

The Taboo Buried in Beheshti's Coffin

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A profile of Mohammad Beheshti, a founder of the Islamic Republic.

Mohammad Beheshti was instrumental in shaping the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as in implementing Sharia law and concept of *velayat-e faqih* in Iranian society. The image of Beheshti that remains in popular memory has been highly manipulated, a result of a lack of reliable information due to the government's confiscation of essential documents. This has cleared the way for propaganda to define Beheshti's legacy. But his true role in postrevolutionary Iranian society must not be forgotten.

When the Assembly of Experts first drafted the constitution, Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri was placed in charge, and Beheshti was selected to be his representative. It became apparent that Beheshti was to be a unique player the Islamic Republic's history. He was not only the main architect of the constitution, who with great difficulty included the concept of *velayat-e faqih*, but was also the primary advocate for the necessity of Sharia law and its central importance for the Islamic Republic. Beheshti essentially created the Islamic Republic Party (IRP), and most likely the mindset and mentality in which the IRP operates, including its methods of dismantling the opposition.

Much of the details of Beheshti's life remain unknown. Without a further understanding of his life and his role, a shadow is cast upon the accounts of the early years following the Islamic Revolution. The biggest impediment playing a role in hindering the discovery of this knowledge continues to be the propaganda that attempts to fill the unaccounted history of an enigmatic and powerful individual. ❖

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