"From promoter of religion to ‘protector of the nation’
Mapping the emergence of Khomeini”

Ayatollah Khomeini entered the Iranian political scene in the autumn of 1962 by actively opposing the Shah’s program of reform. Sacrificing political struggle against the regime’s strategy of marginalizing the clergy, and capitalizing on the Shah’s violation of the constitution, Khomeini acquired both political capital and popular support. Buoyed by its progressivist illusions, the regime sought to neutralize him by vilifying him as a “black reactionary”. Two years later, by vocally opposing growing US influence, Khomeini had an opportunity to represent himself as a defender of Iranian national sovereignty. This talk will explore Khomeini’s rise from obscurity to political prominence.

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