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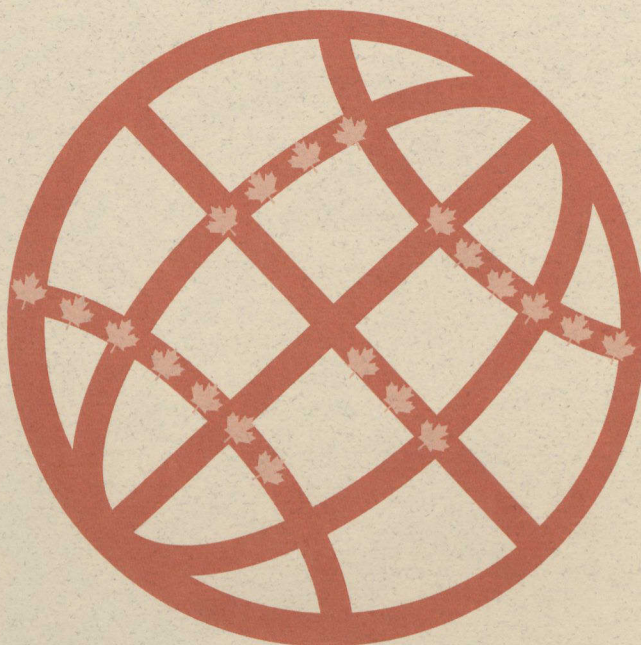
MANAGING DIVERSITY IN PLURAL  
SOCIETIES

-Project Report: Ukraine-

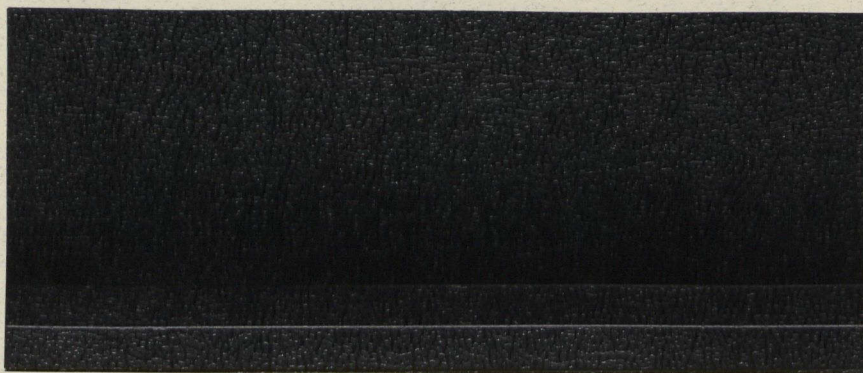
Focus: Crimea and the Crimean Tatars

November 1997

John Jaworsky, Forum Eastern Europe







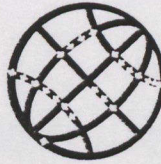






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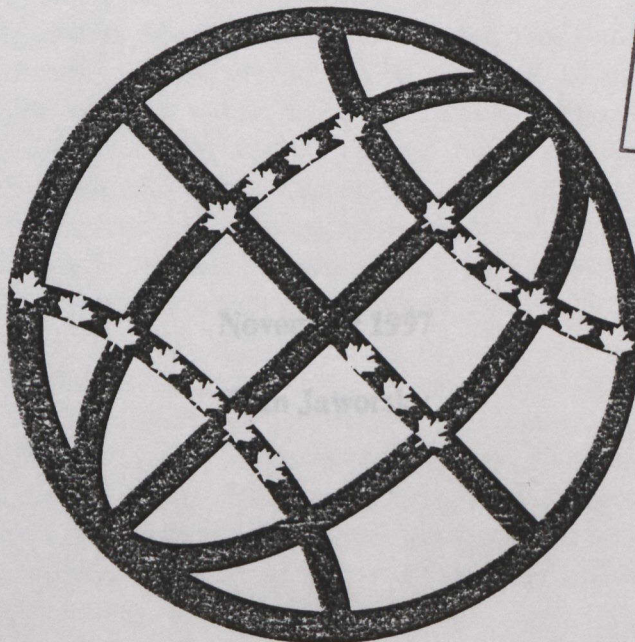
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FOCUS: CRIMEA AND THE CRIMEAN TATS



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# MANAGING DIVERSITY IN PLURAL SOCIETIES

## PROJECT REPORT: UKRAINE

### FORUM EASTERN EUROPE

#### Executive Summary

In May 1997 a group of Canadian scholars and officials visited Ukraine to conduct seminars (in the capital, Kyiv, Odessa, and in Crimea) within the framework of a broader project entitled "Managing Diversity in Plural Societies". The general aims of this project are as follows:

- 1) To promote Canadian values of inter-cultural understanding and respect for human diversity, and to examine the challenges posed by political diversity.
- 2) To strengthen regional security in Central/Eastern Europe by examining some of the root causes of local political instability and proposing measures to improve conflict management capabilities.

## MANAGING DIVERSITY IN PLURAL SOCIETIES

### PROJECT REPORT: UKRAINE

#### FOCUS: CRIMEA AND THE CRIMEAN TATARS

To date there have been only isolated cases of inter-ethnic conflict in Ukraine, and Ukraine's record concerning the treatment of minorities has generally been assessed favourably. However, the relative calm which has characterized inter-ethnic relations in Ukraine is largely due to the political passivity of Ukraine's population, the absence of effective centrifugal leaders eager to take advantage of ethnic tensions, and the ambiguity of government policy in certain sensitive policy areas. A shaky status quo has been maintained among Ukraine's ethnic communities, but this is because the government has avoided clearly defining government policies concerning certain controversial issues and has only half-heartedly implemented other policies (e.g., on language use, on punishing those responsible for the production of xenophobic literature, etc.).

November 1997

John Jaworsky

As these policies are gradually implemented more forcefully the potential for conflict will increase. In Ukraine, a country of very great geopolitical importance, Ukraine's government officials and community leaders lack many of the skills needed to cope with the challenges related to ethnic diversity. Thus the Kiev seminar played a useful role by providing a frank exchange of views on political issues and encouraging in-depth discussions of the application of various conflict management strategies in a Ukrainian setting.

The Kiev seminar focused on issues such as language and minority issues, and the role of the state in managing ethnic diversity. The seminar also provided an opportunity for Canadian officials to meet and discuss with Ukrainian officials the Canadian approach to managing ethnic diversity in Canada and ways of greater cooperation between the two countries.



# MANAGING DIVERSITY IN PLURAL SOCIETIES

## PROJECT REPORT: UKRAINE

### Executive Summary

In May 1997 a team of Canadian scholars and officials visited Ukraine to conduct seminars (in the capital, Kyiv [Kiev], and in Crimea) within the framework of a broader project entitled "Managing Diversity in Plural Societies". The general aims of this project are as follows.

- 1) To promote Canadian values of inter-cultural understanding and respect for human/minority rights in regions of actual/potential tensions or conflict, especially where there is a clear interest in outside expertise in understanding and managing the challenges posed by politicized diversity.
- 2) To strengthen regional security in Central/Eastern Europe by examining some of the root causes of local political instability and proposing measures to improve conflict management capabilities.

To date there have been only isolated cases of inter-ethnic conflict in Ukraine, and Ukraine's record concerning the treatment of minorities has generally been assessed favourably. However, the relative calm which has characterized inter-ethnic relations in Ukraine is largely due to the political passivity of Ukraine's population, the absence of effective demagogic leaders eager to take advantage of ethnic tensions, and the ambiguity of government policy in certain sensitive policy areas. A shaky status quo has been maintained among Ukraine's ethnic communities, but this is because the government has avoided clearly defining government policies concerning certain controversial issues and has only half-heartedly implemented other policies (e.g., on language use, on punishing those responsible for the production and distribution of xenophobic literature, etc.).

As these policies are gradually clarified and implemented more forcefully the potential for conflict will increase rather than decrease in Ukraine, a country of very great geopolitical importance. Ukraine's government officials and community leaders lack many of the skills needed to cope with the challenges related to ethnic diversity. Thus the Kyiv seminar played a useful role by promoting a frank exchange of views on painful issues and encouraging in-depth discussions of the application of various conflict management strategies in a Ukrainian setting.

The Kyiv seminar focussed on topics such as language and migration issues, managing ethnic/regional differences, and the status of indigenous peoples, which have provoked heated debate in Canada and were of great interest to the Ukrainian audience.



The seminar succeeded in achieving its major goals: to provide the Ukrainian audience with insights into the policies and practices which have helped to ensure relatively stable inter-ethnic relations in Canada and other liberal-democratic states; and to promote a productive dialogue among the representatives of groups and institutions which rarely have an opportunity to meet and interact in a non-conflictual setting.

The Canadian team's activities in Crimea differed substantially from those in Kyiv. The main purpose of the Crimean programme was to allow the members of this team to become fully acquainted with the distinctive situation in this region, so that they could then suggest ways in which governmental and non-governmental organizations in Canada could provide expertise and assistance to deal with some of the problems faced by Crimea.

All assessments of developments in Crimea agree that this region remains one of the most significant "hot spots" of potential conflict not only within Ukraine but in the entire Black Sea region because of the distinctive ethnic composition of Crimea's population, and continuing separatist demands in Crimea which are supported by some nationalist circles in Moscow. Recent developments in Ukrainian-Russian relations have helped reduce some of the tensions in Crimea. However, Russia has succeeded in maintaining a strong naval presence in the port of Sevastopol, and the strategic location of this city provides Russia with a convenient means of influencing developments throughout the entire Black Sea region.

Russia is determined to maintain its presence in Crimea because it regards the Black Sea region as part of its sphere of influence, and also because of the large volumes of oil and gas, from Azerbaijan and Central Asia, which will be transported across, under, or around the Black Sea. Since nationalist rhetoric from Moscow will continue to fuel separatist tendencies in Crimea, it will remain a troubled area for several years to come, and it is essential that initiatives be taken quickly to help maintain peace and stability in this peninsula. To date Canada has not devoted much attention to Crimea. However, the members of the Canadian team feel that even modest Canadian initiatives in this region could bring considerable long-term benefits.

The Canadian team took a special interest in the plight of the Crimean Tatars, who were deported en masse from their homeland in 1944 and have only recently begun to return to Crimea, where they currently comprise ten percent of the population. Given their vulnerable status as recent returnees who have encountered considerable discrimination the Crimean Tatars, with little economic clout, are the greatest victims of the stagnant and heavily criminalized socio-economic situation in Crimea. In addition, the Crimean Tatars have ended up as pawns in a political tug-of-war between the central Ukrainian authorities and the local authorities in Crimea.

Because of the high level of cohesion and discipline within the Crimean Tatar community and the moderate stance of its leaders, to date its grievances have generally been expressed in a peaceful fashion. However, the community has already demonstrated that when provoked, it can easily mobilize its membership to engage in mass protests. In



addition, the continuing discrimination faced by this community has led to the radicalization of part of its membership. Thus the continued maintenance of ethnic “peace” in Crimea will largely depend on the treatment of the Crimean Tatar community, and internal dynamics within this community.

#### **Summary of recommendations:**

1. Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations should devote more attention to Crimea when projects involving Ukraine are being planned or implemented. Special efforts should be made to ensure that such projects address the needs of all communities in Crimea, including the Crimean Tatars.
2. Representatives of Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade should stress, when interacting with senior government officials in Ukraine and Uzbekistan (as well as other states in which Crimean Tatars currently reside), that Canada strongly supports the rapid naturalization of the Crimean Tatar population currently residing in Ukraine, and condemns all artificial barriers which impede this naturalization process.
3. Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations should strongly support the emergence in Crimea of financial structures, such as credit unions, which encourage local economic development and foster self-reliance.
4. Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations should support initiatives aimed at developing the potential of “non-traditional” tourism in the Crimean peninsula. Support for small-scale projects encouraging “heritage” tourism, eco-tourism, and the emergence of family-run “bed-and-breakfast” operations is of particular importance.
5. Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations should support cultural development and cultural preservation projects in Crimea, especially in the case of formerly deported groups, such as the Crimean Tatars, which have demonstrated a strong attachment to their cultural heritage and are trying to revive it, after several decades of persecution, in very difficult circumstances.
6. Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations should support projects aimed at promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and inter-cultural understanding in Crimea, and combatting the vicious ethnocultural stereotypes that are widespread in this region.
7. Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations should support projects aimed at ending Crimea’s relative isolation and increasing its contacts with the outside world.



## Introduction

There are few venues in Central/Eastern Europe for frank and open discussion of issues such as language, education and citizenship policy; immigrant and refugee integration; and strategies for promoting tolerance and dealing with regional inequalities. This gap can partly be filled by specialized seminars on these topics, combined with the appropriate follow-up activities. If they are tailored to the specific needs of individual countries and selected audiences, and keep in mind the particular challenges of the post-communist transition period, such programs can play a significant role in promoting the emergence of more open and tolerant societies.

In 1995 "Forum Eastern Europe," an international research group, initiated an open-ended project entitled "Managing Diversity in Plural Societies". The general aims of this project are as follows:

- 1) To promote Canadian values of inter-cultural understanding and respect for human/minority rights in regions of actual/potential conflict, especially where there is a clear interest in outside expertise in understanding and managing the challenges posed by politicized diversity.
- 2) To strengthen regional security in Central/Eastern Europe by examining some of the root causes of local political instability and proposing measures to improve conflict management capabilities.

Building on the success of "pilot" seminars held in Slovakia in May 1995 and Latvia in September 1996, and in response to invitations from government officials and NGO representatives in Ukraine, the seminar organizers put together a Canadian "team" with expertise in a number of subject areas of interest to the host institutions in Ukraine. They include multiculturalism and the rights of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, inter-cultural relations, centre-periphery relations, and migration/refugee policy.

The members of the Canadian team included:

Mr. Steven Lee, National Director, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

Ms. Judy Young, Special Advisor, Multiculturalism, Department of Canadian Heritage

Prof. Will Kymlicka, University of Ottawa

Prof. Jeremy Webber, Faculty of Law, McGill University



Prof. Magdalena Opalski, Carleton University

Prof. John Jaworsky, University of Waterloo

The following European experts also participated in the Ukrainian portion of this project:

Prof. Bill Bowring, Human Rights Centre, University of Essex

Prof. Jean-Robert Raviot, Fondation National des Sciences Politiques (Paris)

Mr. Boris Tsilevich, Baltic Insight Research and Educational Centre (Riga)

### **Background: Why Ukraine?**

Numerous commentaries prior to and following the collapse of central authority in the Soviet Union stressed the likelihood of extensive inter-ethnic violence in Ukraine, which was considered poorly prepared for independence. In particular, the East-West divide separating the largely Ukrainian-speaking population of Western Ukraine and the Russian-speaking population of Eastern Ukraine, was perceived to pose a major threat to Ukraine's integrity. In all the scenarios emphasizing the potential for inter-ethnic violence in Crimea, an autonomous republic within Ukraine, was regarded as the "hot spot" where conflict was most likely to occur.

In retrospect these concerns were exaggerated, and did not take account of the specific circumstances in which large-scale ethnic conflicts are most likely to occur. However, at the same time many of Ukraine's politicians have been overly smug in portraying Ukraine as an oasis of inter-ethnic harmony, since the country faces a number of serious challenges related to its ethnic and regional diversity. These challenges have included, among others, formulating and implementing new language policies, aiding in the repatriation of the Crimean Tatars, dealing with great intolerance towards the Roma (gypsy) minority and refugees from Asia, and finding an appropriate balance between citizens' individual rights and the group rights of ethnic minorities as well as the titular ethnic group.

Such challenges are daunting even in the most favourable of settings, as continuing inter-ethnic tensions in liberal democratic states such as Canada and Belgium clearly demonstrate. Despite Ukraine's generally favourable record to date, it should also be noted that the growing consolidation of the Ukrainian state will, in some spheres, actually increase the potential for the growth of tensions over issues which can easily become politicized.



For example, during the first few years of Ukraine's independence the implementation of Ukraine's language legislation was ignored or neglected in certain regions of the country. However, as Ukraine's central government attempts to enforce its authority throughout the country it is running into increasing opposition from local bureaucracies which are reluctant to implement this legislation, and which are supported by much of the local population. The ambiguities (some of them probably intentional) which, until recently, allowed for a certain "creative anarchy" in the sphere of language policy will inevitably have to be clarified, and this is bound to lead to numerous disagreements and conflict in the years to come.

In addition, nationalist extremism still poses a certain threat to inter-ethnic harmony. To date the advocates of extremist forms of Ukrainian and Russian nationalism have played a marginal role in Ukraine's domestic politics, but they have managed to maintain a base of public support in some regions of the country. If the socio-economic situation in Ukraine deteriorates further, and ethnic demagogues attempt to take advantage of ever-present ethnic tensions, the base of support for extremism could grow. The possibility that such a threat could emerge is further amplified by the poor state of Ukraine's legal infrastructure. Its deficiencies have hampered attempts to counter the activities of extremist groups and prosecute cases of discrimination on the basis of ethnic background.

Ukraine's government officials and community leaders, at both the central and local levels, often lack the skills needed to cope with the challenges related to ethnic diversity. In contrast Canada, with its well-known policy of multiculturalism, has accumulated a great deal of highly-respected expertise dealing with issues which are of crucial importance in the development of Ukraine's regional and minority policies. The Canadian experience differs in many respects from that of Ukraine. However, many Canadian officials and scholars interested in these topics have closely studied and benefitted from the experience of foreign countries, and can easily relate to the situation in Ukraine. In addition the Canadian multicultural experience has a special significance for Ukraine because of the large community of Canadians of Ukrainian background.

### **Background: Why the Focus on Crimea?**

The project's Crimean programme differed substantially from the Kyiv programme. The original intention of the organizers was to maintain the rough format of the Kyiv seminar, but adapt and abbreviate it to suit local circumstances by focussing on the themes most relevant to the Crimean situation. However, in the course of our preparations the very distinctive nature of inter-ethnic relations in Crimea became increasingly obvious. In addition, representatives of several NGOs in Kyiv and Crimea specifically requested that the Canadian team do everything possible to become fully acquainted with the situation in Crimea, and the specific difficulties faced by the Crimean Tatars, so that we could then suggest ways in which governmental and non-governmental



organizations in Canada could provide expertise to deal with some of the problems faced by this region of Ukraine.

All attempts to assess developments in Ukraine have consistently stressed that certain distinctive features of the situation in Crimea (formal title -- Autonomous Republic of Crimea) have turned it into a region of tension which poses a very significant challenge to Ukraine's development as a democratic, independent state, and to regional stability in the Black Sea basin.

1. Crimea has the anomalous status of an autonomous republic within an otherwise unitary state, and controversies over the relationship between the Crimean and central Ukrainian authorities continue.
2. The majority of Crimea's population is of ethnic Russian background, and many of the Ukrainians in Crimea are Russified. Many local politicians who claim to represent the interests of the Russian population have played on its resentment of the central authorities in Kyiv, who are accused of being anti-Russian and blamed for the economic downturn in the peninsula. In addition, the rhetoric used by these politicians has often fanned inter-communal tensions between the Russian and Crimean Tatar populations. Crimea has also attracted the attention of numerous politicians in Russia who are eager to demonstrate their support for Russian diaspora communities, and this situation has been further complicated by the significant (and, until recently, largely unregulated) Russian military presence in the Crimean naval base of Sevastopol. Crimea's role as a source of tension between Ukraine and Russia has diminished as a result of recent agreements between these two countries. However, relations between Russia and Ukraine will continue to be greatly affected by developments in this strategically located peninsula.
3. Two hundred and sixty thousand Crimean Tatars have recently returned to their homeland after more than forty years of exile following their brutal deportation to Soviet Central Asia in 1944. A similar number of Crimean Tatars still hope to return to Crimea (mostly from Uzbekistan and other regions of Central Asia), but those who have already moved to Crimea face harsh discrimination, very difficult living conditions, and high levels of unemployment. Thus a majority of adult Crimean Tatars are currently unemployed, and most of those who are employed do not work in their field of specialization. At the same time the Crimean Tatar community is very disciplined and well-organized, and its leaders have shown that they can easily mobilize the community for political action.
4. A meeting of the heads of government of the countries of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) decided that the expenses associated with the return of the Crimean Tatars to Crimea would be shared by these countries. However, to date only the Ukrainian government has assisted the Crimean Tatar returnees, and the funds it has provided cover only a small percentage of the massive costs of reestablishing a viable Crimean Tatar community in its homeland.



External intervention can do little to influence the relationship between Kyiv and Crimea, or the way in which Crimea remains a potential source of conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Outside assistance can, however, play a major role in helping to stabilize the socio-economic situation in Crimea, and assisting beleaguered minorities such as the Crimean Tatars.

The Crimean Tatar community has the good fortune to be headed by pragmatic and authoritative leaders who realize that the Crimean Tatars have the most to lose if inter-ethnic tensions in Crimea lead to open conflict. Thus the Crimean Tatars generally demonstrated very great restraint after their return to Crimea. They have not demanded the return of their original property (although they hope to eventually gain compensation for it), and have consistently advocated peaceful methods of protest against the abuses to which they have been subjected. As a result, they have begun to gradually win the grudging respect of their immediate neighbours.

However, the political situation in Crimea remains unsettled as some local politicians continue to propagate anti-Tatar stereotypes and paint dramatic pictures of Tatar plans to take over the peninsula. In addition, the Crimean Tatar leaders are facing increasing pressure from activists who point to continued discrimination against their community and advocate the use of force to defend their rights. Even moderate figures in the Crimean Tatar movement sometimes ruefully note that their difficult situation will gain substantial domestic and international attention only if violence erupts in Crimea.

Thus given the size and dynamism of the Crimean Tatar returnee community, and the prospect that many more Crimean Tatars will return to their homeland in the next few years, Ukraine faces very great challenges in: 1) providing this population with the infrastructure it needs to satisfy its most basic, immediate needs; and 2) maintaining ethnic "peace" in Crimea.

It is especially difficult to deal with these challenges in view of the severe socio-economic, environmental, and other problems facing Crimea. The stagnant Crimean economy is largely the result of an unholy alliance between various criminal "clans" and local Crimean politicians and bureaucrats. They are attempting to control the most lucrative sectors of the economy by manipulating the process of privatization of state-owned property, and this is a source of great resentment among the Crimean Tatars. They are unlikely to benefit from privatization given the way in which it is currently being conducted.

A variety of international organizations have begun to take an interest in the Crimean situation. However, the international response has left a great deal to be desired, and development projects in Crimea have involved more discussion than concrete action. The restraint shown by Crimean Tatar leaders has paradoxically served to deflect international attention from the situation in Crimea since, as a result of the relatively low level of ethnic conflict there, Crimea does not qualify for certain categories of emergency



funding from international organizations. A Canadian observer in Crimea recently noted, "If we had a few riots or a rebellion, then aid would come quickly to Crimea. But there's none to help prevent a crisis." As a result there is a general mood of disillusionment among the Crimean Tatars. They feel abandoned by the international community, and this has increased the region's volatility. The aid which has been provided to date has not had a substantial impact on the logistical and material difficulties associated with Tatar repatriation, and little has been done to increase the level of trust among the peninsula's ethnic groups, especially Tatars and Russians.

## Preparations

The main Canadian institution involved in organizing the seminars in Ukraine was Forum Eastern Europe (FEE), an independent, international research group based in Ottawa. FEE conducts research on nationalism, ethnopolitics, ethnic conflict, human/minority rights, migration and refugee issues, and democratic development in Central/Eastern Europe. In addition to conducting research, FEE seeks to promote intercultural understanding and respect for pluralism and human/minority rights in this region. In particular, FEE seeks to popularize the experience of Canada and other multi-ethnic liberal democracies in dealing with ethnocultural diversity and conflict management.

Since 1994 FEE, in conjunction with a variety of Canadian and Central/Eastern European institutions, has organized and conducted a number of international seminars, workshops and training programs in Central/Eastern Europe. Given the success of these activities (in particular a seminar on "Managing Diversity in Plural Societies" held in Latvia in September 1996), FEE was approached by government officials and NGO representatives in Ukraine to organize a seminar series in this country. FEE's Executive Committee then utilized its contacts in Ukraine to determine the feasibility of such a project, and to help it prepare a project proposal.

From the very inception of this project FEE was assisted by the personnel of the Pylyp Orlyk Institute for Democracy (POID), a non-partisan, non-profit public policy research and information centre in Kyiv which fosters the process of democratic statebuilding in Ukraine. It is heavily involved in helping to develop public policies on human and minority rights in Ukraine, and the POID was thus a logical local partner for FEE. POID's Center for Pluralism, headed by Dr. Natalie Belitser, was closely involved, from the beginning, in planning and implementing all aspects of the project.

FEE was fortunate to receive financial support for this project from three institutions: 1) the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development; 2) the Multiculturalism Program, Heritage Canada; and 3) the International Renaissance Foundation (Kyiv). Special thanks for their advice and assistance are due to Judy Young, Special Advisor on Multiculturalism, Canada Heritage, and Steven Lee, National Director, Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. Excellent facilities for the Kyiv seminar were provided, gratis, by the Institute of Ethnic and Political Studies of the National



Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and the Institute's personnel (in particular, Dr. Tetyana Klinchenko) played an important role in ensuring the smooth functioning of the Kyiv seminar.

A number of individuals also volunteered their time and expertise during the Crimean seminar. Mr. Nadyr Bekirov, Head of the Department of Law and Politics, Crimean Tatar Mejlis, and his assistants, must be singled out for special thanks. No monetary value can be placed on their assistance, which played a crucial role in ensuring the success of the Crimean seminar.

The executive committee of FEE has consistently emphasized that its seminars should encourage a genuine exchange of views and experiences as well as audience participation, and that follow-up activities should ensure a concrete, long-term impact for the seminars. For example, discussions held during the seminar in Latvia led to the development of the MINELRES (Electronic Resources on Minorities) homepage and listserv, which now provide an important forum for the free exchange of ideas and information on the situation of minorities in the post-communist societies of Central/Eastern Europe.

In the case of the seminars held in Ukraine, the primary follow-up activities consist of the elaboration, in cooperation with colleagues in Kyiv and Crimea, of specific proposals for projects (see the recommendations in this report) which address some of the distinctive problems faced by various ethnic communities in Crimea.

### **The Kyiv Seminar**

The Kyiv seminar provided a wide-ranging perspective on the ethnopolitical situation in Ukraine. Comparative insights were emphasized, especially those based on the Canadian experience. Following a presentation which addressed the relevance of the Canadian multicultural experiment for Eastern Europe, and Ukraine in particular, the seminar then focussed on topics (e.g., language and migration issues) which were of special interest to the Kyiv audience given the current ethnopolitical situation in Ukraine. The seminar concluded by providing Canadian and comparative perspectives on the situation of groups claiming the status of indigenous peoples, a topic of particular interest to the Crimean Tatars and several other minorities (e.g., Karaites, Krymchaks) in Ukraine.

Each introductory presentation by a member of the Canadian team consisted of an overview of the Canadian and general comparative context for a particular topic, providing a framework and stimulus for further discussion. This was followed by several concise presentations, directly addressing the main issues and controversies relevant to a given topic, delivered by local officials, scholars, or NGO representatives from Ukraine. Brief commentaries by selected members of the audience and a discussion period followed.



The composition of the seminar participants changed somewhat depending on the topic under discussion; however, approximately 50-60 individuals were in attendance throughout the seminar. They included a wide range of government officials, politicians, scholars, journalists, and NGO representatives from various regions of Ukraine. For example local speakers included senior officials of the State Committee for Nationalities and Migration (Oleh Shamshur and Yuri Bilukha), some of the most respected leaders of the Crimean Tatar movement (Lenur Arifov and Nadyr Bekirov), deputies from Ukraine's parliament (Ihor Koliushko and Serhij Kyjashko), and representatives of the Administration of the President of Ukraine (Valentyna Polistchuk).

Prominent scholars involved in the seminar included Prof. Mykola Shul'ha (Institute of Sociology and former Minister, Ministry for Nationalities and Migration), Prof. Volodymyr Yevintov (Director of the Ukrainian Centre for Human Rights), and Prof. Valerij Vozgrin (Russian Academy of Sciences). NGO representatives included Leonid Finberg (Director, Institute of Jewish Studies), Miklosh Kovach (Head of the Association of Hungarian Culture, Uzhhorod), Vyacheslav Pokotylo (Executive Director, International Renaissance Foundation) and Oleksandr Piskun (Migration Problems Research Centre). Speakers from international organizations included Christoph Bierwirth (Senior Legal Officer, United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, Office in Ukraine) and Nicolaas de Zwager (Head of the Kyiv Bureau, International Organization for Migration).

A number of journalists, including some (e.g., Oleksandr Mayboroda) who write frequently on "ethnic" issues delivered presentations or attended the Kyiv seminar. In addition, several Canadians who were not part of the formal Canadian "team" were in Kyiv at the time of the seminar and participated in its proceedings. They included Prof. Orest Subtelny, a well-known historian of Ukraine at York University, Francoise Girard, a regional director at the Open Societies Institute in New York, and Natalie Mychajlyszyn, a Ph.D. candidate at Queen's University.

The Kyiv seminar was held at a time of considerable political turmoil in Ukraine (preparations for the visit of Russia's President Boris Yeltsin), and some individuals invited to participate in the seminar could attend. However, the level and quality of the turnout was gratifying, and there was a consistently high level of interest and participation in the seminar proceedings. It should be noted that an intentional effort was made to ensure that the seminar did not involve just the "standard" experts (usually from the older generation), from governmental or government-sponsored institutions, who normally attend such events. As a result, many speakers and members of the audience represented a new, younger generation of officials, scholars, journalists, and community activists who will have an increasing impact on the development of Ukraine's human/minority rights policies in the years to come.

This is of special importance since many of the elites of Ukraine and other East/Central European states have only gradually come to realize that there are no easy ways of dealing with the many difficult challenges which emerge in ethnically plural



societies. Thus in many circles in Ukraine (and especially among senior government officials) one frequently finds the view that, if the right key is found, the "problems" which emerge as a result of diversity can somehow be "resolved". Alternatively, politicians or officials eager to gain or maintain power sometimes attempt to exploit ethnic tensions for political gain.

The members of the Canadian team consistently spoke out against simplistic views that the challenges resulting from ethnic diversity can be managed easily, or manipulated safely for short-term political gain. They argued that the "problems" of diversity are almost never "resolved" (unless unacceptably brutal means are used), and ethnic "passions" can rarely be easily controlled once they have been provoked.

The Canadian (and comparative) experience points to the importance of utilizing a wide array of non-violent institutional and non-institutional means of accommodating diversity, and this accommodation usually involves a difficult, drawn-out (in fact, never-ending) series of torturous and time-consuming negotiations. This process leads to partial solutions and unhappy compromises which rarely fully satisfy any of the parties involved in such negotiations; however, the alternatives are even less desirable. By stressing the importance of various non-conflictual means of ethnic conflict management, and providing concrete examples of the effective handling of potential conflict situations, the seminar made a significant contribution to the ongoing debate on this issue in Ukraine.

Thus the seminar was successful in achieving its major goals: to provide the Ukrainian audience with insights into the policies and practices which have helped to ensure inter-ethnic "peace" in Canada and other liberal-democratic states; and to promote a productive dialogue among the representatives of groups and institutions which rarely have an opportunity to meet and interact in a non-conflictual setting.

At the same time, the Kyiv seminar provided the members of the Canadian "team" with an excellent briefing on the situation in Ukraine which prepared us well for our program in Crimea. To supplement the discussions during the seminar, a bound collection of original articles, prepared by FEE, on ethnopolitics in East/Central Europe was distributed among the seminar participants. In addition, several members of the Canadian team discussed various forms of further cooperation with seminar participants from Ukraine.

It should also be noted that the Embassy of Canada in Ukraine supported the seminar by allowing its participants to interact in an informal setting at a reception hosted by His Excellency Mr. Christopher Westdal who also, together with Mr. Ivan Kuras, Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine, officially opened the Kyiv seminar.



## The Crimean Programme

There were several components to the Canadian team's programme in Crimea: official seminar sessions; meetings with local officials and representatives of minority communities; and direct contacts with local communities. Official seminar sessions were held in two locations: Simferopol, the Crimean capital; and Miskhor, near Yalta. It was important for the Canadian team to develop a good understanding of all aspects of the complex inter-ethnic situation in Crimea, and thus the standard seminar format was modified. After a small number of formal presentations the seminar sessions developed into a wide-ranging dialogue which covered the most sensitive issues of concern to the various ethnic communities in Crimea.

For example, it quickly became clear that one of the major problems facing the Crimean Tatars and other ethnic groups returning from internal exile, as well as refugees from conflict areas who have settled in Crimea, is the acquisition of Ukrainian citizenship. Thus in late 1996 the majority of Tatars in Crimea were still not citizens of Ukraine. This is partly the result of problems with Ukraine's legislation, although recent changes in Ukraine's citizenship law have eliminated some of its deficiencies. Another problem, however, is that the countries in which the Crimean Tatars and other returnees once resided have made it very difficult for them to renounce their previous citizenship. Since Ukraine does not allow for dual citizenship, this leaves returnees in a very difficult situation. Useful information on this issue was provided by Vladimir Zubarev, a prominent lawyer who is the director of the "Sodeistvie" (Assistance) Foundation on Naturalisation and Human Rights, based in Simferopol. An ethnic Russian, Mr. Zubarev also spoke about attempts to foster a dialogue between the Crimean Tatar and majority Russian populations in Crimea.

Given the "siege mentality" which is widespread among ethnic communities in Crimea, it is sometimes difficult to get a good grasp of the specific challenges faced by specific subgroups within these communities. Thus the members of the Canadian team made a special effort to encourage all seminar participants to speak out. For example, women have carried an enormous (and often unrecognized) burden during the difficult process of Crimean Tatar resettlement, and are often the greatest victims of petty harassment by local administrative authorities. Thus some of the most valuable insights into community problems were provided by representatives of Crimean Tatar women's organizations.

For example, because of the very high rates of unemployment among the Crimean Tatars women often support their families by preparing baked goods and other foodstuffs and selling them to the many tourists who flock to Crimea during the summer. However, every summer the local administrative authorities, pressured by cafe and restaurant owners who are often linked to organized crime, attempt to restrict this informal trade. The same authorities have placed numerous bureaucratic barriers in the path of Crimean Tatars attempting to set up their own cafes and private businesses, and this has led to tremendous frustration and resentment.



Other valuable insights were provided by Crimean Tatar youth representatives, who spoke frankly about the assimilatory pressures faced by their peers. These pressures are due to the absence of an appropriate educational/cultural infrastructure to serve the needs of the Crimean Tatar population, and the highly disruptive process of resettlement. The language and culture of the Crimean Tatars were maintained, even in the difficult conditions of exile in Central Asia, because of the cohesiveness of traditional extended families. However, many of these extended families have been broken up during the process of resettlement in Crimea. In addition, the very high levels of unemployment among the returnees, and limited career opportunities for their children, have greatly demoralized the Crimean Tatars and have contributed to an increase in social pathologies in their communities.

The difficulties faced by the indigenous Karaite and Krymchak minorities of Crimea were also a topic of discussion. For example, the relatively small Karaite community has inherited a fascinating historical legacy in Crimea. The remaining members of this minority are strongly committed to preserving this legacy, and have shown great sophistication in using e-mail networks to maintain contacts among the scattered members of their community. They are very eager to take advantage of the experience of other small ethnic groups which have successfully resisted assimilation.

Formal and informal meetings with the representatives of various ethnic communities provided the members of the Canadian team with additional valuable insights. Of special importance was an unprecedented three-hour meeting with Mustafa Dzhemilev. Mustafa Dzhemilev is the Chairman of the Mejlis, a plenipotentiary body which speaks for Crimean Tatars between sessions of the Kurultai, a representative assembly of the Crimean Tatar people. The Kurultai and Mejlis are controversial institutions because in some respects they act as rivals to the official parliamentary institutions of the autonomous Crimean republic. However, the Kurultai and the leaders of the Mejlis have a great deal of authority among the Crimean Tatars, and these institutions have succeeded in maintaining a high degree of unity and discipline in the Crimean Tatar movement. After describing the aims and strategy of the movement he heads, Mustafa Dzhemilev participated in an intensive question and answer session which clarified some of the dynamics of the current political situation in Crimea.

Two members of the Canadian team also met with Ilmi Umerov, at the time the Vice-Prime Minister of the Crimean government (several weeks after this meeting he was replaced by Lenur Arifov). During a lengthy conversation he was very frank in describing and criticizing certain trends within the Crimean Tatar movement, and certain policies of the Crimean government. Lenur Arifov, who at the time of our seminars chaired the Standing Committee on Nationality Affairs and Deported Peoples of the Parliament of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, was also very helpful in answering any and all questions which arose during the seminars in both Kyiv and Crimea.



A number of leading figures in the Karaite and Krymchak communities devoted a great deal of time and effort to fully informing the Canadian team about the challenges faced by these small ethnic groups. In particular, we were taken on a detailed tour of Chufut-kale, an ancient Karaite fortress located in the mountains near Bakhchisarai. The leaders of the Karaite community in Ukraine hope that by establishing an open-air museum in this picturesque location they can preserve important elements of their historical and cultural legacy, and also provide employment opportunities to young members of the community.

On the last day of the formal programme in Crimea several members of the Canadian team had an opportunity to meet with the local media during a press conference in Simferopol. Approximately 20 journalists attended the press conference, which resulted in several articles and radio commentaries in the local and national media.

Following the formal programme some members of the Canadian team remained in Crimea for several days and lived with a Crimean Tatar family in the village of Veseloe, near the town of Sudak. This provided us with an excellent opportunity to observe, at first hand, the day-to-day life and problems of the local population. In addition, we were invited to attend a village meeting during which local Crimean Tatars voiced their grievances to village officials. Our observations and numerous conversations with village residents played a crucial role in supplementing the information gained from the seminars and meetings described above. Since Veseloe is typical of many other villages in Crimea, the situation there is briefly summarized below.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a number of Crimean Tatar families managed, with difficulty, to re-establish themselves in Veseloe, where they were once the dominant population. After the local Crimean Tatars were deported to Central Asia in 1944 ethnic Russians and Ukrainians were resettled in the village, and took over the dwellings and property of the deportees. Thus these new settlers and their descendants were understandably concerned about the return of the Crimean Tatars to Veseloe. However, their worst fears were not realized, since the returnees did not demand the return of their old property (or that of their parents and grandparents). Rather, they attempted to build new dwellings on the outskirts of the village. Over time mutual suspicions began to fade away, and the Crimean Tatars started to reintroduce traditional agricultural techniques which are more suited to local circumstances than Soviet-style collective farming.

However, the Tatars returned to Veseloe at a time of great economic disruption in the entire post-Soviet region. Very high inflation rates quickly devalued their savings, and Crimea suffered a dramatic economic downturn that is even more marked than in the rest of Ukraine. Most Crimean Tatar families cannot afford to finish building the new houses they began when they first arrived in the village, and thus Veseloe is full of half-completed dwellings. Their residents live in cramped, poorly heated, and unsanitary conditions that have led to widespread health problems. As a result, in many cases the reunification of extended families has been put off until the economic situation in Crimea improves.



Employment opportunities for recent arrivals are almost nil in a setting where even the old work force is being reduced because of a contraction in the Crimean economy. Thus it is almost impossible for highly qualified professionals among the Crimean Tatars to find jobs suited to their background, even when their skills are desperately needed. Economic reforms are essential, but the privatization of state-owned property is taking place at a very slow rate, and control of this process is the subject of intense political battles in Kyiv, Simferopol (the capital of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea), and at the local level. The Crimean Tatars in Veseloe and elsewhere have effectively been locked out of this process.

At the same time, attempts by the Crimean Tatars to set up small businesses, or to sell products they raise on small plots of land, are hampered by administrative restrictions often dating back to the Soviet period. In addition criminal elements, often allied with local government officials, have attempted to eliminate or control all small business activities. This includes demanding "protection money" from women selling vegetables at local markets, and such practices are often ignored by local law enforcement agencies.

Because of the difficult economic circumstances in Crimea funding for health care, education, culture and all forms of social welfare have been cut back. As a result, it has been impossible to establish the cultural and educational infrastructure that the Crimean Tatars in Veseloe need to effectively maintain their language and culture. They have also been denied proper facilities for their religious services, which are currently held in a small room of a noisy recreation facility. All the factors described above have greatly demoralized the recent returnees, and have led to great resentment among the many unemployed young men and women in their midst.

It is important to note that most of the non-Crimean Tatars in the village have also been affected by the economic downturn of recent years, and have suffered a significant decline in their living standards. However, most of them are employed (although they often receive their wages with considerable delays), and the existing social services and educational/cultural infrastructure still satisfy their most basic needs. Thus they are concerned that the return of the Crimean Tatars will put a heavy strain on these services and infrastructure, and will increase competition in the labour market. Last but not least, the non-returnees feel threatened by the high degree of solidarity among the Crimean Tatars, which has helped the returnees maintain the integrity of their community in spite of all the problems noted above.

The Crimean Tatars who returned to Veseloe have managed to co-exist peacefully with the previous inhabitants of the village, and in some cases have even slowly won their respect. However, the stresses and strains described above have led to a highly unstable situation which is duplicated in many other villages and towns in Crimea. Some Crimean politicians have attempted to play on these tensions to maintain their political support base, and the potential for conflict is great. On a number of occasions the leaders of the Crimean Tatar movement have acted quickly to prevent tensions in individual communities



from escalating into open conflict; however, their capacity to control the situation has begun to reach its limits.

## Conclusions

It is difficult to grasp all the nuances of inter-ethnic relations even in settings that are much less complex than in Crimea. It is often tempting to identify strongly with the cause of beleaguered minority groups such as the Crimean Tatars, and to paint majority-minority relations in simplistic black and white colours. Thus it is important to stress that the Crimean Tatar community should not be idealized. Its leaders are not infallible, Crimean Tatar groups have also been involved in organized crime in Crimea, and the community is not free of extremists. This is not surprising. What is surprising is that its leaders have generally continued to advocate relatively moderate policies, and extremist activity is very limited, in spite of the brutality and persecution to which this community was subjected after it was deported, and the discrimination it continues to encounter in its homeland. It should be noted that these conclusions concerning the restraint demonstrated by the Crimean Tatars are shared by many scholars and NGO representatives who have carefully studied the situation in Crimea and the pattern of inter-ethnic tensions in the region.

The leaders of the Crimean Tatar community have shown that they are pragmatists who are ready to negotiate and compromise on various issues as long as these compromises do not threaten the integrity and viability of their community in Crimea. However, in a number of cases the dominant political elites in Crimea have demonstrated that they do not share this willingness to negotiate in good faith. In addition Ukraine's central authorities in Kyiv, preoccupied with issues such as the fate of the Black Sea Fleet and the separatist rhetoric voiced by some Crimean politicians, have benefitted from the support of the Tatar community in Crimea without providing it with equivalent support.

The crucial nature of developments in Crimea for the future of Ukraine fully justifies this report's emphasis on the situation in this important region. Other reports and studies have emphasized Crimea's role in Russian-Ukrainian relations, and the way in which developments there affect regional stability in the Black Sea basin. This report focuses heavily on the Crimean Tatars in the hope that this will attract greater attention to the problems they face in building a new life for themselves in their homeland, and the report's recommendations reflect these emphases.



## Recommendations

1. Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations have been involved in a variety of assistance programmes in Ukraine. However, in spite of its great importance to Ukraine, and its geopolitical importance in the Black Sea Basin, Crimea has generally been neglected by these organizations. Similar organizations in other countries and a number of international organizations have devoted considerable attention to monitoring the situation in Crimea, but relatively little funding has been available for projects aimed at improving the living conditions of Crimea's population, and promoting improved inter-group relations in this troubled peninsula. In short, Crimea has received a disproportionately large amount of media attention, but a disproportionately small share of Western assistance. Given the difficult socio-economic situation in Crimea, and its status as a potential regional "hot spot," this region deserves more attention than it has received to date. Thus it is strongly recommended that greater efforts be made to ensure that Canadian assistance projects directed at Ukraine include Crimea as a potential "target area."

Those providing assistance to Crimea must be aware of the specific circumstances in this region of Ukraine. For example, care should be taken to ensure that such projects address the distinctive needs of minority communities such as the Crimean Tatars, and in some cases separate projects directed at particular communities should be considered. However, it is also important to keep in mind certain nuances of the local political situation. For example, too much emphasis on Crimea's distinctiveness strengthens the position of ambitious Crimean politicians who oppose almost any attempts by Kyiv to restrict their autonomy. Thus those providing assistance to Crimea should be aware that they are operating within the broader framework of a Ukrainian state which is involved in a complex tug-of-war with Crimea over their respective areas of jurisdiction.

2. The deportees and their descendants who have returned to Crimea have found it very difficult to gain Ukrainian citizenship. This has deprived them of many services and benefits available to citizens of Ukraine, and has greatly hampered their integration into Ukrainian society. Thus many representatives of the returnee population stress the importance of accelerating the naturalisation of the returnee population. The Ukrainian government has recently taken some steps to simplify naturalisation procedures, but could do more to facilitate this process. Naturalisation is also hampered by the fact that Ukraine does not permit dual citizenship, and the returnees must therefore officially renounce their previous citizenship. Since some of the countries in which they formerly resided (in particular, Uzbekistan) have made it very difficult for returnees to perform this act, this has left them in a legal limbo. It is therefore recommended that representatives of Canada's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade raise this issue when meeting with senior officials in Ukraine, and in the Central Asian states where most of the Crimean Tatars used to reside. Such interventions might help resolve a problem that has been the source of much grief to those returning to their homeland.



3. The banking system in Crimea is old-fashioned and inflexible. It serves the interests of those who control the large industrial enterprises and collective farms which still play an important role in the Crimean economy, and is linked to politicians and businessmen who are widely believed to have connections with organized crime. This banking system is very unresponsive to the needs of those with modest savings or who require small loans to renovate old buildings, complete new houses, or start a new business.

Credit unions could play a key role in providing essential services to the numerous individuals and groups which are neglected by the traditional banking system in Crimea. Ukrainian-Canadian credit unions, in conjunction with the credit union association to which they belong, have been active in establishing new credit unions in several regions of Ukraine, and they should be encouraged, and aided, to spread their activities to Crimea. It is likely that credit unions would be most popular among groups such as the Crimean Tatars, which already have a strong tradition of self-organization and self-help. However, if these credit unions prove to be successful, then their influence would quickly spread beyond individual ethnic communities.

4. The members of the Canadian team are not experts in the field of economic reform, and therefore this important issue is only referred to briefly in this report and its recommendations. However, all the members of this team were impressed by Crimea's great tourism potential. In addition, those of us who briefly extended our stay in Crimea had an opportunity to learn more about some of the creative ways in which this potential can be developed.

Crimea has a well-developed tourist infrastructure, although it catered almost exclusively to domestic tourists during the Soviet period and most of its facilities are poorly adapted to post-Soviet conditions. In addition, the mainstream tourist industry in Crimea has been thoroughly infiltrated by organized crime syndicates, which have established a very strong presence in Crimea. Thus it is almost impossible for "outsiders" who would like to develop their entrepreneurial skills to break into this market.

However, some enterprising individuals have begun to investigate the possibility of beginning modest tourist ventures along the lines of "bed and breakfast" establishments which would bypass the mainstream tourist industry. In particular, they are interested in taking advantage of the growing interest, in Europe and North America, in various forms of heritage tourism. Crimea, with its combination of varied landscapes, rich and picturesque historical legacy as a crossroads of various civilizations in the Black Sea basin, and fascinating mix of ethnic groups, is an ideal location for such heritage tourism. It is therefore recommended that a project be initiated to help transfer Canadian expertise in this field, which would include training courses for those interested in promoting various forms of heritage tourism.



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



quite expensive to arrange for the productive interaction of specialists in this field from Canada and Crimea. However, a low-cost alternative is to provide funding which would allow specialists in countries like Poland to assist and train personnel from Crimea.

6. Given the difficult economic situation and high levels of unemployment in Crimea, it is inevitable that the return of the Tatars to Crimea will continue to generate resentment and some degree of hostility among the majority population, which is itself living in difficult circumstances. In the long run, only economic reforms and new employment opportunities will help eliminate the socio-economic grounds for resentment of the Crimean Tatars. However, "Tatarophobia" in Crimea is not simply the result of socio-economic problems, for inter-ethnic tensions in Crimea pre-date the recent economic downturn. For example, after World War II there was a consistent effort to propagate a very negative stereotype of the Crimean Tatars, and this was accompanied by efforts to destroy most reminders of their presence in Crimea. In addition to destroying numerous Tatar mosques and libraries, thousands of traditional geographical place names were changed in an arbitrary and artificial fashion. Efforts to overturn the legacy of these attempts to destroy all traces of the Tatar presence in Crimea have met with great resistance and many local politicians and bureaucrats have continued to encourage distrust and resentment of the Crimean Tatars.

Here the experience of Canada and other states which have been active in combatting manifestations of intolerance and racism could prove useful to NGOs in Crimea which are active in this field. Thus it is recommended that certain multicultural teaching materials used in Canadian schools be adapted to Crimean needs, and that several short-term Canadian internships be organized for community activists involved in promoting improved inter-group relations in Crimea.

7. This report has repeatedly stressed that although Crimea has received a great deal of attention as a regional "hot spot" of potential conflict, to date this attention has not been translated into meaningful, long-term projects which would help end Crimea's isolation from the outside world. Thus the members of the Canadian team strongly recommend that Canadian governmental and non-governmental organizations support projects which would help end this isolation.

This goal could be achieved by: supporting study-abroad opportunities and internships for Crimeans of all ethnic backgrounds; supporting internships in Crimea for Canadian students and professionals with the appropriate skills; improving the quality of the local Crimean media (e.g., by encouraging journalistic exchanges within Ukraine, and within the region); and supporting projects which would link Crimea more effectively to the internet.

In the case of many of the recommendations noted above, a great deal can be achieved by encouraging contacts between Ukraine and East European countries such as



Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. These countries are in many respects much more advanced than Ukraine, and they can play a very important role as “bridges” facilitating Ukraine’s integration with the rest of Europe. In particular, many Polish NGO activists, journalists, and scholars have a strong interest in Ukraine, and some have developed a high level of expertise in Crimean affairs. However, they often lack the funds to conduct meaningful projects in Ukraine. Thus modest funding which would encourage interactions among Polish and Ukrainian NGO activists, journalists, and scholars provides a low-cost alternative to the usual practice of promoting direct (and expensive) ties between individuals and organizations in Canada and Ukraine.

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