THIS FLAME WITHIN

Iranian Revolutionaries in the United States

Manijeh Moradian

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You've got to have this flame within you
that can warm others.

Jalil Mostashari
Iranian Students Association member,
1963–1968

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ABBREVIATIONS

CISNU	Confederation of Iranian Students (National Union) (*Konfederāsīūn-e jahānī-e moḥaṣṣelīn wa dānešjūyān-e īrānī etteḥādīya-ye mellī*)
EW	Emancipation of Women (*Anjoman-e rahaie zan*)
ISA	Iranian Students Association in the United States
NDF	National Democratic Front (*Jebhā-ye demokrātīk-e melli*)
NF	National Front (*Jebhā-ye mellī-e Īrān*)
NUW	National Union of Women (*Etehād-e melli-e zanān*)
OCU	Organization of Communist Unity (*Sāzman-i vahdat-i kumūnisti*)
OIPFG	Organization of Iranian People's Fadā'i Guerrillas (*Sāzmān-e čerikhā-ye Fadā'i-e ḳalq-e Irān*/), or *Fadaiyan*
RO	Revolutionary Organization of the Tudeh Party of Iran (*Sāzmān-e enqelāb-e hezb-e tūde-ye Īrān*) or *Sāzmān-e Enqelābi*
SAW	Society for the Awakening of Women (*Jam'iat-e bidāri-e zanān*)
UIC	Union of Iranian Communists (*Etehādi-e kommūnisthā*)

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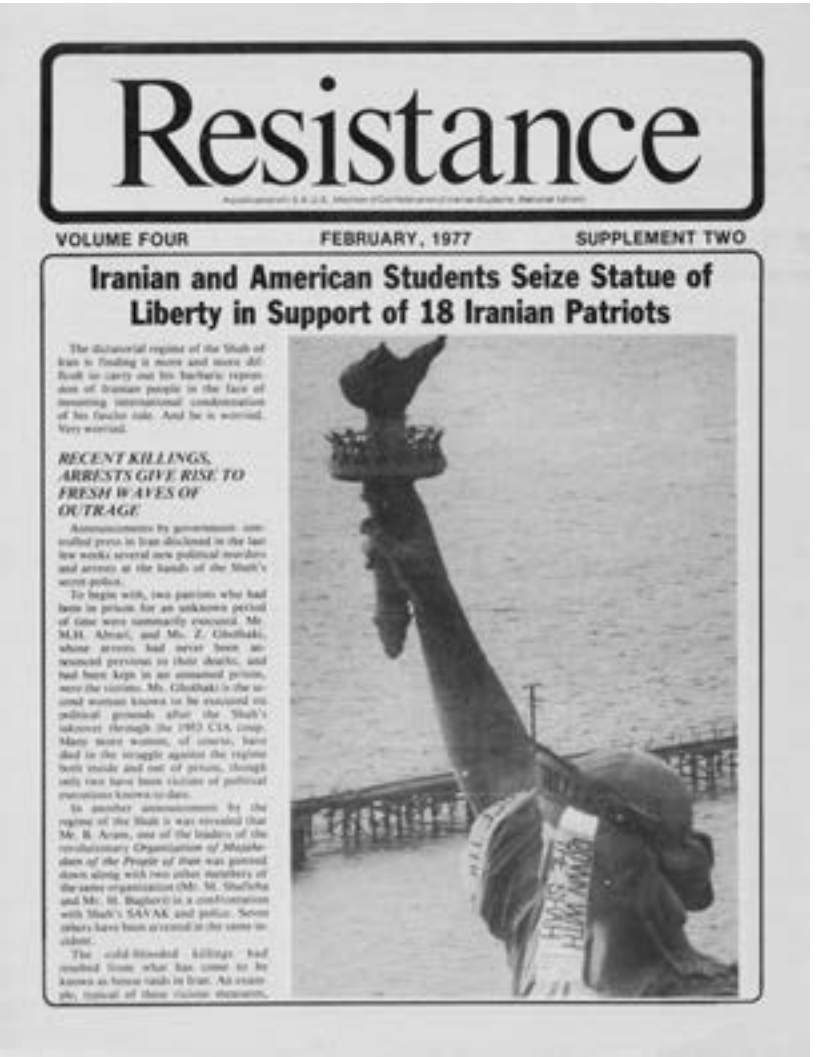
Finally, endless gratitude to my sweetest ones, Ashley and Sholeh, who remind me every day that life can be joyful and the struggle is worth it.

This book is for all the children of revolutionaries.

Introduction
Before We Were "Terrorists"

On February 15, 1977, six members of the Iranian Students Association (ISA), along with a small group of Americans from the Revolutionary Student Brigade, chained themselves to the inside of the crown of the Statue of Liberty and unfurled two giant banners (see figure I.1).[1] The larger one read "DOWN WITH THE SHAH." To the right, a smaller banner demanded "FREE THE 18," a reference to a group of political prisoners who had just been arrested in Iran. The ISA was a coalition involving several thousand Iranian student-visa holders living in the United States who were determined to end Washington's political, economic, and military aid to the Shah's regime. They channeled this determination into a political force through conspicuous acts of protest, such as the occupation of the statue that epitomized America's democratic promise to the world. By draping an iconic monument to American exceptionalism with a condemnation of a dictatorship that was also a major US ally, these young men and women turned their outrage into a visual spectacle of American hypocrisy. They hoped this spectacle would resonate widely as a call to action.

An accompanying press release issued by Vietnam Veterans Against the War made the expectation of solidarity clear. "The American people," it stated, "have no interest in dominati[ng] other countries as the American rulers do, [*sic*] instead their very interest is in joining with other people to fight against our own rulers who perpetuate the same misery in this country as well as abroad."[2] This sentiment was echoed in an article that appeared shortly afterward in the ISA's English-language magazine, *Resistance*, explaining that



Resistance

VOLUME FOUR FEBRUARY, 1977 SUPPLEMENT TWO

Iranian and American Students Seize Statue of Liberty in Support of 18 Iranian Patriots

The dictatorial regime of the Shah of Iran is finding it more and more difficult to carry out his barbaric repression of Iranian people in the face of mounting international condemnation of his fascist rule. And he is worried. Very worried.

RECENT KILLINGS, ARRESTS GIVE RISE TO FRESH WAVES OF OUTRAGE

Announcements by government controlled press in Iran disclosed in the last few weeks several new political murders and arrests at the hands of the Shah's secret police.

To begin with, two patriots who had been in prison for an unknown period of time were summarily executed. Mr. M.H. Ahvazi, and Ms. Z. Ghotbaki, whose arrests had never been announced previous to their deaths, and had been kept in an unnamed prison, were the victims. Ms. Ghotbaki is the second woman known to be executed on political grounds after the Shah's takeover through the 1953 CIA coup. Many more women, of course, have died in the struggle against the regime both inside and out of prison, though only two have been victims of political executions known to date.

In another announcement by the regime of the Shah it was revealed that Mr. B. Ayam, one of the leaders of the revolutionary *Organization of Mujahedeen of the People of Iran* was gunned down along with two other members of the same organization (Mr. M. Shafieha and Mr. H. Bagheri) in a confrontation with Shah's SAVAK and police. Seven others have been arrested in the same incident.

The cold-blooded killings had resulted from what has come to be known as house raids in Iran. An example, typical of these vicious measures,

Figure I.1 *Resistance*, February 1977. ISA file, Social Protest Collection, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley.

the occupation was intended to "dramatize the hatred and disgust of the Shah and US policies toward Iran felt both by Iranian and American people."[3] The article's broad and confident assertion that "Iranian and American people" shared viscerally negative reactions—"hatred" and "disgust"—toward their own respective governments, rather than hostile feelings toward one another, reveals the presumption of a shared affective disposition and internationalist

sensibility that would, after the revolution in Iran just two years later, become almost unimaginable.

By the time of the Statue of Liberty occupation in 1977, Iranian student activists had already spent sixteen years working to convince the Americans around them that they were on the same side in a global contest over the future of humanity. On one side was the US government, its brutal war in Vietnam, its coterie of allied dictatorships across the Third World, and its entrenched racist power structure at home; on the other side were popular liberation movements in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States. The ISA invited Americans to add Iran to the map of concern and affiliation that had motivated so many to act against US imperial power in Southeast Asia. If enough Americans expressed outrage at US complicity with the authoritarian regime in Iran, ISA members hoped, Washington might withdraw its support and weaken the Shah to the point that the Iranian people could overthrow him.

Hence the need for dramatic acts of protest that could attract attention to the cause. Chained to the inside of Lady Liberty's crown for over five hours, Iranian students and their American friends waited for a crew of reporters to arrive. Instead, all ferry services to the island were suspended. The Coast Guard went so far as to intercept a private boat full of journalists to prevent them from conducting interviews.[4] According to *Resistance*, Coast Guard Captain J. L. Fleishell declared a "security zone" around the perimeter, in his words, "because of the presence of known terrorists on Liberty Island."[5] The unnamed ISA author conveys surprise at this choice of words: "Why would he say that? How did he know? What made these people 'terrorists'?"[6] As the article points out, the students carried no weapons and made no threats. The article's indignant questions, however justified, transport today's reader to a very different geopolitical era, before the words *Iranian* and *terrorist* had become virtually synonymous in the American media and popular imagination. At the time, Iranians were not generally regarded as threatening or violent. From the mid-1950s until the mid-1970s, Iran was a hopeful site of American largesse toward developing nations, and Iranian students in the US were welcomed as harbingers of Iran's ascent to the rank of a modern, capitalist nation—that is, if they were noticed at all. Scholars and media commentators routinely assume that the term *terrorist* first stuck to Iranians in the US after the taking of American hostages in Iran in late 1979. In fact, it was used against leftist Iranian students in 1977 who expressed public outrage about US complicity with the Shah's dictatorship. This earlier iteration reveals the enduring political motivations behind the selective use

of this term as a slur against individuals and groups who oppose hegemonic state power. Before Iranians in the US were labeled "terrorists" they were revolutionaries.

The ISA's occupation of the Statue of Liberty raises several questions at the heart of this book. First, how was it that militant anti-imperialist activists emerged from the ranks of privileged foreign students whose raison d'être was to assist in the Westernization of Iran? Second, how did these students come to align themselves with a wide range of other liberation movements, and what did this solidarity look like in practice? Third, how did the history of the ISA become marginalized to the point that it is a virtually unknown part of the story of the Third World Left in the US, and how would that story change if the ISA were part of it? Finally, how might the ISA's legacy become meaningful to the contemporary Iranian diaspora in the US? I address these questions through an investigation of the lived experiences of Iranian student leftists in the United States from the early 1960s through the 1978–79 Iranian revolution. This investigation draws on archives and interviews to write Iranian foreign students into the historiography of Third World internationalism in the US and to gain a deeper understanding of what it meant to organize one's life around the project of revolution. It also examines the tensions and disappointments of that era, particularly the apparent tendency of anticolonial revolutions to betray the women who fought for them. The ISA thus becomes a case study of the gender and sexual politics of the anti-imperialist Left and reveals a far richer and more complex story than one of simple male domination. This wrangling with the past is also a provocation to rethink contemporary Iranian diasporic subjectivity, feminism, and transnational solidarity. My major contention is that the neglected history of Iranian revolutionaries in the United States can help to reorient diasporic identity away from nationalism, assimilation, and exceptionalism, and toward affiliation with multiple, ongoing freedom struggles—in the US, in Iran, and around the world.

In the pages that follow, not only do the activities of a nearly forgotten movement come into focus, but the affects and emotions that made it possible resurface from the hidden archives of memory and the fading mimeographed pages of activist ephemera. *This Flame Within* invokes both the powerful ferment of an Iranian revolutionary movement that occurred within the borders of the United States *and* the animating, embodied force of affect in forging political subjects and movements. It is the exploration of what I call "revolutionary affects" and how they transform subjectivity that compels this study and imbues it with significance beyond the Iranian

context. If we want to better understand how collectivities form around the goal of social and political revolution, then the registers of affect and emotion carry valuable information. This study of the ISA thus addresses the much larger question of how and under what conditions affective attachments to revolution come to be shared in common, making it possible for people with very different experiences and histories to imagine their struggles and futures as interdependent. Below I describe my research process and the conceptual terminology I assembled in order make sense of what I found.

Becoming Revolutionaries

Before they were revolutionaries, Iranians in the US were students, including my father, who arrived in Washington, DC, in 1960 to attend Howard University. He participated in ISA meetings, rallies, and marches, as well as actions large and small against anti-Black racism, colonization, and war. It was from him that I first learned about the existence of an Iranian student movement in the United States. My father seemed to embody the spirit of those years of connection across difference, rejecting narrow forms of Persian nationalist identity in favor of the broadest possible identification with all those who suffered because of global capitalist expansion. As a graduate student, I wanted to learn more about the ISA, its role in undermining US support for the Shah, and its role in the post-World War II era of decolonization. Crucially, given the polarizing gender and sexual politics of the Iranian Revolution in which these students participated, I wondered what a study of this movement might have to teach us about the broader tendency of postcolonial states to reconfigure and reinforce, rather than dismantle, patriarchal forms of citizenship. How, I wanted to know, did former ISA members feel about this traumatic history, which drove many of them into permanent exile?

My research led me to ISA archival materials at Stanford University, University of California–Berkeley, and the Library of Congress. Among the many pamphlets, fliers, and periodicals available in Persian and in English, the ISA's English language journal, *Resistance*, which was published regularly throughout the 1970s, proved invaluable as a record of how the ISA attempted to galvanize the Americans around them. I was also fortunate enough to gain access to the personal collections of several former ISA members, including Younes Parsa Benab, Leyli Shayegan, Nancy Hormachea, and Parviz Shokat. I looked in less obvious places, too, such as the San Francisco State Strike archives and the archives of campus newspapers, and was rewarded for my

efforts. In particular, coverage of the ISA in UC Berkeley's *Daily Californian* and Howard University's *The Hilltop* provided rich material for addressing the impact of ISA activism on American student politics more broadly. In addition to these print sources, I also analyze a short documentary film about the women's uprising in Tehran in March 1979, in which some returning ISA members participated. The original Persian audio is difficult to hear, but reveals affects and experiences marginalized by the French voiceover and English subtitles. My close reading of this film centers the voices of the Iranian women featured in it, voices that have been all but buried by the dominant narratives of victory and defeat that attend the Iranian Revolution.

Above all, as I set out to learn about the ISA, I wanted to hear directly from participants and gather their memories into a new kind of archive. Over the course of several years, I interviewed thirty former ISA members: twenty men and ten women. These interviews were usually conducted in person and lasted an average of three hours, sometimes with additional follow-up sessions. I also interviewed six non-Iranian activists who had worked with the ISA. It quickly became clear that I could interview dozens of Americans who fit this description, as the ISA was fondly remembered by many leftists of that generation, but this would have become a different project. Listening to former ISA members talk about their activist years, I was repeatedly struck by the strength of feeling that lingered decades later. I was interviewing people who had been profoundly affected by growing up under a US-backed dictatorship. Their encounters with state repression and with different traditions and moments of resistance in Iran left them searching for a way to act against injustice. The ISA became the way, a vehicle for transforming students into revolutionaries.[7] But how did this happen and what did it feel like in practice? And how might those feelings inform present and future diasporic orientations?

In order to address these questions, I read the affects and emotions embedded in the memories of former ISA members, as well as in print and video materials, as an "affective archive." I borrow this concept from queer feminist scholars, in particular Gayatri Gopinath and Ann Cvetkovich. Gopinath understands affect as the force of desire that transgresses the boundaries of nation, race, gender, and sexuality, making legible marginalized histories of the interconnections between different forms of oppression and differently targeted populations.[8] She locates the formation of marginalized subjectivities in the body's affective capacity to remember that which official histories must forget, and in small, everyday acts that are too often excluded from notions of the political.[9] I take my understanding of the subversive potential of affect

as a site for reading alternative diasporic histories from her work. Cvetkovich's attention to the "emotional histories that lead people to activism" has also been formative in my approach to charting an affective history of the Iranian student Left in the US.[10] The registers of affect and emotion reveal complex and often contradictory responses to the experience of revolutionary activity—from joy to grief to ambivalence to disbelief—that belie tidy narratives of success or failure. Far from offering a static picture of how things really were, feelings attached to certain memories of collective struggle in the 1960s and 1970s change along with geopolitical conditions and sensibilities, becoming available for new interpretations. An "affective archive" of the ISA can help to make sense of the risks that were taken, the sacrifices that were made, and the feelings that suffuse diasporic political consciousness today.[11]

This Flame Within reads this archive for what I call "revolutionary affects," those visceral intensities generated by experiences of repression and resistance that remain latent within the body. For former ISA members, revolutionary affects are the embodied remains of the intertwined experiences of imperialism, dictatorship, and diaspora. Revolutionary affects form the basis of the transnational theory of revolutionary subjectivity offered in this book. Before I elaborate, I must first explain what I mean by *affect*, a term rarely used outside specialized scholarly circles. Affect refers to the way the body, which includes the "mind" or brain, registers the impact of coming into contact with people, places, objects, and ideas. Affects are outward and relational, rather than internal or fixed, and they are manifest physically—as a sensation (or lack thereof), a gesture, a facial expression, a stance, an orientation in space. They are always present; indeed, as Jonathan Flatley points out, we are always in an affective state (or mood) of some sort, although we may not know exactly how we got there.[12] The sociologist Deborah Gould explains that an affective state is "often experienced, as Raymond Williams wrote, 'at the very edge of semantic availability,' felt as 'an unease, a stress, a displacement, a latency.'"[13] I would add to this list affective states experienced as pressure, excitement, anger, fear, and melancholia, by which I mean an unwillingness to let go of someone or something that is lost, like a loved one, a sense of belonging, or a moment of freedom. Rather than understand "negative" affects and feelings—such as anger and melancholia—as counterproductive or unhealthy, I draw on cultural studies scholarship that explores the subversive knowledge, subjectivities, and collectives that can emerge from an open and ongoing engagement with loss.[14] Our affective states, what Williams famously called "structures of feeling," can register the "tension between dominant accounts of what is and what might be, on

the one hand, and lived experience that contradicts those accounts."[15] They may be the first sign that all is not well, that something needs to change.

Affect and *emotion* are not identical terms. Some scholars draw a sharp distinction between the two, arguing that affect is inchoate and loaded with potential, whereas emotion represents the cohering of affect into a definite form of expression.[16] Affect may be open-ended, but it is, nonetheless, always social. As Gould writes, "affect is a body's processing of social conditions."[17] Sara Ahmed has illustrated how this processing provides the raw material for political emotions: we might experience something that puts us in an affective state of unease—an incident of harassment, for example—but only realize later, when we come to recognize the experience as part of a system of discrimination, that we are angry about what happened.[18] We also might want to better understand how that system works in order to make sense of how we have been affected. Coming into contact with others who share our affective state can channel our affects in particular directions, toward particular political ideologies and organizations. Social movements, Gould argues, provide an "emotional pedagogy … a guide for what and how to feel and what to do in light of those feelings," and can, moreover, "authorize selected feelings and actions while downplaying and even invalidating others."[19] This is the case no matter where a social movement falls on the political spectrum. Seen in this way, the ISA became compelling because it offered an explanation for the affective states of Iranian students who had trouble accepting a US worldview that hinged on support for dictatorship and because it provided a plan for action. Affect thus became a conduit toward new political horizons, new ideas about what kinds of feelings and actions were permissible and desirable.[20] In the chapters that follow, I have sometimes found it necessary to draw a distinction between *affect* and *emotion*—for example, when discussing childhood memories of ISA members or changing feelings ascribed to the same memory. At other times I use the two terms together because they are both equally relevant to my analysis of revolutionary subjectivity.

The concept of revolutionary affects refers to the sensorial material out of which a revolutionary consciousness can later be fashioned *and* to those affects that attach to and fuel the project of making a revolution. Michael Hardt argues that affects "illuminate … both our power to affect the world around us and our power to be affected by it, and the relationship between these two powers."[21] The term *revolutionary affects* describes precisely this relationship, encompassing the power of being impacted by the world such that one is out of sync with the dominant order *and* the power to sustain

revolutionary activity designed to change that same order. The revolutionary affects of former ISA members provide an archive of the United States' disavowed empire in the Middle East and the efforts by a group of foreign students to bring that empire down.

Revolutionary affects describe a theory of revolutionary subjectivity that is not predictive but rather historical and analytical. Affective potency lingers and can animate the body later on in ways that are impossible to foresee.[22] In the absence of revolutionary ideas and organization, revolutionary affects flow elsewhere or dissipate. In other words, revolutionary affects do not cause a person to adopt a revolutionary ideology or join a revolutionary organization; and yet it may be impossible to fully understand why certain ideologies and organizations become compelling enough to reorient the lives of thousands of people at the same time without paying attention to the affects they mobilize and circulate.[23] After all, not everyone who reads Marx becomes a Marxist. Or as Flatley points out, "insights about one's political oppression are unlikely to motivate resistance unless they can be made interesting and affectively rewarding."[24] Just as socialist and communist ideas offered Iranian students a method of "reading" their formative memories and the affects that remained, the concept of revolutionary affects offers an approach to reading history, a method of interpreting the data I accumulated through in-depth interviews with former ISA members and through archival research. By telling their stories, and opening themselves up to the affects and feelings that attend them, ISA veterans produced, in the words of Cvetkovich, "political history as affective history, a history that captures activism's felt and even traumatic dimensions."[25] These are the dimensions that do not appear in conventional histories of modern Iran or of US-Iran relations, but that left each of these young people longing for justice. Here I give just a few examples.

Sitting quietly in a room in Tehran, a ten-year-old Jewish girl named Jaleh Behroozi tried to make sense of why her brother, an artist, had been tortured by SAVAK (Sāzemān-e Ettelā'āt va Amniyat-e Keshvar), the US-trained secret police force. As she worked this horror over in her mind, she sat next to a different brother who was translating *The Diary of Anne Frank* into Persian. She read each page as he handed it to her. It is this moment that Jaleh recalls when she talks about how she lost her faith in God and became interested in the idea of self-emancipation. The atrocities of the European Holocaust, the violence of dictatorship, her brother's body in pain—these experiences affected her in ways she hardly understood at the time. Years later in diaspora, the affects and emotions that remained would fuel her

decision to commit her life to a revolutionary movement that promised to put an end, once and for all, to regimes that torture.[26]

Among the thirty former ISA members interviewed for this book, many could still describe specific encounters with state repression in Iran in the aftermath of the 1953 CIA-backed coup, events that occurred many years before they came to study in the US. They recounted memories of martial law and the sting of tear gas, of relatives disappeared, of friends, teachers, and neighbors imprisoned and tortured. Farid, a former ISA member now based in New York City, recalled a recurring scene from his childhood in Tehran: "We would see the tanks, we would see the soldiers in the streets. These were all in front of my eyes, and then the question, why are they doing that? Why are they there?" These formative experiences, and the troubling questions they raised affected how individuals reacted when they came across subversive ideas, texts, and organizations—whether in Iran or in diaspora. The recollections of some former ISA members evoked even earlier moments of Iranian opposition to autocracy, charting a subterranean leftist genealogy that reaches back through generations of repression and resistance. During the first half of the twentieth century, Iran was a nexus point for the transnational circulation of radical ideologies and movements, including the formation of Asia's first communist party among Iranian migrant workers in the oil fields of Baku in 1920. Both the persistence of visceral memories of state violence *and* affective attachments to earlier moments in the modern Iranian freedom struggle illustrate how the making of revolutionary subjects unfolds over time through a complex entanglement of the intimate, the historical, and the geopolitical.

The desire for national liberation among Iranian students challenged the hierarchies of class, as thousands of middle- and upper-class Iranian students in the US became concerned with the liberation of the vast majority of poor Iranians back home. Members of the ISA were affectively attached to a broad yet powerful notion of "the Iranian people," which included those left out of the version of progress the US and the Shah were promoting. These attachments to the impoverished and exploited masses proved far more compelling than Western degrees or the promise of individual career advancement. As I discuss in chapter 5, this class rebellion included a rejection of bourgeois forms of femininity associated with a Westernizing dictatorship and made possible new gender roles for women within the student movement. Revolutionary affects, including the desire for equality and belonging in an alienating and unjust world, facilitated the transformation of thousands of Iranian students into revolutionaries.

Affects of Solidarity

In the course of my research, I found that former ISA members had not only engaged in actions geared toward overthrowing the Shah, but also participated in a wide range of other movements. This is how Jalil Mostashari, a former ISA member at Michigan State in the mid-1960s, described his activities: "The Black struggle was a part of the total international struggle for me. It was not only them. Sometimes the UAW [United Auto Workers] needed people on their picket line in Detroit. When Arab students had an action, we would participate in it. When we had an action, they would participate in it. Eritreans would come with us. Afghan students would come with us. Some people from Bengal—they were leftists—they would come with us."[27]

When I asked him what motivated this level of commitment to so many different causes, he looked me in the eyes, held my gaze, and spoke with the gravity of someone expressing a sacred truth: "If you want people to sympathize with you, you have to sympathize with them at the time of their need. You cannot just say things; you've got to believe it, really, in your heart. You have to have this flame within you that can warm others. You cannot say it with your tongue; it doesn't move anybody." This book takes its title from Jalil's words and from the description of the relationship between affective energy and political action embedded within it. To "believe" something "really, in your heart" describes an affective state that blurs the mind/body divide structuring Western enlightenment notions of subjectivity. To have "this flame within" is to embody a politics of solidarity as animating energy that burns, warms, and moves people toward others with whom they sense something shared.

I developed the concept "affects of solidarity" to describe embodied attachments to the liberation of others. Affects of solidarity are generated when revolutionary affects, or desires for revolution, circulate and converge across different populations and movements. It is important here to distinguish between affects of solidarity and emotions like pity or guilt that might accompany altruism or charity. Solidarity enables people who do not occupy the same position in a global or national hierarchy of power to imagine themselves as sharing something in common—a common enemy perhaps, or a common stance against injustice, or a common vision of the future. David Featherstone defines solidarity "as a relation forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression."[28] Solidarity, he explains, is transformative and relational, proceeding across the uneven terrain of race, gender, nation, and empire, bringing new political possibilities

into being.[29] Solidarity does not automatically eradicate or transcend those divisions and can sometimes reproduce them, but it can also reroute our affiliations and attachments away from dominant hierarchies and toward new forms of connection.

By paying attention to affects of solidarity we can better understand how the power of solidarity "from below" emerges. If affect refers to our ability to be affected or changed by the world, and also our ability to effect change, then the question becomes: how and under what conditions is affect mobilized toward acts of solidarity? There may be a material basis for different groups of people coming to identify with one another and act collectively, such as a common interest in fighting a company that pollutes the environment and busts unions (for example, the "Teamsters and Turtles" coalition of union members and environmentalists that opposed NAFTA). But this kind of coincidence of immediate, material interests is not always present or necessary for solidarity to occur. There was no immediate, material interest at stake when Iranian students marched with their American counterparts against the US war in Vietnam as they were not in danger of being drafted. I argue that the affective states mobilized and generated through acts of solidarity have the power to redefine the very notion of "interests," to change how we perceive our needs, desires, and commonalities. Affects of solidarity encompass a range of sensations and orientations toward the Other that are compelling precisely because they facilitate a new feeling of mutuality, connection, and collective power. This is how affective attachments to the well-being of others become rewarding and transformative, even among people who may previously have understood themselves to hold disparate or conflicting concerns.

The element of mobility that characterizes affect is perhaps most crucial to my formulation. Affects of solidarity accumulate and circulate, building in intensity and picking up new meanings as they move. Affects of solidarity draw people together from widely differing contexts and facilitate joint political action across the boundaries of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, language, and nationality. They describe the affective state or mood that made Third World internationalism possible. Iranian student activists in the US were deeply affected by the conditions they encountered in diaspora, by the rebellions underway on and off college campuses. Depending on where they landed, ISA members had the opportunity to participate in mass movements against racism and war. Their activities constitute a missing piece of Afro-Asian studies historiography, bringing West Asian solidarity with African American and African liberation into focus. Like their American

activist peers, Iranian students were influenced and inspired by the proliferation of Third World anticolonial movements and searched among them for models to adapt and follow. In turn, ISA members contributed to the shared feelings of militancy and solidarity among a larger leftist milieu by exposing the hidden brutalities of the alliance between the US and the Shah, and, along with Arab and Arab American students, by placing West Asia and North Africa on the map of activist affiliation and concern. In this way, they deepened and expanded an internationalist political culture that thrived by making connections between domestic and imperial forms of subjugation and by linking vastly different sites of resistance. These connections were sometimes material—as when the Shah was funneling weapons to suppress anticolonial struggles in Southern Africa—and always affective.

Among the most active Iranian students, Third World Marxism became the primary interpretive lens for their experiences in Iran and in the US. Even though the ISA was imagined as a coalition representing the interests of all Iranian foreign students, by the late 1960s many leading ISA activists were also affiliated with a handful of underground leftist parties. These parties followed various interpretations of Marxism-Leninism and Maoism. Some supported guerilla struggle while others looked to rural peasant movements or to the urban working class as the agent of change. By 1975, the competing influences of these parties, and disagreements among them, would cause the ISA to split. Despite this fragmentation, the Iranian anti-Shah student opposition would continue to grow and to deepen its connections with other revolutionary movements.[30] The fact that the ISA came to be dominated by Third World Marxism created a shared ideological framework with the rest of the US Third World Left, facilitating what Cynthia Young has called the "multiple translations and substitutions" necessary to "close the gaps between First and Third World subjects."[31] My argument is that analogies between the conditions faced by inhabitants of racialized urban space in the US and those of the colonial countryside, between Black and Brown Americans and the peasantries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, were lived and felt as affects of solidarity, and that this force allowed disparities and inconsistencies to recede in the construction of a deeply rewarding revolutionary imaginary.

However, even as affects of solidarity crossed national, racial, and other sites of difference, they did not necessarily transcend them. In the 1960s and 1970s, affects of solidarity did not attach equally to all liberation movements. Notably, feminist and gay liberation movements were not common areas of affiliation and solidarity for the Third World Marxist Left, including

for the ISA. Rather than idealizing solidarity, this study explores these gaps and contradictions in order to better understand how affects of solidarity attach to some struggles and not others. I thus contribute to queer and feminist interventions into Afro-Asian studies by exploring how affective dissonance within movements became a launching point for challenges to hetero-patriarchal ideas and forms of organizing.[32]

Crucially, as my research shows, affects of solidarity do not necessarily stem from the same experiences of oppression; Iranian foreign students like Jalil were not targeted by racism the way that African Americans were, for example, and yet they could still identify with and support "the Black struggle." That "flame within" could emanate from vastly different encounters with injustice and still attract people to the same meetings and demonstrations. When it came to the divisions between men and women, however, solidarity was often conditional upon adherence to masculinist definitions of proper revolutionary activity. These were the conditions that gave rise to Third World and women-of-color feminism.[33] Below I apply my affective theory of revolutionary subjectivity to analyze the structures of feeling that facilitated, and impinged upon, solidarity between women and men in the ISA.

Affect, Gender, and Feminist Critique

The terms of belonging for women and men in the ISA reflected a set of feelings about the particular relationship between class, gender, and sexuality produced in the context of Western intervention in Iran. Class, gender, and sexuality, while not the only markers of difference among ISA members, emerged in my research as the most persistent challenges to building a united movement. New forms of revolutionary subjectivity both transgressed and reinforced the boundaries of traditional gender roles and class divisions. In the 1960s, as the first generation of Iranian feminist scholars of modern Iran have shown, the Shah co-opted the discourse, and even some of the demands, of Iranian feminists and imposed a top-down agenda that rested on thoroughly gendered notions of modernization.[34] The link between femininity and modernization crystalized in the figure of the Westernized bourgeois woman, adorned with a miniskirt and makeup. For opposition movements, religious and secular, this figure fused femininity, upper-class status, and imperial intervention into the quintessential symbol of the corruption and degradation of Iranian society under the Shah.[35] Anti-Shah forces from across the political spectrum railed against this figure and offered ways for

women to regain their self-respect via adherence to particular revolutionary ideologies and gendered forms of participation in revolutionary activity. For the Marxist Left, women could never really be free until the larger socioeconomic system was transformed. Yet, within Marxist organizations, as Iranian feminist scholars have discussed, women's experiences were highly contradictory. On the one hand, becoming part of a clandestine movement for human liberation was exciting and empowering, especially when compared with life as a bourgeois housewife valued only for her sex appeal and reproductive capacity.[36] On the other hand, the Left remained male-dominated in leadership and outlook, invested in a hierarchical approach to liberation that subordinated the "woman question" to the anti-imperialist struggle.[37]

Hostile feelings toward the Westernized femininity promoted under the Shah's reign traveled with Iranian students to the US and fueled attachments to anti-capitalist, anti-consumerist ideals. Adherence to these ideals was also the manner in which mostly upper-class student activists tried to show that they had truly sided with the "toiling masses"—a population, the ISA routinely pointed out, which included millions of women. These women performed backbreaking labor in fields and dusty workshops and did not wear miniskirts or makeup. The exploited masses of women thus served as a noble foil to the "West-toxified" woman complicit with the Shah's regime. Feelings about class and gender were inextricably linked to feelings about the intertwining of imperialism and dictatorship, and were embedded within the revolutionary affects mobilized by the ISA in diaspora. Class and gender differences within the organization were mediated through affective attachments to new forms of revolutionary subjectivity, which were supposed to make those differences less visible and, therefore, less threatening to the unity of the movement. Through an ideology of "gender sameness," men and women repeated the notion that they were "the same," meaning already equal. Their "sameness" was supposedly achieved by mutual dedication to and participation in the cause, and through a tacit, if routinely broken, agreement that "serious" revolutionaries had no time or interest in the distractions of sexual desire and intimacy. Yet in practice, the ideology of gender sameness manifested as what Parvin Paidar has called "masculinization": for the good of the revolution, women would cut their hair short and wear clothing that hid the shape of their bodies.[38] At no point were men supposed to change the way they looked or acted to become more like women. Many women felt uncomfortable about such double standards, including those surrounding the sexual practices of men versus women, but willingly participated anyway. My research illuminates the affective investments women had in these

gendered forms of revolutionary subject-making, which were not unique to the Iranian context.

Memories of gender sameness, masculinization, and efforts to side with the oppressed classes are loaded with contradictory sensations, affective dissonances that index deeply gendered states of being. Affects, to borrow Flatley's words, "come into being only *through* categories of class and gender" because these social formations "are woven into our emotional lives in the most fundamental way."[39] We must speak, then, of the intersectional character of revolutionary affects—affective experiences of state repression and resistance in Iran—which reside in bodies continuously impacted by patriarchy, compulsory heterosexuality, and class divisions.[40] While the men and women I interviewed recalled the joy that came from feeling part of a revolutionary family, estrangement, surprise, dismay, and regret toward the past often emerged as well, and sometimes in the course of a single memory. These "negative" feelings are certainly products of hindsight, inextricable from the events and experiences of the past forty years, and yet these feelings also reference affective states of ambivalence, tension, and discomfort that existed at the time. Sometimes these feelings drove efforts toward institutional and cultural change within the ISA and the Iranian Left. More frequently, they remained in an inchoate and unnamed affective register until conditions changed and they became available as sources of feminist critique and mobilization. As I argue in chapter 6, this is what happened in Tehran in March 1979, when a revolutionary women's uprising seemed to appear out of nowhere, catching all established parties off guard.

Given the demonization of Iranian society and culture as particularly oppressive to women, and the weaponization of this discourse by Western imperial countries, I have found it necessary and productive to adopt a relational approach that makes visible similarities between the gender and sexual politics of the Iranian internationalist Left and other diasporic and anticolonial revolutionary movements. In the United States, Iranian students were active alongside many non-Iranian movements that were also grappling with gender, sexual, and class divisions within their ranks. Iranian leftists were far from alone in reproducing existing hierarchies, demanding gendered forms of sacrifice in the name of unity and gendered forms of unity in the face of state repression. For the Third Worldist Left of the 1960s and 1970s, revolutionary affects attached to ideas, leaders, and organizations that represented the most compelling responses to oppressive conditions at the time. Across all racial, ethnic, and national groups, those responses were often bound up with the oppressions they sought to overcome, even as they offered animating

visions of another possible world. Placing the gender and sexual politics of the ISA within this broader context undermines the reductionist, ahistorical blaming of Muslim culture as the source of gender and sexual oppression in Iran and on the Iranian Left. My research shows that the revolutionary affects of avowedly secular ISA members were embedded within social formations (gender, sexuality, and class) that were reconfigured at the intersection of imperialism, dictatorship, and diaspora. My argument is that this analysis of the relationship between affect and political processes must impact how we study the Iranian diaspora before and after 1979.

An Intersectional Approach to Iranian Diaspora Studies

The changing dynamics of US imperialism and dictatorship in Iran have been, since the US replaced Britain as the dominant imperial power in the middle of the twentieth century, the driving force behind the migration of Iranians abroad—whether as foreign students or as exiles, immigrants, and asylees—and the central problematic around which Iranian diasporic identity, culture, and politics have been organized in the US. Imperialism and dictatorship both stand in the way of freedom and justice for ordinary Iranian people, who might yet wish for a future that is neither a US neo-colony nor an Islamic republic. This is true whether US empire and dictatorship are in alignment, as they generally were during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, which is the focus of the current study, or whether these power structures are locked in a bitter and highly unequal conflict, as are the US and Iran today.

With so much emphasis generally, and understandably, placed on the rupture of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, many of the continuities between the pre- and postrevolutionary periods have been overlooked in ways that may distort our understanding of diasporic consciousness and political possibility. *This Flame Within* offers an approach that views major geopolitical shifts in US-Iran relations not so much as a before and after, but as different iterations of a crisis brought on by the incompatibility between "US interests" and popular democracy. I understand "US interests" as the mandate to intervene militarily, economically, and/or politically anywhere in the world to maintain the profitability and competitive edge of US capitalism and to suppress any entity considered threatening or even slightly unfavorable to this agenda. It is this agenda that has been so sympathetic to dictatorships around the world, including that of Mohammad Reza Shah, who was empowered to crush all opposition. And it is in this context that anticolonial opposition forces come

to treat internal dissent as a vulnerability, as a weakness to be stamped out in the face of the continuous threat of state repression and foreign domination. Whether US interests were in alignment with the goals of the Iranian state or not, it was the interactions between state repression and imperial aggression that created the conditions for Iranian migration to the United States from the 1950s through to our current moment.

This integrated and dynamic way of framing a longer historical arc of displacement builds on over three decades of scholarship constituting the still-emerging interdisciplinary field of Iranian diaspora studies. In their introduction to a special journal issue on the topic, Babak Elahi and Persis M. Karim traced the shift from the use of terms like *exile*, *refugee*, and *immigrant* to the term *diaspora* within literary and sociological scholarship on Iranian populations abroad. They argue that the use of diaspora allows for investigations of Iranian experiences outside Iran that are organized not only in relation to Iran, but also in "mutually transformative" relationship to various host countries *and* to communities of Iranians within them.[41] Elahi and Karim carve out space for the study of the Iranian diaspora not primarily as a subset of Iranian studies, but as a field that "situates Iran and Iranian culture in the continuum of more global diasporic consciousness."[42] My emphasis on an intersectional approach to Iranian diaspora studies is a provocation to develop this nascent field further precisely by engaging analyses drawn from the global context of multiple diasporic experiences.[43] These include systemic critiques of capitalism, empire, racial formation, and the politics of gender and sexuality produced by scholars of Black and Third World feminisms, Asian American studies, Arab American studies, and queer-of-color diasporic critique. One of the most important insights I draw from these bodies of work is the need to expose and resist the hierarchical binary between West and East that creates conditions in which the diasporic racialized subject must either assimilate to the higher civilizational order or be rendered abject/threatening. To reject this logic in relation to the Iranian diaspora means to tackle directly the geopolitical polarization between the US and Iran that exerts massive pressure on our diasporic culture, politics, and subjectivity.

An intersectional approach to the Iranian diaspora would reject the notion, so common among the generation of Iranians who came to the US in the immediate aftermath of the 1979 revolution, that Iran has been "lost" to a uniquely oppressive Islamist state and that the US constitutes its polar opposite—a space of exceptional freedom.[44] Aside from the obvious Orientalism inscribed in this view, it removes the Islamic Republic from the

political battles which brought it into being and also exempts it from the larger context of postcolonial dictatorships across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[45] The corresponding construction of the US as "free" disregards the structural brutality of settler colonialism, white supremacy, poverty, mass incarceration, and the rampant gender and sexual violence embedded in every sector of US society. Furthermore, this dominant "polar opposites" paradigm cannot account for the complicated role of US empire in the rise of undemocratic postcolonial governments, whether formed with US support or in reaction to US imperial power.

At the same time, an intersectional Iranian diaspora studies framework departs from a still potent strain of anti-imperialism, which insists the job of Iranians in the US is only to denounce US aggression and not to discuss the domestic repression that shapes Iranian society. This position makes transnational solidarity with Iranians living in Iran impossible, for it refuses to respond to popular opposition to and alienation from the Iranian government and offers no support to grassroots activists persecuted for contesting policies that are anathema to even the most broadly defined progressive agenda.[46] Furthermore, it aligns the Left in the US with the Iranian government, conceding the political terrain of concern for repression in Iran either to liberal human rights advocates—who often take for granted the benevolence of US influence abroad—or to pro-war media outlets and politicians.[47] The leftist diasporic mandate to only criticize "our own government," meaning the US government, is driven by the legitimate fear that saying anything negative about Iranian society can and will be used as a justification for sanctions, war, and US-sponsored "regime change."

This amounts to a transnational version of an argument that has long circulated among oppressed and targeted groups: that we must not air our "dirty laundry" in front of those who would seize on any excuse to do us harm. Women-of-color feminists have had to engage with this argument as a condition of possibility for their very existence.[48] From the 1977 statement of the Combahee River Collective, to anthologies like *This Bridge Called My Back* and *Colonize This!*, to the work of Arab and Arab American feminists like Rabab Abdulhadi, Evelyn Alsultany, and Nadine Naber, women-of-color feminists in the US have responded to the "dirty laundry" debate by arguing that our movements against racism, economic exploitation, and imperialism will become stronger and more effective if we also oppose gender and sexual oppression.[49] Even more than this, women-of-color and Third World feminists have demonstrated that racism, capitalism, and empire mobilize and depend on particular constructions of gender and sexual difference in order

to justify and carry out their operations of power.[50] My aim in this book is to continue this work by addressing multiple, "interlocking" or "intersecting" forms of oppression that impact Iranians and by refusing to rank or silence systemic injustices.[51] The agenda of those who would do us harm is an operating constraint and a workplace hazard, demanding that we make it as difficult as possible for our ideas and activities to be co-opted.

An intersectional Iranian diaspora studies framework addresses this set of challenges by drawing on several branches of feminist thought and practice. These include the theoretical and conceptual tools of women-of-color feminism developed in a US context, in particular Black feminism, which can be productively adapted to the transnational relationship between the Iranian diaspora and Iran. By illuminating the multiple sources of oppression and inequality that structure US *and* Iranian societies, we can refuse to side with either government and open up new spaces of mutual connection and solidarity. An intersectional approach to the Iranian diaspora also builds on the frameworks of postcolonial feminist scholars and applies them to the diaspora, looking at how gendered discourses of Orientalism and modernity impact people displaced to the heart of empire. Feminist scholarship on West Asia and North Africa has demonstrated the centrality of gender and sexuality for delineating the categories of West and East and for positioning the masculinized West as dominant over the feminized East. Leila Ahmed, Leila Abu-Lughod, and Deniz Kandiyoti, among others, have argued that gender and sexuality in Muslim-majority nations—and in particular, gendered forms of dress like hijab—become politically loaded markers of difference mobilized for distinct, often competing ends by anticolonial governments and by Western imperial powers.[52] In postrevolutionary Iran, the unequal legal status of women, state-imposed hijab, and specific Islamized ideals about women's roles in the family and in society are crucial to the state's notions of citizenship and sovereignty and to its anti-imperialist ideology.[53]

Postcolonial and transnational feminist scholars have also critiqued the shifting discourses of US imperialism and its co-optation of women's rights.[54] As the world witnessed to disastrous effect in Afghanistan, the US has marketed war and occupation as necessary preconditions for the liberation of Muslim women.[55] Transnational feminists have done the difficult work of analyzing gender and sexual oppression across the violent divide of Global South and Global North, generating incisive critiques of the gender and sexual oppression on which imperialism, neocolonialism, and corporate globalization rest.[56] The challenge for an intersectional approach to the Iranian diaspora is how to counter the deadly combination of Orientalism,

Islamophobia, and imperialism, all of which rely on gendered systems of meaning for their legitimacy, while also engaging with the real problems women and gender and sexual minorities in Iran face. In fact, Iranians living in Iran also confront this challenge, and there is much to learn from the variety of strategies of resistance that different groups have used to advocate for internal change from below.[57]

This is also not a new problem, since authoritarian rule and imperialist intervention have characterized Iranian society for more than a century. There is a rich tradition of Iranian feminist scholarship by Afsaneh Najmabadi, Eliz Sanasarian, Parvin Paidar, Haideh Moghissi, Homa Hoodfar, Minoo Moallem, Nima Naghibi, and others who have parsed the gender and sexual politics of the Pahlavi dynasty (1925–79), of the various opposition tendencies that called for its overthrow, and of the Islamic Republic that took its place.[58] State-building ideologies, as well as opposition movements, all have a politics of gender and sexuality—that is, ideas about the "natural" and/or "proper" roles and attributes ascribed to the constructed categories of "woman" and "man," which are enforced and regulated in particular ways. This scholarship reveals many similarities between supposedly antithetical regimes and ideologies, and works to shift debates over gender and sexual oppression away from the familiar dichotomies of West versus East, secularism versus Islam. Indeed, both the monarchists and the leftists in Iran shared a similar teleological narrative of Third World development; the major difference was over who should benefit from the resulting abundance.[59] Women's rights were always subordinated to these narratives of developmentalist progress, either circumscribed by a modernizing dictatorship or subsumed under the "primary" project of national liberation.

An intersectional framework expands upon this legacy of Iranian feminist scholarship on twentieth-century Iran by responding to three sites of concern at the same time: American imperial pretentions to saving Muslim women; the repressive policies and attitudes regulating gender and sexuality in Iran; and the repressive policies and attitudes regulating gender and sexuality in the US.[60] This approach can lay the foundations for an unapologetic, anti-imperialist approach to understanding and supporting struggles around gender and sexual equality in Iran on the basis of an engagement with related struggles in the US (and elsewhere). The ISA's multifaceted and multi-sited critique of imperialism and dictatorship, and its consistent practice of making connections between oppressive conditions in the US and in Iran, is, therefore, a necessary starting point for an intersectional feminist approach to the Iranian diaspora in the US.

Re-Periodizing the Diaspora

Members of the ISA were part of the first mass migration of Iranians to the United States, which was composed of student-visa holders scattered across Europe, North America, and parts of West and South Asia. I refer to this population as a diaspora, even though the temporary nature of their student visas ensured that most of them returned home when their studies had finished.[61] Many could not go home, however, because their political activity had made them targets of the Iranian government. Nadine Naber's theorization of "diasporas of empire" highlights the fact that this population of foreign students was produced by the economic and political priorities of US imperialism in Iran and draws our attention to the ways that "empire inscribes itself on the diasporic subject within the domestic (national) borders of empire."[62] Throughout this book, I explore the inscription of US empire on diasporic subjectivity in the form of the turn to revolutionary politics. The inability for some foreign students to return home safely was a side effect of their political activity in response to Western-backed authoritarian modernization. It was this formation that produced a foreign student diaspora in the first place.

From the late 1950s, following the CIA-backed coup in Iran, through 1980, tens of thousands of Iranians came to the US to study—more than from any other nation.[63] At the time of the revolution in Iran, there were approximately 50,000 Iranian students enrolled in American colleges and universities.[64] I call the diasporic students of this era "imperial model minorities" (see chapter 2) because they were supposed to model the benefits of US-sponsored development in the Third World as an alternative to national liberation movements. Iranian imperial model minorities were encouraged to adopt a US worldview, and their presence in the US was considered evidence of the success of US Cold War hegemony. Rather than only viewing the nationally bounded space of Iran as the site of revolutionary opposition to the alliance between the US and the Shah, this study of the ISA shows that the process of "losing" Iran as a watchdog for US interests also unfolded in diaspora, in the US itself.

The revolutionary affects of ISA members left them alienated from the mainstream of Iranian and US societies and fueled a vibrant diasporic counterculture that has been almost completely left out of studies of the Iranian diaspora.[65] Until very recently, scholarship on the Iranian diaspora in the US was chiefly concerned with the immigrant population that fled the 1979 revolution and its aftermath.[66] Traumatized by revolution and war and often persecuted as "counterrevolutionaries" by the new Iranian government, this

latter group developed an exilic culture oriented around deep animosity toward the Islamic Republic and nostalgia for the era of the pro-Western Shah. The majority of these immigrants leveraged their upper-class backgrounds and advanced degrees to achieve notably high rates of economic success.[67] They tended to embrace what I call a "Persian imperial identity" constituted around an attachment to a so-called Aryan racial heritage associated with the pre-Islamic Persian Empire and a disassociation from Arabs and other people of color in the US.[68]

While it has largely been through literary writing that a more complex picture of Iranian American/diaspora identity has emerged, academic scholarship is only just beginning to attend to a wider variety of affiliations.[69] Neda Maghbouleh's groundbreaking sociological study, *The Limits of Whiteness: Iranian Americans and the Everyday Politics of Race*, revealed how racism and Islamophobia whipped up during the 1979–80 hostage crisis and in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks have disrupted the process of assimilation for younger generations and produced alienation from the Persian imperial identity of Iranian immigrant parents and grandparents.[70] In this context, new racial identities and solidarities with Arabs, South Asians, African Americans, and other people of color, sometimes organized around a pan-Muslim affiliation, have become available to Iranians in the US.[71] These findings are all the more interesting if we understand them as a contemporary iteration of "affects of solidarity," a diasporic orientation that resonates with the pre-1979 period and the story of the ISA.

The capacious internationalism practiced by the ISA exemplified an anti-imperialist worldview that linked the US and Iran as sites of resistance to unjust state power. Such a view offers a radical alternative to enduring notions of a clash of cultures or civilizations, of Islam versus the West, that have cast an indelible shadow over how the Iranian Revolution, Iranian diasporic subjectivity, and US-Iran relations have been understood ever since. While these Orientalist logics stretch back to the beginnings of European incursion into Asia, they have been reinvigorated by the US-Iran standoff, now in its fifth decade. Both Washington and Tehran continually reinforce the idea of a fundamental cultural difference between the two nations, with each government competing to claim moral superiority over the other. In what has become a familiar script, the US accuses Iran of promoting and sponsoring terrorism, revising the Truman Doctrine's mandate to fight "communism" anywhere in the world in order to legitimize a permanent, global "war on terror." The Iranian government counters by declaring itself the main obstacle to US imperialism in the Middle East, the champion of the oppressed. It then

folds this rhetoric into official justifications for domestic repression in the name of national security and for its own regional imperial interventions. This polarizing context exerts a structuring constraint over global politics today, limiting the political horizon to a choice between accepting US hegemony or aligning with some form of Islamic governance.

Two examples illustrate the stakes of finding a way out of this impasse. First: In 2009, when a pro-democracy movement erupted in the streets of Iranian cities, the Iranian government quickly labeled it a Western imperialist conspiracy and unleashed a violent crackdown on dissent. This is a script the Iranian government has followed each time its citizens rise up to demand structural change. Second: During the popular uprising in Egypt in 2011, the specter of Iran hovered overhead, an ever-present deterrent against the complete dismantling of the military dictatorship. Iran, many people argued, was proof that the sudden overthrow of a pro-Western authoritarian regime could result in something even worse: an Islamic republic. This logic shares much in common with Margaret Thatcher's famous declaration at the end of the Cold War: "there is no alternative." This phrase, which became known by the acronym TINA, has been used to assert that any attempt to create an alternative to Western capitalism inevitably leads to totalitarianism. Today, by running an authoritarian state in the name of "revolution," the Iranian government helps to discredit the idea of "revolution" altogether. After the broken promises and bloody betrayals of so many postcolonial states, it *can* seem as if there is no alternative to joining the US world order, waging the war on terror, embracing neoliberal economic policies, and intensifying the militarization of everyday life. Ironically, even while it maintains independence from US domination, the Iranian government pursues its own version of austerity, privatization, and the hyper-policing of public space. This can indeed make it seem like there is no alternative outside the hegemonic logics of authoritarian capitalism, whether in secular or religious garb.

Working against the cynicism of TINA doctrines old and new, this book revisits the period leading up to the shift in US-Iran relations from special friends to arch enemies in order to recuperate the sense of political possibility and dynamism that enlivened an era of revolutionary internationalism. It draws on this history to reframe the "US-Iran conflict" as a long, unequal, and deeply fraught relationship that originates with US efforts to control Iranian resources and the larger Persian Gulf region. In the chapters that follow, I analyze the impact of this relationship on the Iranians who joined the ISA and explore the web of affective, material, and ideological connections that facilitated solidarity between the ISA and other liberation movements.

By paying attention to how the material, the affective, and the ideological interact in the making of revolutionary subjects, movements, and practices, we can better understand how rebellions can erupt from within spaces of privilege, turning the celebrated figure of the Iranian imperial model minority into an anti-imperialist revolutionary, or, according to the US Coast Guard, a "known terrorist."

A Methodology of Possibility

This Flame Within is concerned with both recuperating a diasporic movement of Iranian revolutionaries in the United States and with critiquing that movement at the same time. But how can this be done? Surely one must decide to be *for* something or *against* it, to either redeem or to condemn. The overwhelming majority of former ISA members I interviewed took a different approach, and I listened while they grappled with who they had been and what they had done. The memories I gathered were filled with feelings of regret, shame, and grief as well as joy, elation, and hope. I developed what I call a "methodology of possibility" to analyze both the "positive" and "negative" feelings associated with the Iranian leftist past for their productive, future-oriented potential. A methodology of possibility allows a non-teleological approach to reading an archive, one that is attentive to memories, affects, and emotions marginalized or erased by dominant accounts of the failures of revolutionary leftist movements.[72] It shares an affinity with the queer futurity José Muñoz describes as a mode of critiquing the "devastating logic of the here and now," recuperating hope as something always on the horizon.[73] A methodology of possibility takes the collective feeling of hope or possibility itself—however fleeting or naive—as a legitimate object of study, as a way of rethinking the legacy of anti-imperialist revolutions.

The legacy of the Iranian Left—before, during, and after the 1979 revolution—is a site of tremendous affective and emotional discord among the Iranian diaspora, and any discussion of the ISA is likely to trigger an avalanche of strong feelings among readers directly impacted by the events of the period. The Left was heavily persecuted—by the Shah and by the Islamic Republic—and was unable to survive the revolutionary period with its organizations, members, and ideas intact. With a few notable exceptions, ISA members echoed the major Iranian leftist parties in offering uncritical support to Ayatollah Khomeini in his capacity as the leader of the revolution.[74] As a whole, the organized Iranian Left did not marshal its forces, limited

though they were, to advocate for a more democratic postrevolutionary society or to defend equal citizenship for women and religious and ethnic minorities.[75] Many volumes have been written about the reasons for these failures, attributing them to dogmatism, disconnection from Iranian society, the stifling conditions of state repression, a fundamental misapprehension of Khomeinism, and a suicidal naivete.[76]

The postrevolutionary generation of Iranian feminist scholars cited earlier emerged from this experience of betrayal and disappointment to produce ground-breaking work on the politics of gender and sexuality at the intersection of imperialism and dictatorship. While the organized Left of the ISA's generation has been discredited and crushed, Iranian feminists, labor activists, students, and others persist in organizing and agitating for the society in which they want to live. The economic warfare of the US sanctions policy in Iran, and the constant threats of American military intervention, undermine the prospects of these activists and grind the population into despair. At this bleak moment, it is all the more important to recuperate a history of thousands of young Iranians who imagined, and even glimpsed, a future for Iran that was neither a monarchical client state nor a theocratic dictatorship. A methodology of possibility allows us to generate new meanings from the ISA's fraught and flawed legacy, to claim the mistakes as much as the successes as part of a diasporic inheritance for future generations to parse and transform.

As illustrated above, the affective archive I have assembled from interviews with former ISA members makes possible a comparative, transnational, and intersectional feminist critique of Third Worldist Marxism, which, I argue, can strengthen our future movements against multiple, interlocking oppressions in the US and in Iran. At the same time, the memories gathered in this book reveal a set of feelings that force us to contend with the Third World leftist experiment as it was lived and experienced from day to day, rather than as a prelude to some inevitable failure or betrayal. Stories of collective self-sacrifice, dedication, and discipline index ways of being in the world that are only possible when the logics of capitalist individualism lose their hold and a passion for justice shapes new forms of subjectivity. Shahnaz, who joined the ISA in Northern California, did not lament the time she spent in prison in Iran after the revolution. Instead, she declared, "That experience is one of the greatest of my life!" and described with palpable joy the community of women she had the chance to know behind bars. She, like so many women and men of her generation, had devoted her life to the cause of freedom and was willing to suffer the consequences. This is

just one example of an affective attachment to revolutionary ways of being in the world that has endured alongside devastating loss.

Many such examples emerged in the course of my research, compelling me to make sense of melancholic attachments to revolutionary activity that have been marginalized by the dominant narrative of leftist failure and complicity. I borrow the term *resistant nostalgia* from Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer to describe affective attachments that disrupt the dominant forms of diasporic nostalgia for pre-revolutionary Iran, for the "good life" lived under the Shah.[77] Resistant nostalgia allows us to engage with a sustained longing for a freedom that never arrived, an ongoing attachment to a wild and uncompromising desire for a different, better world. In this way, memories of revolutionary subjectivity, sociality, and solidarity can become part of the terrain of diasporic consciousness and identity, with implications for how we view the past and the future. Indeed, the resistant nostalgia of some ISA members makes it necessary to tell the story of the Iranian revolution itself differently. Memories of participation in the women's uprising in Tehran in March 1979, in which tens of thousands of women took to the streets and mounted the first open challenge to the consolidation of a new Islamist government, contain another set of possibilities for what might have been.[78] They gesture toward an intersectional anti-imperialist politics that began to emerge from within the revolutionary process itself. By using a methodology of possibility to center these fleeting days of protest (see chapter 6), new sources of knowledge about the postcolonial relationship between gender, sexuality, and national sovereignty that resonate far beyond the Iranian context become available; and new losses, which continue to shape diasporic subjectivity and politics today, become visible.

Resistant nostalgia is out of sync with neat stories of leftist failure. It pushes us to question the political stakes of how the past is remembered and how the permissible scope of subsequent political action is determined. Resistant nostalgia, as a key aspect of a methodology of possibility, keeps alive the memories, affects, and emotions generated in moments when collective aspirations for human liberation are still abstracted from any actually existing state form. These moments remind us that the outcomes of revolutions are unpredictable rather than inevitable. Resistant nostalgia expresses affects that refuse to be vanquished even in a period of defeat. The words of Egyptian activist Alaa Abdel-Fattah offer a heartbreaking contemporary example. Writing from his prison cell in Cairo in 2016, five years after his arrest for participating in the uprising that ousted US-backed President Hosni Mubarak, Abdel-Fattah ended his despairing account of a lost revolution with these

incisive words: "But one thing I do remember, one thing I know: the sense of possibility was real. It may have been naive to believe our dream could come true, but it was not foolish to believe that another world was possible. It really was. Or at least that's how I remember it."[79] *This Flame Within* takes that "sense of possibility" seriously as something "real": a revolutionary affect attached to a memory—however fleeting—that just might harbor our best hopes for the future.

Organization of the Book

The chapters of this book follow the transnational journey of Iranian foreign students and the movement they built. Chapter 1, "Revolutionary Affects and the Archive of Memory," reads formative experiences of dictatorship and US empire in Iran as an archive of revolutionary affects *and* a partial genealogy of the modern Iranian freedom struggle. This chapter argues that Iranian student radicalization must be understood as a transnational process that began in Iran—a place that was itself a site of regional and international circulation of revolutionary movements, ideas, banned literatures, and democratic aspirations, as well as technologies of imperial and state repression. I examine the relationship between affect, memory, and diasporic politics, and argue that melancholic attachments to pre-1979 moments of popular resistance continue to circulate revolutionary affects across the generations.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the formation, development, and impact of the ISA on public opinion, discourse, and institutional practices in the US. In chapter 2, "Revolt in the Metropole," I examine the unexpected consequences of the migration of foreign students—and their revolutionary affects—to the US at the height of the Cold War. The chapter names this population "imperial model minorities," a revision of the immigrant "model minority" category that shifts the site of proscribed normativity from the domestic sphere of citizenship to the transnational sphere of empire. I investigate migrant radicalization as a response to the cooperation between imperialism and dictatorship, rather than only as a reaction against racial discrimination and assimilation in the US, and trace the history of the ISA's emergence as an opposition organization. Chapter 3, "Making the Most of an American Education," draws on interviews, ISA publications, and mainstream and student newspapers to analyze ISA actions designed to expose the complicity of US universities, law enforcement, and government

with state repression in Iran. I argue that the ISA played an important role in undermining American popular support for US influence in West Asia by bringing the spectacle of torture and suffering in Iran into the public sphere in the US. This chapter also draws on mainstream media coverage to analyze the backlash against the ISA among ordinary Americans, pundits, and politicians. The ISA's militant, leftist opposition to the relationship between the US and the Shah triggered a racist, xenophobic reaction years before the taking of American hostages in Iran.

I then turn to look at the extensive cross-pollination that occurred between the Iranian foreign-student opposition, the US Left, and diasporic anticolonial movements. Chapter 4, "The Feeling and Practice of Solidarity," draws on interviews with former ISA members and other former activists of the era, campus newspapers, ISA literature, and activist ephemera to excavate ISA participation in the anti-Vietnam War, Black liberation, and Palestine liberation movements. I look at how revolutionary affects among disparate groups of people converged into powerful affects of solidarity that made mutual support and affiliation into a way of being in relation to others that shaped everyday life. This chapter contributes to feminist and queer interventions into Afro-Asian studies, a field that has not focused on the gender and sexual hierarchies within revolutionary organizations. Resisting the notion that revolutionary militancy is always already masculinist, I argue that acts of solidarity were affectively rewarding for women as much as for men. This chapter departs from a celebratory mode of studying the high points of Third World internationalism *and* from the narrative of leftist failure that weighs so heavily on the Iranian experience. Instead, it argues that the cross-pollinations between the ISA and non-Iranian leftist movements evidence forms of affinity across difference that provided the context for the later emergence of feminist and queer revolutionary politics.

Chapter 5, "Political Cultures of Revolutionary Belonging," looks at the internal political culture of the ISA and the Iranian leftist groups operating within it. I theorize the "revolutionary time" that reoriented ISA members away from the linear march of authoritarian developmentalism and analyze how the urgent imperative to bring about a revolution infused the management of gender and sexual difference in the ISA.[80] This chapter situates the everyday gender and sexual practices of the ISA, such as "gender sameness" and "masculinization," within the broader leftist milieu in which these students lived and organized. By using a comparative, diasporic framework, my analysis undermines facile religious or cultural explanations for persistent sexism within the Iranian left and allows for a serious engagement with the affective

investments of women themselves in contradictory forms of gendered revolutionary subjectivity.

Chapter 6, "Intersectional Anti-Imperialism: Alternative Genealogies of Revolution and Diaspora," looks at what happened when ISA members returned to Iran to participate in the unfolding process of revolution. The chapter focuses on the mass uprising of women in Tehran in March 1979, which posed the first major challenge to the curtailing of democracy by the revolutionary government. I argue for the centrality of the women's uprising, which has been minimized in the historiography of 1979, to understanding the trajectory of the Iranian revolution overall. Through close readings of interviews, movement literature, and video documentary footage, I argue that these events constitute a neglected part of a genealogy of Third World revolutionary feminism that has implications for diasporic and anti-imperialist politics today.

The concluding chapter, "Revolutionary Affects and the Remaking of Diaspora," follows the fragmentation and disorientation of the Iranian student Left under conditions of postrevolutionary repression—conditions that led the majority of my interviewees to return to the US. I utilize a methodology of possibility to explore the political potential of revolutionary affects that live on in diaspora, where they have been marginalized by the prevalence of hostile feelings toward the revolution and the Left. I argue that the affective attachments of former ISA members to the possibility of an Iran that was neither a US client state nor an Islamic republic illustrate resistant nostalgia, a form of exilic nostalgia that disrupts the normative Iranian diasporic nostalgia for the "good life" under the Shah. This chapter reprises the major concepts and arguments within the book as a whole and ends with provocations for reimagining the way Iranians in the US might relate to the traumatic history that has produced our diaspora. I consider the implications of resistant nostalgia—as a means of maintaining an open relationship to the political hopes of the previous era—for contemporary diasporic affective and political orientations.

A Note on the Interview Process

Among the Iranians I interviewed, some individuals requested the use of pseudonyms or the omission of their last names, and I have honored these requests. While they came from families with varying degrees of religiosity, all of the men and women I interviewed were from the Shi'i Muslim majority

except two Jewish women and one Sunni man. The majority were from upper-middle class or upper-class backgrounds. Most, but not all, were members of ISA chapters in Northern California, Washington-Baltimore, New York City, or Texas-Oklahoma. All but three were also members of transnational underground leftist parties. Currently, twenty-nine of the people I interviewed live in the US and one lives in Iran.[81] Although the details of their lives differ in important ways, as a cohort they are survivors of the persecution that followed the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This book would not have been possible without their willingness to share their memories of revolutionary activity and their reflections on this tumultuous period of their lives. I am profoundly grateful for their generosity and trust. It is important to acknowledge, of course, that memory is slippery, ephemeral, and contested, and to be aware that it is always filtered through present concerns and adapted to particular audiences.[82] As Maurice Halbwachs, who developed the concept of collective memory over seventy years ago, wrote, "the mind reconstructs its memories under the pressure of society," and in the case of former ISA members, both US and Iranian societies have been hostile to the leftist politics that once defined their lives.[83] I treat the memories of those who shared their stories for this book as a living archive of how subjects negotiate that which cannot be forgotten, the hopes that have not died, the wounds that do not heal.

It is also important to note that the relationship between interviewer and interviewee shapes what memories are shared and how. Halbwachs noted precisely this facet of the workings of memory when he wrote, "most of the time, when I remember, it is others who spur me on."[84] Inevitably, my own interests and concerns shaped the direction of the interviews and, thus, the process of selecting and crafting the stories that were told. My approach to those I interviewed was evidence of the transmission of revolutionary affects across borders and generations. I disclosed to the former ISA members I interviewed that my father had been involved on the periphery of the movement during his student days at Howard University (although only three people remembered him). For many of them, I became "like a daughter," a sentiment I heard again and again. At the same time, several of my interviewees also remarked that I was quite unlike their actual children, many of whom, they felt, were not particularly interested in the history we were discussing. Invariably, I was asked to account for this difference, which set me apart in their eyes from my generational peers. I was open about my own history of political involvement; like the men and women I interviewed, I too joined a revolutionary organization in college and devoted many years of my life to the

large and small causes it championed. The major difference, aside from the specificity of the Marxist traditions to which we had each adhered, was that my membership had not coincided with a global revolutionary conjuncture; the personal and political stakes were much lower for me than they were for this older generation of Iranian activists. However, my intimate familiarity with leftist political cultures, often with the same texts and historical debates in which my interviewees had immersed themselves when they were young, allowed for an ease of conversation and omitted any need to explain or defend the choice to make revolutionary politics the center of one's life. The fact that I left my organization after twelve years but did not renounce this part of my past meant that I also shared their ambivalent and melancholic relationship to the Left. I carried my own resistant nostalgia—for my lived experiences of collective struggle and for a previous revolutionary era that ended before I was old enough to participate. This shared affective state or affinity provided a sense of safety, leading some of the people I interviewed to talk about particularly painful memories for the first time and even to express a sense of solace that comes from (finally) feeling understood.

One brief exchange illustrates this dynamic. Jaleh Pirnazar, a Jewish woman who was a member of the Northern California branch of the ISA, described her parents' opposition to her revolutionary activity. Knowing that I also have a Jewish mother, she was curious about how my mother had reacted to my all-consuming approach to activism. I told her that my mother was very disappointed that I went to college and spent so much of my time protesting instead of studying. Jaleh said that this was exactly how her parents had felt, that she was wasting her opportunities in the US. I added that I did not think I had wasted my time and began to list some of the campaigns in which I was proud to have participated, such as preventing campus police from carrying guns, organizing Palestine solidarity actions, and supporting a local teacher's strike.

"But these are all good causes!" Jaleh said, interrupting me. She nodded to show her approval, not unlike a proud mother might.

"We did a lot of good things," I continued, "but sometimes I look back and think—"

"You would have done it differently," she said.

"I would have done it differently. At the time, it was just about—"

"Becoming accepted in a cause that is so good." We sat quietly for a moment. Jaleh had finished my sentences, and now she smiled, as if to affirm that we each knew just how the other felt. The feeling we shared was the starting point for the study that unfolds in the chapters that follow.

NOTES

Introduction: Before We Were "Terrorists"

1 "Iranian and American Students," *Resistance*, February 1977.
2 Qtd. in Vietnam Veterans against the War, "Support Iranian Struggle," April 1977, 14.
3 "Iranian and American Students," *Resistance*, February 1977, 4.
4 "Iranian and American Students," *Resistance*, February 1977, 4.
5 "Iranian and American Students," *Resistance*, February 1977, 4.
6 "Iranian and American Students," *Resistance*, February 1977, 4.
7 I define "revolutionaries" as people who have decided to organize their lives around the project of making a revolution.
8 Gopinath, *Unruly Visions*, 129–30.
9 Gopinath, *Unruly Visions*, 125–26.
10 Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 13.
11 Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 14.
12 Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, 21–22.
13 Gould quoting Williams, in "On Affect and Protest," 32.
14 See Flatley, *Affective Mapping*; Eng and Kazanjian, *Loss*.
15 Gould, "On Affect and Protest," 32.
16 Gould, "On Affect and Protest," 27.
17 Gould, *Moving Politics*, 31.
18 Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 27–28.
19 Gould, *Moving Politics*, 28.
20 Gould, *Moving Politics*, 3.
21 Hardt, "Foreword," ix.
22 Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 4–5.

23 Gould, *Moving Politics*, 27.

24 Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, 79.

25 Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 167.

26 Based on interview with Jaleh Behroozi, June 23, 2012.

27 All quotes from former ISA members are from interviews with the author unless otherwise noted.

28 Featherstone, *Solidarity*, 5.

29 Featherstone, *Solidarity*, 5.

30 Matin-asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition*, 13.

31 Young, *Soul Power*, 4.

32 See Reddy and Sudhakar, "Introduction."

33 Alexander and Mohanty, *Feminist Genealogies*, xxiv.

34 Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 149–50.

35 See Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality," 48–76. See also Moallem on Ali Shari'ati's denunciations of *zan-e hich va pouch* in *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister*, 92–93.

36 Moallem, *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister*, 3.

37 Moghissi, *Populism and Feminism*, 2–3.

38 Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*, 171.

39 Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, 79.

40 See Collins, *Intersectionality*.

41 Elahi and Karim, "Introduction," 383, 387.

42 Elahi and Karim, "Introduction," 384.

43 For an overview of the concept of "intersectionality" and its multiple genealogies, see Collins and Bilge, *Intersectionality*.

44 See Ghamari-Tabrizi on the "myth of the stolen revolution" in *Foucault in Iran*, 19–53.

45 See Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Islam and Dissent*; Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*.

46 See, e.g., Abayomi Azikiwe, "US Activists Meet with Iranian President," *Worker's World*, September 30, 2010, https://www.workers.org/2010/us/iran_1007/.

47 See, e.g., Herb London, "The Iranian People Are Pro-American, Unlike Their Government," *Fox News*, January 5, 2018, https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/the-iranian-people-are-pro-american-unlike-their-government.

48 I am indebted to the scholarship and activism of women of color, transnational, and queer diasporic feminist criticism for my approach. See, e.g., Nadine Naber's analysis of Arab diasporic activism against US-Israeli imperialism and Islamophobia in *Arab America*, 159–246.

49 The difficulty of addressing sexism and homophobia within groups targeted by racism and imperialism has been at the center of women-of-color feminism. See, e.g., Combahee River Collective, "Statement," in Taylor, *How We Get Free*; Moraga

and Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back*; Hernández and Rehman, *Colonize This!*; Abdulhadi et al., *Arab and Arab American Feminisms*.

50 See Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures*.

51 The formulation that the major systems of oppression are interlocking comes from the Combahee River Collective Statement. See *How We Get Free*, 15. Critical race scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term *intersectionality* to describe oppression that occurred at the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and class. See Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection."

52 See Abu-Lughod, *Remaking Women*; Ahmed, *Women and Gender*; Kandiyoti, *Gendering the Middle East*.

53 See Moallem, *Between Warrior Brother and Veiled Sister.*

54 See Bacchetta et al., "Transnational Feminist Practices," 302–8.

55 See Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?," 783–90; Rostami-Povey, *Afghan Women.*

56 See, e.g., Mohanty, Russo, and Torres, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*; Shohat, *Talking Visions*; and Grewal and Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies*.

57 See, e.g., Osanloo, *Politics of Women's Rights*; Sameh, *Axis of Hope.*

58 See, e.g., Tabari and Yeganeh, *In the Shadow of Islam*; Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality"; Sanasarian, *Women's Rights Movement*; Paidar, *Women and the Political Process*; Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife"; Moghissi, *Populism and Feminism*; Hoodfar, "The Veil."

59 On the dominance of a developmentalist notion of progress among colonial and anti-colonial forces, see Saldaña-Portillo, *Revolutionary Imagination*, 7.

60 Here I build on Nadine Naber's concept of "diasporic feminist anti-imperialism" and adapt it to encompass the changing iterations of dictatorship in Iran. See Naber, *Arab America*, 203–46. Because Iran was not directly colonized, and has not been governed by a pro-Western state for over forty years, repression in Iran has its own dynamics not entirely reducible to Western domination.

61 In 2003, sociologist Nilu Mostofi defined *diaspora* as "the mass migrations of peoples to various locations around the world." Thus, the term is aptly applied despite the temporary status of student migration, which, in many cases, became permanent after 1979. Mostofi, quoted in Elahi and Karim, "Introduction," 384.

62 Naber, *Arab America*, 27.

63 Shannon, *Losing Hearts and Minds*, 3 and 155.

64 Matin-asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition*, 131.

65 Matin-asgari wrote the first book-length study, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah*, without which my book would not have been possible. Shannon's *Losing Hearts and Minds* looks at the presence of Iranian foreign students from the perspective of US-Iran diplomatic and policy relations. There are no other monographs in English focusing on the pre-1979 Iranian population in the US.

66 See, e.g., Naficy, *Making of Exile Cultures*.

67 For statistics on educational levels and occupation trends among the post-1979 wave of Iranian immigrants, see Sabagh and Bozorgmehr, "Are the Characteristics of Exiles Different?"

68 My approach to different forms of diasporic nationalism (across the political spectrum) is indebted to Gayatri Gopinath's queer diasporic feminist critique in *Impossible Desires*. For an analysis of Iranian American racial identity, see Maghbouleh, *Limits of Whiteness*, in which she argues that first-generation Iranian immigrants have largely embraced a "white" identity. On the roots of the "Aryan myth," see Zia-Ebrahimi, "Self-Orientalization and Dislocation," 445–72.

69 For a range of examples of the diversity of experience within Iranian American and Iranian diasporic literature, see Karim and Khorrami, *World Between*; Karim, *Let Me Tell You Where I've Been*; Amirrezvani and Karim, *Tremors*.

70 Maghbouleh, *Limits of Whiteness*, 171–73.

71 See Maghbouleh, *Limits of Whiteness*, 135–61; Maira, *The 9/11 Generation*.

72 I am indebted to José Muñoz's formulation of queer concrete utopianism as "a backward glance that enacts a future vision" and his insistence that hope rests on the ability to "pull from the past the no-longer-conscious . . . to push beyond the impasse of the present." Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 4 and 31.

73 Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 12.

74 See Ghameri-Tabrizi's discussion of leftist support for Khomeini in *Foucault in Iran*, 19–53.

75 For an account of the Left's attitude toward women's rights immediately after the revolution, see Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran*, 113–58.

76 Examples include Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*; Moghissi, *Populism and Feminism*; Ghamari-Tabrizi, *Foucault in Iran*; Tabari and Yeganeh, *In the Shadow of Islam*.

77 I take the term *resistant nostalgia* from Hirsch and Spitzer, "'We Would Not Have Come without You.'" The notion of the "good life" as the reproduction of a normativity that produces unsustainable crisis comes from Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 2.

78 See Mottadeh, *Whisper Tapes*.

79 Merrit Kennedy, "A Look at Egypt's Uprising, 5 Years Later," *NPR*, January 25, 2016, https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/01/25/464290769/a-look-at-egypts-uprising-5-years-later.

80 For the concept of "revolutionary time" I take inspiration from the definition of "queer time" in Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place*, 6.

81 My attempts to interview additional former ISA members living in Iran proved unsuccessful, perhaps because of ongoing fears of government repression.

82 Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*, 10–12.

83 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 51.

84 Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 31.