

A specific request for assistance in the field of tourism development came from the small Karaite community of Crimea. Crimea is the homeland of this fascinating ethnic group, and during our visit to Crimea we had an opportunity to tour an ancient Karaite fortress called Chufut-kale, in a picturesque location in the mountains near Bakhchisarai. The Karaites are interested in developing an open-air museum at this site that would provide employment to young Karaites and help them preserve their culture. Given the great natural beauty of this location, and the determination of the Karaites to develop this site, it is recommended that Canadian expertise be used to help the leaders of this community develop a feasibility plan for an open-air museum.

5. Many of the most immediate problems faced by the Crimean Tatars are of a socio-economic and political-administrative nature. However, the Crimean Tatars returned to Crimea not only because of emotional ties to the region, but also because of expectations that they could best preserve and further develop their language, culture, and traditions in their homeland. Thus their leaders have placed a strong emphasis on the development of an educational/cultural infrastructure to meet community needs. However, the extensive infrastructure in place prior to 1944 was almost completely destroyed following the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, and attempts to develop a new infrastructure are being made at a time when almost no local funding is available to facilitate this process. Thus even modest assistance in this sphere can play a significant role in helping this community preserve and develop its rich but neglected cultural heritage.

This issue is of more than symbolic importance. Paradoxically, the Crimean Tatars were able to preserve their language and culture quite effectively following their deportation to Soviet Central Asia, but have found it difficult to continue doing so in their homeland. Some Crimean Tatars became discouraged once they became fully aware of the extent to which Crimea was systematically "cleansed," after WWII, of any reminders of their presence on this territory, and this discouragement has been accentuated by the widespread discrimination which Crimean Tatars have encountered from local authorities. In these circumstances many young people in the Crimean Tatar community are becoming estranged from their native culture while the same time they are ostracized by the majority population of Crimea. This has led to the radicalization of some elements in the Crimean Tatar community, and also to the emergence of various social pathologies in their midst. Thus support for cultural preservation and development projects would boost the morale of the Crimean Tatar community and help prevent the alienation of its youth.

For example, all the Tatar-language holdings of libraries that once served the Crimean Tatar community were destroyed during and after WWII. Crimean Tatar cultural activists are now painstakingly gathering all books and documents which survived this devastation, and have even turned to libraries abroad to obtain copies of publications which cannot be located in Ukraine. However, advice about and assistance in preserving old and fragile books and documents, and other cultural artifacts, is desperately needed. Canadian expertise in this field is not always fully relevant to local needs, and it would be