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# TURKMENISTAN: THE POPULATION AND MIGRATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

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## Table of Contents

Turkmenistan: the population and migration of ethnic minorities.....	2
1. Introduction: migrations as a formation factor of the Turkmen ethnic community and the history of national minorities settling in Turkmenistan .....	2
2. The population of Turkmenistan as part of the Russian Empire and the USSR .....	5
2.1. The era of the Russian Empire and the Civil War .....	5
2.2. The early Soviet period.....	8
2.3. The population of Turkmenistan in 1945-1989 .....	13
3. Turkmenistan. Migration of national minorities in 1990-2018.....	15
3.1. Turkmenistan in the early years of independence.....	15
3.2. The city of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) as a mirror of Slavic migration in 1993-2018. ....	19
3.3. The decline in the Russian population in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) in 1989-2018.....	23
3.4. Only 70,000 Russians left in Turkmenistan .....	26
4. Conclusion. Reasons for ethnic minority migration .....	28

## Turkmenistan: the population and migration of ethnic minorities.

### 1. Introduction: migrations as a formation factor of the Turkmen ethnic community and the history of national minorities settling in Turkmenistan

Most of the sources on the ethnic history of the Turkmen belong to ancient Greek, Roman, Iranian and Chinese authors and European scholars of the modern age. While often obtained from intermediaries and in most cases mythologised, their information is widely used by modern Turkmen historiography guided by the concept of historical egocentrism in the interpretation of archaeological discoveries and linguistic and ethnographic studies. In this aspect, the peoples mentioned in the world history who have lived in Turkmenistan at different times for six thousand years are considered as direct ancestors of modern Turkmen and their material and spiritual monuments are regarded as the cultural heritage of the Turkmen nation.

For centuries, the territory of present-day Turkmenistan has been a vast expanse of continuous migration of heterogeneous ethnic groups from south to north, from west to east and back. The scale of migration varied according to the climate that defined people's living conditions and the political environment that was taking place in different historical eras in the area of modern Turkmenistan.

The migration process became sustainable during the period of operation of the Great Silk Road. The lands of modern Turkmenistan were at its crossroads, where the political, economic and civilizational interests of the ancient and medieval powers of Central Asia, the Middle East and Southeast Asia collided.

Along with state entities, temporary and relatively strong ethnic associations were formed in the context of the struggle for geopolitical dominance over the centre of the world trade route. They arose on the basis of the similarity of languages, cultural traditions and everyday life. However, this did not preclude the violent incorporation, assimilation and even extermination (genocide) of the bearers of other cultural values on racial and religious grounds.

In a long-lasting reality of endless wars and strife, it is still difficult for scientists to determine who was a migrant and who was an indigenous resident of the country: Iranian-speaking or Turkic nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled tribes? Stronger and more numerous associations absorbed or brought to nought small ethnic groups. Names of dominant and subdued tribes and their unions (Turanians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Massageteans, Saka, Caspians, Dahae, Margi, Parni, Khwarezmian, Kushans, Oghuz, etc.) preserved in ancient and later manuscripts, ancient, Byzantine and Eastern numismatics and petroglyphic bas-reliefs are of the abstractly collective nature. The application of a differentiated approach to the history of individual ethnic groups that lived in the territory of modern Turkmenistan is complicated by the eponyms - when the tribes were named after their leaders or the mythical progenitor and his offspring. Born in moments of the highest success of their specific carriers, such names were quickly forgotten disappearing in the boiling ethnic cauldron of the region "splashing out" the local formerly established tribes into the distant lands and consuming more and more ethnic groups.

During the Arab conquest and Islamization of Central Asia, the ethnicity of the people was overshadowed by the religious denomination, which gave a powerful boost to the consolidation of tribes and nationalities under a single religion. However, the tendency towards theocratic commonality was interrupted in the 9-11th centuries AD by the invasion of the north-eastern Oghuz Turkic tribes who

professed polytheism but were relatively quickly converted to Islam following the example of their leaders.

After Seljuk - the leader of the largest and most militant branch of the Oghuz - this hoard of conquerors, which along with the Oghuz included Cuman-Kipchaks, Jalairs and other tribes of non-Oghuz origin, as well as the Iranian-speaking population of agricultural oases, began to be called Seljuks. In 1040, they crushed the highly-cultured Islamic State of Ghaznavids inhabited by peoples closely related to them and founded the Seljuk Empire with the capital in Merv.

From the 40s to 80s of the 11th century, the Seljuks conquered parts of Central Asia, the north-western provinces of Iran, Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Iraq, Armenia, Georgia and other West Asian countries in continuous predatory campaigns establishing tyrannical power over them just like ancient eastern despots.

The repressive state whose path was paved with hecatombs of corpses did not last long - just over a hundred years. It fell in armed conflict with its own people. The last representative of the Seljuk dynasty - the great Sultan Sanjar - was imprisoned for treachery in an iron cage by rebel Oghuz. It was put on the arba and taken around the country for public disgrace.

However, the elite of the nomadic aristocracy took advantage of the fruits of the national victory. In those troubled and poorly described times in historiography, steppe outlaws fought among themselves while carving-up Seljuk heritage and conceded their spoils to stronger and more cunning predators.

The Seljuk period is considered a heroic epoch in the history of the Turkmen who first created a world empire in the 11th century. It was a powerful but the only state in the history of Turkmen. Descendants of his brilliant politicians and generals later created no less powerful empires, but they belonged to the history of other nations. The Seljuk Sultanate remained in the people's memory a bright beacon on the formidable path of the Turkmen to national statehood. And Oghuz, from which Seljuks came, played an important role in the ethnogenesis of the Turkmen in the 9-11 centuries. Oghuz largely defined the culture, mitigated the tribal differences in way of life, household, customs, language and even averaged the physical appearance of Turkmen making it recognizable among representatives of other Central Asian ethnic groups. The word "oghuz" has become synonymous with the word "Turkmen".

Having absorbed the Khwarezmian Sultanate in the early 13th century, the Mongol conquest accelerated the process of forming the Turkmen people, which ended in the 14th-16th centuries. Since then, the ethnonym "Turkmen" used in the description since the 10th century has been permanently assigned to the Turkic nomadic, semi-nomadic and settled tribes living on the Turan Lowland, shores of Amu Darya, in the foothills of Kopet Dag, Koytendag Range, in-between the rivers Tedzhen and Murghaba, the oases of Khwarezm and the Balkhan.

The largest tribes of Turkmen were the tribal coalitions of Ersari, Yomut, Teke, Sakar, Salur, Saryk, Chowdur, Alili, Ata, and Nohurli. Tribes were divided geographically and kindred-wise. In turn, each kindred (or generation) was divided into large kins comparable in number to entire tribes, and such kins included dozens of sub-ethnic subgroups, in turn, divided into smaller communities. Between them in the west, east, north and south of modern Turkmenistan lived small tribes, such as Ogurja, Yazyr, Shih, Yalavach, Igdir, Emreli and others. They sometimes were among the ethnic structures of large tribes, other times they identified themselves as independent tribes.

From the 16th century to the end of the 19th century, the social system of Turkmen was a primitive semblance of Eastern feudalism with an archaic social and economic paradigm, patriarchal slavery and trafficking of humans captured in raids on Persians, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Pashtuns and their own tribesmen. Among the armed groups of most Turkmen leaders, elements of military democracy were common, meaning that decisions were taken by voting at general meetings. The same principle sometimes was implemented to resolve tribal conflicts.

In the 17th-19th centuries, parts of Turkmenistan fell under the rule of the Iranian leaders of the Safavid, Afshar and Qajar dynasties. According to national tradition, all of them are considered Turkmen

and their states are Iranian-Turkmen. These rulers, as well as their Iranian and Turkic predecessors, also professed the principles of plunder and totalitarian rule over the conquered peoples. They have brought a lot of misery and suffering to the native Turkmen. Nadir Shah (1688-1747) - the last great conqueror of the East coming from Afshar Turkmen - became famous for the total ravaging of Northern India and Delhi. This period was marked by a regime of brutal tyranny. He was the sovereign most hated by Turkmen.

In between the ups and downs of the world and regional powers of Central Asia and Iran, Turkmenistan - torn to pieces by feudal and inter-ethnic turmoil - was part of many medium and small state entities. Their ambitious rulers were infected with the idea of reviving the former glory of ancestors who created Parthian and Seljuk world empires in the past. In the struggle for domination in the region, they waged destructive wars weakening the people and desolating cities, pastures, irrigation systems in agricultural oases, and undermining international and domestic trade.

From the 16th century to the middle of the 19th century, the main players on this field were the Iranian Shahs and the Khans of Khiva and Bukhara. Their anti-national policy forced many Turkmen tribes to mass resettlement. The tribal society of nomads and also sedentary Turkmen helped them to courageously resist violence and win during forced migration.

Turkmens of the Aral Sea area and Mangyshlak chose the ancient migratory path of their ancestors - the Eastern Scythians. Fighting with Khivin troops and Kalmyk hordes, they went north to the Volga and around the Northern Caspian and settled in the feather grass foothills of the North Caucasus and the Astrakhan and Stavropol steppes. Khwarezm Turkmen moved to the south leaving their native lands with battles. They went from Khan's oppression to the oases of Akhal, Atreck, Murghab and Tejen. There, Turkmen retained the right to a life free from slaves' shackles, duties and military conscriptions to endless wars with their blood brothers. At the same time, a significant part of Turkmen remained within the Khanate of Khiva and Emirate of Bukhara and some migrated to Afghanistan, Iran and other countries of West and South Asia.

In the second half of the 19th century, Turkmen encountered Iranian regular armies. In the battles of Kara-Kala (1857) in the Balkan Region (Welayat) and Kara-Yaba near the present-day Mary, the Turkmen militia inflicted crushing defeats on them in 1857 and 1860-1861. The joint struggle against foreigners consolidated the Turkmen tribes and smaller associations joined the larger ones as tribesmen.

Since then, Turkmen of Akhal, Mary, Atreck, Cheleken, Balkhan and Garabogaz have lived by the customs of the tribal system under the rule of tribal Khans and elected elders. The ethnic system of Turkmen has simplified but also allowed to strengthen the ethnonym "Turkmen" uniting them and preserve the people surrounded by their predatory neighbours.

Accurate information about the number of inhabitants of the country in various historical eras has not been preserved, and perhaps there was none. In Turkmenistan, various parts of which were included in coming and going aggressor states, there was no centralised population registration. Also, the census caused a mystical reaction among Turkmen resulted in a strong protest.

Comparative analysis of disparate data on the number of caravanserais and the population of cities and residential, religious and administrative buildings inside the city walls and in the suburbs and the number of troops and victims<sup>1</sup> shows that the population of Turkmenistan in its modern borders did not exceed 1.0-1.5 million peoples in the most favourable years. Wars, drought, epidemics and famine have devastated the country and cities, sometimes bringing people to the brink of extinction.

By the end of the 19th century, ancient and medieval cities such as Merv where according to different sources once lived 100,000 to 1,000,000 people in stable periods of powerful states that existed in Turkmenistan, laid in ruins buried under sands. There were no cities in the modern sense of this term. Poorly linked to the outside world and their neighbours economically, Turkmen lived a secluded life.

<sup>1</sup> In the 13th century, at least 0.5 million people died in Turkmenistan when the Mongols conquered Central Asia.

This was the country's state that Russians saw when their power reached these lands, and Turkmen had long-standing diplomatic, trade and economic ties with Russians<sup>2</sup>.

Founded in 1869 on the shores of the Gulf of the same name on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea<sup>3</sup>, Krasnovodsk<sup>4</sup> became the first city in the new history of Turkmenistan. With Turkmenistan's accession to the Russian Empire, the first censuses were conducted providing statisticians with documented material to analyse the quality of the country's population and ethnic migration.

## 2. The population of Turkmenistan as part of the Russian Empire and the USSR

### 2.1. The era of the Russian Empire and the Civil War

During the period of the Russian Empire, most of the sparsely populated territory of present-day Turkmenistan became part of the trans-Caspian region. Relatively densely populated but much smaller areas of the Turkmen right bank and the eastern delta of Amu Darya remained parts of the Khanate of Khiva and Emirate of Bukhara.

In 1897, Russia hosted the first general census. According to its results, 382,487 people were living in the trans-Caspian region. Taking into account the population of the Turkmen part of Khiva and Bukhara where an additional 150,000 people lived and deducting about 20,000 residents of Mangyshlak, which was also a part of the trans-Caspian region, more than 0.5 million people lived within the borders of modern Turkmenistan in 1897<sup>5</sup>. There were about 55% of Turkmen in the trans-Caspian region, over 15% of Uzbeks, 7.3% of Russians, 5% of Azerbaijanis and 4.7% of Armenians. Kazakhs, Persians, Ukrainians and Baluchis accounted for an average of one per cent. The remaining 9% of the population included Turkestan, Khorasan, as well as migrants from the North Caucasus, Iran, South Asia and Eastern Europe in the tenth and hundredths of the population.

The ratio of ethnic, social, gender, age and other qualitative characteristics of the population of the trans-Caspian region has constantly changed with its steady growth. The construction of the Caspian Military Railway (known from 1899 as the Central Asian Railway) in 1880 and its full-scale commission in Krasnovodsk on 15 September 1896 gave a powerful boost to the region's growth. Since then, the development of the Central Asian markets began defined by an increase in trade, the expansion of the industrial sector, growth of livestock and acreage for products in demand in the metropolis and European countries. The economic recovery has provided a positive balance of migration of the population in the trans-Caspian region for many years. This is clearly seen in the example of Krasnovodsk, which received the status of a city with benefits and privileges in 1874.

In a short time, a small military fortification became the most important transit point between Europe and Asia. Krasnovodsk was growing like a mushroom due to the increase in the flow of goods through the seaport. Berths for cargo, military and fishing vessels were built here, a locomotive depot was arranged, there were fisheries, ship repair shops, warehouses, a fish factory and two desalination plants with a water line. Four schools, a hospital, bank branches and steamship partnerships were opened in

<sup>2</sup> Since the 18th century, Western Turkmen tribes have actively supported Russians. During the Russo-Persian War of 1804-1813, they sided with Russians against Persia.

<sup>3</sup> Founded in 1881, Ashgabat became the second city. It soon became the administrative, economic and cultural centre of the trans-Caspian region due to its geographical location in the centre of the Central Asian railway, an abundance of fresh water, soil fertility and a healthy climate.

<sup>4</sup> In 1993, the city of Krasnovodsk was renamed to Turkmenbashi by President Saparmurat Niyazov in honour of his eastern title.

<sup>5</sup> Approximately 552,487 people.

the city. Demand for labour force stimulates the inflow of migrants from the Caucasus, Persia and European part of Russia including Ukraine, Poland, Bessarabia, Kazan and Baltic provinces.

In 1894, the number of Krasnovodsk residents reached 5,500 people and more than half of them were Russians who founded the city on the deserted<sup>6</sup> coast of Muraviev Bay in the Gulf of Krasnovodsk. From the very beginning, Krasnovodsk was formed as a multi-ethnic city. Two Orthodox churches, a Shia mosque and an Armenian-Gregorian church were opened in the city to attract and settle labour force here.

After the Russians in Krasnovodsk, the second largest (15%) population was Persians<sup>7</sup> and their number was constantly increasing. By the number of compatriots, the third diaspora (12%) was Karabakh Armenians<sup>8</sup> and their fellow believers who moved from Iran because of religious oppression. The fourth place was held by Kazakhs, or as they were called then - Kyrgyz (6%). There was no Turkmen in the city, except for the temporary residents who came to the city on trade, administrative or religious matters. They were mostly pilgrims staying on their way to Mecca in the city caravanserai, which belonged to the only Turkmen in the city of the local steppe Bais. The city was often visited by cattle, wool and leather traders and buyers of Russian-made goods. Due to the limited cash flow, money had little circulation. The first place in the exchange of goods belonged to barter trade. Turkmen offered products of national crafts and artisanal production in exchange for Russian goods. In 1901, the number of Krasnovodsk residents was 6,375 and in 1909 it was 7,722<sup>9</sup>. In 1913, the population of Krasnovodsk amounted to 9,353 people and the growth rate was 121% compared to 1909. In 1917, 13,000 people lived in the city.

Ashgabat developed even more rapidly. The original population of the city was mostly made up of Russians and their fellow servicemen - Europeans and Caucasians. In 1901, the ethnic map of the city became even more varied. It was home to 36.5 thousand people. Of these, the first place was taken by Persians<sup>10</sup> (11.2 thousand people). The second place belonged to Russians - 10.7 thousand people, and in the third place were Armenians and other nationalities - 14.6 thousand people. There were still no Turkmen in the city, as they preferred living in steppes.

The population of Ashgabat continued to grow due to the increase in the number of soldiers and officers of the garrison and the number of railway workers, civil servants, lawyers, teachers, members of the creative community and trading firm and industrial enterprise agents. At the same time, the share of Russians and their associates from other nationalities was constantly decreasing due to the influx of the indigenous inhabitants of Turkmenistan (Turkmen, Uzbeks, etc.) into the city, as well as Iranian and Turkestan immigrants.

In 1913, the population of Ashgabat reached almost 55,000 people. Indigenous natives of Central Russia and Volga, Kurland, Lifland, Estland and Dagestan region and Poland and Georgia accounted for a total of 25,000 people or about 42% of the Ashgabat population. Russians made up 19% of the total population or just over 11,000 people. The remaining 23 per cent were Ukrainians (4.3%), Tatars (3.8%), Dagestani (2.5%), Germans (1.7%), Belarusians (1.5%), Poles (1.2%), Latvians (0.9%), Estonians (0.7%),

<sup>6</sup> B. Koyunliev, Krasnovodsk, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan Publishing House, 1987, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Most of them were "Kizylbashi" - Azerbaijanis from Iran. Among them, there were many enterprising traders and owners of real estate, which generates income. They mostly worked as "ambals" - dock worker under the supervision of foreman contractors elected from their numbers.

<sup>8</sup> For the most part, the Armenian settlers were skilled builders and masons. A large part of the stone buildings in the historical part of Krasnovodsk was built by their hands. At the same time, Armenians conducted private trade and opened shops (dukhangs) and restaurants. They were competent financiers, bankers and skilled suppliers of goods. Armenians worked as suppliers for state-owned enterprises, served as officials on the railway and in the administration of the mayor, were officers of the garrison and civilian employees of military reserve units.

<sup>9</sup> The ethnic composition was quite motley: Russians, Persians, Armenians, Tatars, Poles. A little Turkmen lived here at that time - only 51 people.

<sup>10</sup> Most of them were farmhands with a little number of medium and small merchants and money-changers. However, there were the owners of large wealth among Persians. They invested their capitals in the construction of caravanserais, entertainment establishments and public buildings in Krasnovodsk, Ashgabat and other cities.

Bulgarians (0.6%), Hungarians (0.3%) and others ethnicities (5.5%). People of these nationalities served in the army, on the railway, in banking and credit institutions, schools, secondary schools, theatre institutions, the military administration of the city head and the head of the trans-Caspian region.

A large part of the Ashgabat population were Azerbaijanis, Persians and Kurd natives of Iran (Iranians - 7.1%). The share of Armenians was 3.9%, Uzbeks - 2.7%, Jews - 1.3%. Arabs, Turks, Baluchis, Pashtuns and other migrants from West and South Asia amounted to 8%.

In 1913, 12,000 Turkmen lived in Ashgabat or 20% of its population. More than half of them were residents of the surrounding villages and aul (village) of the same name, which gave rise to Ashgabat. Many representatives of the Turkmen ancestral nobility who participated in the battles against the tsarist troops were amnestied and received high military ranks (up to and including colonels). They led the native administration, served in the Russian army and local police or as bailiffs and elected heads from the auls and districts. The bulk of Turkmen citizens grew agricultural products at their urban and suburban land plots for sale in the bazaar, traded products of folk crafts, was employed in the urban utility service ensuring the good working condition and functioning of artesian wells, underground water channels (kariz) and urban aqueducts (aryk) that irrigated gardens, parks and trees planted on the streets. A large part of Turkmen studied at the school of industrial workers: they worked in oil mills and other plants of the local industry and as rail layers, linemen and even locomotive driver assistants.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Turkmenistan population has been constantly replenished not only by whole families of immigrants from other countries but also by compact ethnic associations. For example, in 1910, 600 covered wagons of Baluchis moved here from Afghanistan at the same time. Keeping in mind that each covered wagon was an accounting unit of a nomadic family of 10 to 20 members, an average of 9,000 Baluchis moved to Turkmenistan at once.

At the beginning of 1913, about 620,000 people lived within the borders of modern Turkmenistan. Thus, in the 16 years since the first general census of the Russian Empire, the population of Turkmenistan has increased by 148.8 thousand people or 24%. At the same time, the share of positive migration in population growth was 13% or more than 80,000 people. The ratio of Turkmen, Russian and other nationalities was expressed as a percentage of the total population as 51%, 7.8% and 41.2%, respectively.

Big changes have taken place in the structure of the industry. In Turkmenistan, new industries have emerged providing jobs for migrants while indigenous people have been reluctant to part with their normal way of life.

Table No. 1:

**The industrial structure in Turkmenistan in 1913 (percentage)**

<b>Textile, cotton-cleaning</b>	<b>42.9 per cent</b>
<b>Food</b>	<b>37.3 per cent</b>
<b>Power plants</b>	<b>0.1 per cent</b>
<b>Mining and chemical</b>	<b>0.4 per cent</b>
<b>Other: oil-producing, printing, etc.</b>	<b>19.3 per cent</b>

By the beginning of the First World War of 1914-1918, the population of Turkmenistan increased to 700,000<sup>11</sup> people due to the influx of migrants from the central regions of Russia and refugees from Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan and natural growth. The majority of migrants were resettled in towns and urban-type settlements. There were about 60,000 Russians or 8.6%. Iranian Turks (Azerbaijanis) - or rather Persians, as they were called back then - (12%), Armenians (10%) and Uzbeks (9%) had large diasporas. The share of Turkmen (336,000 people) has decreased since the first general census and made up 48% of the total population. The remaining 13.4% were from Central Asian, Middle Eastern and European nations.

Russia, which has been developing at a high economic rate since the end of the 19th century, has been an attractive country especially for the inhabitants of the countries bordering it on the southern frontiers. During this period, migration of the border peoples to the trans-Caspian region - a part of the Russian Empire - was sent inside the country and increased its population.

This trend continued during the First World War until 1917. By 1917, the number of residents had reached about 900,000 people and 100,000 of them were living in the city. Additionally, Russians were living in cities and only a small portion (by official necessity) of them was living in rural areas. Since 1897, Russians consistently amounted to 6.5-8% of the total population. The population of other national minorities continued to grow. Turkmen were in the first place in number (more than 400,000) but their share in the population decreased to 45%.

The positive process of steady population growth in Turkmenistan was interrupted by the revolutions of 1917 and the Civil War of 1917-1922 in Russia. In Turkmenistan, this period is characterised by a decline in natural population and birth rates, deaths on the fronts and mass migration of people abroad.

Table No. 2:

#### The population of Turkmenistan as part of the Russian Empire

Turkmenistan population	1897	1913	1914	1917
<b>TOTAL in the territory of the modern Turkmenistan</b>	<b>512,487</b>	<b>620,000</b>	<b>700,000</b>	<b>900,000</b>
<b>TOTAL in the trans-Caspian region:</b>	<b>382,487</b>	-	-	-
<b>Turkmen</b>	<b>210,367</b>	<b>316,200</b>	<b>336,000</b>	<b>405,000</b>
<b>Russians</b>	<b>27,921</b>	<b>48,360</b>	<b>60,200</b>	<b>65,700</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>144,197</b>	<b>255,440</b>	<b>303,800</b>	<b>429,300</b>

## 2.2. The early Soviet period

At the end of the Civil War in Russia, the population of Turkmenistan decreased to 750,000 people or by 17% compared to 1917. The sharp drop in the number of country's inhabitants occurred due to Turkmen and other nomads, who traditionally moved to live in safer places.

In 1922, 340,000 Turkmen remained in Turkmenistan or 45% of its total population. The land plots freed by them in the agricultural oases of the middle and lower right bank and delta of Amu Darya (now Lebap

<sup>11</sup> According to other data it was 900,000 people but that does not correspond to the overall dynamics of population growth.

and Dashoguz Region (welayat)) were occupied by Uzbeks. They were fleeing the hardships of the Civil War migrating from the Khanate of Khiva and Emirate of Bukhara<sup>12</sup>. In 1922, the number of Uzbeks in Turkmenistan where many of their tribesmen lived before the migration in 1917-1922 amounted to 80,000 people or 10.7%.

Russians concentrated in the cities did not leave them. On the contrary, the number of Russians and their share of the population increased to 70,000 people or by 9.3%. The number of Russians increased due to natural growth but to a large extent due to the influx of compatriots who took an active part in the revolutionary events within the Red Army, Revolutionary Committees (Revcoms) and the Soviet administration. The same reasons can be attributed to the increase in the number of Jews in Turkmenistan amounting to about 1,500 people in 1922 or 0.2 per cent of the total population. They were mostly promoted to the party and central or local bodies of the Soviet government.

The social and political upheavals of the Civil War have shuffled the ethnic map of Turkmenistan, and the ratio of more than thirty ethnic groups living there has changed with a sharp decline in the number of most nationalities compared to the previous period.

Table No. 3:

**The population of Turkmenistan in 1922**

<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>750,000</b>
<b>Turkmen</b>	340,000
<b>Uzbeks</b>	80,000
<b>Russians</b>	70,000
<b>OTHER (more than 30 nationalities)</b>	260,000

With the formation of the USSR in 1922 and the pacification of the warring parties in Turkmenistan, the country began showing a stable population growth, in which migration processes played a decisive role in the initial period of Soviet power. In 1924, a national disengagement was held in Central Asia resulting in the cities: Kerki, Old and New Chardzhou with rural districts became part of Soviet Turkmenistan, which has acquired modern state borders. It also included the western part of the Khanate of Khiva in the delta of Amu Darya. These territories were inhabited mainly by Uzbeks in cities and Turkmen in the steppe. In the same year, with the consent of the Soviet authorities in Turkmenistan, more than 10,000 Baluchis settled in the Tejen oasis.

By 1926, most of the Turkmen had returned to their homeland having fled the country from the civil war but failing in finding peace and prosperity in the foreign country. In the same year, about one thousand more Baluchi wagons or about 15,000 people came to the Kushka area from Afghanistan.

In Turkmenistan, the consequences of devastation were eliminated and the national economy was being restored. Cities of a new type grew near the stations of the Central Asian Railway and instead of mudbrick settlements of the settled population, and the population in these cities grew steadily. This trend continued until the late 1970s - mid-1980s.

Table No. 4:

<sup>12</sup> On 2 February 1920, the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic was formed on the territory of the Khanate of Khiva. On 8 October 1920, the Emirate of Bukhara was transformed into the Bukharan People's Soviet Republic.

## Population growth in the major cities of Turkmenistan (thousands of people) in 1917-1991

Cities	1917	1939	1959	1970	1974 <sup>13</sup>	1989	1991
Ashgabat	65	127	170	253	280	390	450
Chardzhou (Turkmenabat)	14	51	66	96	104	120	130
Mary	18	37	48	62	70	78	85
Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi)	13	21	39	49	53	59 <sup>14</sup>	68 <sup>15</sup>
Tashauz (Dashoguz)	3	15	38	63	75	82	90
Nebit-Dag (Balkanabat)	-	3.5	33	55	62	73	80

The country needed labour force, offered jobs and resonated in various regions of the USSR. At the same time, there was a system of organised reception of compatriots from Iran, Afghanistan and other countries of the West and South Asia. Also, a spontaneous relocation of people continued in this direction. All in all, this ensured that not only the population numbers of 1917 had been restored by 1926, but they also grew. The total number of people living in Turkmenistan was 998,000. Of these, 588,820 people were Turkmen and 409,180 people were migrants. These people made a decisive contribution to the restoration and development of the national economy clearing the way to modern industrialization for Turkmenistan.

Table No. 5:

## The largest ethnic groups in Turkmenistan in 1926. The total number of residents is 998,000 people

Turkmen	Uzbeks	Russians	Baluchis	Kazakhs	Ukrainians	Tatars	Azerbaijanis	Jews	Armenians
588,820	101,796	77,844	10,180	9,481	7,285	4,790	4,191	2,196	1,298
59%	10.2%	7.8%	1.02%	0.95%	0.73%	0.48%	0.42	0.22%	0.13%

**OTHER: 19,05% or 190119 people.**

From 1926 to 1937, Turkmenistan experienced industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. The two projects happened almost simultaneously. The transfer of industry to the latest technologies for that era was achieved at the cost of huge stress of the people and a sharp decline in the standard of living for the majority of the population. The transition of single farms to collective associations (cooperatives) was achieved using violent methods, which caused an active protest of the local population. Thousands of wealthy indigenous people of Turkmenistan, primarily Turkmen, joined the

<sup>13</sup> Administrative and territorial division of the Soviet Union's republics as at 1 January 1974. Publication of the Presidium of the USSR Armed Forces, M., 1974, pages 636-650.

<sup>14</sup> According to the 1989 census. According to the expert opinion - 56,703.

<sup>15</sup> According to the city's statistics department. According to the expert opinion -54,916.

struggle for their rights but could not resist the state terror, which was supported by the poor part of the people led by the National Bolsheviks. Representatives of the defeated resistance were sent to prisons and exiles, and those who escaped punishment went abroad - to Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, etc.

However, the migration in these years did not affect the number and national composition of the population. On the contrary, the number of inhabitants and their ethnic diversity has increased greatly due to the huge influx of migrants from the Central regions of Russia who fled from bloody repression and violence during the socialist reconstruction of society and hid on its outskirts. In addition, there was no total hunger in Turkmenistan, and there was work available.

Life in the country after the devastation of the Civil War was getting better thanks to intense labour. Processing plants were introduced for local raw materials including agricultural raw materials, and oil, ozokerite, salt, fishing and other industries were restored, and livestock and acreage grew. In the cities, available housing was increased and new schools, theatres and libraries were opened. Communist ideology quickly took over the masses. Revolutionary slogans and universal creation for the future of the people's good cemented society and directed it to solve large-scale social and economic problems.

As a more literate and technically prepared part of the population, European migrants made a decisive contribution to achieving set goals. But Turkmen who continued to live in the countryside were also joining the advanced civilization and its culture, science and technology. A massive campaign for technical training of labour force from indigenous nationalities was launched in the country. They replenished the class of industrial workers and specialists, formed a layer of creative intellectuals and local management.

In 1939, 1,252,000 people lived in Turkmenistan. From 1926 to 1939, the population increased by 254,000 people or an average of 19,500 people per year. At the same time, Russians (19%) were the second-largest ethnic group in the republic in 1939.

Table No. 6:

**The largest ethnic groups in Turkmenistan in 1939. The total number of residents is 1,252,000 people**

Turkmen	Russians	Ukrainians	Tatars	Uzbeks	Bela rusians	Kazakhs	Armeni ans	Azerbaija nis	Jews
463,240	237,880	100,160	93,900	81,380	75,120	66,356	50,080	40,064	6,260
37%	19%	8%	7.5%	6.5%	6%	5.3%	4%	3.2%	0.5%

**OTHER – 3% or 37,560 people.** The total number of representatives of the non-titular ethnic group - **788,760** people.

In 1926-1939. with the overall population growth, the number of citizens had more than tripled. At the same time, migrants accounted for 10-15 per cent or more in the towns of the agricultural hinterland (district centres) and 35 to 70 per cent or more in industrial centres and major cities such as New Chardzhou, New Mary, Krasnovodsk, Ashgabat and others. The increase in the urban population stimulated natural growth, as well as internal and (to an even greater extent) external migration mainly from the Soviet republics.

After the Soviet era of industrialisation and collectivisation had passed, Turkmenistan increased industrial capacity, upgraded technical equipment in villages and improved living conditions. The foundations, facilities and resources for the development of national science and culture were created. The network of secondary schools, vocational schools, and technical colleges was developed and expanded. In 1931, the Ashgabat State Teachers' Institute was opened<sup>16</sup>.

In 1928, the Arabic alphabet was replaced by Latin to introduce indigenous peoples to modern science, technical knowledge and world literature. In 1940, the Latin alphabet was replaced by the Russian alphabet due to the geopolitical situation of that time in order for people to quickly learn Russian as the only available information channel at the time to study world heritage and improve the scientific, technical and cultural level<sup>17</sup>.

By 1941, with the absolute growth of agriculture, the share of industrial products in the gross domestic product reached 73%. This economy sector and production, transport, social and cultural infrastructure related to it experienced the concentration of most of the migrants in the pre-war period. Their share in the national population of Turkmenistan, which increased by 1.5% compared to 1939 and amounted to 1,270,780 people, remained virtually unchanged, except for the increased share of Turkmen (533,700 people) or 42% of the country's population. The number of Russians has decreased slightly but practically has not changed - 234,000 people. There have been minor changes in the representative proportions of other ethnic groups, but their total number remains significant - 503,080 people.

The Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 (WWII) caused real devastation in the population of Turkmenistan, changing the quantitative and qualitative parameters of the national composition. Suffice it to say that during the four years of the War 740,000<sup>18</sup> Turkmenistan citizens or 58% of its pre-war population had died at the front. Turkmenistan had lost 185,000 citizens each year of War - young and healthy men and women who died without leaving offspring. The population of the country decreased due to malnutrition, overexertion of the psyche and physical strength. People and especially children were mowed down by diphtheria, measles, dysentery, tuberculosis, colds and other diseases. But the people survived and accomplished a colossal labour feat when they accepted and sent through their country millions of refugees, dismantled factories, military units and equipment. And they did it twice: in the early years of the War people moved them to the east and before the end of the War people moved them back to the west.

During the War, the majority of Turkmen proved themselves to be a monolithic multinational people who sacrificed themselves in the name of victory over the enemy. At the beginning of the War, the 13th Special Cavalry Division and 87th Separate Turkmen Brigade were formed, which served as the base for the 76th Infantry Division. Turkmen women announced the collection of gold and silver jewellery, sewed

<sup>16</sup> It served as a base for creating Turkmen State University in 1950 named after A.M. Gorky (now named after Mahtumkuli).

<sup>17</sup> The agenda-driven and nationalist part of the Turkmen intelligentsia has a view that the change of alphabets has become actions that break the continuity of cultural traditions and tear Turkmen away from their cultural heritage. However, in the pre-Soviet period, Turkmen were mostly illiterate. They maintained cultural traditions in oral folk art. Books of great philosophers, whose ethnicity is still disputed by all Iranian-Turkic peoples, were written in different alphabets in Arabic, Persian and Chagatai (Mahtumkuli). Ordinary Turkmen have never read them. The Arabic alphabet was used by clerics, scribes and occasional merchants, as contracts in the East did not matter much. The transition to Cyrillic became a powerful boost to understanding science and the creation of Soviet national literature, which served as a base for the modern Turkmen language. With the return of the Latin alphabet in 1993, millions of copies of books printed on the basis of Russian font over a nearly 100-year period were destroyed. Among them textbooks, photo albums, geographical maps, scientific monographs, encyclopaedic dictionaries and other reference literature on various subject areas were destroyed beside fiction. But none of those in power recognized such vandalism as breaking the cultural tradition.

<sup>18</sup> Some off-system sources indicate a figure of 200,000. But this is not confirmed by the archival documents that in independent Turkmenistan formed the base for the issue of a series of books "Şöhrat" with separate lists of the front-line soldiers who had actually died or returned from the War for each region (welayat).

warm clothes to the soldiers, collected food parcels and sent them to the front. Ports in the Caspian Sea and the Amu Darya, a railway, an oil refinery built and commissioned in the summer of 1943 in Krasnovodsk, fishing flotillas, oil fields and other facilities of strategic importance worked in the special regime of high responsibility.

A large number of refugees and the increase in military units and paramilitary installations in the country have not affected the steady decline of Turkmenistan's population across all ethnic groups. Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Belarusians, Russians, Ukrainians and Tatars suffered especially heavy damage because they were mostly living in cities where conscription was held at an accelerated pace. In addition, education, the experience of conscripts with vehicles, initial military training and their conformity to the ideology of the state and political requirements for Red Army soldiers were taken into account. These criteria were more met by the inhabitants of cities.

In the countryside where the majority of Turkmen, Uzbeks and other indigenous ethnic groups of Central Asia lived, mobilisation faced some difficulties. Some objectors were hiding from military service in steppe and mountain shelters. At the beginning of the War, the hidden (secret) migration of Turkmen, Uzbeks, Baluchis, Pashtuns, etc. from Turkmenistan to Iran and Afghanistan was noted. For example, the entire collective farms<sup>19</sup> of Turkmen went abroad, which also negatively affected demographic parameters.

In general, the villagers and the inhabitants of the cities met the harsh tests of wartime with dignity. 70,000 Turkmen were decorated with orders and medals, 104 of them became Heroes of the Soviet Union and 15 were awarded the ranks of full cavaliers of the Order of Glory<sup>20</sup>.

### 2.3. The population of Turkmenistan in 1945-1989

In 1945, Turkmenistan's total population fell below the numbers in 1926 and amounted to 870,000 people. Of these, 52.4% or 455,700 people were Turkmen. Russians made up 14.6%, or 127,000 people of the total population. Uzbeks - 10.9%, or 95,000 people. Ukrainians - 4.3% or 37,200 people. Tatars - 3.4% or 29,750 people, Armenians - 2.3% or 20,000 people; Azerbaijanis - 1.95%, or 17,000 people; Jews - 1.0% or 9,000 people; Belarusians - 0.5% or 4,300 people. The remaining ethnic groups accounted for 8.2% or 75,050 people, of which 18,000 were Kazakhs. It should be noted that the demographic situation was dominated by women, the elderly and adolescents.

During the War, Turkmenistan's population decreased by 400,780 people. The number of Turkmen decreased by 14.6% or 78,000 people. At the same time, the number of Uzbeks has increased and they took third place in the demographic table. In percentage terms, the war caused the greatest damage to the Tatars, Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Slavic ethnic groups, which were reduced by 50 per cent or more, of them Russians - 45.7%, Ukrainians - 63%, and Belarusians - 90.3%. The diaspora has shrunk significantly: Kazakhs by 72%, Tatars by 68.3%, Armenians by 60%, and Azerbaijanis by 57.7%.

The earthquakes of 1946 in Kazandzhik and especially the Ashgabat earthquake of 6 October 1948 increased the population decline. According to most modern sources, 177,000 people died in the city and surrounding villages at that time. Of these, 100,000 to 110,000<sup>21</sup> died in Ashgabat itself, where

<sup>19</sup> The entire auls had left, which during the period of continuous collectivisation (1929-1930) were formally transformed into collective farms - collective pastoral and agricultural farms.

<sup>20</sup> During the War, 19,000 Turkmen soldiers and officers were honoured with orders and medals. The increase in the number of awardees is due to the refinement of their lists in the post-war period up to the present day.

<sup>21</sup> The figures are presumptive, as at the time of the earthquake 120,000 to 150,000 people lived in Ashgabat. So far, conflicting information about the number of the city's population still exists. Some say its 116,600, 117,765, 120,000, 130,000, 150,000 or even 80,000. There is no unanimity on the number of dead as well. In the first days

there were up to 70% of Russian-speaking residents: Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Caucasians who suffered the greatest losses.

Despite social, political, military and natural disasters, Turkmenistan's population was rapidly recovering. The country has entered a period of a natural increase in population with a positive migration growth. Tens of thousands of people from various parts of the Soviet Union worked on the restoration of Ashgabat, modernisation of industry, exploration and development of natural deposits and expansion of agricultural land. As was repeatedly noted from the stands of the Central Party and Soviet bodies of Turkmenistan, thanks to the significant contribution of Russians, Ukrainians, Tatars, Kazakhs and other migrants the industry and energetics of the country's national economic complex have been restored and updated, the production and processing of hydrocarbons and other mineral resources have improved and harvests of cotton, wheat and other crops have increased. From 1955 to 1962, representatives of 36 nationalities from all the republics of the Soviet Union worked on the construction of the Karakum Canal. Many of them settled in Turkmenistan, increasing its demographic potential. In 1946, the city of Nebit-Dag<sup>22</sup> was founded, becoming another impulse to the influx of migrants. Turkmen State University was opened in 1950. In 1951, the Academy of Sciences<sup>23</sup> was established with a network of research institutes.

According to the results of the 1959 All-Union Census, 1,516,375 people lived in Turkmenistan, 46% or 700,000 of them in towns and cities. Turkmens made up the majority of the population: 60,92% or 923,724 people. Russians - 17,32% or 262,701 people. Uzbeks - 8,26% or 125,231 people. Tatars - 1,97% or 99,944 people. Kazakhs - 4,59% or 69,552 people. Ukrainians - 1,38% or 20,955 people. Armenians - 1,3% or 19,696 people. Azerbaijanis - 0,85% or 12,868 people. Bashkirs, Baluchis, Bulgarians, Georgians, Dargins, Jews, Karakalpaks, Kyrgyz, Koreans, Kurds, Laks, Lezginis, Mari, Moldovans, Mordvins, Germans, Ossetians, Persians, Poles, Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uighurs, Chuvash and other ethnic groups represented their ethnic groups in the tenths, hundredths and thousandths of Turkmenistan's population.

From 1959 to 1989, Turkmenistan's annual population growth rate ranged from 1.5 to 3.5 %. Population growth over 30 years amounted to 2,006,342 people or an average of 66,878 people a year<sup>24</sup>.

In 1989, the number of Turkmenistan's inhabitants reached 3,522,717 people, of them Turkmen - 2,536,606 people or 72,01%.<sup>25</sup> The ethnic composition has hardly changed, but the proportion of ethnic groups in the population of the country has decreased. Russians - 333,892 people (9.48%); Uzbeks - 317,333 people (9.01%); Kazakhs - 87,802 people (2.49%); Tatars - 39,245 people (1.11%); Ukrainians - 35,578 people (1.01%); Azerbaijanis - 33,365 people (0.95%); Armenians - 31,829 people (0.9%); Balochi - 28,280 people (0.8%); Belarusians - 9,220 people (0.26%).

Residents of Turkmenistan representing more than a hundred nationalities<sup>26</sup> worked hand in hand, all were equal before the law and undivided by national, religious or social grounds. Everyone had equal access to education, health care and career development. Along with Turkmen and Russian general education schools, there were educational institutions for compactly living ethnic minorities. In the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Supreme Council, the Council of Ministers of

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after the earthquake, the death toll was conditionally set at 52,500 - 53,500 people and later reduced to 37,500 people. According to the estimate of the Ashgabat City Statistics Office, 63,400 people remained in the capital of Turkmenistan after the earthquake.

<sup>22</sup> Today it's the city of Balkanabat, the administrative centre of the welayat of the same name.

<sup>23</sup> It was liquidated in 1998 and reinstated in 2008.

<sup>24</sup> According to the UN. Population in 1959 - 1,514,687 Population in 1989 - 3,524,823 Increase of 2,010,136. Or 67,004 per year

<sup>25</sup> In 1970, the population of Turkmenistan was 215,880 people. Turkmen accounted for 65%. The percentage of Russians decreased to 14.5%. Accordingly, the share of other ethnic groups except Uzbeks in the general population of Turkmenistan decreased.

<sup>26</sup> Some sources say about 40, 50 or 70 nationalities. According to the authors of the report, the figure "100" is an ideological constant about the brotherhood of more than a hundred Soviet socialist nations of the USSR.

Turkmenistan and the local authorities and administration the principle of proportionality of national representation was applied. In district centres and village councils, as well as in geographically accountable enterprises, more than 90% of managers were Turkmen. The paperwork management in the district institutions was conducted in the native Turkmen language, which was used on a par with the national Russian language.

The 1989 Census took place during the Perestroika era initiated (as was explained to the Soviet people) for good purposes by the leadership of the CPSU led by M. Gorbachev. However, the reform of the totalitarian system in the absence of state will of the initiator of transformations and his associates ran into serious social and political problems and upheavals within the Soviet state, which determined its disintegration and formation of independent states in the post-Soviet space.

### 3. Turkmenistan. Migration of national minorities in 1990-2018

#### 3.1. Turkmenistan in the early years of independence

Perestroika of the USSR led to large-scale resettlement of people within a huge country. Even before the collapse of the Union, in the Soviet Union's republics, the priority of the titular nation was established, which reserved for national minorities the role of the second-class citizens<sup>27</sup>. Anticipating the colossal restriction of their rights in all spheres of social and political life, people were leaving their homes and returning to their historical homeland a few years before the formation of independent states.

The same process took place in Turkmenistan in the early 1980s. It is typically illustrated by the city of Krasnovodsk, where, as in Ashgabat, the Russian-speaking population was concentrated as part of the national minorities who came to the country at various times. The city was experiencing the increase in the long-distance and inter-republican exchange of apartments, as it was difficult to buy housing in Russia or another republic because of the real poverty of the citizens of the USSR, majority of whom lived only on wages. However, many people bought apartments and houses outside the borders of the TSSR. Seeing the chance to leave using the support of the state, hundreds of people went to Siberia and other regions of Russia using the resettlement sets of labour force departments. The first to leave the country were ones who settled in Turkmenistan more recently and had parents, brothers, sisters, friends and distant relatives in their new homes. Initially, the smooth but continuous migration from the city outside Turkmenistan was led not by the Russians but by representatives of other ethnic groups - Kazakhs and Armenians<sup>28</sup> and partly Dagestani<sup>29</sup> who were pushed by the events in Karabakh and

<sup>27</sup> This is clearly seen in the example of the Armenian USSR, where in the early 1980s air flights to Moscow and other cities of the USSR were declared via the airport speakers as foreign, and where by the mid-90s there were actually no Russians except for inter-ethnic couples. Here, for the first time in the territory of the Union, there was a conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, which escalated in 1988-1989 to an ethnic war for the possession of Nagorno-Karabakh.

<sup>28</sup> In 1989, there were Turkmen pogroms of Armenian cooperatives in Ashgabat and Nebit-Dag instigated by the country's leadership - mostly small retail stalls were affected. Outraged nationalists smashed Armenian pavilions in Ashgabat, beat their owners, shouted nationalist slogans and calls for withdrawal from the USSR. None of them was detained, none of the instigators and perpetrators of pogroms was punished neither administratively nor criminally for undermining the constitutional foundations of the republic or at least for hooliganism. The clash between Turkmen and Armenians in Nebit-Dag was prevented by militia units from Krasnovodsk, supported by the soldiers of the city garrison acting on the orders of the regional party organization and the regional executive committee. The hell-raisers high on hashish were cut off in parts from the crowd, which was moving along the street as a wide river and were pushed into police vans and taken to the police station and detention centre.

Mangyshlak<sup>30</sup>, and then refugees from Baku and Meskhetian Turks from Fergana. At the same time, the inhabitants of the multinational Krasnovodsk remained faithful to the international brotherhood of nations, perceiving other people's suffering as their personal pain as they did more than once in history<sup>31</sup>.

The last All-Union Census of 1989 took place at a troubled time for the state. Its data are recognized as reliable by many researchers. They are often used in research papers on demographics and social journalism as basic indices. However, they cannot be considered absolutely accurate. The country's residents were accounted for in a difficult political environment. There were many places not covered by the census because of their danger to the counters and the reluctance of the local authorities who felt changes and weakening of control from the centralised State promising them undeniable benefits. Including Turkmenistan, the census in the Union's republics was conducted without due responsibility and full-scale rounds of citizens. Summary statements were based on census forms filled out according to pre-census questionnaires with certain changes recommended by the authorities. The main requirement was to show a progressive increase in the population indicating a high standard of living of the Soviet people. At the same time, the Turkmen political class widely represented in 1989 in the highest Party and Soviet leadership, the middle and especially local chain of government, was possessed by obsessive desire to increase the share of Turkmen in demographic reports. The share of national minorities was determined mechanically often leaving the previous values intact in the primary bodies of statistics - the main thing was to reflect as many Turkmen as possible in all regions.

In the era of Turkmenistan's independence, this desire took on an ugly grotesque form. All Turkmen censuses and periodic newsletters did not reflect the actual picture of the country's population in a general and structured way. The statisticians simply did not know it and did not want to know it because they fulfilled and still fulfil the political order. In an effort to inflate the "paper population" as much as possible (while ignoring real mass statistical accounting), national statistics seem to be guided by primitive notions of human reproduction just like infusoria in a flask. No amount of extrapolation, interpolation or other methods of processing false information can help find the grains of truth in such unsubstantiated statistics. They will only reflect the art of the authors in critical reflection of the individual errors they discovered in statistical forgeries. As a result, in the print media and Internet, there will be a mass of reports relatively truthful in form but absolutely meaningless in content.

If one wants to explore the topic of the report, the more productive method will be not the comparison of the figures of dubious information from the annals of official statistics and its verifications but the method of quantitative analysis of national minorities as less affected by the falsification of Turkmen demographics and shedding light on its bespoke forging.

This method applied to Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) as a typical multi-ethnic city in Turkmenistan with a large proportion of ethnic groups living in it helped to define the reference points and the algorithm of urban population growth and migration from 1989 to 2018 and apply them to other cities, welayats and the entire country, considering situational parameters. It also helped in analysing available demographic data from Turkmen officialdom and statements of the UN, foreign embassies, consulates, foreign scientific centres, Internet copyright materials, as well as lists of human resources departments of some

<sup>29</sup> In 1989, conflicts broke out in Nebit-Dag between Dagestani and Turkmen working in oil fields. Turkmen publicly and dirty insulted Dagestani (who were mainly Lezgins). Defending their honor and dignity, though small in numbers in the city, Lezgins came to the central square and demanded equality.

<sup>30</sup> In 1989, Aktau and other cities of Mangyshlak of the Kazakh USSR had national fights broke out between Kazakhs and Caucasians: Azerbaijanis, Chechens and Dagestani.

<sup>31</sup> They met refugees from Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan at railway and sea stations and raised warm clothes, food and money for them. On the days of the Armenian Spitak tragedy in December 1988, all the services of the Krasnovodsk Air Squadron, which included mainly Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Tatars, Armenians, Caucasians and other Russian-speaking residents of the city were on duty day and night at the airport transporting medicines, bedding, tents, clothes, heaters, chlorine lime and other disinfectants to Armenia.

enterprises and institutions in Turkmenistan. Relatively large national minorities living in certain administrative and territorial borders were taken into account, and the remainder of the population was united in the "other" group.

The basis of Turkmenistan's external migration was made up of representatives of European nations and the nation of the Caucasus who played a decisive role in shaping the country's state foundations and economy. Internal migration took place at the expense of ethnic groups, originally living inside the borders of modern Turkmenistan and in cross-border territories. Therefore, ethnic minorities were conditionally divided into external (extra) or western and internal (inter) or eastern migrants joining the population of Turkmenistan. Inter-migrants from small eastern ethnic groups can be attributed to the Russian-speaking community only by a long stretch of the imagination - the tool of inter-ethnic communication for them is the slang of the Turkmen language. At the same time, inter-migration refers to the increase in the population through incorporation and entry of Uzbeks, Carakalpaks, Persians, Baluchis, Pashtuns and other ethnic minorities rather than the mechanical movement of Turkmen citizens within the country. Visual observations were widely used to correct the data with the detection of the percentage of the ethnic population in the monitored groups.

According to the 1989 census, **3,522,717 people** were living in Turkmenistan. Among them: Turkmen - 2,536,606; Russians - 333,892; Uzbeks - 317,333; Kazakhs - 87,802; Ukrainians - 35,578; Azerbaijanis - 33,365; Armenians - 31,829; Lezgins - 10,425<sup>32</sup>; Belarusians - 9,220. The natives of Europe, the European republics of the USSR and the Kazakh USSR made up<sup>33</sup> 633,080 people or 17 per cent of Turkmenistan's population<sup>34</sup>. From the 1980s to the present day, they form migration waves from Turkmenistan to other countries.

In Krasnovodsk, the percentage of national minorities lived was the highest compared to similar rates for other cities and districts of Turkmenistan. According to the All-Union Census, as at 1 January 1989, there were 58,854<sup>35</sup> people in Krasnovodsk<sup>36</sup>. Eleven months later, however, on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the city's founding, the newspaper Krasnovodsky Worker reported that 63,000<sup>37</sup> people live in the city. Of these Russians - 47% (29,422); Turkmen - 16.4% (10,266); Kazakhs - 11.2 (7,011); Azerbaijanis -7% (4,382); Armenians - 4.8 (3,004), Ukrainians - 4.5% (2,817), Tatars - 2% (1,253). In this publication, a suburban urban-type settlement Ufra (3,747 people) where the census was conducted separately had been added to the population of the city (58,854 people). Officials selectively used the percentage indices of the national composition from the All-Union Census and depending on the situation applied them to the city then to the city council on which territory the city and the settlement were located<sup>38</sup>.

The discrepancy of numbers in the counting of the city's population attracted the attention of the public. With the help of employees of the city's statistics department, it was found<sup>39</sup> that in 1989 there were 54,800 people actually living in Krasnovodsk and 1,903 people in the Ufra settlement. That's the total of 56,703 people. The ethnic composition of the population was also different compared to the

<sup>32</sup> There were 15,963 Dagestani living in Turkmenistan. Among them: Avars - 523, Aghuls - 79, Dargins - 1,626, Kumyks - 322, Laks - 2,441, Lezgins - 10,425, Tabasarans - 345, Rutuls - 53, Tsakhur - 17, Nogais - 152, Tats - 32.

<sup>33</sup> According to the latest All-Union Census in Turkmenistan (without Uzbeks and other national minorities who traditionally live in the country).

<sup>34</sup> 25% of the number of Turkmen.

<sup>35</sup> Since 1993, the city has been given the name of the Turkmen title of the first president S. Niyazov - Turkmenbashi. Since the renaming was illegitimate and the city is known as Krasnovodsk in the world, the authors further call the city of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi).

<sup>36</sup> Prior to that, available sources had measured the size of the city's population as 65,000 to 67,000 people.

<sup>37</sup> This figure has remained virtually unchanged during the 30 years of Turkmenistan's independence irrefutably proving the absurdity of parameters not only in demographics but also largely in the economy and public life.

<sup>38</sup> According to the 1989 census, there were 62,601 people on the territory of the Krasnovodsk City Council (city + Ufra settlement).

<sup>39</sup> According to the primary census documents.

official data of the 1989 Census: There were 21,547 or 38% Russians living in the city and settlement; Kazakhs - 5,120 or 9%; Turkmen - 13,041 or 23%; Azerbaijanis - 5,670 or 10%; Armenians - 2,384 or 4.2%; Tatars - 1,650 or 2.9%, Ukrainians - 1,744 or 3%. Other nationalities - 5,547 people. From 1974 to 1989, the population of Krasnovodsk increased by 1,800 people increasing by an average of only 120 people per year, indicating the demographic stagnation in the city and its cause - migration. The vast majority of the settlers were Russians and other Slavs, which was concealed in every possible way at the end of the era of the "brotherhood of the peoples of the USSR". Nearly 70 per cent (69.5%) of citizens leaving Turkmenistan were Russians<sup>40</sup>.

The last All-Union Census became the eve of mass migrations in Turkmenistan, which have been rolling in waves since the early 1990s to the present day. In 1979-1989, Russians and migrants<sup>41</sup> of other ethnicities left the country with dignity in terms of amenities and material security. They ordered containers to send household items at the railway station, bought tickets for direct flights from Krasnovodsk to Moscow or other cities in Russia or the Union's republics. At that time and until 1993, the Krasnovodsk-Tashkent train with access through Uzbekistan to the railway tracks of Central Asia, Central Russia, the Urals, Siberia and the Far East was departing from the city every day.

In October 1990, S. Niyazov - Chairman of the Supreme Council and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkmenistan at the same time - became President of the Republic of Turkmenistan. On 27 October 1991, Turkmenistan's independence was declared<sup>42</sup>. On 18 May 1992, the Constitution was adopted declaring Turkmenistan a democratic, secular and legal state in the form of a presidential republic.

Cities and regions were being renamed throughout the country. In early 1991, the regions held re-elections to the Councils of People's Deputies. The overwhelming number of seats in them were taken by nationalist-minded candidates. After that, ethnic cleansing in enterprises, government institutions, party and social organisations began in the centre and local regions. Staff workers of the non-titular nation were fired because of downsizing or demoted in order to retain professionals.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country found itself in a difficult financial and economic situation: severed economic ties, depreciated Soviet money, mass closures of enterprises, job losses, an increasing number of unemployed, shortages of food and basic necessities forced the government of Turkmenistan to introduce a rationing system in the country to remove social tensions, which triggered the country's first wave of mass migration. The transition to nine-year education and Latin alphabet, reduction in the number of universities, colleges and vocational schools with a corresponding decrease in the admission of students increased the level of migration. Introduced on 1 November 1993, the national currency (manat) with an exchange rate of 1.99 M for \$1 quickly depreciated pointing to the impending unpromising life of national minorities.

The people became more and more impoverished by the minute and the country started accepting humanitarian aid from foreign countries: worn shoes, clothes, underwear and other things that were distributed among the population. Despite rumours of charging fees for utilities and other services in dollars from citizens who have taken Russian citizenship, eviction from apartments, seizure of private houses and dismissal from work, a significant part of the residents went to the consular departments of the Russian Embassy in Turkmenistan to mark their Soviet-made passports with Russian citizenship. All these people became potential candidates to leave the country. More than 75% of them were Russian.

<sup>40</sup> In order to reduce the digital burden on the text, this national minority as the largest and most revealing of non-indigenous ethnic groups of Turkmenistan will be taken by us as an indicator of migration using correlation coefficients to reflect the number of migrants of other ethnic groups where necessary

<sup>41</sup> The status of a migrant appeared later - back then people were just leaving wherever they could.

<sup>42</sup> In December 1991, the USSR ceased to exist, giving way to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

### 3.2. The city of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) as a mirror of Slavic migration in 1993-2018

During these years, flea markets grew like mushrooms after rain in Krasnovodsk<sup>43</sup> that was renamed to Turkmenbashi in 1993. In order to go to the ethnic homeland, people sold for nothing the expensive things preserved from Soviet times as well as everything that had any demand. Apartments and private houses privatised in Soviet times were bought by the indigenous people for ridiculously low prices: A four-room apartment went for \$500-\$700, a two-room - for \$250-\$300, a stone house with a living space of 100-120 square meters - for \$1,500 - \$2,000.

While Soviet transport tariffs persisted and rail and air traffic were uninterrupted, many members of ethnic minorities - mostly women - became "shuttles" to save the family's minimum living wage. As well as for Turkmen women, who got into similar life circumstances, the main destinations for them were the routes Ashgabat-Moscow, Ashgabat-Istanbul and Ashgabat-Dubai.

On 23 December 1993, a dual citizenship agreement was signed between Russia and Turkmenistan, which came into force on 18 May 1995. The agreement became a powerful factor that has increased the migration wave in Turkmenistan. An additional boost to migration was the granting of the status of migrants to the citizens of Turkmenistan by the Russian Federation based on the agreement between Turkmenistan and Russia. This agreement, as well as the growing nationalism and authoritarianism in Turkmenistan, became the main factors of the giant first wave of Russian migration to Russia in the mid-90s.

As throughout the country, the city of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi), which became a mirror of the exodus of Russians and other ethnic minorities (former extra-migrants who ensured the formation and development of statehood, economy and culture) from Turkmenistan, also saw huge queues for obtaining the status of a migrant.

In 1995, the first census was held in independent Turkmenistan. According to its results, 65,126 people lived in Turkmenbashi, including 32.8% of Russians, 29.8% of Turkmen and 37.4% of others. However, according to independent experts and analysts of Turkmenistan, the number of residents of the city registered in the residents' registration office was 52,600 people. In 2002 it was 46,500. In 13 years<sup>44</sup>, the city's actual population has shrunk by 18% and the number of Russians has reduced by 40.65%.

In April 2003, a protocol was signed between Turkmenistan and the Russian Federation on termination of the dual citizenship agreement adopted on 23 December 1993. This event became another boost for the resettlement of ethnic minority citizens from Turkmenistan. In 2002-2004, the second wave of mass migration of citizens of the non-titular nation has risen. Despite the raised obstacles with container shipping<sup>45</sup>, the lack of passenger service by rail and other problems, migration was increasing. To a certain extent, it was stimulated by the permit existing in Turkmenistan in 2002-2010 for migrants allowing them to privatise housing at a residual value and sell it at a market price. Prices in the real estate market remained almost the same, but it was still better than nothing. Purchasers of cheap housing were Turkmen who moved en masse to the cities and had no housing there before. Most of the privatised apartments were locked and barred in the hope of better times. Resettlement from Turkmenistan to Russia was governed by additional Protocols between Russia and Turkmenistan.

<sup>43</sup> Hereinafter referred to as Turkmenbashi.

<sup>44</sup> From 1989 to 2002.

<sup>45</sup> The containers were sent only from Ashgabat, which is hundreds of kilometres away from most regional centres. For example, the distance from Turkmenbashi to Ashgabat is more than 550 km; to Dashoguz - 560 km; to Turkmenabat - 580 km. People had to order trucks and overpay a lot of money or just give up the acquired property.

The overestimation of statistics in demographics has become a steady trend in Turkmenistan. In Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi), the number of residents broke records from year to year. As at 1, January 2007, it reached 100,000 people<sup>46</sup>. Of these: Russians - 18.6%, Turkmen - 57.7%, others - 23.7%. According to the adjusted data of the employees of the city's statistics department, there were 59,000 residents in the city. Among them: Russians - 17 %, Turkmen - 62 %, others - 21%. The increase in the share of Turkmen and "other minorities" in the city's population came at the expense of the settlement of Turkmen, Uzbeks and partially Tajiks and other intern-migrants to the vacant apartments and houses of former extra-migrants. Moreover, if earlier in these dwellings lived 1-2 to a maximum of 5 people, the new tenants were multi-family - up to 7-10 people. At the same time, along with the Russians, the share of traditionally indigenous people that were residents of the city - Ukrainians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Persians, Tatars, Kazakhs - decreased in the population.

On 23 July 2007, a decree was issued on the creation of Awaza - the first National Tourist Area in Turkmenistan. Large-scale construction of the sea resort facilities began. At the same time, industrial facilities were being constructed at the Turkmenbashinsky Oil Refinery Network (TORN), along with residential buildings, a port and chemical facilities in the suburbs of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) and intensive development of the offshore shelf in the Turkmen sector of the Caspian Sea. The construction has given thousands of new jobs to citizens and residents of other regions of Turkmenistan. At the peak of the work, 10-20 or more thousand people worked there at the same time. Of these, 90% were guest workers mostly from the Dashoguz welayat - Turkmen and Uzbeks.

The vast majority of the builders did not have residence permits, but the population of the city continued to grow according to the reports of the city's statistics department as if all workers who came from other places were included in the permanent population of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi).

As we already emphasized, according to the statistics of the city for 2007, the 100,000 population on paper was reduced in 2008 because of its absurdity by order from authorities to 64,570 people. Two years later, the figure in the reports of the state statistics department rose to 73,940 people<sup>47</sup>. When counting the population on the basis of nationality, employees of the state statistics service applied almost unchanged coefficients of previous years. According to insiders, the real number of residents of the city in 2010 was only 62,300 people.

In 2012, the population of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) and the ratio of national groups did not change much either according to the inflated data of the city's statistics department or results of verifications.

According to insiders, the total census of Turkmenistan's<sup>48</sup> population and housing stock in December 2012 was a bolt out of the blue for its initiators revealing to them a picture of the anti-state consequences of the ramped-up flywheel of nationalism and colossally false demographic reporting. According to independent analysts, the figures of the 2012 census<sup>49</sup> were lower than those announced in mid-2006<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> A year later, this fantastic figure was replaced in the reporting of the city's statistics department by the number 64,570, which is also overstated by 1.5-2 thousand.

<sup>47</sup> According to Wikipedia, the population of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) in 2008 was 73,803 people.

<sup>48</sup> Census data has not yet been published.

<sup>49</sup> The 2012 census, which began in fact in 2011, was conducted at a low organisational and technical level while squandering funds by corrupt management. Only a part of the employees of the small in numbers offices of the State Statistics Committee carried out local rounds to each household without attracting a sufficient number of community workers. Counters responsible for filling out questionnaires were mostly young female employees, who were saddled with unbearable burden so they physical could not cope with the task.

<sup>50</sup> Determining demographic numbers in Turkmenistan is akin to being in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn't there. For example, according to preliminary data of official household surveys in 2011, the population of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) amounted to 48,000 people against 73,940 people in 2010 by the state statistics department. Of course, 48,000 that was almost in line with the city's population in 1970 were adjusted and increased by concerned officials. Researchers (including respected international organizations, embassies and

2007-2012 in Turkmenistan was a time of GDP growth and a relatively stable state of society. Colossal construction of civilian and industrial facilities provided the population with jobs and stimulated internal migration from places of the excess population to new buildings. In this case, Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) became a social and economic model reflecting the processes common to all regions.

Dozens of recreational facilities were erected and commissioned in the Awaza Tourist Area, departmental housing construction accelerated<sup>51</sup>, new production facilities were upgraded and built at TORN and other public sector enterprises, 1st category roads and modern overpasses were built. In 2014, construction of a new port began, and in the vicinity of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) new plants for the production of commercial natural gas, polypropylene, polyethylene and carbamide were constructed and operating, and the offshore oil and gas fields closest to the city were developed. Private business in the form of construction, transport, electrical and other individual enterprises (IP) servicing construction sites and oil and gas fields has become more active.

Huge construction absorbed considerable manpower. Mainly Dashoguz worked at the construction sites, who agreed to any wage thus making severe competition to the residents of the city. Let alone domestic general contractors, the human resources departments of foreign companies were headed by indigenous individuals who conducted the practice of covert discrimination of employees by nationality. Bribery flourished among the staff - it was possible to get a job even in the middle ranks of managers for a certain bribe. The individual enterprises of Russians, Ukrainians and other Slavs, which opened in a limited number, did not exist for long. In order to protect themselves from endless checks and quibbles of financial, fire emergency, technical and other services headed by the members of the titular nation, the owners of the IPs had to appoint their "friends" - ethnic Turkmen - as executive directors, who commandeered the property of their yesterday's comrades in their favour under flimsy and in some cases even staged pretexts.

Russians and other Slavs were gladly accepted to foreign oil and gas companies - Petronas, Dragon Oil, Vozrozhdenie and others<sup>52</sup>. However, the official personnel policy - to hire only indigenous people - put Russians in the position of second-class people and very few of them stayed in their offices even in Russian companies. The Azerbaijanis, who were quickly learning Turkish because it is somewhat similar to their language, found themselves in a relatively better position. They took subcontracts from Turkish firms for transport, plumbing and service maintenance in various segments of companies' production processes and held engineering and forwarding positions in them. In the offices of foreign companies, including South Korean enterprises, young Armenian females worked together with Azerbaijanis, among others in the information and computer departments. Rarely they were Russian and other Slav girls.

Table No. 7:

**Timeline of the population dynamics of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) from 1874 to 2018.**

1874	1894	1901	1909	1913	1917	1939	1959	1970	1972
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research centres) are dealing with phantoms of a demographic hoax, in which it is possible to approach the relatively real figures of Turkmen demographics only if you have high-level access.

<sup>51</sup> Residential houses with apartments of improved layout and increased comfort were built only by TORN. Under the contract with IP (!), Krasnovodsky (Turkmenbashinsky) hyakimlyk (Mayor's Office) has erected the only residential building since the beginning of independence (in 25 years!) and to this day - a four-storey 24-apartment building in the Cheremushki district of the city. At the same time, the state spent tens of billions of dollars on urban projects in Ashgabat to make the capital an ostentatious symbol of prosperity and turn it into a world-class White City.

<sup>52</sup> Capable Russian guys went to the UAE and other countries of the Middle East to earn money in foreign companies. But there weren't many of them.

TURKMENISTAN: THE POPULATION AND MIGRATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

400	5,500	6,375	7,722	9,353	13,000	21,000	39,000	49,000	51,000
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Table No. 7 (continued):

1974	1979	1989	1995	2002	2007	2010	2012	2015	2018
53,000	53,250	56,703 <sup>53</sup>	52,500	46,500	59,000	62,300	60,504	63,500	64,220

From 2009 to 2011, the first eight hotels in Awaza National Tourist Area were commissioned able to accommodate 2,500 people simultaneously. In hotels, the same selective principle of hiring people existed. Russians and other members of ethnic minorities were employed in small numbers as workhands and lifeguards. There rarely were any Russians and other members of ethnic minorities among the hotel administrations who mainly worked as accountants<sup>54</sup> but were gradually pushed out by Turkmen.

Lack of career opportunities forced the entire families of Russian youth to go<sup>55</sup> to their historical homeland. In 2012-2015, another surge of Russian migration began across the country, which was most pronounced in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) - a historically Russian city. In 2012, the procedures of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation were simplified to implement the State programme to assist the voluntary resettlement of compatriots living abroad to the Russian Federation.

Queues formed in the consular centre of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) and the Russian Embassy in Ashgabat due to people wanting to obtain migration documents to move to Russia. More than 65% of the migrants were Russians and Ukrainians. The remaining 35% included Tatars, Bashkirs, Dagestani, Armenians, Georgians and other ethnic groups of the city. Azerbaijanis<sup>56</sup> and some Turkmen also were among the migrants to Russia.

The second wave of migration peaked in 2015. In Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi), it was pushed by a situation favourable for departure. The appeal of Awaza National Tourist Area was growing day by day. Thousands of holidaymakers came to the seaside resort. Their service promised a steady income to enterprising people. Turkmen entrepreneurs, who made cash in previous years, invested it in real estate buying apartments from migrants at high prices. For example, depending on the technical condition, the well-maintained two-room apartment was priced at 20-35 thousand, three-room - 35-45 thousand, four-room - 45-55 thousand U.S. dollars. People were willing to pay more than \$75,000 for a five-room apartment with European-style remodelling. A housing boom<sup>57</sup> provided migrants with the opportunity to buy comfortable housing abroad increasing the outflow of the Russian-speaking population from the city.

<sup>53</sup> The total number of residents by expert evaluation: City - 54,800 people and Ufra settlement - 1,903 people. The further figures are given according to the expert evaluation.

<sup>54</sup> In 2018, despite the commissioning of the second line of the seaside resort, there were no Russians among the staff working in the Awaza hotels, with the exception of two or three doctors and no more than two dozen seasonal locksmiths and cultural workers constantly harassed and dismissed at the administration's own discretion. Although most of them have a certificate of completion of a professional school's hotel service classes, it is very difficult for Russians to get jobs in Awaza National Tourist Area. Not only administrator, bartender, on-call registrar, but also waiter, maid and cook positions are not available for them in hotels, cottage towns, yacht clubs, etc. If they are lucky, they can do laundry or serve as cleaners.

<sup>55</sup> As well as members of other ethnic minorities who find themselves in a similar situation. First of all, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Poles, Germans, Dagestani and other Russian-speaking ethnic minorities.

<sup>56</sup> Azerbaijanis moved to Azerbaijan for the most part.

<sup>57</sup> Own houses with land plots were even more expensive, as the city had a ban on reserving new land plots for private construction. Russians, who parted with real estate at bargain prices in the first years of migration had no houses, with rare exceptions. During that period, houses were sold by Armenians, Kazakhs and Azerbaijanis.

Throughout the years since the failed national census of 2012, access to the demographic figures of the city's statistics department and their numerical metamorphoses, which arise during the transit of statistical reports up the chain of authorities from Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) to the State Statistics Committee in Ashgabat, has been difficult. According to sketchy data from the city's statistics department, they continued to register although low but stable population growth reducing the proportion of ethnic minorities and their percentage. According to these data, 74,500 people lived in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) in 2015, and 71% of them were Turkmen, 15.3% Russians and 13.7% others.

Figures closer to reality from alternative sources in the state authorities showed a different situation. The population of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) in 2015 was 63,500 people<sup>58</sup>. Of these, 9 per cent were Russians and 10.2 per cent were other ethnic minorities. Of 5,715 Russians remaining in the city, there were 380 elderly people over 72 (7%); pensioners – 790 (14%). People of pre-retirement age<sup>59</sup> - 930 (16%); able-bodied young and middle-aged people 18 to 54 - 2,300 (40%); children and young people under 18 - 1,315 (23%).

2016 - 2018 are defined by a decline in large-scale construction in the city of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi). As of 1 June 2019, a city hospital<sup>60</sup> was listed among the civil facilities as a long-delayed construction site and six residential buildings<sup>61</sup> with 24 apartments each at different stages of completion. One unfinished industry project was at the TORN and one in the Kiyarli settlement. The collapse of construction has led to significant job losses, which have been only partially compensated by the commissioned chemical plant in Garabogaz and the Kiyarli gas and chemical facility primarily intended for the indigenous labour force.

The attractiveness of Awaza National Tourist Area, where the privatisation of the resort infrastructure is being prepared with the elimination of all competitors, has faded in the eyes of small business. Many of the Turkmen businessmen and entrepreneurs in trade, construction and services began returning from Krasnovodsk to their homeland, which resulted in 2-3 times price drop for the apartments.

However, the migration of ethnic minorities continued during these years, sometimes declining, other times gaining momentum again. Many factors played their roles in the resettlement of ethnic minorities, including the depreciation of the manat by 6.5 times compared to the rate in 2014 and the prices for industrial goods and food both imported and domestic that surged 5-10 times or more. In the conditions of unemployment and freezing of wages, pensions and other social payments<sup>62</sup> this means, to put it mildly, a half-starved existence for socially-unprotected groups of the population, which today can be attributed to the majority of ethnic minorities. The dynamics of migration of ethnic minorities can be traced through the example of the decline of Russian residents in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi).

### 3.3. The decline in the Russian population in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) in 1989-2018

<sup>58</sup> Bearing in mind that the figure of 60,000 (+-) was kept in reports and expert assessments for the 30 years of Turkmenistan's independence, we can confidently say that all these years, there was a mechanical replacement of ethnic minorities with persons of indigenous nationality.

<sup>59</sup> Born in 1953-1960.

<sup>60</sup> Symbolic laying of the foundation for the construction of the hospital was made on 26 May 2016, but its construction has not yet begun.

<sup>61</sup> Long-delayed construction since 2015.

<sup>62</sup> For example, Nutrilon infant formula costs 280 TMT (new Turkmen manat), while the monthly child care allowance is 190 TMT.

Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) has been chosen as a demographic marker because it's the first city in the country where extra-migrants had been settled because of their traditionally high share in the city's population. Even in 2018, after several and massive waves of migration from the country, the share of ethnic minorities in the city is<sup>63</sup> almost 12% against 7.6% nationwide.

Table No. 8:

Population	1989	1989	1995	1995	2002	2002	2007	2007	2010	2010
	Official narrative	Experts' opinions	Official narrative	Experts' opinions	Official narrative	Experts' opinions	Official narrative	Experts' opinions	Official narrative	Experts' opinions
Cities	62,601	56,703	65,126	52,600	66,300	46,500 <sup>64</sup>	100,000	59,000	73,940	62,300
Russians	29,422	21,547	21,361	14,465	19,227	12,788	18,600	10,030	12,717	9,100
Turkmen	10,266	13,041	19,407	23,039	30,034	24,087	57,700	36,580	47,988	41,410
Other	22,913	22,115	24,358	15,096	17,039	9,625	23,700	12,390	13,235	11,790

Table No. 8 (continued):

Population	2015	2015	2018	2018
	Official narrative	Experts' opinions	Official narrative	Experts' opinions
Cities	74,500	63,500	83,000	64,220
Russians	8,567	5,715	7,560	3,532
Turkmen	52,896	51,320	61,340	56,514
Other	13,037	6,465	14,100	4,174

According to employees of the city's Department of State Statistics, they have stopped accounting the population by the order from the government since 2016. This is hardly true - in Turkmenistan, everyone is simply used to play "regime" enterprises, institutions and secrets, for "disclosure" of which the guilty party will be strictly punished. There is no doubt that the State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan added another mythical portion of citizens to the population of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi), as well as other cities and regions of the country, and spread it on national, sexual and other grounds. It doesn't matter what the numbers are. Apart from the illusion of demographic well-being, they do not represent anything.

From a trustworthy source, 1,900 Russians (children and adults of working age), 1,200 Azerbaijanis, 850 Armenians and 200 Kazakhs have left the city and Turkmenistan for the last three years using resettlement documents, foreign passports and guest visas. Using the available algorithms in the demographic dynamics of the population, the rise, decline and directions of migration, natural growth and decline, and considering the social situation and the key values of expert estimates of the number of

<sup>63</sup> Without Uzbeks and other inter-migrant - indigenous residents of Turkmenistan's border regions in the north-east and south-east.

<sup>64</sup> According to the independent examination, 42,000 people lived in Turkmenbashi in 2003 almost in the same national proportion as in 2002. However, these figures were not confirmed in the process of writing the report.

residents for a certain chronological period we can state that the city was home to 64,220<sup>65</sup> people in 2018. Of these: Russians - 3,532 people or 5.5%, Turkmen - 56,514 or 88%, others - 4,174 or 6.5%.

The fact that less than 10 per cent of Russians remain in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) is among other circumstantially evidenced by the number of students in secondary schools as an indicator of demographic studies. In 2018, 14,800 students were enrolled in 15 schools in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi)<sup>66</sup> and 1,802 of them were first-graders. In the Russian sector there were 451 first-graders and in Turkmen - 1,351. Here seems to be a good ratio between representatives of the titular nation and ethnic minorities (33% are studying in Russian classes). This proportion could rival the one of 2002 when according to expert estimates 12,788 Russians were living in the city. However, Turkmen children who have expressed a desire to study in Russian and children of other ethnic minorities living in the city also go to "Russian" classes. In the average "Russian" first class with an average occupancy of 30 people and an equal number of boys and girls, in 2018 studied 9 Russians, 6 Armenians, 5 Azerbaijanis, 4 Turkmens, 3 Ukrainians, two Tatars and one Kazakh<sup>67</sup>. In other words, Russians make up less than one-third in the "Russian" class. This means that among first-graders in 2018, about 135 students or 7.4% of all first-graders were Russians.

The result of the percentage calculation of ethnic minorities by using a "bucket"<sup>68</sup> method in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) gave close figures. October 2018 to May 2019, 68 counts were carried out in residential areas, buses, shops, cafés, institutions, schools, squares, theatres, in the streets and businesses involving about 680 people. Of these registered: Russians (Slav) - 32 (4.7%), Turkmen - 565 (83%), Azerbaijanis - 42 (6.3%), Armenians - 19 (2.8%), Tatars - 7 (1.05%), Kazakhs - 3 (0.45%), people of unidentified nationality - 12 (1.7%).

In 2018, Russians living in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) were divided into age groups as follows. Elderly (over 72) - 177 people (5%). Pensioners 62-72 - 424 people (12%). Of pre-retirement age<sup>69</sup> - 671 people (19%). Of working age<sup>70</sup> - 1,660 people (47%). Children and young people under 18 - 600 people (17%). In 2015, pensioners and persons of pre-retirement age made up 37% among Russians in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi). In 2018, they made up 36%, with a significant reduction in absolute values caused by natural decline and departure to the historical homeland. During this time, the able-bodied part of the Russians decreased by 899 people. In 2015-2018, the proportion of children and young people under 18 in the Russian diaspora decreased by 715 people.

The labour market accessible to Turkmen<sup>71</sup> is practically alienated from Russians and other members of ethnic minorities. The executive bodies and local departments of industry ministries and authorities have got rid of Russians and other members of ethnic minorities in their midst long ago, and even if you

<sup>65</sup> This number was confirmed by the elections of the Mejlis deputies and members of the welayat and urban Halk Maslahaty and Gengesha of Turkmenistan held on 5 March 2018. Thirty-five thousand people took part in the voting in the city of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi). Taking into account the fact that children and young people under the age of 18 make up 45.5% of the population in Turkmenistan and the fact that the city of Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) has in fact become a mono-ethnic city with the predominance of Turkmen with large families, the following calculations can be made.  $35,000 : 0.545 = 64,220$  people.

<sup>66</sup> Of the 15 schools in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi), only six are "mixed". They have less than half of the classes where students are taught in Russian.

<sup>67</sup> In secondary education school No.3, where Kazakhs were studied in Soviet times, now students are taught in Turkmen, and among 900 of them 120 or 13% are Kazakh children. The rest of the students are Turkmen.

<sup>68</sup> The unspoken identification of the national composition of the population in groups of 10 people by the method of anthropological and linguistic identity. This method was also selectively used in 2019 in determining the relative number of Russians in various cities in Turkmenistan.

<sup>69</sup> Born in 1956-1963.

<sup>70</sup> 18-54 years old.

<sup>71</sup> Judging by the emerging trend of public property concentration in private hands, this can be asserted now only to a certain extent. The great part of Turkmen living in the city has the same difficulties with employment as Russians.

might be able to meet them there, it will more likely be an exception. The proportion of teachers from ethnic minorities in general education schools has significantly decreased. Teachers who are members of ethnic minorities cannot be seen in universities: at the Naval Institute or the Turkmenbashi Department of Water Transport of the Turkmen State Institute of Transport and Communications. There are also none of them in secondary vocational schools, except for episodic cases with invitations to hold temporary classes for students. The percentage of Russians in cultural and sports institutions is very small.

A small part of the members of ethnic minorities is able to work until their retirement age in the seaport, at the oil refinery, CHP plant or railway, or work as seasonal workers at facilities of Awaza and private construction sites. Jobs are in short supply, and demand for labour force is falling. Young people and middle-aged citizens are queuing up for resettlement visas. Older people left without children and relatives have a tragic situation<sup>72</sup> in which they will be fading away for the rest of their lives.

2018 was the beginning of the end of the presence of Russians and members of ethnic minorities in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi)<sup>73</sup> and possibly entire Turkmenistan. The Russian population is in a particularly dismal situation: In comparison to the population of the city, the share of Russians in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi) was 5.5% in 2018 (we would like to remind that in 1989, the share was 38%), and to the population of the country - 1.24%.

### 3.4. Only 70,000 Russians left in Turkmenistan

Similar processes with local peculiarities have and are taking place throughout the country in places of compact residence of Russians and other ethnic minorities who migrated to Turkmenistan at different times from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Demographic changes have also affected the peoples who traditionally live in modern Turkmenistan: Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, Persians, Kurds and others.

In their paper, the authors encountered an avalanche of demographic information on Turkmenistan on the Internet represented by the author's works, studies of international organisations and foreign research centres. Unfortunately, because of the constant discrepancy of countless figures, these materials are difficult to understand and often seem arbitrary. However, they were also used in the work on the report as data for analytical correction. The main sources in recreating the relative authenticity of the demographic situation in Turkmenistan were the All-Union Censuses of the Soviet Era, insider reports and statistical department reports available from confidential sources in the reality of the strict ban on the disclosure of official "mysteries". Auxiliary tools were the definition of national composition in settlements by telephone directories issued on various media, review (if such an opportunity emerged) of staffing schedules and personnel lists of institutions, organisations and enterprises of all forms of ownership, as well as tracking the results of elections of different levels in different years.

<sup>72</sup> With a paltry pension (depending on the category, it's **approximately 25-40 U.S. dollars** at the market rate of the U.S. currency), without medical care, medicines, food and care of family and friends.

<sup>73</sup> More than half of today's Russians in Krasnovodsk are mestizo from different marriage variations. They are not easy to distinguish from Turkmen, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Kazakhs, Dagestani, etc. They accept Orthodoxy, attend churches, and are members of the church council of the city church of Archangel Michael. There are often more of them during religious services and ordinances than ethnically "pure" Russians born of Russian couples. Sometimes it seems that this is not a church, but a mosque. However, the same methization is observed among other marker minorities, which determines the corresponding stereotype of behaviour in their mestizo. For example, there are Russian Muslims who have converted to Islam inheriting it from their father or mother. This process is typical for the entire Turkmenistan, and the further east, the more active it is. Perhaps in 10-15 years they will represent Russians in Turkmenistan.

Selective calculations of representatives of all nationalities in groups of 10 people at different venues provided great help in the reality of the complete absence of unbiased information in the state statistical reports. During demographic monitoring in 2018 - 2019, team members and volunteers have held 206 "bucket" calculations with total coverage of more than 2,000 people in Krasnovodsk (Turkmenbashi), Karabogaz, Balkanabat, Serdar, Bereket, Hazara, Mary, Murghab, Turkmenabat, Konye-Urgench, Dashoguz and Ashgabat. Places of information collection were not only casual meetings with people on the streets, markets, railway stations, shops, parks, and buses but also educational institutions, sanatoriums, health resorts, children's health centres, ceremonial meetings, rallies and creative and sports competitions of local, regional and national scale. These methods altogether allowed to calculate and assess the ratio of Turkmen and Russians currently living in Turkmenistan. It is worth noting that during the "bucket" calculations, all citizens who speak Russian and have a pronounced Slavic ethnotype have been attributed to Russians. The authors cannot rule out the fact that not only Russians may be among them but also members of other Slavic peoples. But given the very small number of these nations even at the end of the Soviet era, the authors believe that their contribution to the error of determining the percentage of Russians is very insignificant. The totality of all data including selective calculations at different sites allowed to determine the following dynamics of the demographic situation in Turkmenistan:

Table No. 9:

**Russian diaspora and Turkmen in welayats and the capital of Turkmenistan**  
(Axis years)

Ashgabat and welayats	1989			1995			2018		
	Total	Russians	Turkmen	Total	Russians	Turkmen	Total	Russians	Turkmen
Ashgabat	403,093	130,227	252,175	480,000	78,723	221,450	1,055,140	36,050	938,823
Akhal	498,050	15,666	426,509	675,895	49,801	578,808	1,013,000	7,800	927,406
Balkhan	380,000	68,100	182,500	262,209	17,017	215,011	365,000	4,200	293,850
Dashoguz	696,666	7,315	557,332	649,000	8,200	573,500	1,030,830	1,750	930,072
Lebap	733,098	56,082	549,823	698,269	48,262	542,413	1,068,179	10,500	848,836
Mary- welayat	811,810	56,502	568,267	740,627	43,887	568,438	1,120,627	9,700	852,306
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	<b>3,522,717</b>	<b>333,892</b>	<b>2,536,606</b>	<b>3,506,000</b>	<b>245,890</b>	<b>2,699,620</b>	<b>5,652,776</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>4,791,293</b>

Population size and its differentiation by nationality were based on mechanical and natural growth and migration of de-facto and not just permanent population. The number was determined by calculations.

Russians in the report play the role of a demographic tuning fork - variations of their numbers are reflected proportionally on the number of other ethnic minorities. The space freed by Russians who once were the largest nation in Turkmenistan after Turkmen and now are only 70,000 of them in the country were occupied by Uzbeks. The relative number of them, which is stated by numerous foreign and domestic experts, is 9%. That's more than half a million people. If we add Turkmen to them who consider themselves Uzbeks by origin, Turkmenistan may face a big political problem. It is fueled by the ugly historical self-consciousness of the citizens - revived Chimeras of Khanate of Khiva and Emirate of Bukhara - the territorial claims of neighbouring countries to each other. In the event of a conflict,

Turkmenistan will have no airbags - departed Russians, Ukrainians and other members of European ethnic minorities who once found their homeland in Turkmen lands.

Table No. 10:

**Timeline of the number of Russians and Turkmen in Turkmenistan**

Years	TOTAL	Russians	%	Turkmen	%
1959		262,701	17.32%	923,724	60.9%
1970	2,158,880	313,079	14.50%	1,416,700	65.6%
1979	2,771,428	349,200	12.60%	1,867,942	67.4%
1989	3,522,717	333,892	9.48%	2,536,606	72.0%
1991 <sup>74</sup>	3,159,000 <sup>75</sup>	252,720	8.00%	2,337,660	74.0%
1995	3,506,000	245,890	7.00%	2,699,620	77.0%
2001	3,856,000	173,520	4.50%	3,046,240	79.0%
2002	4,048,000	167,300	4.10%	3,157,440	78.0%
2003	4,168,000	159,500	3.80%	3,296,888	79.1%
2005	4,280,000	145,520	3.40%	3,466,800	81.0%
2006	4,374,720	131,241	3.00%	3,591,645	82.1%
2007	4,510,000	124,000	2.70%	3,711,730	82.3%
2012	4,958,430	104,127	2.10%	4,103,100	82.75%
2013	5,033,257	99,300	1.97%	4,162,503	82.7%
2014	5,188,447	92,000	1.77%	4,306,411	83.0%
2015	5,235,000	87,200	1.66%	4,368,607	83.45%
2016	5,514,164	81,340	1.47%	4,648,440	84.3%
2017	5,582,164	74,250	1.33%	4,719,719	84.55%
2018	5,652,776	70,000	1.24%	4,791,293	84.76%

#### 4. Conclusion. Reasons for ethnic minority migration

Multi-factor causes of the migration of ethnic minorities from Turkmenistan lie in the nature of the Turkmen state built on the basic foundations of the governance of the people preserved in the national consciousness since the days of the Achaemenid Empire. "Suppress and conquer" is the credo of the modern rulers of Turkmenistan from top to bottom and their supreme ruler - President of Turkmenistan, Hero, Arkadag (Patron), Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov.

<sup>74</sup> The statistics data here and further are taken not from by censuses but expert estimates.

<sup>75</sup> The population decrease by 363,717 people in 1991 - during the period of Perestroika and the parade of sovereignty - was due to a sharp decline in the people's standards of living, an increase in mortality in all age groups, drug addiction, criminal wars and mass migration of ethnic minorities.

These are not figures of speech but the bitter reality of millions of citizens forced to live under an authoritarian repressive regime persecuting dissent in any form - from the refusal to participate in the "subbotniks" and "voskresniks" (unpaid community service on Saturdays and Sundays) endlessly imposed on the enslaved people (yevars) to perfectly reasonable proposals to improve the work of the production team. The main thing is unconditional adherence to instructions, including meaningless ones but canonized and voiced by the authorities. A voiceless citizen is an example of the nation's population and a role model. Suppression of any initiative oppresses the inner freedom of a person and leads to the degradation of the individual. This is the darkest evil, born by Saparmurad Niyazov - the first president of Turkmenistan - and inherited by Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov. This is the poisoned atmosphere that forces to run abroad both members of ethnic minorities and sane Turkmen.

The constituent parts of Berdymukhamedov's domestic politics are hypocrisy and lies, which allow the ruling state corruption group and their local loyal servicemen to make huge profits. Lies have created a tangled demographic providing a large space for manipulation for election campaigns to achieve selfish political goals, misappropriation of budget and pension funds and justification of loans from foreign countries. Exorbitant greed and monstrous ambitions of the president - the Arkadag (Guardian) - were evident in his fantastic literary fertility, in fact representing the work of literary day-labourers and poorly disguised money laundering.

The Turkmen new "economic miracle" that arose after the era of the Great Turkmenbashi and has been implemented in large-scale construction projects by foreign contractors for gas- and petrodollars cannot justify the "leader" of the nation. The largest social, communication, industry, transport and other economy sectors' facilities that have been built and commissioned have become the objects of privatisation<sup>76</sup>. They are being commandeered by Berdymukhamedov's relatives, inner circle and large entrepreneurs who are patronized by the dominant clique<sup>77</sup> or rather the insatiable and greedy Arkadag's FAMILY. And members of medium-sized businesses get the buildings and production halls that have served their time<sup>78</sup>. If they are lucky, ordinary citizens get low-paid<sup>79</sup> work albeit in new but unhealthy production halls moved beyond the boundaries of settlements.

Beginning in 2018, in 2019 the government's crackdown on individuals working on the patent gained momentum. Buses after 10 years of operation<sup>80</sup>, car washes, car repair and painting workshops, timbering, carpentry, metal and window-packing shops were banned. They prohibited the use of shops, cafés, tailoring studios, training courses and beauty salons opened on the first floors of apartment buildings. In most cases, these small businesses were held by members of ethnic minorities who lost their jobs overnight and joined the army of unemployed in Turkmenistan.

The continuous decline in living standards during the financial crisis and employment problems are important but not the only factor increasing migration from Turkmenistan. For many citizens, the most important motivation to leave the country is state nationalism, the arbitrariness of law enforcement agencies built on the collective responsibility of bribers, low professional level of medical workers, lack

<sup>76</sup> In the production facilities of the new International Seaport of Turkmenbashi privatised by the joint-stock companies specialists receive (they say that it's temporarily) 1,000 TMT or \$55.

<sup>77</sup> According to the information available in the Internet and according to the website "Fergana.ru", 4% of the Turkmenistan's population own 45% of the country's wealth.

<sup>78</sup> Often real estate purchased at auctions becomes the cause of administrative and even criminal prosecution. An example is the privatisation of the Oktyabrsky cinema in Ashgabat. After the repairs were carried out by the new owner, the court decided to seize the building he had purchased.

<sup>79</sup> 1,400 TMT or \$76.7 at the black market rate, as there is no other in Turkmenistan. Prices on food, industrial goods and building materials are set at the same rate. For single pensioners and other socially-disadvantaged citizens, this means a slow starvation.

<sup>80</sup> The inspectors of the relevant services offered the owners of buses to transfer vehicles to other category, bar windows, etc, but if owners pay them bribes, the permission could be granted.

of full education for young people from ethnic minorities and opportunities for career growth<sup>81</sup>. There are no modern education institutions for Russian-speaking citizens of Turkmenistan to study in their native language. The Russian school in Ashgabat opened on the initiative of Russia and Turkmenistan is, in fact, a Russian-Turkmen school - it has more Turkmen children from wealthy families than Russian students. This is not a policy of social support for children of Russians in education but profanation. In Turkmenistan, the nationalist policies of the leadership of Turkmenistan and authoritarianism and repression of the government led to the complete deprivation of legal, cultural and linguistic rights of Russians and other members of ethnic minorities and they found themselves in an even more difficult position than the titular nation - Turkmen. Russians and other members of ethnic minorities have no party, no public organisations and no representatives in the Mejlis and local government bodies to protect their legitimate interests. The critical situation is in the education of ethnic minorities and training for pre-schools and schools. Citizens from among ethnic minorities wishing to go to their home countries have actually become hostages of the restrictive measures of the Turkmen authorities in the field of financial regulation: maximum restrictions on remittances via Western-Union, blocking of Master and Visa cards put students and citizens of Turkmenistan studying and going abroad on vacation, for permanent residence, to relatives, for treatment, etc. in distress. Exorbitant high prices for air tickets<sup>82</sup> complete forced isolationism for Turkmen citizens.

Russians and Armenians (as well as other ethnic minorities who profess Christianity) are more likely than other minorities to experience harsh discrimination on the basis of nationality primarily due to the dramatic change in the cultural and linguistic situation in Turkmenistan. Almost nothing has been done to overcome the language barrier during the years of independence. On the contrary, the situation is exacerbating year after year. For example, none of the Russians participated in the national music and song contests "Ýañlan Diýarym". Almost zero per cent of them are among the winners of the "Turkmenin Altyn asyry" creative contests of the President of Turkmenistan. Orthodox holidays never mentioned in the print and electronic media, no congratulations are published on these occasions as it is customary in civilized societies. Christians seemed to be left behind brackets not paying any attention to them. The treatment of Russians and other ethnic minorities as second- or third-class people is also a serious reason for their migration.

As the most politically literate part of the population capable of active social protest, Russians and other members of ethnic minorities of European origin were deliberately squeezed out of all state niches of Turkmenistan. From reliable sources, on some days in 2018-2019, the Russian Embassy in Turkmenistan served 150 to 200 Turkmen citizens on resettlement issues.

Migration has affected not only Russians and other ethnic minorities. Turkmen also leave the "state of power and happiness". According to insider information, 23,000 Turkmen men and women have left for Turkey since the beginning of 2019. Of these, a large proportion did not return home. Turkmen students remain abroad. At the same time, houses with crosswise-barred windows are multiplying in the etraps (districts) of Dashoguz and Lebap welayats and the number of abandoned villages is increasing...

It is pointless to appeal to the current totalitarian authorities to finally start developing and implementing a set of measures to reduce the migration flow from the country. "Scare, kick around and

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<sup>81</sup> Members of ethnic minorities and Turkmen among others are obstructed when departing to study abroad and forced to study in the institutions where they told them to study and acquire only the professions that the country needs. Young professionals who have graduated from universities abroad are forced to re-sit exams supposedly for recognition of their diplomas and examiners receive unspoken instructions to give them "F". All these ugliness are happening in favour of the domestic university mafia earning a lot of money on students.

<sup>82</sup> In April - early May 2019, the prices for Ashgabat-Moscow flight tickets soared to 7,200 TMT. That's more than \$2,000 at the state rate and about \$400 at the black market rate, while the average salary is \$50-100. Under the pressure of indignant citizens ticket prices have been reduced by 4.5 times but there are no tickets in free sale and the amount of overpayments is way over all "reasonable" limits. Turkmen national airline Turkmenhowayollary is the only airline in the world, which tickets cannot be bought through online services. And the reason is the monstrous corruption - tickets can be bought only for a bribe to an official.

put to jail" - these principles of Berdymukhamedov's repressive regime policy remain the only tools for managing civil society in Turkmenistan. Unfortunately, Berdymukhamedov did not want to use his historical chance to rid the country of Niyazov's main heritage - authoritarianism. On the contrary, taking advantage of the complete absence of internal opposition and civil society he followed in the footsteps of Niyazov creating a new cult in Turkmenistan - the cult of President Berdymukammedov. And year after year, the country steadily falls into the abyss of totalitarianism. Only the regime change and transition of the country to the democratic and legal basis of development will be able both to stop the flight of citizens from the "Turkmen paradise" and return thousands of talented Turkmen to the country.

The Turkmen people are still silent. But changes lie behind their silence, and their forthcoming is felt in public life according to many signs.

2019

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