

history especially since the 13th/19th century, when it became a scene of conflict between Ottoman, Persian and Russian states and between the Kurds and the Persian governments. These struggles for the control of the region resulted in ethnic and religious clashes involving the Kurds, Turks, Assyrians, and Armenians and were characterized by destruction and massacres (Tamaddon; Kavianpur, pp. 197-284).

In 1243/1828, during the Perso-Russian wars of 1241--43/1826-28, Cahriq was captured by Russian troops. Later, before and during World War I, the region fell to Russian hands again. In spite of the 1263/1847 settlement of the border between Persian and Ottoman Turkey, dispute over the region continued (Mohandes-baši, pp. 170-71), and Turkish troops occupied the region several times as recently as 1324/1906 (Ghilan) and World War I (Tamaddon).

The conflict between the Persian governments and the Kurds of the region, which most of the time belonged to the Baradust principality, dates back to the 10th/16th and 11th/17th centuries, when the Safavid state attempted to extend its direct rule over Kurdish principalities (See baraduvst). The Kurds were weakened by the Persian government policy of resettlement of Turkish tribes in western Azerbaijan. Resisting the centralization policy Kurdish princes and tribal chiefs revolted repeatedly, and the region changed hands between the Kurds and the central governments throughout the 13th/19th century (see, e.g., ?Ali Afšar on the 1880 revolt) and as recently as the 1300s Š./1920s (see van Bruinessen on the revolt by the Šakak tribe led by Esma?il Aga Simko/Semitqu). Qal?a-ye Cahriq became a familiar name when the Bab was imprisoned there before his execution (see ii, below) and when Simko made it a base for his operations against the Persian army (Arfa, p. 137).

Read the rest of this article online at www.iranicaonline.org/articles/cahriq.

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2. Place of Imprisonment of the Bab

by Juan Cole

In Jomada I 1264/April 1848 Grand Vizier (Sadr-e A'zam) Haji Mirza Aqasi had the Bab (q.v.) exiled to Cahriq from the fortress of Maku, both because he felt the young sayyed had too much access to the outside world from the former prison and because the Russian minister in Tehran, Dolgorukov, put pressure on the Qajars to remove the Bab from the vicinity of the Russian border. The fortress and the new prisoner fell under the responsibility of Yahya Kan-e Kord, brother-in-law of Mohammad Shah and governor of Urmia. Although the Bab faced greater restrictions in corresponding with followers in Cahriq, he and his followers had letters smuggled back and forth. He spent the last two years of his life in the fortress, with the exception of his interrogation in Tabriz in the summer of 1264/1848. Observers report that he gained enough freedom to address large crowds in the courtyard of the fortress, and that local Kurdish tribes people respected, after a manner, his religious charisma (Wright and Mochenin in Momen, pp. 73, 75). He produced manuscripts and letters that circulated in the Babi community during the clashes with the state that began late in 1264/1848 and intensified in the spring of 1266/1850. By these writings he brought into his religion such figures as the government official Mirza Asad-Allah Dayyan and the Indian nawab he named "Qahr-Allah," who later became a Babi missionary in India. As his chief disciples gradually met their deaths in the clashes, he appears to have depended more and more in the spring of 1850 on a second rank of leaders, such as Shaikh 'Ali Toršizi 'Azim and the Nuri brothers.

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