

Baragani in October of that year. (For details of these incidents, see MacEoin, "Holy War," pp. 109-12).

Several sources indicate that Babis in different centers were collecting and manufacturing arms in readiness for the postponed koruj on the imam's appearance (ibid., pp. 111-12; Mazandarani, Zohur al-haqq, p. 374). The first serious incidents occurred in 1264/1848 in Mašhad, where armed members of the large Babi community clashed on two occasions with local soldiery. Expelled from Mašhad in Šaʿban, 1264/July, 1848, a party of Babis under the leadership of Molla Mohammad-Hosayn Bošruʿi headed into Mazandaran and in October of that year established themselves near Barforuši at the shrine of Shaikh Abu ʿAli al-Fazl Tabarsi, which they fortified. From an original total of about 300, the number of insurgents rose to between 540 and 600 (Momen, "Social Basis," pp. 161-65, esp. table 4). Leadership of the fort was in the hands of Bošruʿi and another of the Bab's original disciples, Molla Mohammad-ʿAli Barforuši Qoddus. Between 14 Duʿl-qaʿda 1264/13 October 1848 and 16 Jomada II 1265/9 May 1849, the Babi defenders and state troops under the overall command of Mahdiqoli Mirza engaged in sporadic fighting, with heavy losses of life on both sides. The siege was finally ended by a ruse and the surviving Babis either executed or taken prisoner.

Following disturbances in Yazd, a prominent Babi ʿalem (scholar) named Sayyed Yahya Darabi Wahid moved to Neyriz in Rajab, 1266/May, 1850; on his arrival he preached to large crowds and soon converted (or at least gained the support of) a sizeable part of the population of the Cenarsukta quarter. Existing tensions between the populace and the governor, Zayn-al-ʿAbedin Khan, seem to have been reformulated and exacerbated by Darabi, who was regarded by his followers as an independent authority in the town. Fighting soon broke out, whereupon around 1,000 Babis occupied the fort of Kvaja outside Neyriz, where they were besieged by troops sent by Firuz Mirza Nosrat-al-Dawla, the governor of Fars. Hostilities continued until the capture of the fort by treachery in Šaʿban/June; about 500 Babis were killed during the fighting and in the executions that followed.

The Zanjan episode of 1266-67/1850-51 was the most protracted and involved the largest numbers, with the town almost equally divided between the Babis and their opponents. The former, numbering over 2,000, were led by Molla Mohammad-ʿAli Zanjani Hojjat-al-Eslam, a former Akbari ʿalem who had already been the center of religious controversy before his conversion and who seems to have advocated radical social changes. In the course of heavy fighting between the Babis and several contingents of state troops, from 1,000 to 1,800 Babis lost their lives and parts of the town were badly damaged.

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Following the assassination by Babis of the governor of Neyriz Haji Zayn-al-ʿAbedin Khan, early in 1269/1853, fighting continued for several

months in the mountains outside the town, resulting in the deaths of some 350 Babis.

In addition to these outbreaks of large-scale violence, other incidents involving Babis occurred between 1850 and 1853: on 19 or 20 February 1850, seven Babis of relatively high social status were executed in Tehran; on 27 or 28 Šaʿban 1266/8 or 9 July 1850, the Bab himself was publicly shot with one companion in Tabriz; in Duʿl-qaʿda, 1268/August-September, 1852, some 37 Babis, including leading figures such as Qorrat-al-ʿAyn Tahera (q.v.), Molla Shaikh ʿAli Toršizi, and Sayyed Hosayn Yazdi were executed in reprisal for the Babi attempt on the life of Naser-al-Din Shah on 28, Šawwal/15, August; at the same period, there were further attacks on Babis in Milan near Tabriz, Takor in Mazandaran, Yazd, Neyriz, and possibly elsewhere.

In all, something like 3,000 Babis died in these episodes, or, if we take the lower figure of 1,000 deaths at Zanjan, just over 2,000 in all. Later estimates of 20,000 and more found in some Bahai works do not, in fact, correspond to the more detailed figures given in Bahai historical sources. Similarly, the very high figures for both participants and casualties given in state chronicles like the *Nasek al-tawarik* are manifestly exaggerated, probably in order to explain away the failure of the government forces to put down the disturbances rapidly.

It is impossible to identify a consistent pattern in these events. Ivanov's (1939) Marxist analysis shows serious limitations in its treatment of motives and its portrayal of the Babi participants in the struggles as "peasants, artisans, urban poor, and small trades-people." More recent studies by Momen (1983), Smith (1982), and MacEoin (1982) reveal a more complex interplay of social, political, and religious factors at work. The Shaikh Tabarsi siege was the most markedly religious of the larger incidents, while the Zanjan and Neyriz uprisings were more closely linked to local politics. It is arguable that, whereas those involved in the Shaikh Tabarsi struggle and in the smaller pogroms were convinced Babis, many of those who participated in the fighting at Zanjan, Yazd, or Neyriz may have been vague about or indifferent to the specific religious issues propounded by the Babi leadership. At Shaikh Tabarsi, messianic ambitions were linked to a belief that, through martyrdom, the defenders were reenacting the events of Karbala[?]; the Qajar state and its forces were condemned as illegitimate and a defensive jihad proclaimed against them. At Zanjan, religious millenarianism was less marked, while puritan and egalitarian ideals were clearly in evidence.

Smallness of numbers, a limited social base, lack of a centralized or coordinated leadership, the absence of an agreed policy, and conflicts of motive all combined to rob the Babi uprisings of any potential they might otherwise have had of acting as catalysts for a broader movement for social, religious, or political change. Conversely, the military defeat of Babism all but stopped it in its tracks and forced the surviving leaders to reinterpret the religion and restate its goals, leading to the eventual emergence of Azali

Babism (q.v.) and Bahá'ism (q.v.). In the latter case, rejection of Babi militancy and the adoption of a pacifist orientation resulted initially in an emphasis on the absolute distinctiveness of the two movements; but as later doctrinal developments demanded increasing conflation of Babism and Bahá'ism, the Babi uprisings themselves were reinterpreted as defensive reactions to persecution by church and state (see, in particular, MacEoin, "From Babism to Baha'ism").

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For details of histories of Shaikh Tabarsi found in manuscripts, Neyriz, Zanjan, and other incidents, see D. M. MacEoin, Early Babi Doctrine and History: A Survey of Source Materials (forthcoming).

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