



Forcing Reading Persian Newspapers Preventing Arabs from Printing Books in their Own Language

Since full Iranian occupation of Arab Ahvaz in 1925, Iranians have been preoccupied with erasing the Arab identity of the region in order to turn it into a pure Iranian. The Persians who remained for 14 centuries fighting the Arabs who defeated them in Qadissiyah would not accept having Arabs living among them, with their own language, identity and independent culture, with lands that contain a wealth of oil, gas, water, agriculture and fisheries. It is an equation that Persian arrogance and hatred cannot accept. Therefore, Iranian occupation has made great efforts to abolish the Arab identity, get rid thereof and erase it ultimately.

Iranian policy for the Persianization of Ahvaz and erase of Arab identity, culture and language was not limited to Arabs only, but rather it was a scorched-earth policy in order to evacuate the indigenous population and replace them with pure Persians. In his research, "Iranian Deviation Policy: Arabistan of Ahvaz as an example", says in confirmation of the above: "The Iranians deliberately obscure the language, history, customs and traditions of the peoples and nationalities under their occupation, to the extent of changing the names of people, streets, neighborhoods and cities, even the customs of clothing and dresses, which indicate the identity and nationality of these peoples. That change also included the folklore of those peoples. Persianization policy was not limited to Ahvazi Arab people in Arabistan, but rather extended to other nationalities. Since Iran occupied the lands of Baluchistan in 1928, the same policy is practiced against the Kurds in their regions.

On their part, Baqir Al-Sarraf and Adel Al-Suwaidi, researchers in Persian affairs, point out in their book, *Is the Gulf Arab or Persian?*, that "What happened to the Arab region of Ahvaz, which covers an area of 324 thousand square kilometers, is a military occupation, followed by a practice that aimed at eliminating the national identity of the inhabitants of the occupied homeland favor of different concepts. The region of Ahvaz was part of the "great" Arab homeland before its occupation by Iran in 1925, with British complicity, when it helped the former Shah to implement his own expansionist goals.

Even today, Iranian occupier seeks to increase the percentage of non-Arabs in Ahvaz and to change the original Arabic names of cities, towns, rivers and other geographical locations in the Ahvaz region. The city of Muhammarah, for example, became known as (Khorram Shahr), which is a Persian word meaning the green country. The process of changing the Arab character included all aspects of life in Ahvaz after its Safavid occupation, with the aim was to impose Persian culture. On top of the taboos approved by the Iranian-Persian occupation was speaking in Arabic language in public places, where whoever violates that matter is punishable, as speaking in Arabic language is a crime punishable by Safavid law. Iran also decided that school curricula should be in Persian language only, where it is not permissible to speak any other language and Ahvazis were prevented from naming their newborns with Arabic names, nor wearing Arab dress; they were forced to replace it with Persian Pahlavi dress.

When Tehran government found violent Arab resistance to its ambitions, it resorted to indirect methods to force the people of Ahvaz to abandon their Arabic language, including changing the names of the Arab regions with Persian names, so the Hawiza city became (Dasht-Mishan), Al-Khafajiah became (Susankerd), Al-Salihiya became (Andmeeshk), Ahvaz became (Khuzestan) and the port of Khor Abdullah became (Bandar Shahpur port) and Khazali Street in Muhammarah became (Pahlavi Street).

They also published a newspaper in Muhammarah, named Khuzestan Newspaper, published in Persian, where the people of Ahvaz are obligated to buy and read it, while they are prevented from the circulation of Arabic publications, and those who circulated them were brought to the courts for violating one of the taboos punishable by law.

Undoubtedly, the crime of the Mongols in Baghdad is one of the major human crimes, when they expropriated money and honour, but their cultural crime of burning and throwing the reservoir of Arab knowledge into Tigris and Euphrates rivers was the greatest crime. A similar crime was committed by the Iranian Persians in their undertaking a campaign of full removal of Ahvazi Arab culture by seizing all private libraries of the Ahvazis and transferring their contents to Iran. Many of them were destroyed and thrown into Karun River, which turned into a symbol of the Persian-Iranian crime against the Ahvazis. Printing press in the city of Muhammarah was closed for fear that Arabic books would be printed, or even pamphlets hostile to the Iranian occupation. Bookstores selling Arabic publications were closed, their contents were confiscated and owners were abused.

In order to force the Ahvazis to give up their Arabic language and convert into Persian, Iranian government rejected all administrative transactions if they were not in Persian language, and prevented the Ahvazis them from visiting government departments unless they can deal with the employees was in Persian. Testimony of any Arab is not accepted in the courts if he cannot speak Persian, under the pretext that the judges are not fluent in Arabic language. Even interpreter for the Arabs were not admitted to the courts. This is in addition to preventing any Arab from joining a government job unless he proves his proficiency in Persian language. That procedure led to the exposure of many Ahvazi people who refused to speak Persian to homelessness outside Ahvaz.

Iranian occupation state also focused on preventing Ahvazis from wearing Arab dress in government institutions, as well as in public places, including sports centers. In order to disentangle Ahvazi Arabs from their history and cultural heritage. Persian occupation demolished and destroyed many historical monuments in Ahvaz, where most of the palaces and government buildings dating back to the period of the rule of Sheikh Khazal bin Jaber were completely destroyed and what remains thereof is about to fall and disappear as a result of deliberate negligence by the local authorities of the occupation. This is in addition to blowing up the entire Faili Palace, which is the palace overlooking Shatt Al-Arab near Muhammarah city, although it is one of the historical monuments listed on the list of antiquities that must be protected according to local laws.

If there is a term that can describe Iranian occupation of Arab Ahvaz, it shall be the "abhorrent and hateful" occupation. They prevented the Ahvazis from naming their children with Arabic names and allocated a list of permitted names that was circulated to competent authorities, including the names of the imams in the sect, in addition to a few Arab names that are not hostile to revenge and hostility to some Arab symbols, according to Persian mentality. All remaining names are Persian names that have no connection with Arab culture. Iranians were intransigent until they banned the use of hamza in names such as (Jida', Asma', Hawra', Israa', Shaima') and ordered them to be written as (Jida, Asma, Hawra, Israa, Shaima).

Prevented writing names in Arabic "hamza", such as: Jaida', Asma', etc

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