

Between Mecca, Moscow and Mao: Iranian Islamists and socialist countries in the Global Sixties

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Panel 72: *Religious Socialisms and the Cold War*

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Abstract:

The 1960s saw a transformation of politics and religion in the Middle East in tandem with the global trends and in relationship with actors and events of the Global Sixties. This presentation focuses on transformations experienced by various Iranian Islamist trends in the era and how they came to adopt a positive attitude toward the countries of the so-called ‘Socialist Camp,’ including Soviet Union, People’s Republic of China, Cuba and (north) Vietnam. They thus countered the US alignment of the Shah’s regime. How did some Islamists aligned themselves with officially atheist countries? How did they break with the anti-communism of the previous generation of nationalists and Islamists? How did they become Cold Warriors by taking sides in the global Cold War and viewing world events through its prism? These are some of the topics that the presentation hopes to tackle.