



ČAHĀR DOWLĪ

ČAHĀR DOWLĪ (Davālī), or ČĀR DOWLĪ, a tribe of western Iran. According to tribal legend the Čahār Dowlīs acquired their name by defeating a force consisting of four other tribes (Bent, p. 92). They are Turkicized Lurs who were transplanted to Fārs in pre-Qajar times. Āqā **Moḥammad Shah Qājār** (r. 1193-1212/1779-97) allegedly moved them to the Qazvīn region. Later, 'Abbās **Mīrzā** settled them in the valley of the Zarrīnarūd (Jaḡatū river), from Mīāndoāb to Šāhīn Dež (formerly Šā'īn Qaḷ'a). He ordered winter villages to be prepared for them and offered them the revenues of the district in return for their contribution of a contingent of cavalry to the national army (Rawlinson, p. 40; Ker Porter, p. 538). Today the area in question forms a *dehestān* by the name of Čahār Dowlī (Razmārā, *Farhang* IV, pp. 165-66). Ever since the Čahār Dowlīs established themselves in western Azarbaijan, the residence of their chiefs has been Maḥmūd-Jīq, one *farsaq* west of Šāhīn Dež (Rawlinson, p. 40; Bent, p. 92).

The Čahār Dowlī contingent fought with distinction against the Russians at the battle of Nakjavān in 1223/1808 (Brydges, p. 349; Sepehr, p. 103). But when the Russians occupied Marāḡa in 1827 most of the Čahār Dowlīs fled toward Hamadān, settling down in an area southeast of Qorva, which today forms two contiguous *dehestans*, Čahār Dowlī and Čahār Dowlī-e Asadābād (Rawlinson, p. 40; Razmārā, *Farhang* V, pp. 136-37).

The 1,000 Čahār Dowlī families that had been left behind in the valley of the Jaḡatū went through some trying times, being subjected to constant raids by the Kurds and becoming embroiled in a bitter and, at times, violent quarrel



with the central government over the revenues from the lands originally allotted to the tribe in the region (Rawlinson, pp. 41-42). But by the end of the century their lot had considerably improved. J. T. Bent, who visited them in 1888, during that period of relative prosperity, described their chief as “the only one in this neighbourhood who succeeded in keeping back the Kurds.” This chief, whose name was Nowrūz Khan, lived as a quasi-independent sovereign, who refused to pay taxes and exercised “regal authority over his small kingdom” (p. 92).

During the Constitutional Revolution of 1325-30/1906-11 the Čahār Dowlī chief, Salīm Khan Bahādor-al-Salṭana, sided with Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah and was appointed governor of Marāḡa by this ruler in 1326/1908. The Čahār Dowlīs also took part in two assaults on the besieged city of Tabrīz in February and March 1909 (British Parliament, pp. 11, 33, 34, 81).

Already in the early 1300s/late 1800s, the Čahār Dowlīs of southwestern Azarbaijan had a basically agrarian economy. They are “chiefly sedentary and engaged in tilling the fertile valley of the Checkatoo,” observed Bent, “though there are several nomad families who dwell in the villages during the winter months and go up to the *yaila* or mountain pasturages during the summer” (p. 92).

Rawlinson estimated their number at 4,000 families (p. 41). Bent (p. 92) was told by the Čahār Dowlī chief that he owned about 2,000 houses and had 5,000 subjects (*ra‘āyā*). When I visited them in 1339 Š./1960, they comprised 2,000 families, were almost entirely sedentary, and occupied some 38 or 40 villages, which were located mostly to the north of the road linking Mīāndoāb and Šāhīn Dež. They were Shi‘ites and spoke Turkic.

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