



ČALABIĀNLŪ

ČALABIĀNLŪ, a Turkicized tribe dwelling, for the most part, in the *dehestān* of Garmādūz in Arasbārān (q.v., formerly Qarājadāg) region of northern Azarbaijan. Its summer pastures are around Ĥūrmogān (*dehestān* of Kaleybar), half-way between Ahar and the Aras river; its winter pastures are around Kānbāgī (*dehestān* of Garmādūz), some 40 kilometers northeast of Kaleybar (Oberling, pp. 65-66). But today nearly all the Čalabiānlūs are sedentary. According to Lady Sheil (p. 396), in 1849 the tribe comprised 1,500 “tents and houses.” According to K. E. Abbott (*Amanat*, p. 232), in 1864 it comprised 6,000 families, 4,000 of which were sedentary. In 1960, the tribe comprised 1,974 households and, by then, nearly all the tribesmen had settled down upon the land (Oberling, p. 65).

The Čalabiānlūs were among the most intractable of the nomads of Arasbārān. In 1225/1810-11 they rebelled against the central government and migrated to Qarābāg. But Pīrḡolī Khan Qājār, whose task it was “to defend the frontiers of Mughan,” was ordered to subdue them. The Čalabiānlūs were then obliged to return to their old pasture grounds in Arasbārān (Brydges, pp. 424-25).

A detachment of Čalabiānlū cavalry participated in the capture of Herat in 1273/1856. Bāḡer Khan, the commander of this unit, was killed during the campaign (Bāybūrdī, pp. 121-22).

During the Constitutional Revolution of 1325-30/1906-11, the Čalabiānlūs acquired international notoriety owing to the exploits of their leader, Raḡīm Khan, who was a colorful bandit in the manner of Fra Diavolo in 18th-century



Calabria. He became one of the favorites of the crown prince, Moḥammad-‘Alī Mīrzā Qājār, when the latter was governor-general of Azerbaijan during the period immediately preceding the Revolution. When Moḥammad-‘Alī became shah in *Ḍu’l-qa’da* 1324/January 1907, Raḥīm Khan accompanied him to Tehran and was appointed commander of the court cavalry (*rīāsāt-e savārān-e dīvānī*). The titles of Noṣrat-al-Solṭān and Sardār-e Noṣrat were also bestowed upon him (Farzād, p. 91; Amīrkīzī, P. 33).

Raḥīm Khan and his second (but favorite) son, Büyük (Bīyūk) Khan, remained loyal to Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah throughout the revolutionary period, and were the most powerful of the tribal leaders who fought on the royalist side. During the siege of Tabrīz, Raḥīm Khan and his private army consisting of Čalabiānlūs, as well as many Moḥammad-Ķānlūs and Šāhsevans (qq.v.), occupied the northern approaches to the city and raided the whole countryside between the Kaleybar river and the Jolfā road. When Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah was overthrown in *Jomādā* II 1327/July 1909, Raḥīm Khan and several of his allies sent a telegram to the deposed shah in the Russian Embassy assuring him that “as long as we live we will not allow anyone to mention anywhere the word “constitution”” (Kasrawī, p. 90; Amīrkīzī, p. 431; British Parliament: Persia No. 1, p. 5). Raḥīm Khan also threatened to march on Tehran with a force of Qarājadāgīs and Šāhsevans, but instead he invaded northeastern Azarbaijan with a tribal army of about 10,000 men (Kasrawī, p. 91). A small force of approximately 100 men commanded by Sattār Khan was hastily assembled in Tabrīz and dispatched to Ardabīl to prevent the capture of that city by Raḥīm Khan. However, this unit could not withstand the superior force of Raḥīm Khan and soon was forced to return to Tabrīz. Raḥīm Khan occupied Ardabīl in *Šawwāl* 1327/November 1909 (Kasrawī, pp. 84-94; Amīrkīzī, pp. 410-38).

With the seizure of Ardabīl, Raḥīm Khan completed his conquest of northeastern Azarbaijan. But he was not able to consolidate his power in the region. When news of the fall of Ardabīl reached Tehran, the constitutionalist regime at once sent [Yeprem Khan](#), the brilliant Armenian revolutionary leader who had been named commander of the Army of the North, and [Ja‘farqolī Khan Baḳtīārī](#) to the scene with a force consisting of 500 men and four cannon. This well-disciplined force, which was joined by the garrison in Sarāb, easily routed Raḥīm Khan’s ragtag army, which had been weakened by the desertion of many of its elements. By the middle of *Ḍu’l-ḥejja* 1327/end of December 1909, government troops had not only recaptured Ardabīl but also taken Ahar,



the Čalabīānlū capital. Raḥīm Khan and his retinue were then chased all the way to the Aras river, and, in late Moḥarram 1328/early February 1910, they were forced to seek asylum in Russia (Kasrawī, pp. 107-09; Amīrkīzī, pp. 444-47, 481-84; British Parliament: Persia No. 2, p. 155).

In January 1911 Raḥīm Khan returned to Iran, “to become a further source of expense and difficulty to the constitutionalist regime” (Shuster, p. lii). But he was soon lured to Tabrīz by the leaders of the provincial *anjoman*. There, he was given a room in the Ālā Qāpū and placed under police surveillance. Later, he was incarcerated in the Ark. Finally, in the month of Ramažān 1329/September 1911, he was secretly executed during Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah’s unsuccessful attempt to reestablish himself in power (Kasrawī, pp. 154-55, 206-08; Malekzāda, VI, pp. 179-82). Būyūk Khan died in Arasbārān in 1313 Š./1934-35 (Bāybūrdī, p. 137).

Following the death of Raḥīm Khan, the Čalabīānlūs lost most of their influence in Arasbārān, and Sām Khan Amīr-e Aršad, the chief of the Hājī-‘Alīlū tribe, rapidly filled the power vacuum in the region.

During the reign of Rezā Shah, the tribes of Arasbārān did not suffer as much as the tribes of Fārs and Lorestān from his forced settlement policy, for most of the tribesmen were already sedentary, and their lands were comparatively fertile. Moreover, their migration routes were very short, so that a few shepherds were able to move the flocks from their summer pastures to their winter pastures, and vice versa, without attracting much attention.

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