



Soleimani was not an exceptional figure who just presented a balanced interpretation of Iran's 1979 Revolution; he embodied the Revolution itself.



scientific lingua franca; rather, it underscores the critical role of academic studies in the process of colonial domination.

In this context, the significant and complex field of "Orientalism" should not be overlooked. This 19th-century Western initiative aimed to understand the East from a Western perspective, portraying Eastern peoples as primitive and irrational. Such depictions justified Western paternalistic superiority and domination. This perspective justified the supposed need for entities like the East India Company, symbolizing Western superiority and the early efforts of Orientalism. Consequently, the implementation of colonialist ideologies pushed the West forward while keeping the East in a state of backwardness. From this perspective, colonial studies, both consciously and subconsciously, can address one of the most critical questions for Eastern societies regarding their relative underdevelopment compared to Western societies—a question that encompasses much of the Eastern identity and character.

Thus, understanding Iranian colonialism can clarify why Iranians, even at their most powerful, generally avoided colonial exploitation and barbarity. The primary reason for backwardness, stagnation, and sometimes decline in various civil sectors is the pervasive and pernicious phenomenon of colonialism.

What are the driving forces behind the civilization-building of Iranian identity?

The identity that leads to our civilization has two main pillars. The first pillar is bringing religion from the margins to the center, opposing secularism. Currently, the clergy holds power, and the religious fabric of society remains strong.

The Islamic Revolution has significantly contributed to this. The scholars of Qom, the Assembly of Experts, religious teachings, and the deep-rooted presence of Shia Islam in Iranian society collectively moved religion from the periphery to the center. Although religion was on the margins back then, it had the power to critique the status quo effectively. Consequently, the Shah felt compelled to visit religious sites like Mashhad and Mecca and support religious institutions. His father, who ignored these aspects, was quickly rejected by the people.

The social base of the revolution started with small Quranic and religious gatherings. Initially, it began in high schools and then spread to universities. In Isfahan, teachers were the leaders of the Revolution, followed by merchants. Contrary to communist narratives, the working class and peasants were the last to join. The cultural sector dominated the Revolution because it was not class-based. Workers showed their support in the final years, mainly to assert their labor rights.

The second pillar is "resistance to domination," which has not developed as much as the first. Resisting domination requires a deep understanding of colonialism. Today, there are fair-minded researchers in the West documenting the crimes of colonialism.

How do you evaluate the status of the decolonization movement in the world?

A powerful decolonization movement has emerged in the West. Numerous associations have been formed, and they are unwilling to comply with colonial norms. Although the decolonization movement was initially dominated by Marxists, today other academic streams are also seriously addressing this issue. Half of our recently published collection on colonial studies is composed of original works, while the other half includes works by researchers in this field. Some books and writings related to decolonization are dominated by leftist perspectives. However, thanks to extensive scholarly efforts, the Islamic Revolution has reached a level of understanding that allows us to view colonialism independently without being aligned with either the left or the right.

Since this movement is based in Iran, we have named it "Iranian Colonial Studies." It seems we are at the beginning of this journey and need to mature further. Our focus is on filling a 45-year gap in this field. There has been significant neglect in this area, and one of our tasks is to monitor the existing efforts. We must make every effort to thoroughly and comprehensively introduce and promote the foundational aspects of Shia identity without hesitation.



Martyr President