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Crimean Diary

BY ADAM SMITH ALBION

TRABZON, Turkey

20 July 1995

Crimean Tatars

The Crimean Peninsula is an overwhelmingly Slavic area. The two major Slavic nations, Ukraine and Russia, have been engaged in a tug-of-war for the last two years over its status. "The Jewel of the Black Sea," Crimea was a "gift" from Krushchov to the Ukraine in 1954. The population, however, is 62 percent Russian (out of 2.6 million). After a constitutional struggle, the uncertainty of who it belonged to was ended this March when Crimea was firmly subjugated to Kiev. Not only are its people Slavic, so too are the associations it brings to mind. Crimea is an inalienable part of Slavic, particularly Russian, history and culture — Pushkin's exile, Tolstoy's stories, the guns at Sevastopol', the "Russian Riviera," the seeds of Moscow's *Pax Sovietica* sown at Yalta... Indeed, whether one strolls through downtown Simferopol', the Crimean capital, or promenades the lido at Yalta, almost nothing will catch the eye or distract the mind from a settled conviction that one is in a Slavic heartland...

It was not always so. Crimea passed by conquest to Russia in only 1783 — much later than, say, Siberia. For the five and a half centuries before that it was dominated by the Tatars and Turks. The first invasion was by Batu Khan in 1220. Crimea became a province of the Tatar Khans on the Volga in the 14th century. At this time the peninsula was converted to Sunni Islam. Tamerlane characteristically attacked in 1395. In the 15th century, the Tatar Golden Horde broke up into four parts. As one of the three new independent khanates to appear, the Crimean Khanate was founded in 1441 by Haci Giray (the other two were the Khanates of Kazan' and Astrakhan). Forty years later the Ottomans, fresh from taking Constantinople, had overrun the peninsula. It became an Ottoman vassal state in 1478, and remained so until Catherine the Great captured it in 1783.

Despite Crimea's incorporation into the Russian Empire, a Tatar of the time might have been excused for believing that half a millennium of Turkic occupation and rule on the peninsula would prove an indelible legacy. For 160 years this was true. Neither conquest, nor emigration nor time were able to wipe a sponge over the history of Crimea. That was the work of Stalin.

Simferopol' — Intrusions

I crossed onto Crimea on an 8-hour bus ride from Kherson, in southern Ukraine. The isthmus connecting the peninsula to the Ukrainian mainland narrows at one point to only 8 km (area of Crimea: 25,500 sq. km). The land is flat with barely a tree to be seen. I was entering the northern Crimean plains, where the first Turkic nomads settled; Turks did not penetrate the interior until the Seljuks arrived in the 13th century. Three-quarters of Crimea is plains, continuing the sweep of the

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Ukrainian steppe southwards. Hardly a hill appears until the outskirts of Simferopol'. South of the capital the landscape changes dramatically. A chain of limestone mountains suddenly rears up, covered in Alpine foliage. The Crimean Mountains slice off a long, skinny littoral stretching from Feodosia to Sevastopol'. Greek, Armenian, Frankish, Slavic, and Italian trade colonies were able to live along the coast in relative isolation from the Tatars.

Once in Simferopol', I asked the bus driver for an unpretentious hotel. (I have described the trials of finding accommodation in Ukraine in the previous diary.) He pointed out Hotel Auto opposite the bus station. It was the lodging for bus drivers! I slept happily for three days in a dormitory room for six. In the bed beside mine was Vanya, 51, who had just been laid off after thirty years' service. The shock had been so great that he was hiding from his family (pleading "stress") and spent all day at the window reading Gorky's *My Childhood* and wistfully watching "his" busses plying to and from the station. On my fourth day there, the giggly young receptionist was gone, and there was a new one who exploded at me. She goose-stepped me to the "Rules and Regulations" posted on the wall and made me read it aloud. Point 5 was: "Foreign passports are not accepted in this hotel." I looked more closely. The paper was dated 1982! "These are Soviet rules," I said. "You must leave at once!" she said. "But the sign isn't valid any more. You should take it down. Here, I'll take it down for you," I said. At that, she threatened to call the police. I'd have been curious to know what they made of the situation. At any rate, it was the stupidest eviction I have ever suffered from anywhere.

Very rarely I would catch sight of a Kipchak or Nogai Tatar in the center of Simferopol', recognizing him by his eyes and cheekbones — and by the way others tried not to stand beside him on the bus. Later I met Tavri (Mountain) and Yaliboysky (Littoral) Tatars whom I could not distinguish from Caucasians. However, the place to seek Tatars is never the center, but the shantytowns that ring all the major cities in Crimea. In Simferopol', Bakhchisaray and Alushta I simply rode the bus to the edge of town, asked to be dropped, and never had to walk more than ten minutes to find Tatars living in dire poverty, and bearing up to their miserable situation with astonishing patience and fortitude.

I do not know how sociologists and urban researchers, census-takers, religious busybodies and miscellaneous do-gooders are able to bustle into the homes of "the poor" and expect them to suffer an intrusion of their privacy (albeit "for their own good") that the intruders themselves would never accept in their own homes. Where do they get the nerve? What arrogance must lie under the veneer of compassion. In fact, the more they protest their compassion, the less I trust them. And that goes for Eleanor Roosevelt and the British Queen Mother too, however chirpily they chowed down with the underprivileged. I know I felt ghastly and ashamed. Maybe others could get away with, "Hello. I am an

American researcher and I just wanted to ask..." but I couldn't carry the sentence through. The words died on my lips. Sitting in a bare hovel with an earthen floor, decorated with old photographs and a few mementos of Uzbekistan, neither condolence nor bully good cheer can be appropriate. A show of understanding and serious concern, however well-meant, is so cheap and shallow under the circumstances that the woman at the table waves it away with her hand. One can not bluff one's way past the fact that the old man in the Astrakhan hat, her father, is living without water, electricity, medicine or pension, and that she is unemployed and at her wit's end how to survive tomorrow.

These are people who have sacrificed almost everything to return to their Crimean homeland, whence they were deported by Stalin en masse on a single day, 18 May 1944.

Deportations

Since the stories of the deportations (the Soviet euphemism is *spetsposeleniye*, "special resettlement") were told to me without melodrama or milking the tragedy for sympathy, I too will try to be matter-of-fact. Before WWII there had been 251,000 Tatars in Crimea, comprising 22 percent of the population. They primarily worked in agriculture (65 percent). On 18 May 1944 Tatar families were rounded up. They were summarily ejected from their homes, sometimes being given as little as two minutes to collect their belongings. (The Tatars were not alone: the mass deportation included smaller numbers of Mesketian Turks, Volga Germans, Chechens, Gypsies and Greeks — 228,000 people in all, 195,000 of them Tatars.) Their houses and property were confiscated. They were locked into freight cars and the trains set off for Central Asia. The majority were taken to Uzbekistan, the rest to the Urals and Siberia. The journey took one month, across sun-parched steppes. Forty-six percent of them died on the way. Tatar men who returned from the front after the war found their villages deserted. They were sent on afterwards. By the end of 1946, 119,460 Tatars (37,767 families) were registered in Uzbekistan. For this logistical achievement, NKVD¹ Commissar Serov was awarded the Order of Lenin and named Hero of the Soviet Union.

On arrival, Tatars lived in camps (*spetskomendaturny*) until 1956. Their movements were restricted, and they had to present themselves (sometimes weekly) to NKVD offices as if they were on parole. I spoke to a man who had lived with five other families in 20 square meters of space. He worked in the Tashkent Instruments Factory, starting December 1945. He was treated like a slave or a prisoner: he saw no wages until the end of April 1946. I met another when I was visiting a Tatar organization in Simferopol'. He clearly had something to unburden to me privately. He waited till I had spoken to everybody else, then followed me outside. Under a chestnut tree, he described to me how his father had been shot for being a Tatar officer; how he and his mother had been transported first to Sverdlovsk, then to

Tashkent, and the conditions they lived in; and how his mother had died, repeating the only lesson she ever taught, that his duty was to return to Crimea and "prodolzhit' rod" — "continue the [Tatar] race." For steel, his mother must have ranked with the mothers of ancient Sparta. His name was Merdan Bekirov.

Why was a whole people deported? The official explanation, not given until June 1946, charged them with "Treason to the Fatherland": "During the Great Patriotic War, when the peoples of the USSR were heroically defending the honor and independence of the Fatherland in the struggle against the German-Fascist invaders, 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." [*Izvestiya*, quoted in Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), p. 167].

The Tatars I consulted, unsurprisingly, dismissed this as a complete fabrication. (Fisher suggests there may have been some instances of collaboration, but hastens to note there were mitigating circumstances, and nothing merited the scale of punishment doled out by Stalin.) Their firm conclusion was "Great Russian chauvinism/racism." The deportation represented ethnic cleansing of the Crimea. The Russians are the spiritual forefathers of the Serbs, who also cannot bear to live among non-Slavs. Nor was this show of Russian intolerance unprecedented: after the Russian conquest in 1783, also, great numbers of Tatars were forced to flee from Crimea to the Ottoman Empire. A second wave followed after 1917. (As a result, there are some 5-6 million Tatars living in Turkey today.) "Have you watched *Novosti* [the Russian TV news]? Have you seen all the Russian nationalistic symbols and self-congratulation during the end credits — the Russian flags waving, the soldiers marching, and champagne glasses clinking? That's the sort of thing we're up against here," one young man, Enver, said to me. After the Tatars had been eradicated from the peninsula, it is true that there followed two great waves of Slavic immigration: Russians (1944-49) and Galician Ukrainians (1950-54) to make up avowed "labor and population shortages."

The Tatars have never been fully rehabilitated. An unpublished decree in 1956 and a limited-edition *ukaz* in



1967 offered very limited absolution, even hinting that the Tatars' punishment was unjustified, but making no mention of compensation and forbidding them to return to Crimea, although it seems almost 10,000 managed to. Western scholarship for a long time tended to accept the official version of Tatar crimes. Soviet opinion, if it knew anything about the Tatars, was rabidly hostile to them. Tatar children in Uzbek schools were forever reminded they belonged to the Mongolian-Tatar Horde (*nashestvie*) that had shamefully attacked Russia. Enver showed me a book by Ivan Kozlov, *V Krymskom podpol'e* ("In the Crimean Underground") where literally on every page there is a mention of "the Crimean Tatars, the dirty traitors" ("*svolochi predateli*" — *svoloch'*: dirt, scum, swine).

(As Ukraine has made no public effort to reverse the effect of Soviet anti-Tatar education and propaganda, prejudices of this kind remain strong. The sight of Tatars living in squalor has confirmed the image of them among the Crimean public as undesirables.)

At last, the Tatars were given permission to travel to Crimea during perestroika. They began arriving in 1988. The flow of immigration has risen and fallen — 30,500 (1989), 41,200 (1990), 33,400 (1991), 26,400 (1992), 18,800 (1993), approximately 45,000 (1994-present)² — but the Tatars' determination to return has not wavered in the slightest. The talk is of bringing every last Tatar home. (Two hundred thirty-six thousand Tatars were registered in Crimea in September 1994 — an equal number are still in Russia and Central Asia.) In Zalankoy there is a Home for the Old (*Dom starikov*) who have made the arduous journey to Crimea in order only to die there.

Ukraine dithers

Ukraine to date has established no structure or comprehensive program to handle the Tatar immigrations. Its response has been piecemeal. Much less has it shown great sympathy for their plight, or tried systematically to make their transition easier. A Tatar typically arrives in Crimea with a suitcase in each hand. He has sold his apartment, if possible, and at least some of his possessions; those he has not sold follow by railroad container. He knows where to go by word of mouth — the grapevine stretching from Crimea to Central Asia — or sets off to stay with relatives or friends. He has no guarantee of getting papers, work, or medical treatment, and he is stateless, for reasons discussed below. Here is the story of a man named Server:

“I came in 1994. I sold my three-room apartment in Serganie, near Tashkent, for \$500, a good price for Uzbekistan. I sold my car. The Uzbeks did not want to let me leave. They sat on the *vyypiski* [exit papers] for months. I got a 5-ton container for \$700. When I arrived here I went to the Meclis [Tatar National Assembly]. They were able to compensate me \$96, but they could only give me a money order that I had to change at the National Bank of Ukraine, and there they gave me 35,000 coupons to \$1 [about a third of the true rate at the time].

“I’m living with my wife’s relatives in a *samostroi* [shack] that they put up last year outside Simferopol’. Do you know, the same apartment I had in Uzbekistan would cost me \$13,000 in Crimea? I lived for about eight months before I could get registered with the Crimean authorities. Then I could get work at a factory. I was trained as an engineer: in Uzbekistan I was a Professor of Physics. I’m not a Ukrainian citizen, of course, and I forfeited my Uzbek citizenship when I left the country.”

Without local registration (*propiski*) it is impossible to work, receive medical treatment, or draw a pension in Crimea. This was the situation for most Tatars until relatively recently. To begin to address the medical problem, they set up their own hospital in Simferopol’ (Kamskaya Street 25). Receiving no instructions from the Ukrainian government what to do, local authorities for a long time did nothing. A vicious circle set in: they couldn’t register people who had no fixed addresses or workplaces; but Tatars couldn’t settle or find work because they weren’t registered; etc.

In the meantime, Tatars who could not find housing began to build it for themselves. Over and over, the epithet I heard the Tatars apply to themselves was *trudolyubivii* — “willing to work.” They would have to be. Some were even careful to research the relative prices of building materials in Crimea and Uzbekistan and brought their own from home. Clumps of crude houses popped up on the edges of towns all around Crimea (like *gecekodu* in Turkey). In total, there are about 285 today. Still 90 percent of Tatars have no electricity in their homes, 92 percent have no water, and 180/240 of the settlements

where Tatars live compactly have no electricity, no water, no roads, and no social facilities of any kind whatsoever.

Crimean authorities have gradually awakened to the fact that the Tatar problem is not going to go away. Tatars continue to arrive and their *samostroi* continue to go up. In response to persistent pressure, the government has begun to act. The registration process has been streamlined so that today practically all Tatars have *propiski*. In 1992, for the first time, a portion of the Ukrainian budget was set aside to help with the repatriation of deported peoples. The monies travel a tortuous route. They originate in the Ministry of Finance in Kiev, and pass from there to the Crimean Ministry of Finance in Simferopol’, to the government authority dealing with deportations, to Imdat Bank, to the so-called Oversight Committee. It is the Oversight Committee, made up of Ukrainian and Tatar representatives, and steered by the Chairman of the Meclis, that makes the hard decisions about which Tatar communities most desperately need help.

After protests were organized in Kiev and Bakhchisaray in 1992, 8 *raions* were officially designated as places where the Tatars could live. In 1993, 3,500 hectares of land were earmarked for distribution to them where they could build and, more urgently, plant food. Most of the land was in the empty north of the peninsula, where allotments might be up to 600 sq. meters. In the more populous central plateau, land parcels were much smaller (around 10 sq. meters) and even smaller in cities (8 sq. meters). This initial land grant has only been a drop in the bucket. The line of Tatars waiting for land is long.

Tatar Meclis — Election boycott

While the Ukrainians were sitting on their hands, the Tatars were setting up their own structure. It would be misleading to call it a shadow or parallel government (such as the Albanians have in Kosovo). Rather, it was an extended self-help organization. In June 1991 the Crimean Tatar National Assembly — the Meclis — was formed. It has 33 members. It works like the Presidium of the Parliament. The Parliament is called the Kurultay — a resonant word that used to mean the gathering of clan leaders in the days of the Khanates. One deputy is elected to the Kurultay per 1,000 Tatars, so at the moment there are about 250 deputies. Reporting to the Kurultay are about 350 regional and town councils, that channel upwards a steady stream of problems, frustrations, questions, complaints, petitions, and pleas for assistance.

Here, in letter form, is a typical plea:

“My name is ——. I was born 1941. I came from Leninabad in Tajikistan in 1994. I am temporarily registered with relations. I have nowhere to live. I have a son, I am a single mother. My son is 15, in the ninth class. I

ask you to help me to live somewhere so my son can study uninterrupted. I am registered in Bakhchisaray. Now I work at the First Simferopol' Clinic."

"What are you going to do?" I asked the deputy who showed it to me. "What can I do? There are hundreds of these. Very little, I'm afraid." He filed it under: "Poor housing condition. Single mother."

One of the more interesting town councils is in Bakhchisaray, where there are now 22,000 Tatars (21 percent of the population). It works out of four departments — education, information, juridical matters and religion. There, as in other places, authorities are confronted with pensioners without pensions, the ill without medicine and large families sometimes without a roof over their heads. I was surprised to hear about the religion department, though — especially since one of the leaders of the Meclis had estimated to me that, despite all the talk about Tatars taking their place in the muslim world, the majority were natural products of the Soviet system that instilled atheism.³

However, the work of the religion department is not pastoral, as I at first supposed. Bakhchisaray was the Tatar capital from 1423 to 1783. The Khan's Palace, with its courtyards and minarets, is still impressive. But except for it, Tatar buildings, monuments and cemeteries have been mostly torn down by the Soviets, or converted. It is the same story throughout the peninsula. The Cuma Mosque in Simferopol' became a warehouse. Perhaps 1,500 mosques were destroyed in all. If Pushkin's Fountain of Bakhchisaray really existed, that too has probably been bulldozed.⁴ The Zynjyry Medrese, a famous site of Tatar religious education in Bakhchisaray, has been converted into a psycho-neurological clinic. The religion department's primary task is to field a special commission to negotiate reclaiming it from the Crimean authorities. There have been no encouraging signs from that quarter, as yet.

The Meclis in Simferopol' is a half-hour's walk from the center. I had to go there on foot, since there were no busses. It is housed in one of three small buildings ranged around a tiny patio garden with tables where men drink tea and play backgammon, just as in Turkey. The other two buildings are the office of the Meclis newspaper, *Avdet* (its first issue appeared 15 July 1990), and a canteen/television room. On different days the canteen served spaghetti, *kubitye*, *cheburek*, *burma*, *yantyk* (all forms of Tatar meat and vegetable pastries), but mainly the cook's Uzbek specialty, *plov*. *Plov* is a heavy form of brown rice pilaf.

In the Meclis building there are two offices for secretaries, and the meeting hall for the deputies with two small rooms attached. The meeting hall, which doubles as a waiting room, is only 20 ft x 20 ft. On the walls are a map of Crimea, two frames of Arab calligraphy reading "Allah" and "Muhammed," and pictures of the Chechen Tsar Shamil and the first Tatar President (in the

19th century) Chelebi Djikhan. The building was purchased in 1993 with donations from Tatars living in America.

The Chairman of the Meclis is Mustafa Djemilev (he Latinizes/Turkifies his name as Cemiloglu). His Organization for National Salvation of the Crimean Tatars has 18 of the 33 seats in the Meclis. I was sitting in the tea garden one Monday evening, wondering how I could get to meet him, when he sat down beside me. I recognized him from his photographs in the Turkish press. He was born in 1943. He is a small, wiry man with a thin moustache and beard and sorrowful eyes. He was wearing a crushed black suit and was clearly exhausted. Monday was the day he held his "surgery," when he was available to all comers to discuss their problems. There are four other deputies who hold surgeries at the Meclis twice a week for four hours, but Djemilev's hours are Monday 12PM-6PM. He had just emerged.

We ate a dinner of *plov* together outside. I spoke Russian out of courtesy, but he tried out some English on me: "My English is not too bad. I spent 15 years in prison. I had a lot of time to practice," he said wryly. Djemilev was arrested the first time in 1962, when he was 19, for founding the "Union of Crimean Tatar Youths." By his *fourth* trial in 1976 he was well-enough known as a dissident and defender of human rights that Sakharov and Bonner traveled to Omsk to attend and publicize his case. Sakharov wrote a number of pieces in support of him and the Tatars, including a letter to the UN.

The most important thing on Djemilev's mind that evening was the upcoming Crimean local elections on June 25. The Tatars had decided to boycott them. One motive was to protest the great reduction in this year's budget for the Oversight Committee to support repatriation: 1.3 trillion coupons (\$10.3 million), about one fifth of last year's allotment. (Belt-tightening is not surprising in the wake of Ukrainian President Kuchma's economic reform plan announced last October.) Three days earlier, 5,000 Tatars had demonstrated outside the Crimean Supreme Soviet to show their disappointment and displeasure.

The most compelling reason for boycotting local elections, however, is that most of the Tatars in Crimea cannot participate in them. Over 50 percent of them have not been granted Ukrainian citizenship. According to a recent decree, Tatars who arrived after November 1991 (i.e. toward the end of the Soviet regime and the beginning of Ukraine's independent existence) do not have the same rights to automatic citizenship as those who arrived before. They face a long wait with no promise of a passport at the end. Moreover, according to Uzbek regulations, Tatars lose their Uzbek passports by moving abroad. Clearly, as more Tatars arrive in Crimea, the proportion of those who are stateless will go up.

Not being citizens, the majority of Tatars cannot vote.

They face other forms of discrimination too, of which the most crippling is that they are not eligible to participate in the privatization plan adopted in February of this year. As non-citizens, they cannot receive privatization vouchers, on which the whole scheme turns. Moreover, the plan sets a deadline for citizens to apply for vouchers: 31 December 1996. Thus, even if Tatars get citizenship after that date, they will have irrevocably missed out on privatization, falling so far behind economically that they will never be able to catch up. As the Tatars also point out, it would be impossible to get all their compatriots home in time to meet that deadline even to have a chance of participating in privatization. They demand either that privatization be delayed, or that eligibility requirements be changed.

"We are also demanding quotas," said Djemilev: "We want 10 percent of the seats on local councils reserved for Tatars, and 33 percent of the seats in the Crimean Supreme Soviet." His argument is that the Tatars, as a constituent nation of Crimea, which is their homeland, have a right to be represented at all levels of government, but that their scattered demographics would prevent them winning any seats at all. In fact, 14/100 seats were held aside for the Tatars in the 27 March 1994 elections for the Crimean Supreme Soviet (4 seats were reserved for the other deported peoples). Djemilev considers 14 percent too little. His case for 33 percent is rooted in the history of pre-WWII Crimea, when it was briefly (1921-41) an "Autonomous Republic" of the Russian Federation. (Tatars were over-represented in government and industries, especially from 1923-28 under the administration of Veli Ibrahimov. The period is thought of as a Golden Age, although when I looked up the history it became apparent that the Tatars were not as supreme, or as autonomous, as they remember: cf. Fisher, *op. cit.*) "In 1944 we made up 24 percent of the population but 33 percent of the deputies were Tatars. Today we make up 10 percent of the population. But we will be over 20 percent when we bring everyone home. We are working up a new Crimean Constitution proposal for a one or two-house Parliament where the Tatars will have around 30 percent of the seats."

The bottom line: what do the Tatars want, that they think they can get?

1. Rehabilitation. Neither Russia nor Ukraine has issued a retraction of the charges made against them. Ukraine, whose responsibility they have become, although Moscow did the damage, should admit that the deportations were illegal. This would open the door to compensation.

2. Compensation from the central government in Kiev for the suffering and human cost. Compensation from Crimea for the property seized in 1944 and subsequently enjoyed by inhabitants of Crimea to whom it was redistributed.

3. A fair deal from Uzbekistan. As the Tatars were forced to live there and contribute to the country's well-being and economy, they argue they have a right to share the fruits of their labor there, although they are re-

turning home to Crimea. In particular, they want Tashkent to release their pensions/social security. An understanding must also be struck between Ukraine and Uzbekistan on passports/dual citizenship, simpler customs procedures for containers, transfer of assets out of Central Asia, etc. President Kuchma paid an official visit to Uzbekistan in June (and met Djemilev at Sevastopol' airport on the eve of his departure), but there is no sign yet that the Tatars' concerns were resolved or even concretely addressed.

4. Special provisions allowing all Tatars to participate in privatization.

5. Quotas in the Parliament and local councils, enshrined in the new Crimean constitution.

Turkey disappoints

But where is Ankara in all this? How is Turkey fulfilling its self-appointed mission to aid the Turkic peoples emerging from under the rubble of the ex-USSR?

As an example of the rhetoric Turks and Tatars use about one another, here are Djemilev's opening remarks at the Turk-Tatar-Crimea Trade Fair in Simferopol'. He gives the case for Turkey's "forward deployment" in aiding the Tatars, much as a Turk would have given it:

"The basic goal of this fair is to help bring Crimea and the Turkish Republic closer together in trade and economic relations. For us, Turkey is not only a close neighbor in the geographical sense but is a kindred country with which we are united by affinity of language, the same religion, traditions, customs and deep historical roots. Furthermore, after the conquest of Crimea by Russia, hundreds of thousands of our compatriots saved their lives by emigrating to the Ottoman Empire and now the number of them living in the territory of Turkey is ten times greater than the number of Tatars living in the territory of the whole ex-USSR..."

However, "Turkey's tongue has been longer than its hand," as one Tatar put it to me. The Turks have failed to meet expectations that they generated in the first place.

The month-long trade fair, organized by the Meclis' Crimea Foundation and Turkey's Kar Toplulugu ("Profit Society"), was an exception. It brought over 100 tons of goods at wholesale prices from 10 Turkish firms ranging from chocolate to furniture, from kitchenware to religious books. The hall was hung brightly with Turkish, Ukrainian and Tatar flags. About 5,000 visitors came the first day, although attendance fell off sharply after a week. Ozal shoes and Ulker sweets sold particularly well. The Tatars earned 10 percent on every sale or order.

It is possible to enumerate small, often almost symbolic help, that Turks have offered the Tatars. They sent sheep to slaughter for *Kurban bayrami*, the Festival of Sacrifices. The "Second World Conference of Turkic Youth" was organized in Bakhchisaray in 1994 (the first took place in Russian Tataristan). The Tatar folk group K'yrym was invited to a festival in Izmir. A pious foun-

dation in Ankara donated a computer to the Meclis newspaper. In August 1993 the Meclis adopted, in theory, a Latin alphabet for the Tatar language developed with Turkish help (in practice all Tatars still use Cyrillic). Hopes were also raised when eleven trucks from Turkish Red Crescent in May 1993 delivered \$430,000 worth of food, clothes, medicine and the ubiquitous religious literature in the Turkish language that Tatars generally cannot understand.

The litmus test, however, was President Demirel's visit to Ukraine in May 1994. Many instances of Turkish aid to Crimea have been privately administered through the Organization for Turkish Tatars in Ankara. On the official level, Ankara has promised little and disillusioned the Tatars by failing to deliver even that much. Among Demirel's pledges were 250-300 places in Turkish universities for Tatar students. This has proven to be rhetorical inflation. The number in 1994 was 15-20, which the Turks have promised to increase to 40 this year.

More importantly, Demirel promised that Turkish firms would build 1,000 apartments for the Tatars. One thousand will hardly go far in solving the Tatars' chronic housing problems, but they did not look a gift horse in the mouth. As a good-will gesture it was appreciated; as a test of Ankara's seriousness, the Tatars counted on it. Nothing happened for six months. Djemilev came to Turkey in January 1995 and re-opened the question of apartments with the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA). It was agreed that Turkey would finance 60 percent of the construction from foreign lenders. Turkish architects reconnoitered the territory and decided on four 9-story buildings in Simferopol', Yalta and Alushta (weak foundations rule out taller buildings). And since then no progress has been made. The architects were to return in May and June but postponed each time, without setting any new timetable. The Tatars see enthusiasm ebbing away. They assume the idea has been quietly shelved and that momentum for this and other projects has been lost irrevocably. One of the council workers in Alushta said, in a fit of pessimism, that if Crimea is the Jewel of the Black Sea, then the Turkish child has already got bored of playing with its new bauble. And at a high level, Tatars privately confess they are not pinning any hopes on Ankara any more at all. □

NOTES

1. NKVD: "People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs," i.e. pre-KGB Soviet state security police.
2. Pre-1994 numbers from the Tatar newspaper *Azdet* (Return), 4 Nov. 1994.
3. But the magazine *Yildiz* published the Koran in Tatar translation in three installments in 1990. Also, Meclis sessions open with a prayer, and Tatar TV (4 hours on Wednesday evenings, one hour of which is given over to the US soap opera "Santa Barbara") opens "May Allah Grant Health."
4. Until recently the museum of Simferopol' made no mention of Tatars in connection with the history of Crimea. This year it staged an exhibit of "The Weaving and Embroidery of the Crimean Tatar Masters, XVIII-XX Centuries."

Current Fellows & Their Activities

Bacete Bwogo. A Sudanese from the Shilluk tribe of southern Sudan, Bacete is a physician spending two and one-half years studying health-delivery systems in Costa Rica, Cuba, Kerala State (India) and the Bronx, U.S.A. Bacete did his undergraduate work at the University of Juba and received his M.D. from the University of Alexandria in Egypt. He served as a public-health officer in Port Sudan until 1990, when he moved to England to take advantage of scholarships at the London School of Economics and Oxford University [THE AMERICAS]

Cheng Li An Assistant Professor of Government at Hamilton College in Clinton, NY, Cheng Li is studying the growth of technocracy and its impact on the economy of the southeastern coast of China. He began his academic life by earning a Medical Degree from Jing An Medical School in Shanghai, but then did graduate work in Asian Studies and Political Science in the United States, with an M.A. from Berkeley in 1987 and a Ph.D. from Princeton in 1992. [EAST ASIA]

Adam Albion. A former research associate at the Institute for East-West Studies at Prague in the Czech Republic, Adam is spending two years studying and writing about Turkey's regional role and growing importance as an actor in the Balkans, the Middle East and the former Soviet bloc. A Harvard graduate (1988; History), Adam has completed the first year of a two-year M. Litt. degree in Russian/East European history and languages at Oxford University [EUROPE/RUSSIA]

Cynthia Caron With a Masters degree in Forest Science from the Yale School of Forestry and Environment, Cynthia is spending two years in South Asia as ICWA's first John Miller Musser Memorial Forest & Society Fellow. She is studying and writing about the impact of forest-preservation projects on the lives (and land-tenure) of indigenous peoples and local farmers who live on their fringes. Her fellowship includes stays in Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka. [SOUTH ASIA/Forest & Society]

Hisham Ahmed Born blind in the Palestinian Dheisheh Refugee Camp near Bethlehem, Hisham finished his A-levels with the fifth highest score out of 13,000 students throughout Israel. He received a B.A. in political science on a scholarship from Illinois State University and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California in Santa Barbara. Back in East Jerusalem and still blind, Hisham plans to gather oral histories from a broad selection of Palestinians to produce a "Portrait of Palestine" at this crucial point in Middle Eastern history [MID-EAST/N AFRICA]

Sharon Griffin A feature writer and contributing columnist on African affairs at the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Sharon is spending two years in southern Africa studying Zulu and the KwaZulu kingdom and writing about the role of nongovernmental organizations as fulfillment centers for national needs in developing countries where governments are still feeling their way toward effective administration. She plans to travel and live in Namibia and Zimbabwe as well as South Africa [sub-SAHARA]

Pramila Jayapal. Born in India, Pramila left when she was four and went through primary and secondary education in Indonesia. She graduated from Georgetown University in 1986 and won an M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management in Evanston, Illinois in 1990. She has worked as a corporate analyst for PaineWebber and an accounts manager for the world's leading producer of cardiac defibrillators, but most recently managed a \$7 million developing-country revolving-loan fund for the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) in Seattle. Pramila is spending two years in India tracing her roots and studying social issues involving religion, the status of women, population and AIDS [SOUTH ASIA]

William F. Foote Formerly a financial analyst with Lehman Brothers' Emerging Markets Group, Willy Foote is examining the economic substructure of Mexico and the impact of free-market reforms on Mexico's people, society and politics. Willy holds a Bachelor's degree from Yale University (history), a Master's from the London School of Economics (Development Economics; Latin America) and studied Basque history in San Sebastian, Spain. He carried out intensive Spanish-language studies in Guatemala in 1990 and then worked as a copy editor and Reporter for the Buenos Aires Herald from 1990 to 1992 [THE AMERICAS]

Teresa C. Yates. A former member of the American Civil Liberties Union's national task force on the workplace, Teresa is spending two years in South Africa observing and reporting on the efforts of the Mandela government to reform the national land-tenure system. A Vassar graduate with a *juris doctor* from the University of Cincinnati College of Law, Teresa had an internship at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies in Johannesburg in 1991 and 1992, studying the feasibility of including social and economic rights in the new South African constitution. While with the ACLU, she also conducted a Seminar on Women in the Law at Fordham Law School in New York [sub-SAHARA]

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