

#Crimea Has Nothing to Do With Ukraine

#Chersonese Is Sevastopol

#Russians suffered from repressions more than Crimean Tatars

# Serhiy Hromenko

#Sevastopol Is the "City of Russian Glory"

#Crimea Is the Original Russian Land

## #Crimean Tatars Are the "Traitorous People"

#Khrushchev Gave Crimea to Ukraine

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History of the Russian Myth

2017

UDC 32.019.51:94(477.75)

**S. V. Hromenko,**

(2017). #CrimeIsOurs. History of the Russian Myth / S. V. Hromenko. Kyiv. 224 pages, pictures.  
ISBN 978-617-7260-10-2

The annexation of Crimea that caused the largest political crisis in Europe since the Second World War at the same time spurred the unprecedented flowering of political mythology. In 2014, a large number of separate myths and falsified facts gave rise to the so-called “*Crimea-is-ours*” myth designed to justify the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation in the eyes of the world. Is Crimea really an original Russian land? Is it true that the Crimean Tatars are all traitors? Was the peninsula really integrated into Ukraine illegally? And what, after all, were the events of February–March 2014—the occupation of Crimea or the “restoration of historical justice”? This book gives answers to all these questions.

For politicians, public figures, historians and journalists.

**With the assistance of Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine.**

Set of services related to graphic products printing is performed by Mega-press group LLC made to order of Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reduced Names of Archives.....	4
Foreword. “Crimea-is-ours” as a Political Myth.....	7
Introduction. Decade of Lies. Creation of the “Crimean Myth” in the USSR (1944–1953).....	13
Part 1. The Great Past of The Hero and His “Birthright”.....	39
Myth 1. Crimea Is an Originally Russian Land.....	41
Myth 2. Crimea Has Always Belonged to Russia.....	48
Myth 3. Crimea is a “Spiritual Source” and “Primary Baptismal Font” of Russia...56	
Myth 4. Chersonese Is Sevastopol.....	65
Myth 5. Sevastopol Is the “City of the Russian Glory”.....	69
Part 2. The Villain, His Machinations and Defeat.....	81
Myth 6. Crimean Tatars Are Not the Indigenous People of Crimea.....	83
Myth 7. The Greeks Are the Most Ancient Indigenous People of Crimea.....	91
Myth 8. Crimean Tatars Deserted the Red Army en Masse.....	97
Myth 9. Crimean Tatars Are a “Traitor People”.....	107
Myth 10. The Deportation Saved Crimean Tatars.....	118
Myth 11. Russians Suffered from Repressions More than Crimean Tatars.....	127
Part 3. The Traitor and His “Stab in the Back” to The Hero.....	133
Myth 12. Crimea Has Nothing to Do With Ukraine.....	135
Myth 13. Khrushchev Presented Crimea as a Gift to Ukraine.....	141
Myth 14. Crimea Was Transferred to Ukraine Illegally.....	149
Myth 15. Sevastopol Was not Transferred to Ukraine.....	178
Myth 16. Crimea Was Transferred as a “Sack of Potatoes”.....	198
Afterword. The Annexation of Crimea as an Object of Myth-Making.....	204
Summary.....	212
Резюме (укр.).....	214
Резюме (рус.).....	216

## **REDUCED NAMES OF ARCHIVES**

APRF	Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii (Archives of the President of the Russian Federation)
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiyskoy Federatsii (State Archives of the Russian Federation)
DAARK	Derzhavnyi arkhiv v Avtonomnii Respublitsi Krym (State Archives in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea)
RGAKFD	Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyi arkhiv kinofotodokumentov (Russian State Archives of Cinema and Photo Documents)
RGASPI	Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsyalno-politicheskoy istorii (Russian State Archives of Social and Political History)
TsAMO	Tsentralnyi arkhiv Ministerstva oborony RF (Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation)
TsVMA	Tsentralnyi voenno-morskoy arkhiv Ministerstva oborony RF (Central Naval Archives of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation)
TsGA RSFSR	Tsentralnyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiyskoy Sovetskoy Federativnoy Sotsialisticheskoy Respubliki (Central State Archives of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)
TsGAOR	Tsentralnyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Oktyabrskoy revolyutsii, vysshikh organov gosudarstvennoy vlasti i organov gosudarstvennogo upravleniya Ukrainy (Central State Archives of the October Revolution, Supreme State Authorities and Government Bodies of the USSR (currently part of the GARF))
TsDAVOVU	Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchikh orhaniv vldy ta upravlinnia Ukrainy (Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine)
TsDAHO	Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromadskykh obyednan Ukrainy (Central State Archives of Public Associations of Ukraine)





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## FOREWORD.

### “CRIMEA-IS-OURS” AS A POLITICAL MYTH

It is human nature to believe in myths at any time, but their role especially increases during revolutions and wars. The annexation of Crimea that caused the largest political crisis in Europe since the Second World War at the same time spurred the unprecedented flowering of political mythology. In 2014, a large number of separate myths and falsified facts gave rise to the so-called “*Crimea-is-ours*” myth designed to justify the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation in the eyes of the world. Is Crimea really an original Russian land? Is it true that the Crimean Tatars are all traitors? Was the peninsula really integrated into Ukraine illegally? And what, after all, were the events of February–March 2014—the occupation of Crimea or the “restoration of historical justice”? You will learn all this if you read this book.

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Mythology and myth-making exist as long as humanity itself. But it would be wrong to think that the sphere of myths is limited only to legends about gods and heroes. In fact, *myth* in the broadest sense is a form of human thinking, a model of the real world simplified to distortion, and therefore not only “divine”, but also “earthly” things inevitably fall into the sphere of the *mythical*, one of which is politics. Ancient world societies practically did not separate legends about gods from stories about rulers, but as we approached the present day, the aura of supernaturalism around myths faded, revealing a completely rational “skeleton”. Today, people believe almost as passionately as they did a thousand years ago, but already completely in other things: in the national football team, in seasonal discounts, in the means for losing weight. And, of course, many people believe in the infallibility of their leader.

What’s so surprising that modern politics in all its forms is also interpreted not only from a rational, but also from a mythical point of view? Political myths, even if they do not identify leaders with gods, play the same roles as in ancient history. They either legitimize the existing world order or justify its change. “Millennial statehood”, “age-old oppression”, “a brilliant leader and teacher”, “a special path”, “Masonic conspiracy”, and “secret world government”—hundreds, if not thousands of the most

diverse political myths continue to exist today. The past is the main and sometimes the only source of the political legitimacy of the present and the myth is in a sense the main instrument for exploiting this valuable resource.

Unlike everyday myths, political ones do not arise spontaneously, but are the product of the activities of individuals and organizations, most often of intellectuals in the government service. Here's how a connoisseur of the matter, Prussian King Frederick the Great, wrote about this,

“If you like someone else's province, and you have enough strength, take it immediately. Once you do this, you will always find a sufficient number of lawyers who will prove that you have all the rights to the occupied territory.”

The “Crimea-is-ours” myth, to which this book is devoted, arose as a result of attempts of the Russian government to substantiate its claims to the peninsula. The first elements of the myth began to form at the end of the 18th century, just before and immediately after the liquidation of the Crimean Khanate and the annexation of its territory by the Russian Empire. At that time, such a policy was presented as a triumph of “civilization” over “barbarism”. An additional incentive for myth-making was the need to justify the defeat of Russia in the Crimean War in the middle of the next century, thanks to which the thesis about the “heroic defense” of Sevastopol—the “city of the Russian glory”—arose. The large-scale falsification of the history of the peninsula, which caused the appearance of many of the living myths, began after (and as a result) the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 and lasted almost a decade, “justifying” that deportation. The finishing touches were added to the myth in 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. And, finally, the Russian political myth about Crimea received its completed political form (and its original name too) after the annexation of the peninsula by the Russian Federation in 2014. What we could only read in books before happened before our eyes.

••

Like any self-respecting myth, “Crimea-is-ours” is not just a set of unrelated propaganda slogans and scientific misconceptions. The “Crimea-is-ours” myth is a real

epic work written by several generations of artists and performed according to all the rules of classical drama.

The “Crimea-is-ours” myth is characterized by the trinity of place, time and action. The place of unfolding of the myth events is the Crimean peninsula itself. But, unlike real geography, the center of the mythological space of Crimea is not the administrative Simferopol, not the historical Bakhchysarai or Theodosia, but the relatively new Sevastopol. The time of action of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth is the whole millennium: from the Christianization of Kievan Rus, which allegedly took place in Chersonese in 988, till the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, to which Crimea had the most direct relationship. It is impossible not to pay attention to the symbolic framing of that period by two Vladimirs, the Kiev Prince and the Russian President. It is Putin who is the last to date and the most authoritative of the authors of the myth, as well as his main beneficiary. And, finally, the unity of action is ensured by the constant presence of an almost unchanged “cast” on the “stage”.

In general, the list of the *Principal Characters* of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth is not very diverse. *The Hero* is the Russian people / Russia. It is its history that is the pivot on which all other events of the myth are strung. The role of *The Villain* of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth went to the Crimean Tatar people / Crimean Khanate, and *The Traitor* is the Ukrainian people / Ukraine. The interaction of the three *Principal Characters* determines the plot of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth, and the remaining peoples/states of the peninsula act as supernumeraries in it.

This book was created in accordance with the structure of the myth. Introduction describes the decade of falsification of the Crimean history in the USSR (1944–1953), without which it is impossible to understand the patterns by which the myth is cut out today. The first part describes specific Russian myths, dedicated to *The Hero* and his supposedly ancient glorious past in Crimea. The second part is devoted to the myths about *The Villain*, who supposedly from time to time opposed to *The Hero*, but in the end was defeated and banished. And in the third part we will talk about the myths about *The Traitor*, the “machinations” of which allegedly led *The Hero* to the plight in which he was in 2014. Afterword will be devoted to the mythologization of the annexation of Crimea as supposedly the “restoration of historical justice”.



Of course, the reader must understand that in one book it is impossible to exhaustively describe all the myths of the Crimean history accumulated for the past three hundred years, and there is hardly any need for it. The vast majority of historical misconceptions did not go beyond the academic world, and at the very least got into school textbooks and then eventually was dispelled by new generations of historians. Our goal was precisely those myths, which, being in the official discourse of the Russian government, acquired a political color. In other words, when a myth ceases to be an annoying historiographic misunderstanding and begins to influence the current policy, it becomes really dangerous. And so, contrary to the opinion of some Ukrainian “academicians” who fled from the world in “ivory towers”, the fight against Russian political myths is a matter of national security. It will not be a big exaggeration to say that the failure of the Ukrainian humanitarian policy in Crimea in the last two decades and total dominance of Russian propaganda in the peninsula have greatly facilitated the Kremlin’s invasion of Ukraine.

For fairness’ sake, it should be noted that historical and political myths about Crimea are peculiar not only to Russians, but also to Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. Then why do not I consider them in my book? The answer is simple: neither Crimean Tatar nor Ukrainian myths are imposed by tanks and supported by rocket artillery. Contrary to disinformation spread by Moscow, there was no aggressive Ukrainization, which allegedly threatened the identity of Russian-speaking Crimeans, and there was no Crimean Tatar terrorism that allegedly threatened their lives in the peninsula. All three myths about Crimea co-existed and competed with each other relatively honestly: the Crimean Tatars were more united, the Ukrainians had a state, the Russians had the most money (from Moscow), but the appearance of “little green men” put an end to that. Within a few days, the Russian myth about Crimea turned from an object of interest of historians and sociologists into an excuse for the Kremlin’s imperialism. And the longer we turn a blind eye to its existence and the less attention we pay to fighting it, the higher the probability of a new Russian aggression will be.

After all, no one canceled the “Novorossiya-is-ours” myth.

♦♦♦♦

This book was written and published thanks to many people, five of whom I would like to say a special thank you. To the historian Gulnara Bekirova—for her many years of work, the results of which my work is largely based on. To the historian Kyril Halushko, coordinator of the project Likbez. Historical Front—for the beginning in the summer of 2014 of systematic struggle against Russian propaganda in the humanitarian sphere, within which the first “Crimean” myths were debunked. To the journalist Oleksandr Yankovskyi—for his question, “As far as I understand, now there will be a book?”—and the opportunity to sound the results of my research on the air. And, finally, to Ukrainian officials of the new generation—Serhiy Kostynskyi and Emine Dzhheppar—for their help in the publication process. Traditional collective gratitude to my family, the project Krym.Realii, on the site of which some sections of the future book were published for the first time, and the publisher—for interest in my work and great patience. Of course, neither they nor my other friends and colleagues are responsible for the possible failures of this book.

Enjoy reading!



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## **INTRODUCTION. DECADE OF LIES. CREATION OF THE “CRIMEAN MYTH” IN THE USSR (1944–1953)**

The great modern “Crimea-is-ours” myth, which replaced the real Crimean history for most Russians, did not come out of the blue. Some elements of myth-making and even deliberate falsifications can be traced both in the imperial period and in the early years of Soviet power. But total rewriting of the history of Crimea with the complete elimination of the Crimean Tatars from the past and glorification of the Crimean Russians occurred only after World War II. And it should be noted that the myth-makers and falsifiers reached the task set before them in such a quality manner that we reap the fruits of their activities to this day. And to fight against the modern Russian “Crimea-is-ours” myth is absolutely impossible without analyzing the Soviet “Crimean myth” and overcoming its negative consequences.

### **Objective Setting (1944)**

Without any doubt, the complete deportation of the Crimean Tatar people in May 1944 was the most important event that affected the emergence of the “Crimean myth”. Of course, the policy of Tatarization was curtailed in the peninsula in the late 1920s, the national elite was exterminated during the Great Purge, but in and of themselves those facts did not require total falsification of the Crimean history. Deportation is another matter. Preparing for a possible war with Turkey over the Black Sea straits, Joseph Stalin thoroughly “cleansed” the future Soviet bridgeheads, the Caucasus and Crimea, from an “unreliable element”. In the Caucasus, exiles were selectively Turkic peoples, in Crimea—almost all non-Slavs. To justify this monstrous crime that resulted in the genocide, the Chekists accused the deported population of “mass desertion” and “total collaboration”. The current Stalinists stubbornly repeat these ideas, although the true reason was then declared by Lavrentiy Beria: “undesirability of living in the border area”.

As we know, there was no war, Turkey disappeared behind the American “umbrella”, but the problem of the expelled indigenous and old-timer peoples of Crimea and the Caucasus remained. In the peninsula, over 90% of all toponyms

were of Crimean Tatar origin, there were many elements of architecture and material culture preserved, while Russian and Ukrainian old men remembered their neighbors and sometimes could speak their languages. All this could not but cause cognitive dissonance among the settlers arriving in Crimea, especially among those who were placed by the authorities in the empty houses after the deportation. In addition, sooner or later the questions of the war that had just died down and of post-war years were to receive coverage in Soviet historical science. So, the problem of coordinating the true past of Crimea with the communist propaganda picture brewed up, and, of course, that coordination was not in favor of the past.

In general, any Matrix could envy the set of measures taken by the Soviet government to distort reality in the minds of people. And, alas, as noted above, even today not everyone agrees to see the real world.

### **Cleansing of the Historical Landscape (1945–1948)**

The most urgent measures for the preparation of the future falsification of the history of Crimea were taken by the Soviet authorities immediately after the end of hostilities in Europe in May 1945. Two of them were the most important.

Firstly, Crimea was lowered in status—from the autonomous republic to the region. This event, by the way, shows what autonomy was in fact. And although its constitution did not record that it was Crimean Tatar, it was the deportation of the Crimean Tatars that made its existence unnecessary. And we must not forget that under the same constitution, the official languages of the republic were Russian and Tatar. That heritage should also be quickly removed.

So, on June 30, 1945, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (PSS) of the USSR adopted the following decree:

The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics decides:

To approve the submission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on the transformation of the Crimean ASSR into the Crimean region as part of the RSFSR.

*Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR "On the transformation of the Crimean ASSR into the Crimean region as part of the RSFSR", June 30, 1945*

A year later, Soviet Russia with the law of its parliament approved abolishing of the Crimean autonomy and amending its own constitution. The text of that document was much more cynical:

During the Great Patriotic War, when the peoples of the USSR heroically defended the honor and independence of their Motherland in the struggle against the Nazi invaders, many Chechens and Crimean Tatars, at the instigation of German agents, joined volunteer groups organized by the Germans and, together with German troops, waged an armed struggle against units of the Red Army, as well as at the behest of the Germans, created sabotage gangs to fight Soviet power in the rear, and the bulk of the population of the Chechen-Ingush and Crimean ASSR did not show any opposition to these traitors.

In this regard, the Chechens and Crimean Tatars were resettled in other areas of the USSR, where they were allotted with land and provided with the necessary state aid in their economic arrangement. On the proposal of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, the Chechen-Ingush ASSR was abolished by decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and the Crimean ASSR was transformed into the Crimean region.

The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic decides:

1. To approve the abolition of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and the transformation of the Crimean ASSR into the Crimean region.
2. To introduce appropriate amendments and additions to Article 14 of the Constitution of the RSFSR.

*The RSFSR law "On the abolition of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and on the transformation of the Crimean ASSR into the Crimean region", June 25, 1946*

And, finally, on February 25, 1947, quite ordinary, among other changes, the lowering of the status of Crimea was included in the current Constitution of the Soviet Union.

Secondly, it was not limited to administrative measures alone. Simultaneously, the authorities started a real war with the historical Crimean toponymy. They swept the peninsula in three waves.

Thus, already on December 14, 1944, by decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, 11 districts and district centers having Crimean Tatar and German names in Crimea were renamed. The only town in the list—Karasubazar—which even the imperial authorities did not touch, also fell “under the heat of the moment”; henceforth it began to be called Bilohirsk.

It took off from there. By a similar decree of August 21, 1945, more than 300 villages and settlements were renamed, and even the names of Stalin and Telman were not spared, they were intensively fighting the past names!

The final, in terms of scope and cynicism, blow was dealt exactly on the fourth anniversary of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars on May 18, 1948. According to the last decree, over a thousand ancient names were replaced by the faceless “Aromatni”, “Rozdolni” and “Urozhayni”. The number of renamed streets, squares and parks can not be counted.

It is said that the Regional Committee instructed the editor of the party newspaper to come up with new names, and he delegated the work to the responsible secretary. When human names were exhausted (Mykolaivka, Novomykolaivka, Ivanivka, Novoivanivka, Semenivka, Volodymyrivka, Petrivka and others) garden, vegetable and agricultural subjects (Ovocheve, Horodnye, Sinokosne, Vypasne, Pshenychno, Kukurudziane, Zernove, Molochne, Sadove, Verkhniosadove, Lisove, Hrushivka, Vynohradne) came into play. When this topic was also exhausted, the military manual prompted a new topic, and so such names as Hvardiyske, Tankove, Heroivske, Bastionne, Lazo, Furmanove, Udarne, Rezervne, Frontove, etc. were created.

*Bekirova G. Povesti reshitelnuyu borbu so vsem tatarskim  
[To Lead a Decisive Struggle against the Entire Tartar]. Krym.Realii, September 29, 2015*

In the end, there were only seven toponyms with Turkic roots remained in the entire peninsula: the settlements of Bakhchysarai, Dzhanqoy, Inkerman, Kerch, Saki and Staryi Krym, and the railway station of Ishun. But even they were under threat. According to the plans in the archives, Dzhanqoy could have become Pivnichne, Vidradne, Vuzlove or Stepove, Saki could have become Ozerne, Bakhchysarai was going to be renamed as Pushkin. Fortunately, it did not come to that.

Another large-scale renaming was not realized. In the summer of 1953, several hundred names of geographical objects were to be changed in the peninsula. The Ai-Petri Mountain was planned to be renamed as Petrovi Skeli, Demerdzhi as Obvalna, Roman-Kosh as Vysoka, and Shaitan-Burun as Lysytsyna Gora. The Salhir River was supposed to become Krymka, and the Djur-Djur Waterfall was planned to become Shumnyi. Other mountains, bays, capes and lakes awaited a similar fate. Only the death of Stalin and the direct intervention of the Commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Admiral Sergey Gorshkov, stopped the process. The objects recorded in Sailing

Directions and on military maps remained, with single exceptions, intact. [*Makeeva M. Sekretnaya operatsiya "Zabyt vse" [Secret operation "Forget All"]*. Respublika, November 7, 2012.]

However, the process of renaming could not be called easy. A separate meeting of the Crimean Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) on September 25, 1948 was devoted to the etching of former names from people's historical memory.

The Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) recognizes that the issue of renaming settlements, rivers, valleys, streets, certain types of work and other Tatar signs was delayed, and that the population arriving in Crimea began to introduce these names into everyday life. A number of Party and Soviet leading workers themselves very often use Tatar words and introduce them into everyday speech. The regional and district press, not to mention the bulletin board, as well as different letters and instructions, often abound in Tatar names. Even after the renaming of settlements, some workers continue to use old names. Considering this wrong and harmful, the Bureau of the Regional Committee decides:

1) That the Regional Executive Committee should continue to work on renaming settlements, railway stations, rivers, valleys, certain types of work with Tatar signs.

2) To oblige district party committees to conduct a decisive struggle against the Tatar and not allow the use of Tatar words and names. To carry out a special work on explaining the significance of new Russian names of settlements, railway stations, rivers, valleys and other signs. To instruct district party and soviet active members, heads of collective and state farms. To beautifully arrange new names of settlements in prominent places.

3) To oblige district committees to prepare proposals for renaming Tatar signs and submit them to the Commission of the Regional Executive Committee before November 1.

*DAARK, F. 1, Op. 1, S. 2848, Ark. 45-46*

But even after that, the matter did not immediately go smoothly. In January 1949, at a special meeting of writers of Crimea, the First Secretary of the Regional Committee Nikolay Solovyov instructed the audience about the image of the Crimean way of life:

They are Russian people; they cannot live in Tatar premises. It is necessary to show how they end up with the Tartar, in all respects, including with the Tatar hut.

And here in some places Tatar words and names have been instilled in people. This is disgrace.

*DAARK, F. 1, Op. 1, S. 3069, Ark. 6*

The results of this approach are clearly demonstrated by the example of the prolific author Pyotr Pavlenko, four-time (!) winner of the Stalin Prize for propaganda opuses about the “new Crimea”.

Here is one of the characteristic texts of P. Pavlenko in the mid-1940s: “Crimea becomes an adopted country for many tens of thousands of people. These people need to know everything about Crimea. A lot of Russian blood and Russian sweat was shed in the mountains of Crimea. We live on the bones of our ancestors in the most precise and narrow sense of this concept, because Russia did not make such sacrifices for any of its regions, which it made for Crimea.” Revelations of P. Pavlenko and his epigones about the “Russian Crimea” with hot iron stuck in the heads of citizens through newspapers and large editions of their works, accurately reflecting the neo-imperial spirit of that period of Stalin’s rule. And we must admit that the efforts of the “engineers of human souls” were not in vain. Their slogans proved to be so tenacious that they are still revived with some modifications by modern Russian political scientists (for example, by K. Zatulin) being nostalgic for the “Russian Crimea” of the 1940s, “golden age” of democracy in Stalin’s terms.

*Bekirova G. Krymskotatarskaya problema v SSSR (1944–1991) [The Crimean Tatar problem in the USSR (1944–1991)]. Simferopol, 2004. Chapter 4*

As a final chord, another 30 railway stations and a number of collective and state farms, the names of which miraculously survived the last wave of renaming, received new names.

From acting as the Head of the 5th branch of the Stalin Railway to Comrade Kononov. With the abolition of the Crimean Autonomous Republic, the settlements having the Tatar names have been renamed, but the railway stations have retained the Tatar names so far. Please provide your representative along with your suggestions for renaming the inhabited stations and passing loops.

G. Kuvshynnikov, October 7, 1948.

*Yakimova N. Krymskie stantsii na politicheskikh relsakh. Maloizvestnye stranitsy zheleznodorozhnoy istorii poluostrova [Crimean Stations on Political Rails. Little-known pages of the railway history of the peninsula] Pervaya Krymskaya [First Crimean]. 2010, No. 348*

But the list was ready only six months later. According to the decision of the Executive Committee of the Crimean Regional Soviet of Working People's Deputies No. 548 of June 8, 1949 "On renaming of railway stations and passing loops located within the Crimean region", it was decided to ask the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR to petition the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to assign new names to railway stations and passing loops.

By reason of the necessity to bring the names of stations and passing loops into line with the names of settlements and expel from use the names that contradict modern natural, historical and ethnographic conditions, the Executive Committee of the Crimean region of the Council of Working People's Deputies requests to issue an order to assign to railway stations and passing loops new names specified in the following list.

*Yakimova N. Krymskie stantsii na politicheskikh relsakh. Maloizvestnye stranitsy zheleznodorozhnoy istorii poluostrova [Crimean Stations on Political Rails. Little-known pages of the railway history of the peninsula] Pervaya Krymskaya [First Crimean]. 2010, No. 348*

The list included 31 names, and 15 names were dismissed for revision. Some of them were dismissed because there were already (not even in Crimea, but in the nearby regions of Ukraine) stations with such names. Others seemed to be insufficiently politically mature.

In addition, the Crimean leadership wrote to the Minister of State Farms of the USSR Nikolay Skvortsov, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food and Beverages of the RSFSR with a request to rename some Crimea's state farms, which had old Crimean Tatar names. Needless to say that the "wish of the working people" was fulfilled [*Mohyla D. Pereymenuvannya nazv administratyvnykh obyektiv u Krymu yak naslidkiy vyseleynnya krymskykh tatar, bolgar, virmen i grekiv u 1944 rotsi [Renaming administrative entities in Crimea as a consequence of the eviction of the Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, Armenians and Greeks in 1944] Uchenye zapiski Tavricheskogo natsionalnogo universiteta im. V. I. Vernadskogo. Seriya: Yuridicheskie nauki [Scientific Notes of Taurida National V. I. Vernadskiy University. Series: Juridical Sciences], 2008. Vol. 21 (60), No. 2: pp. 301–310*].

By 1952, the process of "cleansing" the peninsula from unwanted names was completed. In several stages, the communist totalitarian regime distorted the Crimean present beyond recognition to exclude uncomfortable questions both in Crimea and

beyond. There remained a small matter to fit the Crimean history to the already properly “edited” present, in order to create an integral, consistent picture of the peninsula as “an originally Russian land”.

It must be acknowledged that the authorities coped with that task “perfectly”.

### **Disputes about the Crimean History (1948–1952)**

Until the late 1930’s, when studying the history of Crimea, the role of Russian tsarism was interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, it was impossible not to “rejoice” at the successes of Russian weapons in 1783, and on the other hand, it was necessary to emphasize that tsarism destroyed the unique Crimean Tatar culture. After deportation, analogies with the “accursed tsarist regime” became so obvious that the history of the Crimean Tatars was tightly tabooed.

No less forbidden, by the way, was the history of the Crimean Goths, as too fresh were memories of the German invasion and exaltation of the past of this people in the occupation press. It was the struggle within the framework of the “Gothic question” that initiated the process of falsifying the history of Crimea that interests us.

It wouldn’t be inappropriate to remind that in the first post-war years, the so-called Marrism, or the “New Theory of Language” of Nikolay Marr, was promoted in historical science almost in a directive order. Its historical component was reduced to the fact that there were no migrations in the past, and any “new” people are the next stage in the development of the “old” people. Thus, the foundation for subsequent constructions was laid.

In 1945, in Moscow, the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR organized the Tavro-Scythian expedition led by Pavlo Schultz just to study the most ancient population of the peninsula. In 1948, the expedition was enlarged to the Crimean Scientific Research Base that was soon transformed into the Crimean branch of the Academy of Sciences. These scientific organizations were tasked to prove the high level of development of local tribes in contrast to the alien Goths. Later, along with the Goths, other nations, including the Crimean Tatars, will fall under the blow.

Meanwhile, Schultz needed to disclose the role of the “Crimean Scythians in the process of formation of culture and statehood of the Eastern Slavs”. The Scythians

were no longer considered barbarians, but were called an “advanced people of Eastern and Central Europe”. And given the “Crimean Tatar problem”, the Asian origin of the Scythians was out of the question. According to the theory of Schulz, the developed statehood of the Scythians existed in Crimea until the Hun invasion in the end of the IV century, so there was no place for the “Gothic period”.

In the end, the Scythians began to be regarded as the ancestors of the Slavs. Schultz wrote:

In the high material and spiritual culture of the late Scythians in Crimea, it was possible to establish many new points of contact with the culture of the ancient Slavs. In the character of Scythian cities and dwellings, in particular ridges on roofs, dishes, wooden carvings, ornamentation, funeral rites... we find many similarities with the oldest monuments of Slavic culture, with Russian and Ukrainian folk art... the Scythian culture is one of the sources of Russian culture... those who cherish the historical destinies of the Russian people cannot now pass by the monuments of Novgorod Scythian... because the Crimean lands even in primordial times belonged to the Slavs and the Russians and their ancestors, the Scythians.

*Schultz P. N. Tavro-skifskaya ekspeditsiya v 1946 godu  
[Tavro-Scythian Expedition in 1946]. Sovetskiy Krym [Soviet Crimea], 1947. No. 5: p. 71*

Naturally, with this approach, there was no place for other peoples in the history of the peninsula. Relatively restrained in publications and in speeches, Schultz did not choose words. Thus, on March 29, 1949, at a meeting of the Institute for the History of Material Culture dedicated to the struggle against cosmopolitanism in history, he stated:

Crimea, the sunny health resort of the Soviet Union, one of the richest historical reserves of our country, was sold by cosmopolitans of different persuasions wholesale and retail to the Roman invaders, Goths, Genoese, Tatars, Turks and Germans.

*Arkhiv Rossiyskoy Akademii nauk  
(Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences), F. 1909, Op. 1, D. 102, L. 76*

If such a thing was asserted in the academic press, what to say about journalism! For example, in the article *Homeland of Achilles* by Alexey Yugov this ancient Greek hero was declared Russian, and *Iliad* of Homer was used as a source for studying the Russian

national mentality. The author insisted on the origin of Kievan Rus from the Scythian Kingdom in Crimea and argued that the Russians were the ancestral population of Crimea [Yugov A. *Rodina Akhillesa [Homeland of Achilles]. Krym [Crimea], 1947. No. 5*].

However, with all his mistakes, Pavel Shultz remained a professional archeologist, and it is entirely possible that under the influence of conclusive evidence he would reconsider his opinion on the origin of the Slavs from the Scythians. But the topic was too important politically to leave it to historians, so party functionaries joined the cause.

The evil genius of Crimean historiography was Saveliy Naumovich Posyagin, better known as Pavel Nadinskiy, a provincial with three classes of the church school, a Chekist and a loyal “fighter of the ideological front”. Not having a profile education, he was enlisted in the staff of the Crimean base of the Academy of Sciences and in fact became its main censor. No scientific publication could come out without his visa. Considering the “Gothic question” a provocation by German scientists to justify the German claims to the peninsula, Nadinskiy undertook to affirm in science the thesis about “an originally Russian Crimea”. One of the main figurants of this story, Head of the Bakhchysarai mountain expedition team Yevgen Veimarn, later recalled:

It all began with the indication of the competent authorities about the need to prove that Crimea was an originally Slavic land. That “necessity” appeared right after the deportation of the Crimean Tatars and the urgent settlement of the peninsula by Russians, mostly from the Orel and Penza regions. This “scientific trend” was led by an assistant to the Head of the Historical and Archaeological Section of the Crimean branch, an expert in the history of the revolution, Civil and Great Patriotic Wars, and in the past a worker of the Regional Party Committee, P. N. Nadinskiy. The lack of erudition allowed him to choose the theory of N. Y. Marr about the stage for his concept. According to the “historical schemes” of P. N. Nadinskiy, the Crimean Scythians were the ancestors of the Slavs. Unfortunately, in those years, the Head of the Section P. N. Schulz was forced to fall under the influence of P. N. Nadinskiy. Attempts of political threats were made against me, but I resolutely refused to become a supporter of this “concept”.

*Piolo I. Skladna dolia arkeoloha (do 85-richchia Yevgena Volodymyrovycha Veymarna)*  
*[Difficult Fate of an Archaeologist (To the 85th Anniversary of Yevhen Volodymyrovych Veimarn)*  
*Arkheologiya [Archeology], 1990, No. 4: p. 147*

In January 1950, Nadinskiy began to prepare the first volume of his monumental “Essays on the History of Crimea” dedicated to antiquity and the Middle Ages and written

from the Marrist positions. It seemed that the “transformation” of the Scythians into the Slavs was a decided matter, but then a thunder broke out on the political Olympus.

In the summer of the same 1950, Joseph Stalin himself spoke in the press against the “vulgar Marrism” as a view hostile to Marxism. After that, to remain a Marrist meant becoming a potential “enemy of the people”, so the Crimean scientists began feverishly deleting the name of Marr from their unfinished works. Naturally, the opponents of Nadinskiy and Schulz had a temptation to recoup. The leading Soviet scientific journal *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History) directly accused Schulz of “marrism”, and in those days it could result in not only dismissal, but also in arrest. The result was a serious struggle for leadership in the Crimean science, on the outcome of which depended the “correct” writing of the history of the peninsula.

In the autumn of 1951, the First Secretary of the Crimean Party Committee Pavel Titov sent a note to the Department of Science of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) dedicated to “perversions in covering the history of Crimea”.

In many historical works, especially those published in the period before the Great Patriotic War, there is an idealization of the Tatar-Turkish period in the history of Crimea, an incorrect assessment of joining Crimea to Russia, which is regarded as a continuous evil for the historical destinies of the population of Crimea... In historical literature, an antiscientific “theory” created by bourgeois German historians about the Crimean Goths, the ancestors of modern Germans, has not yet been exposed.

*RGASPI, F. 17, Op. 133, D. 220, L. 16*

Meanwhile, at the very end of 1951, the first volume of Nadinskiy’s *Essays* was published. It was bereft of external signs of “marrism”, but remained so in spirit. In the conditions of the collapse of this theory, the book was seriously criticized.

On January 19, 1952, in a memorandum addressed to the chief ideologue of the Soviet Union Mikhail Suslov, prepared in response to Titov’s address, facts of “unpatriotic” coverage of the Crimean past were revealed and a proposal was made to publish a special article on this topic in *Voprosy Istorii* [*Tikhonov V. “Rasprodazha solnechnoy zdavnitsy”*: *boi za istoriyu Kryma v poslevoennom SSSR* [*Sale of the Solar Health Resort: Battles for the History of Crimea in the Post-War USSR*]. *Rodina* [*Homeland*], 2015. No. 1: pp. 152-153].

And so, an article “K voprosu o slavyanakh v Krymu” [*On the Question of the Slavs in Crimea*] by Veimarn and former deputy director for scientific work of the Chersonese Museum Stanislav Strzelecki appeared in the April issue of the journal. The original text should have been voiced at a meeting of the Crimean branch of the Academy of Sciences, but Schultz opposed to it. It was not surprising that in the journal version it was subjected to merciless criticism.

In the article, the “antipatriotic” thesis about the late arrival of the Slavs in Crimea was refuted from now on. The theory about the origin of the Slavs from the Scythians was declared unscientific. According to a new view, the Slavs appeared in the peninsula in the first centuries A.D., interacted with the Scythians and Sarmatians and survived during the Hun invasion. Crimea was declared part of the territory of the “Old Russian people” and the focus of its culture right up to the Mongol invasion. The peninsula fit into the general history of the Russian Middle Ages, and the Tatars acted as later aliens. Also, the authors accused not only Schulz of “marrism”, but also his party leader Nadinskiy [*Veimarn Y., Strzhelecki. K voprosu o slavyanakh v Krymu [On the Question of the Slavs in Crimea]. Voprosy Istorii [Questions of History], 1952. No. 4: pp. 94-99*].

After all that, continuation of the normal work of the Crimean Branch of the Academy of Sciences was out of question. Individual leaders did not talk to each other, and ordinary employees expected to receive “valuable instructions” on the way of further interpretation of the past of the peninsula. Moscow was forced to intervene in resolving the fierce dispute between the Nadinskiy-Shultz and Veimarn-Strzelecki groups at the highest academic level.

### **The Only Correct History of Crimea (1952)**

To finally solve the “Crimean question”, the United Scientific Session of the Division of History and Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Crimean Branch of the Academy of Sciences was convened in Simferopol. It opened on May 23, 1952 under the chairmanship of Titov and lasted two days becoming the culmination of the battle for the past of the peninsula. The participants worked out the interpretation of the Crimean history, which in fact dominated until the late 1980s and formed the basis of many provisions of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth. The outstanding Ukrainian historian Yulian Braychevskiy became an eyewitness of that event.

The situation at the session was very tense, and at times grew into hysterical. The electrified public (the vast majority of whom were amateurs or persons not involved in historical science at all) with a hoot pulled down from the rostrum the outstanding scientists—Iranist V. Abaev and one of the leading Byzantinists A. Yakobson. The dead also caught it bad. So, P. Nadinskiy publicly announced the outstanding Leningrad paleolithologist G. Bonch-Osmolovskiy a German spy. In this situation, any fantasies and manifestations of militant ignorance, stimulated by party attitudes, became possible.

The main hero of the session was B. Rybakov, who, to an ovation of the audience, delivered two reports at its sessions. One examined the general state of the study of the history of Crimea, and the other was specifically dedicated to the Slavs in Crimea and Taman. The concept outlined in them, surpassed all the statements that were made earlier. The Black Sea (called “Russian”) acted as an internal Russia’s lake; not only Crimea and Taman (which were in the title) were certified Slavic territories, but also the Caucasus, Asia Minor and the Balkan Peninsula. The Saltov culture was declared Russian (nota bene: Russian, not Slavic), etc. According to the speaker, the main trouble was not the overestimation of the historical role of the Slavs in the south-eastern part of Europe, but its underestimation, and therefore the urgent task of historians should become an intensification of this problem.

*Braychevskiy M. Krymska sesiya 1952 roku [Crimean Session of 1952] K., Ruthenica, 2002.  
Vol. 1: pp. 175–184*

The aforementioned Borys Rybakov was a patriarch of Soviet Slavic studies, and it is not surprising that his views set the tone for the discussion. The next speaker was Schultz with a contradictory report “On the role of local tribes and nationalities in the ancient history of Crimea”. The archaeologist admitted that the formulas “Scythians are the ancestors of the Slavs” and “Scythians are one of the ancestors of the Slavs” are erroneous. “The common idea that the Scythian tribes are separate predecessors of the Old Slavic tribes does not correspond to the facts.” However, “it would be a grave mistake to deny the role of the Scythian tribes in the process of formation and development of the Eastern Slavs.”

Strzhelecki did not miss his chance to criticize Schulz, despite the fact that the latter acknowledged a number of mistakes in his previous works.

I believe that... we should speak of the most genuine Marrism in the views of P. N. Schultz, for the transition of the Scythians into the Slavs is an ill-disguised Marr’s provision. This provision was clearly shown in the reports and published by

P. N. Shultz in his works. Moreover, the protection of these Marr's provisions continued even after the publication of the brilliant work *Marxism and Questions of Linguistic* by J. V. Stalin... Pavlo Mykolaiovych absolutely indistinctly speaks on the ethnogenesis of the Scythians. On the one hand, he says that the tribes of the Scythians and the tribes of the Slavs are developing simultaneously, being different ethnic tribes, and at the same time casts doubt on this clear provision... Thus, it remains unclear today whether Shultz considers the Scythians as the ancestors of the Slavs or not? The duality and ambiguity of P. N. Shultz's formulations in the report and theses make one think that he did not solve this question.

*Lomakin D. Krymskaya nauchnaya sessiya AN SSSR 1952 goda [Crimean Scientific Session of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1952]. Pytannya istorii nauky i tekhniki [Questions of the History of Science and Technology], 2009. No. 9: pp. 10-17*

The patron of Schultz, Nadinskiy, of course, spoke in his support.

As for Comrade Strzelecki, who spared me and reproached P. N. Shultz, I will say that your thoughts about the Scythians, that you expressed here, are extremely discursive, and it is difficult to understand what your point of view is, because you had many points of view. And if you demand, if you categorically demand that they admit their mistakes, so why didn't you, Stanislav Frantsevich, admit yours? Why didn't you openly and honestly say, "Comrades, I, like you, was the propagandist of Marr".

*Lomakin D. Krymskaya nauchnaya sessiya AN SSSR 1952 goda [Crimean Scientific Session of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1952]. Pytannya istorii nauky i tekhniki [Questions of the History of Science and Technology], 2009. No. 9: pp. 10-17*

The degree of discussion increased. The academician Yevgen Pavlovskiy concluded that "a considerable amount of material has already been accumulated and allows us to cover the history of Crimea in a new perspective. This material gives grounds for considering Crimea as an Old Russian territory. Archaeological excavations of recent years allow us to say that already in ancient times the Slavs lived in Crimea." Nadinskiy picked up, "Why have not Slavic antiquities previously been found? Because no one has been looking for the Slavs in Crimea, a priori believing that they could not be here!" And then he received a remark from the audience, "Soon they will find a Slavic shard in China and say that the Slavs lived in China."

The report of Nadinskiy himself was oversaturated with quasi-scientific rhetoric, gross historical errors and absurdities.

As you can see, this is an old song. The Slavs are Barbarians, and the Romans are represented as benefactors... Sometimes it seems to me that some of such archaeologists and historians, when studying the history of Ancient Crimea, feel more like Greeks than Soviet, Russian historians [*applause*]. It's time to move these people from Athens to Crimea, from houses of Greek colonizers to huts of Taurus-Scythians!

*Lomakin D. Krymskaya nauchnaya sessiya AN SSSR 1952 goda [Crimean Scientific Session of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1952] Pytannya istorii nauky i tekhniky [Questions of the History of Science and Technology], 2009. No. 9: pp. 10-17*

Discussion of terminological issues, in particular, which word, “joining” of Crimea to Russia or “reunification”, should be preferred, grew into a fierce dispute. This issue was raised by the Doctor of Historical Sciences Aleksandr Smirnov, who delivered a report “Reunification of Crimea with Russia and its Progressive Significance”. But the report not only did not set things straight, but, on the contrary, caused a lot of questions among the attendees. “The reunification of Crimea with Russia was mentioned only by Yakiv Dmitrievich Kozin, the Chairman of the Session, but in the report, nothing was said on the reunification. What, in the end, was that? Was Crimea joined or captured by the Russians? Or, maybe, it was the reunification of the ancient Russian lands with Russia?” Smirnov asked.

Prior to that, the first term was commonly used; then Russian-made “patriots” insisted on the second one. The strippers that played the role of a noisy conference background adopted particularly aggressive attitude. The argument was very symptomatic and demonstrative: “we need to educate sailors in the spirit of patriotism, and therefore we must not “join” Crimea to Russia, but “reunite” the peninsula with it”. That group of the audience did not burden itself with scientific facts.

The dispute adequately reflected the atmosphere of the session. But the participation of respectable scientists to some extent restrained the jingoistic enthusiasm of ignoramuses. The academician B. Grekov, after a noisy debate behind closed doors, said ex-cathedra, “The leaders of the session have come to the conclusion that the most correct term to use would be the term “inclusion” of Crimea into Russia. That statement was met with irreverent laughter of the audience, and did not satisfy either side. But, nevertheless, the word “inclusion” was practically legalized.

*Braychevskiyi M. Krymska sesiya 1952 roku [Crimean Session of 1952]. K., Ruthenica, 2002. Vol. 1: pp. 175–184*

The final word was delivered by another titan, academician Borys Grekov, Head of four Institutes of the Academy of Sciences, and thus, the official head of Soviet history. In the evening of May 25, after the heated discussions, the session unanimously (that's a given) adopted the Decisions. According to Braychevskiyi, that became possible due to the fact that the final text included substantially milder formulations than those discussed at the session. However...

That session, despite being called scientific, had a very remote relationship to the real science; it was planned as a large-scale ideological action with a visionary sight.

*Braychevskiyi M. Krymska sesiya 1952 roku [Crimean Session of 1952]. K., Ruthenica, 2002. Vol. 1: pp. 175–184*

It is interesting that the text of the Decisions of the session was printed in a limited number of copies (three thousand) and distributed per special lists. If we discard all the Marxist-Leninist ritual formulas and enumeration of the outstanding successes of Soviet historical science, the document was extremely amusing. Here, for example, is a list of “sins” into which Crimean historians fell.

Noting a number of achievements in the works on the history of Crimea and the Black Sea region, the session states that numerous errors and shortcomings in this field have not yet been eliminated. Basically, these mistakes are reduced to the fact that the history of Crimea was covered in isolation from the history of the Russian people.

The traditions of bourgeois science, which mainly dealt with ancient cities and neglected to study the indigenous population, have not been completely eradicated; the substance-related attitude to archaeological sources has not been overcome. To some extent, the mentioned shortcomings were reflected in the works of V. D. Blavatskiy, G. D. Belov, V. F. Gaidukevych, I. B. Zeest, and others.

In the study of the history of Crimea, the falsification of the historic role of the Goths was observed. Goths, which in the 3rd and 4th centuries composed an insignificant share of the newly-arrived population of Crimea and gradually assimilated, were proclaimed the creators of the “Gothic state”, which in fact never existed. This reactionary theory, created to justify German imperialist aggression, also penetrated into some works of Soviet archaeologists (V. I. Ravdonikas).

In scientific and popular literature, there was an exaggeration of the historical role of Byzantium (A. L. Yakobson), Khazars (M. I. Artamonov), Genoese, Tatars and Turks.

Some authors incorrectly estimated the inclusion of Crimea into Russia as a colonial capture.

Particularly great harm to the study of the history of Crimea was inflicted by the anti-popular theory of N. Y. Marr, which replaced the specific historical process of people's development with a vulgar schematic "stage". The scholastic antiscientific concept of Marr in the issue of ethnogenesis of the Slavs got into the works of some historians and archaeologists (N. S. Derzhavin, M. I. Artamonov, A. D. Udaltsov, P. M. Tretyakov, etc.).

The works of P. M. Shultz and P. N. Nadinskiy published in 1950–1951 have erroneous provisions on the ethnogenesis of the Slavs.

*Braychevskiy M. Krymska sesiya 1952 roku [Crimean Session of 1952]. K., Ruthenica, 2002. Vol. 1: pp. 175–184*

And here is what should be corrected in the future (I give selectively from 26 points).

1. To critically review the erroneous provisions and concepts regarding the historical past of Crimea in the perspective of J. V. Stalin's brilliant work *Marxism and Questions of Linguistic*. To organize work on the creation of a truly scientific history of Crimea in its inseparable connection with the history of the Russian people.

2. To carefully and comprehensively study the relationship of the indigenous population with the agricultural population of Eastern Europe in all epochs, paying special attention to the connection with the ancient Slavs.

10. To broadly and comprehensively study the history of the penetration of the Slavs, and Slavic settlements in Crimea.

12. It is decisive to fight against the idealization of the Khazars, Pechenegs, Kipchaks and Tatars in the history of Crimea.

15. To carefully study the history of the inclusion of Crimea into Russia and show the progressive significance of this event.

20. Given the existence of facts of the distortion of the history of Crimea, to review the popular scientific and reference literature published in the post-war period.

21. In accordance with the new scientific data in the field of history, to instruct the Crimean Branch and the museums on altering the expositions of Crimean museums... in truly Marxist coverage.

*Braychevskiy M. Krymska sesiya 1952 roku [Crimean Session of 1952]. K., Ruthenica, 2002. Vol. 1: pp. 175–184*

In general, it was necessary to praise the Slavs and Russia, to fight against the "idealization" of the Tatars, and to remake books and museum expositions. However,

the Shultz-Nadinskiy concept of the “Scythian-Slavs” was defeated, and the authors were offered to revise their views.

The end of the text is so admirable that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of citing it to illustrate the spirit of the age.

The joint session of the Department of History and Philosophy and the Crimean Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences was held in an atmosphere of Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism, proved to be fruitful in its consequences and will contribute to further successful work on the study of the history of Crimea.

The session calls on historians engaged in research of the history of Crimea to close cooperation in solving the main problems of history, conducting on the basis of the works of Comrade Stalin a firm line of struggle both with the recurrence of “marrism” and with manifestations of cosmopolitanism and bourgeois objectivism in historical science.

The participants of the session unanimously express their confidence that Soviet historians armed with the Marxist-Leninist theory will justify the trust of our own government and create truly scientific works on the history of Crimea.

*Braychevskiyi M. Krymska sesiya 1952 roku [Crimean Session of 1952]. K., Ruthenica, 2002. Vol. 1: pp. 175–184*

However, if the Decisions remained a document for official use, the introductory and final reports of the two “colossi”—Rybakov and Grekov—became public.

The work “Ob oshibkakh v izuchenii istorii Kryma i o zadachakh dalneyshikh issledovaniy” [*On Mistakes in the Study of the History of Crimea and on Tasks of Further Research*] by Rybakov was published in a separate brochure immediately after the session, and not in Moscow, but in Simferopol. It began with the fact that “the Soviet historians studying the past of Crimea and the Black Sea region need to revise their views and methods of work from the standpoint of Stalin’s works”. Its most important provisions are as follows:

Despite the seeming geographic isolation of the Crimean peninsula, it, nevertheless, was inseparably linked with the Russian Plain throughout its entire historical life. The Crimean peninsula has never been an integral state. There were either several small state entities, or the entire peninsula, or part of it, was part of the states associated with Eastern Europe... none of the historical phenomena in Crimea can be considered in isolation, without regard to the destinies of not only the Northern Black Sea Coast, but all of Eastern Europe. The history of Crimea is an integral and important part of the history of Eastern Europe.

When studying the history of Crimea, it is necessary to take into account deep external historical factors, in the sense of their influence on the development and inhibition of local productive forces. It is necessary to correctly assess such historical events as the Greek colonization, the creation of the Scythian state, the Roman and Byzantine aggression, the formation of the Russian principality in the territory of Crimea (Tmutarakan Principality), the conquest of Crimea by nomads (Khazars, Kipchaks, Tatars), the seizure of Crimean cities by Genoese, and the conquest of Crimea by Turkey.

The establishment of city-polis by Hellenic evicts had a great positive impact on the historical development of Crimea, since it introduced the peninsula to the high ancient civilization. The symbiosis of Greek cities and the local population led to the creation of a peculiar culture of the Black Sea region.

The formation of the Scythian state in Crimea, which had a great progressive significance, and the strengthening of the local element in the semi-Greek cities put forward the aboriginal tribes of the Black Sea region, and therefore the external forces that tried to seize Crimea and forcibly tear it off from Eastern Europe should be regarded as an obstacle in the development of productive forces of the peninsula.

The conquest of Crimea by the great powers associated with it by sea routes (Rome, Byzantium) could not contribute to the development of local productive forces, since Crimea was considered by these states as an object of exploitation, as a strategic border point, as a base for military and diplomatic operations and as a market of slaves bought from nomads. The role of Byzantium was sharply negative, since the emperor and the patriarch sought to tear off the Crimean regions from the connection with Rus, and used Crimea as a strategic area from which the strikes of nomads could be directed to Rus.

*Rybakov B. Ob oshibkakh v izuchenii istorii Kryma i o zadachakh dalneyshikh issledovaniy [On Mistakes in the Study of the History of Crimea and on Tasks of Further Research]. Simferopol, 1952. Pp. 2-6*

Generally...

The work “Ob oshibkakh v izuchenii istorii Kryma i o zadachakh dalneyshikh issledovaniy” [*On Mistakes in the Study of the History of Crimea and on Tasks of Further Research*] by Rybakov is most demonstrative in the Soviet post-war reflection on Crimea. It is unusual for its crystal clearness. This is a rare example of ideological work based on theoretical and methodological research guidelines, specifically on Crimean history... The work of Rybakov was surely intended for historians. This was not a work for the general public, but for the formation of a correct, that is, a scientific statement on the history of Crimea in the “army of Soviet historians”. It was necessary to explain them how to understand this or that issue of the Crimean history. Due to the danger of this subject and the high

degree of uncertainty of some issues of the Crimean history of the newest period, a special explanation was needed. The work of Rybakov carried out this task... In the case of Crimea, it was necessary to urgently conduct educational work among professional historians. This gave rise to some simplicity, even by Soviet standards.

*Nikolaienko D. Formirovanie krymskogo mifa v SSSR [Formation of the Crimean Myth in the USSR]. Qasevet, 2009. No. 35: pp. 2-9*

But if Rybakov's brochure was available only in Crimean libraries, Grekov's report titled "O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii Kryma" [*On Some Issues of the History of Crimea*] was published in the central Soviet newspaper *Izvestiya* [News]. Thus, the interpretation of the past of the peninsula, approved at the 1952 session, was reported to every Soviet citizen and became official until the era of perestroika. Its main provisions are as follows.

The history of Crimea is inseparable from the history of the great Russian people. Already in ancient times, Crimea's relationship with the agricultural population of the Russian Plain, more precisely, with the Slavic, Russian population, played a decisive role in its historical destinies. Long before the formation of the Kiev state, the Slavs lived in the Crimean peninsula, and in the times of Kievan Rus Crimea was largely Russian.

In the history of Crimea, there are very important, responsible problems, on correct resolution of which depends the clarification of many questions of the history of our Motherland.

In covering the history of Crimea there are many distortions that are very tendentious. As is known, over the course of several centuries Crimea was a desired object for many states hostile to Russia, and therefore it is not surprising that bourgeois scientists of different countries, in order to please political programs of their governments, tried in every possible way to falsify the history of Crimea to justify the aggressive plans of their masters.

In the pre-war period, in order to please the Tatar bourgeois nationalists, in some historical works the role of the Crimean Khanate was completely and unjustifiably exaggerated. The issue of including Crimea into Russia was completely misinterpreted. This historically progressive event was usually regarded as a colonial capture, as a continuous evil in the historical life of the population who lived in the Crimean peninsula at that time.

Today we must admit the fact that before the appearance of Tatars in Crimea in the 13th century, the Russian population here was significant. This is evidenced by the treaty of Prince Igor with the Greeks (944), implying here the presence of the Russian people; this is also evidenced by a note of the Gothic Toparch; this is confirmed by the data known to us about the campaign against Korsun of Vladimir Sviatoslavych; the presence of the Russian

people and Russian writing here in the 9th century hardly raise doubts.

During the session, a very interesting issue about the need to study the history of agriculture in Crimea was raised. The formulation of that issue was very important and relevant. After all, it was the agricultural Russian people who cultivated this branch of production. Perhaps it was the Russian people who brought their agricultural skills to Crimea, just as it had happened in Siberia.

A great place was taken in the work of the session to consider the issue of progressive significance of the inclusion of Crimea into Russia. Doctor of Historical Sciences N. A. Smirnov, who made a report on that subject, convincingly showed that the Turkish-Tatar domination turned Crimea into the most backward region in Europe in economic and cultural terms, and actually left the peninsula to the mercy of the khans and sultans who occupied it. The Crimean Khanate served as a springboard and an instrument of the aggressive policy of Sultan Turkey in South-Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. This aggressive policy of Turkey in the Black Sea basin was supported and inspired by the West European powers, primarily Britain, France and Sweden, which during the 17th and 18th centuries systematically pushed Turkey and its Crimean vassal to an armed struggle against Russia. Elimination of the Crimean Khanate and the inclusion of Crimea into the Russian state ensured the security of the southern Russian borders, contributed to the firm establishment of Russia in the Black Sea and the economic recovery of the entire southern region.

Issues of the history of Crimea are not only historical and ethnographic issues. They concern the history of our entire Motherland, since a number of important fundamental problems that are of paramount importance for Soviet historical science as a whole are being solved based on the Crimean material.

*Grekov B. O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii Kryma [On Some Issues of the History of Crimea]. Izvestiya [News], June 4, 1952*

The version of this article for the professional community was published by Grekov in co-authorship with the great Soviet ethnographer Yulian Bromley in *Vestnik* [Herald] of the Academy of Sciences all in the same 1952 [Grekov B., Bromley Y. *Izuchenie istorii Kryima [Study of the History of Crimea]. Vestnik [Herald] of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1952, No. 8: pp. 71-76*].

Grekov's article is much tougher and contains fewer recommendations than the article of Rybakov, but the essence remained unchanged: the Russians inhabited the peninsula in ancient times and brought there agriculture, the Crimean Khanate is "backward and aggressive", the seizure of the peninsula by Russia is a "progressive event", the history of Crimea is the field of fight with falsifiers. By the way, the above-

mentioned note of the Gothic Toparch was a forgery, but this is no big deal. The main task of both the session and publications was achieved, and in 1952 a sacred and unshakable canon of the Crimean past appeared.

### **Rearguard Actions (1953)**

Thus, the Crimean Tatars were expelled from the Crimean history, and there was a slight problem left—to establish the Russian superiority in Crimea. And, given the defeat of the views of Nadinskiy-Shultz, the primacy in the Slavic archeology of the peninsula gradually passed to Veimarn. In September 1952, he resumed excavations in the peninsula, but his activities were suddenly interrupted by opening a criminal case at the end of the same year.

Veimarn was accused of embezzling state funds. In the Crimean press, the activities of his expedition, and indeed of the entire Department of History and Archeology of the Crimean Branch of the Academy of Sciences, were cast in a negative light. The personal record of Yevhen Volodymyrovych was considered at a general meeting, and an attempt was made to remove him from work [Yurochkin V. “Gotskiy” i “slavianskiy” voprosy v poslevoennom Krymu [“Gothic” and “Slavic” issues in the post-war Crimea]. *Narteks. Byzantina Ukrainensis. Vol. 2: ‘Ρωμαϊος: Collection of Articles to the 60th Anniversary of Prof. S. B. Sorochan. Kharkiv, 2013. Pp. 392–412*]. He himself, and reasonably, thought that the prosecution was inspired by Nadinskiy avenging the defeat of the “Scythian-Slavic” theory.

It was decided to audit the financial activities of the Inkerman expedition, and a group of auditors was sent to Bakhchysarai. It included eight (!) accountants. The course of the audit immediately demonstrated its full bias. The Director of the Museum of Cave Towns, I. Lipatov, “assisted” the auditors. He was so convinced in my fast end that even started borrowing money from me. Fraudulent results of this audit allowed the journalist-falsifier S. Shantyr to publish a shameful feuilleton in *Krymska Pravda* [Crimean Truth] on January 14, 1953, in which he reported that I spent 195 thousand rubles of the Inkerman expedition in Bakhchysarai without going to

the field. A criminal case was brought against me. On February 7, 1953, the Presidium of the Crimean Branch, in the absence of its chairman, academician E. N. Pavlovskiy, decided on my dismissal from office. However, as it turned out, such a decision could be made only in Moscow. The “Inkerman case” was stopped and began again several times. Finally, on June 12–13, fortunately, after the death of Stalin, the case of embezzlement of no more than 220 thousand rubles was considered in the Bakhchysarai District Court. At trial, I was completely acquitted. The judge offered to consider that there had been no court at all, and this case must be excluded from my track record. This was officially reported to the Crimean Department. The times gradually changed, and we were able to quietly engage in scientific work.

*Piolo I. Skladna dolia arkeoloha (do 85-richchia Yevgena Volodymyrovycha Veymarna)*  
*[Difficult Fate of an Archaeologist (To the 85th Anniversary of Yevhen Volodymyrovych Veimarn)].*  
*Arkheologiya [Archeology], 1990, No. 4: p. 147*

However, the complacency of the judge can be easily explained. On March 27, the “Beria’s amnesty” began, and all cases related to economic and official crimes were terminated. Soon after the judgment, the Presidium of the Crimean Branch canceled its decision to dismiss Veimarn. Not the least role in this was played by the fact that Shultz spoke in support of his subordinate and implacable opponent.

Defeated Nadinskiy could no longer influence the determination of the historical fate of Crimea focusing instead on the study of the events of the 1917 revolution. Veimarn took up the business of his life—the medieval archeology of the peninsula. Schulz organized research of the ancient period in the Eastern Crimea, Strzhelecky—in Chersonese.

After Stalin’s death, the concept of the early Slavs in Crimea was revised. Between 1953 and 1958, at least ten works that refute the dating approved at the “Crimean session” were published. The opinion about the appearance of the Slavs in the peninsula in the 18th century became dominant already in the 1970s.

It was not so with the Crimean Tatars. Their history remained under an unofficial ban at least until 1989, and in the works on the medieval Crimea, stamps were constantly repeated: “Mongolo-Tatars”, “aggressors”, “backward economy” and “progressive significance of the inclusion of Crimea into Russia”.

## **Instead of an Epilogue**

The transfer of Crimea to Ukraine in 1954 removed the slogan “Crimea is an original Russian land” from agenda and in general depoliticized the Slavic studios. But the other theses announced in 1952 remained relevant. And if the myths around the “Gothic problem” never went beyond scientific literature, then half a century of silence and falsification of the Crimean Tatar history made its presence felt. From the very first days of Ukraine’s independence, the struggle for the minds of the population between Kyiv and Moscow broke out in the peninsula, and one of the elements of that struggle was the blackening of Crimean Tatars. The events of 2014 showed that many years of Russian propaganda left their mark. And, speaking of the theses of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth, one must not forget that they were based on the carefully thought-out Soviet “Crimean myth”.





**PART I.  
THE GREAT PAST  
OF THE HERO  
AND HIS “BIRTHRIGHT”**

The most important (in the literal sense, the fundamental) role in the structure of the common “Crimea-is-ours” myth is played by private “initial” myths: the originality of the Russian Crimea, its eternal belonging to Russia, the Russian Sevastopol, which is Chersonese at the same time, and finally the sacred Korsun. Collected together, they create an impression on the outside observer that the Russians in Crimea do not take anything away, they “return their own”, and do not conquer anybody, but only “defend their land”.

Characteristic for the era of Romanticism, the desire to continue the history of its people as far as possible into the depths of centuries has not been overcome in the philistine mind to this day. The seeds of Russian state propaganda, which seek in the past means to legitimize the present, fall on more fertile ground. And the idea of the “birthright” of Russians in Crimea is the pivot of Russian propaganda. As experience shows, in case of acute shortage of legal arguments, the creators of myths resort to “historical” ones. Therefore, for modern Russia it is so important to assure the world that it has exclusive rights to the history of Crimea. Remove this myth and Moscow’s claims to the peninsula will hang in the air.

Yes, there remain many other myths, no less kind to the Russian heart, but *The Hero* in them—“the great Russian people / Russia”—will be just one of many other characters or even worse, the conqueror. Therefore, the rejection of the wording “Crimea is Russia” is tantamount in the imperial worldview to public recognition of the illegality of its actions. And that’s why it is so important to raze the myths about the “Russian birthright” in Crimea to the ground.

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# MYTH 1. CRIMEA IS AN ORIGINALLY RUSSIAN LAND

## *Intro*

Among the myths designed to consolidate the “Russian birthright” in the peninsula, the thesis “Crimea is an originally Russian land” is the first among equals. “Original Russian” in this case means “belonging to the Russians from time immemorial (that is, literally “from the beginning of time”). And if it is possible to convince the world that Crimea is a Russian ethnic territory, Russia will receive an additional argument in the negotiations on the status of the peninsula. Russia skillfully plays in this field, interpreting the right of nations to self-determination exclusively in the ethnic sense.

## *Myth...*

This myth has two versions: journalistic and pseudoscientific, which are alternately applied depending on the circumstances. The journalistic version is much simpler, does not contain any indication of specific dates, and describes the situation in the most general phrases. Its “canonical” version was voiced several times by Vladimir Putin himself.

To understand why this choice was made, it is enough to know the history of Crimea, to know what Russia meant for Crimea and Crimea for Russia. In Crimea, everything is permeated with our common history and pride... All these years, citizens and many public figures have repeatedly raised this issue, saying that Crimea is an originally Russian land, and Sevastopol is a Russian city.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, March 18, 2014*

Crimea is not some kind of incomprehensible territory for us; Crimea is historically Russian, Russian territory with the predominantly Russian population... I spoke to my colleagues. And I spoke directly to them, as I am speaking right now, absolutely openly, that this is our historical territory.

*Putin V. Crimea. Krym. Put na Rodinu [Crimea. The Way Home] [interview].  
Komsomolskaya Pravda [Komsomol Truth], March 16, 2015*

For most Russians, this argument is sufficient. In such truncated form, this myth appears in “network wars” or television propaganda. The phrase “originally Russian land” is in itself a meme and an axiom, and no additional evidence is required.

But in some cases, the journalistic version is clearly not enough. For example, when an opponent asks to specify from which time it is necessary to start counting the “historicity” or “legality” of Russians in Crimea. In this case, a pseudoscientific explanation is used. It consists of two equally incorrect premises: a) the Slavs have lived in Crimea from ancient times, b) the Slavs mean the Russians.

After the collapse of the great and mighty Soviet Union, the question of which people originally lived in the peninsula and which people, relatively speaking, has historical rights to this territory, has repeatedly been raised... The fact that our ancestors were the most ancient inhabitants of Crimea is not surprising. Our ancestors long before Christ’s birth mastered many territories of Eurasia, including the Crimean peninsula. Non-Russians, such as Greeks, Romans, Khazars, Genoese and other tribes, appeared in Crimea later. Part of Crimean lands was part of various states: Bosporan Kingdom, Kingdom of Pontus, Roman Empire, and Crimean Khanate. But the indigenous inhabitants of the peninsula, the Slavs and the Scythians, did not disappear anywhere.

*Antonov A. Krym – eto iskonno russkaya zemlya [Crimea is an Originally Russian Land].  
Midgard-INFO, March 1, 2014*

Crimea is an originally Russian territory. It was part of Russia even before the Russian Sea was renamed into the Black Sea. And now history is returning what once taken away and looted.

*Ishchenko A. Krym –iskonno russkaya territoriya  
[Crimea is an originally Russian territory]. Vzglyad-info, March 19, 2014*

This variant is less widespread and is used mainly by supporters of marginal theories about “Slavs–Scythians”, “Slavs–Aryans” and “Slavs–Hyperboreans” (among whom, however, was Catherine II). Non-critically perceived ancient and medieval texts, indeed identifying the Slavs with other peoples of antiquity, are used as arguments. As a rule, the authors of such texts do not consider it necessary to check with public encyclopedias, believing that

“official” science “perverts and conceals” the true past of the Russians. This is the result of the inherited Soviet distrust of history allegedly “being constantly rewritten” in favor of politics.

We must admit that the idea of the “millennia” of Russian history is really quite common at the philistine level. Even the constructions of the “New Chronology” by Anatoliy Fomenko and Glib Nosovskyi that have no direct relation to the “Crimea-is-ours” myth play into the hands of such views.

Professional historians who were guided more by the current political situation and the instructions of the “party and government” than by the sources are unfortunately also involved in the construction of a pseudoscientific version of the myth. As already noted, until the mid-50s of the last century, the Soviet archeology was almost completely dominated by “Slavic autochthonism”, the idea of “originality” and continuity of the ancient Slavic population of the European part of the USSR. This is how the informal leader of this trend, Pavel Nadinskiy, expressed his opinion.

The overwhelming majority of the previously written works and studies on the history of Crimea contain many fundamental mistakes... In this work, the first attempt to cover the history of Crimea as... the history of the Russian Crimea, an originally Russian land, is made.

The Crimean land, even during the Turkish-Tatar rule, remained the Russian land. The Crimean peninsula [in 1783] was returned to its true owner—the Russian people.

*Nadinskiy P. Ocherki po istorii Kryma. Ch. 1 [Essays on the History of Crimea. Part 1]. Simferopol, 1951. Pp. 6; 75; 92.*

And although this theory was disproved during the Soviet times, modern folk historians, dilettantes and manipulators sometimes resort to such an outdated argument.

However, even if the adherents of “Crimea-is-ours” myth are not strong in history, Russian propaganda still has room for manipulations. Let’s take, for example, the data of the so-called “Population Censuses in the Crimean Federal District”. It shows that the share of Russians in the peninsula (65.3%) exceeds the total share of all other nationalities, while the Crimean Tatars make up only 10.1%. What conclusion can an unprepared reader make, seeing these figures for the first time? Exactly, in

most cases he admits that there is something behind the formulation “Crimea is an originally Russian land”. Such a population structure does not appear from scratch.

But has the ethnic map of Crimea always looked like this?

***...and reality***

Since the journalistic version of the myth is only a “squeeze” of the pseudoscientific version, we will start the analysis with the latter...

Of all the hypotheses about the Slavs in Crimea, the most likely is the opinion of A. L. Yakobson and G. F. Korzukhina on the emigration of some population groups from Ancient Rus in the 13th century during the Tatar-Mongol invasion... While there is no convincing evidence, neither written nor archaeological, about the early Slavs. All attempts to find them were tendentious, sometimes even pseudoscientific. Leading Soviet researchers have already abandoned most of the proposed concepts of the early colonization of Crimea by the Slavs.

*Pioro I. Krymskaya Gotiya [Crimean Gothia].  
K., 1990. Pp. 33-34*

Studies of recent decades have only confirmed the conclusion cited above that the Slavs did not live in Crimea in ancient times.

In the 13th–18th centuries, Slavic merchants did live in some Crimean cities, but they were not numerous and hardly lived there permanently. A lot of Slavic slaves indeed passed through the peninsula, but they had no time to influence the structure of the local population. Contrary to the report of Evliya Chelebi about the alleged 920 thousand captured “Cossacks” in Crimea, all of them either were immediately sold in the markets of Caffa (Theodosia) and Kezlev (Yevpatoria), or were quickly assimilated among the Crimean Tatars. When in 1778 Alexander Suvorov organized the “withdrawal” (de facto deportation) of Christians from Crimea by order of Empress Catherine II, there were more than 30 thousand displaced persons: Greeks, Armenians, Georgians and “Vlachs”, i. e., Romanians and Moldavians. Neither Russians, nor Ukrainians, nor other Slavs were on the list of the displaced persons.

The revision of 1793 counted 6.5 thousand Russians in Crimea, most of which were late “stragglers”:

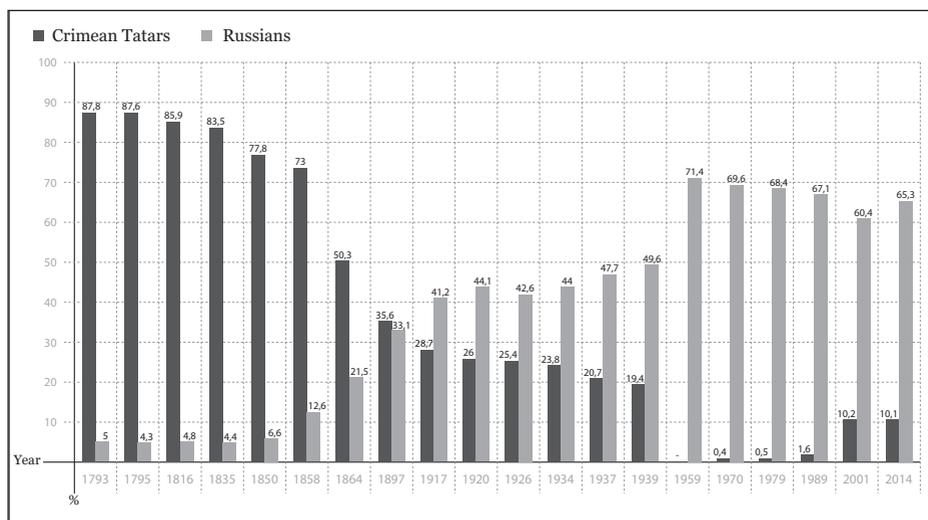
...peasants (1.3 thousand people) arrived from abroad in 1786 and included in the number of state-owned, Great Russian deserters (about 2 thousand people), retired soldiers (about 500 people).

*Vodarskiy Y. et al. Naselenie Kryma [Population of Crimea]. M., 2003. Pp. 120-121*

Therefore,

**the permanent Slavic population appeared in the peninsula not earlier than in the 13th century, was vanishingly small before the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire in 1783, and since not all Slavs were Russians, it's simply ridiculous to talk about the “original Russian land”.**

The question of turning Russians from a small group into an absolute majority of the peninsula's population deserves a separate consideration. Above I noted how easy modern ethnic structure can become an argument in favor of the thesis of the “originality” of Russians in Crimea. And so it is important to show the dynamics of changes in the composition of Crimea's population over the past three hundred years. For the sake of simplicity, the diagram shows only changes in the number of Russians and Crimean Tatars.



*Fig. 1 Dynamics of the Ratio of the Russian and Crimean Tatar Population in Crimea in 1783–2014.*

*Source: Vodarskiy Y. et al. Naselenie Kryma [Population of Crimea]. M., 2003.*

*Note: the results of the 2014 “census” are not internationally recognized.*

As you can see, during almost a century since the annexation (1783–1860s), Crimea, in the words of Adam Mickiewicz, was the “East in miniature”: a typical southern Turkic-Muslim province of Russia, in which Russians accounted for only a small percentage of the population. The title people of the Empire were represented mainly by officials and soldiers (until the 1830s), and later—also by the landed aristocracy. Crimean Tatars, as the indigenous people, were the overwhelming majority of the population, despite the unfriendly power and gradual emigration.

Only after the Crimean (Eastern) War, which was unsuccessful for Russia, the government seriously came to grips with the local population, practically forcing it to massively move to the Ottoman Empire. In the 1860s, a paradoxical situation was created: the number of Crimean Tatars who found themselves in the diaspora exceeded the number of those who stayed at home. At the same time, the number of Russian immigrants also increased.

And only at the beginning of the 20th century (no earlier than in 1901), the share of Russians in Crimea exceeded the share of Crimean Tatars. And even so, until the deportation of the Crimean Tatar people (1944), Russians did not constitute an absolute majority in the peninsula, as it is today.

By the way, it is interesting to compare the results of the last Ukrainian census in Crimea and Sevastopol (2001) with the Russian “census” (2014). According to the first, the population breakdown in the peninsula was as follows: Russians—60.7%, Ukrainians—24.1%, Crimean Tatars—10.2%, simply “Tatars”—0.5%. According to the second, the population consists of 68.3% of Russians, 15.8% of Ukrainians, 10.6% of Crimean Tatars, and 2.1% of “Tatars”.

The fact that part of the Eastern Slavs of mixed origin ceased to define themselves as “Ukrainians” and recorded as “Russians”, is not surprising. Some people decided to identify themselves by the flag at the nearest administrative building, while some were afraid of possible persecution. Much more indicative is the manipulation with the explosive growth in the number of simply “Tatars” in Crimea. Almost 11 thousand people (0.5%), who called themselves Tatars in 2001, are a fairly reliable number, what cannot be said about 45 thousand Tatars from 2014. However, the demography is not able to explain the fourfold (!) growth of a separate ethnic group for 13 years. There was either a directive mass migration of Tatars of the Volga region to Crimea, or a fantastic-scale distortion of statistics. And

since the press in the Russian Federation did not say anything about such people movements, there is no doubt that Russia forged the results of the “census” in order to underestimate the number of Crimean Tatars in Crimea. Probably, in some places the respondents were incorrectly posed questions about nationality, and in some places the answers were deliberately distorted. The myth of the “originally Russian” peninsula once again required a “crutch” of the state apparatus.

Proceeding from the above, two important conclusions can be made. Firstly,

**the Russians in Crimea turned out to be in a majority exclusively due to the administrative pressure of the imperial and Soviet governments on the Crimean Tatars (from manipulating statistics to deportation and genocide), and not owing to their “originality”.**

Secondly,

**from three thousand years of written history of Crimea (9th century BC to 21st century), Russians make up the relative ethnic majority in the peninsula for only 115 years, or 3.8%, and the absolute of 72 years, or 2.4% of the entire Crimean history.**

It is not long for the “originally Russian Crimea”, isn’t it?

## MYTH 2. CRIMEA HAS ALWAYS BELONGED TO RUSSIA

### *Intro*

The myth that Russia “has always owned” Crimea is a twin brother or, if you like, the reverse side of the myth No. 1 about “an originally Russian land”. The only difference is that one myth is based on the ethnic approach, and the other—on the political one. The content and the “expected result” of the application of the myth are entirely the same: if the peninsula has “always” been part of Russia (in different forms), then now it must belong to it and to no one else.

### *Myth...*

The truncated journalistic version, which carefully avoids particular dates, has become so popular that it has captured not only Russian but also some foreign minds.

Being Russian, I also want Crimea to be Russian... We need to convince the world that Crimea has always belonged to Russia, and meanwhile we’ve had to pay for the mistake made by Nikita Khrushchev for 20 years.

*Filatov S. Yeshchyo v 90-e gody Krym khotel rasstatsiya s Ukrainoy [Back in the 90s, Crimea wanted to part with Ukraine] [interview]. lifenews. March 15, 2014*

Crimea has always belonged to Russia. Under Khrushchev, it was given to Ukraine, but it was an unwise decision, so I find it strange to claim to what originally belonged to Russia, and only for a short time to Ukraine.

*Krylov G. Krym vseгда prinadlezhal Rossii [Crimea Has Always Belonged to Russia]. Pravoslavnyi vzglyad [Orthodox View], March 17, 2014*

Crimea has never belonged to Ukraine. Crimea has always belonged to Russia. For me, this whole situation is not so tragic. In my opinion, the root cause of all is the internal crisis in Ukraine.

*Klaus V. Konflikt na Ukraine nachali SShA, a Rossiya vynuzhdena reagirovat [The Conflict in Ukraine Was Initiated by the United States, and Russia is forced to React] [interview]. Russkaya vesna [Russian Spring], March 8, 2015*

This is a kind of natural return, since Crimea has always belonged to Russia. I think you need to be able to face the reality.

*Miar Zh. Krym vseгда byl rossiyskim [Crimea has always been Russian] [interview]. Vestnik Kavkaza [The Herald of the Caucasus], July 26, 2015*

Vladimir Putin also could not stand aside from the mainstream. However, the Russian President showed remarkable restraint in the interpretation of this myth.

Dear colleagues! In the heart, in the minds of people, Crimea has always been and remains an integral part of Russia.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, March 18, 2014*

But, as in the case with the “originally Russian” Crimea, such rhetoric immediately loses its appeal as soon as opponents ask to clarify when exactly Crimea became part of Russia. The date “1783” obviously does not suit the apologists for the “Crimea-is-ours” myth, therefore, as in the previous case, they begin their rain dance around the history of Ancient Rus.

And, finally, the historical reunion of Crimea and Sevastopol with Russia has happened. This event is of particular importance for our country and for our people. Because our people live in Crimea, and the territory is strategically important, because here is the spiritual source of the formation... of the centralized Russian state.

*Putin V. Message from the President to the Federal Assembly, December 4, 2014*

The themes of “Sacred Korsun” and “Chersonese–Sevastopol” are so important that they will be considered separately below. Here, we will focus on pseudoscientific evidence of the theory of the fundamental role of Crimea in the history of Kievan Rus.

The poet Gavrylo Derzhavin was one of the first in the Russian Empire, who proclaimed the conquest of Crimea a “return”. Commenting his own ode “Na priobretenie Kryma” [*For the Acquisition of Crimea*] (1784), he wrote:

Back then, the Caucasian hordes were restrained, and Chersonese, the ancient city of Russian Princes, was returned to Russia.

*Derzhavin G. Obyasneniya [Na priobretenie Kryma] [Explanations [For the acquisition of Crimea]]. Sochineniya [Compositions]. Vol. 3. St. Petersburg, 1866. P. 604*

In the Soviet times, such views were shared by Pavel Nadinskiy. He states that the Tmutarakan Principality “united the territories of the Kerch peninsula and Taman”. Based on such inferences, the author came to a conclusion that anticipated “Crimea-is-ours” and put the beginning of the myth that interests us.

Crimea was repeatedly subjected to invasions by various foreign peoples... But all these foreign newcomers came to Crimea as temporary conquerors, invaders of foreign land. Only the Russians had undeniable historical rights to Crimea as their ancient Russian territory.

*Nadinskiy P. Ocherki po istorii Kryma. Chast 1  
[Essays on the History of Crimea. Part 1]. Simferopol, 1951. P. 57*

The first and last President of Crimea, Yuriy Meshkov, went further in his dissertation, turning a small principality into... Sourozh Rus!

And when the chronicler wrote that “for a thousand years they together could not create Rus”, of course, he meant all of Rus: Northern, Southern, Don and Sourozh (in Taurida).

*Meshkov Y. Konstitutsionno-pravovoy status Respubliki Krym: diss. kand. yur. nauk  
[Constitutional and Legal Status of the Republic of Crimea: Dissertation of the Candidate  
of Legal Sciences]. M., 2000. P. 12*

Putin’s point of view is completely shared by his Minister of Culture, Vladimir Medinskiy, notorious for his views on the “extra chromosome” of the Russians. In his appeal to the readers of the History of Crimea of OLMA Publishing House, there is such a passage:

At the end of the Early Middle Ages, Russes and Pechenegs appeared here... And the Tmutarakan Principality arose in the territory of Crimea. However, with the arrival of the Komans, the Russian power was ousted from here.

*Medinskiy V. K chitatel'nyam [To Readers]. Istoriya Kryma [History of Crimea]. M., 2015. P. 3*

In the most finished form, the opinion of the “ancient Russian possession” of Crimea was formulated by the authors of the site of the scandalously known “Sevastopol-Crimea-Russia Front”.

At the beginning of 9th century, Crimea falls into the sphere of influence of ancient Russian Princes... In the middle of the 11th century, ancient Russes... take possession of the Greek city of Tamatarha, the latest Tmutarakan, the capital of the future ancient Russian Principality... by the middle of the 10th century, the power of Kiev Princes extended to a part of the lands in Crimea and, above all, to the Kerch peninsula.

In 944, the Kiev Prince Igor set his governor in Crimea, near the Kerch Strait, having ousted the Khazars from there... Igor's son Svyatoslav managed to strengthen the influence of Kiev Princes in Crimea, especially in the period of 962–971... In 988, Svyatoslav's son Vladimir carried out a campaign against Korsun and seized the city.

Byzantium had to sign an agreement with the Kiev Prince, which recognized his possessions in Crimea and the Azov Sea. Thanks to this agreement, Kievan Rus gained access to the Black Sea and strengthened the Tmutarakan Principality, which was dependent on it. After the Korsun Campaign, the city of Bospor with the district was joined to this principality and received the Russian name Korchev.

Throughout the 11th century, the Tmutarakan Principality, including its lands in the Crimean peninsula, belonged to Ancient Rus.

*Slavyane v Krymu [Slavs in Crimea]. Website of the Popular Front "Sevastopol–Crimea–Russia" (<http://sevkrinrus.narod.ru/ZAKON/istor3.htm>).*

In the text (by the way, half written off from Nadinskiy), three interrelated theses are easily distinguished:

- a) The Tmutarakan Principality was part of Rus.
- b) The Tmutarakan Principality owned lands in Crimea.
- c) Kiev Princes captured cities in Crimea, which Byzantium rendered valid.

As a result, the reader comes to the conclusion that Crimea belonged to Kievan Rus, which means that in 2014 Putin only returned to Russia its “ancient possessions”. Then the fact that “Rus = Russia” goes without saying for the followers of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth.

Nadinskiy, probably without knowing it himself, fully supported Derzhavin's thesis about the “return” of Crimea, and declared the annexation of 1783... a reunification!

The reunification of Crimea with Russia objectively had a great historical progressive significance... In the historical literature on Crimea, some Soviet historians completely

incorrectly portrayed the struggle of the Russian state against the Turks and Crimean Tatars, interpreting the question of the reunification of Crimea with Russia as an imperialistic seizure of foreign land, being completely silent about the progressive role, which Russia played for Crimea... These wrong positions are now completely exposed.

*Nadinskiy P. Ocherki po istorii Kryma. Chast 1 [Essays on the History of Crimea. Part 1]. Simferopol, 1951. Pp. 93, 95*

Little wonder now that the current RF calls occupation of any territory a “reunification”.

### ***...and reality***

As in the case of myth No. 1, criticizing the journalistic version of the thesis on the eternal belonging of Crimea to Russia does not make much sense. It is enough only to ask the apologists for the “Crimea-is-ours” myth to specify the time of the first accession of the peninsula to the Russian Empire—1783.

And in case they start a conversation about Ancient Rus as a whole, and military expeditions to the peninsula in particular, they should be recalled that the seizure of Byzantine cities in Crimea by Kiev Princes itself does not mean entry of these cities into Rus. The analysis of the “particularly beloved” Vladimir’s campaign against Korsun in 989 will be made below, but for the time being, recall more often that the seizure of, for example, Sevastopol in 1855 by Anglo-French allies did not make the city part of Europe.

But this is an indirect and secondary, in general, remark, and the most important will be now. Contrary to the widely held opinion in Russia and Ukraine (unfortunately, found in school and university textbooks), neither Eastern Crimea nor Kerch were parts of the Tmutarakan Principality.

The city [Kerch] that belonged to the Empire already from the last quarter of the 9th century, both in terms of planning and material culture, was a Byzantine city. The short existence of the Tmutarakan Principality on the opposite side of the Russian strait had no effect on its everyday life. There are no findings marking the Slavic ethnos either in mass ceramic material or in the inventory of the cemetery.

*Arkheologiya. Krym, Severo-Vostochnoe Prichernomorye i Zakavkazye v epokhu srednevekovya IV-XIII veka [Archeology. Crimea, Northeastern Black Sea Region and Transcaucasia in the Middle Ages: the 4th–13th Centuries] M., 2003. P. 73*

I specifically quote the most fundamental and relatively fresh of Russian academic works. It's no secret that excessive politicization of history damages its credibility, so it is important to show that these best Russian historians reject the ridiculous opinion about the possessions of Russia in Crimea, and not the "Ukrainians" try to deny "Russians" their legal rights.

What is really interesting is that some Ukrainian myth-makers willingly jump on abstracts on the presence of Rus in Crimea, but with the aim of justifying their own claims to the peninsula according to the scheme "Rus = Ukraine". Especially for them I note that although some historians in the old manner "record" Eastern Crimea as part of Rus, in the Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine all the accents are placed correctly.

The territory of the T. K. [Tmutarakan Principality] probably covered only a part of the present-day Taman peninsula... A widely spread opinion that for some time Korchev (the Byzantine Bosphorus, modern Kerch) also belonged to the T. K. is not confirmed by sources and is only a hypothesis.

*Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine. Vol. 10. K., 2013. P. 102*

And without this "clamp" the whole concept (both Russian and Ukrainian) immediately collapses. Yes, the Tmutarakan Principality did exist; it was part of Russia and had a glorious history. Yes, Kiev Princes did go to war against Crimea several times and captured cities and villages there, but (and this is the main thing),

**the territory of Tmutarakan did not include a scrap of Crimean land, and none of the Crimean cities captured by Kiev Princes remained under their control.**

Such academic unanimity allows to forever close the issue of Russia, which allegedly has "indisputable historical rights to Crimea as its ancient Russian territory".

And without the "ancient Russian" prop, Russian claims to "eternal" possession of Crimea look ridiculous. The liquidation of the Crimean Khanate and the annexation of its territory by Petersburg took place in the spring of 1783, after which the peninsula remained in the Russian Empire for completed 134 years, until the spring of 1917. Then the revolutionary leapfrog of 1917–1920 began. Within this period, Crimea was under the control of various "red" and "white" Russian governments. But during a year, from

the spring of 1918 to the spring of 1919, the peninsula was alternately occupied by the German and French armies. As part of Soviet Russia, Crimea stayed formally for 34 years, until 1954, but again with a break for the German occupation from the autumn of 1941 to the spring of 1944.

Thus, in total, Petersburg and Moscow owned Crimea from 1783 to 1954, i. e. 171 years, and in fact, taking into account the two occupations, another 3.5 years less. So,

from three thousand years of written history of Crimea (the 9th century BC to the 21st century), its actual belonging to Russia lasted 168 years, or 5.6% of the entire Crimean history.

For greater clarity, we will display this period in the figure.

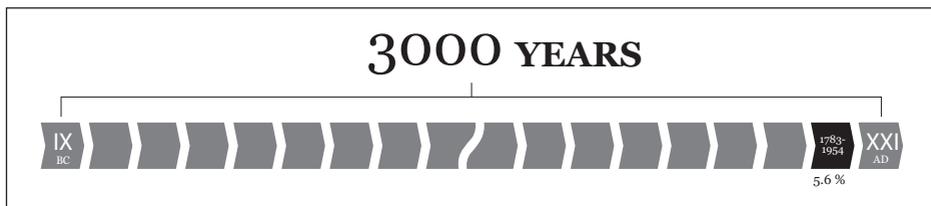


Fig. 2. “Russian period” in the history of Crimea (taking into account the breaks for the European occupation)

You must admit that “Russian Crimea” does not look impressive enough against the background of the existence of the same Crimean Khanate (1441–1783)—342 years, or 11.4%.

The rest of the states, although they did not own the entire Crimean peninsula, also demonstrate good results in the “historic marathon”.

The Empire of Trebizond owned Chersonese and through it owned the South-Eastern Tauris from 1204 to 1397 (the top date is the subject of expert debate, but the scatter of opinions is only two years), or 193 ± 2 years (6.4%).

Genoese “Gazariya”, stretching along the Crimean coast from Chersonese to Kerch, arose in 1266 with the foundation of Caffa and died in 1475, having existed for 209 years (6.9%).

The Byzantine Empire included Chersonese, the southern coast of Crimea and part of the territory of the Bosporan Kingdom in the Kerch peninsula in 527–528,

and fell under the onslaught of the Crusaders in 1204, holding Tauris for 676 years (22.5%).

Chersonese was founded in 529/528 BC and existed (either in the form of the capital of the state or in the form of a self-governing city) for about 1055 years (35%) until the inclusion in the composition of Byzantium.

And, finally, the first among equals is the Bosporan Kingdom. Its capital, Panticapaeum, was founded between 600 and 590 BC, and the state itself, contrary to popular belief, did not die under the blows of the Huns, but was swallowed up along with Chersonese by the Byzantine Empire. The result was almost 1120 years of existence (37.3%).

This short comparison should be enough to ridicule Russia's claims to the "eternal" possession of Crimea, as the peninsula knew far more prolonged statehood.

### MYTH 3. CRIMEA IS A “SPIRITUAL SOURCE” AND “PRIMARY BAPTISMAL FONT” OF RUSSIA

#### *Intro*

The myth about Crimea as Russia’s “primary baptismal font” and “spiritual source” occupies a special place in our exposition. It’s not just that this myth is the last in terms of origin, but that it was born before our very eyes, has an exact link to the date and the specific parent—Vladimir Putin himself. Thanks to the deconstruction of the myth about the notorious “sacral Korsun”, we can also see the process of formation of other historical myths.

Among neighbors, the “spiritual” myth occupies an honorable niche, as if specially allocated to it. As already noted, the first group of myths is intended to justify the so-called Russia’s “historical rights” to Crimea. And if “Crimea is an originally Russian land” fulfills this task from an ethnonational point of view, and “Crimea has always belonged to Russia”—from the position of state continuity, then the “sacral Korsun” demonstrates the third approach, religious. And no matter how archaic this myth may seem in our time, it had a certain effect in the country of “spiritual clamps”.

#### *Myth...*

The myth about “sacral Korsun” as yet has only a journalistic version, and I dare to hope that pseudoscientific explanations will not be readjusted to it. Already on March 18, 2014, in the Crimean speech, Putin formulated the religious component of Russia’s claims to Crimea.

Here is the ancient Chersonese, where the Holy Prince Vladimir was baptized. His spiritual feat—appeal to Orthodoxy—predetermined a common cultural, value, civilizational basis that unites peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, March 18, 2014*

As you can see, the classical Greek name of the city has been used and the shopworn mantra about the “commonality” of peoples of the three neighboring states

has been repeated here. But already at the November meeting with young historians, Vladimir Putin changed his rhetoric and, in addition to valuable directions, gave the following statement to the listeners.

...After all, it was in Crimea, in Chersonese, where Prince Vladimir was baptized, and then he baptized Rus. Initially, the primary baptismal font of Russia was there.

And what is Chersonese? It is Sevastopol. Can you imagine the connection between the spiritual source and the state component, meaning the struggle for this place: for Crimea as a whole, and for Sevastopol, for Chersonese? In fact, the Russian people have struggled for many centuries to firmly stand near their historical spiritual font.

*Putin V. Meeting with young scientists and history teachers [shorthand notes], November 5, 2014*

There are several important points to note. Firstly, the Russian President moved from the abstract rhetoric about the “spiritual feat” to the “exact” designation of Crimea as a whole and Chersonese in particular as Russia’s “primary baptismal font” and “spiritual source”. Secondly, current Vladimir unilaterally “privatized” the “spiritual feat” of baptism committed by ancient Vladimir, attributing it exclusively to the “Russian people”. And, thirdly, Putin casually supported another myth: “Chersonese is Sevastopol” to emphasize the imaginary continuity of Ancient Rus and modern Russia and legitimize its “centuries-old” struggle for the peninsula.

The concept of Russia’s “spiritual source” in Crimea so pleased the President that he repeated it in his message to the Russian parliament.

In Crimea... there is a spiritual source of the formation of a multi-faceted, but monolithic Russian nation and a centralized Russian state. It was here, in Crimea, in ancient Chersonese, or, as the Russian chroniclers called it, Korsun, where Prince Vladimir received baptism, and then he baptized all of Rus...

And it is on this spiritual basis that our ancestors for the first time and forever realized themselves as a single people. And this gives us every reason to say that for Russia Crimea, the ancient Korsun, Chersonese and Sevastopol have a huge civilizational and sacral significance. Just like the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for those who profess Islam or Judaism.

*Putin V. Message from the President to the Federal Assembly, December 4, 2014*

This passage is remarkable for its two components. First of all, for the combination of two phrases, “ancient Korsun” and “sacral significance”, in one sentence probably to enhance the effect of “originality”, and Secondly, for the comparison of Korsun in meaning with the Temple Mount. Later, the construction of “sacral Korsun” became a meme and began to live a separate life. Much to the regret for our historical journalism, Vladimir Putin did not specify which of “our ancestors for the first time and forever realized themselves as a single people” and in what this unity was reflected. Apparently, in this place it should read “the ancestors of the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus”, as in the corresponding place of the Crimean speech on March 18.

But it would be wrong not to mention that Putin is by no means the first statesman who called Crimea Russia’s “primary baptismal font”. Long before him the same thesis was developed by the main “promoters” of the first annexation of the peninsula. They are Catherine II (in 1775):

Kherson was the source of Christianity for Russia, where after christening Prince Vladimir, the light of grace and true worship brightened and was planted in Russia.

*Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii (1649–1825) [Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire (1649-1825)]. Vol. XX, No. 14366*

and Grigoriy Potyomkin (in 1783):

Taurian Kherson is the source of our Christianity, and therefore of humanity, already in the arms of its daughter [Russia]. There is something mystical about it.

*Catherine II and G. A. Potyomkin. Personal correspondence. 1769-1791. M., 1991. P. 180*

It is interesting that the thesis about Crimea as “the source of a multi-faceted, but monolithic Russian nation” can be interpreted in the opposite direction, about Russia as the creator of the “people of Crimea”.

It was within Russia’s borders that the formation of a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-confessional people of Crimea, the will of which was so distinctly manifested in recent events, was completed.

*Przhilenskaya I. Krym polietnicheskiy i mnogonatsionalnyi [Multiethnic and Multinational Crimea]. Methodical Recommendations for Schools of the Russian Federation for Conducting Lessons and Extra-Curricular Activities Dedicated to the Reunification of Russia and Crimea. M., 2014. P. 98*

However, it is unclear what in the world “the people of Crimea” is and how it is different from the people of Kuban for instance. By the way, both Nadinskiy in 1951 and Medinskiy in 2015 were very restrained in describing the campaign of Vladimir against Chersonese, mentioning only a common misconception about personal baptism of the Kiev Prince in this city. No “fonts” and “sources” were found in their writings. But Mykola Starikov clearly caught the trend.

In 988, Svyatoslav’s son, Prince Vladimir carried out a campaign against Korsun (Chersonese) and seized the city. And there he received baptism. This historical event affected the entire subsequent history of Russia, so Sevastopol also has a special spiritual meaning for our state.

*Starikov N., Belyaev D. Rossiya. Krym. Istoriya [Russia. Crimea. History]. SPb., 2015. P. 247*

However, after the beginning of the Russian military operation in Syria, the emphasis of Russian state propaganda shifted, and now this country was declared the “spiritual source” of Russia, directly to the detriment of Chersonese!

For us, Syria is our culture and historical memory; it’s more than Chersonese... Russian Orthodoxy came from Syria.

*Stepashyn S. [interview].  
Dozhd TV Channel. November 27, 2015.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSeegxD4qPY>*

Many people think that Syria is a distant place. I always say that Syria is generally a holy land... It was from there that civilization came to us... If there had been no Syria, there would have been no Antioch, there would have been no Orthodoxy and there would have been no Russia. This is our land.

*Bagdasarov S. [interview].  
Russia TV Channel. October 1, 2015.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRhOuz3XsMg>*

But, despite such somersaults, the “spiritual” argument in favor of the “Russian Crimea” still retains its significance.

### **...and reality**

The myth of the “font” and “source” is noteworthy in that each of its theses is pseudoscientific, and most of them do not need special knowledge of history to be disproved. We will analyze them item by item.

1. According to paragraph 1 of Article 14 of the Constitution of Russia,

the Russian Federation is a secular state. No religion can be established as a state or compulsory religion.

This alone should be enough to close all talks about the special spiritual value of Crimea for the Russian Federation, as religion cannot determine the policy of a secular state. However, who and when took seriously the Russian constitution?

2. Russia, which is obvious, is a multi-confessional country, although the data on the religious structure of the population varies significantly. Since the legislation does not permit to pose this question in the census questionnaire, it is necessary to rely on rather contradictory results of sociological research. In 2012-2013, the situation looked as follows:

a) According to the Atlas of Religions and Nationalities, the Orthodox parishioners of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia numbered 41%, Orthodox believers outside the Church—1.5%, non-confessional Christians—4.1%, “simply believers”—25% [[sreda.org/arena](http://sreda.org/arena)];

b) According to the Levada-Center, all Orthodox believers amounted to 74% [[levada.ru/old/17-12-2012/v-rossii-74-pravoslavnykh-i-7-musulman](http://levada.ru/old/17-12-2012/v-rossii-74-pravoslavnykh-i-7-musulman)];

c) According to the statistical survey of the Public Opinion Fund, there are 64% of Orthodox believers [[fom.ru/obshchestvo/10953](http://fom.ru/obshchestvo/10953)].

The issue who of the sociologists was more manipulative with the formulation of questions and rigging of answers is extremely amusing, but not so important for our topic. Another interesting thing is that the question of a “primary baptismal font” is important for an average of only two-thirds of Russians (in reality, less—see the next paragraph). Nearly 50 million people of the Russian Federation have either another “spiritual source” or none at all.

Do you know what is the funniest of all? The fact that on August 19, 2013 (before

Putin’s “sacral Korsun”), only 25% of Russians correctly answered the question “Under which ruler was Rus baptized?” [*fom.ru/Proshloe/11042*].

By the way, according to the VTsIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center) research on March 17, 2016, only 58% of Russians agreed that “In Chersonese, located in the territory of the Crimean peninsula, the foundations of the self-consciousness of the Russian people were laid”, while 21% rejected this statement [*wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115622*]. The result, by the way, correlates well with the calculation of the number of “all” Orthodox believers in Russia.

In general, although the myth shows a positive dynamic, it has not completely mastered the minds of the inhabitants of the Russian Federation.

3. Prince Vladimir did not receive baptism in Chersonese. For more than a hundred years, a consensus has been reached among historians that the Prince was baptized before the campaign against Crimea, either in 987 or in January 988.

In the summer of 987, an embassy headed by Metropolitan Theophylactus was to arrive in Kiev... with the offer for Vladimir to get married with Princess Anna in exchange for baptism and the provision of military assistance to the Empire. As already mentioned, Vladimir might receive baptism in Kiev on Christmas holidays, which included the day of Basil the Great (January 1), the patron saint of the Emperor and the newly baptized Prince having received the royal name “Basil”, and, in fact, the feast of Baptism.

*Petrukhin V. Kreschenie Rusi  
[The Baptism of Rus]. M., 2006. P. 131*

The place of baptism is debated: it is hardly important whether it was Kiev or Vasilev (the current Vasylykiv). The main thing is that the campaign against Chersonese was a purely political event and was in no way connected with the spiritual quest of Prince Vladimir.



Fig. 3. Eggink I. Grand Prince Vladimir Choosing the Religion, 1822.  
Source: State Museum of the History of Religion, St. Petersburg

By the way, the legendary plot about the “choice of religion” precedes the “Korsun legend” and explains a rather important but subtle inconsistency. According to legend, Chersonese was so well fortified that only through the betrayal of the priest Anastas Vladimir forced the city to surrender. Have you ever wondered why that priest began to help the “pagan” in his struggle against the Christian city?

And by the way, contrary to the widely held opinion, reflected even in school textbooks, Chersonese was by no means taken by the Kiev troops in 988.

During the military campaign in Asia Minor, another Russian army, led by Vladimir, was to besiege the Byzantine Chersonese, taken in the summer of 989. Andrzej Poppe proposed a hypothesis according to which the action of the Russian Prince was not aimed at the Byzantine Emperors, but against Chersonese, which supposedly supported the mutiny. This possibility was implied still by the treaty of Rus with the Greeks in 944.

*Petrukhin V. Rus v IX–X vekah. Ot prizvaniya varyagov do vybora very [Russia in the 9th–10th Centuries. From Calling the Varangians to the Choice of Religion]. M., 2014. P. 396*

4. At the time of Prince Vladimir’s personal conversion, Christianity was not a novelty in Rus. Christianity came to the territory of modern Russia much earlier than to Kiev. For example, in the North Caucasus it was spread in the first centuries AD. So, why Vladimir Putin ignores this obvious fact remains a mystery. As for the lands of modern Russia as part of Kievan Rus, Christianity came there not from Chersonese, but from Kiev, and 80 years later pagan uprisings broke out in the Upper Volga region, which were suppressed with great difficulty by the Kiev armed forces.

And it looks like a miracle that none of the advisers told the Russian President two more indisputable facts from the life of Ancient Rus. Firstly, that Princess Olga, the grandmother of Vladimir, received Christianity in the capital of Byzantium Constantinople, and secondly, that a century earlier the Kiev Prince Askold passed through the same rite in the same place (at least, there is such a legend). In general, why the current Istanbul is not a “font of Russia”? And is not it time for the “green men” to appear there?

5. Vladimir could not “appeal to Orthodoxy” for the simple reason that the final split of the Eastern and Western Christian churches took shape only in 1054. And although even in the 10th century the difference between the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople was obvious, in the case of Vladimir the “appeal to Orthodoxy” was an unacceptable juggling.

And in general, our chronicles, which convey the circumstances of the baptism of Rus, were created after the church split, and therefore strongly sin prejudice against Western Christianity as such.

6. Well, as regards the comparison of Chersonese with the Temple Mount, no one could say about it better than the Deacon Andrey Kuraev.

Combination of the words “temple mountain”, “Islam” and “Judaism” does not at all give anything hopeful. Quite the contrary, this immediately sends us to the most difficult, centuries-old and insoluble conflict...

For an Orthodox Christian (and even narrower—for a Russian Orthodox Christian), there are no such duties to Korsun church statutes stipulated. Orthodoxy generally does not have mandatory places for pilgrimage. And those places that are most attractive to a Christian are far beyond Crimea: on the Mount Athos or in the Holy Land. And the pilgrims that wandered and went to them in the 18th–19th centuries did not go to Crimea at all. And

inside the Orthodox Russian Empire, the same Kiev with its holy caves, relics and icons was much more attractive than the ruins of Chersonese.

*Kuraev A. Sv. Vladimir, Putin i Khersones [St. Vladimir, Putin and Chersonese].  
LiveJournal (<http://diak-kuraev.livejournal.com/722637.html>)*

Therefore,

**Christianity appeared in the territory of Russia before Vladimir, and he himself was not baptized in Chersonese, so Crimea is neither a “primary baptismal font” nor a “spiritual source” of modern Russia.**

This is how the personal rating of Vladimir Putin and the undivided dominance of the TV in Russia change the collective memory of Russians right before our eyes.

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## MYTH 4. CHERSONESE IS SEVASTOPOL

### ***Intro***

In the structure of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth, the myth about the complete identity of Chersonese–“sacral Korsun” and Sevastopol plays the role of a kind of bridge connecting the immemorial times of the supposedly “originally Russian” Crimea with quite real events of the Crimean (Eastern) War. Without this myth, “the connection of times breaks down”, and there would be no use in the previous myth of the “primary baptismal font” and the “spiritual source”, even if it suddenly turned out to be true.

Indeed, this is no big deal that some prince, moreover, Kiev, was baptized in some old city, since that city is long gone. A different thing is the glorious Sevastopol, for which our grandfathers really fought! And for the solution of this task, it is just necessary to declare both cities a single whole. So, identifying Chersonese with Sevastopol, Vladimir Putin not only increases the overall “sacredness” of Crimea, but also brings the hoary antiquity of baptizing Vladimir the Great in the mass consciousness to our days.

### ***Myth...***

This myth was born from the development of Putin’s idea of Chersonese as the “primary baptismal font” and Crimea as the “spiritual source” of Russia.

After all, it was in Crimea, in Chersonese, where Prince Vladimir was baptized, and then he baptized Rus. Initially, the primary baptismal font of Russia was there.

And what is Chersonese? It is Sevastopol. Can you imagine the connection between the spiritual source and the state component, meaning the struggle for this place: for Crimea as a whole, and for Sevastopol, for Chersonese? In fact, the Russian people have struggled for many centuries to firmly stand near their historical spiritual font.

*Putin V. Meeting with young scientists and history teachers [shorthand notes],  
November 5, 2014*

The idea, of course, laid on the prepared ground. The blank about Chersonese-Sevastopol was picked up, among others, by Mikhail Zadornov, today better known as a folk-historian rather than a satirist.

Kirill... was a person in attendance of the Patriarch Photius in Byzantium. The Patriarch of Byzantium sent him across Crimea to the city of Chersonese, this is Sevastopol today.

*Zadornov M. Vstrecha vtoraya [Meeting Two] [interview]. Yunost [Youth].  
October, 2015. P. 17*

Type “Chersonese” and “Sevastopol” in a search engine, and you will surely stumble upon a lot of sites that lead one city directly from another. This affliction especially strongly affects the web pages of travel agencies and hotels, striving to prove to the guests that Sevastopol is not inferior to the cities of Antalya, not only in terms of “service”, but also in terms of “ancientry”.

However, as we have seen in recent years, Russian propaganda cares little about tourist value of Crimea. It is much more important for it to unite Chersonese as a “spiritual source” (Myth No. 3) and Sevastopol as the “city of the Russian glory” (Myth No. 5). And that is why the widely spread kitchen-and-ordinary idea of the identity of two cities, ancient and modern, became an element of the political “Crimea-is-ours” myth.

### ***...and reality***

In fact, there is nothing wrong with the philistine idea of the coincidence of ancient cities with new ones based on their place. Problems begin when such ideas begin to be used in political games in order to prove state continuity, especially where it does not exist. The pair “Chersonese–Sevastopol” is just such a case.

The only scientific criterion for the continuity of cities is the continuity of development, determined by the continuity of settlement. In this sense, the present Rome is the same city that was founded by Romulus, and Istanbul is the Greek Byzantium, the direct predecessor of Constantinople. And all because, despite the change of state or even civilizational affiliation, the population in them has never completely disappeared.

Ancient Greek Chersonese was founded in 529/528 BC and throughout antiquity and the Early Middle Ages was the only city in Crimea, which was never captured by enemies. But in the last years of the 14th century, the Hordeans inflicted a devastating blow to Chersonese, from which it did not recover. Genoese, and then the Turks just dismantled the surviving city buildings.

During the Crimean Khanate, on the southern shore of the present Sevastopol

Bay, at a significant distance from the ruins of Chersonese, the Crimean Tatar village of Akhti-Yar (Akhtiyar, Akh-Yar, “White Beach”) arose. According to the command of Catherine II (1784), with the aim of developing the Black Sea Fleet it was necessary to arrange

...a big fortress Sevastopol, where now there is Akhti-Yar and where there should be an admiralty, a shipyard for the first rank ships, a port and a military village.

*Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiyskoy imperii (1649–1825) [Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire (1649–1825)]. Vol. XXII, No. 15920*

Theoretically, we can consider Akh-Yar the predecessor of Sevastopol, if we neglect the difference in status between the village and the fortress city. But Chersonese cannot be such a predecessor under any circumstances, since its ruins for 200 years were not even located within the city of Sevastopol. Travelers of the first half of the 19th century drove five versts (more than 5 km) off Sevastopol to see the “piles of stones” that remained from Chersonese.

During our stay in Sevastopol, we visited the ruins of the ancient Chersonese, a bunch of disordered stones, among which we did not see the slightest trace of the monuments that undoubtedly adorned this city of Greek origin.

*Gamba J.-F. Voyage dans la Russie meridionale... T. I. Paris, 1826. Pp. 31-32*

...a large space above the sea, covered with piles of bricks and stones. Here and there some silent mounds protrude, or a fragment of a wall can be seen above the ground—and this is all that remains of the first Christian city in the north.

*Hoyetskiy E. Spohady z podorozhi po Krymu [Memories of a Trip to Crimea]. Simferopol, 2008 [1845]. P. 78*

By the way, the Quarantine Bay separating the ruins of the ancient Chersonese from the “imperial” Sevastopol, also points to the abyss between both cities. It received its name from the performed function, quarantine inspection of the crews of incoming ships for viral diseases. Obviously, such a place could be located only on the outskirts of the then Sevastopol. And Chersonese was located even further. Even on the plan of 1904, the city buildings of Sevastopol do not come into contact with the territory of Chersonese, not to mention 1783! The new city absorbed the ruins of the ancient one only in the second half of the 20th century.

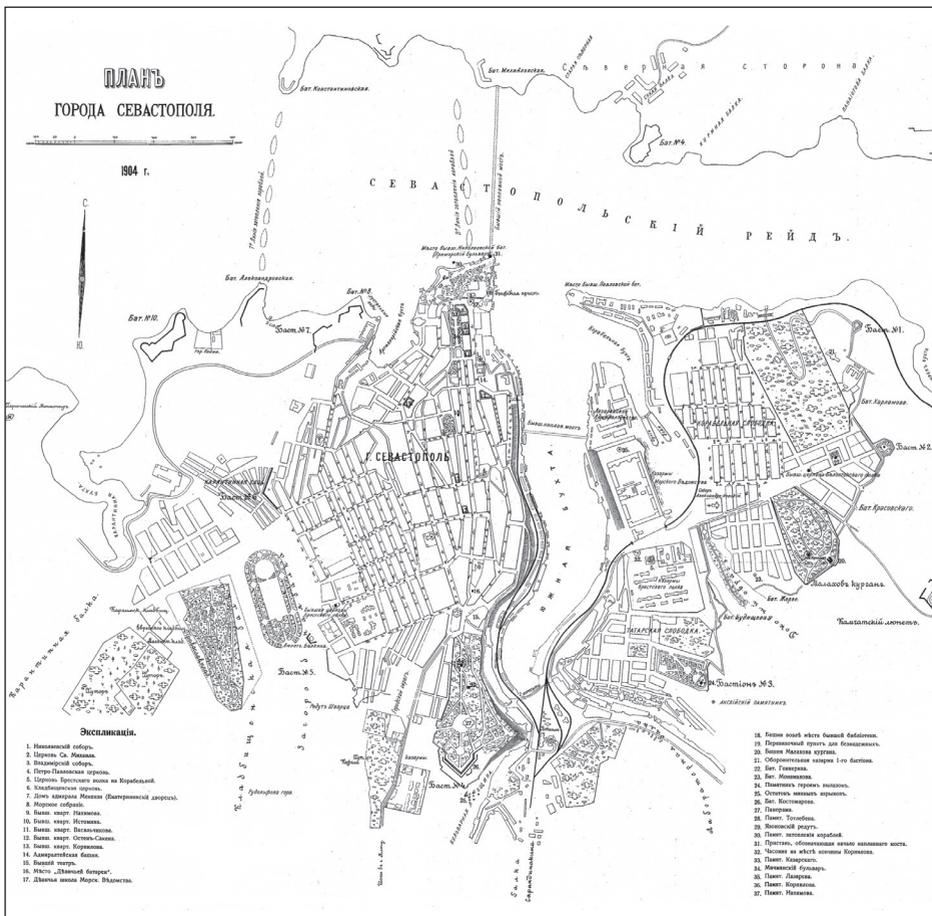


Fig. 4. Plan of Sevastopol in 1904, the ruins of Chersonese are not marked.

Source: Zayonchkovskiy A. Istoricheskiy putevoditel po Sevastopolju [Historical Guide to Sevastopol]. St. Petersburg, 1907

So,

**Chersonese is one city, and Sevastopol is completely different, and there is no continuity between them.**

Ancient Chersonese and the present Sevastopol have nothing in common, except for the geographical proximity of city centers, and to deduce one of the other is antiscientific. It looks the same as the search for continuity between Simferopol and the Paleolithic site in the Cave of Chokurcha in the modern city area.

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## **MYTH 5.**

### **SEVASTOPOL IS THE “CITY OF THE RUSSIAN GLORY”**

#### ***Intro***

Of all the myths “about the glorious past of the great Russian people”, this one is perhaps the most famous. Moreover, the myth about Sevastopol as the “city of the Russian glory” is (at least at the philistine level) the most important argument in favor of supporting the annexation of Crimea. This myth is firmly embedded in the non-Soviet concept of the “Great Patriotic War”, which is planted in the Russian Federation. The Defense of Sevastopol in 1941–1942 is inseparable from the battles for Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad and Kursk in the Russian public consciousness. To criticize the “heroic defense of Sevastopol” means not only to criticize the modern system-forming Russia’s myth about the Great Patriotic War, but also to literally put oneself under the article of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

The current Russian government has done a lot for the “sacralization” and Russification of Sevastopol. These processes were promoted by the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation, Moscow State University Branch, and fiery appeals of Yuriy Luzhkov to “compatriots”—there have been enough reasons for Russians to consider Sevastopol “their own” for the last 25 years.

The myth about the “city of the Russian glory” holds together the times of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and more recently, the Russian Federation. Therefore, it is so important to address its debunking with all due care.

#### ***Myth...***

Any defeat always brings to life compensation mechanisms that allow the losers to more easily cope with the psychological trauma. The loss of Sevastopol as a result of the Anglo-French assault in September 1855 was no exception. Aristocrats were guilty of poor-quality weapons (“Count Chernyshyov” in Leskov’s *Lefty*), and officers were guilty of bad command (“It was smooth on paper” by Tolstoy). The government was accused of insufficient supply of the army, and the Crimean Tatars (unexpectedly, right?) were branded as “traitors”. But in the end, the best “therapy” was the heroization of the defense process itself, regardless of the final

result. Mikhail Bestuzhev, the Decembrist and traveler, can be considered the “discoverer” of this method. On January 1, 1856, he wrote the following lines:

Sevastopol fell, but with such glory that every Russian, and in particular every sailor, should be proud of the fall, which is worth brilliant victories.

*Pisma dekabrysta Mihaila Bestuzheva k M.F. Reyneke*  
[Letters of the Decembrist Mikhail Bestuzhev to M. F. Reinecke]. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*  
[Literary Heritage]. Vol. 60, book 1. M., 1956. Pp. 231-244

After that, there was a common place that connected the words “Sevastopol”, “glory”, “Russian” and “sailor” in one sentence. A significant role in the confirmation of the myth was played by Lev Tolstoy’s *Sevastopol Sketches*. And the tsarist government also invested a lot of energy and resources in supporting the cult of the heroes of the battle for Sevastopol, and there was a good reason for that.

Despite many similarities between the Sevastopol myth and the equally populist myths of Borodino and Ivan Susanin... there is an important difference between them. Even though all three can be called the “defense of the motherland” myths, the Sevastopol myth was the first to be based on the events of a war conducted on the previously non-Russian territory, which had been annexed by the Empire only 70 years before the outbreak of the Crimean War. From that perspective, the Sevastopol myth presents a new type of Russian mythology, one that justified and glorified the defense of new imperial possessions acquired during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

*Plokhly S. The City of Glory: Sevastopol in Russian Historical Mythology.*  
*Journal of Contemporary History*, 2000. Vol. 35, No. 3. P. 377

In the “Lenin” times, the myth was forgotten (and the monument to Nakhimov in Sevastopol was destroyed), but by the beginning of the Winter War with Finland was again in demand. The memory of the heroism of the defenders of Sevastopol was used to raise the fighting spirit of the soldiers, and to explain to Soviet citizens the supposedly “traditional” hostile attitude of Britain and France. The appearance of the monumental *Sevastopol Strada* by Sergey Sergeev-Tsenskiy, which celebrates the first defense of the city, also dates back to the same time.

The use of nationalism, primarily Russian, by Stalin after the German invasion as a means of mobilizing the fighting spirit, the siege of Sevastopol by the Wehrmacht

in 1941–1942, and the postwar wave of memoirs and works of art made the revival of the myth of the city a settled case.

Sevastopol is the base of the Black Sea Fleet, the city of the Russian glory.

*Mikhailov N. Zemlya russkaya. Ekonomiko-geograficheskiy ocherk SSSR*  
[*The Russian Land. Economic and Geographical Outline of the USSR*]. M., 1946. p. 147

The defense of Sevastopol is an amazing chronicle of patriotism, the selflessness of military qualities and the valor of the Russian people. Only a Russian sailor and a Russian soldier could create such an amazing historical drama written by Russian blood.

*Tarle E. Gorod russkoy slavy. Sevastopol v 1854–1855 gg*  
[*City of the Russian Glory. Sevastopol in 1854–1855*]. M., 1954. P. 16

In the newest Russian journalism, this epithet is also popular.

The title of the city of the Russian glory is not given so simply. Sevastopol received it not for the beautiful name that Catherine the Great gave it, and not for the beautiful view of the sea waves. This title is sprinkled with the blood of Russian soldiers and sailors, and not in one war.

*Starikov N., Belyaev D. Rossiya. Krym. Istoriya*  
[*Russia. Crimea. History*]. SPb., 2015. P. 103

It would even be strange if this phrase were not used today, especially in the context of justifying the annexation of Crimea. Everything began with A. Nikolaev's poem...

On the ruins of our superpower,  
There is the greatest paradox of history:  
Sevastopol is the city of the Russian glory,  
But... not in the Russian territory!

*Nikolaev A. Literaturnaya Rossiya [Literary Russia], January 8, 1993*

...and ended with Putin's speech in the St. George Hall:

Crimea is Sevastopol, a legendary city, a city of great destiny, a fortified city and the homeland of the Russian Black Sea Navy Fleet. Crimea is Balaklava and Kerch, Malakhov

Kurgan and Sapun-Gora. Each of these places is sacred for us; these are symbols of Russian military glory and unprecedented valor.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, March 18, 2014*

After that, the status of Sevastopol as the “city of the Russian glory” began to be used as one of the most important justifications for the annexation of Crimea.

Head of Spravedlivaya Rossiya (A Just Russia) Sergey Mironov said, “We will do everything to make the city of the Russian glory become the capital of Russian sport.”

*Shigin V. Sevastopol. Gorod russkoy slavy [Sevastopol. City of the Russian Glory]. M., 2014. P. 301*

In the early 1990s, the whole Crimea found itself in a difficult situation, but the “cutting off” from Russia was most acutely felt in Sevastopol. And the inhabitants of the city of Russian military glory did not give up...

...the Russian Black Sea Fleet will be based in the Russian city of Sevastopol, the city of the Russian glory, Russian victory and Russian courage.

*Starikov N., Belyaev D. Rossiya. Krym. Istoriya [Russia. Crimea. History]. SPb., 2015. Pp. 74, 77*

But in the most complete (and in the true sense the “canonical”) form, the myth of Sevastopol as the “city of the Russian glory” is manifested, as one would expect, in its official anthem. The song “Legendary Sevastopol” was specially written for the centenary of “the first defense” of the city and the tenth anniversary of the expulsion of the Nazi occupiers. It was publicly performed for the first time on July 25, 1954 by the Song and Dance Ensemble of the Black Sea Fleet, and exactly 40 years later, on July 29, 1994, was approved as a city anthem. The text of the “Legendary Sevastopol” is so remarkable that it makes sense to cite it completely.

Fly winged wind,  
Over the seas, over the land,  
Tell the whole world  
About my beloved city.  
Tell the whole world  
How on the Crimean shores  
Our grandfathers fought  
And glorified in battle.

Chorus:  
 Legendary Sevastopol,  
 Impregnable to enemies.  
 Sevastopol, Sevastopol—  
 The pride of Russian sailors!

Here we went to the rightful and holy battles  
 For our Motherland,  
 And we multiplied in battle  
 Your previous glory.  
 Having thrown off black sailor jackets,  
 The Black Sea sailors, during the days of War,  
 Went against tanks with only handgrenades,  
 Your sons went to their deaths.

If from across the ocean  
 Enemies come to us with swords,  
 We'll meet the uninvited guests  
 With annihilating fire.  
 The whole of our dear country knows,  
 That the ships do not sleep,  
 And are guarding surely  
 The shores of the homeland.

The whole song is a brief description of the history of the city, and there is some “zest” in virtually every verse. First “our grandfathers fought” (familiar, is not it?)—about the times of the first “conquest of Crimea” in 1783. Then—“rightful and holy battles” (a direct quote from “Varshavyanka”, the revolutionary song of 1905)—a reference to the establishment of Soviet power in Crimea. In the next verse, along with the historical “black sailor jackets” (marines), there is a legend about the five Black Sea men who allegedly went “against tanks with only handgrenades” near Duvankoy on November 7, 1941. This myth, by the way, was constructed according to the patterns of the myth about “28 Panfilovites” recently debunked in the Russian Federation at the official level. Well, how in the end without “enemies from across the ocean”, relevant for Sevastopol residents both in 1954 and now.

But especially remarkable is the chorus, because both components of the myth

of the “city of the Russian glory” are vividly revealed in it. According to the chorus of Sevastopol, firstly, “it is impregnable to enemies”, and secondly, “the pride of the Russian sailors”. Below, we will try to understand whether this city was so impregnable, and whether the pride for it belongs solely to the Russians.

### ***...and reality***

Let’s start with exposing a small lie perceived as a big truth. The point is that Sevastopol is allegedly impregnable to enemies. This phrase has so deeply rooted in the subcortex of the overwhelming majority of Russians and even Ukrainians that the acquaintance with the historical reality is shocking for many people. Meanwhile, the facts described below are familiar to any student.

First, Sevastopol has survived not two, but five sieges for the time of its existence, so the flashy medals “For the 3rd Defense of Sevastopol” look on the chest in the most ridiculous way.

Among these sieges, two ones really differed in intensity and duration of hostilities, so they can be called “large”. Information about them can be found in every history textbook. They are the siege of Sevastopol in 1854–1855 during the Crimean War and the siege in 1941–1942 during the Second World War.

In addition, the city survived three more “small sieges”, which did not fall into the “canon” and did not become part of the myth of the “city of the Russian glory” [*Hromenko S. 500 bitv za Krym [500 Battles for Crimea]. K., 2016*].

1) Siege of the city by German troops from April 24 to 28, 1918; the defending party is the Red Guards and the Black Sea sailors. On the last day, the Germans broke through the front on Alma, and the Bolsheviks, unable to keep the city, began evacuation with the dawn on April 29. By the way, it was then, on April 29, when the ships of the Black Sea Fleet raised Ukrainian flags. The next day, on April 30, some of the ships tried to escape from the bay under the firing of Germans, who on May 1 occupied Sevastopol without any resistance.

2) Siege of the city by the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army from April 15 to 28, 1919; the defending party is the French. Clashes began in the area of Balaklava, where the advance of the Red Army was delayed by the fire of the allied fleet. Over the next week, an armistice was announced several times, but the hostilities broke out again. On April 23, the final agreement was reached, and on April 28, the Anglo-

French squadron left Sevastopol bays for an external raid. The next day, the first "red" units entered the city.

3) The siege of the city by the Soviet Army from April 16 to May 9–12, 1944; the defending party is the Wehrmacht. On April 16, the Soviet units attempted to take Sevastopol on the move, but, despite some successes, managed to occupy only Balaklava and Fedyukhiny Vysoty by April 18. Since April 26, the attack ceased, and the hostilities moved into the positional phase. On May 5, the Soviet units attacked from the north side, the next day the attack began from the south. The storming of Sapun-Gora began on May 7, and on May 9 Sevastopol was completely taken. After the city was left, the battle began at the Cape Chersonese, where the Wehrmacht held positions until May 12.

As you probably remember, as a result of "large" sieges, the Russian/Soviet army ceded the city to the enemy. In general, in all five battles for Sevastopol, the defending party could not defend it even once! So,

**the impregnability of Sevastopol exists only in the lines of the anthem and the imagination of the jingoists, but in reality the city was taken by everyone who wanted to take it.**

The situation with the "glory" of the defenders of Sevastopol looks better, but it is also spoiled by the Soviet way of waging war. If the struggle for the city between the Russian Empire and the European coalition in 1854–1855 can be considered "chivalrous" (as far as it is generally acceptable for the 19th century), then in 1941–1942, everything was completely different.

No one has any claims to the Soviet soldiers and sailors who fulfilled their duty to the end, but a lot of claims have accumulated to the military and political leaders. Only typically communist, ruthless attitude towards the soldiers as an expendable material can explain such facts.

1) On June 23, the day after the German invasion, the waters near Sevastopol were mined for protection from the Italian and German fleet. As a result, enemy ships in the Black Sea did not appear, but Soviet ships lost freedom of maneuver and often became convenient targets for the Luftwaffe.

2) Throughout the battle for Sevastopol, the Black Sea Fleet would sit by passively in the Caucasian ports rather than supported the defenders of the city with ship fire. From October 31 to November 3, most of the ships left Sevastopol and took

refuge in Batumi, Poti and Tuapse. Later, some of them returned, but the moment was missed. At the same time, Fleet Commander Admiral Oktyabrskiy was also absent from the city.

But these misses look like a pale shadow against the background of the betrayal of the Sevastopol garrison by its command in the summer of 1942. Only the top military and party archives were removed from the doomed city, and ordinary defenders were left to their fate. This episode is perfectly illustrated in the modern film *Nezlamna* (in the Russian box office—*Battle for Sevastopol*).

In the morning of June 30, Oktyabrskiy sends a telegram to GHQ, “I ask you to allow me to airlift 200–250 responsible officers and commanders by Douglas airliners to the Caucasus on the night of June 30 to July 1, 1942, and, if possible, to leave Sevastopol myself.”

On the night of July 1, 13 planes took on board a few lucky ones with boarding passes at the Chersonese aerodrome. Despite the fact that Oktyabrskiy was disguised in a shabby civilian jacket and a plain cap, he was recognized. The soldiers gathered near the planes began to clamor, and somebody tried to stop the plane with a burst of submachine gun fire. Then they began to shoot at the plane that had already taken off.

It was impossible to organize a normal evacuation. Those who were stronger got on the plane. My turn came when boarding the third plane, but when I tried to get on the plane, one person of the boarding team hit me in the head with a boot so that I lost consciousness. They mostly took sailors, but I was wearing a land uniform.

*Zinchenko A. [Memoirs]. TsVMA, F. 83, D. 308, L. 262*

If the naval authorities flew away on airplanes, then for the army authorities submarines were prepared. On the night of July 1, the embarkment began on the pier near the 35th battery. The commanders were towed to the sea by a tug and then put in submarines. Those who remained murmured and shot at those who were departing.

We were going to board the submarine. I was walking ahead of Petrov. At that time, someone from the crowd began shouting screamingly, “You are so-and-so, you are abandoning us and running away”. And then he fired a burst from the submachine gun at the commander General Petrov. But since I was ahead of him, the whole burst hit at me. I fell.

*Mikhaylik I. [Memoirs]. Fund of the Museum of the Red Banner Black Sea Fleet, D. NVM, L. 318–325*

Some commanders escaped on staff boats. And it was not even about taking wounded men away. In general, by hook or by crook, 1228 people, the absolute majority of which were commanders and party apparatchiks, left the city.

And what about soldiers and sailors? According to the eternal Soviet tradition, no one thought about them. Although Marshal Budennyi promised to send all available watercrafts for the evacuation of wounded soldiers and commanding staff on July 1, the ships did not come. In addition, at that time no one thought to give the order to stop the meaningless resistance.

As a result, not only dozens of thousands of people, who would have had a chance to survive, died. Because of the lack of a large-scale rescue operation, 80 to 95 thousand Soviet soldiers and sailors were taken captive by the Germans. And that disgrace could not be wiped away by anything.

When in 1920 the Red Army broke into Crimea, Wrangel brought to sea all that could swim, and saved almost 150 thousand people from the Bolshevik terror, having lost only one ship.

When the Wehrmacht surrounded the British Expeditionary Force at Dunkirk in 1940, the old good England sent all available ships of the Navy and Merchant Fleet, as well as cruise yachts, to rescue it. They managed to save almost 340 thousand people, having lost 60 ships.

Finally, when in 1944 the Red Army seized Sevastopol, the Wehrmacht did not abandon its garrison. Until May 12, boats and submarines took away the last of the soldiers from the same coast, on which the Soviet units were abandoned two years earlier. They managed to save almost 65 thousand people, having lost 60 ships.

In general, the true history of Sevastopol in 1941–1942 was carefully concealed and falsified. Instead, Soviet citizens were fed with shocking doses of propaganda and fictional exploits. Well, finally, is it appropriate to talk about Sevastopol in the context of two "big" defenses as the city of exclusively "Russian" glory? Any right-minded person would say no. Since the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union were officially multi-ethnic states,

**the military glory of Sevastopol belongs to representatives of all nations who took part in its defense.**

The pre-revolutionary Sevastopol myth praised the heroism of the Russian people, who, according to the official view, were divided into three branches: the

Great Russians, the Little Russians and the Belarusians, who formed the core of the Russian imperial army. This concept of a tripartite Russian people did not survive the events of the 1917 revolution. The new Bolshevik authorities were forced to recognize the existence of three separate peoples—the Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. [The post-revolutionary myth] continued to be centered on the heroism of the Russian people, now understood not as the heroism of a tripartite nation but as that of the Great Russians alone.

*Plokhyy S. The City of Glory: Sevastopol in Russian Historical Mythology. Journal of Contemporary History, 2000, Vol. 35, No. 3. P. 377*

I will explain this by the example of Ukrainians. In the middle of the 19th century, their share in the population of the Empire exceeded 17% (and this is not counting the Black Sea Cossacks). But since the whole of the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia were not conscripted in the then Russia, the cumulative share of the Eastern Slavs in the army (86%) was more than their total share in the population—67% [*Zayonchkovskiy P. Russkiy ofitser'skiy korpus nakanune Pervoy mirovoy voyny [Russian Officer Corps on the Eve of the First World War]. M., 1998; Tannberg T. Komplektovanie rossiyskoy armii v pervoy polovine XIX v. [Recruitment of the Russian Army in the First Half of the 19th century]. Journal of Education and Science ISTORIYA [History], 2012. Vol. 3, issue 4*]. An uncomplicated proportion shows us that the Ukrainian soldiers numbered almost 22%, and this is only in the infantry! Since 1853, the Black Sea Fleet was manned mainly from the population of the Tauride, Kherson and Ekaterinoslav provinces, so that at the time of the siege of Sevastopol, at least a third of the sailors were Ukrainians. The Ukrainians (and natives of the Ukrainian lands as a whole) made up the majority in the Black Sea Cossack Army. Half of all regular cavalry regiments of the Russian army were manned on the Ukrainian lands. In general, from 25% to 40% of the defenders of Sevastopol in 1854–1855 were Ukrainians and natives of Ukraine.

On the most famous lithograph of the Crimean War, dedicated to the lower ranks, three out of five characters (Kishka, Dymchenko, Zaika) are Ukrainians.



Fig. 5. Timm V. Soldiers—Heroes of the Defense of Sevastopol, 1855.  
Source: *Russkiy khudozhestvennyi listok* [Russian Artistic Leaflet]

A similar situation was observed in 1941–1942. As is known, in 1944, Ukrainians in the infantry amounted to 22.27% with 16.56% of the total population of the USSR [Artemiev A. *Bratskiy boevoy soyuz narodov SSSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne* [Bratsk Combat Union of the Peoples of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War]. M., 1975]. Naturally, at the beginning of the war (before the occupation of Ukraine) the situation was even better. Consequently,

**both in 1854–1855 and 1941–1942 only half of the defenders of Sevastopol were Russians, but at least every fourth, or even every third, was from Ukraine.**

And, of course, representatives of other nationalities also participated in defending the city.

That is what it is, the “city of the Russian glory”!



**PART II.**  
**THE VILLAIN,**  
**HIS MACHINATIONS**  
**AND DEFEAT**

The first part of the book was devoted to analyzing the elements of the CrimeaisOurs Myth describing the “glorious past” of *The Hero* of this Myth—the Russian people / Russia. However, the followers of the Myth are not satisfied with the simple justification of their own greatness. To make the picture complete, *The Hero* also needs to defeat *The Villain*, without which the picture of triumph will be imperfect. And of all the possible options, the Crimean Tatar people / Crimean Khanate were prudently elected for the unsavory role of *The Villain*. Why?

First, the Crimean Tatars really dominated culturally and numerically in the peninsula before its first annexation (1783), and therefore it was particularly important to take Crimea away from them not only politically, but also symbolically. The true history of Crimea, that is, including the Crimean Tatar people, was not well combined with the myths of the “original Russian land” and “eternal belonging to Russia”. This, by the way, is typical for the beginning of this century.

Second, Soviet Russia needed to wipe out the indelible stain of deportation of the Crimean Tatars. To that effect, all means were good: from the complete concealment of the very fact of genocide and the total renaming of the Crimean toponyms to the campaign for blackening the victims of eviction in the style of: “It serves them right”. As we saw at the beginning of the book, the “expulsion” of the Crimean Tatars from Crimean history is a purposeful action organized by the top of the communist regime. As a result, from the “figure of concealment” of monographs and textbooks in the past, Crimeans turned into an object of propaganda of newspapers and television in the present.

And third, quite numerous and united Crimean Tatars after returning from the places of exile began to actively defend their rights, naturally, coming into conflict with the post-communist power in the peninsula. And, wishing to garner if not favor, then at least neutrality of the Slav majority, the local authorities shamelessly badmouthed the whole people, and some newspapers openly excited interethnic hostility.

The combination of these three factors led to the emergence of a “black legend” concerning the Crimean Tatars as aliens, robbers and traitors, which proved very useful when preparing and implementing the second annexation of Crimea.

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## **MYTH 6. CRIMEAN TATARS ARE NOT THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF CRIMEA**

### ***Intro***

The issue of ethnogenesis of the Crimean Tatars is of interest not only and not so much scientific as political. It is inseparably linked with the problem of the status of the Crimean Tatar people as the indigenous people and, ultimately, with its right to self-determination. Unfriendly politicians and even ordinary citizens believe that the refusal to recognize the Crimean Tatars as the indigenous people will deprive them of the opportunity to create national autonomy in Crimea. And since in the ordinary consciousness the status of the “indigenous people” can belong only to the most ancient population of a certain territory, therefore, calling the Crimean Tatars “newcomers”, you can deny them the right to this status. Alas, the misconception about the origin of the Crimean Tatars from the “Mongolo-Tatars”, widespread in the 19th century, has received a second, political life these days. And although modern academic and journalistic works do not directly speak of this, it is implied by the text itself, in which both the Mongols and the Crimean Tatars are equally called the “Tatars”.

### ***Myth...***

Already in the first Russian historical work written by Andrey Lyzlov in 1692, the word “Tatars” was distributed to both the Mongols and the ancestors of the Crimean Tatars.

After that victory Tatars have razed the fortress, and the towns and villages, the Polovtsian to the ground. And the whole country near the Don and the Meotes Sea (Sea of Azov), and Tauris of Kherson, was called Perekop from the day of the digging of the Intermarium, and the Tatars settled and had have a foothold, around the Euxine Sea, that is the Black Sea.

*Lyzlov A. Skifskaya istoriya [Scythian History]. M., 1990 [1692]. P. 17*

In this case, the author relied on the centuries-old Russian chronicle tradition

to call the “Mongols” (not in ethnical, but in political and military sense) the “Tatars”. Later European and Russian chroniclers and travelers also did not distinguish the Mongols from the Tatars–“Tartar” (that is, people from the Ancient Greek hell). On European maps until the 18th century, one could often see “Great Tartary” beyond the Urals.

For example, historian and writer Sergey Glinka in his memoirs in the middle of the 19th century puts an equal sign between the Mongolian Empire and the Crimean Khanate, and this view can be considered characteristic of that era.

He [*Potyomkin–Auth.*] cared about the ancient Kingdom of Mithridates, and it was him who presented this Kingdom to Russia as a bloodless gift. This giant of his time alone accomplished what centuries since the conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan did not have time to do and what Peter I did not have time to do. He restrained and pacified the last nest of the Mongolian domination.

*Glinka S. Notes (from 1776 to 1796). SPb., 1895. Chapter 1*

The terminological confusion between “Mongols” and “Tatars”, as well as the use of verbal hybrids “Mongolo-Tatars” and “Tataro-Mongols”, led to serious difficulties. The use of all these words as synonyms in one text created the illusion that the author is talking about the same people. This problem is typical for the main falsifier of Crimean history Pavel Nadinskiy.

The Tataro-Mongol hordes passed through the southern steppes of the Black Sea region with a fiery river, annihilating and destroying everything in their path. They strengthened their dominance on Russian lands for a long time... This yoke lasted more than two centuries. The Tatars mastered in Crimea from the 13th to the 18th century.

*Nadinskiy P. Ocherki po istorii Kryyima. Ch. 1 [Essays on the History of Crimea. Part 1]. Simferopol, 1951. P. 58*

But modern scientists, like Anatoliy Yakobson, also could not escape from the captivity of false definitions.

With the Tatar conquest a new period in the history of Crimea began. Mongolo-Tatars, who had come from the depths of Asia in the early 13th century... founded a powerful

state in the territory they had seized. Throughout the 13th century, the Tatar storm, “like a cloud driven by the wind” (words of a contemporary), was approaching Crimea closer and closer: after the first defeat of Sudak in 1223, other raids on Crimea followed, until the ancient Taurica became destiny of Tatars.

*Yakobson A. Krym v Srednie veka [Crimea in the Middle Ages].  
M., 1973. P. 104*

And this problem has not gone away today. Even the Russian portal *Istoricheskaya Pravda* [Historical Truth] positioning itself as a scientific (not to be confused with the original Ukrainian *Istorychna Pravda* [Historical Truth]) in the program text of March 7, 2014 “Crimean Tatars: Myths and Reality” writes outright nonsense. The very first question “Is it true that the Tatars came to Crimea earlier than Russians, and therefore they are considered the indigenous ethnos of the peninsula?” is legally illiterate, and the answer to it is in the same vein. “The fact that the Slavs of Eastern Europe, including Russians, not only penetrated Crimea long ago, but also lived here, has many evidences from a wide variety of authors,” the answer begins. And so it ends: “The Tatars had not come to Crimea until the 13th century”. Not a word is said about the status of indigenous peoples and that “Tatars” and “Crimean Tatars” are not the same people.

The second question sounded much more specific: “Are the Crimean Tatars the descendants of the Mongolo-Tatars?” In the next three paragraphs, it was not directly written, but the reader was made to understand that the “descendants” (although not specified) seemed to be “Mongols” or “Tatars”. In addition, the “Crimean Tatars” are confused with the “Crimeans” in the answer.

In general, it is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of Internet users, and therefore a lot of philistine minds, still believe in the origin of the Crimean Tatars from certain “Mongolo-Tatars”. Type the phrase “Crimean Tatars are not the indigenous people of Crimea” in a search engine, and enjoy one-type explanations that before 1223 nobody heard about the “Tatars”, which means that they are not the most ancient people of the peninsula and, accordingly, their alleged descendants – Crimean Tatars – cannot claim the status of indigenous.

In sum, banal ignorance and political inquiry give sad results.

### ***...and reality***

The easiest thing is the status of indigenous people. According to the Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries of 1989 adopted by the International Labor Organization, peoples are regarded as indigenous

on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions.

Crimean Tatars, Crimean Karaites and Krymchaks really inhabited Crimea, and the former even accounted for the absolute majority of the population at the time of the seizure of the peninsula by the Russian Empire in 1783, retained their internal way of life during the century of Russian colonization and, finally, took part in establishing the state borders of Crimea in 1921 and 1991. In addition, the Crimean Tatars for a quarter of a century have kept their system of national self-government: Qurultay–Mejlis. From a legal point of view, the “ancientry” of the people does not play any role in assigning the status of “indigenous”; therefore all three Crimean ethnoses have the right to receive it.

In addition, according to Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007,

Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

Crimea is exactly the land traditionally owned by Crimean Tatars at the time of the seizure of the peninsula by the Russian Empire.

The ethnogenesis of the Crimean Tatars it is more difficult, as this process has overgrown with too many myths, and too little research has been done so far. And although it is not important for debunking the thesis made in the headline, we will briefly review the history of the use of the ethnonym “Tatars”. As for the “true” Tatars, it was a large and strong Far Eastern tribe (or tribal union) either of Mongolian or Turkic origin. In the 11th century, Tatars were the main force in the region, and their ethnonym became widely known.

Their name has been known in the world since ancient times. Numerous branches separated from them. All that tribe [consisted] of seventy thousand houses [or families]... [already] in antiquity, most of the time they were conquerors and rulers of most [Mongolian] tribes and regions, [being remarkable for their] greatness, power and complete honor... Due to [their] extraordinary greatness and honorable position, other Turkic clans, with [all] the differences in their ranks and names, became known under their name and were all called the Tatars. And those different clans believed that their greatness and dignity was in that they attributed themselves to them and became known under their name.

*Rashid ad-Din. Collection of Chronicles. Vol. 1, book 1. M.–L., 1952 [1311]. P. 102*

In 1202, the Tatars were defeated by Genghis Khan and subjected to genocide—almost all adult men and many women were killed.

He ordered to slaughter all the Tatars, and not one of them should be kept alive until the limit defined by law; to kill women and small children, and to incise wombs of pregnant women in order to completely destroy them.

*Rashid ad-Din. Collection of Chronicles. Vol. 1, book 1. M.–L., 1952 [1311]. P. 106*

But their name was preserved and was transferred by Chinese historians to other peoples, including Mongols. So, already in 1221 a hybrid of “Mongolo-Tatars” appeared. In Chinese, “mengda” is an abbreviation of two ethnonyms: “menggu” (Mongols) and “dada” (Tatars) [*Zhao Hong. Mengda Beilu (Full Description of the Mongolo-Tatars). M., 1975*]. The surviving Tatars were later incorporated into the Mongol Army, which met the army of Rus on the Kalka River in 1223. Whether from the allied Kipchaks, or from the Mongolian ambassadors, the Russian chroniclers adopted the word “Tatars”, which became traditional: “Ethnic groups who have appeared, of whom no one clearly knows: who they are and where they are from, what language they speak, from which tribe and what faith they have. Some call them Tatars, while others call them Taumens”. According to current standards, all the multinational forces of Genghis Khan and his successors should be called “Mongolian”—purely from a political point of view, such as, for example, “Soviet troops”.

In order to somehow explain the combination of the Mongolian elite with the predominantly Turkic population of the Horde, the Russian historian Pyotr Naumov

in 1823 proposed the use of the term “Tataro-Mongols”, preserved in Soviet literature [*Naumov P. Ob otnosheniyah rossiyskikh knyazey k mongolskim i tatarskim hanam 1224 po 1480 god [On the Attitude of Russian Princes to the Mongol and Tatar Khans from 1224 to 1480]. SPb., 1823*]. In the Russian Empire, the term “Tatars” was used to denote the entire population of the Golden Horde and its fragments, and then, until the beginning of the 20th century, a dozen of the most diverse Turkic nationalities: from Azerbaijanians to Khakassians.

Those few in number proper Mongols that reached Crimea soon dissolved into the surrounding Turkic massif.

In ancient times this state was a country of the Kipchaks, but when they were captured by the Tatars [*the Egyptian geographer also did not distinctively distinguish the Mongols and the Tatars –Auth.*], the Kipchaks became their subjects. Then, they (the Tatars) mingled and became related to them (the Kipchaks), and the land prevailed over their (Tatars’) natural and racial qualities, and they all became exactly Kipchaks, as if they were of the same (with them) clan, because the Mongols (and the Tatars) settled on the land of the Kipchaks, married them and stayed to live on their (the Kipchaks’) land.

*Al-Omari. Ways of View on States with Large Cities.  
Collection of Materials Relating to the History of the Golden Horde. SPb., 1884. P. 235*

As a result, more than 80% of modern Crimean Tatars are of the Europeoid type, and not of the Mongoloid type, as one would expect based on the “Mongolo-Tatar” concept.



Fig. 6. Semenov I. *Types of Tatars. Crimea. Postcard of 1905–1910*

By the way, the adjective “Crimean” initially designated only the geographical localization of the Crimean Tatars (for example, the state language in the Crimean ASSR was simply “Tatar”), and only in the 20th century it became part of the self-designation—*Qirimtatarlar*. At the same time, a new ethnonym—*Qirimlar*, literally “Crimean Tatars”, is being approved these days. By the way, this word (“Crimean Tatars”, “Crimean people”) was used in the documents circulation of the Moscow State in the Early Modern Times.

The consideration of the issue of the Crimean Tatar ethnogenesis goes beyond the scope of this book and is not required for the analysis of the myth, but it can be affirmed unequivocally that

**the Crimean Tatars are not the same as the “Mongolo-Tatars”.**

To originate Crimean Tatars from any other “Tatars” only on the basis of the consonance of ethnonyms is absolutely unscientific; the term “Tatars” has too many completely different meanings.

And the most important thing:

**the status of the indigenous people and the related right to self-determination does not depend on the time of origin of this people, but is regulated by international law.**

By Decree No. 1140-18 of March 20, 2014, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine recognized the Crimean Tatars as the indigenous people and expressed support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore,

**the Crimean Tatars (as well as the Crimean Karaites and the Krymchaks) are the indigenous people of Ukraine, who have the right to self-determination in Crimea within the borders of the Ukrainian state.**

No historical arguments can be justification for revising this status.

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## **MYTH 7.**

### **THE GREEKS ARE THE MOST ANCIENT INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF CRIMEA**

#### ***Intro***

As previously noted more than once, myths almost never appear one at a time, and the present one is not an exception. If manipulators deny the Crimean Tatars the right to the status of indigenous people, and the “multi-faceted, but monolithic Russian nation”, in general, does not need it, then the resulting niche must be filled by someone else. And the Greeks perfectly suit to this role. As noted earlier, it is important for the “Crimea-is-ours” myth to link the status of indigenous people to ethnogenesis, to call the Crimean Tatars descendants of the “Mongolo-Tatars” and easily declare Greeks the indigenous population, who were known to live in the peninsula before the Mongols. I have already said that the Crimean Tatars are not Mongolo-Tatars, so now it is time to understand why the Greeks, who brought civilization to Crimea, are still not the indigenous people today.

#### ***Myth...***

This myth has two roots. Firstly, legal illiteracy, which allows the confusion of the status of “indigenes”, or “aborigines” with the status of “indigenous population”. Secondly, political games around the Crimean Tatars, especially aggravated in the early 90s of the last century, after the return of the people from the places of special settlements. And although the Soviet academic science has favored Greeks for half a century...

The establishment in Crimea of city states by Hellenic evicts had a great positive impact on the historical development of Crimea, since introduced it to the high ancient civilization. The symbiosis of Greek cities and the local population led to the creation of a peculiar culture of the Black Sea region.

*Rybakov B. Ob oshibkakh v izuchenii istorii Kryma i o zadachakh dalneyshikh issledovaniy [On Mistakes in the Study of the History of Crimea and on Tasks of Further Research]. Simferopol, 1952. P. 4*

...Finally, the myth was formed relatively recently. The following text written by one of the leaders of the Russian movement of Crimea in 1992 can be considered a kind of textbook.

The division of Crimeans into “newcomers” and “indigenous”, inspired by the Tatar Mejlis, began to sound often from the lips of some politicians. They endow Crimean Tatars with the status of “indigenous”, and assign the status of “newcomers” to Crimean Russians, Crimean Ukrainians, Crimean Greeks and other national groups. On this basis, special rights of the “indigenous” (Tatar) nation are assigned in comparison with other national groups in Crimea... In fact, the most ancient of the national groups now living in Crimea are the Crimean Greeks, because it is reliably known that they have lived in Crimea at least since the 6th century BC... And only in the 13th century, the Tatars came to Crimea with the Golden Horde... Unlike the true aborigines of America, the Indians, no national group living in Crimea can claim to the Crimean “aboriginality” or “indigeneity”, and especially the ethnic exclusivity. That is why it is unreasonable and simply dangerous to raise the question of the claims of Tatars to the status of “titular nation”.

*Mordashov V. Kto v Krymu korennoy–slavyane, tatory ili greki?  
[Who is Indigenous in Crimea–Slavs, Tatars or Greeks?]  
Krymskie izvestiya [Crimean News], March, 1992*

So, historical and legal arguments are piled in one heap; the Crimean Tatars are tied to the Golden Horde, and the Greeks are named the oldest living national group. Such a statement soon became a “common place”, repeated from text to text, until in 2014 was cast in bronze by the main Russian historian Vladimir Putin.

At a meeting with Crimean Tatar politicians and public figures in Sochi, to which we will return later, the Russian president, in response to a proposal to recognize the Crimean Tatars as the indigenous people of the peninsula, said,

You know, of course, we can think about it. But solving one question, we should not generate other problematic [questions]. What do I mean? One of the indigenous peoples... is the Greeks. They also have the right. The Greeks were here before us. Do you understand?

*Putin V. Meeting with representatives of the Crimean Tatars,  
May 16, 2014*

The formula “Greeks are the indigenous people of Crimea”, “consecrated” by Putin himself, has become a universal justification for denying the Crimean Tatars this status. But is it really possible for Greeks to claim to such an honor?

**...and reality**

Let's start with the simple thing, that is, with the legal side. As I have repeatedly stressed, the status of indigenous people and the associated privilege of self-determination are granted according to the criteria of international law and do not depend on the ancientry or uniqueness of this people. But most importantly, a people cannot be considered indigenous people if it has its own national state. The present Greece has been recognized by the world community since 1830, so that at the time of the establishment of the state borders of Crimea both in 1921 and in 1991, the Greeks could not be considered the indigenous people according to modern legal norms.

As for the Greeks as supposedly the most ancient of the living peoples of the peninsula, this is nothing more than a delusion based on excessively broad understanding of the ethnonym "Greek". In fact, there were no single and only Greeks in the Crimean history, but there were four waves of the conditional Greek population, often speaking different languages [*Aradgioni M. Krymskie greki [Crimean Greeks]. Ot kimmeriytsev do krymchakov [From Cimmerians to Krymchaks]. Simferopol, 2007. P. 192*].

The first wave was the ancient Greeks, or rather the Hellenes, the contemporaries of Herodotus and the creators of democracy. They settled in Crimea, beginning from the 600s BC, somewhere, for example on the Bosphorus, immediately mixing with local barbarians, somewhere, as in Chersonese, keeping themselves "clean" until Roman times. In the best years, the Hellenes owned in Crimea the whole of the Kerch peninsula and the surrounding lands up to Old Crimea and Sudak, as well as a wide strip of land from Sevastopol to Chornomorske. After the great migration of nations (from the Goths of the 3rd century to the Huns of the 5th century), it is pointless to speak of "pure" ancient Greeks. New peoples with their own culture and the spread of Christianity finally erased the features of classical antiquity in Crimea. During the same period, the ancient Greek language ceased to be used forever.

The second wave was the medieval "Crimean Greeks", or rather Romans, known to us as Byzantines, who were neither in language nor in faith like Hellenes. After the entry of Chersonese and Bosphorus into Byzantium in the 530s, Crimea turned into a place of constant exile and flight of troubled elements from the capital.

Those Romans willingly entered into marriages with the Christian nationalities of Crimea and, together with the Goths and Alans, formed their principality Theodoro in the mountains. The Middle Greek language became the lingua franca of the early-medieval peninsula. After the Turkish conquest of Crimea in 1475, the ethnos of the Crimean Greeks split: most of them, together with the Crimean Goths and Alans, accepted Islam and very soon dissolved among the Crimean Tatars. The few remaining formed two sub-ethnic groups: the Rums and the Urums. Both professed Christianity, but the Rums retained the Greek language, and the Urums spoke Turkic. In 1778, 18 thousand Rums and Urums were deported by Suvorov to the Azov Sea, becoming Mariupol Greeks. Yalta, Mangush and Old Crimea in the Azov Sea region are their handiwork.

The third wave of Greek immigrants was refugees from the Ottoman Empire of the early 19th century and sailors invited to the Russian service. Those Greeks already spoke the Modern Greek language. Together with the Orthodox Albanians, known under the name of the Arnauts, they settled first near Kerch, and then were transferred to Balaklava, where they formed a separate border battalion. Unlike their predecessors, the Balaklava Greeks were at enmity with the Crimean Tatars, and the echoes of that conflict would be heard at the beginning of the 20th century. A few years later, the battalion was disbanded, and the Greek warriors turned into farmers and winegrowers of the Mountainous Crimea and the Southshore region. And in June 1944, their descendants, along with other “punished peoples”, were deported by the Soviet authorities to Central Asia.



*Fig. 7. A Greek and an Arnavut. Source: Pauli G.-F. Etnograficheskoe opisaniye narodov Rossii [Ethnographic Description of the Peoples of Russia]. SPb., 1862*

The current, fourth wave is only partly related to the previous Greek population. Before the Second World War, the Greeks accounted for almost 2% of the population of the peninsula and preserved many features of traditional culture. Today, the Greek community has barely risen above the mark of 0.1% of the Crimeans. The 13-fold drop in the number led to the actual disappearance of the Greeks from the once-colorful Crimean palette.

So, the history of the Greek population of the peninsula was interrupted once in part and twice completely, and there is no direct continuity between the Hellenes of the 7th century BC and modern Greek community. Therefore,

**it is unscientific to call the Greeks the oldest of the living peoples of Crimea.**

And, it would not be inappropriate to remind you that

**having their own national state, the Greeks cannot be considered the indigenous people in international law.**

The Greek people already have a lot of merits to the Crimean history to allow it to become a bargaining chip in Russian propaganda.

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## **MYTH 8. CRIMEAN TATARS DESERTED THE RED ARMY EN MASSE**

### ***Intro***

Before us is one of the private myths, entering into a kind of “deportation triad”. Unable to recognize the total eviction of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 as a crime against humanity, Soviet propagandists came up (and their present heirs willingly caught up) the “justification” for the deportation by allegedly numerous “sins” of the Crimean Tatars. And the first charge in this connection is that in 1941 the Crimean Tatars deserted the ranks of the Red Army en masse.

### ***Myth...***

The charge was initiated at the highest level. The memorandum by the Deputy People’s Commissar of State Security of the USSR Bogdan Kobulov and Deputy People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR Ivan Serov addressed to Lavrentiy Beria stated:

All those drafted into the Red Army made up 90 thousand people, including 20 thousand Crimean Tatars... 20 thousand Crimean Tatars deserted in 1941 from the 51st Army in retreating from Crimea.

*Joseph Stalin to Lavrentiy Beria, “They must be deported...”:  
documents, facts, comments. Compiled by Bugay N. M., 1992. P. 131*

However, the memorandum itself was created on April 22, 1944, much later than the events described, but very close to the date of deportation of the Crimean Tatars. This figure “migrated” to Beria’s letter to Joseph Stalin on May 10, 1944.

In 1941, more than 20 thousand Tatars deserted from the Red Army units, betrayed their homeland, switched to the service of the Germans and fought against the Red Army with weapons.

*GARF, F. P-9401, Op. 2, D. 65, L. 41-43*

The result of the mention by such “authorities” as Beria was that this number of “Crimean Tatar deserters” began to be uncritically reproduced in dozens, if not hundreds of modern texts. The figure “20 thousand” acquired a touch of certain sacredness and served as a convenient justification for the deportation and chauvinist propaganda against the Crimean Tatars. Most often it is given in its original form with reference to the memorandum by Kobulov and Serov.

At the beginning of the war, 90 thousand people were drafted into the Red Army from the Crimean population, including 20 thousand Crimean Tatars who, during the retreat of the 51st Army from Crimea in 1941, deserted en masse. For example, only in one village of Koush, from 132 draftees into the Red Army 120 people deserted. So, the desertion of the Crimean Tatars was indeed massive.

*Martirosyan A. 200 mifov o Staline. T. 5: Stalin posle voyny. 1945–1953 gody [200 Myths about Stalin. Vol. 5: Stalin after the War. 1945–1953]. M., 2007. Myth No. 173*

But sometimes, in a fit of inspiration, the authors increase the number of “fugitives” threefold.

Or, if you remember later times, the autumn of 1941, you can see about 60 thousand young Crimean Tatars who almost completely deserted from the ranks of the Red Army, so that soon voluntarily join the Wehrmacht auxiliary troops and cut out stars on the chest of the captured Red Navy sailors in Crimean prison camps.

*Krenlyov S. 10 mifov o 1941 gode [10 Myths about 1941]. M., 2008. Myth No. 7*

Indeed, what is it for to count them! And even if a trivial misprint occurred in the text, it did not influence the definition of the Crimean Tatars as “massive deserters”.

However, in purely scientific works devoted to the problem of Crimean collaboration during the Second World War, you can find other figures.

In the summer of 1941, four rifle divisions were formed from the local population of Crimea. The personnel of two of them, the 320th Feodosia and the 321st Yevpatoria, consisted mainly of Crimean Tatars (there were about 10 thousand of them in these formations)... And the majority of the “missing people” are the personnel of the two Crimean-Tatar divisions. In October–November 1941, they were located at the following positions: the 320th–on Ak-Monay (Kerch peninsula), and the 321st–between Saky and Yevpatoria. Hastily

organized, poorly trained and armed, abandoned in a panic and loss of control of the troops, these divisions disintegrated at the very first blows of the German troops. Some of their personnel were captured, but the overwhelming majority of new recruits dispersed to their villages.

In 1941, about 10 thousand Crimean Tatars were drafted into the Red Army, many of whom either deserted or were captured by the Germans during the autumn-winter battles.

*Romanko O. Krym pod pyatoy Gitlera. Nemetskaya okkupatsionnaya politika v Krymu 1941–1944 gg. [Crimea under the Heel of Hitler: German Occupation Policy in Crimea in 1941–1944]. M., 2011. Pp. 129–130, 330*

Which figures are true, and how many Crimean Tatars actually fled from the ranks of the Red Army?

### **...and reality**

The question of how many Crimean Tatars fought on the side of the Red/Soviet Army and how many laid down their life in the struggle against Nazism is complex. Because of the senseless regime of secrecy in the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation in Podolsk, we do not have direct documentary evidence, so we have to use other routes.

First, let us explain the extraordinary popularity of the figure “20 thousand”, so often and so uncritically reproduced today.

The author of the article does not feel uneasy about the strangeness of the wording “20 thousand conscripts–20 thousand deserters”. He does not even try to ask himself a question about how the 51st Army fought in 1941, what losses it suffered, and how it happened that the Soviet military leaders surrendered the Crimean peninsula for many years of occupation, shifting the blame on “traitor peoples”. (It should be reminded that in addition to the Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Armenians and Bulgarians were deported on charges of complicity to enemies, and at the very beginning of the war “potential” (in the understanding of the authorities) accessories of the Fascists–Germans and Italians–were evicted). He also does not point out that in the memorandum by B. Kobulov and I. Serov there is an indication of the lack of accurate data on the number of Tatar population in Crimea; the executors of the punitive action only approximately provided the number of the Crimean Tatar population subject to deportation.

*Bekirova G. Stereotypy radyanskoho chasu shchodo krymskotatarskoho narodu ta yikh retranslyatsiya u postradyanskomu informatsiynomu prostori [Soviet-Era Stereotypes About the Crimean Tatar People and Their Retranslation in the Post-Soviet Informational Space]. Krymski studii [Crimean Studios]. 2002, No. 3–4 (15–16). Pp. 44–66*

The key point here is the “coincidence” of the traditional number of “deserters” and the traditional number of future Crimean Tatar collaborators (see Myth No. 9). It turns out to be a surprisingly “convenient” scheme of “crimes” of the Crimean Tatars: 20 thousand were drafted—20 thousand deserted—20 thousand accepted cooperation with the enemy. Why addle brain with unbiased calculations, if the “right” figure is known in advance. But how many Crimeans were actually drafted in 1941?

The number of Crimean Tatars, soldiers of the Red Army, widespread in the national literature, is obviously overestimated: from 60 to 137 thousand, and from time to time it is uncritically reproduced in the scientific literature of Ukraine and Russia. In fact, the mobilization limit of the settled population was about 10% [*Shaposhnikov B. Mozg armii [Brain of the Army]. Vol. 1. M.–L., 1927. Chapter 2*], and therefore any 60 thousand and more Crimean servicemen were impossible in principle.

Let’s try another tack and calculate the total number of recruits and mobilized soldiers from Crimea in 1941. According to the calculations of Vladimir Broshevan, after the announcement of the general mobilization of men aged from 23 to 36 years old from Crimea on June 22, 72.4 thousand people went to the ranks of the Red Army. Conscripts already served compulsory military service from 19 years old, and their number barely amounted to 21 thousand people. Accordingly, by August 1941, only about 93 thousand Crimeans served in the active army [*Polyakov V. Pravda o “20 tysyachakh krymskotatarskikh dezertirov” [Truth about “20 Thousand Crimean Tatar Deserters”]. Pervaya Krymskaya [First Crimean]. 2010, No. 2 (308)*]. The author of the last Soviet generalizing book on the war in Crimea Aleksey Basov also writes about 93 thousand people who were off at the front from the peninsula in the first months [*Basov A. Krym v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941–1945 [Crimea in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945]. M., 1987. P. 43*]. In the memorandum of Kobulov and Serov, we meet the rounded figure of 90 thousand people.

Since the Crimean Tatars were considered loyal to the Soviet regime and did not fall under the draft restrictions (like the Germans or the Poles), there is no reason to believe that their share in the troops was smaller than among the Crimeans as a whole. Taking into account the natural increase between the time of the census (1939) and the beginning of hostilities (1941), the number of the Crimean Tatar population is estimated by me at 232–233 thousand people. Sometimes with the wording “according to the archives” you can find a figure of 250 thousand, but I’ve never come across

an indication of the fund and the case number with this information. On the other hand, the share of the Crimean Tatar population steadily decreased during the decade: 1934–23.8%; 1937–20.7%; 1939–19.4%, so it can be assumed that in 1941 this figure was about 18%.

Using the demographic proportion, we have calculated that at the beginning of the war almost 17 thousand Crimean Tatars served in the Red Army. But, contrary to popular belief, they did not fight in the territory of the Crimean peninsula. By August 1941, all conscripts aged 18 to 36 years old were already at different fronts and had nothing to do with Crimea.

The researcher Aleksandr Nemenko writes, though, without indicating the source, that...

According to the Crimean Military Commissariat, from June 22 to August 1, 1941 [*the original has a typo: "1942"—Auth.*] 17,254 Crimean residents, who had “Crimean Tatar” in the column “nationality”, were mobilized. Of them, 876 people were sent to the 106th division, which was located in Crimea, 276 people were sent to other Crimean units, and the rest of them were sent to the “Big Land”. At the same time, part of the draftees died during the export from Crimea (including by the transport “Lenin”). This figure does not take into account those who fought in the Crimean divisions of the people’s militia.

*Nemenko A. O krymskikh tatarakh v 1941–44 g. [About the Crimean Tatars in 1941–44].*  
[http://www.litsovet.ru/index.php/material.read?material\\_id=481851](http://www.litsovet.ru/index.php/material.read?material_id=481851).

There is an amazing coincidence of figures.

Let’s count further. The task of defending the peninsula was entrusted to the 51st Independent Army, to which the Crimeans born until 1895, were additionally mobilized since August 14 in accordance with the Directive of the Supreme High Command General Headquarters No. 00931. The rest of the Crimean conscripts were already at war on the “Big Land”.

August 4, 1941, 22 hours 00 minutes

1. For the defense of Crimea, to form the 51st Independent Army (on the rights of the front) with direct subordination to the Supreme High Command. Colonel General Kuznetsov is appointed as the Commander of the Army, Major General Batov is appointed as the Deputy Commander of the Army. The headquarters of the Army is the district of Simferopol.

...

3. To include the 106th, 156th, 271st and 276th rifle divisions, 40th, 42nd and 48th cavalry divisions in the combat strength of the troops of the newly formed 51st Independent Army.

...

5. To the Military Council of the 51st Independent Army:

a) to form two or three rifle divisions and the necessary number of armored sites by drafting human resources of Crimea born until 1895 inclusive...

*TsAMO, F. 148a, Op. 3763, D. 90, L. 47-48*

The created army, which numbered 68.5 thousand people, could be divided into two parts. The first was comprised of the “old” regular rifle divisions mentioned in the Directive: 106th and 156th; “new” divisions: 271st and 276th, as well as three cavalry divisions: 40th, 42nd and 48th— a total of 39.5 thousand soldiers. There were no Crimeans among the soldiers of these divisions before the outbreak of the war; they were formed outside the peninsula.

The second part of the Army consisted of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th “Crimean divisions of the people’s militia” (KDNO, later the 321st, 184th, 172nd and 320th rifle divisions, respectively), in which local residents, mobilized by the above-mentioned Directive, were recruited—a total of 29 thousand people. The second Crimean division numbered only 4 thousand soldiers, but it was created on the basis of the border troops of the NKVD. Thus, the remaining Crimean divisions recruited an average of 8.3 thousand people each. If the previous proportions are correct, then up to 5.5 thousand Crimean Tatars were mobilized into the “Crimean divisions” of the 51st Army...

The same Nemenko, and again without references, states that...

According to the Crimean Republican Military Commissariat, as of the end of August 1941, 54 thousand people of military age, including 12.5 thousand Crimean Tatars, were additionally mobilized. The same number was drafted in September. Unfortunately, there is no data on October.

*Nemenko A. O krymskikh tatarakh v 1941–44 g. [About the Crimean Tatars in 1941–44].  
[http://www.litsovet.ru/index.php/material.read?material\\_id=481851](http://www.litsovet.ru/index.php/material.read?material_id=481851)*

It is clear that in September, at the time of the Germans’ breakthrough in Perekop, and in October, the military commissariats “pulled in” both old and young

people. However, either Nemenko incorrectly quoted sources, or they contain an error.

Two new documents have been recently found in the State Archives of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. In the first “The number of mobilized and drafted into the Red Army from cities and urban-type settlements of the Crimean ASSR (as of November 1, 1941)”, it was reported: “91.9 thousand people were mobilized into the Red Army and the Navy” (14.78% of all residents, and 24% of those aged 18–59). In the second document “The number of mobilized and drafted into the Red Army from the rural area of the Crimean ASSR (as of November 1, 1941)”, we read: “67.6 thousand people were mobilized into the Red Army (19.47% of the total rural population and 25.01% of the population aged 18–59). In total, according to these two documents, 159.5 thousand people (each 7th resident of the republic) were mobilized to fight the enemy.

*Broshevan V. M. Osobennosti mobilizatsii i perestroyki na voennyi lad ekonomiki v Krymu [Features of the Mobilization and Restructuring of the Economy of Crimea in a Military Manner]. Patriot Ukrainy: istorychnyi almanakh [Patriot of Ukraine: Historical Almanac]. K., 2010. Issue 7. Pp. 45-54*

The number “according to Broshevan” (159.5 thousand) looks much more plausible than the numbers “according to Nemenko” (54 thousand in August + the same number in September + October mobilization, and this is not counting those who already served and were mobilized earlier). In addition, it is confirmed by archival sources, so let’s take it as the basis.

This final number includes almost 21 thousand of those who at the time of the beginning of the war served in the active army, 72 thousand people drafted according to the “standard procedure” from June to August (the very 93 thousand who fought outside the peninsula) and, in the remainder, 66.5 thousand Crimeans, mobilized specifically to defend the peninsula from August to November. And, if according to the Directive No. 00931, the men aged less than 46 years old were drafted, in the archival information there were already 59-year-old fighters. It can be assumed that among these latter the Crimean Tatars numbered at least 12 thousand.

So, there were more than 29 thousand Crimean Tatars in the ranks of the Red Army: more than 17 thousand, mobilized before August 1941, + 12 thousand, mobilized later. 1 thousand draftees of the “first wave” strengthened regular divisions of the 51st Army, and the rest were transferred to the “Big Land”. Up to 5.5 thousand soldiers of

the second wave were assigned to the division of the people's militia, the remaining 6.5 thousand were either aimed at deploying "armored sites" from the above Directive, or later directed to make up for the losses. Thus, in all, about 13 thousand Crimean Tatar soldiers defended Crimea in November 1941.

Oleg Romanko, as we saw above, counted 10 thousand Crimean Tatars in two divisions, refers to Anatoliy Vyatkin's article, but he refers to completely different figures.

However, these calculations are not applicable to the Tatars, since at the end of June 1941 only 4.5 thousand Tatars served in the army (2.0% of their number according to the 1939 census), and those who were mobilized in July–August of the same year for the defense of the peninsula, partially died, but in its bulk deserted... Thus, in the Red Army during the war there were no more than 15 thousand Crimean Tatars, which accounted for about 7% of the entire population.

*Vyatkin A. Nemetskaya okkupatsiya i krymskie tatary v 1941–1944 gg.*  
[*German Occupation and Crimean Tatars in 1941–1944*]. *Vostok [East]*. 2005, No. 4. P. 39

However, this researcher also did not give the source of his calculations. Thus, I have no reasonable doubt about the accuracy of my own calculations, according to which up to 30 thousand Crimean Tatars (12.5%) served in various personnel units of the Red Army on the eve of the seizure of the peninsula, which is not much higher than the estimated mobilization limit.

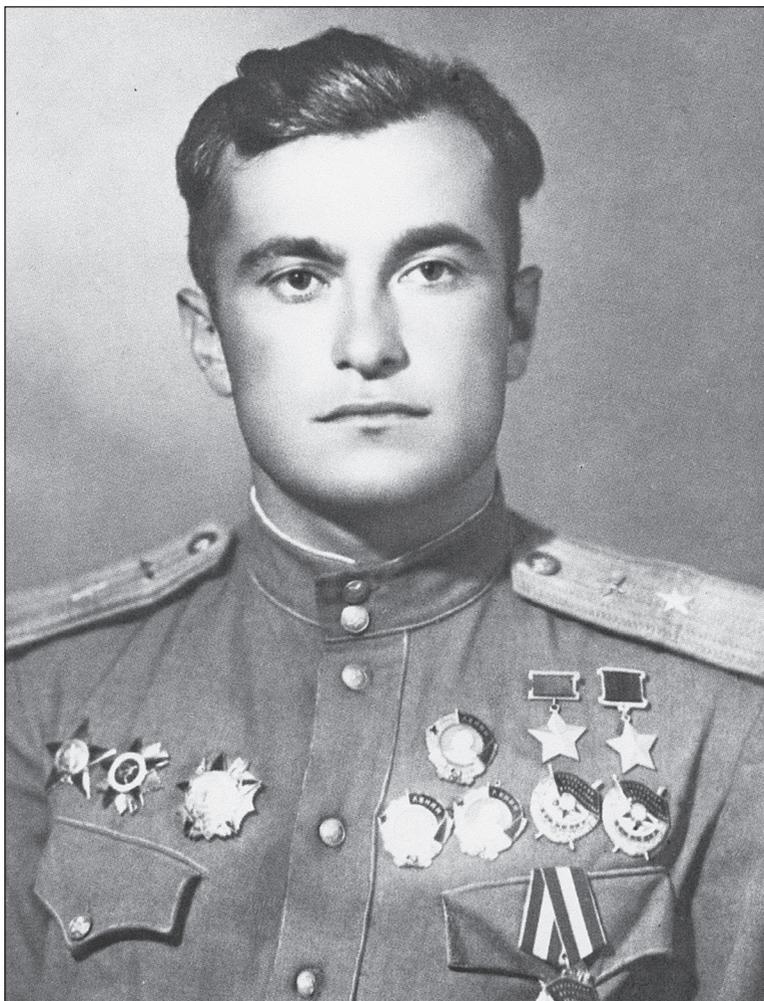
As already noted, 16 thousand Crimean Tatars fought outside the peninsula, 8995 of them survived to the victory and were demobilized to special settlements [GARF, F. P-9479, Op. 1, D. 436–33, L. 98–99] to their deported families.

There were 13 thousand Crimean Tatars remained in various units in the peninsula, and after the defeat inflicted by the 11th Army of Erich von Manstein of the Soviet 51st Army, all the recruits of all nationalities, not only the Crimean Tatars, fled from it. Leaving home was often the only way to survive for the remaining unarmed soldiers. By the way, according to A. Nemenko, 3671 Crimean Tatars participated in the defense of Sevastopol, and almost 2 thousand came to the city voluntarily.

So, out of 13 thousand at least 1290 people were officially missing (calculated by V. Polyakov using the Memorial Book of the ARC), 3671 continued the struggle in Sevastopol, and almost 4 thousand people were captured and found themselves in camps in Mykolayiv, Kherson and Crimea (see Myth No. 9). The fate of another 4

thousand Crimean Tatars remains undetermined. Some of them, naturally, died in battles, some were evacuated to Taman, and the rest went home, like thousands of their fellow countrymen of other nationalities.

**So, the total number of turncoats, deserters and deviators among the Crimean Tatars was less than 4 thousand, and not the mythical 20 thousand people.**



*Fig. 8. Amet-Khan Sultan, Double Hero of the Soviet Union, 1945. Source: Avdet Newspaper*

In general, “20 thousand” is a rounded number of all Crimean Tatars who served in the Red Army after 1941 on the Big Land and in Sevastopol. And taking into account 9 thousand survivors, among which was double Hero of the Soviet Union Amet-Khan Sultan, five Heroes and two Full Cavaliers of the Order of Glory,

**there was simply nowhere to take “20,000 Crimean Tatar deserters”.**

By the way, according to the official “Reference on the Number of Deserters from the Red Army during the Three Years of the Great Patriotic War”, compiled in September 1944, only 479 deserters (without indication of nationality) among the natives of the Crimean ASSR were detained, [*GARF, F. P-9478, Op. 1, D. 137, L. 1-2, 15-16*]. And although this number does not include fugitives from the 51st Army in the autumn of 1941, even with them it does not come up to “20 thousand”.

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## **MYTH 9. CRIMEAN TATARS ARE A “TRAITOR PEOPLE”**

### ***Intro***

As already mentioned above, charging Crimean Tatars of all mortal sins is the most important element of the Russian propaganda self-justification for deportation. But the “desertion” plays only the role of the seed; the main claim is the alleged mass collaboration of the Crimean Tatars at all times, especially during the Second World War. Propagandists wrench the most complicated scientific problem of collaboration out of its context, clear it of all warnings and submit it in the form of a ready-made formula: “Crimean Tatars are a traitor people”. After pronouncing this formula, it becomes much easier to justify the deportation in particular and the Russification of Crimea as a whole. The phrase: “It serves them right” is a universal tool in the struggle for Crimean history.

### ***Myth...***

This myth has two journalistic varieties—short and long. The short one focuses on the so-called “mass cooperation with Hitlerites” in 1941–1944, and the long one searches for the roots of the Crimean Tatars’ “treachery” in the depth of the centuries. It is characteristic that the propagandistic theses are easily voiced even by seemingly professional historians. Thus, the interview with the “Academician, Doctor of Historical Sciences Andrey Goncharov” can be considered canonical in this sense.

– Andrey Pavlovich, this year marks 65 years of the so-called Stalin’s deportation of the Crimean Tatars and other peoples. What, in your opinion, motivated the leaders of the USSR in 1944 to take this step?

– I’m already tired of proving that those were absolutely logical and fair actions towards traitors of the Motherland and fascist henchmen. At the same time, one should note the humanism of the Soviet authorities in relation to the bandits who faithfully served the Führer. Under the laws of wartime, according to Article 193-22 of the then

Criminal Code of the RSFSR, our commanders, of course, had every right to shoot down if not the entire nation, then the entire male population of the so-called Crimean Tatars for desertion and treachery!

– Well, that’s too much!

– The facts show that virtually all of the Crimean Tatar population of military age acted on the side of fascist Germany. Once front approached Crimea, the overwhelming majority of the population began to cross to the side of the enemy.

*Goncharov A. Pochemu deportirovali krymskikh tatar?  
[Why were Crimean Tatars deported?].  
Russkoe dvizhenie [Russian movement], March 25, 2011*

The set of accusations against “traitors and henchmen” of the “so-called Crimean Tatars” in all cases is almost the same: a) the alleged total service of male Crimean Tatars in the German occupation forces and the participation in repressions against partisans and the civilian Slavic population; b) congratulations and memoranda addressed to Hitler with proposals to create an independent Crimean Tatar state; c) financial, food and organizational assistance to the Germans from the “Muslim Committees” of Crimea; d) insufficient participation in the partisan movement.

Most often, with reference to German sources, they mention the figure of 20 thousand people as the number of all collaborators, which is supposedly twice the number of the Crimean Tatar soldiers in the Red Army. Retelling all the arguments of supporters of this approach does not make sense, because everyone can easily find them on the Internet.

As for the “long” version of the myth, its most complete form is represented in the book *Za chto Stalin vyselyal narody* [For What Stalin Exiled Peoples] by Igor Pykhalov, in which the history of the Crimean Tatar “atrocities” has been traced since the end of the Middle Ages. They were incriminated in raids against Russia, cooperation with Anglo-French troops during the Crimean War, and even the nation building during the revolution of 1917–1920. I even do not undertake to calculate the frequency of the use of the words “traitors” and “betrayers”—in any case, the reader approaches the description of the events of the Second World War in a proper mood.

And the corresponding section ends with the following paragraph:

As we can see, being part of the Russian state, the Crimean Tatars betrayed our country whenever the enemy came to the land of Crimea.

*Pykhalov I. Za chto Stalin vyselyal narody [For What Stalin Exiled Peoples].  
M., 2008. P. 143*

We will not examine this, in its own way logical, scheme. Our contemporaries are no longer worried about the Horde raids, and the role of the Crimean Tatars in the Crimean War is not important for the “Crimea-is-ours” myth, so we will concentrate on the main accusation against the Crimean Tatar people of total collaboration in the years of World War II.

### **...and reality**

By tradition, I will begin with the legal side. Yes, of course, the existence of collaborationist organizations of Crimean Tatars during the war is a fact, and their activities, from toasts in honor of Adolf-Effendi to collecting money for the Wehrmacht and organizing security battalions, are unequivocal cooperation with the enemy. However, to extend responsibility for their crimes to anyone other than their immediate participants, let alone the whole people, is also a crime. International law condemns any attempts to use collective responsibility. The activities of the Russian Liberation Army and the Halychyna Division do not turn Russians and Ukrainians into “collaborative nations”, however this approach is very common with respect to the Crimean Tatars. In response to this, it can often be heard that there were fewer Russians in the Russian Liberation Army than there were Crimean Tatars in their battalions. Firstly, from a legal point of view, it does not matter—everyone is responsible for their own misconduct, and the number of “accomplices of the enemy” does not play any role. And secondly, the number of collaborators among the Crimean Tatars is greatly overstated, but we will return to this later.

Undoubtedly, there were collaborators among the Crimean Tatars, as they were among the representatives of other peoples, and, in fact, among any population occupied by the enemy. In fact, it is difficult to imagine that the wave of repressions that fell on the people in 1920–1930 and repeatedly “walked” throughout the peninsula, did not rouse feelings of hatred for the Soviet regime and its leaders in the environment of a part of the victims. Nevertheless, there are many evidences of the heroism of Crimeans,

including, of course, Crimean Tatars. In the *Memorial Book of Crimea* published in 1994, which included the names of the Crimeans, who did not return from the fronts of the Great Patriotic War, we find the names of representatives of all the nationalities of the peninsula, without exception.

So the facts of collaborationism—and we are deeply convinced of this—can not in any way serve as an excuse for the criminal decisions of the Soviet leaders about the deportation of entire peoples, the execution of which brought untold misery to millions of innocent people.

*Bekirova G. Krymskotatarskaya problema v SSSR (1944–1991) [The Crimean Tatar Problem in the USSR (1944–1991)]. Simferopol, 2004. Chapter 1*

As for the participation of the Crimean Tatars in the anti-partisan struggle, everything is not as simple as it seems to the propagandists. The fact is that at the initial stage of the underground resistance, provisions for Soviet detachments were purchased or exchanged, but due to the failure of preparation by responsible party members, partisans soon went over to direct requisitions. In general, the idea of the Soviet partisans as knights without fear and beyond reproach is another sheer myth. In fact, there were no less evidences of their crimes than feats. In general, it is not surprising that the population of the Crimean villages from time to time formed self-defense units to protect themselves from “forest avengers”. The German propaganda, organized provocations (staged Soviet attacks on villages) and low discipline among the commanders of the underground led to the beginning of partisan-peasant conflicts in the Crimean mountains. After the launch, the flywheel of mutual murders already was not so easy to stop.

As for the number of Crimean Tatar “volunteers” in the service of the Germans, it is unambiguously overstated. Here is the famous quotation from the reference of the German High Command of March 20, 1942 on the formation of auxiliary troops, with which everything begins.

The recruitment of volunteers was conducted as follows:

1. The entire territory of Crimea was divided into districts and sub-districts.
2. For each district, one or several commissions from representatives of operational groups D and suitable Tatar recruiters were formed.

The enrolled volunteers were subjected to on-site inspection. In camps, the recruitment was conducted in the same way.

In general, recruitment activities can be considered complete. They were held in 203 settlements and 5 camps. Were enrolled:

a) in settlements: about 6 thousand volunteers;

b) in camps: about 4 thousand volunteers.

A total of about 10 thousand volunteers.

According to the Tatar Committee, village elders organized about 4 thousand more people to fight the partisans. In addition, there are about 5 thousand volunteers ready to replenish the formed military units.

Thus, with a population of about 200 thousand people, the Tatars allocated about 20 thousand people to our army. If we consider that about 10 thousand people were drafted into the Red Army, then we can assume that all combat-capable Tatars were fully accounted for.

*Organy gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti SSSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne*  
 [State Security Bodies of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War]. Vol. 3, Book 1: *Krushenie «Blitzkriga»*  
 [The Collapse of Blitzkrieg]. M., 2003. P. 599

So, once again “sacred” 20 thousand Crimean Tatars. However, not all “accomplices” were documented. According to the calculations of Oleg Romanko, 9255 Hiwis (Hilfswilliger), volunteers of the Wehrmacht, were recruited. Some of them were unfit for service, so there were only 8684 people recruited (they were easily “rounded” up to 10 thousand [Romanko O. *Krym pod pyatoy Gitlera. Nemetskaya okkupatsionnaya politika v Krymu 1941–1944 gg.* [Crimea under the Heel of Hitler. German Occupation Policy in Crimea in 1941–1944]. M., 2011. P. 176].

But the remaining 10 thousand cause reasonable doubt. First, the number of 4 thousand “people for the fight with partisans” was obtained from the words of representatives of the “Tatar Committee”, and not counted by German recruiters. Whether they really existed in such quantity is a big question.

The most interesting begins next. O. Romanko, in addition to these Hiwis, additionally counts 14 self-defense units, organized in January–March 1942, in which 1632 people of payroll staff served [Romanko O. *Krym pod pyatoy Gitlera* [Crimea under the Heel of Hitler]. Pp. 176-177].

And the quote from the above German reference suggests a completely different conclusion:

Operational Group D1 undertook the mobilization itself, concentration at collecting points and sending volunteers to military units. The Operational Group formed 14 Tatar

companies for self-defense totaling 1632 volunteers. The remainder was used in various ways: most were divided into small groups of 3 to 10 persons and distributed among companies, batteries and other military units; a small part—in closed military units—was attached to detachments, for example, one company along with the Caucasian company was attached to the 24th engineer battalion.

*Organy gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti SSSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne*  
[State Security Bodies of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War]. Vol. 3, Book 1: *Krushenie «Blitzkriga»*  
[The Collapse of Blitzkrieg]. M., 2003. P. 600

It follows that the companies of “self-defense” were organized from those “10 thousand volunteers” who were recruited by the Germans themselves, as indicated by their designation as “volunteers”, and the distribution of the “remainder” among the units of the Wehrmacht. It is impossible to imagine that people who did not pass the German conscription commission but were brought by the “Tatar Committee” were accepted for service in the German army.

Therefore, “self-defense” (1632 people) and Hiwis (8684 – 1632 = 7052) should be counted within the same 8.7 thousand volunteers, and not separately. And it is certainly unacceptable to reckon 4 or even 9 thousand Crimean Tatars allegedly recruited by the “Tatar Committee” among collaborators without documentary evidence of their service.

In the summer of 1942, the formation of Schuma security battalions (Schutzmannschaft) began. To that end, 2184 Hiwis (i. e., there remained 4868 Hiwis), 364 prisoners of war from the Simferopol and Dzhankoy prison camps and 821 civil volunteers, totaling 3369 soldiers, were transferred to the 11th Army. [Romanko O. *Krym pod pyatoy Gitlera* [Crimea under the Heel of Hitler]. Pp. 183-184].

They formed eight battalions (from the 147th to the 154th). O. Romanko points out the short-lived existence of the 155th and 156th battalions, but even in this case the total number of Schuma would not exceed 4 thousand people. And not all of them were Crimean Tatars. In the 154th battalion, half of them were Ukrainians, and in the remaining battalions other Turks and Muslims were together recorded as “Tatars”. With this in mind, the figure of 3 thousand Crimean Tatars in Schuma can be considered reliable.

At the same time, the “auxiliary police of individual service” (Hilfspolizei) with a total number of 5–7 thousand people, 4 thousand of which were Crimean Tatars, was formed [Romanko O. *Krym pod pyatoy Gitlera* [Crimea under the Heel of Hitler].

*P. 190*]. This figure correlates with the number of soldiers “for the struggle against partisans”, which the “Crimean Tatar Committee” allegedly promised to provide.

And, by the way, there is a lot of personal evidence that the service of many Crimean Tatars in security units was not voluntary but “voluntary-compulsory” for fear of Nazi terror or fear of hunger.

And now we can calculate the true number of Crimean Tatar collaborators with regard to the “staff turnover”.

At the beginning of 1942, 8684 people were supplied, and some of them were escorted, so the word “volunteers” can be applied to them quite arbitrarily. Of them, 1632 people formed companies of self-defense, and the rest joined the 11th Army as Hiwis. When organizing Schuma battalions, 2184 people were transferred from the remaining Hiwis, and the rest were recruited from volunteers and prisoners of war. Thus, the number of remaining Hiwis was:  $8684 - 1632 - 2184 = 4868$  people. These “rounded” 5 thousand (according to O. Romanko—“5–6 thousand”) came from Crimea together with the Wehrmacht in September 1942 and did not return to the peninsula.

The Schuma battalions numbered 4 thousand fighters, of whom 3 thousand were Crimean Tatars (a third of them were later disarmed and put in camps by the Germans for “unreliability”); of 5–7 thousand people of auxiliary police of individual service (“polizei”), 4 thousand were Crimean Tatars.

In March 1943, the Germans tried to conduct another recruitment of Crimean Tatars. That time, they needed to recruit 1100–1200 people to form: another 1 Schuma battalion, 2–3 construction battalions, 2–3 economic companies for German economic battalions and 2 railway construction companies [*Romanko O. Krym pod pyatoy Gitlera [Crimea under the Heel of Hitler]. P. 190*]. In reality, they recruited no more than 1 thousand as Hiwis for the units quartered in Crimea.

About 3.5 thousand men from “volunteer formations” were evacuated to the West during the retreat of the Wehrmacht. Actually, the informers of Beria believed that there had been up to 5 thousand “active accomplices” taken out, but the remainder was most likely made up of women and children—all of them were sent by sea to the ports of Romania and Bulgaria from April 14 to 26, 1944. The men were distributed as follows: 2.5 thousand were (after a year of reorganization and redeployment) enrolled into the combat group “Crimea” of the East Turkic Union, more than 800 people were sent as Hiwis to the 35th Grenadier Division,

and the rest were enrolled into the Volga-Tatar Legion in France and auxiliary air defense units [*Romanko O. Musulmanskie legiony vo Vtoroy mirovoy voyne [Muslim Legions in the Second World War]. M., 2004. Pp. 164–165*]. However, they had previously served in the collaborationist units and should therefore not be reckoned again.

Thus, the number of really confirmed collaborators by the end of 1943 (during the period of their maximum number) was as follows: 5 thousand Hiwis outside the peninsula + 4 thousand “polizei” + 3 thousand Schuma soldiers + 2 thousand “self-defense” fighters + 1 thousand Hiwis in Crimea = 15 thousand people. All those who served the Germans earlier were among them; all those who will serve later will be recruited from among them.

15 thousand collaborators are 6.5% of the total Crimean Tatar population. This is indeed more than the average percentage of the occupied part of the USSR, but it is still clearly not enough to seriously insist on “total collaboration”. In addition, critics usually do not take into account:

a) the specifics of “small peoples” who were completely under foreign power without the hope to get free on their own and unable to leave the occupation zone;

Small peoples as objects of persecution are more convenient than the large ones... they were chosen as scapegoats for the common sin.

*Pomerants G. Krasnaya kniga narodov (Zametki 1987–1989)  
[The Red Book of the Peoples (Notes of 1987–1989)].*

*April: Literaturno-khudozhestvennyi i obschestvenno-politicheskiy almanakh  
[April: Literary-Artistic and Socio-Political Almanac]. M., 1990. Pp. 209–217*

b) frank flirtation of the Nazis with the indigenous Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union (180 thousand of the so-called “Turkestani” served in the Wehrmacht despite the fact that the war did not reach Central Asia): the Germans opened mosques, arranged provocations, staged attacks of partisans on villages of the Crimean Tatars, and in every way set up those against the Soviet power;

c) the fact that twice as many Crimean Tatars and partisan detachments fought in the ranks of the Red Army in 1941.



*Fig. 9. Troshkin P. Crimean Tatars in a Partisan Detachment, Simeiz, April 1944. Source: RGAKFD*

But the main argument against the bundle “collaboration—deportation” is the fate of the “volunteers” themselves. In short, all of them either died in battle, or suffered individual punishment.

5 thousand Hiwis and 3.5 thousand “evacuants” fought outside of Crimea. Of these 8.5 thousand people, 3.5 thousand survived the end of the war, and, of course, were delivered to the Soviet Union and sent to camps. In the peninsula, there were 6.5 thousand collaborators remained, of whom at least a thousand Schuma soldiers were put into camps by the Germans, and some of the “self-defense” fighters came over to partisans with weapons. Of the remaining 5 thousand, more than 1 thousand died during the attack of the Red Army (The largest battles involving auxiliary battalions were fought for Islam Terek (now—Kirovske) and Bakhchysarai. The first battle involved three units of the Crimean

Tatars, and the second involved only one. After the first collision, there were more than 800 captives taken).

The work on the identification of surviving collaborators was launched on April 13, 1944 [GARF, F. P-9401, Op. 2, D. 3, L. 502–505] and lasted until the end of the deportation. According to the telegram of Kobulov and Serov to Beria as of May 20, a total of 5989 Crimean Tatars of the so-called “anti-Soviet element” (collaborators, spies, participants in self-government) were arrested [GARF, F. P-9401, Op. 1, D. 2191, L. 68–69]. It is clear that some of the detainees were innocent, but it was difficult to call such a figure completely groundless—there were fifty mortars, more than 600 machine guns, 10 thousand assault rifles and 5 million cartridges seized during the special operation. Part of those weapons was abandoned by the Germans during the retreat, and part was brought by former collaborators who deserted from their divisions.

In general, 6 thousand “accomplices of enemies” (1 thousand in Crimea and 5 thousand in Europe) died in battle, and 9.5 thousand people (6 thousand from Crimea and 3.5 thousand from Europe) were sent to the Gulag (not counting those who were executed by military field courts in Crimea), totaling 15.5 thousand, which is even more than the maximum number of all those “cooperating”.

Thus, although collaboration among the Crimeans took place, and moreover, a notable one (however, *no* people under the Nazi occupation escaped that sin, even Jews), nevertheless any “total cooperation with the enemy” is out of question; there were still more Crimean Tatars serving in the ranks of the Red Army and partisan detachments than those in the Wehrmacht. And the most important thing:

**the absolute majority of Crimean Tatar collaborators either died in battle, or suffered an individual punishment.**

Injustice consists in the very precedent of the “punishment of the peoples”, which replaced judicial proceedings against specific individuals. Regardless of any statistics, the attribution of collective guilt and the application of collective punishment based on ethnicity is a serious crime against humanity, along with capturing and shooting hostages.

*Polyan P. Ne po svoey vole. Istoriya i geografiya prinuditelnykh migratsiy v SSSR [Out of Choice. History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR]. M., 2001. P. 104*

Therefore, punishing the whole people with deportation is not a “just retribution”, but an obvious crime against humanity, which the Soviet authorities had always been lavish with. And the stigma of a “traitor people” is not an allegedly objective assessment of the Crimean Tatar collaboration, but a banal justification for criminal deportation.

## MYTH 10. THE DEPORTATION SAVED CRIMEAN TATARS

### *Intro*

If the more widespread version of the myth about Crimean Tatar crimes (deportation is a “just punishment”) could be called *patriotic chauvinistic*, then in this case (deportation is a “rescue”) we are talking about a *liberal chauvinistic* myth. Indeed, in this version of the myth, the main postulate—about the total cooperation of the Crimean Tatars with the enemy—remained unchanged. The old Stalinists do not need to justify deportation as such, while the new generation of the leader’s lovers tries to present it in a positive light. As for me, it’s hard to come up with a more nasty thing.

### *Myth...*

So, the supporters of the thesis “deportation is a rescue” do not even doubt the total collaboration of the Crimean Tatars. But since it is somehow illiberal to call the exile of the whole people a “just retribution”, we need to come up with another explanation for Stalin’s actions. And, generally speaking, there are only three such actions.

Firstly, the dictator allegedly could not leave a mass of armed people in the rear.

In the course of the exile of the Crimean Tatars, 49 mortars, 716 machine guns, 724 submachine guns, 9888 rifles and ammunition to small arms in the amount of 5 million pcs were additionally seized. Such a quantity of weapons would be enough to equip at least two divisions by wartime staff.

Could Stalin in the conditions of wartime have left in the rear such a mass of armed bandits, supported at the same time by the local Crimean Tatar population?! Especially if we take into account that during the retreat the Hitlerite command everywhere tried to leave numerous armed gangs to fight the Soviet Union in the rear. Naturally, no. No sensible state leader would do this. So, there is no reason to run down Stalin, especially since he treated the Crimean Tatars rather gently—he just exiled them.

*Martirosyan A. 200 mifov o Staline. T. 5: Stalin posle voyny. 1945–1953 gody [200 Myths about Stalin. Vol. 5: Stalin after the War. 1945–1953]. Vol. 5: M., 2007. Myth No. 173*

Secondly, Stalin allegedly did not want to shoot all Crimean Tatar men for cooperation with the enemy and replaced the murder with the exile of the entire people.

That type of punishment, hard for everyone, was a rescue from death for a large part of men, as well as for the whole ethnos. If the Chechens had been judged individually according to the laws of wartime, it would have turned into an ethnocide—the loss of such a large part of young men would have undermined the demographic potential of the people...

You can do such a mental experiment: let each of those who curses the USSR for the “criminal deportation” of peoples, present themselves in the place of the father or mother of the Chechen family, in which the son fought in the mountains on the side of the Germans. Once the Germans are driven away, and parents are asked what they would prefer—whether their son was judged according to “civilized” laws and shot as a traitor who fought on the side of the enemy, or the entire family was evicted to Kazakhstan? It is possible to answer in advance that 100% of those who really can imagine themselves in this situation would answer that they would be happy to choose deportation. Another thing is that the detractors of the USSR, frankly speaking, did not give a damn about the fate of Chechen or Crimean Tatar men, as well as about all their peoples.

*Kara-Murza S. Sovetskaya tsivilizatsiya [Soviet Civilization].  
Vol. 1. M., 2001. P. 303*

And thirdly, the tyrant allegedly prevented retribution against the Crimean Tatars from the Slavic population of the peninsula.

– According to your opinion, Stalin was almost a benefactor for the Crimean Tatars.

– Yes, they should adore him! He saved them from the righteous people’s anger, from the pogroms. Just imagine: during the German occupation, the Tatar police units collected more than 50 thousand Russian residents of Crimea to steal them for Germany! Plus, the inhumane atrocities that they did towards their neighbors. What would the Crimean front-line soldiers who returned from Berlin—fathers, brothers and sons of the Soviet citizens torn to pieces or sent into slavery by them—have done to them in 1945?! There nothing would have been left from the Crimean Tatars.

*Goncharov A. Pochemu deportirovali krymskikh tatar? [Why Were Crimean Tatars Deported?] [interview]. Russkoe dvizhenie [Russian Movement], March 25, 2011*

That was how the “caring” Joseph Vissarionovich, the true “father of the peoples”, “saved” the Crimean Tatar people from all kinds of ills. We can only wonder why Russian publicists who profess such views have not yet offered the Crimean Tatars to erect a monument to Stalin?

***...and reality***

And again we begin with the legal side. As already noted above (see Myth No. 9), 15 thousand documented collaborators from among the Crimean Tatars account for 15.5 thousand dead and sent to the Gulag “for assisting the enemy”. Thus, the Soviet authorities did not have the slightest reason for applying collective punishment towards the remaining Crimean Tatars (mainly elderly people, women and children). Moreover, it was strictly prohibited by international law then and is prohibited now.

No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, shall be inflicted upon the population on account of the acts of individuals for which they cannot be regarded as jointly and severally responsible.

*Hague Convention of 1907 on the Laws and Customs of War on Land. Art. 50*

No protected person [*civilian population—Auth.*] may be punished for an offense he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited.

*Geneva Convention of 1949 Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Art. 33*

Now we will object on each of the items of justification for deportation. As for the alleged “mass of armed bandits, supported at the same time by the local Crimean Tatar population”, it was repeatedly stressed that from April 13 to May 20, 1944 all of them were detained, disarmed and sent to the Gulag—almost 6 thousand people.

As to mass shootings supposedly expected for collaboration, here we see either a woeful ignorance or a deliberate lie. Soviet legislation did not provide for the mandatory shooting of civilians for “assisting the enemy”. According to Article 58-1a of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR of 1926,

crossing to the side of the enemy, flight (by surface or air) abroad, shall be punishable—by the supreme measure of criminal punishment—shooting with confiscation

of all property, or with mitigating circumstances—deprivation of liberty for a term of 10 years with confiscation of all property.

And only “crossing to the side of the enemy” by a serviceman certainly turned into a penalty. As for Article 193-22, repeatedly mentioned by neo-Stalinists, it also concerned only soldiers and officers.

Unauthorized abandonment of the battlefield during a battle, surrender, not caused by a combat situation, or refusal to use weapon during a battle, as well as crossing to the side of the enemy, entail the supreme measure of social defense with confiscation of property.

Law enforcement practice in the USSR after the war was such that they shot (hanged) only commanders and “punishers” in the full meaning of the word, and the rank and file was massively sent to the logging site. As we know, cases of execution by military field courts in Crimea were single, and 6 thousand collaborators (or simply suspects) were arrested and imprisoned in the Gulag. There was nothing like shooting “the entire male population” in any case of the “punished peoples”.

And, finally, the alleged “revenge” on the part of the local population is a figment of some publicists’ imagination. Collaboration existed in all the occupied territories of the Soviet Union, but there were no cases of massacres of the population loyal to the Germans recorded anywhere. Therefore, the allegation of deportation as a preventive measure in the face of future civil conflicts has no basis. And after all, the defenders of the USSR imagine the “Soviet people” in some strange manner, namely as a crowd of bloodthirsty barbarians.

As for the real reason for the deportation, it is well known. Stalin was going to fight with Turkey for the Black Sea straits, so he cleared the future bridgeheads—Crimea and the Caucasus—from the “undesirable element”. Turks and Kalmyks were selectively exiled in the Caucasus (without touching the ethnic groups of the Caucasian family), and almost all non-Slavic peoples were exiled in Crimea. The war, as we know, did not begin, but no one hurried to return the indigenous population to its “all-Union health resort”.

So, if the deportation was not (as we have found out) a “rescue” for the Crimean Tatars, because there was no need to save them, then what was it really? To answer this question, let us give the floor to not even the deportees themselves, but their executioners and jailers.

Roofs of some dormitories in the Moksha district are holey and leak during the rain. Most of the frames in dormitories have no glasses, especially in the Krasnogorsk and Sokol districts. Furnaces are out of order—they emit smoke and are not adapted for cooking, and therefore special settlers are forced to cook outdoors. Fuel has not been transported to the dormitories. Accommodation in dormitories is made by several families in one room.

*GARF, F. 9479, Op. 1, D. 156, L. 78*

Extremely poor conditions of housing of special settlers were identified in forestry enterprises of the People’s Commissariat of Cellulose and Paper Industry in the Kologriv and Manturov districts, in the Buisk and Galich forestry enterprises of People’s Commissariat of Forestry... Due to the lack of glasses, window frames are not being repaired. Special settlers are not provided with clothes and footwear. The special settlers work in the forest barefooted... The families of special settlers are supplied with meals irregularly, the quality of food is unsatisfactory, bread is given at the rate of 150 g per person... Some Stakhanovites wear such shabby clothes that it can not be repaired. For the entire period from the moment of settlement, only one pair of underwear has been issued... It should also be noted that the special settlers do not have bedding: blankets, pillows, sheets. The absence of blankets leads to the fact that special settlers use their already worn overcoats for this purpose, which leads to unsanitary conditions and contributes to lice infestation... The special settlers are housed in a barrack on three-tier bunks. The barrack is designed for 150 people, but, in fact, it accommodates 380 people. Due to the lack of mattresses, special settlers sleep on bare boards. The residential areas are very small and dirty, and full of bugs. The food is unsatisfactory. The special settlers are not provided with clothes and footwear, they make the impression of threadbare beggars, and meanwhile many of them carry medals and orders on their chests. Salaries have not been paid since the time of settlement.

*GARF, F. 9479, Op. 1, D. 157, L. 51-55*

Recently, the number of cases of malaria and gastrointestinal diseases has increased significantly among the special settlers—Crimean Tatars in the Uzbek SSR... Acute

gastrointestinal diseases mainly occur due to the use of raw water, unwashed vegetables and unsanitary housing conditions. Preventive measures are not carried out because of the absence of a bacteriophage.

*GARF, F. 9479, Op. 1, D. 160, L. 23-23 ob.*

Special settlers from Crimea, transferred for employment in the Construction Trust of the People's Commissariat of Oil Industry (Leninskiy district of the Andijan region), live in extremely difficult housing conditions. So, for example: at construction sites No. 1, 2, 3 and 4, special settlers are accommodated in unfit premises without roofs and windows.

*GARF, F. 9479, Op. 1, D. 208, L. 19*

You can find more information on these and other documents in the special article [*Bekirova G. The special settlers are not provided with clothes and footwear, they make the impression of threadbare beggars, and meanwhile many of them carry medals and orders on their chests.* [http://kirimtatar.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=113&Itemid=382](http://kirimtatar.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=113&Itemid=382)]. Let alone the horrors recorded by the deportees themselves.



*Fig. 10. Deported Crimean Tatars from Otuzy and Shelen villages at work in Krasnovishersk of the Molotov region of the RSFSR, 1948. Source: Istorychna pravda [Historical Truth]*

As a result of the very obvious *criminal negligence* on the part of the Communist leaders, the Crimean Tatars (as well as other peoples exiled from Crimea) suffered enormous losses. Their exact number remains a matter of controversy, but certain calculations can be made now.

A total of 194,185 Crimean Tatars were deported from Crimea (excluding those arrested). They were divided into three categories: “general special settlers” (183,155 people), sent for compulsory labor to the Moscow Coal Trust (5 thousand people) and to the camps of the Main Directorate of Reserves (6 thousand people). During the “on-site” census in the autumn of 1944, there were 193,865 people available—“unaccounted” 320 people died on the way or immediately upon arrival at the site [Hromenko S. *Krymski Tatary—tsina viyny, tsina myru [Crimean Tatars—the Price of War, the Price of Peace]. Istorychna pravda [Historical Truth]. Jule 2, 2015*].

In the late fall, the cold stroke, and the mortality curve crept upward. The number of deaths exceeded the number of births until 1948 inclusively [Zemskov V. *Spetsposelentsy v SSSR, 1930–1960 [Special Settlers in the USSR, 1930–1960]. M., 2005. P. 197*], in the first years more than 10 times, gradually decreasing. Unfortunately, we have only verified data for the Uzbek SSR (and not for all years), but even a rough estimate is amazing. According to the NKVD,

16,052 people (10.6%) died during the first six months of 1944, that is, from the time they arrived in the UzSSR and before the end of the year, and in 1945—13,183 (9.8%)

GARF, F. 9479, Op. 15, D. 248, L. 12

So, more than 20% of the dead in a year and a half, and this is only in relatively warm Uzbekistan even before the famine of 1946–1947. Of course, some of the victims died a natural death, but under normal conditions (read: without deportation), this would be more than offset by natural increase. Taking into account the likely higher mortality in less favorable regions (the Mari SSR, the region in Siberia) and additional victims of mass famine, it is possible to say with high probability that

**more than 20% of exiled Crimean Tatars became victims of communist crimes,**

and probably would have survived, if not for the deportation.

According to other Soviet data, the total number of the dead among all the

peoples exiled from Crimea before October 1, 1948 was almost 45 thousand people, or up to 20% [*Zemskov V. Spetsposeleltsy (po dokumentatsii NKVD—MVD SSSR) [Special Settlers (according to the documentation of the NKVD—Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR)]. Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniya [Social Research], 1990, No. 11. P. 9*]. However, judging by the figures, this number included the mortality statistics of not all deported groups.

According to the popular census conducted by the activists of the Crimean Tatar movement in the first half of the 1960s, by way of a family survey, 46.2% of Crimean Tatars perished in places of exile. But without access to the primary census documents it is difficult to say anything definite about these figures.

However, whatever the death rates of the first post-deportation years—46.2% according to the self-census of the people or 20–25% according to official data—even if it is only “about” a quarter of the deceased ethnos, one can speak about the purposeful destruction of the ethnos and confidently qualify the actions of the authorities as genocide.

*Bekirova G. Krymskotatarskaya problema v SSSR (1944–1991)*  
*[The Crimean Tatar Problem in the USSR (1944–1991)]. Simferopol, 2004. Chapter 2*

This, in general, was understood even then.

Communofascists in the USSR, carrying out the construction of their monstrous caricature of socialism, do not stop at the physical destruction not only of certain “class-alien” groups of the population, but of whole nations, to achieve their goals. One of the most vivid examples of this policy, which was called “genocide” (extermination of the nationality) in the international law after the war, and for which the leaders of the Nazis were convicted and sentenced to execution in Nuremberg, is the systematic and planned extermination of the Crimean Tatars, produced by the Soviet authorities.

*Aleksandrov G. Istreblenie krymskikh tatar [Extermination of the Crimean Tatars].*  
*Sotsialisticheskij vestnik [Socialist Herald] (Paris), March, 1950. Pp. 50–51*

And, finally, it has been recognized now.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine,  
 guided by the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, honoring the memory of the victims of deportation of the Crimean Tatar people in 1944, expressing support to the Crimean Tatar people, condemning the

policy of the totalitarian regime for oppressing the Crimean Tatar people, decides:

1. To recognize the deportation of the Crimean Tatars from Crimea in 1944 as a genocide of the Crimean Tatar people.
2. To set May 18 as the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Crimean Tatar People Genocide in Ukraine.

*Regulation of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine No. 792-VIII  
On the Recognition of the Genocide of the Crimean Tatar People, dated November 12, 2015*

**The death of almost every fourth Crimean Tatar is the real price of deportation; those were the real consequences of the Soviet “rescue”.**

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## **MYTH 11.**

### **RUSSIANS SUFFERED FROM REPRESSIONS MORE THAN CRIMEAN TATARS**

#### ***Intro***

In cases where there is no point in denying an obvious crime, manipulators still have to resort to the last means—relativization, that is, diminution of the significance of some victims by comparison with other victims. The most widespread and cynical wording of such moral relativism concerns Nazi concentration camps, such as Auschwitz or places of mass executions like Babyn Yar. “Not only Jews died in gas chambers”, the phrase itself is not wrong, but its use almost always implies the diminution of the tragedy of the Jewish people in World War II.

In a similar way, such relativism is applied to Crimean Tatars as well. If the deportation can be neither silenced, nor justified or revised, there is only one thing left—to diminish its significance, comparing it with repressions in general and the deportation of other peoples in particular.

#### ***Myth...***

Here, everything is brief and clear. On March 18, the president-“historian” Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin “Crimean speech” briefly noted that repressions affected people of different nationalities.

True, there was a time when Crimean Tatars were treated unfairly, just as a number of other peoples in the USSR. There is only one thing I can say here: millions of people of various ethnicities suffered during those repressions, and primarily Russians.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, March 18, 2014*

Later, having met with representatives of the Crimean Tatars in Sochi on May 16, 2014, he refused to recognize them as the indigenous people on the basis of two arguments. Firstly, in his opinion, the Greeks in Crimea are “more indigenous” (see myth No. 7), and secondly, the Crimean Tatar people did not experience any exceptional tragedy.

We are meeting on the eve of a mournful and sad date, but one that we cannot ignore: from May 18 to May 20, 1944 the NKVD troops carried out an inhuman act of deporting an entire people from Crimea.

As you know, not only the Crimean Tatar people suffered during that time of repressions. The most affected people was, of course, the Russian people. The repressions began back in the 1920s and 1930s, first against the Cossacks and clergymen, then it was the turn of the so-called “kulaks” [wealthier peasants], and then repressions spread to all political opponents of the then regime.

As for the Crimean Tatars, this people perhaps suffered more than others in that they were able to return to their native lands later than the other peoples deported during Stalin’s repressions.

*Putin V. Meeting with representatives of the Crimean Tatars,  
May 16, 2014*

Here we can see a dual argument: on the one hand, Putin stressed that “the most affected people” was “primarily” the Russian people, and on the other hand, agreed that the Crimean Tatar people “perhaps suffered more than others”. It was not without an extremely revealing phrase that “not only the Crimean Tatar people suffered during that time of repressions”. As is the case with the rest of the myths, after the Putin’s words this relativistic thesis received the status of absolute truth.

### ***...and reality***

Let me start with a preliminary comment. At the level of repressions applied to one person, the “arithmetic” level, of course, there is no difference whether he or she suffered as a Russian, a Crimean Tatar or a Jew. When it comes to deportation, personal tragedies of an evicted Crimean Tatar, Armenian, Bulgarian or Greek are quite comparable.

But since the people are more than just the sum of persons composing it, then at this “algebraic” level, the difference in the catastrophe of the same Russian and Crimean Tatars becomes obvious.

And now let’s count. The number of people subjected to deportations in the USSR is amazing—6 million people [*Polyan P. Ne po svoey vole. Istoriya i geografiya prinuditelnykh migratsiy v SSSR [Out of Choice. History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR]. M., 2001*]:

Period	1920	1930-1931	1932-1934	1935-1938	1939-1941	1941-1942	1943-1944	1944-1945	1947-1952	TOTAL
Number of Deportees (thousand people)	45	2050	535	260	395	1200	870	260	400	6015

It is approximately 3% for the “united Soviet people” (195 million by 1941), while the percentage of the deported Crimean Tatars amounted to 99.5% (200 thousand exiled from the peninsula + 3.5 thousand interned in Europe and 9 thousand demobilized from the Red Army against about one thousand of those who did not live in Crimea or was soon released from the special settlement).

As for the death rate among the deportees, here we can see a similar picture. 950 thousand exiles died in 1929–1934, 350 thousand in 1935–1941, 300 thousand in 1941–1945 and 150 thousand in 1945–1953 [*Erlikhman V. Poteri narodonaseleniya v XX veke [Loss of Population in the 20th Century]. M., 2004*], a total of 1.75 million people. This is 0.9% in relation to the maximum population of the USSR. The exact number of victims among the Crimean Tatar people after the deportation is unknown, but even the Soviet official statistics show more than 20%.

For comparison, the number of Russians in 1939 was approximately 99.6 million, of which 90.3 million (90.6%) lived in the RSFSR, where they accounted for 83.3% of the population. In this republic, during the years of repressions, 5.15 million people died from terror and 1.6 million died during collectivization [*Erlikhman V. Poteri narodonaseleniya v XX veke [Loss of Population in the 20th Century]. M., 2004*], that is. 6.75 million people. If we roughly assume that the losses of Russians are directly proportional to their share in the population, then about 5.6 million Russians became victims in Soviet Russia. If we even more roughly admit that the level of supermortality of the representatives of the Russian people from terror was on average the same throughout the USSR (the balance in the republics: higher in Ukraine, lower in Belarus), the total number of victims was 6.2 million people, or the same 6.2%. But 20% of the Crimean Tatars perished only because of exile, and this figure does not include victims of political terror and collectivization. On no account did the Russians suffer the greatest losses from Stalin’s repressions.

And, finally, at the level, figuratively speaking, of “higher mathematics”, the contours of tragedy that appear can not be expressed in any figures. This is a tragedy of culture and historical memory of the people, entirely torn from their land without hope of ever returning. The expulsion of Armenians, Bulgarians and Greeks from Crimea naturally caused irreparable damage to the culture of the peninsula, but not to the national cultures of these peoples as a whole. Only six out of dozens of ethnic groups deported by the Soviet government got into the millstones of the totalitarian machine completely (Kalmyks, Chechens and Ingush, Karachays and Balkars, Crimean Tatars). But if the first five peoples were justified in the late 50s and were able to return to their homes, then accusations of mass collaboration were removed from the Crimean Tatars only in 1967, while they were prevented from returning to their homeland until 1989.



Fig. 11. The Decree, formally rehabilitating the Crimean Tatars, but not allowing them to return to Crimea, 1967.

In addition, the land of no other expelled people has undergone such a transformation in the field of economy and culture as Crimea (90% of toponyms have been changed, land and property restitution has not taken place until now).

And in terms of the aggregate number of deportees, the number of victims, the duration of exile and the damage to the small homeland

**the Crimean Tatars are the people most affected by the actions of Soviet power.**

And although today to compare “whose mountain of corpses is higher” is completely unpromising and wrong with respect to the uniqueness of any human life, to diminish losses of one people, pointing to the victims of another, is also absolutely unacceptable.



**PART III.  
THE TRAITOR  
AND HIS “STAB IN THE BACK”  
TO THE HERO**

It is time for the third character, *The Traitor*—the Ukrainian people / Ukraine—to appear on the stage of the CrimeaIsOurs Myth. Without it, it is absolutely impossible to explain the “dramatic” turn in the fate of *The Hero* (Russian people / Russia). In fact, if *The Villain* (Crimean Tatar people / Crimean Khanate), despite its centuries-old machinations, is finally defeated and, in the end, expelled from the Crimean “paradise”, why does the myth finds *The Hero* in this unsightly condition? Then why is it, according to the myth, humiliated and offended, denied the right to its own language and culture, and forced to submit to someone else’s power? There can be only one answer—the “Great Betrayal” committed in relation to *The Hero* by its seemingly closest companion, in the literal sense by its brother—the Ukrainian people / Ukraine. It was *The Traitor* who broke off the paeon of the great Russian people on the highest note and plunged this very people into the abyss of national, cultural and linguistic oppression, first by Narodnyi Rukh [People’s Movement of Ukraine], and, finally, by Pravyi Sektor [Right Sector]. And the “Great Betrayal”, from which modern Russian propaganda begins to count the unthinkable suffering of the Russians in Crimea, is, of course, the transfer of the peninsula to Ukraine in 1954.

The third part of the book is devoted to the analysis of those elements of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth, which deny the connection of the peninsula with Ukraine. As you know, for the last half a thousand years, Crimea had only three permanent, non-episodic owners—Turkey (Ottoman), Russia (imperial and Soviet) and Ukraine (Soviet and independent). In these circumstances, it is quite natural for the myth’s adherents to deny the Crimean-Turkish and Crimean-Ukrainian ties, emphasizing the Crimean-Russian ties. And since today’s Turkey does not make any claims to the peninsula, the main polemical fervor of myth-makers is directed right against Ukraine. According to them, it had nothing to do with Crimea until 1954, and after that, brought to Crimeans (by which only Russians are meant) only untold suffering. And the stronger was the Ukrainian “oppression” for 60 consecutive years (but especially in recent decades), the “juster” was the annexation of Crimea by Russia, at least in the eyes of its supporters. The thesis of the “illegitimacy” of the transfer of the peninsula in 1954 was the basis for Moscow’s claims to Crimea in the early 1990s of the last century, and received a second life in 2014.

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## MYTH 12.

# CRIMEA HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH UKRAINE

### ***Intro***

Unable to deny the Ukrainian “ownership” of the peninsula since 1954, the adherents of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth are ready to lay down their lives to prove that until that date Crimea and Ukraine were at least in different universes and never crossed. This myth lies in the beginning of the road to the non-recognition of the power of Kyiv, which ended in March 2014.

### ***Myth...***

Actually, there are no special arguments for this myth, but there is only a thesis put into the title. For example, the interview of the Russian edition *Vesti* with the popular director Oleg Tabakov is called: *Oleg Tabakov: Krym ne imeet nikakogo otnosheniya k Ukraine* [Oleg Tabakov: Crimea Has Nothing to Do with Ukraine]. Among other things, it can be heard in it that “Crimea has returned to its family”, that Ukrainians should have been “more sensible”, not to debate, but to say to Russians “Forgive us, for Christ’s sake, we fell for a freebie”, and, of course, that

Crimea has nothing to do with Ukraine, both “dependent” and “independent”!

*Tabakov O.: Krym ne imeet nikakogo otnosheniya k Ukraine*  
[Crimea Has Nothing to Do with Ukraine]. *Vesti.ru*, September 7, 2014.  
<http://www.vesti.ru/videos/show/vid/619028>

This phrase, uttered in peremptory tone and shown in prime time, certainly reflects the mindset of at least 86% of Russians. But one should not think that such views are characteristic only for smatterers. Alas, this disease mows even “professional” historians.

In 1996, the Verkhovna Rada refused to give the Russian language the status of a state language even in Novorossia and Crimea—on the lands that had nothing to do with that Ukraine, reunited with Russia in 1654.

*Narohnitskaya N. Ukraina: istoricheskaya retrospektiva i geopoliticheskaya perspektiva*  
[Ukraine: Historical Retrospective and Geopolitical Perspective]. *Pravoslavie.ru*, December 2, 2004

Natalia Narochmitskaya is a doctor of historical sciences, an employee of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the daughter of a historian-academician. But, apparently, membership in the Inter-Council Presence of the Russian Orthodox Church and work as an authorized representative of the “candidate” for presidency Vladimir Putin have left an indelible imprint on professionalism. And if very few people in Ukraine can clearly describe the historical Crimean-Ukrainian ties, what can be demanded of the Russians?

### **...and reality**

Geographically, the Crimean peninsula is the continuation of the southern Ukrainian steppes (however, they are called “southern Russian” in the Russian jingoistic literature), so it’s ridiculous to think that over the past centuries they could have had different historical destinies. Since the myth of the lack of connection between Crimea and Ukraine is an ordinary ignorance, it is enough to refresh memory about the well-known facts in order to debunk it. Even if you do not look into the darkness of ages, the list will be rather big [*Serhiychuk V. Ukrainskyi Krym [Ukrainian Crimea]. K., 2001. P. 304; unfortunately, the book got the myth about the allegedly predominant Ukrainian population in Crimea in the Middle Ages, but in general the work deserves attention*].

1. Although in the Middle Ages Crimea, contrary to common belief, was not part of Russia, permanent Slavic population has been in the peninsula since the 11th–13th centuries. To understand the ancestors of what modern East Slavic peoples were among those people is impossible, but the fact that there were Kievites, Chernihivites, Pereyaslavites, Galicians and many others, is beyond doubt.

2. From the very end of the 15th century, the connections between Crimea and Ukraine became stable and continuous, although not always satisfying both parties. On the one hand, Ukrainian lands were the arena of military incursions of Crimean Tatars, and Ukrainian captives were year to year sold in the Crimean markets. On the other hand, Ukrainian Cossacks regularly attacked the Crimean coast and also took prisoners. In the 18th century, the Cossacks in the troops of the Russian Empire again fought against the Crimean Tatars.

3. Since the 14th century, some groups of Crimean Tatars settled on Ukrainian lands, primarily in Volhynia, introducing their culture, and Ukrainian slaves in Crimea,

coming over to Islam, were released and replenished the gene pool of the population of the peninsula.

4. Contacts and conflicts on the Crimean-Ukrainian border led to the borrowing of some things on the mainland, which are cult today. Such “typically Ukrainian” concepts like “Cossack”, “sharovary” and even “maidan” came to us from Crimea.

5. In 1624, Khan Janibek Geray with the janissaries came to seize the throne from Khan Mehmed Geray III, but the Zaporizhian archers on the latter’s side managed to smash the enemy at Karasu-Bazar (Bilohirsk). In January of the following year the first Cossack-Tatar alliance was concluded.

6. In 1628–1629, the Cossacks took part in another civil war in Crimea, supporting their old ally Mehmed Geray III against his enemies. One of those who folded their heads for the alliance with Crimea in the battle near the Alma River in 1628 was Hetman Mykhailo Doroshenko.

7. From 1648 to 1654, Crimean Tatars were allies of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, and although their behavior on the battlefield was not always pleasing to the Hetman, together they managed to win many victories.



*Fig. 12. Jan Matejko. Bohdan Khmelnytskyi with Tugay Bey near Lviv, 1885.  
Source: National Museum, Warsaw*

8. Until the Bakhchysarai Peace of 1681, the Crimean troops helped the Cossack hetmans in their struggle for independence from Warsaw and Moscow, and between 1692 and 1734, supported, including with military force, Ukrainian political emigration: of Petryk, Orlyk and others.

9. By the way, in 1711–1734, the Zaporizhian Sich, or the so-called Oleshky Sich, was located in the mouth of the Dnieper in the territory of the Crimean Khanate.

10. There is even no need to talk about legendary Chumaks who brought salt from Crimea to Ukraine, as well as other Crimean-Ukrainian trade ties—so commonplace they were.

11. Both early-modern political organizations—the Hetmanate and the Crimean Khanate—were dissolved in the Russian Empire almost simultaneously: in 1781–1783. After that, the inhabitants of Crimea and Ukraine ceased to be just neighbors, and became subjects of one state. Moreover, in the first decades of Russian power, Crimea and South Ukraine were part of one administrative unit—the Novorossiysk Governorate-General.

12. Throughout the existence of the separate Taurian province, that is, for more than a hundred years, it included not only the peninsula, but also the lands of the modern eastern Kherson region, as a result of which Crimea and the Ukrainian Azov Sea region formed a single economic organism.

13. From the beginning of the 19th century and until 1944, the Ukrainians consistently formed the third largest group of the Crimean population, being second only to the Crimean Tatars and Russians.

14. The Black Sea Fleet played an important role in the Crimean-Ukrainian ties. Firstly, the ships for the Fleet were built including by Ukrainian workers at the shipyards of Mykolaiv. Secondly, the personnel of the crews was replenished with Ukrainian recruits, starting with former Zaporizhians (we do not have exact figures, but we can assume that the sailors from Ukraine numbered from 30% in the middle of the 19th century to 80% in the First World War).

15. In 1917, both in the peninsula and on the mainland, Ukrainization of land units and naval crews, as well as the deployment of Ukrainian local self-government bodies began. In April 1918, the Ukrainian troops under the command of Petro Bolbochan knocked out Bolsheviks from Crimea, and on April 29 all Ukrainian ships ran Ukrainian flags.

16. During the Civil War of 1917–1920, the relations of different Crimean authorities with continental Ukraine developed in different ways: from union to confrontation, but no Ukrainian government renounced its claims to the peninsula. Negotiations on the inclusion of Crimea into Ukraine were conducted in the autumn of 1918.

17. In the first years of Soviet power, the question of the peninsula's belonging was raised repeatedly. Under the treaty on the borders between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR dated April 10, 1919, Crimea was part of Russia, but by the party line since July 3, 1920, it was subordinated (not for the first time) to Ukraine. Only in 1921, the dispute was finally resolved in favor of Moscow. By the way, the newly formed autonomous Crimean SSR claimed also to Genichesk and the mouth of the Dnieper, but without success.

18. During the Inter-War twenty years, Crimea was regularly subsidized with Ukrainian bread: in 1921–1923 and since 1927, exporting fruits and wine to the mainland.

19. The connection of Crimea with the mainland was so obvious to the German occupation administration that the peninsula was formally part of the Reichskommissariat Ukraine (although in fact it was managed by the military).

20. And after 1954, Crimea's belonging to Ukraine was confirmed by a multitude of international and bilateral documents, beginning with the Soviet Constitution and ending with the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 262.

Thus, over the past several centuries, various strong ties have been established between Crimea and Ukraine, which are absolutely impossible to be ignored. In 2014, the peninsula received from the mainland:

- Electric power: 80%
- Water: 80%
- Gas: 65%

Donations to the republican budget: 50%

And although all these facts themselves do not give Ukraine any special rights to Crimea (the so-called “historical rights” are generally propaganda fiction, Crimea is Ukrainian by law),

**to deny the centuries-old stable connection of the peninsula with the mainland means to admit one's own ignorance.**

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## **MYTH 13.**

### **KHRUSHCHEV PRESENTED CRIMEA AS A GIFT TO UKRAINE**

#### ***Intro***

Of all the Russian myths about the Ukrainian Crimea, this is perhaps the most popular. It was voiced numerous times by taxi drivers and presidents, circulated in social networks and school textbooks, and as a result, the thesis of a “gift” has become so self-evident that its refutation causes people a natural shock. And it is difficult to imagine how many unflattering words were uttered towards the unhappy Nikita Sergeyevich. Inclusion of Crimea into Ukraine was called both “kingly” and “drunk” gift of Khrushchev. But is he really so guilty for the modern Russians, or is it an unjust conviction?

#### ***Myth...***

The legends circulating on the Internet are not worth to be retold, so let’s immediately turn to official speeches and documents. And the first among equals, of course, will be Russian President Vladimir Putin, managed to say out loud two outright nonsenses in one fragment of the Crimean speech.

And in 1954, a decision was made to transfer the Crimean region, along with Sevastopol, despite the fact that it was a federal city, to its [Ukrainian] composition. This was the personal initiative of the Communist Party Head Nikita Khrushchev. What stood behind his decision—a desire to win the support of the Ukrainian political nomenklatura or to atone for the mass repression of the 1930s in Ukraine—is for historians to figure out.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, March 18, 2014*

We will still talk of the myth about “Sevastopol is of Union subordination”, but for now we will continue our consideration of the thesis about Khrushchev’s personal decision or, as a maximum, a decision made “behind the scenes”. The Minister of Culture of Russia, Vladimir Medinskiy, in the foreword to the *History of the Crimea* spoke more laconically and categorically than the President.

The voluntaristic policy of the Soviet leader N. S. Khrushchev led to the fact that in 1954 Crimea was “gifted” to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic by the RSFSR, which was the starting point for subsequent contradictions. In fact, the population of Crimea turned out to be a bargaining chip in redrawing borders within a single country, which was irrelevant from the point of view of the realities of that epoch.

*Medinskiy V. K chitatelyam [To Readers]. Istoriya Kryma [History of Crimea]. M., 2015. P. 6*

The publicist Nikolay Starikov is as always daring in his approach to the issue under consideration. In his book, he directly accuses Khrushchev of Stalin’s murder and collusion with foreigners to destroy the Soviet Union.

Only after considering all the actions of Nikita Sergeevich, one can understand that the situation with Crimea was not at all a mistake, but one of the steps towards the collapse of the USSR.

The transfer of Crimea was a demonstrative gesture of Khrushchev. He demonstrated to the party elite who wore the pants, because the transfer was carried out with a clear violation of the then laws of the country, with the unanimous support of this Khrushchev’s proposal and the absence of objections from any side. In other words, giving Crimea to Ukraine, Khrushchev put the final point in the issue of “succession to the throne”. Now power is only him, Khrushchev.

*Starikov N., Belyaev D. Rossiya. Krym. Istoriya [Russia. Crimea. History]. SPb., 2015. Pp. 78, 80*

But, you may say, this is a private opinion of several authors, and I dramatize in vain. I wish it was so, but let’s have a look at the *Methodical Recommendations for Schools of the Russian Federation for Conducting Lessons and Extra-Curricular Activities Dedicated to the Reunification of Russia and Crimea* and see how things stand there.

In 1954, at the initiative of the then leader of the USSR, N. S. Khrushchev, and in commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the Pereyaslav Council (which united—“reunited” Ukraine with Russia), Crimea was incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR. The transfer of Crimea from the RSFSR to the subordination of Ukraine had grave consequences for the economy of the peninsula due to the break of the established economic and administrative ties. That step was carried out with a flagrant violation of the then legislation.

*Krym v rossiyskoy istorii [Crimea in the Russian History]. Methodical Recommendations for Schools of the Russian Federation for Conducting Lessons and Extra-Curricular Activities Dedicated to the Reunification of Russia and Crimea. M., 2014. P. 79*

1954: Due to the voluntaristic decision of the First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Nikita Khrushchev, Crimea is transferred from the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation (RSFSR) to the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian SSR and becomes an region within Ukraine.

February 19, 1954: At the initiative of the General Secretary of the CPSU N. Khrushchev, the Crimean region (voluntarily, without a referendum) was transferred together with residents from the RSFSR into the foreign-language Ukrainian SSR (“in honor of the 300th anniversary of the Pereyaslav Council”, “taking into account the commonality of the economy, territorial proximity, and close economic and cultural ties between the Crimean region and the Ukrainian SSR”).

*Kratkiy khronologicheskiy ocherk istoricheskikh sobyitiy v Krymu [Short Chronological Essay on Historical Events in Crimea]. Methodical Recommendations for Schools of the Russian Federation for Conducting Lessons and Extra-Curricular Activities Dedicated to the Reunification of Russia and Crimea. M., 2014. P. 153*

We can see approximately the same in another teaching guide:

Indeed, as has been repeatedly noted, the decision to transfer the Crimean region did not fully comply with Soviet legislation.

*Kochegarov K. Krym v istorii Rossii: metodicheskoe posobie dlya uchiteley obshcheobrazovatelnykh organizatsiy [Crimea in the History of Russia: Teaching Guide for Teachers of Educational Organizations]. M., 2014. P. 27*

By the way, half of the section devoted to the transfer of Crimea is occupied by the quotes from the speech of Vladimir Putin quoted above.

As you can see, Russian and Crimean schoolchildren are doomed to listen to fables of the “voluntarist” Khrushchev, “referendum”, “Pereyaslav Council”, “violation of legislation”, “deterioration of the economic situation” (as is combined with the official formula: “taking into account the commonality of the economy”—incomprehensible), and, finally, a lie about turning Crimea into a region, because it became a region while being part of Russia.

In general, the myth of “Khrushchev’s gift” became too noticeable to be ignored.

### **...and reality**

We will consider below all issues related to the procedure for including Crimea into Ukraine (Myth No. 14), but for now we will concentrate on the role and motives of

Khrushchev in this process.

And the first thing you need to know about Nikita Sergeyevich in the context of including Crimea into Ukraine is that

**in 1954, Khrushchev was not and could not be the sole leader of the Soviet Union,**

and at least for this reason alone did not solve the issues of this level independently.

Already on the day of Joseph Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, his immediate entourage made a reshuffle in power. The top of the informal hierarchy was taken by Georgiy Malenkov, who combined the posts of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and in the government he was deputized by his subordinate competitor, Lavrentiy Beria. Formal Head of the Union was the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Kliment Voroshilov. Only on September 7, Khrushchev became First Secretary of the Party, but he remained a younger partner of his colleagues for a long time.

The first to leave the leaders' race was Beria, who became incredibly stronger, in fact leading the process of liberalization of the Stalinist regime. As a result of a conspiracy on the part of his colleagues on June 26, he was arrested, and later shot. Malenkov continued to play the first violin in the orchestra of the Soviet leadership, and only in February 1955, he was defeated in the fight against Khrushchev and lost his post [Sokolov A., Tyazhelnikov V. *Kurs sovetskoy istorii, 1941–1991* [*The Course of Soviet History, 1941–1991*]. M., 1999. Pp. 195–203]. Thus, in January–February 1954, when a principled decision on the fate of Crimea was taken, Khrushchev was not on the top step of either the formal or the actual ladder of power.

It is interesting to note that the question of changing the peninsula's belonging was not reflected either in his collected works [Khrushchev N. *Stroitelstvo kommunizma v SSSR i razvitie selskogo hozyaystva* [*Construction of Communism in the USSR and Development of Agriculture*]. In 8 vol. M., 1962–1964], or in the memoirs [Khrushchev N. *Vremya. Lyudi. Vlast (vospominaniya)* [*Time. People. Power (memories)*]. In 4 vol. M., 1999] of Khrushchev. This may indicate his low personal interest in this issue.

And the second thing you need to know about Nikita Sergeyeovich in the context of including Crimea into Ukraine is that

**there is no Khrushchev's signature on any of the ruling documents,** associated with this process. At the meeting of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee on January 25, 1954, where the transfer of Crimea was discussed, Malenkov presided, and Khrushchev only visaed the extract from the minutes. The Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of February 19 and the subsequent Law of April 26, 1954 was signed by Voroshilov.

The myth about Khrushchev's direct influence on the transfer of Crimea was most likely to arise, "thanks to" the habit of attributing all the achievements and all the failures of the Soviet leadership to one person. In the post-Soviet period, the memories of the son-in-law and the daughter of the First Secretary, Aleksey and Rada Adzhubey, which were published in Russian media, worked for the benefit of this myth [*Adzhubey A. Kak Khrushchev Krym Ukraine otdal. Vospominaniya na zadannuyu temu [How Khrushchev gave Crimea to Ukraine. Memories on a Given Topic]. Novoe vremya [New Time], 1992, No. 6; Adzhubey R. Otets Krym otdaval na moikh glazakh [Father Was Giving Crimea Before my Eyes]. Rossiyskaya gazeta [Russian Newspaper]. October 19, 2004*]. It should be noted that in the memoirs of Adzhubey issued during the Soviet era [*Adzhubey A. Te desyat let [Those Ten Years]. M., 1989*], there is nothing about the role of Khrushchev in the fate of Crimea.

Well, since it can be considered proven that the initiative to transfer Crimea to Ukraine does not belong to Khrushchev personally, then there is no special reason to consider his personal motives, even if they were. In this context, his human qualities, for example, supposedly regular drunkenness, also do not matter.

Therefore,

**the decision to transfer the Crimean region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR was not made solely by Khrushchev, but collectively by the Soviet top leadership,**

and there was no trace of either "voluntaristic initiative" or "kingly gift". If Russian propagandists so want to name those "guilty of the loss of Crimea", this role

might be claimed by Malenkov and Voroshilov, but not by Khrushchev.

As for the reasons for the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine, none of the existing hypotheses is completely satisfactory. According to the “gift” version, the inclusion of Crimea into Ukraine was timed to coincide with the 300th anniversary of the Pereyaslav Council and the “reunification” of Ukraine with Russia. But, despite the fact that this was constantly discussed in newspaper articles and public speeches, there is not a single document that would confirm such a motive. There was really a beautiful coincidence, but nothing more.

According to the Putin’s version of May 18, 2014, Khrushchev tried to enlist the support of the Ukrainian nomenklatura in the struggle for power or make amends after participating in mass repressions. As for the competition for the high office, everything is clear here. The decision was collective, so Khrushchev personally could not hope for any special affection of his comrades from the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine. The same goes for the repressions: even if Nikita Sergeyevich was troubled by his conscience, the Soviet Union did not officially recognize the repressions before the Twentieth Congress in 1956, so it was too early for him to apologize.

The most elaborated are two “economic” versions. According to Khrushchev’s son Sergey, his father really tried to streamline the day-to-day economic management of the Lower Dnieper region and the peninsula within one republic. But the fact was that the project for the construction of the North-Crimean Canal was approved back in 1950, during Stalin’s lifetime, when the transfer of Crimea was out of question. And as it seems to Ukrainian jingoes, Moscow thus simply dumped on Kiev all the efforts to restore Crimea, suffered during the war. But the fact is that by the 1954, the peninsula’s economy had already returned to the pre-war level, and after that year, subsidies to the Ukrainian budget from the all-Union treasury sharply increased. In 1950, subsidies from the center amounted to only 0.6% of the republic’s revenues, and in 1955 (immediately after the transfer of Crimea) they increased up to 13.4%, i. e., 22 times! Therefore, it is not worthwhile to hyperbolize the Crimean “burden”.



*Fig. 13. Soviet Stamp Depicting the Project of the North-Crimean Canal Before the Transfer of the Peninsula to Ukraine, 1951*

Well, and it cannot do without financial and conspiracy version! There is a legend spread on the Internet that in February 1929 Soviet Russia concluded a contract with an international firm Agro-Joint to receive a multi-million loan against land in Crimea. In 1954, the term of repayment seemed to be coming to an end, therefore the region was transferred to Ukraine, so that the land claims should be expressed to it, and Russia remained aloof. The supporters of this version do not give either archival materials or eyewitness accounts to confirm it. Instead, they constantly mix real deals of the 1920s, Jewish autonomous settlements in the peninsula, plans of the “Crimean

California” in 1944, and serve it under the sauce of the names of Rockefeller and Roosevelt. However, this scheme suits more to the contracts of the gangster 1990s than to interstate agreements. In fact, the agreement dated January 15, 1929 was signed by Agro-Joint with the Land Committee at the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, and approved on February 15 by the all-Union Council of People’s Commissars, so the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine would not save the Union from reckoning. However funny it may be, neither the date “1954”, nor any Soviet land obligations appear in the contract.

Thus, the establishment of the real reason for the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine (and not simply the reproduction of the formula about “economic commonality”) is a matter for the next generations of historians.

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## **MYTH 14. CRIMEA WAS TRANSFERRED TO UKRAINE ILLEGALLY**

### ***Intro***

Most of the historical myths operate only in the humanitarian plane and may only be used in propaganda. Of course, the power of constant repetition of the mantra “Sevastopol is the city of the Russian glory” must not be underestimated, but this thesis itself does not affect the state belonging of Sevastopol. The same applies to the myths about “sacred Korsun” or “20 thousand Crimean Tatar deserters”. But this is not the case with the accusation of illegality of the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine. This is one of those cases when the myth from the humanitarian plane goes into the legal and even the political plane. Since 1992, the parliament of the Russian Federation has from time to time questioned the legitimacy of Crimea’s inclusion into Ukraine and, in the end, well prepared the public opinion of its country for the thesis of the “reunification” or “return” of Crimea. It is absolutely clear that where there are two lawyers, there are three opinions, and in one text all the available questions around the transfer of Crimea cannot be solved, but it is completely impossible to ignore this problem.

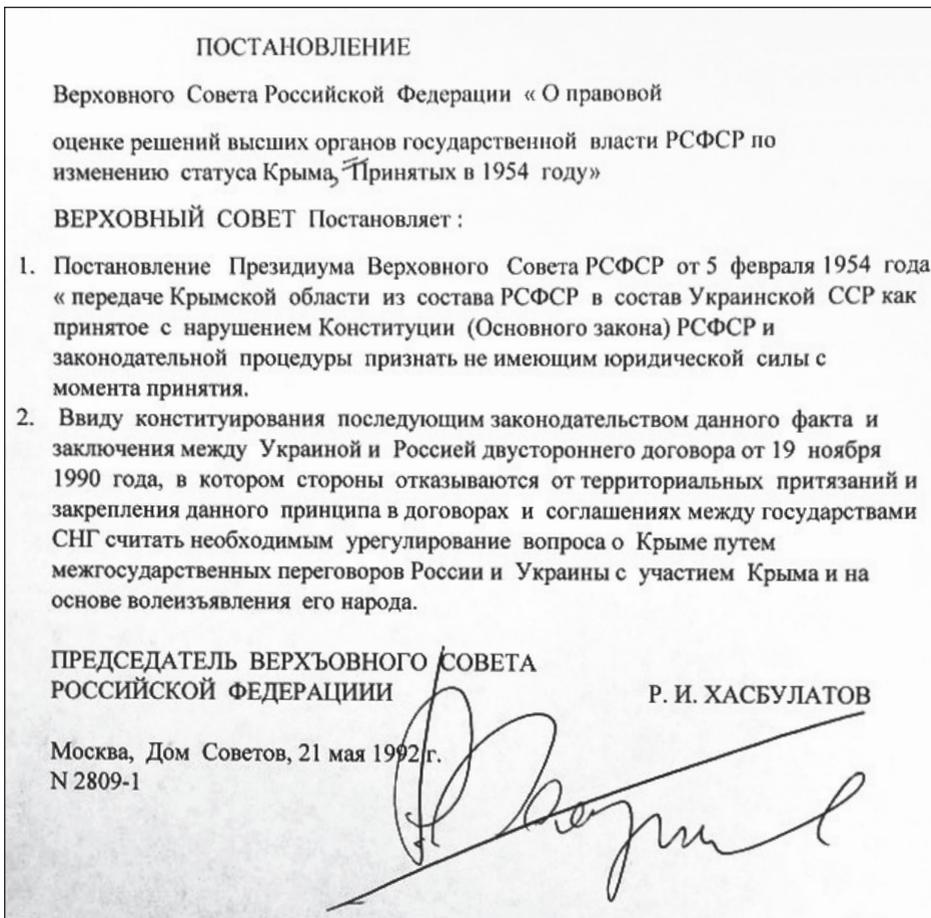
### ***Myth...***

It is unrealistic to make an overview of all opinions expressed on this topic in the Russian press, therefore we will limit ourselves to official documents and modern historical works. Russian parliament was the first to come out on the “war-path”.

The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation decides:

1. To recognize the Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR of February 5, 1954 On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, adopted in violation of the Constitution (Basic Law) of the RSFSR and the legislative procedure, as null and void since its adoption.

*Resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the RF No. 2809-1 On the Legal Assessment of the Decisions of the Supreme State Authorities of the RSFSR to Change the Status of Crimea Adopted in 1954, May 21, 1992*



*Fig. 14.1. Resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation  
On the Legal Assessment of the Decisions of the Supreme State Authorities of the RSFSR  
to Change the Status of Crimea Adopted in 1954, May 21, 1992.*

Then, for many years there was a “diplomatic war”, during which some Russian authorities or individual politicians brought territorial claims to Ukraine, while others disavowed them. At the same time, several documents, according to which the territorial integrity of the signatory countries was “respected”, were signed within the CIS. But only with the “Great” Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between the Russian Federation and Ukraine (concluded in 1997, entered into force in

1999), the problem of Crimea's belonging ceased to be constantly present in Russian-Ukrainian relations.

However, no sooner had the annexation of Crimea occurred, than the ancient demons broke free again. Reasoning about the illegality of the peninsula's transfer migrated from marginal publications to the pages of official documents and textbooks. At first, as usual, we quote Russian President Vladimir Putin:

And in 1954, a decision was made to transfer the Crimean region, along with Sevastopol, despite the fact that it was a federal city, to its [Ukrainian] composition. This was the personal initiative of the Communist Party Head Nikita Khrushchev. What stood behind his decision—a desire to win the support of the Ukrainian political nomenklatura or to atone for the mass repression of the 1930s in Ukraine—is for historians to figure out.

What matters now is that this decision was made in clear violation of the constitutional norms that were in place even then. The decision was made behind the scenes. Naturally, in a totalitarian state nobody bothered to ask the citizens of Crimea and Sevastopol. They were just faced with the fact.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, May 18, 2014*

The Russian Prosecutor General's Office also joined the case:

In consideration of the foregoing, the decisions of the Presidiums of the Supreme Soviets of the RSFSR and the USSR on the transfer of the Crimean region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954 did not comply with the Constitution (Basic Law) of the RSFSR and the Constitution (Basic Law) of the USSR.

*Letter of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation No. otv-22-4199-15,  
May 18, 2015*

Briefly speaking, according to Nikolay Starikov,

we can safely say that the procedure for the transfer of Crimea from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR passed with an unacceptable violation of the laws.

*Starikov N., Belyaev D. Rossiya. Krym. Istoriya [Russia. Crimea. History].  
SPb., 2015. P. 82*

Teaching guides for Russian schoolchildren are no less categorical:

The transfer of Crimea from the RSFSR to the subordination of Ukraine had grave consequences for the economy of the peninsula due to the break of the established economic and administrative ties. That step was carried out with a flagrant violation of the then legislation.

*Krym v rossiyskoy istorii [Crimea in the Russian History]. Methodical Recommendations for Schools of the Russian Federation for Conducting Lessons and Extra-Curricular Activities Dedicated to the Reunification of Russia and Crimea. M., 2014. P. 79*

In general, in the ordinary consciousness of the majority of Russians, the annexation of Crimea is not simply a demonstration of the power of “Russia that has risen from the knees”, but the correction of an illegal decision, which allegedly took place in 1954. And although the legal subtleties are usually lost in the fuse of patriotic battles on both sides, this is no reason not to analyze them.

### ***...and reality***

I should make a reservation, that I will not consider any unconfirmed and especially conspiracy versions, I will limit myself to reliable documents.

## **I. Crimea was exchanged for Taganrog?**

The Party decision to transfer Crimea from Russia to Ukraine was documented at a meeting of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee on January 25, 1954. The Minutes No. 49 is surrounded by a lot of legends. Many Ukrainian patriots are firmly convinced that this document allegedly recorded the transfer of some territories in Donbas in exchange for Crimea.

There is another very important detail, which for some reason is shyly held back by everyone today. That at the same time, in exchange for Crimea, Taganrog and its borderlands, the territory of which is equal to the area occupied by the peninsula in the Black Sea, were transferred from Ukraine to the Russian Federation (Minutes of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee No. 49 of January 25, 1954). To this, one should add that in exchange for the rich black-earth regions Kyiv received an arid solonchak steppe, without water, any hint of irrigation, without electricity and energy resources. But today hardly anyone takes it into account.

*Gorobets A. Chto poluchila Rossiya vzamen Kryma v 1954 godu? [What did Russia Receive in Exchange for Crimea in 1954?]. URA-Inform, March 21, 2014.*

Journalists, bloggers and social activists, who are thrilled to reprint the fiction about the “Minutes No. 49 of January 25, 1954”, do not usually bother checking the actual database. In fact, it is impossible to see this document in full—it has not yet been published and, most likely, has not been declassified. Collection of all resolutions of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee for 1954–1964 [*Prezidium TsK KPSS. 1954–1964. Chernovye protokolnye zapisi zasedaniy. Stenogrammy. Postanovleniya. V 3 t. / T. 2. Postanovleniya. 1954–1958 [Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee. 1954–1964. Draft Minutes of Meetings. Transcripts. Resolutions. In 3 vol. / Vol. 2. Resolutions. 1954–1958]. M.: ROSSPEN, 2006. P. 1120*] begins with the Minutes No. 50 dated February 8, 1954, and there are no earlier documents. The Protocol also cannot be found in the 9th issue of the Bulletin of Declassified Documents of the Federal State Archives (2008), which contains Resolutions of the Bureau of the Presidium, the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee with Applications and Materials. 1953–1966.

And the existing extract from the Minutes No. 49 refers only to Crimea, and there is not a word about Taganrog (by the way, transferred to Russia in 1925). Let’s see for ourselves.

From the Minutes No. 49 of the meeting of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee on the transfer of the Crimean region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR

January 25, 1954

Presided by Comrade Malenkov G. M.

Present:

Members of the Presidium of the Central Committee: Comrades Khrushchev N. S., Voroshilov K. Y., Bulganin N. A., Kaganovich L. M., Mikoyan A. L., Saburov M. Z., Pervukhin M. G.

Candidates for the Presidium of the Central Committee: Comrades Shvernik N. M., Ponomarenko P. K.

Secretaries of the CPSU Central Committee: Comrades Suslov M. A., Pospelov P. N., Shatalin N. N.

XL On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR.

1. To approve, with the amendments adopted at the meeting, the attached draft Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR.

2. To recognize it expedient to hold a special meeting of the Presidium of the

Supreme Soviet of the USSR at which to consider the joint submission of the Presidiums of the Supreme Soviets of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR on the transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR.

Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee

N. Khrushchev

*APRF, F. 3, Op. 10, D. 65, L. 1,4-b*

Therefore, to the displeasure of many Ukrainian jingoes,  
**there was no “exchange” of territories,**  
and there is no reason to “return” Taganrog to Ukraine.

## **II. There was no quorum in the Russian parliament during the transfer of Crimea?**

It follows from the extract quoted above that already at the beginning of 1954 the question in its essence was resolved, it was only necessary to observe some formalities. The initiative was advanced by the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR on February 5.

Taking into account the territorial inclination of the Crimean region towards the Ukrainian SSR, the commonality of the economy and close economic and cultural ties between the Crimean region and the Ukrainian SSR, the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR decides:

To recognize it expedient to transfer the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR.

To ask the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR to consider the transfer of the Crimean region to the Ukrainian SSR and to enter the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR with an appropriate resolution.

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR A. Puzanov

Manager of the Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR I. Gruzdev

*Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR No. 156 On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, February 5, 1954*

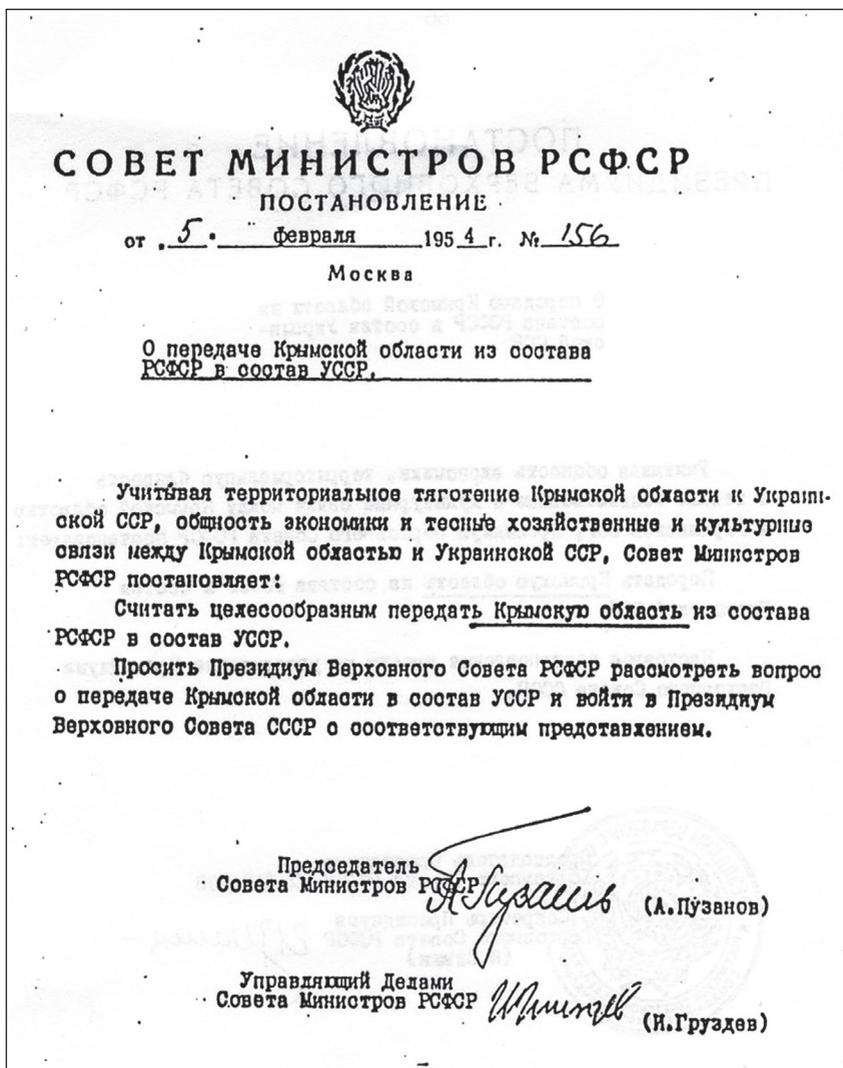


Fig. 14.2. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR No. 156 On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, February 5, 1954.

The aforementioned Presidium responded on the same day. The official text of the Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR of February 5, 1954 is

widely available, but we are much more interested in the Minutes of the Presidium meeting of that day. The fact is that one of the most common myths about the transfer of Crimea is the alleged absence of a quorum at that meeting, which automatically made its decision illegitimate.

In fact, the meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR was attended only by 13 of 27 its members. And although there was no quorum and the meeting must not be held, however, all those present “unanimously” voted: to give Crimea to Ukraine.

*Starikov N., Belyaev D. Rossiya. Krym. Istoriya [Russia. Crimea. History]. SPb., 2015. P. 82*

Here we will need the Minutes, since it is impossible to solve this question by the text of the Resolution alone.

Minutes No. 41 of the Meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR

February 5, 1954

Presided by Comrade Tarasov M. L.

Present:

Deputy Chairmen of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR: Comrades Andreeva Z. A., Danilova A. P., Selyukin M. O., Tsyrempilon D. D., Shcherbakov P. V.

Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, Comrade Zimin I. N.

Members of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR: Comrades Buzina P. S., Ladanov P. F., Pantikov P. L., Pupshova K. L., Sokolov A. G., Stepanova K. V., Tsvetkova V. S., Yasnov M. A.

Minister of Justice of the RSFSR Comrade Rubichyov A. T.

Chairman of the Supreme Court of the RSFSR Comrade Zityukov S. L.

Prosecutor of the RSFSR Comrade Baranov P. V.

Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Crimean Regional Council of Working People’s Deputies Comrade Ponomarenko T. M.

Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Sevastopol City Council of Working People’s Deputies Comrade Sosnitskiy S. V.

On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR

Taking into account the commonality of the economy, territorial proximity and close economic and cultural ties between the Crimean region and the Ukrainian SSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR decides:

To transfer the Crimean region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR. This Resolution is to be submitted for approval by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR M. Tarasov  
 Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, Zimin I. N.

*TsGA RSFSR, F. 385, OP. 13, D. 492, L. 1-2*

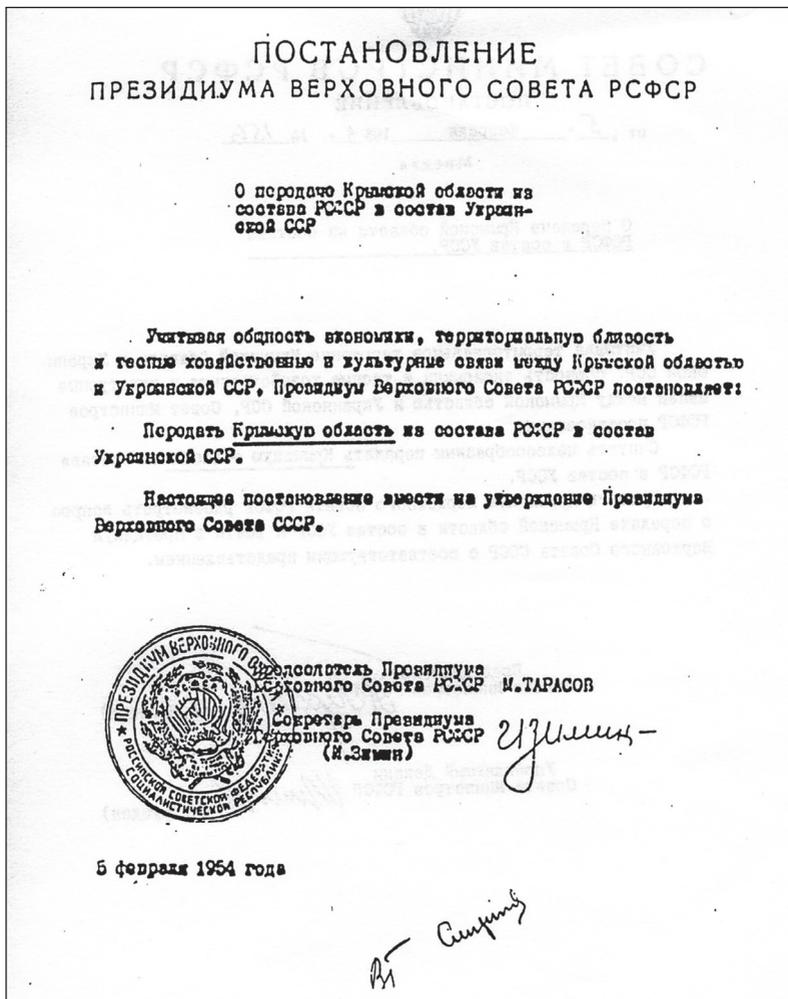


Fig. 14.3. Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, February 5, 1954.

According to Article 31 of the Constitution of the RSFSR of 1937 (cited by the version of 1948), “The Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR elects the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR with the following membership: Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, twelve Deputy Chairman in the number of autonomous republics, Secretary of the Presidium and thirteen members of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR”. Therefore,

**the total number of members of the Presidium was indeed 27, but the number of those participated in the meeting was not 13, but 15 people (the Chairman, 5 deputies, the Secretary and 8 members), which is quite enough for making a decision..**

So, this myth does not stand the documentary check.

### **III. No one in Russia had the right to transfer Crimea?**

There is another much more serious claim. According to a number of Russian researchers, no one in the RSFSR at all had the authority to transfer part of the territory of Russia.

Art. 33 of the Constitution of the Republic contained an exhaustive list of authorities of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR—11 items: from the right to convene sessions of the Supreme Soviet and interpret the laws of the RSFSR, to the appointment and recall of diplomatic representatives of the RSFSR, the acceptance of letters of credence or recall of the diplomatic representatives of foreign states accredited in its presence. The exhaustive list of authorities of the Presidium did not contain even a hint of the right to decide the issue of territorial reorganization of the Republic.

Moreover, when analyzing constitutional norms, we must inevitably come to the conclusion that not only the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, but even the Supreme Soviet itself, did not have the legal right, neither timely nor retrospectively, to change or consent to change the territory of the RSFSR.

In accordance with Art. 22 of the Constitution of the Republic, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR was the supreme body of state power of the RSFSR. According to Art. 23 of the Constitution, the Soviet exercised all the rights conferred by the RSFSR in accordance with Art. 13 and 19 of the Constitution of the RSFSR, including those that were part of the Constitution in the competence of the RSFSR’s bodies accountable to the Supreme Soviet of

the RSFSR: the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the Council of Ministers and the ministries of the RSFSR.

So, the supreme body of state power of the RSFSR could exercise only the rights provided for by Art. 13 and 19 of the Constitution, and even then not in full. Meanwhile, the legal norm that the territory of the RSFSR can not be changed without the consent of the RSFSR was contained in Art. 16 of the Constitution, and therefore, was outside the sphere of rights of not only the Presidium, but also the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. It follows that no body of state power of the RSFSR was given the right to change or consent to change the territory of the RSFSR.

Since the item “д” of Art. 14 of the Constitution of the USSR referred the approval of changes in the borders between the Union republics to the jurisdiction of the USSR through its supreme bodies of state power and public administration, and the republican Constitution did not vest any state body with the right to make such decisions, we might as well talk about a constitutional gap, and there was only one way to receive consent of the RSFSR to change its territory—a referendum of its citizens. And item “г” of Art. 33 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation vested the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet with the right to conduct a popular consultation (referendum).

*Baburin S. Krym naveki s Rossiey. Istoriko-pravovoe obosnovanie vossoedineniya respublik Krym i goroda Sevastopol s Rossiyskoy Federatsiey [Crimea Forever with Russia. Historical and Legal Basis for the Reunification of the Crimean Republic and the City of Sevastopol with the Russian Federation]. M., 2014. Pp. 55-60*

This long quotation is absolutely necessary, because from it we can see the logic of denying the legality of the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine. Its main postulates can be considered as follows:

a) Art. 16 of the Russian Constitution states that “The territory of the RSFSR cannot be changed without the consent of the RSFSR”, but it does not define any mechanism for giving this consent, and in articles defining the authorities of the Supreme Soviet and its Presidium, nothing is said about the right to change the republican borders;

b) Art. 14 of the Constitution of the USSR conferred on the Soviet Union, represented by its supreme bodies of state power and public administration, the right to “approve changes in the borders between the Union republics”, but not to “resolve” this issue.

If both postulates are considered correct, as Sergey Baburin and his supporters do, then, of course, there is a “constitutional gap” eroding the legitimacy of the transfer

of Crimea to Ukraine. But in reality there is no problem here, and the whole discussion can only turn around the meaning of a single word.

So, Art. 14 of the all-Union Constitution lists the exclusive authorities of the Union, and Art. 15 states: “The sovereignty of the Union Republics is limited only to the extent specified in Article 14 of the Constitution of the USSR. Outside these limits, each Union Republic exercises state power independently. The USSR protects the sovereign rights of the Union Republics”. We can read almost the same in Art. 13 of the Constitution of the RSFSR: “...On this basis, the RSFSR provides for the USSR, represented by its supreme bodies of state power and public administration, the rights defined in Article 14 of the Constitution of the USSR. Outside the limits of Article 14 of the Constitution of the USSR, the RSFSR exercises state power independently, while retaining completely its sovereign rights”.

Thus, there could be no “dual power” in the USSR: specific authorities belonged to either the allied or republican center, but not both at the same time. Consequently, the supreme bodies of the RSFSR *could not have* any right to change the republican borders, since it belonged exclusively to the supreme bodies of the USSR.

Therefore, the whole discussion boils down to an interpretation of the content of item “д” of Art. 14 of the Constitution of the USSR: “approval of changes in the borders between the Union Republics”, and still more precisely to the definition of the meaning of the word “approval”. Opponents of the legitimacy of the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine interpret this word literally, implying that if the supreme Soviet authorities “approve” *something*, then some other authorities must first “make a decision”, and only then submit it for “approval” to superior authorities.

Meanwhile, such a mechanism would completely contradict the principle of separation of powers, enshrined in both constitutions. It would appear that the republican center makes a decision on changing the borders in the form of a “decision”, and then a similar decision in the form of an “approval” is accepted by the allied center. However, as was shown above,

**changing borders was in the exclusive competence of the supreme bodies of the USSR and did not need any republican “decisions”.**

That is why the republican constitutions lacked the right to change borders.

And as for the very word “approval”, it is explained very simply. Russia, represented by the Presidium of its Supreme Soviet, did not take a final decision on the transfer of Crimea on February 5, 1954, because it was not part of its authority, but rather, as we read above, “for approval by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR”. And as we will see later, the all-Union bodies “approve” the joint submission of the parliaments of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR on the transfer of Crimea, expressed in the form of appropriate resolutions. And although it probably looks somewhat clunky from a legal point of view, nevertheless the spirit of the law was not violated.

And on February 13, the Presidium of the Ukrainian parliament considered the issue of “acceptance” of Crimea into the Ukrainian SSR.

Having discussed the submission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR on the transfer of the Crimean region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, submitted for consideration by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR, for its part, believes that the transfer of Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR, taking into account the commonality of their economy, and close economic and cultural ties, is quite expedient and is a testament to the boundless trust of the great Russian people to the Ukrainian people.

The Ukrainian people with cordial gratitude and approval will meet the decision to transfer Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR as a new manifestation of care of the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet Government to further strengthen the indestructible friendship and brotherly ties between the Russian and Ukrainian peoples. The Government of Ukraine will pay due attention to the further development of the national economy of Crimea, and to raising the material and cultural well-being of the working people of the Crimean region.

In accordance with the submission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian SFSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR decides:

To ask the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to transfer the Crimean region from the Russian SFSR to the Ukrainian SSR.

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR  
D. Korotchenko

Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR V. Nyzhnyk  
*Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR On the Submission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR on the Transfer of the Crimean Region to the Ukrainian SSR, February 13, 1954*

Копия

ПОСТАНОВЛЕНИЕ

Президиума Верховного Совета Украинской ССР

О представлении Президиума Верховного  
Совета РСФСР по вопросу передачи крым-  
ской области в состав Украинской ССР

Обсудив представление Президиума Верховного Совета Российской СФСР по вопросу передачи Крымской области из состава РСФСР в состав Украинской ССР, внесенное на рассмотрение Президиума Верховного Совета СССР, Президиум Верховного Совета Украинской ССР со своей стороны считает, что передача Крыма Украинской ССР, учитывая общность их экономики, территориальную близость и тесные хозяйственные и культурные связи, вполне целесообразна и является свидетельством безграничного доверия великого русского народа украинскому народу.

Украинский народ с сердечной благодарностью и одобрением встретит решение о передаче Крыма Украинской ССР, как новое проявление заботы ЦК КПСС и Советского Правительства о дальнейшем укреплении нерушимой дружбы и братской связи между русским и украинским народами. Правительство Украины уделит должное внимание делу дальнейшего развития народного хозяйства Крыма, повышению материального и культурного благосостояния трудящихся Крымской области.

Соответственно представлению Президиума Верховного Совета Российской СФСР Президиум Верховного Совета Украинской ССР постановляет:

Просить Президиум Верховного Совета Союза ССР передать Крымскую область из состава Российской СФСР в состав Украинской ССР.

П/п. Председатель Президиума Верховного  
Совета Украинской ССР - Д.КОРОТЧЕНКО

Секретарь Президиума Верховного  
Совета Украинской ССР - В.НИЖНИК

г. Киев  
13 февраля 1954г.

Врною 2/1/1954

Fig. 14.4. Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR On the Submission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR on the Transfer of the Crimean Region to the Ukrainian SSR, February 13, 1954.

Two days later, the Resolution was transferred from Kiev to Moscow with a cover letter.

To the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the SSR K. E. Voroshilov with a report on the Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR  
February 15, 1954

On February 13, 1954, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR adopted a resolution on the transfer of the Crimean region from the Russian SFSR to the Ukrainian SSR and submits it to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for approval.

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR  
D. Korotchenko

Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR  
V. Nyzhnyk

*TsGAOR, F. 7523, Op. 85, D. 94, L. 8*

And in the “Ukrainian” case, we can see that the republican parliament does not take a final decision on the inclusion of Crimea in Ukraine, but only “asks” to transfer Crimea and submits its Resolution for “approval by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR”.

Thus, on the basis of two Regulations we can see that

**none of the parliaments of the Union republics made a final decision on the transfer of Crimea, and both submitted their Resolutions for “approval” by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.**

And the latter, in full accordance with the spirit and even the letter of the Constitution, “approved” them. Consequently, there is no reason to believe that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR went beyond its constitutional authorities. The question of whether it is possible to consider the said Resolutions an “expression of consent” to change the territory will be considered below.

#### **IV. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR did not have the authority to transfer Crimea?**

So, on February 19, 1954, the Presidium of the Soviet parliament adopts the following decree.

Taking into account the commonality of the economy, territorial proximity and close economic and cultural ties between the Crimean region and the Ukrainian SSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics decides:

To approve the joint submission of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR on the transfer of the Crimean region from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR K. E. Voroshilov  
Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, N. M. Pegov

*Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, Friday, February 19, 1954*

УКАЗ ПРЕЗИДИИ ВЕРХОВНОЙ РАДЫ ССРР  
 УКАЗ ПРЕЗИДИУМА ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА СССР  
 СССР ОДНИ СОВЕТИ ПРЕЗИДИУМНИИ ФОРМИИ  
 СССР ЖОГАРЕМ СОВЕТИ ПРЕЗИДИУМНИИ УКАЗЫ  
 СССР ОДНИ СОВЕТИ ПРЕЗИДИУМНИИ ФОРМИИ  
 СССР ОДНИ СОВЕТИ ПРЕЗИДИУМНИИ ФОРМИИ



УКАЗ ПРЕЗИДИУМА ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА СССР  
 О ПЕРЕДАЧЕ КРЫМСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ ИЗ СОСТАВА  
 РСФСР В СОСТАВ УССР

## УКАЗ ПРЕЗИДИУМА ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА СССР

О передаче Крымской области из состава  
 РСФСР в состав УССР

Учитывая общность экономики, территориальную близость и тесные хозяйственные и культурные связи между Крымской областью и Украинской ССР, Президиум Верховного Совета Союза Советских Социалистических Республик постановляет:

Утвердить совместное представление Президиума Верховного Совета РСФСР и Президиума Верховного Совета УССР о передаче Крымской области из состава Российской Советской Федеративной Социалистической Республики в состав Украинской Советской Социалистической Республики.

Председатель Президиума  
 Верховного Совета СССР  
 (К. Ворошилов)

Секретарь Президиума  
 Верховного Совета СССР -  
 (Н. Петров)

Москва, Кремль.  
 19 февраля 1954 г.

Fig. 14.5. Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, Friday, February 19, 1954.

And here we face the only truly significant pitfall in the whole process, namely, did the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR have the right by its Decree to change the belonging of Crimea?

Russian researchers note that the authorities of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet did not include changing borders. That could only be conducted directly by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

*Derygachyov V., Braterskiy A. Matviyenko otygryvaetsya na Khrushchyove. Sovfed hochet priznat nezakonnoy peredachu Kryma Ukraine v 1954 godu [Matviyenko is Taking it out on Khrushchev. The Federation Council Wants to Recognize Illegal the Transfer of Crimea to Ukraine in 1954]. Gazeta.ru, December 23, 2014*

And you can not say that this view was unfounded. Art. 49 of the Union Constitution had an exhaustive list an exhaustive list of authorities of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and, of course, it had no right to change the republican borders. As already mentioned more than once, the exclusive rights of the USSR listed in Art. 14, belonged to the Union “represented by its supreme bodies of state power and public administration”. According to Art. 30, “The supreme body of state power of the USSR is the Supreme Soviet of the USSR”, and according to Art. 31, “The Supreme Soviet of the USSR exercises all the rights conferred on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in accordance with Article 14 of the Constitution, since they do not fall within competence of the bodies of the USSR accountable to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Ministries of the USSR. Consequently, there is no denying that if the list of authorities of the Presidium does not have the right to change borders, it means that it belongs to the Supreme Soviet as a whole. That is, by adopting the Decree of February 19, the Presidium clearly went beyond its authorities.

Many Russian politicians, noting this fact, say that the transfer of Crimea was illegitimate, since the Presidium had no right to implement it. This point of view is quite common among Russian residents as well. But does the excess of powers really make the transfer of the peninsula illegal?

In fact, critics often miss the fact that the Supreme Soviet of the USSR did not act permanently, but held sessions twice a year, in spring and in autumn, lasting three to four months. As a result, it was the practice of the Presidium

to issue Decrees between sessions, which were then approved by relevant Laws adopted at sessions of the Soviet. There is a certain legal incident in which the traditional law enforcement practice was somewhat different from the letter of the law.

To consider the Decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR outside the fact of their approval by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR is not quite correct. It follows from the same logic that according to the Decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, at least seven border regions were illegally created in the territory of the RSFSR: Murmansk (May 28, 1938), Bryansk (July 5, 1944), Novgorod (July 5, 1944), Pskov (August 23, 1944), Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (February 2, 1946), Königsberg (April 6, 1946) and Belgorod (January 6, 1954). However, all the relevant Decrees were approved at the next session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and gained the force of law. Without taking this fact into account, we would have to admit that the Russian Federation has regions, the belonging of which to Russia is in doubt.

On January 6–7, 1954, according to the Decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, such regions as Arzamas, Balashov, Kamensk and Lipetsk (the list is far from complete) appeared in the RSFSR, which required changes in Art. 22 of the Constitution of the USSR describing the composition of the RSFSR. Similarly, in connection with the abolition of the Izmail region, the emergence of a new Cherkasy and the renaming of the Kamianets-Podilskyi region to Khmelnytsk region, it became necessary to amend Art. 23 of the Constitution describing the composition of the Ukrainian SSR. After approval by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, these Decrees of the Presidium gained the force of law.

*Karaichev D. N. Formirovanie ofitsialnoy rossiyskoy tochki zreniya na zakonnost peredachi Krymskoy oblasti v 1954 g. iz sostava RSFSR v sostav Ukrainskoy SSR [Formation of the Official Russian Point of View on the Legitimacy of the Transfer of the Crimean Region in 1954 from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR]. [www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=26352942](http://www.elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=26352942)*

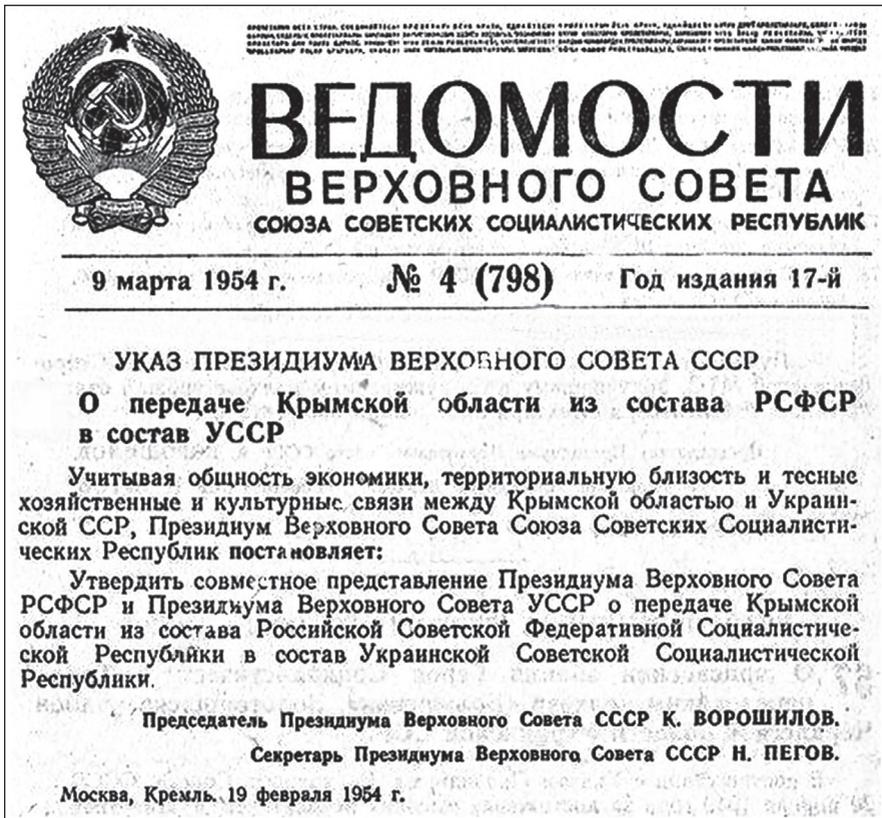


Fig. 14.6. The above Decree, published on March 9, 1954

Thus, if the inclusion of the peninsula in Ukraine was based on only one Decree, the legitimacy of that process could easily be challenged. But as early as in April of the same year in 1954, that gap in the legislation was closed. First, a special law, dedicated directly to the peninsula, was adopted.

The Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics decides:

1. To approve the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of February 19, 1954 on the transfer of the Crimean region from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.
2. To introduce appropriate amendments to Articles 22 and 23 of the Constitution of the USSR.

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR K. E. Voroshilov  
Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, N. M. Pegov  
Moscow, the Kremlin  
April 26, 1954

*Law of the USSR On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR  
to the Ukrainian SSR, April 26, 1954*

And then, by another Law, the remaining decrees of the Presidium concerning recent administrative and territorial changes were all together approved and the texts of amendments to the Constitution were formulated.

The Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics decides:

1. To approve the Decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR:

Of December 3, 1953 On the Formation of the Magadan Region

Of January 6, 1954 On the Formation of the Balashov Region within the RSFSR

Of January 6, 1954 On the Formation of the Belgorod Region within the RSFSR

Of January 6, 1954 On the Formation of the Kamensk Region within the RSFSR

Of January 6, 1954 On the Formation of the Lipetsk Region within the RSFSR

Of January 7, 1954 On the Formation of the Arzamas Region within the RSFSR

Of January 7, 1954 On the Formation of the Cherkasy Region within the Ukrainian

SSR

Of February 4, 1954 On Renaming the City of Proskurov into the city of Khmelnytskyi and Kamianets-Podilskyi region into Khmelnytsk region

Of February 15, 1954 On the Abolition of the Izmail region of the Ukrainian SSR

In this regard, and in accordance with the USSR Law of April 26, 1954 On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, to introduce appropriate amendments to Articles 22 and 23 of the Constitution of the USSR by stating these Articles as follows:

Article 23. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic consists of the following regions: Vinnytsya, Volyn, Voroshilovgrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Drohobych, Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Zaporizhia, Kyiv, Kirovograd, Crimea, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Stalin, Stanislav, Sumy, Ternopil, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, Chernihiv and Chernivtsi.

*Law of the USSR On Approval of the Decrees  
of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR,  
April 26, 1954*

I omit the rest of the text of the new edition of the all-Union Constitution, but the quoted text is more than enough. As we can see from the two laws of April 26, the Soviet legislators understood perfectly well that the Decrees of the Presidium are not enough for transformations, and therefore they hastened, firstly, to approve the Decrees by a special Law, and secondly, to immediately amend the Constitution. Since the Basic Law has the highest legal force in relation to other regulatory acts, the change in its text automatically removes all disagreement on the question of Crimea's belonging.

Therefore,

**even recognizing that the Presidium exceeded its authorities in the Decree of February 19, we cannot deny that, from the point of view of the letter of the law, the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine did take place, albeit on April 26, 1954.**

## **V. Russia did not give consent to change its territory?**

Let us now consider one more claim of Russian lawyers to this process, namely, the alleged lack of consent of the RSFSR to change its territory. Above, we have already quoted Sergey Baburin's opinion on this matter.

So, the supreme body of state power of the RSFSR could exercise only the rights provided for by Art. 13 and 19 of the Constitution, and even then not in full. Meanwhile, the legal norm that the territory of the RSFSR cannot be changed without the consent of the RSFSR was contained in Art. 16 of the Constitution, and therefore, was outside the sphere of rights of not only the Presidium, but also the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR. It follows that no body of state power of the RSFSR was given the right to change or consent to change the territory of the RSFSR.

*Baburin S. Krym naveki s Rossiey. Istoriko-pravovoe obosnovanie vossoedineniya respubliky Krym i goroda Sevastopol s Rossiyskoy Federatsiey [Crimea forever with Russia. Historical and Legal Basis for the Reunification of the Crimean Republic and the City of Sevastopol with the Russian Federation]. M., 2014. Pp. 59–60*

This is a rather strange reasoning. The fact that the norm regulating the change of the territory of Russia was not on the list of authorities of the parliament of the RSFSR does not mean that the Supreme Soviet of the Republic did not have the right

to change it. As I have already noted, the mechanism for giving consent to change the territory of the RSFSR was not written out in Art. 16 of the Constitution, and this, in turn, left the last word for the authors of this Constitution, that is, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR.

In Art. 19 of this document, the first place on the list of authorities of the parliament of Soviet Russia as a whole is “the establishment of the Constitution of the RSFSR and monitoring its observance”, and Art. 24 reads: “The Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR is the sole legislative body of the RSFSR”. In addition, Art. 33 determines that the Presidium of the Russian parliament “interprets the laws of the RSFSR”. Thus, everything that is written down in the republican Constitution can be interpreted and even changed by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet on its own. There is no reason to exclude the right to give or not to give consent to change the territory of Russia from these comprehensive authorities. In general, it was the parliament of the RSFSR that gave the required consent, whatever they thought about it in today’s Russia.

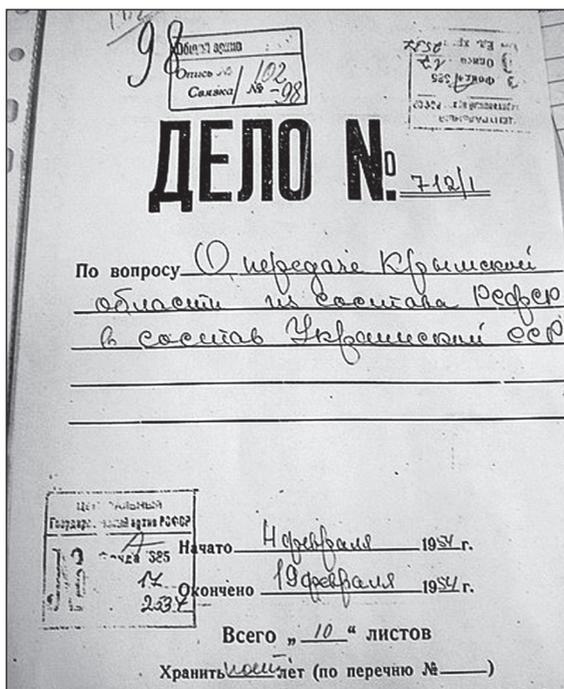


Fig. 14.7. Archival documents on the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine. Source: TsGA RSFSR

And as for the mechanism of giving the sought consent, there are no special problems with it either. The fact is that the state structure of the RSFSR was determined by Article 2 of the Constitution, and the list of constituent entities of Soviet Russia was provided in Art. 14. Consequently, it was the text of this Article that established the “territory of the RSFSR”, and the change in this text constituted a change in the territory of Russia. As noted in Art. 151, “The amendment of the Constitution of the RSFSR is made only by decision of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, adopted by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of the Supreme Council.” Consequently,

**amendments and additions to Art. 14 of the republican Constitution made by the Russian parliament as the supreme body representing the RSFSR itself and determining the composition of the RSFSR means giving consent to change the territory of the RSFSR..**

Well, and no one doubts that such amendments and additions did take place.

The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic decides:

Given the transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR and the formation of the Arzamas, Balashov, Belgorod, Kamensk, Lipetsk and Magadan Regions within the RSFSR, to state Article 14 of the Constitution of the RSFSR in accordance with Article 22 of the Constitution of the USSR as follows:

*[a list of Russian territories and regions, ASSRs and autonomous regions without Crimea –Auth.]*

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR M. Tarasov

Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, I. Zimin

*Law of the RSFSR On Amendments and Additions to Article 14 of the Constitution (Basic Law) of the RSFSR, June 2, 1954*

Similarly, in accordance with the requirements of its own republican Constitution, the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR also gave consent to change the territory of Soviet Ukraine.

The Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic decides:

Given the transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, the liquidation of the Izmail region, the renaming of the Kamianets-Podilskyi region and the formation of the Cherkasy region within the Ukrainian SSR, to state Article 18 of the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR in accordance with Article 23 of the Constitution of the

USSR as follows:

“Article 18. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic consists of the following regions: Vinnytsya, Volyn, Voroshilovgrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Drohobych, Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Zaporizhia, Kyiv, Kirovograd, Crimea, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Stalin, Stanislav, Sumy, Ternopil, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, Chernivtsi and Chernihiv.”

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR  
D. Korotchenko

Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR V. Nyzhnyk  
*Law of the Ukrainian SSR On Amendments and Additions to Article 18  
of the Constitution (Basic Law) of the Ukrainian SSR, June 17, 1954*

In general, and from this point of view, all the necessary formalities were observed.

## **VI. During the transfer of Crimea, the rights of Crimeans, citizens of the RSFSR, were violated?**

Another, we must admit, quite original argument against the legality of the transfer of Crimea to Ukraine, is the alleged violation of the rights of Crimeans, depriving them of citizenship of the RSFSR without their consent.

Precedents of the so-called cession (that is, the transfer from one sovereign state to another) of territories are known in international law: for example, Alsace, Western Ukraine, Kaliningrad... But in such case, transfer, that is, transfer of residents to a new citizenship, is made, or citizens are offered an option, that is, they must clearly express their will: whether they want, along with the transfer of the territory, to obtain the citizenship of another country, or to stay in the old one. Until February 19, 1954, residents of Crimea were citizens of the RSFSR. Did anyone ask them then whether they wanted to renounce their citizenship and become citizens of the Ukrainian SSR?

So, the residents of Crimea never left the citizenship of the RSFSR.

*Gagarin N. Krym, kotoryi ne “nash” i ne “vash” [Crimea that is not “ours” and not “yours”].  
Novaya gazeta [New Newspaper], September 5, 2016*

This legal thesis has a very definite political consequence. It follows that, to date, most of the residents of Crimea have the citizenship of the RSFSR or, in fact,

Russian. You must admit that this is a weighty argument in favor of those who insist on “restoring historical justice”.

However, the situation is such that the very concept of “citizenship of the RSFSR” balances on the brink of a legal fiction and is unlikely to give rise to such global consequences. On the one hand, the “republican citizenship” was indeed mentioned in all Union and republican Constitutions, but at the same time—without the slightest details about the principles and rules for its acquisition and change.

In such cases, provisions of the Basic Law are usually detailed by the norms of a special law on citizenship, but paradoxically there is not a single regulatory act devoted to the “citizenship of the RSFSR”. Rather, they existed between 1918 and 1921, that is, before the formation of the USSR. In the Soviet Union itself, a single Union citizenship was established (from the Treaty on the Creation of the USSR in 1922 and in all subsequent Constitutions), while preserving the “republican citizenship” as a secondary to the all-Union citizenship.

The most important for solving the problem of interest to us is the Statute on the Citizenship of the USSR of 1931. Item 2 stated the following:

A citizen of the USSR is a citizen of that Union republic within which they permanently reside. However, if by nationality or by origin they consider themselves connected with another Union republic, they can choose the citizenship of that republic.

*Resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR No. 4, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR No. 216 Regulation on the Citizenship of the USSR, April 22, 1931*

Unfortunately, the procedure for “selecting” another republican citizenship was not detailed, and as I have already noted, there were no republican laws on citizenship during that period.

To the even greater regret, with the entry into force of the USSR Law of 1938 On the Citizenship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the previous resolution was no longer valid, and there was no similar norm in the new Law. It was not in the laws on Soviet citizenship of 1978 and 1990, only the existence of “other legislative acts of the USSR, Union and autonomous republics on Soviet citizenship” was declared.

Certain issues related to the inheritance of parents' citizenship by children were discussed in the Marriage and Family Codes of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR in 1969, but there was nothing similar to the norm of the Resolution of 1931. The first

republican Law of the RSFSR No. 1948-1 On the Citizenship of the RSFSR was adopted only on November 28, 1991, that is, after the actual collapse of the Soviet Union. In the end, this situation has led to speculation around Crimeans—citizens of the RSFSR.

And so, as noted in one of the courses on lectures on Russia’s constitutional law, within the USSR,

Russian citizenship was to a large extent a legal fiction.

*Kolyushin E. Konstitutsionnoe pravo Rossii [Constitutional Law of Russia]. M., 1999. Lecture 12*

So, although the Statute on the Citizenship of the USSR of 1931 formally did not act at the time of Crimea’s inclusion in Ukraine, it can be argued that item 2 of the Statute de facto regulated the law-enforcement practice of resolving issues related to republican citizenship in the USSR. Briefly speaking, (except for persons who received republican citizenship by decrees of the Presidiums of the republican parliaments)

**for the lack of special laws on republican citizenship and republican passports, citizenship of a Union republic was determined according to the place of registration of Soviet citizens.**

Therefore,

**in 1954, with the change of the Union republic, and hence, the place of registration, the Crimeans changed their republican citizenship from Russian to Ukrainian.**

And so, there was no majority of the citizens of the Russian Federation in the peninsula in 2014.

## **VII. For the transfer of Crimea it was necessary to hold a referendum?**

Let’s quickly glance over another complaint about the process of including Crimea in Ukraine, voiced at all levels up to the Russian President, namely, the absence of a referendum in the peninsula on the issue of transfer. We have already become convinced that there was no gap in the legislation; the Union parliament had the sole right to change the republican borders, and the supreme bodies of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR could easily give consent to change their territories. In this regard,

**there was simply no need to hold a referendum to determine the fate of Crimea.**

The organization of the popular consultation was the *right*, and not the *responsibility* of the Presidiums of all Soviet parliaments—I think there is no need to explain the difference between these concepts. It only remains to add that during the existence of the Soviet Union hundreds of administrative and territorial transformations were made, and until 1991 none of them was accompanied by a referendum.

### **VIII. Russia finally recognized the transfer of Crimea only after the collapse of the USSR?**

Sometimes you can hear that Crimea belongs to Ukraine only in documents about the transfer of 1954, and since they are allegedly legally unsound, the peninsula was part of Russia until the collapse of the USSR, and only then Moscow recognized it as belonging to Kyiv.

The main argument against this point of view is the further development of Soviet constitutional legislation. In Art. 77 of the Basic Law of the Ukrainian SSR of 1978 the following was noted:

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic has the following regions: Vinnytsia, Volyn, Voroshilovgrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Zaporizhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Kirovograd, Crimea, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Ternopil, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, Chernivtsi and Chernihiv.

The cities of republican subordination in the Ukrainian SSR are Kyiv and Sevastopol.

In the Basic Law of the RSFSR of the same year, of course, there is no Crimean region. This further emphasizes the fact that the change in the administrative and territorial structure of the two Soviet republics took place in accordance with the then legislation, and the current situation was without debates reflected in their new constitutions. So, the opponents of the legitimacy of the inclusion of Crimea in Ukraine, in fact, face an unsolvable task—to prove the unconstitutionality of two Soviet republican Constitutions of 1978, Russian and Ukrainian.

In general, having considered almost all aspects of the inclusion of Crimea in

Ukraine in 1954, it can be argued that

**the overwhelming majority of Russian claims to the process of transfer of Crimea to Ukraine are unfounded,**

and even taking into account the “incident of February 19”,

**the legality of this transfer cannot be challenged.**

It should only be admitted that, according to the letter of the law, the joining of the peninsula to Ukraine occurred on April 26, 1954.

## **MYTH 15. SEVASTOPOL WAS NOT TRANSFERRED TO UKRAINE**

### ***Intro***

Desperate to prove that in 1954 Crimea was transferred to Ukraine illegally, the adherents of the Kremlin “Crimea-is-ours” myth are striving to “defend” at least a small piece of the peninsula—Sevastopol. Since 1993, the Russian government repeatedly raised the issue of the city’s belonging, and only with the signing of the Great Treaty on Friendship between Russia and Ukraine, Moscow’s claims subsided. But some politicians and entire organizations did not want to recognize the Ukrainian status of Sevastopol and with their speeches and actions prepared the public opinion for the change in rhetoric in 2014. After the annexation of Crimea, the thesis about the “untransferable Sevastopol” again returned to the big politics.

### ***Myth...***

Official documents draw before us such a picture that it is not necessary to search for citations of “couch experts” on the Internet. Let’s start with the Resolution of the Russian parliament of July 9, 1993.

The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, having examined the question of the status of the city of Sevastopol on the instructions of the Seventh Congress of People’s Deputies of the Russian Federation, decides:

1. To confirm the Russian federal status of the city of Sevastopol in the administrative and territorial borders of the city district as of December 1991.

*Resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation No. 5359-1  
On the Status of the City of Sevastopol, July 9, 1993*

## Постановление Верховного Совета Российской Федерации « О статусе города Севастополя »

Верховный Совет Российской Федерации, рассмотрев по поручению седьмого Съезда народных депутатов Российской Федерации вопрос о статусе города Севастополя, постановляет:

1. Подтвердить российский федеральный статус города Севастополя в административно-территориальных границах городского округа по состоянию на декабрь 1991 года.

2. Совету Министров - Правительству Российской Федерации в кратчайший срок разработать государственную программу обеспечения статуса города Севастополя, дав соответствующие поручения министерствам и ведомствам; провести переговоры с Правительством Украины о городе Севастополе как главной базе единого Черноморского флота. В состав российской делегации на переговорах включить от Верховного Совета Российской Федерации народных депутатов России Воронина Ю.М., Амбарцумова Е.А., Лудовкина Е.К., Саенко Г.В., Селиванова А.Г., Чеботаревского Р.З., Югина В.А.

3. Центральному Банку России предусмотреть финансирование соответствующих статей бюджета города Севастополя через свои отделения.

4. Комитету Верховного Совета Российской Федерации по конституционному законодательству подготовить проект закона Российской Федерации о закреплении в Конституции Российской Федерации федерального статуса города Севастополя.

5. В целях недопущения политической напряженности просить Правительство Украины отозвать передислоцированные в район города Севастополя подразделения спецчастей.

Председатель Верховного Совета  
Российской Федерации

Р. И. ХАСБУЛАТОВ

9 июля 1993 г.  
N 5359-1

(Д)

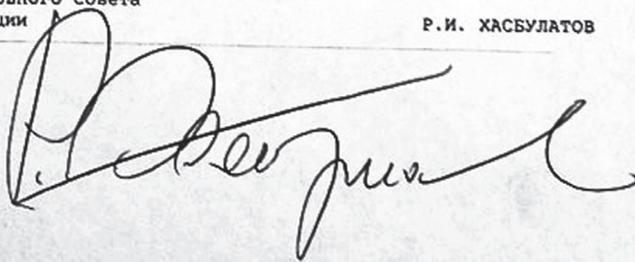


Fig. 15.1. Resolution of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation No. 5359-1 On the Status of the City of Sevastopol, July 9, 1993.

This Resolution also provided for the development of appropriate amendments to the then existing Russian Constitution of 1978, which, in the end, was not done. As early as on July 14, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine declared (Resolution No. 3378-12)

this document to be not legally valid and called on the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation to abolish it. However, in the next year the Russian resolution already caused a reaction in Sevastopol itself.

Having heard and discussed the information of the deputy of the City Council from the 7th electoral district Romanenko V. I. On the Status of the City of Sevastopol and, taking into account the results of the public opinion poll of citizens of the city of June 26, 1994 on this issue, as well as the ongoing contacts between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on conclusion of a full-scale treaty, the Sevastopol City Council of People's Deputies

decided:

1. To recognize the Russian legal status of the city of Sevastopol;
2. To confirm the principled position of the City Council on Sevastopol as the main base of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation, expressed in all previously adopted decisions of the City Council of the 21st and 22nd convocations.

Chairman of the City Council of People's Deputies of Sevastopol V. Semenov,  
Head of the Secretariat of the City Council K. Pavlenko,  
Chairman of the Editorial Commission V. Romanenko,  
Chairman of the Session Secretariat I. Kulikov

*Decision of the Sevastopol City Council of People's Deputies No. 41 On the Status of the City of Sevastopol, August 23, 1994*

However, as early as on September 15 that decision was canceled by the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine No. 162/94. It took off from there. On October 24, 1996, the State Duma in an appeal (No. 747-II of the State Duma) to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine stated that the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR of October 29, 1948 was still in effect, and therefore Russia "has the right to exercise state sovereignty over Sevastopol".

Then the upper chamber of the Russian parliament joined the discussion.

The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation is following the development of events around the Black Sea Fleet and the city of Sevastopol with concern, because the Ukrainian Party, in spite of objective realities, does not want to discuss the issue on the Russian status of the city of Sevastopol at the talks.

*Appeal of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation No. 405-SF On the Status of the City of Sevastopol, December 5, 1996*

Four days later, the State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots recommended that the parliament adopts the following document.

Guided by Article 4 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, affirming that Russia's sovereignty extends to the territory of the city of Sevastopol since its foundation as the main base of the Black Sea Fleet, was uninterrupted and was not transferred to Ukraine either within the framework of a single Union state, or after the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation decides:

1. To proceed from the fact that any actions that change or can change the Russian federal status of the hero city of Sevastopol as an integral part of the territory of the Russian Federation, including the conclusion of international treaties of the Russian Federation on this issue, must comply with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Federal Constitutional Law On the Referendum of the Russian Federation, the Federal Law On International Treaties of the Russian Federation.

2. To state that unilateral acts of Ukraine on the proclamation of the hero city of Sevastopol under the jurisdiction of Ukraine are illegal, contradict to the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and Article 6 of the Treaty between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, signed in Kyiv on November 19, 1990.

3. To confirm the Russian federal status of the hero city of Sevastopol—the main base of the Black Sea Fleet within the administrative and territorial boundaries of the city district, as of December 1991, on the basis of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR On the Separation of the City of Sevastopol into an Independent Administrative and Economic Center of October 29, 1948 No. 761/2 and the Resolution of the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation On the Status of the City of Sevastopol of July 9, 1993, No. 5359-1.

*Draft Resolution of the State Duma On the Status of the Hero City of Sevastopol—the Main Base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, December 9, 1996*

However, that project was never approved, and on December 25, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RF explained that Moscow considered Sevastopol a Ukrainian territory. After the conclusion of the “Great” Treaty on Friendship in 1997 and the Border Treaty in 2003, the question of the city's belonging was raised only by Yuriy Luzhkov and a number of marginal Crimean organizations. But the annexation of the peninsula in 2014 changed everything back.

And in 1954, a decision was made to transfer the Crimean region, along with Sevastopol, despite the fact that it was a federal city, to its composition.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, March 18, 2014*

Twenty years—a whole era of political and legal debate about the status of Sevastopol, or rather about whether it was transferred to Ukraine together with Crimea in 1954 or remained Russian. And as subsequent events have shown, this dispute is not so much about the history of the city, as of current events. In an attempt to justify the annexation of Crimea, calling it the “restoration of historical justice”, the question of the transfer/non-transfer of Sevastopol undoubtedly plays a key role.

### ***...and reality***

The problem of the status of Sevastopol, from the Russian point of view, is even more legally confused than the problem of the transfer of Crimea. But in this case we also face the desire to give out what is desired for reality, and not the real problems.

## **I. Was the status of Sevastopol equal to the status of the Crimean region?**

It all started with the fact that in the summer of 1948 Joseph Stalin suddenly decided to rest not in the Caucasus, but in Crimea, and during his visit to the peninsula he visited Sevastopol. The leader did not like what he saw so much that the Council of Ministers of the USSR issued a special Resolution on the development of the city.

The Council of Ministers of the USSR notes that the restoration of the city of Sevastopol and the main naval base of the Black Sea Fleet is extremely slow. At the current pace, the restoration of the city and the naval base can be completed no earlier than in 10–15 years, which is absolutely unacceptable.

The Council of Ministers of the USSR considers the urgent state task to accelerate the full restoration of Sevastopol as a first-class naval fortress and decides:

1. To complete the restoration of Sevastopol and the main naval base of the Black Sea Fleet within the next 3–4 years.

57. To separate the city of Sevastopol to the number of cities of republican subordination.

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR I. Stalin

Manager of the Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the USSR Y. Chadaev

*Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the USSR No. 403 On Measures to Accelerate the Restoration of Sevastopol, October 25, 1948*

The republican authorities of the RSFSR reacted to item 57 with astonishing speed (in only 4 days).

To separate the city of Sevastopol into an independent administrative and economic center with its own special budget and to classify it as a city of republican subordination.

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR I. Vlasov

Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR P. Vakhmurov

*Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR No. 761/2 On the Separation of the City of Sevastopol into an Independent Administrative and Economic Center, October 29, 1948*

On the same day, the Government of Russia, in pursuance of this Decree, adopted the following Resolution. It is so important that we will come back to it more than once.

Due to the separation of the city of Sevastopol into an independent administrative and economic center and its classification as a city of republican subordination, the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR decides:

1. To oblige the Ministry of Finance of the RSFSR and the Crimean Regional Executive Committee to allocate the budget of the city of Sevastopol from the budget of the Crimean region for 1948 and to submit it for approval by the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR not later than on November 20, 1948.

2. To oblige the State Planning Committee of the RSFSR, in conjunction with the ministries and departments of the RSFSR and the Crimean Regional Executive Committee, within the plans for economic and cultural construction and the plans for the material and technical supply of the Crimean region for 1948, to outline the plan for economic and cultural construction and the plan for the material and technical supply of the city of Sevastopol and submit for approval by the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR by November 20, 1948.

3. To oblige the State Planning Committee of the RSFSR, the Ministry of Finance of the RSFSR, and the ministries and departments of the RSFSR to further separate the city of Sevastopol in the state plan and the budget in a separate line.

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR M. Rodionov

Manager of the Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR I. Padezhnoy

*Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR No. 1082 Issues  
of the City of Sevastopol, October 29, 1948*

Based on the above three documents, most Russian researchers conclude that Sevastopol was separated from the Crimean region and acquired equal status. And since Sevastopol was not mentioned in the normative acts regulating the process of Crimea's entry into Ukraine, this supposedly implies that the city remained part of Russia. And the justification of annexation is within a stone's throw from this thesis.

What do we have in reality? The fact that neither in the Union Constitution of 1936, nor in the Russian Constitution of 1937 in effect at that time, no "cities of republican subordination" were mentioned, hence their status is a matter of debate. The initiator of the scandalous decision of the Sevastopol Council in 1996, Vladimir Romanenko, for example, believes that

Despite the absence of the normatively defined concept of a "city of republican significance" during the period of the 1935 Constitution of the USSR and the 1937 Constitution of the RSFSR, it follows from a number of normative acts in force at the time that such cities were equal in status to the autonomous republics, territories and regions.

So, for example, in the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of September 23, 1944, No. 682 On the Procedure for Spending the Reserve Fund of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR: "People's Commissariats and departments of the RSFSR, regional executive committees, territorial executive committees, Councils of People's Commissars of autonomous republics and city executive committees of cities of republican subordination may apply for extrabudgetary loans..." (item 2).

In the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR of May 22, 1947 No. 389 On the Protection of Architectural Monuments, responsibility for the protection of monuments is assigned to the Department for Architecture Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR, regional and territorial executive committees, city executive committees of the cities of republican (RSFSR) subordination and Councils of Ministers of autonomous republics (item 2).

Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR of February 3, 1948 No. 59 On the Land and Economic Structure of Cities and Workers' Settlements of the RSFSR

established that “technical projects for engineering preparation of the territories of cities and workers’ settlements are considered and approved by the Ministry of Communal Services of the RSFSR for above-limit facilities, and by relevant territorial, regional and city (cities of republican (RSFSR) subordination) executive committees of Soviets of Working People’s Deputies and Councils of Ministers of autonomous republics for lower-limit facilities” (item 11).

It follows from these excerpts of legal acts that **granting Sevastopol the status of the city of republican (RSFSR) subordination meant giving it a status equal to the status of the Crimean region** [*highlighted in the original—Auth.*]

*Romanenko V. Sevastopol—gorod Rossii [Sevastopol Is a City of Russia].  
Obozrevatel-ObsERVER, 2009. No. 2. P. 49*

But, despite all the categorical nature of this statement, nothing of the kind appears from the listed regulatory acts. *None of the listed resolutions has a definition of a “city of republican subordination”, therefore, there is no reason to conclude that their status is equal to the status of the region.* Even if you appeal to the fact that these cities are listed along with territories and regions, it is still impossible to reach the desired conclusion. In all documents, the listed authorities are located *in descending order of status*: in the last two—first the RSFSR as a whole, then regions and territories, and only then—the cities of republican subordination and autonomous republics, and in the first document such cities are listed the last. Thus, if you follow the letter of documents, the status of a city of republican subordination is *lower* than the status of a region or a territory.

Now we go on. Article 22 of the Constitution of the USSR and Article 14 of the Constitution of the RSFSR in the wording of 1948 were absolutely identical in content. They listed 6 territories, 47 regions, 12 ASSRs and 6 autonomous regions, of which Russia was composed at that time. In the first half of the 20th century, there were a total of a dozen cities of republican subordination in the RSFSR: Moscow and Leningrad (1931), Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk, Molotov, Novosibirsk, Saratov, Kuibyshev and Gorkiy (1943), Stalingrad and Rostov-on-Don (1945), Omsk (1947), Sochi and Sevastopol (1948), Krasnoyarsk (1951), and none of them, except Moscow, was mentioned in any of the Constitutions. In 1958, all the remaining cities of the RSFSR, except for the first two, lost their status.

Of course, the absence of mention in the Constitution does not make the

existence of cities of republican subordination unconstitutional. For example, in the Basic Law of the RSFSR, neither national districts nor, especially, ordinary districts were mentioned, which does not put them outside the law. However, the logic of the creators of the Russian Constitution is obvious: it listed constituent entities of the Federation and, as an exception, autonomous regions, 5 of which were members of other entities, and Tuva itself was the entity (this is the reason for such an exception). Formally, within the RSFSR, the status of the territories, regions or ASSRs was the same (ASSRs had their own “legislation”, but the priority was still for all-Russian laws). And since the regions were full-fledged and equal constituent entities of the Federation, therefore, any administrative unit having the same status as them had to be included in Art. 14 of the Constitution.

From this point of view, it is absolutely unambiguous that

**status of the city of republican subordination was not equal to the status of the region.**

Based on the logic of the drafters of the above-mentioned documents, this status was even lower, although this is not fundamental. But what then in reality meant to be a city of republican subordination?

## **II. Did Sevastopol remain part of the Crimean region?**

As we have seen, critics of Ukrainian sovereignty over Sevastopol stress the fact that the city in 1948 received a status equal to the Crimean region, and therefore with all the inevitability had to be separated from its composition. But the paradox lies in the fact that it is precisely this wording—“separated from the Crimean region”—that we do not meet anywhere.

In the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, which Russian politicians are so fond of referring to, it is literally written: “To separate the city of Sevastopol into an independent administrative and economic center with its own special budget and to classify it as a city of republican subordination.” There is no mention of the transformation of the city into an independent administrative-territorial unit. And as we have cleared up above, there was no equality of Sevastopol’s status with the status of Crimea.

Moreover, the Resolution of the RSFSR Council of Ministers on Sevastopol repeats the same thing in each of the three items: “separate plan” and “separate budget”. According to this document, this Sevastopol plan was separated from the Crimean plan and the Sevastopol budget—from the Crimean budget, and not Sevastopol—from the Crimean region.

Since there is no exact wording of “separated from the Crimean region” in the documents, Russian researchers resort to searching for arguments *in essence*, which would allow us to state that Sevastopol was ruled from Moscow directly, bypassing Simferopol, and consequently was not part of Crimea.

But the facts show the opposite. There are several examples that clearly show that Sevastopol was part of the Crimean region even after November 1948. Thus, in the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR of December 18, 1948 on establishing the list of secondary schools of the Crimean region, Sevastopol educational institutions, No. 4 and No. 16 for girls, and No. 19 and No. 38 for boys, appear as well [*Serhiychuk V. Gorod respublikanskogo podchineniya [City of Republican Subordination]. Zerkalo nedeli [Mirror of the Week], June 13, 2008*].

On January 6, 1951, Crimean Regional Council elected eight people’s assessors from Sevastopol to the Crimean Regional Court [*DAARK, F. P-3287, Op. 2, S. 845, Ar. 213–214*].

The state plan for the development of the national economy of the Crimean region for 1952 took into account the results of the work of the Sevastopol commissary, a jewelry store, a public catering trust, a department store, a sewing factory No. 4 and other enterprises of Sevastopol [*Krymskaya pravda [Crimean Truth], February 1, 1953*].

On February 28, 1953, the first session of the Crimean Regional Council of Workers of the third convocation was opened. The head of the Crimean Regional Executive Committee was Mykhaylo Kuzmenko (elected from the district No. 112 of Sevastopol), his deputy was Gavrylo Ponomarenko (elected from the district No. 110 of Sevastopol). Mykola Khlamov, Prosecutor of the Crimean region, and Viktor Goncharenko, Head of the Regional Communications Department, were also elected in Sevastopol [*Serhiychuk V. Ukrainskyi Krym [Ukrainian Crimea]. K., 2001. P. 222*].

In the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR On Electoral Districts for Elections to the Council of the Union” of January 11, 1954, the following

was written: “The RSFSR. The Crimean Region. No. 211 Sevastopol electoral district (center—Sevastopol). City of Sevastopol with the joined territory and Balaklava district” [*On Electoral Districts for Elections to the Council of the Union*] of January 11, 1954. *Vedomosti VS SSSR [Gazette of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR]*, January 25, 1954. No. 2. Art. 23 Pp. 18–69].

Consequently, contrary to popular belief,

**separation of Sevastopol into the city of republican subordination concerned only the economic side of the administration (plan and budget), and in the administrative and territorial respect it remained within the Crimean region.**

And the most paradoxical is that before it was perfectly understood in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The letter to the Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs of December 25, 1996, signed by the First Deputy Minister V. Pastukhov, was attached with the Conclusion of the Legal Department on the Status of the City of Sevastopol. It stated:

The Decree of 1948 did not separate the territory of the city of Sevastopol from the Crimean region into an independent administrative-territorial unit within any borders (this is indicated, in particular, by the terminology of the Decree—“administrative and economic center”, and not “administrative-territorial unit”), but only established the principle of its management and funding directly by the central republican authorities. Thus, it can be concluded that the territory of the city in 1954 was part of the Crimean region. Accordingly, the city of Sevastopol was transferred to Ukraine along with the Crimean region.

*Vishnyakov V. Krym: pravo i politika [Crimea: Law and Politics].  
M., 2011. P. 103*

However, adherents of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth refuse to believe even in obvious truths like the difference between “administrative and economic center” and “administrative-territorial unit” and completely ignore the absence of cities of republican subordination in the Soviet Constitutions or any other laws.

### III. Was Sevastopol transferred to Ukraine?

The Russian answer, as we already know, sounds like “no”. Sevastopol allegedly was not part of the Crimean region, and therefore, could not be transferred to Ukraine along with it.

Until December 8, 1991, financial and organizational functions within the administrative and territorial boundaries of the city district of Sevastopol were carried out under the direct supervision of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and without any participation of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR. Therefore, the Resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR of February 5, 1954 On the Transfer of the Crimean Region from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of February 19, 1954 of the same name and the Law of the USSR of April 26, 1954 on that matter, do not contain any mention about Sevastopol, despite the fact that the special status of the city that had been assigned to it for six years, demanded a special reservation for Sevastopol in case of its transfer to Ukraine. It is necessary to emphasize that according to the aforementioned acts, it was the Crimean region, and not the Crimean peninsula, that was transferred to the Ukrainian SSR. By that time, Sevastopol had not been part of the region for six years.

*Fyodorov A. Pravovoy status Kryma. Pravovoy status Sevastopolya  
[The Legal Status of Crimea. The Legal Status of Sevastopol]. M., 1999. P. 31*

But this is a banal ignorance or a direct lie. Firstly, there was no question of separating Sevastopol from Crimea, and secondly, despite a loud statement, the government of Soviet Ukraine exercised direct control over the city. The only “privilege” of Sevastopol was that “Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Sevastopol City Council of Working People’s Deputies, Comrade Sergey Sosnitskiy” was a participant in the meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR on February 5, 1954, at which the decision to transfer the Crimean region to Ukraine was taken. If Sevastopol had nothing to do with Crimea, then why its leader was invited to such an important event? So, being an integral part of Crimea (albeit with a specific economic status), on April 26, 1954 Sevastopol, along with the rest of the peninsula, was included in Ukraine.

And what is characteristic, its status did not change. Being a city of republican subordination in the RSFSR, it remained as such in the Ukrainian SSR, still being part of the Crimean region.

Let us take the Law on the State Budget of the RSFSR for 1951. Sevastopol was really written out in it in a separate line: Crimean region: 365,932 thousand rubles; Sevastopol: 94,824 thousand rubles. At that time, there were 14 cities of republican subordination in the RSFSR (Novosibirsk, Sochi, Saratov, etc.). In the Law on the State Budget of the RSFSR for 1956, there were still 14 cities of republican subordination, but there was already no Sevastopol (and, of course, the Crimean region), and instead of it, there was ...Krasnoyarsk.

It is quite obvious that from 1948 to 1954 Sevastopol (as well as the Crimean region) was financed by the RSFSR and was separated as a city of republic subordination of the RSFSR (one of many). After 1954, it began to be financed from the budget of the Ukrainian SSR, where it was also separated as a city of republican subordination of Ukraine (one of two). Thus, after 1954, Sevastopol retained the status of a city of republican subordination, but changed the republic to which it was subordinate.

*Cherkasova E. Sevastopol: eshchyo raz o territorialnoy probleme [Sevastopol: Once Again on the Territorial Issue]. Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya [The World Economy and International Relations], 1999. No. 9. Pp. 108–114*

Naturally, being in Ukraine, Sevastopol preserved its own budget. In the Law on the State Budget of the Ukrainian SSR of 1954, this city was absolutely expected to be referred to in a separate line after Kyiv from 116,595 thousand rubles of income and the same figure of expenditure [*Lukinyuk M. Oberezhno: mify! [Attention: Myths!]* K., 2013. P. 477]. And this situation was preserved in the future.

In the same 1954, a special decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR approved the program of socio-economic and cultural development of Crimea and, inter alia, considered “proposals for the completion of the restoration of Sevastopol and the further development of the city economy” [*TsDAHO, F. 1, Op. 52, S. 5003, Ark. 4*].

In the autumn of the same year in 1954, preparations for the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR began in the peninsula, and the Executive Committee of the Crimean region asked the Presidium of the republican parliament to establish three electoral districts in Sevastopol: Stalinskiy, Korabelnyi and Nakhimovskiy [*TsDAVOVU, F. 1, Op. 20, S. 476, Ark. 41*], but in the capital they decided that two would be enough. As a result, on February 27, 1955, deputies A. Korovchenko and M. Kulakov were elected from Stalinskiy and Korabelnyi electoral districts of Sevastopol to the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine. [*TsDAVOVU, F. 1, Op. 20, S. 485, Ark. 3–23*].

In 1956, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR received a memorandum on the work of the newly elected regional councils, and, among other things, there were statistics on Sevastopol. In 1955, public funds were spent and goods were stolen for 2.5 million rubles, fines were imposed for 20,950 people and 3,348 residents were charged with administrative offences in the city [*TsDAVOVU, F. 1, Op. 20, S. 512, Ark. 33-42*].

In addition to documentary, there are many personal evidences.

For me, a native of Sevastopol, this is more than strange. In 1955, due to the birth of your humble servant, my parents received a document with the coat of arms of the Ukrainian SSR, with the inscription “Birth Certificate” and the signatures of the workers of the Sevastopol registry office. Then I graduated from high school in Sevastopol, studying according to the programs of the Ministry of Education of the Ukrainian SSR, and received a certificate, where there was even a graph “Ukrainian Language and Literature”. At the age of 16 I received a passport of a citizen of the USSR, issued for some reason in two languages: Russian and Ukrainian (in full accordance with the Soviet constitutional norm on Union and republican citizenship). On the building of the Sevastopol City Committee of the Communist Party (since the USSR was a party state!) the following letters shone with gold: “Sevastopol City Committee of the Communist Party”. On all the plates at the entrance to the administrative buildings, there was a coat of arms of the Ukrainian SSR and inscriptions in two languages. Strange things happened in the city “that was not transferred” to Ukraine...

*Losev I. “Sverkhmaglost” srabotaet? [Will “Super-Impudence” Work?]. Den [Day], 2008. No. 169*



Fig. 15.2. Birth Certificate, issued in Sevastopol, 1964. Ukrainian language of the document form and the mention of the Crimean region deserve attention.

In general, the facts hushed up by the Russian “experts” quite clearly indicate that:

- a) **Sevastopol remained within the Crimean region before and after 1948;**
- b) **Sevastopol, along with the Crimean region was transferred to Ukraine in 1954.**

And precisely because the status of Sevastopol concerned only the plan and the budget, and otherwise it remained part of the Crimean region, there was no need to mention it additionally in the Decree and the Law on the Transfer of Crimea, just as there was no need to mention Yevpatoria, Kerch or Yalta.

By the way, all this was well understood in the RSFSR, therefore, the Resolution of the Government regulating the status of Sevastopol was, albeit not immediately, abolished.

The Council of Ministers of the RSFSR decides:

To accept the proposal of the Legal Commission under the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR on the invalidation of decisions of the Government of the RSFSR on issues of state planning in accordance with the attached list.

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR G. Voronov

Manager of the Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR M. Tupitsyn

LIST of the decisions of the Government of the RSFSR on state planning issues that have become invalid:

1. Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of June 4, 1927 On the Procedure for Planning Research Work on the Study of the Productive Forces and on the Procedure for Issuing Works of Importance for Economic Construction and not Issued due to Financial Difficulties" (Collection of Legal Documents of the RSFSR, 1927, No. 56, Art. 391).

23. Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR No. 1082 Issues of the City of Sevastopol.

*Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR No. 264 On the Repeal of Certain Decisions of the Government of the RSFSR on State Planning Issues, April 25, 1968*

#### **IV. How was the status of Sevastopol reflected in Soviet encyclopedias?**

In Soviet times, no matter how regrettable it is for today's Russian propagandists, no one made a secret either of the status of Sevastopol or of its belonging to Ukraine.

However, the reluctance to see obvious things sometimes takes comical forms.

On March 1, 1954, the official reference book SSSR. *Administrativno-territorialnoe delenie soyuznyih respublik* [USSR. Administrative-Territorial Division of the Union Republics] (eighth edition) was published. It was published by the Information and Statistics Division under the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. This reference book repeated the wording from the previous reference book word for word, moving after the Crimean region all the information about Sevastopol as a city of republican subordination from the "RSFSR" section to the "Ukrainian SSR" section. The same mistake was repeated

in the edition of the reference book of 1967. It seems obvious that, despite the official nature of this edition, the information indicated in it cannot be recognized as securing the status of Sevastopol as a city of republican subordination within Ukraine, since the said edition does not have the nature of a legal act.

*Fyodorov A. Pravovoy status Kryma. Pravovoy status Sevastopolya [The Legal Status of Crimea. The Legal Status of Sevastopol]. M., 1999. P. 30*

So, the information from the official reference books is nothing but a “mistake” because they do not coincide with the “knowingly correct” opinion of the author. On the other hand, it is true that these publications are not the legal acts and therefore do not really “secure” the Ukrainian status of Sevastopol. But they *fix* this status, secured by the relevant changes in Soviet legislation.

And do Russian “experts” seriously think that all the most authoritative publications in the Soviet Union that describe Sevastopol as a Ukrainian city were “mistaken”? Let’s see.

Sevastopol is a city in the Crimean region of the USSR.

*Kratkaya geograficheskaya entsiklopediya [Brief Geographical Encyclopedia]. M., 1962. Vol. 3. P. 436*

Sevastopol is a city in the Crimean region of the USSR.

*Sovetskaya istoricheskaya entsiklopediya [Soviet Historical Encyclopedia]. M., 1969. Vol. 12. P. 622*

Sevastopol is a city of republican subordination, a large seaport, an important industrial, scientific and cultural center of the south of Ukraine.

*Istoriya mist i sil URSSR. Krymska oblast [History of Cities and Villages of the Ukrainian SSR. Crimean Region]. K., 1974. P. 142*

Sevastopol, the city of republican subordination of the Crimean region of the Ukrainian SSR.

*Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya [Great Soviet Encyclopedia]. 3rd ed. M., 1976. Vol. 23. P. 104*

Sevastopol, the city-hero, in the Crimean region.

*Geograficheskiy entsiklopedicheskiy slovar. Geograficheskie nazvaniya [Geographical Encyclopedic Dictionary. Geographic Names]. M., 1989. P. 421*

The list can be continued, but there is no need. In a country where censorship won, the probability of an accidental mistake was minimal, and a conscious digression from the “general line” was eliminated in principle. Therefore, it is not surprising that

**all Soviet publications described Sevastopol, firstly, as a city in the Crimean region, and secondly, as a city in the Ukrainian SSR.**

But there was *not a single* Soviet book stating that Sevastopol remained part of Russia. But perhaps you know the proverb that “there are none so blind as they who will not see” that can be applied to Russian propagandists.

## **V. When was Sevastopol separated from the Crimean region?**

However, Sevastopol and Crimea still had to “break up”. This was done in 1978 with the adoption of the new Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR. According to Article 77,

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic has the following regions: Vinnytsia, Volyn, Voroshilovgrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Zaporizhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Kirovograd, Crimea, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Ternopil, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, Chernivtsi and Chernihiv.

The cities of republican subordination in the Ukrainian SSR are Kyiv and Sevastopol.

Thus, it was in 1978, and not earlier, when the status of Sevastopol as a city of republican subordination was secured in the Constitution and, therefore, became equal to the status of the Crimean region. Since that time, Crimea and Sevastopol coexisted within one peninsula as two separate administrative units.

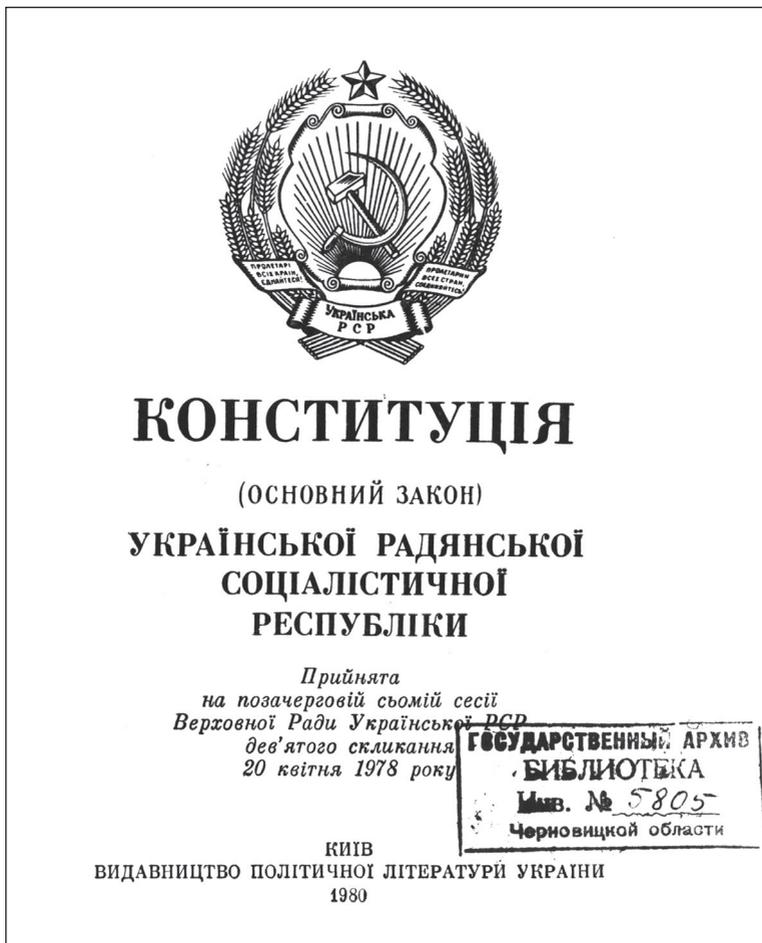


Fig. 15.3. Title page of the Constitution of the USSR of 1978

Another claim of Russian “experts”, such as S. Baburin and A. Fyodorov, is connected with the adoption of this Ukrainian Constitution. In their reasoning, in principle rejecting the very fact of the transfer of Sevastopol to Ukraine, one can find phrases like “the Ukrainian SSR finally and unilaterally extended its jurisdiction to the city of Sevastopol” and “the decision was taken unilaterally by the Ukrainian SSR without the relevant decision being taken by the constitutional authorities of the RSFSR”.

Meanwhile, however ridiculous, Ukraine did not make any “unilateral decision”. And it’s not even that Kyiv, as we have seen above, ruled Sevastopol since 1954. The situation becomes piquant due to the fact that

**the new Constitution of the RSFSR, which did not mention Crimea and Sevastopol, was adopted on April 12, 1978, and the new Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR with both administrative units—only a week later, on April 20 of the same year.**

Therefore,

**at first the new Russian republican Constitution confirmed that Moscow did not own Crimea and Sevastopol, and then the new Ukrainian republican Constitution confirmed their belonging to Ukraine.**

Therefore, there is no question of any “unilateral decision” of Kyiv.

So, in 1948, Sevastopol became a city of republican subordination of the RSFSR, but remained in the Crimean region, with which it was transferred to Ukraine in 1954. In 1978, it became an independent administrative-territorial unit, but again within the Ukrainian SSR. The RSFSR, in its turn, never made any claims either to Crimea or to Sevastopol.

## MYTH 16. CRIMEA WAS TRANSFERRED AS A “SACK OF POTATOES”

### *Intro*

The following judgment can often be heard from the lips of Russian adherents of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth. “Well,” they say, “it does not matter whether Crimea was transferred to Ukraine in 1954 legally or illegally, we will not argue. But you will not deny that the transfer was carried out within the framework of one state, the Soviet Union, will you? And since you withdrew from the USSR, is not it time to return what was received in the Soviet times?” In recent years, the Ukrainian Law on Decommunization became an additional, if one may say so, “argument” in this dispute. Cunningly screwing up their eyes, the adherents of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth ask: “Since the Soviet regime is considered criminal, why do not you correct the consequences of all of its actions: return Crimea to Russia, and Lviv to Poland? And if you demolish monuments to Lenin, maybe you will also take down Soviet factories and houses?” Well, let us consider this myth, the last one in the series of “historical”, about 1991 and the “sack of potatoes”.

### *Myth...*

In various forms, it has existed all two decades after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Here, for example, the text of 2002:

In fact, the transfer of Crimea from the RSFSR to the Ukrainian SSR was also violent, since it moved the Russian people of the peninsula from one republic of the USSR to another without asking the people’s opinion, and at first, was not a deportation as well. But in 1991, the USSR collapsed. In January 1991, the autonomy of Crimea was restored, but in the Ukrainian SSR, not the RSFSR. Thus, as early as in December 1991, after the collapse of the USSR, the Russians of Crimea found themselves not in Russia, but in Ukraine.

*Glukhov A. Pozornaya stranitsa istorii kommunisticheskoy Rossii*  
*[Shameful Page in the History of Communist Russia].*  
<http://kro-krim.narod.ru/LITERAT/KRIM2/ghuhov54.htm>

And here is the final quotation from Vladimir Putin’s Crimean speech:

People, of course, wondered why all of a sudden Crimea became part of Ukraine. But on the whole—and we must state this clearly, we all know it—this decision was treated as a kind of formality because the territory was transferred within the boundaries of a single state. Back then, it was impossible to imagine that Ukraine and Russia may split up and become two separate states. However, this happened.

Unfortunately, what seemed impossible became a reality. The USSR fell apart. It was only when Crimea ended up as part of a different country that Russia realized that it was not simply robbed, it was plundered.

At the same time, we have to admit that by launching the sovereignty parade Russia itself aided in the collapse of the Soviet Union. And as this collapse was legalized, everyone forgot about Crimea and Sevastopol—the main base of the Black Sea Fleet.

Now, many years later, I heard residents of Crimea say that back in 1991 they were handed over like a sack of potatoes. This is hard to disagree with. And what about the Russian state? What about Russia? It humbly accepted the situation. This country was going through such hard times then that realistically it was incapable of protecting its interests. However, the people could not reconcile themselves to this outrageous historical injustice.

*Putin V. Crimean speech, March 18, 2014*

So, the main theses of the myth about “Crimea is a sack of potatoes” are the following two: 1) the inclusion of the peninsula in Ukraine was, if not an illegal act, then certainly “a kind of formality” and 2) after the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Russia could not, but had to regain Crimea, and Ukraine had to give it back. We have already talked about the alleged problems with the transfer of the peninsula earlier (see Myth No. 14), so now we will concentrate on item No. 2.

### ***...and reality***

Sometimes for the purpose of manipulation, but more often because of banal ignorance, talking about a “sack of potatoes” originates from 1991. Well, they say, the Soviet Union collapsed, and all hell broke loose. In fact, it all started earlier. On June 12, 1990, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic adopted the Declaration on State Sovereignty, which proclaimed the establishment of a democratic law-based state within the renewed USSR. A month later, on July 16, a similar declaration was adopted by the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. And although both republics were formally part of one state, they began to build their own bilateral relations on a new basis. As early as on November 19, 1990, Leonid Kravchuk and Boris Yeltsin signed the

Treaty between the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR in Kyiv, Article 6 of which read:

The High Contracting Parties recognize and respect the territorial integrity of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic within the existing framework of the USSR borders.

*Treaty between the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, November 19, 1990*

Of course, this agreement confirmed the presence of Crimea in Ukraine, not in Russia, since it was precisely this fact that was fixed in the then existing Constitutions of the RSFSR and the Ukrainian SSR. So, there was no “Crimean issue” on the agenda.

Adherents of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth return that the contract was between the two Soviet republics, and after gaining independence, the situation changed. Well, the independent states also settled this issue with the help of several documents, among which:

- The Agreement on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States of 8 December 1991, which referred to the recognition and respect for the mutual territorial integrity and inviolability of existing borders within the framework of the Commonwealth;

- The Alma-Ata Declaration of December 21, 1991, which confirms this approach;

- The CIS Charter of January 22, 1993, fixing, among the interrelated and equivalent principles of relations within the CIS, the inviolability of state borders, the recognition of existing borders and the rejection of illegal territorial acquisitions, as well as the territorial integrity of states and the refusal of any actions aimed at dismemberment of another’s territory;

- The Declaration on the Observance of the Sovereignty, Territorial Integrity and Immunity of Borders of Member States of the CIS of April 15, 1994.

In response, it can be heard that Ukraine has never become a full-fledged “member” of the CIS, but has remained only a “participant”, so these provisions do not apply to it. However, this opinion is erroneous, since three out of the four mentioned documents were ratified by both Ukraine and Russia and, therefore, oblige these countries to implement the above provisions.

From 1992 to 1996, Russian parliament passed several similar resolutions, which

consistently denied the right of Ukraine to own Crimea and, separately, Sevastopol. But in all these cases, Russia simply denied the legality of the 1954 acts, and did not put forward other justifications.

Ultimately, only after the “Great” Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, concluded in 1997 and entered into force in 1999, official Moscow renounced its claims to the Crimean peninsula.

The High Contracting Parties shall build relations with each other on the basis of the principles of mutual respect, sovereign equality, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force or threat of force, including economic and other means of pressure, the right of peoples to freely dispose of their destiny, non-interference into internal affairs, observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, cooperation between states, conscientious fulfillment of international commitments, as well as other generally recognized norms of international law.

*Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, May 31, 1997*

What is noteworthy, in 2008, Vladimir Putin himself, then the Prime Minister, unequivocally spoke in favor of the Ukrainian belonging of Crimea.

Crimea is not a disputable territory. And Russia has long recognized the borders of today’s Ukraine. By and large, we have completed our talks on the border. Now we have to deal with the demarcation, but this is a technical issue. Within the society (of Crimea), complex processes are taking place. There are problems of the Crimean Tatars, the Ukrainian population, the Russian population, and, in general, the Slav population. But this is the internal political problem of Ukraine itself.

*Putin V. Interview with German TV Channel ARD, August 29, 2008.  
[www.archive.premier.gov.ru/events/pressconferences/1758/](http://www.archive.premier.gov.ru/events/pressconferences/1758/)*

Many other high-ranking Russian politicians expressed themselves in the same vein. Sergey Lavrov, the chief of the foreign policy department, was quite unambiguous in 2011.

Presidents Yeltsin, Putin, Medvedev consistently spoke about the status of Crimea. Each of us can have reminiscences, nostalgic memories, but any responsible politician and

any normal person living in Russia or in any other country should understand that the resuscitation of the question of Crimea's belonging means blood. And no one needs this.

*Lavrov S. [interview]. Ekho Moskvyy [Echo of Moscow], June 5, 2011*

How much their rhetoric has changed after the annexation of Crimea! But let us get back to our myth.

So, firstly, in 1991, the peninsula was not transferred anywhere, either as a sack, or in any other way, since by that time it had already been in Ukraine for almost four decades, no matter what the adherents of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth say about the events of 1954.

Secondly, its belonging to Ukraine was fixed in the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR in 1978, and Ukraine itself was recognized in this composition by the RSFSR under the 1990 agreement. So Russia did not “forget” anything during the collapse of the USSR.

Thirdly, the statements of the Russian parliament in 1992–1996 about the “non-Ukrainian Crimea” were exclusively unilateral documents. The peninsula's belonging was not contested in any bilateral agreements between Kyiv and Moscow. As you could read above, not so long ago the Russian leadership publicly disowned Crimea, and only after the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich took its words back. It is interesting that the annexation of the peninsula has led to the violation of more than 400 interstate, intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements between Russia and Ukraine, in which the Ukrainian region figured one way or another [*Zadorozhniy O. Aneksiya Krymu—mizhnarodnyi zlochyn [Annexation of Crimea is an International Crime]. K., 2015. P. 420*].

Well, and the most important fact that the Russian propagandists are constantly “shy” about is that on December 1, 1991, most Crimeans voted in support of the independence of Ukraine, which legitimized the sovereignty of the new state in the territory of the peninsula.

ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО РЕЗУЛЬТАТИ ВСЬУКРАЇНСЬКОГО РЕФЕРЕНДУМУ І грудня 1991 року													
№ п/п	Автономна республіка, області і міста	Загальна кількість ділянок для голосування	Кількість громадян, які вносили до списку для голосування		Кількість громадян, які брали участь в голосуванні		Кількість громадян, які взяли участь в голосуванні за незалежність України		Кількість громадян, які брали участь в голосуванні за незалежність України		Кількість бюлетенів, вказаних на незалежність		
			абс.	%	абс.	%	абс.	%	абс.	%	абс.	%	
1.	Кримська АРСР	1,186	1,535,154	1,039,443	67,7	1,036,190	67,50	561,496	54,19	437,505	42,22	37,187	3,59
2.	Вінницька	1,582	1,424,110	1,303,081	91,51	1,301,765	91,41	1,242,244	95,43	39,387	3,03	20,134	1,55
3.	Волинська	1,152	762,872	711,690	93,31	710,969	93,20	684,634	96,32	16,299	2,29	9,856	1,39
4.	Дніпропетровська	1,856	2,877,974	2,358,052	81,94	2,354,169	81,80	2,127,089	90,36	181,529	7,71	45,551	1,93
5.	Донецька	2,636	3,854,440	2,962,092	76,84	2,957,372	76,73	2,461,157	83,30	372,157	12,58	04,058	3,52
6.	Житомирська	1,438	1,105,023	1,001,671	90,59	1,000,426	90,53	950,976	95,06	35,798	3,58	13,651	1,36
7.	Закарпатська	732	856,687	711,974	83,11	710,286	82,91	657,678	92,59	31,891	4,49	20,717	2,92
8.	Запорізька	1,207	1,553,858	1,254,422	80,71	1,252,226	80,59	1,135,271	90,66	91,929	7,34	25,025	2,00
9.	Івано-Франківська	966	1,019,145	976,399	95,81	975,656	95,73	960,281	96,42	10,028	1,03	5,346	0,55
10.	Київська	1,360	1,430,507	1,261,128	88,13	1,259,129	88,02	1,202,773	95,52	36,086	2,87	20,270	1,61
11.	Кіровоградська	978	924,050	815,097	88,21	813,833	88,07	764,053	93,88	35,613	4,38	14,167	1,73
12.	Луганська	1,505	2,085,931	1,685,751	80,84	1,682,344	80,65	1,410,694	83,86	4225,589	13,41	45,861	1,74
13.	Львівська	2,083	2,011,261	1,917,419	95,34	1,915,597	95,24	1,866,921	97,46	35,671	1,86	13,076	0,68
14.	Миколаївська	918	973,309	819,803	84,24	818,538	84,10	732,179	89,45	66,858	8,17	19,501	2,38
15.	Одеська	1,763	1,882,610	1,418,028	75,34	1,412,228	75,01	1,205,755	85,38	163,831	11,60	42,642	3,02
16.	Полтавська	1,328	1,313,588	1,207,905	91,91	1,206,801	91,87	1,145,639	94,33	44,308	3,67	16,854	1,40
17.	Рівненська	963	814,246	757,713	93,06	757,151	92,99	726,575	95,96	19,369	2,56	11,207	1,48
18.	Сумська	1,130	1,072,639	949,541	88,54	948,278	88,41	878,196	92,61	46,479	4,90	23,601	2,49
19.	Тернопільська	1,173	861,647	837,125	97,13	836,667	97,10	825,525	98,67	6,565	0,78	4,576	0,55
20.	Харківська	1,771	2,377,159	1,802,516	75,83	1,798,977	75,68	1,559,065	86,33	187,631	10,43	58,281	3,24
21.	Херсонська	739	909,691	759,734	83,61	753,843	83,40	679,451	90,13	54,246	7,20	20,144	2,67
22.	Хмельницька	1,663	1,133,350	1,059,750	93,51	1,059,021	93,44	1,019,813	96,30	27,743	2,62	11,465	1,06
23.	Черкаська	1,076	1,154,455	1,042,730	90,32	1,040,371	90,17	999,603	95,03	28,703	2,76	13,665	1,22
24.	Чернівецька	549	668,781	586,671	87,74	586,377	87,68	544,022	92,78	24,226	4,13	18,129	3,09
25.	Чернігівська	1,111	1,068,152	970,519	90,86	969,638	90,78	908,904	93,74	39,774	4,10	20,960	2,16
26.	м. Київ	926	1,913,692	1,540,966	80,52	1,537,585	80,36	1,428,001	92,88	81,246	5,28	28,338	1,84
27.	м. Севастополь	302	307,024	196,600	64,03	195,668	63,74	111,671	57,07	77,091	39,39	6,926	3,54
Всього по Україні		34,093	37,885,335	31,943,820	84,32	31,691,742	84,18	26,804,071	90,32	2,417,554	7,58	670,117	2,10

Fig. 16. Records of the all-Ukrainian referendum on December 1, 1991. More than 54% of Crimeans and 57% of Sevastopol residents voted for the independence of Ukraine.

In general, official Moscow has consistently recognized Crimea as Ukrainian since 1990, Crimeans agreed to live in the independent Ukraine in 1991, and all talks about a “sack of potatoes” is nothing more than an attempt of the Kremlin to justify aggression against a neighboring state.

## **AFTERWORD. THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA AS AN OBJECT OF MYTH-MAKING**

As it was shown in this book, the falsification of the history of Crimea is a very important tool of modern Russian politics. The so-called “historical arguments” are used mainly in the absence of legal arguments. But from the point of view of the adherents of the “Crimea-is-ours” myth themselves, the past of the peninsula is also a coveted trophy, for which you can go for a crime. I can not help sharing the text of one of the most famous Russian nationalists, Yegor Kholmogorov, who openly describes all the benefits of Russia since this “acquisition”.

In 2014, Russian history not only renewed its current, but also at one stroke extended itself by 20 centuries. Having regained Crimea, Russia has regained several millennia of its past, important not only in itself, as an interesting memorial object, but also for determining our status in Europe and the world.

Europe is obliquely crossed from the northwest to the southeast by an invisible line. This is the line of the ancient Roman Limes, the border of the Empire. On one side of this border is culture, a true ancient history, on the other hand—barbarism. The place occupied by a tiny site of ancient Vindobona excavated by archaeologists in the center of the magnificent imperial Vienna shows how important for the symbolic marking of the “quality” of space even the most worthless ancient ruin can be. At Michaelplatz, next to the Hofburg Palace, where the Habsburgs, former hosts of half of Europe, lived, where the magnificent crown of Charlemagne and other insignia of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation are stored, there is an inset made in the pavement, where you can see neither remarkable nor outstanding Roman ruins. But, in a sense, these ruins weigh more than the crown of the barbarian emperor.

In 1991, Russia was practically cut off from its antiquity. There were only small remains preserved near the Sea of Azov and in the North Caucasus—Phanagoria (where Putin caught amphorae), Tanais, but it was a dull periphery of the ancient world. And then this myth was enough to model the legend of the foundation of Russia by the Argonauts at the Games in Sochi.

Returning Crimea, we, from the barbarian periphery, from the outskirts, find ourselves in the most boiling center of the ancient and Byzantine world, becoming its full participants. And dissatisfied Western neighbors discover that our history is no longer a pathetic stump of a millennium, but can compete with their history both in duration and in

saturation with events. If earlier in Russia there were only cities that are a thousand years younger than the cities of the center of the West European nucleus—Ile de France, now we are suddenly 600 years older. It's hard not to get mad at us.

*Kholmogorov Y. Priobreteniya 2014 goda: 2000 let istorii [Acquisitions of 2014: 2000 Years of History]. Sputnik i pogrom [Satellite and Pogrom], December 31, 2014*

So, in 2014, not only the Crimean peninsula was stolen from Ukraine (and in a sense from the whole world). The thousand-year history, which became for Russia another symbol of its imperial status, was stolen from our country (and in a sense from the whole world). Little wonder that this “symbol” will be given a corresponding, albeit fake, brilliance by efforts of court propagandists and historians.

From a strictly scientific point of view, the history of Crimea ended in 1991, and everything that happened later is already the present. But it would be naive to think that with the collapse of the Soviet Union the Crimean myth-making also ceased—the difference is that now its object is not the past, but the present. And at the time of the annexation, the propaganda absurdities that the Kremlin had been replicating for several decades suddenly turned into “respectable” explanations and justifications for this annexation. And although full study of the Crimean events of 2014 is the subject of a separate study, it is impossible not to mention at least in a few words the main arguments that Russia used to try to legitimize its aggression.

*Russian language and culture were oppressed in Crimea, and Russia came to the aid of its compatriots.* According to the results of the last legal census of 2001, 60% of respondents in Crimea and Sevastopol called themselves Russians, Ukrainians—24%, Crimean Tatars—10%. But at the same time 77% of the inhabitants of the region stated that Russian was their mother tongue. Russian language reigned supreme in the streets and in outdoor advertising.

The use of Russian in Crimea has never been restricted by law. On the contrary, according to Art. 10 of the Constitution of the ARC “The Russian language as the language of the majority of the population in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and acceptable for interethnic communication is used in all spheres of public life”, according to Art. 11, “passport, work record book, education certificates, birth certificate, marriage certificate and others are executed in the Ukrainian and Russian languages”. At the same time, in order to obtain a document in the Crimean Tatar language, it was necessary to file a special petition with the authorities. According to

Art. 12 of the Constitution, Russian can be used as a language of legal proceedings and notariate, and according to Art. 13, Russian can be used at the choice of a citizen in all spheres of service. Needless to say that it was always chosen. By the way, the first speech in the Verkhovna Rada of the ARC in the language of the Crimean Tatars was held only in 2012.

In Crimea, by 2013, 89.4% of schoolchildren received education in Russian, while 7.4% and 3.1% received education in Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar, respectively. Of nearly 600 schools in Crimea at the time of its capture by Russia, only 15 were with the Crimean Tatar language of training and only 4—with the Ukrainian language. 11 out of more than 500 preschool institutions were Ukrainian-speaking, and only one institution provided education in Crimean Tatar.

In the Crimean universities, only 5% of the disciplines were taught in Ukrainian, the rest were taught in Russian. The share of university students who studied exclusively in Russian was 83.1% for the ARC, and 86.7% for Sevastopol. For technical schools and colleges, this indicator was 94.5% in the ARC, and 100% in Sevastopol. Only two higher educational institutions of Crimea trained teachers of the Crimean Tatar language and literature.

More than 80% of printed media were published exclusively in Russian, and only one newspaper was completely Ukrainian-speaking, namely Krymska Svitlytsya (Crimean Parlor). Only 7% of TV programs on the Crimean state television were issued in the Crimean Tatar language. A similar situation was observed in other areas.

Consequently, there was no and there could be no oppression of Russians on the basis of language and culture.

*The Maidan led to the overthrow of the legitimate authorities and the arrival of the “junta”, to which Russia had no obligations.* The Maidan was not a revolution to the same extent that it was—the president fled and the executive branch fell, but the legislative branch remained, namely, the Verkhovna Rada approved international agreements with Russia on the inviolability of borders. But even if it were not so, treaties are still concluded between states, and not between authorities, so that even a “full-fledged” revolution, like the French one in 1789, does not automatically lead to their abolition. If Russia really believed that as a result of the Maidan a new state arose in Ukraine, it was to begin establishing diplomatic relations with it from scratch, and at the same time to renegotiate all treaties. But Ukraine even after 2014 remained the

same subject of international relations as before the Maidan.

And to preserve diplomatic relations, but not to recognize the inviolability of borders is an ordinary hypocrisy.

*Russian troops defended the Crimeans from the “fascist threat” from the Maidan. If not for them, Crimea would share the fate of Donbas.* Here there is a classical manipulation, when cause and effect change places. There were no “fascists” in the Maidan; right-wing radicals, which are extremely “popular” in the Russian media, have always been a political minority in Ukraine, as evidenced by the results of the 2014 parliamentary elections. Svoboda won 4.7% of the vote, Right Sector—1.8%, so it is natural that factions of these political forces did not appear in the Verkhovna Rada.

And the war in Donbas was exactly the result of the annexation of Crimea, when Russian mercenaries managed to seduce Ukrainian separatists and irredentists with promises of rapid integration into Russia. If the Russian Federation had not seized Crimea, it would never have occurred to anyone in Donetsk with Lugansk, or Kharkiv with Odesa, to violate the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

And the most important argument—the Ukrainian Government controls 93% of the country, and there are no “horrors of the bloody junta” (according to the Russian propagandists). Nothing would have threatened Crimea, if the Russian army had not entered it, as nothing has threatened Crimeans for the last 25 years. Combat operations are conducted only in those areas that the Russian military helps the Ukrainian militants to keep.

*Crimea repeated the fate of Kosovo.* Apart from the fact that the Albanians were the majority in Kosovo, and the Russians—in Crimea, there is nothing in common in these cases. The Kosovars fought for independence with weapons in their hands for 10 years, while the Crimean Russians became skilled only in mastering the money allocated from Moscow. Also, the Serbian army and police applied force to suppress Kosovars; nothing of the kind was recorded in Crimea.

In addition, Albanians in Kosovo are building their own, albeit partially recognized, state, while the so-called “Republic of Crimea”, not having existed for two days, decided to “join” Russia.

Yes, Kosovo at the time of proclamation of independence was also occupied by foreign troops, but it was a multinational contingent of NATO, and none of the countries

of the alliance claimed to this territory. Russian troops were directly interested in the “independence” of Crimea and its “entry” into the Russian Federation.

*The Crimeans had the right to self-determination, implemented in the referendum.* Strictly speaking, “Crimeans” (in the politico-geographical sense) exercised their right to self-determination, firstly, on January 20, 1991, when they voted for the restoration of the autonomy of the peninsula, and secondly, on December 1 of the same year, when they voted for Ukraine’s independence. And the autonomy of Crimea was preserved in the new state. From the ethnic point of view, only Crimean Tatars, Karaites and Krymchaks, who are the indigenous peoples of the peninsula, can demand self-determination, while Russians, Ukrainians and other peoples already have their own national states outside Crimea.

As for the events of March 16, 2014, they can be called an all-Crimean carnival, flash mob or otherwise, but not a referendum. Firstly, after the Russian occupation and capture of administrative buildings, there are no legitimate authorities that can announce, organize and hold a referendum remained in Crimea. The Council of Ministers of the ARC has been illegitimate since February 27, 2014, as Crimean deputies voted for it literally at Russian rifle point and in violation of the norms of Ukrainian legislation. The Verkhovna Rada of the ARC has been illegitimate de facto since February 27, and de jure since March 15, having been dissolved by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. In addition, the Central Election Commission of Ukraine did not create any bodies to hold a referendum in Crimea, and also blocked the access to the voters register in the peninsula. Secondly, at that time there was no legislative base for holding local referenda. And thirdly, according to Art. 73 of the Constitution, “Only the all-Ukrainian referendum resolves questions about changing the territory of Ukraine”.

And the words of Vladimir Putin himself, told on April 17, 2014, can become the icing on the cake: “of course, our servicemen stood up behind the back of the self-defense forces of Crimea. They acted very correctly, but... resolutely and professionally. There was just no other way to hold a referendum in an open, fair, dignified manner and help people express their opinions.”

And that’s why, by the way, the statements of some Russian politicians about holding the so-called “repeated fair referendum” in Crimea are meaningless, as there was simply no “first referendum”.

*Most Crimeans were for joining Russia.* According to official results, 96.77% of the voters supported “joining” of Crimea to Russia at the turnout of 83.1%, and in Sevastopol 95.6% of the electors voted for “joining” to Russia with the turnout of 89.5%. Since the so-called “referendum” was conducted in the conditions of open Russian occupation, there are no grounds not only to recognize, but even to trust its “results”. Therefore, the question if the Crimeans really supported “joining” to Russia remains controversial.

Certainly, some of the inhabitants of the peninsula, especially ethnic Russians or immigrants from Russia, have always supported this idea, but their number has never been particularly high. In 1994, 58 out of 100 deputies in the Crimean parliament were expressly pro-Russian (55—Bloc “Rossiya” [Russia], 2—Russkaya Partiya Kryma [Russian Party of Crimea], 1—Russkaya Obshchina Kryma [Russian Community of Crimea]). In 1998, 6 deputies (5—Party “Soyuz”[Union], 1—Russkaya Obshchina Kryma [Russian Community of Crimea]). In 2002, 5 deputies (2—Party “Za Rus yedinuyu” [For One Rus], 2—Party “Russko-ukrainskiy soyuz” [Russian-Ukrainian Union], 1—Party “Soyuz”[Union]). In 2006, 23 deputies (12—Party “Soyuz”[Union], 9—Party “Russkiy blok” [Russian Bloc], 2—Party “Russko-ukrainskiy soyuz” [Russian-Ukrainian Union]). In 2010, 8 deputies (5—Party “Soyuz”[Union], 3—Party “Russkoe yedinstvo” [Russian Unity]). So, we can see a gradual and steady decline in the popularity of the “Russian idea” in the political space.

According to the research of the Razumkov Center in 2008, 63.8% of the inhabitants of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and 72.4% of Sevastopol residents expressed their support for the Crimea’s withdrawal from Ukraine and its joining to Russia. Quarterly reports of the United Nations Development Program in Crimea indicate a decrease in the share of supporters of joining Crimea to Russia from 70% to 65% from 2009 to 2011. But as soon as the respondents were asked the otherwise formulated question about the optimal status of Crimea, the picture of the answers also dramatically changed: only 43–45% favored becoming a constituent entity of the Russian Federation, and 26–32% voted for maintaining autonomy within Ukraine. According to the Research&Branding Group, the number of Crimeans who favor the Ukrainian status of Crimea for the first time exceeded the number of supporters of the Russian status in the ratio of 40% against 38% in 2012. Polls of the Gallup Institute recorded a decrease of the proportion of supporters of the transfer of Crimea from

Ukraine to Russia among Crimeans from 33% in October 2011 to 23% in May 2013. According to the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 36% of Crimeans favored the unification of Ukraine with Russia in 2013, and 41% in February 2014. Such growth can easily be explained by the strengthening of Russian propaganda, which resonated with the anti-Maidan rhetoric of local authorities.

The electoral activity of the Crimeans in general elections was traditionally not high. In 1999, 51.2% of electors voted for Petro Symonenko at a turnout of 64%; in 2004, 81.5% of electors voted for Viktor Yanukovych at a turnout of 73%; in 2010, 78.2% of electors again voted for him at a turnout of 69%. At the parliamentary and, especially, local elections the turnout was even lower. At the same time, during the so-called “referendum” (alleged turnout of 83%), there were recorded “activity peaks” characteristic for falsifications, impossible discrepancies in the dynamics of voting, issuance of ballots by Russian citizens, and in Sevastopol, the turnout was 123%. There is an opinion that from 50% to 60% of electors voted for “joining” to Russia with a turnout of 30–50%.

Thus, there is no reason to state that the majority of Crimeans really favored joining Russia and supported annexation.

*Russia did not implement the “annexation”, since Crimea already became an independent state.* Firstly, as part of the unitary Ukraine, the ARC did not have the right to withdraw unilaterally, and any changes to the country’s territory should be approved exclusively by an all-Ukrainian referendum. Secondly, since the seizure of administrative buildings by Russian troops, no decisions of local authorities can be considered voluntary and independent and, as a consequence, legitimate. And, thirdly, any independence must go through the process of not only internal, but also external legitimization, that is, recognition by other states. No country in the world, except Russia, recognized the “Republic of Crimea”, nor does the overwhelming majority of states recognize Crimea as part of the Russian Federation.

*The West will sooner or later recognize Russian sovereignty over Crimea.* No matter how much you utter this calming mantra, it will not become more real. The annexation of Crimea became the first in Europe since the Second World War, which was supposed to stop similar phenomena. Recognition of the annexation of Crimea automatically annihilates the world order that arose after the War, and opens the floodgates for a massive force revision of existing borders. None of the seven world

annexations since 1945 has ever been recognized, and in most cases the aggressor has already retreated.

In general, Russian propaganda creates a “parallel reality” in which, after the “Fascist putsch” in the Maidan, Crimeans, “being in danger”, at the “referendum” supported the “independence” of Crimea, which then “entered” into Russia. This set of myths leaves no room for actual Russian aggression and occupation of the peninsula, does not mention the violation of international, Ukrainian and Russian law [Marusyak O. *Aneksiya Krymu Rosiyskoyu Federatsiyeyu yak zlochyn agresii proty Ukrainy: mizhnarodno-pravovi aspekty* [The Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation as a Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine: International and Legal Aspects]. Chernivtsi, 2016], and ignores the real opinion of the inhabitants of Crimea, most of which did not support annexation. This myth about the Crimean Spring fulfills the same role as the more general “Crimea-is-ours” myth, of which it is a part, that justifies the Russian annexation of the peninsula. Alas, many people around the world, philistines, journalists and politicians, believe in this myth and support the actions of the Kremlin. And that is why the Ukrainian struggle against Russian political mythmaking is an important condition for the very existence of our country.

## SUMMARY

The myth of «Crimea-is-ours» (in Russian Krym nash) is a political myth encompassing a system of false historical concepts meant to validate Russia's exclusive right to possess Crimea.

The myth's origins date back to the last third of the 18th century when Russia justified the return of Crimea to the Christian roots at Chersonesus through the elimination of the Crimean Khanate and the annexation of its territory. Russia perpetuated the myth in the mid-nineteenth century when they were traumatized by losing the Crimean War, and they hid their losses behind the narrative of the «heroic defense of Sevastopol». The Russians formed the most significant part of the myth after the 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars. They created a myth that Crimean Tatars collaborated with the German Nazis and deserted the frontline. The myth has taken its final shape in the late 20th century as Russian politicians attempted to revise the Ukrainian status of Crimea. After the peninsula's annexation in 2014, Russian claims that form the «Crimea-is-ours» myth were used to justify Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The false historical concepts forming the myth fall under the three categories. The first is the myths of «Russian Crimea», namely «Crimea is an originally Russian land», «Crimea has always belonged to Russia», «Crimea is a spiritual source and primary baptismal font of Russia», «Chersonesus is Sevastopol» and «Sevastopol is the city of the Russian glory». Russia's goal is to draw the succession line from the times of Prince Vladimir the Great and the times of Vladimir Putin.

The second category is the myths vilifying the Crimean Tatars. «Crimean Tatars are not the indigenous people in Crimea», «The Greeks are the most ancient indigenous people of Crimea», «Crimean Tatars deserted the Red Army en masse», «Crimean Tatars are a traitor people», «The deportation saved Crimean Tatars» and «Russians suffered from repressions more than Crimean Tatars». These claims call into doubt the rights of the Crimean Tatars to have a say on the peninsula's fate.

The third group is the myths of the so-called «Ukrainian cycle»: «Crimea has nothing to do with Ukraine», «Khrushchev presented Crimea as a gift to Ukraine», «Crimea was transferred to Ukraine illegally», «Sevastopol was not transferred to

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Ukraine», and «Crimea was transferred as a sack of potatoes». The task of these myths is to undermine the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government at the peninsula.

After February 2014 a myth of the «Crimean spring» started forming in the modern Russian discourse. It is an immediate sequel to the «Crimea-is-ours» myth meant to justify Russian occupation and annexation of the peninsula. According to the myth, residents of Crimea voluntarily supported Crimea's incorporation into the Russian Federation in a so-called referendum, which was illegally conducted after Russia's military invasion into Crimea and seizure of the Crimean parliament. Public institution employees were forced to vote under a threat to be fired. Only two options were offered: Crimea to be separated from Ukraine, and Crimea to be part of Russia.

Contrary to the opinion of some «academic» historians one of the pillars of Ukraine's national security is combating Russian political myth-making.

## РЕЗЮМЕ

Міф про «КримНаш» – політичний міф, що являє собою систему помилкових історичних концепцій і покликаний обґрунтувати виключне право Росії на володіння Кримом.

Основи Міфу було закладено в останній третині XVIII століття для виправдання ліквідації Кримського ханства та анексії його території нібито поверненням до християнських коренів Росії в Херсонесі. Наступний етап розвитку Міфу – середина XIX століття, коли травма від поразки в Кримській війні була витіснена героїзацією «оборони Севастополя». Основну частину Міфу було сформовано після депортації кримських татар у 1944 році для виправдання цього злочину нібито їхнім масовим дезертирством і колабораціонізмом. І остаточного вигляду Міф набув наприкінці XX століття внаслідок спроб російських політиків переглянути український статус Криму. Після анексії півострова у 2014 році положення Міфу про «КримНаш» російська пропаганда використовує для виправдання агресивної політики Москви.

Помилкові історичні концепції, що утворюють Міф, становлять три групи. До першої входять міфи про «російський Крим»: «Крим – це споконвічно російська земля», «Крим завжди належав Росії», «Крим – «духовне джерело» й «первинна купіль» Росії», «Херсонес – це Севастополь» і «Севастополь – «місто російської слави». Їхнє призначення – провести лінію спадковості між часами Володимира Великого і Володимира Путіна.

Другу групу становлять міфи, покликані дискредитувати кримських татар: «Кримські татари – не корінний народ у Криму», «Греки – найдавніший корінний народ Криму», «Кримські татари масово дезертирували з Червоної армії», «Кримські татари – «народ-зрадник», «Депортація була порятунком для кримських татар», «Від репресій росіяни постраждали більше за кримських татар». Ці тези ставлять під сумнів право кримських татар брати участь у вирішенні долі півострова.

Третя група – міфи «українського циклу»: «Крим не має до України жодного відношення», «Хрущов подарував Крим Україні», «Крим передали Україні незаконно», «Севастополь не передавали Україні», «Крим передали

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як «мішок картоплі». Завдання цих міфів – підірвати легітимність української влади на півострові.

Після лютого 2014 року в сучасному російському дискурсі почалося формування Міфу про «Кримську весну» – безпосереднього продовження Міфу про «КримНаш», – що виправдовує російську окупацію та анексію півострова. Згідно з цим Міфом кримчани добровільно на «референдумі» підтримали «входження» Криму до складу Росії.

Всупереч думці деяких «академічних» істориків, боротьба з російською політичною міфотворчістю є однією з основ національної безпеки України.

## РЕЗЮМЕ

Миф про «КрымНаш» – политический миф, представляющий собой систему ложных исторических концепций и призванный обосновать исключительное право России на обладание Крымом.

Основы Мифа были заложены в последней трети XVIII века для оправдания ликвидации Крымского ханства и аннексии его территории якобы возвратом к христианским корням России в Херсонесе. Следующий этап развития Мифа – середина XIX века, когда травма от поражения в Крымской войне была вытеснена героизацией «обороны Севастополя». Основная часть Мифа была сформирована после депортации крымских татар в 1944 году для оправдания этого преступления якобы их массовым дезертирством и коллаборационизмом. И окончательный вид Миф приобрел в конце XX века вследствие попыток российских политиков пересмотреть украинский статус Крыма. После аннексии полуострова в 2014 году положения Мифа про «КрымНаш» используются российской пропагандой для оправдания агрессивной политики Москвы.

Образующие Миф ложные исторические концепции составляют три группы. В первую входят мифы о «русском Крыме»: «Крым – это исконно русская земля», «Крым всегда принадлежал России», «Крым – «духовный исток» и «первичная купель» России», «Херсонес – это Севастополь» и «Севастополь – «город русской славы». Их назначение – протянуть линию преемственности между временами Владимира Великого и Владимира Путина.

Вторую группу составляют мифы, очерняющие крымских татар: «Крымские татары – не коренной народ в Крыму», «Греки – древнейший коренной народ Крыма», «Крымские татары массово дезертировали из Красной армии», «Крымские татары – «народ-предатель», «Депортация была спасением для крымских татар», «От репрессий русские пострадали больше крымских татар». Эти тезисы ставят под сомнение право крымских татар участвовать в решении судьбы полуострова.

Третья группа – мифы «украинского цикла»: «Крым не имеет к Украине никакого отношения», «Хрущев подарил Крым Украине», «Крым передали Украине незаконно», «Севастополь не передавали Украине», «Крым передали как

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«мешок картошки». Задача этих мифов – подорвать легитимность украинской власти на полуострове.

После февраля 2014 года в современном российском дискурсе началось формирование Мифа о «Крымской весне» – непосредственного продолжения Мифа про «КрымНаш», – оправдывающего российскую оккупацию и аннексию полуострова. Согласно этому Мифу, крымчане добровольно на «референдуме» поддержали «вхождение» Крыма в состав России.

Вопреки мнению некоторых «академических» историков, борьба с российским политическим мифотворчеством является одной из основ национальной безопасности Украины.













Научно-популярное издание

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Громенко С. В.  
**#КрымНаш.**  
**История российского мифа**

(на английском языке)

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Автор книги (текст, подбор иллюстраций) С. В. Громенко

Подписано к печати 05.12.2017. Формат 64x90/32.

Печать офсетная. Усл. печ. л. 7,47.

Тираж 1000 экз.

ООО «ИФ «Афиша»».

79005, г. Львов, просп. Т. Г. Шевченко, 16.

Тел./факс: (032) 297-14-27, 297-05-37

Свидетельство о внесении субъекта издательского дела в Государственный реестр издателей, изготовителей и распространителей издательской продукции, серия ДК № 2146 от 1.04.2005 г.

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**При поддержке Министерства информационной политики Украины**

Информационный партнер:

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#Crimea Has Nothing to Do With Ukraine

#Chersonese Is Sevastopol

#Russians suffered from repressions more than Crimean Tatars



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The author of the books Stepý, morze i góry: Polskie puteshestvenniki kontsa XVIII – nachala XX veka o Kryme [Stepy, Morze i Góry: Polish Travelers of the End of the 18th—the Beginning of the 20th Century about Crimea] (Simferopol, 2011) and 500 Bitv za Krym [500 Battles for Crimea] (Kyiv, 2016) and a significant number of articles on Crimean history and modernity.

“The annexation of Crimea that caused the largest political crisis in Europe since the Second World War at the same time spurred the unprecedented flowering of political mythology. In 2014, a large number of separate myths and falsified facts gave rise to the so-called CrimealsOurs Myth designed to justify the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation in the eyes of the world. Is Crimea really the original Russian land? Is it true that the Crimean Tatars are all traitors? Was the peninsula really integrated into Ukraine illegally? And what, after all, were the events of February–March 2014—the occupation of Crimea or the “restoration of historical justice”? You will learn all this if you read this book to the end.”

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#Sevastopol Is the “City of Russian Glory”

#Deportation Was a Rescue for the Crimean Tatars