



CINEMA I. HISTORY OF CINEMA IN PERSIA

CINEMA

i. History of Cinema in Persia

The beginnings. On 7 Rabī' I 1318/8 June 1900, during his first trip to Europe, Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah (1313-24/1896-1907) saw at Contrexeville, France, scenes filmed with the *cinématographe*, the French motion-picture camera that had been invented only five years earlier (Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah, pp. 100-01). The shah ordered his chief photographer, Mīrzā Ebrāhīm 'Akkās-bāšī, to purchase a Gaumont camera, and footage that he shot at a flower festival in Ostend, Belgium (see iii, below), was probably the first film ever shot by a Persian cameraman (Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah, p. 160). Back in Tehran 'Akkās-bāšī was ordered to film the lions in the royal zoo at Faraḥābād and the Moḥarram processions in Sabzameydān. He also became the first person to screen films at court and in private houses at weddings, births, and circumcisions (Gaffary, *EIr.* I, p. 719). All these early films are lost.

The first person to open a public cinema was Mīrzā Ebrāhīm Ṣaḥḥāf-bāšī (son of Ṭaqī Khan Ṣaḥḥāf-bāšī, who had been sent to Europe after 1276/1859; Gaffary, 1357 Š./1978, p. 14). Mīrzā Ebrāhīm was a liberal thinker who had frequently traveled abroad on business (see *Tārīḵ-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 291, 360-61, 433, 442; Hedāyat, pp. 114-25; Jamālzāda, pp. 128-31). He



opened his motion-picture house in Ramažān 1322/November 1904 on Čerāg Gāz (subsequently Amīr[-e] Kabīr) Street, and for about one month he showed short comedies and original or reconstructed ten-minute newsreels, mostly obtained from Odessa and Rostov. Among those who visited the motion-picture house were ‘Abd-Allāh Entezām and Moḥammad-‘Alī Jamālzāda, who later rose to prominence as a statesman and a novelist respectively; for 2 *qerāns* they could also drink lemonade and peer at pictures in the *šahr-e farang*, or *vue d’optique* (Gaffary, 1357 Š./1978, pp. 13-17; Jamālzāda, 1359, p. 145). A more persistent film exhibitor was Mehdī (Mahdī) Rūsī Khan (whose actual surname was Ivanov), of English and Russian Tatar parentage (b. 15 October 1875, d. 19 March 1968 in St. Cloud, France). He began as an apprentice to ‘Abd-Allāh Qājār, photographer to Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah (r. 1324-27/1907-09), and eventually bought a projector and fifteen films from Pathé in Paris to show in the harem. In Ramažān 1325/October 1907 he rented a courtyard next to his photographic shop on ‘Alā’-al-Dawla (subsequently Ferdowsī) Street; it had space to seat 200 people, and late every afternoon he projected several short films on such subjects as the Russo-Japanese war (1904-05). Later he rented the second floor of the Pharos/Fārūs printing house on Lālazār Street, where he screened French comedies with great success. A rival exhibitor was the Caucasian Āqāyov, who opened a cinema house on Nāšerī (subsequently Nāšer-e Qosrow) Street. Rūsī Khan supported the absolutist shah, and Russian cossacks (see [cossack brigade](#)) often drank champagne in his cinema. In Moḥarram 1327/January 1909 he produced about 80 m of film on the Moḥarram ceremonies, which were processed and shown in Russia but never projected in Persia. Later in the year, after the shah had been deposed in the aftermath of the [Constitutional Revolution](#), Rūsī Khan’s shop was looted, and all the films that he had personally shot were lost, though the Fārūs cinema continued with an audience of armed *mojāhedīn* (revolutionaries) until he was forced to close it at the end of the year. In 1329/1911 he went into exile, turning over his projector and thirty films to a person who organized provincial tours (Gaffary, 1973, pp. 3-4).

Regularly scheduled film screenings were introduced in Tehran by Ārdāšes Batmāngarīān, known as Ardašīr Khan, who had worked at Pathé in Paris at the turn of the century and had brought back to Persia the cinematograph, the phonograph, and the bicycle. In 1331/1913 he opened a projection room above a French bookshop and pastry counter on ‘Alā’-al-Dawla Street near the site later chosen for the German embassy. On busy days the performances were accompanied by a piano and a violin, and refreshments appropriate to the



season were served. This cinema continued in operation until Ardašīr Khan's death in 1304 Š./1925 (Bahrāmī, pp. 43-46; Matīn-Daftarī, p. 7). At the beginning of the 1340s/1920s the number of motion-picture houses began to increase, both in Tehran and in the provinces. In about 1344 = 1304 Š./1925 'Alī Wakīlī opened the Grānd Sīnemā with 500 seats in the Grand Hotel on Lālazār Street. In 1307 Š./1928 a Russian immigrant named Arnold Jacobson opened Sīnemā-ye Īrān down the street from the Grānd; it was the most lavish cinema in Tehran, with films accompanied by piano and later by a small orchestra. Performances in Tehran were at first reserved for men, but eventually special performances were arranged for women. In 1307 Š./1928 three attempts to establish separate theaters for women met with commercial failure, but in the same year mixed audiences were permitted. There were separate entrances for men and women, who sat on opposite sides of a central aisle. Both employees and police were on guard against the presence of "unchaste women and corrupt young men" (Omīd, 1363 Š./1984, I, pp. 107, 109, 115, 116).

One of the first published articles about cinema in Persia appeared in the weekly *Ḥaqāyeq* (published in Baku) in 1335/1916-17; its author, 'Alī-Moḥammad Khan Owaysī, defined *sīnemātogrāf* as "the art of moving images" (*šowar-e motaḥarreka*; Malekpūr, II, p. 235 no. 2).

Silent films. In 1304 Š./1925 Khan Bābā Khan Mo'tazedī (ca. 1310-1406 = 1365 Š./1892-1986), who had studied electronics in Europe and worked as a cameraman at the Gaumont studios in France, shot newsreels of the Majles-e Mo'assesān (Constitutional assembly) and in 1305 Š./1926 of the coronation of Rezā Shah; some excerpts from both survive (see iii, below). Silent movies were usually accompanied by "commentaries," spoken by a man or a woman, depending on the audience; this person walked up and down the aisle summarizing the story in a loud voice. Mo'tazedī introduced Persian-language intertitles, inserted into the film at intervals to explain what was happening. Intertitles remained the primary means of encapsulating the plot until the 1340s Š./1960s, when systematic dubbing of foreign films was adopted in Persia.

Āvānes Ūhānīān (Ohanian, also called Ohanians, 1319-81 = 1340 Š./1901-61) was an Armenian who served an apprenticeship in the film industry in Russia, then came to Persia in 1309 Š./1930; he founded Parvarešgāh-e ārtīstī-e sīnemā (Film actors' school) for young men and women.

In Dey 1310 Š./January 1931 he directed his students and cameraman



Mo'tazedī in the first feature film made in Persia, *Ābī o Rābī*, a slapstick comedy inspired by the characters and antics of two Danish actors, Harald Madsen and Carl Schenström, in a series of films made for the company Palladium and directed by Lau Lauritzen between 1920 and 1929 (see ii, below). *Ābī o Rābī*, which was filled with movement and special effects, was a success; at each performance it was preceded by a short film showing the countryside around Tehran and its buildings. Ūhānīān's second feature, *Ḥājī Āqā āktor-e sīnemā* (Ḥājī Āqā, movie actor, 1312 Š./1934), a comedy, is especially interesting for the shots of Tehran: interiors, costumes, and representation of current ways of thinking (Ḥabīb-Allāh Morād played Ḥājī Āqā; screenplay in Omīd, 1363 Š./1984, II, pp. 100-45; see ii, below). This film was overshadowed, however, by the first Persian talking film, *Doḳtar-e Lor* (Girl of the Lors, 1312 Š./1933), which had been released about two and a half months earlier. Ebrāhīm Morādī (1316-97 = 1356 Š./1898-1977), who may have worked for the Soviet film organization Mezhrabpom (Mezhdunarodnaya Rabochaya Pomoshch', International workers' aid group), attempted to film a feature entitled *Enteqām-e barādar* (The brother's revenge) at Bandar-e Pahlavī in 1309 Š./1930 but failed to finish it; he then entered Ūhānīān's school in Tehran. With other students he shot *Bu'l-hawas* (Capricious, 1313 Š./1934), which cost 30,000 rials. Despite official support, this hour-long silent film also could not compete with *Doḳtar-e Lor*; nevertheless, by contrasting a wicked city man with a hard-working peasant, it established a convention that was to prevail in later Persian cinema (Tahāmīnezād, pp. 178-79). In 1311 Š./1932 there were eight cinemas in Tehran and a few others in the provinces. In Mordād 1309 Š./August 1930 'Alī Wakīlī founded *Majalla-ye sīnemā wa nemāyeshāt* (Cinema and performance magazine), the first journal devoted to films, which at that time were mainly imported from abroad; the names of the exhibitors Ṣaḥḥāf-bāšī, Rūsī Khan, and a certain Bāqerov were also mentioned (see Ṣadr Hāšemī, *Jarā'ed o majallāt* III, p. 55).

A particularly important silent film shot in Persia was *Grass* (1925), directed by the Americans Merian Cooper and Ernst Schoedsack, from a script by Marguerite Harrison. This documentary on the epic courage of **Baḳtīārī** tribesmen, who crossed the swollen Kārūn each spring and climbed through snow and ice to pasture their flocks on the grassland beyond the Zardkūh, was not officially released in Persia, owing to opposition from those who thought it degraded the image of their country, emphasizing its backwardness and misery (see Cooper).



At the end of the 1920s the French writer André Malraux (chap. VI, p. 4) saw a film that revealed the ingenuity of Persian distributors: “In Persia I saw a film that does not exist. It was called *Charlie’s Life* [*Zendagī-e Čārli*, i.e., Charlie Chaplin]. The Persian cinemas are outdoors, and on the walls that surround the audience black cats sat and watched. The Armenian distributors had edited all Charlie’s shorts with much skill into a very long and surprising film.” Forty-five years later this idea was taken up in *The Gentleman Tramp* (RBC Films), compiled by the American Richard Paterson and released in 1975.

Sound films. *Doḡtar-e Lor* was made in India with local technicians and Persian actors. The role of Ja’far was played by ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Sepantā (1286-1348 Š./1907-69), a literary figure and newspaper publisher from Isfahan, who also wrote the script and collaborated with the Indian director Ardašīr Īrānī (screenplay in Omīd, 1363 Š./1984, III, pp. 95-154). The film was released in Tehran in Mehr 1312 Š./October 1933 at the Māyāk and Sepāh cinemas, the first film in which the Persian language was heard on the screen. Its success was overwhelming, and no silent film was able to compete with it. Even today *Doḡtar-e Lor* retains a naïve charm and unpretentious sincerity. Sepantā continued to work as a director in India (see ii, below). At the request of the Persian Ministry of education (Wezārat-e ma’āref) he also made a fictional biography of the poet Ferdowsī, of which some parts about the poet’s royal patron, Maḥmūd of Ġazna, had to be reshot on the order of the Persian authorities (Omīd, 1363 Š./1984, III, pp. 49-53). Unfortunately all these films have been lost.

According to Sepantā, the success of *Doḡtar-e Lor* caused the distributors of American films in Tehran to fear competition from native products, and they prevented him from working in Persia (Omīd, 1363 Š./1984, III, p. 75). Nor did Sepantā receive further encouragement from the government; he was thus unable to produce two other scripts, *Joḡd-e siāh* (The black owl) and *‘Omar Ḳayyām* (Omīd, 1363 Š./1984, III, p. 75). Indeed, no other feature film was produced in Persia until 1326 Š./1947.

The film industry. In 1324 Š./1945, while Esmā’īl Kūšān (1333-1401 = 1360 Š./1915-81) was working as an extra at the Universum Film A.G. (U.F.A.) studio in Berlin, he purchased a copy of the French film *Premier rendez-vous* (starring Danielle Darrieux) and dubbed it in Persian in Istanbul. Released in Tehran with the title *Doḡtar-e ferārī* (Girl on the run), it met with such success that Kūšān decided to produce the first sound feature film in Persia: *Ṭūfān-e zendagī* (Storm of life, 1326 Š./1947), directed by the theatrical director ‘Alī



Daryābīgī, who had also served his apprenticeship in Germany (see ii, below). The film met with little success, but Kūšān went on to establish Pārs Film, which operated as the first major studio in Persia until 1358 Š./1979. Primarily a businessman, Kūšān directed such mediocre films as *Šarmsār* (Disgraced, 1329 Š./1950), in which the well-known singer *Delkaš* played the part of a simple peasant girl whose “golden” voice brought her fame on the radio (see ii, below), and *Mādar* (The mother, 1331 Š./1952), with *Delkaš* and another singer, Qamar-al-Molūk Wazīrī (1323-79 = 1338 Š./1905-59; Mehrābī, pp. 50-53). Other noteworthy films of the 1320-30s Š./1950-60s were *Velgard* (The vagabond, 1331 Š./1952), directed by Mahdī Ra’īs Firūz; *Āqā Moḥammad Khan*, directed by Noṣrat-Allāh Moḥtašam, the first of a series of banal historical films; *Qīām-e Pišavarī* (Pišavarī’s uprising, 1333 Š./1954), a satire on events in Azarbaijan in 1324-25 Š./1945-46; *Amīr Arsalān-e nāmdār* (The illustrious Amīr Arsalān, 1334 Š./1955), a period film that had great box-office success; *Hafdah rūz be e’dām* (Seventeen days to the execution, 1335 Š./1956), the first film by a graduate of an established foreign film school (Institut des Hautes-Études Cinématographiques), Hūšang Kāvūsī, who was fiercely critical of what he derided as *film-fārsī* (see ii, below); *Bolbol-e mazra’ā* (The nightingale of the farm, 1336 Š./1957), a rural melodrama; *Šab-nešīnī dar jahannam*, (Soirée in hell, 1336 Š./1957), a black comedy; *Čahār-rāh-e hawādeṭ* (Crossroads of incidents, 1333 Š./1954) and *Ṭūfān dar šahr-e mā* (Storm in our town, 1337 Š./1958), both directed by Sāmūel Kāčīkīān, a specialist in box-office thrillers; *Čašm be rāh* (Waiting, 1337 Š./1958), about the miseries of the people; *Lāt-e javānmard* (A chivalrous rogue, 1337 Š./1958), vaguely inspired by Šādeq Hedāyat’s novel *Dāš Ākol* about the *kolāh-maḳmalī* (lit. “felt hats,” i.e., neighborhood gangs; see ii, below); and *Ganj-e Qārūn* (Qarun’s treasure, 1344 Š./1965), a box-office hit about the insignificance of money and the importance of friendship.

In 1320 Š./1941 250 films were screened in Persia, 60 percent from the United States, 20 percent from Germany, 5 percent from France, and 5 percent from the U.S.S.R. (Naficy, 1979, p. 449). In the spring of 1329 Š./1950 there were eighty cinemas in Persia, of which twenty were open-air summer facilities; the total annual audience was about 9 million. Approximately 450 films were distributed each year, 85 percent from the United States and the remainder from Great Britain, Egypt, France, Italy, India, the U.S.S.R., and Persia (UNESCO, *Press, Film, Radio. Report IV*, 1950). In the six years ending in late Esfand 1323 Š./mid-March 1955 fifty-eight films were produced in Persia. In Bahman 1336 Š./February 1958 twenty-two production companies were in



operation, producing features with standard budgets of 5 million rials each (Gaffary, 1973). The prevailing fashion was to imitate Egyptian, Turkish, and especially Indian melodramas, in which compulsory singing and dancing sequences—sometimes in color—were inserted.

The first film club and library, *Kānūn-e mellī-e film*, was started in Āḍar 1328 Š./December 1949; its members organized the first film festivals in Persia (showing British films in 1329 Š./1950 and French films in 1330 Š./1951). In 1329 Š./1950 Farroḡ Ġaffārī (b. 1340/1922) introduced serious film criticism, writing in the leftist press under the signature M. Mobārak; he also wrote the first articles on the history of Persian cinema, in 1330 Š./1951. In 1337 Š./1958 Ġaffārī, who had served as assistant to Henri Langlois at the Cinémathèque Française and as executive secretary of the International Federation of Film Archives in Paris from 1951 to 1956, made *Janūb-e šahr* (The southern part of the city), about the life of good and bad ruffians in Tehran. It was shot on location outdoors, and its neorealistic style offended the censors, who mutilated the negative and banned the film (see ii, below). In 1342 Š./1963 Ġaffārī adapted a tale from *A Thousand and One Nights* for a comedy on fear at different social levels in contemporary Tehran; it was entitled *Šab-e qūzī* (Night of the hunchback) and was shown at the Cannes Film Festival in 1964. A few years later the poet Fereydūn Rahnemā (1325-44 Š./1936-75) made *Sīāvoš dar Taḡt-e Jamšīd* (Sīāvoš at Persepolis, 1346 Š./1967), an experimental film about the notion of time. Another poet, Forūḡ Farroḡzād (1314-46 Š./1935-67), directed a moving short film on lepers, *Ḳāna sīāh ast* (The house is doomed, 1341 Š./1962). The writer Ebrāhīm Golestān (b. 1340/1922) made *Kešt wa āyīna* (The mud brick and the mirror, 1344 Š./1965), a realistic, introspective work. All these films were shown abroad at festivals and libraries, but the Persian public did not respond favorably to any of them, and they all failed at the box office.

New developments (1337-57 Š./1958-79; see Table 43). Production of full-length films increased from twenty-five in 1338 Š./1959 to fifty-three in 1345 Š./1966 to eighty in 1350 Š./1971 but then decreased to sixty-one in 1355 Š./1976 (Gaffary, 1973). The number of film producers increased from twenty-two in the mid-1330s Š./1950s to forty in the mid-1340s Š./1960s to sixty-seven in the early 1350s Š./1970s. The cost of film production doubled in the period 1345-55 Š./1966-76 because of the inflationary trend of the economy. The total expenditure of production companies increased from 247 million rials to 546 million rials in this period. The average cost of making a color film increased



from 6 million rials in 1966 to 8.5 million rials in 1971 and to 12 million rials in 1976, higher than in Egypt or Turkey. In 1354 Š./1975 Persia exported eighty-three films to Afghanistan, forty-two to Dubai, two to the U.S.S.R., and one to the United States (*Sāl-nāma-ye āmārī*, 2535 = 1355 Š./1976, p. 162). The number of movie houses increased from 142 in 1338 Š./1959 to 453 in 1354 Š./1975; 112 of them were in Tehran (*Sāl-nāma-ye āmārī*, 2535 = 1355 Š./1976, p. 161; UNESCO, *Statistical Yearbook*, 1961, p. 152). In 1353 Š./1974, 473 films were shown commercially in Persia: 143 from the United States, sixty-one from Persia, fifty-nine from Hong Kong, thirty-three from France, twenty-seven from India, sixteen from Great Britain, twelve from Japan, nine from Turkey, and six from the U.S.S.R. (Tahāmīnezād, pp. 195-96).

In the autumn of 1343 Š./1964 the department of cinema (Edāra-ye koll-e omūr-e sīnemā'ī) in the newly founded Ministry of culture and art (Wezārat-e farhang o honar) brought all affairs pertaining to the film industry and censorship (see iv, below) under a centralized administration. The censorship bureaucracy was organized on two levels: the film-control commission and the higher council of the performing arts, which functioned as a court of appeal on censorship decisions (Tahāmīnezād, pp. 119-23). Production corporations like Etteḥādīya-ye šanāye'-e film-e Īrān (Union of Iranian film industries) and syndicates of actors, directors, exhibitors, dubbers, and the like were founded. In Āḍar 1337 Š./December 1958 Film-ḵāna-ye mellī-e Īrān (National film archive) was inaugurated; Persian and foreign films were collected and shown regularly. In Ābān 1345 Š./November 1966 the annual international film festival for children (Festīvāl-e bayn-al-melalī-e filmhā-ye kūdakān wa now-javānān) was inaugurated in Tehran. From 1345 Š./1966 to 1356 Š./1977 the Jašn-e honar (Festival of the arts) in Shiraz, devoted principally to theater and music, also included films. In 1348 Š./1969 the national film festival (Sepās) was organized; it was an annual event until 1353 Š./1974. In 1351 Š./1972 the Tehran international film festival (Jašnvāra-ye jahānī-e film-e Tehrān) was inaugurated; it continued for six years.

Madrasa-ye 'ālī-e televīzīon wa sīnemā (College for television and film) was founded in 1345 Š./1966 by the new National Iranian radio and television (NIRT; see iii, below). By 1357 Š./1978 NIRT had three channels; there were 2 million television sets in Persia and more than 11 million viewers—one-third of the population. The programming was devoted to information, culture, and entertainment, and NIRT thus became an important film producer (60 percent of all programs were produced in Persia). NIRT established a quasi-



autonomous entity, Telfilm, for quality film production; it produced a number of shorts, feature films, and serials, including *Ātaš-e bedūn-e dūd* (Fire without smoke) written and directed by Nāder Ebrāhīmī in 1352 Š./1973; *Šāzda Eḥtejāb* (Prince Eḥtejāb), by Bahman Farmānārā in 1353 Š./1974; and *Dāyera-ye mīnā* (The cycle) by Dārīūš Mehrjūī in 1356 Š./1977. Through the efforts of such institutions a more interesting period in Persian film opened in 1348 Š./1969, with the production of *Gāv* (The cow) by Dārīūš Mehrjūī and *Qeysar* by Mas'ūd Kīmīāī (see ii, below). *Gāv* was based on a story by Ġolām-Ḥosayn Sā'edī, a powerful fable of a peasant's identification with his cow. The main character of *Qeysar* is a combination of a Tehran ruffian and a cowboy. Both films were critical successes. Nāṣer Taqwāī directed *Ārāmeš dar ḥozūr-e dīgarān* (Tranquility in the presence of others, 1348 Š./1969), also from a story by Sā'edī, about a colonel whose past weighs on him. Taqwāī's biggest success, however, was a television serial entitled *Dāī Jān Nāpel'on* (Dear Uncle Napoleon).

In 1351 Š./1972 Bahrām Bayzāī (b. 1317 Š./1938), a playwright and theater historian, related in *Ragbār* (Downpour) the story of a schoolteacher in the southern quarters of Tehran. In the same year he directed a superb short, *Safar* (The journey) about two children in search of a home and security. NIRT had the courage to produce *Moğolhā* (The Mongols, 1351 Š./1972), directed by Parvīz Kīmīāwī, which ridiculed the bad influence of television in villages. Kīmīāwī is always in search of offbeat characters and has made several shorts worthy of mention, including *Yā zāmen-e āhū* (Oh, protector of the deer [i.e., Imam Rezā], 1349 Š./1970) and *P meṭl-e pelīkān* (P as in "pelican," 1350 Š./1971). (For other films made in this period see v, below.)

The Revolution of Bahman 1357 Š./February 1979. During the two years preceding the revolution, some 255 cinemas were either burned or closed down. As a result the number of cinemas declined from 453 in 1354 Š./1975 to 198 in 1358 Š./1979 (*Sāl-nāma-ye āmārī*, 2535 = 1355 Š./1976, p. 161; *Sāl-nāma-ye āmārī*, 1360 Š./1981, p. 203). After Bahman 1357 Š./February 1979 films from socialist countries dominated Persian screens, both for political reasons and because they cost less. The films were censored to conform to Islamic morality: Frames were either blacked out with felt-tipped pens or cut. The censors were so strict that 1,800 of the 2,000 films inspected in 1358 Š./1979 were banned. In 1361 Š./1982 nineteen of twenty-six films were rejected. Some actors, producers, and directors who had worked under the previous regime were labeled "prostitutes" or "corrupt" and banned from the screen. One producer



was executed and another imprisoned because of their Bahai faith (Naficy, 1987, pp. 448-52). Some militant propaganda films were made, but great confusion arose regarding the role of women on the screen. Moḥsen Maḵmalbāf, who later became a film director, resolved the problem as follows: Because women should not remove their *čādors* (veils) except in the presence of *maḥrams* (intimates of the family) and spectators cannot be *maḥram*, women must remain covered in all situations. Maḵmalbāf proposed that most female characters in a script be changed to male characters, unless they were supposed to be pregnant (Maḵmalbāf, pp. 136-39). Eventually the situation became more stable; in 1365 Š./1986, 247 theaters were operating in Persia, seventy-eight of them in Tehran, with a total of 156,000 seats, an average of 631 seats per theater (*Sāl-nāma-ye āmārī*, 1365 Š./1986, p. 227). In the first years after the revolution, as in the 1300s Š./1920s, some cinemas in provincial towns were divided in half, with one side reserved for men and the other for men with their families. In 1362 Š./1983 the Fārābī foundation (Bonyād-e sīnemā'ī-e Fārābī) took over responsibility for the importation of foreign films and the production and export of Persian films (see Wezārat-e eršād-e eslāmī, pp. 321-26). The municipal tax on Persian films was reduced to 5 percent, whereas for others it was raised to 25 percent (Wezārat-e eršād-e eslāmī, pp. 327-28). The wealthy Bonyād-e mostaẓ'afīn, the former Pahlavi foundation, inherited the management of 137 theaters throughout the country (Naficy, 1987, pp. 456-58). Between 1359 Š./1980 and 1367 Š./1988 fifty-six features were made on the Persian-Iraqī war, most of them “concentrated on phony war adventures, sensationalism and superficial sloganeering designed to encourage the war effort” (*Fīlm*, 18 Ābān 1363 Š./9 November 1984, pp. 12-13). In a rating of Persian films between 1358 Š./1979 and mid-1364 Š./1985 the magazine *Fīlm* mentioned only “sleazy,” “bad,” and “mediocre” examples (Naficy, 1987, pp. 455-62). Among these war films there were at least two box-office hits: *Barzakīhā* (People in limbo, 1361 Š./1982), directed by Īraj Qāderī, and *Oqābhā* (The eagles, 1364 Š./1985) by Samuel Kāčīkīān. Despite problems, both established and new filmmakers managed to direct interesting films, for a variety of reasons (see v, below). Some directors emigrated after the revolution and continued to work abroad, notably Parvīz Šayyād, who has made two courageous works in the United States: *Ferestāda* (The mission, 1363 Š./1984) and *Sarḥadd* (Checkpoint, 1365 Š./1987); Parvīz Kīmīāwī, who has received a number of commissions for French television; and Arbī (Arby) Ovānesiān, whose *Le tablier de ma mère* (1980), though highly regarded, was not generally released.



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