

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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SUBJECT: Evaluation of "Hoja" Films

USIS Baghdad submits the following pertinent comments on the subject films gathered by mobile unit personnel on a recent trip:

Businessman: "The misappropriation of others' share was and is still going on in every walk of life. It is not possible to benefit from Hoja's moral so long as man is selfish and egotistical, unless he is fused in a special crucible and cast in a different cultural mould."

Teacher: "The one who wanted to share the woodcutter's emoluments merely for giving him an unprofitable moral didn't create something original, for we notice nowadays those who take possession of all the emoluments of others by virtue of their social position, due to the lack of a judge whose judgments are to be carried out in chocking the tyrants and giving the laborer his just duo, in accordance with this film."

Farmer: "I believe that some of our sheikhs do not accept the judgments of the judge, because by virtue of their positions, they think that whatever the fellah owns belongs to them."

Businessman: (Nassiriyah) "Confusion has ruled in most nations, including ours (I mean those uneducated citizens of the nation) regarding the understanding of universal facts and values, so that by democracy they've come to understand savagery and brutality and the usurpation of the others' rights and properties; it divides the people into two classes -- Masters and slaves. They did not, as well, understand the meaning of capitalism, and so through pedants and evil-sowers they saw that their salvation from their severe trials could only be accomplished by the Communist regime. Naturally, this is not true; all the prophets who came called for equality, including Mohammed, who said, 'There is no preference neither of Arabs to Persians, nor of Quraishies to Abyssinian; the most pious is the most preferred and beloved by God.' After Mohammed came the intellectuals, amongst whom was Lincoln, and all of them aimed through their struggles at the equality of all peoples in the diversity of their classes and colors. Lincoln was not a Communist, nor was Mohammed. Therefore, whence did this ill-opinion that Communism is the principle of equality come?"

MI.Gramer:FNM:gc1

REPORTER(S)

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"If we have a thorough look at the Communists and examine their condition in Russia, we would find that their people is divided into two classes: the masters (i.e., the rulers) headed by Stalin, and the slaves who constitute the major part of the nation and who work all their lives against mere procurement of food. In their vocabulary, a sufficient quantity of food means that quantity which would just keep them alive and snatch them from death. Woe to him who meditates about his status, for in northern Siberia death awaits him in its most hideous form.

"Stalin wanted to fight capitalism, and so he deprived all of his people of the fruits of their labor, thus becoming the richest man in the world, indisputably, but without himself openly benefitting from his avidity, as this contradicts his principle. He, therefore, appeared to the public as a hermit, but secretly lived in luxury. His trick was successful as was the trick of the cat on the mouse when the latter saw the former with a rosary in his hands praying in the niche. And I haven't, so far, heard of a man simpler than that journalist who published an article about his meeting with Stalin, describing the Communist leader as the most ascetic person he had ever met. I think he has the right to write so, because he saw Stalin in his official room which the latter prepared for his visitors, containing a number of his military dresses and a large number of tobacco leaves. That journalist missed Stalin's trick as did the messenger of mice who told his fellow mice about the cat's piety. The mice, upon hearing that, came from all countries carrying presents and rare gifts. When they got near the pious cat, he jumped on them, seized and devoured them all. If Stalin was just in his cause, then what is the meaning of the Iron Curtain? He prohibited his people from mixing with other nations so as not to compare their poverty with the riches, their confinement with the expansion of others. He was afraid of the great scandal, hence made Russia a prison for Russians, wherein they are not even allowed to look up to the free world. For this same reason he was always insisting on the repatriation of the Communist POW's in spite of the latter's objections, so that he could gag them forever before revealing his cards to the world. A free person is always frank in his life without having a need for isolation or double-dealing. Russia should follow the example of the United States in opening its doors to every visitor so that man may be able to give his opinion regarding the Communists' way of living; but the Iron Curtain is the best hindrance standing against the entrance of peoples into Stalin's paradise. Should circumstances allow somebody to enter in the religion of this leader, he would not be able to desert it at all. Would it not have been better for the adopters to be given the chance and liberty to go out in the world and tell the other nations the good things which this god had bestowed upon them? Russia is like a trap with a beautiful exterior which attracts the birds whose destinies are that they should be the victims of the wily hunter!

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"We must not be amazed for the existence of such a man, as long as we resemble him in many ways. There exist in this country many Stalins, whom we call "Shaikhs," the shaikhs who despoiled pieces of lands and made of their inhabitants slaves for themselves without being able to entertain any right to claim their labor and fatigue, except what would barely enable them to live. For here, several months ago, one of the fellahs wanted to sell the wool he owned, when all of a sudden he and his colleagues were summoned by their shaikh who pronounced their death. They were thrown into boiling cauldrons until they were dead, and afterwards their bodies were burned with red-hot iron bars. All this because they wanted to benefit from what they owned. The spectators did not witness in court against the shaikh because he bribed some of them and frightened the others. These Stalin-type tyrants live with us and impose their wills upon us without our possessing the force for defending ourselves. The communist laborer works eight hours per day against a ration coupon, while our fellah sows the land and pastures the cattle all day long, and when darkness falls he stays awake to guard his property. He works the whole day against a dry piece of bread and a worn-out piece of cloth. He cries, but without tears, because tears scandalize him and push him to death on the hands of the shaikh. And if he opens his mouth and claims his rights, the Government would accuse him of communism, as in this, our environment, it is required of us not to claim our rights, otherwise our destiny would be Nugrat al-Salman."/>

"The liberty of man moves him to claim for his disregarded rights. This is exactly what Lincoln did when he supported the Negroes and the poor people. Claiming of rights is one of the sound democratic principles, but if we want to be democratic, they (the authorities) would accuse us of Communism and throw us in a corner after which there is certain death. Consequently, we are confused; we are now perplexed about Democracy and Communism, without being able to distinguish between the two. We want to work and benefit from the results of our toil as our brother-democrats, without having to share the fruits of our labor with any tyrant, as at present.

"We must not envy the rich man his wealth, if that wealth was the result of his labor and vigilance, as is the case with the American capitalists. Ford was able to achieve his present status only by his endless efforts and continued labor which resulted in the expansion of his factory after it was something insignificant. So is the case with others. We must not envy those who own many vast villages -- those villages which they bought with money they earned by prolific labor. But we judge those who usurped our lands by the help of and filled their pockets from the fruits of our labor and fatigue ... for them to live and for us to die.

✦ Iraq's most notorious prison

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"There is no debate or objection about lawful capitalism, but illegitimate capitalism is the one which ruins our peace in every way. And as a result of the confusion between these two types of capitalism the communists seized the opportunity and assailed capitalism without leaving any chance for the people to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate capitalism.

"Each man wants to live freely with nobody to share with him the fruit of his labor and efforts, but to receive the wages of his noble work (as in the film about Hoja). There should not exist any personal discrimination - masters and slaves. If these descriptions are true of democracy, hence we are democrats, and if they are true of communism, which I and others deny, we are, therefore, communists by force, and the responsibility falls upon the present policy."

Audience in Baiji: Many of the audience commented upon the moral of the film, recognizing that it existed, but had difficulty in analyzing its content. It was noted, however, that the word "communism" was mentioned several times during the showing of the film. "We have heard many of the Jaha stories, but never these versions."

From Shirkat: "Whence did you bring these pygmies?" "Are Hoja and his friends like these dummies, while all of them are common Arabs?" "Why do you show such films at this hour? Don't you know that children are frightened at night?"

From Hammam al-Alil: (Government official) "Nonsense, when Hamid uttered "salt - apple." (If the governor of the town cuts one apple from the tree, then the people will cut all the apples. But if no apple is cut, then none of the apples will be removed.) "Hamid states that, 'We, and the communists, do not believe in what you think of the apple and salt, because what you believe is ridiculous.' Was there communism at the time of Hoja? Away with such propaganda."

From Mosul: "It is better and wiser that you bring such wiser and amusing, yet meaningful, films." Another of the audience, "Whence did the Americans snatch you, Hoja, to make fun of you?" This individual was interrupted by another, "Listen to the story, let us understand it."

Iraqi Air Force (Mosul): "What's this mustache and eyebrows of Hoja's forehead?" "Were there such things at that time? They used to dress better than Americans." An Officer: "Dear fellows, enough of Hoja and his story; everybody knows that it is not true."

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Telafar: One of the Government officials: "The films are unbearable. Spread the light and do not propagandize against the communists, in accordance with Hamid's statement." Another: "Let them bring dung, and it would be better than our Government. Let us see the world and its peoples." At this point the crowd was taken over by the police.

Dhok: Students commented that the films would have been better "had they been made in cartoon form rather than these terrifying dummies."

Amadiyah: Post Office official: "I have never seen sillier films. All are mere propaganda for America."

Afrah: "The films would have been better were they made in cartoons; they would have been easier to understand."

Hamdaniyah: "These are devils, please do not play the devils."

Erbil: Government officials: "I read all of Hoja and Mulla Nasr Uddin's stories, but didn't come across these two stories. Were they composed by Uncle Sam? And these ugly moving dummies, were they made by Truman who probably resembles Hoja?"

Kharir Btas: "These films and this propaganda are useless. The only things which can uproot communism in Iraq are deeds and not words."

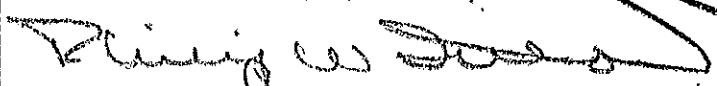
Rowanduz: The students roared with laughter and shouted when the woodcutter appeared with his funny face. Some of the spectators began to throw stones at the screen.

Diana: Army Officer: "The public cannot understand these stories; at least I cannot understand them unless I see them two or three times; otherwise I cannot follow the movement of these dummies and the words at the same time."

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It is generally agreed that the fast pacing and quick movements of the puppets and marionettes are distracting influences in getting the message across. This is particularly true if children or illiterate adults constitute the great part of the audience.

For the Ambassador:


Philip W. Ireland
Counselor of Embassy

Amia