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***Stasis and the State: The Role of Nomadic Forces in the Thought of Deleuze
and Guattari and the Formation of Iranian National Identity***

Kaveh Abbasian and Edward Thornton

The purpose of this collaborative article is to provoke discussion on the topic of national State power and national identity. For this purpose, we will first put forward an edited version of the theory of State formation developed by the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, before discussing the way in which Iranian national identity was formed in the years running up to, and during, the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

This article was initially conceived as part of a presentation and film screening for a meeting of the *Oxford Critical Theories and World Politics* group, held on 7th May 2015. The presentation was repeated during the *Kinesis and Stasis* conference held at the Barbican Centre on 27th November 2015 and run by the TECHNE research consortium. On both of these occasions the presentation was accompanied by screenings of edited sections taken from three documentary films: *Grass: A Nation's Battle for Life* (1925), which follows one branch of the Bakhtiari tribe during their annual migration; *The Sheep Must Live* (1970), which shows the same nomadic tribe, making the same crossing 45 years later; and one episode of *Chronicles of Triumph*, the Iranian, state-funded, war propaganda film series made by the filmmaker Morteza Avini during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

The intention of these presentations was not to use the philosophy Deleuze and Guattari to explain the films or the conflict that they depict, but to present both the theory and films alongside one another, each offering its own critical perspective on State power. While the presentations took the Iranian national context as their focus, the intention was somewhat broader. Given recent developments of nationalism in Europe and the rigid enforcement of European State borders, we hoped that the presentations would provoke discussion on the form of State power in general.

Section 1: Deleuze and Guattari's Theory of the State.

During the 1970s, the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psychoanalyst and self-styled militant Felix Guattari collaborated on an academic project by which they intended to offer a multidimensional critique of the traditional philosophical method, the dogma attached to the psychoanalytic institution and the accepted form of political discourse at the time. This project resulted in two books, first *Anti-Oedipus* and then *A Thousand Plateaus,* which were published with the common subtitle *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Their aim was to show how the dominant thought structures and the dominant power structures of contemporary life are intimately intertwined. Specifically, Deleuze and Guattari aimed to show the way in which the psychoanalytic understanding of the subject and the economic theory of capitalism mutually uphold one another, via a shared mode of thought based on an assessment of lack.[1]

It is as part of this larger project that Deleuze and Guattari construct their critique of State power. Here, I intend to offer a description of one aspect of this critique, in which Deleuze and Guattari analyse the necessarily 'sedentary' nature of the State and oppose it to an alternative 'nomadic' form of social organisation. I will do this in the hope that we will be able to find connections between this theory, the film extracts mentioned above, and the discussion that will follow on the formation of Iranian national identity during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

Sedentary people and the formation of the State:

In chapter 12 of *A Thousand Plateaus*, or '1227: Treatise on Nomadology: - The War Machine', Deleuze and Guattari take a historical view of the formation of the state.[2] They claim here that two different and opposing histories of society can be discerned, the first

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[1] *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* vary in their content, form, and style, with the former carrying out a sustained critique of psychoanalysis and its relationship with capitalist power and the latter developing several original analyses of social and political phenomena that draw on a wider range of disciplinary modes, including evolutionary biology, geology, mathematics and literary theory.

[2] For the full chapter, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, p387-466. Deleuze and Guattari also discuss nomadic thought at various other points in the book. See p27 where the authors first mention the nomad in relation to their development of the concept of the rhizome; p131 where they discuss nomadic semiotics; p468 onwards where they use the concept repeatedly in their chapter on 'the apparatus of capture'; and finally from p523 onwards during their explication of the relationship between smooth and striated space.

development occurring in situations in which a society is stationary or sedentary, and the second occurring in situations in which a society is constantly on the move, or nomadic. According to their analysis, the state form is the outcome of the sedentary side of the history of society, and that it has always developed alongside its nomadic alternative. Here I will outline the way in which these two different social forms are defined by Deleuze and Guattari and I will look briefly at what the authors have to say about the role of war in this context.[3]

The necessary precondition for the creation of a sedentary social group is the establishment of a settlement with a distinct boundary. By drawing a boundary, and by determining an inside and an outside, the society can claim ownership of a piece of land, which it can then use to provide for its members. In order to cultivate a piece of land, it is necessary to protect that land and its crop from others by claiming rights of ownership. The first act of the state apparatus is therefore to define a territory, to organise that territory into distinct sections by creating borders and erecting boundaries, and then to distribute that territory among the members of the society for the production of goods. State power is thus initially the power to define a space of interiority and to claim legislative power over that territory.

Taking a simplified version of the early organisation of the city-state as an example, we can see how state power and land boundaries are so closely interrelated: the city is defined by the construction of a city wall, the lands surrounding the city are encircled by a border that defines the jurisdiction of the city, that land is then subdivided into sections which are distributed among farmers and the laws of the state all rely on these boundaries. Any farmer who works land within this territory must pay tax to the State; this tax may be based on the number of segments of land farmed and on the local jurisdiction into which they fall.[4]

In this sedentary context, many other forms of thought also develop that rely on the drawing of boundaries that create binary distinctions of inside and outside, which are used

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[3] Deleuze and Guattari's development of 'nomadic thought' as a philosophical concept is intended to cover more ground than can be covered in this short article. For further reading on the importance of this distinction see Eugene Holland's discussion of 'nomadism' and 'nomad science' in *Deleuze and Guattari's 'A Thousand Plateaus': A Reader's Guide*, p48-53. See also the sections on 'Nomadicism', 'Nomadicism and Citizenship', and 'Nomos' in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, edited by Adrian Parr, p185, p188, and p189 respectively.

[4] This is my example, rather than one discussed directly by Deleuze and Guattari. Their analysis of State power is more complex and is organized around the differing forms of control wielded by the archetypal figures of State power defined by Georges Dumézil as the 'magician-emperor' and the 'jurist-priest-king'. For the purposes of this talk I have played down the discussion of the internal dynamics of the State in favour of a discussion of the difference between the State and the Nomad.

to organise society. Not only is land subdivided by a process of boundary formatiion, but people are also divided in a similar way. To take a different example, in Roman law there is a conceptual boundary marking the distinction between citizens and non-citizens, and then there are a proliferation of other such distinctions: there is a boundary between free individuals and slaves, within the free individuals there are men and women, within the men there are politicians, farmers, tradesmen, and soldiers, among others. Then in each of these areas the process of division begins again. The army is divided into legions, then into cohorts, then into centuries. At all points, the legitimacy of the law is linked to the existence of a boundary: there are different rules for citizens and non-citizens, for men and women, and for farmers and soldiers.

The use of boundaries to define territories (whether physical or conceptual) is also apparent in the development of the sedentary forms of technology. There is the technique of building walls, canals, and roads and of agricultural techniques for efficiently subdividing space. Architecture also develops in a particular way due to this context, one of being sedentary and of defining spaces of interiority: ideal buildings will last a long time in one place, they will keep the cold out and the warmth in (or vice versa), and they can be used to lock people out or to lock people in. A similar process is also discernable in other, seemingly unconnected modes of thought, for example, in the classification of the animal 'kingdom'. There is a conceptual boundary between living things and non-living things, within the living there are plants and animals, within the animals there are vertebrates and invertebrates, within these categories the process of division continues again and again until all variations of life have been categorised. Similarly, within academic disciplines a sedentary mode of thought leads to the subdivision of intellectual activities into faculties who exert some power of ownership: there are sciences and there are the humanities, within the sciences there are natural sciences and there are formal sciences. etc.

The point of all these examples is to show what Deleuze and Guattari mean by the State apparatus. The State apparatus is the principle of organization that defines the state form and serves to legitimize its power.[5] It operates by imposing borders and boundaries to

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[5] Deleuze and Guattari do not simply equate the State apparatus with the principle of organization that brings it about, but instead describe the relationship as one of mutual determination. The two only become equivalent in the case of the totalitarian State: "The most we can say is that the State apparatus tends increasingly to identify with the abstract machine it effectuates. This is where the notion of the totalitarian State becomes meaningful: a State becomes totalitarian when, instead of effectuating, within its own limits, the worldwide overcoding machine, it identifies with it." *A Thousand Plateaus,* p246.

create spaces of interiority, to define territories, and to distribute rights and duties based on these territories. This principle of control is one that develops specifically in the context of sedentary societies, in which it is necessary to territorialise the land and distribute rights of ownership. So, in Deleuze and Guattari's view, the 'State' is a particular kind of institutional regime derived from a set of social relations that are required when a society remains fixed in one place. Despite the differences between specific States, they all share this institutional regime that we can call the "State-form".

Nomadic people and the formation of the war machine:

The second social form that Deleuze and Guattari describe, and the one that they put in opposition to the sedentary social form, is that of the nomad. Unlike the societies that sustain themselves by claiming and appropriating a specific territory for the production of food, some societies survive by constantly moving into new areas, finding ever new pastures and new sources of sustenance. While for the sedentary group there was a constant danger of their crop being taken or destroyed, a danger that was mitigated by the construction of boundaries and borders and the allocation of legal rights on their basis, the nomadic social group is confronted with no such danger. For a nomadic tribe the only danger is that they may come up against obstacles that block them from accessing new territories. As such, the necessary precondition for the formation of a nomadic society is the ability to cross barriers that would otherwise halt their movement. As in the extract from *Grass: A Nations Battle for Life* mentioned above, these barriers may be natural phenomena such as rivers or mountains, but they may also be man made boundaries, such as the city walls of a different, sedentary society.

The mode of social organisation that develops in this context is based on the activity of unobstructed movement, an activity that Deleuze and Guattari call the 'smoothing' out of space. While the state apparatus is defined as a process of territorializing space, the nomadic social group survives by a process of (what Deleuze and Guattari call) deterritorialization: "[S]edentary space is striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by "traits" that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory."[6]

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[6] *A Thousand Plateaus,* p420

The modes of thought that develop in this setting reflect this basic social form. In the case of technologies, horse-riding, animal herding, and rafting are all developed as methods for allowing free movement in space in the face of potential boundaries. Similarly, the architectural forms that develop in this context embrace the need for movement and are thus light and transportable, but also, and perhaps more interestingly, they tend to have a more permeable boundary between the inside and the outside: tents and temporary structures are created that do not completely enclose a space, but simply regulate the movement of temperature by, for example, blocking the sun while allowing the wind to pass through. As we have seen, the 'state-form' is composed of the combined physical and conceptual processes that exist in sedentary societies, which serve to enclose and delimit territories and to allocate and impose legal rights and duties based on these distinctions. On the other hand, the form of social organisation composed of the combined processes that exist in nomadic societies, which serve to overcome boundaries and deterritorialize space, is given the name of the 'war machine' by Deleuze and Guattari.

This is, in some ways, a confusing title, as the nomadic tribe is in no way necessarily connected to any act of war. The term simply reflects the way that nomadic societies are experienced from the perspective of sedentary societies. When the apparatus that functions by overcoming boundaries comes up against the apparatus that functions by creating them, there is necessarily a conflict. From the perspective of the sedentary group, the nomadic tribe is inevitably seen as destructive and barbarous, but only because the forms of moral and legal judgement used by the sedentary group are historically based on the construction, rather than the overcoming, of boundaries.

The role of War:

There is, however, another reason that Deleuze and Guattari describe the collective processes of nomadic groups as a 'war machine', that is related to the way in which the state justifies its interaction in war. Before I go on to say something about the role played by war in the formation and justification of different forms of social and political power, I want to point out something else about the relationship between the two different social forms that Deleuze and Guattari describe.

The two, somewhat simplified, descriptions I have offered of the different 'types' of society defined by Deleuze and Guattari are not completely distinct and separate. It would be more accurate to say that both the State-apparatus and the war-machine, which characterise the sedentary and the nomadic groups respectively, are processes and tendencies that always exist alongside one another. Any society will include both of these tendencies to some degree, in some cases the tendency to deliminate and territorialise will be in the ascendency, in other cases the tendency to smooth out space and deterritorialize will have the upper hand, and it is the relationship between these two forces that determine the form of political power in a particular society.

The existence of war, and of the State's engagement in war, is an example of the way in which these two opposing processes can interact. According to the mode of functioning of the State apparatus, as we have defined it above, the legitimacy of force is always connected to the formation of an interior space. For example, the State law has a particular jurisdiction in which it can apply physical force in the form of police power. Similarly the state can legitimise certain power relations between one social or demographic group and another based on the creation of binary distinctions between them, for example, the simultaneous construction of race as a category distinction and the implementation of racial segregation, or the simultaneous construction of gender difference and the claimed legitimacy of sexual discrimination. However, as the State's method for legitimizing its power and the use of force is always tied to an idea of the 'inside', it has neither the technical ability nor the legitimacy on its own grounds of turning its power outward, against another State.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, the State can only attempt to go to war by appropriating both the technological and conceptual structures developed by the nomadic war machine. Historically, for example, nomadic tribesmen were paid as mercenaries in order to be used as a state army, and similarly, nomadic hunting technologies, such as horse riding and archery were appropriated by the state and given to its citizens so that they could be directed outward for their use in war. According to this explanation, the State army is an appropriation of the nomadic power of deterritorialization named the war machine. The nomadic way of life is essentially defined by a process of boundary crossing, when this process comes into contact with the boundaries of a sedentary state it develops means for

abolishing those boundaries, which it only sees as obstacles to its free movement. After capturing the power of this process within the strict rules of a national army, the State can then direct this power outward, for use in war against anything that opposes it.

So, by looking at the historical development of different social forms, Deleuze and Guattari aim to show that the State-form is connected to a history of sedentary society in which the territorialisation of land and the distribution of legal rights and duties, and therefore of privileges and penalties, is legitimized. They also aim to show that there is an alternative tendency in the history of social development that is linked to the formation of nomadic societies, by which processes have developed that function by overcoming both physical and conceptual boundaries. This force, which they call the war-machine, may be turned against the state, coming either from an external group, or from a group from within the state, a phenomenon seen during a national revolution for example. But the force of the war-machine can also be appropriated by the State in the formation of a State-army. This force, once again, can then be directed outward, beyond the boundary of interiority that it had defined, in order to engage in and legitimise the act of war, or it can erupt internally, for example in the case of a military coup.

The importance of this discussion is that it aims to challenge the State's claim to absolute sovereignty by recognising the existence of a force that operates in opposition to the state, and by recognising the ways in which the State may, in contrast to its own internal logic of organisation, appropriate the processes of an alternative, anti-State force in order to fight for its own survival.

Final note on National Identity:

I began this article by noting that Deleuze and Guattari's larger political and philosophical project aimed to show how the dominant thought structures and dominant power structures of contemporary life are intimately intertwined. In the case of the development of a sedentary state therefore, the same process is repeated at two different levels. At the level of material reality, a border is drawn that defines a literal space of interiority. At the level of thought, a conceptual boundary is drawn that defines the nation as having a particular identity, which is recognised as unique in relation to a general form of the 'outside'. At

both of these levels it is sometimes necessary for the state to appropriate the powers of its alternative, nomadic form. In the case of the definition of the national border it may be necessary to engage in acts of war that rely on the directed and controlled use of the nomadic war machine. Similarly, in the case of the definition of a national identity it may be necessary to appropriate nomadic forms of thought to mobilise the nationalistic mentality required for the nation-state to define itself.

Section 2: The Case of Iranian Contemporary History and The Emergence of The Sacred Defense Cinema

The origins of the Iranian nomads is not a concern of this article, what we are going to discuss here is the important role they played in the contemporary history of Iran in conflict with both the Qajar and then the Pahlavi central governments, a conflict that hugely contributed to the formation of the Iranian nation-state and the Iranian national identity during the 20th century. We will follow this history until the 1979 Revolution followed by the Iran-Iraq war, which became a scene of systematic reshaping of the Iranian national identity. We will then briefly go through a specific documentary series directed by *Morteza Avini* called *The Chronicle of Triumph* that has a lot to say about this ideological reshaping of the Iranian national identity.

The Constitutional Revolution

The contemporary history of Iran starts with the constitutional revolution of 1905-1907 which was an anti-despotism movement that led to the establishment of a parliament during the Qajar dynasty and paved the way for the modern era and the creation of the Iranian nation-state during the Pahlavi dynasty.

Despite the fact that since the 16th century there had been four major different dynasties that each controlled all the territories that now make up Iran, prior to the constitutional revolution there was no concept of Iran or Persia as a 'country' in its modern sense or the Iranian people as a nation. The Iranian people were comprised of several ethnicities, cultures, religions and languages and did not necessarily have a sense of belonging neither to each other nor to the central authority. It was only during the late 19th and early 20th

century that the Western educated Iranian intelligentsia started to translate and publish Western literature regarding concepts such as nations, nationalism, democracy, secularism and parliament in several newly established Persian newspapers. In that sense, Benedict Anderson's suggestion that the invention of the printing press and rise of print media played a crucial role in the emergence of the idea of "nation" can be found here (Anderson, 2006).

But there were critical differences between the European societies of the 19th century where modern nation-states were being formed, and the Iranian society prior to the constitutional revolution. During the revolution and well after it, the central government controlled only Tehran and its surroundings. Most of the rest of the country was under the sway of nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes amounting to a quarter if not a third of the total population (Tapper, 1997). These tribes who were almost completely independent of the central authority, paid no taxes, ran their own armies and were in constant conflict with the central government. They had formed tribal confederations and obtained a great deal of power and influence that let them negotiate with or even force the local and national governments for extensive land rights. Here Deleuze and Guattari's theory of sedentary-nomadic conflict and the emergence of the 'war machine' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988) can be observed not in ancient times but recent history. Also their argument on the appropriation of both the technological and conceptual structures developed by the nomadic war machine by the state can be observed in the fact that most of the Qajar military force was formed of nomadic tribesmen who were paid as mercenaries.

Although the majority of the nomadic population of Iran remained out of perspective during the constitutional revolution which was more or less an urban movement, the Bakhtiaris under the commandment of *Sardar As'ad Bakhtiari* played an essential role in one of the most important events of the revolution, they formed one of the three major armed forces that occupied Tehran in 1909, an event that caused the re-establishment of the parliament that had been closed down by Mohammad Ali Shah, the exile of the Shah and eventually the collapse of the Qajar dynasty and coming to power of Reza Shah, the greatest enemy of the nomadic identity and way of life.

The Pahlavis

Reza Khan before becoming the Shah of Iran had been appointed as the minister of war during the rule of Ahmad Shah, the last of the Qajars in 1921. He saw the nomadic tribes as one of the biggest obstacles against his efforts towards centralization of power and unification and modernization of the Iranian society. Using his newly formed efficient army he started a countrywide campaign against the nomadic tribes. His tribal policy was implemented in two distinct phases: first a campaign of pacification and disarmament, carried out mostly before he became Shah, and second a programme of nomad sedentarization enforced during the last decade of his reign (Tapper, 1997). In addition to military manoeuvres against the tribes, Reza Shah used such economic and administrative techniques as confiscation of tribal properties and the holding of chiefs' sons as hostages. Eventually, many nomads were subdued and placed under army control. Some were given government-built houses and forced to follow a sedentary life. It is of no surprise that the screening of the documentary film *Grass, A Nation's Battle For Life* (1925) which was mentioned in the beginning of this article was banned all around Iran during Reza Shah's rule and was only screened for a limited audience 42 years later.

As part of his campaign of building the Iranian national identity and under the influence of European nationalist movements, Reza Shah officially named the country as 'Iran' and declared it an 'Aryan' nation. Inspired by the Young Turks and Kemal Ataturk of Turkey, he banned the use of languages other than Persian in schools and written media, and this was happening in a country of numerous ethnicities and languages.

Reza Shah's son, Mohammad Reza Shah, more or less continued his father's policies regarding the nomadic tribes. Several tribal leaders were exiled, pasturelands were nationalised and the military was given the authority to regulate tribal migrations. In 1963 he started a campaign of land reform under the title of 'White Revolution'. Fearing a red revolution he intended to systematically abolish Feudalism. The plan was to buy the land from the feudal landlords and sell it to the peasants and settled nomads at 30% below the market value. Although at first the plan seemed to be working, in the long run what it actually caused was the emergence of small landowners and large number of village labourers of which many migrated to urban centres in search of work and later became the army of the 1979 revolution. Large numbers of newly settled tribal people were subjected to this process.

Under Mohammad Reza Shah's reign the publication of literature on the 'Aryan race' and histories of ancient Iranian empires were heavily funded and encouraged. He declared his reign as a continuation of a Persian monarchy founded by the Achamenid King Cyrus the Great, and in 1971 he organised an elaborate celebration and called it the 2500th year celebration of the Persian Empire, during which he gave himself the title of *Shahanshah Aryamehr* meaning 'king of kings, light of the Aryans'. Although this ideological rhetoric for creating a sense of national identity had an influence on the urban middle class, for the newly settled nomadic tribesmen who were struggling with poverty and for the landless villagers who had migrated to towns and cities in search of work, it meant nothing. The Islamic rulers who seized power during the upheaval of the 1979 revolution had another plan for the construction of the Iranian national identity, a plan that became possible with the start of the war.

The Sacred Defence

The Iran-Iraq war or as its known in Iran the sacred defense, started soon after the 1979 revolution with an Iraqi invasion of the south west of Iran. During the chaos of the revolution, war became a unifying factor. The internal opposition was heavily suppressed and the society was mobilized for war. The nomadic tribesmen were first to respond to the call of war and with their natural skills managed to wage a guerilla war against the advancing Iraqi Army. Apart from the official conventional army, two other major organisations named *Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution* (Sepah-e Pasdaran) and *The Organisation for Mobilization of the Oppressed* (Basij) were formed in order to mobilize the volunteers all around the country.

It took Iranians less than two years to repel the Iraqi invasion and take the occupied land back, soon a peace treaty was offered but Khomeini, the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic who had seen the benefits of war rejected it, after all he publicly considered war as a divine gift. The result was another six years of war and more than one million casualties on both sides. The nomadic tribe of Qashqai that defied the state's policies was suppressed in bloodshed and *Khosro Khan*, the chief of the Qashqai tribe, was publicly executed. War became the main characteristic of the post revolutionary Iran and constant efforts were put into the hegemonisation of the ideology of war. Shi'ism was used as the

unifying factor and specific Shi'a concepts of mourning, martyrdom, Karbala (where *Husayn ibn Ali* the third Imam of the Shias was killed by the army of the caliph), apocalypticism and the twelfth or awaited Imam and *Vilayat-e-Faqih* (guardianship of the supreme Islamic jurist) which all had their roots in pre-Islamic Iranian cultures and religions, were widely propagated. Saddam, the Iraqi president was compared to Yazid the caliph who ordered the killing of Husayn and his family, the Iranian army was considered the army of the awaited Imam, to invade Iraq and take the city of Karbala was considered a historical right of the Shias, the war even when the Iranians were on the offensive was called the sacred defence and was considered a turning point of history and a preparation for the re-emergence of Imam Mahdi, the awaited Imam. The result was the largest national military mobilisation in Iranian history, volunteers from every corner of the country headed towards the frontlines and the nomadic tribesmen not only volunteered but also formed their own specialized branches of the militia. The diverse population of Iran was being mobilized for war against a common foreign enemy, the nation-state building project was in process and for that purpose the new Islamic rulers needed cinema, although they hated it.

The Chronicle of Triumph

During and shortly after the 1979 revolution, Islamist crowds had burnt hundreds of cinema venues around the country, the new Islamic rulers had initiated a nation-wide campaign of purification of cinema, closing down cinema venues and banning a large number of cinema professionals from working. The state aimed for an independent domestic cinema with Islamic and educational content in service of reshaping the Iranian national identity. Soon many young non-professional Islamic revolutionaries started making their own state-funded ideological films.

Morteza Avini was one of these revolutionaries who managed to establish himself as the head of a group of young filmmakers making documentaries in the frontlines of Iran-Iraq war. In 1986 he was given the task of documenting the war both at the battle front and behind the lines. The result was five series of newsreel style documentaries consisting of 63 episodes under one title, 'The Chronicle of Triumph', which continued to be broadcasted by the national TV until the end of war in 1988.

Benefiting from mass state funding, Avini could expand his group and equipment and be at several locations at the same time. He used his literary talent in the writing of the mystic and ideological narration of the series which was read by himself. He developed his own techniques which had unique creative elements. Techniques such as the use of multi layered sound, specific music, narration, special effects, freeze frames, handheld camera, long take eye level shots and spontaneous interviews, were used to create one of the strongest propaganda tools in service of the hegemonisation of the Islamic Republic's ideology and reshaping of the Iranian national identity.

Avini and his *The Chronicle of Triumph* became so influential in Iran that after the war Khamenei, the new Supreme Leader, praised him and ordered for the establishment of a cultural institution named after the series itself, dedicated to making documentaries about the Sacred Defence. The institution became a dominant authority in the production of war documentaries and continued its work even after Avini himself was killed by a landmine.

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