

*Studies and Documents*    *Second Edition, Revised and Expanded*

# *The Tatars of Crimea*

RETURN TO THE HOMELAND



EDWARD A. ALLWORTH, EDITOR

*The Tatars*  
*of*  
*Crimea*

*Central Asia Book Series*

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## *Central Asia Book Series*

Thinkers at least as ancient as Herodotus, Plato, and Plutarch have recorded biographies cited in swings in the Western debate about whether history does more to make the leader or the leader more to make history. Some Central Asian annalists no later than Narshakhi, Biruni, and 'Abd al-Razzaq referred to sacred traditions and persistently sought explanations for strong human character and leadership in the power of the deity and the influence of the changing juxtapositions of the planets in their courses.

In 1943, the American philosopher Sidney Hook formally contributed to another modern discussion when he first copyrighted his original volume analyzing leadership, entitled *The Hero in History: A Study in Limitation and Possibility* (New York: John Day, 1943). It came out at a moment of international turmoil, full of fearsome ideologies, loathing, and total war. That strife occurred as the Soviet system still lacked stability and as Europe and North America only haltingly emerged from a deep economic depression. Hook advanced several arguments meant to distinguish a leader's historical fame from his historical significance and the true leader from the merely opportune one. His full-fledged hero, or leader, had to perform in history as an "event-making man" or woman, not merely an "eventful man" or woman.

The real hero, by that definition, makes things happen. His or her "actions are the consequences of outstanding capacities of intelligence, will, and character rather than [simply] . . . accidents of position." The event maker creates crucial opportunities for actions that he or she makes occur through exceptional leadership ability.

Also in 1943, in a small Crimean village, the wife of Abdüljemil, Makhfure, warily celebrated the birth of her fourth child, a new son, Mustafa, in November, in a region under the frightening military occupation of Nazi invading forces. Within barely half a year, the Red Army retook Crimea, and violence again shook the peninsula. Punitive Soviet security troops soon roughly herded all Crimean Tatar "traitors" of the region, including Makhfure and her infants and youngsters, into boxcars and

forcibly shipped the survivors of that ruthless mistreatment three thousand kilometers to the East (the father of the family, like many other Crimean Tatar men, then served in a Soviet army unit at the front).

Growing up in Central Asian exile under a strict police regimen, Mustafa quickly recognized his disconnection from a nurturing culture and relevant place. The strange absence of a significant community started him on a daring lifetime quest for his people's soul under a vindictive political system. By young adulthood in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Mustafa had already educated himself about Crimean Tatar history and helped erase some of the deficiencies in the education of his compatriots. His actions from that time forward reveal the behavior of an event maker as he, initially in a deliberately undifferentiated group of activists, persistently fought his people's enemies and won the profound esteem of his elders and other exiles. He accomplished this through self-sacrifice and fortitude and by repeatedly outwitting the overpowering goliath through strategies implemented without resort to violence. A great part of that victory resulted from his extraordinary ability to communicate with Crimean Tatars and with the larger worlds of allies in the Soviet Union and with the foreign journalists, scholars, and politicians interested in events affecting the Soviet Union's vulnerability in nationality affairs.

*The Tatars of Crimea* devotes itself principally to seeking an understanding of what lies behind the resilience of that nationality and its effects. In that respect, probably no prominent figure in the Crimean Tatar group more effectively represents his community than the event-making leader, Mustafa Jemiloglu. As a result of his deeds, ideas, and strategies, he projects a large figure in several parts of this book.

In a focus on the Crimean Tatars, perspectives of scholarship owe their effectiveness or ineffectiveness to the extent of their mastery over the multiple frameworks within which inquirers work to pull out insights and understanding about the intellectual problems they hope to solve. Events flowing from the Soviet Empire's formal demise in late 1991 greatly influence later scholarship concerning people of that territory, for loss of the familiar enclosure left the configuration shapeless or, rather, with an unfamiliar shape still eluding exact identification. The subject of Crimea and its exiled Tatars had merited and received attention long before the parts of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics disassembled, but, after the outline of that Union disappeared from the map, study of Crimean Tatars proved

almost as intractable as before. The two editions of the present book mean to contribute to a better understanding of these problems while Crimean Tatars reenter the international arena. Geopolitics somewhat obscure that emergence, for indigenous sources report that they live in three sovereign countries instead of one, as before. Around 50 percent of ex-Soviet Crimean Tatars as of this writing remain inhabitants of Siberia and of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in Central Asia, and the other half now reside in Crimea, part of the independent Republic of Ukayina.

The Central Asia Book Series publishes mainly original studies and documents like this one, travel accounts, documents, and reference works relating to twentieth-century affairs. It selects works based at least in part on the local languages of the area used in pursuit of original insights into the modern and postmodern developments, attitudes, and ideas motivating or typifying the people of Central Asia and related areas.

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## Preface

Most aspects of life in the Crimean Tatar community have undergone tremendous change since *Tatars of the Crimea: Their Struggle for Survival* first appeared in 1988. A completely new opening chapter and the entire third section in this substantially revised edition of the book reflect that drastic turn of events. Three scholars have written four new chapters and translated documents specifically concerning the experience of the most recent period, especially the developments of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The book also provides an up-to-date bibliography on this subject. The flow of unofficial (samizdat) documentation from Crimean Tatar activists that played such a vital part in the earlier edition has ceased. Rather, the open press now appearing in Crimea, along with the frequent travels abroad of Tatar intellectuals and politicians, plus free public access to the region itself for outsiders, including some of these authors, to meetings, congresses, and people, in the peninsula, all these have provided a largely different basis for research. And uncensored book publishing in Crimean Tatar and in Russian suddenly offers useful additional sources for serious inquiry.

*The Tatars of Crimea: Return to the Homeland, Studies and Documents* reflects these changes without trying to become the purveyor of the latest news from Crimea. (That book title also embodies a shift in terminology away from the old Western usage that regularly placed the definite article *the* ahead of the place name or ethnonym *Crimea*, just as the names *Lebanon* and *Ukrayina* [Ukraine], like most independent countries and autonomous regions, now stand alone without the article that formerly introduced and, some felt, demeaned them.)

The general aims of the book remain the same: to discuss the main developments in Crimean Tatar life, culture, history, and, to some extent, politics in the twentieth century. Throughout, the authors intend to give specific meaning to the studies by analyzing the motivations underlying and the important consequences arising from those developments. First, the authors of part 1 demonstrate the impact of the cultural reforms, initiated late in the nineteenth century and continued into the next, pre-

Soviet era, for the modernization of the group's outlook and self-identity throughout the twentieth century, as evinced in its cultural expression. That established in the study, the chapters in part 2 proceed to the Crimean Tatar ordeal, mainly since 1944, when the Soviet regime forcibly removed the entire nationality from Crimea overnight and deported it to restricted zones in the Urals region and in Central Asia. Treatment of the consequences of that action focused the second part of the book on the efforts of Crimean Tatars to reconstitute their nationality after the shattering trauma.

The disassembly of the Soviet Union in late 1991, perhaps influenced to some extent by the Crimean Tatars' effective public demonstrations of the failure of Soviet nationality policies, accelerated Crimean Tatar efforts to reclaim the homeland. Part 3 considers the opportunities offered by the loss of that Soviet control, which simultaneously created many new problems for Crimean Tatars. The most pronounced of them arose from the fact that multiethnic Crimea no longer lived under Moscow's jurisdiction but relied on Kyiv (Kiev) and the economically distressed government of Ukrayina for support and protection from the violence and political excesses of the numerically predominant Russian military and civilian immigrants settled in Crimea since World War II. Part 3 looks primarily at issues raised by the slackening and cessation of Soviet control and refocuses attention on Crimea and some cultural, social, and political dilemmas engrossing the Crimean Tatar community in the Republic of Ukrayina.

By necessity, the second edition of *The Tatars of Crimea* has replaced to some degree, with newer material, many of the documents published in English for the first time in the 1988 edition. Readers may consult that edition for texts of Crimean Tatar proclamations, records, and statements especially reflecting affairs during the period 1966–87. Edward Allworth, Nermin Eren, Alan Fisher, Edward Lazzarini, Andrew Wilson, and Nancy Workman have translated a selection of original texts, placed at the ends of the three main sections of this inquiry, from documents written in the Crimean Tatar, Kazan Tatar, Turkish, Turkistanian, and Russian languages. Because these accounts relate closely to the studies making up the largest part of this volume, the translators provide no separate commentary about them. The authors contributing to this research come from the emigrant community of Crimean Tatars, from England, from North America, and from Turkiye. Crimean Tatar and Russian intellectuals in

Crimea invited to contribute to this edition could not spare the time and attention it demanded from their most pressing responsibilities there to submit finished chapters in time for this edition of *The Tatars of Crimea*. In the future, they will have a great deal to teach foreign scholars about the realities of Crimean and continued Central Asian life when they have the opportunity to communicate it to the world.

The editor especially thanks President of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis Mustafa Jemiloglu and Madam Safinar Jemiloglu for their kindness in having recent documents, photographs, and publications made available for this research. Some financial support for the preparation of the revised manuscript came from the Ismail Gaspirali Fund, Columbia University, for which the editor wishes to register his gratitude. Thanks for advice and/or assistance in the substantive as well as technical side of the effort also gladly go especially to Abdurrahim Demirayak, Nermin Eren, Ahmet Kanlidere, Seyit Ahmet Kirimca, Edward Kasinec, John R. Krueger, Martha Merrill, Alexander Motyl, Halim Saylik, Robert Scott, Peter Sinnott, Svat Soucek, Andrew Wilson, Fikret Yurter. Walter Barnard and Sarah Spurgin of the Columbia University Libraries repeatedly gave useful advice, as did Natalia Zitselsberger in the New York Public Library.

Transliteration from alphabets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and successor republics follows an adaptation of the system published in the directory *Nationalities of the Soviet East: Publications and Writing Systems* (1971), by Edward Allworth. In the present book, references to certain consonants in the Romanized Turkish alphabet appear as digraphs as employed in English: Turkish ç = English *ch*; Turkish ş = English *sh*; Turkish ğ = English *gh*; Turkish c = English *j*; umlauts indicate Turkish vowels *ö*, *ü*, and velar *i*. In the bibliography, notes, and text, this method of transliteration applies also to personal names written in Turkish, except for instances where the persons mentioned have established a certain spelling in English for their own names: for example, Kirimca rather than Kirimcha; Inalcik rather than Inaljik. With the demise of the Soviet Union, many proper names have reverted to traditional forms. President Jemiloglu had long been known in Russian-language sources as Mustafa Dzhemilev (its transliteration Anglicized to Jemilev). In his and many other instances, but not all, the Russian patronymics *-ev*, *-ov*, *-ova*, and *-ovna* have disappeared, in some cases replaced by Turkic patronymics *-oglu* and *-qizi*. In the emigrant journal *Emel* and some other publications

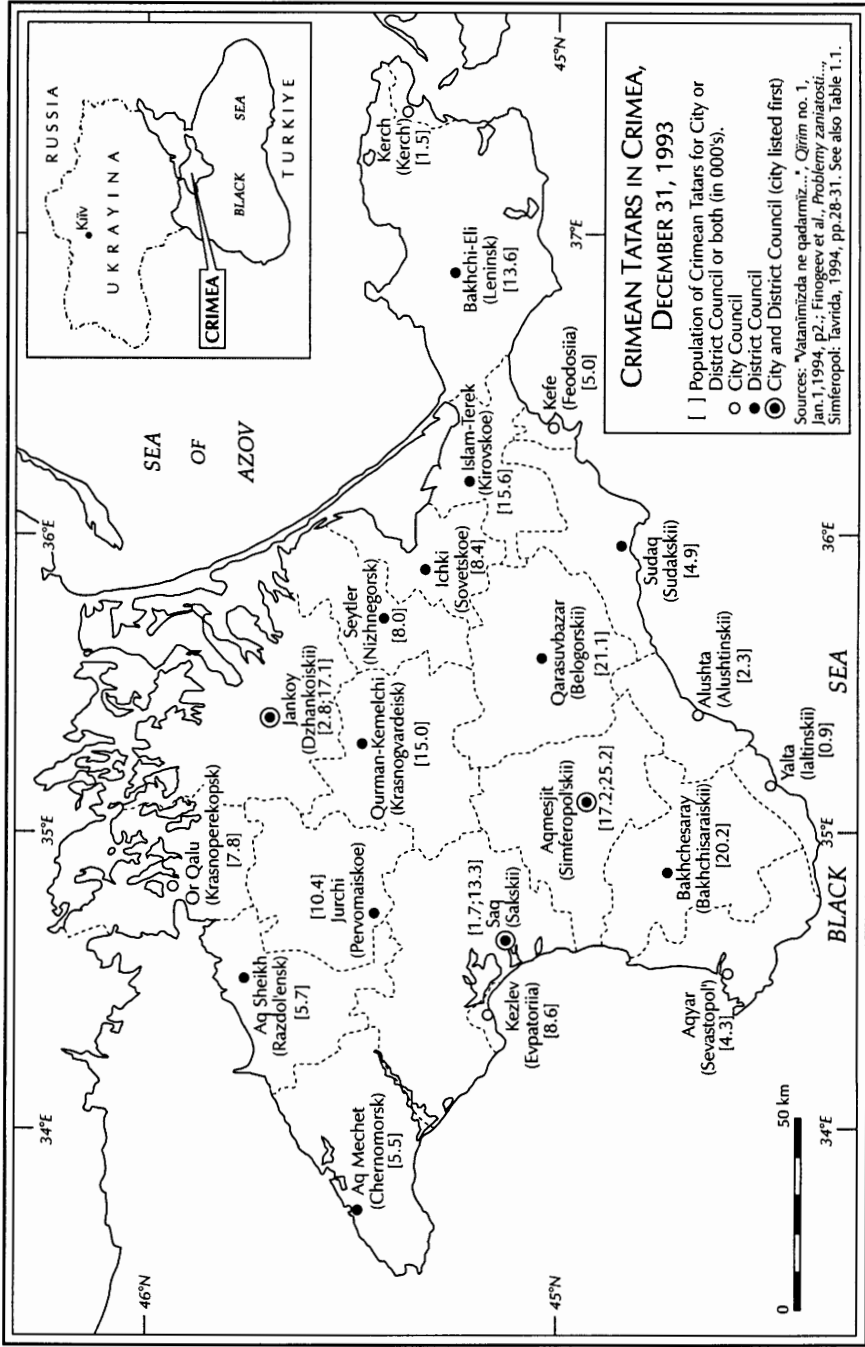
from Turkiye, readers will see the form Mustafa Abdüljemil Kırımoglu, showing his father's name as the second name and the substitution of Kırım as a last name in place of the shorter form, Mustafa Jemiloglu, adopted in this book from the Mejlis president's signature.

Crimean Tatars' own name for their homeland, *Qırım*, deserves the general acceptance owed to regional and country designations. The editor prefers to accept such self-names and forms, but the use of *Qırım* among nonspecialists and specialists has yet to find the immediate recognition that could overcome the confusion that might result from the adoption of *Qırım* in place of *Crimea* in English. Nevertheless, the repeated appearance of that self-name in this book in references and direct quotations, literary titles, and the like should help prepare the ground for a shift from the Russian-based form *Krym/Crimea* found in European languages to *Qırım*, the indigenous Crimean Tatar form and spelling of their name. Such naming receives significant attention in chapter 1 below.

Christopher Brest prepared the original cartography for the map covering the northern Black Sea littoral, which shows the distribution of the returning Crimean Tatar population of the former Soviet Union in Crimea near the end of the twentieth century. Abdurrahim Demirayak and Senol and Sinan Utku deserve sincere thanks for providing photographs and other graphic materials important for the design on the paperback cover of this book and for documentation of recent events in the studies.

E. A. New York

*The Tatars*  
*of*  
*Crimea*



*Renewing Self-Awareness*

EDWARD A. ALLWORTH

The ill treatment endured by Crimean Tatars during the last half century has tested them severely. When other nationalities might have faltered, these Tatars have persevered. Immersed in a hostile cultural, economic, and social environment created by a Russian oligarchy, they found great strength to carry them through the man-made threats to the survival of their community. What sorts of resources and support have proved indispensable in sustaining the group to this extraordinary degree?

Two reflections of this strength, in particular, attract immediate attention: steadiness in the face of each new danger and a fearless determination to defend themselves, spiritually and culturally, against formidable opponents.

## Expressions of Attitudes and Values

Those same traits reveal themselves person by person. The seemingly tenuous networks that tie individuals to a common cause may exist and reveal themselves most of all in the cultural values, moods, and attitudes expressed through words and other symbols. The literature, language, art, and related bearers and creators of signs serve more fundamentally than other factors to shape and support the outlook of Crimean Tatars in the postmodern season of the group's life. These mediums reach beyond bolstering courage and conviction. They convey a necessary appreciation of beauty, joy, and an affirmation of life that can give people the stimulus to act with imagination in hostile surroundings.

The way people express their feelings about their community and their place in this immediate post-Soviet period tells more about their group's viability under contemporary conditions than does news about their political life and institutions. A shattered community's many spokesmen and -women must participate in the process of reidentifying their group with

its central nervous system, its significant core. Those talented enough to convey their feelings and ideas memorably in literature, music, and the arts probably exert the strongest influence in restoring and sustaining people's faith in the one community.

Crimean Tatars benefit in this respect from a small but active circle of writers, poets, composers, and other creative artists, men and women who have found that eloquence. Rather than conventionally idealize, they visualize their community and place in phrases and images that reaffirm them aesthetically in the minds and hearts of their audience. Where, under the circumstances, readers, listeners, and viewers might expect anger or hostility, more often than not the poets and artists speak softly, portray gently. A lyrical reengagement with suppressed feelings of longing seems all the more remarkable in view of the most recent history of the group. Decades of enduring an often harsh Central Asian exile have marked Crimean Tatars as surely as other previous, recent experiences. Nevertheless, the poetry and art publicly circulated usually accents a positive vision.

Although composing verse in Uzbekistan exile before the rise of glasnost as public policy in the Soviet Union after the mid-1980s, Eskender Fazil guardedly conveyed his thoughts in notably terse lines that skirted strong feelings. Under the heavy censorship then especially limiting the literary efforts of Crimean Tatars in Central Asia, the young writer's collections of poetry—*The Violet (Melevshe)* had appeared in 1970 and *The Old Beechtree (Qart emen)* in 1976—enjoyed the select company of only twelve companion titles by various authors created and issued in the Crimean Tatar language.<sup>1</sup> But, because the Communist Party then continued to deny the crucial attributive *Crimean* to these Tatars, the colophon to *Gesture of Respect (Temenna, 1982)* specifies only that this poetry appears in “the Tatar language.” The experienced writer Cherkez Ali, one of whose verses this chapter cites, below, functioned as editor of the booklet, and Aidar Osmanov, once editor of the Crimean Tatar literary journal *Yıldız*, wrote brief comments for *Temenna*, giving the younger poet strong backing in those difficult times.

Yet in that booklet's opening poem, ostensibly intended for young readers and devoted “To Mothers of the World” (“Dyun'ya analarına”), poet and teacher Eskender Fazil examines the human condition in the Soviet Union and beyond. In this eighty-six-page booklet circulated in only two thousand copies for the hundreds of thousands of potential readers, he

searches for an understanding of the origins of the cruel as well as the merciful individuals in his society and others and, by implication, the institutions among which he and his people live:

White,	(Beyaz,
Yellow,	Sari,
Black colored,	Qara renkli,
Tenderhearted mothers—	Merametli analar—
Tenderhearted,	Merametli,
Just	Adaletli
Bear children.	Doghuralar balalar.
Or hard-hearted,	Ya tash yurekli,
Black blooded	Qara qanlı
Who bore the merciless one?	Djellyatni kim doghurghan?
The liar,	Yalandjini
The troublemaker	Fitnedjini
What sort of “mother” bore?	Angi “ana” doghurghan? <sup>2)</sup>

The tone and rhetoric of literature, such as this poetry composed in the period of exile under severe restrictions, naturally remained more guarded, more circumspect, than most writings toward the end of and following the breakup of the Soviet Union.

In a later, lyrical turn, one of the personal voices heard frequently toward the end of the 1980s and 1990s sounds in the poetry of Lilia Budzhurova. She revels in beautiful perceptions of Crimea, usually tinged with a nuance of sadness. Budzhurova’s short verse (in Russian) “What Is the Homeland’s Scent?” (1989) exemplifies this sensual evocation:

Of what does the homeland smell?  
 Of a dry blade of grass,  
 Caught in a child’s hair,  
 Of a pine branch, of bitter wormwood,  
 Or, of separation, buried in the heart?  
 Or, of lamb’s wool, of aromatic coffee,  
 Tinkling as it pours into thin little cups,  
 Of mountain tea, of almonds, fragrant with mint,  
 Of today’s reality, of yesterday’s dream?  
 Or, of the searing cry of a lone seagull?

Or, of the snowy peak of Chatır-dagh?  
 Of distant music from an ancient song?  
 Oh no, my homeland smells of hope.<sup>3</sup>

Because this short lyric expressed such strong feeling about the Crimean homeland, Soviet censors in Central Asia would not accept it for publication. In her personal notes (see document 3, chapter 16), the poet mentions that such verses circulated in manuscript form. The first samizdat edition of it came out as a kind of underground pamphlet issued somewhere in the Baltics. This contrasts strikingly with the intellectuality of a later, topical poem dedicated to the delegates to the Second Qurultay, “We Returned Today” (June 1991), again in Russian:

Our happiness comes from being together,  
 In spite of the awful calamity [*bespredely*],  
 We gathered in the old place, in order  
 Once more to make our history.<sup>4</sup>

If literature and the representational arts supply much of the glue that holds in place the thinking and values of a nationality, the symbolism offered in the familiar, ever-present names of places and terrain features presents a second, potent source of identity for the group.

### The Resonance of Names

Self-names supply most important symbols signaling the collective identity that unifies a community of people. Reliable linkage between name and people, and often place, ordinarily forges strong bonds, securing group identity. The Crimean Tatar poet Rustem Ali speaks to this central theme for his people. In the expression of loyalty cited below, taken from the short poem “Crimea” (“Qırım,” 1992), he affirms that, in spite of long-enforced separation, Crimean Tatars have neither neglected nor forsaken their true name or the memory of a place that nourishes them as a maternal presence with its verdancy symbolic of renewing life. This passionate expression concerning the name and the place often characterizes late twentieth-century Crimean Tatar written literature, some of it lyrical, much of it melancholy:

Crimea, Crimea, Mother Crimea,	(Qırım, Qırım, Qırım Ana,
We did not forget our name.	Unutmadik adimizni.
We did not, Mother Crimea,	Dengishmedik, Qırım Ana,
Exchange our isle for another's.	Bashqasına adamizni. <sup>5</sup> )

Crimean Tatars sometimes refer to Crimea as their “green island,” or, as in this instance, merely as “our island,” because it is connected to the mainland only by a very thin neck at the northern extreme of the peninsula. A prominent anti-Soviet Russian author, Vassily Aksyonov, has written a novel, *The Island Crimea* (1981), based partly on this premise.

When something interrupts or breaks that connection between group and name, both self-awareness and unity can suffer. The name adopted long ago by Crimean Tatars has experienced no simple or direct history. Invaders, conquerors, and internal opponents over several centuries leading up to the 1990s have repeatedly misunderstood, erased, or tried to change the self-name of Crimean Tatars.

Reviewing the nationality's stormy life, the matter of historical onomastic right becomes less than clear. Attempts to explain exactly how and when the present name originated and replaced the ancient *Chersonesus Taurica* (Tauric Chersonese) have yet to satisfy everyone. Reputable European historians in the nineteenth century surmised that *Crimea* derived from the name of the Cimmerian people driven from their habitat in the peninsula by Scythians as early as the eighth century B.C.,<sup>6</sup> but centuries had elapsed; moreover, the Cimmerian center lay in the eastern extreme of the peninsula, on the site of today's Kerch.

In the late nineteenth century, some scholars hypothesized from the peninsula's peculiar geography—the aforementioned narrowness of the northern isthmus making it almost an island—that Tatars and Turks at the end of the thirteenth century regarded the place as a highly defensible fortress and named it *Qrim* (Russian *Krym*). Etymologists reasoned that the word *crimea* originally meant “stronghold” “because this word, by Forster's explanation, means *krepost'* [Russian for *fortress*], and can be connected with the Mongol word *kerm* [meaning] ‘wall.’” A seventeenth-century Mongolian royal document shows the place name as *Qaram*, a form phonetically incompatible with *kerm/kerem* and therefore deriving from another original term.<sup>7</sup>

Russian lexicographers had developed a somewhat similar etymology

for *Krym* more than a century earlier, shortly after the imperial acquisition of the peninsula, although the eighteenth-century version asserted that *Krym* meant “fortress” in Tatar.<sup>8</sup> Mongol hegemony over Crimea in the thirteenth century made that sort of etymology seem plausible. It did not explain whether the use of the term *Tatar* in this context referred to the Turkic language of Crimea’s Tatars or to the Mongolian of Chinggis Khan and his commanders and descendants, whom Russians commonly called Tatars.

Much earlier, Qipchaq Turkic horsemen roaming the strip of territory just north of the Black Sea at the edge of the huge Desht-i Qipchaq had ridden down across the narrow isthmus to penetrate into the peninsula known as Tauric Chersonese in the ancient and early medieval world. Later, as the main force of troops under Chinggis Khan’s commanders, those horsemen in 1223 did drive all the way to Sudaq, on the southeast coast of the peninsula, and withdrew in the same year.

Of the many cruelties connected with Crimea and its naming, an episode in the brutal rivalries among Mongol rulers seems to have prompted the earliest recorded use of the toponym *Crimea* for the peninsula. It appeared in the final part of a chronicle entitled *A Short History of Mankind* (*al-Mukhtasar fi akhbar al-bashar*) by the Arab writer and statesman Isma’il Ibn-’Ali Abu-l’Fida in the year H. 700/A.D. 1300–1301. He records details concerning the war between Mongol princes of the Golden Horde, Jöge and his opponent, Toqta. To gain favor with Toqta, a ruler of Trnovo in north-central Bulgaria betrayed Jöge, who had fled to him for refuge. He confined Jöge in his citadel, executed him, and “sent his head to Crimea, and the kingdom of Noqai passed to Toqta.”<sup>9</sup>

Additional evidence indicates that the medieval town of Solkhat/Solhat received the name *Qrim/Eski Qrim* after the place already served as an administrative and cultural center of the peninsula for the Genoese, for Armenians, and, in the second half of the thirteenth century, for Qipchaq plainsmen. That renaming of Solkhat apparently occurred before the rise of the Muslim Giray dynasty to mastery over Crimea during the 1420s, when their center remained still outside Crimea, up the Itil (Volga) River at Berke’s Saray, near the site of the modern Volgograd.<sup>10</sup>

A more lasting presence seemingly made itself known in the application of names to places. A learned etymology offered by a modern European scholar attributes the name of the town Eski Qrim and that of the penin-

sula to the language of the Crimean Tatars and the Turks. He cites as the root for *Crimea* (*Qırım*) the term *qurum*, “defense,” from *qurimaq*, “to defend, protect,” which he says the Qalmyq language absorbed from Turkic as *kharm*. The postmodern Crimean Tatar lexicon conserves the meaning “defending” for *qoruma*, from the verb *qorumaq*, “to guard, defend.”<sup>11</sup>

Thus, it appears that the early version of *Crimea* appeared first as a practical term for a defensive position at the neck of the peninsula, then as the toponym or a descriptive attribute for an administrative center (*Solkhat* becoming *Qurum* and its derivative, *Qrim* and then *Eski Qrim*, i.e., “Old Crimea”). Subsequently, that *Qrim* nomenclature extended to the surrounding territory. Very likely, after the first decades of their establishment on the peninsula, Crimean Tatars themselves consistently referred to their land as *Crimea*. From this point, the term may have passed into usage as part of the distinctive name for Tatars who lived there and some decades later initiated their rule over the area in governments under the Giray dynasty. Its tenure as an official designation, with the area sometimes overseen by foreign powers such as the Ottoman Empire up to 1774, lasted until imperial Russian troops occupied Crimea and the governors changed its name.<sup>12</sup>

When administrators of the czarist Russian state annexed the peninsula that gave a home to Crimean Tatars in 1783, for a place name they returned to the classical toponym and immediately designated it the *Taurida* district (*Tavrisheskaia oblast'*) of their realm. The fact that the Ottoman Turks had called that peninsula *Crimea* since they held sway over it beginning in the late fifteenth century may have motivated the Russian choice of a different (Greek) name. As late as 1914, Russia's rulers continued to use the name *Taurida*, rather than *Crimea*, for that *oblast'*.<sup>13</sup>

Readers of the main writings of the great Crimean Tatar reformist Ismail Bey Gaspirali (to whose contributions chaps. 2 and 3 of this volume directly pertain) do not encounter in them calls for the ethnic self-determination of his people. Rather, Gaspirali writes constantly of the Muslims of Russia, including his own people, as part of that community. In matters of language, Gaspirali emphatically promotes the use of an ethnically neutral all-Turkic tongue and literary medium more or less based on Ottoman Turkish, again avoiding any partiality for the distinctive linguistic identity of Crimean Tatars. In his collection of articles *Russian Islam* (*Russkoe musul'manstvo*, 1881), he writes of “Tatar-Muslim traits” but, significantly, does

not choose the form *Crimean Tatars*. Later, he specifically attacks the narrow kind of nationalism put forward by Russians and other Europeans. In an article entitled “Turkism” (“Turkchilik,” 1907), he writes: “Let the cosmopolitans and others of the old persuasion speak of nationalism. This is their affair, but we have a different understanding.”<sup>14</sup> Gaspirali defined his nation as the Muslim community of which he and the populations of coreligionists in the Russian Empire were a part.

He mentions Tatars of Kazan or Tatars of Crimea in such important tracts as his “Russian-Oriental Relations” (*Russkoe vostochnoe soglasenie*, 1896), but not “Crimean Tatars.”<sup>15</sup> (A full English translation of this pamphlet is provided in chap. 7 of this volume.) In the modern cultural history of the Crimean Tatar nationality, Gaspirali has surely played a key part. His importance lies especially in the contributions he made to educational innovation and to a new, universalist perspective for his and other Muslim Turkic people and, in retrospect, in the tremendous amount he accomplished in renewing Crimean Tatar culture. In no sense a nationalist, only indirectly did he strengthen the singularity of his kinsmen’s ethnic attachment through their reverence for his prominence and purity of motives for enlightenment of the Muslims in the Russian-wide empire. Not long after Gaspirali passed from the scene, in 1914, many other influential persons and events further clouded the definition of group identity and confused the naming of Crimea’s Tatars and like groups.

When in 1921 Soviet authorities designated an administrative-territorial unit embodied in the peninsula as the Autonomous Crimean Socialist Soviet Republic (ACSSR), they merely emulated the earlier selection of place name by Crimean Tatars themselves. The Constituent Assembly (Qurultay) convened by Crimean Tatars in Bakhchesaray on 26 November 1917 proclaimed the establishment of a new, multiethnic, autonomous republic coextensive with the Crimean peninsula and named it the Crimean government (or administration) (*Qrim Idaresi*, in Tatar) and the Crimean People’s Republic (*Krymskaia Narodnaia Respublika*, in Russian). That logical selection of political name for their government and state probably stands as the first official use of *Crimea* for the purpose since the czarist Russian annexation of the region in 1783.

By 14 January 1918, heavily armed Russian naval forces had captured Aqmesjit (Simferopol’), then the capital of Crimea. They arrested defenders, including many Tatars, and dissolved the multiethnic Qurultay of

Crimea. Through the nights of 21–24 February 1918, Slavic soldiers and sailors, instigated by the Bolsheviks, rampaged in Aqyar (Sevastopol), killing hundreds whom they called “bourgeois” and shooting to death members of the Crimean administration already imprisoned in the city jail, including its president, Numan Chelebi Jihan (about him, see chap. 4 in this volume).<sup>16</sup>

The sequel to all this typical Soviet political violence led at once not only to the replacement of the Crimean Tatar language by Russian in all public communication but also to the declaration of a government and state significantly renamed *Tavrida*, the Russian version of the ancient Greek *Tauris*. On 10 March 1918, the Central Executive Committee of the Simferopol’ Guberniia’s Congress of Soviets proclaimed Crimea as the Socialist Soviet Republic of Tavrida (SSRT). That action separated the traditional name applied by Tatars, *Crimea*, from its historic territory at least for the month or so that the SSRT lasted.<sup>17</sup>

Chaos reigned supreme in Crimea thereafter, as successive waves of troops, renegades, and the fleeing White Army, nominally led by General Anton I. Denikin, followed by Baron Petr N. Wrangel, swept through the peninsula between 1918 and late 1920, when Red Army units forced General Wrangel to evacuate White Army forces to Istanbul. Bolshevik army and naval units followed, like all their predecessors victimizing the beleaguered Crimean Tatars. With that, only accident and fortitude could account for the possibility that any of the former society remained intact or that Crimean Tatars themselves survived. Briefly, in the course of that traumatic period, the Muslim Executive Committee (Musispolkom), established by an organizational meeting for the First Qurultay on 25 March 1917 in Aqmesjit (Simferopol’), and a Crimean political body, the National Party (Milli Firqa), attempted vainly to create a foothold for their fellow countrymen. They proposed a multiethnic, Crimea-wide, but not exclusively Crimean Tatar government and autonomous unit within the larger framework of the Russian state that might emerge from the period of revolution and civil war for the region. Musispolkom subsequently proclaimed the slogan “Crimea for Crimeans,” which emphasized the inclusion of Slavs, Greeks, Tatars, and others within the Crimean political family.<sup>18</sup> At the time, only an ineffective fraction among the political groupings insisted that the delegates to the pre-Soviet Second Crimean Tatar Delegate Congress in October 1917 advance a national formula that would demand Tatarism as a

basis for cultural, social, and political reorganization in the region. A pro-Bolshevik group of Crimean Tatars led by Veli Ibrahimov opposed the extreme nationalist position with calls for working-class solidarity. None of the remaining pro-Crimean or anti-Crimean forces and parties advocated the erection of a strictly national Crimean Tatar edifice in the peninsula.

The Autonomous Crimean Socialist Soviet Republic, or ACSSR (later listed as the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, or Crimean ASSR), formally came into existence on 18 October 1921 under the new Communist regime in the former czarist territories. The ACSSR joined six other ASSRs in the Soviet Union during that year, four of them named, not for specific ethnic groups, but for regions (Crimean, Daghestanian, Gorskaia [Mountainous], and Turkistanian).<sup>19</sup> The Crimean Congress of Soviets approved a "Constitution of the ACSSR" for the region on 10 November 1921.<sup>20</sup>

The antinationalist, multiethnic Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (RSFSR), guided by its Marxist, class-oriented ideology, stood fourth in line of descent of ethnically heterogeneous empires under which Crimean Tatars had struggled to retain a distinctive group identity. Beginning with the Mongols early in the thirteenth century, the Qipchaq component of the inhabitants who populated the peninsula, Tatars, rather soon found themselves a minor segment in another conglomerate, the Ottoman Empire, a government led by politicians more willing than later imperial rulers to leave Crimean Tatar unity intact. Russian emperors in their turn sought not only to absorb the geography and economy of Crimea into their unitary state but to destroy or dissolve any viability of the Crimean Tatar community. History shows that, by the time of the February 1917 collapse of the Romanov dynasty in Russia, that community neared extinction in the Crimean peninsula. In the multiethnic Soviet Union, official measures to recognize the separate identity of a Crimean Tatar nationality in time might have restored its vitality and numbers had the authorities in 1944 not abruptly reversed those efforts and returned to the destructive legacy of the czars.

Continuing that supraethnic pattern of organization after Czar Nicholas II abdicated in March 1917, each of the state structures erected in and for Crimea, including the one set up by Crimean Tatars in 1917 and the republic established under Soviet auspices in 1921, as the above review showed, carefully avoided organizing or naming itself solely for Tatars.

Paradoxically, a decade and a half later, in a speech delivered on 25 November 1936 to the Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets, Joseph Stalin did imply, perhaps inadvertently, that the ACSSR took its name from the Crimean Tatars, although Soviet politicians normally rejected that notion vehemently. In that instance, Stalin meant to quash any dreams that Crimean Tatars might have cherished about elevating their namesake administrative-territorial unit to the level of union republic (or Soviet Socialist Republic, SSR). He meant to ensure that Russia's main semitropical playground and naval base on the Black Sea could harbor no technical ambitions to secede from the Soviet Union.

In its usual fashion, the dictator's rhetoric plodded on as follows in this regard:

What are the grounds for transferring Autonomous Republics to the category of Union Republics [the highest level in the territorial-administrative hierarchy]? . . . First, the republic concerned must be a border republic. . . . Secondly, the nationality which gives its name to a certain Soviet republic must constitute a more or less compact majority within that republic. Take the Crimean Autonomous Republic, for example, it is a border republic, but Crimean Tatars do not constitute the majority of that republic. . . . Thirdly, the republic must not have too small a population; it should have a population of, say, not less but more than a million, at least.<sup>21</sup>

The purported significance of these rankings lay in the practically meaningless prerogatives allowed a union republic: to call itself sovereign although it exercised no authority over its important domestic or foreign affairs; to have the right (but no plausible political means) to secede from the Soviet Union; to have its token foreign minister; to send larger delegations than could the ASSRs to Soviet Supreme Council sessions in Moscow; to have an anthem and banner that Moscow specified; and, after World War II, to send occasional representatives to sessions of the United Nations in New York and other international meetings.

In 1936, Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Secretary Stalin would have known from statistics estimated for his information, and a few years later surely from data compiled in the then-unpublished 1939 Soviet census, that the population of Crimea (1.13 million) did, indeed, exceed the minimum required for union republic status. Of course, the 218,879 Crimean Tatars registered in that census made up only 19.4 percent of the

peninsula's total. Stalin knew also that, years before the all-out deportation of 1944, the regime, on ideological pretexts fueled by Russian hostility to Tatars and other non-Slavs, had already diminished the Crimean Tatar proportion by shipping thousands from Crimea to exile in Siberia and elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, that 1939 census showed some growth in Crimean Tatar numbers after 1926, but not in their proportion, which had fallen from the 25 percent (179,094 of a total population of 713,979) reported from the peninsula in 1926.<sup>23</sup>

Inconsistency did not deter the Communist chieftain from delivering such remarks in his speeches and writings. Evidence of this discrepancy between fact and political pronouncement lay in sources for all to see. The numbers of the Soviet Union's Turkmens (631,920 in 1926) and Tajiks (617,130 in 1926), each endowed with the rank of union republic (in 1925 and 1929, respectively), failed to pass the test. A decade later, around the time of his 1936 comments, the unpublished census data showed Stalin's aides that the population of neither group yet came close to reaching the requisite million within the boundaries of its namesake SSR (Turkmens, 741,488 in 1939; Tajiks, 883,966 in 1939). The aggregate of all nationalities residing in each of those SSRs—somewhat more than 1 million but fewer than 1.5 million—then matched the combined total in the Crimean ASSR fairly closely.<sup>24</sup>

In 1940, not long after Stalin's cynical statement about qualifications for union republics, he and his politburo elevated the Karelian ASSR to the status of union republic, calling it the Karelo-Finnish SSR. When this occurred, the area, bordering on Finland, according to 1939 data, housed but 469,000 people all told, 23.2 percent (109,000) of whom identified themselves as Karelian.<sup>25</sup>

After Soviet security forces deported Crimean Tatars from Crimea on 18 May 1944, the Soviet regime resorted to a comprehensive replacement of the anthroponymy and onomastics native to Crimea. By decree of the Supreme Council of the RSFSR, in December 1944, all main provinces and provincial centers received new, usually Russian, designations: Aq Mechet became Chernomorsk, Qarasuvbazar became Belogorskii, and so on. Also in 1944, the *Oblast'* Committee of the Crimean ASSR summarily ordered the replacement of all other traditional toponyms, including those of rivers, mountains, villages, and towns—commonly thought to have originated from Crimean Tatars but in reality coming, as well, from many earlier

civilizations layering the peninsula. An eyewitness has reported that this order went to the executive secretary of the Russian-language newspaper *Krasnyi Krym*, who happened to serve as duty officer on the night the order came to its offices. He consulted two Russian books that lay on his desk, one a nineteenth-century treatise about horticulture, the other a recent treatment of how the Soviet military forces reconquered Crimea from the Nazi armies. These volumes account for the multiplicity of places and terrain features on the map of Crimea with names, often duplicated, such as *Abrikosovoe* (apricot), *Vinogradnoe* (vineyard), *Sadovoe* (orchard), or *Gvardiiskoe* (the guards) and the disappearance of nearly all the previous, universally used traditional names with their power to evoke a strong sense of personal identification for every normal inhabitant of the peninsula.<sup>26</sup> Distortion mangled the forms of a few place names that remained. On the map today, inhabitants find the Crimean Tatar names *Aqmesjit* (for *Simferopol'*) and *Aq Mechet*, a Russian version of the same toponym (for *Chernomorsk*). Crimean Tatar scholars have pointed out additional examples, including *Qırq Or*, which Russian historians mistransliterated from *Qırq Yer*, the authentic rendering from the Arabic script previously used by Crimean Tatars.<sup>27</sup>

Equally damaging to self-recognition and esteem within the Crimean Tatar nationality, the authorities decreed that Crimea's Tatars could no longer call themselves *Crimean*. In passports and other official documents, people now had to refer to themselves as "Tatars, formerly living in Crimea." Later on, when token amounts of publishing began appearing in their language, the name *Crimean Tatar* remained eerily unmentioned. During the absence of the deportees, Russian settlers disposed as they pleased of the property and real estate of the exiles. Not only did place names change; the new inhabitants of the region simply obliterated some of the former settlements, as they did the village of Chukurja, about four kilometers from Aqmesjit (*Simferopol'*). They dammed up the Salgir River in order to form an artificial lake just southeast of the city for recreational boating. That pond, now called *Simferopol' Reservoir*, submerged Chukurja village, among other places.<sup>28</sup>

Not until fifty years later, early in 1994, would an official action rectify the deprivation of their distinctive group name. The provincial government, the Republic of Crimea, authorized the restoration of *Crimean* to individuals and the group in the following resolution (full text):

Led by principles of humanism and social justice, with the aim of removing discrepancies in the interpretation of the name of the nationality "Crimean Tatars" and "Tatars," the Supreme Council of Crimea resolves 1. to restore the official name of the nationality, "Crimean Tatars"; 2. [to direct] the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Crimea to determine the procedure before 15 January 1994 and enter into the passports of citizens of Crimean Tatar nationality the appropriate changes. Chairman, Supreme Council of Crimea, N. Bagrov, 9 December 1993, Simferopol'.<sup>29</sup>

This belated action affirmed a return to the use of the distinction between Crimean and other Tatars that had already occurred in statistics compiled and published at the time of the Soviet population census in 1989 and in other treatment. Its major significance lay elsewhere, as a reflection of the strong sense of rightness characterizing the Crimean Tatar nationality in its reemergence from unwarranted censure by the corrupt Soviet regime. Although practice had already preceded the formality, the group's insistence on even such a tardy official correction and redress of this wrong perpetrated under that regime presaged much of its own dogged campaign and rationale that would appear in things to come.

With the official restoration of the nationality's self-name, a firm, legal, name linkage establishing a correspondence between the self-name of at least one nationality and the designation for the peninsula has, after fifty years, finally returned. Old Tavrida undeniably now carries the name *Crimea*, and so do the Crimean Tatars and no others. That holds great significance if group names evince connections to like-named places. When Crimean Tatars say that they have no place to live other than Crimea, it shows that they believe that they have the right to the land that gave them their distinctive name.

That victory over arbitrariness evinced the Crimean Tatar understanding that renaming disturbs the continuities needed to sustain a society's cultural identity. For persons with long years behind them, another change in authority can permit a reversal and welcome return to traditional names. That rehabilitation, presently overdue in Crimea, suggests the reversion to a previous, often Crimean Tatar form of countless street, village, town, and other place names from the Slavic coinages imposed during World War II. Such action would replace the several repetitions of Russian place names, such as *Lazarevka* and *Zavetnyi*, as well as names like *Schastlivyi* (Joyful) and *Izobil'noe* (Abundant) even more offensive to the sensibilities of Cri-

mean Tatars. But an appeal based on an article published in the union-wide Moscow press in 1988 for just such renewal of the old names brought no response from the Soviet Cultural Foundation to which its authors had addressed it.<sup>30</sup> The map of Crimea continues to bear hundreds of Slavic place names devised in the mid-twentieth century. Table 1.1 supplies Crimean Tatar and Russian names for Crimea's main population centers and regions and gives the numbers and ethnic proportions of their inhabitants.

Despite the justice implicit in such corrective manipulations, had they occurred, few could grant those born between 1944 and 1991 any ready familiarity with an irretrievable emotional tie to the previous nomenclature. Notwithstanding the likelihood that younger people heard from family or read about the place names of the past, their immediate experience had detached those designations from daily life. To them, both the Russian substitutes and the erased and then reinstated traditional place names had to seem new, the pre-1944 designations necessarily lacking the resonance they instantly aroused in Tatar elders. An example of such potential difficulties in relating to the symbolism of a renamed place shows itself in the representation elected to the Third Qurultay of Crimean Tatars during late June–early July 1996. Of the 154 delegates, 115 persons in the cohort thirty to fifty years of age belong to the generations born in exile, most of whom returned to Crimea only in recent years. Twenty of the 154 delegates have yet to immigrate to Crimea from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Krasnodarskii Krai of the Russian Republic (twelve of those twenty were born before the 1944 deportation from Crimea).<sup>31</sup>

Until the establishment of the myriad associations between person, society, and place names needed to make Crimea's toponyms their own, the younger generations will remain alien to the restored names; that is, until those names enter the everyday vocabulary and thus into unself-conscious usage, the restored and substitute names will seem equally foreign to the younger speakers of the vernacular language.

### The Language Link

For almost fifty years, the Soviet government refused to permit a public educational program anywhere to teach in the Crimean Tatar language. For that reason, children of the group grew up speaking, reading, and writ-

Table 1.1 Crimean Tatars Registered in Crimea, 31 December 1993

Distribution District Councils and City Councils: Tatar/Russian Name	Crimean Tatar Population (thousands)	Tatars as % of Total Population in the Area
Or Qalu/Krasnoperekopsk (city)	7.8	7.4
Aq Sheikh/Razdol'ensk	5.7	15.6
Aq Mechet/Chernomorsk	5.5	15.2
Kezlev/Evpatoriia (city)	8.6	6.5
Saq/Saksii	13.3	16.7
Saq/Saki (city)	1.7	4.2
Aqmesjit/Simferopol'skii	25.2	17.5
Aqmesjit/Simferopol' (city)	17.2	4.5
Bakhchesaray/Bakhchisaraiskii	20.2	19.9
Aqyar/Sevastopol' (city)	4.3	1.0
Yalta/Ialtinskii (city)	.9	.5
Alushta/Alushtinskii (city)	2.3	3.9
Qarasuvbazar/Belogorskii	21.1	28.4
Sudaq/Sudakskii	4.9	15.1
Kefe/Feodosiia (city)	5.0	4.0
Bakhchi-Eli/Leninsk	13.6	16.0
Kerch/Kerch' (city)	1.5	.8
Islam-Terek/Kirovskoe	15.6	23.3
Ichki/Sovetskoe	8.4	19.6
Seytler/Nizhnegorsk	8.0	12.8
Jankoy/Dzhankoiskii	17.1	18.6
Jankoy/Dzhankoi (city)	2.8	5.0
Qurman-Kemelchi/Krasnogvardeisk	15.0	13.9
Jurchi/Pervomaiskoe	10.4	21.0
Crimean Tatars in Crimea	235.7	8.8
Entire population in Crimea	2,672.2	

Sources: "Vatanimizda ne qadarmiz ve oning angi yerinde yashaymiz?" *Qırım*, no. 1 (1 January 1994): 2; B. L. Finogeev, E. M. Liumanov, and G. D. Bodner, *Problemy zaniatosti krymskotatarskogo naseleniia kryma (analiticheskii obzor)* (Simferopol: "Tavrída," 1994), 28–31, with data from the Komitet po Delam Deportirovannykh Narodov i Otdel Mezhnatsional'nykh Otnoshenii Soveta Ministrov Kryma; Enver Memetovich Abdullaev and Memet Umerovich Umerov, *Ruscha-qirimtatarja oquv lughati: Rusko-krymskotatarskii uchebnyi slovar'* (Aqmesjit: Qırım Oquv-Pedagogik Neshriyatı, 1994), 369–83. Finogeev et al. give data as of 1 January 1993, whereas "Vatanimizda . . ." provides data as of 31 December 1993. By year's end, figures for Crimean Tatar registrations rose in all places except Alushta.

Andrew Wilson (*The Crimean Tatars: A Situation Report on the Crimean Tatars* [London: International Alert, 1994], 38) reports that Crimean Tatars estimate that a further 50,000–60,000 of their countrymen had migrated back from exile without official registration, thus totaling, by September 1993, 250,000–260,000.

ing Kazak, Tajik, or Uzbek, for example, and Russian. A memorandum (*Otchet*) presented to the government of the Republic of Ukrayina by the Crimean Tatar Mejlis confirms the existence of that policy. No earlier than 1993 did the first school since the World War II-era deportations using the Crimean Tatar language for instruction come into being. The community established another in the following year. Both schools owed their start to private funding.<sup>32</sup> The younger Crimean Tatar emigrants earlier educated in Samarkand or Tashkent—the main places of urban residence for them in Uzbekistan during the postwar Soviet era—today speak and write excellent Uzbek and Russian.

Partly as a reaction to this situation, many Crimean Tatars preferred the use of Russian to a Central Asian tongue. Russian offered broader international communication than did a local medium and neutralized the assimilatory threat of the Central Asian languages. Observers have often noticed that Crimean Tatars born after 1942 seem most at home speaking and writing Russian, and some understandably lack a perfect control of their own language.

The president of the Mejlis, Mustafa Jemiloglu himself, has said that he delivered his report to the Second Qurultay in the Crimean Tatar tongue because he considered the meetings in 1991 a historic event, despite the knowledge that visitors to the Qurultay might not understand his language. He undertook this even though it required a few days of his busy time to translate the speech into what he called the Turkic (Crimean Tatar) language from the Russian in which he composed it. Many other speakers in those sessions simply delivered their messages in Russian,<sup>33</sup> possibly because they could not so fluently address the Qurultay correctly in their own language, or perhaps from a sense that many Crimean Tatars themselves felt more at home in Russian. In any case, urban Crimean Tatars lived at a crossroads important to the larger world and participated in a cosmopolitan traffic of ideas, languages, and people. Their preferences included mediums such as the bilingual press (fig. 1.1) that permitted them easy communication abroad and with the foreigners traveling and living in Crimea.

Denial of the right freely to publish, speak, and study their own language has taken its toll on Crimean Tatar youngsters, as well. A sympathetic Slavic resident of Crimea comes on a cluster of Crimean Tatar boys on a street corner chattering in Russian and asks them, “‘Why don’t you



Figure 1.1. Front page of Crimean Tatar/Russian bilingual newspaper *Qirim* (formerly *Dostlug*), no. 39 (25 September 1993).

‘speak Tatar with each other?’ After an awkward silence, they reply, ‘We’re shy.’ I understand the desire of the kids not to be singled out, not to be tactless with others, but also understandable to me is the tragedy of this situation, when you are reticent about speaking the native tongue.”<sup>34</sup> That reticence reflects the feeling, pervasive among young and old, that, by blending into the social surroundings and speaking the prevailing language, they can cast off the stigma wrongly placed on them by the Soviet regime in 1944.

Deprivation of the use of their tongue in education and other intellectual discourse has produced yet another side effect. Crimean Tatars regard the native language as a treasure worth preserving for its own, symbolic sake, not only for normal communication. The poet Remzi Burnash captures something of that attitude in lines from his verse entitled “My Mother Tongue” (“Ana tilim”; trans. by Edward Allworth with S. Ahmet Kirimca):

Each nation has its own tongue	(Er bir khalqın oz' tili bar
In which lovers confide,	Yaresinen sirdashqan,
To it, that tongue is sweeter than honey,	Baldan tatlı o til' onga,

It will never be forgotten.	O bir vaqit unutilmay.
My nation of kinsmen, too,	Menim tuvghan khalqimnin da
Has its own tongue that sings,	Oz' tili bar yirlashqan,
Amid a thousand and one stars	Bin bir yildiz arasında
This tongue, in my cradle,	Bu til' meni beshigimde
Raised me with its lullaby,	Ayneninen os'tyurgen,
It pulled forward from my youth	Yashlighimdan yetekley o
Holding me by the hand. . .	Tutip benim qolumdan. . .)

Portraying with words in some ways differs little from painting with oil and watercolors. Each medium in certain hands makes more palpable to observers scenes and moods imagined by creative artists. The Crimean Tatars' culture has generated artists who could remind them of the places and situations the exiles have longed to experience. On 18 September 1993, the Art Museum of Aqmesjit (Simferopol') opened a one-man show of works painted by Ramazan Useinov (born in 1949 in Samarkand). His became the sixth such exhibition hung for Crimean Tatar artists in Crimea. Viewers found works that symbolized his own spiritual return to Crimea, where he had evidently never previously lived. Some of the pieces bore titles especially significant to Crimean Tatars, such as *The Return*, *Ayu Dag Mountain*, and *Bakhchesaray*. Critics sensed in his rather abstract, generally more universal visualizations, in particular among those completed in the 1990s, a more somber, melancholy mood than they had noticed in much of his earlier painting.<sup>36</sup> That shift may have reflected the change perceptible in some literature, as well, as creative artists descended from the optimism and high expectations of the late 1980s and very early 1990s to a cautionary realism (in poems cited above, Lilia Budzhurova refers to Crimea as a place redolent of hope but not devoid of the pangs of separation). Renditions by their creative intellectuals in the different fields of art, literature, and music, whether pessimistic or affirmative, contributed significantly to the regrowth of self-identity among Crimean Tatars.

Familiar words set to popular melodies carve another facet into the sensory configuration making up the group's self-awareness. In Central Asian exile along with his countrymen, the Crimean Tatar composer and folklorist Yahya Sherfedinov (born in 1894) came from a poor family of Kefe (Feodosiia). His talent earned him admission to the Petersburg School of the Arts. He finished teachers' seminary and taught in Kefe. He took his

diploma from the Moscow conservatory in 1931. At his behest, during 1955–56, people in the Bekabad, Uzbekistan, zone of exile collected from their older countrymen and –women over seventy folk songs and melodies. When Uzbek Radio began broadcasting these in its Tatar programming, they were “the first melodies that reminded [Crimean Tatars] of the native land, which Sherfedinov’s countrymen longed to hear.” Every Crimean Tatar family attended live performances of these songs, dances, and other music presented throughout the zones of exile at concerts of the ensemble *Qaytarma*, reestablished in 1957 (see the discussion of the *Qaytarma* Ensemble in chap. 5 below). For Crimean Tatars, that troupe was “definitely a symbol of the ethnic group [*narod*].”<sup>37</sup>

### Yet Another Testing Time

The exiles needed such musical, moral support in order to overcome the ordeal they had to endure. A new shock came from discovering how vicious the hatred had grown, whether from fear or guilt, of Slavs toward Crimean Tatars during the last half of the 1980s and the early 1990s. It seemed to Tatars as if the arrival of something a step closer to parity among nationalities, in particular greater equality for Crimean Tatars, had aroused a kind of fury in the deposed dominant ethnic group. Before 1990, many acts of willful destruction struck Crimean Tatars. In August 1989 rose the first tent city of Crimea in the late Soviet era, erected on land occupied by Crimean Tatars in Sevastianovka village, Bakhchesaray *raion*. Such actions continued and soon provoked strong reprisals. Slavic vigilantes destroyed a similar self-constructed habitation in the village of Molodezhnoe, near Aqmesjit (Simferopol’), on 9 September 1989 (see fig. 1.2); they destroyed another near Nizhnie Oreshka, in Qarasuvbazar (Belogorsk) *raion* on 12 September 1989. Local thugs demolished an old Muslim mosque in the village of Azek (Plodovoe) in Bakhchesaray *raion* on 7 October 1989 and yet another group of temporary habitations on 14 December 1989 at the village of Degirmanenka, near Alushta, with militiamen participating in the action.<sup>38</sup>

Russian militiamen and vigilantes continued the physical destruction and theft of Crimean Tatar housing, materials, and facilities in 1990 and 1991, on 16 August 1991 again razing to the ground the mosque rebuilt from



Figure 1.2. Crimean Tatars around the ruins of their new mosque at Molodezhnoe suburb, 2.25 kilometers north of Aqmesjit (Simferopol'), demolished in August 1991 by Slavic thugs. Photo courtesy of Mme Safinar Jemiloglu, wife of the president of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis.

the materials left after the first destruction of housing in Molodezhnoe on 9 September 1989.<sup>39</sup> Demolition of tents and other temporary structures made up only one of the miseries besetting the returnees. On announcing, “‘In the name of Allah [*Bismillah* . . .]’ at the very first moment when they set foot on [what they called] that ‘sacred ground [*muqaddes topraq*],” Crimean Tatars singled out as the most severe among “a thousand different hardships” they suffered on returning to Crimea the difficulty of getting land.<sup>40</sup> When some of them received assignment to more permanent accommodations, they found further problems. A collective letter from forty-six Crimean Tatar residents of a dormitory complained in detail about the sorry conditions under which fifty-six families, including those with little children, with ill or demented members, tried to live. With neither functioning bathing or indoor plumbing facilities nor kitchens or gas for heating and cooking, paying rent higher than their living allowances for more than two years for grossly overcrowded quarters, they

found no response at all from the authorities in their district to reports they made about the delapidation.<sup>41</sup> And so it goes.

But it mouths no empty cliché to observe in this case that hardship builds character. The harsh conditions and the hostility of Slavic settlers awaiting young Crimean Tatars emigrating from Central Asia to Crimea for the first time in their lives have tested and tempered them. In the early 1990s, a young couple, expecting a child, squatters on a plot near Aqmesjit (Simferopol'), consider "Crimea . . . a remote, provincial place, compared to Tashkent," where they came from. The return to Crimea means "exchanging relative prosperity [in Central Asia] for poverty," but, they say, "all of us are returning." Asked by an interviewer if they fear more persecution after the repeated imprisonment of their parents for flouting discriminatory regulations here, they laugh: "We have survived so much, we no longer fear anything." Outsiders confirm the rudimentary living conditions of many Tatars in Crimea.<sup>42</sup>

In the final analysis, the resoluteness characteristic of the group—one expression of its optimism—grows out of the understanding that a mature sense of loss overcome but not forgotten sustains the group. Mejlis president Mustafa Jemiloglu has expressed that conviction in similar terms: "We can be optimistic in these difficult times, because we have survived much more dismal periods in the past; [and] . . . we do not foresee an easy future."<sup>43</sup> Related to that outlook arises the belief that the ashes of martyrs and other ancestors validate the group's linkage with Crimea. The cemetery of the khans in Bakhchesaray and the Qaraim graves in Mangup Qale, both in Crimea, had been plundered repeatedly by Russian and other treasure hunters long before Soviet authorities in the 1940s authorized and executed the destruction of local graveyards, removing all identifying signs and markers. In contrast, visits by Crimean Tatars to some well-kept graves of what are thought to have been three royal Crimean Tatars buried, apparently, in the eighteenth century in Chatalja, Turkiye, have confirmed for the living that "the sacredness of a grave has been considered indisputable among Muslims since ancient times."<sup>44</sup> From such attitudes have grown the strongly shared views about Crimea itself: "Our nationality has been returning one by one to our sacred [*asret*] Homeland [*Vatan*] for fifty years. Not a single thing can measure the holiness [*asretligi*] of the Homeland [*Vatan*] [to us]."<sup>45</sup> (For further discussion of this idea, see chap. 13.)

An important part of real group self-awareness comes from avoiding

denial of the melancholy past as well as of the happy history of a nationality and its place. One reason for venerating ancestors arises exactly from a mature sense of loss leading to a more meaningful present life. Visits to the old cemeteries and grieving over the vandalizing of Crimea's mausoleums and Crimean Tatar cemeteries perform an important function as part of the process of absorbing both the regrettable and the salutary in truly strengthening a group's self-identity. Such things replace rather than merely propagandize a quasi-realistic past fabricated to fit an ideological treatment of times gone by like that in most Soviet versions of Crimean Tatar history.

In his day, Ismail Bey Gaspirali expressed the conviction that religious community, not language family, ethnic group, or political organization, constituted the main source of group strength for his people.<sup>46</sup> Late in the twentieth century, faith combines with the personal traits of Crimean Tatars—an acute traditional sense of moral and human rights, of ultimate honor and justice, combined with good name and redemption—to make a firm concept of self-worth and clear identity. This has developed because of and despite the vicissitudes involving traditional symbols, places, and an alien hegemony that have tormented and then strengthened them. They very paucity of visible signs of man-made Crimean Tatar physical identity in the landscape gives the scattered remnants of mosques, palaces, and relics of tombs all the more worth to them.<sup>47</sup> Overshadowing stone monuments, shared values and attitudes shape the imagined ties that endow a resolute community with mighty sinews of self-awareness leading to firm group identity.

## Notes

1. *Pechat' SSSR v 1976 godu: Statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow: "Statistika," 1977), 21, tables 9, 43.
2. Eskender Fazil, *Temenna: Shiirler* (Tashkent: Ghafur Ghulam adina Edebiyat va San'at Neshriyati, 1982), 6. (Unless otherwise noted, Edward Allworth made all translations.) Fazil had published many poems in Central Asia before *Gesture of Respect* (*Temenna*), a copy of which he kindly inscribed to the author of this chapter.
3. Lilia Budzhurova, "Kak pakhnet rodina?" *Nekuplennyyi bilet. Sbornik stikhov* (Baltic Region [city not named]: Krymizdat, 1990), 32.