A number of Kurdish settlements in Russia appeared as a result of migrations during the first half of the 19th century after the Turkmanchai Treaty between Russia and Iran was signed in 1828, and the Adrianapole Treaty of 1829 between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. In the Russia Empire the Kurds lived a nomadic existence during the 19th century. In the second half of the century, they were largely living in the Erivan (Yerevan), Echmiadzin and Surmalu sub-districts of the Erivan district. All of them were divided into kin and tribe groups, their confessions being Sunnah, Shi'a and Yezidi.

Presently the main bulk of the Kurdish population in the CIS lives in the Transcaucasian and Central Asian states, in Armenian, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In Armenia they live in the Aparan, Echmiadzin, Talin, Ashtarak, Artashat and Armavir districts. Georgian Kurds are concentrated mainly in the capital of the Republic, in Tbilisi, most of them having emigrated from Armenia. The Kurds of Armenia and Georgia almost entirely belong to the followers of the Yezidi religion, unlike their compatriots in Azerbaijan who are Muslims par excellence. The Kurds of Azerbaijan occupy a vast territory between Kalbajar in the North and Zangul in the East, including the Lachin and Kubatli districts. The Kurds are also living in the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, in the Khachmas and Yevlakh districts. In Turkmenistan the Kurds appeared as a result of various migration waves from Khorasan (Iran). They live in the Geok-tepe, Kara-kalin and Tedjen districts of the republic, as well as in Ashgabad, Badir, Mari and Bayam-Ali. A considerable amount of the Kurds live also in the Djambul district of Kazakhstan and the Osh region of Kyrgyzstan. The last were deported by the Soviet Government in the mid 1930’s and 1940’s from Armenia and Georgia.

The Kurds of Russia, in particular, those of the Transcaucasus, accepted Soviet hegemony and participated in the Sovietization of the Kurdish communities during the 1920’s; a meeting of several thousand Azerbaijani. Kurds sent the following letter in 1921 to the Council of the Peoples’ Commissars of the Republic stating: “We, the Kurds, being free people and by our nature close to Soviet power, today for the first time to embrace our mother - the power of workers and peasants... Today, casting off our fetters we hold out our hands to fraternal Azerbaijan and address the Red Army, joining to it our glorious Red Kurdish cavalry which will always be inseparable from it” (“Bakinskij rabochij”, 22.8.1921).

The active process of nation building in the country, initiated in the 1920-s paved the way towards the resolution of the Kurdish question. The making of the Kurdish intelligenzia was started. It was a widely used practice to send the most gifted youth to study in Moscow, Leningrad and other centres of higher learning in order to stimulate among the Kurds the emergence of their own teachers, physicians, agronomists, lawyers and journalists. Publications in the Kurdish language began to appear. However, the Kurds’ status in the region during the first years after the establishment of Soviet power was uncertain. The centuries long backwardness of the Kurdish population, the ravages and famine inflicted by the Civil War, the British intervention in Baku and the inroads of the Turkish army into Armenia and Azerbaijan were the order of the day in the Kurdish regions. One of the activists of the Kurdish movement, Chingiz Ildyrym, addressing the First Congress of the Azerbaijan Council (May, 1921) gave a characteristic picture of life among the Kubatli district’s population, mainly Kurds: “This is a cemetery with a living population, where people go absolutely naked, barefoot, hungry, sunburnt; they look, especially women, absolutely nightmarish. Everyone is begging for their daily bread and for cloth to cover their nakedness”.

In 1921 the Azerbaijan government attempted to feed the starving population. In November of the same year, Nariman Narimanov, the Chairman of the Councils of the People's Commissars, wrote to V.I.Lenin about the inauguration of the Azerbaijan State Bank, which donated 40,000,000 rubles "out of its income to the starving fraternal peoples of Povolzhie and Kurdistan". We can hardly say to what extent this help reached the addressees. We can only note, that the economic conditions of the Kurdish regions of Azerbaijan in 1922-1929 were extremely hard. Over 50 % of the population was starving. Many thousands of them had lost their dwellings and lived in caves, roaming around naked and barefoot, they had no kerosine and had to burn splinters or dry tree bark. Under these conditions, in 1923, a number of compact Kurdish settlements in Azerbaijan, namely: Karakushlak, Kalbadjar, Koturlu, Kubatli, Kurd-hadji, Murad-Khanlu (unified later into 4 districts - Kalbadjar, Lachin, Kubatlu and Zangilan) were included in the enlarged Kurdish district (Kurdistanskii uyezd) set up by the order of the Government of the Republic and later reorganized into the Kurdish National Autonomous District with its centre in the town of Lachin.

In 1925, a special commission was set up to study the situation in the Kurdish district. The realization of the measures proposed by the commission played a certain role in the improvement of the economic and cultural level of the district. The publication of a newspaper "Sovetskij Kurdistan" ("Soviet Kurdistan") in the Kurdish language was started in the town of Shusha. A Kurdish college was opened, a Radio Station broadcast in Kurdish, children had their classes in their native language, etc. All administrative bodies of the autononous district had real power usually denied to such regions.

However, by the end of the 1920's all work with the Kurdish population in Azerbaijan was curtailed. In 1929 the Kurdish Autonomous District was liquidated. In the 1930's the words "Kurd" and "Soviet Kurdistan" ceased to be used. The number of the Kurdish population was officially underestimated. So, while in the years of Kurdish autonomy about 48,000 Kurds lived there, according to the 1979 population census, there were no Kurds at all. At the same time, taking into consideration a high birthrate among the Kurds, according to the most conservative estimate, Azerbaijan should have had about 200,000 Kurds by that date. The majority of Azerbaijan Kurds lost their native tongue, their culture and their centuries old customs and traditions.

Presently there is not a single Kurdish school in Azerbaijan; not a single centre of the Kurdish culture. The same was the fate of the Kurdish population in Turkmenistan. Yet, later censuses in the former Soviet Union showed a significant increase in the Kurdish population.

According to the 1959 population census, about 59,000 people in the USSR called themselves Kurds, and the result of the 1979 census showed 116,000 Kurds. A certain role in this growth was played by the higher national identity level as a result of the intensified national liberation struggle in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Assimilation of the Kurds was greatly stimulated by their forced resettlement out of Transcaucassus to other regions of the Soviet Union. In 1937, a number of the Kurds of the Transcaucusus were banished as "unreliable elements" to the Republics of Central Asia and Kazakhstan by a decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of the Peoples' Commissars N 103/1127-267. In 1944 on the bases of the decree of the State Defence Committee N 6279 the Kurds along with Turks and Hemshils (Muslim Armenians) were also deported there from Georgia ("Golos kurda", N 1-2, p.1).

Until the end of the 1950's the resettled Kurds were under a special registration with no right to move anywhere outside their hamlets, in fact, they were deprived of their constitutional rights. With the aim to somehow avoid persecution and insult and to obtain the right to leave and to study, many of them had to conceal their national identity.

Quite satisfactory was the fate of the Armenian Kurds, though they did not escape the repressions of the 1930's. In 1921 the Congress of the Yezidi-Kurds living in the foot-hills of Aragats was held. Delegates to the Congress sent a telegram to the Chairman of the Armenian Government, Alexander Miasnikian. In January-February of 1922, the Kurds participated in the work of the supreme legislative body of the state - the first Congress of Soviet