

*Politics in and around Crimea:
A Difficult Homecoming*

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Return: The Revival of the Qurultay and the Politics of
National Homeland, 1989–91

The Late Soviet Period

The campaign by Crimean Tatars first to restore their good name and then to reclaim and return to their homeland has been going on ever since 1956, when Khrushchev's momentous "secret speech" to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) rehabilitated Chechens, Kalmyks, and other deported peoples and authorized their organized return home but failed even to mention Tatars.¹ Without significant rehabilitation, the outcast Tatars had little to lose from a more or less permanent campaign of mass protest once political conditions were liberalized in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Nor did the 1967 decree that absolved them from accusations of wartime collaboration with the Germans and granted them the right to "reside in every territory of the Soviet Union" do much to deter their campaign. It was not widely publicized, and the authorities claimed that, as "citizens of the Tatar nationality formerly resident in Crimea" had "settled in the Uzbek and other Union republics," there was therefore no need for them to return to Crimea.² Although thousands attempted to make the journey in 1967–68, nearly all were turned back.

It was only the authorities' increasing resort to coercion that caused the movement to subside in the late 1970s (see chaps. 9 and 11 in this volume). However, the long-standing protest campaign at least allowed Crimean Tatars to develop a well-defined agenda and habits of organization that would serve them well in later years. It was therefore no surprise that they were one of the first groups to take advantage of renewed liberalization under perestroika. Once again, Tatars were at the forefront of dissent,

Table 14.1 The Number of Crimean Tatars in Crimea, 1979–94

1979 (Soviet census)	5,400	July 1991	132,000
Spring 1988	17,500	August 1991	142,200
1989 (Soviet census)	38,000	May 1993	250,000
May 1990	83,000	September 1993	257,000 ^a
January 1991	100,000	1994	260,000

Sources: Adapted from Andrew Wilson, *The Crimean Tatars* (London: International Alert, 1994), 37; Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia, eds., *Krymskotatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Tsentr po izucheniiu mezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenii, 1992–96), 1:153, 2:254; and Svetlana Chervonnaia, "Kryms'kotatars'kyi natsional'nyi rukh i suchasna sytuatsiia v Respublitsi Krym (do chervnia 1993 r.)," in *Etnichni menshyny Skhidnoi ta Tsentral'noi Yevropy: Komparatyvnyi analiz stanovyschcha ta perspektyv rozvytku*, ed. Volodymyr Yevtukh and Arnol'd Zuppan (Kyiv: INTEL, 1994), 103–4.

^aTatar leaders claimed that 227,000 Crimean Tatars were officially registered on the peninsula in late 1993 and that a further 30,000 were living there unofficially. The rest of the population consisted of 626,000 Ukrainians, 1,461,000 Russians, and 119,000 others. The Ukrainian population was heavily Russified; 81.4 percent of the non-Tatar population was Russophone. (F. D. Zastavnyi, *Heohrafiia Ukraïny* [Lviv: Svit, 1994], 413; Volodymyr Tevtoukh, "The Dynamics of Interethnic Relations in Crimea," in *Crimea: Dynamics, Challenges, Prospects*, ed. Maria Drohobycky [Lanham, Md.: American Association for the Advancement of Science/Rowman & Littlefield, 1995], 69–85.) See also table 1.1, where somewhat different figures emerge from other sources for 1993.

constantly testing the limits of permissible protest after breaking the Soviet taboo on public demonstrations in Moscow in June 1987.

The response of the authorities was more defensive than in the 1960s and 1970s but always remained one step behind the Tatars' demands. Although the new Soviet leadership was undoubtedly embarrassed by what had been done to Tatars in 1944, it could not conceive of any way of settling their grievances without alienating the Slavic population in Crimea. Gorbachev set up a commission under Andrei Gromyko to study the Tatars' problem, but, although his report in June 1988 recommended removing "unjustified obstacles to changes of residence" by Tatars (i.e., returning to Crimea), it did nothing to meet any of their key political demands. It failed to provide an unequivocal condemnation of the 1944 deportation and made no mention of restoring the designation *Crimean Tatar*. Nor did it take a position on the Tatars' demand for the revival of some form of national-territorial autonomy along the lines of the 1921–45 Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (CASSR) (see below).

The path-breaking semidemocratic elections to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies in March 1989 produced a certain change of mood. In November 1989, the new Soviet parliament finally decided formally to condemn the deportation, but by then Tatars were increasingly taking matters into their own hands as the declining powers of the Soviet state opened the floodgates to mass return to Crimea. Table 14.1 records how the number of new arrivals peaked during 1990–92, before rapidly rising travel costs slowed the flow to a trickle after 1993. The frontispiece map and table 1.1 show how the returnees (approximately 260,000 in all) were concentrated in their traditional homelands on the northern side of the Crimean mountains (Bakhchesaray, Aqmesjit [Simferopol'], Qarasuvbazar [Belogorsk], and Islam-Terek [Kirovskoe] *raion*, formerly “Old Crimea”).³ In July 1991, a decree of the Soviet Council of Ministers finally proposed limited material assistance to help the Tatars' organized return, but by then few Tatars had any confidence in Soviet institutions to deliver the goods.

The Establishment of Crimean Tatar Parties

The failure to obtain real redress of grievance from the Soviet authorities in the late 1980s led Crimean Tatars to create their own organizations and develop their own political strategies. The original parent organization, the National Movement of Crimean Tatars (in Russian, Natsional'noe Dvizhenie Krymskikh Tatar, or *NDKT*), first appeared in April 1987, although its leaders had initially worked together during the protest campaigns of the 1960s.⁴ The *NDKT* was therefore to an extent old-fashioned in its approach, and its faith in policies of peaceful protest and loyal petition to the authorities soon seemed outmoded. More radical Tatars therefore founded the breakaway Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement (in Russian, Organizatsiia Krymskotatarskogo Natsional'nogo Dvizheniia, or *OKND*) in May 1989.⁵

The *NDKT*

After 1989, the *NDKT* continued to exist and grew increasingly hostile to the *OKND*. Its first leader, the veteran dissident Yurii Osmanov, was murdered in November 1993; he was succeeded by Vasvi Abduraimov, a former official in the Crimean ministry of education. The *NDKT* was a much looser organization than the *OKND* and could not be considered a political

party as such, but it expressed a consistent political philosophy, the basis for which was its opposition to any “attempt to divide the people of Crimea into two antagonistic, irreconcilable camps.” “In Crimea,” argued Abduraimov, “the Slavo-Turks (Crimean Tatars, Russians, and Ukrainians) have a real possibility to create and perfect a micro-model for a Slavo-Turkic ‘superunion’”⁶ and by the example of their cooperation help prevent the historical fault line of confrontation between the Orthodox and Islamic worlds reemerging in Crimea. In fact, Abduraimov liked to quote the views of “Eurasianists” such as Nikolai Trubetskoi and Lev Gumilev to argue that cooperation between Slavs and Turks had laid the basis for Russia’s unique culture and the foundations of its geopolitical strength.⁷ The *NDKT* therefore attacked the “anti-Slavic and pan-Turkic policy” of the *OKND*⁸ and even after 1991 tended to regret the disappearance of the Soviet Union as an overarching institution preventing open confrontation between Slavs and Tatars, calling for a “Eurasian union” to take its place.⁹ Abduraimov even talked of the possible future “creation of a single Slavo-Turkic ethnos . . . on the territory of the former Soviet Union.”¹⁰

Just before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the *NDKT* prepared a detailed constitutional blueprint for Crimea. Its preferred model was a restored Crimean *ASSR*, albeit one idealized as embodying “the national statehood of the Crimean Tatar people” in which their rights would not be “held hostage to the artificial (criminal) diminution of the Crimean Tatar people on their national territory” but protected by the oversight of then all-Soviet institutions.¹¹ The *NDKT* was therefore never as tame and conformist an organization as its opponents liked to suggest, although it continued to stress the importance of working with existing authorities and rejecting radical methods.

In the early 1990s the Crimean authorities attempted to bolster support for the *NDKT* by recognizing it ahead of the politically more awkward *OKND*.¹² However, the *NDKT*’s poor showing in the 1994 Crimean elections (see below) destroyed the pretense that the Crimean Tatar community was represented by a plurality of equally legitimate voices, and the organization slipped from center stage.

The *OKND*

The *OKND* was undoubtedly the stronger of the two organizations. Whereas the *NDKT* could be dismissed as something of a one-man band,

the OKND had around six hundred members and, after its founding congress in August 1991, most of the accoutrements of a normal political party. In essence, the OKND was a radical nationalist party, which, although strictly nonviolent, preferred a more direct approach to the cautious tactics of the NDKT. Its guiding principle was “the return of [all] the Crimean Tatar people to their historic homeland and the restoration [*vosstanovlenie*] of their national statehood.” The party’s blueprint for a future Crimean state promised to “guarantee the observance of the rights and freedoms of all individuals, regardless of their race, nationality, political opinions, and religion,” but at the same time argued that “without ensuring the freedom and rights of the nation it is impossible to ensure the freedom and rights of the individual.” Therefore, although the OKND supported a secular and multiethnic state, it would be one in which “the unity and uninterrupted development of the national culture” and language of Crimean Tatars would be given priority. The OKND accepted that, “on the basis of an agreement with” Kyiv, the future Crimean state “would be a part of Ukraine,”¹³ but it also sought to develop links with Turkiye and other Black Sea states, and many of its members expressed support for the Chechen side in the war with Russia.¹⁴

The centerpiece of the OKND’s political strategy was the election of a Crimean Tatar assembly (Qurultay) in June 1991 (see below). Thereafter, the two worked in parallel, with the OKND continuing to operate as a political party and the Qurultay as the would-be sovereign assembly of the Crimean Tatar people. Seventeen of thirty-three members of the Mejlis (plenipotentiary committee) elected by the 1991 Qurultay belonged to the OKND,¹⁵ and the first two leaders of the OKND, Mustafa Jemiloglu (1989–91) and Refat Chubarov (1991–93), were elected head and deputy head of the Mejlis in 1991 (the leader of the OKND since 1993 has been Rejep Khairedinov). In fact, some OKND members went so far as to argue that it was no longer necessary to maintain the party as a separate organization after 1991 and that it should be dissolved into the Qurultay.¹⁶ However, a basic division of functions justified their continued separate existence. Whereas the Qurultay and Mejlis were deliberative bodies that were ultimately answerable to an electorate (see figs. 14.1 and 14.2), the OKND saw itself as a radical ginger group and the conscience of the Mejlis, acting as guardian of the key principles decided on in 1991. Nevertheless, after the departure of Chubarov as leader in 1993,



Figure 14.1. Nine of the thirty-three member Crimean Tatar Mejlis (beneath a portrait of Numan Chelebi Jihan, first president, Crimean National Government, 1917–18), during a July 1993 session of the Second Qurultay (*left to right*): Server Omerof, Julvern Ablamitov, President Mustafa Jemiloglu, Vice President Refat Chubarov, Refat Appazov, Remzi Ablaeu, Refat Kurtiyev, Server Kerimov, and Nadir Bekirov. Omerof, Appazov, and Kurtiyev did not serve in the next Mejlis, starting June 1996. Photo courtesy of Vice President Chubarov, and Abdurrahim Demirayak.

the party lost much of its original dynamism and ability to shape the political agenda.

The Qurultay

The defining moment in modern Crimean Tatar politics came in June 1991, when the Second Qurultay, or national assembly of the Crimean Tatar people, convened in the Crimean capital of Aqmesjit (Simferopol') (the assembly was called the *Second* Qurultay in order to emphasize continuity with the body first established in December 1917). As stated above, the organization of the assembly was entirely the work of the OKND, which had begun laying plans as early as March 1990. The NDKT in contrast attacked



Figure 14.2. Five leading members of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis on stage in June 1996 during the Third Qurultay (*front, left to right*): Server Kerimov, Vice President Refat Chubarov, President Mustafa Jemiloglu, *Avdet* editor Lilia Budzhurova, and Lenur Arifov. Photo courtesy of Abdurrahim Demirayak.

“the formation of ‘proto-state’ forms such as the ‘Qurultay-Mejlis’” as a form of self-isolation from mainstream political life in the peninsula that could only help perpetuate the “1944 policy of Crimea without Crimean Tatars” and, in any case, considered such action as equivalent to “the inmates of a prison camp proclaiming ‘self-rule.’”¹⁷

The Qurultay claimed to represent almost all the 272,000 Crimean Tatars recorded by the 1989 Soviet census as resident in the Soviet Union, both in Crimea and in Russia and Central Asia (at the time, only 130,000 Tatars had returned to the peninsula).¹⁸ Although the organizers claimed that the true number of their compatriots was at least twice as high, it was decided to work with the official Soviet figure “in order to avoid future speculation from the authorities about the legitimacy of the Qurultay.”¹⁹ The 262 delegates therefore supposedly each represented one thousand Crimean Tatars, including those too young to vote, and were elected in two stages between October 1990 and May 1991. First, Crimean Tatars gathered in groups of thirty in open meetings throughout the Soviet Union to choose

“electors,”²⁰ who then traveled in blocks of thirty-three to thirty-four to regional conferences, where delegates to the Qurultay proper were elected by secret ballot. The largest number of delegates was elected in Crimea (127); nine were from elsewhere in Ukrayina, eighty-eight from Uzbekistan, twelve from other Central Asia republics, and sixteen from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Most were men (90 percent) of elderly middle age, veterans of the 1960s protest movement. A plurality were actually born in Central Asia (116).²¹

The organizers of the Qurultay claimed that a total of 86,360 Crimean Tatars voted in Crimea and that a similar number voted in Russia and Central Asia,²² although the author has no independent information with which to assess this claim. Nevertheless, the Qurultay was able to assert that the electoral process gave the assembly “the right to elect the sole legitimate representative body of the Crimean Tatar people,”²³ that is, the thirty-three-strong Mejlis, which would act on behalf of the Qurultay between sessions. Mustafa Jemiloglu was elected head and Refat Chubarov his deputy. By mid-1993, some three hundred “mini-Mejlises” had been set up at the local level in Crimea and some four hundred by 1996.²⁴

The Qurultay adopted a national flag, incorporating the family emblem of the Giray dynasty, rulers of Crimea before 1783, and a national hymn, *My Pledge* [*Ant etkenmen*] (see chap. 4), and passed the “Declaration of National Sovereignty of the Crimean Tatar People” (see the full translation in chap. 16), which soon acquired the status of a founding document and statement of fundamental principle. The Declaration was based on the absolutist theories of national self-determination favored by the OKND, its two key statements being the claims that “Crimea is the national territory of the Crimean Tatar people, on which they alone possess the right to self-determination,” and that “the political, economic, spiritual, and cultural rebirth of the Crimean Tatar people is possible only in their own sovereign national state.” Moreover, the Declaration asserted that all “the land and natural resources of Crimea, including its spa and recreational potential, is the basis of the national wealth of the Crimean Tatar people,” albeit subject to the qualification that it was also “a source of well-being for all the inhabitants of Crimea.” The Declaration concluded by raising the possibility that, “in the event of [any attempt] by state agencies or any other source to resist the aims proclaimed by the Qurultay and the present Declaration, the Qurultay will entrust the Mejlis with securing recognition

of the Crimean Tatars' status as a people engaged in a struggle for national liberation and act in accordance with this status"—a not particularly veiled threat to use direct action in support of their aims.²⁵

The general thrust of the Declaration was therefore uncompromising and the claim to national statehood unqualified, despite appearing in the general context of soothing promises that "relations between Crimean Tatars and national and ethnic groups living in Crimea must be organized on the basis of mutual respect and the recognition of human and civil rights" and the declaration by Tatars to their new neighbors that they had "no intention to inflict any harm or encroach on your property, spiritual, cultural, religious, political, and other rights. We will respect the national sentiments and human dignity of all people" in Crimea.²⁶ The Qurultay repeatedly referred to Crimea as "the [sole] historical homeland [*rodina*]" of the Crimean Tatar people, to which they were tied by history and the rights of an indigenous (*korennoe*) people. Clearly, however, an absolute claim to sovereignty based on principles of original settlement and the claim to be the sole indigenous people on the peninsula would be difficult to implement in a situation where Crimean Tatars still made up only 5–6 percent of the local population.

The Mejlis's Constitutional Project

However, from the very beginning, there was an inherent tension between the absolutist doctrine of national self-determination that inspired the Declaration of Sovereignty and the practical demands of everyday politics. Although the OKND repeatedly insisted that the policies of the Mejlis should be kept "as close as possible to the principles of the declaration of sovereignty,"²⁷ the latter's leaders were in practice prepared to be flexible and act in a spirit of consociational compromise (Jemiloglu stayed closer to the OKND, while Refat Chubarov was more of a pragmatist). The contrast was reflected in a second key text, the draft constitution of the Crimean Republic drawn up by the Mejlis in December 1991.

In contrast to the declaration, the draft constitution used a carefully worded formula to define sovereign power in a future Crimean state as resting with "the people of Crimea—Crimean Tatars, Qrymchaq and Qaraïm, who make up the indigenous population of the republic, and citizens of other nationalities, for whom by virtue of historical circumstances Crimea

has become their homeland” (the last phrase was significant for avoiding any reference to “occupation” or to the “settler population”). In order to balance the interests of the two groups, it was proposed to introduce a system of “dual power.” At a local level, representation would work through two parallel networks: local councils for the general population and in “areas of compact settlement of the indigenous population corresponding [mini-]Mejlises.” As the councils and Mejlises would overlap territorially (only in isolated areas were Tatars a majority community; otherwise, they tended to settle on the outskirts of the main urban areas), an Austro-Marxist system of national-personal autonomy seemed to be envisaged, whereby a local Mejlis would cater for all the “social, economic, cultural, national, and ecological” needs of Tatars within its jurisdiction (and presumably also for the Qrymchaq and Qaraïm)—education in particular—and the councils would serve the general population in a similar fashion.²⁸

The Mejlis proposed that this parallel or consociational system would also operate at a national level. The Crimean parliament would have two chambers of equal powers elected simultaneously (changes to the constitution would have to be by referendum or by “a two-thirds majority in both houses”). A Council of People’s Representatives of one hundred deputies would be elected by the general Crimean electorate from territorial constituencies, and a Mejlis of fifty would be elected by the Qurultay to serve as the upper house.²⁹ A Crimean president would also be introduced, but in order to be elected he or she would need the support of “more than half the electors taking part in the voting, including more than half the voters representing the indigenous population of the republic” (or “more than one-third” in any second round).³⁰ In effect, therefore, Crimean Tatars would have a veto over who was elected. Moreover, “in order to better express the will of the indigenous population,” the power of the president would be balanced by a vice-president elected by the Qurultay (there was no indication of any division of functions between the two posts).³¹

Taken together, these measures amounted to an essentially pragmatic power-sharing agenda, although, when combined with the absolutist principles laid out in the Declaration of Sovereignty, they tended to lead the Mejlis to demand veto powers in any future constitutional arrangement that it would be difficult for the majority population to accept. None of the proposed changes was implemented. Nevertheless, they provided a useful guide to the kind of ideal type of system that Crimean Tatars wanted to see

develop, against which future changes could be judged (it is important to bear in mind that the constitutional arrangements worked out in 1994 fell considerably short of the Tatars' original demands—see below).

The Wrong Republic: Independent Ukrayina and Autonomous Crimea, 1991–93

The 1991 Referendum

By the time the Qurultay assembled in June 1991, however, Tatars had been beaten to the punch with their plans for a future Crimean republic. The accelerating pace of Crimean Tatar return and the growing influence of the Ukrayinan nationalist movement in Kyiv prompted the Crimean leadership to rush forward with their own plans to hold a referendum on the peninsula's status. Rather than create an ethnic Tatar republic, however, the Communist-dominated Crimean leadership proposed to restore the interwar Crimean ASSR.

As noted above, ironically, many Crimean Tatars looked back on the period of the original Crimean ASSR as an era of relative freedom and Tatar preeminence, but only the *NDKT* could now overlook the preference of the Crimean Communist Party for the very same constitutional model. In historical fact, the Crimean ASSR was not an ethnic republic as such. As in other Soviet republics, a "nativization" policy was adopted in the 1920s, but the Crimean ASSR was always a "Crimean," rather than a "Crimean Tatar," republic. Under the leadership of Veli Ibrahimov from 1923–28, a positive discrimination policy built up Tatar representation to a position of rough equality with local Russians,³² but no further (Crimean Tatars made up only 25.1 percent of the local population in 1926 and 19.4 percent in 1939, Russians accounted for 49.6 percent of the population in 1939, and Ukrayinans 13.7 percent).³³ Moreover, nativization policies were often merely declarative. Slavs continued to predominate in the main urban centers, and Crimean Tatars lost ground substantially in the 1930s. Nevertheless, Tatars would demand the return of a similar quota system in the mid-1990s (see below).³⁴

Without the element of positive discrimination, the restoration of a Crimean rather than a Crimean Tatar ASSR in the circumstances of early

1991 would clearly not favor Tatars. At the time, only 100,000 had returned to the peninsula; Tatars therefore made up only 4 percent of the total local population (see table 14.1).³⁵ Only one Tatar (Iksander Memetov, a local businessman close to the centrist establishment party ПЕВК)³⁶ had been elected to the Crimean council in the 1990 elections, only sixty Tatars were to be found among the twelve thousand employees of the Crimean interior ministry, and none at all were in the local security services.³⁷ The ОКНД therefore urged a boycott of the poll organized by the Crimean authorities in January 1991, which asked the question, “Are you in favor of the re-creation of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as a subject of the Soviet Union and a party to [Gorbachev’s proposed] Union Treaty?”³⁸ Nevertheless, turnout across Crimea was an impressive 81 percent, of which 93 percent voted in favor.³⁹ When the decision was swiftly endorsed by the Ukrayinan Supreme Council, Tatars found themselves having to deal with a distinctly unfriendly regime in Crimea as well as with the Soviet and Ukrayinan authorities.

Geopolitics: Russia, Ukrayina, or Turkiye?

The problem was thrown into unexpectedly sharp focus by the sudden disappearance of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Ukrayina as an independent state with legal sovereignty over Crimea. At first glance, Tatars had little cause for celebration. Unlike either the Soviet Union or the Russian Federation, Ukrayina was not a federal state and therefore arguably offered fewer possibilities for accommodating Tatar demands. Moreover, although the Ukrayinan nationalist movement had been a keen supporter of the Crimean Tatar cause before 1991,⁴⁰ the national Communists who dominated the leadership of the new Ukrayinan state had shown no interest whatsoever in the Tatars’ plight. Their instant ratification of the January 1991 poll demonstrated that their primary concern was containing the growth of the Russian separatist movement on the peninsula. Kyiv therefore continued to allow the Crimean authorities a virtual free hand in relations with Crimean Tatars.

Nevertheless, Crimean Tatars were compelled to make a choice of sorts. As Refat Chubarov later argued, “any idea of an independent Crimea in whatever form, whether as a Crimean Tatar state . . . or [simply] independent, is absurd. . . . Given the strength of geopolitical constraints in the

region, Crimea must be in the orbit of one of the great states of the area—whether that is Ukrayina, Russia, or Turkiye.”⁴¹ In practice, after 1991 the choice narrowed to one—Ukrayina.

Siding with Russia would have meant an inconceivable alliance with the local separatist movement. Moreover, it was extremely unlikely that nationalists in the Russian Duma would allow the Russian government to antagonize the Russophile movement in Crimea by doing anything more than express general sympathy for the Tatars’ predicament.⁴² Finally, most Tatars still regarded Russia *de facto* as the party responsible for the 1944 deportation.

A pan-Turkic orientation was simply not practical geopolitics and would have played into the hands of the local Russophile propaganda machine and its focus on the chimerical “Islamic threat.” Nevertheless, most leaders of the Qurultay continued to view Turkiye as a natural ally.⁴³ Negotiations with Turkish president Suleyman Demirel in May 1994 and May 1996 produced promises of assistance in building a thousand homes in Crimea, along with the necessary “sociocultural infrastructure.” The leaders of the Qurultay were also keen to develop links with the estimated two to five million Turkish citizens of Crimean Tatar descent (see chap. 15), who were able to provide substantial practical assistance, if not a strong lobbying presence in Ankara.⁴⁴ Tatars also demonstrated a certain sympathy for the Chechen cause after the war with Russia began in December 1994, although reports that they had sent anything more than humanitarian aid remained unsubstantiated.⁴⁵

Acceptance of Crimea’s status within an independent Ukrayina was therefore the only feasible short-term option. In November 1991, on the eve of the crucial referendum on Ukrayinan independence, a special session of delegates to the Qurultay declared its “support for Ukrayina’s efforts to become an independent democratic state” and recommended that all Crimean Tatars vote yes in recognition of the fact that “Ukrayina and Crimea have been and will continue to be historical neighbors [*sic*].” Tatars were also urged “to vote for a candidate from the democratic block [i.e., one of the three nationalist candidates who unsuccessfully opposed Leonid Kravchuk] in the simultaneous presidential election.”⁴⁶

Only a bare majority of Crimean voters voted yes in the referendum, 54.2 percent of a turnout of 67.5 percent, compared to 90.3 percent of a turnout of 84.2 percent in Ukrayina as a whole (Crimea was the only region in

Ukrayina that came anywhere near to voting no). In a calculated appeal to the authorities in Kyiv, the Mejlis therefore claimed that “it was only the vote of Crimean Tatars . . . that produced a majority in Crimea for the supporters of Ukrayinan independence.”⁴⁷ The Mejlis’s argument was plausible. Around 140,000 Crimean Tatars had returned to the peninsula by late 1991 (although not all were registered voters), and they could just have tipped the balance between the 561,500 Crimeans who backed Ukrayinan independence and the 437,500 who were against.⁴⁸

The Qurultay therefore hoped that Ukrayinan independence would usher in a new era in relations with Kyiv. Their preferred model for future relations was set out in an appeal submitted to the Ukrayinan parliament and the new president, Kravchuk, that envisaged a rolling six-stage program leading up to the year 2000:

–*Stage 1:* First was “the study of the history of the [Crimean Tatar] problem in its legal, political, historical, ethnographic, and culturological aspects” and meetings and initial negotiations with “representative bodies of the Crimean Tatar people,” in other words, the Mejlis.

–*Stage 2:* The Ukrayinan parliament was “to pass an act granting de jure recognition of the Mejlis as the sole higher plenipotentiary representative body of the Crimean Tatar people.”

–*Stage 3:* A program of “technical-economic” development for Crimea would be begun.

–*Stage 4:* The Ukrayinan parliament was to pass a law “on the restoration [*vosstanovlenie*] of the rights of the Crimean Tatar people (nation) in Ukrayina,” along with corresponding amendments to the Ukrayinan constitution; a bicameral Crimean council would be introduced with the Mejlis “as the basis for the upper house” (decisions would be taken “by the agreement of both houses”); “the jurisdiction of Ukrayina over Crimea in international law” would be confirmed simultaneously with “the restoration of the statehood of the Crimean Tatar people in the form of national-territorial autonomy on the territory of Crimea as a part of Ukrayina” (it was unclear whether such statehood had to be recognized in some institutional form).

–*Stage 5:* Then came “the reorganization of state power in Crimea,” along with the “reform of the system of local government in the Republic of Crimea.”

–*Stage 6:* Finally would come “the realization of a socioeconomic and cultural program” over three to five years; “a program of organized repatriation” of those Crimean Tatars remaining in Central Asia and elsewhere; the “social defense [of

Tatars] during the period of transition to a market economy and a guarantee of [their] privatization rights"; and "the creation of the necessary national-cultural infrastructure" for Crimean Tatars (schools in particular). The Crimean Tatars would then enjoy the same rights as "existing Ukrainian citizens."⁴⁹

However, at this stage, the Qurultay was to be disappointed.⁵⁰ Its overtures to Kyiv were rebuffed, with President Kravchuk in particular remaining lukewarm (as with the Mejlis's model constitution, however, the program nevertheless provides a useful outline of how Tatars would ideally like the future to develop, and most of its key elements have been raised in subsequent negotiations with Kyiv). Only once, in the aftermath of Crimea's temporary declaration of independence in May 1992, did Kyiv contemplate establishing links with the Mejlis, but the feelers tentatively put out were withdrawn as soon as the crisis subsided.⁵¹ Kravchuk's priority was to provide more or less uncritical support for the relatively moderate chairman of the Crimean council, Mykola Bagrov, in order to bolster his position against the separatist opposition (Yurii Meshkov's Republican Movement of Crimea).⁵² Therefore, if only for tactical reasons, Kyiv was prepared to support the line of the Crimean authorities that the claim by the Qurultay/Mejlis to "parallel sovereignty" in Crimea ruled it out as an acceptable negotiating partner.⁵³ It was only the crisis provoked by Meshkov's decisive victory over Bagrov in the January 1994 presidential election in Crimea that finally forced Kyiv to change its mind (see below).

There were also several practical problems between the Mejlis and Kyiv. In 1992, the Mejlis encouraged all Crimean Tatars to apply for citizenship in the new Ukrainian state.⁵⁴ However, although the Ukrainian citizenship law of November 1991 took the apparently generous step of automatically granting citizenship to all those then resident on Ukrainian territory (in contrast to Latvia and Estonia, there was no attempt to exclude Russian immigrants), the law was not so generous to Crimean Tatars, only around 140,000 of whom had returned by August 1991 (see table 14.1). According to the 1991 law, those who arrived later than 1 November 1991 had to wait five years before becoming eligible for citizenship. Tatar leaders therefore appealed to the Ukrainian authorities to bypass this process, but procedures remained slow and cumbersome, and, in late 1995, some seventy thousand later arrivals still lacked Ukrainian citizenship. Under Ukrainian law, they were therefore denied the right to vote and access to most welfare benefits and had no right to participate in the privatization program.⁵⁵

Two other sore points were military service and the mechanics of Tatar resettlement. The first was partially settled after the Mejlis declared in January 1992 that Crimean Tatars should refuse to take the oath of loyalty in the new Ukrainian army, when most Tatars were offered the right to confine their period of service to Crimea.⁵⁶ Resettlement, on the other hand, was a more intractable issue. As the Crimean authorities were extremely reluctant to allow Tatars to make claims on the property they had lost in 1944, they were compelled to build elsewhere (70 percent of Tatars lived in new rural settlements). Moreover, Tatars were largely prevented from settling in the southern coastal region. However, although Kyiv provided the only significant sums to aid new building and the provision of utilities and services (see below), the Mejlis was aggrieved that the money passed to the Crimean authorities. Tatar settlements were frequently attacked by local thugs, while the authorities turned a blind eye.⁵⁷

Therefore, although circumstances forced the leadership of the Mejlis to remain loyal to Ukraine, many radicals, particularly in the OKND, grew increasingly frustrated with Kyiv's position. According to Ilmy Umerov, head of the Bakhchesaray Mejlis, speaking at the 1993 Qurultay, for example, "in voting for the independence of Ukraine on 1 December [1991], we voted for the rebirth of the Ukrainian people in their own homeland. But it seems we voted for new oppressors, for a new tyranny over the Crimean Tatar people. . . . Ukraine today is in both form and content in practice a colonial state."⁵⁸ Tatar radicals who sought to establish a separate radical party in 1993 (named after the main Crimean Tatar party in 1918–20, the Milli Firqa—see below) declared that "the attitude of Milli Firqa toward the Ukrainian state depends on the attitude of the Ukrainian state toward the problem of restoring Crimean Tatar rights. As long as [Ukraine] fails to recognize and create the conditions for the free self-determination of the Crimean Tatar nation, Milli Firqa will consider it to be a foreign colonial state."⁵⁹ The Mejlis was able to prevent too many Tatars from breaking ranks, but the strain was increasingly evident so long as Kyiv continued to reject the Mejlis's overtures.

Local Politics: No Welcome Home

Strains within the Tatar movement were also produced by the extremely tense relations between the Qurultay/Mejlis and the local Crimean au-

thorities throughout the period 1991–93. The possibility of Crimea's taking forcible measures against Tatars first arose during the July 1991 Qurultay. Under its last leader, Leonid Grach, the local Communist Party circulated instructions on means of counteracting its influence and spreading dissension within its ranks, and the Crimean council passed a resolution condemning the "illegality" and "nationalist character" of the Qurultay. The council also declared that "the proclamation of Crimea as the national territory of the Crimean Tatar people, with the symbols and attributes of statehood, together with exclusive property rights over land and natural resources, and also the attempt to create parallel structures of power and illegal administration, is in contradiction to the constitution of the Ukrainian SSR and Soviet and [all] existing law." Therefore, the Qurultay "could not represent the Crimean Tatar people in relations with state agencies."⁶⁰ During the attempted coup in Moscow in August 1991, the Crimean authorities briefly contemplated following up the decree with measures to suppress all the "structures formed by the Qurultay."⁶¹

Nor did relations improve much after the ban on the Communist Party in August 1991. Mykola Bagrov's tentative attempts at a rapprochement with the Tatars were blocked by a strong opposition movement consisting of a revived Communist Party of Crimea (КРК) and Yurii Meshkov's republican movement (later the Republican Party of Crimea).⁶² In October 1992, during a series of violent demonstrations outside the Crimean council, the Crimean authorities instructed the militia "to take measures to put a stop to the anticonstitutional activity of the Mejlis and OKND and also [to seek] legal compensation for any material losses" caused by Tatar demonstrators⁶³ and contemplated an outright ban on the two bodies and a roundup of Tatar leaders. It seems that they were dissuaded by Kravchuk, but at the price of Kyiv's continuing to keep the Mejlis at arm's length.

The Growth of Crimean Tatar Radicalism

Growing frustration with the authorities in both Kyiv and Aqmesjit (Simferopol') therefore tended to fuel the growth of a new radical fringe movement among Crimean Tatars. Although the leaders of the Mejlis have had considerable success in upholding their traditions of nonviolent protest, Crimean Tatars have periodically resorted to direct action in defense of their rights, usually, it must be said, in response to threats from other

quarters. In October 1992, a public demonstration spilled over into an attempt to sack the Crimean council; railway lines were blocked in October 1993 in protests over the proposed election law (see below); and large-scale confrontations with militia erupted in June 1995 after Tatar traders organized rallies to denounce alleged collusion between local authorities and racketeers. Moreover, claims that Crimean Tatar radicals have considered establishing (or have already established) *Asker* (soldier) self-defense units have periodically appeared in the press.⁶⁴ Although Refat Chubarov carefully denied that the Qurultay/Mejlis had anything to do with such plans,⁶⁵ fears grew through 1993–96 that radical activists might be taking the task on themselves.

Radicals within the Qurultay and the OKND have several times considered establishing a separate party. A draft program for a revived Milli Firqa (National Party) appeared in September 1993 under the sponsorship of Ilmy Umerov, which, using language rather more colorful than that of the Mejlis, described the primary tasks of the would-be party as “defending Crimean Tatars from the threat of annihilation, coercion, and assimilation and liquidating the colonial oppression of [all] foreign states against Crimea and Crimean Tatars.” Nevertheless, its broad political aim, “the full, all-around development of national self-rule as a step toward the establishment of a sovereign national state,” was no different from that of the Qurultay, as defined by the 1991 Declaration of Sovereignty. However, Milli Firqa differed markedly in its attitude toward Ukrayina (see above) and clearly envisaged a future Crimean republic as a more narrowly ethnic state. The draft program declared that “the only state language [in Crimea] will be Crimean Tatar” and promised that “preferential citizenship rights will belong to those who lived in Crimea before 1944 and their descendants.”⁶⁶

However, on all occasions to date, the Mejlis has proved able to maintain formal unity within the Crimean Tatar movement (the NDKT excepted), a considerable achievement in itself, especially in comparison to the fissiparous tendencies common to party politics in most post-Communist states. The would-be Milli Firqa failed to make the break in 1993–95 and faded away after Umerov accepted the number 4 position on the Qurultay list for the Crimean elections (see below) and was duly elected. An organizing committee for an *Adalet* (Justice) “Crimean Tatar nationalist party” appeared in 1995 under Mejlis member Server Kerimov, as did a shadowy

Islamic Party of Crimea, but once again both preferred to operate as informal groups within the Mejlis.⁶⁷

The 1994 Elections: Quota and Participation Controversy

Election Quotas

The Crimean authorities dismissed out of hand all the constitutional suggestions put forth by the Mejlis in 1991. The only possible form of consociational arrangement they were prepared to discuss was deliberate overrepresentation for Tatars in the elections to the Crimean council due to be held in 1994, although not on the scale of the (ultimately unsuccessful) Abkhazian or Crimean ASSR model envisaged by some in the Qurultay.⁶⁸

As the slowdown in the pace of the Crimean Tatar return seemed likely to cap their numbers at around 10 percent of the local population (see tables 1.1 and 14.1), it was unlikely that Tatars would be able to win any individual constituency if the traditional majoritarian voting system were maintained. Even a proportional system would entitle Tatars to only nine or ten seats in the proposed ninety-eight-seat council (the Mejlis had summarily dismissed an offer of seven seats back in March 1991).⁶⁹ Moreover, many Tatars had fundamental doubts about participating in Crimean elections at all, as it would leave them far short of the aims laid out in the Declaration of Sovereignty and in the eyes of many would simply serve to legitimate an “occupying regime.”

In March 1993, Bagrov offered the Qurultay fourteen seats out of ninety-eight, overruling strong opposition from Meshkov’s republican movement and the КРК (their alternative project sought to swamp the Tatar vote by electing all Crimean deputies from one large all-Crimean multimandate constituency on a party list system).⁷⁰ Tatars were initially unsure how to respond. The ОКНД argued that the offer should be rejected outright because it failed “to stipulate the right of the Crimean Tatar people to a veto” in the council.⁷¹ The second session of the Second Qurultay in July 1993 demanded one-third of the seats,⁷² later refining this to a formula of twenty-two of eighty, along with six further seats for the other deported and/or indigenous peoples (Greeks, Germans, Armenians, Bulgarians, Qrymchaq, and Qaraïm).⁷³

However, when the issue was put to a vote in the Crimean council in September 1993, only forty-six deputies (out of just under two hundred) were prepared to support even Bagrov's plan. The majority backed an alternative proposal to revert to the majority system throughout Crimea.⁷⁴ The decision sparked the largest Tatar protests since their return. Mass demonstrations were organized, railway lines blocked, and a permanent picket of the council threatened. The Crimean council duly backed down a month later and reverted to the fourteen plus four formula (fourteen for Tatars and four for the other deported peoples—the tiny Qrymchaq and Qaraım populations were deemed too small to warrant separate representation). The general Crimean electorate would also elect fourteen seats from a parallel party list, and the remaining sixty-six seats were to be territorial constituencies in which anyone could stand. However, the arrangement was for one election only, and Crimean Tatars received no guarantee of permanent representation.

The proposal was discussed at a special session of the Qurultay in November 1993.⁷⁵ The OKND again wanted to reject the offer, acceptance of which would “legitimize the Crimean parliament” and “deprive the Mejlis of its status as the sole representative organ” of the Crimean Tatar people. The quota would neither “allow effective defense of Crimean Tatar interests nor guarantee their participation in state [i.e., Crimean] administration.”⁷⁶ The events of September and October supposedly showed that only direct action produced results, and Rejep Khairedinov, leader of the OKND, called on the Mejlis to form a Crimean Tatar national government that could act as an alternative center of power.⁷⁷ Mustafa Jemiloglu, the leader of the Mejlis, remained lukewarm about the quota proposal and decided not to stand in the elections, possibly because his main concern was to prevent a radical faction from splitting away from the Tatar movement, while Refat Chubarov led the pragmatic argument in favor. (Vasvi Abduraimov for the NDKT was arguing outside the Qurultay that “not to take part in the elections would mean voluntary capitulation before the 1944 strategy of ‘Crimea without Crimean Tatars’”).⁷⁸

Delegates to the Qurultay voted 167 to 16 in favor of participation⁷⁹ but attempted to keep any future Tatar faction under their control by insisting that all candidates promise to “implement strictly and unswervingly the Declaration of National Sovereignty of the Crimean Tatar people, the election platform, and other decisions of the Qurultay and Mejlis.” Depu-

ties would be subject to recall if they refused to do so.⁸⁰ The OKND fell into line at its fourth congress in January 1994.⁸¹

The Election Results

Four different sets of elections were held in Crimea in 1994, followed by local elections in 1995.⁸² In some, Crimean Tatars were able to make a considerable impact; in others, their relative impotence was cruelly exposed, especially in elections where the quota system did not operate. Although the elections provided the Qurultay/Mejlis with a foothold in the local council and helped persuade Kyiv to provide Crimean Tatars with greater political and economic assistance, they also demonstrated the difficulties of exercising real political influence on the peninsula with only slightly over 10 percent of the local population.

The Crimean Presidential Election

Although the quota issue had been rumbling for some time, Tatars were suddenly confronted with an extra issue when Crimean presidential elections were scheduled for January 1994. Whereas the argument about the elections to the Crimean council was finely poised, Tatars were understandably fundamentally hostile to the very idea of a Crimean presidency. It was not a post any of their leaders could aspire to (in addition to the Tatars' minority position, only those who had been resident in Crimea for ten years were to be allowed to stand), it contradicted the positions laid out in the Mejlis's 1991 draft constitution, and, in the words of a resolution passed by the November 1993 session of the Qurultay, the "possible election of a candidate from one of the Crimean parties espousing a chauvinist ideology" could lead to a dangerous "attempt to reexamine existing state borders in the region."⁸³

The NDKT initially had no qualms about running its own candidate, Rustem Khalilov. Ironically, however, his campaign was stopped in its tracks by an electoral commission ruling that half the seven thousand signatures collected in his favor were invalid.⁸⁴ In January 1994, the NDKT therefore reversed its decision and called for a boycott.⁸⁵ Members of the Mejlis, by contrast, had always been inclined toward a boycott and on 2 January decided by eighteen votes to eight to recommend that Tatars stay at home. However, rising support for Yurii Meshkov, now head of the

separatist “Russia” bloc,⁸⁶ and the consequent threat “to stability in Crimea” led them to reverse the decision a week later by declaring that support for Mykola Bagrov, the relatively moderate chairman of the Crimean council and Kyiv’s preferred candidate, was the lesser of two evils, although Mustafa Jemiloglu indicated that he went along with the decision reluctantly.⁸⁷ However, the Mejlis insisted that “participation in the elections did not imply in any way the recognition by the Mejlis of the institution of a Crimean presidency” as such and was simply an attempt to block Meshkov’s path to power.⁸⁸

The leaders of the Mejlis claimed that some 119,000 Crimean Tatars voted in the first round and 116,000 in the second (out of a maximum Tatar voting strength of approximately 134,000),⁸⁹ with over 90 percent supposedly following their instructions to support Bagrov.⁹⁰ If this were indeed true, then Crimean Tatars provided almost half Bagrov’s first round vote of 245,042 (333,243 in the second round) and, as in December 1991, provided the cornerstone of the pro-Kyiv vote (the elections having demonstrated the relative passivity and deep-seated “Russification” of Crimea’s 626,000 Ukrainians). Limited indirect support for the Mejlis’s claim can be drawn from the official results, as Bagrov’s first-round vote rose well above his average of 16.9 percent in areas of concentrated Crimean Tatar settlement, such as Qarasuvbazar (Belogorsk) (26.1 percent) and Bakhchesaray (21.3 percent). Nevertheless, however impressive Crimean Tatar voting solidarity, it did little to affect the overall result. Bagrov trailed well behind Meshkov in both the first (16.9 to 38.5 percent) and second (23.4 to 72.9 percent) rounds.⁹¹ (For an explanation of Crimean regions and place names, see tables 1.1 and 14.1.) The Mejlis was unable to prevent the election of the most openly anti-Tatar candidate, placing into sharp focus the problem of returning to a homeland dominated by a distinctly unfriendly Slav majority.⁹²

The Elections to the Crimean Council

Crimean Tatars made a more successful impact on the March–April 1994 elections to the local Crimean council, although once again they could do little to affect the overall result.⁹³ The separate contest for the fourteen seats on the Crimean Tatar list not surprisingly resolved itself into a straight fight between the Qurultay and the *NDKT*.⁹⁴ The Qurultay’s election platform called for the recognition of “the Mejlis as the supreme plenipotentiary

representative organ of the Crimean Tatar people” and repeated the demand made in the 1991 Declaration of Sovereignty for “the restoration of Crimean Tatar national statehood” in Crimea (a full translation of the platform can be found in chapter 16). The Qurultay also demanded the recognition of Russia’s “primary responsibility for the genocide of Crimean Tatars” and its “financing of the process of return, rehabilitation, and compensation for damages brought on the Crimean Tatar people” and called on the Central Asian states “to participate” in the same process.⁹⁵

By contrast, the *NDKT* also called for the rebirth of Crimean Tatar statehood but stressed the importance of Tatars’ entering “the structures of [existing] state power” during the transition period and, unlike the skeptical Qurultay, argued that the quota system provided a sufficient constitutional basis for resolving most foreseeable problems.⁹⁶

The Qurultay/Mejlis again demonstrated the voting discipline of its supporters, winning 90,959 votes on the special Crimean Tatar list (89.3 percent of the total) against a mere 5,566 for the *NDKT* (5.5 percent). Support for the Qurultay was consistent throughout Crimea, its lowest level being 81 percent in Jankoy (Dzhankoi). The Qurultay therefore won all fourteen seats available, as the *NDKT* failed to win one-fourteenth of the vote. Chubarov headed the list. Turnout was 75.8 percent (101,808 of a total registered Crimean Tatar electorate of 134,834).⁹⁷

However, in the sixty-six single-member constituencies, Crimean Tatars were unable to elect a deputy. Local branches of the Mejlis put forward thirty-five candidates in thirty-two of the constituencies, ten of whom made it through to the second round. The Mejlis’s candidates won 78,860 votes in the first round and 54,538 in the second,⁹⁸ but none were elected, indicating how reliant Crimean Tatars were on the quota system.⁹⁹ Moreover, all ten were standing in rural constituencies, where 70 percent of Crimean Tatars lived. In the big cities such as Aqmesjit (Simferopol’) (1.4 percent) of Kezlev (Evpatoriia) (3.4 percent), Tatar candidates trailed badly or were not on the ballot at all (Alushta, Yalta, Kefe [Feodosiia], Kerch’).¹⁰⁰ The best results for the Mejlis appeared in Qarasuvbazar (Belogorsk), where two candidates, including Abdureshit Jepparov, one of the founders of the *OKND*, won 26 percent of the vote, Islam-Terek (Kirovskoe) *raion* (23.4 percent), and Bakhchesaray (18.2 percent).

Overall results of the elections were even more disappointing (see table 14.2 below). The Crimean Tatars’ potential allies in the local Ukrainian

Table 14.2 Original Results of the 1994 Elections to the Crimean Council

	Lists			Single Mandate	Total
	Tatar	Other	General		
Qurultay	14	—	—	—	14
“Russia” bloc	—	—	11	43 (+ 4)	54 (58)
КРК	—	—	2	—	2
РЕVK	—	1 (+ 2)	1	(4)	2 (8)
RusPK	—	—	—	1	1
Independents	—	1	—	10	11
Total	14	4	14	62/66 ^a	94/98

Source: Andrew Wilson, “The Elections in Crimea,” *RFE/RL Research Reports* 3, no. 25 (24 June 1994): 18, slightly revised in the light of subsequent information supplied by the Crimean council.

^aFour seats were not filled at the first attempt.

community failed to elect a single deputy,¹⁰¹ and the centrist parties who had proved sympathetic to the Qurultay in the past polled poorly, with only РЕVK securing any seats at all (two, plus six supporters). The four other minority seats were taken by sympathetic moderates, but the separatist and Tatarphobic “Russia” bloc established by Yuri Meshkov triumphed elsewhere. In the all-Crimean party list, the “Russia” bloc won 66.8 percent of the vote, trouncing both center parties such as РЕVK (7.1 percent) and the Union in Support of the Republic of Crimea (2.6 percent) and the Communist КРК (11.6 percent). The “Russia” bloc therefore won eleven seats, the КРК two, and РЕVK one. Moreover, the “Russia” block also swept the board in the single-member constituencies, although fourteen independents were also elected (four were close to РЕVK), along with one deputy from the hardline Russian Party of Crimea (RusPK). Overall, the “Russia” bloc won fifty-four of ninety-four seats (four seats remained empty until repeat elections in the summer), and a further four independents were close allies. Table 14.2 shows the results in detail.

The Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

In the elections to the Ukrainian parliament, also held in March and April, the contrast between the Crimean Tatars’ voting discipline and the

difficulty of making progress under the majoritarian electoral system was again sharply exposed. The Qurultay recommended that Tatars support a list of ten candidates in the second round of the elections (a mixture of Tatars, prominent Ukrainians including Serhii Lytvyn, head of the main Ukrainophile organization the Ukrainian Civic Congress of Crimea, and centrist moderates such as Tat'iana Orezhova of the Union in Support of the Republic of Crimea).¹⁰² None were successful; in fact none managed to win more than 38 percent of the vote (as the "Russia" bloc boycotted the poll, most seats were won by independents or by the КРК).¹⁰³ Of the three Crimean Tatars on the Qurultay list, Ava Azamatova won 15,625 votes (25.1 percent of the total) in Bakhchesaray, Abdulla Abdullaev 11,955 (23 percent) in Islam-Terek (Kirovskoe) *raion*, and Bekir Kurtosmanov 13,949 (25.5 percent) in Bakhchi-Eli (Leninsk) *raion*.¹⁰⁴ The Qurultay has therefore pressed the Ukrainian authorities to introduce a quota arrangement similar to that used for the Crimean council for the parliamentary elections due in 1998 (or perhaps to make special provision for the Qurultay on a party list system), but Kyiv has been reluctant to set a precedent for Ukraine's other national minorities.

The Ukrainian Presidential Election

In the summer 1994 election for the Ukrainian presidency, the leaders of the Mejlis felt honor bound to oppose the candidacy of Leonid Kuchma, as they accepted the caricature put forward by their Ukrainian nationalist allies that he was excessively pro-Russian. On the other hand, they could raise little enthusiasm for Kravchuk, who had done so little to advance their cause since 1991, despite his speech at the May 1994 commemoration of the 1944 deportation belatedly referring to their "right to self-government."¹⁰⁵ However, the vast majority of political forces in Crimea, including centrists, Communists, and even several leaders of the "Russia" bloc, stood firmly behind Kuchma. Only the tiny Ukrainian parties backed Kravchuk.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the Tatars could do little to prevent Kuchma from sweeping Crimea with an impressive 89.7 percent of the total vote in the second round (91.9 percent in Aqyar [Sevastopol]). Even in areas of concentrated Tatar settlement such as Qarasubazar (Belogorsk), support for Kuchma was still 81.3 percent (17.2 percent for Kravchuk). The low vote for Kravchuk in areas such as Bakhchesaray (6,092) and Aqmesjit (Simferopol') (11,756) suggested that many Tatars stayed at home.¹⁰⁷

After the Elections: An End to Isolation?

Crimea: Local Elections

Despite the seeming success of the 1994 quota agreement in drawing Crimean Tatars into public political life on the peninsula, the fragility of the arrangement was immediately demonstrated by the Crimean local elections in June 1995. In theory, the elections could have ushered in the kind of power-sharing arrangement proposed by the Qurultay back in 1991, but, under the rules drafted by the Crimean council, there was no provision either for special Crimean Tatar constituencies or quotas, let alone for separate Crimean Tatar councils, and participation was to be limited to those who had returned to Crimea before November 1991 (in other words, the Crimean authorities were seeking to take advantage of the Ukrainian citizenship law to minimize the Tatar vote). Tatars protested to the Ukrainian parliament, but the Crimean council ignored its instructions to make special provision for all the “deported peoples.”¹⁰⁸

The Mejlis therefore called on Crimean Tatars to boycott the poll.¹⁰⁹ Turnout was low (53 percent), but this probably reflected general voter apathy as much as the Mejlis’s instructions. Moreover, the main winners from the partial results were the Communist КРК, no friend of the Qurultay.¹¹⁰ Local structures of power in Crimea (and it was local councils that were responsible for practical measures such as providing water and electricity to new Tatar settlements) were therefore no better disposed toward Tatars than before.

The insecurity of the Crimean Tatars’ position was further demonstrated when the new Crimean constitution adopted by the Crimean council in November 1995 failed even to mention the quota system, despite a prolonged hunger strike by several Tatar deputies in protest.¹¹¹ The perceived indifference of the Kyiv authorities, despite the advice of Max van der Stoep, the OSCE commissioner for national minorities, that the quota system be retained,¹¹² added to rising Tatar disillusionment, and the debate began to polarize once again between local Russophile parties, which wished to withdraw all special provision for Tatars, and Tatar radicals, who returned to demanding 33 percent of seats at all levels.

Crimea: Political Realignment

Furthermore, although in the immediate aftermath of the 1994 elections the Qurultay could take some pride in its rout of the НКРТ, with only

Table 14.3 Development of Factions in the Crimean Council, 1994–95

	Spring 1994	Summer 1994	Winter 1994/95	Summer 1995
Russia	54	44	22	22
Republic	—	11	10	10
Russia/unity	—	—	18	14
Crimea	—	—	10	10
Agrarians/КРК	—	10	11	5
Agrarians/Crimea	—	—	—	6
Reform/РЕВК	2	9	10	10
Qurultay	14	14	14	14

Sources: List of deputies supplied by Crimean council in August 1994; UNIAN, 24 September 1994; UNIAN, 19 October 1994; *Krymskie izvestiia*, 7 March 1995.

Note: Numbers do not always add up to ninety-eight owing to frequent changes of allegiance and the variable number of independents.

fourteen deputies of ninety-four in the Crimean council the Tatar faction seemed to be in the powerless position radicals had predicted it would be back in 1993. The leaders of the victorious “Russia” bloc, Yurii Meshkov and Sergei Tsekov (the chairman of the council), maintained their anti-Tatar rhetoric and used the fact that the Tatar faction took the name of a rival assembly rather than a political party to freeze the Qurultay out of all influence in local administration (they had not, after all, negotiated the quota agreement). The OKND, on the other hand, responded by demanding that Tatar deputies be granted a right of veto over legislation in areas of immediate concern or else withdraw from the council, while even the more moderate Mejlis predicted that the policies of “the parliamentary majority based on the ‘Russia’ bloc” could lead to “armed civil strife and international conflict.”¹¹³

However, the “Russia” bloc’s apparent dominance of Crimean politics did not last long, and factional infighting and the shifting balance of power between Kyiv, Moscow, and Aqmesjit (Simferopol’) soon began to break the political logjam, to the Tatars’ advantage. Moreover, the failure of the “Russia” bloc to win the expected support from Moscow or take practical measures to improve the Crimean economy allowed centrist parties more friendly to Tatars to regroup and make a partial comeback.

Table 14.3 shows how the council was soon plagued by divisions between “Muscovites” and locals, between rural and city deputies, and between

economic reformers and conservatives.¹¹⁴ Rural independents formed an agrarian faction in mid-1994, along with a handful of deputies from the КРК, which in turn split in March 1995—the more moderate agrarian faction tending to vote with the Qurultay. A second moderate faction was a reform group, formed by РЕВК with the help of the Armenian, Bulgarian, and Greek deputies. In September–October 1994, a Ruritanian factional and personal struggle between Meshkov and the Crimean council split the “Russia” bloc in three: “Russia” itself, the “Russia-unity” faction initially made up of the rapidly diminishing band of Meshkov’s supporters, and the “Crimea” group led by local businessman Aleksandr Korotko, previously close to РЕВК. The conflict was essentially clannish, but the “Crimea” group represented relative moderates who were prepared to compromise with the new Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma, especially after he launched Ukraine’s first serious program of economic reform in October. As a signal of their newfound willingness to build bridges with Kyiv, Kuchma’s ally and son-in-law Anatolii Franchuk was appointed as Crimean prime minister (although he was temporarily deposed in the spring).

The breakup of the “Russia” bloc and the growing desire among more moderate local politicians to reach an accommodation with Kyiv helped shift the center of political gravity toward the Qurultay. In October 1994, Ilmy Umerov became the first member of the Qurultay to be appointed to a major government post, deputy prime minister responsible for health, social security, and ethnic affairs.¹¹⁵ The following February, a reshuffle of the powerful presidium of the Crimean council gave the Qurultay two of fourteen seats, including Refat Chubarov as head of the committee for nationalities policy and deported nations.¹¹⁶ However, the decisive change in the political climate came in March, when the Ukrainian parliament took advantage of the Crimean *guerre des chefs* and Russia’s preoccupation with the Chechen war to abolish both the 1992 Crimean constitution and the post of Crimean president. Two weeks later, Leonid Kuchma imposed direct presidential control over the Crimean government.¹¹⁷ The “Russia” bloc was unable to organize an effective response, and a Crimean “loyal opposition” began to coalesce around the Qurultay and the various centrist groups. By early April, it could count on thirty-five deputies, who issued an appeal to Kuchma in support of his moves to bring the republic’s Russophile leaders to heel; by late April, their numbers had risen to forty-two.¹¹⁸

A potential alternative governing majority was now in place. Significantly, despite strong pressure from nationalists in Kyiv to crack down harder on Crimea, Kuchma deliberately chose not to abolish the Crimean council and refrained from altering Crimea's formal position within the Ukrainian constitution, indicating that Kyiv's problem was with Crimea's then leaders rather than with Crimea itself. Kuchma also held out the prospect that he would rescind his earlier decrees if Franchuk were to be formally reinstated as Crimean prime minister. The Crimeans duly obliged, and, in July, Tsekov was deposed and replaced by Yevhen Supruniuk, one of the leaders of the relatively pragmatic agrarian faction (by fifty-eight votes to thirty-one). Refat Chubarov's pivotal role as leader of the Qurultay faction was reflected in his election as one of Supruniuk's three vice-chairmen.

Although short-term political alignments would no doubt prove ephemeral, the political maneuvering suggested that Tatars could build pragmatic alliances with centrist Crimean politicians, to the extent of assembling a fragile governing majority, albeit one that probably lacked long-term coherence.¹¹⁹ The possibility of open conflict between Tatar radicals and hard-line Russian nationalists that seemed to be looming in early 1994 had faded away, if only temporarily. Second, the change of local regime granted the Tatars their first real influence on the governance of the peninsula. Third, it showed that Tatars could work productively with Kyiv and, by helping oust Kyiv's opponents from power, demonstrated to the Ukrainian authorities the political benefits of working with the Qurultay/Mejlis. As Mustafa Jemiloglu commented in 1993, "We appear to be better representatives of the Ukrainian state [in Crimea] than the Ukrainians themselves."¹²⁰ The crisis therefore encouraged the Tatars' hesitant orientation toward Kyiv, to the extent that they could even be accused of being "too pro-Ukrainian" and "too anti-Russian."¹²¹

The Tatars and Kyiv: A Growing Coincidence of Interests?

Kyiv, for its part, had first shown signs of changing its attitude toward Crimean Tatars in 1993–94. A ministry for nationalities and migration was established in April 1993, and it lobbied energetically on the Tatars' behalf, especially after the academic Volodymyr Yevtukh was appointed minister in 1995.¹²² A draft law "On the Restoration of the Rights of the Deported"

was prepared by the ministry, although it made slow progress in the Ukrainian parliament in the face of opposition from Russophiles and conservatives.¹²³ The fiftieth anniversary of the 1944 deportation in May 1994 was marked with respect, if not mutual understanding, and by an academic conference in Kyiv that did much to publicize the Tatars' cause.¹²⁴

However, the real change in Kyiv came after the 1994 Crimean elections. The Ukrainian authorities had expected their candidate Bagrov to win the presidential poll but were now forced to realize that their proxy forces on the peninsula were no match for the local Russophiles. As briefly in May 1992, Kyiv now began to consider using the Qurultay as an alternative bulwark against the local separatists. In December 1994, Kyiv sent its first real high-level delegation concerned with the Tatar situation to Crimea under deputy prime minister Ivan Kuras.¹²⁵ The visit resulted in a promised increase in budgetary aid for deported peoples (80 percent of which was to go to assist Crimean Tatars) from 1.048 trillion karbovantsi in 1994 to 3.753 trillion karbovantsi in 1995,¹²⁶ although the eventual amount proved to be nearer 2 trillion karbovantsi (\$11 million). The 1996 budget allocated 2.8 trillion.¹²⁷ According to Viktor Yakovlev, head of the deported peoples' department in the minorities ministry, the equivalent amount allocated by the Crimean authorities for 1995 was only 40 billion karbovantsi.¹²⁸ Moreover, Ukraine's relative generosity was in sharp contrast to other, arguably more culpable, states. Despite two agreements signed between Ukraine and Uzbekistan in October 1992 and November 1994, the lack of real money from either Central Asia or Russia to aid resettlement was a constant source of Crimean Tatar complaint.¹²⁹ Moreover, cash-strapped Ukrainian politicians such as Yurii Karmazyn, head of the Ukrainian parliament's temporary commission on Crimea, increasingly tended to agree.¹³⁰

Kyiv's newfound closeness to the Qurultay was seemingly demonstrated by its swift response to the June 1995 riots in which Crimean Tatar protests at insufficient protection against local "Mafiosi" left four dead and many more injured in Kefe (Feodosiia), Sudaq (Sudak), and the nearby village of Shchebetovka. Kuchma met Mustafa Jemiloglu and Refat Chubarov for the first time and issued a decree promising a government commission to investigate the affair, draft in more police, and allow local councils to "appoint people directly responsible for implementing concerted measures to prevent criminal encroachment and to uncover organized criminal group-

ings.”¹³¹ The possibility of finally endorsing the official status of the Mejlis was also raised in the Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers.¹³²

The Third Qurultay

Nevertheless, Kyiv refused to rush into any new arrangement, as its primary concern remained preserving the delicate coalition of relatively friendly forces that had emerged in Crimea. Jemiloglu was soon once again expressing his disappointment as Kyiv continued to drag its heels and the investigation of the June 1995 events produced no concrete results. The sense of disillusion was evident when the Third Qurultay convened (a year late) in Aqmesjit (Simferopol') in June 1996.¹³³ Reelection of the delegates revealed a more radical mood, with an estimated 80 of 157 of those elected supporting the radical politics of the OKND.¹³⁴ (Most delegates, 134 in all, were now from Crimea, given “the objective difficulties of organizing elections in the [Central Asian] states”; only two were under the age of thirty.)¹³⁵ Ten of the thirty-three members of the 1991 Mejlis were re-elected, with radicals such as Umerov and Kerimov prominent.

Jemiloglu's keynote speech struck a radical note, attacking the “chauvinist and . . . semifascist parliament” in Crimea and “Ukrayina's indifference to our plight” and bemoaning the general “loss of faith” in the authorities in both Aqmesjit (Simferopol') and Kyiv after their inadequate response to the June 1995 events. Kyiv's failure to reimpose the quota agreement was attacked as “sanctioning . . . discrimination against our people and the denial of their legal rights.” “It is sad,” he continued, “that, in our struggle with chauvinism and sometimes with outright Russian fascism in Crimea, we have not received the necessary support from Ukrayina, although Crimean Tatars and their representative body—the Mejlis—have always been the main and the most consistent supporters of the integrity and independence of Ukrayina. [It seems that] there are sufficient forces [in Kyiv], above all, those of a Communist and pro-Soviet orientation, to consciously torpedo the restoration of our rights.”¹³⁶

Radical delegates led by the OKND circulated an unsanctioned policy document, entitled “On the Struggle with the Colonial Regime,” which called for “the complete liquidation of the Russian colonial regime in Crimea,” the establishment of real national autonomy, and the withdrawal of all Tatar deputies from representative bodies “within two weeks” unless

Tatars were guaranteed 33 percent representation at all levels and called on the Mejlis to “make the necessary preparations for a mass, ongoing campaign of civil disobedience.” “The possibilities for searching for agreement through parliamentary political activity are exhausted,” it declared; “the time has come to talk to political barbarians in a language they will understand.”¹³⁷

The document was not put to a vote, but the Qurultay passed an appeal to the United Nations that used similar language, attacking “the Ukrainian state [for] encouraging a system of apartheid in relation to Crimean Tatars” and behaving “no differently from the previous [Soviet] regime.”¹³⁸ Even Chubarov accused the authorities of backsliding over the citizenship issue.¹³⁹ Although the existing leadership (Jemiloglu and Chubarov) was reelected and confirmed the basic principles of nonviolence and constitutional protest,¹⁴⁰ it was clearly finding it difficult to hold the line.

The Crimean Tatar Dilemma

Since their mass return began in the late 1980s, the political situation of Crimean Tatars has been marked by three awkward conundrums. First, once their numbers peaked at around 250,000–260,000 (10 percent of the local population), there were too many Tatars to be ignored but too few seriously to challenge the power of the Russophone majority in Crimea. Second, there was the contrast between the radical agenda contained in the 1991 Declaration of Sovereignty and draft constitution and the pragmatic politics pursued by the Mejlis from day to day. Given the nature of Crimean Tatar history on the peninsula before 1944 (and especially before 1783), the rhetoric of “sovereignty” and “indigenous rights” was understandable, but it fitted ill with the realities of the Tatars’ minority position in the 1990s. Third, Crimean Tatars had little practical choice but to side with Ukraine in local geopolitical conflicts, but the very unconditionality of the alignment too often had Kyiv offering little practical support in return. The turnaround in local Crimean politics in 1994–95 left Kyiv better disposed toward the Tatars, but it was unlikely to rush into any formal alliance with the Qurultay/Mejlis. Many Tatars were therefore increasingly prepared to attack Ukraine, like Russia, as a “colonial power.” Working through the paradoxes and creating workable political arrange-

ments was therefore likely to test all political forces on the peninsula, those of the returning Crimean Tatars most of all.

Notes

1. On Crimean Tatar politics in the late Soviet period, see Edward J. Lazzerini, "The Crimean Tatars," in *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, ed. Graham Smith, 2d ed. (London: Longman, 1995), 412–35; Andrew Wilson, *The Crimean Tatars* (London: International Alert, 1994); Mustafa Cemiloglu (Jemiloglu), "A History of the Crimean Tatar National Liberation Movement: A Sociological Perspective," in *Crimea: Dynamics, Challenges, Prospects*, ed. Maria Drohobycky (New York: American Association for the Advancement of Science/Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), 87–105; Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia, "The Crimean Tatar Question and the Present Ethnopolitical Situation in Crimea," *Russian Politics and Law* 33, no. 6 (November–December 1995): 31–60; Mikhail Guboglo and Svetlana Chervonnaia, eds., *Krymskotatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Tsentr po izucheniiu mezhnatsional'nykh otnoshenii, 1992–96); Svetlana Chervonnaia, "Krymskotatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie v kontekste etnopoliticheskoi situatsii v Krymu (avgust 1991–mart 1995 gg.)," in *Krymskotatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*, 3:26–101; and David R. Marples and David F. Duke, "Ukraine, Russia, and the Question of Crimea," *Nationalities Papers* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 261–90. This chapter always seeks to refer to Crimean Tatars, but *Crimean* is dropped if it occurs too many times in a sentence and there is no risk of ambiguity.
2. Edward Allworth, ed., *Tatars of the Crimea: Their Struggle for Survival*, 1st ed. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), 145–46; and *Krymskotatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*, 1:105–17.
3. Most Crimean place names have been rendered in both Crimean Tatar and Russian.
4. *Krymskotatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*, 1:133, 152.
5. *Ibid.*, 154.
6. Vasvi Abduraimov, "Geopoliticheskie aspekty krymskogo uzla," *Areket* (the paper of the NDKT), no. 3 (28 February 1994): 1.
7. Vasvi Abduraimov, "Ia—storonnik slaviano-tiurkского edinstva," *Tavrisheskie vedomosti*, no. 27 (5 July 1996): 2.
8. Abduraimov interviewed in *Vseukrainskie vedomosti*, 22 June 1995. See also Yurii Osmanov, "Strategicheskaiia zadacha: 'Obzhuliverit' krymskotatarskii narod,'" *Areket*, no. 8 (18 August 1993): 3.

9. "Obrashchenie NDKT," *Tavricheskie vedomosti*, no. 16 (29 April 1994): 1.
10. Abduraimov, "Ja—storonnik slaviano-tiurkskogo edinstva," 2.
11. "Proekt kontseptsii Konstitutsii Krymskoi ASSR, predlozhennyi NDKT (1990 g.—1991 g.)," in *Krymskotatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*, 2:99, 98, 102.
12. *Holos Ukraïny*, 12 August 1993, 4. The NDKT was actually registered as a movement rather than a political party.
13. "Programma OKND," in *Organizatsiia krymskotatarskogo natsional'nogo dvizheniia* (Simferopol', 1993), 5, 6, 7.
14. Shevket Kaibullaev, "Kontseptsii vneshnepoliticheskoi deiatel'nosti OKND" (party document in the author's possession dated 15 December 1993); *Demokratychna Ukraïna*, 14 January 1995, 1.
15. Interview with Refat Chubarov, then leader of the OKND, in *Avdet* (the main paper of the Mejlis), no. 23 (12 November 1992): 2.
16. Alim Suleimanov, "Krizis v OKND—eto real'nost," *Avdet*, no. 23 (12 November 1992): 2. Compare Nadir Bekirov, "Ot OKND k 'Milli Firka,'" *Avdet*, no. 12 (11 June 1992): 2.
17. Statement by the NDKT, in *Areket*, no. 8 (18 August 1993): 4.
18. A. I. Kliachin ("Dinamika etnicheskikh sistem rasseleniia v Krymu [v sviazi s problemoi vozvrashcheniia krymskikh tatar]," *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 [1992]: 33) cites 132,000 Tatars as of July 1991.
19. All information about the election process, including the quotation given, is derived from a document dated 1993, "Medzhlis krymskotatarskogo naroda, formirovanie i kompetentsiia (kratkaia spravka)," supplied to the author by the Mejlis. It seems that the organizers of the election may have divided a putative population of 272,000 into groups of 1,000 and worked backward, rather than beginning with actual voter turnout.
20. Voting was secret if an "observer" was present.
21. Only 2.6 percent were under thirty, 35.4 percent were thirty to thirty-nine, 27.5 percent forty to fifty, and 24.5 percent fifty to sixty ("Po dannym mandatnoi komissii," *Avdet*, nos. 15–16 [1 July 1991]: 8).
22. "Raschet chislennosti izbiratelei—krymskikh tatar, priniavshykh uchastie v izbranii delegatov natsional'nogo s'ezda krymskotatarskogo naroda—Kurultaia" (document supplied to the author by Nadir Bekirov). (The Mejlis claimed that the 137 delegates to the second session of the Second Qurultay in 1993 represented 93,160 Crimean Tatar electors in Crimea, or 60 percent of all adult electors.)
23. "Medzhlis krymskotatarskogo naroda," 3.
24. *Avdet*, nos. 16–17 (9 August 1993): 5; "Otchetnyi doklad predsedatelia Medzhlisa Mustafy Dzhemileva na pervoi sessii 3-go Kurultaia krymskotatarskogo naroda" (Simferopol', 26 June 1996), 10.
25. *Avdet*, nos. 15–16 (1 July 1991): 1; and *Krymskotatarskoe natsional'noe dvizhenie*, 2:109–11.

26. Ibid.; and “Obrashchenie Kurultaia krymskotatarskogo naroda k vsem zhiteliam Kryma,” *Avdet*, nos. 15–16 (11 July 1991): 1.
27. Rejep Khairedinov speaking at the special session of the Qurultay in November 1993 (*Qırım*, no. 50 [11 December 1993]: 3).
28. “Konstitutsiia Krymskoi respubliki, razrabotannaia Medzhlisom krymskotatarskogo naroda (proekt)” (December 1991), in *Krymskotatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*, 2:144, 160, 167.
29. Ibid., 162. It was unclear whether Crimean Tatars would also vote for the Council of People’s Representatives. Functions were allocated to the parliament in general, without any indication of separate spheres of competence. Legislation required the agreement of both houses; in its absence, bills would go to a conciliation commission. Joint sessions were also possible (ibid., 162–64).
30. Ibid., 165. The formulation was slightly ambiguous. The second half of the sentence fails to make clear whether more than half of all “indigenous” electors is required or simply more than half those taking part.
31. Ibid., 166.
32. In 1927, Crimean Tatars and Russians each accounted for just over a third (each at 34.7 percent) of the seats on the Crimean central committee (Heorhii Kas’ianov, “Kryms’ka ARSR: 1920–30-ti roky,” *Filosofs’ka i sotsiologichna dumka*, no. 7 [1990]: 76).
33. Ibid., 80; and Kliachin, “Dinamika etnicheskikh sistem rasseleniia,” 26. Some Crimean Tatars have claimed that an informal “40 percent rule” was used to build up their strength in the 1920s. See, e.g., the comments by Nadir Bekirov in *Avdet*, no. 6 (15 March 1991), as quoted in *Krymskotatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*, 3:59.
34. *Krymskotatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*, 3:40.
35. Svetlana Chervonnaia, “Kryms’kotatars’kyi natsional’nyi rukh i suchasna sytuatsiia v Respublitsi Krym (do chervnia 1993 r.),” in *Etnichni menshyny Skhidnoi ta Tsentral’noi Yevropy: Komparatyvnyi analiz stanovyscha ta perspektyv rozvytku*, ed. Volodymyr Yevtukh and Arnold Zuppan (Kyiv: INTEL, 1994), 104.
36. РЕВК is the Russian acronym for the Party of Economic Renaissance of Crimea.
37. “Otchetnyi doklad predsedatelia Medzhlisa,” 17.
38. *Molod’ Ukraïny*, 26 January 1991. According to official figures, only fifteen hundred Tatars “took ballot papers” with which to vote (*Krymskotatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*, 1:290).
39. Kathleen Mihalisko, “The Other Side of Separatism: Crimea Votes for Autonomy,” *Report on the USSR* 3, no. 5 (1 February 1991): 36–38. Detailed results are in *Izvestiia*, 21 January 1991. Crimean Russophiles also argued that the phrase “as a party to the Union Treaty” provided a mandate for the continued existence of the Soviet Union that took precedence over any Ukrainian vote, especially when two months later 87.6 percent of Crimeans voted yes in the Soviet-wide referendum

called by Gorbachev in March 1991 on the preservation of the Soviet Union, compared to 70.5 percent in Ukrayina as a whole.

40. For examples of Ukrayinan nationalist support, see “Do parlamentu i narodu Ukraïny shchodo sytuatsii v Krymu,” in *Druhi Vseukraïns’ki zbory Narodnoho Rukhu Ukraïny: Dokumenty* (Newark, N.J.: Proloh, 1991), 64–65; and “Zaiava III Vseukraïns’kykh zboriv Narodnoho Rukhu Ukraïny pro stanovyshe v Krymu” (declaration of the third Rukh congress in 1992, in the author’s files).

41. Chubarov interviewed in *Nezavisimost*, 30 June 1995, 2.

42. “Postanovlenie Verkhovnogo Soveta Rossiiskoi Federatsii ‘O reabilitatsii krymskikh tatar’ (proekt),” reprinted in *Avdet*, no. 18 (9 September 1993): 3.

43. See, e.g., the remark by Mustafa Jemiloglu that, “if union with Turkiye were to come about some day, the inhabitants of Crimea would probably be no worse off than during the days of Russian rule” (interview in *Uncaptive Minds* 5, no. 3 [Fall 1992]): 57. See also Duygu Bazoglu Sezer, “Balance of Power in the Black Sea in the Post–Cold War Era: Russia, Turkey and Ukraine,” in *Crimea*, 157–94; and Oles M. Smolansky, “Ukrainian–Turkish Relations,” *Ukrainian Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 5–34.

44. The Turkish aid was worth an estimated \$87 million. In addition, fifty young Tatars a year were offered places in Turkish universities, and two Turkish lycées were opened in Crimea. Akhmeta Ukhsana Kyrymly headed a union of Tatar groups in Turkiye.

45. For reports of demonstrations in support of the Chechens and the organization of humanitarian aid, see *Kratkaia khronika deiatel’nosti Medzhlisa krymskotatarskogo naroda: Iiul’ 1991 g. –iiun’ 1996 g.* (Simferopol’: Mejlis, 1996), 67, 74, 107.

46. “Rezoliutsiia o predstoiashchem vseukraïnskom referendume i vyborakh prezidenta Ukraïny,” in *Krymskotatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*, 2:139–40; and *Avdet* (29 November 1991): 3.

47. “Programma vosstanovleniia prav krymskotatarskogo naroda v Ukraine (Vozmoznyi variant)” (document submitted to the Ukrayinan president and parliament dated 19 September 1993 and supplied to the author by the Mejlis), 1.

48. *Krymskotatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*, 1:222, cites a figure of 142,200 Crimean Tatars as of 1 August 1991. Detailed referendum results can be found in F. D. Zastavnyi, *Heobrafia Ukraïny* (Lviv: Svit, 1994), 394 (percentage calculations are rounded up to the nearest hundred).

49. “Programma vosstanovleniia prav krymskotatarskogo naroda v Ukraine” (document supplied to the author by the Mejlis).

50. See also Susan Stewart, “The Tatar Dimension,” *RFE/RL Research Report* 3, no. 19 (13 May 1994): 22–26.

51. Author’s interview with Mustafa Jemiloglu, 29 September 1993; *Avdet*, nos. 16–17 (9 August 1993): 4.

52. For an analysis of Crimean politics in 1992–93, see Andrew Wilson, “Crimea’s Political Cauldron,” *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 45 (12 November 1993): 1–8.
53. *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 10 October 1992; *Holos Ukraïny*, 21 October 1993. See also the comments by Mustafa Jemiloglu in *Stolitsa*; no. 26 (1994): 15–16.
54. “Postanovlenie Medzhliisa krymskotatarskogo naroda ‘O priobretenii (podtverzhdenii) krymskimi tatarami grazhdanstva Ukrainy,’” *Avdet*, no. 23 (12 November 1992): 1.
55. *Ukrainian Weekly*, no. 44 (29 October 1995): 2.
56. *Avdet*, no. 15 (22 July 1993): 4.
57. A chronology of public attacks on Crimean Tatars is provided in *Qırım* (25 September 1993): 3. See also “Kratkaia khronika deiatel’nosti Medzhliisa krymskotatarskogo naroda (iiun’ 1991 g.–iiul’ 1993 g.),” *Avdet*, no. 15 (22 July 1993): 1–10.
58. Cited by Volodymyr Prytula, “Ne takyi strashnyi Kurultai, yak ioho chekaly,” *Post-postup*, no. 28 (2–9 August 1993): 3. See also Ksenia Niushkina, “Ekhali tatory na svoiu istoricheskuiu rodinu,” *Nezavisimost’*, 4 August 1993, 2.
59. “Krymskotatarskaia partiia natsional’nogo vozrozhdeniia ‘Milli Firka’: Programmnye tezisy (Proekt),” *Avdet*, no. 18 (9 September 1993): 2.
60. *Avdet*, no. 15 (22 July 1993); “Postanovlenie Verkhovnogo Soveta Krymskoi ASSR o s’ezde (kurultae) predstavitelei krymskikh tatar (29 July 1991),” in *Krymskotatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*, 2:122–24; author’s interview with Leonid Grach, 30 September 1993.
61. Guboglo and Chervonnaia, “The Crimean Tatar Question,” 39; Guboglo and Chervonnaia, *Krymskotatarskoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*, 3:33–34.
62. The КРК was formally revived in June 1992 and later became a constituent part of the Communist Party of Ukrayina (Wilson, “Crimea’s Political Cauldron,” 1–2; *Avdet*, no. 1 [12 January 1992]).
63. “O situatsii v Krymu v sviazi s antikonstitutsionnoi deiatel’nost’iu ‘Medzhliisa krymskotatarskogo naroda’ i organizatsii OKND,” session of Sept.–Dec. 1992, *Vedomosti verkhovnogo soveta Kryma*, no. 1 (22 March 1993): 40.
64. Such calls were heard at two rallies in January and May 1995 (OKND leader Khairedinov, reported in *FBIS/SOV* 95-070 [31 January 1995]; *Novaia ezbednevnaia gazeta*, 31 January 1995; *Holos Ukraïny*, 13 May 1995; *Izvestiia*, 16 May 1995; *Segodnia*, 17 May 1995).
65. Chubarov interviewed in *Nezavisimost’*, 30 June 1995, 2.
66. “Krymskotatarskaia partiia natsional’nogo vozrozhdeniia ‘Milli Firka,’” 2.
67. “Ustav Krymskotatarskoi Natsionalisticheskoi Partii ‘Adalet’ Qırım-tatar Milletchi ‘Adalet’ (КМФ),” *Avdet*, no. 5 (3 March 1995): 2; *Holos Ukraïny*, 13 May 1995, 1; *Segodnia*, 1 September 1995, 8.
68. Although Abkhazians made up only 17 percent of the population of Abkhazian

ASSR, a positive discrimination policy under Soviet rule gave them a majority of local leadership positions.

69. Chervonnaia, "Kryms'kotatars'kyi natsional'nyi rukh," 104.

70. Author's interview with Mykola Bagrov, 29 September 1993. See also Nariman Abdureshidov, "Ne otvergaia i bor'bu v parlamente," *Qirim*, no. 50 (11 December 1993): 3.

71. "Zaiavlenie TsK OKND po voprosu o vlasti v Krymu" (OKND document dated 27 July 1993).

72. The 1993 session is reported in *Avdet*, nos. 16–17 (9 August 1993): 1–8.

73. "Zaiavlenie Medzhliisa krymskotatarskogo naroda 'O vyborakh Verkhovnogo Soveta Kryma'" (Mejlis document dated 19 September 1993); author's interview with Refat Chubarov, 29 September 1993. See also *Holos Ukrainy*, 2 June 1993, 2; and *Demokratychna Ukraïna*, 6 July 1993, 1.

74. *Post-postup*, no. 34 (22–29 September 1993): 5.

75. See the detailed report in *Avdet*, no. 24 (2 December 1993): 2–6; *Holos Ukrainy*, 1 December 1993, p. 4; and Oleg Khomenok, "Na kogo postavit Medzhliis?" *Tavrisheskie vedomosti*, no. 48 (3 December 1993): 1.

76. "Zaiavlenie tsentral'nogo soveta OKND" (party document supplied to the author dated 29 October 1993).

77. *Avdet*, no. 24 (2 December 1993): 2.

78. Vasvi Abduraimov, "Kakoi Prezident nuzhen 'Medzhliisu?'" *Areket*, no. 1 (14 January 1994): 2; Ukrainian Independent Information Agency (UNIAN), 5 January 1994.

79. *Avdet*, no. 24 (2 December 1993), 5.

80. Khomenok, "Na kogo postavit Medzhliis?" 1. The form of the words was published in *Avdet*, no. 5 (10 March 1994): 3.

81. *Tavrisheskie vedomosti*, no. 4 (4 February 1994): 1.

82. Andrew Wilson, "Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in Ukraine: The Issue of Crimea," in *Crimea*, 107–31, covers all the 1994 elections in Crimea in detail.

83. "Postanovlenie tret'ei (vneocherednoi) sessii II Kurultaia krymskotatarskogo naroda 'Ob institute prezidentstva v Krymu,'" *Avdet*, no. 24 (2 December 1993): 2. Similar points were made by the OKND ("Zaiavlenie tsentral'nogo soveta OKND po povodu priniatiia verkhovnym sovetom respubliky Krym zakona 'O vyborakh Prezidenta respubliky Krym'" [party document dated 22 October 1993]), 1.

84. *Areket*, no. 1 (14 January 1994): 4.

85. *Areket*, no. 3 (28 February 1994): 1.

86. The "Russia" bloc was an alliance between Meshkov's republican movement and the smaller People's Party of Crimea. Most of its members were strongly anti-Tatar and anti-Ukrainian, but they were tactically divided on the best means of

- returning Crimea to the Russian orbit—independence, some kind of Slavic union, or reunion with Russia pure and simple (*Tavrisheskie vedomosti*, no. 46 [19 November]: 1 and no. 49 [10 December 1993]: 1–2).
87. Interview with Jemiloglu in *Kyivs'ka pravda*, 8 January 1994, 2.
88. “Postanovlenie Medzhliisa krymskotatarskogo naroda ‘Ob otnoshenii k prezidentskim vyboram v Krymu,’” *Avdet*, no. 1 (13 January 1994): 1. See also *Krymskaia pravda*, 5 January 1994, 1. The “majority of the 28 members present” at the session of the Mejlis on 25 January recommended continued support for Bagrov in the second round (“Zasedanie Medzhliisa,” *Avdet*, no. 2 [27 January 1994]: 1).
89. The total number of electors on the official list for the Crimean Tatar roster in the spring elections was 134,384 (“Itogi golosovania po mnogomandatnomu izbiratel'nomu okrugu” [document supplied by the Crimean electoral commission]: 8). Nariman Abdureshitov of the Mejlis’s political department calculated a maximum strength of 140,000 (*Avdet*, no. 4 [24 February 1994]: 2).
90. Information supplied to the author by the Mejlis.
91. In all Crimean elections, a second round was necessary if no candidate won over 50 percent of the vote in the first round.
92. See the Mejlis’s pessimistic assessment of the likely consequences of the victory of Meshkov, “one of the most consistent opponents of the realization of Crimean Tatar rights,” in “Zaiavlenie Medzhliisa krymskotatarskogo naroda v sviazi s itogami prezidentskikh vyborov v Krymu,” *Avdet*, no. 4 (24 February 1994): 1.
93. A more detailed analysis can be found in Andrew Wilson, “The Elections in Crimea,” *RFE/RL Research Report* 3, no. 25 (24 June 1994): 7–19.
94. The Crimean authorities almost sabotaged the election when they considered ruling that the Qurultay was not a registered political party and therefore ineligible to stand.
95. “Predvybornaia platforma Kurultaia krymskotatarskogo naroda,” *Avdet*, no. 5 (10 March 1994): 3; also in *Krymskie izvestiia*, 22 March 1994, 2.
96. Z. Mutalupova, “Golosa—dostoinym,” *Krymskie izvestiia*, 25 March 1994.
97. “Itogi golosovania po mnogomandatnomu izbiratel'nomu okrugu,” 6. A further 1,320 votes (1.3 percent) went to the “Crimean Republican Cultural Center of the Crimean Tatars,” a front organization of the Qurultay (at least four of its candidates were members of the Mejlis), and 980 (1.0 percent) to the “Crimean Tatar Cultural Fund of the Crimean Republic,” a sibling organization to the NDKT.
98. Author’s calculations from information provided by the Mejlis and the official results in *Krymskaia gazeta*, 5 April 1994, 2–3; and *Krymskie izvestiia*, 12 April 1994, 1 (the shortfall from the 101,808 who voted for the Crimean Tatar list most probably is explained by the fact that the Qurultay/Mejlis was unable to put forward candidates in several areas, especially Or Qalu [Krasnoperokopsk], Kerch [Kerch’], and the southern coastal region).

99. Author's interviews with Refat Chubarov and Nadir Bekirov, 28 April 1994.
100. Author's calculations from the classification of constituencies in *Mieshchanskaia gazeta*, no. 10 (February 1994), 2.
101. To be fair, many Ukrainian groups boycotted the poll or were not allowed to participate. On the other hand, the lack of Ukrainian voting strength was ably demonstrated by the Ukrainian Civic Congress of Crimea's demand that the peninsula's 626,000 Ukrainians be granted a quota agreement similar to that for Tatars (*Kryms'ka svitlytsia*, 4 February 1995, 2).
102. *Avdet*, no. 7 (7 April 1994), 3.
103. Eleven of twenty-three seats in Crimea were filled at the first attempt (four went to the КРК, seven to centrist independents). In subsequent repeat elections, eleven more seats were filled: six went to the КРК (although one of their deputies subsequently died), four to independents, and one to РЕВК. Once again, no Tatars were elected.
104. Azamatova worked on the Qurultay paper *Avdet*, Kurtosmanov with the Crimean committee on deported peoples.
105. Jemiloglu indicated that Kravchuk had belatedly made an effort to win the Tatars' support ("Otchetnyi doklad predsedatelia Medzhliisa," 6; see also L. Takosh, "Leonid II: Prognoz dlia Kryma," *Avdet*, no. 14 [22 July 1994]: 2).
106. "Partii Kryma privetstvuiut izbranie novogo prezidenta Ukrainy," *Krymskie izvestiia*, 19 July 1994, 1–2. See also *Tavrisheskie vedomosti*, 1, 8 July 1994, 1–2.
107. Source: the author's calculations from official results supplied by the Crimean election commission.
108. See the interviews with Refat Chubarov in *Golos Kryma*, 7 April 1995, 2; and *Molod' Ukrainy*, 27 April 1995, 3. Even the НДКТ felt compelled to protest (see *Krymskaia pravda*, 22 April 1995, 2).
109. *Novosti*, 25 June 1995, 1.
110. Significantly, the Communists were the main beneficiaries of declining support for the "Russia" bloc and claimed 290 deputies at all levels. РЕВК won thirty-seven seats and the Republican Party set up by Meshkov a derisory five (UNIAN, 30 June 1995, 2). See also the opinion poll in *Krymskaia pravda*, 8 January 1995, 2.
111. *OMRI Daily Digest*, pt. 2, nos. 216, 221, and 224 (6, 13, and 16 November 1995). At the time of writing (August 1996), Crimeans were under pressure to rewrite their constitution to bring it into line with the new Ukrainian constitution adopted in June 1996.
112. *OMRI Daily Digest*, pt. 2, no. 231 (29 November 1995).
113. Ukrainian Radio, 28 May 1994; "Postanovlenie Medzhliisa krymskotatarskogo naroda v sviazi s opasnost'iu vznikoveniia vooruzhennogo konflikta v Krymu" (Mejlis document dated 22 May 1994).
114. *Stolitsa*, no. 26 (1994): 15–16.

115. UNIAN, 13 October 1995.
116. *Krymskie izvestiia*, 11 March 1995, 1.
117. Chrystyna Lapychak, "Crackdown on Crimean Separatism," *Transition* 1, no. 8 (26 May 1995); Tor Bukkvoll, "A Fall from Grace for Crimean Separatists," *Transition* 1, no. 22 (17 November 1995): 46–49.
118. The thirty-five were made up of the Qurultay, reform, and agrarian factions plus independents (Interfax; *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 7 April 1995).
119. Because it excluded the Communists and relied on the "Republic" group, whose support for the opposition was largely tactical. Although the "Russia" bloc imploded in late 1994, the underlying factors that produced its stunning electoral victories in 1994 remained largely unchanged, and separatist and anti-Tatar sentiment remained strong. See, e.g., Tsekov's interview in *Krymskoe vremia*, 29 June 1996, 2.
120. *Avdet*, no. 24 (2 December 1993): 4.
121. Interview with Refat Chubarov, *Nezavisimost'*, 30 June 1995, 2.
122. Author's interviews with deputy minister Oleksandr Piskun, 27 September 1993, and with Yevtukh, 9 February 1996 (the ministry became a state commission in August 1996).
123. "Zakon Ukraïny: Pro vidnovlennia prav deportovanykh (proekt)" (document in author's possession).
124. *Holos Ukraïny*, 17 May 1994. A historical conference organized by various civic groups to mark the anniversary appeal to the Ukrainian president and parliament to do more to help Crimean Tatars ("Zvernennia mizhnarodnoï naukovoï konferentsii 'Kryms'ki tatar: istoriia i suchasnist' [do 50-richchia deportatsii kryms'kotatar'koho narodu]," 13–14 travnia 1994 roku do Prezydenta i Verkhovnoï Rady Ukraïny" [document dated 23 May 1994]).
125. *Krymskaia pravda*, 24 December 1994, 1.
126. *Krymskaia gazeta*, 3 February 1995, 1.
127. *Holos Ukraïny*, 18 August 1995, 1; *Zerkalo nedeli*, 29 June–5 July 1996, 2.
128. INTELNEWS, 1 June 1995.
129. See the appeal to the Uzbek president, Islam Karimov, and the resolution "O neotlozhnykh merakh po okazaniiu sodeistviia v vozvrashchenii i obustrouistve krymskikh tatar, vynuzhdenno prozhivaiushchikh v mestakh vysylki," passed by the third session of the Second Qurultay in November 1993 (*Qırım*, no. 50 [11 December 1993], 1).
130. Radio Ukrayina, 28 June 1995; *Segodnia*, 19 November 1994.
131. The decree is in *Uriadovyi kur"ier*, 29 June 1995, 4.
132. "Otchetnyi doklad predsedatelia Medzhlisa," 15; *Segodnia*, 1 September 1995, 8.
133. *Kryms'ka svitlytsia*, 29 June 1996, 1; *Tavrisheskie vedomosti*, 5 July 1996, 2; and *Vseukrainskie vedomosti*, 2 July 1996, 3.

134. O. Egorova, "Radikaly v atake," *Krymskie izvestiia*, 29 June 1996, 1.
135. *Avdet*, no. 12 (24 June 1996), 2. Each of the 134 delegates from Crimea supposedly represented one thousand electors. Three delegates came from elsewhere in Ukrayina (the neighboring *oblasts* of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia), nineteen from "areas of compact settlement" in Uzbekistan, and one from Tajikistan. Sixty-nine percent of the delegates had higher education.
136. "Otchetnyi doklad predsedatelia Medzhlisa," 5, 7, 9, 10, 17.
137. The document, "O bor'be s kolonial'nym rezhimom (proekt)," was published in *Krymskoe vremia*, 4 July 1996, 8.
138. *Ibid.*; *Tavricheskie vedomosti*, no. 27 (5 July 1996), 2; and *Pravda Ukrainy*, 2 July 1996, 1.
139. *Yuzhnii kur'er*, 5 July 1996, 2.
140. See the interview with Jemiloglu, "Kurultai ne pidtrymav kraini tochky zoru," *Kryms'ka svitlytsia*, 6 July 1996, 1.