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IRAN AND CZECH POLITICAL AND CULTURAL RELATION

Abstract:

In this article, after noting the first point in relations of Iran and Europe in modern times, the historical relations between Iran and Czech in political and cultural sides would be considered. This relations could be studied both in formal or state and public spheres. In formal side, the relations between two countries started around nine decades ago. In public side, in political aspect, Czechoslovakia was one of the Eastern European countries during cold war in where some of the leaders of the Iranian Communist Party leaved and politically activated. In public cultural aspect however the main point is the situation of some Czech figures such as Vaclav Havel among Iranian intelligentsia.

Keywords:

Iran, Czech, politcal relations, cultural relations

Introduction

Among the European countries in modern era, Iranians firstly acknowledged and introduced to France, so as the Europeans have normally been called the French in Persian or Iranian literature. However Czech and its people are very familiar for Iranians in both political and cultural aspects. Meanwhile, the formal and popular relations between two nations are old and multifarious.

Formal Political Relations

Iranian-Czech formal political relations were established nearly nine years ago, in 1925. Firstly Iranian ambassadors in Italy were as accredited in Czechoslovakia, and Iran had a consulate in Prague (IPIS, 1990: 36). In 1939 however due to integration of Czech in Germany, the relations of Iran and Czech were canceled. After the end of the world war second Iranian embassy in Prague was opened in November 1946 and in August 1962 the relations were promoted to the level of ambassador (IPIS, 1990: 36&37).

Iran and Czechoslovakia: Relations of Competitor Blocs

Since 1945, finishing world war second and forming two pillars system, many countries chose or were chosen their position in the new international order. Meanwhile, Czechoslovakia with other Eastern Europe states fell in the east bloc and Iran especially after US & UK Backed 1953 coup de tat in the west bloc (Foran, 1998: 461). Although strategy of both countries in their foreign policies were alignment, but in fact in two antagonist blocs. In fifty decade, under Iranian foreign policy called "positive nationalism", the formal relations of two countries accompanied with suspicious, but after changing and renaming foreign policy of Iran to "national independent", the relations promoted. After Iranian 1979 revolution, by following the policy of "no east no west", the formal relations fell to the level of charge de affair (IPIS, 1990: 36&37), but in the following decades once again promoted to ambassador level.

Iranian Communists and Czechoslovakia

During communist era, Czechoslovakia, like as other communist states, was one of the main countries of Iranian left groups especially some leaders and members of Iranian communist party known as Toodeh Party in exile (Abrahamian, 1998: 415). Ardashes Avanesian, Armenian Iranian member of central committee of the party went to the USSR and then emigrated to Czechoslovakia in where lived and teach Iranian history in university (Modir Shanechi, 2009: 180). A former member of the party, Mohammad Ali Javaheri, who was the first Iranian poet in free style as well, went to Prague and lived several years in Czechoslovakia (Saedloo, 2013: 297).

Some other Iranian communists who lived and engaged in party activities in Prague included Iraj Eskandari, a former minister and first secretary of Toodeh Party (Eskandari, 1993: 385), Ahmad Ghssemi and Gholam Hossein Forootan, two former member of central committee and executive board of the party, Abbas Saghali, counselor member of central committee, Poolad dezh and his wife, Mansour Shakki, M. A. Dorri and Navaii (Showkat, 1993: 69,133-135,223&224). Among another notable Iranian politician should be mentioned to Dr. Abd al Rahman Ghassemloo, general secretary of Kurdistan Democrat Party of Iran who lived in Czechoslovakia till 1968 (Showkat, 1993: 436).

Iranian Intelligentsia, Dubcek and Spring of Prague, and Havel

Czechoslovakia was not only a pivot or pattern for many of pro-Russian communists in Iran in half a century during the cold war, but also it was an interesting country for Iranian dependent leftist and intelligentsia especially after the spring of Prague in 1968. Alexander Dubcek (1921-1992) was in fact a famous and beloved figure among Iranian nationalist and patriot intellectuals. The newer Czechoslovakian popular figure in Iran was Vaclav Havel (1936-2011), famous Czech politician, poet, play writer, essayist and philosopher. He as the ninth and last president of Czechoslovakia (1936-2011) and the first president of Republic of Czech (1993-2003) is a loved political as well as cultural and literary characters among Iranian Intelligentsia. Translation of a great deal of Havel's works has played an efficient role in Czech-Iranian cultural relations.

Conclusion

Iran-Czech formal political relation back to around ninety years ago when Iranian consulate was opened in Prague. After some up and down mainly due to the world war second, these relations were promoted to the level of ambassador nearly half a century ago. Czechoslovakia was for a period house of some Iranian communists such as Iraj Eskandari former first secretary of Iranian Toodeh Party or pro-Russian communist party of Iran. Dependent communist or leftist and non-communist Iranian intelligentsia however were attracted to figures such as Dubcek, after the spring of Prague. Meanwhile Czech political as well as cultural and literary men like as Vaclav Havel are very famous and beloved figures in Iran whom translation of their work play a great role in Czech-Iranian cultural relations in the public sphere.

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