



CSEAS EURASIA SEMINAR

October 18, 2024 16:30-18:30 (Japan Time)

Seminar Room (No.213)

2nd Floor, Inamori Foundation Memorial Building, Kyoto University

TALK 1

TITLE "Syria Is Your Country!":
External Alliances of Kurdish Guerrilla Movements during the Cold War

SPEAKER SIARHEI BOHDAN
Specially-Appointed Associate Professor, Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, University of Hokkaido;
Research Associate and Lecturer, University of Regensburg

TALK 2

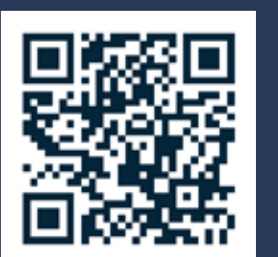
TITLE Soviet Kurdish Policies and the Rivalry between Soviet Armenia
and Azerbaijan

SPEAKER ANGELIKA POBEDONOSTSEVA
Associate Professor and Head of the Kurdish Studies sector, Department of History of the Middle East Countries,
Faculty of Asian and African Studies, Saint-Petersburg State University

MODERATOR MOSTAFA KHALILI
CSEAS, Hakubi Program Specific Assistant Professor

LANGUAGE ENGLISH

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In collaboration with

"Deconstructing the Production of Knowledge on the Kurds and Kurdistan"
(Mostafa Khalili, 2024FY, Collaborative Research Project, Institute for the Future of Human Society, Kyoto University)

"Minorities (dis)engagement in the majority-led social movements: a relational approach towards understanding
the perception of "nation consciousness" among ethnoreligious minorities in the Middle East"
(PI: Mostafa Khalili, JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Early-Career Scientists, 24K20991)

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SPEAKER

SIARHEI BOHDAN

Specially-Appointed Associate Professor, Slavic-Eurasian Research Center, University of Hokkaido;
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Abstract

All major Kurdish political movements interacted with foreign states in search of resources and support. Besides superpowers, it was the Arab nationalist regime of Syria that cooperated with foreign Kurdish radical groups in the most stable way as well as instrumentalised them. The paper fills the gap in scholarship by focusing on Damascus' relations with the Iraqi Kurdish groups in the 1950s – 1990s. What drove them, how the dynamics of these relations changed, what role did this cooperation play in Kurdish politics and which consequences it had? The most active phase of these relations included the 1970s and the 1980s. The Assad regime's Kurdish policies were closely related to Syria's rise as a regional power enabled by its tapping into external resources. These were provided by a number of states driven by Cold War developments. The paper shall focus on the question of Kurdish own agency in such interactions, how the Kurdish groups handled these relations and succeeded or failed

in avoiding dependency on the Syrian regime. The research relies mostly on Iraqi, Iranian, Turkish and Soviet media reports and political documents of the time, memoirs of politicians, activists and others involved in the events.

Bio

Siarhei Bohdan is Specially-Appointed Associate Professor in Slavic-Eurasian Research Center at the University of Hokkaido and Research Associate and Lecturer in University of Regensburg. Originally from Belarus, he also worked in media, think tanks, government bodies, and academic institutions in Eastern Europe and Germany. He holds a doctoral degree in political science from the Freie Universität Berlin. His research interests have focused on Middle Eastern and (post-)Soviet history, as well as contemporary political and societal topics in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

TITLE

Soviet Kurdish Policies and the Rivalry between Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan

SPEAKER

ANGELIKA POBEDONOSTSEVA

Associate Professor and Head of the Kurdish Studies sector, Department of History of the Middle East Countries,
Faculty of Asian and African Studies, Saint-Petersburg State University



Abstract

Soviet Kurdish policies never were consistent because they frequently were a product of parallel and even conflicting courses of actions pursued by actors, most of whom were far away from Moscow. My paper investigates the history of the Soviet Kurdish projects by taking account of the agency exerted with regard to them by relevant non-central players—especially the Soviet Union member Republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan which interacted, cooperated and clashed among themselves, with Moscow and Kurdish activists. The Union member republics were for a long time dismissed in terms of foreign relations despite well-known cases of such republics engaging in intra-Union (the role of Soviet Armenia in Kurdish-Yezidi project in Transcaucasia) and extra-Union external relations or even something resembling foreign policies (the role of Soviet Azerbaijan in establishing Azerbaijani and Kurdish autonomies in Iran as well as in interaction with the Iraqi Kurdish rebels). The paper shall focus on the competition and cooperation between Armenian and Azerbaijan Soviet Republics in the context of the policies towards Kurdish ethnic groups pursued by the Soviet Union central government and constituent Union

republics in the 1920s-1960s. To clarify the actual trajectory of the Soviet Kurdish policies I will leave out the demonstrative aspects of Soviet policies and explore how these policies effectively interacted with the life of respective societies, scholars, and activists. To explore the issue, I have examined publications of the time, official records in about twenty archives, memoirs, family documents and collections, as well as interviewed relatives and colleagues of these scholars and activists.

Bio

Angelika Pobedonostseva studied at the Peter the Great Polytechnic University of St. Petersburg, the University of Istanbul and Saint Petersburg State University (PhD in history). Her research interests include modern Kurdish history and culture, Russian-Kurdish relations, Soviet Oriental studies, Yezidism, Uyghur history and culture. Currently, she is an Associate Professor and Head of the Kurdish Studies sector at the Department of History of the Middle East Countries, Faculty of Asian and African Studies, Saint-Petersburg State University.