

# Kurd has right to call Canada home

Re: "A credit to Canada, or a threat?" (Jan. 6). In my work as a historian, I have come across secret police documents in archives on activities of Ukrainian intellectuals in 19th-century Russian-ruled Ukraine.

They were often accused of being revolutionaries or of having ties with them. As a result, Ukrainian intellectuals were often harassed, some were arrested, while others lost jobs and left Ukraine for exile. The "guilt" of these intellectuals consisted of defending the

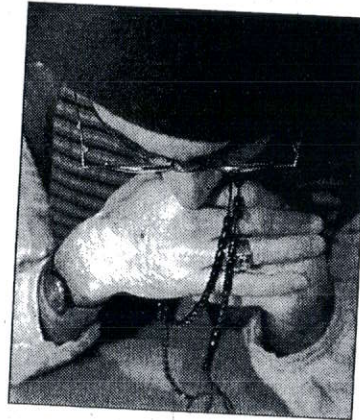
right of their nation to cultural equality and development within Russia. Today it is clear that the charges against these cultural figures were greatly exaggerated.

Saren Azer is a Kurd whose "guilt" consists of respecting his own people and of working for their human and cultural rights. It is well known that the Kurds have been persecuted by and denied basic human and cultural rights by Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. All of these states are far from democratic and suppress the Kurds.

In Turkey, Kurds are not even recognized as a people, and speaking the language in an official capacity is a jailable offence.

It seems to me that Saren Azer deserves the protection of this country. As CSIS, our secret police, appear to be following in the best traditions of the stupidities of the past, will our immigration minister please show she has the wisdom and political will to allow this well-educated and talented person to call Canada his home?

**Bohdan Klid, Ph.D., Edmonton**



FILE PHOTO

Saren Azer, a University of Alberta scientist alleged to be a terrorist, deserves the protection of Canada, writes Bohdan Klid.