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**LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF AZERBAIJANI PEOPLE
IN RESEARCH WORKS BY THE IRANIAN HISTORIAN AHMAD KASRAVI**

In an era of rapid globalization where the world has moved into an international mass information space, there are still many researchers in Iran who solely rely on the unscientific and unreasoned hypotheses of Ahmad Kasravi postulated 100 years ago. This propensity derives from the fact that the Persian language retains its indisputable supremacy status in Iran to this day. Despite the fact that language rights have been enshrined in the constitution of Iran, the Azerbaijani Turkish is not used as a medium of instruction in a single educational institution, nor is the language taught as a separate subject as a part of accepted curricula across the country. At a time when Azerbaijani Turkish, officially named as Azerbaijani language in the Republic of Azerbaijan is growing and thriving as a state language and used by millions of speakers around the world, Azerbaijani Turks living in Iran are completely denied the opportunity to practice their basic right of receiving an education in their own native language. By exploring distortions in Ahmad Kasravi's writings, this article substantively criticizes unfounded claims and falsification trends deeply rooted in Iranian historiography and linguistics.

Key words: Azerbaijani Turkish, Iranian Historiography, Kasravi, native language, national identity, ethnicity, culture.

Historic territory of Azerbaijan was divided into two parts under the peace treaties of Gulistan and Turkmenchay concluding the Russian-Iranian wars of 1805-1813 and 1826-1828 respectively. As a result of these treaties, the territories remaining in the north of river of Aras were given to administration of separate governorships in Russia. Despite colonialist policies of Tsarist Russia and its consistent attempts to alienate Azerbaijani people from Ottoman Turks and Turks residing in Iran by various repressive measures such as renaming the Turkish language as Tatar language and referring to Azerbaijani Turks as Tatars, the Azerbaijani people were able to preserve their language (Azerbaijani Turkish) and create a rich scientific, literary and artistic literature throughout this time.

In 1918-1920, the formation of the independent People Republic of Azerbaijan in the northern part of Azerbaijan annexed to Russia and declaration of Turkish (Azerbaijani Turkish) as the official language of the state impacted the national sentiments and resurrection movement in Iran to a great extent. Azerbaijani National Government (April-September 1920) which was formed as a result of Tabriz revolts against kingdom regime in Iran in 1920 was led by a reputable Azerbaijani thinker, who was raised in a religious family and was therefore

referred to as Sheykh Mahammad Khiyabani. Turkish was an officially declared state language of this short-lived government and was the main medium of communication in correspondence and daily interactions [1:96-97].

During this time, Gajars' powerbase was gradually debilitated both because of persistent internal frictions and conflict of interests of international players in the region. Consequently, in 1925, Rza Khan came to power with a feigned claim on a fake family lineage of *Pahlavi* and commenced a policy of systematized persecution against Azerbaijani Turks and Turkish language. Under the slogan of unifying Iran as one nation speaking a unified language and under the pretext of reviving the grandiosity of Iran and restoring great traditions of Sasanids' era, Rza Shah started oppressing Turkish, the second most widely spoken language in the country. Banning usage of Turkish, as well as Kurdish, Arabic and other minority languages became an accepted policy in Iran during the reign of Rza Shah. In reality, Rza who was a military serviceman by profession had no family ties to Pahlavis as he was a son of an impoverished Turkish man, Dadash bey, who was also a military man himself. Hence, his efforts were aimed at nothing else but preserving and strengthening his clout in power [2:539]. Rza had started his military service as an ordinary gunner in *kazak* brigades created by Iranian shah with the close assistance of Russians. He participated ferociously in quelling the revolts and crushing the uprisings against the Iranian Shah at the time. He later became a distinguished colonel for his military acumen and attracted the attention of the British. It was with the help and complicity of the British that Rza Khan was able to become a Grand Vizier, Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief of armed forces, and later the Iranian Shah in 1925 [3:157]. In coronation ceremony, an infuriated noblewoman from Gajars dynasty had shouted at Rza Khan calling him a throne robber. Unmoved, he had responded with unaffected calm that he had saved the Iranian throne from being treaded under the foot.

Although Rza Shah was not a sophisticated man in terms of his educational background, he understood the realities and callings of the 20th century fairly well. Therefore, on the one hand, he was trying to push ahead with the similar reforms carried out in neighboring Turkey by Mustafa Kamal Atatürk for the sake of enlightenment and cultural development of his country, but on the other hand he had issued strict orders to the Ministry of Education to extend the ban on use of Turkish (Azerbaijani Turkish) from classrooms even to corridor chats during break times at schools. At a time when Azerbaijani Turks were demanding increased rights to be able to practice their native language in Iran freely, instead of trying to address these legitimate concerns at least partially Rza Shah had ironically ordered the high-level state servants to carry out an assimilation policy of ensuring marriages between Azerbaijani men and Persian women so that their demand on "mother tongue" would be met through Persian mothers. The fact that there was no access to an education in any other language other than Persian in Iran was contributing towards growing illiteracy among millions of Azerbaijani Turks.

Rza Shah was intent on assimilating all languages, nations, cultures into the dominant Persian identity as he believed Iranian identity was derived from the high *Arian* race and all other identities were subcultures to serve to the formation of a unified Iranian nation and Persian was a single legitimate language in the country. This course of policy unfortunately gave rise to partial and biased views in Iranian historiography. Historians became blind ideologists whose main mission was to bolster Shah's claims on superiority of Iranian identity through concocted academic validations of his proclaimed theories. They tried to academically prove that people

of all other nationalities had migrated to these lands at later periods in history and their languages had descended from Persian. Although always met with stiff resistance by speakers of non-Persian languages who never ceased to demand their legitimate rights, this destructive trend in historiography of Iran continued throughout the reign of Shah's regime until 1979 when it was finally ousted.

Among the historians who served to endorse and corroborate high-handed Pahlavi language policies, undoubtedly the most renowned and impactful was Seyid Ahmad Kasravi Tabrizi (1890-1946) who was himself in fact of an Azerbaijani origin. His insightful writings on history, linguistics, philosophy, culture, politics, society, religion, law, economy and many other subjects became frequently referenced sources for Iranian researchers in generations. Although his views on Iranism, nationalism, religiosity and statehood were innovative and ground-breaking in many ways, they were not devoid of evident contradictions and inconsistencies. For instance, despite the fact that he was fiercely advocating the annihilation of Sunni-Shia sectarianism and formation of a unified Islamic religion to which he used to refer as "a pure religion", he was also considering it vitally indispensable to eliminate all linguistic, nationalistic and cultural distinctions to create a unified Iranian identity and achieve a dominance of Persian language.

One of the prominent and well-known articles of Ahmad Kasravi in this respect is on "Turkish Language in Iran". According to prominent Iranian scholar Dr. Javad Heyat, this article was initially written in Arabic and published in Syria, in the journal of "Al-Irfan". Then the article was first translated to English by Professor Evan Zegal and later on to Persian language by the Harvard professor Dr. Shahabi. Renowned researcher Ahmad Amir Farhangi also published this lengthy article as a booklet in Tehran [4:1]. It is worth mentioning that unlike his writings and articles published in Iran, in this article Ahmad Kasravi did express some objective and impartial views on the origin of Azerbaijani Turks and Turkish language. For instance, he states that the present-day Turks of Iran descend from their forebear Turks who migrated to Iran in ancient times from Turkistan for the purpose of residence and herding, and who later settled in various parts of the country. This postulation can be considered to some extent valid and accurate, but it has to be highlighted that even before Arian tribes moved into Iranian plateau, there were many aboriginal nationalities, including indigenous people comprising Turkish tribes who were already residing in these highlands. Nevertheless, it's absolutely praiseworthy that Ahmad Kasravi has at least not attempted to trace the origin of Turks in Iran to 12-13th century as many Iranian historians have tried to do so with no historical proof or academic basis. Ahmad Kasravi goes on to characterize Turkish language in these terms: "Azerbaijani Turkish is a well-developed and progressive language which bears all the features and advantages of strong, creative and resourceful languages. Although not extensively used in written format, Turkish language has some unique and distinctive peculiarities that differentiate it exceptionally from a number of advanced languages of the world". [5:496] Interestingly, in this article Ahmad Kasravi draws attention to the diversity of verbal forms in Turkish language and notes that the grammar of Turkish is based on more stable and established rules as compared to Persian and Arabic. The author makes a notable confession in the article which is worth invoking here. He remarks that although he cannot be definitely sure about the state of Turkish language during the Hulaki and his sons' reign (13-14th centuries, Mogul rule-E.M.), all the documents which have reached us and which can be taken as valid proofs indicate that Turkish was always

subjected to all kinds of harsh censures, condemnation and suppression in previous centuries, even at the height of the reign of dynasties of Turkish descent in Iran. The conclusion to which Ahmad Kasravi comes at the end of this revealing article is astounding and indeed quiet reminiscent of inconsistencies in his position and course he took in life. More precisely, he closes his article with this statement that “the fact that the Azerbaijani people have started demonstrating a greater love and support for their native language is indicative of a start of a literary resurrection movement in opposition to deprivation of the legitimate rights of Azerbaijani Turks, their subjection to denunciations, suppression and persecution of their language” [6:498].

It is very striking that in his books published in Iran, Ahmad Kasravi displays an entirely different, a biased and opinionated attitude towards the history, language and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani Turks living in Iran. Apparently, Ahmad Kasravi was trying to swim with the tide in boosting the propagation of Shah’s assimilation policies and clampdown on non-Persians in Iran at the time. In this respect, his book on “Azeri or the Ancient Language of Azerbaijan” is quite noticeable and deserves a special research [7]. In this book, he articulates his interpretation of Azerbaijani Turkish being referred to as *Azeri* by some European thinkers, by drawing a reference to a quotation from a book called “Mojamul-Buldan” by Yagut Hamavi, a 13th century Arabic geographer on Azerbaijan which goes as “they speak a semi-language which is called Azeri and nobody except themselves understand this language”. After citing this unreliable source without any due checks on its validity and academic accuracy, Ahmad Kasravi proceeds to describe Turkish Language as an offspring of Persian. Without drawing on any proven sources or evidence, Ahmad Kasravi hastily determines that “until the first centuries of lunar calendar the Azerbaijani people were *Arians* or *Aris*, therefore their language is no more than a sure descendant of Persian language”. [8:9-10]

In the section on “Early Turks in Azerbaijan”, Ahmad Kasravi writes that “early groups of Turks migrated to Azerbaijan during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Gaznavi”, and then he continues to comment that “our researches demonstrate that Turki (Turkish language-E.M.) came to the region with migration of Turkish tribes during the Seljuk Empire” [9:15]. As it is manifest, the author contradicts himself and refutes his earlier views on migration of Turks to this region in much older times as stated in his above-mentioned article published previously outside Iran. He ignores all historical sources documenting the voyage of tribes of Turkic origin, Huns, Sabirs, Khazars, and Bulgars, to Azerbaijan in 4-5th centuries A.C. The author also disregards the historical fact that Turkish tribes consisting of Gokturk tribes had arrived to Iran during the Sasanids’ rule (3-7th centuries A.C.) and they were settled in Azerbaijan at the order of the Sasanid ruler, Anushiravan. These facts have been ascertained by Dr. Javad Heyat in his book called “The Memoirs of Anushiravan” which chronicles the period of Sasanids’ rule in Iran.

Ahmad Kasravi also elaborates upon the claims by Iranian historians on mass migration of Turks to Azerbaijan during Mogul rule and their proliferation in the region in that period: “We cannot conclude that Turkish population grew and burgeoned in the region during Mogul’s time as we have no substantial proof to verify this claim” [10:18]. Ahmad Kasravi is certainly explicitly right in this judgment as Turks were residing both in the territory of Iran and Azerbaijan long before Moguls invaded the region, furthermore the region was populated not only with Oghuz Turks of Anatolia, but with Qipchak Turks as well who had migrated to the region from the northern part of Caspian Sea and Caucasus much earlier. Therefore, Turkish was a primary language of conversation and interaction much before the Mogul’s presence in the region.

However, it has to be emphasized that as asserted by European and Islamic historians as well, more than half of the Moghul army consisted of Turks (it was since this period that Russians coined the Tatar-Moghul phrase as they were referring to Turks as Tatars-E.M.) and majority of army chiefs were composed of Turks. So, there are some facts that during the Moghuls' rule more than 2 million Turks moved to Iran who eventually settled in Azerbaijan. Ibn-Batuta and Ibn Fazlullah-al-Omari who travelled to Tabriz in 14th century document that the population of Tabriz spoke fully in Turkish [11:503].

Ahmad Kasravi mentions that Turkish language got a chance to grow and expand in Azerbaijan during the period when Garagoyunlus and Aghgoyunlus dynasties of Turkic origin were in power. According to him, the height of this growth came during the Safavids' time which was followed by stagnation and regression later on. He states that Turkish was in par with Persian during the rule of Ismayil Shah I and Tahmasib Shah I, but as Abbas Shah I came to power and moved the capital of Safavids from Tabriz to Isfahan, Turkish language also lost its influence markedly. He goes on to say that "recently, the status of Turkish language has shown a steady progress instead of deterioration in the context of constitutional revolution and revival of patriotic sentiments". He rightly remarks that "the constitutional revolution was a freedom movement, so it was not meant to entail quashing and destroying the native language of Iranian people". But, as we know Rza Shah's rise to power, dissolution of constitution and reinforcement of radical Persian nationalism hampered the spread and use of Turkish again.

It has to be underlined that in order to authenticate his proclamation on existence of Azeri language as opposed to Turkish, Ahmad Kasravi presents so-called textual and poetic samples which bear no similarity to the language of Azerbaijani Turks. These samples belong down-right to Tat and Talish dialects (of Persian) which are not even understood by Persian speakers themselves. For that reason, Dr. Javad Heyat has sensibly stressed that Ahmad Kasravi acts not as an academic linguist researching languages empirically, but more as a professional politician who tries to impose his views on others by distorting the facts and blurring minds. He doesn't mind referring to clearly different dialects as Azeri in order to support his claims on similarity of so-called Azeri language to Persian. He doesn't stop shy of calling for inevitable destruction of Turkish spoken by millions of Azerbaijanis and Iranians for the sake of replacing it with a Persian language.

Many more examples can be alluded to here in order to exhibit completely incorrect, unfounded postulations of Ahmad Kasravi in this regard. Unfortunately, he laid the foundation in Iranian historiography for utter falsification of ethnicity of Azerbaijani Turks and distortion of the history of Turkish language. Regrettably, this tendency was carried on and is still continuing today by many researchers [12].

It is deplorable that a politically motivated tendency which was aimed at serving radical Persian nationalism at the cost of depriving more than half of the Iranian population of their legitimate rights still carries a considerable weight today supported by followers of "kasravism" school of thought. What is more unacceptable is that these perilous activities have long surpassed the boundaries of historical and linguistic researches pervading into Iranian daily newspapers and journals, radio-television broadcasts and mass publications. This subtle theme of pan-Iranism is not overlooked even outside Iran and often times picked up by Iranian authors dwelling abroad as well. Turaj Atabeyi's book on "Azerbaijan, Ethnicity and Struggle for Power in Iran" published in New York and London and translated to Persian in 1997 under the

title of “Azerbaijan in Modern Iran”, as well as the article on “Where is Azerbaijan?” published in the journal of Iranian Studies (1989, Issue 3) in the United States of America are examples of many works reflecting the same overarching tendency initiated by Ahmad Kasravi [13:7].

It is a source of great disappointment and bewilderment that in an era of globalization where the world has moved into an international mass information space, there are still many researchers in Iran who solely rely on the unscientific and unreasoned hypotheses of Ahmad Kasravi postulated 100 years ago. These researchers choose to defend and propagate the untenable view that Azerbaijani Turks, Kurds and Arabs who together make up more than half of the Iranian population are descendants of fictitious “Iranian race” and they were forced to convert to Turkish, Kurdish and Arabic speakers because of inauspicious turn of historic events. This propensity derives from the fact that the Persian language retains its indisputable supremacy status in Iran to this day. Despite the fact that language rights have been enshrined in the constitution of Iran, the Azerbaijani Turkish is not used as a medium of instruction in a single educational institution, nor is the language taught as a separate subject as a part of accepted curricula across the country. At a time when Azerbaijani Turkish, officially named as Azerbaijani language in Republic of Azerbaijan is growing and thriving as a state language and used by millions of speakers around the world, Azerbaijani Turks living in Iran are totally denied the opportunity to practice their basic right of receiving an education in their own native language. In Iran, the key calling of the 21st century, endorsement of diversities and support for development of multiculturalism is substituted by purposeful destruction of languages. Therefore, it is of utmost importance and urgency that historians, linguists, and enlightened thinkers in Iran realize their share of responsibility in this unhealthy process.

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ГЕРМАНИЯ И НЕМЦЫ ВО «ФРАНКФУРТСКИХ ЛЕКЦИЯХ» Г. БЁЛЛЯ (ЛИНГВОИМАГОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АСПЕКТ)

В статье на материале «Франкфуртских лекций» выдающегося немецкого писателя и публициста Г.Бёлля анализируется видение им Германии и немцев периода Второй мировой войны: истоки и причины возникновения фашизма, разрушительное его воздействие на страну в целом и каждого ее жителя.

Ключевые слова: лингвоимагология, Германия, немцы, Г.Бёлль.

В последние годы мы разрабатываем лингвоимагологию – направление, призванное изучить образ, имидж (отсюда термин) страны и народа в глазах другого народа. В ходе анализа и размышлений оказалось, что не менее интересна оценка своей страны и народа в текстах какого-либо выдающегося его представителя. Именно такой случай мы наблюдаем в «Франкфуртских лекциях», прочитанных известным немецким литературоведом и публицистом Г.Бёллем в середине XX века.

Данные лекции интересны прежде всего анализом, с одной стороны, причин, обусловивших приход фашизма, а с другой стороны, оценкой его последствий для Германии и ее жителей. В этом году, в год 70-летия Великой Победы, представленные размышления особенно актуальны.

В «Краткой литературной энциклопедии» о Г.Бёлле приводятся такие сведения: «Бёлль (Böll), Генрих (р.21.XII.1917, Кельн) – немецкий писатель... С 1939 до 1945 был солдатом... Первые произведения Б. – повести: «Поезд придет вовремя» (Der Zug war pünktlich), 1949 и «Где ты был, Адам?» (Woharst du, Adam?) (1951). Их герои – солдаты, которые тщетно пытаются спастись от кошмара войны, пассивно сопротивляются и погибают. Повести и роман «Бильярд в половине десятого» (Billardumhalbzehn, 1959) посвящены жизни современной Германии ... Гуманный и правдивый художник,

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