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Soviet Propaganda and the Integration of the Yezidis into the Communist Society during the *Korenizatsiya* Policy (1923–1934)

Abstract:

Yezidis arrived in the South Caucasus following their migration from the Ottoman Empire. They led a traditional semi-nomadic life and preserved their culture through oral transmission, lacking a formal written tradition or education. After the establishment of the Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks intended to resolve the national question. In contrast to the Russification policy of Tsarist Russia, they granted unprecedented rights to national minorities. However, these rights needed to gain their trust and integrate them into the voluntary project of construction of a communist society. By developing propaganda tools, the Soviet authorities built a foundation for the promotion of Marxist-Leninist ideology. The process was called korenizatsiya (indigenization). This study aims to explore how Bolshevik propaganda was employed to transform the traditional lifestyle of the small Yezidi community during the korenizatsiya policy (1923–1934) so they could be integrated into a communist society. By conducting desk research and analysing both specialised literature and archival documents, the study indicates that the Soviet authorities provided the Yezidi community with opportunities to study their language and culture to publish literature and journalistic works aimed at instilling communist values and spreading ideology. Furthermore, Soviet authorities directed their propaganda at the religious and tribal leaders of the Yezidi community, using multiple various forms of art to weaken their authority and support the integration of Yezidis into the Soviet system. As a result, some aspects of the Yezidi identity, including religion and traditions, were stigmatized and portrayed as relics of the past.

Keywords:

Yezidis, USSR, Anti-religious Policy, Propaganda, *Korenizatsiya*, Intelligentsia.

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Introduction

After the establishment of the USSR, in the early 1920s, Lenin's government introduced a policy of *korenizatsiya* (literally "indigenization") as a counterweight to the Russification policy of Tsarist Russia. The latter was a set of measures aimed at assimilating ethnically non-Russian peoples of the empire. For this purpose, the Russian language, culture, and official religion were actively disseminated. The goal of this policy was to suppress the national aspirations of small communities, as well as to strengthen the unity of the Russian Empire. On the contrary, the policy of *korenizatsiya* contributed to the development of the culture and formal education of national minorities. At the initial stage, this policy did indeed encourage equality of all peoples and did not prioritize Russian culture. However, this was not an end in itself; the Bolsheviks wanted to secure the support of representatives of national minorities to build a communist society and lay the groundwork for a common socialist culture. In this way, they sought to resolve the issue of nationalism among different nations; if national minorities were indoctrinated with communist principles, their existing value systems could be modified to correspond with socialist principles. This required the formation of schools and universities, the development of literature and the printed media, cinema and theatre with a clear ideological direction and control. For this purpose, the Bolsheviks employed multiple forms of propaganda. Consequently, propaganda within the framework of the *korenizatsiya* policy did not completely suppress the identity of national minorities, but rather integrated them into the context of a new society with ideological control. Thus, the Soviet leadership set the goal not only of culturally developing minorities, but also of forming a "loyal" consciousness in the community.

The aim of this article is to identify how propaganda within the framework of the *korenizatsiya* policy integrated a traditional ethno-confessional Yezidi community into the newly formed communist society in the 1920s. The author attempted to identify the methods and forms of propaganda which were applied to the Yezidis in different spheres such as women's emancipation, education, and culture, as well as to consider which elements of the Yezidi community were targeted by Soviet propaganda and the nature of the critical discourse employed. The novelty of this article lies in its first comprehensive analysis of the Soviet propaganda towards the Yezidi community within the framework of the *korenizatsiya* policy through the lens of socio-political communication and ideological discourse. The propaganda methods used by the Soviet authorities should be viewed as a means of communication aimed at shaping and instilling ideological attitudes in the mass consciousness, which can both help and harm the community.

The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology based on the conduction of desk research and a qualitative analysis of archival documents and literature of intellectuals of a Yezidi origin (intelligentsia) of the Soviet Union. While analysing visual material (newspaper excerpts, film, and theatrical production), particular attention was paid to how images and compositions reflected the ideological tenets of the Soviet regime, gender roles, the roles of religious and tribal leaders (identifying which figures were idealized and which were portrayed as villains), as well as the place of the Yezidis in socialist society. The visual elements were viewed as elements of propaganda discourse, complementing the textual sources. All texts and archival materials used in the study were translated by the author from three languages: Kurmanji, Armenian, and Russian, into English. The texts were translated with careful attention to the original context, semantic features, ensuring an accurate interpretation of the propaganda messages.

The article examines the processes that took place mostly with the Yezidis of Soviet Armenia. Soviet Armenia has traditionally occupied a central role in scholarly and cultural activity of the Yezidis, being the place where their alphabet, the earliest books, and the first newspaper were published.

The scope of this study extends from 1923 to 1934. Later, Joseph Stalin reversed the policy of *korenizatsiya* and elevated the Russian nation to the rank of "first among equals." This shift also affected the Yezidis, and the present study lays the groundwork for further research on the means of propaganda applied to the Yezidis under successive Soviet leaders and in the post-Soviet period.

There are certain limitations to this study. First of all, it concerns the use of the terminology Yezidi, Kurd, Kurd-Yezidi (or Yezidi Kurd). When Joseph Stalin came to power in 1924, he established the ethnolinguistic policy, the aim of which was to reduce the number of nations[1] in the country.[2] Thus, Soviet authorities grouped Muslim Kurds and Yezidis under a single umbrella-term, categorizing them as one national entity. They were guided by the fact that both communities spoke Kurmanji.[3] Consequently,

[1] Soviet authorities used several terms regarding national and ethnic classifications, which differed from European or Western understanding. For example, the term "nation" in the Soviet Union (and later in Russian and other post-Soviet contexts) did not mean a nation-state as in European culture, but rather an ethnic group. Similarly, "nationality" (национальность) referred not to citizenship but to an ethnic origin.

[2] Cf. Ali *et al*. 2021: 8.

[3] In this study, the term Kurmanji is used to denote the northern branch of the Kurdish language complex. This usage is corroborated by modern linguistic glosses. Descriptive studies distinguish Kurmanji as an independent entity (see Haig 2018); a detailed classification of its internal dialects is offered by Öpengin & Haig (2014), and reference works emphasize the incomplete mutual intelligibility between Kurmanji and Sorani (see Thackston 2006, Preface). For this reason, the author does not use the term Kurdish language. Please note, the Yezidi community in the former Soviet Union is linguistically divided: some members refer to their language as Kurdish, while others call it Ezdiki. The author considers the term Kurmanji to be less politicized and academically justified.

in most archival publications (books, newspapers, articles, etc.) on Yezidis from the Soviet era, their nationality is noted as Kurdish, which may also refer to Muslim Kurds. It is also noteworthy to mention that alongside the nationalities Yezidi, Kurd-Yezidi, or Kurd, there existed a more consolidated form of self-identity inherent to the inhabitants living in the territory of Sarhad[4] – Kurmanj.[5] A striking example of this is Arab Shamilov's book *Kurdish Shepherd (Şivanê Kurmanca)*, which was never translated into Russian as *Kurmanj Shepherd*. In light of this, if the archival documents indicate the Kurdish language, the author changes it to Kurmanji. If the documents use the word Kurdish in relation to certain institutions, the author leaves it the same, since they could also refer to Muslim Kurds (for example, Kurdish schools). The study uses direct quotes that the author does not change.

Of particular significance is the fact that some publications, particularly books and the *Ria Taza* newspaper, published in the Latin alphabet, were destroyed during the Soviet repressions. For this reason, early issues of the newspaper are currently inaccessible in online archives. However, the author was able to examine one of the *Ria Taza* issues in the Latin alphabet through access to a private collection of the writer Hajie Jndi.

It should be emphasized that the author received the archival documents in the reading room of the National Archives of the Republic of Armenia in 2021. At present, due to the author's location outside the country, it is impossible to clarify the archival collection (фонд) (except for *Ria Taza* newspaper), the series (опись), and file numbers (дело). However, the digital version of the documents is stored in the researcher's personal archive.

The article is structured into three main sections. The first part examines the policy of *korenizatsiya* as a framework for integrating national minorities into the Soviet system. Particular attention is paid to the educational and women's emancipation policies which provide the necessary context for understanding the mechanisms of Soviet influence on national minorities. They allow one to consider propaganda not in isolation, but as part of a broader system of ideological practices in which gender equality and educational policy served as the foundation for the formation of Soviet cultural identity. The second section explores the targets of Soviet propaganda, focusing on how ideology was adapted to the specific context of the Yezidi community. The third part analyses cultural production (literature, cinema, theatre, and the printed media) as key instruments through which Soviet values were disseminated and normalized. It should

[4] A territory covering the Kars region, Van vilayet, Bayazid sanjak, and Alashkert.

[5] Literally a person or an ethnic group, who speaks Kurmanji. The absolute majority of Yezidis and Muslim Kurds living in the Caucasus and Sarhad region are traditionally Kurmanji-speakers.

be noted that literature served as the main instrument for disseminating Soviet narratives about the Yezidi community, while films and theatrical productions were rare due to the high costs and labour involved in their production.

National Policy of Korenizatsiya: New Socialist Identity

The national question remained a pivotal focus for the Bolsheviks following their rise to power. They acknowledged that Tsarist Russia's policy of forced Russification had proven ineffective and demanded a different course of action. Bolshevik support was coming primarily from Central Russia; in all other regions, they were supported either by Russians or Russified workers.[6] In this regard, it was essential to attract other ethnic groups to the Communist Party. They deliberately involved locals in the governing bodies for each region, as they knew the life and customs of their community. In addition, they issued laws in minority languages. Accordingly, the Bolsheviks sought to position themselves as the party which fought the policy of forced Russification:

> Only by fighting Great Russian chauvinism can we ensure the strength of the union and the influence of the party among the working masses of other countries.[7]

One of the central aims of this process was the formation of a common socialist culture that would unite numerous peoples through values based on communist ideology. It is noteworthy that Stalin defined minority cultures as "national in form, but socialist in content".[8] This implied that the distinctive national identity of the non-Russian population was to coexist with the emerging socialist culture and be promoted only in the socio-economic sphere. By promoting the cultures of non-Russian peoples through the dissemination of folklore, national songs and dances, literature, the Bolsheviks aimed to depoliticize their national identities.[9] Education, language, and culture served as mechanisms of governance for the deliberate formation of new socialist identity.[10] To this end, it was essential to demonstrate the successes of the economic and social revolution as the formation of collective farms (kolkhoz), dispossession of the kulaks (dekulakization),[11] industrialization, the opening of schools and theatres in national lan-

6 Cf. Smith 1996: 177.

7 Institute of Marxism–Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU 1983: 53.

8 Martin 2001: 74.

9 See *ibid*: 75.

10 Cf. Hirsch 2005: 199.

11 Dekulakization was part of broader collectivization policy (1928–1937), which was the process of forced unification of peasant farms into kolkhoz. The goal of collectivization was the liquidation of private land ownership and the creation of large agricultural enterprises. During this period, the Bolsheviks liquidated the kulaks as a social class.

guages, and so on. Thus, socialist identity was to be defined through work and culture (dance, folklore), and not through religion or traditions.[12]

Particular attention should be paid to Bolshevik gender policy in this period. The Soviet government regarded the emancipation of women as a key instrument for destroying "the old order", as women in traditional societies were perceived as the main bearers of customs and religion. In this context, women's "liberation" became not only a social but also an ideological goal–a tool for rebuilding traditional society along Soviet lines.[13] Thus, the Soviet authorities aimed to eliminate the "backwardness" of Eastern women[14] and integrate them into the socialist system. However, the rights and opportunities granted to women were implemented strictly within certain limits. The Bolsheviks were afraid of rising feminism, as it could lead to the exclusion of female workers from the general class struggle.[15] To prevent this, the Bolsheviks set themselves a task of training female instructors in accordance with socialist values. Thus, the Women's department of the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party (CC) was supposed to involve women from the East in the construction of communism. One of the markers of this policy implementation was the inclusion of minority women in leadership positions who would promote communist ideas within the community. As an example, an instructor at the Women's Department a Yezidi Nure Polatova[16] declared:

> The time is approaching when Yezidi women will no longer be represented only by isolated individuals in our ranks. They will overcome their intellectual stagnation.[17]

At the conference that brought together Yezidi women, Polatova had lectures on such topics as "What Soviet Life Gave to Women", "Women Under the Communist System", "The Position of Women in the Past, Present, and Future", etc.

In accordance with the propaganda manual, Yezidi authors highlighted in their publications the oppressed role of Yezidi women before the October Revolution. They often mentioned the difficult conditions in which Yezidi women had lived. For example, the women had had no access to healthcare during illness or childbirth, so they often lost their babies or suffered complications.[18] In the book "Culture of the Kurds of Soviet Armenia", the practice of polygamy was discussed, noting that wealthy begs and aghas

[12] Cf. Hirsch 2005: 200.

[13] Cf. Northrop 2001: 193.

[14] During this period, the Bolsheviks introduced a campaign to liberate women of the East: women of the Volga region, Central Asia, and the Caucasus.

[15] Institute of Marxism–Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU 1984: 125.

[16] Nure Polatova was a sister of a Bolshevik revolutionary Fyodor Lytkin, known as Ferik Polatbekov among the Yezidis.

[17] Chatoev 1965: 60.

[18] Cf. Avdal 1960: 179.

could have up to five wives, whereas men from average households had one or two.[19] Moreover, it pointed out that a Yezidi man saw a woman in the house as a speechless creature; it was perfectly shown in a proverb "Men lengthened their tongue at women" ("*Zimanê mêr ser jinê dirêj bû*"), i.e., men had a right to speak freely and authoritatively, while women should have obeyed and not to reply.[20] In contrast, Yezidi authors paid particular attention to women's achievements and positive changes following the establishment of Soviet power. In particular, they highlighted that polygamy was officially abolished, some Yezidi women were awarded the honorary title "Mother Heroine", received education and were elected as deputies.[21] In 1929, a chairperson of the Karvansere[22] village council Susika Khudo declared:

> I feel like I am in my family here, like an equal among equals. We, the Kurds, live prosperously and culturally. Now our girls are not sold for a bride price (…). We owe all this to the Soviet power. I take off my headdress – a symbol of centuries-old backwardness, fettering my thoughts and will!.[23]

These were success stories documented by intelligentsia in books and newspapers as part of the propaganda, while in practice women faced significant challenges.[24] For some women, access to education was particularly difficult. For example, a daughter of Beg Omar Agha Ozman, Gyavaz Ozman introduced herself as Mariam Saroyan, because of the social status of her father.[25] As a consequence, she was bullied both by her neighbours in the village and her Yezidi classmates.[26] In addition, the polygamy practice was still rarely observed up to the late 1960s. At that time, it occurred not because of wealth, but rather when the first wife was unable to give birth to a son. Accordingly, in some cases wives themselves would bring a new wife to their husbands in the hope that the family line would be continued by a son. These wives referred to themselves as "co-wife" ("hewî") and lived in the same household. Thus, this practice reflected a gender-biased social structure, as a woman's consent to a second wife was often the result of pressure within the community.

It should be highlighted, that the 12th Congress of the Bolshevik Party, held in April 1923, described detailed propaganda methods for achieving educational goals. The Bol-

[19] Cf. *ibid*.

[20] Cf. *ibid*.

[21] Cf. Jndi 1954: 9.

[22] Karvansere or Emirê Teze, now Sadunts village in Aragatsotn Province, Armenia.

[23] Chatoev 1965: 61.

[24] It should be noted that women belonging to national minorities often face a dual challenge, encountering discrimination not only in wider society but also within their communities, where traditions are strictly maintained.

[25] Further details are provided in the next chapter.

[26] Cf. Pobedonostseva Kaya 2024: 72.

sheviks set the task of increasing the educational qualifications of peoples in accordance with Marxist ideology. Thus, schools were to be available in all villages and cities. Moreover, they sought to reinforce party-controlled publishing and educational institutions such as party schools and communist universities to develop a proletarian intelligentsia.[27] The Bolsheviks realized that the elimination of illiteracy meant better control over culture and education. Moreover, the most effective way to create a new Soviet identity was to ensure access to an ideologically oriented education system. Thus, according to the Decree on the Elimination of Illiteracy, all illiterate people between the ages of 8 and 50 were required to receive an education.[28] Consequently, there were literacy centres operating in the Yezidi villages of Soviet Armenia: Hakko, Gyalto, Tlik, Sorrik, Kyalashbek, Sichanlu, Baysiz, Dian, Bolshoy Dzhamushlu, Mirak, Djarjaris, Karvansere, etc.[29]

On April 23, 1921, the People's Commissariat of Education issued a decree, according to which, the Yezidis would be taught to read and write in their native language. In October 1921, a textbook with the Kurmanji alphabet, known as Shams, was published by an Armenian, Hakob Ter-Kazaryan (Lazo). It was based on the Armenian script and consisted of two sections: a primer and a book for reading. In the preface to the textbook, Lazo wrote:

> The efforts of the Soviet Armenia government have made the creation of a primer for the Kurds possible today. The People's Commissariat of Education of the Armenian SSR entrusted me with this task and did not shrink from any difficulties, so that in the near future we could accomplish what had for decades remained merely a subject of discussions.[30]

[27] Institute of Marxism–Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU 1984: 55.
[28] See Decree of 26 December 1919 on the Elimination of Illiteracy among the Population of the R.S.F.S.R. (1943).
[29] Cf. Chatoev 1965: 107.
[30] National Archives of Armenia. Fond 1407, Marking the 60th Anniversary of the textbook Shams [Unpublished archival material]. Inventory and case are not identified.



Kurmanji alphabet *Shams* made by Lazo, which was based on the Armenian script.

However, this alphabet did not correspond to the phonetic features of Kurmanji. Moreover, the Muslim Kurds, living mainly in Azerbaijan and abroad, could not understand it. Thus, on March 25, 1925, the People's Commissariat of Education of Soviet Armenia approved the new Kurmanji alphabet based on the Latin script. At the end of 1928, a public figure and member of the Communist Party Arab Shamilov and a linguist Isaac Marogulov, who was of an Assyrian origin, published a new alphabet for Kurmanji.

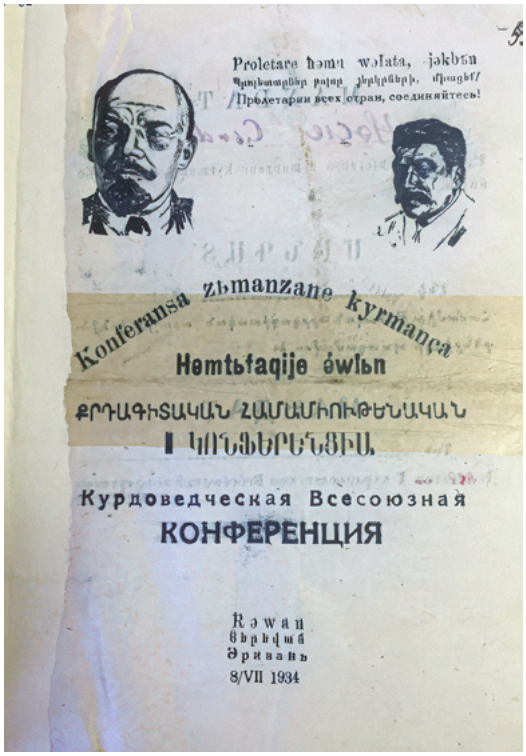
Consequently, in 1930, there were 27 Kurdish schools with 1,451 students in Soviet Armenia.[31] It should be noted that school textbooks were also published in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.[32] Upon the establishment of Kurdish schools, Yusuf Kamil Bey Bedirkhan expressed his deep admiration for the Soviet Union. His statement was quickly appropriated by Soviet media and was subsequently reproduced both in the *Ria Taza* newspaper and in school textbooks, serving as an illustration of loyalty to Soviet educational policy:

[31] Cf. Chatoev 1965: 122.

[32] National Archives of Armenia. Fond 1407, *Marking the 50th Anniversary of the New Kurdish Alphabet* [Unpublished archival material]. Inventory and case are not identified.

> The Soviet system, perhaps, has given no other people such irreplaceable historical blessings as to the Kurdish people. It developed a language for our children; it healed the blindness of our thoughts; it lit the torch of our civilization; it gave us the means and the opportunity to join the ranks of civilized nations. (…) From now on, the Kurdish nation will not die. Glory to Soviet power, which raised the torch of civilization.[33]

The shift to compulsory primary education contributed to the preparation of qualified teachers. In this regard, a group of eleven individuals, identified as Yezidis and possibly including Muslim Kurds, were sent to the Leningrad Oriental Institute to become qualified teachers. However, this was not enough, and, in January 1931, the People's Commissar of Education of Soviet Armenia A. Mravyan founded the Transcaucasian Kurdish Technical Institute in Yerevan. The first director of the institute was Arab Shamilov. During the 6 years of its existence, the school trained 70 new teachers of Kurmanji. In 1937, during the Great Terror, the institute was closed.



Booklet of the All-Union Kurdish Studies Conference of 1934. Source: Hajie Jndi's private archive

In July 1934, the first All-Union Kurdish Studies Conference was held in Yerevan. The conference discussed such issues as "The October Revolution and National-Cultural Construction Among the Kurmanji Workers", "The Problem of a Common Cultural Language", "Formation of socialism among the Kurmanjis before the October Revolution", "The Fundamentals of Kurmanji Grammar", etc.

[33] *Idem.*



Participants of the first All-Union Kurdish Studies Conference. Source: Hajie Jndi's private archive

Within the Bolshevik propaganda, an anti-religious policy occupies a distinctive place. The Bolsheviks believed that anti-religious propaganda could not be successfully implemented until the issue of illiteracy of the population was finally resolved.[34] Accordingly, control over education was closely linked to anti-religious policy. Interestingly, the Bolsheviks realised that mockery of objects of faith would not lead to results. Instead, they agreed on propaganda aimed at exposing of the connection of religious groups with the interests of the bourgeoisie, landowners, capitalists, or religious elites.[35] Thus, they sought to replace "the outdated remnants" of religious ideas with clear scientifically grounded perspectives on both nature and social life.[36] To this end, the Bolsheviks took steps to organize anti-religious interest groups and publish special literature in minority languages. Obviously, they gave serious consideration to this issue, as they suggested preparing lively and understandable lectures involving natural scientists and materialists.[37] To illustrate, a candidate of historical sciences[38], orientalist

[34] Institute of Marxism–Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU 1984: 125.
[35] Cf. *ibid*: 114.
[36] Cf. *ibid*.
[37] Cf. *ibid*.
[38] Soviet terminology of PhD in History.

Tatyana Aristova wrote that Yezidi religious holidays were harmful to health and under this pretext they needed to abandon them:

> Traditional religious holidays, such as Fast days of Ezid Festival (Rojiyên Êzdî), Fast days of Khidir Nabi Festival (Rojiyên Xidir Nebî), or Festival of Khidir Nabi (Eyda Xidir Nebî) cause enormous harm to public health. Kurdish families fast for three to thirty days. (…) Young Kurdish women and even children often take part in observing the fast.[39]

She suggested the local intelligentsia conduct explanatory work with the community, as administrative fines could push people away from the ideology of communism. In general, she believed that religious holidays were celebrated out of habit, and not because of religious beliefs.[40]

Thus, the process of establishing a socialist identity evolved from a mere bureaucratic formality into a method of shaping mass consciousness.[41] Education, language policy, the formation of national schools, and gender equality were not simply manifestations of cultural diversity, but instruments for integrating minorities into the Soviet ideological space. The 12th Bolshevik Congress demonstrated that *korenizatsiya* was aimed to make Soviet power acceptable and understandable to the minorities, encouraging them to perceive the Soviet power as their own achievement.[42]

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Yezidis were largely illiterate and lacked a written literary tradition. Therefore, the creation of schools and the development of an alphabet were not acts of mercy, but rather a deliberate political strategy aimed at cultivating a loyal citizenry. The authorities had to first teach people literacy before proceeding to the ideologically restructuring their consciousness. Thus, they established an alphabet and special institute to train teachers for Kurdish schools and opened educational institutions in rural areas. Moreover, when examining works describing the difficulties women faced before the establishment of Soviet power, it's not always obvious that such texts were part of a broader propaganda framework. Without understanding how the Soviet regime interpreted and utilized the concept of gender equality, these texts can be perceived merely as narratives of social progress, rather than as ideological constructs. The true aim of these apparently well-intentioned measures was to instil the communist ideology into the consciousness of the masses, to shape a mindset oriented toward loyalty to the regime, and practically to eliminate the possibility of critical thought.

[39] National Archives of Armenia. Fond 1407, *On the Issue of Religious Vestiges in Kurdish Families* [Unpublished archival material]. Inventory and case are not identified.

[40] Cf. *ibid*.

[41] Cf. Hirsch 2005: 145.

[42] Cf. Martin 2001: 74.

Religious and Tribal Leaders as Targets of Soviet Propaganda

The Yezidis migrated to the South Caucasus in tribal groups, each led by an agha or beg. They held authority among the common people and had power over them. Furthermore, as in classic feudalism, begs or aghas were involved in decision-making processes. In addition to their role as rulers, they also acted as guardians of customary law, thus combining the powers of governance and judicial authority. This was certainly true in the case of such disputes as the kidnapping of girls, the division of property, etc.[43] Notably, the more peasants begs had, the stronger their economic power and military strength was.

Besides protecting their tribe, begs or aghas collected income from each family of the tribe and held control over their property.[44] Arab Shamilov describes the beg's possessions in detail. Since the beg had summer and winter pastures, a nomad paid him the so-called "per head of cattle" ("*çop başî*").[45] Accordingly, the members of the tribe paid tribute to the beg for using the pastures.

Naturally, such power could not coexist in Soviet society, where the Bolsheviks eliminated social groups of wealthy classes. Soon, they elevated many begs and aghas into kulaks[46] as part of the collectivization policy and repressed them. The most famous examples are the arrests of Usub Beg and Jangir Agha, most honoured authorities among the Yezidis of Sarhad.

Usub Beg was the leader of the Haseni tribe. According to archival materials, he received education in Echmiadzin in 1883 at the age of 16. Usub Beg and his tribe (according to various estimates, his tribe numbered 20,000 people) left the Surmalu Uyezd[47] in 1918, when the Russians retreated from the conquered territories, and Turkish troops invaded. They settled in the village of Shamiram, which was located in the territory of modern Armenia.

Alongside his authority, Usub Beg supported the Dashnaktsutyun party (Armenian Revolutionary Federation) that came to power in Armenia in 1918. Later, Usub Beg represented the Yezidis in the Armenian parliament (Khorhurd). Two years later, the Dashnaktsutyun party actively fought against the Bolsheviks, however the latter succeed in the establishment of Soviet power in Armenia. Usub Beg then fled to Iran with dozens of the Dashnaktsutyun party members and returned to Armenia only in 1921. Enjoying great authority among the Yezidis and having connections with the Dashnaks, Usub

[43] Cf. Pirbari 2008: 37.

[44] Cf. *ibid*: 33.

[45] Cf. Shamilov 1932: 35.

[46] A wealthy peasant who was seen as a class enemy by the Bolsheviks.

[47] One of the uyezds (municipalities) within the Erivan Governorate of the Russian Empire.

Beg posed a threat to the new government. Thus, he was arrested in 1929 on charges of spreading alleged counterrevolutionary ideas.

Another leader was Jangir Agha, head of the Zukri tribe. Jangir Agha migrated from the Chibukhli village of Van vilayet of the Ottoman Empire, where he resided. He is considered a national hero among the Yezidis of Sarhad. Like Usub Beg, Jangir Agha supported the Dashnak government. In 1938, he was arrested on charges of counter-revolutionary activity.

Consequently, the Soviet authorities saw both Usub Beg and Jangir Agha as enemies of the regime as they held authoritative positions in the Yezidi community and had been associated in the past with the Dashnaktsutyun party. They were leaders of their tribes, which counted tens of thousands of people, and their influence allowed them to discourage the Yezidis from embracing Soviet power.

The second social institution of the Yezidis that needed to be fought was the clergy. The Yezidi formation is a theocratic community, which means that their life is closely connected to religion. D. Pirbari believes that "Yezidism is a national religion", that is, not just a religious and philosophical teaching, but also an integral part of ethnic identity.[48] Accordingly, a special place in the life of each Yezidi is occupied by clergymen – Sheikhs and Pirs. Every Yezidi has their Sheikh and Pir. The primary function of a Sheikh is to serve as a spiritual guide for his followers, who show him respect and, to a certain degree, obedience.[49] For many Yezidis, respecting a living Sheikh is equivalent to paying homage to the holy eponym of their family.[50] Hence, they perform religious rites such as weddings, first hair cutting (bisk), funerals, etc. and ensure their followers comply with the religious precepts. Followers often contributed the charity in name of the deceased (*xêra miriya*) to Sheiks and Pirs, which was perceived by Soviet authorities as negative practice.

In addition, one must mention the structure of the community's religious centre. The religious centre of the Yezidis is Lalish, currently located in the Yezidi region of Walat Sheikh, within the Kurdish-controlled Nineveh Plains of Iraq. The Yezidis are under the rule of a mir, a figure with both secular and religious functions. He is the head of the Supreme Spiritual Council of the Yezidis (head of the Yezidis of the whole world). The mir annually sends Qawwals to the Yezidi-populated areas to preach and spread the religion.[51] Interestingly, Qawwals visited even the newly formed Soviet Union. It was

[48] Cf. Pirbari and Shchedrovitsky 2016: 13.

[49] Cf. Kreyenbroek 1995: 130.

[50] Cf. *ibid*.

[51] Cf. Nicolaus 2024: 84.

possible until their visits were considered hostile by the Soviet authorities in the 1920s. In the mid-20th century, the Kurdish (Kurmanji) edition of Yerevan Radio received a letter from Lalish inquiring about a Qawwal who had gone to Armenia before the Bolshevik Revolution and never returned. As he was a cleric, the journalists did not reply.[52] This indicates that the Yezidis sustained their connection with the Supreme Spiritual Council despite geographical separation and only state-level restrictions limited their communication.

To conclude, lacking their own nation-state, the Yezidis were bound by laws and norms dictated by their religious and tribal leaders. Religious holidays and traditions had always played an essential role in the community life and held a high esteem. Thus, to advance their economic, educational, and cultural agenda, the Soviet authorities sought to weaken the authority of religious and tribal leaders. The article further analyses the educational and cultural programs that enabled the Yezidis to gain access to education and foster the development of their language and literature as well as the use of art as a means of propaganda directed against the Yezidi clergy and tribal leaders.

Propaganda in Literature, Film, Theatre, and the Newspaper Ria Taza

At the 12th Congress, the Bolsheviks agreed on the implying literature, theatre, and cinema as instruments of their propaganda. In this regard, one should recall Lenin's well-known statement:

> While our people are illiterate, the most important forms of art for us are cinema and circus.[53]

According to them, the heroic sided of the communist struggle against ideology enemies must have been emphasized.[54] Moreover, art was to play a major role in the fight against religion.

In 1926, the famous Armenian director Hamo Beknazarov made the film *Zare*. The story was based on the eponymous story written by Lazo. The movie portrays an unbreakable love between Yezidi young people – Zare and Saido, and injustice that was encouraged by the previous regime. The plot centres on a village near Mount Alagyaz in the early 20th century. The shepherd Saido is in love with Zare and dreams of marrying her. Temur-beg, who is married and has recently had a child, wants to have Zare as his second wife. At this time, the Tsarist government intends to have a volunteer troop

[52] Cf. Sardar 2013.

[53] Stolyarova 2017.

[54] Institute of Marxism–Leninism under the Central Committee of the CPSU 1984: 111.

of Kurds to send to war. Temur-beg and the Sheikh bribe the government representatives to decide who to send to war. Thus, the poor are sent, and the rich are not. Later, they take bribes from some of the villagers to withdraw their names from the volunteer list. Temur-beg deliberately includes Saido in the list. At the time, when the men went to war, the beg kidnaps Zare. When Zare's family turns to the sheikh to help them get the girl back, he asks for a bribe. However, it does not help, as the beg does not agree to return Zare. On the contrary, he wants to send the bride price to her father. At the wedding, Zare rejects Temur-beg and slaps him. In a rage, he announces to everyone that the girl is not "innocent". So, the guests begin to spit on her face. Fortunately, Saido, who earlier escaped from the military troop, runs up and saves Zare.



One of the first posters for Zare. Source: Zagros Film Festival

As Armenian film scholar Karen Kalantar writes, the movie *Zare* depicts the real East – exploiters and exploited.

> The central aspect of Zare lies in its painfully unadorned depiction of the people's life, presented for the first time in the history of global cinema. [55]

Thus, Beknazarov made the Tsarist regime, the Yezidi clergy and nobility the villains. The film aimed to illustrate the exploitation of power by the corrupt beg and Sheikh and the resulting injustice toward ordinary people. Interestingly, Beknazarov mentioned in his memoirs that Stalin, after watching "Zare", said that only the Armenians should have produced films about the lives of Eastern people.[56]

The second film dedicated to the life of the Yezidis is the film *Kurds-Yezidis* directed by Amasi Martirosyan. It was released in 1932. The movie portrays the hardships faced by ordinary Yezidis, who are deceived by Yezidi nobility and clergy. It also highlights the difficult life of Yezidi women, who are simultaneously engaged in household chores,

[55] Kalantar 1973: 48.

[56] Cf. Bakhchinyan 2015: 108.

childcare, and cattle breeding. Lack of access to education and healthcare made Yezidis believe in various superstitions told by the Sheikh, but everything changes with the establishment of Soviet power in the country. A doctor and a female teacher visit the village and improve life in the village with their knowledge. The main villain, Sheikh, does not like it and forbids Yezidis from studying and having medical evaluations. In the end, the peasants limit the Sheikh's authority by establishing a kolkhoz, where men and women worked on equal conditions. In addition to the main antagonist, the Sheikh, the film prominently highlights the issue of gender inequality, portraying its resolution as a consequence of the socialist revolution.



Kurdish theatre in the 1940s. Source: Hajie Jndi's private archive.

Thus, it is evident that early films about the Yezidis vividly reflected the Soviet authorities' rejection of religious and tribal leaders. They portrayed them as evil, hypocritical antagonists who obstructed social progress.

The same themes formed the main repertoire of a traveling Kurdish theatre which was organized in the Aparan region in the 1930s. The performers were Yezidis/Kurds from Yerevan, Tbilisi, and other cities. The plays "Sunrise" and "Daughter of Mirak"

showed life on kolkhoz and the struggle of the Yezidis against the begs and Sheikhs during the Civil War.[57]

The first book that was published in Kurmanji (with a Latin base) was the book by Arab Shamilov and a linguist Isaac Marogulov Self-study Guide to Kurmanji for Adults. The book reflected themes and examples related to communism. For example, the section on important days highlighted days such as the dates of the February and October Revolutions, the day of Lenin's death, World Workers' Day, and the day of the unification of the USSR.

Shamilov also worked as a translator. The books "The Life of Lenin", "The History of the October Revolution", etc. were issued in Kurmanji.

In the 1930s, Shamilov published his autobiographical book, The Kurdish Shepherd. He described his family's hard life, the loss of loved ones, his early education and work in a Cossack regiment during the First World War, and the injustice that prompted him to support the Bolsheviks:

> The whole life of a Kurdish shepherd boy was filled with labour and the painful concern of how to appease hunger. However, in the spring of 1917, a turning point occurred in me: a piece of bread stopped being the main and only purpose of my existence (…). I joined the Party.[58]

In Shamilov's first play, "Koçekê Perevîn" ("False Prophet"), which was published in 1931, the author spoke out against religious customs. In Kurds of *Alagyaz* he portrayed the begs, aghas, and Yezidi clergy as the main antagonists, resisting the establishment of Soviet authority in the villages. The young communist Misto, a former shepherd, fought against the power of tribal leaders, in particular, Usub Beg and Jangir Agha. He claimed:

> Our first enemy are the begs, agalars, Sheikhs, and mullahs, and the second one is nomadic migration (…) We must destroy our old traditions and not listen to the Sheikhs, who always say: "Obey your elders, the begs." (…) If anyone says anything against a Sheikh, Pir or mullah, the beg will flog him with rods.[59]

As a result, the heroes established a kolkhoz and joined the Komsomol[60]. In addition, the story addressed the issues of bride price, child marriage, and polygamy. Most importantly, it illustrated a transition of the Yezidis from a semi-nomadic to a sedentary lifestyle. In fact, this issue was deemed essential for the Soviet authorities, as the

[57] National Archives of Armenia. Fond 1407, *The Opening of the State Kurdish Touring Theatre* [Unpublished archival material]. Inventory and case are not identified.

[58] Shamilov 1931.

[59] *Idem* 1935.

[60] Officially, "All-Union Leninist Young Communist League" – a Soviet political youth organization.

successful functioning of kolkhoz presupposed the settlement of nomadic communities. According to Hajie Jndi, the transition from nomadic life to the kolkhoz represented a profound and unprecedented shift, almost unimaginable at that time.[61]

It is worthwhile to analyse Shamilov's article "On the Issue of Feudalism Among the Kurds" (1936). He challenged theses of "bourgeois" historians who insisted that the Kurds were a democratic community, where everyone, regardless of their standard of living, had equal rights.[62] Shamilov noted that feudalism undermined the economic basis of clan society and reshaped religion and traditions ("remnants of the past") to serve the interests of class domination. He also highlighted that feudal lords enriched themselves by extracting "legal" incomes taken from peasants.[63] For example, during holidays or a misfortune the peasants should have brought some gifts.[64]



Self-study Guide to Kurmanji for Adults.

In 1931, writers Hajie Jndi and Amine Avdal translated Lazo's book *About Jasim*.[65] It portrayed the journey of a young man, the son of a shepherd, who took part in the revolution. Later, he became a fighter for the Soviets. In addition, Hajie Jndi translated the work of the Armenian writer Hrachya Kochar *Khadje*. The story depicted Yezidi nomads who, under the influence of Armenian educated young people, adopted a sedentary lifestyle. A young girl, Khadje, despite all difficulties, succeeded in obtaining an education.

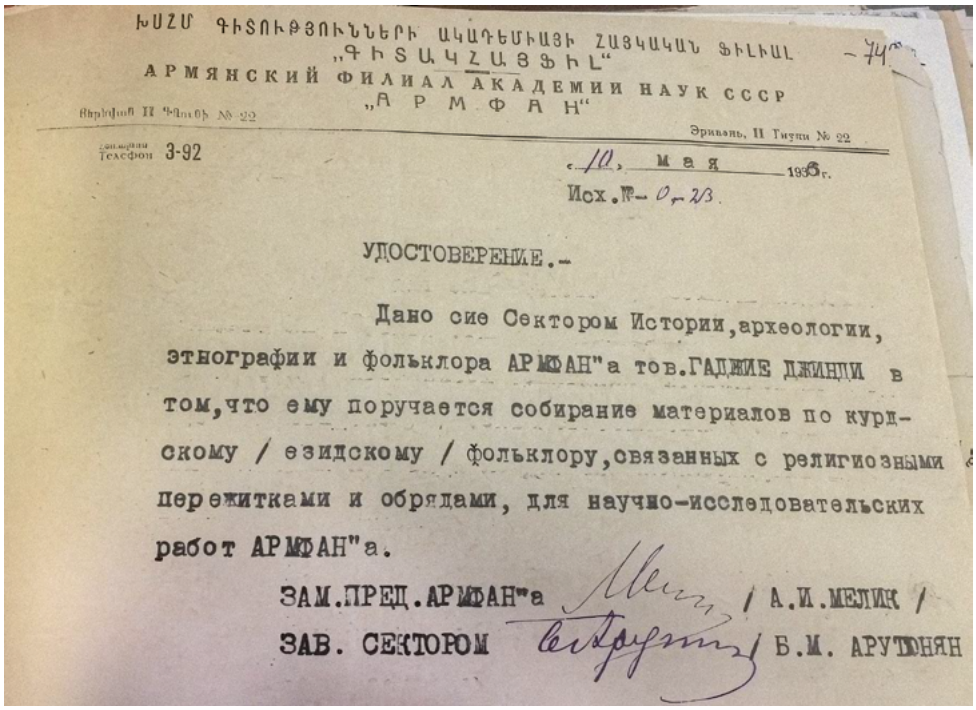
[61] Cf. Jndi 1954: 7.

[62] Cf. Shamilov 1936: 12.

[63] Cf. *ibid*: 44.

[64] Cf. *ibid*.

[65] National Archives of Armenia. Fond 1407, *On the 70th Anniversary of the Birth of Professor H. J. Djawari* [Unpublished archival material]. Inventory and case are not identified.



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„А Р М Ф А Н“
Երևան, II Տիպ. № 22
Телефон 3-92
Эривань, II Типо № 22
«10» мая 1936 г.
Исх. № 0-23

УДОСТОВЕРЕНИЕ.-

Дано сие Сектором Истории, археологии, этнографии и фольклора АРМФАН"а тов. ГАДЖИЕ ДЖИНДИ в том, что ему поручается собирание материалов по курдскому / езидскому / фольклору, связанных с религиозными пережитками и обрядами, для научно-исследовательских работ АРМФАН"а.

ЗАМ. ПРЕД. АРМФАН"а / А.И. МЕЛИК /
ЗАВ. СЕКТОРОМ / Б.М. АРУТЮНЯН

A document stating that the Hajie Jndi was to collect materials on Kurdish/Yezidi folklore related to remnants of past religious life and rituals. 1936 Source: Hajie Jndi's private archive

Notably, in folk singing, there were works that glorified Soviet leaders and condemned religious and tribal authorities.

Hezar hêştsed heftê salê Şêrîn Lenîn	In eighteen seventy, dear Lenin was born.
Hatiye dinê. Dinê xemilî, gul ketine,	He brightened our life, blossoms bestrewed.
Miletê Kurd da xwendinê.	He brought education to the Kurdish people.
Dewra berê belengazbûn	In the past, we lived in poverty,
Lenîn rabû, em xelasbûn,	Lenin rose up and freed us.
Navê Lenîn şêrîn şabû	The name of Lenin became sweet at night,
Ilmê Marks xwendin dabû.[66]	He brought Marxism to us to study,
	Opened the path of education.

[66] Sîmo c. 1960s.

Another example is a song *Наве Ленин* published in 1973[67], in *Ria Taza* with lyrics by Bemale Keko and musical notes by Jamila Jalil:

Ленин жь Р'усетере р'абу,
Щьмаэ'те ма һэвр'а ша бу,
Щьмаэ'те ма һэвр'а ша бу,
Эм жь дэсте зөлмк'ара хъласбун.
Эм жь дэсте зөлмк'ара хъласбун.

Lenin rose in Russia.
Our people were filled with joy.
We were liberated from the hands of the oppressors.

Наве Ленин навэки мэзьнэ,
Азаий да дьниайе, мер у жьнэ,
Азаий да дьниайе, мер у жьнэ,
Wэки дьнйа сал бъ сал бъхэмьлэ
Wэки дьнйа сал бъ сал бъхэмьлэ

The name of Lenin is a distinguished one.
He granted liberty to the world, to both men and women,
Making the world more prosperous year by year.

Эм жь ве дэwре зэ'ф р'азинэ,
Щьмаэ'те мэ т'эмам хwэньдьнэ,
Щьмаэ'те мэ т'эмам хwэньдьнэ.
Һэвр'а һэрт'ъм к'ефф у шанэ.
Һэвр'а һэрт'ъм к'ефф у шанэ.[68]

We are deeply grateful for this achievement.
Our community is now well educated,
And its members live together in Lasting happiness and dignity.

As an additional example is a poem that was published by Hajie Jndi in Armenian:

Չեմ մոռանա, չեմ մոռանա,
Լենինի գործը չեմ մոռանա,
Թշնամիներից չեմ վախենա,
Լենինի ուղուց չեմ հեռանա:
Մենք աշխատում էինք՝ հարուստն էր ուտում,
Մենք վատում էինք ցավից, տանջանքից,
Մեր Սովետներին շնորհակալություն,
Որ մեզ ազատեց աղա ու բեկից.[69]

I won't forget, I won't forget,
Lenin's life's work I won't forget,
I won't be afraid of enemies,
I will stay true to Lenin's path.
We toiled while the wealthy dined,
We were buried with pain and sorrow.
We thank our Soviets,
Who freed us from begs and aghas.

[67] It should be noted, while the song was officially recorded in 1973, it had existed in oral folklore long before that.
[68] Keko and Jalil 1973: 3.
[69] Jndi 1954: 17.

Interestingly, orientalist Oleg Vilchevsky argued that the themes of Yezidi oral folklore changed during the early Soviet years.[70] According to him, during the years of collectivization, the Yezidis no longer sang about the heroic deeds of begs and aghas and the benefits of religion. According to him:

> They [the Yezidis] forgot their hungry past and turned to the future with hope. (…) This is primarily attributable to the correct, proven Leninist-Stalinist policies of our party (…).[71]

He argued that this was true Soviet folklore:

Привольное нынче житье для нас.	Life is easy for us now.
Шейхи и беки, ага и муллы,	Sheikhs and begs, aghas and mullahs,
Больше их нет среди нас.	They are no longer among us.
Сталин как чудо явился средь нас, Горести наши развеял, принес	Stalin appeared among us like a miracle,
Новую жизнь для нас.	Eased our suffering, brought us a new life.
Кулаков, дармоедов выгнал от нас; Подать, поборы, налоги никто	He drove out the kulaks and parasites;
Больше не требует с нас.	No one demands taxes, levies, or dues from us anymore.
К старым путям повернуть если нас	If anyone attempts to return us to the old ways,
Вздумает кто, не видать	They will gain nothing from us.
Пользы ему от нас.	Only uprisings and wars will our enemies see for now,
Только восстанья и войны у нас	At least one of us remains.
Увидят враги пока,	We will never allow Stalin's achievements to Slip from our hands.
Один хоть остался из нас.	We will never give up our new life.
Сталина дело из рук никогда	Stalin is our friend, he is our kin.
Не выпустим. Новую нашу жизнь	As long as the peasant and worker live in this world,
Не отдадим никогда.	He will never be forgotten.
Сталин наш друг, он родной нам.	
Пока Крестьянин с рабочим на свете живут,	
Не забудут его никогда.[72]	

[70] Cf. Vilchevskii 1936: 82.
[71] *ibid.*
[72] *Ibid:* 84.

The Yezidi poet Ahmed Mirazi also dedicated some of his poems to Stalin:

Я хожу по Москве,	I walk through Moscow,
Я смотрю на гранитные стены Кремля.	I gaze at the granite walls of the Kremlin.
Вижу Сталина,	I see Stalin,
Он говорит,	He speaks,
И ответом ему	And in response to him,
Поднимается наша земля,	Our land rises,
Поднимаются соки земли	The sap of the earth rises,
От корней до листвы,	From roots to foliage,
И листвою шумят тополя.	And the poplars rustle with their leaves.
Ты – самый душистый и яркий цветок базилик!	You are the most fragrant and vivid flower, basil!
Ты – Энгельса, Маркса и Ленина лучший, большой ученик!	You are the best, outstanding student of Engels, Marx, and Lenin!
Встречает тебя, провожает тебя народа ликующий крик!	The people's cheer of joy greets you and sees you off!
Народ понимает всем сердцем твой мудрый и ясный язык!	The people understand with all their hearts your wise and plain language!
Ты в самые корни законов вселенной проник![73]	You have penetrated to the very roots of the laws of the universe!

The active publications of books marked the moment to turn to journalism. The Bolsheviks paid more attention to the printing media. According to them, the press had not only economic, but also cultural significance.[74] Thus, it was essential to publish newspapers in minority languages. Consequently, in 1930, the Kurmanji newspaper *Ria Taza* was founded. The editorial board included Jardoe Genjo, Hajie Jndi, Amine Avdal, Jasme Jalil, Atare Sharo, and others. According to journalist and the last editor-in-chief of the newspaper, Amarike Sardar, *Ria Taza* functioned as an organ of the Communist Party and, therefore, disseminated its propaganda.[75] Moreover, he claims that censorship was very strict. Under state control, articles were composed discussing the issues of government decrees, the benefits of kolkhoz, and class and religious struggle. It also covered articles highlighting the successes of workers, the activities of schools, and the Transcaucasian Kurdish Institute, as well as the works of writers.[76]

In the June 1937 issue of the newspaper, journalists emphasized the role of Stalin in the development of Yezidi culture. There was also an article reporting the number of

[73] Горький 1938: 148.

[74] Cf. *ibid*: 75.

[75] Cf. Polat 2003.

[76] Cf. Chatoev 1965: 143–144.

people who joined the Komsomol. For instance, in 1934, there were 4 members of the Komsomol, and by 1937 the number was increased to 24.[77]



RIA TƏZƏ

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KRIZISA ÇƏSUSTJA WƏLATE BUR ŻUAZIE DƏRƏKƏ

Bb TЬVDARƏKJA BЬLЬND HAZЬR BЬN BONA BƏRƏVKЬRNA HASЬLATE

Ria Taza* for June 1937. Source: Hajie Jndi's private archive

In 1938, the newspaper was closed due to repression, and the editorial board was accused of anti-communist activity. The newspaper was relaunched in 1955, however, the Latin alphabet of Kurmanji was changed to the Cyrillic one. Below are excerpts from the new edition of the newspaper, as earlier issues are difficult to obtain.[78] How-

[77] Cf. Shamo 1937: 4.

[78] Selected examples are presented to convey the newspaper's content to the reader.

ever, the contents of the new edition were not significantly different from those of the old one (apart from the alphabets). The editors continued to describe the Party work, kolkhoz news, as well as works of the intelligentsia.

In the article "Kurmanji theatre group", the anonymous author discussed the exploitation of the Yezidis by begs and aghas.[79] He expressed gratitude to the October Revolution, which had turned nomadism into a thing of the past and led to the cultural development of the community. An article from March 1973 remarked on the USSR's role in helping the Yezidis to be liberated from oppression, claiming this was the reason that they were voting for the communists.[80] The article "The Dawn of Socialist Culture" discussed the USSR support for the small nations' cultures.[81] Moreover, they believed that socialist culture was an international culture.

Quite a few articles called for atheism, outlined that religion was an echo of the past. The kolkhoz section is noteworthy for its emphasis on women who highlighted their equal role with men in kolkhoz work. Moreover, women who were candidates for deputy of local government were also always mentioned. It is also worth noting the article on World Women's Day that points out the help of the USSR in the emancipation of women.[82]

Taken together, the main thrust of Soviet propaganda in art and media was the exaltation of Soviet authority, demonstrating the benefits of its implementation, and discrediting religious and tribal leaders. Constant comparisons of Yezidi life before and after the establishment of Soviet rule were even reflected in oral folklore. As noted above, the successes of the economic and cultural revolution (the formation of kolkhoz, the rejection of traditions and religious practices, etc.) were indeed actively covered and prioritized in the propaganda manual directed toward the Yezidis.

Conclusions

After the failure of the Russification policy, the Bolsheviks chose not to supress national identities of minorities, but rather reshape them in accordance with socialist ideals. Sharing a common socialist culture, Soviet peoples increasingly demonstrated loyalty to the government. Propaganda aimed at constantly praising the communist society proved effective; the policies of dekulakization, the establishment of kolkhoz,

[79] *Cf. Ria Taza* 1937.

[80] Cf. Mamedov, Ä. and H'ame 1958: 19.

[81] *Cf. Ria Taza* 1974: 3.

[82] Cf. Armenpress 1974: 2.

and then industrialization were expected to be adopted with the support of at least part of the population.

It cannot be denied that within the policy of *korenizatsiya* the Yezidis were given equal rights along with the dominant nations. Moreover, they formed an intelligentsia to study their language and culture. In turn, they had to express gratitude to the October Revolution, praising Soviet power and its achievements. On the other hand, in addition to providing access to education and cultural advancement, the Soviet regime distanced part of the community from their own people and traditional environment. The Yezidis are an ethno-confessional community, hence a religion plays a major role in the Yezidi identity. This did not fit into the Soviet atheistic paradigm, so propaganda against the clergy was needed. Thus, by limiting religious and tribal leaders' power, the Bolsheviks brought the Yezidis closer to the construction of communism. Powerful instruments of ideological influence, including schools, cinema, theatres, books, and newspapers, were employed to promote the Soviet economic and cultural policies and the restriction of the power of religious and tribal authority. Under the pretext of protecting women's rights, Soviet propaganda primarily pursued the goal of ideological mobilization; women's emancipation was viewed not as a valuable social goal in its own right, but as a means of incorporating traditional community into the Soviet political and cultural "project". Moreover, the actual educational opportunities were closely intertwined with propaganda rhetoric about equality and the enlightenment of national minorities, highlighting the dual character of Soviet policy. As a result, traditions not aligned with socialist norms were presented as remnants of the past.

Korenizatsiya, in essence, became a paradox of Soviet national policy: by providing a previously semi-nomadic Yezidi community without a written tradition, a language, a school, and a newspaper, it deprived them of the opportunity to operate beyond the prescribed ideological framework.

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იზაბელ ბროიანი

საბჭოთა პროპაგანდა და ეზიდების ინტეგრაცია კომუნისტურ საზოგადოებაში კორენიზაციის პოლიტიკის დროს (1923–1934)

აბსტრაქტი:

ეზიდები სამხრეთ კავკასიაში ოსმალეთის იმპერიიდან მიგრაციის შედეგად აღმოჩნდნენ. ისინი ტრადიციული ნახევრად მომთაბარე ცხოვრებით ცხოვრობდნენ და ზეპირი გადმოცემით ინარჩუნებდნენ თავიანთ კულტურას, რადგან არ ჰქონდათ ფორმალური წერილობითიტრადიციაანგანათლება.საბჭოთაკავშირისდაარსებისშემდეგ,ბოლშევიკებმა განიზრახეს ეროვნული საკითხის გადაჭრა. მეფის რუსეთის რუსიფიკაციის პოლიტიკისგან განსხვავებით, მათ ეროვნულ უმცირესობებს უპრეცედენტო უფლებები მიანიჭეს. თუმცა, ამ უფლებებს სჭირდებოდა მათი ნდობის მოპოვება და კომუნისტური საზოგადოების მშენებლობის ნებაყოფლობით პროექტში მათი ინტეგრაცია. პროპაგანდის საშუალებების განვითარებით, საბჭოთა ხელისუფლებამ შექმნა საფუძველი მარქსისტულ-ლენინური იდეოლოგიის გასავრცელებლად. ამ პროცესს კორენიზაცია ერქვა. ამ კვლევის მიზანია გამოიკვლიოს, თუ როგორ გამოიყენებოდა ბოლშევიკური პროპაგანდა კორენიზაციის პოლიტიკის (1923–1934) პერიოდში მცირე ეზიდური თემის ტრადიციული ცხოვრების წესის შესაცვლელად, რათა ისინი კომუნისტურ საზოგადოებაში ინტეგრირებულიყვნენ. სამაგიდო კვლევის, სპეციალური ლიტერატურისა და საარქივო დოკუმენტების ანალიზის საფუძველზე, კვლევა აჩვენებს, რომ საბჭოთა ხელისუფლება ეზიდ საზოგადოებას აძლევდა შესაძლებლობას, შეესწავლათ საკუთარი ენა და კულტურა, გამოეცათ ლიტერატურა და ჟურნალისტური ნაშრომები, რომელთა მიზანი იყო კომუნისტური ღირებულებების დანერგვა და იდეოლოგიის გავრცელება. გარდა ამისა, საბჭოთა ხელისუფლება თავის პროპაგანდას ეზიდების საზოგადოების რელიგიური და ტომის ლიდერების წინააღმდეგ მიმართავდა და იყენებდა ხელოვნების მრავალფეროვან ფორმებს მათი ავტორიტეტის შესასუსტებლად და ეზიდების საბჭოთა სისტემაში ინტეგრაციის მხარდასაჭერად. შედეგად, ეზიდური იდენტობის ზოგიერთი ასპექტი, მათ შორის რელიგია და ტრადიციები, სტიგმატიზებული გახდა და წარმოდგენილი იქნა, როგორც წარსულის ნარჩენები.

საკვანძო სიტყვები:

ეზიდები;, იეზიდები, სსრკ, ანტი-რელიგიური პოლიტიკა, პროპაგანდა, კორენიზაცია, ინტელიგენცია.

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Isabel Broian

Propagandaya Sovyetî û Yekbûn (Entegrasyon) a Êzdiyan di civaka komûnîstda dema Polîtîka Korenîzasiyada (1923–1934)

Kurte:

Êzdî piştî koçbûna wan ji Împeratorya Osmanî hatîne Başûrê Kavkasiya. Wan jiyaneke kilasîkî ya nîv-koçerî jiyan û çand û kûltûra xwe bi riya devkî parastîye, bêyî ku çand û kûltûra nivîskî yan perwerda resmî hebin. Piştî teşkîlbûna Yekîtiya Sovyetê, bolşevîkan armanc kir, ku pir-

sa netewî çareser bikin. Bi berovajî polîtîka rusîfîkasyonê ya Rûsya Qeyserî, wan mafên nû û cara yekem da kêmayên netewîye biçûk. Lê her wisa ev maf lazimbû ku baweriya wan bi xwe bistînn û wan di projeya bi dilxwazî avakirina civakeke komûnîst da bin. Bi pêşxistina amûrên propagandê, desthilatdarên Sovyêtî bingehek avakirin ji bo belavkirina îdeolojiya Marksîzm–Lenînîzmê. Ev qonax û pêvajoya hate nasandin bi navê korenîzasiya (xwecîkirin/ indigenization). Ji ber hindê ev lêkolîn hewl dide ku lêkolîn bike ka propaganda bolşevîkî çawa hatye bikarînan ji bo guherandina jiyana klasîkî ya civaka biçûk ya êzdiya di dema polîtîka korenîzasiyada ya salên (1923–1934), da ku ew di civakeke komûnîstda bêne intigrasiyon kirin. Bi riya vekolîna desk research û analîza him jêderên taybetî û him jî belgeyên arşîvî, vekolîn nîşandike ku desthilatdarên Sovyêtî mecal dan civaka êzdiyan ku ziman û çanda xwe bixûnin û berhemên edebî û rojnamegerî çap bikin, yên ku armanca wan çandina nirxên komûnîst û belavkirina îdeolojiyê bû. Wekî dî jî, desthilatdarên Sovyetî hewl dan propagandaya xwe li ser serokên dînî û eşîretên civaka êzdî rêxistin û bi bikaranîna cureyên cuda yên hunerê ku desthilata wan sist bikin û piştgirî bidin yekgirtina êzdiyan di sistema Sovyêtîda. Di encamda, hindek aliyên nasnameya êzdiyan, di nav wan de dîn û kûltûr, hatin stigmatîzekirin û wekî têkiliyên kevn yên derbasbûyî hatin nîşandan.

Peyvên sereke:

Êzdî; Yekîtiya Sovyetê (USSR); polîtîka dij-olî; propagandayê; korenîzasiya; entelîgênsiya.