

Resistance fighting hegemonic goals in Mideast

Western 'barbaric thoughts' exposed by Axis of Resistance, Syrian publisher says



By Zohreh Qanadi
Staff writer

The 35th Tehran International Book Fair is set to conclude Saturday, marking the end of a celebration of reading and a platform for global dialogue and cultural exchange. This year, amidst a diverse range of offerings, the spotlight is on a topic of significant global importance: the Gaza War. The Palestinian death toll in the seven-month conflict has now exceeded 35,000. The civilian casualties in Israel's assault on the besieged enclave have sparked international condemnation and concern, drawing attention from authors and publishers, too. Through their words and imagery, the authors amplify the voice of Gaza. In this edition, the Tehran International Book Fair has also offered this opportunity for foreign publishers from countries like Syria, the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Turkey, giving them a chance to participate in this narrative. Saba Publications from Syria, with a main focus on Syria's national resistance, was represented at Tehran's book fair. In an interview with Iran Daily, Aya Ali Dasha, in charge of the institute, said

the company's participation in the Tehran exhibition was "a great opportunity to introduce his country's culture to the world". The works focused on supporting the Axis of Resistance were showcased in the 10-day book fair. Dasha said Saba Publications "encourages Syrian youth to pick up the pen and retell narratives centered around Resistance". The Axis of Resistance in the Middle East opposes the Western influence, led by the US and Israel. It includes the Islamic Republic of Iran, Palestinian groups like Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, Lebanon's Hezbollah, the Houthi movement in Yemen, and several Shia groups in Iraq and Syria. The manager of Saba Publications believes that "the Axis of Resistance is pushing back hegemonic goals in our region, which aims to dominate us in terms of energy, culture, beliefs, or strategies". "Part of this geography is located in Syria, and in line with this resistance, the publication has documented the defense of its people, beliefs, homeland, and ideology," she says, explaining that, "The Resistance has laid bare a set of barbaric thoughts claiming to be civilized but perpetrating heinous acts". "The violence against the people of Gaza

is a prominent example of this brutality." The bloodiest-ever Gaza war erupted after Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel. The United Nations has recently said that nearly 450,000 people have been displaced from Rafah in the south of the Gaza Strip. At the same time, another 100,000 people have fled their homes amid renewed fighting in northern Gaza, the UN has said, meaning that around a quarter of Gaza's population of around 2.4 million people has been displaced again in just over a week. In this regard, Saba Publications has compiled a book titled "Storm of Words," inspired by Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, the manager said. The operation, launched by the Hamas resistance group was a reaction to years of Israeli devastation, oppression, and savagery amid the indifference and silence of the international community. Speaking about the book, she said "The authors of the book have depicted the pain and suffering of the people in the region, especially Gaza, based on heartbreaking images of atrocities committed by Israel or the Daesh terrorist group. One of the most moving written descriptions by Nour Haj Ibrahim illustrating a photo of a child watching over the lifeless body of his mother is presented here:



Mother, get up...
It's not your habit to sleep for such a long time...!!
Get up...
I'm not waking you up because I need an oil and thyme sandwich...
Nor will I ask you for money to buy a balloon.
I wake you up because I miss you...
Come on Mom...
I promise I won't fight with the neighbor boys again...
I will write my homework as soon as I get back from school.
And I will ask you when you call me at the same moment ...
Get up, Mom ...
Life is still young...
I still need to live next to you
And I love you...

Puly Press from Azerbaijan was also among the foreign publishers who attended the Tehran International Book Fair. Mahi Sharifzadeh, responsible for publishing at Puly Press, says the institute "aims to introduce and familiarize Azerbaijani language books to their fellow countrymen worldwide. The main focus of this publishing house is religious books centered around Shia beliefs. Additionally, this publishing house introduces Iranian martyrs, heroes, and Islamic religious figures to the world. Sharifzadeh states that their goal is to show the truth by translating these types of books from Persian to Azerbaijani. Alongside this institution, the website Kitaboxu.com is also active in three languages: Russian, Azerbaijani, and Turkish. One of the recent international activities of this publishing house is a book 'Palestine', compiling the longstanding remarks of the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei regarding the Palestinian issue. This book is dedicated to the fight against Zionism.

Persian Literature: Common foundation of two nations



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The head of publishing and press of the Tajikistan Ministry of Culture hailed Ferdowsi's Shahnameh as a mirror of Tajik culture, asserting that this epic poem encapsulates the worldview of the Tajik people, instilling values of bravery, love, and patriotism. Coinciding with the 35th Tehran International Book Fair, held from May 8 to May 19, the Tajikistan pavilion has been established in the exhibition's international section. The pavilion showcased books by Tajik publishers and offered opportunities for their introduction and supply. Attending the fair as a special guest from Tajikistan, Rahmonali Miralizoda, the head of publishing and press at the Ministry of Culture of Tajikistan, conducted an exclusive interview with Iran Daily. Read on for an in-depth account of the conversation:

Iran Daily: Could you provide insights into Tajikistan's participation in this year's exhibition?

Miralizoda: Ever since the early 90s, following Tajikistan's independence and the establishment of official relations between Tajikistan and Iran, Tajik publishers have consistently taken part in the Tehran book fair annually. This year, Tajikistan is participating with over 150 book titles encompassing various subjects. The majority of these books delve into topics such as history, literature, prose and poetry, fiction, and encyclopedias. Some noteworthy titles among these works include the 6th-century collection of poetry by Ohadeddin Muhammad bin Muhammad Anuri, the timeless epic Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, Nizami Ganjavi's captivating war tales, and the renowned medical treatise penned by Avicenna. These literary gems continue to garner significant interest and appreciation from Iranian readers. It's important to note that in Tajikistan, we write Persian in the Cyrillic script, which is our nation's official writing system. This distinctive feature often leads some to mistakenly assume that these books are penned in Russian. In reality, they are all written in Persian, mirroring how individuals sometimes employ Latin letters to write Persian in the form of Finglish. Similarly, we use the Russian alphabet to transcribe books.

It seems that the difference in handwriting between two Persian-speaking countries has created a slight separation, making it challenging for our people to communicate effectively through text and writing. What measures could be considered to address this issue?

If you are referring to the change in script, it would be a costly undertaking for Tajikistan and is not an easy task. However, to tackle the issue you've raised, we've selected the finest books available in both countries and underlined them, as they no longer require translation. For instance, I personally translated 'Cyrus the Great or Dhu al-Qarnayn,' an enlightening work authored by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a distinguished Indian intellectual. Dr. Bastani Parisi translated this piece from Urdu into Persian. In this book, Azad provides an in-depth exploration of Cyrus the Great by examining the historical context of Dhu al-Qarnayn mentioned in the Qur'an and Torah. Notably, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad boasts an intriguing multicultural background: he was born in Mecca, raised in Egypt, and grew up in India. His mother is of Arab descent, while his father is Hindu. Through his work, Azad illuminates the character of Cyrus the Great by delving into the religious and historical narratives that surround Dhu al-Qarnayn.

An aspect worth noting about the people of Tajikistan is their exceptional focus on and admiration for Persian literature and ancient Iranian culture, notably Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. What is the source of this captivation?

Persian history, culture, and literature constitute our shared roots; we are intrinsically bound to them. The origins of modern Farsi language can be traced to eastern Iran, whereas Pahlavi language was spoken in the western region. Pahlavi eventually faded away, yet Dari Farsi has endured and thrived across Iran and beyond. From the distant past to the present day, our land has birthed renowned

poets and writers who have bestowed upon us an incredibly rich literary heritage spanning over a thousand years. This expansive literature encompasses diverse poetic forms such as sonnets, stories, quatrains, and couplets, among others. Within the realms of history, literature, and culture, we possess a priceless global treasure, which acts as a shield protecting us against Western cultural encroachment. Our strong cultural foundation helps prevent self-destruction in the face of external influences. Today, we inhabit an age of globalization where various cultures inevitably collide, and digital advancements have transformed the world into a small, interconnected village. This digital realm allows people to communicate with one another at an unprecedented pace. Against this backdrop, we are urged to delve into our historical roots and cultivate a deeper appreciation for our own culture. We must not only preserve our rich literary assets but also promote them on the global stage to enhance their visibility and recognition.

It appears that Ferdowsi's Shahnameh holds a high status in Tajikistan. Could you elaborate on this?

The Shahnameh embodies the culture, history, language, literature, worldview, and wisdom of our people, all skillfully woven together within its pages. The epic imparts two key messages: the establishment of justice and the triumph of knowledge over ignorance. These themes exemplify our collective worldview and are complemented by lessons on courage, patriotism, and love, among others. Tajikistan's fascination with Shahnameh is not a recent phenomenon; its roots trace back to a time

before the nation's independence. During the Soviet era, the epic was held in high regard and enjoyed immense popularity. This reverence was manifested through various film adaptations of Shahnameh's individual stories, such as Kaveh Ahangar, Rostam and Sohrab, and The Story of Siavash. These films were meticulously produced with the finest Russian actors and were considered costly endeavors due to the challenges of depicting ancient armies without the aid of modern visual effects. Shahnameh stands as a testament to our rich literary heritage, joining the ranks of universally acclaimed poets like Saadi, Hafez, Rudaki, and Rumi. Within these works, we discover the pinnacle of human society's ideals. Recognizing the historical, cultural, moral, and epistemological significance of Shahnameh, the decision was made this year to publish and disseminate this timeless epic, making it accessible to all Tajiks.

