

## **TURKS AKHYSKA OF KAZAKHSTAN: HISTORY AND CONTEMPORANEITY**

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**Abstract:** *In this article, we tried to describe briefly the geography, the history of the area of Akhyska, the history of the migration of the Turks of Akhyska to Central Asia, and the role of the Turkish diaspora in the socio-cultural life of Kazakhstan. The Akhyska Turks had been departed to Kazakhstan in Soviet period, so they became an integral part of our country. The paper considers the problems of demographic situation during last 70 years, modifications in the way of their life. In the article used the texts of the colloquial speech of the representatives of the Turks of Kazakhstan, written and transcribed by the author of the article within the framework of the project „Interaction of languages and cultures of the Turkic peoples of Kazakhstan”.*

**Keywords:** Turks, akhyska, deportation, diaspora, Kazakhstan, culture.

One people, hundreds of years ago, settled in the Caucasian mountains and lived there in peace and harmony. This people was called the Akhysk Turks. They numbered about 350-400 thousand people and they professed Islam. Under the protection of the Ottoman Empire, no one touched them, but over the past hundred years they have experienced many grief, since the expulsion from their homeland is the greatest grief for the Ahiska Turks.

The Turkish diaspora of Kazakhstan plays an important role in politics, economy and culture of our country. Recently, they have identified themselves as Turks of Akhyska by the name of the area from which they were deported to Kazakhstan. On the question of their origin, there are two polar positions. The first determines their Georgian origin and is based on the research of Soviet Georgian scientists. According to this theory, the historical Georgian province of Meskhetia in 1578 was conquered by Ottoman Turks, and as a result the local population adopted Islam, it was narrated and lost Georgian identity. Under the influence of the supporters of this viewpoint, since the late 1980s, after the Ferghana events, new terms have spread in the literature- the „Meskhetian Turks” or the „Meskhetian Turks”.

According to the second point of view today among the overwhelming majority of the Akhyskas, they are of Turkish origin, and their real name is the „Akhyska’s Turks” (Turkic „akhyska ‘s Turks”). We rely on the works of scientists who adhere to the second point of view.

Akhyska is the area of today's Georgian Meskheta in the South Caucasus with an area of 6260 km<sup>2</sup>, located 15 km from the borders of Northeast Turkey, which includes 5 big cities (Akhyska, Adygon, Akhylkelek, Aspinza and Bogdanovka) with 248 settlements adjoining them. Akhyska is rubbed along both banks of the Posof River, and is connected by railroads to Turkey and the Georgian cities of Tbilisi, Batumi. On the territory of Akhyska, flows the Kura River, which is important for the whole Caucasus region. The rivers Posof and Adygon, flowing from the West, connect with the Kura in the eastern part of the city of Akhyska, and flow into the Caspian Sea. In Akhyska, along with the fertile plains that are convenient for farming, between hilly mountains there are hilly lands with magnificent herbs suitable for cattle breeding.<sup>1</sup>

The Turks in Kazakhstan appeared in the 1920s and in a few decades turned into one of the most numerous and fast-growing ethnic communities of the republic. According to the estimate as of January 1, 2014, almost 105 thousand Turks lived in the republic, which occupied the 9<sup>th</sup> place in terms of population. Compared with the last census of the population of KazSSR, their number in the republic more than doubled. Kazakhstani Turks are mainly natives of the republic and have a Georgian-Meskhetaian origin (ahyska), although from the early 1990s, people from the Turkish Republic.

The peculiarity of the national character of the Turkish diaspora is their courtesy, hospitality, straightforwardness, but also there is cruelty and cunning. Turkish hospitality is known to many, especially generosity. Turks do not have excessive gaiety, talk, gesticulation, the temperament of the Turk restrains and the dogmas of Islam, deeply rooted in the consciousness and habits of the older generation. In the distribution of moral values among the Turks in the first place are courage, love of the motherland, attachment to the family and loved ones. The very word „Turk” means „strong, strong”. In Turkish, „Turk” means „Turks” as a representative of the Turkish ethnos and „Turk”, as a representative of the ethno-linguistic community of the Turkic peoples. For the spiritual and cultural life of each nation living in a particular country, three basic conditions are necessary: peace, harmony and creative work.

Several variants of the Turkish language are functioning in Kazakhstan: the variant of the language of the Turks of Ahiska, Hemshilli and Lazov. Achska Turks are divided into yerly (local) and

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Yunus, *Akhyska Arařtırmaları*, Ankara, 2006.

trekeme. All the variants of the Turkish language functioning in Kazakhstan are non-written and are on the verge of extinction.

It should be specially emphasized that the separation from the main Turkish ethnic massif, after the closure of the borders in the 20s of the last century and the deportation in 1944, led, in particular, to the preservation of the language and certain elements of traditional Turkish culture. The language of the Kazakh Turks was preserved in the form in which it existed before the Kemalist reform in the Republic of Turkey. At the same time, quite fast processes of cultural assimilation of Kazakh Turks (simultaneously to Kazakh and Russian-language culture) are taking place and the language and culture retained by the older generation need fixation by researchers. A special study revealing the sociolinguistic situation of the Turkish diaspora in Kazakhstan was also not conducted earlier. From 2015-2017, a scientific study on the theme „Turkic world of Kazakhstan: language variants, cultural archetypes, identification of the Turkish diaspora”, funded by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

### **History of Akhyska**

The Caucasus region occupies the territory between the Caspian and Black Seas. It is divided into northern and southern parts. The North Caucasus absorbs the mountain chain of the Caucasian mountains, and the Republics located at its foot-Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Adygea, Abkhazia, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, Ossetia; and part of the Krasnodar Territory. The South Caucasus includes the Republics of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, the territory of Turkey including the cities of Agra, Kars, Artvin, and the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Tauris. Due to natural obstacles created by the Caucasus Mountains, contacts between the north and the south were possible only with the help of the passes „Iron Gate” and „Daryal”.

The Caucasus region throughout its history has been the place of interaction of adifferent cultures, peoples, languages. The mild climate, fertile lands, the richness of water resources, as well as the presence of natural protective barriers attracted tribes of different origins and were the subject of frequent conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

The location of the South Caucasus on the border of Eastern Europe and South-West Asia, thus being a link between the two parts of

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<sup>2</sup> K. Alp Ercilasun, „Selçukluların Kafkasya Politikası”, in *Türk Kültürü*, no. XXXIII, 1995.

the world, the availability of land, sea and river routes, allowing trade between remote regions (the Northern Silk Road, fur road) political and geographical significance of the Caucasus.

In connection with the constant movement of peoples, the Caucasus acted as a field of permanent migration processes, and as a result of the interaction of languages and cultures.

Before the Ottoman rule, this land was divided between the Iranians (Sassanids), the Byzantines, the Khazars, and for a long time it was under pressure from the Arabs.

Especially there were frequent attacks from the Seljuks (Oguz-Turkmen) on Eastern Anatolia and the South Caucasus.

In this connection, at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Georgian king David invites the Kypchaks from the Northern Caucasus to help in opposing the Seljuk aggression. Thus, 40.000 Kypchaks settle along the flows Upper Kura and Chorukh.<sup>3</sup> 60 years after the transition to Georgia, since 1118 the Kypchaks founded a dynasty named by Kypchak leader of the Georgian army Kubasar, which played an important role in the history of Georgia.<sup>4</sup>

Being a powerful force of the Georgian army, the Kypchaks founded their dynasties in the territories of Chorukh and Upper Kura, where the majority of the Kypchaks lived. Thus, in 1268, the principality of Samtskhe-Saatabago (Samtskheatabek) emerged on this territory. The capital of Atabekov was the town of Akhyska. For 310 years, the Atabekovs controlled the Turkic Muslim regions of Ilkhanly, Zhalaiyrly, Karakoyunlu, Akkoyunlu, Safewi.<sup>5</sup>

In 1578, an administrative unit was established within the Ottoman Sultanate-the AkhyskaPashalyk.

In 1828, as a result of the Russian-Turkish war, the Akhinsk Pashalyk ceased to exist, and part of its territory became part of the Russian Empire. So a new stage in the history of the Akhaltsikhe Turks began. Two counties-Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki-were created on this territory. As a result of the strict colonialist policy towards the local Turkish population, most of the local residents moved to Turkey, and in exchange the Armenians from Kars and Bayazit began mass settlement of these territories.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I. Şahin, „Anadolu’da Oğuzlar”, in *Türkler*, no. IV, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> B. Mirza, „Gürcistan”, in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Ankara, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> A. Gökbel, „Kıpçaklar/Kumanlar”, in *Türkler*, no. II, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> *Akhaltsikhe Intolerance*, no. 94, 1897.

In 1828, the population of the city of Akhaltsikhe was more than 50 thousand people. In 1939-12,2 thousand, 1959-16,9 thousand, and by 1966 it reached 17,8 thousand.<sup>7</sup>

### **Features of cultural development of the region**

March 16, 1921 in Moscow, signed a treaty of friendship between Turkey and Russia. Akhaltsikha and Akhalkalaki districts were withdrawn to the Russians, and later were annexed to the Georgian SSR.

In the 1920s and 1930s of the XX century, the cultural and economic development of the Akhaltsikhe Turks increased, a new cultural and educational centers were formed, national cadres were growing, technical and pedagogical schools, courses of political education were being opened.

In 1934, with the assistance of the Tbilisi Azeri Theater, the Adygun collective and state farm theater under the leadership of Ibrahim Isfahanli began to function.<sup>8</sup>

At the end of the 1920s, five new districts were created in this region-Adygun, Akhalkalaki, Akhiskine, Aspindza and Bogdanovka. According to the census of 1939, more than half of the population of Akhaltsikha (28.480 of 55.490) were Turks. In the information of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography named after N. Dzhavakhashvili, figures are given that differ from the official statistics for 1939: in the Adygun region 80% of the population were Turks, 70% in Bogdanovka, 66% in Aspindze, 51% in Akhaltsikhe.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, the cultural development of the area was suspended by the plan of the eviction of Turks from Georgia. To this end, at the beginning of the Second World War, a 70-kilometer railway line was laid from Borzhomi to Vale. So, the decision No. 6279 of the State Defense Committee of July 31, 1944, and the PCIA order number 001176, from September 20, it was decided to relocate the Turks.<sup>10</sup>

Before the deportation among the Turks, humiliating agitation was conducted, they were tried to persuade them to adopt Georgian

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<sup>7</sup> F. F. Davitaya, *The Soviet Union. Geographical description in 22 volumes*, Georgia/Moscow, 1967.

<sup>8</sup> H. Abbas, *Tbilisi Azeri Theater*, Baku, 1984.

<sup>9</sup> To clarify an important historical fact. Newspaper „National education”, July 30, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> Ahiska-Ahiska, „Gazetesi”, retrieved from: [www.ahiska-gazeta.com](http://www.ahiska-gazeta.com).

nationality. But, even in Georgian sources, the people strongly rejected such proposals, expressing adherence to their roots.<sup>11</sup>

In 1944, the Meskhetian Turks (along with the Kurds, Hemshils), according to the decision of the USSR State Committee for Defense No. 6279 of July 31, 1944, were evicted from Georgia to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. A total of 115.5 thousand. This was done „due to the fact that a significant part of the population was related to the residents of the border regions of Turkey by kindred relations and showed emigration sentiments”.

The Turk-Ahiska was accused of „assisting the enemies, engaging in smuggling and serving for Turkish intelligence agencies by recruiting spy elements and planting bandit groups” (from Beria’s report to Stalin).

Deported Meskhetian Turks were dispersed in separate settlements in various regions of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as „special settlers” (that is, without the right to change their place of residence). From the documents it becomes clear that the plan to evict the Turks from these places has been prepared for a long time. To this end, at the beginning of the war, a 70-kilometer railway line was laid from Borzhomi to Vale.

In early November 1944, the resettlement areas of the Turks were blocked by troops, and after the declaration of martial law at dawn on November 15, inhuman deportation of civilians began. In a few days, 125.000 people were deported from 220 villages-115.000 Turks, 7000 Kurds, and 3000 Hamshins. At that time, 46 thousand Akhaltsikhe Turks fought on the fronts of the Second World War, of which 26 thousand were killed, but nevertheless all those who returned home, including hundreds decorated with orders and medals for courage and bravery, including 8 heroes of the Soviet Union, were deported to place of deportation.

According to data cited by the chief research officer of the Institute of History of the SA KSSR, V. N. Zemskov, in the article of the journal „Sociological Research” in 1990, the total number of people deported to Central Asia in 1944 from the Georgian SSR was 94.955 people. Of these, 29.497 in Kazakhstan, 42.618 in Uzbekistan, and 9811 people in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Sh Badridze, „Turks-Meskhetians: how did the problem arise?”, in *The Tbilisi evening*, 1989.

<sup>12</sup> V. N. Zemskov, „Special settlers (according to the documents of the PCIA and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR)”, in *Sociological research*, no. 11, 1990, pp. 103-114.

The first echelons with the deported Turks arrived in the Tashkent region on December 9, 1944 after a 22-day journey. People who were ordered to take food for three days, rode for the most part without food and warm clothing in broken freight cars.<sup>13</sup>

For 12 years, they lived in the status of special settlers, under the conditions of the curfew, in a situation of complete lack of rights and arbitrariness.

Of the 29.497 Turks resettled in Kazakhstan, according to the 1959 census, 9916 people remained in Kazakhstan. 11 years later, in 1970, 18.377 Turks were living in Kazakhstan, from this it is clear that since the 60s the Turks decided to settle in Kazakhstan, the Turkish families of that time numbered 6-8 children. According to the 1979 census, the number of Turks in Kazakhstan was 25.718, an increase of 40% over 9 years. This indicator is lower than the previous census period. This can be explained by the fact that in this period there were fewer Turks of childbearing age, since during deportation to Kazakhstan there was a very high mortality rate. According to some reports, several thousand people died on the way, and in the first six months of their stay in new conditions in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, 37.000 Turks died, 17.000 of them children and adolescents. The period when these 17 thousand children and adolescents could see their grandchildren, and there were 70s. The second reason for the reduction in the number of Turks was the relocation of ethnic Turks from Kazakhstan, mainly to Azerbaijan.

According to the 1989 census, there were 49.219 representatives of the Turkish people living in Kazakhstan. From this it can be seen that the Turks basically closed the topic of the move and began to take deep roots in the Kazakh land. In 1999-2009, the number of Turks increased by 28% to 97.015 people.

In 1959, the Turks were 0.1% of the population of the republic, and according to the data as of January 1, 2014, 104 792 Turks live in Kazakhstan, which amounted to 0.6% of the population.<sup>14</sup> According to unofficial sources, the number of Turks in Kazakhstan reaches 200.000 people.

So, we examined the history of the area of Akhysk and the reasons for the migration of Turks living in the territory of this locality to the

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<sup>13</sup> M. Baratashvili, *Legal status of Meskhs-repatriates in Georgia*, Tbilisi, 1998.

<sup>14</sup> *Population and composition of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Results of the 1999 population census in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Statistical compilation*, Almaty, 2000.

Republic of Kazakhstan. Now let us turn to the modern life of the Turks of Kazakhstan.

### **The role and place of the Turks of Akhysk in the socio-cultural life of Kazakhstan**

Under the influence of Soviet ideology, which pursued the goal of merging all the peoples of the USSR, the traditional culture of hundreds of ethnic groups living on the territory of the Soviet Union, including the Turkish one, were partially or completely destroyed. Ethnoses were subjected to a historical experiment that contributed to the loss of communication with the traditional way of life; led to profound changes in culture. Spiritual treasures were partly rejected, crossed out of national circulation.

After gaining Independence in the states of the former Union, the issue of returning lost national values became urgent. In this connection, in Kazakhstan, activities aimed at developing the spiritual culture of all ethnic groups of the Republic began to develop.

So, in February 1991, the Public Association of the Turk-Akhyska „All-Union Turkish Cultural Center’ Turkey” was established in Almaty. JS „Turkish ethnocultural center”, „Akhyska” is the legal successor of the above-mentioned organization, which changed its name several times. The status of the association is republican. A harmonious vertical structure of the relationship of the republican society with the regional, city, regional branches and representatives in the settlements where the Turkish diaspora lives compactly has been created. Currently, there are eight regions (Almaty, South Kazakhstan, Akmola, Zhambyl, Kyzyl-Orda, Karaganda, Mangistau, East Kazakhstan), seven city and 13 district branches. In each locality, Councils of Diaspora representatives have been elected by vote. At the council of the society, 10 committees have been elected by the executive committee in various areas of work: education, culture, sports, the Committee on Youth Affairs, the Women’s Council, the Committee for Legal Social Protection, the Committee for Religious Affairs, the Council of Elders, the Association of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen, the Committee for Foreign Economic and Cultural Affairs connections (Ahiska-Ahisk).

The main thing that is envisaged by the Charter of the center is the friendship and consent of all peoples living on the territory of independent Kazakhstan. The activists of this center do not forget about traditions, customs, culture, as well as problems of the Turkish diaspora.

In addition, representatives of the Turkish diaspora actively participate in the political life of Kazakhstan, supporting the course of reforms and reforms. The first country who literally within half an hour recognized the independence of Kazakhstan was Turkey. The first head of the foreign state was the President of Turkey Turgut Ozal. And following the behest of Atatürk offered help. The young country needed a currency, dollars. Experienced by a deep economic crisis, Turkey took credit in the West and transferred it to its Turkic brothers as a non-refundable aid. But today the Turks themselves are looking with hope at Kazakhstan, which they see as a bridge that will connect the Turkic world spiritually and on the basis of common origin.

The main activities of the regional branch of the public association „Turkish National Center”, „Ahyška”:

- assistance in the comprehensive mutual enrichment of national cultures of the peoples of Kazakhstan, including Kazakh and Turkish, including the development of diverse cultural ties between Kazakhstan and Turkey;

- participation in the implementation of cultural and educational activities among persons of Turkish nationality studying history, preserving and developing the language, culture, customs and traditions of the Turkish people;

- study of the problems of the Turkish population and representation of its interests in state and other public associations of the Republic and other states;

- attraction of representatives of other nationalities and nationalities to the history, culture, art of the Turkish people.

When the union is working class on studying the Turkish language, a youth club, a dance group.

The activities of the Turkish national center are aimed at raising the level of culture and education of the ethnos. The company publishes the republican newspaper „Akhyska” in Russian, Turkish and Kazakh. In the spring of 2001, the audience saw and appreciated the first film in Turkish „Sweet Spring”, which tells about the life, way of life and traditions of the Turkish diaspora in Kazakhstan. Almost finished work on the second feature film in Turkish-„Debt”. Currently, in 42 secondary schools in Almaty, Zhambyl and South-Kazakhstan regions, it is here that a large number of Turkish diasporas live, the Turkish language is studied. Secondary school No. 99 of Almaty city is the leading one in the study of the Turkish language.

At the Turkish Cultural Center in Almaty, the united society „Akhyska Woman” operates.

Since 2000, the international newspaper of the Turkish ethno-cultural center in Kazakhstan, „Akhyska”, has been published under the aegis of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. The newspaper is published in three languages: Turkish, Kazakh and Russian. „Akhyska” is distributed not only in all cities of Kazakhstan, but also in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, America, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia. The newspaper is read by a wide variety of people. „Akhyska” is popular with representatives of the country's authorities, embassies and consulates, as well as various diasporas of the republic and foreigners. The main task of the publication is to create conditions for a harmonious and friendly neighborhood between all the peoples of Kazakhstan (Ahiska-Ahisk).

It is known that the national theaters play an important role for the spiritual development of the people. So, in the South-Kazakhstan region the Turkish comedy theater „Miko” functions.

The feature film "Borch" (Debt) was shot, and documentary films about the life, traditions and customs of the Turk of the akhyska of the SSN-Turkiye TV companies from Turkey and the television and radio complex of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Annually the national wrestling tournament „Gyuresh”, soccer championships among junior and adult teams are held. Organized Republican, regional and regional festivals of culture.

### **Features of life of the Turks**

With the acquisition by Kazakhstan of Independence, the Turks-„Akhyska”-ceased to feel discriminated against on a national basis. Today the names of such people are known to a wide circle of people: people's poets Ali Pasha Veysal-oglu, Karayev Kamal, writer Chingiz Badalov, singer-ashug Akhmetov Mowlet, actor of theater and cinema Afrasogly Mikael, professional football player of the main part of the football club „Kairat” Aliyev Ali, candidate of medical sciences Kurdaev Tofiq Ashimovich, Karim Alibek Niyazovich-professor, candidate of chemical sciences. Annually the national wrestling tournament „Gyuresh”, soccer championships among youth and adult teams are held. Organized Republican, regional and regional festivals of culture.

Traditional Turkish women's and men's clothing consisted of the same components: trousers (shalwar), shirts (chelek), waistcoat (yelek),

belt (sash) and various headgear. The trousers were made of dark fabric, were wide in the waist and gradually narrowed downwards. Such a cut was well suited for working in the field and for sitting on the floor „in Turkish”, cross-legged. Chomlek (shirt)-zapravlyalsya inside pants. It had a tunic-like cut without shoulder seams. Men met shirts and with shoulder seams (mintan), with a standing collar and three buttons in front.

But the women on top of the shirt wore a long, to the heel, a dress with arms, covering the fingertips (entaris). There were two varieties of entarie: one of them (utesetekentari) had a front incision from the gates to the hem, fastened at the waist with three buttons, and also two lateral incisions from the waist to the hem, the second (ikietekentar) had only two lateral incisions. Sash (belt), reaching a length of 3-4 meters, the women bandaged the dress, and the men vest, storing money, tobacco, matches and other small items. A short waistcoat was sometimes worn by women, putting it on top of the entarie, and the silk yelek, ornate with gold and silver embroidery, served as an indispensable element of the wedding attire of the bride.

The traditional occupation of the Turks of Kazakhstan is the cultivation of grain, horticulture, cultivation of industrial crops, transhumance sheep breeding, cattle breeding. This is explained by the large resettlement of Turks in rural areas. Let's give examples from excerpts from the records of the speech of the Kazakh Turks: „*jašajış bile šükür Allağa bile ejolir her adamaburdajašjanadamlaratopraqverildi, berkesgendibahšasındaçalışir, kimisitahilekir, kimisimejvaekir, kimisihijardurpamidordurbelabirbajattabuišidüzeldiuroBulušakumbajiriir*”/ „We live, glory to Allah, it's good. Everyone living here is given land, all work in their gardens, who sow grain, who plant fruits, who are cucumbers, tomatoes. They set up this work, raise sons and children” (Akhiska\_Turgen\_110815 10:16).

„*İndi anamatamjašürköjde. Köjde de bile birküçibköjdü. İnekbahiürlär mal mulbahiürlär, qojunonansoraonagünnügörürler. Onnangünnügörürler, sütsatijlerbazaragidip, sütsatijler, pejndirsatijrler, qajmah ne bile ištaanam da nejdeištiratamajardimidir. Atamözjüçobandır*”/ „Now parents live in the village. The village is such a small settlement. Graze cows, graze cattle, sheep, and so on. So they live feeding, they sold milk, cheese, sour cream in the market. What else, Mom also works, helps my father. Father himself is a shepherd” (Akhiska\_Almaty\_110815 02:08).

The traditional crafts of the Turks are carpet weaving, goldsmithing and jewelry production, making of forged fine utensils,

pottery, processing of wood and stone, woolen, silk, and paper weaving, felting, dressing of leather, making braids, knitting socks and others.

Until 1989, it was forbidden to write and mention about this people. There is no clarity on the issue of their origin, which contributed to the emergence of heated debates, which then took on a political character. In the sources and documents of the Russian Empire of the XIX-early XX centuries, the terms „Muslims” and „Turks” prevail, sometimes „Sunni Georgians”. In Soviet times, before the deportation of 1944, this people were called „Turks” or „Azerbaijanis”, and already in Central Asia they were recorded in documents as „Turks”, sometimes „Azerbaijanis”. In connection with the emergence of the movement of the Ahiska Turks for their return to their homeland, in the 70-80s. appeared two polar positions on the issue of their origin. The first determines their Georgian origin and is based on the research of Georgian scientists. According to this theory, the historical Georgian province of Meskheta in 1578 was conquered by Ottoman Turks, and as a result the local population adopted Islam, it was narrated and lost Georgian identity. Under the influence of supporters of this viewpoint, since the late 1980s, especially after the Ferghana events, new terms have spread in the literature-„Meskhetian Turks” or „Meskhetian Turks”.

During the Soviet period, the rights of Turks to higher education were infringed. Therefore, in those years, among the employees of state institutions, the Turks practically did not exist, not counting those who, according to the passport, were registered as an Azerbaijan.

*„Eveldenoqumaqöbçetinmeseleidi. Biraznatsional'novprosi. Eger türkjazlıseninstitutadıšmaççetinmeseleidi. Ona sebepçobuzimiztürkler de azerbajdjanjazlıırdi. Biz dörtqardašubdörtqardaštanikisiazerbajjandurjazlıikisitürk. Bennen de kuçubqardašimazerbajdjanjazlııdur. Ben institutuqurtardımgırdim. Kuçukqardašimmilisijaškolanilisijajiqurtardi, šejdeministerstvomu trennib del işledi, odanp'ensijaaçıbtı o da”/„Earlier, learning was a problem. There was a national question. If you are recorded as a Turk, entering the institute was a problem. Therefore, many of our Turks are recorded as an Azerbaijanis. We are four brothers. Two of them were recorded by Azerbaijanis, two by Turks. My younger brother and I are recorded by Azerbaijanis. I graduated from the institute. The younger brother graduated from the police school, worked in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, from there he retired” (Ahiska\_Turgen\_110815 05:13).*

*„jigirmisek.kizjilburdaişledim, çaliştım. Buranınbubalabaqşasını, mektebini, joluni, sujuni, bol'nitsasinihebburanınbükiil japan inşineradambenim”/„Twenty*

*years ago worked here. Local kindergarten, school, road, water, hospital, everything here as an engineer I did*" (Ahiska\_Turgen\_110815\_03:47).

With the acquisition of independence by Kazakhstan, the Turks ceased to feel discrimination on ethnic grounds. They are free to receive education not only in Kazakhstan, but also abroad. With the support of the Turkish Government every year, 15-20 young citizens are sent to study in universities in Turkey.

*„A ſindiſükür.AllağabizimçalçoğusumuſTurkija'da da oqijir, German'jada da oqijir, Astana'daoqijirEvrazijskiinstitutta, Naſarbayev, Demirelſejsinde de oqijir"/* „And now, thank God, our children are studying both in Turkey and in Germany, in Astana in the Eurasian Institute, in Naſarbayev, in Demirel are studying" (Ahiska\_Turgen\_110815\_04:49).

*„Onan sora Qazaq-Turk Universitesinedüſtüm, Turkeistan'daoquđımHimja-Biologija Fakultesinibitirdim, özimmeelimim. Birinjiبرانſimmeelim. Beſjiloquđım"/* „Then I entered the Kazakh-Turkish University, I studied in Turkestan, graduated from the Chemistry and Biology Department, I am a teacher. My first profession is a teacher. I studied for five years" (Ahiska\_Almaty\_110815\_00:28).

*„Pađıſahımſejden de provitel'stojadadehirdenakimlere de ſadan'javeriirkiceillerekvartira, evlerverin, podjomıverin, küvegitsinlerkikövincamaatınababsınlar, çükü ne içünbukövdebiſimibtjarlarasatemiſoturiir, hepbukolhozdaçalſtiler, qocaaldiler, pensijajaçhtuler. Naabitkibunlaradärmenlaſım, dohtorlaſım, dohtorlarımſjoııidi. ſindiſükürAllağageldiler, iſliirler, tezebol'nıtsajaptub, balabahſasınjaptub, a ſindiſüçeoğublarbalabahſasınagidiirler"/* „Our pađıshakh gave a decision to the government and the akim of the towns, so that they could stay in the village, look at the villagers, and everything because in our old people, our uncles, our aunts live in villages. All of them worked in these collective farms, grew old, retired. Sometimes they need help, a doctor is needed. Before, there were no doctors. Now, thanks to Allah, they have arrived, they are working, a new hospital was built, a kindergarten was built, and now the children go to kindergarten" (Ahiska\_Turgen\_110815\_ZhS:09:26).

The music of the Akhysk Turks living in Kazakhstan is part of the cultural life of the polyethnic country. Having passed in the first half of the twentieth century. a difficult and tragic way with hardships and difficulties, the Turks today represent a prosperous diaspora, numbering about 200 thousand people (not officially-300 thousand). At the same time, it is a nation that has preserved and worthily bearing its native language, customs, traditions, culture, art. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the activity of the Turkish ethnocultural center (AECC)

„Ahyska” under the leadership of Kasanov Z. I. Operating in different regions of the country, the center is engaged in supporting creative intelligentsia (writers, poets, musicians, ashugs), youth cultural organizations, masters of applied art etc. It should be noted that, despite the absence of a national compositional school, genres of written music of European orientation, the Turks of Kazakhstan have managed to preserve traditional art at the proper level. So, folklore and ritual songs, instrumental works, widely sung songs of lyrical content and musical and poetic competitions of ashugs are widely distributed among the people. As for the creativity of the latter, the first deputy chairman of the culture department of the „Ahyska” fuel and energy complex, I. A. Mushtakov, notes: *„Indeed as hugs are carriers of the musical and poetic art of oral tradition. This, as a rule, is a master of high level, with outstanding performing abilities, bearers of great natural talent. So, in Kazakhstan, various concerts of folk music are often held, where they perform both works of traditional culture and their own compositions”*.

Since October 2000, the monthly newspaper „Akhyška” has been issued in three languages: Turkish, Kazakh and Russian. The international newspaper „Ahıska-Ahyska” is published by the Turkish ethno-cultural center in Kazakhstan and is published under the auspices of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. „Ahıska-Ahyska” is distributed not only in all cities of Kazakhstan, but also in Turkey, Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, America, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia.

## **Conclusions**

Thus, during the period of independence of Kazakhstan, a galaxy of intellectuals has grown among representatives of the Turkish diaspora. Today the names of such people are known to a wide circle of people, not only in our Republic, but also beyond its borders: people’s poets Ali Pasha Veisal-ogly, Karaev Kamal, writer Chingiz Badalov, singer-ashug Akhmetov Mowlet, theater and cinema actor Afrasoglu Mikael; professional football player, the main player of the football club „Kairat” Aliyev Ali, candidate of medical sciences Kurdaev Tofiq Ashimovitch, professor, candidate of chemical sciences Karim Alibek Niyazovich and others.

As we can see, to date the Turkish diaspora in Kazakhstan is actively engaged in social and cultural activities that will undoubtedly contribute to the improvement of national relations in the Republic of

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Kazakhstan and contribute to the active involvement of Turks in all spheres of social and cultural life.

