

Believing Globally: Islamist Internationalism Between the Cold War and Decolonization

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in cooperation with: Department of Contemporary History,
Research Center for the History of Transformations (RECET),
FSP Global History & Research Group New Cold War Studies

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4.15–5.45 pm

Hörsaal (2R-EG-07) - Institut Osteuropäische Geschichte,
Spitalgasse 2 - Hof 3, 1090 Vienna

Chair: Eva-Maria Muschik (Department of Development
Studies)

A century ago, Sunni Islamist movements like the Muslim Brotherhood had achieved modest influence in Egypt, but there were few Shi'a Islamist movements of note. However, during the Cold War, this changed dramatically. Shi'a Islamist actors commandeered the popular revolution against the Shah of Iran to establish the Islamic Republic of Iran. The new regime in Tehran not only challenged the two superpowers but also supported anti-colonial national liberation movements worldwide.

How did Shi'a Islamist actors come to hold such grand ambitions for themselves? In this talk, Prof. Dr. Timothy Nunan draws on research in new Persian- and Arabic-language materials to show how decolonization and the Cold War shaped the trajectory of Shi'a Islamism. In the 1960s, Islamist actors studied national liberation movements from a distance. A decade later, they encountered anti-colonial movements through the Palestine Liberation Organization. These encounters, Nunan will show, shaped the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy toward Third Worldist causes for years to come.

