommodation with evil, and for the government to speak out openly and forcefully is of greater importance than any other consideration, whether it be the Soviet Union, the USA *vide* the School of Americas moved from Panama, where methods of repression and suppression were taught, Brazil, Argentina, Haiti, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Iran, South Africa²²³

The attention of a reader for those several countries, and the perception he expressed of a connection between all the cases supports the idea that even the British public opinion was influenced by the Third Worldist perspective. Even more so, considering the way the reader/writer named those regimes: ‘the evil’; a Manichaeist category that included all the different dictatorships and their actions.

The lack of long term plans for the Shah government continued to be expressed in the pages of *The Guardian*. Violence increased, and so did the articles on the brutal methods of the Iranian king.²²⁴ The following month does not see a clear change in this editorial line. Most of the articles remained focused on the simple transmission of news with some rare exceptions. An example of the latter is the article published the 20th of June 1978. In this piece was analyzed the general trend of Third World countries in relation to the increased demand for weapons.²²⁵ In the month of July, the attention for the Middle Eastern country decreased. Nevertheless, a different perspective was expressed in a couple of articles. Those pieces stated the intention of the Shah for a more liberal and democratic development for his country. The support expressed for the Iranian leader does not have a proper comparison in the other newspapers analyzed in this research and hence appears to be a first relevant difference from the continental attitude towards the Iranian situation. The first article was published the 4th of July and expressed the necessity for the opposition to take political responsibility and not only attack the policies of modernization implemented by Reza Pahlavi.²²⁶ The second stated the importance and the relevance of the push towards democracy and liberalization carried out by the Shah.²²⁷ This different perspective expressed by the English newspaper is fundamental, mostly because it showed a more cautious way of understanding the Iranian situation. By this, it was not meant

²²² Jonathan Randal “Policies backfire on Shah” in *The Guardian*, April 10, 1978

²²³ C. W. Manning, Letter to the editor, “Speaking up for human rights” in *The Guardian*, May 3, 1978

²²⁴ Liz Thurgood “Harsh tactics fail to teach a lesson to Iranian students” *The Guardian*, May 16, 1978; Reuter “Iran riot ‘warning’ to Shah” *The Guardian*, May 17, 1978

²²⁵ David Pallister “Third World step up interest in arms” in *The Guardian*, June 20, 1978

²²⁶ Martin Woollacott “Iran’s cautious style of democracy” in *The Guardian*, July 4, 1978

²²⁷ Martin Woollacott “The Shah shoves Iran towards democracy” in *The Guardian*, July 8, 1978

to say that the Shah was a true supporter of liberalization, but that the situation was more complicated than a black and white distinction between ‘good’ and ‘evil’. Moreover, the time in which those articles were published appears to be significant: while *Le Monde* and “*Corriere della Sera*” were shifting their position from neutrality to a clear support for the opposition, *The Guardian* was instead expressing support for the Shah’s policies.

As seen in the previous analysis, the month of August 1978 was marked by the tragic event of the fire of the Abadan cinema. The situation at the time was unclear, the opposition was blaming the regime for the tragedy, while the regime was blaming the opposition. A mistake worth



noticing was made by *The Guardian*, which claimed that Mehdi Bazargan was a ‘respected religious leader’²²⁸ while instead, he was a secular member of the opposition and a democratic supporter.²²⁹ Such a confusion made by the British newspaper can be considered part of

the reason why the public opinion had not a clear understanding of the Iranian events. The opposition was considered as a single body, while actually, the different members of the movement had different ideas for the future of Iran.

Until this point, the editorial line expressed by the English newspaper was ambivalent. There were authors more supportive of the Shah publishing pieces, along with journalists influenced by the Third Worldist perspective. For both the *Corriere* and *Le Monde* the ‘Black Friday’ was a fundamental turning point to determine their point of view. Therefore, it is important to check if this was the case for *The Guardian* too.

The 9th of September, the British newspaper reported the bloodshed happened in Iran. The use of violence over an unarmed crowd was impossible to support, and *The Guardian* described the terrible decision of the Iranian king. A cartoon was published the same day.²³⁰ It represented the Shah on a crumbling peacock throne, with a queue of the world’s leaders looking for some deals. Moreover, a rock was represented breaking the glass of a window and arriving at the head of one of those leaders. This cartoon clearly express the dependency of many states from the energy supply given by Iran. And even if the peacock throne is crumbling and there are riots all over the country (represented by the flying rocks), still the queue of foreign countries ready to deal with the Shah is quite long. Is it possible to connect this Cartoon to the Third Worldist perspective? Yes, it is. The complete indifference for the angry crowd expressed by the western countries and the superpowers is a message. It is wrong to support a violent regime just because of economic interests. Another example of the discredit for the Shah was the article published

²²⁸ Liz Thurgood “Ten held for Iran fire as toll rises” in *The Guardian*, August 22, 1978

²²⁹ Sabahi, *Storia dell’Iran*, 143

²³⁰ Cartoon by Fitzjames in *The Guardian*, September 9, 1978

the 11th of September: ‘The Shah goes back to rule by bullet’.²³¹ Nevertheless, the commitment of the Shah was not in doubt for the British opinion makers. In an article published the 17th of September in “The Observer”, the journalist Colin Smith stressed this ‘genuine intellectual commitment’²³² of the Iranian sovereign but said that, even so, the Shah was doomed if he did not act very quickly to support the liberalization program. Once again, the editorial line of the group of *The Guardian* and “The Observer” was not clearly defined. Some journalists still believed that there was a chance for the Shah to be a liberal leader, while others condemned the violent actions against the population. Therefore, it is possible to notice a clear difference from the continental newspapers analyzed before.

In the month of October, the perspective of the editorial group was not more defined than before. Many articles were still reporting the news about the events in Iran without expressing an unambiguous position. Nevertheless, an interesting debate started in the pages of the newspaper. It was related to the position of the British Labour party, which represented the government at the time.

Doctor David Owen, the Foreign Secretary defied his Labour Party critics yesterday by declaring that it would not be Britain’s interests if the Shah of Iran was toppled. The right course for the West was to keep up the pressure for liberalization of the existing regime, he said.²³³

The fact that there was a clear disagreement between a Labour minister and the majority of Labour MPs expressed the divergence inside the left-leaning opinion makers. Apparently, this division was not only a matter related to the press but clearly even to politics. As a matter of fact, the debate continued in the following days. Owen was criticized again by the members of his own party: ‘Owen talking rubbish over Iran, says MP’²³⁴ was the title of the following article. The problem expressed by the Foreign Minister was clear: in the event of a fall of the Iranian regime, the Soviet Union would profit from the chaotic situation. Hence it was better for Britain to maintain the Shah in power, regardless for his disrespect for human rights. About this debate, a clear position on the matter was stated in an article published in *The Guardian*:

It is one thing not to want to lend, even indirectly, public support to those who seek a change of regime. It is quite another to write off the representatives of all those in Iran who do want radical social and political change as tools either of ultra-reactionary religious fanatics or agents of Moscow. There is no doubt that both the elements are to be found in the current Iranian ferment [...] but the movement for democracy and change is far more complex²³⁵

The way in which the problematic situation was analyzed by the British newspaper is particularly interesting if compared to the continental one. As it is possible to see from the quotation, the analysis went deeper than before. There was a clear differentiation between the religious fundamentalist, the communists and the democratic components of the revolution.

²³¹ Liz Thurgood “The Shah goes back to rule by bullet” in *The Guardian*, September 11, 1978

²³² Colin Smith “Time running out for the Shah” in *The Observer*, September 17, 1978

²³³ Ian Aitken “Defiant Dr. Owen backs the Shah” in *The Guardian*, October 23, 1978

²³⁴ Michael White “Owen talking rubbish over Iran, says MP” in *The Guardian*, October 24, 1978

²³⁵ “Our Shah, right or wrong?” in *The Guardian*, October 24, 1978

The opposition showed by *The Guardian* towards the religious movement, defined as ultra-reactionary, was a clear differentiation from the continental trend of support for Khomeini. The debate inside the Labour party continued in November. The position was still divided on the support for the Shah. The government was trying to maintain a proper relationship with the peacock throne, while the MPs were much against this position and supported the Iranian movements. Therefore, the plan of Elizabeth II to go and visit Iran was strongly criticized by the Labour MPs,²³⁶ considering that such a trip would have demonstrated the still strong link between the British government and the Iranian dictator.

It is important to remember that the support for the Iranian opposition by some journalist of *The Guardian* was not for the whole opposition. Critics to Khomeini continued to be written in the newspaper: '[Khomeini] symbolizes a Right-wing, reactionary, fanatical force, which, given half the chance, would drag Iran back to 7th century'.²³⁷ Those harsh words were a clear expression of the editorial line: the newspaper was ambiguous on the support, but not on the disdain, it did not like the reactionary perspective of Khomeini. Another article, published the 10th of November, stated this critic to the Shi'a clergy and its followers

The specific solution offered [by the Islamic fundamentalists], in its rigidity and legalism and with its elitist and theocratic overtones, is another matter, seeming to open up another dimension of conflict and schism between societies which have known little else in their modern existence.²³⁸

Moreover, the political debate in relation to Iran continued in the pages of *The Guardian*. A couple of articles described the position of both the parliamentary majority and the Prime minister.²³⁹

During the month of December, the demonstrations increased. The reports made by the British newspapers paid more attention to the development of those protests. Nevertheless, this attention did not lead to more analysis than before. Most of the articles reported the news with little investigation. However, one article was published in relation to the general situation of the Islamic countries. In this piece, the instability in the Middle East was described, and it tried to explain the decreasing influence of superpowers in the region.²⁴⁰ Both the US and the USSR were not perceived by the Iranian population as reliable allies. This fact created a shift in the common perspective of the Third World countries as moving from one protector to the other like if international relations were just a straight line.

As seen, Khomeini never received the support of *The Guardian* editorial line, even if some aspects of Third Worldism were integrated into its perspective. In January, when it became clear that the Shah was doomed and the *Ayatollah* was ready to come back and rule the country, the British newspaper became increasingly hostile to the Iranian clergyman. This aspect can be proved by a letter to the editor published the 25th of January 1979. The title of this letter explained clearly the position of the reader/writer: 'Khomeini is not the answer to Iran's prayers'.²⁴¹ As stated before, it is both interesting and relevant for this research to know the

²³⁶ Simon Hoggart "Iran visit angers Labour" in *The Guardian*, November 2, 1978

²³⁷ Liz Thrugood "The utopian visions of Iran's rebel inspire ever more followers" in *The Guardian*, November 7, 1978

²³⁸ Martin Woollacott "Militant Islam pressing for change around the world" in *The Guardian*, November 10, 1978

²³⁹ "MP's denial over Iran" in *The Guardian*, November 13, 1978; "PM's warning on problems of Shah" in *The Guardian*, November 17, 1978

²⁴⁰ "Islam and the swathe of instability" in *The Guardian*, December 28, 1978

²⁴¹ Jonathan Arkush, Letter to the editor, "Khomeini is not the answer to Iran's prayers" in *The Guardian*, January 25, 1979

opinion of the readers, mostly because it shows the influence the opinion makers had on their public. Therefore, the lack of support for Khomeini before the arrival of the *Ayatollah* in Iran, express a clear position of the English left-leaning public opinion on the matter of the Iranian Revolution. The readers of *The Guardian* were not mesmerized by the myth of Khomeini, nor by the Third Worldist ideology.

The events that characterized the return of Khomeini in Iran strongly influenced the idea the English public opinion had of the religious leader. The articles published in *The Guardian* described the way in which Khomeini was handling power as ‘unclear’ and not very democratic.²⁴² Moreover, in “The Observer” an article was published in which was expressed an interesting comparison between the fundamentalist clergy which was in power of Iran and the Jacobins of the French Revolution.²⁴³ Such comparison is interesting for two main aspects: the Jacobins were always perceived by the British people as an enemy, and a threat to the well-being of England; the abuse of a moral code to get rid of political enemies was a means used by both the Islamic and the Jacobin republic.

The critical fact of this Girondins [Mehdi Bazargan’s government]²⁴⁴ of the Iranian Revolution is that they lack power. Political power lies in the south of the city with Ayatollah Khomeini and his Komiteh (committee) which has an unintentional but unmistakable Jacobin flavour to it.²⁴⁵

This comparison is a final mark on the dislike for the reactionary and theocratic regime that Khomeini was implementing in Iran. The articles published both in *The Guardian* and in “The Observer” became clearly against the new Iranian regime. The British public opinion did not well perceive the perspective of a theocratic regime in a former allied country. The newspapers continued to express this negative perspective on the Iranian regime for all the time considered in this research. There are several examples of such perspective expressed during 1979 by both *The Guardian* and “The Observer”. The media was reporting the different actions started by Khomeini and his government, describing the reactionary policies and the lack of respect for human rights.²⁴⁶ This development in Iran led to the perception of Third World as a threat more than anything else. This vision was expressed clearly in an article whose title was: ‘Third World ‘threat’ to West.’²⁴⁷ The idea that what happened in Iran could influence the other countries of the region was a scary one for England, considering the relevance of Third World countries for the energy supply of the whole Europe. Therefore, it is possible to state that by mid-1979 the Third Worldist perspective was not even taken into account by the British newspapers.

²⁴² Liz Thurgood “Ayatollah’s policies for new Iran ‘unclear’” in *The Guardian*, February 3, 1979; Liz Thurgood “Khomeini gives warning to Iran ‘traitors’” in *The Guardian*, February 14, 1979

²⁴³ de St Jorre J. “The ‘Jacobins try to get Iran working’” in *The Observer*, February 18, 1979

²⁴⁴ The Girondins were a political and parliamentary group of the French National Assembly during the French Revolution. They were more than the Jacobins in the Assembly but the Jacobins were able to take power and prosecute them.

²⁴⁵ John de St Jorre “The ‘Jacobins try to get Iran working’” in *The Observer*, February 18, 1979

²⁴⁶ Liz Thurgood “Iran law for public executions approved” in *The Guardian*, April 6, 1979; Liz Thurgood “Fears of Khomeini purge on press” in *The Guardian*, May 11, 1979

²⁴⁷ Stephen Cook “Third World ‘threat’ to West” in *The Guardian*, May 16, 1979

2. *What was the perspective of the British left-leaning public opinion in relation to the Iranian revolution?*

England has always been a different country from the continental one. Nevertheless, some ideologies and beliefs were able to cross the sea and determine the opinion of many people in the biggest European island. Was it the case for Third Worldism too? It is hard to have a clear stance on this. For what has been analyzed in this part related to the British case, we have seen first an ambivalent and ambiguous oration in relation to the Iranian case, and then a clear determination to go very much against the new theocratic government planned and then implemented by Khomeini. Some articles, and even a cartoon were clearly influenced by the Third Worldist perspective, as well as some readers (as demonstrated by a letter to the editor). Therefore, in order to give a proper answer to the sub-question reported in the title of this paragraph, it is possible to say that Third Worldism influenced the British opinion makers and the public opinion. However, this influence never became the editorial line of *The Guardian* nor "The Observer." Moreover, its influence lasted for a shorter period of time if compared to the other countries analyzed.

PART 3 – RESEARCH OUTCOME AND CONCLUSION

1. What was the influence and the relevance of the Third Worldism perspective on the European left-leaning public opinion in regards to the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979?

The analysis of the different countries considered in this research is now complete. This last part of the essay is dedicated to the comparison of the three outcomes in order to see if there was a common pattern that determined the perspective of the left-leaning European public opinion. The research question has been chosen as the title of this paragraph because it is useful to remind the reader what was the main goal of the research: determine the influence and relevance of Third Worldism on the left-leaning European public opinion in regards to the Iranian Revolution.

The last paragraph of the three parts in which the analysis was divided answered the three sub-questions decided at the beginning. Therefore, it is much easier now to compare the three outcomes and sum them up in a complete answer to the main research question.

As stated before, relevance and influence are not quantifiable aspects, but still these two terms granted a much freer analysis, thanks to the fact that the goal was not to consider measurable data but to understand what people belonging to a specific category thought about an important international event and how much biased by an ideology this perception was.

Italy and France have experienced a similar influence of the Third Worldist perspective on their public opinion. The three periods taken into account were almost the same: in the first part of 1978 both the *Corriere* and *Le Monde* saw the increasing use of the Third Worldist paradigm by the opinion makers; until February 1979 the Third Worldist paradigm determined the editorial line of the two newspapers; after the arrival of Khomeini in Iran both saw a shift, and Third Worldism no longer determined the perspective of the articles that were published. Moreover, Michel Foucault had a decisive influence in France and Italy for the left-leaning public opinion. What differentiates mostly *Le Monde* from the *Corriere* is the fact that, until the ascension to power of Khomeini, there was no author or journalist in the Italian press who expressed an interpretation of the Iranian revolution different from the one showed by Foucault and connected to Third Worldism. In the French one, instead, Rodinson determined a possible and alternative interpretation from the Third Worldist paradigm, considering the insurgence of religious fundamentalism in Iran as a new phenomenon, different from the developments of other countries of the Third World. Moreover, this new phenomenon was not democratic nor supportive of any improvement of human rights, but, instead, ready to implement an 'archaic fascism.'

For what concerns the British case, the situation was quite different. There was, for a limited period of time, an influence of Third Worldism on the publications made by both *The Guardian* and "The Observer". This influence, anyway, never was the only directive expressed by the editorial lines of the two British newspapers. A more prudent and differentiated perspective was voiced by the several authors and journalists who reported news and wrote an analysis on the subject of the Iranian revolution. Moreover, Khomeini was very rarely considered as a

moderate or a promoter of democracy and human rights. This last aspect differentiates the perspective of the British public opinion substantially from the one expressed by the continental newspapers.

Is it possible to say that there was a common pattern between the three countries here considered? The answer is both yes and no. Yes, because, even if limited, Third Worldism has been influential even in England, with all the specifications previously seen. No, because those specifications do not allow to determine an identical development in Italy, France, and England. In the end, it is time to answer the research question. This essay, through its analysis, proved that the influence and relevance of the Third Worldist perspective were decisive to express the interpretation of the events that were taking place in Iran. The European left-leaning public opinion, believed in the possible democratic outcome of the revolution, supported the opposition and hated the Shah, often described as a bloodthirsty dictator. This fact created a mystification and an exaltation of some political figures, particularly Khomeini's. Even if England had its specific differentiation from the other two countries, the fact that an ideology such as Third Worldism was able to influence newspapers, MPs and the public opinion is astonishing if we consider the reluctance of the British people for continental ideologies and the different developments of Marxism. Therefore, the influence and the relevance of Third Worldism were fundamental to understand the Iranian Revolution. Moreover, another point has been proven through this research: the extension of the influence of Third Worldism for a longer period than what literature usually states. As seen in the majority of the studies described the fact that Third Worldism was already a not so critical perspective during the mid-seventies. This essay, instead, demonstrated that even during the last years of the seventies a good amount of authors and opinion makers believed that was the right paradigm to understand the developments and the events which characterized the Third World.

There are some few final remarks to make in order to conclude this research. The three countries chosen for the analysis were, as stated in the beginning, the most relevant to make a proper comparison and answer the research question. However, the topic can be taken even in a broader way. The hope of who writes is to give, with this contribution to the literature, a way to go deeper in the understanding of both Third Worldism and the interpretation of the Iranian Revolution. Other scholars and students may consider different countries, such as Germany, or various newspapers, such as "Libération" and "l'Unità", or even different ideologies, such as Catholicism. The field of study regarding the influence of Western ideologies, used to understand the development of the so called Third World, is still very much not explored. Therefore, the first aim of this research was to fill, partly, a gap that needs more attention and work from the scientific community.

The literature used was helpful but, still, the publications concerned, most of the times, a specific subject. This fact implied the necessity to create a link between the different aspect involved in this research directly in the analysis. As seen, most of the texts were related to Third Worldism, history of specific countries, history of the press, and so on. The implementation of a link between those different but connected aspects was the second, but no less important, aim of the essay.

Finally, the comparison between sources of different origins is another aspect that usually is not taken into account by historical studies. Most of the times the sources are all from a specific country, leaving a gap in the literature. A gap that this research, again tried to fill, considering, for example, the strong influence of Michel Foucault both in Italy and in France.

If all these aspects become more relevant for the scientific community it will be a beneficial

achievement for all the scholars, but not only them, considering the relevance of the near past to understand the present and be prepared for the future.

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A brief specification is necessary for this part. The articles here reported are the ones quoted in the research. Nevertheless, many more articles were consulted and analyzed for this research. More precisely, the consultation of the newspapers *Corriere della Sera*, *Le Monde* and *The Guardian* comprehended more than 500 articles related to the Iranian revolution, and many more were consulted just to understand the content of the articles and if there was any relevant part for this research. Therefore, it is important to understand that this work was more precisely a consultation of the three newspapers from the 1st January 1978 to the 4th of November 1979. Moreover, it has been decided that, for an easier consultation, the sources have been divided according to the newspaper they belong and they were put in a chronological order of publication, because many of the articles were not signed.

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