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Dmytro Hordiienko

CRIMEA WITHIN OR OUTSIDE THE UKRAINIAN BORDERS

The southern border of Ukraine is, among others, very volatile and has undergone major changes over the last millennium. The problem of its definition lies primarily in the ethnocentric approach of the vast majority of conceptions of Ukrainian history, which is inherent in the Eastern European model of the modern state¹.

In this model, the unity of the nation is determined not so much by the commonality of the territory of residence as by the commonality of origin, language, traditions, etc. Despite the fact that the most prominent Ukrainian historian M. Hrushevsky in his “History of Ukraine-Rus” paid considerable attention to the ancient Crimea² and the whole section of the Crimean Khanate, Crimea remained an external counterpart to Ukrainian history.

The Crimean question was complicated by the image of the Crimean Khanate³ created by Russian historiography as the timeless enemy of Russia⁴, thus it justified the conquest of the Crimea at the end of the eighteenth century as a forced measure to end the “predatory” campaigns of the Crimean Tatars on Russian lands. Ukrainian historiography followed the Russian standpoint and also until recently presented the Crimea as the antagonist, the enemy of Ukraine⁵. It took time to become aware of the common interests of Ukraine and the Crimea. It was Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine in 2014 with the occupation and alienation of the Crimea that intensified the attention of Ukrainian historians to the Crimea. Various collections of scientific articles⁶, mono-

¹ See: A. SMITH, *National Identity*, Reno; Las Vegas; London, 1991, p. 8–15.

² М. ГРУШЕВСЬКИЙ, *Історія України-Руси: В 11 т., 12 кн.*, К. 1994, т. I: *До початку XI віка*, с. 84–151.

³ М. ГРУШЕВСЬКИЙ, *Історія України-Руси: В 11 т., 12 кн.*, К. 1993, т. IV: *XIV–XVI віки – відносини політичні*, с. 292–337.

⁴ See: В. СЕРПІЙЧУК, *Український Крим*, вид. 3-є, доповнене, Вишгород 2016, с. 43–44.

⁵ See, for example: М. ДРАГОМАНОВ, *Про українських козаків, татар та турків*, К. 1876, 69 с.

⁶ For example: *Крим від античності до сьогодення: Історичні студії*, відп. ред. В. СМОЛІЙ, К. (Інститут історії України НАН України) 2014.

graphs⁷, and collections of sources from the history of the Crimea⁸ began to be actively published. At the M. S. Hrushevsky Institute of Ukrainian Archeography and Source Studies the annual scientific conference “Crimea in the history of Ukraine” has been started, based on the materials of which the “Our Crimea”⁹ annual edition is published.

Russia’s occupation of the Crimea in 2014 is the first case of invasion in post-war Europe. Russia’s act of aggression against Ukraine is a gross violation of the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations, the foundations of which were laid out in Yalta, Crimea, at a conference of the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition of Great Britain, the USA and the USSR on February 4–11th, 1945, when the decision to form the Organization of the United Nations was made. The bitter fact is that in 2014 the aggressor country against Ukraine was Russia – the successor country of the USSR, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and one of the guarantors of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. Thus, the problem of occupation and reoccupation of the Crimea came onto the international level and only at that level, it can be solved. Thus, the Crimean theme is actualized in world historiography¹⁰.

Despite a significant increase in interest to the “Crimean” topic, the ethnocentric approach remains dominant in determining the affiliation of the Crimea. However, even with this approach, it can be noted

⁷ For example: С. КУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Кримський вузол*, 2-е вид., К. (Кліо) 2019.

⁸ *Крим в умовах суспільно-політичних трансформацій (1940–2015). Збірник документів і матеріалів*, Друге видання, упоряд.: О. Г. БАЖАН, О. В. БАЖАН, С. М. БЛАЩУК, Г. В. БОРЯК, С. І. ВЛАСЕНКО, Н. В. МАКОВСЬКА, К. (ТОВ “Видавництво «Кліо»”) 2016.

⁹ *Наш Крим = Our Crimea = Bizim Qırımımız*, вип. 1–3 (2015–2017).

¹⁰ See, for example: GWENDOLYN SASSE, *The Crimea Question. Identity, Transition, and Conflict*, Cambridge (MA: Harvard UP) 2007; GWENDOLYN SASSE, *The Crimean issue*, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 12:1 (1996): 83–100; DAVID R. MARPLES and DAVID F. DUKE, *Ukraine, Russia, and the Question of Crimea*, *Nationalities Papers*, 23:2 (1995): 261–289; MIKHAIL SMIRNOV, *Like a Sack of Potatoes. Who Transferred the Crimean Oblast to the Ukrainian SSR in 1952–54 and How It Was Done*, *Russian Politics & Law*, 53 (2015) – Issue 2: *Russian Views of Ukrainian Crisis: Part 2. Legal and Political Ramifications*: 32–46; PAUL ROBERT MAGOCSI, *This Blessed Land: Crimea and the Crimean Tatars*, Toronto (University of Toronto Press) 2014; KERSTIN S. JOBST, *Geschichte der Krim: Iphigenie und Putin auf Tauris*, Berlin (De Gruyter Oldenbourg) 2020, etc.

that the Ukrainian ethnos / pro-ethnos covered the whole territory of modern Ukraine already in ancient times. Today the southern border of Ukraine, in particular in the Crimea, is determined by the coastline of the Black and Azov seas and the boundary of territorial waters of Ukraine. Thus, in the Crimea, the question arises as to whether or not the peninsula belongs to Ukraine, in particular, the vicissitudes of its joining Ukraine.

The formation of Eastern European political nations was actualized by the First World War, which led to a series of national revolutions in Eastern Europe and the emergence of new nations. The formation of the Ukrainian modern nation took place in the crucible of the Ukrainian Revolution, within which the Crimean Tatar national movement also unfolded. It was the strengthening of Ukraine and Crimea during the revolution that forced Moscow to recognize the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation and the right of the Crimean Tatars for self-determination. In the future, the existence of the UNR government in exile will guarantee the existence of the USSR and will subsequently lead to the restoration of state independence of Ukraine in 1991. Having lost a numerical advantage in the population of the Crimean peninsula, having suffered a devastating defeat in an attempt to revive its own statehood in the form of the Crimean People's Republic, the Crimean Tatar movement has been transformed from the desire to gain an independent state to autonomy within Ukraine.

Thus, there are three key stages in the issue of Crimea's membership of Ukraine: 1) the years of the Ukrainian Revolution – the establishment of a dialogue between Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar leaders. Transformation of ethnocentric approach towards territorial issues in defining the borders of Ukraine; 2) The transfer of the Crimean region to the USSR without taking into account the views of the indigenous people – the Crimean Tatars, who were deported outside the peninsula at that time; and 3) the Crimean issue in the years of political independence of Ukraine since 1991. Documentation sources, personal sources, non-fiction and historiographical sources are the source base. Unfortunately, the Archive of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea is not available today due to the occupation of the Crimea by Russia, but the available sources make it quite possible to study the issue raised.

It should be noted that in the case of the Crimea, the ethnocentric approach has its own peculiarities. It is the only region in Ukraine that has undergone several waves of cynical and catastrophic interference by ethnic Russian authorities in the course of the last 200 years. Moscow has succeeded in breaking the burden of generations for all without exception of the Crimean ethnic groups, which was especially threatening in the Soviet period, with a Communist Party policy aimed at erasing nations and merging them into a single Soviet, Russian nation. National phobias to other ethnic groups and peoples were justified by the created myth of the so-called Great Patriotic War, led by the hegemon people – the Russians. Thus, the Ukrainian humanities face a difficult task aimed not only at reviving historical justice, but also at forming Crimean identity in the Ukrainian space on grounds that are not typical for such processes in world practice.

The presence of Pro-Ukrainian ethnic group in the Crimea has been recorded since the middle of the first millennium¹¹. The Slavic monuments found in settlements in the Crimea bear the closest analogy to the monuments of the Middle Dnieper, known since the times of Kyivan Rus. Especially widely the Ukrainian ethnic element spread in the Crimea during the late Middle Ages, the Ukrainian quarters were in most of the major cities of the Crimea¹². The Mongol invasion, the formation of the Crimean ulus and the transition of Ukrainian lands to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania also marked the first political milestone between princely Ukraine and Crimea. The Prince of Kyiv, Semen Olelkovich, defined the border with Crimea as follows: “from the Murafa river that flows into the Dniester to the confluence of the Dniester into the sea, and from there to the mouth of the Dniester estuary and then the border passed through Ochakiv up to the Dnieper estuary, and from the mouth of the Dnieper to the Tavan and beyond ... up Samara, up to the Don and from the Don to the Tykha Sosna”¹³. With the formation of the Crimean Khanate (1427) and the establishment of the Ottomans on the

¹¹ П. НАДИНСКИЙ, *Очерки по истории Крыма*, Симферополь (Крымиздат) 1951, ч. 1, с. 47.

¹² С. МАЩЕНКО, *Українці в Криму: етнодемографічні аспекти (VIII–XX століття)*, Етнічна історія народів Європи, К. 1999, с. 42.

¹³ *Акты, относящиеся к истории Западной Руси*, Санкт-Петербург 1851, т. 2, с. 98.

southern coast of Ukraine, the border between Ukraine and the Crimea was not stable, forming a kind of frontier that existed until the end of the 18th century – the first Russian annexation of the Crimea.

The contact zone created by the Cossacks and Tatars contributed to the confusion of the population, both on the Ukrainian lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in the Crimea. In the 17th century we had numerous Tatar quarters in Ukrainian cities¹⁴, and in the Crimea a significant percentage of the population were ethnic Ukrainians, which was noted by Turkish traveler Evlie Chelebi in 1666¹⁵.

With the formation of the Cossack Republic – the Hetmanate under Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the Crimea became a strategic ally of the Hetmanate at first. Hetman Ivan Mazepa made the first attempts to include in the Cossack Republic the Black Sea coast, which directly affected the interests of the Crimean Khanate. However, the Poltava catastrophe in 1709 dramatically changed the deployment of forces in the region and for the last time activated the Cossack-Crimean Union, the most striking expression of which was the existence of Oleshkiv Sich on the lands of the Crimean Khanate (1711–1734). The provision of the relevant acts by the Crimean khans to the Cossacks for staying on the lands of the khanate in the future became the legal basis for the expansion of the Ukrainians onto the lands of the Black Sea region and the Azov region¹⁶. This expansion became particularly active after the 1740s.

The Union of Hetman's Ukraine and the Crimean Khanate was also enshrined in the Ukrainian Constitution of 1710. The Constitution clearly defined the western and eastern borders of Ukraine, with Poland and Russia respectively. A separate third section was devoted to relations with the Crimea. However, it only declared allied and friendly relations with Khanate, in no way defining the border lines between the two states¹⁷.

¹⁴ О. САВЧЕНКО, *Локалізація "татар-осадників" на землях Правобережної України в XVI–XVII ст.*, Українознавство, 1(58) (2016): 89–96.

¹⁵ Е. ЧЕЛЕБИ, *Книга путешествий. Походы с татарами и путешествие по Крыму (1641–1667)*, Симферополь 1996, с. 172.

¹⁶ В. ГРИБОВСЬКИЙ, *Запорожці та їхні тюркські сусіди у міжвоєнний період (1740–1768 рр.)* [ін:] В. БРЕХУНЕНКО, В. ГРИБОВСЬКИЙ, Ю. МИЦИК, В. ПІСКУН, І. СИНЯК, І. ТАРАСЕНКО, *Між конфронтацією та взаємодією: українсько-кримські та українсько-ногайські стосунки в XVII – першій половині XX ст.*, за ред. В. БРЕХУНЕНКА, К. (ІУАД) 2018, с. 216.

¹⁷ *Договори і постанови*, упоряд. О. АЛФЬОРОВ, К. (Темпора) 2010, с. 45–47; латинський текст: с. 118–119.

The first demarcation of the border was carried out in 1713–1714 on the basis of the Russian-Turkish Adrianople Treaty. On the Left Bank, the border ran between the mouths of the Oryl and Samara rivers to the Don River. This border remained in force until the Russian-Turkish War of 1735–1739. It is noticeable that in defining the demarcation line, the Russian side categorically refused to demarcate the border, which gave it the opportunity to interpret the demarcation line later in its favour. Only the clear position of the Ottoman representative made it possible to clearly define the border on the left bank of the Dnieper. On the Right Bank, the border between Poland and the Crimean Khanate was determined by the Russian-Turkish Treaty of 1719, but no clear demarcation line was also drawn¹⁸. This made it possible for Warsaw, with the support of Russia, to immediately move towards the regaining its authority over the entire Right Bank of Ukraine.

Therefore, only as a result of the Russian-Turkish War of 1735–1739, when the Crimea was first occupied by Russian troops, the first demarcation of the border between Ukraine (Hetmanate) and the Crimea according to the Baghdad Peace (September 18th, 1739) was established. All parties sought to establish a stable border for the long term. It was decided to isolate the buffer zone and visually mark the border line. The relevant Russian-Turkish commission identified the border line marked with visual signs: mounds, bunkers, etc. The border between the Hetmanate and the Crimean Khanate passed along the rivers Berda and Konkha before flowing into the Dnieper, then down the Dnieper to the mouth of the river Kamianka, then up the river bed to the Polish border at the confluence of the Kodyma River into the Southern Bug River¹⁹. Therefore, a large Ukrainian ethnic enclave remained on the territories governed by the Crimean Khanate – Khanska Ukraïna (the territory of the present Odessa oblast of Ukraine) with its center in Balta.

¹⁸ В. ГРИБОВСЬКИЙ, *Міграції українського та тюркського населення в умовах стабілізації державних кордонів у 1711–1741 рр.* [ін.] В. БРЕХУНЕНКО, В. ГРИБОВСЬКИЙ, Ю. МИЩИК, В. ПІСКУН, І. СИНЯК, І. ТАРАСЕНКО, *Між конфронтацією та взаємодією: українсько-кримські та українсько-ногайські стосунки в XVII – першій половині XX ст.*, за ред. В. БРЕХУНЕНКА, К. (ІУАД) 2018, с. 163–164.

¹⁹ *Инструмент разграничения земель между Россиею и Портою в 1742 году*, Записки Одесского общества истории и древностей, т. 2 (Одесса, 1852): 834–835; В. ГРИБОВСЬКИЙ, *Міграції українського та тюркського населення в умовах стабілізації державних кордонів у 1711–1741 рр.*, с. 187–188.

The first Russian annexation of the Crimea was a direct consequence of the Russian-Turkish war in 1768–1774. It is noteworthy that at first, Petersburg did not seek to include the Crimea and the Ukrainian Black Sea coast into the empire. As early as 1770, Russia pursued the goal of creating puppet independent states from the Crimean Khanate and the Nogai Horde. The guarantee of Russia's position in the region should be transferring one of the ports on the Crimean coast under the authority of the Russians²⁰. However, the absolute victory of Russia in the war with Turkey dramatically changed the plans of St. Petersburg. Thus, a full annexation of the Crimea by the Russian Empire was enshrined in the manifesto of Catherine II on April 8th, 1783²¹. Since that time, *de jure* and *de facto*, Ukraine and the Crimea have been part of one political body – the Russian Empire. Initially, the Crimea joined the governorate-generals, covering the whole of southern Ukraine. The official status of the Crimea was affixed to Catherine II's manifesto of February 2nd, 1784. According to this manifesto, the Crimea was part of the Katerynoslav and Tavria governorate-generals (now the city of Dnipro) until its population was increased and the corresponding institutions were created, that will allow to allocate the Crimea into a separate province²². The Crimean Khanate and other political entities under its rule were liquidated. As a result of the administrative reform of 1796, the Crimea became part of the Novorossiysk province, which in turn was divided into three provinces in 1802, the Tavria province among them. In 1822, they were subordinate to the governor-general of Novorossiysk in military terms²³.

By 1783, 92% of the Crimean population was made up of Crimean Tatars. However, immediately after occupation, most of its inhabitants left the Crimea, emigrating mainly to the Ottoman Empire²⁴. At that

²⁰ Архив Государственного совета, Санкт-Петербург 1869, т. I: *Совет в царствование императрицы Екатерины II (1768–1796)*, с. 43–45.

²¹ *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*, т. XXI, Санкт-Петербург, 1846, с. 898.

²² *Полное собрание законов Российской империи*, т. XXII, Санкт-Петербург 1847, с. 18.

²³ С. Кульчицкий, Л. Якубова, *Op. cit.*, с. 42.

²⁴ С. СЕКИРИНСКИЙ, *К вопросу о заселении Крыма в конце XVIII века*, Известия Крымского педагогического института, Симферополь 1956, т. XXII, с. 74.

time, the population of the Crimea was reduced four-fold. There was an acute problem of populating the peninsula. Although Potemkin favoured the Russians “for the sake of strengthening Russia and the Russification of the annexed regions”²⁵, the former migrants became the first settlers. This was due to the fact that the Cossacks and the Crimean Tatars created a common socio-cultural space, knew each other’s language, and were well acquainted with the peculiarities of the climate, landscape, etc. of the Crimea. Already in 1787, peasants of Ukrainian provinces were granted the right to settle in the Crimea, which caused the influx of migrants from Kyiv, Chernihiv, Novgorod-Siversky, Kherson and Katerynoslav provinces²⁶. Instead, as Volodymyr Sergiichuk noted, in a hundred years’ time Russians did not integrated in the Crimea²⁷. On the other hand, the Russians themselves have treated and continue to treat the Crimea as a conquered country, behaving on the peninsula as conquerors.

The next stage of a fundamental change in the demographic and ethnographic situation in the Crimea took place after the Crimean War. During 1860–1863, about 200,000 Crimean Tatars moved to Turkey from the Crimea, accounting for about half of the entire nation²⁸. Administratively, they came from the Russian lands, but a significant percentage of it was also Ukrainian population. The resettlement of the latter was facilitated by the proximity of the territories and the accession of the Crimea together with the South of Ukraine into one Tavria province. Thus, in 1914, in the rural area of the Crimea, the share of the Ukrainian ethnic group was 65 %, and Russian – 12 %²⁹. In the cities, Ukrainians made up only 10.4 % of the population, conceding not only to the Russians but also to the Crimean Tatars and Jews. The most urbanized ethnic group, 97 % of whom already at the end of the 19th century lived in cities, were Russians. However, the problem was that nationality was usually fixed by language or religion. The inhabi-

²⁵ *Известия Таврической ученой архивной комиссии*, 7 (1889): 91.

²⁶ Б. КОРОЛЕНКО, *Приєднання та колонізація Криму кінця XVIII століття: український аспект*, Крим в історичних реаліях України: Матеріали наук. конф., до 50-річчя входження Криму до складу УРСР, К. 2004, с. 96.

²⁷ В. СЕРГІЙЧУК, *Op. cit.*, с. 69.

²⁸ В. СЕРГІЙЧУК, *Op. cit.*, с. 74; С. КУЛЬЧИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 60.

²⁹ С. РУДНИЦЬКИЙ, *Основи землезнавства України*, Л.; У. 1924, с. 215, 235.

tants of the city, regardless of their origin, were reclassified according to their language and religion. Thus, both Russians and Russian-speaking Ukrainians and Belarusians were recorded as Russians. However, even with this approach, the share of Ukrainians in the Tavria province was 50.1 %³⁰, while in the Crimea in 1917 only 12.4 % (100 thousand people) identified themselves as ethnic Ukrainians, together with the Russians they made 49.4 %, with 26.8 % of the Crimean Tatars together with the Turks³¹. The predominance of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in rural areas will influence the further development of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar political movement in the Crimea.

Remembering the Eastern (Crimean) war of 1853–1856, it should be noted that the vast majority of the Russian army and the Black Sea Fleet were staffed by Ukrainians. Almost all supplies of the Russian army were provided by the forces and resources of Ukraine. All Russian Army hospitals were located in Ukraine³². On the other hand, the political circles of the Allies the issue of establishing independent Ukraine in case of a complete victory over Russia was raised. As part of the allied troops, the Ukrainian Cossack units of Michal Czajkowski also acted against Russia³³.

Russia's defeat in the Crimean War led to transformational processes in the empire, in particular the construction of two powerful industrial complexes in the Urals and southern Ukraine. The South Ukrainian complex included the Dnieper-Donetsk region and the Crimea. Thus, starting from the second half of the 19th century the Crimea made

³⁰ Б. КОРОЛЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, с. 88–89.

³¹ Г.М. БУРОВ и др., *История Крыма с древнейших времен до наших дней (в очерках)*, Симферополь 2006, с. 285.

³² В. МОЛЧАНОВ, *Кримська війна 1853–1856 рр.: український рахунок*, Крим від античності до сьогодення: Історичні студії, відп. ред. В. СМОЛІЙ, К. (Інститут історії України НАН України), с. 347–363; А. СКРИПНИК, *Участь населення правобережної України у розбудові військової інфраструктури та постачанні продовольчих і матеріальних ресурсів до Криму (1799–1855 рр.)*, Наш Крим = Our Crimea = Bizim Qırımımız, вип. 2 (2016): 76–82, etc.

³³ М. HANDELSMAN, *Ukraińska polityka ks. Adama Czartoryskiego przed wojna Krymska*, Warszawa 1936; В. ПОТУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, *Представник польського консерватизму Міхал Чайковський як учасник Кримської війни (До реконструкції історичної перспективи проблеми)*, Наш Крим = Our Crimea = Bizim Qırımımız, вип. 2 (2016): 67–75, etc.

one economic integrity with mainland Ukraine³⁴. For example, almost all trade turnover of Tavria province was conducted by Crimean merchants. The Crimea was further anchored to Ukraine when in 1870 a railway was laid connecting the Crimea with the Dnieper economic region, bringing the Crimea to the domestic market of Ukraine, and giving the Ukrainian industry an exit to the Crimean Black Sea ports³⁵.

The vicissitudes of the Crimea's accession into Ukraine during the Ukrainian Revolution

The formation of the modern Ukrainian nation, in particular the formation of modern political borders of Ukraine, is connected with the events of the Ukrainian Revolution (1917–1923). The revolutionary movement covered almost all the ethnographic lands of Ukraine, including the Crimea.

The Ukrainian Central Rada, formed in Kyiv in March 1917, gradually took over full power over Ukraine. One of the urgent tasks of the Central Rada and the General Secretariat – the Ukrainian government – was the issue of defining Ukraine's borders. At first, the Central Rada declared as the purpose of its activity the acquisition of national-territorial autonomy, within the ethnic borders of Ukraine, as Mykhailo Hrushevsky directly wrote: “Ukrainians want the Ukrainian lands of the Russian state (we are talking about them without touching the issue of unification of all Ukrainian lands) form one area, one national territory. Provinces, therefore, should be mainly or completely Ukrainian provinces”, while “non-Ukrainian counties and parishes should be cut from them”³⁶.

At that time, the Crimea, consisting of 5 counties (Yevpatoria, Perekop, Simferopol, Theodosius, Yalta) was part of the Tavria province, which also had three mainland counties: Berdyansk, Dnipro and Melitopol. By ethnic composition, according to the 1897 census, the Tavria

³⁴ See: Р. КОВАЛЬНИК, *Україна до і після Кримської війни*, Наш Крим = Our Crimea = Bizim Qırımımız, вип. 2 (2016): 10–24.

³⁵ Т. ЛАЗАНСЬКА, *Історія підприємництва в Україні (на матеріалах торгово-промислової статистики XIX ст.)*, К. 1999, с. 7–15.

³⁶ М. ГРУШЕВСЬКИЙ, *Якої ми хочемо автономії і федерації*, Великий українець: Матеріали з життя та діяльності М. С. Грушевського, упоряд. А. П. ДЕМИДЕНКО, К. (Веселка) 1992, с. 121.

province consisted predominantly of Ukrainians – 42.2 % (611 121 people), compared to 27.9 % of Russians³⁷. However, the dominance of Ukrainians was ensured by the absolute dominance of Ukrainians in the mainland counties of the province. In the Crimean counties, as noted, either the Russians or the Crimean Tatars prevailed numerically (59.0 % in the Sevastopol district).

Despite such an ethnic palette, at first the Central Rada actually included the entire Tavria province as part of the prospective Ukrainian autonomy³⁸. However, the Provisional Government, which was taken by surprise by the formation of the Central Council, delayed the issue of defining the boundaries of the competence of the Central Council. At first, the Ukrainian National Council in Petrograd, which considered the Central Rada itself as its representative body in the province and tried to restrict the Ukrainian autonomy by the ethnographic borders of the Ukrainian population's settlement, tried to carry out its independent policy³⁹. Considering the position of the Ukrainian National Council in Petrograd, the Central Council in its instructions to the delegation to negotiate with the Provisional Government on Ukrainian autonomy, the formation of a regional council and the appointment of a regional / Ukrainian commissioner did not clearly delineate the boundaries of Ukrainian autonomy⁴⁰. Obviously, at this point, the delegation had to leave the negotiating situation. However, on June 3rd, 1917, the Provisional Government rejected by telegramme all the claims of the Central Council. Only with the deployment of the Ukrainian movement, its militarization forced the Russian government to negotiate with Ukraine. Thus, the second stage of negotiations with the participation of the Ministers of the Provisional Government A. Kerensky, M. Tereshchenko and

³⁷ С. ЧОРНИЙ, *Національний склад населення України в ХХ сторіччі. Довідник*, К. (ДНВП “Картографія”) 2001, с. 28–31.

³⁸ See: І.С. ІВАНОВА, *Крим в політиці Української Центральної Ради щодо визначення та формування території України*, Ученые записки Таврического национального университета им. В. И. Вернадского. Серия: “Юридические науки”, т. 26(65) (2013), № 2, ч. 1, с. 39–40.

³⁹ *Український національно-визвольний рух. Березень – листопад 1917 року: Документи і матеріали*, упоряд.: В. ВЕРСТЮК (керівник) та ін., К. (Вид-во імені Олени Теліги) 2003, с. 256.

⁴⁰ І.С. ІВАНОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 41.

I. Tsereteli took place in Kyiv. One of the negotiation issues was the issue of defining the ethnographic boundaries of Ukraine. At the same time, representatives of the Provisional Government in Kyiv *de facto* recognized the Tavria province as a part of the Ukrainian ethnographic territory⁴¹, and therefore also in the Ukrainian autonomy.

The Ukrainian national movement that was unfolded in the Crimea also raised the issue of the Crimea's joining Ukraine. Most sailors and officers of the Black Sea Fleet, based in Sevastopol, were made up of ethnic Ukrainians. Already in March 1917, the "Kobzar" group organized a meeting of Ukrainian sailors, at which the Sevastopol Ukrainian community was formed, headed by V. Liashchenko. Subsequently, the Social-Revolutionary Black Sea community began to work. The second meeting of the Ukrainian Black Sea Community, held in early April of the same year, called for Russia's proclamation of a democratic republic, giving Ukraine broad autonomy within it⁴². At that time, the initiative was for the military and already at the first Military Congress held in Kyiv on May 18–25, delegates recognized that the Black Sea Fleet should belong to Ukraine⁴³. Thus, on June 26, 1917, at the Fifth Session of the Central Rada, the Chairman of the Sevastopol Ukrainian Community, V. Liashchenko, called for special attention to be paid to the Black Sea and the Black Sea Ukrainian communities⁴⁴. In all cities of the Crimea centers of Ukrainian political parties began to emerge, in their programs they raised issues such as the right of each nation for self-determination⁴⁵.

Therefore, despite the discussion on the incorporating the Crimea into Ukraine, in whole or in part, the representative of the Tavria province became Yu. Dezhur-Zhurov⁴⁶ (although it had been planned to include

⁴¹ О.Б. Кудлай, *Переговори Центральної Ради і представників Тимчасового Уряду (28–30 червня 1917 р.)*, Український історичний журнал, 6 (1999): 50.

⁴² А. ІВАНЕЦЬ, *Кримський вектор політики Української Центральної Ради*, Культура народів Причорномор'я, 3 (Сімферополь 1998): 144; В. СЕРГІЙЧУК, *Op. cit.*, с. 80.

⁴³ А. РУСНАЧЕНКО, *Нариси новітньої історії України*, К. 2017, кн. 1, с. 65.

⁴⁴ *Українська Центральна Рада: Документи і матеріали. У двох томах*, т. 1: 4 березня – 9 грудня 1917 р., упоряд.: В. Ф. ВЕРСТЮК (керівник) та ін., К. (Наукова Думка) 1996, с. 66; І.С. ІВАНОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 40.

⁴⁵ С. КУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 106.

⁴⁶ *Українська Центральна Рада: Документи і матеріали...*, т. 1, с. 66.

three representatives of the Tavria province). Thus, *de facto* and *de jure*, the Central Rada recognized the Crimea as part of its jurisdiction.

However, the position of the Provisional Government was not as straightforward. No official acts were signed in Kyiv during the negotiations with the General Secretariat. The position of Secretary General V. Vynnychenko was also unclear. In his report at a meeting of the Central Rada on July 1st, 1917, on the results of negotiations with the Provisional Government, he noted only 10 provinces as indisputably Ukrainian, as of the other ones, they, according to V. Vynnychenko, needed to be investigated⁴⁷. Apparently, by the latter he meant Tavria province. This ambiguous position was reflected in the main documents – the first Universals of the Central Rada, respectively, the I on June 10th and the II on July 3rd, 1917.

It was not until August 4th that the Provisional Government officially decided on the boundaries of the competence of the General Secretariat. They included the Kyiv, Volyn, Podil, Poltava and most of the Chernihiv provinces⁴⁸. The exclusion of Tavria, the east and the south of Ukraine from the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian government was explained by economic factors, because in that region “all Donetsk coal and Kryvyi Rih iron ore basin and all metallurgical plants of southern Russia” were located⁴⁹. It was this part of the Ukrainian lands that created the material base for the modernization of the economy of the Russian Empire. The same factor contributed to increased assimilation processes for the benefit of the Russian nation in Eastern and Southern Ukraine⁵⁰. The famous Ukrainian figure Ievhen Chykalenko in September 1917 emphasized that such Ukrainian cities as Odessa, Kherson, Rostov and Sevastopol “will remain Russian for a very long time, because Jews and Armenians, together with our «Malorosy (little Russians)» will strongly defend the russification of these cities and will oppose their ukrainization”⁵¹.

⁴⁷ Українська Центральна Рада: Документи і матеріали..., т. 1, с. 152.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, с. 214.

⁴⁹ І.С. ІВАНОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 42.

⁵⁰ А. РУСНАЧЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, кн. 1, с. 37–38.

⁵¹ ЄВГЕН ЧИКАЛЕНКО. ПЕТРО СТЕБНИЦЬКИЙ, *Листування 1901–1922 років*, К. (Темпора) 2008, с. 506.

In Ukraine, the Provisional Government's instruction was seen as limiting the territory of autonomy. It is noteworthy that at a meeting of the Central Rada on August 9th, 1917, the representative of the Crimea Khrystych protested against the "annexation of the Taurian lands by the Provisional Government"⁵². However, despite the protest, 227 members of the Council voted in favour of the resolution, against were only 16, although the total number of members was 798⁵³. However, the leadership of the Central Rada, in fact, the Small Rada considered itself representative of all Ukraine, including the Crimea. Therefore, on August 8th, the mandate commission confirmed the powers of delegates from the Tavria province in the same number of 3 representatives⁵⁴.

The Bolshevik coup in Petrograd on October 25th, 1917, radically changed the policy of the Central Rada. Immediately after the coup, the Central Rada established a Committee for the Protection of the Revolution, whose power extended onto the Tavria province⁵⁵. The overthrowing of the Provisional Government provided the Central Rada with the legal basis to abolish the instruction on August 3rd and to extend its authority onto all Ukrainian territory. The corresponding decision was made at the meeting of the Council on October 31st. The power of the Central Council and the General Secretariat was to extend only to the mainland of Tavria, with the exception of the Crimea⁵⁶. These territorial boundaries were reiterated in the Secretariat General's notice to the Ukrainian people on November 3rd and at the Universal III of the Central Rada on November 7th, 1917⁵⁷. The Universal III actually proclaimed the formation of a separate state – the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR). Accordingly, the territories of the republic were determined by lands inhabited mainly by Ukrainians, despite the fact that from an economic point of view the Crimea constituted the whole with the mainland of Ukraine. The same borders, without Crimea, were de-

⁵² *Українська Центральна Рада: Документи і матеріали...*, т. 1, с. 247; І.С. ІВАНОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 42.

⁵³ І.С. ІВАНОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 42.

⁵⁴ *Українська Центральна Рада: Документи і матеріали...*, т. 1, с. 233.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, с. 364–365.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, с. 379.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, с. 391, 400.

fined in the draft Constitution of the UNR in 1918⁵⁸. Thus, at that time, ethnicity was decisive in determining boundaries. In fact, the Crimean issue remained open. However, despite such delimitation of Ukraine, on November 13th, 1917, representatives of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars formed a joint Crimean Revolutionary Headquarters.

The unresolved Crimean issue as a legal conflict first emerged during the signing of the Brest Peace Treaty with the Central Powers. In defining the boundaries of the UNR, the Ukrainian delegation did not mention the Crimea. At the same time, on the maps of the states of the Fourth Union, the Crimea was already designated as the territory of Ukraine⁵⁹. At the time, the Russian Bolshevik government also recognized the Crimea as part of Ukraine⁶⁰. Under such circumstances, ignoring the Crimean issue was a fatal mistake of the Central Rada. It was not until the spring of 1918 that the Central Rada began to view the Crimea as an integral part of the territory of Ukraine. Thus, on April 22nd, 1918 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed in his telegramme the Ukrainian Ambassador in Germany V. Sevriuk about Ukrainian-German contradictions on the Crimea, emphasized the inadmissibility of German troops entering the Crimea, and announced the preparation of normalizing the Ukrainian borders, including the Crimea. A similar stance on the Crimea, as an integral part of the UNR, was expressed by the UNR ambassador to Turkey, M. Levytsky⁶¹, in a conversation with the Grand Vizier. The Ukrainian ambassador received support from Istanbul, which did not want a Muslim state to be formed in which the Crimean Tatars would not form the majority⁶². Thus, replying to the note of Moscow's protest to Berlin for occupation the Crimea by the German troops, Berlin stated that belonging of the Crimea to Ukraine or Russia should be the subject of Ukrainian-Russian negotiations. At the same time, Berlin reminded Kyiv that the Universal III had rejected

⁵⁸ *Українська Центральна Рада: Документи і матеріали. У двох томах*, т. 2: 10 грудня 1917 р. – 29 квітня 1918 р., упоряд.: В. Ф. ВЕРСТЮК (керівник) та ін., К. (Наукова Думка) 1997, с. 5.

⁵⁹ А. ІВАНЕЦЬ, *Кримський вектор політики Української Центральної Ради*, с. 144.

⁶⁰ *Українська Центральна Рада: Документи і матеріали...*, т. 2, с. 167.

⁶¹ І.С. ІВАНОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 44–45.

⁶² А. РУСНАЧЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, кн. 1, с. 116.

the Crimea as its territory⁶³. Therefore, Ukraine was forced to relocate Bolbachan's regiment from the Crimea to the Melitopol district⁶⁴.

However, on the day of receiving the said telegramme from Turkey by M. Levytsky in Kyiv, a hetman's coup took place and Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky came to power. Concerning the Crimean issue, the policy of the Hetman and the government of the Ukrainian State in general was a continuation of the relevant policy of the Central Rada, in which the succession of the Ukrainian state-building position during the Ukrainian Revolution was clearly revealed.

In its policy of defining Ukraine's borders, the Hetman relied not on an ethnic approach but on a territorial-state approach, which envisaged the inclusion of all Crimea and the Kuban into the Ukrainian State⁶⁵. Within a week of coming to power, Skoropadsky addressed the issue of the accession of the Crimea, and ordered the government to economically justify the need for the accession of the Crimea to Ukraine⁶⁶. However, in dealing with the Crimean issue, the Hetman had to immediately confront the German allies. On May 1st, 1918 the Crimea was fully occupied by German troops. However, the German command did not in any way coordinate its actions with the Ukrainian government. Hetman Skoropadsky said: "I do not know the plans of the Germans, in any case, with the combination available, the Germans do not mind establishing themselves there. Turkey with the Tatars also reaches out to the Crimea, but Ukraine cannot live without owning the Crimea, it will be some torso without legs. The Crimea must belong to Ukraine, on what terms, whether it be complete merging or broad autonomy, the latter should depend on the wishes of the Crimeans themselves, but we need to be fully protected from hostile actions by the Crimea. In economic terms, the Crimea cannot actually exist without us"⁶⁷. As a mi-

⁶³ С. Кульчицький, Л. Якубова, *Op. cit.*, с. 126.

⁶⁴ Д. Дорошенко, *Історія України 1917–1923 рр.*, Нью-Йорк 1954, т. 1: *Доба Центральної Ради*, с. 381.

⁶⁵ А. Іванець, *Кримський вектор політики Павла Скоропадського: новий підхід чи наслідування Центральної Ради?*, Студії з архівної справи та документознавства, 5 (1999): 88.

⁶⁶ Т. Бикова, *Уряди Криму (1917–1921 рр.). Документи*, Уряди України у ХХ ст., К. 2001, с. 269.

⁶⁷ П. Скоропадський, *Спогади*, К.; Філадельфія 1995, с. 262.

litary man, P. Skoropadsky was well aware of the importance for Ukraine's defense capability of the Black Sea Fleet based in Sevastopol.

On the issue of belonging of the Crimea to Ukraine, P. Skoropadsky entered into negotiations with the German command in Ukraine, and on May 10th, 1918 sent a note to the German government in Berlin on the need to subordinate the Crimea. At the same time, the issue of the accession of the Crimea was raised at a meeting of the Government of Ukraine on May 7th, 1918. As a result, the Crimean administration of the Ukrainian State was created, the first representative of which was appointed on May 21st by Rear Admiral M. Ostrogradsky⁶⁸.

However, the Germans sought to use the Crimea for their own strategic purposes. As Andriy Ivanets noted, "the Crimea was regarded by Germany as one of the important footholds for a possible strike on the Asian colonies of Britain. If this plan is successful, despite the unfavorable situation on the Western Front, Germany could count on honourable peace"⁶⁹. The Universal III of the Central Rada, which, as noted, determined the state borders of Ukraine without the Crimea, contributed to the German counteraction to Skoropadsky's Crimean policy. The Government of Ukraine had to resort to a variety of diplomatic tricks to interpret the provisions of the Universal in its favour. At the same time, Ukraine pursued the full incorporation of the Crimea into the state or the autonomous status of the peninsula within Ukraine.

In their turn, the Germans also sought to establish German autonomy in the Crimea based on local German colonists. At the German congress in May 1918 it was decided to create the German Black Sea region⁷⁰. Over time, German autonomy in the Crimea was planned to join Ukraine, but instead Kyiv was to help German colonists from other regions relocate to the Crimea. However, Berlin rejected the project, saying that "the formation of a state of German colonists in the Crimea under a protectorate would be the basis for strengthening pro-Russian sympathies on the one hand and complicating relations with Turkey on the other; that is why the Crimea had to join the Ukrainian State, which would guarantee the rights of the German people on the peninsula"⁷¹.

⁶⁸ А. ІВАНЕЦЬ, *Кримський вектор політики Павла Скоропадського...*, с. 88.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, с. 89.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ С. КУЛЬЧИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 134.

At the same time, the Crimean Tatar national movement, as well as the Bolshevik and Russian White Guards, were gaining momentum in the Crimea. Even before the First World War, Crimean Tatar activists began to move from the Ottoman Empire to the Crimea. The outbreak of war did not stop this relocation. Just then, in 1914, Crimean Tatar leaders such as Noman Çelebicihan and Jafar Seydamet arrived to the Crimea⁷². With the beginning of the Russian Revolution, the Temporary Crimean-Muslim Executive Committee was formed in the Crimea in March 1917, and in July 1917, the first Crimean Tatar political party, the Milliyy Firqa (People's Party), was formed⁷³.

At the very beginning of the unfolding of the revolutionary events in the Crimea, contact was established between Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar organizations, which contributed to the Central Council's rejection of its claims as for the Crimea. The Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar movements at that time combined opposition to the Provisional Government in St. Petersburg. That is why, during the negotiations on July 11th in the Interim Government delegation with the General Secretariat in Kyiv, I. Tsereteli insisted that the Central Council did not recognize and support national competitions, in particular autonomous, of other peoples of the Russian Empire⁷⁴. However, in August 1917, the leaders of the Crimean Tatars, J. Seydamet and A. Ozenbaşlı, arrived to Kyiv. They had a meeting with the Chairman of the Central Rada M. Hrushevsky, the Prime Minister of the UNR Government V. Vynnychenko, the Military Secretary S. Petliura and the Secretary for International Affairs O. Shulhin. At this meeting, the Crimean Tatar delegation submitted a memorandum on the autonomy of the Crimea in future Ukraine. Ukrainian leaders have recognized Crimean Tatars as the main subject of self-determination in the Crimea⁷⁵. On September 8–15th, 1917, the Central Rada convened a backgammon congress in Kyiv, attended by 10 delegates of the Crimean Tatar delegation, which became an important point in the relationship between Ukrainians and Crimean

⁷² П.-Р. МАГОЧІЙ, *Крим: наша благословенна земля*, пер. з англ. О. Сидорчука та Н. Кушко, У. (Вид-во В. Падяка) 2014, с. 89.

⁷³ А. РУСНАЧЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, кн. 1, с. 115.

⁷⁴ О. Б. КУДЛАЙ, *Op. cit.*, с. 49.

⁷⁵ С. КУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 108.

Tatars. This congress “became a kind of impetus for the politicization and organization of the Crimean Tatar movement”⁷⁶.

The Bolshevik coup in Petrograd revived the activity of the Crimean Tatar movement. The Crimean Tatars held a Kurultai in November 1917, which established the Crimean Tatar government, the Directory headed by Çelebicihan and Seydamet. Representatives of Ukrainian parties, organizations and the Central Rada in the Crimea supported the Crimean Tatars, which made it possible for the Muslim Executive Committee to regain the Khan’s palace in Bakhchysarai. And on December 25th of the same year, the Constitution of the Crimean People’s Republic was adopted. Unfortunately, the relations between the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Crimean People’s Republic did not become regular⁷⁷. As Valentyna Piskun notes, “this is most likely due to the fact that both republics were in an evolutionary state of becoming state institutions, and therefore were more focused on their own internal national problems. Moreover, they had to be resolved in the face of military confrontation, increasing chaos and fierce political competition”⁷⁸.

On December 25th, 1917, the Bolsheviks set up a Soviet separatist government in Kharkiv. At the same time, they began to transfer to the Black Sea Fleet the Bolshevik sailors from the Baltic Fleet, who formed a Bolshevik revolutionary committee on the night of December 29th and proclaimed the usurpation of the flaw⁷⁹. Thus, in January 1918, the Bolsheviks defeated the Crimean Tatar Directory and thus the Crimean People’s Republic. The Russians killed Çelebicihan, one of the leaders of the Crimean Tatars and in March 1918 proclaimed the Bolshevik Soviet Socialist Republic of Tavrida on the Crimean peninsula, which existed for about a month. In April 1918 the Crimea was occupied by German and Ukrainian troops. On April 25th, the Crimean UNR troops occupied Simferopol, and on April 26th, Bakhchysarai. On

⁷⁶ В. ПІСКУН, *Українська Народна Республіка і Кримська Народна Республіка: від конфронтації до пошуку шляхів відродження та моделі співіснування* [у:] В. БРЕХУНЕНКО, В. ГРИБОВСЬКИЙ, Ю. МИЦИК, В. ПІСКУН, І. СИНЯК, І. ТАРАСЕНКО, *Між конфронтацією та взаємодією: українсько-кримські та українсько-ногайські стосунки в XVII – першій половині XX ст.*, за ред. В. БРЕХУНЕНКА, К. (ІУАД) 2018, с. 306.

⁷⁷ С. КУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 111–114; П.-Р. МАГОЧІЙ, *Op. cit.*, с. 91.

⁷⁸ В. ПІСКУН, *Op. cit.*, с. 300.

⁷⁹ С. КУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 117.

April 30th the Black Sea Fleet raised the blue-yellow flag and recognized the UNR⁸⁰. With the overthrow of the Bolsheviks, the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar national movements became more active in the Crimea. On May 11th, J. Seydamet returned to the Crimea to launch an independent Crimean Khanate⁸¹.

At this time, the Crimean Tatar movement focused on an ally of Germany – Turkey in foreign policy. This forced the German command and leaders of the Crimean Tatar movement to cooperate. In turn, this made the government of P. Skoropadsky to pay attention to the Crimean Tatar movement. Germany, as noted, implemented a dual policy as for Ukraine in the Crimea. On the one hand, under Brest agreements, it assisted Ukraine, on the other hand, the German administration sought under no circumstances to transfer the authority over the Crimea to Ukraine. For this purpose, the German command on June 5th, 1918, promoted the Lithuanian Tatar S. Sulkevych, known for his anti-Ukrainian policy to take the position of the Crimean prime minister. Thus, by his first act on June 6th of the same year, S. Sulkevych forbade the Crimean administrations to engage in any relations with the Government of Ukraine⁸². At the same time, Sulkevych considered only two perspectives for the Crimea: 1) creation of an independent the Crimean Tatar state and 2) the Crimea's joining Russia⁸³.

The sharp demarcation of Skoropadsky before the German administration forced the latter to delay the recognition of the Sulkevych's government, which happened only on June 25th. On the other hand, the German administration had to reassure the Hetman that it was a forced, temporary step and in the future, Germany would agree to the Crimea's joining Ukraine⁸⁴.

Skoropadsky's government was not satisfied with German assurances and by the end of June Ukraine had established a complete blockade of the Crimea⁸⁵. On the contrary to German command, Kyiv

⁸⁰ С. КУЛЬЧИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 124.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, с. 128.

⁸² А. ІВАНЕЦЬ, *Кримський вектор політики Павла Скоропадського...*, с. 89.

⁸³ Д. ДОНЦОВ, *Рік 1918*, К.; Торонто (Гомін України) 1954, с. 24.

⁸⁴ Д. ДОРОШЕНКО, *Мої спомини про недавнє минуле (1914–1918)*, Л. 1923, ч. 3, с. 36.

⁸⁵ А. РУСНАЧЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, кн. 1, с. 165.

subordinated the northern regions of the Crimea, including Perekop. For the final accession of the Crimea to Ukraine, an appropriate state body – the Committee of Steppe Ukraine – was created. The blockade put the Crimea on the brink of disaster and famine. Therefore, despite previous pretentious statements, the Sulkevych's government was forced to try to forge relations with Kyiv, but in vain. He also failed to win the recognition of Germany. Eventually in September, it forced the Crimean government to turn to Germany to mediate negotiations with Ukraine. At this time, Hetman visited Berlin, where he was received at the highest level. Hetman's visit helped to resolve the issue of organizing the Ukrainian army, transferring the authority over the Black Sea Fleet to Ukraine, accession the Crimea and the Kholmshchyna. So, on September 10th, 1918, Germany demanded from Sulkevych to start negotiations on the Crimea's joining Ukraine on an autonomous basis.

The Crimean government agreed to those conditions and the Crimean delegation led by the Minister of Justice A. Akhmatovych arrived to Kyiv in late September. The Ukrainian delegation was headed by Prime Minister F. Lyzohub, Germany was represented by Prince H. Reis. During the negotiations on October 5th, 1918, Ukraine presented the conditions of the Crimea's joining Ukraine:

1. The Crimea joins Ukraine on the rights of autonomy under the sole authority of the Hetman.
2. The subjects of the Ukrainian state and the Crimea have the same rights.
3. The international policy, army and navy management belong to Kyiv.
4. The Crimean Army is formed on a territorial basis and is stationed in the Crimea in peacetime.
5. The Crimea has an autonomous government that works within the defined competencies.
6. Local laws come into force under Hetman's signature.
7. Hetman approves members of the Crimean government.
8. Customs borders are common across Ukraine.
9. The Ukrainian state shall bear all the expenses related to the maintenance of the army and navy, railways, post offices, telegraph and the like.

Instead, the Crimean delegation offered to unify the Crimea with Ukraine on a federal basis, but Kyiv categorically rejected the proposal. At that time, the negotiations stopped, but already on October 12th, the Crimean delegation accepted all the conditions of Ukraine, it only asked to postpone the signing of the agreement on the Crimea's joining Ukraine until consideration of this act by Kurultai and other Crimean national organizations⁸⁶. However, with the surrender of Germany, the resignation of Skoropadsky and the Russian occupation of the Crimea, this perspective had no longer any sense.

The UNR Directory on the Crimea continued the policy of the Central Rada and Hetman Skoropadsky. At the Paris Peace Conference, in November 1919 – January 1920, the Ukrainian delegation sought to gain international recognition of Ukraine and assist it in confronting Russia, the delegation included the Crimea and the Kuban to Ukraine (see map).

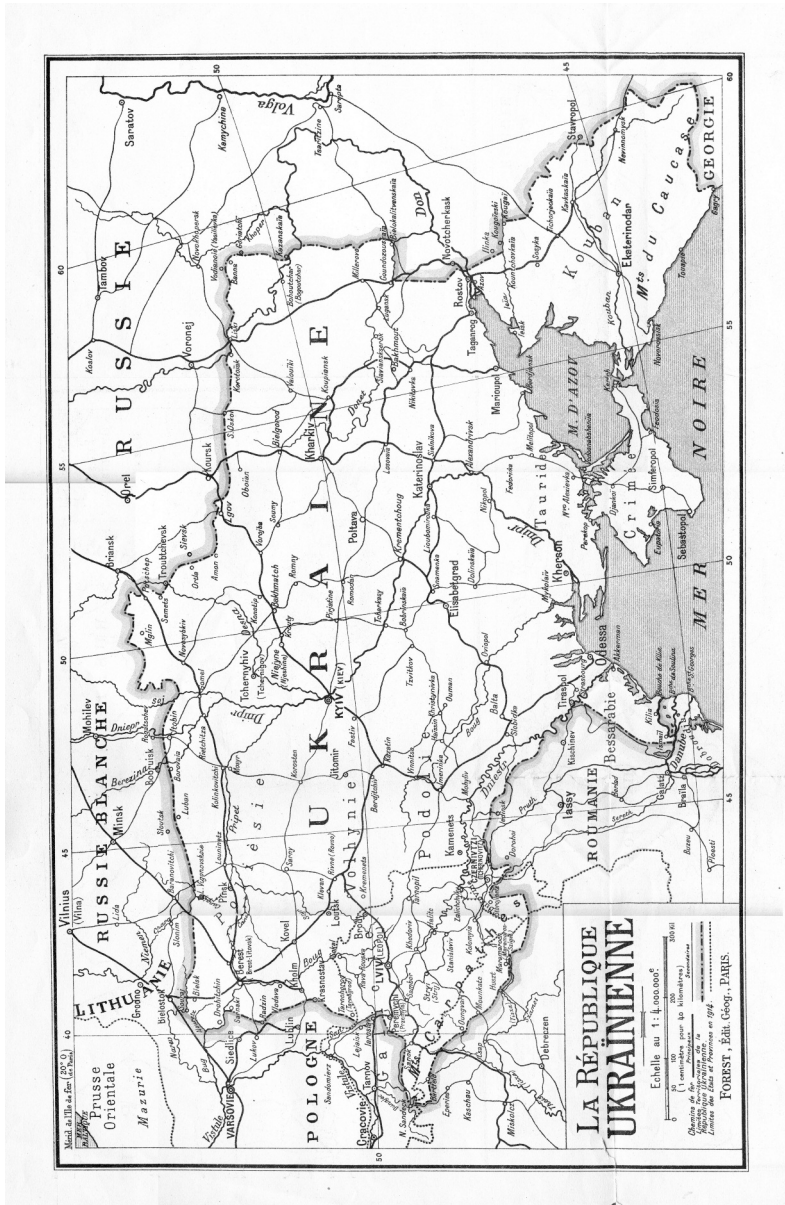
With the departure of the Germans, under agreements with the Entente, during 1919–1920 the Crimea was under the authority of the White Army. The Crimean government, led by Karaite Solomon Crimea, fully supported the idea of a united Russia, effectively siding with the White Army. However, this did not prevent Denikin from carrying out violent repression against Crimean Tatar activists in May 1919⁸⁷. And the White Guard regime did not last long, by the end of 1920 the Crimea was fully occupied by Bolshevik Russia. For some times the Bolsheviks in the Crimea were opposed by insurgent units united into the Green Army. The Greens have established links with the rebels of Kherson and Makhno, with whom they coordinated their actions in the fight against the Bolsheviks⁸⁸.

In October 1918, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (Central Committee of the RCP (b)) transferred the authority over the Crimean Party Organization to the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine (CP(b)U), which administered the Crimean organization through the Odessa Branch of the For-

⁸⁶ С. КУЛЬЧИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 136–138.

⁸⁷ П.-Р. МАГОЧІЙ, *Op. cit.*, с. 96.

⁸⁸ А. РУСНАЧЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, кн. 1, с. 398.



Map of Ukraine, submitted by the Ukrainian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference (1919)

eign Bureau of the Central Committee of the CP(b)⁸⁹. At first, in relation to the status of the Crimea, Moscow came out with purely economic needs and political expediency. Thus, Moscow included the Crimean districts of the Tavria province into the Soviet Ukraine⁹⁰.

The issue of the status of the Crimea was considered on April 23rd, 1919, at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP(b), which was attended personally by V. Lenin and J. Stalin. As a result, it was decided:

1. Recognize the formation of the Crimean Soviet Republic as desirable.

2. Ask Comrade Rakovsky about the candidates from the Central Committee of the Communist Party(b)U for the post of chairman of the Crimean Radnarkom⁹¹.

Even before, on February 25th, 1919, an “Interagency meeting on the issue of the Gomel province and the establishment of borders with Ukraine” took place. In defining the boundaries, the commission took into account the ethnicity and *de facto* adopted the decision of the Universal III of the Central Rada as its decision. Thus, starting from Tavria province only the continental counties were recognized as Ukrainian, the border of Soviet Ukraine with the Crimea had to be at the Perekopskop Isthmus. The decision of the Commission formed the basis of the Treaty of Soviet Ukraine on the border with the RSFSR, which, on the Ukrainian side, was approved by the Council of People’s Commissars on March 10th, 1919⁹².

The status of the Bolshevik Crimea was defined by the decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) on May 28th, 1919. According to this decision, although proclaimed an independent state, it had to fully obey Moscow, and in some cases had to respect the Kharkiv Soviet government. According to the researchers, “the proclamation of an independent Crimean Soviet Republic was explained by

⁸⁹ С. Кульчицький, Л. Якубова, *Op. cit.*, с. 146.

⁹⁰ Г. Єфіменко, *Входження Криму до складу Радянської України в 1920 р.: нереалізований проект*, Крим від античності до сьогодення: Історичні студії, відп. ред. В. Смолий, К. (Інститут історії України НАН України) 2014, с. 411–412.

⁹¹ П. Гарчев, В. Овод, *Про створення Кримської Радянської Республіки*, Український історичний журнал, 4 (1992): 24.

⁹² Г. Єфіменко, *Op. cit.*, с. 413–414.

one motive – an attempt to avoid repeated intervention by the Entente countries”⁹³. However, this Crimean Soviet Republic only existed for two months when it was defeated by P. Wrangel’s White Guard troops.

With the final assertion of the Bolshevik authorities in the Crimea in November 1920, the issue of the status of the Crimea arose again. And only a year later, on October 18th, 1921, the Central Executive Committee and the RNA of the RSFSR adopted a resolution “On the Autonomy of the Crimean Soviet Socialist Republic”, according to which the Crimea became autonomous in Russia, despite the fact that the Bolsheviks had already recognized that the Crimea was not a constituent of southern Ukraine⁹⁴. Thus, as Stanislav Kulchytsky and Larisa Yakubova noted, “by drowning the Crimea in the blood of their political enemies, the Kremlin ended the epic national-liberation contest”⁹⁵ of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars on the peninsula.

However, granting the Crimea autonomy was certainly a sham, especially considering the total dominance of the Russians on the peninsula. Crimean autonomy was a strategic Kremlin maneuver in international policy. That is why in the Crimean constitutions, adopted on November 10th, 1921, the word “autonomous” was not used. The constitution proclaimed the Crimean Socialist Soviet Republic, which was reflected on all state symbols. Such external independence was driven by the idea of exporting the revolution to the East through Crimea. Of course, “both V. Lenin and J. Stalin did not intend to give the Taurian province to Soviet Ukraine in its full governance. Taking the authority over the Crimea from Ukraine was inappropriate from an economic point of view, but it did not bother the leaders of Russian communism. They sought to spread the Communist Revolution to the East and hoped that at least for Turkey, born in the Ottoman Empire, with their help, the Crimea would become a model for the establishment of Soviet-style power. Therefore, the Crimea within the borders of the RSFSR had to become a republic, even a republic-state, since its autonomous status, that is, non-state status was really concealed”⁹⁶.

⁹³ С. Кульчицький, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 153.

⁹⁴ П. ГАРЧЕВ, Л. КОНОНЕНКО, М. МАКСИМЕНКО, *Республіка Тавриди*, К. 1990, с. 45; Г. ЄФІМЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, с. 417.

⁹⁵ С. Кульчицький, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 176.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, с. 212.

In the 1920s, Moscow started the policy of indigenization, the purpose of which was different in different regions. In the Crimea, the policy of indigenization in fact became the policy of Russification. Thus, in 1927, almost 94 % of Crimean Russians received education in their native language, the situation was similar to Crimean Tatars, almost 90 % of whom were able to receive education in their mother tongue, while only 1.9 % of Crimean Ukrainians attended schools with Ukrainian language of teaching, instead, almost 97 % of them attended Russian-speaking schools⁹⁷. Such educational policies distorted the national identity of the population. Therefore, in 1939 in the Crimea were 49.5 % Russians, 19.4 % Tatars and only 13.7 % Ukrainians. At that time, Jews (5.8 %) and Germans (4.6 %) could be distinguished from other large ethnic groups⁹⁸.

During the Nazi occupation, during the Second World War, the Crimea was included in the Reich Commissariat of Ukraine, with its capital in Rivne, led by Reich Commissar Erich Koch. As part of the Reich Commissariat, a general district was created, covering the Crimea, Kherson and Zaporizhia regions of Ukraine⁹⁹. Although Hitler planned to turn the Crimea into a purely German colony of Gothenland (the land of Goths), Simferopol was to be renamed Gothenburg and Sevastopol to Teodorichshafen¹⁰⁰. On the other hand, at the beginning of the war, the Crimean units of the Red Army were subordinate to the staff of the Odessa military district, during the war Moscow subordinated the Crimean guerrilla units to the headquarters of the guerrilla movement of Ukraine, and the liberation of the Crimea was entrusted to the 4th Ukrainian Front¹⁰¹.

Nazi occupation of the Crimea lasted until May 12th, 1944. On May 11th J. Stalin signed a decision to evict all Crimean Tatars outside

⁹⁷ *Национальная политика ВКП(б) в цифрах*, Москва 1930, с. 279.

⁹⁸ С. Кульчицький, Л. Якубова, *Op. cit.*, с. 237.

⁹⁹ В. Косик, *Україна і Німеччина у Другій світовій війні*, Париж, Нью-Йорк, Л. 1993, с. 515.

¹⁰⁰ I. FLEISCHHAUER, *Das Dritte Reich und die Deutschen in der Sowjetunion*, Stuttgart 1983, S. 76.

¹⁰¹ О. Лисенко, *Крим у період Другої світової війни: регіональний вимір*, Крим від античності до сьогодення: Історичні студії, відп. ред. В. Смолий, К. (Інститут історії України НАН України) 2014, с. 443–450.

the peninsula, which began a week later on May 18th, when NKVD troops began deportation of the Crimean Tatar population to Central Asia, 188,000 people in total. Already at the beginning of the war, 50,000 German colonists were evicted from the Crimea, along with the Crimean Tatars. After the occupation by the Soviet troops 14,4 thousand Greeks, 12 thousand Bulgarians, 11,3 thousand Armenians, as well as 1531 Greek, 105 Turkey and 16 Iraq citizens were deported from the peninsula. In total, almost 300,000 people were deported¹⁰². In addition to the next, dramatic change in the ethnic composition of the peninsula, the names of settlements from Crimean Tatar were renamed into Russian. The Crimea was to become a purely Russian land. By 1959, the proportion of Russians was 71 %, Ukrainians – 22 %. Such radical ethnic cleansing gave Moscow grounds on June 30th, 1945 to eliminate Crimean autonomy and turn it into an area of Russia¹⁰³. On the place of the deported inhabitants of the Crimea, 62 thousand peasants from Russia and Ukraine, including from Kyiv, Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr and Podilsk regions, were relocated voluntarily to the peninsula¹⁰⁴. At the same time, 55 % of immigrants from the Russian regions left the peninsula in the first months of their residence in 1944–1945¹⁰⁵.

Thus, the entire Crimean Tatar national movement concentrated outside the Crimea. As early as in the interwar period, a dialogue between Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar leaders within the Promethean Movement was initiated in emigration in Europe. With the assistance of the Polish Government, on October 29th, 1929, negotiations took place in Warsaw between the UNR and the Crimea, in which the main issue was the settlement of relations between Ukraine and the Crimea. No official documents were signed at the time. Only from a letter by J. Seydamet to Colonel Schatzel dated to January 24th, 1930, is it known that in negotiations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UNR O. Shulhin, an agreement was reached on the following principles:

1. Full recognition of Crimean independence and mutual assistance against Russian elements in the Crimea.

¹⁰² А. Козицький, *Геноцид та політика масового винищення цивільного населення у ХХ ст.*, Л. 2012, с. 371–372; О. Лисенко, *Op. cit.*, с. 452–453.

¹⁰³ С. Кульницький, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 244; П.-Р. МАГОЧІЙ, *Op. cit.*, с. 129.

¹⁰⁴ С. КУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 245.

¹⁰⁵ О. ЛИСЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, с. 454.

2. The relations between the two parties should be settled in the future according to a treaty with international status¹⁰⁶. In fact, the question was to determine the conditions for the accession of the Crimea as an autonomous entity into Ukraine and the limits of that autonomy. However, the Crimea joined Ukraine before Ukraine gained independence.

Transfer of the Crimean region of the RSFSR to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954

Officially, at the request of Ukraine itself, in honour of the 300th anniversary of the “reunification of Ukraine with Russia” in 1954, Moscow transferred the Crimean region to Soviet Ukraine. The resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on February 13th, 1954 decided: “To request the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to transfer the Crimean region from the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic”. In response to the address of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on February 19th, 1954 adopted a decree “On the transfer of the Crimean region from the RSFSR to the USSR”¹⁰⁷. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR approved this decree by the law “On transfer of the Crimean region from the RSFSR to the USSR”. Accordingly, the Constitution of the USSR was amended: the Crimean region was removed from the Russian Federation, and was added to the list of regions of Ukraine. On June 2nd, 1954 the relevant amendments were made to the Constitution of the RSFSR, and on June 17th to the Constitution of the USSR¹⁰⁸. As you can see, Ukraine adopted the relevant acts shortly after their adoption by Russia. Obviously, the Ukrainian leadership was thus reassured of possible accusations of encroaching on “foreign” territories.

The reason for the transfer of the Crimea to Ukraine was 1) demographic catastrophe on the peninsula and 2) total economic destruc-

¹⁰⁶ В. ПІСКУН, *Op. cit.*, с. 315.

¹⁰⁷ *Крим в умовах суспільно-політичних трансформацій (1940–2015). Збірник документів і матеріалів*, с. 167.

¹⁰⁸ О. КОПИЛЕНКО, *Крим як невід’ємна частина України: правові аспекти*, Крим від античності до сьогодення: Історичні студії, відп. ред. В. СМОЛІЙ, К. (Інститут історії України НАН України) 2014, с. 602.

tion. The solution to these issues was transmitted from Russia to Ukraine. On the other hand, Moscow in every way hindered the Ukrainisation of the peninsula, turning it into a bridgehead for Russian influence in Ukraine.

As at 1954, the economy of the Crimea by all indicators did not reach the level of 1940. There was no restoration of cultural establishments, in an extremely negative state was provision of the population with treatment, education, especially preschool institutions. The reconstruction of Crimean sanatorium and resort facilities was very slow. The transport system remained unsatisfactory, with some cities, such as Alushta and Yevpatoria, with no sewage system at all, while in others it was of low-power, causing significant pollution of the sea by impurities. The water supply of the peninsula was catastrophic.

One of the factors of stagnation of the recovery from the economic crisis of the Crimea was the administration of the region from Moscow, with its natural economic unity with Ukraine.

Certainly, the direct participation of the First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee M. Khrushchev in the transfer of the Crimea to Ukraine can be traced. However, it was not a gift or an arbitrary decision, even if it was seen as an element of the struggle against Ukrainian nationalism¹⁰⁹. Apparently, the impetus for the decision to transfer the Crimea to Ukraine apparently became Khrushchev's spontaneous trip to the Crimean region in 1953.

In October 1953, M. Khrushchev, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, left for vacations to the Crimea, where he stayed at the Vorontsov Palace. One day he made the spontaneous decision to visit the steppe of the Crimea. As the journalist of the 'Komsomolskaya Pravda' newspaper Alexei Adzhubei mentioned, Bakhchysarai made the first negative impression on the Secretary-General: "The palace, which turned out to be stone ruins, was empty. The famous Fountain of Tears, sung by Pushkin, was covered with deep scabies. The fountains were dried up, they did not drip diamond streams of water, they did not even have the strength to cry.

¹⁰⁹ І. Лисяк-Рудницький, *Новий Переяслав* [у:] І. Лисяк-Рудницький, *Історичні есе*, т. 2, упоряд. Ф. Сисин, К. (Основи) 1994, с. 290.

There was still a terrible war here on the plateau. Along the roads there were broken tanks and cannons and everywhere, as far as one could see there were gray stone obelisks erected by military builders to commemorate their fallen brothers. And the land was also dry and overgrown with stiff weeds. There were empty villages, Tatar aulads. Their masters, sent by Stalin's evil will into the distant cold lands, lost all hope for returning".

Most of all, however, Khrushchev "was struck and upset by the displaced crowds who had somehow learnt about his trip.

A silent gray mass of people was blocking his road, and silently waited until the cars stopped. People unbearably long didn't start the conversation, allowing Khrushchev to start first. Subsequently, one question came up from the crowd, the second one and the third. About food, shelter, help. The majority of immigrants came from Russia, the Volga region, and the northern Russian regions.

I am writing now, «they came», but they shouted «we were forced» – the usual moaning of people who had lost hope for a better fate. There were also hysterical shouts from the crowd: «Potatoes aren't growing here, cabbage is fading». Suddenly, a quite sad phrase: «The bed-bugs feast on us». «Why have you come here?» – Khrushchev asked – and the crowd exhaled: «We were fooled»".

On the same day, Khrushchev flew to Kyiv and late in the evening at a dinner in the Mariinsky Palace urged the Ukrainian authorities to help revive the Crimea: "There Southerners are needed who loves gardens, corn, not potatoes"¹¹⁰.

Therefore, on February 5th, 1954, the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR adopted the resolution "On the transfer of the Crimean region from the RSFSR to the USSR". The expediency of such act was justified by the territorial closeness of the Crimea to Ukraine, the common economy and the close economic and cultural ties between the Crimea and Ukraine. The resolution ended with an appeal of the Russian government to the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR to consider the issue¹¹¹. From the Ukrainian side, the response to the actions of the Government

¹¹⁰ А. АДЖУБЕЙ, *Как Хрущев Крым Украине отдал. Воспоминания на заданную тему*, Новое время, 6(92) (1992): 20–21.

¹¹¹ С. КУЛЬНИЦКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 252.

and the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR and the USSR was the above-mentioned resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of February 13th, 1954. Officially, Ukraine regarded this act as a “generous, noble act of the brotherly Russian people”. The Bureau assured that “the Ukrainian people will, with a sense of deep satisfaction and passionate gratitude, accept the decision to transfer the Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR as a new vivid display of boundless trust and sincere love for the Russian people, a new testimony of an indestructible brotherly friend to the Ukrainian nations”. However, the real reasons for the transfer of the Crimea were well understood in Ukraine, so the Ukrainian leadership assured that “the Government of Ukraine will take care of the further development and prosperity of the Crimean economy”¹¹².

It is worth noting that transferring the Crimea to Ukraine the Union Center lost nothing, because Ukraine’s sovereignty in the USSR was fictitious, so *de facto* there was only a change of the administrative center, not the state, political jurisdiction, there was an elementary “transfer from one pocket to another” without changing of the owner. The “transfer of the Crimea” took place within one state, managed by one center. “Therefore, the decision to transfer the Crimea under Ukraine’s subordination did not provoke positive or negative emotions among the participants of the political process at that time. Emotions emerged only when a ghostly federation broke up along the line of constitutionally defined borders, when the union republics became independent states, when all leaders of post-Soviet Russia, who from their birth considered Russia as the entire Soviet Union, began to look at state borders, which had been historically formed, in a new way”¹¹³.

Thus, the transfer of the Crimea was not a gift, no act of good will of Khrushchev or Russia. However, for the sake of the general public, the Soviet leadership could not reveal the real cause of the act of transferring – the total socio-economic failure of its policy in the Crimea, which would be fundamentally contrary to Soviet propaganda. Therefore, the 300th anniversary of the “reunification” of Ukraine and Russia was the official reason.

¹¹² Крим в умовах суспільно-політичних трансформацій (1940–2015)..., с. 167.

¹¹³ С. КУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 251.

The transfer of the Crimea to Ukraine justified its purpose. In the following years, there was a steady increase in population, primarily due to resettlement from other regions of Ukraine, which contributed to the economic revival of the peninsula. During 1954–1990, Ukraine invested 30.765 million rubles in the development of the Crimean economy, which is about five times higher than the capital investment in other regions of Ukraine similar in terms of population and economy¹¹⁴. One of the biggest problems was the water supply of the peninsula, which was worsening every year due to population growth. As early as 1950, the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) and the Council of Ministers of the USSR decided to build the Crimean canal, which was supposed to supply Dnieper water to the peninsula. However, the canal construction began only in 1957, after the transfer of the Crimea to Ukraine and continued until 1971¹¹⁵. In addition to the canal construction, a whole system of reservoirs and water intakes was developed using local Crimean water. The success of the economic revival of the Crimea is evidenced by the fact that, in 1970, the level of industrial production of the peninsula increased by 10 times in comparison with the pre-war period, in 1954 it was 0.5. The largest industrial agglomerations arose around Kerch, Simferopol and Sevastopol, the latter almost completely was focused on the military-industrial complex.

The Ukrainian emigration did not approve of the transfer of the Crimea to Ukraine. The Ukrainian press in emigration mainly described the act as purely propaganda. An exemplary article in the newspaper “Ukrainian Voice” (New Ulm, Germany) of March 17th, 1954 wrote: “Ukraine, Crimea and Pereiaslav”. The author of the editorial expressed, though optimistic, at the same time, a cautious attitude towards the act of transferring the Crimea to Ukraine: “Although we are not glad about this act, we cannot deny that it can be of great importance for Ukraine at the same time. The Crimea does have close ties with Ukraine, and its economic development is linked to Ukrainian land. The fact that Moscow accessed it to the Ukrainian territory and acknowledged to the world (for other reasons) that it is territorially and economically owned by Ukraine, may someday be given to Ukraine as

¹¹⁴ С. Кульчицький, Л. Якубова, *Ор. cit.*, с. 258.

¹¹⁵ *Крим в умовах суспільно-політичних трансформацій (1940–2015)...*, с. 733.

an argument in a diplomatic world when Ukraine becomes a truly independent state”. I. Lysiak-Rudnytsky perceived the transfer of the Crimea to Ukraine in the same way as the new Pereiaslav¹¹⁶. However, well-known Ukrainian art scientist Volodymyr Sichynsky was quite optimistic about this act: “By accessing the Crimea to the USSR, the Soviet government returned to Ukraine an integral part of its state-political independence. This is due to current national relations in the Soviet empire, and even more so to the future one”¹¹⁷.

A more weighted position was taken by the UNR State Center in exile – Ukrainian National Council. In its Declaration, adopted at the III Session, March 6–12th, 1954, it stated its clear position on the undemocratic nature of the act: “Only the free expression of the will of the indigenous people of this region, who were there before the time of forced resettlement, will determine the fate and secure the better future of the Crimea. Secondly, the Kremlin’s hypocrisy is manifested precisely in the fact that the Moscow government, in solving the Crimean issue, did not even have the intention of returning to the homeland a forcibly displaced part of its population – the Tatars”¹¹⁸. Thus, the UNR State Center in exile remained true to the above-mentioned agreement between O. Shulhin and J. Seydamet on the status of the Crimea and its relations with Ukraine.

Closest to further reality, this act was identified by the newspaper “Canadian Scene”, which described it as the Moscow “Trojan Horse” in Ukraine. Indeed, immediately the Crimea became a kind of Russian bastion in Ukraine. The Russians were the only nation in the USSR whose homeland was the entire union, not just the RSFSR¹¹⁹. Soviet repression against the Ukrainian national movement in the Crimea had led to the fact that most Crimean Ukrainians have become angry with the Russians. As noted, this was facilitated by the education system. There were no Ukrainian schools outside the USSR, and in the Crimea they began to emerge, as well as the introduction of the Ukrainian lan-

¹¹⁶ І. Лисяк-Рудницький, *Op. cit.*, с. 273–292.

¹¹⁷ В. Січинський, *Крим. Історичний нарис*, Нью Йорк 1954, с. 31.

¹¹⁸ *Український парламентаризм на еміграції*, ред. В. Яблонський, К. (Видавництво імені Олени Теліги) 2012, с. 325.

¹¹⁹ А. Русначенко, *Op. cit.*, кн. 1, с. 10.

guage in all secondary schools only after 1954. However, only in 1957 the first school was opened in Simferopol with the Ukrainian language of teaching, and in 1958 there were only four of them in the Crimea. In the same year, the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR Government published the thesis “On Strengthening the Relationship of the School with Life and Further Development of the National Education System in the Country”, which recommended compulsory Russian language learning, instead of teaching national languages. As early as April 17th, 1959, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted the Law “On Strengthening the Relationship of School with Life and on the Further Development of the System of Public Education in the Ukrainian USSR”. As a consequence, in the following 1960/1961 academic year there were only three schools with the Ukrainian language of teaching for 930 students in total, and in 1970 – only one, and since 1971 the admission of pupils to the first class with the Ukrainian language of instruction stopped¹²⁰. Thus, the Crimea became the only fully Russian-speaking region of Ukraine, culturally detached, though still closely linked to it economically. Also, Russian propaganda begins to create Russian historical myths about the Crimea aimed at asserting Russian identity of the Crimea¹²¹.

Crimean question in the years of independence

With the liberalization of the political situation in the USSR with the death of Stalin, the Crimean Tatar national movement was revived, its main aim was obtaining the right to return to the historical homeland in the Crimea. The demands of the Crimean Tatars were supported by Ukrainian dissidents, the most active fighter for the rights of the Crimean Tatars was General P. Hryhorenko. With the deployment of perestroika for Gorbachev, the Soviet leadership began considering the issue of return of the Crimean Tatars to their historical homeland, creating a corresponding commission, first headed by A. Gromyko, and later by G. Ianaev. The demands of the Crimean Tatars were supported by the Ukrainian democratic forces. Thus, at its Constituent Congress

¹²⁰ Крим в умовах суспільно-політичних трансформацій (1940–2015)..., с. 316, 378.

¹²¹ See: Р. ДЕМЧУК, “Кримський міф” у контексті імперської парадигми Росії, Наш Крим = Our Crimea = Bizim Qırımımız, вип. I (2015): 19–33.

on September 8–10th, 1989 in Kyiv, the People's Movement of Ukraine appealed to the citizens of the republic to help the Crimean Tatars to regain their autonomy, culture, education, and, in fact, statehood¹²². Thus, under pressure from the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar public, the Moscow Commission of G. Ianaev was forced to formulate the demand for the revival of the Crimean autonomy within the USSR. The first official act was the resolution of the Government of the USSR on July 11th, 1990 “On the first priority measures to resolve the issues related to the return of the Crimean Tatars to the Crimean region”.

In practice, Crimean autonomy within the USSR was created not by the Crimean Tatar people or the Ukrainians but by the Russian-speaking population of the Crimea in February 1991, following the referendum held on January 20th, 1991 on the peninsula. This decision was significantly far from the decisions of the Soviet leadership. Formally, the issue of restoring the autonomy was raised by a resolution of the USSR Supreme Soviet on November 28th, 1989, “On the conclusions and proposals of the Commission on the Problems of the Soviet Germans and the Crimean Tatar People”. Although the Resolution was aimed at restoring the rights of the Crimean Tatar people, the act “would be in the interests of both Crimean Tatars and representatives of other nationalities who currently reside in the Crimea”¹²³. However, in practice, this idea was implemented by the Russian majority of the Crimea, who sought to “prevent the return of the Crimean Tatar people to their homeland”¹²⁴. Therefore, at the suggestion of Yu. Meshkov in April 1990, a committee was formed at the Crimean Regional Council to develop proposals on the status of the Crimea, on the proposal of which, in September of that year, the regular session of the Regional Council approved the committee's decision and decided to raise the status of the Crimea to the Autonomous Republic, which was put to the referendum on January 20th, 1991. The essence of the referendum was well understood by the leaders of the Crimean Tatar movement. The organization

¹²² Три дні вересня вісімдесят дев'ятого: Матеріали Установчого з'їзду Народного руху України за перебудову, К. 2000, с. 404.

¹²³ Депортовані кримські татари, болгари, вірмени, греки, німці: Збірник документів (1989–2002), К. 2003, с. 9.

¹²⁴ С. Кульницький, Л. Якубова, *Op. cit.*, с. 303.

of the Crimean Tatar national movement, headed by M. Dzhemilev, clearly stated that the referendum of the Russian-speaking population, who had been resettled to the Crimea after the deportation of the indigenous people, would be a gross violation of the rights of the Crimean Tatars and would have no legal force¹²⁵. However, the clear position of the Crimean Tatars was not taken into account by either the Union or the Ukrainian authorities. L. Kravchuk even refused to meet with a delegation of the Crimean Tatars who had arrived to Kyiv immediately. On February 12th, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR declared the referendum to be legally binding and adopted the law on the restoration of the Crimean ASSR within the USSR. In response, the USSR Supreme Soviet recognized the Crimean ASSR as part of the USSR by law on March 7th, and repealed the law of June 30th, 1946, “On the Transformation of the Crimean ASSR into the Crimean Region as part of the RSFSR”.

Crimean autonomy became a reality, however, it was created not to restore the rights of Crimean Tatars, but “to counteract the possible consequences of Tatars returning to the Crimea”. According to Stanislav Kulchytsky and Larisa Yakubova, “in Kyiv and Moscow, they equally calculated that the autonomy of the Russian-speaking population would strengthen the local authorities, which was determined to prevent the implementation of the requirements of the Crimean Tatars when they would return to their homeland, to create a national-territorial territory. Almost unanimous endorsement of the idea of autonomy by the Russian-speaking population of the peninsula was also not surprising. It was not about the Russians or the Ukrainians, but the Russian-speaking ones – a non-ethnic conglomerate of the population that dominated in the Crimea and consisted of displaced people ... who were easily nostalgic for times of relative prosperity”¹²⁶. However, the result of the referendum on December 1st, 1991 on the approval of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine on August 24th was unexpected: 54 % of Crimean voters, in particular, 57 % of Sevastopol citizens voted in favour of the Independence Act of Ukraine. The Crimea found itself in new realities – the independent Ukraine.

¹²⁵ С. КУЛЬЧИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 304.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, с. 305.

The Autonomous Republic of Crimea was approved in the Constitution of Ukraine in 1996. Only Sevastopol was allocated to a separate administrative unit and was subordinate directly to Kyiv. The Constitution of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in 1998 also recognized that Crimea was an integral part of Ukraine. Autonomy was defined as territorial, which was nonsense. Thus, the head of the mission of the Security and Cooperation Council in Europe, J. Lundwick, who visited the Crimea in March 1992, said: “What is this autonomy on a territorial basis? They say that there are representatives of 105 nations in the Crimea, so autonomy is for everyone. Then, with the same success, you can create autonomy in any region of the USSR. After all, the population was terribly mixed. More than 10 million Ukrainians, for example, still live in Russia. We are absolutely convinced that the Crimean Tatar national-territorial autonomy should be in the Crimea. Russians, Ukrainians, though far more than the Crimean Tatars, should get used to this situation”¹²⁷. At first, Ukrainian Crimean Tatar national movement was aimed at gaining national autonomy in the Crimea. However, despite the powerful Crimean Tatar movement, the Constitution of Ukraine did not clearly define the nature of the Crimean autonomy. In fact, this autonomy became territorial autonomy of the Russian-speaking population, inherently anti-state.

As early as November 19th, 1990, in the context of transformation processes in the USSR, after the proclamation of the Declarations of Sovereignty (RSFSR – June 12th, the USSR – July 16th), a treaty was concluded between the USSR and the RSFSR, according to which (Article 6), “High Contracting Parties recognize and respect the territorial integrity of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic within the borders currently existing within the USSR”¹²⁸. This was also repeated by Article 5 of the CIS Decree on December 8th, 1991¹²⁹. However, in practice, by the end of 1991, the Soviet leadership was not ready for the rapid collapse of the USSR. It had to react *post factum*. Therefore, in January 1992, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR questioned the constitutionality of the

¹²⁷ О. ПІЛАТ, *Права нації, права людини*, Голос України (19 березня 1992).

¹²⁸ *Відомості Верховної Ради*, 49 (1990): 637.

¹²⁹ О. КОПИЛЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, с. 604.

transfer of the Crimea in 1954. At the same time, the issue of war against Ukraine for the return of the Crimea was launched in the Russian press¹³⁰. Immediately the Kremlin begins to play the card of the declaration of independence of the Crimea, simultaneously putting pressure on Kyiv as for the jurisdiction of the Black Sea Fleet, it put Ukraine and Russia on the brink of war in the spring of 1992. Ukraine appealed to the norms of international law, in particular the Helsinki Final Act of the Security and Cooperation Council in Europe in 1975¹³¹. Thus, the issue was resolved, but already on July 9th, 1993, the Supreme Soviet of Russia adopted the resolution “On the status of the city of Sevastopol”, in which, recognizing the legal transfer of the Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954, did not recognize the transfer of Sevastopol as a city of central subordination. The resolution obliged the Council of Ministers of Russia to develop a programme for securing the status of the city of Sevastopol, the Central Bank of Russia should have provided appropriate funding, and the corresponding Committee of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation – to prepare a draft law on the constitution of the federal status of the city of Sevastopol. The cynicism of the resolution was intensified by a proposal to the Government of Ukraine to withdraw Ukrainian units from the city, with the aim of “preventing political tension”¹³². At the same time, in the preparatory materials, the Russians called for the Universal III of the Central Rada, which, as it was shown, left Tavria province without the Crimea in Ukraine¹³³. In response, on July 14th, 1993, the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine adopted the resolution “On the resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation «On the status of the city of Sevastopol», which recognized the Russian resolution as an aggressive act against Ukraine. Ukraine addressed the UN Security Council, whose chairman in his statement on July 20th, 1993 endorsed Ukraine’s position aimed

¹³⁰ See, for example: *Полуостров раздора. Россия – Украина*, Новое время, 6(92) (1992): 20.

¹³¹ О. ЛюбоVECЬ, *Українсько-російські суперечності щодо визначення статусу Криму та м. Севастополь (1990-ті роки)*, Крим від античності до сьогодення: Історичні студії, відп. ред. В. СМОЛІЙ, К. (Інститут історії України НАН України) 2014, с. 626–627.

¹³² *Ibid.*, с. 627.

¹³³ О. КОПИЛЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, с. 599.

at preserving Ukraine's territorial integrity¹³⁴. At that time, the settlement was facilitated by the confrontation between Russian President B. Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament, which made it impossible to actively playing the Crimean card.

However, with the direct intervention and assistance of Russia, the Crimean local government has set itself on a course to completely separate the Crimea from Ukraine. In October 1993, the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea passed the law "On the President of the Republic of Crimea", the election of which was appointed on January 16th, 1994. The main contender was the leader of the "Russian Movement of Crimea" Yu. Meshkov. On January 30th, 1994 Yuri Meshkov explained his victory by saying that "the Crimeans made their choice by voting for unity with Russia, for restoration of economic relations, for restoration of the military-political union with the Russian Federation, for all that the Russian Movement proclaimed. Crimea back in August 1991"¹³⁵.

The Supreme Soviet of Ukraine reacted already on February 24th, 1994, by adopting a resolution "On the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in accordance with the current Constitution and legislation of Ukraine", obliging the Crimean Parliament to bring its normative base into conformity with the Constitution and laws of Ukraine within a month. However, with the support of Russia, Yu. Meshkov actually ignored Kyiv's decision. Finally, on March 17th, 1995, the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine repealed the Constitution and a number of ARC laws on the basis of their inconsistency with the Constitution of Ukraine. At the same time, the post of the President of the ARC was abolished and a criminal case was opened against Yu. Meshkov for treason and separatism. Yu. Meshkov was forced to flee to Moscow.

Back in April 1994, during the meeting of the Presidents of Ukraine and Russia to resolve the problem of the Black Sea Fleet, it was decided to conclude a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries, which also provided for mutual recognition of the integrity of both countries and the inviolability of their borders. The "Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership Agreement" between

¹³⁴ О. Любовець, *Op. cit.*, с. 627; О. Копиленко, *Op. cit.*, с. 605.

¹³⁵ Quote of the О. ЗАДОРЖНИЙ, *Анексія Криму – міжнародний злочин*, К. 2015, с. 58–59.

Ukraine and Russia was signed in 1997. Its adoption was facilitated by the accession of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary to NATO, and in parallel Ukraine prepared the NATO-Ukraine Special Partnership Charter. Fear of Ukraine's reorientation to the West forced Russia to make concessions and recognize Ukraine's territorial integrity. On May 30–31st, 1997, during the visit of Russian President B. Yeltsin to Kyiv, the Treaty was signed. In particular, the Treaty proclaimed: "The High Contracting Parties, in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter and the obligations under the Final Act of the Security and Cooperation Council in Europe, respect the territorial integrity of each other and affirm the inviolability of the borders that exist between them"¹³⁶. The Supreme Soviet of Ukraine ratified the Treaty on January 14th, 1998 and only on December 25th, 1998, it was ratified by the State Duma of the Russian Federation and signed on December 17th, 1999 by President of Russia B. Yeltsin. On April 1st, 1999, Presidents L. Kuchma and B. Yeltsin exchanged their instruments of ratification¹³⁷. Formally, the signing of this treaty meant that "the process of demarcation between Ukraine and Russia, which began with the visit of the Central Rada delegation headed by V. Vynnychenko to revolutionary Petrograd in the spring of 1917, was completed. It took so long for a generation of Russian politicians to realize the desire of the Ukrainian people to live independently within the borders of their own state, which have historically emerged"¹³⁸. However, since 1996, Russian politicians are beginning to re-play the issue of Sevastopol's ownership of Ukraine, this time as a threat to the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, not Ukraine¹³⁹. Over the following years, Russia consistently maintained the "Russian-speaking status" of Sevastopol, opening its educational establishments there, granting it Russian citizenship in violation of Ukrainian law, and cultivating Russian military myths, it was promoted by the fact that the Russian Black Sea Fleet was stationed in the city.

Moscow, since 1991, has not abandoned attempts to revive the USSR in its various forms. The first of these was the creation, with the participation of Ukraine and Belarus, of a CIS super-state formation,

¹³⁶ Quote of the С. КУЛЬЧИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 311.

¹³⁷ О. КОПИЛЕНКО, *Op. cit.*, с. 608.

¹³⁸ С. КУЛЬЧИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 315.

¹³⁹ О. ЛЮБОВЕЦЬ, *Op. cit.*, с. 629.

with integration processes intensifying when Putin came to power in Russia. On September 18th, 2003, at the summit of the CIS countries, an agreement was signed on the creation of the Single Economic Space (SES). Despite the fact that L. Kuchma came to power on pro-Russian slogans, advocated deepening cooperation with Russia, despite signing the Agreement on the creation of the SES, Russia resorted to territorial pressure on Ukraine in the waters of the Azov Sea for further rapprochement between Ukraine and Russia.

By agreeing to sign the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership, Russia delayed the signing of the Border Demarcation Treaty. Therefore, the Ukrainian-Russian border within the marine area of the Azov Sea was not clearly defined. Therefore, a week after the signing of the SES Agreement, Russia began to build a dam from the Taman Peninsula in the direction of islander pledge. On October 14th, 2003, the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine appealed to the Federal Assembly of Russia to intervene in order to stop actions against the state sovereignty of Ukraine and its territorial integrity. The position of Russia was clearly stated by the Head of the Russian Administration Alexander Voloshin: "Russia will never give the Kerch Strait to Ukraine. It is enough that the Crimea is Ukrainian today, and we have hardly reassured people about it. It is enough to make fun of us. If necessary, we will drop a bomb there"¹⁴⁰. In response, Kuchma threatened Putin with Ukraine's withdrawal from the SES Agreement. It is noticeable that this was the first open case of threat to the territorial integrity of Ukraine, when the countries-guarantors of the Budapest Memorandum were completely inactive.

The crisis was overcome at a meeting between the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine on December 24th, 2004, when Ukraine was forced to make territorial concessions to Russia in the Azov Sea, although it kept Tuzla behind. Ukraine recognized the Sea of Azov as an inland sea not only of Ukraine but also of Russia and pledged to ratify the SES Agreement. Thus, on April 20th, 2004, the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine ratified the SES Agreement. However, the Our Ukraine parliamentary faction, headed by future President of Ukraine V. Yushchenko, appealed

¹⁴⁰ Quote of the С. КУЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 320.

to the Constitutional Court on the constitutionality of the creation of a supranational regulatory body. Yes, “while the Court was examining the request, the Orange Revolution made the SES problem irrelevant. Ukraine has again slipped from the «brotherly» embrace of its northern neighbor”¹⁴¹. At that time, Simferopol was fully in solidarity with Kyiv in the matter of state affiliation of the island Tuzla.

The Crimean Tatar movement in the years of independence developed ambiguously. At first, the Crimean Tatars actually supported the Russian-speaking project of the Crimea, thereby strengthening the anti-Ukrainian component of Crimea’s local politicum. A radical change in the policy vector of the Crimean Tatar Kurultai and Majlis took place during the presidency of V. Yushchenko in 2005–2010. During V. Yushchenko’s cadence, the influence of the democratic forces on the state policy of Ukraine became stronger, which, as it was mentioned, consistently supported the Crimean Tatar movement. On the other hand, parliamentary elections in 2006, held in full proportionality for the first time, were the impetus for the reorientation of Crimean Tatars to pro-Ukrainian positions. In those elections, the Party of Regions, headed by V. Yanukovych, garnered 58 % of the vote in the Crimea. Such a result was driven by the desire of the Russian-speaking population of the Crimea to add to Crimean autonomy a national Russian character, thereby preventing the Tatarization of the Crimea. Instead, the Crimean Tatars, while in the minority, sought to maintain the status of territorial autonomy of the Crimea, which gave them a chance to reach the majority in the population and fight for national Crimean Tatar autonomy. At the same time, for the first time, a language issue was urged against the spread of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar on the peninsula¹⁴².

Thus, with the direct support of the Party of Regions, Russian chauvinist organizations in the Crimea launched a powerful anti-Ukrainian campaign, with the full inaction of Ukraine’s security forces. Dozens of Russian newspapers, for example, “Russian Sevastopol”, “Russian Crimea”, “Russian Community of Sevastopol”, which were printed on the typographic base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, directly stated the

¹⁴¹ С. Кульчицкий, Л. Якубова, *Op. cit.*, с. 322.

¹⁴² See: С. Кульчицкий, Л. Якубова, *Op. cit.*, с. 324.

need for Crimea's joining Russia¹⁴³, which directly violated the Constitution and Laws of Ukraine and international law. Those newspapers were distributed free of charge, which turned them into political agitators.

Kyiv was well aware of the danger of the Russian Black Sea Fleet stationed in Sevastopol, which participated in the Russian war against Georgia in 2008, which violated international law in the Black Sea basin and the Russian-Ukrainian agreement on the Russian Black Sea Fleet's stay in Ukraine. Even before Russia's aggression against Georgia in the spring 2008, Ukraine decided to suspend the deployment of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol. On May 27th, 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine issued a statement saying that "Ukraine is not considering extending the Black Sea Fleet within its territory after May 28th, 2017. The Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation must be completely withdrawn from the territory of Ukraine by the specified deadline"¹⁴⁴. In response, Russia threw all its resources into a full revenge of the pro-Russian Party of Regions and its leader V. Yanukovich, who, having won the 2010 presidential election in Ukraine, immediately strengthened Russia's position in the Crimea by signing the Kharkiv agreements on April 21st, 2010¹⁴⁵.

According to the Kharkiv agreements, the lease term for all 4.6 thousand objects of the deployment of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine was extended until May 28th, 2042, with the right to extend the contract. In the future, as President Leonid Kravchuk noted, "Kharkiv agreements have played a negative role in the occupation of the Crimea and Ukraine. But plans for the occupation of Ukraine or the dismemberment of Ukraine and its destruction as a state and replenishment of the empire, not within the former Soviet Union, but within tsarist Russia, were drawn up long ago by Putin and his team. All these issues, which were then to be resolved in Ukraine, were litmus test. Putin checked how far Ukraine would resist, whether it would easily give everything. Tuzla, Kharkiv agreements, trade wars, gas pipeline overlap, gas price hikes were all parts of one chain"¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴³ *Дзеркало тижня* (11 квітня 2008).

¹⁴⁴ *Урядовий кур'єр* (27 травня 2008).

¹⁴⁵ *Офіційний вісник України*, № 39 (2010): 1154.

¹⁴⁶ Л. КРАВЧУК, *Харківські угоди – плацдарм для російської агресії*, *Дзеркало тижня* (28 квітня 2015).

The situation in the Crimea during the 2010–2013 presidential cadence of Viktor Yanukovych was aggravated by the central government's internal policy of the autonomy. In fact, the Crimea was committed to semi-criminalized pro-Russian structures. The Crimea has increasingly become an outpost of Russian politics and the “Russian world” in Ukraine. The most radical activities were the youth wings of the Russian breakthrough organizations and the Crimean Branch of the Eurasian Youth Union, headed by A. Dugin with distinct extremist and Nazi attitudes¹⁴⁷.

The Party of Regions was also supported by the Communists, who considered Crimean Tatars as their irreconcilable enemies. In fact, during the plenary session of the Supreme Soviet in spring 2012, Chief Ukrainian Communist P. Symonenko justified Stalin's deportation of Crimean Tatars. In response, deputies from the Our Ukraine political party filed a lawsuit against the Communist leader at the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, but to no avail¹⁴⁸.

Therefore, further processes of Ukrainian society's progress towards European integration, with the active support of the Crimean Tatar national movement, which resulted in a strong Ukrainian opposition to Yanukovych's policy in the Revolution of Dignity, prompted Russia to direct aggression against Ukraine in the spring of 2014 and the occupation of the Crimea by its troops. Thus, as of early 2020, the Crimea is still under Russian occupation. Therefore, the issue of belonging to the Crimea, and therefore the definition of the southern borders of Ukraine, has been updated several times over the last hundred years and remains open today. Since the Ukrainian Revolution, the Crimea has experienced two Russian occupations and one Nazi occupation.

However, it was precisely the years of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1923 that made it crucial for the awareness of the Crimea as part of Ukraine. During this time, the Ukrainian state-making movement went from an ethnic approach to the creation of a state that excluded the Crimea from Ukraine, to territorial, which envisaged Crimean autonomy within Ukraine, which was partly implemented in the Constitution of Ukraine in 1996. For its part, the Crimean Tatar na-

¹⁴⁷ С. КУЛЬЧИЦЬКИЙ, Л. ЯКУБОВА, *Op. cit.*, с. 378.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, с. 349.

tional movement evolved from the idea of achieving full political independence of the Crimea to the acquisition of full cultural and political rights within the framework of the Crimean autonomy within Ukraine. The negative experience of a military defeat from Russia led to the conclusion about the shared interests of the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. This idea has been professed by both Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar emigrants and democratic forces in independent Ukraine.

Having witnessed the total ethnic transformation in the 20th century in the referendum in 1991, most Crimean residents supported the Declaration of Independence of Ukraine. And despite the indecision, often half-heartedness of Kyiv's actions on the Crimea and the status of the Crimean Tatars, the processes of Westernization and democratization of society have been steadily developing in Ukraine and in the Crimea. In 2014, Russia exhausted the possibility of indirect pressure on Kyiv to adjust or define Ukraine's foreign and domestic policies, and in spring 2014 it resorted to an act of open, though unannounced, aggression against Ukraine, the first act of which was the occupation of the Crimea with subsequent annexation of the peninsula by the Russian Federation.

Russia's annexation of the Crimea in 2014 was a major challenge to the world order. In addition to gross violation of international law, the transformation of the Crimea by Russia, according to Putin, into a "never drowning aircraft carrier" violates the balance of power in the region. Thus, the solution of the Crimean occupation should be decided not only at the level of Ukraine – Russia, but with the active involvement of international organizations, first of all the UN and EU structures.