The inclusion of Shino, of Persian Kurdistan, with the five urban centers from Iraqi Kurdistan, may be justified by three main reasons. First, the following accounts provide information on Shino in an important moment in modern Kurdish history. Second, the accounts describe relationships between Mullā Muṣṭafā Barzānī, the greatest Kurdish leader, and the Jews of Shino. Third, the patterns of internal migration in Kurdistan placed aghas and non-tribal Jews from different areas together in a new place, as happened in Shino.¹ Shino became the setting for the encounter between Mullā Muṣṭafā Barzānī who resided there around 1945–1946 and Michael Michaeli, a Jewish weaver originally from Iraqi Kurdistan who became a representative of the Jewish community.

Several Jewish informants from various communities commented on the relations between Barzānī aghas and the Jews under their jurisdiction. The relations between Mullā Muṣṭafā and the Jewish household of Khawaja Khinno in Aqra go back at least three generations to the 19th century if not earlier.² Other accounts disclose the relationships between Barzānī aghas, notably Shaikh Aḥmad and Mullā Muṣṭafā, and the rural Jews living in villages under Barzānī control. The family of Moshe Binyamin (I#4) that resided in both Serkane and Mergasor (Kur., Red Meadow) spoke about the positive treatment they received from the Barzānī chieftains and from Mullā Muṣṭafā Barzānī in particular.³ The following accounts of Michael Michaeli (I#26) discuss the period in 1945/6 when Mullā Muṣṭafā and members of his family and armed units lived temporarily in Shino. Interestingly, when Barzānī

¹ The various dialects (both Kurdish and Neo-Aramaic) and practices are evidence of internal migration.
² Fāʾik Gabbai (I#12); Majīd and Hertzl Gabbai (I#9&10); Aryeh Gabbai (I#8); Darwīsh Naḥum (I#28).
³ Moshe Binyamin (I#3); Michael Michaeli (I#26); Fāʾik Gabbai (I#12); Majīd and Hertzl Gabbai (I#9&10); Aryeh Gabbai (I#8); Darwīsh Naḥum (I#28).
died in March 1979, he was buried in Shino and many Kurds attended his funeral.4

A. Barzâni’s Jewish Liaison

Michael Michaeli (I#26) was a Jewish weaver originally from Iraqi Kurdistan. He moved to Shino in pursuit of work, and lived there during 1945–46, when Shino was at war.3 During 1945–46, for part of which Shino was at war, Mullâ Muṣṭafâ Barzânî resided in Shino with his armed units and Michaeli became his weaver. Michaeli met Barzânî “dozens of times,” in his words, and considered him “a great man.” He would make shale-shapik for him and would need to measure the threads before commencing weaving. In the following account, Michaeli describes how he became acquainted with Mullâ Muṣṭafâ and became a liaison of the Jewish community in Shino.

Michael Michaeli had never read any book about the history of the Kurdish national movement, but he lived and witnessed one of its important chapters, serving and helping the Barzânîs, and he was well aware of the importance of this era in Kurdish history. Barzânî arrived in Shino with 3,000 men towards the end of World War II and the Soviets gave Barzânî’s men control over Shino, Nakada and Sablax.6 A year later Barzânî was appointed “a chief of staff” of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad. When the Soviets withdrew from the region at the end of 1946, the republic fell apart and a war ensued between the Kurds and the Persians.7 Some of Barzânî’s men were killed and others injured. They retreated and gathered in Shino, bringing with them 180 Persian prisoners of war. According to Michaeli,

During all this period, I was making shale-shapik for Mullâ Muṣṭafâ and his brothers…Babo, Muḥammad Šādiq and Shaikh Aḥmad, whom the Barzânîs revered like the prophet Muḥammad.

After the collapse of the Republic of Mahabad, the war between the Persian army and the armed units of Barzânî was waged in the Shino

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4 In 1994, the body of Mullâ Muṣṭafâ moved from Shino and buried at last in Barzân, where he was born, in a huge ceremony reserved for the Kurdish national leader.
3 On the Jews of Persian Kurdistan, see Magnarella 1969 and Netzer 1976.
6 Also known as Sauj Bulaq, or Mahabad.