

# **CRIMEAN TATAR'S DISCRIMINATION AFTER RUSSIA'S ANNEXATION**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis discusses the current situation of Crimean Tatars, namely the new challenges that they face after Russia's annexation in 2014. The description of problems, namely discrimination in different aspects, repressions, and violation of their rights are analyzed in this paper. Also, it is significant to understand how this discrimination can affect the lives of Crimean Tatars and the consequences of this.

The repressive measures towards Crimean Tatars have not occurred for the first time. One of the historically massive disasters for them was mass deportation under Stalin. This historical period played a significant tragic role in the collective memory of Crimean Tatars. Despite all difficulties and challenges that Crimean Tatars experienced, they could save their national identity, its common elements, and fighting for survival.

After Russia's annexation, the context has obtained the similarities as it occurred in the past under Stalin. The assimilation of Crimean Tatars on the one hand and discrimination of their rights, on the other hand, is one of the essential and actual problems which should be discussed in this academic work. Apart from this, the comparable and similar patterns between two areas (the historical and current) are one of the issues, which are analyzed in this thesis.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Research Question .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Literature review .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.       <i>Theoretical Framework</i> .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1.1.       Collective Memory .....	12
1.2.       The Ethno-symbolic approach of Nationalism theory .....	12
1.3.       Theory of Forced Assimilation .....	14
1.4.       The Theory of Homeland Orientation and Myths of Return.....	16
<b>2.       <i>The beginning of Russian conquest. Russian-Tatars relations</i> .....</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1.       Crimean Tatar's nationalism .....	21
2.2.       The beginning of Russian-Crimean Tatar tensions.....	26
2.3.       Comparative analysis of annexation by the Ottoman Empire and Russia .....	30
<b>3.       <i>Deportation - the national tragedy. Destruction of the Crimean Tatar Nation</i>.....</b>	<b>33</b>
3.1.       The process of rebirth and return home .....	39
3.2.       Crimean Tatar's context since 1991 .....	47
3.3.       Crimea as an autonomous region within the territory of Ukraine.....	49
<b>4.       <i>Crimean Tatar's context after Russia's annexation in 2014</i>.....</b>	<b>55</b>
4.1.       The historical policy of Crimea's annexation .....	55
4.2.       Crimean Tatars under Russia. The new threats and challenges .....	58
<b>5.       <i>Discrimination of Crimean Tatars</i> .....</b>	<b>61</b>
5.1.       Discrimination of language .....	61
5.2.       Discrimination of religion .....	63
5.3.       Discrimination of Mejlis as a self-governing body of Crimean Tatars.....	64
5.4.       Violation of the freedoms of expression and the media.....	65
5.5.       Violations of the freedom of movement of minorities.....	66
5.6.       Property rights of the Crimean repatriates .....	67
<b>6.       <i>Comparative analysis between Stalin and Putin policies</i> .....</b>	<b>69</b>
6.1.       Genocide and Forced mass population methods of Stalin .....	69
6.2.       Assimilation or integration methods of Putin .....	74
6.3.       Understanding the parallels between Stalinism and Putinism policies towards the Crimean Tatars. Finding out the motives, ideas, and outcomes.....	79
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>87</b>

## Introduction

Discrimination of Crimean Tatars by Russia has profound historical roots that serve as a basis for the foundation of the contemporary conflict. Thereby, it would be reasonable to detect the existence of modern problems with historical background. Historically Crimean Tatars were oppressed and discriminated against being one of the primary victims of Stalin's policy. Deportation in 1944 became the peak of the whole tragedy in the history of Crimean Tatars people. These historic events could be considered as one of the parts of ethnic cleansings policy by the Soviet authorities. Collective memory, historical connection with the Ottoman Empire, religion, language are significant elements of Crimean Tatars that made their national identity more powerful. Historically, they were undergone the policy repressions that were the main political target of the Soviet Government. The mass deportation and genocide are considered as the main methods of elimination by Stalin. This policy led to the massive disaster for Tatars, reducing their number, and putting them away from their homeland. Nowadays, Crimean Tatars' case after Russia's annexation reminds the same situation that occurred during Stalin's period. Since the language and religion of Crimean Tatars are the main elements of their nationalism, the Russian authorities attempt to prohibit them on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula. Thus, from my perspective, the current situation and discrimination towards Crimean Tatars could be considered as the violation policy, which was implemented under Stalin throughout the Soviet period. Also, from my perspective, current Russian authorities attempt to use the neo-Stalinist model towards Tatars, making them less potent on the ethnonational level. Assimilation, integration, and Russification of Crimean Tatars trace on the cultural level can be considered as a significant part of Putin's policy. In other words, discrimination of language and religion can also be considered as cultural genocide that can destroy them spiritually. The methods of Stalin and Putin are different.

However, I consider the ideas and purposes of eliminating Crimean Tatars as a nation have identical patterns.

Comparative analysis between the historical and current cases in the issue of discrimination, assimilation, Russification, and violation of human rights will be analyzed in this academic work. I consider that there are certain similarities between the historical (Stalin period) and current (Putin) period in the policy implemented towards the Crimean Tatars and motives of eliminating are identical. Thereby, I will do research by making a comparative analysis between Stalin and Putin period, researching two different methods, and demonstrating that motives and ideas are identical. In other words, I will research and analyze the motives behind and why Putin's policy should be considered as a neo-Stalinist model. However, before commencing the analytical research, it would be reasonable to provide brief information about the Crimean Tatars and their background.

The Crimean Tatars are one of the indigenous people that have been living on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula for several centuries. Regarding linguistic background, the Crimean Tatar language is acknowledged as one of the sub-branches of Kipchak-Turkic language. Historically, Crimean Tatars had their state, which was well-known as The Crimean Khanate. This state ruled the territory of Crimea from the 14th to the 18th century (Aydin 2014). After the Ottoman Empire's territorial might and successful military operations, The Crimean Khanate became one of Ottoman vassal states. The situation changed in 1783 when Russia had annexed the territory of the Crimean Khanate. A certain number of Crimean Tatars moved to the Ottoman Empire because of cultural, linguistic, and religious similarities with Ottoman Turks. For this reason, Crimean annexation by Russia in 1783 might be determined as the historical beginning of Russian domination of Crimean territory (Aydin, 2014, p. 82). Despite Russian ruling over the Crimean territory, Crimean people attempted to create their state. It could be explained by the historical fact when they declared

independence in 1917. However, all these measures were oppressed by Bolsheviks in 1920, making Crimea a part of the Soviet Union (Aydin 2014).

Despite the colossal oppression the Russian Government caused towards Crimean Tatars, they could save their national identity. Crimean Tatars practiced Islam; they were able to retain their religious belonging and at the same time to use their Crimean Tatar language for communication. It is also significant to point out that Pan-Turkism ideology has influenced the national identity of Crimean Tatars. One of the principal founders of this ideology was Ismayil Gasprinsky, who played a crucial role in the development of the Pan-Turkic movement. He was Crimean Tatar and acknowledged as one of the prominent intellectuals who had the honor among Crimean people (Zenkovsky 1960). Nationalist ideas, ethnic memories, and Pan-Turkic popularity among Crimean Tatars have often caused fear by the Soviet Government. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that these nationalist ideas became the direct menace for their life, especially under the Stalin regime.

The crucial historical episode regarding the Crimean Tatars is mass deportation, which is one of the most tragic historical events organized by Stalin on 18 May 1944. The main reason for deportation was suspicion by Stalin about the collaboration of Crimean Tatars with Nazi Germany. Thereby, over 180 thousand Crimean Tatars were deported from their homelands to different parts of the USSR. As a result of deportation, some Tatars died due to starvation, different types of diseases, and harsh climatic conditions (Blank, 2015, p. 21).

Even though charges of Nazi collaboration with the Tatars were revoked in 1967, they were still unable to return to Crimea from different regions of Russia and Central Asia, where they had been deported during mass deportation. All these factors could not prevent Tatars from carrying out the human rights movement, which was the largest on the territory of the whole Soviet Union.

The main idea of their protests was linked to the demanding the right to move back to their homelands and, at the same time, to re-establish their autonomous republic (Aydin 2014). After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Crimea remained a part of the territory of Ukraine. Thereby, the dissolution of the Soviet Union contributed to the repatriation of the half of 500 thousand Tatars to return to Crimea from their places of exile. It is important to emphasize that, historically, Crimean territory had geostrategic significance for Russia, primarily it might be explained by an outlet to the Black Sea. The beginning of Russia-Ukraine tense political relations became one of the main reasons for Crimea's annexation in 2014. After this annexation, the Crimean Tatars have been commenced to undergo violations of human rights and discrimination by the Russian Government. Also, the policy of discrimination in different sectors was implemented towards the Tatars. These oppressions and different kinds of discrimination can be determined as part of the assimilation policy implemented by the Russian Government. Thus, after the Russian annexation, the Crimean Tatars faced the new challenges which remind the historical events that occurred under Stalin.

## **Research Question**

The case of Crimean Tatar's human rights has altered after the annexation of Crimean territory by Russia. I will attempt to analyze and find out these changes which they face nowadays. Apart from this question, I will conduct a comparative analysis of Tatar's life under Stalin and after annexation in 2014, including the extent to which Crimean Tatars' situation has changed.

One of the research questions which I will focus my attention on is violations currently encountered by the Crimean Tatars. For instance, some prominent political figures of Mejlis (the single highest executive-representative body of the Crimean Tatars) such as Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov still face severe problems in moving back to their homeland. It is significant

to note that these political figures supported the Ukrainian position in the case of Crimea's belonging and protested Russia's annexation. They are currently afraid of the Russian Government, taking into consideration their radical Anti-Russian positions by these political activists.

Another problem that Crimean Tatars face and is not solved is a policy of persecution of the Mejlis by the Russian Government. As mentioned above, Mejlis is the highest executive-representative body of the Crimean Tatars and historically played a substantial role in Tatars' political and cultural life. However, after annexation in 2014, the activity of Mejlis was getting to decrease and being less powerful. These political changes are directly related to the anti-Mejlis position by Russia. Furthermore, on the base of the final decision by the Supreme Court of Crimea, Mejlis was recognized as an extremist organization, and the activity of its members was banned.

The discrimination of language and its prohibition in different schools on the territory of Crimea is a critical field of investigation in this academic work. The reduction of Crimean Tatar language schools, the creation of obstacles for studying in the native language, Russification of all cultural and educational aspects that eliminates all spiritual-cultural influence of Crimean Tatars is considered as one of the repressions in the Russian policy.

One of the other samples of the problems which Crimean Tatars face is a violation of freedom of religion. Since Russia's annexation, the religious situation in the Crimean region has started altering. Historically, the Crimean territory was plentiful of religious varieties. Representatives of different religious groups or communities were subjected to various types of discrimination from Russian authorities. These religious communities, such as the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate, Islamic groups whose members are mainly Crimean Tatars, have massive pressure and restrictions. As a result, most of them left the Crimean territory. The main argument of producing such cruel discrimination by the

Russian authorities towards different religious groups was anti-Russian protests in the case of Crimean annexation (OHCHR 2016).

Furthermore, as per perspective of John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, a taxonomy of the macro-political forms of ethnic conflict regulation has different methods for eliminating and managing differences, such as:

- i. methods for eliminating differences (a) genocide (b) forced mass-population transfers (c) partition and/or secession (self-determination) (d) integration and/or assimilation
- ii. methods for managing differences (a) hegemonic control (b) arbitration (third-party intervention) (c) cantonisation and/or federalisation (d) consociationalism or power-sharing (McGarry and O'Leary 1993, 4).

The authors emphasized different samples matching for each method that has been mentioned above. The case of Crimean Tatars, namely mass deportation implemented by Stalin on 18-20 May 1944, was considered as genocide and forced mass-population transfers as per John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary (McGarry and O'Leary 1993). Nowadays, the current situation regarding the Crimean Tatars recalls a similar historical disaster that happened to them before. However, instead of genocide and forced mass-population, the current methods towards the Crimean Tatars implemented by the Russian authorities were altered. From my perspective, integration or assimilation as one of the methods for eliminating differences is carried out towards the Crimean Tatars. Thus, all discrimination towards the Crimean Tatars in the religious, linguistic, and political cases is one of the main parts of assimilation policy. I will attempt to find out why the Russian authorities had selected this method and how it would impact the national identity of the Crimean Tatars.

By considering all these details and problems that may define the current situation of Crimean Tatars, I will pay attention to these main research questions:

- i. What kind of parallels between historical (Stalin period) and current (Putin period) negative anti-nationalist prejudices on Crimean Tatars population by Russia? Comparative analysis of the methods of conflict regulation by Stalin and Putin policies.
- ii. Why was assimilation policy selected as a macro-political form of ethnic conflict regulation in Crimea after Russia annexation in 2014? What are the ways this form may menace towards the Crimean Tatars?
- iii. How can discrimination affect the Crimean Tatar aspects of life after annexation?

### **Literature review**

The role of Pan-Turkism is one of the essential elements which is linked to the Crimean Tatar nationalism. Historical bond to the Ottoman Empire and identification themselves as a part of the Turkic world played a vital role in the form of national consciousness of Tatars. S.Zenkovsky (1960) emphasized the role of Gaspriinski, who is the prominent figure not only in the policy of Crimean Tatars but also in the Turkic world. From his perspective, this cultural unity with the other Turkic peoples can transform the Crimean Tatars as a political mobilization, which in turn, would be the direct menace for the Soviet authorities. In other words, the cultural union could impact the form of political alliance with the Ottoman Empire, which consequently could influence the political weakness of the Soviet Empire. Thereby, the Pan-Turkism ideas could be taken as a core element that could lead to the form of Crimean Tatar nationalism. Another issue that can also be applied for the Crimean Tatar nationalism is the collective desire for returning homeland. The collective memory of Tatars for coming back play a core role in the foundation of national consciousness. Thus, Safran (1991) claims that myth of collective homeland could be considered

as instrumentation for establishing the diaspora. Without the myth and imagination about homeland, it is complicated to exist as a diaspora outside of the homeland. I consider, this argument would be applicable to the issue of Crimean Tatars. It can be justified by the fact that by living in Uzbekistan and other regions of Central Asia and Russia, Crimean Tatars are actively involved in fighting for their rights. Demand to return transformed to the ideological concept one generation to another. Also, Safran (1991) emphasized the feelings in host society when particular diaspora feels isolated since they are not part of host-society. This argumentation was completely applied for the Crimean Tatars when they were deported to Uzbekistan and were not accepted by local communities.

Apart from the homeland orientation of Crimean Tatars, it is vital to understand that this case could be linked to the ethno-symbolism, whose main features are identical. From the perspective of A. Smith (1991), the main attributes of ethno-symbolism, such as the myth of common ancestry, historical memories, an association with a specific "homeland," play a base role in the foundation and existence of ethnic communities. From my perspective, these all attributes are entirely applicable in Crimean Tatar's case. Firstly, as a myth of common ancestry, it is significant to point out the historical Turkic roots and their cultural, linguistic connections with the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, historical memories such as the existence of Crimean Khanate, the vassal period of the Ottoman Empire, and deportation as the national tragedy are the core elements of historical memories among Crimean Tatars. The third issue is an association with the homeland and living far from it. As it was mentioned, the idea of returning homeland play a vital role in the national union of Tatars and struggling for this idea. According to Sukhareva (1960), "notion of regaining the lost homeland" became the central element and foundation of the maintenance of national identity for Crimean Tatars. In other words, the spiritual sentiments for their homeland

and collective desire to move back play a vital role in their national mind. I consider this element influenced national union development.

In order to understand the cultural proximity with the Ottoman Empire, it would be reasonable to make comparative analysis in the case of occupation the Crimean territory by Ottoman and Russian Empires. The territory was occupied by both, but the reaction of Crimean Tatars to this event was different. According to A.Aydingun (2010), the occupation of Crimean territory by Ottomans provided some privileges for the Crimean Tatars. From my perspective, it could also be described as the union of two brothers come together and having strong and tight relations. Apart from this argument, almost the same culture, language, and Islam religion are the primary attributes that make closely-knit these two groups. The occupation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Empire has opposite effects in juxtaposition with the Ottoman. A.Aydingun (2010) emphasized that assimilation of Crimean Tatars to the society was sophisticated due to cultural and linguistic distinctions. Thereby, the psychological sentiments of Crimean Tatars about being a part of the Russian Empire could be considered as unfavorable. Nevertheless, from my perspective, not only this factor plays a negative role in the attitude of Crimean Tatars towards the Russian Empire. Also, it is worth noting the privileges and opportunities of self-rule under the Ottoman Empire. After the Russian annexation of Crimean territory, Crimean Tatars were deprived from many privileges as well. Being the indigenous people on the Crimean Peninsula territory, they were perceived as second-rate people since the immense opportunities were provided for the Russians and Russian-speaker people.

Turkish influence has always been perceived as a direct threat, even during the Soviet period. The Soviet Government took into consideration the cultural tights of Crimean Tatars with Turkey, and during the Second World War, the main fear of Stalin was phobia that Turkic people

would betray him cooperating with Turkey. Williams B.G (1999) claims that precisely understanding the historical connection between Turkey when it was the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Tatars, Stalin implemented the anti-Turkish campaign. Thereby, the mass deportation can be considered as the anti-Turkish campaign, and several motives were stimulating Stalin to implement it. Usually, the suspicion of Crimean Tatars in connection with Nazi Germany and fear of disloyalty of these ethnic groups could be taken. However, from my perspective, not only one motive could be sufficient for the implementation of deportation. Thus, the suspects of strengthening ties with Turkey and collaboration with this state could also be forced Stalin to implement the deportation of Crimean Tatars. Pohl (2000) supported this idea and emphasized the suspect of Crimean Tatars being the fifth column of Turkey cooperating against the interests of the Soviet Union. The fear of sabotage and diversion could be taken as the main reason for stimulating Stalin to realize the mass deportations of national minorities.

As a comparative analysis, which is one of the crucial parts of thesis, revealing the parallels between Stalin and Putin's policies, several scientific studies have been used. From my perspective, the current Russian Government has implemented the neo-Stalinist models of the policy towards the Crimean Tatars. My statement was formed on the base of Aydin and Sahin's work (2019), which provided several samples for finding out the parallels in repressions, tortures, and persecution used by Stalin and Putin. These measures had similar patterns, which is the reason to determine the policy of Putin as neo-Stalinism.

Despite the similarities in their policy, the methods were not identical in eliminating the differences. O'Leary and McGarry (1993) described multiple methods in order to manage and eliminate the differences. They determined that the genocide and mass deportation methods apply to Stalin policy. Their analysis was valuable for me to determine these methods applicable to Stalin

and Putin, namely mass deportation, genocide and assimilation or integration. Thus, with the help of their theoretical framework, it was possible to coordinate these methods with the policy of Stalin and Putin towards the Crimean Tatars, which is valuable for the comparative analysis between two areas.

## **Methodology**

This paper will be based on the comparative method between two areas that the thesis focused on discourse analysis. The comparative analysis will be opted for finding the central answers to the questions of study and analyze the hypothesis that is used for academic work. Furthermore, to provide adequate discourse and receive more rigorous information based on the theoretical issues, this academic work will be maintained with the desk research. Thus, essential documents, academic works, journal articles, agreements will be reviewed and analyzed to have a more precise understanding of the topic.

# **1. Theoretical Framework**

## **1.1. Collective Memory**

Collective memory could be considered as the spiritual part of any ethnic minorities consciousness. Wulf Kansteiner described it as a "collective phenomenon which can take hold of historically and socially remote events and often privilege the interests of the contemporary" (Kansteiner 2002). This phenomenon acts as a chain that connects the past with the present. The term "collective memory" was first introduced by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and was determined as a critical influence in memory studies (M.Halbwachs 1992). He claims that people are obligated by society to reproduce previous events from the historical case and shorten or complete them. Furthermore, Kansteiner supports the idea that "we are always a part of several mnemonic communities: collective memories exist on the level of families, professions, political generations, ethnic and regional groups, social classes and nations." (Kansteiner 2002).

The collective memory plays a vital role in the historical process of national identity. In the case of Crimean Tatars, this phenomenon became the central element of their national consciousness. For instance, the deportation of the Crimean Tatars on 18-20 May 1944 by the Soviet authorities is an indispensable historical part of the collective memory among the Crimean Tatars. They still remember and recognize these historical events like the national tragedy, which could mobilize and make Crimean Tatars as a closely-knit nation.

## **1.2. The Ethno-symbolic approach of Nationalism theory**

Ethno-symbolism is one of the theories of nationalism, along with modernism, primordialism, and instrumentalism (A.S.Leoussi, S.Grosby 2007). Ethno-symbolism emphasizes how people should save their ancient, solid values of national self-identification. In other words, ethno-symbolism shows that national identity has been formed due to the massive reinterpretation

of these things, such as symbols, traditions, myths, and memories (A.D.Smith 1991). For instance: religion is one of the main symbols that play a significant role in the formation of national self-identity. Christianity has also united different civilizations and impacted the formation of these modern countries such as Ethiopia, Russia, and Armenia.

Furthermore, Smith has also emphasized the role of intellectuals, namely creators, inventors, producers who create these symbols for the national identity of people (A.Smith 1986). In most of the cases, intellectuals act the role of chroniclers of the ethnic past reproducing the memories from the historical past and link them with the modern period. In general, the intellectual's role is considered as inventors of the bridge that link the past and the present through the ethnic myths, culture, religion, image of the nation, etc.

There are also several main ethno-symbols in the case of the Crimean Tatars that have a significance. One of them is religion. As has been mentioned above, they are Muslims and practiced Islam since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Historically, Islam played an essential role in the national consciousness of the Crimean Tatars. The second and significant element of national identity as well is Pan-Turkism. This ideology was discovered by Ismayil Gasprinski whose name had already been mentioned above. He was prominent Crimean Tatar's intellectual, who played a key role in the cultural life of Crimean Tatars people. Pan-Turkism is considered as an ideology which is a cultural and political union with all Turkic peoples. Thereby, this ideology functioned as protection from the Russification policy and stimulated the cultural revival of Turkic historical roots. Also, the Crimean-Tatar language is considered as the main element of Tatar nationalism. The language that has a Turkic background and similarities with other Turkic languages made Crimean Tatars more isolated than other nations among the population who lived on the Crimean Peninsula territory. Despite the Russification policy carried out by the Russian Government, they were able

to save their language and still prefer to use it for communication. To take all these facts into consideration, it is obvious that religion, Pan-Turkism ideology, and language are considered the main elements of Crimean Tatars' national identity in ethno-symbolic approach of nationalism theory.

### **1.3. Theory of Forced Assimilation**

The Soviet Government implemented a dual political course towards ethnic minorities, realizing the policy of assimilation and at the same time, maintaining the ethnic institution in the 1920s. This policy could be explained by the fact of control of all these territories and carrying out the "divide and rule" strategy. However, at the same time, the Soviet authorities opted for the language as an effective method of assimilation. Russian became the language of interethnic communication that was sooner transformed into an essential element of Soviet society (Gorenburg, 2003, p. 15). Since the language is an indispensable component of ethnic identity, the spreading of Russian and overwhelming status over other national minority languages made the process of assimilation of non-Russian minorities successful. Also, the process of assimilation in urban areas was different in juxtaposition with rural. People who lived in urban areas were more vulnerable to assimilation rather than rural inhabitants. The Russian language was the main in the education system. Thereby, non-Russians who were willing to have an education were obliged to learn Russian. The number of Russians who moved for living to different republics, provinces of the Soviet Union was also taken as one of the reasons for Russian language popularity among non-Russians. Apart from the policy of language assimilation, parents of the children preferred to send their children to Russian-language schools taking into account the fact that the knowledge of Russian would be more perspective and could provide more opportunities to carry out career ambitions for their children as well. It is significant to point out the fact that by the 1980s, the

majority of non-Russian children were educated in the Russian language, and it also happened in the other Soviet Republics where education in Russian was more preferred rather than in their native languages (Karklins 1986). Understanding the fact that they are the citizens of the Soviet Union and taking into consideration the fact that knowledge of Russian was compulsory for further life, they were forced to learn and speak Russian. Thus, the number of Russian speakers were much more predominant rather than non-Russian. Initially, language assimilation had severe methods. It especially occurred under Stalin when political and cultural leaders among national minorities became the victims of the Great Terror in 1936-38. It could be justified by the fact that they were accused of ethnic nationalism, and due to this, they were repressed. After the end of the 1930-s, the Soviet Government took severe measures to increase Russian language knowledge, especially among the ethnic minority population (Blitstein 1999). The Russification policy was commenced by Stalin and continued even after his death. One of the crucial reforms which were implemented by Khrushchev was the school reform of 1958 (Gorenburg 2003). Russian became the language of interethnic communication on the territory of the Soviet Union from the decree of Khrushchev. Also, per the government statement, by the 1960s, Russian was considered as a language of socialism ideology. Hence, non-Russians who have profound beliefs in ideology commenced learning Russian and sending their children to the Russian language schools (Bilinsky 1968).

Another part of assimilation was the persecution of believers on the territory of the Soviet Union. The main reason for this religious discrimination was the ideology since the Soviet regime rejected religion and its activity. Taking into account the anti-religious political course, the Communist Party had the purpose of destroying all religious organizations and any kinds of confessions. Thus, representatives of various religious confessions were persecuted and arrested. Struggle against churches, mosques, and restrictions of different religious activities became one of

the main parts of the anti-religious policy of the Soviet authorities (Lyubov Soskovets 2015). Religion was actively criticized on the base of Bolshevik anti-religious propaganda, and religious people were considered the primary opponents of the Soviet authorities. One of the important documents which banned religion was the Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (8 April, 1929) "On Religious Associations" (Propilei 1995). On the basis of this decree, there were different restrictions, such as forbiddance of mutual benefits between people, ban of charity; creation of cooperatives and production associations; and organization prayer-meetings for children (Lyubov Soskovets 2015). Under N. Khrushchev in the late 1950s, the anti-religious situation on the territory of the Soviet Union remained its stability. New anti-religious campaigns prohibited any religious ceremonies, and religious believers still have been persecuted as well. Also, anti-religious propaganda was renewed, and atheist education was still taught in schools and universities (Smolkin-Rothrock 2014). Thereby, different religious minorities became the victims of the anti-religion campaign implemented by the Communist party. Restrictions of religious ceremonies, closing religious institutions, and prohibition of any religions, which were the primary attribute for ethnic minorities' identification, played a significant role in the process of forced assimilation of different ethnic groups living on the territory of the Soviet Union. In other words, the prohibition of native languages and spreading Russian instead of them; prohibition of religion and its ceremonies were considered as the primary parts of assimilation by the Soviet leaders towards different linguistic, ethnic, and religious minorities.

#### **1.4. The Theory of Homeland Orientation and Myths of Return**

Nowadays, the term of homeland orientation or the myths of return could be concerning to the diasporas which exist in different states in the world. Despite living for a long time far from the

homeland and at the same time the birth of their second and third generation, representatives of diasporas still retain their national identity, roots, and other main attributes. The existence of diaspora directly depends on the significance of maintaining and expressing the cultural symbols that play a vital role in the retaining of identity itself. The understanding of the term "diaspora" had been analyzed through different methods by scholars. For instance, from the perspective of Rogers Brubaker, the use of the term "diaspora" had been widening (Brubaker 2005). In other words, one of the elements of using this term of expansion "involves the application of the term diaspora to an ever-broadening set of cases: essentially to any and every nameable population category that is to some extent dispersed in space" (Brubaker 2005).

Currently, the diaspora or diaspora community is used to categorize different people, such as expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, etc. (Safran 1991). From the perspective of Walker Connor, "this term was applied to Cubans and Mexicans in the United States, Pakistanis in Britain, Maghrebis in France, Turks in Germany, Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, Greek and Polish minorities, Palestinian Arabs, blacks in North America and the Caribbean, Indians, and Armenians" (Walker 1986). William Safran defined the diaspora and its characteristics in other way, making counterarguments to the Walker theoretical statement. He suggested Connor extend the definition of diaspora, emphasizing several significant features that can be applied to expatriate minority communities and their members. These are: 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland — its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which

they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return — when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship” (Safran 1991).

## 2. The beginning of Russian conquest. Russian-Tatars relations

The historical formation of the Crimean Tatars identity has a long and profound process. Crimean Tatars are one of the ethnic groups that have a Turkic background. They descended from the tribes of Chingis Khan during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, who were part of the Mongol Eurasian empire (B. Williams 1997, 226). Also, it is worth to note that these steppe and nomadic groups such as Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Khazars, Pechenegs, and Kipchaks who were migrating from the East to the Crimean peninsula played a significant role in the process of the ethnogenesis of the Crimean Tatars (Williams B. G., 2001, pp. 329-348). Another point that should be emphasized is the religion and its historical importance for the Crimean Tatars. The religious influence on the Crimean Tatars' life was a historically significant process. The process of converting Islam by the Crimean Tatars was linked to the spread of Hanafi Islam into the steppes of the Golden Horde in the 1300s. Thereby, Islam became not only the main religion for Crimean Tatars but also formed the basis for different fields of life, such as legal, cultural, and social (B. Williams 1997).

During the existence of Crimean Khanate (1441-1783), the role of religion in the life of Crimean Tatars was massive. It could be justified by the fact that approximately 1600 mosques and religious schools had been built on the territory of the Crimean Khanate. Besides, according to the historical notes of travelers who had been in Crimean Khanate, it was described as "flourishing state that was a vital part of the Muslim milieu, a land where slender Ottoman-style minarets dotted the landscape, poets wrote in literary Persian, life centered around the village mosque and Muslim children, like their counterparts throughout the Muslim world, learned to recite from the Quran in Arabic" (B. Williams 1997, 226). From the perspective of Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, Islam provided the Crimea's Muslim population with a "surrogate political national identity" (Lemerrier-

Quelquejay 1984). These factors emphasize that language, culture, and religion were the main significant attributes of Tatars' identity before the annexation of the Crimean khanate.

Before the annexation of the Crimean territory by Russia in 1783, the Crimean khanate was one of the Ottoman Empire's vassals. The close relations between the Ottomans and the Crimean Tatars are explained by the cultural, linguistic, and spiritual attachment. Having such close relations, the Ottoman Empire had a loyal ally on the territory of the Black Sea zone. The significance of having this ally in this region expressed by the strategical geopolitical factors and primary political interests for the Ottomans. This annexation of this territory was one of the crucial tasks for the Russian Empire as well.

According to Walter Kalarz "the liquidation of the Crimean Tatars as an ethnic group and their removal from their Crimean homeland by the Soviet government was but the last act of a long process which had started when Empress Catherine II established a Russian Protectorate over the Crimea in 1774 and annexed it in 1783." (Kalarz, 1955, p. 76). The situation had been altered when the territory of Crimea was annexed by the Russian Empire in April 1783 (Anderson 1958). As mentioned above, the territory of Crimea had significant geostrategic meaning and the annexation it by Catherine II attached the might on the Black Sea. This historical event became the beginning of tragedy for all Crimean Tatars. The consequences of annexation had altered the demographical situation of Crimea as well. Between 1784 and 1790, the massive number of Crimean Tatars, about 300 thousand out of a total population of one million abandoned their home state and moved to Turkey (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 302). It is worth noting that the ongoing emigration of the Crimean Tatars occurred between 1807 and 1811, after the Russian-Turkish war. Besides, as a result of the Crimean War (1859-1863), another substantial emigration took place as well (Potichnyj, 1975, p.

303). This massive flow of Crimean Tatars migrants reduced the native population of the Crimean territory to 34.1 percent of the total by 1897 (Vardys 1971).

This kind of policy, such as oppressive rule toward the Tatars who were carrying out by the Russian Empire, had the positive patters itself. The massive emigration of Crimean Tatars became the result of its policy. Another reason that could be explained of such a repressive policy by Russian authorities was the religious attachment of Crimean Tatars. Decree of the Minister of War in 1854 that claims, " Emperor has ordered all inhabitants of the Muslim faith living in the coastal area to be removed from the coast into inland provinces." (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 303). This policy was too sophisticated to implement, and only some parts of the population of Crimean Tatars were removed to other regions. On the other hand, people from other regions of the Russian Empire commenced moving to the territory of Crimea. It could be explained by fertile Crimean land, mild climate, and old horticultural traditions. Different peoples such as Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, Bulgarians, Czechs, Estonians were the settlers who moved to Crimea. The demographic changes severely impacted the reduction of Crimean Tatar's number. By 1917, only almost one-fourth of the total population in Crimea accounted for Crimean Tatars (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 303). The number of Russian settlers was getting to increase at that period and made up 50 percent of the population, while other nationalities such as Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, etc. accounted for the remaining 25 percent (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 303). Although the number of Crimean Tatars was not high, they could save their identity through the dominant elements of nationalism, which is reasonable to understand as a phenomenon.

## **2.1. Crimean Tatar's nationalism**

Another subject that should be taken into consideration is the process of the emergence of Crimean Tatar's nationalism and its role in their mindset and society as well. The foundation of

Crimean Tatar's nationalism was linked to the new generation of intellectuals. They had been educated in different schools in these cities, such as Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Istanbul, and even Paris (B. Williams 1997, 225-252). Crimean Tatar intellectuals were not supporters of conservative religious norms and advocated mostly education and its reforms.

One of the prominent figures who played a significant role in this movement was Ismail Gaspirali or Gasprinskii (1851-1914), who was emphasized in the previous chapters. He was a middle-class newspaper editor, intellectual, and publisher. Gasprinskii was one of the Crimean Tatar intellectuals who attempted to trigger the national spirit of the Crimean Tatars through education but not religion. He was one of the founders of Pan-Turkism and Jadidist movements. These two movements were tightly bounded with the Crimean-Tatars consciousness and nationalism. Before analyzing the process of Crimean Tatar's nationalism, it would be relevant to find out and reveal the meaning of Jadidism and Pan-Turkism.

Jadidism is a socio-political and reform movement in Central Asian countries founded on the territory of the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th century (Kanat Kaldybekovich Bazarbayeva, 2013, pp. 876-881). The process of revolutions such as Russian in 1905, Turkish, Iranian and Indian of 1908-1913 had impacted the formation of this socio-political movement. Along with Ismayil Gasprinskii, other Crimean Tatar intellectuals such as Danish Ahmad (1827-1897), Furkat (1858-1909), Mukimi (1850-1903), Abay (1845-1904) were the prominent representatives of Jadidist movement. These intellectuals understood precisely the values of education and considered the roots of their problems by the conservativeness of religion. In other words, they were supporters of the traditional system reforms of Muslim religious education. They offered the establishment of a new method of education, development of social, theatre, cultural, and political institutions instead of the conservative religious patterns. Crimean Tatars intellectuals

considered education as the primary ideological weapon in the struggle against economic, moral, and political backwardness of the different peoples who lived on the territory of Turkestan (Kanat Kaldybekovich Bazarbayeva, 2013, pp. 876-881). The role of Ismayil Gaspinskii in the establishment of Jadidist schools was vital because it impacted not only the Crimean Tatars but also other Turkic peoples. The word "Jadid" has Arabic background and means (literally 'new'). Initially, the term Jadids meant a group of people who supported the didactic ideas of Ismayil Gasprinskii. The popularity and significance of these ideas and acceptance by other Turkic peoples led to the creation of new-methods schools, whose aim was teaching not only religious but secular sciences as well (Gankevich 2000).

After the implementation of Jadid's ideas, new-methods schools became well-known as "usul-i jadid". The idea of creation of the new methods of teaching taking into consideration phonetic and analytical innovative patterns was familiarized by Gaspinskii during his study at Sorbonne University. After returning home, he could achieve the establishment of the first "usul-i jadid" school, where 12 students were taught how to read and write. After this event, Gasprinskii mentioned: "The result exceeded all my expectations, and then this method was implemented in a few more schools. Visitors from the regions familiarized themselves with these schools and also accepted the new method in more than 200 schools" (Ibid). Apart from the pedagogical activity, Gaspinskii was involved in the publisher's activity, which led to the creation of the newspaper "Tarjimon" (Translator). He brilliantly demonstrated and advocated his ideas on the pages of this newspaper. Thereby, forward-looking ideas of him were accessible for various readers. His ideas became popular among readers from Marghelan, Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand, Turkestan, and Akmechet (Kanat Kaldybekovich Bazarbayeva, 2013, pp. 876-881).

Furthermore, the range of interests of Jadists was not only focused on the educational field but also on the purposes of changing the old system of social and political statuses and making them more progressive. Also, they viewed education as one of the methods of salvation and resolving severe problems in the society in which people followed the conservative religious views. From their perspective, only through the knowledge it would be possible to overcome economic and cultural stagnation, which were the main obstacles in the process of achieving the progress. One of their main tasks was the creation of a new educational system and following reforms that would be realized for altering the situation in a positive way.

The popularity of these schools became the result of an extensive system of traditional educational establishments and the Jadid schools built on the various regions of the Russian Empire (Kanat Kaldybekovich Bazarbayeva, 2013, pp. 876-881). The number of these schools accounted for 5892 and 353 madrasas, which had been constructed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ibid). The high level of literacy was acknowledged by the Tsarist Government, taking into account these changes and recognized it as tremendous progress. Also, P.I Mischenko who was governor-general of Turkestan wrote to the Minister of Public Education of Russia: “The literacy of the natives of Turkestan, especially in its main regions such as Syrdarya, Ferghana and Samarkand, is at a very high level and is much higher than in European Russia. A well-developed system of primary schools (schools), secondary and higher education institutions (madrasas) tightly covered most of the territory”. (Kanat Kaldybekovich Bazarbayeva, 2013, pp. 876-881).

It is significant to emphasize the attitude of the Soviet Government towards Jadid ideas. On the one hand, spreading these ideas among the local population, especially in Turkic countries within the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, later led to the emergence of new well-educated classes whose representatives could work in different places, carrying out their ambitions. On the

other hand, followers of the Jadid movement supported the ideas of granting cultural autonomy to local people. Thereby, the supporters of these ideas expressed the interest of modernization society, culture, and education. Apart from it, the severe threat that had triggered the Russian Government was ambitions to create the national liberation movement in the different regions. The proponents of the Jadid movement denied the "legitimacy" of the colonial power, making the resistance to Russia's colonial oppression (Kanat Kaldybekovich Bazarbayeva, 2013, pp 876-881).

Apart from the Jadid ideas, Ismayil Gaspinskii played a critical role in foundation and spread of the Pan-Turkism ideology. Gasprinskii was also one of the first who supported the plans, calling for greater unity among Russia's many Turkic-Muslim groups (B. Williams 1997, 225-252). Primary "Tercuman" (the Translator) published by him became popular and widely read among the Turkic-Muslim groups such as Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Volga Tatars, and Crimean Tatars. From his perspective, only through the cultural aspects, it would be possible to forge a united Turkic nation. Apart from that, he also attempted to focus the colossal attention on the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic commonalities among the various Turkic groups who lived on Russia's territory (B. Williams 1997, 225-252). According to the plan of Gasprinskii, the development and extension of linguistic and cultural bonds between Turkic groups would lead to the realization of Pan-Turkism ideology.

Despite the successful promotion of Pan-Turkism ideas among Turkic Muslim groups living on the territory of Russia, it is worth noting that the plan of realization of this ideology had several obstacles in the implementation. One of the reasons was the geographic distinctions in the areas where various Turkic groups lived. The considerable distance between the areas where they lived makes this situation more complicated. Another reason is a distinct kind of mindset of Turkic groups who lived in different areas. For instance, the nomadic Kazakh shepherd, who lived on the

border with China and used Kipchak Turkic language, had fewer similarities in terms of culture with Crimean Tatars who possessed the Europeanized views and lived in the urban areas. Apart from this factor, the Crimean Tatars language was closer to Ottoman Turkish that in turn made their understanding of each other more possible. Some Turkic groups had not accepted these notions such as Turan or Turkestan and generally "Turkic Homeland" which were principal in the Pan-Turkism ideology except Tatars and Azeris, who considered themselves as a part of single Pan-Turkic nation. It could be explained by the fact that some Turkic groups could not discover the significance of Pan-Turkism ideology, and this notion was too broad in scope to seize some Turkic peoples' imagination (B. Williams 1997, 225-252). The Pan-Turkism produced two different effects for the Crimean Tatars: the positive one is related mobilization having the national interests, and the negative is the attitude of Russia towards Tatars and policy for eliminating their ambitions.

## **2.2. The beginning of Russian-Crimean Tatar tensions**

The historical changes that occurred on the territory of Russia gave some hope for the Crimean Tatars in the process of struggle for their national ideas. Thereby, the fall of the Russian Empire caused the desire, on the one hand, and a kind of hope to achieve self-government for their territory. These political ambitions had lots of obstacles in the process of achievement. For instance, the situation was deteriorated when the Revolution and the First World War started. As mentioned above, the geo-strategical position of Crimea was one of the motivations for different states to occupy this territory. It became the battleground between different armies such as nationalist Tatars, Germans, Bolsheviks, the Ukrainian governments in Kyiv, the White Russian armies, etc. (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 304).

5 May 1917 became one of the significant historical events for the Crimean Tatars. They were able to achieve and proclaim autonomy. In October the same year, the Crimean Tatar assembly, which is well-known as Kurultai proclaimed the Crimean Democratic Republic. Even though the number of Tatars made up only 25% of Crimea's total population, whereas Russians accounted for 50% and Ukrainians along with others for 25%, they created political party "Milliy Firqa" in the central city of Simferopol (Potichnyj 1975). During this period, the Crimean Tatar's nationalism got its peak, and national symbols became an indispensable part of the national memory of Tatars. The creation of the national flag on which depicted Crimean khans' tamgha (royal seal), having the colossal historical significance, was one of their accomplishments. The merits of the establishment of "Milliy Firqa" belonged to Numan Chelebi Chihan. He was a prominent Crimean Tatar politician, the first president of the Crimean Democratic Republic and poet as well. Also, Numan Chelebi Chihan was the author of the poem "Ant etkenmen" ("I have pledged"), which became sooner the national anthem of Crimean Tatars (Vozgirin 1992). The growth of patriotism and nationalist sentiments of Crimean Tatars were getting to increase, namely during this period. This historical fact as the primary sample might be observed in the following Milli Firka oath:

“I gave my oath to die for the nation

I am always prepared to dry the tears of the nation

If I do not fulfill this oath

Then I myself will be the great Khan

And let them bury me in my grave” (Bogachov 1930).

However, this achievement had temporary success because the Communists had oppressed the creation of this country. Besides, the president of this temporary republic Chlebiev was shot in February 1918 (Potichnyj 1975). The disputes about the territory of Crimea between Russia and Ukraine had been formed even at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely between 1917 and 1920. The representatives of Ukrainian national governments, along with the Ukrainian Communist leaders, had the same territorial interests towards Crimea. It could be justified by the argument that both sides had been involved in the idea of maintaining the overall territorial integrity of Ukraine, and this factor had a significant political pattern (Majstrenko, 1971, pp. 561-62).

In terms of the Russian position, annexation of Crimean territory had a major political significance. In other words, the occupation of Crimea would lead to direct control over the northern coast of the Black Sea and Ukraine's territory as well. Regarding the political position of Lenin towards the territory of Crimea, he supported both interests: Tatar and Russian. This political position of Lenin stimulated him to decide on the establishment of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the territory of the Russian Federation (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 305). Thereby, the image of Lenin was considered a benefactor by Crimean Tatars. Due to his decision, the Crimean Tatars could obtain the cultural-linguistic autonomy within the Russian territory that, in turn, was important for retaining the national identity.

However, these historical changes that had positive outcomes for Tatars were gradually altered to the negative side. It could be directly explained by the regime founded by Stalin and the establishment of his political course. The political shift was implemented by Stalin and various political programs, such as Collectivization in the late 1920s, destroyed the plans of national renaissance and maintenance of national movement by Crimean Tatars (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 305). Several thousand of Crimean Tatar political activists had been undergone by different kinds of

punishment and deported from their home states. One of the outstanding Crimean political leaders Veli Ibrahim was assassinated for "bourgeois nationalism" in 1928. As a result of the collectivization policy by Stalin of 1929-1930, between 30 and 40 thousand Crimean Tatars were deported to Siberia and the Urals (Aleksandrov 1950). Apart from it, the majority of them perished due to the massive famine of 1931-1934 that severely reduced the number of Crimean Tatars. Some of the Crimean Tatar political leaders expressed their protests against Stalin's policy. Mehmed Kubay who became the successor of Veli Ibrahim mentioned: "Moscow destroys the Republic of Crimea, carries away all its natural riches without giving bread to the starving population of the peninsula" (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 305). Most of the political leaders who defended Crimean Tatars and openly protested were assassinated became the victims of the mass terror of 1936-1938. Furthermore, throughout the late 1930s, there were several political campaigns with the primary purpose of destroying "the roots of Crimean Tatar nationalism" among local people. Consequently, different representatives of culture, scientists, prominent writers, poets, and educators became the victims of mass purges, one of the parts of the political repression policy of Stalin. It is essential to point out that the destruction of cultural and political leaders as a part of repression's policy was implemented in different countries, regions on the territory of the Soviet Empire where representatives of various religious, cultural, and ethnic groups lived.

Apart from the ethnic cleansing, Stalin implemented the Russification policy among non-Russian peoples (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 305). One of the significant parts of the Russification policy was the introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet. Along with other peoples on the territory of the Soviet Empire, Crimean Tatars deprived their literature, which had been declared non-proletarian and non-Soviet.

Furthermore, the policy towards religious matter had also been implemented by the Soviet Government. As a result of this policy, the religious form of the ethnic basis of identity among Crimean Tatars was replaced by secular. Thereby, the completion of the shift towards a secular form occurred in Crimea earlier in comparison with other Muslim regions (Central Asia and Northern Caucasus). These severe anti-Muslim measures such as mosque closing and mass executions of religious figures among Crimean Tatars led to a decline in religious consciousness as Islam, which before played a significant role in their life. Thus, the new generation of Crimean Tatars commenced understanding their identity not on the base of religious but scientific factors, namely principles of Marxist-Leninism. Koran, which was their main religious attribute, was replaced by the ideological books and publications throughout the 1920s and 1930s (Critchlow 1986). All anti-nationalist and anti-Muslim measures and restrictions that the Soviet authorities enforced strengthened the national feelings and spirit. Despite the spreading of ideological propaganda and oppressions of nationalist ideas towards the Crimean Tatars, they expressed greater emotional attachment to Crimea as their homeland rather than considering the Soviet Union in general. This outcome could be explained by the fact that the massive number of intellectuals and political leaders were assassinated; the traditional economy was destructed, leading to the massive poverty (Critchlow 1986). Thus, due to all these measures, the bonds of loyalty by many Crimean Tatars and feelings towards the greater homeland as the Soviet Union was getting to become weak.

### **2.3. Comparative analysis of annexation by the Ottoman Empire and Russia**

As was mentioned above, the Crimean Tatars had their sovereign territory which existed for an extended period. Regarding the historical facts, the Crimean Khanate lost its sovereignty twice: the first was when the Crimean territory became the part of the Ottoman Empire and the second when the Russian Empire conquered their lands (A.Aydingun, 2010, p. 23). However,

despite the annexation of two states, the attitudes and psychological sentiments regarding the annexation perceived differently by the Crimean Tatars. It could be justified by the argument that the Ottoman annexation was characterized mostly as suzerainty that meant technically independence possessing some kind of self-rule. The Ottoman annexation was also interpreted as the reunion of two brotherly groups with the same roots and descent. The relations between the Ottoman Empire and Crimean Khanate had a specific pattern by possessing the interest of cooperation and mutual benefit (Fisher, 1977). As was discussed above, the cultural, linguistic, and religious similarities united two ethnic groups together rather than dividing.

Regarding the second loss of the Crimean sovereignty, namely by Russia, the Crimean Tatars perceived this historical event negatively. Multiple inherent reasons explain this opposite attitude. First of all, the Russian language is entirely different without any similarities with the Crimean Tatar language. The second reason is the policy that the Russian Government implemented. For instance, the Russian land regime carrying out on the territory of annexed Crimea deteriorated the life conditions of Crimean Tatars. The third reason, in terms of annexation by the Ottoman Empire, the suzerainty provided Crimean Tatars the opportunity to integrate. Furthermore, due to cultural, religious, linguistic similarities between them, the policy of integration was plausible to realize. However, in the case of Russian integration, it had more sophisticated patterns. Thereby, Crimean Tatars had more cultural and political kinds of alienation from Russians, making them too different (A.Aydingun, 2010, p. 24).

Despite unsuccessful operations of integration policy towards the Crimean Tatars, the Soviet Government implanted forced assimilation policy. The policy of slavification was implemented not only towards the Crimean Tatars, but also other ethnic groups who became the

part of the Soviet territory. As a result of this policy, the massive number of Crimean Tatars abandoned their homeland, moving primarily to the Ottoman lands.

There were only two positive effects on the Crimean Tatars after Russia's annexation. First, it was the changes after the implementation of the "korenizatsia" (nativization) policy. The primary purposes of this policy were: providing opportunities for different ethnic groups in the working in different administrative levels of the local government; be involved in the administrative system having equal rights along with Russians. The primary motive of this policy was to integrate non-Russian nationalities into the governments of their specific soviet republics. Thus, the policy of de-Russification was one of the parts of "korenizatsia". People had opportunities to use their local languages in different governmental institutions, culture, public life, and education. Children were provided an opportunity to study at schools in their native languages (Vihavainen 2000). This policy had some advantages for non-Russian minorities living on the territory of the Soviet Union as well as Crimean Tatars.

The second positive issue regarding the case of Crimean Tatars, as it was mentioned above, was the establishment of the Crimean Autonomous Republic in 1921 on the base of Lenin's decree. These political events led to the cultural revival of Crimean Tatars. However, political measures that had positive patterns did not have a permanent character and ended up later on by the policy of Stalin. Stalin era became the most dangerous and changing the fate of Crimean Tatars completely. Depriving the autonomy and being the victims of persecution, they became a part of the policy of mass repressions by Stalin. However, the most significant historical event cardinally altered the lives of thousands of Tatars was the implementation of forced mass deportation by Stalin. Thus, it will be significant to analyze the reasons and consequences of mass deportation from the historical and political angles.

### **3. Deportation - the national tragedy. Destruction of the Crimean Tatar Nation**

The mass deportation of Crimean Tatars, which was implemented on 18-20 May 1944, became the national tragedy for Crimean Tatar people. Before analyzing the historical details of deportation, it is reasonable to focus on motives that stimulated the implementation of mass deportation by Stalin.

From the perspective of Walter Kolarz, it is "quite difficult to say to what extent the Crimean Tatars remained loyal to the Soviet regime and to what extent they betrayed it when living under German occupation" (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 306). It is complicated to determine the relations between the Crimean Tatars and the Soviet Government positive. Several factors can emphasize this argument. One of them was an untrusted position of Crimean Tatars towards the Soviet authorities. After the policy of assimilation and liquidation of autonomy by the Soviet Government, the collective disloyalty of Crimean Tatars towards Stalin is obvious. Thereby, from the perspective of the Soviet elites, grounds for collaboration of Crimean Tatars with Nazi Germany existed from the beginning of the Second World War. Namely, suspicion of Crimean Tatars in collaboration with Nazi Germany became the primary reasons for deportation. Even according to the arguments of contemporary Crimean Tatar leaders, about 0,5 percent of the population was involved in the anti-Soviet activity during the Second World War (Potichnyj, 1975, p. 306).

Furthermore, not only Crimean Tatars were suspected in the collaboration but also representatives of other ethnic and religious groups living on the territory of the Soviet Union: Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Kalmyks, Karachays, Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Bulgarians, Armenians, Poles, Finns, Greeks, Kalmyks became the victims of Stalin policy during the war (Polian 2004). As has been mentioned above, all these people were deported to different

remote areas of the Soviet Union, such as Kazakhstan, Central Asia, in 1943-1944. These violent and forced relocations to desolate areas with severe conditions led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people (Alieva 1993). These motives, such as collaboration with enemies, allegations of treachery, banditry, and the goal of diffusing ethnic tensions led to the implementation of mass deportation of these peoples (Korsten 2018). The main reason of collaboration of non-Russian minorities is the interest in independence and retaining their identity. Thereby, they might view collaboration as salvation from the totalitarian regime by Stalin. The majority of ethnic minorities on the territory of the Soviet Union criticized the totalitarian regime of Soviet authorities and repressions, which had been implemented at the end of the 1930s, as a result of which the colossal number of people were assassinated.

It is significant to emphasize that not all Crimean Tatars were involved in the process of collaboration, but also some people remaining in the USSR being as Red Army soldiers and at the same fighting against the Germans. Despite these historical facts, the Soviet authorities deported not only Crimean Tatars who were German collaborators but also innocent children, women, invalids. Communist Party members were undergone of deportation as well. About 9 thousand former Red Army soldiers of Crimean Tatar nationality were contained in the special settlements by March 1949 (Bugai N. , 1992, p. 134). Apart from it, there were 534 officers (former veterans); 1,392 sergeants, and 7,079 rank and file soldiers who were charged in treason becoming the victims of deportation (Ibid).

To understand the profound motives of implementation of deportation, it is reasonable to analyze the political ambitions. These motives are linked to the Soviet foreign policy towards the Middle East (Fisher, 1978). The Stalin policy had concentrated on designs regarding Turkish territory after the Second World War. The interests are explained by the desires of Stalin to obtain

the territories of Turkey, such as Kars and Adharan. These cities had significant strategic patterns. That is why the establishment of military bases in the Dardanelle Straits was one of Stalin's primary political desires. Despite the signing of the 1925 Soviet-Turkish Treaty of Neutrality, the Soviet authorities made all necessary measures and diplomatic pressure to Turkey to have naval bases in the Straits and obtain Kars and Ardahan (Ibid). Stalin discussed these issues about Kars and Ardahan at both the Yalta and Potsdam summits. He continued to put military and diplomatic pressure on Turkey for the realization of this political idea.

Moreover, Soviet-Turkish relations tended the mass deportation of ethnic minorities on the territory of the Soviet Union. Thereby, the deportation of Karachays, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, and Meskhetian Turks was one of the parts of the anti-Turkish campaign (Williams B. G., 1999, p. 583). It could be explained by the fact that all these nationalities had historical and cultural ties with Turkey, which made them closer. Apart from the cultural and historical relations, the areas where these ethnic groups live had substantial geo-strategical advantages. For instance, The Meskhetian Turks historically lived near the Georgian-Turkish border; the Karachays, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkars inhabited nearby the main highways through the Caucasus; the Crimean Tatars lived on the territory of the Crimean peninsula where there were naval bases which had significant benefits because of the Black Sea Fleet (Pohl 2000). From the perspective of Stalin and Beria, who was most influential of Stalin's secret police chiefs, these nationalities would not be loyal to the USSR if the conflict between the Soviet Union and Turkey starts. Besides, Stalin and Beria believed that these ethnic groups would represent the mission of the pro-Turkish fifth column betraying the interests of the USSR. Therefore, considering all these facts, the Soviet authorities made all severe measures (mass deportation as one of them) to prevent any kind of

diversion, sabotage, or assistance of these ethnic groups to Turkey if the conflict between both sides commences (Pohl 2000).

In terms of the Crimean case, as has been mentioned above, the significance of controlling over the Crimean territory was one of the primary military purposes by Russia to conquest this region. It worth pointing out that the importance of annexation of this territory was strongly expressed during the Crimean War in the last century (Pohl 2000). The Soviet authorities completely realized that controlling the territory of Crimea would be complicated to implement due to the national solidarity and unity of Crimean Tatars. Thereby, to implement this policy, the mass deportation was one of the optimal solutions. To take into account the linguistic, cultural, religious, and historical ties between Turkey and Crimean Tatars, Stalin decided to organize mass deportation of Crimean Tatars to remote areas such as Central Asia and the Urals. Thus, the first mass deportation of Crimean Tatars was organized on 18 May 1944 by NKVD - interior ministry of the Soviet Union. These deputies of Chiefs of the NKVD, such as Bogdan Kobulov and Ivan Serov, played a vital role in the entrainment of the condemned nation (Pohl 2000). Also, there were 23 thousand officers, members of NKVD, 9 thousand NKVD-NKGB operatives, 100 "Willey Jeeps," 250 trucks, and 67 train echelons participated in the operations of capturing and organizing the deportation of Crimean Tatars (Bugai N. F., 1992, p. 144). During the deportation, the Crimean Tatars were able to take only up the 500 kg of their belongings. However, some of them could take belongings, which were less than 500 kg. Also, NKVD members did not allow some Crimean Tatars to bring anything during their mass deportation.

The massive number of Crimean Tatars was deported to Uzbekistan in special settlements. Their number accounted for 151 thousand people (Pohl 2000). The majority of them were women and children. It could be justified by the fact that men continued to struggle in the troops of the Red

Army against Nazi Germany so far while their families were sent into exile. Deported Crimean Tatars served as cheap labor working in various fields such as in mines, factories, and industrial construction projects (Pohl 2000). Considering all these historical facts, it is significant to note that the contribution of Crimean Tatars to the economic development of Uzbekistan was substantial. A table below indicates the number of deported Crimean Tatars who were taken to train stations and sent en route to Uzbekistan (Bugai N. F., 1992, p. 139).

<b>Day</b>	<b>Taken to Train Stations</b>	<b>Sent en route to Uzbekistan</b>
18 May 1944	90,000	48,400
19 May 1944	165,515	136,412
20 May 1944	183,155	183,155

The first several years of exile on the territory of Uzbekistan was very complicated for Crimean Tatars. Since the Crimean Tatars were presented as traitors and Nazi collaborators, the local people's attitude was not positive. It could also be justified by the fact that NKVD implemented the agitation against the reputation of Crimean Tatars, and this propaganda played a negatively significant role in the relationship between Crimean Tatars and Uzbeks who fought in the Red Army (Williams B. G., 1999, pp. 590-592). This initial hostile from Uzbeks towards Crimean Tatars became a robust experience making them deprived of any assistance from local people between 1944 and 1945.

Apart from the problems that Crimean Tatars faced from local people's attitude, there were other challenges as well. For instance, the climate and its conditions on the territory of Uzbekistan are severe and negatively affected the health of Tatars. Since the water had a massive deficit and at the same time, there was the existence of other unhygienic conditions, new diseases such as

malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery commenced spreading among the Tatars. All these factors critically impacted the life of them and led to a massive number of deaths. Another reason which made it impossible to stop spreading mass outbreaks of diseases was the absence of proper medical care. Hence, there was no prevention to eliminate these catastrophic problems in respect of Crimean Tatars. These cities of Uzbekistan, such as Namangan, Samarkand, and Bukhara, became primary, where the rates of infection were higher (Bugai N. , 1995, p. 142). For instance, almost 40 percent of Crimean Tatars in Namangan had both diseases, namely malaria and yellow fever in July 1944 (Ibid). Thus, the outcome of mass deportation of Crimean Tatars was hunger, various types of diseases, and deaths.

Furthermore, the number of dead people who were deported to special settlements on the territory of Uzbekistan was high. Per NKVD archives, the number of Crimean Tatars who died in Uzbekistan between May 1944 and 1 January 1945 made up 13,592 (Nekrich n.d.). Thereby, this figure made up 9.1 percent of the Crimean Tatars exiled to Uzbekistan and 7.4 percent of all Crimean Tatars who were sent to special settlements (Ibid). It is worth emphasizing that, throughout a year and a half, the number of Tatars who were exiled to Uzbekistan and perished accounted for 17.8 percent (Pohl 2000). Also, about half of these deaths regarded to children under sixteen age among Crimean Tatars and less than a quarter accounted for adult people. Along with the diseases and infections which had been rapidly spread among the deported Tatars population, the deserts of Uzbekistan became overly fatal for them. According to the documents of reproduced in Nekrich, "out of 13,183 recorded deaths in 1945, 6,096 were children, 4,525 women, and only 2,562 men" (Nekrich n.d.). There was an indicator of deaths and births among Crimean Tatars during deportation in Uzbekistan in different years (Pohl 2000).

<b>Year</b>	<b>Deaths</b>	<b>Births</b>
1945	15,997	1,099
1946	4,997	961
1947	2,937	1,753
1948	3,918	1,753
1949	2,120	3,586
1950	2,138	4,671
Total	32,107	13,823

### **3.1. The process of rebirth and return home**

As mentioned above, there were other ethnic groups along with Crimean Tatars such as Chechens, Ingush people, Karachays, Balkars, Kalmyks, Volga Germans and Meskhetian Turks who had been deported from their homes as well. The situation towards them had been altered only after the death of Stalin in 1953. Nikita Khrushchev's rule period (1953-1964) was determined as the gradual easing of totalitarianism (B. Williams 1997). Khrushchev's era was also well-known as the "thaw" (Ehrenburg 1954). This term means de-Stalinization when millions of people were released from prisons, labor camps, repressions, and censorship acquired the relaxed form (Tompson 1995). One of the problems which had been solved during the Khrushchev period was the rehabilitation of so-called "punished ethnic groups" who were recognized as traitors. Some of these people could obtain the status of rehabilitation, which, in turn, allowed them to return their homes. However, not all deported nations could possess these opportunities to return to their autonomous regions. Crimean Tatars were one of these groups along with the Volga Germans and Meskhetian Turks who were not forgiven by Khrushchev and still condemned to languish in exile (B. Williams 1997, 238).

It is significant to point out that all these measures which positively altered towards other nations were the feeling of shock and disappointment. It could be explained by the fact that other deported peoples such as Caucasian (Chechens, The Ingush people) who had been deported as well, had the chance to move to their reconstituted mountain homeland republics and restart their living. Thereby, all these political and historical events left the profound imprint in the collective memory of Crimean Tatars as well as mass deportation in 1944. Nevertheless, there is also another point regarding the new difficulties of Crimean Tatars that should be mentioned. Even though Crimean Tatars faced with other challenges, all these difficulties made them more closely-knit. Being expelled and living away from home, the Crimean Tatars commenced thinking of a new strategy to return to Crimea (B. Williams 1997). Therefore, the common sense of injustice of Crimean Tatars and ongoing frustration towards the Soviet authorities led to the creation of "Return to the Homeland" mass movement. Crimean Tatars, who lived in different regions and places in their exile, became more active, organizing at the same time committees whose primary function was maintenance their culture and strengthening national solidarity. Additionally, being the witnesses of the difficulties that could lead to the destruction of their national identity, all necessary measures were taken by them to avoid new problems. In the late 1950s, national activism among Crimean Tatars living in different regions was getting to increase, and the common sense of grievance led to the creation of political mobilization (B. Williams 1997).

In particular, on the territory of Uzbekistan, where there was the vast number of Crimean Tatar communities, various initiative groups had been established with the principal purpose to make specific pressure to the Soviet authorities and achieve the rehabilitation for Crimean Tatars that in turn give them a possibility to return their homes. According to one of the accounts of the movements, "Any Crimean Tatar who wished could join. Within a city, street groups informed the

city group of their activities; the city group, in turn, informed the area group; the area group informed the republic group" (Alexeyeva, 1985, p. 140). Thus, the Crimean Tatars commenced to a frontal challenge to the Soviet regime on the base of ethnic and nationalist ideas, which could be considered as the first in modern history. Those, who expressed discontent toward the Soviet Government, protested in the form of self-immolation. Aside from these cases, the massive number of activists and dissidents among Tatars have been getting to increase. Their activity and protests had been suppressed brutally, and some of them were imprisoned and sent to the Gulag (Soviet forced-labor camps) as well (B. Williams 1997). One of the main requirements of Crimean Tatar dissidents was the revival of Crimean ASSR within the Soviet Empire, providing cultural autonomy for Tatars. The cohesion between them was getting to increase, and this factor could be justified by the argument that Tatars were actively involved in the struggle for their rights defending their friends and neighbors who had been arrested for opposing the forced settlement regime (Safonov 1990). Despite the steady strengthening of struggling, their protests had more non-violent form, and the majority from protesters were highly educated people. One of the prominent dissidents whose role still influential so far is Mustafa Dzhemilev. His activity and struggle were so potent that he was compared with other world political fighters such as Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. Also, his popularity was getting to increase in the Central Asian states among Crimean Tatars, who gave him the honorary title Kirimoglu — "son of the Crimea" (B. Williams 1997, 239). He was imprisoned several times throughout 15 years for his dissident activity that in turn deteriorated his health. Apart from Dzhemilev, there were hundreds of other Crimean Tatars in Tashkent (capital of Uzbekistan) continued to fight for their rights and the opportunity to return their homes. According to the claim of one of the Soviet generals who were sympathetic to the Crimean Tatars' cause, "Despite their expectations, the punitive actions of the authorities called forth still greater political activism on the part of the Crimean Tatar masses. The number of appeals

and protests continued to grow" (Grigorenko, 1977, p. 59). It is also essential to point out that more than 120 thousand Crimean Tatars took part in the signing of a document in which one of the requirements was rehabilitation and repatriation of their nation (Sheehy, 1971, p. 14).

Regarding the fight to return home, it is essential to note that the 1960s was the period when Crimean Tatars were able to create organizations in the case of defending their human rights. One of the aims of these organizations was to achieve political rehabilitation for the Tatars. It could allow them to move back their homelands and re-establish their "status of administrative autonomy" (Potichnyj 1975). Since the political activity of Crimean Tatars was getting to increase, Communist authorities of Uzbekistan apprehended the feelings that massive protests and challenges towards the Communist regime could somehow influence the population of 8 million Uzbeks. According to the United States State Department report, due to the protests of Crimean Tatars, there was a "certain demonstrative effect upon minority nationalities in Central Asia and elsewhere" (Kowalewski, 1977, p. 13). Eventually, owing to the active participation and involvement of Tatars in the process of struggling for their rights, some positive outcomes for them were accomplished. It is explained by the historical fact that on 21 July 1967, the committee of Crimean Tatars, which consisted of 400 people obtained permission to meet several Soviet politicians and high ranking Soviet officials along with Yuri Andropov, who was KGB chairman at that period (B. Williams 1997). As a result of several tense months, the Soviet authorities agreed to listen to the demands of Crimean Tatars and make some concessions. Thus, on the base of the decree in September 1967 by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Crimean Tatars were released from the status of mass betrayal during the Second World War and were permitted greater rights in the countries of Central Asia. However, despite the content, which was depicted, the real expectations had not been realized in practice. In other words, the second part of decree claims:

"citizens of Tatar nationality who had formerly been living in the Crimea have taken root (ukorenilis) in the territory of the Uzbek and other Union Republics" and "they enjoy all the rights of Soviet citizens" (Chervonaia, 1992, p. 112). The expectations regarding the improvement of the situation among Crimean Tatars once again destroyed, and dreams of returning home were not realized. Therefore, by making this decree, the Soviet Authorities hoped that the Crimean Tatars would not demand the rights of returning, being the citizens of other Union Republics, and enjoying equal human rights. However, all these decrees stimulated many upsurges in rallies and protests among Tatars. This decree could be considered a false hypothesis by the Soviet leaders that due to the improvement of human rights for Tatars, the number of protests would decrease. The homeland of Crimea was still crucial for Tatars, who still lived far from, and this factor is directly related to the Crimean Tatars' identity in exile. As has been described above, other nations such as Chechens, the Ingush people, and Kalmyks, who had been deported from their homeland, became the victims of the Soviet regime's forced assimilation policy. Nevertheless, not all ethnic groups successfully assimilated and integrated into other societies, retaining still their national identity. For instance, Chechens united all together and organized into different clans between each other through religious brotherhoods. Since they developed their own version of religion (namely unofficial Sufi mystical version of Islam), these measures helped them avoid assimilation and save national identity. Despite some similarities and common ethnonational problems, a situation of maintaining identity in terms of Crimean Tatars was distinctive. Tatars, who were urbanized and secular, were less religious than Chechens, despite the significant role of Islam in the lives of Tatars. The main element of Crimean Tatar's nationalism at that period was the concept of their national homeland that, in turn, preserved their national identity. In other words, the "notion of regaining the lost homeland" became the central element and foundation of the maintenance of national identity for Crimean Tatars (Sukhareva 1960). Thereby, this idea helped them resist the process of assimilation

into the surrounding Central Asia society and, at the same time, denied any facts to accept Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan (or any other SSR) as their homeland. From the perspective of Azade Ayse Rorlich, "The struggle for their homeland is at the center of their struggle to endure as a nation. It unfolds the twin banners of political activism and cultural assertiveness" (Rorlich, 1994, p. 172).

The memory of the homeland was the principal motivator of the emergence of national movements among Tatars. It is worth noting that the stories about Crimean Tatars have been passed from one generation to another. Despite growing up and living in Central Asia, Tatar's children had visual imagination about their historical Motherland. One of the Crimean Tatar exiles said: "Most children say 'mama' or 'papa' as their first word. Our children said 'Krym' the word for Crimea" (Reuters 1994). There was also another method of retaining national memory, namely through culture and literature. For example, there are brilliant pieces of Crimean Tatar literature such as "*Yurdunu Kaybeden Adam* (The Man Who Lost His Land)" by greatest poet Cengiz Dagci, "*O Topraklar Bizimdi* (That Land Was Ours)" etc. (Tutuncu, 1992, p. 9). Different songs, paintings, poems reflect the historical disaster and difficulties that Crimean Tatars faced in their life. There was also a well-known Crimean Tatar song about exile who surreptitiously moved back to Crimea, observed how his house (the place where his parents and grandparents lived together) occupied by Russians. Tatars lived in different Soviet Republics, but they all had one dream: return to the homeland.

The case of Crimean Tatars could also be considered as one of the applicable samples of homeland-oriented diaspora conception. According to William Safran, one of the essential features of a diaspora is that its members "believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and its safety and prosperity". Apart from it, Safran emphasizes that diaspora "continue to relate, personally and vicariously, to that homeland

in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship" (Safran 1991, p. 84). Furthermore, one of the main motives for making Crimean Tatars more politically active is explained by mutual problems. The national tragedy (repressions, deportation, ethnic cleansings) united Crimean Tatars all together. The Soviet Government made all appropriate measures versus Tatars, namely refuse to acknowledge Crimean Tatars as a separate ethnic group and deny the legitimacy of Tatars to Crimea as their homeland. In other words, these such severe restrictions could also be viewed as attempts to destroy the total national identity of Tatars by the Soviet Government. After the 1970s, the involvement in the political life of Crimean Tatars has been strengthened. This was due to Crimean Tatar's political activists commenced cooperating with other Soviet dissidents who were fighting against the violence of human rights in the USSR. One of them was Andrei Sakharov, a prominent Russian scientist, dissident, Nobel laureate and activist of human rights. Since the interaction and cooperation for the accomplishment of mutual goals between Crimean Tatar's political activists and other Soviet dissidents were getting to increase, the process of struggling might be called more impressive in contrast to the previous years (B. Williams 1997).

In the 1980s, the Crimean Tatars attempted to move to different Ukrainian provinces, which had a border with Crimea (B. Williams 1997). The central regions where they moved were Krasnodar and Caucasian territory due to the geographical position of these regions being closer to their homeland. All these historical events led to the strengthening of measures towards Crimean Tatars. Thus, they had been forcefully re-deported to Uzbekistan and other regions of Central Asia. As has described above, despite the widespread living on the territory of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Crimean Tatars had never acknowledged these countries as their homeland. Despite linguistic, cultural, and religious similarities between Crimean Tatars and Uzbeks, the desire to

return to a homeland was still the main goal of Tatars. Apart from Crimean Tatars, there were many different ethnic groups, such as Koreans and Uighurs, who lived in the Central Asian states. Even though their population was large, these ethnic groups did not strive to abandon these places, unlike the Crimean Tatars. The Crimean territory was overcrowded with other people such as Slavs (Russians and Ukrainians), and holiday resorts had been created there as well. Thus, according to the Soviet authorities, the return of Crimean Tatars to their historical homeland would be impossible.

A significant case which is essential to mention is comparable patterns of migration between Soviet Jews and Crimean Tatars. Both had the same idea of returning to their historical land. In contradistinction to Crimean Tatars, the ambitions of Jews to move to Israel, which had been considered as their historic homeland, were more prosperous. The main reason which could explain the positive outcomes of Soviet Jews to migrate to Israel was international support (B. Williams 1997). Also, the role of the Jewish diaspora in different countries was vital to emphasize the progressive achievement of Soviet Jews in the process of moving to Israel. The struggle of Crimean Tatars for returning to the homeland was not as well-known as the Soviet Jews in the 1980s in the West. The little support to the Crimean Tatars was implemented only from Turkey. It was due to the large number of Crimean Tatars who live on the territory of Turkey settling after the Russian conquest of the Crimean Peninsula. It is worth noting that Crimean Tatar assimilation in Turkish society occurred in a short period. Thus, a certain group of Crimean Tatars could not retain their national identity and acknowledge themselves as Turkish people.

The situation altered a little when Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union in 1985. The policies of Gorbachev, such as "glasnost"(openness) and "perestroika" (restructuring), had more liberal patterns on the base of reforms, which provided specific hope to the Crimean Tatar

people to strengthen their demands. For instance, they could organize a protest at Moscow's Red Square in July 1987 (B. Williams 1997). Taking into consideration political changes and advantage of the new political environment, approximately 300 Crimean Tatars took part in these protests where they were holding posters with inscription "Motherland or Death". This protest attracted attention not only of Moscow officials but also Western journalists and tourists. Andrei Gromyko was the first among influential Soviet politicians who responded to this rally. He ordered to create a commission with the purpose of dealing with the Crimean Tatars' demands. Thereby, according to Gromyko, the plan of "controlled" return of Crimean Tatars has been implemented by 1989-1990, which in turn provided the opportunity for Tatars to carry out their historical ambitions. Gennady Yanayev, who was another prominent Soviet politician at that period, suggested restoring the Crimean ASSR. Thus, the plan of gradual returning of Crimean Tatars to Crimea was commenced to realize. There were approximately 120 thousand Crimean Tatars who could return to their homeland by May of 1990 (B. Williams 1997). Also, Mustafa Dzhemilev, who became the leader of Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement OCNM played a vital role in the process of repatriation of thousands of Crimean Tatars to the Crimea due to his long-term struggle for the rights for Tatars. The dissolution of the Soviet Union led the new political shift in the lives of different national minorities of the USSR and affected their ambitions. Crimean Tatars, who lived on the territory of Ukraine (when Crimea was a part of Ukraine), have also witnessed these political events.

### **3.2. Crimean Tatar's context since 1991**

As it was mentioned, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Crimea became an indispensable part of Ukraine that obtained new independence. This territory was always atypical for Ukraine compared to others, since Crimea was the only region in Ukraine where the majority

of the population were Russians and Russian speakers. Before analyzing the context of Crimean Tatars after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, it is significant to point out a few historical facts about Ukraine and Crimea's correlation.

The transfer of Crimea to the territory of Ukraine was implemented in 1954 by Nikita Khrushchev, who was the first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1953 – 1964). There are multiple reasons for transferring Crimea to Ukraine. One of them is territorial proximity and geographical location. The second reason is the shared cultural and economic features between Ukraine and Crimea, which unites both sides. Apart from these factors, it is worth noting that despite transferring Crimea to Ukraine, the Crimean territory was culturally Russified. Since the Soviet Union's existence and direct dependence on the other Soviet Republic to the center (Moscow), transferring Crimea to Ukraine had not triggered any tensions between peoples in the Soviet society. Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Crimean territory retained the Russian spirit, and the Russian language was used in different areas even though the Ukrainian language obtained official status (Barrington 2002). After the Second World War, Sevastopol, which is the largest city on the Crimean Peninsula is still considered as "the city of Russian glory" (Plokhly, 2008, p. 372).

As it was mentioned above, the number of Crimean Tatars who returned to Crimea was getting to increase before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, their number was significantly lower compared to the Russians and Ukrainians, who made up most of the population in Crimea. Moreover, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, in 1991, the majority of the Crimean peninsula's population voted for the restoration of autonomy within the USSR and this decision was approved by the Ukrainian Supreme Council. Due to the referendum, which was implemented in December 1991, both the Crimean and Ukrainian authorities recognized Crimea as a part of

Ukraine (Osipov 2014). It is significant to point out that Crimean Tatars were one of the ethnic minorities on the Crimean Peninsula who expressed a desire to be a part of Ukrainian territory rather than Russian. Despite this fact, the secessionist ambition of the Crimean population (mainly Crimean Tatars) still existed at the beginning of the 1990s. Thus, on May 5, 1992, the Crimean parliament proclaimed Crimea's independence and also the establishment of the first constitution. However, the proclamation of the Crimean self-government was annulled by the Ukrainian Supreme Rada (parliament) on May 19, 1992, since the pressure of the Ukrainian authorities regarding this issue was massive (Osipov 2014). The Ukrainian authorities agreed to strengthen Crimea's autonomous status within the territory of Ukraine. To take into account these opportunities and legal prerogatives, the post of President of Crimea had been established by the Crimean parliament on October 14, 1993. Apart from this advantage, regular representation in the consultative Council of Fourteen was granted for the Crimean Tatars (Osipov 2014).

### **3.3. Crimea as an autonomous region within the territory of Ukraine**

Regarding the number of Crimean Tatars by January 1992, it was getting to increase, making up about 200 thousand in 1994 (Gabriel'an, 1997, p. 42). After returning to the homeland, they faced different challenges and problems. These problems were related to these areas, such as housing, employment, property, schooling, and social security (Kotigorenko 2005). Repatriates among Crimean Tatars faced the challenges in the compensation and property restitution, which were insufficient (Shevel 2001). All these measures led to different tensions and clashes between Crimean Tatars and the Ukrainian police. Another problem that should be emphasized is the difficulties of obtaining citizenship. According to the Ukrainian national law, double citizenship is not possible on the territory of Ukraine. It is explained by the fact that the majority of repatriates among Crimean Tatars remained as the citizens of Uzbekistan. Only in 1998-1999, under the aegis

of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Uzbekistan and Ukraine could manage these issues resolving the problems of citizenship. Yet the problems regarding citizenship, housing, employment, and education among Crimean Tatars still existed at that period. Apart from these factors, the large number of Crimean Tatars who returned to Crimea were accommodated mostly in the central and eastern parts of the peninsula, which were less progressive and prosperous compared to other parts.

In 1998, new political events occurred that influenced the life of the Crimean Tatars. It is justified by the argument that the Autonomous Republic of Crimea obtained limited administrative and budgetary but not legislative competences according to the new Constitution (Osipov 2014). Hence, the ARC was provided opportunities to manage issues such as urban planning and agriculture. Besides, Crimean Tatars obtained the possibilities to participate in the creation of local businesses supported by the authorities and implementation of social programs but in the limited form (Temnenko, 2012, pp. 88-94).

Furthermore, Ukrainian retained the status of official language throughout the territory of the whole Crimea. However, taking into consideration other ethnic groups, these languages, such as Russian and Crimean Tatar were guaranteed functioning, use, and protection status as well. Since the main population of the peninsula was Russian speakers, Russian was used as official communication. Crimean Tatar language was used in 15 schools and taught in 40 bilingual schools, which were Russian and Crimean Tatar or Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar. Also, the Crimean Tatar language was used by journalists in some media outlets (Crimean Political Dialogue 2010).

Another issue that is essential to point out is the political and economic situation in Crimea. Even though the ARC had weak administrative autonomy with any kind of restrictions, the representatives of political and economic elites in Crimea were satisfied with the current situation.

It was one of the reasons why the Crimean Tatars did not support the populist movement for integration with Russia, having close relations between 1992 and 1994 (Tolkacheva, 2004, pp. 86-103). Despite the autonomy that Crimea possessed, control over this territory was implemented from Kyiv (center) through the Regions Party machinery, and the function of management of Crimea was carried out by the Council of Ministers (Formanchuk 2000). There were certain Ukrainian politicians with the radical views who considered the Crimean autonomy as a menace that might influence the security and integrity of Ukrainian territory. Thereby, they supported the idea of abolishing the status of autonomy for the Crimean region (Malyarenko and Galbreath 2001). Crimean Tatars were dissatisfied by the problems which had occurred on the territory of their region, namely, it could be explained by the economic problems such as stagnation and the weak system of Ukrainian statehood. Yet they were feeling that they are living in a democratic country where there was the existence of free elections and a multi-party system. The role of Crimean Tatars in the political life of Ukraine was substantial. It is explained by the fact that representatives of Mejlis participated in the Ukrainian parliament being deputies. At the same time, since 2010, six politicians with the Crimean Tatar background were deputies of local representative organs (Osipov 2014). The number of Crimean Tatars politicians who became the deputies in the Ukrainian parliament was getting to increase. For instance, in 2010, their number accounted for 992, making up 14 percent of the total number among public figures on the territory of Crimea (Ovcharenko, 2013, p. 49). Also, in 1993-98, the Crimean Tatars were provided 14 reserved seats at the ARC Supreme Council (Mal'gin, 2000, pp. 64-109).

Furthermore, it is also significant to note the role of Mejlis and Qurultay when Crimea was a part of Ukrainian territory. At that period, Mejlis demanded many issues regarding the problems Crimean Tatars faced. One of the problems which have not been solved until 17 April 2014 was

the rehabilitation of the repressed people. This issue was very significant, especially after the large flow of Crimean Tatars return to Crimea from Central Asian countries. Unfortunately for the Crimean Tatars, the Ukrainian law on the rehabilitation of the repressed people has been adopted only after Russian annexation on 17 April 2014, but it was too late. Thus, there were not any responses from the Ukrainian Government to the demands of Crimean Tatars in the issue of the status of Crimean Tatars as indigenous peoples until 2014 (Osipov 2014).

Another problem that should be noted is the unwillingness of the Ukrainian authorities to acknowledge Qurultay and the Mejlis as public bodies. Taking into account the historical and political significance of these public bodies for Tatars' lives, the Ukrainian Government recognized these establishments as important for them. Only in 1999, the Mejlis could obtain an accomplishment of granting just indirect recognition. In other words, Mejlis became the consultative Council on the issue of Crimean Tatars under the Ukrainian President. Nevertheless, the Council lost its function after 2005, which was substituted by another public body in 2010 (OSCE 2013). Apart from it, the Ukrainian Government implemented fewer measures to solve the problems regarding the Crimean Tatars, namely the establishment of a workable and durable formula of power-sharing. In other words, the issues of property restitution and territorial self-determination of Crimean Tatars had not been resolved, which stimulated the conflict within Crimea.

As it was mentioned above, one of the main aims of Qurultay was recognition of the Crimean Tatars as indigenous people of the Crimean Peninsula along with other small ethnic groups such as Karaims and Krymchaks. From the perspective of Crimean Tatars politicians, obtaining the status of indigenous people is one of the most serious issues for them, despite the fact that they are the minorities on the territory of Crimea. They also considered that they deserved to

obtain the exclusive right of self-determination and had the possibility to determine the political status of Crimea (Avdet 1991). The representatives of Mejlis and Qurultay have presented different documents regarding the international law and collective rights of indigenous peoples. Apart from it, another demand of Crimean Tatars was recognition of Qurultay as only one legitimate representative organ with a special public status and entitlements. These measures of demand did not satisfy the interests of the Ukrainian Government. Mejlis and Qurultay were considered non-governmental organizations by the Ukrainian officials, which triggered protests from the Crimean Tatar politicians. However, the Ukrainian Government attempted to use the Crimean Tatar movement despite disputes between Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar politicians. In order to achieve the loyalty of Crimean Tatars to the Ukrainian power, several various measures were implemented in favor of Tatar by Ukraine. For instance, various social and educational programs were launched by the Ukrainian, whose main goal was to provide opportunities for repatriates to use their rights and consequently reduce the number of protests among Tatars. Despite the realization of these programs, they were criticized by Tatars due to insufficient measures (Osipov 2014). One of the reasons which could support the argument for drawbacks of programs was economic problems that Ukraine faced.

To sum up, the descriptive and historical analysis regarding the Crimea under Ukraine's control were described and analyzed. It is unfair to claim that there were only negative sides, namely the problems and challenges of Crimean Tatars under Ukraine. Despite the drawbacks in the process of managing and solving the conflict with Crimean Tatars by Ukrainian authorities, there were positive aspects as well. It could be justified by the democratic values and opportunities for Crimean Tatars to express their thoughts. Besides, they were able to manage the protests and fight for their rights. For a reason, Crimean Tatars agreed to be a part of Ukraine rather than Russia.

After the annexation of Crimea in 2014 by Russia, Crimean Tatars were one of the first peoples who openly expressed their protests and complaints. All these protests impacted the Crimean Tatars in a negative way. In the following chapter, the case of Crimean Tatars after Russia's annexation is described. Thus, the new difficulties and problems that have not been solved yet regarding the Crimean Tatars are analyzed.

## **4. Crimean Tatar's context after Russia's annexation in 2014**

### **4.1. The historical policy of Crimea's annexation**

The Crimean separatism had historical and profound roots. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Crimea could avoid the violent conflict in juxtaposition with other territorial conflicts such as Transnistria in Moldova, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Nagorno Karabakh in Azerbaijan, and Chechnya in Russia (Katchanovski I. , 2015, p. 81). Thereby, this territory had the potential frozen conflict that could lead to the beginning of ethnic violence. The beginning of the Crimean problems commenced after the violent overthrow of the Yanukovich government in February 2014. The protests of Euromaidan occurred in 2014 forced the former president of Ukraine Yanukovich to abandon Ukraine, and with the help of the Russian military, he could escape to Russia. From the perspective of Ukrainian and Western media, Yanukovich abandoned Ukraine because of responsibility for the implementation of a large massacre towards Maidan participants on 20 February 2014. However, according to certain evidence, different far-right and oligarchic organizations played an important role in the overthrow of the Yanukovich government (Katchanovski I. , 2014, p 85). It is worth to point out that Russian media supported other views and political positions regarding Euromaidan events. According to Russian politicians and media, the main motive of the overthrow of Yanukovich's regime is based on the fascist ideology that stimulates these consequences. Thus, the Russian annexation of Crimea and involvement in this political process was justified by the argument to protect Russian people living in the Crimea from the Ukrainian aggression and fascist regime. However, the profound reason for Crimea's occupation by Russian military forces linked to the significance of the geo-strategical position of the Crimean Peninsula. Since the territory of Crimea had historical importance for Russia and national security interests, the Russian authorities implemented all measures to prevent losing its control over the main Black Sea naval base. Moreover, as per the political strategy of

Russia, deteriorating the political relations with Russia and tight rapprochement with the Western block would lead under the control of NATO. Thus, the occupation of this territory by Russia was the only way to avoid these changes and retain its control over the Crimean Peninsula.

After Euromaidan events that impacted the political situation on the territory of Ukraine, the context of Crimea had undergone by political changes. In February 2014, Serhii Aksyonov was elected as the new Premier Minister of the Crimean autonomy. Prior to becoming the Premier Minister, he was the leader of the Russian Unity party that supported pro-separatist Russian ideas (Katchanovski I. , 2015, p. 86). Afterward, the parliament of the Crimean autonomy and the Sevastopol city council made decision to declare their independence from Ukraine and set up a referendum on the base of this issue. As a result of the referendum, which held on 16 March 2014, 97 percent of the Crimean population supported joining Russia (Katchanovski I. , 2015, p. 86). According to the Ukrainian media and politicians, the results of the referendum were illegal and falsified. Crimean separatism and referendum that results supported the idea of joining Russia were bonded directly to Russia's military intervention. As per the analysis of different sources of media and survey data; the main reason stimulating the beginning of the Crimean crisis had occurred after Euromaidan events and overthrow of Yanukovych's (2010-2014) pro-Russian government.

According to Bebler, the results of the referendum can be considered falsified due to several main reasons. First of all, the referendum's main shortcoming could be explained by the fact that the possibility of Crimea's remaining as a part of Ukraine within the current structure was not included and failed (Bebler 2015). The second reason is that there were no international institutional observers like OSCE and other organizations during the referendum process. The third reason had a direct link to the media. Since the Crimean median was controlled by Russia after 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014, the whole information presented had biased pattern (Bebler, 2015, pp. 196-219).

To take all these facts into consideration, Crimea declared its independence on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014 and became the part of Russia the day after, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014. The case of Crimean annexation had divided the opinions of different political experts. According to Issaeva, political experts had various statements regarding the process of annexation, one group of experts agree on illegal action by Russian authorities, another group supported opposite position, claiming that Russian actions had lawful patterns (Issaeva 2015). Despite various political statements and disputes among politicians, there are several significant documents, agreements, and treaties that reinforce Ukraine's territorial integrity. These are UN Charter (1945), Final Act of the CSCE (1973), the 1991 protocol to the Commonwealth Pact, the Memorandum on Security Assurances (Budapest memorandum; 2014) and bilateral treaties between Russia and Ukraine, such as Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership (1997) or Partition Treaty on the Status and Conditions of the Black Sea Fleet (Matzek, 2016, p. 3). Furthermore, according to the Partition Treaty on the Status and Conditions of the Black Sea Fleet in 1997, Russia had the right to deploy its troops on Ukrainian territory. However, this article has contradictory pattern toward the article 6 (1) of the same treaty that claims: “Military units operate in places of deployment per the legislation of the Russian Federation, respect the sovereignty of Ukraine, observe its legislation and do not allow interference in the internal affairs Ukraine” (Matzek, 2016, p. 3).

The referendum's consequences impacted Russia's economic relations with other countries that did not recognize the referendum's results. Therefore, several states expressing their discontent due to Crimean annexation implemented sanctions against Russia. In March 2016, states such as the USA, EU, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Japan implemented six rounds of sanctions against Russia. In addition, the list of initial three rounds of sanctions included different Russian politicians and businessmen, whose assets had been frozen and access to these countries was

banned (Wang, 2015, pp. 1-6). These sanctions could not impact the situation on the positive side; on the contrary, aggravated the context. Thus, in retaliation, the price of natural gas on Ukraine was raised by Russia, which at the same time reduced the supply in European states such as Poland, Slovenia, and Romania. Additionally, since August, Russian authorities decided to boycott different agricultural products from the states that took part in the sanctions process against Russia (Wang, 2015, pp. 1-6).

It is significant to point out that international economic sanctions against Russian impacted the Russian economy. It could be justified by the fact that USD/Ruble exchange rate dropped by 50%; and at the same time, slow GDP growth in Russia led to a loss of 4-5 billion USD per year (Wang, 2015, pp. 1-6). Taking into account all these economic problems and sanctions, the Russian authorities had decided to change political course in the issue of international economic relations. Thereby, in order to get rid of the international isolation and maintaining economic stability, Russia established cooperative economic relations mostly with Asian countries such as China, India, Vietnam, and even North Korea (Matzek, 2016, p. 4). Despite the political events that occurred in 2014 after Russian annexation, the Russian Government continues to carry out its policy, using forcible measures with respect to Ukraine's territorial integrity. All sanctions which were carried out towards Russia by Western countries had been implemented in order to make Russia comply with international norms that were violated. Yet the existence of economic sanctions, international political pressure by Western states, and the position of Russian policy regarding the Crimean context remain unchanged (Matzek, 2016, p. 4).

#### **4.2. Crimean Tatars under Russia. The new threats and challenges**

As mentioned above, the Crimean annexation by Russia led to the emergence of new changes that impacted the lives of Crimean citizens. One of the issues which should be mentioned

is that Mejlis had supported Euromaidan protests, believing Ukraine's transformation into the democratic society and new European values. Mejlis was one of the first that did not recognize the results of the Crimean referendum. Thus, the majority of Crimean Tatars boycotted the referendum and recalled other citizens of Crimea (representatives of other nationalities) not to participate in referendum (Brenner 2014). Even before the referendum, the Crimean Tatar opposition was one of the powers that supported the anti-Russian position. However, initially, the Russian authorities promised the positive changes for the Crimean Tatars after the referendum, namely establishment the post of three ministers and deputy premier-minister who could defend the interests of Crimean Tatars people and also official recognition of their communal organization (Chazan 2014). It is worth to note the speech of President of Russia Vladimir Putin in which he stated: "to make all the necessary political and legislative decisions to finalize the rehabilitation of Crimean Tatars, restore them in their rights and clear their good name" and also emphasized the provision of equal status for three languages in Crimea, namely Russian, Ukrainian, and Tatar (Kremlin 2014). However, these kinds of promises did not achieve any trust or support from the Crimean Tatars. It could be explained by several significant factors. One of them is the collective memory of Crimean Tatars that still plays a vital role in their life. The memory of mass deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944, which also considered as genocide by many Tatars, has a strong influence. Even though Stalin implemented this national tragedy during the Soviet period, Russia is still considered a dangerous phenomenon because it is the successor state of the USSR. The second reason is linked to the democratic deficit that Russia possesses nowadays. According to Djelal, "In contemporary Russia, federalism remains just a disguise" (Djelal 2015). The third reason is explained by the existence of pro-Russian militia groups on the territory of Crimea that can trigger any danger for the security and life of Crimean Tatars (Melichar 2015).

Crimean annexation became the era of new challenges and problems that Crimean Tatars face. These threats are related to societal society, religious, and cultural aspects. Also, the discrimination in several significant aspects could create menace for the Crimean Tatars in the case of their survival as a distinctive societal group (Melichar 2015). In the following sub-chapters, discrimination in the explicit spheres, violation of human rights, and other current challenges that Crimean Tatars face were analyzed to realize their problems specifically.

## 5. Discrimination of Crimean Tatars

### 5.1. Discrimination of language

One of the discrimination aspects of Crimean Tatars, which should be pointed out, is the language. The Crimean Tatar language had a repressed position even before the annexation. It can be justified by the argument that there were only 18 Tatar schools on the territory of the Crimean peninsula, which meant that only one out of ten children had the opportunity to have education in their native Crimean Tatar language (Aydin, 2020, p. 84). It worth noting that historically the Crimean Tatar language had been undergone by disruption throughout the Soviet Union, and this policy is still implemented after the annexation. Thus, the culture and language of Crimean Tatars had been forbidden under the hegemony of Russian culture and language. The tendency of this policy still continues. Taking into consideration the ban of the Crimean Tatar language, it would be considered as one of the endangered languages of the world. Despite the Russian authorities' promises after Crimean annexation to provide the Crimean Tatar language the status of one of the official languages and the equal treatment along with Russian and Ukrainian, no measures for realization of these were performed. Additionally, there are several reports about the persecution of those Tatars who attempted to speak their native language on the streets (Aydin 2020, 85). Language and education have remained a crucial problem, the resolution of which has not started yet. Even on the base of the new Constitution, which was adopted after the Crimean occupation, the Crimean Tatar language was recognized as one of the official ones. However, all these declarations remain on the paper, but there are no results in reality (Belitser 2015). According to Emine Avemileva, who is a member of the Mejlis, the situation regarding the language and education (Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar) is getting to deteriorate. Thus, only 3 percent of Crimean Tatar's schoolchildren had the opportunity to study in their mother tongue. However, the rest 75% of children had no access to education in the Crimean Tatar language. Because of Russian language

dominance, 96% of schoolchildren on the territory of Crimea get education explicitly in Russian (Belitser 2015). After the annexation, provision of equal treatment for Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages and attempts to make them compulsory for education, as per educational draft law, have failed. It is justified by the argument that this idea was not supported, and the Committee on the education of the 'State Council of Crimea' rejected this draft law. The Russian Authorities do not consider this language discrimination as an immense problem, and according to their position, 'all residents of Crimea know Russian' (Belitser 2015).

Furthermore, the number of teachers of the Crimean Tatar language and literature has been getting to decrease. It is explained by the fact that the Russian Government decided to prohibit and stop the training of teachers of the Crimean Tatar language and literature. Apart from that, the hiring of teachers who came from Turkey for the pedagogical activity was banned (OSCE 2015). There was also a large shortage of textbooks that are essential for the training of Crimean Tatar language and literature. Another problem that appeared due to the discrimination of language policy linked to the reduction of the number of hours dedicated to the Crimean Tatar language. Not only secular but also religious schools have been undergone discrimination by the Russian policy. Between June and September 2014, Russian authorities searched three Crimean Tatar religious schools located in Simferopol (OSCE 2015). Russian authorities had searched 8 out of 10 Tatar religious schools that belong to the Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Crimea in the mid of September 2014. The textbooks which had been banned from teaching were recognized as "extremist" literature that negatively could impact the Tatars. Thus, extremism's liquidation was determined as the main purpose of forbidding religious schools and textbooks (OHCHR 2014).

## 5.2. Discrimination of religion

Religion is one of the institutions which had been violated alongside with the language. After the annexation, the majority of religious organizations were discriminated against and violated except the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus, representatives and members of various religious communities have been undergone by attacks by the Russian authorities. Before the Russian occupation in 2014, there were 1400 registered religious communities on the territory of Crimea. However, after annexation, in 2016, only 365 religious communities were re-registered according to the demands of de facto authorities (OHCHR 2014). Only Russian citizens had the opportunity to register religious organizations. Thereby, these religious organizations such as Islamic groups, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate, and the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were undergone restrictions and severe repressions as well. Apart from the restrictions, priests of Ukrainian Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic churches had been abducted, intimidated, and accused of extremist religious activity (Shapovalova, 2016, p. 21). These restrictions forced the majority of priests to abandon the territory of Crimea. Apart from it, the religious buildings had been destroyed, and their properties were damaged. These anti-religious measures were so severe that representatives of different religious organizations were fearful of practicing their religions. For instance, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv Patriarchate deprived half of their building that led to the confiscation of their cathedral in Simferopol (Krym.Realii 2016).

Furthermore, the mosques and Muslim schools (madrassas) had also been undergone searching, and their properties were confiscated. The religious teachers and members of religious organizations had been interrogated. Police searching had been implemented in the mosques and

various madrassas which belong to the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Crimea (Shapovalova, 2016, p. 22).

One of the contexts regarding the discrimination of religion is "The Case of Hizb ut-Tahrir". It is explained by the fact that members of the Islamic movement Hizb ut-Tahrir had a vulnerable situation. This organization had official status and existed on the territory of Crimea when it was the Ukrainian part. The main aim of this organization was political and educational activity, and it existed in European countries' territory. However, currently, this organization is acknowledged as an extremist terrorist organization. At the beginning of 2015, four Crimean Tatars, namely Ruslan Zeytullaev, Nuri Primov, Rustem Vaitov, and Ferat Saifullaev have been arrested and accused of 'establishment of a terrorist organization and participation in the activities of this organization' (Pechonchyk, 2015, p. 64). Taking into account the fact that Hizb ut-Tahrir has not been registered, according to the Russian authorities, every Crimean Tatar who would become a member of this organization can potentially be charged in connection with this organization and convicted for the terrorist activity. Thereby, the main aim of this anti-religious measures in the policy towards representatives of different religious groups is to suppress dissent that would be considered as the general menace for the Russian Government.

### **5.3. Discrimination of Mejlis as a self-governing body of Crimean Tatars**

As has been mentioned above, Mejlis is the highest executive-representative body of Crimean Tatars. Mejlis played a crucial role in the political, social, public life of Tatars. However, after the annexation of Crimea, it was undergone restrictions and faced discrimination. It explains the fact that the Mejlis and its members were one of the first who protested the Russian military occupation of Crimean territory in 2014. Thus, the members of Mejlis had faced numerous repressions and persecution. Due to their protests, the pressure was exerted on Mejlis politicians.

These significant Crimean Tatar political figures such as Rize Shavkiev, Mejlis, and Chairman of the 'Crimea Foundation' and Mejlis Chairman Refat Chubarov were accused of their political activity was considered as "extremism" (V.Likhachev, 2015, pp. 6-8). Also, there was an entry ban of Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov to the territory of Crimea, which considered as a part of the repressions policy towards the Mejlis. Ukrainian Government and Mustafa Dzhemilev himself appealed to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) against Russia by criticizing Russia's discrimination policy towards Tatar politicians and Mejlis. Apart from it, in January 2015, Eskender Bariev, Sinaver Kadyrov, and Akmedzhit Suleimanov, who were the members of the Committee on the Rights of the Crimean Tatar People, were detained when they were returning to Crimea from Ukraine (Pechonchyk, 2015, p. 64). As being members of this Committee, they criticized current Russian policy and discrimination that was implemented towards the Crimean Tatars. They were accused of separatism activity by the Russian authorities (OSCE 2015). Sinaver Kadyrov was deported from the Crimea, according to a court order, and his entry to the Crimea was banned.

#### **5.4. Violation of the freedoms of expression and the media**

Media became one of the main targets of the Russian authorities. After annexation, the broadcasting of Ukrainian television stations was banned along with a large number of Ukrainian TV programs. Ukrainian independent journalists and generally representatives of Ukrainian media were attacked and persecuted by the police. Besides, these Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar media agencies such as "Chernomorskaya television and radio station" (Ukraine), Crimean Tatar television station ATR, Mejlis newspaper Avdet, and the Crimean News Agency (QHA) were targeted and oppressed. The journalists who were working in these media agencies were attacked and arrested, and at the same time, their properties were searched and confiscated (Shapovalova,

2016, p. 18). Since the journalists, bloggers, and representatives of different media agencies criticized the Russian government's discrimination policy, they were accused of extremist and separatist ideas. Even ordinary residents, who might post any negative statement or opinion about Russian policy, become the victims of persecution. Thus, all the measures led to the restriction of freedom of expression. As a result of this policy, only 232 media outlets were allowed to perform, but they were authorized under Russian law. As a comparison, about 3000 media outlets existed in Crimea under Ukraine before annexation (OSCE 2015). Restriction for the existence of these media outlets such as "ATR" and "Lale" television channels, and "Lider" radio stations, the "QHA" news agency, "Avdet" newspaper could negatively impact Tatars. It can be justified by the argument that Crimean Tatar media was the main instrument for maintaining their identity, and deprivation of it from them became the massive shock (OSCE 2015). Ukrainians living on the territory of Crimea and not being able to move to Ukraine after Russia annexation faced the same restriction for watching Ukrainian channels or programs in the Ukrainian language. Thereby, Ukrainian people were able to watch Ukrainian channels only via satellite. There was only one program that lasted for 13 minutes in the Ukrainian language, which is shown twice a week on the Crimean television. A large number of Ukrainian news agencies were closed since 2014. There was only one newspaper in the Ukrainian language, 'Krymska Svitlytsia', which had been sponsored by the Ukrainian Government. Nevertheless, it existed for a particular time and closed later on (OSCE 2015).

### **5.5. Violations of the freedom of movement of minorities**

Another violation that should be pointed out is related to the restriction in the movement of minorities. Since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, many Crimean Tatar politicians and members of Mejlis protested and criticized the Russian policy. They were persecuted by the Russian policy

due to their support of the Ukrainian side and resist the Russian occupation. As it was described in the previous chapters, Mustafa Dzhemilev, Crimean Tatar dissident, became one of the victims of Russian policy. Thereby, the entry of Mustafa Dzhemilev to the territory of Crimea was banned, as per decree of Russia's FSB in April 2014. His successor, current Mejlis Chairman Refat Chubarov was banned from entry to the Crimea for five years (Shapovalova, 2016, p. 18). The prohibition of entry of these people to the territory of Crimea led to the implementation of repressions of organizations and members of Mejlis. Besides, it is worth noting that many Turkish citizens were having business in Crimea and were living there. Turkish and Crimean Tatar cooperation was carried out in the trade and economic field. After annexation, the majority of Turkish had to abandon the Crimea, and their business activities ended up. Thus, in March 2016, three Crimean Tatars were prohibited from entry to Crimea for five years (European Parliament 2016).

## **5.6. Property rights of the Crimean repatriates**

The problems regarding the property rights of the Crimean repatriates was one of the problems the resolutions of which have not been started yet. These difficulties had commenced even before annexation when the Crimean territory was a part of Ukraine. When Crimean Tatars were returning to Crimea, they were deprived of the right to their lands. Thus, this situation was one of the problems before the annexation—these severe measures towards Crimean Tatars to construct different houses on the lands illegally. Since 2015 the Russian Government provided permission for citizens of Crimea to possess the properties which were illegally built by Crimean Tatars according to the new draft law (European Parliament 2016). Owing to the numerous protests and obstacles in the process of implementation of this law, it has not been realized so far. There were also several cases when the properties built by Crimean Tatars on seized land plots were

destroyed. Thus, de-facto the authorities destroyed the properties of Crimean Tatars without requiring a court decision (Karamanoglu 2015). This event triggered the beginning of protests among Tatars. The situation deteriorated when Seidament Gemedz, the leader of 'Sebat', which is a non-governmental organization assisting with land issues, was arrested. According to the report of Nariman Dzelial, who was the First Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis, several attempts to destroy properties belonging to the Crimean Tatars, such as six buildings and market located in Sudak town (Shapovalova, 2016, p. 24).

Thereby, discrimination in different contexts that Crimean Tatars faced was described and analyzed in this chapter. The description of these cases helped understand the current difficulties and challenges which Tatars have. The causes as mentioned earlier, are the relevant sample to demonstrate the direct violation of human rights. The post-occupational situation of the Crimea and its residents indicates anti-democratic measures that are still implemented by Putin and his regime. Thus, the Putin regime could become the other menace after Crimean Tatars repressions under Stalin many years ago. As a result of the Putin policy, Crimean Tatars challenged the new problems and difficulties that Tatars possess so far. Those Tatars who did not acknowledge the Russian occupation and power opted for the solution to abandon Crimea and move to Ukraine. On the contrary, those who decided to stay in the Crimea had two options: either to recognize the Russian supremacy by refusing the Ukrainian citizenship or retain their previous ideas and continue to fight. The second option's supporters faced more challenges, having massive pressure and restrictions on human rights by the Russian authorities. Thus, the following chapter aims to grasp the policy of Stalin and Putin in terms of Crimean Tatars through comparative analysis of two cases.

## 6. Comparative analysis between Stalin and Putin policies

As it has been mentioned in the previous chapters, there are several significant macro-political forms of ethnic conflict regulation. In this chapter, two cases will be compared and analyzed, as well: Stalin and Putin's policies. According to McGarry and O'Leary, there are two significant methods for eliminating and managing differences:

1. methods for eliminating differences (a) genocide (b) forced mass-population transfers (c) partition and/or secession (self-determination) (d) integration and/or assimilation
2. methods for managing differences (a) hegemonic control (b) arbitration (third-party intervention) (c) cantonisation and/or federalisation (d) consociationalism or power-sharing (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 4).

### 6.1. Genocide and Forced mass population methods of Stalin

According to John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, *genocide* and *forced mass-population* transfers were the main methods used by Stalin towards minority groups. These two methods have similarities and often go together. The definition of *genocide* means the killing of race and generation (Lemkin 1944, p. 79). However, theoretically, there are several conceptions of understanding this term either by means of legally or social scientists (F.Chalk 1990). Nowadays, the term genocide has formed conception, which is used by different scholars. Thus, genocide is "the systematic mass-killing of an ethnic collectivity (however defined), or the indirect destruction of such a community through the deliberate termination of the conditions which permit its biological and social reproduction" (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 6). There are different historical samples which were considered as genocide. For instance, the Holocaust, which was executed by Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, the genocide realized by European colonizers in the Americas and Tsarist Russian Empire are the samples of the term mentioned above. The number

of genocides has been increased since 1945. It is significant to emphasize the genocides such as the Chechens, the Ingushi, the Karachai, the Balkars, the Meskhetians and the Crimean Tartars executed by the Soviet Authorities; also, Hutu in Burundi; the Kurds in Iraq; Bengalis in Pakistan; Muslims in Burma; the Chinese and the indigenous population of East Timor in Indonesia; Kurds and Baha'is in Iran (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 7). According to Jonassohn, "genocides are usually one-sided - indeed this is one of their defining features and they are intended to terminate ethnic conflict" (Jonassohn, 1992, p. 19). The genocides also have two different forms, such as *state* and *frontiers*.

*State Genocide* is implemented when:

1. The mass terrorization of European settler-states in the 'new world', Africa, and Australasia.
2. The deficit of geopolitical resources such as large diaspora and own states, such as Armenians, European Jews, and Gypsies.
3. When the subordinate ethnic community is getting to become more vulnerable when one empire is undergone by disintegration, such as Armenians and Bosnian Muslims.
4. When an ethnic community has cultural and economic superiority, but military and political power are getting to become weak in the process of industrialization (Gellner, 1983, p. 105).
5. Lack of democracy in relevant states (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 8).

*Frontier genocide* is implemented by means of different purposes and reasons. It is explained by the fact that settlers with more powerful positions and technologically superior resources can displace indigenous people from their lands and access for it. These measures could be considered as a part of the colonization policy. Moreover, an important factor of the massive

killing is based on the concepts of a racial, ethnic, or religious ideology. Therefore, these ideological beliefs play a more significant role than technological capacities because they can reflect the scale of genocides (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 9). According to different scholars, the genocides have contemporary historical patterns, which can be justified by the fact that it was formed from the beginning of religious wars of the Middle Ages till the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely the spread of nationalist and Marxist-Leninist doctrines. From the perspective of John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary, genocide should not be taken as the modern phenomenon because historically, the rise and fall of different empires led to the massive killings of people (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 9). Also, the genocides can have different patterns, namely instrumental, preemptive, and ideological. For instance, the massive killing of indigenous people by European colonizers and Tutsi genocides by Hutu in Burundi had the same motives for the implementation of these kinds of genocides.

The authors acknowledge the mass deportation of different ethnic minorities such as the Chechens, the Ingushi, the Karachai, the Balkars, the Meskhetians, and the Crimean Tartars as genocide. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the main motive behind deporting these peoples was linked to the suspicion in collaboration with Nazi Germany. As a result of mass deportation, more than thousands of people died (109,956) (Hall 2014). Thereby, the forced mass deportation could be considered as genocide and ethnic cleansings in conjunction.

### **Forced mass-population transfers**

This method for eliminating differences is carried out when one specific ethnic community is physically resettled from its homeland to other places where they are forced to live. Several reasons trigger the implementation of forced mass-population transfers. For instance, ethnic conflicts and wars stimulate the beginning of forced mass-population transfers. Nevertheless, the

main problem is that this method does not always resolve ethnic conflicts. Thus, as a result of military operations and the threat of military coercion, civilians become the victims of mass deportations. From the perspective of Terminski, there are four main categories for arbitrary displacement associated with deportation: "conflict-induced displacement, environmentally-induced displacement, disaster-induced displacement and development-induced displacement" (Bogumil, 2016).

Furthermore, several historical samples demonstrate that the consequences of forced mass-population transfers cannot solve the conflict. For instance, the emergence of ethnic conflicts in certain parts of the Soviet Union was the outcome of forced mass-population transfers implemented by Lenin and Stalin. Similar policies were realized under Tsarist and Ottoman emperors (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 9). The identical context with the mass deportation has happened towards the Serbs who were deported from Independent State of Croatia under fascist Ustaša to German-occupied Serbia in 1943 (Ramet, 2006, p. 114). Also, other historical samples are indicating the severe outcomes of mass deportation. For instance, a massive number of Palestinians were expelled from Israel during the war which led to the creation of the state of Israel. As a result, Palestinians were forced to move to other neighboring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, etc. Currently, they are afraid of thinking of the regulation of West Bank in favor of Israeli colonizers, as a result of which they can be deprived of their settlements where they live compactly. Also, forced resettlement policy, which was carried out by the Ethiopian Government in the mid of 1980s deteriorated the situation and led to the commencement of civil war and famine. The policy of forced mass deportation was implemented in the states such as Nigeria, Burma, and Vietnam. The attempts of the Indian Government to expel Bengali migrants from the state of Assam is considered as a part of this policy (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 10).

It is significant to emphasize that in most contexts, mass-population transfers are frequently acknowledged as one of the main components of imperial consolidation strategies. This part of the policy is usually implemented either during the wars or afterward. For example, the policy of Oliver Cromwell in Ireland; Turkish and Tsarist policies on the territory of Caucasus in the nineteenth century; the movements of Volga Germans according to Stalin's decree; the project of Milosevich about 'Great Serbia' etc. (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 10). Also, there are significant samples of deportation that was related to the decolonization process. For instance, the beginning of Algerian war for the independence in the 1950s, the Bangladeshi war of independence and the Vietnam war in the 1970s and the severe unrest on the territory of Zaire and Rwanda in the 1960s (Matthew J. Gibney, 2003, p. 9).

Thereby, mass deportation cannot be appropriate to the democratic ideas, because the massive number of civilians could become the victims or could be killed on the one hand. On the other hand, those who survived during the deportation deprived from their homeland. In other words, the anti-democratic position of mass-population transfers could be explained by the violation of human rights and egalitarian political principles.

Obviously, the cruel methods for eliminating the differences by Stalin corresponds to the totalitarian regime and dictatorship. Thereby, Crimean Tatars became the victims of two methods which Stalin implemented: the first is forced mass-population transfers and the second one is genocide. Both have similar patterns and related to each other. The bond of one method to another is explained by the fact that a large number of deaths among Crimean Tatars during mass deportation led to the genocide. Along with other ethnic minorities living on the territory of the Soviet Union, the Crimean Tatars became the target of the policy of repressions and deportation. The Exile of Crimean Tatars from their homeland to the Central Asian countries and Siberia played

an essential role in the creation of homeland orientation attachment. Despite living on the territory of other countries and being far from their homeland, the national feelings and collective memory of Crimean Tatars became stronger. Thus, genocide and mass deportation are considered the main methods implemented by Stalin towards Crimean Tatars, which on the one hand led to the ethnic destruction of mass numbers of Crimean Tatars; but on the other hand, strengthened the national sentiments and spirit among them with the ambitions to return to their homeland.

## **6.2. Assimilation or integration methods of Putin**

One of the methods of macro-political ethnic conflict regulation is assimilation or integration. O'Leary and McGarry considered these terms as identical parts of the method, the initial idea of which is to attempt to eliminate differences within the state by transforming various ethnic communities into a new transcendent identity (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 17). In other words, the idea of assimilation or integration is the creation of a collective ethnic identity, which is also well-known as 'melting-pot.' As a sample, it occurred when white Protestants had assimilated (Swedes, Norwegians, and Germans) and at the same time white Catholics (Irish, Italians, and Poles) had assimilated as well but step by step (Ibid, p. 18). The same situation occurred with Asian migrants in 1945 when they moved to the USA and Canada. Moreover, the emergence of the term 'New Australians' was related to the migrant wave of Europeans who could involve the assimilation policy and sooner recognized themselves as Australians. Since the Canadian Government implemented different political measures to assimilate migrants into Canadian society successfully, immigrants could acquire Canadian civic identity which was more predominant than their original ethnic identity.

People who support assimilation ideas justify it by the argument of reducing the differences between ethnic communities. They consider advantage of assimilation in equal opportunities for

their children despite racial, ethnic, religious features. The beneficial idea of assimilation promotes the prevention of ethnic segregation and the procuring of workplaces. The realization of assimilation policy can lead to the creation of a single identity, as it was in the Soviet and Yugoslavian cases (Ibid, p.17). Apart from this factor, language plays a vital role in this process, as well. The compulsory use of one official language in different establishments and institutions include different ethnic minorities to the assimilation. Thereby, learning and using state language instead of native can provide students with different educational opportunities (schools, universities), employment (workplaces), etc.

However, despite the beneficial patterns of assimilation policy, it is worth noting its drawbacks and the consequences which could negatively affect the life of ethnic minorities. For instance, while representatives of different ethnic communities are getting involved in the assimilation policy, various kinds of menace can be triggered by the cultural aspects of those people. There are different groups of indigenous people living in the USA and Canada who still resist assimilation and reject to accept another culture and language. In some cases, the attempts to implement forced assimilation of people can be considered as ethnocide, which can lead to the destruction of a people's culture. As it was mentioned above, the culture, religion, and language are the main components of national identity. Thus, eradication of one of these components can lead to the extermination of national identity itself. There were also several historical samples when the Government of different states attempted to implement assimilation policy towards different ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities. While the governors expected the positive outcomes of assimilation policy, this policy could not always justify itself and, on the contrary, aggravate the conflict with minorities. For instance, currently, the context of the Uyghurs in the case of discrimination rights by the Chinese authorities remind the policy of forced assimilation. It is

explained by the fact that since 2015, the Uyghurs were detained in special "re-education camps" where the 'transformation had influenced them through education' whose main aim was to impact the religious and national sentiments of the Uyghurs. Also, different lectures in government Chinese policy, ethnic unity education and psychological counseling were taught to forcibly assimilate the Uyghurs to the Chinese society (Zenz, 2019, p. 105).

Moreover there other different samples of historical attempts of the assimilation policy implementation are the transforming of peasants to the French people in the nineteenth century, the schooling of black South Africans in Afrikaans, the 'Russification' policy carried out under Tsar and Soviet regimes, attempts of the policy of Anglicization of French Canada (Quebec) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the policy of 'Romanization' which was implemented by Ceausescu in Transylvania (O'Leary & McGarry, 1993, p. 20).

Nowadays, the situation which is occurred on the territory of Crimea reminds the forced assimilation policy implemented by the Russian Government (Putin) towards the Crimean Tatars. Thus, the violence of human rights, discrimination of language, religion, etc. are considered as the parts of assimilation, namely, the Russification policy. The main difference between the policy of Stalin and Putin are in the methods they used. Stalin implemented one of the large mass deportations in the Soviet Union during the Second World War. As it was been mentioned above, different ethnic groups had been deported along with the Crimean Tatars. From the perspective of certain scholars, politicians, these forced mass-deportations are also recognized as an act of genocide. Countries like Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, and Canada adopted statements of deportation of Crimean Tatars, considering it genocide (The Baltic Times 2019).

Furthermore, May 18<sup>th</sup> is the day of implementation of mass forced deportation. On 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015, according to the Ukrainian Parliament, this day was recognized as genocide; thus,

it led to the recognition of May 18<sup>th</sup> as a Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Crimean Tatar Genocide.

Thereby, the measures which were implemented towards Crimean Tatars by Stalin are forced mass deportation and genocide. These methods were obvious taking into consideration anti-democratic, totalitarian regime of Stalin, creation of own political course Stalinism which led to the mass repressions, ethnic cleansings, mass deportations of different national minorities, great famines that destroyed millions of people (for example the Holodomor in 1932-1933) (Kulchytsky 2008). Compared to the Stalin policy, the Putin regime selected the assimilation or integration method to manage the differences. This method is soft, but the aim and form of repressions have identical ideas. Discrimination of Crimean Tatars' rights in different sectors can be considered as an assimilation policy as was mentioned above. The russification policy by Putin towards the Tatars can negatively impact the national institutions of Tatars.

After the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, the new era of Russian nationalism commenced in which Crimean Tatars became once more the victims of Russian policy. Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized several times the historical significance of Crimea for Russian history. Thus, the annexation of this territory became the new era that symbolizes the might of Russian nationalism. Once, he emphasizes the importance of Crimea, defending its annexation and claiming that "Crimea is as sacred to Russians as Jerusalem is to Muslims" (Chelik 2018).

Thereby, the annexation of Crimean territory can be considered as the motive of re-establish Russian imperialism. Also, construction of the Kerch Bridge which facilitated the incorporation of Crimea into the Russian state, became the symbolic historical event and the beginning of Russification of the whole Crimean Peninsula (Wilson and Bari 2019).

The propaganda of pan-Slavic ideas, the superiority of Russian culture, and the idea of Slavic blood among the population in Crimea could also play a key role in the attitudes against ethnic minorities who are not Russians. Thereby, all non-Slavic ethnic groups could become the victims of not only the Russian Government who strengthened its pressure but also the establishment of the Russian people's negative attitudes in Crimea against the Tatars. According to Mustafa Dzhemilev, all measures directed against the interests of Crimean Tatars attempt to assimilate Crimean Tatars through the Russification policy and, at the same time, implement various forms of discrimination to severe consequences for the further life of Crimean Tatars. He mentioned: "The main aim of the exile was to destroy the Crimean Tatar people as a nation and make Crimea part of the Russian world" which could be considered as a crime against the Tatar people which was implemented by Stalin and is continued by Putin as well (Chirciu 2002).

Since the methods implemented by Stalin, are not corresponding the methods of Russian policy of the 21st century, assimilation can be considered as the effective method for eliminating the differences, because of these reasons such as current Russian policy, the political system and international reputation of Putin. Despite the soft form of assimilation comparing to genocide and mass deportation, the Russian authorities pursued the same targets. The imperialistic and Russian nationalistic form of policy created by Putin could trigger the menace for Crimean Tatars. Genocide and forced mass-deportation could not be selected as the methods in the policy of Putin, even though Putin continued neo-Stalinism policy towards the Crimean Tatars. Thereby, opting the assimilation method in the elimination of the differences after the Crimean annexation in 2014, the Stalinist ideas are continued but within the soft form. Russification of the Crimean Peninsula can be considered as an effective method that may alter the ethnicity within the population. It is worth

noting that historically different ethnic groups lived on the territory of Crimea and they still live so far.

Along with Crimean Tatars, other representatives of different ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups will be undergone by the Russification policy. Russification (assimilation policy) and discrimination against the rights of national minorities in different aspects will destroy Crimean Tatars not only physically, as it was under Stalin (mass-deportation as well as the genocide), but also spiritually. Thereby, the spiritual annihilation of the Crimean Tatars could be the outcome of the assimilation method, which is used by the Putin regime. Inculcation of the Russian culture, the obligatory teaching and learning Russian at schools, universities, and various establishments and the restriction of using other local languages can stimulate the annihilation of the national identity of Crimean Tatars. Thus, the Putin method (assimilation) is soft compared to Stalin, but at the same time, he continues the Stalinist ideas having the same purpose. Nowadays, this method is more applicable for eliminating the nation's differences and is one of the indispensable parts of Putin's policy towards Crimean Tatars. The spiritual annihilation could trigger the same effect as well as the physical one. The outcome will be identical. The main menace for the Crimean Tatars is the destruction of their national self-identity. It was substantial to understand this description and differences in patterns of the policies of both leaders in terms of the Crimean Tatars. The following chapter is focused on the parallels and patterns unifying both policies in terms of motives and ideas.

### **6.3. Understanding the parallels between Stalinism and Putinism policies towards the Crimean Tatars. Finding out the motives, ideas, and outcomes.**

Regarding the parallels between Stalin and Putin's policy, it is significant to emphasize that repressions and disregard of the collective rights are the main instruments that unite both policies. However, as it was mentioned above, the methods selected for eliminating the differences are not

the same. Under Stalin, the repressions were radical and these measures such as torture, mass killings, and extrajudicial execution, were implemented towards different national minorities (Crimean Tatars were one of them). It was an indispensable part of the internal policy of Stalin. Since Stalin and Putin's motives for repressions had similar patterns, it is significant to investigate these issues precisely.

The specific position of Putin towards the Crimean territory shows the historical attachment of Russians to this land. In his propaganda speech he several times emphasized annexation as the historical justice for the Russians and Russia itself. Thus, on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014, he mentioned: “Everything in Crimea speaks our shared history and pride. This is the location of the ancient Khersones, where Prince Vladimir was baptized...The graves of Russian soldiers, whose bravery brought Crimea into the Russian Empire, are also in Crimea...Crimea is Balaklava and Kerch...symbolizing Russian military glory and outstanding valor” (The Kremlin 2014).

Moreover, it is also worth pointing out the Russian position towards the deportation of Crimean Tatars, namely Putin did not acknowledge these historical events as the genocide. Before the annexation, the commemoration of the deportation was annually organized by Crimean Tatars on 18<sup>th</sup> May, the day of mass deportation. After annexation, different measures were implemented by the Russian police to prevent of commemoration of this day (Aydin & Sahin, 2019, p. 47). On September 2014, the Crimean Tatars were undergone the new restrictions, namely, ban of Crimean Tatars' Mejlis and its recognition as illegal and extremist organization. Since the Mejlis was banned, the Crimean Tatars were deprived of the opportunity to use self-determination status, as not being recognized as indigenous people. Besides, as was mentioned, prominent Crimean Tatar politicians and Mejlis members, such as Dzhemilev and Chubarov were prohibited from entry into the Crimea (Izmirli 2014). Thereby, all these repressions which were implemented after the

Russian annexation in 2014, suggest that Putin continued the policy of neo-Stalinism and its approach. It is also justified by the fact that Putin's political tactics aligned with the Soviet tactics under Stalin. Currently, the repressions which were implemented towards the Crimean Tatars reminds the picture of Soviet times. The measures such as mass arrests, abductions of political activists, house-searches, tortured, forced psychiatric hospitalization of certain dissidents, and other various sorts of threats had the similar patters with the repressions under Stalin and this is why this kind of repressions implemented by Putin are recognized as Neo-Stalinist (Aydin & Sahin, 2019, p. 46).

Also, during the Soviet period, several Crimean Tatar dissidents were fighting for the rights and against their violation as well. One of them was Ayshe Seitmuratova who had been deported from the Soviet Union due to her dissident activity. The punishment of extradition reminds the current context with Ilmi Umerov and Akhtem Chiygoz (Crimean Tatar activists) who protested the Russian occupation of the Crimea. As a result, they were extradited to Turkey in exchange for Russian prisoners (Aydin & Sahin, 2019, p. 47). It is significant to emphasize, that both the Soviet authorities and the current Russian authorities implemented the same pattern of repressions such as applied policies of forced citizenship and military conscription; the destruction of the national institutions; prohibition of national events, commemorations, and mass demonstrations; limitation of national media, education, and use of language; and intimidation (Shandra 2015).

Furthermore, some Crimean Tatars who are the members of Hizb-ut Tahrir which is recognized as an extremist terrorist organization by the Russian Government, are undergone by the religious persecution suspecting in the link to the Islamic radicalism. Another problem that is not solved yet is the acknowledgment of Tatars as indigenous people by the Russian authorities. Thus,

all the discriminatory measures and repressions indicate that the neo-Stalinist regime retains its patterns and the current Russian authorities continue this traditional anti-Tatar policy.

It is essential to point out that Stalin's implementation of such discriminatory measures towards Crimean Tatars has similar motives with Putin policy. For finding out the answer of this argument, the reasons of mass-deportation by Stalin should be analyzed. The Crimean Tatar nationalism was too powerful throughout Soviet history. Ethno-symbolic factors such as language, culture, religion, and historical bonds to Turkey (Ottoman Empire) made them spiritually independent and triggered the negative feedback from the Soviet authorities. Considering all these factors, Stalin precisely realized the ethno-psychology of Crimean Tatars and their ambitions to retrieve the establishment of their state. It is significant to emphasize that not only Crimean Tatars became the victims of the Stalin policy of repressions and mass deportation. As it was been mentioned above, there have been also Chechens, Ingushi people, Kalmyks who were deported from their homeland. Thus, Stalin did not punish Crimean Tatars only due to the ethnic or religious features and national identities. The main reason for the implementation of mass deportation was suspicion of Crimean Tatars in the disloyalty to Stalin and his regime. As per the previous chapters, the main motive stimulating Stalin was to make the special order realize forced mass deportation of various national minorities (Crimean Tatars as well) from their homeland to Central Asia and Siberia a hunch in collaboration with Nazi Germany for their national interests. Understanding the collective disloyalty of Crimean Tatars to the Soviet Union and the regime (because of liquidation of autonomy of Crimean Tatars), Crimean Tatars were one of the national minorities who did not achieve the loyalty of Stalin. Thus, the fear of collective disloyalty and suspicion in the betrayal of Crimean Tatars from Stalin forced him to realize these severe measures. This suspicion of the disloyalty of Crimean Tatars presented in the current Russian policy as well. In other words, this

factor has the similar patterns in Stalin's and Putin's attitude towards the Tatars. It can be explained by several significant factors. As per the previous chapters, the Crimean Tatars were supporters of Euromaidan and believed in the positive outcomes in Ukraine. They were one of the first who criticized and did not recognize the results and consequences of the Crimean referendum. Mejlis and Crimean Tatar political figures such as Mustafa Dzhemilev were influential supporters of the anti-Russian position. Putin realized this position and it is evident that his policy was not supported by the Crimean Tatars as well as it was under Stalin. Thus, Putin continued the neo-Stalinist punishment measures against Tatars. As it was mentioned above, Stalin and Putin opted for different methods versus Crimean Tatars. However, the methods could be taken as different, the motives and ideas of repressions by Stalin and Putin embraced similar patterns. Both pursued the idea of destroying the national identity of Crimean Tatars.

On the one hand, the mass deportation or genocide (brutal methods) carried out by Stalin led to the severe consequences of the life of Crimean Tatars, because it was ended up a large number of deaths. On the other hand, Crimean Tatars could save their national identity and unite all together, being far from their homeland and having the collective desire to return home. Putin implemented the same measures but in another form of repressions and methods. As it was mentioned above, Putin pursued the policy of punishing Tatars due to the disloyalty to his regime. Forced assimilation, Russification, discrimination, and violation of their rights are considered as part of Putin's policy against Tatars. As per his policy, through the Russification of Tatars and violation of their rights, it is possible to eliminate Crimean Tatars as an obstacle for Putin.

## Conclusion

Historically, the Crimean Tatars nationalism had profound and deep roots. It is explained by the various reasons which made them dominant on the ethno-national level. One of them was the existence of the independent state well-known as the Crimean Khanate, which existed several centuries until the Russian Empire annexed it in 1783. The second reason which impacted their national identity was the historical link to the Ottoman Empire. Being the vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, the Crimean was bonded to them by the cultural, linguistic, religious features. It is significant to mention that namely religion, language, and culture are considered the main ethnic symbols of the Crimean Tatars.

As discussed above, the Crimean Peninsula's geographical position has the strategic and political significance for the Russian Empire. It was one of the substantial reasons stimulating the beginning of Russian-Ottoman wars. The annexation of Crimean Tatar territory by the Russian Empire became the first historical stage for the beginning of Tatars persecution. The desire to retrieve the own state and at the same time retaining the national identity pursued by the Crimean Tatars till the mid of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The tremendous tragedy that had the further fatal experience for Tatars, was mass deportation on the decree of Stalin. This historical period can be considered as one of the complicated stages in Crimean Tatar's life.

Moreover, this deportation led to the vast number of deaths, diseases, and mass famine among Tatars. This is why this deportation can be considered as genocide. Being deported to Uzbekistan (mostly), other regions of Central Asia, and Siberia, they could save their national identity. As it was mentioned above, the main instrument in the national identity of Crimean Tatars was the collective desire to return their homeland. In other words, the idea of "return to the homeland" played an instrumentalist role in the process of national consciousness of Tatars. The

accomplishment of this idea was more complicated for Tatars than other national minorities deprived from their homeland due to the mass deportation by Stalin. Chechens, the Ingush people, and other nations were allowed to return to their homeland after Stalin's death. However, for Tatars, it was impossible to move back until the end of the 1980s (dissolution of the Soviet Union). When Crimea was part of Ukraine, the Crimean Tatars also had faced various difficulties, but the form of difficulties and problems did not trigger the effect of menace that they obtained after Russia's annexation. Despite the drawback and problems which Tatars had under Ukrainian rule, they were not willing to be a part of Russia. Their dreads and expectations which they could face were realized. The life of Crimean Tatars has altered when Crimea became part of Russia. Firstly, they have subjected to the assimilation policy by Russian authorities. Secondly, as per the forced-assimilation policy, Tatars became the targets of persecution and repressions. These kinds of repressions could be explained as the resumption of violence towards the Crimean Tatars. As was discussed, Putin and Stalin's attitudes towards the Crimean Tatars had similar patterns. Continuing the neo-Stalinist model and imperialistic ideas, Putin pursued the same goal as Stalin. The idea of two political leaders towards Crimean Tatars was identical despite different methods and forms of persecution. Stalin attempted to punish Crimean Tatars and made them more powerless in terms of Turkic nationalism, taking into consideration this ideology as the central menace. The accusation of disloyalty to the regime and powerful nationalist sentiments of Crimean Tatars became the main motive of Stalin implementing forced mass deportation. Ironically, many years later, Putin commenced punishing Crimean Tatars on the base of identical motives. Thus, the challenge of Crimean Tatars may revive over again, and this could lead to further tragical consequences.

Nowadays, Crimean Tatars have undergone various kinds of discrimination, political and cultural repressions, arrests among Tatar politicians, etc. Also, deprivation from the status of

indigenous people is one of the problems which have not been solved yet. Violation of their human rights is one of the challenges that they face after 2014 and it is still ongoing. Furthermore, the current problems that Tatars face are getting to possess a high level of seriousness. The Crimean Tatar language that they still use, Islam religion is practiced by them, the culture for which they saved their traditionalist sentiments are the primary sources of their national self-identification and consciousness. Currently, all these components are involved in the discrimination program that the Russian authorities realized towards the Crimean Tatar people. Discrimination in the sectors such as language, religion, media, Mejlis, which is the self-governing body of Tatars; also, a violation of the freedom of expression is the main challenge in the process of restrictions towards the Crimean Tatars. The Russian authorities carry out all these discriminatory measures in order to assimilate them on the one hand and attempts to force them to lose sight of their cultural, linguistic, and religious roots on the other hand. These kinds of repressions negatively impact Tatars and these measures could lead to the extinction of the nation in the future. Although the future of Crimean Tatars is unpredictable and its determination is complicated, all these severe measures as discrimination and savage policy implemented by the Russian authorities would have further negative consequences for this nation.

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