

The Famine in Kazakhstan In 1930–1933 and the Migration of Kazakhs to Iran

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ABSTRACT:

This study is based on a brief overview of the relationship between Iran and the Kazakhs in past centuries, as well as an overview of the situation of the Kazakhs in the Soviet Union and the main reasons for their migration through historical documents, press reports, and oral data. The main purpose of this study is to examine, on the basis of written and oral data, the migration and lifestyle of Kazakhs who immigrated to Iran during the reign of Reza Shah and received Iranian citizenship in the following decades. Goals. Since the study involves historical, geographical, political, and economic aspects, many levels of analysis from international units to regional relations and international format, and overlapping analysis variables, it required the use of a historical approach and a descriptive approach. Political phenomena and the field of political science are flexible subjects that flow from all other sciences and modes of study. Results. The research work helps to understand the historical foundations of domestic demography and describes the stages of formation of the Kazakh diaspora in Iran. The article examines the Soviet period in the history of Kazakhstan and examines the difficult situation in which our people found themselves at this time. Conclusions. The research topic will introduce students and scholars of the history of the Motherland and world history to the views of Iranian historians on this issue.

Keywords: Iranian Kazakhs, Pahlavi period, migration, collectivization, Soviet Union, persecution, famine

Introduction

After 1927, with the establishment of the Bolshevik regime in the Soviet Union and the decision of that government to divide the

property of the people, many Muslim and non-Muslim residents of the Soviet Union began to migrate to neighboring countries. One of the main destinations of these immigrants was Iran. Although these immigrants mostly arrived in Iran

illegally, their fortunes changed in the following years. Some of them immigrated from Iran and reached America, Australia, and other countries, and some stayed in Iran. Among these permanent immigrants to Iran were Kazakhs, who migrated mainly from Mangyshlak. The peak of migration occurred between 1931 and 1935. During these years, the Iranian government approved special laws on the residence of immigrants in the country. During the second decade of Reza Shah's reign, through the 1931 Citizenship Law, many immigrants attempted to obtain citizenship from the Iranian government. The citizenship law became stricter during Dr. Mossadegh's rule in 1951, and violators were sentenced to five years' exile (Mendikulova, 2017: 25).

For almost a century of their presence in the region of Gorgan and Dasht, which today is called the Golestan province, the Kazakhs have had a remarkable history. The government's efforts to resettle these immigrants have seen many ups and downs. Over the next few decades, these immigrants tried to stabilize their situation. Finding a business to maintain their livelihood was one of the most important activities of these people, which is associated with the allocation of land to these immigrants during the land reforms. In subsequent years, with the revolution of 1979, the life of Iranian Kazakhs also entered a new stage.

This study is based on a brief overview of the relations between Iran and the Kazakhs in past centuries, as well as a look at the position of the Kazakhs in the Soviet Union and the main reasons for their migration using historical documents, press reports and oral history (interview with Muamrin as well as Kazakh and Turkmen informants) to show how Kazakhs migrated to Iran during the era of Reza Shah. After this, it will be discussed how they settled and formed Kazakh neighborhoods in the three cities of Gorgan, Gonbad, and Bandar Shah (Turkmen) in the first decades of their presence in Iran. Another part of this study is to study their livelihood and business situation during these years. After the occupation of Iran in September-August 1941, a new era began. The next chapter of this study is devoted to the period after land

reform in Iran, that is, the years after 1963, and will focus on the vicissitudes of life of the Kazakhs during these years and their efforts to obtain Iranian citizenship. In this regard, the history of the allocation of land to the Kazakhs and the efforts of people such as Malakzak Talibul Alam are assessed (Mendikulova, 2017: 27).

Their life situation in the years after the 1979 revolution, the attempt to obtain land from the new state system, and the events that occurred during the collapse of the Soviet Union; That is, the return of Kazakh families to Kazakhstan or their re-immigration to Iran is the final discussion

of the history of these people in Iran. After this, the changes in the customs of the Kazakhs of Iran, caused by environmental reasons and being away from the mainland, will be assessed in comparison with what exists in Kazakhstan, and finally, an attempt will be made to present the real picture of the situation in Iran. Kazakhs in recent decades. This study examines in detail Kazakh neighborhoods in the three cities of Gonbad, Gorgan, and Bandar Turkmen.

The main purpose of this study is to consider the vicissitudes of migration and the life of Kazakhs who immigrated to Iran during the reign of Reza Shah and received Iranian citizenship in the following decades.

Materials and research methods

What makes this study more innovative and more detailed than the general words of the authors prior to this study is the extensive use of first-hand sources existing in the archives and libraries of Iran and possibly Kazakhstan. For example, by looking at historical documents, it is clear that Kazakh immigrants immigrated to Iran between 1932 and 1936; The accounts of these people described the reasons for their migration, their work, how they got to Iran, their living conditions in the early years; In 1949, they started talking about the resettlement of Kazakhs from Gorgan to the interior regions of Iran; Since 1951, Kazakhs were granted registration and citizenship; In 1962, Kazakhs widely became subjects of the Iranian government. In 1969, Talib-ul-Alam Aq-Kazakhi was expelled from the

region on the direct orders of Mohammad Reza Shah; In those same years, the Chaybui area was considered as a settlement of Gonbad Kazakhs, and the government began its development (Akiner, 1988: 45).

Among the cases mentioned, as well as the reasons for the formation of a new Kazakh quarter in Gorgan, the water supply of the Kazakh quarters and the requests of the Kazakh representative Taj Mohammad Tag Niazi for the allocation of land to the Kazakhs in the years after the revolution of historical documents. It is noteworthy that it is widely used in the present study.

Library: review of books and articles written about the Kazakhs of Iran.

Documents: This section evaluates Iranian archival centers and documents related to the migration of Kazakhs and the life of these people in Iran. The archival centers are: 1. Documentation Organization and National Library of Iran 2. Documentation Center of the Islamic Council 3. Documentation Center of the Islamic Revolution 4. Institute for Research in Contemporary History 5. Documentation Center of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran 6. Center for Presidential Documents 7. Documents Center of the Institute of Culture Mirdamad Gorgan 8. National Document Center in Mazandaran.

Press: In this section, newspapers and periodicals 1. Ettelaat, 2. Iran, 4. Oyande, 5. Bahar, 6. Setareye Iran, 7. Saadat Bishr, 8. Shaheen, 9. Shafaq Sarkh, 10. Shahbaz, 11. Tajd, 14. Golestan Nou, 16. Sahra, 17. Golshan Mehr, 18. Makhtumaghi Faragi, 19. Salim, 20. Golestan, 21. Estrabad, 22. Golshan Mehr and others are reviewed page by page and reports are extracted from them concerning the Cossacks in Iran.

Oral History: Interviews with Kazakhs and local informants about immigration from the Soviet Union to Iran and the living conditions of Kazakhs over the past 90 years in Golestan Province.

Field research: In this section, the Kazakh quarters of the three cities of Gorgan, Gonbad

and Bandar-Turkmen are subjected to anthropological field research.

Scientific methodology. Because the research includes historical, geographic, political, and economic aspects, the multiplicity of levels of analysis from international units to regional relations to an international format, and the overlap of analysis variables, it required employing the historical approach, the descriptive approach, the case study approach, the inductive approach, and the comparative approach. Political phenomena and the field of political science are flexible subjects drawn from all other sciences and knowledge approaches.

Key research questions.

- What were the reasons for the resettlement of the Kazakhs to Iran during the time of Reza Shah?
- How did the migration of the Kazakhs take place during the period of Reza Shah?
- According to the citizenship law, how was the process of accepting Iranian citizenship for Kazakhs?
- What was the quality of the formation of Kazakh settlements in Gorgan, Gonbad, and Bandar? - What has been the work and livelihood of Kazakh migrants over the past 90 years?
- What changes occurred in the culture and customs of the Kazakh migrants under the influence of the new habitat?
- How was the independence of Kazakhstan and the return of Iranian Kazakhs to this country?
- How did the migration of Afghan Kazakhs to the Golestan province take place, and what impact did it have on the Kazakh settlements?

Literature Review

There is a lot of literature and research on this topic. We divided them into two parts according to the countries of the authors, Iran and Kazakhstan. Kazakh authors include G. Mendikulova and a Kazakh researcher from Iran, Islam Zhemenei. Iranian authors also worked in this direction and published a significant number of studies:

The book by Haji Mohammad Shadkam, an Iranian Kazakh and scientist, "A Look at the History of the Kazakh People" (Gorgan, Makhtumagli Faragi, 1378) is dedicated to the history of the migration of the Mangistau Kazakhs to Iran in the 30s of the twentieth century.

And the monograph by Gholamreza Goli Zavare, "Historical and Political Geography of Central Asia" (Qom, Office of Islamic Propaganda, 1373), examines the political history of Central Asia. The author of this book also examines the political reasons for the migration of Kazakhs to Iran.

Prominent scientist Jameni Islam, a former citizen of Iran and Iranian scientist Mansur Kiai, in his books "Kazakhs in Iran, life, customs", "Kazakhs of Iran: a look at the customs of their life", explore the ethnographic side of the Kazakhs and the history of Iranian Kazakhs.

Iranian author Musa Jurjani, in his book "The Role of the Kazakhs in the Period of Holy Defense" (Gorgan, Raikhani, 2014), explores the participation of the Kazakhs in the Iran-Iraq conflict.

In addition to these, sociological studies were conducted, in one of them, Esmail Heydari conducted his research among Iranian Kazakhs and published the results in the book "Sociological study of the migration of Kazakhs from Kazakhstan to Iran."

Results

In the late 19th century, after the full annexation of Central Asia by Russia, a number of Iranians emigrated to these newly captured regions of the Tsarist Empire for different reasons. Some immigrants were merchants who played a key role in the economic life of the region, and some were those in search of work. Others included fugitives who rebelled against Iran's central government, besides captives who were enslaved by Turkmen and Uzbek tribes. This was also the first wave of Iranian emigration to Kazakhstan. The second resettlement came in the 1930s. In the late 1930s, many Iranian residents of the South Caucasus were deported to Kazakhstan.

Deportations were repeated during the 1940s and 1950s. Soviet Kazakhstan was also home to some communist activists who fled Iran. New immigrants faced harsh restrictions imposed by the Soviet government. Since 1956, restrictions have been lifted gradually. Hence, some Iranians left Kazakhstan, and some stayed there until now. They are citizens of the Kazakhstan Republic now. Iranians living in Kazakhstan can play a prominent role in expanding the ties between Iran and Kazakhstan. Currently, some of the economic transactions and trade deals between the two countries are carried out by these people. They play the role of guides and translators while establishing business and economic relations between Iranian and Kazakh partners. In addition, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kazakh people who found refuge in Iran during previous decades felt free to return to their homeland. In recent years, some Kazakh families who lived in cities like Gorgan and Bojnord have resided in Kazakhstan. Both mentioned groups – Iranians in Kazakhstan and Kazakhs in Iran – are remarkable assets on which the two nations can count to bolster relations (Shadkam, 1999: 78).

Kazakhs who left their homeland for various reasons and live there can be found from all over the world. Among them, Kazakhs also went to Iran because of the left-wing policy of confiscating all the country's livestock under the pretext of collectivization of peasants in the Soviet system. In 1925, according to the data of the tax service, there were 26,641 cows in the Aday district (mostly in Taisoygan, Saqiz, Oyil, and Kazbek regions), 62,278 horses, 103,364 camels, and 916,846 sheep. If we take into account that the farms engaged in livestock breeding in the district are scattered, of course, this is not complete information; the livestock should be much more than that. Since 1851, the Mangistau region has been inundated several times. In the period of 1927–1929, the cattle were killed and deserted twice because of the plague. In Mangystau, where nature is less harsh, the confiscation of rich people began in 1929 (Zavareh, 1994: 49).

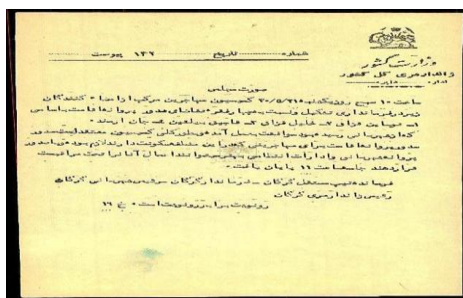


Fig. 1. Residence permits for four Kazakhs

The work in this direction was accelerated by the 19th letter of instruction of the Regional Executive Committee and the Regional Party Committee of Kazakhstan on December 9, 1930, which emphasized the tasks of re-election of village councils, confiscation of the property of the rich, creation of poor and mercenary groups, and the organization and settlement of herders in collective farms. According to the resolution of the Central Committee of the UAC of the Kazakh SSR dated March 12, 1932, "Plan for settlement of Kazakh workers' farms", 400 farms were settled in Mangistau that year, but grouping the previously nomadic and freely roaming country into one place was done with many mistakes. Due to the exaggeration during the confiscation of the rich, middle peasants were also included in this list. In the country, the wave of protests, hunger, running away, and moving from one place to another with livestock has increased (1-fig.). Due to the cruelty of nature and politics, deserted villages without inhabitants appeared in the Mangistau region. Therefore, the

government immediately sealed the border in 1935 and stopped migration outside of Kazakhstan (Kiaei, 2007: 56).

Iranian Kazakhs crossed from Mangistau through Turkmenistan to the territory of Iran during the "Kyzyl taban shubyrundy" of 1929–1933. Kazakhs first settled in the villages of Gomishan and Sallak on the northern border of Iran. All the inhabitants of this village were Turkmen. It was not easy for Kazakhs who moved to Iran to settle down. Because it was not possible to take care of livestock, do farming, and make a living. The first reason was that they did not know the official Persian language,

the second was not being familiar with the life of the new society, and the third was not being able to adapt to the bad weather. And the Kazakhs, who dreamed of the city of Mecca, endured many hardships and went all the way to the Persian Gulf. Maybe they didn't drink enough salt, the weather was bad, the sea was rough and stormy for weeks (Sanai, 1999: 62).



Fig. 2. A sheet from a detailed case file of a Kazakh nicknamed Talib al-Alam

Kazakhs living in the Persian Gulf could not stand the lack of work for a long time and had to return. They passed through the province of Sistan and Baluchistan and decided to live in one of the cities of Mashhad, Semnan, or Shahrud in the province of Khorasan, located in the east and north-east of Iran, and went there. The Kazakhs, who knew that all the inhabitants there spoke Persian and were a country of the Shiite sect, felt that it was impossible to get along with them there quickly (2-fig.). After that, they went and consulted, and returned to the Turkmen Sahara to be close to the Turkmen, who share the same language and religion. At the same time, at first they settled in the village of Nizamabad near the city of Bandar Turkmen, in the village of Shayboyi on the banks of the river in the city of Gumbaz, Kavus. But a group of Kazakhs moved to areas inhabited by Persians. A part of them were residents of Etrakchal and Sultanabad villages of Gorgan city (Jemeney, 2012: 68).

However, over time, in order to develop the economy, they had to engage in farming in addition to raising small livestock. Only because of that, it seemed that they got rid of the lack of life in their new place.

At the beginning, about five hundred families, according to some reports, ten thousand families crossed the border of Iran. When they came to Turkmen field for the second time, they started various jobs in the vicinity of Kurdkuy and Bandarshah cities of Gorgan city. In particular, he worked as a worker in the construction of the road and railway between the cities of Behshahr and Bandar Shah.

Kazakhs were praised by the local people for their road and building construction work and were especially appreciated by the Iranian government. However, the work was difficult. In the early years, the death rate among Kazakhs reached a very high level, as they were unable to get used to the nature of the new environment. Six out of ten people were killed.

According to the elders, people, young and old, fell ill with massive malaria, their stomachs swelled, and they died after a few days. After some time, they could not get used to the new environment and suffered from environmental damage (3-fig.). So, they gave up the work around the city and moved to the cities of Gorgan, Bandarshah, and Gumbez-Kauys and started to build "Kazakh neighborhood" villages (Jemeney).

Iran is a country that hosts various ethnic groups. One of these tribes that live in the Golestan province in the north of Iran is the Kazakhs. There are no accurate and official statistics about the population of Kazakhs in Iran. However, according to unofficial estimates, their number is about 6700 people (Kazakhs in Iran). The Kazakhs of Iran live in Gorgan, Bandar Turkmen, and Gonbad Kavus (Kazakh mahalle). The emigration of Kazakhs to Iran in the 1930s coincided with the strictness of the Soviet Union on religious issues and, more importantly, the great famine caused by the policy of collectivization and sedentarization (Naimark, 2011: 176).

They migrated from Turkmenistan to Iran and were welcomed by the Turkmen living in Iran. Later, they settled in different cities and entered a relationship with Iranian society. In Iran, due to a mistake in translation, Kazakhs are considered the same as Cossacks. Because of the negative actions of the latter in the contemporary history of Iran, there is a negative view of them in society (4-fig.).

However, this issue has not impacted the relations between the Iranian society and the Kazakhs living in Iran. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kazakhs living in Iran have been invited three times to return to their ancestral homeland. As a result, some Kazakhs living in Iran have returned to their ancestral country.

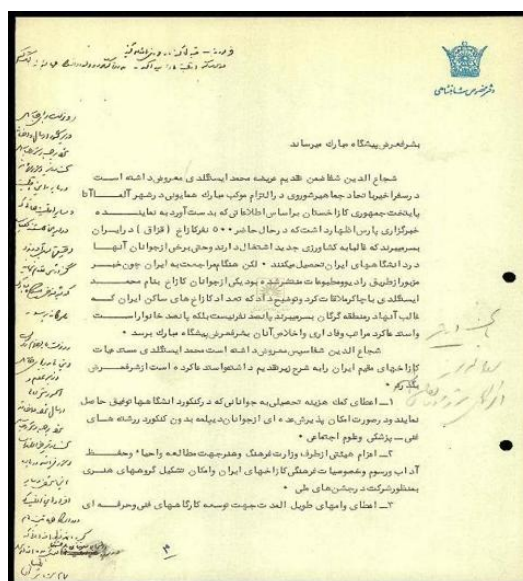


Fig. 3. A sheet from the case about giving Chaibuya a Kazakh settlement in Gonbad, building a school, and improving it in the 1940s-60s

Currently, Kazakhs living in Iran have the same rights as other Iranian people and have a successful presence in Iran's social, economic, scientific, and cultural fields. Kazakhs are no different from other Iranian people in terms of education and employment, and some of them work in government offices or non-government institutions (4-fig.). In addition, Kazakh youths, like other Iranian youths, serve the conscription system and have also offered martyrdom during the Iran-Iraq war (Hojat). However, they prefer

to have intra-ethnic marriages. In recent years, with the establishment of direct flights between the cities of Gorgan and Sari with Kazakhstan, they can easily travel to Kazakhstan to visit their relatives. The Consulate General of Kazakhstan in Gorgan also takes care of their affairs. Finally, the most significant issue regarding the Kazakhs living in Iran is the lack of accurate information and the lack of scientific research on them (5-fig.).

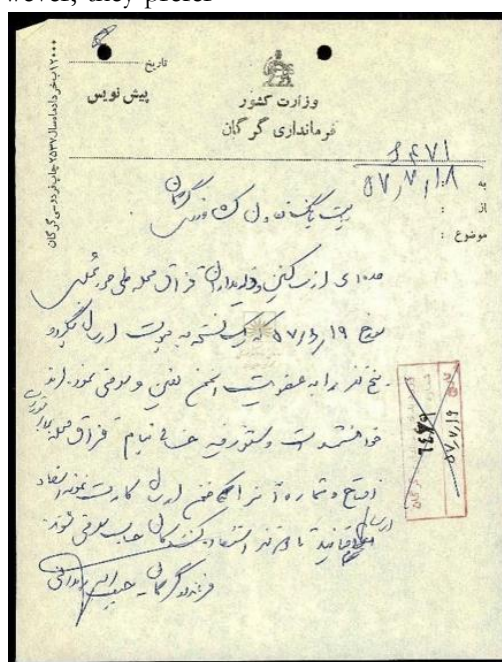


Fig. 4. The first page of a report on the situation of the Kazakhs in 1972 and a letter from one of the Kazakh students at the University of Tehran

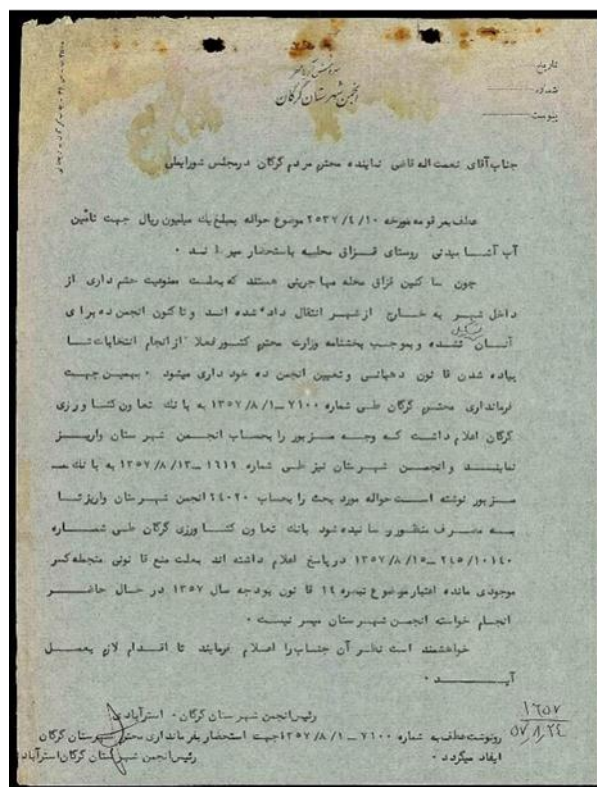


Fig. 5. On the provision of drinking water to the Kazakhs of the Gorgan region in 1979.

Most of the Iranian Kazakhs returned to their homeland in 1995. The whole group that returned to the country settled in Aktau, the central city of Mangistau region. At the end of that year, almost half of Iranian Kazakhs returned to the country. There were two Kazakh villages in each of the cities of Gorgan, Bandar-Turkmen, and Gumbaz-Kavus of Gulistan Province, which was later separated from the former Mazandaran province in the north of Iran. The Consulate General in Gorgan is working on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan to issue free three-year visas for Kazakhs staying in Iran. There is also a great opportunity to use the services of the newly opened Al-Farabi-Abay Center for learning the Kazakh language and culture.

One advantage of the Iranian Kazakhs is that some of their brothers are located in Aktau and Zhanaozen. Therefore, he often communicates with them due to his participation in events such as weddings and charity events. Also, after returning to the country, Iranian-Kazakhs found their brothers and sisters living in the Mangistau region, their ancestral home, and began to establish kinship relations with them. Now, one

advantage is that they are getting close to the local Kazakhs. And the main advantage of Iranian Kazakhs is that they are keeping their Kazakh traditions firmly. For example, from the year they moved to Iran until now, they have never left the drum in their hands, and they have never parted with their national clothes. At the same time, Iranian-Kazakhs attach great importance to education, science, art, and technology. I will discuss this topic later. Therefore, those who stayed in Iran and returned to Kazakhstan have significant achievements in the above-mentioned fields. But compared to all the mentioned opportunities, there is no desire to learn and assimilate the Kazakh literary language. It is a fact that the trend of deep study of Kazakh literature and history has not been formed (Jemeney, 2012: 112).

The first generation of Kazakhs who took refuge in Iran knew how to transfer their longing for their native country to the next generation, i.e., us. Because the fire of ardent desire for their country in them continues to be alive every day, it will spread to the next generation. That's why he was passionate about his homeland, which we

have never seen before, and tied his happiness and future to it.

Kazakhs also had an eldership institute. In recent years, the chairman of the council of elders, Haji Akmurat Rakhbayuly, with his authority, sharp tongue, and common sense, was able to protect those young people from their misdeeds. Because the heads of the city administration institutions respected the elders. One word of his kind words and speech could be a guarantee that the idiots would not be imprisoned.

The 1980s, when the educated generation began to preserve the language and traditions of Kazakh identity, were also fruitful years for Kazakhs. Dozens of young people created the "Kazakh cultural society" to preserve the purity of the Kazakh language and develop its culture in a new field in Kazakhstan. Muhammed Eskeldi, Hajimuhammed Batyruly, Kamid Uzak-bai-uly, Izhan Korpe, Suleiman Baibish, Niyaz Tobysh, Gapur Bali, Gappar Bali, Mansur Wali, Gappar Kazakh, Abdolla Karzhu, Kushbek Kazakh, Orazbai Begei, Abdrahim Paviz, Abubakir Paviz, Kylyshmuhammed Eskeldi, Abdisary Kazakh, Agali Nurkozhauly, Iliyas Zhemenev, Toyzhan Babyk, Abzhan Babyk. Implementation of cultural activities of this society (Jemenev, 2012: 187).

The first Kazakh football team was created. The original members of the team: Mukish Zhemenev, Rakat Begei, Agali Nurkozhauly, Auezberdi Saduuli, Shaltai Kazakh, Shahmurat Kazakh, Ramazan Piltan, Abbas Tobysh, Yaghia Kosayuly, Isa Kosaiuly, Shapur Zayiruly, Vahab Tugelbayuly, and Amanbai Eskeldi. Karim Akmuratuly, Akim Zhemenev, Zhappar Bali, Gappar Bali, Farhad Izhanuly, Kydyr Karabalauly, Jakyp Zhari, Bukai Eskeldi, and Rahim Eskeldi went to the football field. That year, our team won first place among the eight teams that were selected in the competition of teams from the city of Gorgan. It was a historic day for Kazakhs. If I'm not mistaken, the year of that victory was 1980. Only thirteen players of our team were able to participate in competitions that year. Two of our players from our Kazakh village, numbering no more than two thousand, were local citizens like Said, who are Kazakhs. They

joined the Kazakhs, learned Kazakh, and played in the Kazakh team, thinking they were Kazakh. One of them became a Kazakh, became a citizen of independent Kazakhstan, had children here, and died in Almaty (Jemenev, 2012: 113).

The royal system of Iran was abolished in December 1979, and after February 1980, the Islamic Republic of Iran was established. In 1980–1988, the Iran-Iraq war broke the peace of the whole country. At the same time, Kazakh was also under economic and social stress.

Iran – Kazakhstan Relations in the Post-Soviet Era.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of the independent country of Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Iran was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Kazakhstan. It opened its embassy in this country (Rababete siasi). Considering the presence of Islam in Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Iran had a favorable view towards forming a "Muslim" country in its northern neighborhood. The neighborhood of the two countries in the Caspian Sea has provided suitable cooperation grounds for them. Since Kazakhstan is landlocked, Iran can be a suitable route for transporting Kazakhstani products to world markets. Kazakhstan's significant capabilities in producing agricultural products are a sound basis for trade between the two countries. In addition, the people of Iran consider today's Kazakhstan a part of the Iranian-Islamic historical civilization in the golden age of Central Asia. Despite these geographical coordinates, economic overlaps, and shared historical background, the level and depth of the relations between the two sides have not been favorable until now. The annual trade between the two countries has reached less than six hundred million dollars (Kazakhstan Exports to Iran). One of the reasons for this issue is the international sanctions against Iran. Kazakhstan's initiative to host Iran and P5+1 nuclear talks exemplifies this country's willingness to play a constructive role in solving Iran's problems. Finally, it is noteworthy that If Iran's problems with the international community are solved, the

background is ready for both countries to expand their relations.

Conclusion

Some Iranian Kazakhs were returning to their historical homeland. However, some of them still live in Northern Iran and associate their future lives with Iran. There is no pressure from Iran

and the Iranian people, and they are considered full citizens of Iran. There is a tendency to draw them into their historical homeland, a process that is considered logical and natural. However, despite this, it is necessary to continue research into their history, ethnography and social life in Iran.

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