



JAF (JĀF)

JĀF, designation of a once large Kurdish nomadic confederation living in south Iraqi Kurdistan and in the Sanandaj area of Iranian Kurdistan. The former used to be called Morādi, because they had helped the Ottoman Sultan Morād IV to capture Baghdad in about 1638 (Nikitine, p. 171, tr. p. 369). The latter is known as Javānrudi after the main area of their concentration.

Jāf tribal confederation must have been formed some time in the early 17th century, since Šaraf-al-Din Bedlisi (q.v.), the author of the first written history of Kurdistan (comp. 1595), makes no mention of such a tribe, although it is referred to in the Perso-Ottoman peace treaty of 14 Moḥarram 1049/17 May 1639 (Hurewitz, tr. and ed., I, p. 27). The Jāf are culturally related to the inhabitants of central Kurdsistan, like the Mokri, Bābān, and Sōrān. They are Sunnite Muslims of Shafe'ite persuasion, with a good number of them belonging to the Qāderi and Naqšbandi Sufi orders. According to the oral traditions of the Tāyša'i branch, the members of this branch were originally Christians and came from Armenia (Sanandaji, p. 460). According to Moḥammad Marduḳ (I, pp. 78, 102), Timur brought the Qobādi and Bāwajāni (Bābājāni) branches of Jāf from the Ottoman territories in Mesopotamia to their present location in Persia.

During the Constitutional Revolution of 1907-09 (q.v.), the Jāf of Iraq and some southern Kurdish tribes supported Prince Abu'l Faṭḥ Mirzā Sālār-al-Dawla, who had married a daughter of the chief of Iraqi Jāfs chief, Maḥmud Pāšā, and was planning to move in force against the constitutional government in Tehran. They were, however, routed at about ninety miles southeast of Tehran



at the end of September 1911 by an army of the Constitutionalists led by Ep'rem Khan (q.v.; Kasravi, pp. 186-94; Marduk, II, pp. 278 ff.; Malekzāda, VII, pp. 53 ff.).

In the past, the seasonal migrations of this large tribe across the Perso-Ottoman border, had made them a significant factor in the political relations between the two countries. The movement of the tribe, whose large size and nomadic habits often disturbed the peace and disrupted the economic activities in the areas along their migrating route, was always a cause of grave concern for local governments. Eventually Farhād Mirzā Mo'tamed-al-Dawla, the governor of Kurdistan in the years 1284-91/1867-74, prevented the sections stationed in the Ottoman territories from entering Persia (Sanandaji, p. 326).

The Jāf of Javānrud staged a few rebellions during the reigns of Reżā Shah Pahlavi (1925-41) and his son and successor M ohammad-Reżā Shah (1941-79), which were mainly due to the relentless centralization policy of the government. None of these uprisings, however, lasted long or spread widely enough to cause any serious concern for the government. Their last rebellion was a brief one in 1956.

The Jāf are to be found settled everywhere in the region between Sanandaj and Kermānšāh, an area bordering Iraq on the west and once a part of the Ardalān district. The main body of the tribe moved to the Ottoman territory toward the end of the 17th century, after a battle with the governor (*wāli*) of Ardalān, in which their chief and his son were taken prisoner and killed. They settled in the Solaymāniya district, whose governor gave them protection and let them graze their flocks in a region south of this city down to a region of Kāneqin in present-day Iraq. The sections that remained behind in Persia gradually joined the Gurān (q.v.) and became a part of their tribal confederation.

The language of the Jāf belongs to the group of Kurdish dialects known as Sōrāni, but it has adopted many elements of Gurāni and south Kurdish, especially in regions like "Māhidašt" and Qaṣr-e Širin, where they live next to the south Kurdish speakers in many towns and villages.



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