



## KURDOEV, QENĀTĒ

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**KURDOEV, QENĀTĒ** (b. Susiz, near Qaziman in the province of Kars, 1909; d. St. Petersburg, 1985), Kurdish philologist and university professor. Susiz was under Russian domination when Kurdoev (or Kurdo) was born. After the Armenian massacres, Kurdoev's family found themselves, in turn, victims of Ottoman brutality. In 1918, they fled the region along with thousands of other Kurds, taking refuge in Korblax (later Cinkani) in the district of Aparan in Armenia, which was populated by Kurds at the time. Faced with the advance of the invading Turks, the family moved once again and finally settled in Tbilisi. In 1921, Kurdoev met the Armenian couple Hagop ("Lazo") and Olga Gazarian, teachers who founded the first Kurdish school in Tbilisi, and who played an important role in the intellectual development of dozens of young Kurds. We owe to Lazo a version of the Armenian alphabet used to write the Kurdish language.

In 1928, 'Erebē Shemo, who became the first Kurdish novelist, appealed to the Central Committee of the Armenian Communist Party for scholarships to enable Lazo's most promising students to pursue their higher education in Leningrad. Kurdoev was a member of the first group to obtain these scholarships. He studied under A. A. Freïman (q.v.) and I. A. Orbeli, and also enrolled in courses in Baluchi and the Pamir languages under I. I. Zarubin and N. Y. Marr.

In 1934 he was appointed to the Faculty of Philology and to the Workers' Institute and, while teaching, wrote his thesis on "The Construction of Compound Verbs in Kurdish." At the end of World War II, during which he



was wounded, he was appointed to the Faculty of Oriental Studies in Leningrad where he taught Kurdish in the Department of Iranian Studies. In 1961 he became director of the Kurdkij Kabinet, which I. A. Orbeli had established in 1959 at the Institute of Asian Peoples of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences in Leningrad.

Qenatē Kurdoev developed Kurdish studies in the fields of language, literature, folklore, history, sociology, and anthropology. For students and scholars, the Kurdkij Kabinet in Leningrad rapidly became an indispensable venue for study and research. The future Soviet scholars of Kurdish studies were educated there, in addition to dozens of young Kurdish scholarship students from Iraq and Syria who went on to become university professors in Baghdad and Iraqi Kurdistan. Up until his death in 1985, they found in Kurdoev not only a teacher, but also a thoughtful and kindly friend.

Qenatē Kurdoev worked tirelessly and left a substantial body of writings in a number of fields of Kurdish studies, such as philology, literature, folklore, anthropology, sociology, history, and even politics. Some of his Russian works have been translated into Kurdish and published in Sweden and in Iraqi Kurdistan.

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(Joyce Blau)

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