



FERDOWSĪ MAGAZINE

FERDOWSĪ MAGAZINE, the name of two periodicals, a bi-monthly and a weekly magazine published in Tehran.

i. BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

The bi-monthly magazine *al-Adab*, published from January 1918 through February 1922 by students and teachers of the American College (later Alborz College; q.v.) in Tehran, changed its name to *Ferdowsī* in its 4th year. Under its new name, two or three issues were published from Jadī 1300 Š./December 1921. Mīrzā Moḥammad Wafādār, the owner and editor of *al-Adab* and *Ferdowsī*, was the assistant principal of the American College.

The format was thirty-two one-column pages, 16.5 x 20.5 cm, carrying no illustrations or advertisements. Priced at 2 rials, its annual subscription was 8 rials. Copies are accessible at the Central Library of the University of Tehran.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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(NASSEREDDIN PARVIN)

ii. WEEKLY MAGAZINE

Ferdowsī, an influential weekly magazine first published on 9 July 1949 in Tehran under the editorship of Farīborz Amīr Ebrāhīmī, who was succeeded by Faraj-Allāh Nūḥī and Mortazā Lājevardī. The paper was owned by Aşraf Jahānbānū'ī, but the ownership was transferred a year later to Ne'mat-Allāh Jahānbānū'ī. From the outset, *Ferdowsī* became involved in the political turmoil and debates of the time.

After the coup d'état of 1332 Š./1953 (q.v.) the Persian press underwent a period of transition when political restrictions made it focus more on literary and cultural affairs. In this interim period, the journal was edited by Amīr Hūşang 'Askarī.

From 1956, under the editorship of Maĥmūd 'Enāyat and later Nāşer Nayyer-Moĥammadī *Ferdowsī* established its position as a serious cultural periodical with politically liberal inclinations. In this period Moĥammad Zoharī was the editor of magazine's poetry section. Selections from the memoirs of Forūġ Farroġzād and Ḳalīl Malekī, which were published in *Ferdowsī* at this time, further contributed to the popularity of the journal. Two of its regular contributors were pioneers in their own fields: Hūşang Kāvūsī, a cinematographer, who wrote on the cinema in general and Persian films in particular, and Īraj Pezeşkzād, whose satirical sketches and pastiches of the contemporary cultural scene in his regular column "Āsemūn rīsmūn" (hotch-potch) were later published as a book (Tehran 1964). His most famous novel *Dā'ijān Nāpel'on* (q.v.) also appeared first as weekly installments in the journal (1969-70).

For a period from November 1958 to February 1961, *Ferdowsī* abandoned its magazine format and appeared as a weekly newspaper. The experiment was not a success and the magazine reverted to its old format under Maĥmūd 'Enāyat, who returned as the editor of *Ferdowsī*.



The sixties produced a new generation of writers and intellectuals who had not been directly involved in the political turmoil of the late fifties. ‘Enāyat chose a young intellectual, Sīrūs Ṭāhbāz, to oversee the literary pages and invited a host of left-of-center political and social writers to contribute. In this period a number of well known authors and literary figures made contributions to the magazine, including Pežmān Baḳtīārī, Amīrī Fīrūzkūhī, Yaḥyā Marvastī, Nāṣer Woṭūqī, and Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda. The journal played a leading part in this new atmosphere of cultural and artistic experimentation (personal interview with ‘Enāyat).

In 1964 Maḥmūd ‘Enāyat left *Ferdowsī* to start his own journal, *Negīn*, and a young writer, ‘Abbās Pahlavān, was chosen as editor. Pahlavān inaugurated a new era by providing a platform for the young generation of liberal writers and poets while, at the same time, ensuring that the magazine kept its balance and did not become dominated by a single point of view or ideology. During a decade, many new contributors made their mark on the cultural scene. The focus was on poetry—the dominant creative medium in the sixties. Many young poets made their debut at the weekly “Poetry Workshop” held at the *Ferdowsī* offices; and literary critics including Reżā Barāhenī, ‘Esmā’īl Nūrī-alā’, ‘Abd-al-‘Alī Dastḡayb, and Moḥammad-‘Alī Sepānlū engaged in fierce literary debates on its pages. A host of Persian intellectuals and academics, including Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad (q.v.), Aḥmad Ašraf, Dārīūš Ašūrī, and Ḥamīd Ḥamīd also wrote for the magazine. Other contributors included Hādī Ḳorsandī, Eslām Kāzemīya, Mīnā Asadī, Šokūh Mīrzādagī, Mehrangīz Kār, Hūšang Wazīrī, Farāmarz Barzegar, ‘Alī-Reżā Nūrīzāda, ‘Alī-Reżā Maybodī, Jamšīd Arjomand, and Parvīz Davā’ī. The last mentioned is generally considered to be the best Persian film critic of that decade. Also contributed to the magazine were ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Zarrīnkūb, Moḥammad-Ja’far Maḥjūb, and Maḥdī Bahār (Pahlavān, pp. 387-98).

Coinciding with the advent of the cultural revolution of the sixties in Western societies, this decade, beginning in a relatively tolerant political atmosphere in Persia, ended with a harsh imposition of political absolutism in the early 1970s, embodied in the creation of the Rastākīz Party in the mid-1970s. The years in between were the journal’s most productive phase. Most of the politically active Persian intellectuals of this decade belonged to the liberal and socialist camp and this naturally determined the inclinations of the magazine too. *Ferdowsī* was dominated by an attitude of liberal opposition towards the policies of the government. The culminating point of this trend



was the establishment in 1968 of the Iranian Writers Association (Kānūn-e nevisandagān-e Īrān), formed to combat the increasing pressure of state censorship. Most of those involved with the production of *Ferdowsī*, including its editor, were among the founding members of the association. Although, as expected, the association was refused official recognition, its members began issuing open letters and manifestoes against the restrictive policies of the government, and *Ferdowsī* was one of the few publications that wrote about the association and printed their announcements (for the Association, see Sepānlū).

In 1969, for a period of three months, ‘Abbās Pahlavān was removed from the editorship of *Ferdowsī*, and Bīžan Kōrsand, a film critic of the magazine, was installed as the new editor. But protests from the readership and the writers led to Pahlavān’s reinstatement. He served until December 1974, when ‘Abbās Farzīnpūr replaced him.

Finally in 1975, *Ferdowsī* and several other journals were closed down by the government through a decree removing publication rights of journals with allegedly low circulation. Four years later, during the Revolution of 1978-79 Revolution, *Ferdowsī* was again published for a brief period from October 1978 to June 1979, with ‘Abbās Pahlavān as its editor.

The format of the magazine was usually 42 six-column pages, 24 x 34 cm. Incomplete sets of *Ferdowsī* are kept in many libraries in Persia. Abroad, copies are kept at Princeton University and at the Library of The School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.

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(ESMAIL NOORIALA)