

THE CRIMEAN TATARS, VOLGA GERMANS AND MESKHETIANS:

Soviet treatment of some national minorities



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- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.
- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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29 Craven Street
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**Soviet treatment of some
national minorities**

by

Ann Sheehy and

Bohdan Nahaylo

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"The national question in our country looks particularly unattractive at present. I am thinking of the policy of genocide towards a series of small nations, begun under Stalin and continuing to this day. The Volga Germans and Crimean Tatars, driven from their native parts by Stalin, to this day do not have the right to return to the land of their forefathers, to this day remain scattered over the limitless expanses of Siberia and Central Asia and in effect are condemned to forcible assimilation. This situation looks particularly vile against the background of our 'defence' of all those oppressed and persecuted in Greece, Spain, . . . America and Africa."

—Aleksey Kosterin, February 1968

"I wish the participants in the conference every success in their just struggle against colonialism and for freedom and independence and against racialism, apartheid, and racial and national discrimination."

—President Leonid Brezhnev: Message to the World Conference Against Racialism and Racial Discrimination Meeting in Geneva, 4 August 1978.

**From the Universal Declaration
of Human Rights
adopted by the General Assembly
of the United Nations
on 10 December 1948:**

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 13

- i Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- ii Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

**From the Constitution
of the USSR (1977):**

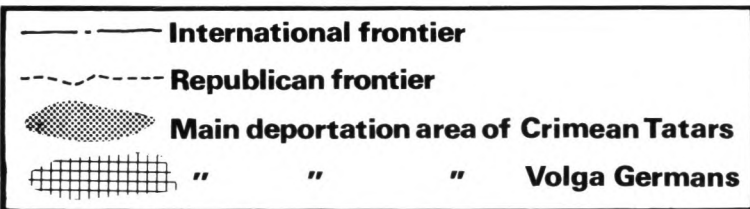
Article 35

Citizens of the USSR of different races and nationalities have equal rights.

Exercise of these rights is ensured by a policy of all-round development and drawing together of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR, by educating citizens in the spirit of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism, and by the possibility to use their native language and the languages of other peoples of the USSR.

Any direct or indirect limitation of the rights of citizens or establishment of direct or indirect privileges on grounds of race or nationality, and any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness, hostility or contempt are punishable by law.

The second edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia* describes genocide as 'an offshoot of decaying imperialism'.



INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

The purpose of this report is to give an account of the recent history and present situation of two national groups in the Soviet Union, the Crimean Tatars and the Soviet (including the Volga) Germans, together with a brief mention of another national group, the Meskhetians. What distinguishes these from the numerous other national groups in the USSR is that they not only suffered a grave injustice in the past on account of their nationality but are still disadvantaged in certain important respects. Their case is, therefore, different from that, say, of the Ukrainians or Lithuanians, who may dislike what they see as Russian hegemony and the regimentation of their national culture but who, in fact, enjoy essentially the same rights as the Russians themselves.

The Crimean Tatars, Soviet Germans and Meskhetians were among several nationalities deported *en bloc* from the European part of the Soviet Union to Siberia and Central Asia during the Second World War. However, unlike the others, they have still not been allowed to return to their former homes. This is in spite of the fact that the Soviet government has admitted that the accusations of wholesale collaboration with the Nazi invaders – which served to justify the deportation of the Crimean Tatars and Volga Germans – were unfounded, and that no charge was ever brought against the Meskhetians. The Crimean Tatars and Volga Germans have also not had restored to them the national autonomy which they were

granted in the early days of Soviet rule, along with virtually all other national groups of any size, and which the latter still enjoy today.

In trying to achieve any balanced account of the situation of the three nationalities one is seriously handicapped by the major gaps in the material published in the Soviet Union. On the deportations there is a conspiracy of silence, even in the Crimean Tatar and German-language press, and no hint is ever given that the three peoples are far from satisfied with their present lot. Indeed, anyone reading only Russian-language Soviet material could easily remain unaware of their existence. A request by the writer to the Soviet Embassy in London in April 1971 for information on the Crimean Tatars and comments on their allegations of discrimination met with the reply that the information was not available at the Embassy.

In these circumstances, for much of the picture inevitably one has to rely on *samizdat* (uncensored) documents which have reached the West, together with information from Soviet Germans who have recently been allowed to join members of their families in West Germany. These sources show that the Crimean Tatars and Meskhetians, in particular, have been conducting mass campaigns since 1956/7 for the restoration of their rights. They also show that as a result of their experiences and the unwillingness of the Soviet government to meet their demands many Meskhetians and Soviet Germans now despair of their future as national groups in the Soviet Union and are seeking emigration to Turkey and West Germany respectively as the only solution to their problem. — A.S.

INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION

This edition continues the account of the recent history and present situation of three national minorities in the Soviet Union: the Crimean Tatars, Soviet Germans and the Meskhetians. It covers the period until the end of 1979. An attempt has been made to retain as much as possible of the previous text while supplementing it with information about recent developments.

Since the appearance of the second edition of this report six and a half years ago, all three national groups have

been conducting mass campaigns: the Crimean Tatars and the Meskhetians to return to their historic homelands, and the Soviet Germans to emigrate to Germany. Only the Soviet German movement has so far met with some success: over 55,000 Soviet Germans were allowed to leave the Soviet Union between 1970 and 1979. Despite decrees rehabilitating them, and in the case of the Meskhetians, a further decree granting them the right to return to Meskhetia, the Crimean Tatars and the Meskhetians remain displaced peoples. The Soviet government continues to violate international and domestic norms by conducting a policy of blatant racial discrimination against them. — B.N.

In recent Soviet censuses the Crimean Tatars have been counted together with the much more numerous Volga or Kazan' Tatars.¹ Their precise numbers are, therefore, not known. They themselves claim to be over half a million strong, but this is probably an overestimate. They were deported from the Crimea on 18 May 1944 for alleged wholesale collaboration with the Germans during the occupation of their homeland, and today live mainly in the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan, particularly in the Tashkent and Samarkand areas and in the Fergana valley.

The Crimean Tatars were politically rehabilitated, i.e. absolved of the charge of wholesale collaboration, in September 1967. At the time it was conjectured that this might be a gesture to mark the improved relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey in view of the Crimean Tatars' historic, cultural and ethnic ties with the Turks. However, samizdat documents which began to come out of the Soviet Union in 1968 revealed that the Tatars had obtained their rehabilitation only as the result of a decade of campaigning, whose scale has been matched in the Soviet Union only by the Meskhetians and possibly the Baptists.²

Since 1968 numerous samizdat documents concerned exclusively with the Crimean Tatar question have reached the West. Among them are bulletins from the Crimean Tatar lobby in Moscow to their constituents in Central Asia; protests and appeals addressed to the Soviet Party and government as well as to the outside world; and the transcript of the five-week trial of ten leading members of the Crimean Tatar movement in Tashkent in 1969 ("Case No. 109"). The Crimean Tatars also figure frequently in the unofficial Moscow *Chronicle of Current Events*, and they are referred to in a number of other documents.³

The failure of the rehabilitation decree to restore the national autonomy of the Crimean Tatars and to provide for their repatriation, combined with the continuing ban in practice on their residence in the Crimea, merely led to an intensification of their campaign for equality of rights with the other nations of the USSR – a campaign which is continuing today. The Crimean Tatars accuse the Soviet authorities not only of discrimination but also of genocide, maintaining that the manner in which they were deported and the conditions in the deportation areas were such that over 46 per cent of their number died on the journey or during the first 18 months after deportation. They also allege that the present policy of denying them their national autonomy – and of denying, moreover, their very existence as a nation by describing them in the rehabilitation decree as "citizens of Tatar nationality formerly resident in the Crimea" – is aimed at their destruction as a nation.

The present report starts with a short history of the Crimean Tatars up to the time of their deportation. Then follows an account of their deportation, the events leading up to their political rehabilitation, and their present situation. Where available, material published in the Soviet Union has been used to corroborate, supplement, or set against the samizdat material.

The confrontation between Russia and the Crimean Tatars dates back to the Mongol Tatar invasion of Europe and the subsequent emergence of the Crimean Tatars as a distinct entity in the early 15th century. The Crimean Tatars are a Muslim Turkic people. They are descended from the Mongol Tatars of the Golden Horde who established themselves in the northern and central steppe hinterland of the Crimean peninsula in the first half of the 13th century, and also from Turkic tribes who arrived before the Mongols and later assimilated Goths as well as Greeks and Genoese who occupied the southern littoral at different periods. With the disintegration of the Golden Horde in the first half of the 15th century, a separate Crimean khanate, extending into the adjacent Black Sea steppes, came into being under the Girey dynasty. In 1478, three years after the Turks had conquered the Italian colonies on the coast of the Crimea, the Crimean khanate acknowledged the suzerainty of the Turkish sultan, but it continued to act independently for some time to come.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the Crimean khanate, with its ability to put many thousands of horsemen into the field, represented a formidable force, and in the confrontation between the khanate and the rising power of Muscovy it was the Tatars who at first had the upper hand. They exacted the old Mongol tribute from the Moscow princes and in addition constantly raided Russian and other lands to the north, carrying off thousands of their inhabitants to sell into slavery. More than once they advanced to the walls of Moscow itself, and in 1571 they besieged the city and burned it to the ground. But from the second half of the 17th century Russia began to gain the ascendancy, and although the Turks and the Crimean Tatars defeated Peter the Great on the Pruth in 1711, Russian troops invaded and ravaged the Crimea during the Russo-Turkish wars of 1735-39 and 1768-74. At the end of the latter war Turkey was forced to give up its suzerainty over the northern shores of the Black Sea, and the Crimean khanate was declared independent. Crimean Tatar fears that this was merely a prelude to annexation by Russia were realized when Catherine the Great proclaimed the Crimea Russian in 1783.

In anticipation of this outcome several thousand Crimean Tatars had already taken refuge in the Ottoman empire, and Tsarist rule was marked by a further series of tragic migrations to Turkey in the course of which many thousands died, while those who remained in the Crimea became increasingly impoverished. It is true that Catherine adopted a relatively liberal policy towards Islam and granted the Tatar nobility the same privileges as the Russian aristocracy. However, as if to obliterate the memory of the khanate, the newly-acquired territory was almost immediately renamed Tavrida and Tatar place names were replaced by Greek ones. In addition, from 1784 the most valuable Tatar lands were confiscated and distributed first to high officials and later to a variety of settlers who were invited in large numbers after 1789. The final straw was Turkey's formal recognition of Russia's annexation of the Crimea in 1792, which deprived the Crimean Tatars of their last hope of regaining their independence. It was this that sparked off the first major migration, to be followed by others in the 1860s, 1870s and 1891-1902. Over the whole period several

¹ for footnotes, see page 27

hundred thousand Tatars abandoned their native Crimea. According to a Russian official writing a decade later, the 1792 exodus "conformed with the wishes of the Russian authorities", and the Tsar, when he was informed in 1856 soon after the Crimean War that the Tatars were leaving the Crimea, is reported to have commented that the territory would be well rid of them. The Tatars had taken no part in the war, but they had been unable to conceal their sympathy for Turkey, and fear of reprisals (apparently fed by reports of a plan to deport the whole Tatar population to the Semipalatinsk province of what is today Kazakhstan) led to such large-scale migration in 1860-3 that hundreds of villages were completely abandoned. By the time of the 1897 census the Crimean Tatars, numbering 188,000, comprised only just over a third of the population, while the Russians and Ukrainians together accounted for some 45 per cent. The overwhelming majority of the Tatar population were peasants, 40 per cent of whom were landless on the eve of the Russian revolution. The fortunes of most of the former Tatar nobility had also declined disastrously.

It was, however, from this impoverished and backward community that the outstanding liberal reformist Ismail Bey Gasprinskiy (Gaspirali) emerged in the latter half of the 19th century. Gasprinskiy aimed at a renaissance of his own and all the Turkic peoples through the modernization of Islam, the practical embodiment of which was his "New Method" education. He also preached Pan-Turk unity, and through his newspaper *Terjuman*, published in Bakhchisaray from 1883 onwards, had an influence that extended into the whole Islamic world. Among some of the younger Crimean Tatar intelligentsia, however, narrower and more radical ideas, aimed at improving the immediate lot of the Crimean Tatars, prevailed; and when the first Tatar political party, the *Milli Firqa* (National Party), was set up in July 1917 its programme demanded the federalization of Russia, cultural autonomy for the minorities, and a solution of the land question.

The *Milli Firqa* dominated the political life of the Crimean Tatars during the upheavals of the revolution and civil war, but as a relatively powerless minority the Tatars had little chance of achieving their aims. An autonomous government, set up by the *Milli Firqa* in Simferopol' in December 1917, was disbanded in January 1918 by Bolshevik sailors from Sevastopol'. Subsequently the left wing of the *Milla Firqa* and — under the extremely hostile White regime of General Denikin in 1919-20 — the *Milli Firqa* Central Committee itself collaborated with the Bolsheviks, but when Soviet rule was finally established for good in November 1920, the *Milli Firqa* was declared a counter-revolutionary organization.

The local Bolshevik regime in the Crimea, like those in other minority areas, was loth to share any of its power with the indigenous inhabitants, and its policy antagonized rather than won over the Tatars. However Lenin had realized very soon after the revolution that some concessions to the feelings of the national minorities were necessary if he was to keep intact the old Russian empire. He had settled on the formula of "self-determination" in the shape of nominally independent or autonomous national republics, in which national sentiments would be placated by promoting national culture, the use of the national language, and native participation in the conduct of affairs.⁴

Accordingly when Moscow became aware of the alienation of the Tatars in the Crimea, it decided that the

solution was an autonomous republic. The objections of the local Bolsheviks that the Tatars formed a minority of the population and that they were not proletarian — as well as their argument that the Crimea was too important to the whole country as a health resort to be under the jurisdiction of an autonomous republic — were overruled, and the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Crimean ASSR) was formally set up on 18 October 1921 as part of the RSFSR. An editorial in *Zhizn' natsional'nostey* (the organ of the People's Commissariat of Nationality Affairs) of 25 October 1921, which announced its formation, declared that the republic was

"due compensation for all the wrongs . . . of the Tsarist regime. But chiefly the proclamation of the republic means a series of social transformations directed towards the satisfaction of all the crying needs of the toiling elements of the native population."

The creation of the republic would ensure

"the maximum of autonomous rights and initiative for the broad toiling masses of the native population in their cultural and economic rebirth."

The editorial also pointed out the importance of the Crimea in international policy in view of the long-standing links of the Crimean Tatars with all the neighbouring Eastern peoples, and asserted that the republic would be

"yet one more brilliantly flashing beacon destined to attract all the best yearnings and aspirations of the multi-million East now under the slave yoke of the international imperialists."

The early years of the Crimean ASSR have been described as the "Golden Age" of the Crimean Tatars under Soviet rule. Veli Ibragimov, formerly leader of the left wing of the *Milli Firqa*, was made President of the Executive Committee, and with many other Tatars in senior posts the Tatars enjoyed a more dominant political position in the republic than their numbers warranted (they made up only 25 per cent of the population of 714,000 at the time of the 1926 census). Tatar was made an official language side by side with Russian; Tatar schools and theatres were opened, and Tatar literature and art encouraged; and Tatar national pride was boosted by archaeological excavations which revealed the high standard of culture achieved by the Crimean khanate.

This relatively happy interlude came to an end in late 1927 when a long purge of "bourgeois nationalists" began in the Muslim republics. In the Crimea, where it was particularly drastic, it started with the arrest and execution of Veli Ibragimov and resulted in the disappearance of practically all the pre-revolutionary Tatar intelligentsia. During the country-wide collectivisation drive of the late 1920s and early 1930s it was the turn of the peasants and some 30,000 to 40,000 were deported to the Urals and Siberia. A violent anti-religious campaign at the same time led to the death or deportation of the majority of the Muslim clergy. Finally came the mass terror of 1936-38 which took its toll indiscriminately on all sections of the population.

Deportation

Given what had gone before it is not surprising that with the approach of the Second World War Stalin's fears about the loyalty of some of his non-Russian subjects became intense. There is evidence that the question of deporting the peoples of the North Caucasus and the Crimean Tatars was mooted at this time, but if any such plans existed for the Crimean Tatars they were forestalled by the rapid German advance. During the war some hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens of various nationalities —

including Russians – served in the German armed forces for one reason or another; and it is true that several thousand Crimean Tatars enrolled in six German-officered Tatar battalions which fought against Soviet partisan detachments in the Crimea and were evacuated with the German forces in 1944.⁵ Nominally they were volunteers, but many of them were prisoners-of-war seeking to escape from starvation or death in German camps. German reports also make it clear that the partisans in the Crimea did not always enjoy the support of the local population. The partisans' mountain operations meant that the predominantly Tatar villages there bore the brunt of both the partisans' attacks and of the German reprisals. On the other hand large numbers of Crimean Tatars served loyally in the Red Army throughout the war, and fought with the local partisans – some having a high price put on their heads by the German High Command. The Soviet press at the time carried reports of Crimean Tatar heroism, and, according to the Crimean Tatars themselves, 13 or 14 of their number were given the highest award for bravery, the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The Red Army offensive in the Crimea began on 8 April 1944 and by 18 April only Sevastopol' remained in German hands. Tatars who had collaborated with the Germans were immediately sentenced to death by military tribunals (reports speak of mass executions in the streets), and then before dawn on 18 May 1944, six days after the last Germans had been cleared from Crimean soil, all the remaining Tatars were roused from their beds by NKVD troops with bayonets and sub-machine guns and deported. The deportation and the reason for it were only made known two years later with the publication in *Izvestiya* of a decree of 25 June 1946 confirming the abolition of the Crimean and also the Chechen-Ingush ASSR. The decree ran in part:

"During the Great Patriotic War . . . many Chechens and Crimean Tatars, at the instigation of German agents, joined volunteer units organized by the Germans and, together with German troops, engaged in armed struggle against units of the Red Army; also at the bidding of the Germans they formed diversionary bands for the struggle against Soviet authority in the rear; meanwhile the bulk of the population of the Chechen-Ingush and Crimean ASSRs took no counter-action against these traitors to the Fatherland. In connection with this, the Chechens and Crimean Tatars were resettled in other regions of the USSR, where they were given land together with the necessary government assistance to set themselves up."

The grim reality of the "resettlement" of the Crimean Tatars has been described in many of the samizdat documents. According to an "Open Letter from the Russian Friends of the Crimean Tatars" written in 1968 or early 1969, some of the Crimean Tatars were given only fifteen minutes to collect such belongings and provisions as they could carry. Others had no more than five minutes to assemble and, as they were forbidden to take anything at all, thought that they were being taken out to be shot. The "Open Letter" continues:

"But it was not to be shot. It was a journey of lingering death in cattle trucks, crammed with people, like mobile gas chambers. The journey lasted three to four weeks and took them across the scorching summer steppes of Kazakhstan. They took the Red partisans of the Crimea, the fighters of the Bolshevik underground, and Soviet and Party activists. Also invalids and old men. The remaining men were fighting at the front, but deportation awaited them at the end of the war. And in the meantime they crammed their women and children into the trucks, where they constituted the vast majority. Death mowed down the old, the young and the weak. They died of thirst, suffocation and the stench.

On the long stages the corpses decomposed in the huddle of the trucks, and at the short halts, where water and food were handed out, the people were not allowed to bury their dead and had to leave them beside the railway track."

The Crimean Tatars were transported several thousand miles to the Urals, Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The majority of the estimated 200,000 to 250,000 of them were taken to Uzbekistan where, according to official Soviet records produced at recent trials, the first ones arrived 11 days later and most of the remainder by 8 June 1944. By 1 July 1944, 35,750 families totalling 151,424 persons had arrived in Uzbekistan. They were followed by a further 818 families before the end of the year, and the figures indicate that another 2,000 or so Crimean Tatar men arrived in Uzbekistan in 1945, presumably on demobilization from the army.

On their arrival in Uzbekistan the deportees met with sullen hostility from the local population, who had been set against them by the authorities. In some cases they even had stones thrown at them. They were dumped in barracks or dug-outs, and in their half-starved and weak state malaria, intestinal diseases contracted from the ditch water after the pure water they had been used to in the Crimea, and a lack of food – which persisted until they were able to harvest their own produce in 1945 – soon started to take their toll. At the trial of ten Crimean Tatars in Tashkent in July and August 1969 an elderly Crimean Tatar, Yusuf Suleymenov, testified as follows:

"They took us and unloaded us in Urta-Aul like cattle for slaughter. Nobody paid any attention to us. We were hungry, dirty and ill. People became even more ill, and started to swell from hunger and began to die in families. I want to say that from our village, where there were 206 people, 100 died. I myself buried 18. Out of seven households of my relatives not one remained."

Many other Crimean Tatars have described the appalling mortality in their own families. As a young Crimean Tatar physicist, Yuriy Osmanov, is said to have commented:

"Yes, the Crimean Tatars were indeed given land – one and a half metres in the cemetery."

As mentioned above, the Crimean Tatars claim, on the basis of a census they carried out in 1966, that 46 per cent or some 110,000 of their number died during deportation and the following 18 months. This is disputed by the Soviet authorities, who have produced figures from old files indicating that a mere 22 per cent or approximately 33,000 of those who arrived in Uzbekistan died prior to 1 January 1946. But even if these figures are accurate, they take no account of those who died during the actual deportation. Moreover the Crimean Tatars claim that the mortality rate was higher in some other deportation areas – for example in the Urals, where in some villages up to 100 per cent of the newly-arrived Crimean Tatars died. On the other hand, if Soviet official figures of 120,129 Crimean Tatar deportees in Uzbekistan on 1 January 1946 are correct, it suggests either that there were no more than about 10,000 Crimean Tatars in other republics or that the Crimean Tatar figure of a 46 per cent mortality is too high. A 46 per cent mortality is also incompatible with Crimean Tatar claims that they are over half a million strong today. It would mean that only some 130,000 survived, and they could hardly have much more than doubled their number in the intervening quarter of a century. (Unfortunately the 1959 and 1970 Soviet census results are of little help in resolving the question since the Crimean Tatars are not distinguished from the other Tatars. The total Tatar population of Uzbekistan was 28,000 in 1926; 147,000 in 1939; 445,000 in 1959; and 578,000 in

1970. Crimean Tatar deportees must have played a large part in the threefold increase in the number of Tatars between 1939 and 1959. On the other hand the figures show that there was already a sizeable and rapidly-growing Kazan' Tatar population in the republic before their arrival.)

The years up to 1956, when they had to live under the conditions of "special settlement" are recalled with particular bitterness by those who survived. Their freedom of movement was restricted to the immediate area to which they had been deported, the penalty for unauthorised departure being up to 25 years hard labour, and their lives were at the mercy of the often sadistic local MVD commandants to whom they had to report once a month. Ex-Major General Grigorenko, the leading civil rights protester and a strong supporter of the Crimean Tatars, has compared their situation at this time to that of serfs; while according to Riza Umerov, one of the Tatars sentenced in 1969, "up till 1956 we were used like draught animals, deprived, moreover, of the most elementary rights". The 5,000 ruble advances they had been given "to set themselves up" turned into millstones round their necks when, in an act of gratuitous cruelty, they were made to pay them back with 5,000 new rubles after the 1947 monetary reform which substituted one new ruble for ten old. Their poverty made it necessary for them to forego higher education. In any case, because of the restrictions on movement, it was a possibility only for those few who happened to have been deported to areas with higher educational institutions, and even then most of them were excluded because of their nationality.

Back in the Crimea the confiscated property of the Crimean Tatars was given to settlers from the Ukraine, and in the words of the "Open Letter of the Russian Friends of the Crimean Tatars":

"everything was done to destroy all traces of the national life of the Tatars and the very memory of their existence. Houses were demolished, and orchards and vineyards were allowed to become wild and overgrown. The cemeteries of the Tatars were ploughed up, and the remains of their ancestors torn from the earth . . . Everything written and printed in Crimean Tatar was burnt - from ancient manuscripts to the classics of Marxism-Leninism inclusive."

Many of the old Tatar place names in the Crimea were also replaced by Russian ones.

At the same time the history of the Crimea was rewritten. While the relevant volume of the first edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia* published in 1937 had dwelt on the cultural achievements of the Crimean khanate and the Crimean Tatars' sufferings under the Tsars, the second edition published in 1953 omitted all reference to both these topics and declared that the main occupation of the Crimean Tatars had been war and plundering raids. It even suggested that the Crimea had been Russian from time immemorial and that it had been "torn away from the Russian people for many centuries" when it had become a province of the Golden Horde in the 13th century. There was no mention of the former Crimean ASSR. Accounts of the Second World War in the Crimea spoke only of the treachery of the Crimean Tatars. Regarding their current whereabouts and plight there was total silence.

Political Rehabilitation

This silence lasted for several more years even after the death of Stalin, but the latter event did lead to a signifi-

cant improvement in the position of the Crimean Tatars. In his Secret Speech at the XX Party Congress in February 1956 Khrushchev included the deportation of whole nations in his catalogue of Stalin's crimes. The "special settlement" restrictions had already been lifted in 1954 from the Crimean Tatars who had fought in the Red Army or with the partisans, and this relief was now extended to the whole Crimean Tatar community by an unpublished decree of 28 April 1956. But the same decree also said that property of the Crimean Tatars confiscated at the time of their deportation would not be returned and that they did not have the right to return to the Crimea. At least, however, they could now reside freely elsewhere in the Soviet Union and even visit the Crimea. Certain cultural concessions also followed. In 1957 a newspaper in Crimean Tatar *Lenin bayragy* (Lenin's Banner) started publication in Tashkent; a Crimean Tatar song and dance ensemble was set up; and a small number of books in Crimean Tatar began to be printed.⁶ But in the Crimea itself, which had been transferred from the RSFSR to the Ukraine on 19 February 1954, the old Tatar place names continued to be changed and further Crimean Tatar monuments destroyed. Moreover the improvement in the situation of the Crimean Tatars was marginal when compared with that of the deported Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Karachay and Balkars who had been mentioned by name in Khrushchev's Secret Speech. These small nations were not only publicly absolved of the charge of mass treachery during the war but also had their autonomous territories reconstituted in January 1957. The most likely reason why the same reparation was not made to the Crimean Tatars is that the authorities were not willing to return them to their homeland as they considered it a strategic area. But not unnaturally the Crimean Tatars expected the same treatment as the other deported peoples were accorded, and in 1956 or 1957 they began a campaign for political rehabilitation, repatriation and the restoration of the Crimean ASSR. It took ten years of intensive efforts to achieve even the first, and then only at the cost of numerous arrests, prison sentences, expulsions from the Party and other forms of persecution, although the Tatars made a point of always acting within the law and their constitutional rights.

At first the Crimean Tatars concentrated on despatching petitions to the authorities in Moscow. Five major appeals with between 6,000 and 18,000 signatures were sent to leading Party and government bodies between July 1957 and March 1961, and a further one signed by 25,000 people followed to the XXII Party Congress in October 1961. The arrest of those most active in the movement began in 1959, but the first available details of a trial relate to October 1961, when two Crimean Tatars were sentenced in Tashkent to seven and five years respectively in "strict regime" labour camps for having composed and distributed documents protesting against the treatment of the Crimean Tatars to compatriots in various towns. This was classed as anti-Soviet propaganda and stirring up racial discord. Another trial in August 1962 involved Marat Omerov, a young factory foreman, and Seit Amza Umerov, a student of Tashkent University. Early in 1962 they had been among some 25 young Crimean Tatar students and workers from the Tashkent area who had decided to set up "The Union of Crimean Tatar Youth for Return to the Homeland". In the event it was not actually set up, since an older member of the group warned that the authorities would object even though it

was to be "truly Leninist". Nonetheless Omerov and Umerov were sentenced to four and three years respectively in "strict regime" labour camps on a charge of anti-Soviet propaganda and setting up and heading an anti-Soviet organization. A number of the others involved were dismissed from their jobs or expelled from the university. But most of them were not deterred from subsequently taking a very active part in the movement.

The Crimean Tatars' campaign entered a more intensive phase in 1964, when they started to maintain a permanent lobby in Moscow. The members of this lobby rotated and each held a mandate signed by the residents of the town or village which sent him to Moscow. These mandates were handed in to the Central Committee on arrival. Up to about September 1968 over 4,000 representatives had been sent to the capital, where they tried to obtain hearings with government and Party leaders, handed in letters and petitions, attempted to inform the Soviet public about the Crimean Tatar question, and issued a bulletin twice a month reporting to their constituents on their activity and general developments.

In 1965 complementary "Action Groups to Assist the Party and Government in Solving the National Question of the Crimean Tatar People" were set up in all the settlements where Crimean Tatars lived. These groups had no formal organization. Their members were chosen by the local Crimean Tatar community and their names — over 5,000 in all — handed in to the Central Committee. In the words of a 1969 protest to the Central Committee and other bodies,

"without in any way exceeding the bounds of the law, the Action Groups organized various measures, whose purpose was to bring to the knowledge of the Party and government the true aims and aspirations of the Crimean Tatar people. They engaged in the collection of signatures to petitions addressed to the government and the collection of funds by way of donations from the people for the despatch of delegates to Moscow, for assistance to the families of participants of the national movement sent to prison and so on."

The Action Groups regularly organized meetings, sometimes attended by several hundred or more Crimean Tatars, at which bulletins from the representatives in Moscow were read and current problems discussed. There were also Action Group meetings on provincial, republican and even inter-republican levels.

The reaction of the authorities to this intense activity was two-fold. Firstly, they ignored the numerous letters and petitions, although by law a proper reply is obligatory. Secondly, they tried to prevent and disrupt Crimean Tatar gatherings and harassed and persecuted those most active in the movement. It is true that Crimean Tatar representatives were received by Mikoyan, then Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, in August 1965 and by Georgadze, Secretary of the same body, in March 1966, but since no concessions followed from either meeting they were presumably intended merely to persuade the Crimean Tatars to desist from their activities, if only temporarily. The events connected with the 1966 meeting, which took place on the eve of the XXIII Party Congress, give some idea of the scale of the Crimean Tatar movement at this time. As the Congress approached, the number of representatives in Moscow rose to 125. 14,284 letters as well as numerous telegrams were sent to various Party and government bodies. In addition a petition to the Congress, signed by more than 120,000 Crimean Tatars (i.e. virtually the whole adult population), together with seven volumes of data support-

ing their claim of a 46 per cent mortality rate in 1944-45, was handed in to the Central Committee. Finally on 28 March 1966 ten of the representatives were received by Georgadze, who promised that their case would be reviewed in a month or so. When nothing happened a new petition with 115,000 signatures was drawn up, 17,000 more letters were sent, and the number of representatives in Moscow began to increase again. But this time they found the Moscow hotels barred to them, and on 25 June they were seized at the Central Committee building and forcibly expelled from the city. A wave of protest meetings in Uzbekistan and elsewhere followed, and yet more representatives arrived in Moscow and distributed accounts of what had happened to various public organizations and the press. Eventually four of them were arrested and, after nine months in custody, were each given a three years' suspended sentence on a charge of inflaming racial discord.

In September 1966 three new articles were added to the republican Criminal Codes to provide the authorities with a new weapon against meetings and demonstrations and the circulation of samizdat. The two important new articles in the Uzbekistan Criminal Code were 191-4 ("the dissemination of deliberate fabrications defaming the Soviet state and social system") and 191-6 ("the organization of or active participation in group actions violating public order"), both carrying a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment. Their immediate target was the Crimean Tatars, and many of the most active campaigners were summoned to the local police and KGB offices and asked to sign a statement that they had familiarized themselves with them. The relevant decree, dated 27 September 1966, was hurriedly brought into force on 9 October to deal with meetings the Crimean Tatars had begun to hold in many parts of Uzbekistan to mark the 45th anniversary of the Crimean ASSR. Although entirely law-abiding and peaceable, a number of these meetings were forcibly broken up by the police. Hundreds of Crimean Tatars were given up to 15 days' imprisonment for "petty hooliganism", and 17, including three Party members, were sentenced to up to two years under the new article 191-6 and article 192 ("resisting the authorities").

The persistent harassment of Mustafa Dzhemilev in 1965-66 showed the lengths to which the KGB was prepared to go to put out of action one of the leading Tatar campaigners. As a boy of 18 he had already been dismissed from his job in a Tashkent aircraft factory in 1962 in connection with the Union of Crimean Tatar Youth episode. In September 1965 he was expelled from the Tashkent Irrigation Engineers Institute where he was a student, and at about the same time he was beaten up in the street. He went to Moscow, where he managed to get his expulsion declared illegal, only to be faced on his return with a trumped-up charge of evading military service. Shortly afterwards he was given 15 days for "petty hooliganism" following an unsuccessful attempt to plant a watch in his pocket in a Tashkent bus. Sentenced to 18 months on the charge of evading military service in May 1966, on his release Dzhemilev had great difficulty in getting a job. The institute also refused to reinstate him. A KGB major told Reshat Dzhemilev, another Crimean Tatar leader, frankly on 22 January 1968:

"It's easier for us if people like Mustafa and Server don't get higher education. It's more difficult for us to combat the intelligentsia than manual workers. So let them be manual workers."

Another young Crimean Tatar leader subjected to a long period of intimidation was Yuriy (Yusuf) Osmanov, a physicist at the Institute of High Energy Physics in Serpukhov near Moscow. Osmanov antagonised the authorities by writing numerous letters to official and public figures and by submitting articles to journals on the taboo subjects of Gasprinskiy and the history of the Crimean Tatars. Together with two other young scientists and a welder he was eventually sentenced to a labour camp in May 1968 on charges of composing and distributing documents defaming the Soviet state and inflaming racial discord.

In July 1967 the number of Crimean Tatar representatives in Moscow rose to over 400. This time they had resolved to stage a demonstration in Red Square if their demands for rehabilitation and repatriation were not met. But on 21 July, 20 of them were received in the Kremlin by Andropov, Chairman of the KGB, as well as by Georgadze, Rudenko, the USSR Prosecutor General, and Shchelokov, the Minister for the Preservation of Public Order. Presumably the authorities had by now decided that some concessions would have to be made to the Crimean Tatars if the steam was to be taken out of their campaign. At all events Andropov told the Crimean Tatar representatives that within the next few days the Central Committee would "loudly and publicly" politically rehabilitate the Crimean Tatars. He also promised that all slanderous literature would be removed from circulation and that the cases of those imprisoned or expelled from the Party for participation in the Crimean Tatar national movement would be reviewed. But he added that the question of their return to the Crimea required further study. This suggests the possibility of disagreement among those concerned as to how far they should go to meet Crimean Tatar demands, which would also explain why several weeks went by without any public announcement of the Crimean Tatars' political rehabilitation. Meanwhile gatherings of up to 2,000 Crimean Tatars in Tashkent on 27 August and 2 September were dispersed by force. Over 130 people were arrested, 12 of whom were later sentenced to up to three years' imprisonment on charges of organizing mass disorders and resisting the authorities.

The decree rehabilitating the Crimean Tatars, dated 5 September 1967, was finally published in newspapers in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgiziya and Tadzhikistan on 9 September 1967. It began as follows:

"After the liberation of the Crimea from Fascist occupation in 1944 instances of active collaboration with the German invaders by a certain section of the Tatars formerly resident in the Crimea were attributed without foundation to the whole Tatar population of the Crimea. These indiscriminate accusations against all citizens of Tatar nationality resident in the Crimea ought to be lifted, the more so since a new generation of people has embarked on its working and political life."

Later it went on to note that "the Tatars formerly resident in the Crimea" had "taken root" in the Uzbek and other republics, and that they enjoyed all the rights of Soviet citizens and had a newspaper and radio broadcasts in Tatar. Finally it enjoined the republican governments concerned to continue to look after the Tatars' interests. The decree was accompanied by an Order of the same date varying the decree of 28 April 1956 and explaining that "citizens of Tatar nationality formerly resident in the Crimea" and members of their families were entitled to reside anywhere in the Soviet Union "in accordance with the existing legislation on employment and the passport regulations". (Under the passport regulations in towns a citizen has to be registered i.e. obtain a

residence permit, which is normally granted automatically if evidence of accommodation is produced.)

The publication of the decree absolving them of the charge of mass treachery was naturally a matter of great satisfaction to the Tatars, but any initial euphoria soon wore off as the unsatisfactory aspects of the rehabilitation became clear. Firstly, the decree had been published only in certain Central Asian papers (apart from the little-read *USSR Supreme Soviet Gazette*) and therefore only a small part of the Soviet population had learnt of the rehabilitation. Secondly, and more importantly, as a 1969 protest says, the decree:

"contained several features aimed at keeping the Crimean Tatars permanently rooted in the deportation areas. The very fact that the decree spoke not of Crimean Tatars but of 'Tatars formerly resident in the Crimea' (i.e. arbitrarily gave the Crimean Tatars a new 'ethnic' designation) was an indication that the government did not recognize the right of the Crimean Tatars to their own national territory and was even trying to deny the existence of the Crimean Tatar nation as such."

That the authorities were well aware of the limitations of the decree is evidenced by the despatch of a high-powered Central Committee commission to "explain" it. But the "explanation" was not always such as to reassure the Tatars. Vishnevskiy, a Central Committee representative who answered questions at a meeting in Samarkand University on the day the decree was published, merely repeated the accusations of treachery against the Crimean Tatars made by a Stalinist writer and denied that they had ever enjoyed autonomy. The brilliant young Crimean Tatar theoretical physicist Rollan Kadyev, a lecturer at the university, who disputed this, was later threatened with dismissal if he did not change his views, and subsequently all trips in connections with his work were refused. Nonetheless the authorities were evidently anxious to have Crimean Tatar approval of the decree since, immediately after it was published, in every work-place the Tatars were summoned and asked to express their gratitude to the Party and government.⁷

Post-Rehabilitation Developments

The three main features of the Crimean Tatar movement since rehabilitation have been persistent and largely unsuccessful efforts to take up residence in the Crimea, a link-up with the human rights movement in the Soviet Union, and a continuation of their campaign for repatriation and the restoration of the Crimean ASSR.

According to a Crimean Tatar report, after the rehabilitation decree was issued the inhabitants of the Crimea were told that Crimean Tatars would be returning to the Crimea and they were asked to offer them accommodation and help in finding jobs. Literally within a week, however, the Crimean Tatars were being depicted as traitors and thoroughly undesirable characters. The reason for this volte-face seems to have been that after the publication of the decree and the accompanying Order hundreds of Crimean Tatar families immediately left Central Asia for their homeland. In giving the Tatars the right to reside in the Crimea again but refusing them repatriation and national autonomy, the authorities may have calculated that, when it came to the point, few would be willing to give up their comfortable existence and good jobs in Central Asia to make the long journey back to the Crimea at their own expense. The Crimean Tatar question would thus solve itself since, if the Tatars continued to agitate for the restoration of the Crimean ASSR, the authorities

could legitimately argue that it was not justified, given the small number of Crimean Tatars who had returned to the Crimea.

Be that as it may, the immediate reaction of the authorities to the influx of Crimean Tatars was to expel them – sometimes with the use of considerable violence. They then set about ensuring that it would be impossible for Crimean Tatars to take up residence in the Crimea in future. Residence permits were made obligatory throughout the peninsula instead of previously only in the towns and health resorts, and a minimum requirement of 13.65 sq.m. accommodation per head was set, a much higher figure than the usual norm. To back up these legal requirements, the inhabitants of the Crimea were warned that they would be severely punished if they offered accommodation or sold their houses to Crimean Tatars. Contracts for the sale of houses concluded by residents who refused to be intimidated were arbitrarily declared invalid and the sellers fined. As a result of such measures, out of the 6,000 or so Crimean Tatars who arrived in the Crimea in the period up to December 1967, only three single men and two families succeeded in getting registered. The remainder were either forcibly deported or, their funds exhausted after months of vain efforts to get registered, eventually compelled to leave of their own accord.

The Tatars, however, refused to be deterred, and in March 1968 the authorities took two steps in Uzbekistan to avert a mass departure for the Crimea planned for the summer. First they announced that officials of the Crimean provincial administration would come to Uzbekistan to conclude labour contracts with those wishing to return to the Crimea. But few resettlement permits were issued and then only with the approval of the KGB to those who had taken no part whatsoever in the national movement. Secondly, the Uzbekistan authorities tried to persuade the Crimean Tatars to renounce their aim of returning to the Crimea by circulating letters among them saying that they were being stirred up by a handful of nationalists and anti-Soviet elements. They also threatened the leading participants in the national movement. The letters were allegedly from members of the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia, but, although the authorities resorted to blackmail, deception and intimidation, they managed to collect only 262 signatures and a considerable number of these were later repudiated.

Undaunted, large numbers of Crimean Tatars continued to leave for the Crimea, in some cases for the second or third time. But the authorities refused to relent. Tatars who managed to get jobs in the Crimea were dismissed as soon as their nationality was discovered, and they were invariably refused residence permits. In addition there were periodic round-ups by the police, followed by forcible expulsion from the Crimea. Those who insisted on trying to register a complaint about their treatment with the local authorities were liable to get 15 days in jail, and in the first year or so after rehabilitation 17 Crimean Tatars were sentenced to longer terms of imprisonment.

The experience of 11 families who bought houses in the Belogorsk district in early 1969 are recounted in the individual protests they addressed to the UN Human Rights Commission after failing to obtain any redress from the Soviet authorities. All 11 were refused registration, and the majority, if not all, of the house contracts

were declared invalid. At the end of June eight of the 11 families were brutally seized in the middle of the night, put on trains leaving the peninsula, and dumped at railway stations beyond, destitute save for a handful of possessions. They were given no compensation for their houses and when, thanks to the generosity of local people, they returned to the Crimea some found their houses boarded up or occupied and their stores looted. They were all reduced to begging in order to keep alive.

Individual Crimean Tatars have continued their efforts to settle in the Crimea, but only in very rare instances have they been successful. Even those who are Party members – and there are said to be about 5,000 – are not allowed to return. In the first half of 1972 another 30 families were refused registration in four districts of the Crimea, and since the beginning of 1972 the ban on Crimean Tatars was apparently extended to certain adjacent areas in the Ukraine where a number have taken up residence after being forced to leave the Crimea. The head of the passport desk in Henichesk was accused by the Crimean Tatars of spreading rumours that too many Tatars had come to the town; they could cut the throats of all the Russians one night.

It is true that up to 1972 a few hundred Crimean Tatar families returned to the Crimea under the organized labour recruitment scheme. But firstly, only farm labour was recruited. Secondly, the families have had to stay permanently on the farm for which they were recruited or leave the Crimea. Thirdly, the families have been settled in ones or twos, or at best in fives to tens, which makes it difficult for them to preserve their language and cultural identity. Fourthly, their children have been denied higher or further education in the Crimea. And finally, the number of Crimean Tatars recruited was a mere fraction of the total Crimean Tatar population. This might be understandable if the Crimea were overpopulated. In fact it is short of labour and large sums have been spent on bringing in Russian and Ukrainian settlers, many of whom have not stayed long.

In recent years the Soviet authorities have continued to refuse to allow large numbers of Crimean Tatars to settle in their ancestral homeland. It has been estimated that between 1967 and 1975 only about 5,000 Crimean Tatars (less than 1% of their population) were allowed to register as residents in the region. According to Crimean Tatar sources, in 1978 some 700 families, comprising about 3,000 people, were living in the Crimea without residence permits.

The Soviet authorities have systematically pressurized unregistered Crimean Tatars to leave the Crimea. Extraordinary obstacles have been placed before Crimean Tatars wishing to purchase homes. Many Crimean Tatars have been denied jobs, or have had essential services to their homes cut off. Their children have frequently been denied admission to schools. In numerous cases the authorities have simply demolished the homes of unregistered Crimean Tatars with bulldozers and tractors, or have beaten up their inhabitants and then forcibly evicted them from the Crimea. Amnesty International estimates that between 1975 and 1979 more than 100 Crimean Tatars have been put on trial on charges of “violation of passport regulations”. In most cases their sentences resulted in their banishment from the Crimea. Amnesty International also knows of numerous other instances where Crimean Tatars have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment having either been convicted

under the more serious charge of "malicious violation of the passport regulations" or on apparently false criminal charges such as "resisting the police".

Only for a short period at the beginning of 1977 did it seem that the Soviet authorities might be embarking on a more lenient policy towards the Crimean Tatars.

According to the *Chronicle of Current Events*, No.44 (dated 16 March 1977), registration of everyone already living in the Crimea was promised to Crimean Tatar representatives during meetings with district Soviet executive committees. Between February and September 1977 around 200 Crimean Tatar families were in fact registered. KGB officials apparently, however, did not conceal that this concession was connected with the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution, and in retrospect it seems that it was motivated by the fear of possible collective protests timed for the anniversary, rather than by any substantial shift in policy.

In 1978 the Soviet authorities launched a new campaign against the unregistered Crimean Tatar families living in the Crimea, resulting in further forcible evictions, protests, arrests and trials. Their plight was highlighted by the widely-reported suicides of two Crimean Tatars. On 23 June 1978 Musa Mamut, a 46-year-old father of three, committed suicide by self-immolation in the Simferopol district of the Crimea, in protest against the new repressive measures. About 1,000 mourners took part in the funeral turning it into a mass public protest. In November 1978 another unregistered Crimean Tatar, Izzet Memedullayev, committed suicide after being threatened with arrest.

During 1978 the Soviet authorities introduced two new measures to prevent Crimean Tatars from leaving Uzbekistan for the Crimea and to place even more pressure on the unregistered Crimean Tatars already living there. In April an unpublished decree (Instruction No. 221, dated 26 April 1978) from the Uzbekistan Ministry of Internal Affairs⁸ was circulated to the police instructing them that "citizens of Tatar nationality formerly resident in the Crimea are forbidden to leave for the Crimea without supporting documents showing that they can be found living accommodation and employment in the Crimea". The Crimean Tatars have subsequently protested that this "Instruction", which applies exclusively to citizens of Crimean Tatar nationality, contradicts articles 34 and 36 of the USSR Constitution, which guarantee the equality of all citizens and nationalities in the Soviet Union, as well as international human rights instruments signed by the Soviet government, such as the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Helsinki Final Act.

On 15 October 1978 an unpublished Decree of the USSR Council of Ministers (No.700, dated 15 August 1978) entitled "Supplementary measures to reinforce the passport regime in the Crimean region"⁹ came into effect. According to this decree, which is described as being a temporary measure,

"People who have arrived in the Crimean region in an unofficial manner and live there without passports, or with invalid passports, without a permit or registration, despite administrative penalties for violating passport regulations by a decision of the executive committee of the city, district or town regional soviet of people's deputies SHALL BE BANISHED from the region by organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; Citizens who own houses, or let or sublet accommodation, or live in hostels and let others live with them without passports, or with invalid passports, without

permits or registration, and who are punished for this twice in one year SHALL BE BANISHED from the Crimean region for 2 years by a decision of the executive committee of the city, district or town regional soviet of people's deputies."

According to the *Chronicle of Current Events*, No.52 (dated March 1979),

"Decree No.700 in practice brings about an extraordinary situation in the Crimea, negating several existing laws. According to Articles 336, 338 of the Civil Code of the RSFSR and the corresponding articles of the Ukrainian SSR Civil Code, citizens can only be evicted by the authorities for 'squatting' in an occupied residence, i.e. occupying a home without the permission of the owner. Such a measure as forcible 'eviction from the region' is not foreseen by the legal system, and banishment can only be authorized by a court as a criminal punishment. Although the decree does not mention Crimean Tatars, its practical enforcement leaves no doubt that it is directed exclusively against Tatars returning to the Crimea."

On 10 April 1979, Academician Andrei Sakharov appealed in a statement addressed to President Leonid Brezhnev for the repeal of Decree No.700.¹⁰ Having stated that "the denial of the right to residence, based on ethnic identity, is the most dangerous form of discrimination", he went on to describe how the Ministry of the Interior's military units were carrying out "mass actions of expulsion of the Crimean Tatars from the Crimea":

"During the actions of deportation, staged as war-time punitive expeditions, heart-rending incidents of violence and brutality toward the elderly, children, women and the ill take place. The personal property of Crimean Tatar families is often destroyed or ransacked. Vegetable gardens still growing are ploughed up. Houses purchased are destroyed or confiscated. Extremely severe and unjust measures of punishment are used toward those who protest against the above lawless actions, up to long-term imprisonment."

According to Ayshe Seytmuratova, a Crimean Tatar representative and a former political prisoner who is now living in the USA, "over 700 families living in the Crimea in 1978 are guaranteed either deportation or prison on the basis of Decree No.700". Between November 1978 and February 1979 about 60 families are reported to have been banished from the Crimea under this unpublished decree. (From January to October 1978 20 or so banishments were reported.) Crimean Tatars have protested against these measures and there have been numerous arrests and detentions.

The link-up between the Tatars and the general democratic movement, whose constitutional approach they share, occurred early in 1968. It seems to have been effected primarily through the writer Aleksey Kosterin, a veteran Communist who had long championed the rights of the smaller nations of the Soviet Union. Kosterin had already tried to get the Crimean Tatar and Volga German questions discussed at two Party congresses (presumably those of 1961 and 1966), and it was through him that Grigorenko, who made his acquaintance in late 1965 or early 1966, also became a staunch supporter of the Crimean Tatar cause. On 17 March 1968 the 60 Crimean Tatar representatives in Moscow held a party in honour of Kosterin's 72nd birthday to express their gratitude for his championing of their cause. The writer himself was seriously ill, and his place was taken by Grigorenko, who delivered a rousing speech, in which he emphasized the short-comings of the Tatars' political rehabilitation and looked forward to the rebirth of the Crimean ASSR. Kosterin's death on 10 November 1968, a month after he had been expelled from the Party for his efforts on their behalf, was a major loss for the

Crimean Tatars. At his funeral, which 23 of them attended, Grigorenko revealed that Kosterin had bequeathed his remains to the Tatars and said that they would be taken to the Crimea as soon as Crimean Tatar autonomy was restored.¹¹

Grigorenko's speech at the banquet in March 1968 and his subsequent close association with the Crimean Tatars were clearly a matter of considerable concern to the authorities, and some time after Kosterin's funeral the Tatars were warned against him in a letter, apparently from the same group of the intelligentsia as had been party to the letters attacking the leaders of the movement in March 1968. Then at the beginning of May 1969 Grigorenko, who had accepted an invitation from about 2,000 Tatars to appear for the defence in the forthcoming trial of ten of their number in Tashkent, was lured to Tashkent by a message, supposedly from Mustafa Dzhemilev, that the trial was shortly to start, only to be arrested before he could return to Moscow. Later, in a travesty of justice, he was confined to a prison mental hospital and not released until June 1974. At about the same time 137 volumes of the Tatar campaign archives were confiscated from the Moscow flat of Il'ya Gabay, another prominent activist in the democratic movement, and Gabay was arrested and sent to Tashkent for trial. The authorities appear to have used Grigorenko's and Gabay's links with the Tatars largely as a pretext for putting them on trial away from the capital, but the confinement of Grigorenko was a particularly severe blow for the Tatars.

The links between the Crimean Tatars and the human rights movement were not, however, broken. In May 1969 Mustafa Dzhemilev, now described as a worker, became one of the 15 founder members of the Action Group for the Defence of Civil Rights in the Soviet Union, and the supporters of this group included Dr Zemfira Asanova, Reshat Dzhemilev and other Crimean Tatars. In May 1971 a Crimean Tatar, Seran Musayev, appeared with seven others including Grigorenko's wife, Petr Yakir and other prominent dissidents, in the first samizdat film. Academician Sakharov, the physicist Valery Chalidze and other prominent Soviet human rights campaigners have made representations to the authorities on the Crimean Tatar question as well as that of the other deported peoples. In May 1974, on the 30th anniversary of the forcible deportation of the Crimean Tatars from the Crimea, the editors of the *Chronicle of Current Events*, devoted an entire issue (No.31) to the Crimean Tatar movement, and subsequent issues of the *Chronicle* have continued to report extensively on it. In recent years the Moscow Helsinki monitoring group has issued several documents dealing with "discrimination against the Crimean Tatars" and with the persecution of Mustafa Dzhemilev. The support of the leading Soviet human and national rights campaigners has clearly remained a source of great moral encouragement for the Crimean Tatars, although the dissidents have been no more successful in obtaining redress for them than they have in achieving their own broader aims.

In fact the link-up between the Crimean Tatar and human rights movements seems rather to have alarmed the authorities and reinforced their determination not to yield to the Tatars over the restoration of the Crimean ASSR, a determination shown not only by their refusal to receive any of their representatives in Moscow since rehabilitation but also by the tougher measures they have taken against the Crimean Tatar movement. On 21 April 1968, when

the Crimean Tatars of Chirchik persisted in holding their national spring festival of "Derviza" — at which it was apparently feared that Grigorenko's March 1968 speech would be read — police and soldiers suddenly set on them as they were singing and dancing, and following a clash which lasted until nightfall some 300 were arrested. The following month, when 800 Crimean Tatar representatives gathered in Moscow to protest about the events in Chirchik and the Crimea, they once again found themselves barred from the hotels on account of their nationality. Then on 16 and 17 May they were all rounded up and sent under escort to Tashkent — even if they lived in other parts of the country. As a result of their inhuman treatment some had heart attacks, while one man, Rustem Il'yasov, went out of his mind. Later in 1968 some of the leading campaigners were arrested and, after several delays, put on trial in Tashkent in July-August 1969.

The continuing ban on Crimean Tatars staying in Moscow hotels apparently reduced their activity in the capital. 147 representatives who arrived from Uzbekistan, Kirgiziya and the southern Ukraine to present a complaint to the Supreme Soviet during the Lenin centenary celebrations in April 1970 were expelled from the city, and the fact that only 15 bulletins were issued by the Moscow representatives between April 1969 and February 1971 suggests that the Tatars had difficulty in maintaining a permanent lobby there. In Uzbekistan, too, extraordinary measures were taken to curb Crimean Tatar activities. The monuments to Lenin have been cordoned off every year on the anniversary of the creation of the Crimean ASSR to prevent the Tatars laying wreaths. Similarly the cemeteries have been cordoned off on the anniversary of the deportation to prevent the Tatars holding their customary rites there in memory of those who died. In May 1972 this led to the detention of a number of Tatars, several of whom were given 15 days for "breaches of the peace". On occasion the authorities have also behaved in an extremely provocative manner when the funeral of a Crimean Tatar has attracted a large number of mourners. Searches of the dwellings of Crimean Tatars active in the movement remain a regular occurrence.

The trials of leading Crimean Tatar campaigners also continued after rehabilitation, mainly on charges of organizing or participating in mass disorders or distributing fabrications defaming the state. The most important trial was "Case No.109" in July-August 1969, which involved ten Tatars arrested the previous autumn and was the one at which Grigorenko was to appear. The defendants represented a typical cross-section of the leading campaigners in that they were predominantly from the younger generation, who could only just remember the deportation, and included both workers and members of the intelligentsia. The three older accused had fought against the Germans during the war and one, Yazdzhiev, a poet and former teacher, who in 1973 was working as a bricklayer, had been recommended for the decoration of Hero of the Soviet Union in 1942. Among the younger defendants were Rollan Kadyev, the brilliant physicist mentioned earlier, and Izzet Khairov, engineer and Party member. All had excellent, even outstanding work records and character references. Some had been active in the movement for several years, others for only a matter of months. They were all charged under article 191-4 of the Uzbek Criminal Code and/or the equivalent articles of the RSFSR and Ukrainian Codes. The allegedly incriminating docu-

ments included bulletins from the Moscow representatives and republican Action Group meetings; six articles or letters from Kosterin; Grigorenko's speech of 17 March 1968; a document written by one of the defendants, Reshat Bayramov, a young electrical fitter, entitled "Genocide in the Policy of the Soviet Government"; and also entries in the visitors' book of Simferopol' Museum by Khairov and others, complaining that it contained nothing about the Crimean Tatars, and in particular about the Tatar heroes of the Revolution and Second World War.

Most of the defendants had been representatives in Moscow in May-June 1968, when four of them had been particularly assiduous in trying to publicize their case by distributing copies of a number of the documents either in person or through the post to various organizations and individuals. It had been a copy of a bulletin, sent to the Uzbek Union of Writers and passed by them to the KGB in June 1968, which had initiated the case. In spite of repeated requests the defendants were not supplied with the necessary literature so that they could prepare their defence. Demands that they should be removed from cells holding as many as 26 people (many of whom were violent criminals including murderers) were rejected by the court when the trial finally opened on 1 July.

As is the normal Soviet practice in such cases, many of the seats in the small courtroom were occupied by the KGB. The prosecutor, who seemed most concerned with the fact that one document had already been published abroad, took it for granted that the documents were slanderous and concentrated on establishing that they had been composed or disseminated by the defendants. This in most instances the defendants admitted. At the same time they argued that the documents were not defamatory since the facts set out in them were true. Kadyyev was particularly eloquent in substantiating his allegations of genocide and racial discrimination, adducing in support Soviet press reports on such phenomena in other countries. Some of the prosecution witnesses also unwittingly played into the hands of the accused. For example, the testimony of a Russian woman, Rozaliya Zorina, was a complete vindication of the arguments of Khairov and others that much more needed to be done to remove the stigma of the Stalinist accusations against the Crimean Tatars. On 5 August 1969 Bayramov and Kadyyev were sentenced to three years each in "ordinary regime" camps, and the rest were given one and a half years, or sentences which entailed their immediate release. During the entire five weeks of the trial Crimean Tatars from many parts of the country stood outside the court in broiling sun to express their solidarity with the accused.

Other trials of Crimean Tatar campaigners included those of Mustafa Dzhemilev, who together with Il'ya Gabay was given three years' imprisonment in Tashkent in January 1970 on the usual charge of deliberate fabrications defaming the Soviet state and social system, and that of a girl of 18 who was sentenced to three years in a labour camp in September 1970 for having hung black flags on the local police and executive council buildings on the previous anniversary of the deportation. By early 1973 details were available in the West of over 30 trials involving some 90 defendants, some of whom had been sentenced more than once. However, the Crimean Tatars claimed in 1968 that more than 200 had been sentenced since 1959, excluding the hundreds who had been given by administrative action up to 15 days' imprisonment for "petty hooliganism". In addition, according to

"incomplete" figures, up to April 1969 40 Crimean Tatars had been expelled from the Party or Komsomol for their part in the national movement, 12 had been expelled from higher or further education institutes in Tashkent and the Crimea, and 60 had been subjected to searches on suspicion of possessing documents slandering the Soviet state. Among those who have been subjected to continual harassment is Professor R.I. Muzafarov, the only expert on Crimean Tatar philology in the Soviet Union. Ever since the professor was a member of the group of Tatars received by Andropov and others in July 1967, he has been unable to get any of his work published and has been dismissed from one teaching post after another in various parts of the country. In addition, a slanderous article accusing him of professional and moral failings was published in the trade union daily *Trud* of 12 April 1972.

Throughout the 1970s the Soviet authorities have kept the leading Crimean Tatar spokesman Mustafa Dzhemilev in imprisonment or internal exile. In May 1974, not long after he had completed a three-year term of imprisonment he was again arrested ostensibly on a charge of "hooliganism". He was released after a 10-day hunger strike, but soon afterwards while in a poor state of health was called up for military service. When he refused on account of his ill health he was arrested and sentenced to one year's imprisonment in a corrective labour colony for "evasion of military service". On 19 June 1975, three days before he was due to complete his sentence, Mustafa Dzhemilev was informed that he was being charged with "anti-Soviet slander" within the camp. He declared a hunger strike in protest against this new charge and maintained it for several months. The trial was scheduled to take place in December 1975 but was postponed several times. Dzhemilev was eventually tried in April 1976 in Omsk and sentenced to a further two and a half years imprisonment, although at least one prosecution witness (a fellow-prisoner) said at the trial that the authorities had blackmailed him into testifying against the defendant. On completion of the sentence in December 1977 Dzhemilev was placed under "administrative surveillance" in Tashkent, which involves severe restrictions on movement, and regular reporting to the authorities. On the last day of his term under surveillance he was arrested again, this time on a charge of "violating probation regulations". On 6 March 1979 he was tried and sentenced to 4 years' internal exile and has been sent to serve the sentence in the remote Yakutsk region in eastern Siberia.

Other active Crimean Tatar campaigners such as Mustafa Dzhemilev's relative Reshat Dzhemilev, Mamedi Chobanov, Ebazer Yunusov, Seidamet Memetov, Eldar Shabanov and Luft Bekirov have also been imprisoned during 1979. Amnesty International knows of at least 10 other Crimean Tatars who were sentenced to terms of imprisonment or internal exile during that year.

However, in spite of all these measures to discourage them, the Crimean Tatar movement has continued unabated during the 1970s. Number 34 of the *Chronicle of Current Events* reported in 1974, for example, that Tatars in the Crimea had begun producing a typewritten information bulletin and that a "Crimean Action Group" had been founded. The Crimean Tatars have continued to lobby local officials in the Crimea and to send delegations with petitions to Moscow. Already by mid-1968 the total number of signatures under various collective and individual protests and appeals since the beginning of the

campaign exceeded three million, and among the many major petitions since then have been one signed by 12,000 Tatars to the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties meeting in Moscow in July 1969; appeals from 3,000 Crimean Tatar Second World War veterans and 350 Crimean Tatar Communists to the Party and government at the time of the Lenin centenary in April 1970; an appeal signed by 60,000 delegates to the XXIV Party Congress in March-April 1971; and two petitions linked to the 50th anniversary of the formation of the USSR in December 1972. The latter already had 18,000 and 20,000 signatures under them when they were handed in in Moscow in June 1972, and the Tatars were hoping to collect a total of 100,000. It was apparently to prevent them achieving this that the houses of 17 Tatars in various parts of Uzbekistan were searched on 12 July 1972. A number of these searches are said to have been carried out with gross breaches of the procedural norms. According to the *Chronicle of Current Events*, by 1975 "the letters, appeals, statements and petitions addressed to all the authorities of the Soviet state" totalled 207 volumes.

The Crimean Tatars have in recent years also continued to send numerous appeals to UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, the UN Human Rights Commission and to various other international organizations. The Crimean Tatars have recently also begun to turn for help to fellow Muslims outside the USSR, as for example, in the case of Reshat Dzhemilev's appeals in 1977-8 to the King of Saudi Arabia.

Conclusions

To date the Crimean Tatars have little to show for all their efforts since rehabilitation. They have not been granted an interview by any leading member of the government or Party, and all their appeals and protests have been ignored. The token organized labour recruitment scheme for the Crimea could perhaps be regarded as a gain, but its limitations have already been pointed out and have led the Crimean Tatars to demand compact resettlement in the Crimea in their subsequent petitions. Accounts in *Lenin bayragy* of the exploits of Crimean Tatars at the time of the Revolution and during the last war are also an advance. But *Lenin bayragy* is read only by Crimean Tatars and, in spite of Andropov's promise, the treatment of Crimean Tatar history in books accessible to the general Soviet public remains essentially that of the second edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia*, i.e. extremely hostile and one-sided accounts of the Crimean khanate and silence on the recent fate of the Crimean Tatars. If the former Crimean ASSR is mentioned, the point is made that it bore the name of a geographical area rather than a people because the population of the Crimea was multi-national; the reasons for setting up the republic given at the time are completely ignored. Similarly any prescriptive rights the Crimean Tatars might have to live in the Crimea are implicitly denied by entries such as that in the *Short Literary Encyclopaedia* under "Tatar Crimean (sic) Literature". This is described as "the literature of the Tatar population of the Crimea, a people formed and resident, until 1944, in the multi-national and shifting ethnic environment of the Crimean peninsula and adjacent steppe regions". That the authorities may sometimes wish the general public to be reminded of the past misdeeds of individual Crimean Tatars is also suggested by

the manner in which a trial was staged in the Crimean capital, Simferopol, in mid-1972 at which four Crimean Tatars were condemned to death for their wartime activities. It is true that two non-Tatars were in the dock with them and that war crimes trials are a continuing phenomenon in the Soviet Union, but, according to the *New York Times* of 16 July 1972, the fact that the Simferopol trial had the trappings of a show trial and was given wide publicity "created the impression among some observers in Moscow that the trial was designed partly to justify the refusal of the government to permit the Crimean Tatars to return to the Crimea".

The only other apparent gain for the Crimean Tatars since their political rehabilitation has been certain cultural concessions, e.g. the introduction of Crimean Tatar for Crimean Tatar children in some primary schools from the 1968/9 school year; an increase in the number of books published in Crimean Tatar, reaching a maximum of 19 titles in 1972 (this number has, however, dropped to an average of 12 per annum between 1973 and 1978); and the setting up of a Crimean Tatar section in the Uzbekistan Union of Writers. There is no doubt that such cultural facilities as the Crimean Tatars enjoy today are considerably better than nothing. Thus a whole new generation of Crimean Tatar writers has been able to exercise its talents in print. But clearly they do not have as much as they had before their deportation or as other nationalities of comparable size enjoy today. For example, they do not have their own theatre.

The Crimean Tatars argue that the Crimean ASSR should be restored not only because its abolition was unjust, but also because the lack of national autonomy means that they are deprived of the conditions necessary to preserve their national identity and in particular their national language and culture. They are thus in effect condemned to assimilation (they have apparently dropped their earlier accusation of "genocide" in this context). Almost certainly the restoration of the Crimean ASSR would, in fact, provide more favourable conditions for the Crimean Tatars to preserve their distinctive culture not only by increasing cultural facilities but also by putting them on a more secure basis. However, their demand for the Crimean Tatar schools they had in the Crimea and to which they are entitled under article 121 of the Soviet constitution goes very much against the current trend in the Soviet Union in that, since the 1950s at least, there has been a growing tendency for the nationalities of the existing autonomous republics and districts, reportedly at their own request, to have their secondary and even their primary schooling in Russian. Indeed this has obvious practical advantages since not only is Russian the *lingua franca* in the Soviet Union, but some of the national minorities are too small for the provision of higher education in their native tongue to be a feasible proposition and a good knowledge of Russian is therefore vital. On the other hand there would seem to be no good reason why Crimean Tatar children, like those of some of the other small minorities, should not be taught their native language and literature in the secondary school as a special subject. The Crimean Tatars complained in the early 1970s, for instance, that because of the lack of instruction in schools in Crimean Tatar, 70% of their number were illiterate in their native tongue.

The prosecutor in "Case No.109" contended that talk of genocide and discrimination against the Crimean Tatars was slander since there was a Crimean Tatar Deputy to

the USSR Supreme Soviet; many Crimean Tatars were Party members, had been elected to local soviets, and held good jobs; the Crimean Tatars had their own newspaper; and from the material point of view they were as well off and in many cases better off than other peoples. The Crimean Tatars do not dispute any of this. Indeed, they are proud that, thanks to their intelligence, industry and superior agricultural skills, they are more prosperous than their neighbours. It is this prosperity that has enabled them to meet the enormous costs of their campaign. They also appear to suffer no discrimination over such things as housing or higher education in Uzbekistan, although they have complained that jobs in certain fields such as public order and state security, the courts and communications are closed to them. But Yazydzhiev voiced their feelings when he said in his final speech at his trial:

“Let no one think that the Crimean Tatar people is a flock of sheep to whom it is a matter of no importance where it grazes as long as it has its fill.”

That the majority of Crimean Tatars share Yazydzhiev's views would seem to have been amply confirmed by the mass nature of their campaign, but to establish beyond any doubt whether they really consider they have “taken root” in Central Asia as the rehabilitation decree alleged, in 1969 the Crimean Tatars polled 18,800 adult compatriots living in Tashkent oblast as to whether they wanted to return to the Crimea and to see the Crimean ASSR restored. Only nine said they did not and eleven declined to reply.

One reason given unofficially for not repatriating the Crimean Tatars is the possible economic damage it might cause to Uzbekistan. Thus a high Party official told Altunyan, a leading dissident, on 30 June 1969:

“The Crimean Tatars do not want to go anywhere. And if they did, it would undermine the economy of Uzbekistan and new problems would arise in the Crimea.”

Given the industry and skills of the Crimean Tatars and the shortage of skilled labour in Uzbekistan, there is probably some truth in this, but the Tatars have been agreeable to a phased repatriation to minimize any disruption, and they also recognize that measures would be necessary to reassure the Russian and Ukrainian population in the Crimea. They themselves have repeatedly made it plain that rumours spread by the authorities that they want to turn the Russians and others out of the Crimea are completely unfounded. They would in any case be a minority, as they were before, since the population of the province in 1970 was over 1,800,000. As for accommodating them in the Crimea, according to two Ukrainian scholars who appealed to the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet Presidium to celebrate the centenary of Lenin's birth in April 1970 by restoring the Crimean ASSR, the Crimea was planning to recruit 500,000 settlers to overcome its acute shortage of labour and could therefore easily take all the Crimean Tatars. In contrast, Central Asia is a labour surplus area. It is also interesting to note that there have been many reports in recent years about the friendly attitude of many of the Ukrainians and Russians living in the Crimea towards the Crimean Tatars in direct contrast to that of the local authorities.

What is it, then, that makes the Soviet authorities so intransigent? First of all there is a definite continuity in Russian policy over the centuries. Just as the post-1784 exodus of the overwhelming majority of the Tatar population from the Crimea “conformed with the wishes of the

Russian authorities”, so also the present Soviet government prefers to agree with the Tsar who declared in 1856 that the Crimea would be well rid of them rather than with Lenin, for whom concessions to the national feelings of the Tatars – as well as to those of the other non-Russian peoples – were imperative both in order to consolidate Soviet rule and to set an attractive example for Muslims beyond the borders of the new Soviet state. Possible strategic considerations, based presumably on a manifestly racist notion that some ethnic groups may be more loyal than others, are out of place, especially in view of the present state of military technology. What is more, the present policy of discrimination against the Crimean Tatars, legally expressed not only in numerous court and administrative decisions, but also in earlier published and recent unpublished legislation, has implicated the Soviet Government in serious violations of international agreements.

The Crimean Tatar cause would have greater chances of success if they had as vocal and well-organized a lobby in the West as the Soviet Jews, yet it is probable that the present resurgence of Islam will provide the possibility for greater support for their cause.

PART TWO: THE VOLGA GERMANS

The Soviet Germans are much more numerous than the Crimean Tatars. According to the 1970 Soviet census, they totalled 1,846,000, ranking 14th among the nationalities of the Soviet Union. A minority are Germans who were not Soviet citizens before the Second World War, but who found themselves in the USSR as a result of later deportation or boundary changes. The overwhelming majority are the descendants of settlers who came to Tsarist Russia a hundred to two hundred or more years ago. It is with these latter, i.e. those who were Soviet citizens in 1938, that this account is primarily concerned.

Most of the Germans in European Russia were deported in 1941-2 as a precautionary measure. The remainder, who were in occupied territory and were evacuated with the Nazi forces, shared their compatriots' fate on repatriation after the war. The Volga Germans, the only ones against whom accusations of disloyalty were made, were politically rehabilitated in 1964, some three years before the Crimean Tatars. But the Volga German ASSR was not re-established, and the Soviet Germans are still barred from returning to their former homes.

In the early 1970s from the limited samizdat material then available on the Soviet Germans – one item in the *Political Diary*¹² and isolated references elsewhere – together with information from Soviet Germans who had been allowed to leave the Soviet Union to join relatives in Germany,¹³ it was known that the Soviet Germans were not satisfied with the partial nature of their 1964 rehabilitation. The Volga Germans, in particular, regarded the re-establishment of their autonomous republic as essential if the injustice done to them be righted and they were to preserve their national identity. But because of their past and recent history the Soviet Germans lacked the cohesion of the Crimean Tatars and were less united in their aims. Increasing numbers began looking to emigration to West Germany as the solution to their prob-

lem, while others seem to have become resigned to their eventual assimilation. Many of the Volga-German activists apparently gave up their campaign for the restoration of their autonomous republic and joined in the powerful Soviet German emigration movement that began to emerge in the early 1970s.

History of German Settlement in Russia

There were two distinct groups in the German population of Tsarist Russia. The first was a small, urbanized element consisting of the descendants of administrators, officers, professional men, merchants and craftsmen who had come to the country when Ivan the Terrible (1533-84) and Peter the Great (1682-1725) recruited foreigners to develop Moscow and St. Petersburg and modernize the army and the administration. The second, and much larger group, who had also come at the invitation of the Tsars, were the peasant farmers. Catherine the Great, anxious to develop the empty steppe along the Volga and have a bulwark against the nomadic Kalmyks, issued a manifesto on 22 July 1763 offering foreign settlers land, freedom from taxation, permanent exemption from military service, and administration of their own village affairs. In response 27,000 German settlers founded 104 colonies on the Volga between 1764 and 1768. At the same period other German colonies were founded near St. Petersburg, and (in the 1780s) mainly by Mennonites, in the Black Sea region not long wrested from the Turks and Crimean Tatars. However, the main settlement in the latter area took place after a second manifesto issued by Alexander I on 20 February 1804. Six German colonies were also founded near Tiflis (Tbilisi) in Transcaucasia in 1817-20. In all an estimated 100,000 German settlers came to Russia between 1763 and 1862, founding 304 primary or mother colonies.

Thanks to their own industry and to the generous help they were given and the fact that – unlike the Russian peasants – they were not serfs, the colonists prospered, and eventually founded over 3,000 daughter colonies. At first these were in the vicinity of the mother colonies; then from the 1860s in the North Caucasus, which was opened up for settlement at the time of the emancipation of the serfs in 1861; and finally from the 1870s in Siberia, Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The economic success of the colonists aroused distrust in pan-Slavic circles, and this was reinforced by apprehension at the growing power of Germany. In consequence, following the founding of the German Empire in 1871, the privileges originally granted to the colonists were withdrawn. It was announced that henceforward they were to be treated as ordinary Russian citizens, and in 1874 they were made liable for military service. Many of the settlers, particularly the Mennonites, could not accept the changed situation, and there was a major exodus to the Americas, which continued until the First World War.

Nonetheless by 1914 there were 1,621,000 Germans in the Tsarist empire excluding those in the Baltic provinces, Poland and Bessarabia which were subsequently lost to Russia as a result of the First World War or the Revolution. They were distributed as follows:

Along the Volga	600,000
Black Sea and Crimea	520,000
Russian Volhynia	150,000
Asiatic Russia	102,000

North Caucasus	100,000
St. Petersburg area	22,000
Transcaucasia	21,000
Town-dwellers	106,000

Three out of four were Protestants, and the remainder Catholics.

The First World War brought a foretaste of the fate the Soviet Germans were to suffer in the Second World War under Stalin. Although German settlers were called up to serve in the Tsarist army, there was considerable suspicion of and hostility towards “the enemy in our midst”, and in 1915 laws were enacted ordering the deportation of all Germans living within 150 km of the border. In the event only 50,000 Volhynian Germans were transported to the east – under such conditions that the majority died as a result. In accordance with a 1916 decree the Germans in the Volga area were to be expelled in April 1917, but after the February 1917 Revolution Kerensky agreed to stay the execution of the decree, and it was finally rescinded when the Bolsheviks came to power.

The Early Decades of Soviet Rule

The period from the Revolution until the Nazi attack on the USSR in June 1941 was not an easy one for the Soviet Germans any more than it was for the rest of the Soviet population, but essentially the Party’s policy towards the Germans as a national group was the same as that towards other nationalities.

At the time of the Revolution itself, Lenin (whose own mother had German blood) had high hopes of revolution in Germany in the near future, and it is likely that the possible propaganda benefits were to the forefront of his mind when the Volga Germans – despite their lack of a large proletarian element – were one of the first peoples in the former Tsarist empire to be granted some kind of national autonomy in the shape of an Autonomous Workers’ Commune on 19 October 1918. This became the Volga German ASSR on 20 February 1924. A total of 17 German National Districts were also set up in other parts of the country where there were concentrations of Germans. Six were in the RSFSR, including one in the Crimea and another in the Altay in Siberia; one each in Georgia and Azerbaydzhan; and nine in the Ukraine.

Losses resulting from the First World War, the civil war, emigration and a very severe famine on the Volga in 1921-2 were responsible for the decline in the number of Germans to only 1,247,000 in 1926. The German population also suffered severely during collectivization and the various purges of the late 1920s and the 1930s, probably somewhat more so than other nationalities, but by 1939 their numbers had risen again to 1,424,000.

As before, the greatest concentration was on the Volga. In 1926 approximately a quarter of the Soviet Germans (380,000) lived in the Volga German ASSR, where they constituted two-thirds of the population. Another 30,000 were in the adjacent Saratov province. Before the war, the Volga Germans had 14 deputies in the USSR Supreme Soviet, and their republic was the main German cultural centre. They had five institutions of higher education, 400 secondary and primary schools, a national theatre and publishing house, and five republican and 20 local newspapers and periodicals. In spite of all the upheavals of the early years of Soviet rule, the Germans continued to

display their traditional farming skills, and German collective farms in the Volga German republic and elsewhere were used as propaganda showpieces right up to 1941.

Deportation

When considering the fate of the Soviet Germans during the Second World War, it always has to be remembered that they were not enemy aliens but Soviet citizens whose forebears had settled in Russia many decades or even centuries earlier. Moreover, as the Soviet government has since admitted, there was no evidence of mass treachery on their part in the first months of the war. All the same, it is understandable that Moscow should have been uneasy about having a large German minority close to the front. There is an interesting parallel with the United States where American citizens of Japanese origin living on the Pacific coast were interned after Pearl Harbour. However, not only did this action provoke adverse comment in America at the time, but – more important – the Japanese Americans were subsequently released and restored to full equality of rights. In other words, if it had been only the supposed demands of national security which determined the fate of the Soviet Germans, one would have expected that they would have been allowed to return to their homes and former existence as soon as the danger was past, or at the very least that they would have been provided with their own republic elsewhere. That the Soviet Germans suffered a much harsher fate can only be put down to Stalin's vindictive nature and a traditional Russian distrust of the Germans.

The Nazi advance in the first weeks of the war was so rapid that 300,000 Soviet Germans living in the Ukraine between the Dniester and Dnieper came under enemy occupation before their deportation could be organized. The major deportations took place from the Crimea and Black Sea area (initially to the North Caucasus) in August 1941; from the Volga German republic in September 1941; from the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia in October 1941; and, after a lifeline had been established to the blockaded city by a road over the frozen Lake Ladoga, from Leningrad and the surrounding areas in March 1942. Only in the case of the Volga Germans was the deportation decree published. The decree, dated 28 August 1941, announced their "transfer" to Novosibirsk and Omsk provinces, the Altay, Kazakhstan and other neighbouring localities, and said it was a precautionary measure in view of the fact that none of the Germans had reported on the presence in their midst of tens of thousands of diversionists and spies ready to engage in sabotage at a signal from Germany. The Volga German ASSR and all 17 German National Districts were abolished. It has been estimated that some 800,000 Soviet Germans were deported from European Russia in 1941-2, 400,000 from the Volga German republic alone. *Over 400,000 Germans were already living in the Asiatic part of the Soviet Union, including those who had been deported during collectivization and the purges and those in forced labour camps.*

The deportations were formally a "transfer" or "evacuation" and were carried out in a much less harsh manner than that of the Crimean Tatars. The Germans were given their pay in advance; they often had several

days' warning, which enabled them to make preparations for the journey; and, in a number of instances at least, they were seen off at the station by friends of other nationalities. But the journey of days and weeks was made packed 40-60 in cattle cars, and among those contingents which had to cross the Central Asian deserts many of the very old, the very young and the sick died from the lack of water.

The vast majority of the deportees were taken to Siberia and northern Kazakhstan, and all the Germans, including those already resident in Siberia, were put under the same restrictions and disabilities as the Crimean Tatars and other deported nations had to endure later. On the whole, on their arrival the deportees appear to have been well-treated by the local population, many of whom had themselves been exiled at one time or another, but there were Russians who called them "Fascists" or "Nazis", and on other occasions they encountered hostility from the indigenous Asian peoples. The living conditions of the local population were very primitive, and the Germans naturally received the worst of the accommodation, being billeted several to a room in crude mud huts and barracks. The rations they received were also inadequate. After helping with the 1941 harvest, the men were drafted into the labour army and sent away to various parts of Siberia, the Urals and the Far North to work on the railways, on road construction, in the coal mines and on timber felling. Many did not survive the ordeal. In 1942 the women, except for mothers of very young children, were also impressed into the labour army. Conditions are said to have been particularly bad in Karaganda, where many starved to death. On the other hand, the Germans were spared the heavy losses other nationalities had to endure at the front although, remarkably in all the circumstances, according to Soviet publications "thousands" did fight as loyal soldiers and partisans, and two were even awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for their gallantry.

As for the Germans in occupied territory, when the tide turned in the war they were evacuated by the Nazi forces. A long trek in covered wagons brought them to the Warthegau in western Poland, where they were settled and granted German citizenship. Later they fled before the advancing Red Army to Germany itself. But the Soviet government did not recognize their German citizenship and, under an allied agreement that all Soviet citizens should be repatriated, in 1945 250,000 of the estimated 350,000 Soviet Germans who had come to Germany were transported back to the Soviet Union, mainly to Siberia and the Komi area. There they were put in labour camps or under the same "special settlement" conditions as those deported during the war. Their treatment was much harsher than that of those deported earlier since they were regarded as traitors who had gone over to the enemy.

As with the Crimean Tatars, all mention of the existence of Soviet Germans disappeared from Soviet published material, and the German place names in the former Volga German republic were changed. The German press and *German educational institutions ceased to exist, and the Germans themselves were treated as pariahs.*

Release from "Special Settlement" Restrictions

An alleviation in the situation of the Soviet Germans would no doubt have come sooner or later following Stalin's death, as it did for the other deported peoples.

But the release of the Soviet Germans from "special settlement" restrictions over four months before the Crimean Tatars and Meskhetians can almost certainly be linked with the establishment of diplomatic relations between Moscow and Bonn and Adenauer's visit to Moscow in September 1955. Adenauer brought up the question of the Soviet Germans in his talks with the Soviet leaders, and, in what was apparently intended as a gesture of goodwill, a decree was issued on 13 December 1955 which stated that the restrictions on the legal position of the Soviet Germans were no longer necessary. At the same time, however, in accordance with the stipulations of the decree, all the Soviet Germans were required to sign a statement that they would never return to the district in which they had formerly lived or put in a claim for property confiscated at the time of deportation.

One can only surmise why the Soviet Germans were not fully rehabilitated in 1956-7 along with the Chechens and others and why they were forbidden to return to their former settlements. Strategic considerations could have been a factor in the case of the Black Sea Germans but hardly in the case of the Volga-Germans. It is probable, therefore, that the motive was simply continuing hostility towards, and distrust of, the Germans. As regards some of the Black Sea Germans, there was, in fact, some concrete justification for doubting their loyalty. Following Adenauer's visit, the mistaken idea spread among the Soviet Germans that those who had been granted German citizenship during the war would be allowed to emigrate. Application forms were made available, and approximately 200,000 were sent to the West German embassy in Moscow. Some of the Black Sea Germans even started making preparations for their departure, only to be told that they were still considered citizens of the Soviet Union.

In spite of its limitations, the 1955 decree greatly eased the lot of the Soviet Germans. They were no longer treated as criminal outcasts, and many took advantage of their newly-regained freedom of movement to shift to the towns and also away from the harsh Siberian winters to the more southerly parts of the Asiatic USSR. More important, they were now able to start seeking out members of their families from whom they had been separated ten or fifteen years previously. In 1956, after a decade of complete silence, thousands of letters were received in West Germany from Soviet Germans trying to get in touch with next-of-kin.

Relative freedom of movement was not the only gain. Germans could now be elected to local soviets and there was a gradual reintroduction of cultural facilities. In 1955 a local paper in German began to appear in the Altay, and in 1957 *Neues Leben*, now a weekly with a circulation of 300,000, began publication in Moscow. Moscow Radio started putting out programmes for Soviet Germans in 1956; Kazakh Radio in 1957; and Kirgiz Radio in 1962. In 1957 directives were issued in a number of republics that instruction in German as the mother tongue was to be introduced where parents requested it, provided that there were at least eight to ten German children in the school and qualified teachers available. In 1960 a symposium of the works of 31 Soviet German writers was published.

After 1955 some kind of organized religious life as well became possible once again for the Soviet Germans. In July 1957 the Rev. Bachmann, a Lutheran minister who had spent 20 years in various labour camps, was allowed

to organize a registered Lutheran church in Tselinograd in northern Kazakhstan. Elsewhere no ordained pastors were available, but congregations were allowed to meet for prayer although their situation was precarious as they were not always registered, i.e. officially recognized by the authorities. Links were established with the Protestant churches in both East and West Germany, and confirmation certificates, specially-printed bibles (from East Germany), and in one case even an organ were despatched to Siberia. German Catholic congregations also came into being, and American and Canadian Mennonites were able to re-establish contact with their co-religionists in the Soviet Union.

Despite these improvements, the position of the Soviet Germans remained an uneasy one, as could be seen from the fact that only very isolated references to their existence could be found in the Russian-language press. It is true that they were included once again among the nationalities of the Soviet Union when the 1959 census results were published — they then numbered 1,620,000 — but there was a marked reluctance to reveal their exact whereabouts. This was most glaring in the case of the Kazakhstan figures which did not list the Germans at all, although it later became known that they totalled 648,000 and ranked fourth among the nationalities in the republic. 820,000 were admitted to be in the RSFSR, but no German was included in the nationality breakdown of population by provinces, although later information confirmed that the biggest concentrations were in Altay region, Omsk and Novosibirsk provinces and Krasnoyarsk region in Siberia. The presence of 91,000 in the Central Asian republics of Kirgiziya, Tadzhikistan and Uzbekistan seems to have been divulged in the local newspapers only through an oversight.

Political Rehabilitation

The political rehabilitation of the Volga Germans (and in effect all the Soviet Germans) came in 1964 and was probably designed as a gesture of friendship towards West Germany with whom Khrushchev was trying to improve relations. The decree was dated 29 August 1964. However, perhaps because of disagreement among Soviet leaders over policy towards Bonn, it was not published immediately, and apparently the Soviet Germans first learnt that they had been rehabilitated from the East German *Neues Deutschland* to which a number subscribe. They protested to *Neues Leben* and Soviet officials about the non-publication of the decree in the Soviet press, and finally it appeared in the *USSR Supreme Soviet Gazette* of 28 December 1964. The decree was very much less grudging than the one which subsequently rehabilitated the Crimean Tatars. Thus it not only said that the sweeping accusations of actively assisting the German invaders were unfounded but went on:

"In reality in the years of the Great Patriotic War the vast majority of the German population, together with the entire Soviet people, assisted the victory of the Soviet Union over Fascist Germany by their labour, and in the post-war years have been actively taking part in Communist construction."

Otherwise, the decree closely resembled that of the Tatars in noting that the Soviet Germans had "taken firm root in their new places of residence", were taking an active part in public and political life, and enjoyed certain cultural facilities.

The decree did not satisfy the Soviet Germans. Apparently even before its publication they had sent a number of petitions to Moscow requesting the restoration of the Volga German republic, but had received no concrete reply. In 1964 or early 1965 a delegation of 13 went to Moscow, but were told that they could not be received as they had not collected enough signatures. Having collected the requisite number, a second delegation arrived in Moscow in late May or early June 1965. The delegation had 35 members representing German communities in Siberia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia and the Volga area and included both Volga and Black Sea Germans. Among its spokesmen were the former head of the defence department of the Volga German republic and a civil war hero. (Many Soviet German Communists are said to have been active in the movement.) They were finally seen by Mikoyan on 7 June 1965.

The delegates argued that "our only real rehabilitation will be the re-establishment of the republic on the Volga. Only this step will free us from shame and mistrust." To support their case they adduced their historical right to the territory and the fact that all the other nationalities had their own republic. They claimed to have the support of at least one million Soviet Germans, and pointed out that there was plenty of room for them on the territory of the former Volga German republic since the rural areas were only 25-30% populated and many of their former villages were in ruins. An agency in Volgograd was recruiting settlers for the area, but none of them stayed long. The spokesmen contrasted the meagre cultural facilities the Germans now enjoyed with those of pre-war days and even of Tsarist times, and contended that because they were scattered and had no national statehood they were inadequately represented in the USSR Supreme Soviet. They also said that the Soviet Germans resented the fact that the decree had not been published in the Russian-language newspapers.

In reply Mikoyan agreed that the restoration of the Volga German republic "would be the best solution to the problem", but pleaded economic difficulties. It would be impossible to manage without the Germans in the Virgin Lands of Kazakhstan and in the Karaganda coal mines. In any case, the fact that two-thirds of the Soviet Germans had lived outside the Volga republic before the war showed that they could live without a republic. However, he promised that the number of German deputies in the USSR Supreme Soviet would be increased, that cultural facilities for the German population would be improved, and that any cases of discrimination against them would be investigated.

The delegates recorded their dissatisfaction with this reply in a letter to Mikoyan and Shelepin, a member of the Party Presidium and Deputy Premier. They maintained that the Soviet Germans who lived outside the republic before the war only flourished because the republic existed, and scathingly contrasted their treatment with the care and attention which the Soviet government had always lavished on the East Germans, as though "the home of the Fascists was not in Germany, but among the Soviet Germans".

There was some force in Mikoyan's argument that the Virgin lands of Kazakhstan and Karaganda, which are perennially short of labour, could not manage without the hard-working and productive Germans, particularly when one considers that they accounted for 12% of the population of the six provinces in 1959. Their contribution to

the economy in Siberia must also be valuable. However, the re-establishment of the Volga German ASSR would not necessarily have meant a mass exodus of Germans from Siberia and Kazakhstan. Many Germans would have been content to stay where they were, but this did not prevent them from regarding the restoration of their former republic as essential to guarantee them the same political and cultural rights as other ethnic groups.

Mikoyan's arguments for not re-establishing the republic might have seemed more convincing if the government had done more to restore the good reputation of the Soviet Germans, both by publicizing the rehabilitation decree and in other ways, but apparently it could not bring itself to do this. However, Mikoyan was true to his word over improved cultural provisions and representation in the Supreme Soviet. Three Soviet Germans were elected to the USSR Supreme Soviet in 1970, one of whom held the post of USSR Minister of Food Industries. Another German obtained the same post in Kazakhstan and German representation in local soviets increased sixfold after their rehabilitation and by the early 1970s approximated to their proportion in the total population. A third newspaper, *Freundschaft*, was started up in Tselinograd for the Kazakhstan Germans and there were more radio programmes and an occasional TV programme. A resolution of 23 July 1965 of the USSR State Committee for the Press led to a substantial improvement in the literary field: more books were published, a German section was set up in the Kazakhstan publishing house, and German sections in a number of writers' unions were established. All-Union seminars of German writers were also held in Moscow, and a professional German variety ensemble, based on Karaganda, was founded in 1968. Another outcome of rehabilitation was that after 1964 books and articles have appeared, if only in German, extolling the exploits of Soviet Germans during the Revolution and Second World War, and a number of scholarly articles on the Soviet Germans, albeit concentrating on relatively innocuous topics such as linguistics, have been published.

Post-Rehabilitation Developments

Thanks to their exceptional industry, at the beginning of the 1970s, from the material point of view the Soviet Germans were relatively well-off. For instance, the results of a survey in Siberia, published in *Neues Leben* in 1969, showed that they had proportionately more radios, television sets, washing machines, bicycles and motorcycles than their Ukrainian neighbours. But ten years after the charge on the basis of which the Volga Germans were deported was admitted groundless, their autonomous republic had still not been restored. A very few returned to their former villages on the Volga, but a mass return was out of the question and the majority of Soviet Germans remained in the Asiatic part of the Soviet Union, i.e. in the areas to which they were deported, although there was a shift southwards from Siberia to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. According to the 1970 census, there were only 762,000 Germans in the RSFSR compared with 820,000 in 1959, while the number in Kazakhstan had risen from 648,000 to 839,000. In 1970 the majority of the Soviet Germans in Kazakhstan remained in Karaganda and the northern (Virgin Land) provinces, but their numbers had been growing proportionately much faster in the south-east (Alma-Ata, Dzhabul and Taldy-Kurgan provinces). There had also

been a very rapid increase in the number of Germans in neighbouring Kirgiziya from 40,000 in 1959 to 90,000 in 1970. A further 38,000 were living in Tadzhikistan.

Although the status of the Soviet Germans improved and the existence of the Soviet German press with the image it projected of the loyal German citizen had done much to restore their self-respect, the authorities still displayed certain inhibitions about them. Thus, when the national composition of the population according to the 1970 census was published in *Pravda* on 17 April 1971, the Germans were unaccountably omitted from the breakdown by republics. This failure to treat the German in the same way as other ethnic groups naturally did nothing to lessen the anti-German feelings of some members of the general public, and the Germans complained that they were still called "Fascists" or "Hitlerites" and blamed for the war. The restoration of the Volga German republic could undoubtedly have played a part in changing such attitudes, and reassuring the Soviet Germans that they are not some kind of second-class citizens. In addition it would almost certainly have provided more favourable conditions for them to preserve and develop their cultural heritage. In the early 1970s their cultural facilities were still nothing to what they had before deportation or to what other comparable nationalities in the Soviet Union enjoyed. Book publication had turned out to be disappointing, and they had no German theatre or school. Even the number of German children receiving instruction in German as the mother tongue as a special subject appears to have declined during the 1960s and was estimated to be only about a quarter of the total. But here not all the blame can be laid at the door of the authorities for not being as energetic as they might over the provision of teachers and textbooks. German teachers themselves were often not prepared to forego better paid jobs in the towns to teach in the rural areas, and some parents felt that to make their children spend time on German may hamper their career prospects when Russian is essential for higher education. The German variety ensemble in Karaganda also had difficulty in recruiting artists because it performed mainly in the rural areas.

No doubt in the normal course of events the former exclusive German village communities would eventually have broken up, but deportation completed a process already accelerated by collectivization. The resulting dispersal of the German population, the greater proportion living in the towns (39.3% in 1959) and the lack of German schools inevitably led to increasing signs of linguistic assimilation. Whereas in 1926 no more than 5% of Soviet Germans regarded Russian as their mother tongue, by 1959 the proportion had risen to 24%, and by 1970 to 32.7%. In the early 1970s fewer and fewer of the younger generation knew German, and more and more of them were marrying outside their ethnic group.

A number of the Soviet Germans were very likely quite content to lose their cultural identity and become assimilated, but it seems that for one reason or another the majority were not satisfied with their existing situation in the Soviet Union. However, they were not united in their aims. It was primarily, but by no means exclusively, the Volga Germans who were interested in the restoration of the Volga republic. Some of the Black Sea Germans argued that they did not have their republic before and were better scattered among the general population if there should be future trouble with Germany. For others emigration to West Germany became

the goal – the Black Sea Germans were more likely to have relatives there than the Volga Germans and thus had a greater chance of being allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

The lack of unanimous support for the campaign for the restoration of the Volga republic was probably one reason why the Soviet Germans were more easily discouraged than the Crimean Tatars. After the delegation was seen by Mikoyan in 1965, many of those involved found his attitude so negative that they gave up trying immediately. A few redoubled their efforts in spite of being subjected to harassment and threats, and a small delegation took a petition with 8,123 signatures to Moscow in summer 1966 but did not see anyone of importance. Two other small groups may have gone in late 1966 and 1967. But with that the movement apparently petered out, although the Volga Germans had some contact with Kosterin and Grigorenko in 1968. According to Grigorenko, the situation of the Volga Germans was even worse than that of the Crimean Tatars. It was for this reason that he declined to give the names of the Volga Germans who attended or the speech of their representative in his compilation on Kosterin's funeral. It is not clear why the Volga Germans' situation was worse. Perhaps the sanctions against those who agitated for the republic were more severe. But it is also likely that the majority of the Germans at that time were less willing to stick their necks out than the Tatars.

Emigration

For many years the Bonn government and the German Red Cross negotiated patiently to obtain permission for members of separated families and others to emigrate. Until the early 1970s only a very limited emigration was permitted. Then and since there has been a marked correlation between the numbers allowed to leave at any one time and Moscow's desire to win favour in Bonn. By early 1973 in all approximately 27,000 Germans had left the Soviet Union since 1957, but about 20,000 of these were Germans who had not been Soviet citizens before the Second World War. They included Germans from Germany and East Europe who were deported to the Soviet Union.

Back in the mid-1950s, after it became clear that the Soviet authorities were not prepared to let the 200,000 native-born Soviet Germans who had applied to go to Germany leave the country, the German Red Cross compiled a list of 43,000 hardcore cases of separated families. But only a very few of these people, most of them elderly, were allowed to leave – some 30-40 in 1957/8 and 529 in 1959/64.

Seemingly as a by-product of the political rehabilitation of the Volga Germans in 1965, an agreement on the re-unification of separated families was reached in Vienna in 1965 between the Soviet and German Red Crosses and the number of native-born Soviet Germans arriving in Germany rose to 984 in 1966 and 836 in 1967. But by 1969 it had declined again to 236. Then in August 1970 Brandt brought up the question of separated families when he was in Moscow to sign the Soviet-West German Non-Aggression Treaty, and in 1971 the number of native-born Soviet Germans arriving in Germany went up again to 871. A spectacular increase took place in 1972

as a result of two blatant instances of the use of Soviet German emigration by the Soviet government to influence events in West Germany. The first occurred when the Soviet-West German treaty came up for ratification by the Bonn parliament in April and the Soviet authorities let it be known that they would allow 700 Germans (of both categories) to leave. Then, in November, in order to improve Brandt's chances of re-election, 1,588 Germans were suddenly given exit visas. The following month the number arriving in Germany dropped sharply to 343.

In all, 2,920 native-born Soviet Germans were allowed to leave in 1972, many of them young. This made a total of 7,321 since 1959, of whom 622 went to East Germany. However, at the end of 1972 there were still 30,000 native-born Soviet Germans on the Red Cross files waiting to rejoin members of their families, and the actual number of Soviet Germans who wanted to leave was apparently very much larger: an estimate of 70% was given by young Soviet Germans who came to West Germany in 1972/73 from various parts of the Soviet Union.

The German Emigration Movement

In July 1972 a group of Germans living in Latvia and Estonia transmitted a petition to the UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim during his visit to Moscow in which they appealed to all governments and peoples of the world to try and persuade the Soviet government to let any Soviet Germans who wished to go to West Germany to do so. They claimed that all their own requests had been turned down. By 1973 reports were being received outside the USSR that a state of unrest existed among the Soviet Germans and that a mass movement to obtain permission to emigrate was being organized.

By the early 1970s many, if not the majority, of Soviet Germans, had become profoundly disillusioned with their prospects as Germans in the Soviet Union. For the Volga Germans the campaign for the restoration of their autonomous republic seemed increasingly hopeless. Not only would this have the undesirable side-effect from the authorities' point of view of strengthening the Crimean Tatars' case, but it would also go against the general trend of the nationalities policy which favours the breaking down of national barriers and the ultimate fusion of nations. Observing the persuasive example of the Jewish emigration movement the Volga Germans no longer saw any point in continuing their struggle for restoration of their national autonomy and merged with other Soviet Germans in demanding the right to emigrate from the Soviet Union.

By 1974 a strong German emigration movement was emerging. It imitated the militant tactics of the Soviet Jews and established close links with human rights activists in Moscow. No.32 of *A Chronicle of Current Events*, dated 17 July 1974, reported that about 40,000 Soviet Germans were asking to leave the country. Demonstrations had been staged in Moscow and Tallin and a samizdat journal, *Re Patria*, had begun to appear. *Chronicle* No.32 also reported that several Soviet Germans had been imprisoned as a result of their participation in the emigration movement.

The Soviet German emigration campaign continued to gather momentum in the years that followed. Demonstra-

tions were staged and numerous appeals and statements addressed to Soviet leaders, the West German government and to world public opinion. The *Chronicle of Current Events* No.40, dated 20 May 1976, reported for example that 1,729 Soviet Germans living in Kirgizia had appealed to the 25th Congress of the CPSU and to the Party leadership for permission to emigrate to Germany. The Soviet Germans have used other tactics as well. In the following issue of the *Chronicle* (dated 3 August 1976), for example, about 600 Germans living in Kazakhstan and Kirgizia are reported to have declared in writing their renunciation of Soviet citizenship and appealed for support to West Germany's Chancellor Schmidt. After this about 200 people are said to have handed in their passports to local police stations.

The Soviet authorities have reacted in an ambivalent manner. On the one hand, faced with the militancy of the German emigration movement at a time of rapprochement between the Soviet Union and West Germany as a result of the latter's *Ostpolitik*, and later the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, they have allowed many thousands of Germans to emigrate. According to the West German embassy in Moscow the number of Soviet Germans allowed to emigrate from the Soviet Union each year between 1970 and 1978¹⁴ was as follows:

1970	438
1971	886
1972	3315
1973	4436
1974	6345
1975	5752
1976	9626
1977	9119
1978	8276

By the end of 1979 the total figure had reached over 55,000. On the other hand they have tried to discourage emigration by placing obstacles in the way of would-be emigrants, by spreading adverse publicity about conditions in West Germany, and by harassing and imprisoning many of the emigration movements' activists.

Among Soviet Germans known by Amnesty International to have been imprisoned in recent years for trying to emigrate legally are: Anton Bleile, Lily Furman, Albert Harleman, Alwin Klassen, Artur Klink, Valentin Klink, Helmut Martens, Otto Netzel, Ivan Peters, Heinrich Redikop, Ivan Redikop, Ivan Schultz, Ivan Teurer, Valentin Vins, Ivan Wagner, Anton Windschuh and L. Windschuh. Amnesty International also knows of other cases where Soviet German would-be emigrants have been tried and sentenced to conditional terms of imprisonment or to corrective work without imprisonment. Most would-be Soviet German emigrants have been tried and sentenced for either "anti-Soviet slander" (Article 190-1 of the RSFSR Criminal Code) or "malicious violation of the passport regulations" (Article 198 of the RSFSR Criminal Code). The latter charge has been most frequently used in Kazakhstan where would-be emigrants have been required to submit their passports together with their applications for emigration and have subsequently been arrested and tried for being without their passport.

Conclusions

During the 1970s the Soviet Germans formed the largest group of emigrants from the Soviet Union apart from the Jews. This was due partly to the good organization and

militancy of the Soviet German emigration movement and partly because the Soviet government found it expedient to use German emigration as a bargaining counter in its relations with West Germany. Demands for the re-establishment of the autonomous Volga-German republic have given way to the demand for the right to emigrate to Germany, and it has become almost impossible to distinguish former Volga Germans from other Soviet Germans in this context. In 1972 the German Red Cross estimated that the number of Soviet Germans with family ties in West Germany was about 40,000. German emigration from the Soviet Union has been formally sanctioned by the Soviet authorities only on the grounds of family reunification and, now that almost 50,000 Germans have left the country, it is unclear how many more they will be prepared to allow to leave. Undoubtedly there are many more Soviet Germans in the Soviet Union who wish to emigrate to Germany for ethnic or religious reasons, and because of this the German emigration movement is continuing its campaign, despite the authorities' efforts to suppress it.

PART THREE: THE MESKHETIANS

Those who describe themselves today as Meskhetians are ethnically a heterogeneous group. They have in common that they are all either Turkic or Turkicized; that they previously inhabited Meskhetia, a mountainous region on the Soviet-Turkish frontier in the south-west Georgian SSR; and that they were all deported to Central Asia and Kazakhstan on 15 November 1944. Since Meskhetia was never occupied by the Germans, their deportation was not punitive. It seems rather to have stemmed from Stalin's desire to remove potentially pro-Turkish peoples from the frontier area at a time when he had ambitions in north-eastern Turkey.

The deportation of the Meskhetians was never announced and, as they did not enjoy any form of national autonomy, it could not be deduced from alterations to the maps as in the case of some of the other deported peoples. Indeed it may not even have been known to those responsible for the second edition of the *Large Soviet Encyclopaedia* since the relevant volume published in 1954 still recorded the Meskhetians as living in Georgia. The first the outside world learnt of their deportation was from the publication of an Order of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 30 May 1968. It later transpired that this Order had been issued in response to a mass campaign on the part of the Meskhetians on a par with that of the Crimean Tatars. The Order theoretically gave them the right to reside anywhere in the Soviet Union, but since then none of them have been allowed to settle in Georgia, let alone Meskhetia. As a result many are now seeking emigration to Turkey.

Unlike the Crimean Tatars and Soviet Germans, the Meskhetians have no newspaper of their own in the Soviet Union and one is almost totally dependent on samizdat for information on their present situation. At the time of writing this amounts to no more than items in the *Chronicle of Current Events* on their campaign to return to Meskhetia, various appeals to Brezhnev, the UN Secretary-General and the Turkish Prime Minister, and Document No.18 (dated 14 January 1977) of the unofficial Moscow Helsinki monitoring group.¹⁵

Brief Historical Background

The indigenous population of Meskhetia, the Meskhetians proper, are Georgian in origin. After their homeland came under Turkish rule in the 16th century they underwent an intensive process of Turkicization, as a result of which the majority adopted Islam and the Turkish language. Under the treaty of Adrianople (1829) only the southern part of Meskhetia remained in Turkish hands. The northern part was incorporated in the Tsarist empire, which had recently annexed Georgia.

In the 1926 Soviet census the Meskhetians were listed as Turks. They then numbered 137,921 and constituted 5.2% of the population of the Georgian SSR. Only 5.9% of them were literate. Schools were provided for them with Turkish as the medium of instruction, but in 1935-6, for reasons unknown, the schools switched to teaching in Azerbaydzhani, a related Turkic language, and the Meskhetians began to be called Azerbaydzhanis.

Deportation

On 15 November 1944 all the Meskhetians were deported from Meskhetia and adjacent areas of Georgia along the Soviet-Turkish frontier. With them were deported the local Turkmens, who also called themselves Turks, and three other small ethnic groups – Turkic Karapapakh Azerbaydzhanis, Turkicized Kurds, and Khemshili Armenians who, like the Meskhetians proper, had been Turkicized and Islamicized. All told, they probably numbered in the region of 200,000, and it was their common fate that welded them into one people. The Meskhetians were told that they were being temporarily evacuated to a safe place in view of the approach of the Germans. This was a patently false pretext. As stated above, the real reason for their removal seems to have been that the Soviet government wanted possibly unreliable groups out of the way in connection with its designs on north-eastern Turkey.

The Meskhetians were deported to Central Asia and Kazakhstan, apparently mainly to the arid Hungry Steppe, which lies partly in Uzbekistan and partly in Kazakhstan. The conditions of their deportation are described as analogous to those of the Crimean Tatars and other deported peoples. According to one report, 50,000 Meskhetians perished in Uzbekistan alone from hunger and cold. A later account gave the total loss as 30,000. The Meskhetians had been promised that they would be returned to their homeland after the war, and it is possible that this was the original intention since it was only a few months after their deportation that they were put under the same restrictive regime as the other deported peoples. All Meskhetians serving at the front were also sent to Central Asia after the war was over.

The Meskhetian Campaign up to 30 May 1968

An unpublished decree of 28 April 1956, presumably the same one as applied to the Tatars, freed the Meskhetians from the "special settler" regime, but without the right to return home and without compensation for the property confiscated at the time of deportation. (There is also mention of an unpublished decree of 31 October 1957 in

connection with the Meskhetians, but it is not known how this supplemented or modified the decree of 28 April 1956.) As with the Crimean Tatars, strategic considerations were no doubt behind the decision not to permit the now possibly embittered Meskhetians to return to their homeland on the Turkish border.

The Meskhetians were not willing to accept the ban on their return to Georgia, and at the end of 1956 or early 1957 representatives went to Moscow to ask for it to be lifted. In reply they were told that they were Azerbaydzhanis and could "return" to Azerbaydzhani. They were recruited to develop the inhospitable Mugan steppe in Azerbaydzhani, and many went in order to be nearer Georgia. At the same time they continued their efforts in Moscow and the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, to obtain permission to return to their homeland, but all in vain. 245 families who ignored the ban and took up residence in Georgia were expelled between July 1960 and February 1961 on the orders of the then Georgian First Secretary Mzhavanadze.

In February 1964 the Meskhetian campaign moved into a new phase when they set up a Turkish Society for the Defence of the National Rights of the Turkish People in Exile with a Provisional Organizing Committee for the Return of the People to the Homeland under the chairmanship of Enver Odabashev, a history teacher and Second World War disabled. The committee was elected at the First Meeting of the People on a collective farm in Tashkent province, which was attended by over 600 delegates from Central Asia, Kazakhstan and the Caucasus with mandates from local assemblies of Meskhetians. To demonstrate that their intentions were not in any way anti-Soviet, they invited representatives of the authorities to the meeting and sent a complete record of its proceedings to Party and government leaders. Besides electing the Provisional Organizing Committee, the meeting chose 125 representatives to go to Moscow. Unlike the Crimean Tatars, the Meskhetians do not seem to have maintained a permanent lobby in Moscow, but to have relied instead on the despatch of frequent delegations.

The Meskhetians continued to meet with nothing but rebuffs from the authorities. Either they got no hearing at all, were told that no changes would be made in their status, or were fobbed off with promises of a solution at some future date. At the same time the KGB tried to intimidate Odabashev and other leaders, and did their best to disrupt national gatherings. When over 6,000 Meskhetian delegates assembled in the town of Yangiyul' near Tashkent in April 1968 for their 22nd Meeting of the People, they were surrounded by troops, police with truncheons, and fire engines. In contrast to the Crimean Tatar gathering the same month in nearby Chirchik, the meeting passed off without incident, but when the delegates left some of them were picked up and 30 were kept in preventive detention cells for two to six months.

Not long after this the authorities evidently decided some gesture must be made to mollify the Meskhetians. Since no charges had ever been made against them of which they could be publicly cleared, the only concession that the authorities could make was to grant them the right to return to Meskhetia, and this they did — on paper. On 30 May 1968 an Order of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet was issued varying the decree of 28 April 1956 and 31 October 1957 and explaining that "Turks, Kurds, Khemshils and Azerbaydzhanis, formerly resident

in the Adzharian ASSR and the Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Adigeni, Aspindza and Bogdanovka districts of the Georgian SSR, and members of their families enjoy the right, like all citizens of the Soviet Union, to reside on the whole territory of the USSR in accordance with the existing legislation on employment and the passport regulations". However, the Order went on to note, in words ominously familiar from the decrees rehabilitating the Volga Germans and Crimean Tatars, that these peoples had "taken root" on the territory of the Uzbek, Kazakh and other union republics.

It is difficult to understand how the authorities could have thought that the Meskhetians would be mollified by this Order when events were to show that they were not, in fact, prepared to allow them to return to Meskhetia or even Georgia. After their recent experience with the Crimean Tatars, they could hardly have believed that the Meskhetians did not, after all, want to return to their homeland. On the other hand, the Order can scarcely have been issued for foreign consumption when it merely informed the outside world of a hitherto unknown and still unremedied Stalinist crime. Perhaps in some tortuous fashion Moscow thought it would somehow make the Meskhetians feel better, or its tacit admission of a past injustice simply salved their own conscience. The authorities knew that they would have little difficulty in keeping the Meskhetians out of Meskhetia since it lies predominantly in the restricted frontier zone where movement is very closely controlled.

The Meskhetians Look to Turkey

The Meskhetians spent the first year after the Order was issued in vain efforts to exercise their supposedly newly-restored right to reside in Georgia. No doubt realizing from the experience of the Crimean Tatars in the previous months that it would be useless for them to try to take up residence in Georgia on the basis of the Order without further official sanction, representatives went to Moscow to ask for an organized return to their homeland, but no one would see them. In July 1968, 7,000 Meskhetians gathered in Tbilisi to press their case further. They were beaten up by the police and searched for weapons but refused to disperse. Finally a few were received by Mzhavanadze, who said that there was no room for them in Meskhetia but 100 families a year could settle elsewhere in Georgia. If this did not satisfy them, he added, they should go to Moscow. This the Meskhetians did, and in November they eventually received verbal permission from an official of the Central Committee to settle in various parts of Georgia. They were told that 15 to 30 families would even be allowed to settle in Meskhetia. However, when they decided to put this promise to the test, they found all manner of obstacles put in their way. They were refused release from their jobs and the local military register, and they were denied transport for their possessions. Many families, who abandoned the latter and went to Georgia, were expelled. Nonetheless by June 1969 some 500 Meskhetian families had settled on the coastal plain of Georgia (the legendary Colchis), where they were given a friendly welcome by the local population. But their success was short-lived as on 7 or 10 June they were all rounded up, put on trains and expelled.

The first sign that the Meskhetians were despairing of ever being allowed to live again in Meskhetia came two months

later in August 1969, when the 120-strong 33rd delegation to Moscow visited the Central Committee offices and was told in an offensive manner that its demands would not be granted. In reply the delegates left a declaration renouncing their Soviet citizenship. The next day they were rounded up and deported from Moscow under escort.

When the Soviet census was taken on 15 January 1970, more of the Meskhetians seem to have chosen to revert to their earlier designation of Turks. The 1959 census had shown 35,000 Turks in the Soviet Union, of whom 21,000 were in Uzbekistan. These were, presumably, mostly Meskhetians. The 1970 total was 79,000, a rise which clearly cannot be accounted for by natural increase alone. The fact that the proportion of Turks claiming Turkish as their native tongue rose from 82.2% in 1959 to 92.3% in 1970 might also be seen as evidence of a growing determination among the Meskhetians to cling to their own culture. (It is difficult to estimate the total number of Meskhetians since many must still be recorded as Azerbaydzhanis or other nationalities. The figure of 200,000 given in *Chronicle of Current Events*, No. 7 (dated 30 April 1969), was probably rather nearer the mark than the half-million claimed in the same Meskhetian appeals.)

The initiative to appeal to the Turkish Embassy in Moscow to allow any Meskhetians who wished to go to Turkey to do so was taken by Odabashev and other committee members on 6 April 1970. Their move was approved at a Meeting of the People in the Saatly district of Azerbaydzhan on 2 May 1970 in a resolution which said that, if the Supreme Soviet was not prepared to grant the Meskhetians' demands for the punishment of those responsible for their deportation, for the formation of a Meskhetian Turkish autonomous republic or province in the Georgian SSR and their return to Meskhetia, it should be asked to permit emigration to Turkey. This resolution, including the new demand for an autonomous republic or province, has formed the basis of Meskhetian policy ever since. On 15 March lists of those wishing to go to Turkey if they were not allowed to return to Meskhetia were given to the Turkish Embassy in Moscow, and in May 1971 a delegation of 61 tried unsuccessfully to visit the Embassy after its demands had been categorically rejected at the Supreme Soviet and Central Committee offices. Its three leaders, who attempted to visit the Embassy again later by appointment with the consul, were detained and sentenced respectively to 15 and 12 days in prison and a fine. The attitude of the Turkish authorities to the Meskhetians is not known but, according to the *Chronicle*, Islam Karymov, a young Meskhetian leader who tried to commit suicide after he was arrested in December 1970, was released as a result of intervention by the Turkish Embassy.

In 1971 the Meskhetians also started to appeal to the United Nations. On 4 May the Council of Elders sent U Thant a copy of a letter to the Soviet leaders. Another appeal to the Soviet leaders, unanimously adopted, at a Meeting of the People on 18 July 1971 attended by several hundred delegates from Kazakhstan, Kirgiziya, Uzbekistan, Azerbaydzhan, Tadzhikistan and Kabardino-Balkariya, was copied to U Thant and the Turkish parliament, president, government and people.

The Meskhetians' attempts to enlist foreign support for their case evidently riled the authorities, and in the following months Odabashev and other leaders (Mukhlis Niyazov, Allaz Izatov and Karymov) were arrested and

sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Odabashev himself, who had been summoned to court at least six times before, on one occasion in April 1969 owing his release to a mass protest by his fellow-Meskhetians, was given two years in Baku on 24 August 1971 on a charge of adding common land to his private garden plot. But the imprisonment of Odabashev and the others did not stop the Meskhetians sending appeals to the United Nations and Turkey. In one dated 14 July 1972 to Brezhnev, Waldheim and the Turkish Premier Melen, and another of 20 September 1972 to Waldheim only, Reshit Seyfatov, a Communist and member of the Committee for the Release of the Turks from Exile, asked for the despatch of a United Nations commission to examine the situation of the Turks in the USSR and also for help in obtaining permission for the Meskhetians to return to Meskhetia or leave the country.

Recent Developments

During the 1970s while the campaign for return to their historic homeland has continued, the majority of Meskhetians appear to have experienced difficulty in deciding whether they are Georgians or Turks. This problem has been reflected in the division among Meskhetian activists with regard to tactics and aims.

The Meskhetian-Georgians have campaigned for their return, if not to Meskhetia, then at least to Georgia, and are reported to be prepared to "settle in any district, if necessary, in small groups". Faced with the intransigence of the Soviet authorities in 1976 they successfully turned for support to the Georgian and Moscow Helsinki monitoring groups. The prominent Georgian human rights activists Merab Kostava and Viktor Rtskhiladze championed their cause before their arrest in 1977 and subsequent imprisonment for human rights activities, and even reproached the editors of *A Chronicle of Current Events* for referring to the Meskhetians as Meskhetian-Turks. In January 1977 the Moscow Helsinki monitoring group issued a short report entitled "On the Situation of the Meskhetians", based on the information that the Meskhetian-Georgians had sent to the group's chairman Dr Yuri Orlov. In this document the Moscow Helsinki monitors stated that they had received "lists with the signatures of more than 1,100 heads of families, representing nearly 7,500 people" appealing for the right to return to their homeland.

The Meskhetian-Turks continue to demand their return to Meskhetia, even were this repatriation to be extended over several years. Having met with no positive response from the Soviet authorities, they have appealed unsuccessfully for support to the Turkish government. Many of them have demanded resettlement in Turkey. The more militant activists are reported to have considered calling for the annexation of Meskhetia to Turkey if the Soviet government continues to ignore their demands. The Meskhetian-Turks have not appealed directly to the Moscow Helsinki monitoring groups but have sent it copies of the resolutions of their congresses.

The most recent information on the Meskhetians is contained in No. 45 of the *Chronicle of Current Events* (dated 25 May 1977) which provides extracts from an appeal dated 10 March 1977 and addressed to Leonid Brezhnev with a copy to the Georgian Party First

Secretary, Edward Shevardnadze. According to this appeal the Meskhetians had over the past 33 years sent 38 delegations to Moscow and submitted more than 160,000 individual and collective statements to the Soviet authorities. The appeal describes how the authorities continually refuse to deal with the Meskhetian problem, referring them from one office to another. In January 1977, for instance, a Meskhetian delegation was told in Moscow that their question was being dealt with by the Georgian Council of Ministers. In Tbilisi the Meskhetian representatives were told that they had "the right to live anywhere on Georgian territory" provided that the local authorities would accept them. On approaching these authorities the Meskhetians were given the reply that "we will accept you with pleasure if the Georgian Council of Ministers permit it". The Meskhetians then returned to Tbilisi and requested the Council of Ministers to instruct the local authorities accordingly. This time they were told: "We have already explained everything to you, there will be no other reply." The authors of the appeal end by saying "after all this, we came to the conclusion that all resolutions and edicts regarding the Meskhetians from the highest organ of the USSR are mere formalities . . ."

Conclusions

For what Moscow apparently sees as overriding strategic reasons, it seems improbable that the Meskhetians will be

granted even token resettlement in Meskhetia in spite of the fact that there has been some improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and Turkey. The Meskhetians' demand for an autonomous republic or province remains unrealistic in present circumstances, and cultural concessions are unlikely. The 1935-6 decision to change the medium of instruction in Meskhetian schools from Turkish to Azerbaydzhani was probably made on practical rather than political grounds. There are also practical reasons today for not providing schooling in Turkish, and since the abolition of Turkish-language schools was not linked with the Meskhetians' deportation the authorities doubtless feel no obligation to provide even instruction in Turkish as a special subject by way of reparation. Like the Crimean Tatars, the Meskhetians argue that their dispersal, brought about by deportation and aggravated by some Meskhetians leaving Central Asia for Azerbaydzhan, is leading to their assimilation; the pressures are obvious when one considers that in Kazakhstan alone some Turkish children receive their education in Kazakh and others in Uzbek and Russian. In these circumstances, after 35 years of arbitrary exile from their homeland and with no immediate prospect of its coming to an end, it is hardly surprising that some of the Meskhetians are disillusioned about their future in the Soviet Union and seek emigration to Turkey.

Footnotes

- ¹ The Volga or Kazan' Tatars, whose language and culture are distinct from those of the Crimean Tatars, make up the overwhelming majority of the 5,931,000 Tatars in the Soviet Union in 1970. They have their own Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on the Volga, of which Kazan' is the capital, but are fairly widely dispersed throughout the Soviet Union.
- ² See Michael Bourdeaux, *Religious Ferment in Russia* (London, 1968), the same author's *Religious Minorities in the Soviet Union* (Revised 1977 edition, Minority Rights Group, London), and *Faith on Trial in Russia* (London, 1971).
- ³ All the samizdat material is available in Russian from the Radio Liberty "Arkhiv Samizdata". Two of the documents are published in English in *In Quest of Justice*, edited by Abraham Brumberg (Praeger, 1970), and an annotated English translation of the first 11 issues of the *Chronicle of Current Events* appears in *Uncensored Russia*, edited by Peter Reddaway (London, 1972). English translations of subsequent issues have been published by Amnesty International, London. A few of the documents have also been translated into Turkish in *Dergi*, No.62 of 1970 and No.63 of 1971. The various documents issued by the Moscow Helsinki monitoring group concerning Tatars are published in English in *Reports of Helsinki Accord Monitors in the Soviet Union*, edited and prepared by the staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Congress of the United States, Washington, D.C. 20515.
- ⁴ Republics, autonomous republics, autonomous provinces and national districts, in descending order of importance, were established according to the size and compact settlement of the various nationalities. They do not enjoy independence or autonomy in any meaningful sense of the word, but are rather administrative units which take national attributes into account.
- ⁵ Over 300 families of those who left the Soviet Union during the Second World War went to the USA, but the bulk of them made their way to Turkey. Back in 1918 there were estimated to be about two million Crimean Tatars in Turkey as a result of emigration from the Crimea in the preceding century and a half. There were then also roughly 80,000 in Roumania, and somewhat fewer in Bulgaria. At present there are about 35,000 in Roumania, the remainder having moved to Turkey. Many of those in Bulgaria have also gone to Turkey. As for those in Turkey itself, they are all regarded as Turks by the Turkish

- government and have undergone various degrees of assimilation with the Turks. A considerable number still speak Crimean Tatar as well as some form of Turkish, and many more remain conscious of their Tatar origins. In the opinion of Dr. Edige Kirimal, a Crimean Tatar emigré scholar, a number of the Crimean Tatars abroad would return to the Crimea if it became Tatar again.
- ⁶ The conspiracy of silence surrounding the Crimean Tatars is well illustrated by the fact that nine years later scholars in the USSR Academy of Sciences' Institute of Linguistics were apparently unaware that a newspaper and books were being published in Crimean Tatar in Tashkent. At all events the introduction to Volume II (Turkic Languages) of the major five-volume *Languages of the Peoples of the USSR* published by the institute in 1966 put Crimean Tatar in the category of languages "without a written form".
- ⁷ In the Uzbekistan newspaper *Pravda Vostoka* of 16 September 1967 a Crimean Tatar foreman at the Tashkent Textile Machinery Plant wrote of his "profound joy and gratitude to our Party and government" for the decree and went on to say that his Tatar colleagues at the works had expressed similar feelings at a recent meeting.
- ⁸ See in the *Chronicle of Current Events*, No.51, 1 December 1978, p.126.
- ⁹ See in *Ibid.*, No.52.
- ¹⁰ *Arkhiv Samizdata*, No.3530.
- ¹¹ Both of the above speeches are published in *The Grigorenko Papers*, (London, 1976), pp.63-68.
- ¹² This item can be found in Russian in *1964-70. Politicheskii dnevnik* (Amsterdam, 1973). A German translation appeared in *Der Spiegel* of 4 December 1972, and an English translation (from the German) in *Intercontinental Press* of 18 December 1972.
- ¹³ The authors are indebted to Mrs. Emma S. Haynes for this information and much other assistance.
- ¹⁴ See the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 January 1979.
- ¹⁵ See *Chronicle of Current Events*, Nos.7, 9, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27 (footnote 3), 34, 41 and 45. Document No.18 of the Helsinki Monitoring group is published in English in Volume II of *Reports of Helsinki Accord Monitors in the Soviet Union*.

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Ann Sheehy has been a research associate at the Central Asian Research Centre in London. She served in the British Embassy in Moscow from 1957 to 1959.

Bohdan Nahaylo works as a researcher at Amnesty International's International Secretariat in London. He has done postgraduate research on Soviet affairs at the London School of Economics.



The cover photograph shows Crimean Tatar families on the railway station at Ust-Labinsk after their expulsion from the Crimea, and is reproduced by kind permission of Peter Reddaway.



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