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'Phantom Limb': Russian Settler Colonialism in the Post-Soviet Crimea (1991-1997)

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Abstract

Where does the myth that 'Crimea has always been Russian' come from? How did the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union 'make' Crimea Russian? This dissertation shows how empires applied settler colonial practices to Crimea, displacing the indigenous population and repopulating the peninsula with loyal settlers and how Crimean settler colonial structures survived the fall of the Soviet Union. It argues that this process defines post-Soviet history of the peninsula.

For centuries Crimea existed within the discourse of Russian imperial control. This dissertation challenges the dominant view by applying settler colonial theory to Crimea's past and present *for the first time*. This produces two major scholarly contributions. Firstly, it broadens the geography of settler colonialism, demonstrating that it existed not only in Western European imperialism but also in Russia's imperial project. Secondly, it challenges the 'uniqueness' of Russian imperialism.

The focus is on Crimea as a settler colony during the first years after the USSR's collapse. The main argument is that the 1990s conflict in Crimea was mainly around decolonization attempts and resistance by the settler colonial system. Contrary to the analysis of 'conflict that did not happen' it argues that Crimea is a case of a conflict that *never stopped* since the late 18th century. It analyses how settler colonial structures fought for their own preservation in opposition to the forces of decolonization represented by the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar national movements, maneuvering between the Russian and Ukrainian capitals, which in turn triggered perceptions of Crimean separatism.

A main theme is control over the narrative. Crimean settler colonial institutions maintained their monopoly over 'the truth' about the peninsula's past and present. This dissertation demonstrates how this continued in the 1990s, how Crimean newspapers forged the meaning of 'Crimean,' redesigned boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in order to marginalize Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar activists. Another important issue is the role of hybrid institutions including government structures in Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet, which

conducted subversive operations (informational and military) to counter and reduce the growing presence of the Ukrainian state on the peninsula.

Keywords

Summary for Lay Audience

The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014 for many people was the first time they heard about the existence of this peninsula. A region in the Eastern Europe for most people of the West was too far away from their home to take the conflict around it seriously. Meanwhile, the claims of the Russian authorities that Crimea is 'historically Russian' for many seemed like a good enough justification for the annexation. As a result, the first territorial annexation in Europe since the Second World War received little to no active response from the world.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the popular image of Crimea is a result of the Russian and Soviet imperial policies. I argue that since the late 18th century Crimea has been a settler colony of the Russian Empire, Soviet Union, and now – Russian Federation. In other words, the history of Crimea is similar to the history of other settler colonies of Western European empires. Therefore, the fact of settler colonization has to be at the basis of any analysis of Crimean past and present. Through the analysis of the political events in Crimea during the 1990s, this dissertation demonstrates that the fall of the Soviet Union did not bring decolonization to the peninsula. Quite the contrary, local institutions fought to preserve the colonial status quo and prolonged a conflict between the colonizers and the colonized. In that fight, Russian state, a former metropole, pretended to be a non-participant, but in fact actively interfered into Crimean domestic politics.

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Introduction

On January 15, 1992 the official newspaper of the Russian government *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* published an article dedicated to the rising conflict between Russia and Ukraine over the Crimean Peninsula. That article was about a letter by a group of Soviet "distinguished military commanders," high ranking officers of the Soviet Fleet, who appealed to the Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk.[1] The commanders argued against the decree of 1954 that transferred Crimea from the Russian SFSR to the Ukrainian SSR. They also asked the Ukrainian President to prevent the division of the Black Sea Fleet and to keep it under the joint command of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). What is interesting in this letter is that the signatories presented the Ukrainian President with a historical narrative of Crimea that argued for the Russian right to this territory. The letter argued that "The incorporation of Crimea into Russia [the Russian Empire] by no means meant colonization of this area. Quite the contrary. Crimea had always been a privileged part of the Russian Empire. Russia was its patron and a missionary."[2] Two paragraphs later: "Prior to the war [Second World War] the Greeks and Turks were expelled. During the war Hitlerites annihilated the Karaites and Gypsies of Crimea. In 1944 under the cruel will of Stalin all Tatars were deported from Crimea. Therefore, everything non-Russian *was carefully scraped out* [my emphasis] of the republic. Crimea became purely Russian, with only a certain portion of Ukrainians […] Therefore, Crimea – is a historical territory of Russia and the Russian people."[3]

Military commanders are not historians and do not have to see how elimination of the indigenous population of the territory does not make it 'historically native' for another ethnicity. The arguments presented in this letter were common at that time. The struggle between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea often employed history as a political tool. In this struggle tactical victories were often on the side of those who were able to control the narrative about the past and present. For various reasons, neither the Ukrainian state or

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[1] "Rossia i Krym", *Rossiiskaia Gazeta,* January 15, 1992, 5.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

activists, nor Crimean Tatars were able to outweigh Russia's historical claims to this land. The 'historical circumstances' of indigenous elimination and re-settlement of the Crimea's space 'worked' and still 'work' as a legitimate justification for territorial annexations in the 21st century.

This study offers a new view on Crimea and the processes that occur there. It argues that over the last two centuries Crimea has been reshaped and constructed as a settler colony of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. This centuries-long settler colonial project involved complex ideological, political, demographic, economic and historical decisions by the imperial government that aimed at securing Crimea as part of the empire and justifying the legitimacy of the Russian presence in Crimean territory. In order to prove this argument, this study uses the theories from postcolonial and settler colonial studies and tests them in a Crimean historical context. Previously, these theories have not been applied to the history of Crimea. One of the main conclusions, as a result, is that the history of the Russian imperial and, subsequent, Soviet domination in Crimea in principal is not much different from the history of the British (and generally European) imperial domination in settler colonies all over the world. The methods which the Russian imperial authorities used to secure Crimea as an imperial space, methods that were in essence continued by the Soviet government, were similar to (if not copied from) those of other European empires in their overseas colonies. The decision to apply settler colonial theory to the history of Crimea linked to the insufficiency of popular images regarding Crimea's historical past and, therefore, its present. This study deconstructs the popular image of the peninsula's past and present and demonstrates how Russian and Soviet Empires forged a Crimean historical narrative and further used it for political purposes. It further gives voice to alternative visions of Crimea, Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian, which undermine the Russian argument about the unanimously pro-Russian region. The application of post-colonial lens to the history relations between Crimea and Russia allows a researcher to step away from the Russian imperial myth, reassess the existing knowledge about Crimea and better understand the current political dynamic in the region.

The bulk of this study is not on the historiography of Crimea, but on the post-Soviet transformation of the peninsula during the first half-decade after the disintegration of the

USSR. Historians and political scientists, as well as politicians and wider public, often looked at post-Soviet Crimean transformation through the lens of a separatist movement, where a rebellious unilaterally pro-Russian region fought with the state center for its autonomy or/and its right to join a neighboring state. This research shows that the analysis of Crimean post-Soviet social and political processes requires a broader context. In order to understand the post-Soviet events in Crimea, as well as the current situation on the peninsula, one has to take the international and imperial context into account. Upon taking control over the peninsula in the 18th century, the imperial center reshaped its cultural and political space. It replaced the local population with settlers and forged a narrative of 'Russian Crimea.' Therefore, 'the separatist movement' in Crimea is a direct result of the imperial settler policies, displacement of the Crimea's indigenous population and its cultures that cannot be simply reduced to 'historical circumstances.' This research shows that the Crimean settler colony did not disappear with the empire, but survived and adapted in the post-imperial environment. The settler colonial institutions, institutions that maintained the settler colonial regime, preserved formal and informal connections to the former imperial center – post-Soviet Russia – and used those connections in order to protect imperial power structures in post-imperial time. Furthermore, this research shows how informational resources and control over the story of the past and present transcended into a space of active politics that was meant to define Crimea's future. All this becomes clear if one places the history of Crimea's post-Soviet transformation and the history of Crimean separatism in post-colonial and settler colonial discourse. The political struggle between Kyiv and Simferopol was never reduced to the sphere of domestic problems of Ukraine, but existed as a triangulated conflict between Kyiv, Simferopol, and Moscow.

The proclamation of the Ukrainian independence in 1991 was a challenge for the local Crimean elites. Traditionally alienated within the Soviet Ukrainian politics, local Crimean communists feared that the loss of oversight from Moscow might lead to the deconstruction of the Crimean settler colonial institutions within an independent Ukraine. This, in turn, would deprive Crimean communists of their political and economic power in what they saw as their domain. Therefore, maintaining a controlled conflict, which 'hung' Crimea as a contested space *between* Ukraine and Russia allowed local Crimean

elites to preserve their personal power, and gain a level of institutionalized autonomy within the Ukrainian state. They did this through the continuous support of the Russian cultural, political and historical narrative, and resistance to decolonization. When the leadership of Crimea changed in 1994, and the forces behind Yurii Meshkov tried to disrupt this balance in Russia's favor, this cost them their power. It further narrowed the power of Crimea's settler colonial institutions but did not destroy them. Crimea's place between Ukraine and Russia most accurately reflected the peninsula's state within the Soviet Union after it was transferred from the Russian SFSR to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954. The way to secure this space politically and informationally for Crimean authorities was to propose various forms of integration between Crimea and Russia, or Ukraine and Russia in which the peninsula had to serve as a "bridge" between the two states.

The Ukrainian government supported this balance, having no political, or financial resources to deal with a region and its problems that Ukrainian politicians had little understanding of. Ukrainian activists in Crimea, on the other hand, were not numerous, but very active. Their informational resources could not possibly match up to the informational resources of the settler colony or the Russian state. However, their cultural and political activism, already a very unusual (and therefore intriguing and interesting) social phenomenon in early 1990s, allowed them to begin formulating an alternative narrative of Crimea – as a territory of a unitary Ukrainian state. The very conflict around the separation of the Black Sea Fleet between Russia and Ukraine happened due to the local initiatives of Ukrainian officers, who were willing to serve in Ukraine and did not see any timely or adequate reaction from their government in Kyiv. The narrative about Ukrainian Crimea, formulated by local activists and supported (some would argue – insufficiently) by the state, never dominated the public space, but it was dangerous for the settler colonial institutions and Russia's political presence in a long term.

The ability of the Crimean settler colonial institutions to preserve power and control over political, economic and financial resources facilitated the marginalization of the Crimean Tatar decolonization movement. The indigeneity of Crimean Tatars and their claim for it appeared to be one of the most uncomfortable challenges for the settler colonial institutions. While the Ukrainian claims for indigeneity in Crimea were easy to debunk,

most often ridicule, the demand of Crimean Tatars for their rights as indigenous people were much harder to resist. As it often happens historically in settler colonies, the very presence of the indigenous nation disrupts the colonizer's claims for indigeneity and emphases the foreignness of their power. The conflict over land that happened between the local Crimean authorities and Crimean Tatar activists in 1990s was more than just a conflict over property. In the most simple terms, it was a conflict over who got to control the repatriation process. In a broader context, it was a conflict over the fate of decolonization, the fate of Crimea – whether Crimean Tatars dissolved in the 'multinational caldron' of the peninsula, as settler institutions wanted, or become a separate political force (with appropriate political and national rights) that is able to protect its indigenous sovereignty.

The marginalization of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar movements happened according to a similar logic. Having control over the informational space and the post-Soviet cultural and political discourse, Crimean settler colonial institutions (as well as Russian media) were able to define the 'right' and 'wrong' of Crimean politics. Therefore, they often employed Soviet-era cultural and political stereotypes in order to forge an image of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars as aggressive nationalists and extremists that were going to disrupt a peaceful life of the Crimean population. In the case of Crimean Tatars, their Muslim faith in combination with the history of Soviet propaganda, played an additional role in provoking hostility towards them. Both Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar demands for national equality were presented as unreasonable demands for privileges, attempts to forcefully assimilate/colonize the Russian-speaking population of Crimea. Crimean newspapers, as well as Russian media played an important role as settler colonial institution in order to invoke, reinforce and support these myths. In turn, the use of those myths was an important factor of mobilization of the Russian-speaking majority of the peninsula.

The role of Russia as a (former) metropole in this conflict was obvious, but formally external. Russian government successfully employed the democratic rhetoric of 'protection of the Russian-speaking people' in the post-Soviet area in order to cover its interference into domestic affairs of other countries behind a façade of the international law. The domestic political processes within post-Soviet Russia itself made Crimea part

of the post-Soviet nation-building issue, a matter of pride for the fallen empire. For the Russian nationalist thought the foreign political status of Crimea was painful; the fact that this status was *Ukrainian* made the pain even worse. Therefore, supporting the dominance of the pro-Russian political, cultural and historical narrative about Crimea was a matter of preserving control over this space. This control over the Crimean Peninsula provided leverage that allowed the Russian government if not to frame, then to influence Ukraine's domestic and foreign policy. Having no sovereignty over Crimea, the Russian state maintained its military presence, as well as formal and informal contacts with the local Crimean state institutions. Russian politicians and state institutions financed the pro-Russian civic movements in Crimea (some of which were paramilitary), conducted propaganda through the newspapers of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, through the Russian Orthodox Church. Russian intelligence services operated on the territory of the peninsula openly, as part of the Black Sea Fleet. These contacts helped the Russian government get support of Russian interests from the inside of Ukraine, even when this was contrary to the decisions of the government in Kyiv. The intersection of the Russian intelligence, Russian Orthodox church and pro-Russian civic movement in Crimea and their role as agents of Russian influence is a very complicated but important topic that awaits its future research.

Most of the existing scholarship on Crimea bases itself on a narrative that comes out of the Russian or Soviet imperial center. The political power of scholarly research for some time has been a matter of analysis by Indigenous scholars in other places of the world. This research touches on this topic in relation to Crimea. It also demonstrates that there is more than one possible narrative about Crimea and that the currently dominant one is a result of the consistent Russian imperial policy that started with the first annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire in 1783. This legacy of control over the narrative, past and present, is an important element of the analysis that this study introduces. It shows that imperial rhetorical power was and remains a powerful instrument that allows the (former) empire to maintain control over the (former) colonies and to shape the way people in Crimea and around the world understand the Crimean Peninsula. Ultimately this means that the inherited instruments of imperial propaganda in Crimea became effective tools to control the Crimean population. Meanwhile, Russian control over the popular and

political image of Crimea as a 'historically Russian land' operated more meaningfully in the international framing of geopolitical events than the real popular support of this image by Crimean population.

Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview

Contrary to their statement that Crimea was not a colony, the military commanders mentioned above, described exactly a process that fits into the analytical and theoretical framework of settler colonization. Previously, histories of settler colonialism and the field of postcolonial theory have been exclusively applied to the history of Western European empires and their colonies. The application of those theories allowed social scientists to critically reassess the histories of the imperialism, race and gender relations, as well as criticize current policies of the Western settler colonial states (such as United States, Canada or Australia, just to name the few) towards the indigenous population of their respective countries. Histories of settler colonialism, in particular, deconstructed the historical myths that settler colonial states used in order to justify their policies of elimination towards the indigenous cultures, this further disrupted an image of Western civilization as paragons of democracy. Arguably, such scholarly criticism eventually enabled changes in some of the imperial policies and contributed to democratization (although, very slow as many would argue) of Western societies.

Due to a generally lower interest of Western scholarship to the field of Eastern European studies, in addition to a decades long separation by an 'Iron Curtain,' post-colonial theories and concept of settler colonialism received little to no application in the context of Eastern Europe. As this research will demonstrate, this eventually led to a problem when Western scholarship often follows Eastern European imperial narratives without critically assessing them. A general understanding of 'Russia' (a term that is often, rather mistakenly, applied to various state formations from the times of Kyivan Rus´ through Tsardom of Muscovy, Russian Empire and the Soviet Union to the contemporary Russian Federation) as a center and the main producer of knowledge about Eastern Europe created a situation in which Russian historical narrative often dominates the knowledge about regions that are less popular among scholars. Therefore, the application of settler colonial lens to the history of Crimea is an attempt to challenge the domination of a

Russian historical narrative and begin to reassess the existing knowledge about the peninsula and its cultural and political dynamic.

Settler colonialism is a type of a foreign invasion, which results in replacement of the indigenous population of the occupied land with foreign colonizers. Patrick Wolfe describes settler colonialism in a following way: "…the colonizers come to stay, expropriating the native owners of the soil, which they typically develop by means of a subordinated labor force (slaves, indentures, convicts) whom they import from elsewhere."[4] He further formulates settler colonization as a range of imperial policies that result in the same outcome – elimination and replacement of the indigenous:

> "...settler-colonization is at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement. The logic of this project, a sustained institutional tendency to eliminate the Indigenous population, informs *a range of historical practices that might otherwise appear distinct – invasion is a structure not an event*." [my emphasis][5]

On the most basic level the application of this definition of settler colonialism to Crimea suggests an explanation of how the population of the peninsula was gradually replaced by settlers in course of two centuries, how the indigenous peoples of the peninsula were either eliminated, displaced or marginalized to the state of national minority in their land. Wolfe's definition is important in multiple ways. It demonstrates that talking about settler colonialism means talking about a system of power and institutions that act over time, often inconsistently. Their actions aim at replacing the indigenous people with settlers, depriving the former of their identity, indigeneity, and sovereignty, while claiming a right of settlers to be the only "native" masters in the territory. "Invasion as structure, not event" means that formal decolonization does not 'restore the pre-colonial balance.' The act of entering a foreign land, occupying and controlling it while removing the Indigenous from the land does not stop when the generation of settlers is replaced by the

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[4] Patrick Wolfe, "Land Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* 106, Vol. 3 (June 2001): 868.

[5] Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (London: Cassel, 1999), 163.

generation of their children, born in the colonized space. Colonizer's offspring eventually claim the 'local' identity in the colonized space (by creating a 'settler's myth'), proclaiming themselves the indigenous people. In eyes of the colonized Indigenous people, the colonizers remain foreign invaders, even those born in the space of the colony.

The elimination, displacement of the indigenous and their replacement with the colonizers goes beyond the *physical* act: settler colonization aims to create a new society with its own culture, history and 'local' identity. Lorenco Veracini identifies multiple types of indigenous displacement that all relate to various challenges of the indigenous sovereignty by the colonizer: in addition to physical displacement that also includes ignoring the presence of the indigenous, ignoring their diversity, traditions and history, attempts to assimilate them within other national groups or within the colonizers' society, redefining parameters of who can be recognized as a member of the indigenous group and so on.[6] Veracini goes on by saying,

> "The very possibility of the settler project – a collective sovereign displacement - is premised on what historian of the 'Angloworld' James Belich has defined as 'mass transfer', the capacity of shifting substantial clusters of peoples across oceans and mountain ranges."[7]

In other words, settler colonialism has very close relationships to the sovereignty of the colonizer and the colonized, their interaction and competition. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries Russian and Soviet Empires challenged Crimean Tatar sovereignty on multiple occasions, disrupted their traditional way of life and religious practices, displaced the population physically and culturally, reshaped the Crimean geographical space to make it Christian, Russian, Soviet (see Chapter 1).

One of the important features of settler colonization is the role of women in formulating the future 'local' population. One of the distinctions Veracini makes between regular

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[6] Lorenco Viracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 35-52.

[7] Ibid., 33.

extractive colonialism and *settler* colonialism is permanence of the society and its ability to sustain and reproduce itself.[8] Scholars of woman's history add an important argument to this distinction, arguing that the appearance of the colonizers' (white) women in the colonies changed the nature of colonization. Theda Perdue, for instance, notes that the appearance of white women in North American settler colonies resulted in the outbreak of racism against the native population, as the interracial marriages were no more socially acceptable.[9] In turn, Margaret Jacobs points to the instrumentalization of the traditional European patriarchal gender roles of women as mothers in the attempts to colonize and assimilate the indigenous children of the North America and Australia through the system of boarding schools.[10] The writing of Ann Stoler, in turn, further demonstrate the connections between the race, gender and colonialism in the Dutch East Indies. In particular, Stoler focuses on a complicated colonizer's task to remain 'civilized' and 'European' while being far away from Europe. The author demonstrates how the empire implemented racial boundaries and policed sexuality of *both* colonizers and the colonized in order to avoid 'cultural mixing' and 'degeneration' of the white settlers.[11] Due to the lack of primary sources this research does not address the role of women in Crimean settler colony. The settler colonial context, however, requires to identify the importance of this topic for the future development of application of the settler colonial theory to Crimean history.

The problem of race and gender in the colonies, as well as the link between them arises from the sphere of imaginative geography. One of the first scholars who demonstrated this connection was Edward Said with his concept of Orientalism.[12] At its core *Orientalism* is a study of the Western identity, created in opposition to the self-

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[8] Lorenco Veracini, *Settler Colonial Present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 13-31.

[9] Theda Perdue, *"Mixed Blood" Indians: Racial Construction in the Early South* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 88.

[10] Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

[11] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2010).

[12] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

constructed image of the 'Other' – the Orient. Said argues that the West created a number of cultural stereotypes about the East and that those stereotypes hardly resemble reality. In the meantime, cultural stereotypes are easy to instrumentalize, since they provide comfortable reference points, used to justify the inequality between cultures. Said's texts focused a lot on the language and texts of the empire, demonstrating how language can be used as an instrument of subjugation of a different nation or class. *Orientalism* is one of those texts that shows connection between culture and politics, broadening the meaning of the latter term to include social relations (racial, gender, class) and inequalities into politics in addition to a classical political process.

Edward Said received a fair amount of criticism for presenting the West and the East (Orient) as homogenous entities and not taking into account the internal differences and inequities within them. In addition, as it appears today, Said completely omitted the problem of Eastern Europe on his imaginative map – that is something what Alexander Etkind called "a hole in the image of the world."[13]   However, his methodological approach – analysis of cultural rhetoric, symbols and how they transfer into every day politics – remain fruitful. *Orientalism*, in fact, says more about the Western countries and cultures than about the 'East.' Apart from providing a history of cultural, rhetorical and political domination of the West over the East, *Orientalism* provides guidelines that demonstrate that in a hierarchical situation, hierarchy is often created through a control over the narrative. The dominance of the West over the Orient based itself not just on the brutal armed force, but on the ability to determine how events were being recorded and interpreted. This is a very important point, since it also speaks to the idea of artificially constructed historical narrative and the necessity to decolonize historiography of former colonized societies. To an extent, imperial control over the historical narrative puts

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[13] Alexander Etkind, "Dyra v kartine mira: pochemu kolonial´nye avtory pisali o Rossii, a postkolonial´nye net," Translated by Vladimir Makarov in *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2011): 99-116.

This article is a translation of a chapter within from a larger monograph: Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russian Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011). The reason to cite this article is that the original text in English does not use the phrase "the hole in the image of the world" to describe the absence of postcolonial research, focused on Eastern Europe. The phrase only appears in Russian translated, edited by Alexander Etkind.

imperial history in the field of political science, while the history itself becomes an instrument of power, one of the colonial institutions.

The ability of the invader to determine the narrative and interpretation of events, to install cultural hierarchies (by proclaiming that the invader is more 'civilized' than the colonized), based on socially constructed and culturally contingent (biased) criteria, gives him power that extends beyond his own community to influence the subjugated culture as well. The extent of that power and the psychology of the colonized subject became an object of the study by Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist, philosopher and revolutionary from Martinique. Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks* and the collection of essays published in *The Wretched of the Earth* explore the psychological aspects of colonial subjugation. Fanon's writing focuses mostly on racial subjugation and how it influences both the colonizer and the colonized. In *Black Skin White Masks* he argues that the 'civilizational' rhetoric and racism of the colonizer creates an inferiority complex in the mind of the colonized.[14] The black person becomes willing to escape his/her blackness by trying to copy the cultural traditions of the colonizer, by trying to 'fit into' the civilized society.[15] The irony, however, is that in a colonial situation the 'white mask' is never good enough for the colonizer to accept a colonized black body as equal. In the meantime, this same mask removes the person wearing it from his/her own cultural community. Black body in a 'white mask' occupies an in-between cultural space. Colonization creates a hybrid culture, and both colonizers and colonized antagonize it. Both Fanon and Said touch on the question of exotics, sexual curiosity of the European colonizer about the non-European body. The sexualization of the Other, male and female, according their works, was yet another instrument of colonization – the hyper-masculine image of the non-European males painted them as both extremely sexually capable and violent.[16] Therefore, as stated by Gayatri Spivak, white European men saw it as their duty to protect exotic non-European females from non-European males and used this duty as a

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[14] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Mask* (London: Pluto Press, 2008).

[15] Ibid., 2–3, 45–60.

[16] Ibid., 120-121.

justification for colonization.[17] The accusations of aggressiveness, that colonizers pose to the colonized is somewhat related to this fear for white female bodies. The questions of gender, race and colonization thus have become closely tied in postcolonial analysis. Studies of race and gender in a colonial context parallel Foucault's concept of body politics but placed into a colonial situation. Empire locks the colonized person in his/her own body, sexualizes this body, and also defines it as inferior. This same empire polices its white and non-white subjects in order to prevent any 'mixing' between them, to keep the blood and the culture 'clean'.

Franz Fanon's essay "On Violence" published as part of *The Wretched of The Earth* collection gives us additional characteristics of the colonizer and the colonized, as well as relationships between them. The essay itself explores the process of decolonization and argues that it is impossible to decolonize without violence: "…decolonization is quite simply the substitution of the 'species' of mankind by another."[18] According to Fanon, "Decolonization is truly the creation of new men. But such a creation cannot be attributed to a supernatural power: The 'thing' colonized becomes a man through the very process of liberation."[19] In other words, decolonization goes beyond a simple process of dismantling the colonial institutions and fixing the legislation to a new standard of equality. The important element of Fanon's ideas lays in the sphere of psychology. Decolonization is a process during which the colonized community reinvents itself, creates itself from scratch, removes the legacy of colonization together with the cultural stereotypes and the creators of those stereotypes – the colonizers.

Fanon also argues that the colonizer is well aware of the violent nature of true decolonization. This is why the colonizer lives in a constant fear of revolt.[20] The violence of the colonizer against the colonized aims to prevent a possible revolt with the use of force. And when decolonization begins, colonizers often use pacification rhetoric, calling

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[17] Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak*?*" in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory. A Reader,* ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Christman (NY: Columbia University Press, 1994), 101.

[18] Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 1.

[19] Ibid., 2.

[20] Ibid., 5.

on the colonized to avoid violence, to be 'reasonable', appealing to (colonizer's) "civilized" values, and 'common sense.' Those appeals come from the colonizers' fear and necessity to preserve the colonial status quo.[21] Ironically, this rhetoric of the colonizers often gets support from the colonized intellectuals, who have adopted the values of the colonizer.[22] This is why the violence is so important in Fanon's view – it is the only guarantee that decolonization is not sabotaged by the colonizer, who is also in control of the cultural narrative (by defining the norms of moral and fair conduct).

Fanon's writing was revolutionary and also grounded in scholarly analysis. It is important to understand that Franz Fanon did not theorize on colonialism in general but analyzed a very particular situation in Northern Africa after the Second World war. Fanon's analysis of inequality primarily relates to racial inequality, of course. It is an intellectual response to colonization of *black* bodies first, rather than a reflection on subjugation in general. It seems, however, that while being very specifically related to a particular situation and particular group of the colonizers and the colonized, Fanon's texts allow the reader to extract a certain general pattern of colonial relations that could be also true for other colonies and other colonized subjects. Race as a social construct historically serves as one of the major, but not the only, characteristic that has been used by the colonizers in order to justify their actions all over the world. Fanon's findings in the sphere of colonized psychology proves that colonial relations are as much psychological as they are military, economic and cultural. This means that psychological analysis of colonization should be tested and extended to other colonial situations. Fanon's texts demonstrate the extent to which the process of colonization affects the identity of the colonizer and the colonized. This analysis goes beyond culture and politics and therefore is often harder to identify. What is important is that colonization exists in a metaphysical space in addition to all other spheres of life.

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[21] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* 8-11.

[22] Ibid.

Based on the writing of Edward Said and Franz Fanon, Homi Bhabha explored the problem of hybridity in a colonial context in *The Location of Culture.*[23] Bhabha presents a very interesting interpretation of boundaries and borderlines between different cultures. He proposes to exit the binary approach to those boundaries and to look at them as if they are not the place of strict limits, but a "place from which something begins its presencing."[24] Bhabha argues that the national "imagined communities" in Benedict Anderson's terms are not homogenous, but are a result of negotiations between various parts of those communities, which create hybridity.[25] The image of the homogenous nation is a myth, and therefore it should be deconstructed. Just as there are boundaries between nations, there are also boundaries within nations. Colonized space, according to Bhabha, is a space of hybridity and ambivalence, it is a space where cultures overlap and inter-mix into a hybrid in which a + b = more than c. It is a space, where the cultures of the colonized meet the symbols of the colonizers and translates them into indigenous terms, where the meaning of the things said is not always equal to the sum of meanings of separate words in a statement. The hybrid that comes as a result is neither fully 'inner', not fully 'outer' culture (but a 'borderland'), it therefore influences and modifies cultures of both the colonizer and the colonized. The important contribution of this idea is that colonialism is not a 'one-way road', not a unidirectional force in which colonizers impose their culture on the colonized, as it is often believed to be. There is no simple binary of oppressor and oppressed, the subject (agent) and the object of cultural influence. Colonization, in fact, influences both sides and modifies their cultural and political norms. The idea that the imperial image of the 'Other' is in fact the mirror image of the colonial 'Self' surprisingly repeats itself in one postcolonial text after another. This idea is visibly present in the writing of Said, Fanon and Bhabha.

In addition to the concept of settler colonialism, Bhabha's concepts of ambivalence and hybridity, as well as Fanon's writing on decolonization and psychology of the colonized will be very useful for this analysis. Upon closer look it seems that modern colonial

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[23] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

[24] Ibid., 7.

[25] Ibid., 7.

empires used very similar methods of 'pacifying' that occupied territories and forcing colonized population under control. If those methods were similar, this might suggest that the methods of deconstruction of imperial narratives could be similar as well. This research suggests, that the texts of postcolonial theorists could and should be tested in the context of Eastern European experience. Not only this will complicate the knowledge about Eastern Europe but enrich the theory itself.

Multiple scholars in the field of settler colonialism show that settler colonial structures of power use propaganda and history as instruments of power in order to cover the actual aims of their policies. Through the informational instruments the colonizer justifies his actions, and aims to represent himself, the invader, as a victim or generous giver. The replacement of a local population always has to happen 'in a lawful way,' not in reality, but in representation and history. The colonizer controls the discourse, including that of indigenous people, and paints himself as innocent of violence or wrongdoing.[26] In the meantime, because the colonizing structure has institutional control, it has the power to change the parameters/reasons for oppression as well.[27] In the rhetoric of the colonizer the colonized is always presented as 'lesser': less human, less civilized, closer to the wilderness/ nature, childish, less masculine, exotically sexualized. The colonizers, in the meantime, paint themselves as 'benevolent givers', whose aim is to 'save the human-like creatures' from themselves. It is always colonizers who bring culture and civilization to the colonized, who have to maintain purity of their own race (by 'protecting' white women and children from unworthy influence of the colonized). The "White Man's Burden" by Rudyard Kipling is a classic example of these views.

Eastern Europe and Post-Colonial Studies

There are surprisingly few studies that apply postcolonial theory and literature to analyze the Eastern European historical context. Even today postcolonial and settler colonial theory serve as instruments of analysis of the *Western* imperialism, a history of communication between the so called 'First' and 'Third' worlds. Eastern Europe, and the

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[26] Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology* (London: Cassel, 1999), 3.

[27] Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference…" *The American Historical Review* 106 (2001): 879.

history of the Eastern European imperialism largely remains outside of the scope of this analysis. Alexander Etkind addresses some of the reasons for the existence of what he calls a "hole in the image of the world." One of the main reasons, according to Etkind, is the 'in-betweenness' of the Eastern European 'Second world': for the postcolonial scholars, the Eastern European 'Second world' was hardly much different from the West, since it did not support the colonized nations in their struggle for decolonization. In the meantime, for the advocates of the modernization theory, the 'Second world' was hardly different from the 'Third', as they both were just previous modernization stages, compared to the 'First' world.[28]

There seems to be a certain tradition in the Eastern European imperial studies that tend to describe the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union as 'unique' instances of imperialism, much different from Western European imperialism. For quite a while scholars in Eastern European and Russian Studies were not even sure, whether Soviet Union constituted an empire at all. For some, the application of this term to the Soviet Union was rather a question of perspective. Mark Beissinger argued, for example, that due to the politization of the term 'empire,' its application usually comes as a result of accusations of imperialism from one or more subjugated nations.[29] Other scholars, like Ronald Suny, Ilya Gerasimov, Sergey Glebov also tend to open their discussion of empires by stating the fluidity and instability of the concept.[30] Therefore, when editors and contributors of *Ab Imperio* formulated the concept of the 'New Imperial History' in early 2000s, it seemed that taking a route that was parallel to the postcolonial studies was a conscious choice.

The concept of the 'affirmative action empire,' applied to the Soviet Union by Terry Martin on the one hand provided a valuable insight into the history of Soviet national

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[28] Alexander Etkind, "Dyra v kartine mira…" in *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2011): 115.

[29] Mark R. Beissinger, "Pereosmyslenie imperii posle raspada Sovetskogo Soiuza," Translated by M. Loskutovoi, in *Ab Imperio*, 3 (2005): 45.

[30] Ronald Suny, "Imperiia kak ona est´: imperskaia Rossiia, 'natsional´noe' samosoznanie i teorii imperii," Translated by A. Semenov and M. Mogilner in *Ab Imperio*, 1-2 (2001): 9-10.

Ilya Gerasimov, Sergey Glebov et al. "In Search of a New Imperial History," *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2005): 33-37.

relations. Martin's argument that Soviet Union was at the highest stage of imperialism and therefore created its empire specifically in opposition to imperialism – as an anti-imperial state is especially valuable for this research.[31] Speaking on a similar topic, Ronald Suny says that the Soviet Union (and the Russian Empire) was an empire, where the class of communist elite performed the role of a metropole and did not think in national terms.[32] He also believes that the Soviet Union fell apart, because it was too successful in performing the 'development' mission of non-Russian peoples, forging non-Russian nations that eventually demanded independence.[33] In different ways, both Martin's and Suny's arguments seem to contribute to the perception of the Russian and Soviet imperial exceptionalism. However, United States have also been formed as an anti-imperial state, while at the same time being one of the most prominent examples of settler colonialism. It would be interesting to analyze the extent to which Martin's 'affirmative action' is similar or different to the concept of sociocryonics by Olúfémi Táíwò. Táíwò defines sociocryonics as an imperial policy of "cryopreserving social forms, arresting them and denying them and those whose social forms they are the opportunity of deciding what, how and when to keep any of their social forms."[34] In the context of the African continent sociocryonics was a policy of inventing and supporting the 'indigenous' traditions, while denying the indigenous society a right to modernize and using the absence of modernization as an argument in support of indigenous inferiority.

One of the recent challenges to the idea of Russian imperial and Soviet imperial exceptionalism was a collection, edited by David Rainbow and dedicated to the history of racial relations in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.[35] In the opening article of the collection Vera Tolz argues against an existing tradition of the Russian studies to

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[31] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 20.

[32] Suny, "Imperiia kak ona est′…": 15.

[33] Ibid.: 25.

[34] Olúfémi Táíwò, *How Colonialism Pre-Empted Modernity in Africa* (Bloomington, Indianopolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 11.

[35] David Rainbow (ed.), *Ideologies of Race: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in the Global Context* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2019).

simplify Western concepts of race and reject the applicability of those concepts to the Russian Empire.[36] She further demonstrates that the concept of race in the Russian Empire existed and therefore were utilized in defining state policies.[37] Furthermore, contrary to the official propaganda of the Soviet Union as a state without racism, Brigid O'Keeffee and Adrienne Edgar demonstrate how the concept of race informed social practices in the Soviet Union.[38]

Historiography of Crimea exists outside of all those discussions. As a periphery of an empire, Crimea rarely becomes an object of study in itself. Rather, it appears in historical analysis as a place *where* the history of the empires (Russian, Soviet, other) takes place. Historically, the history of the Russian imperial annexation of Crimea in late 18th century has been widely described as colonization. The application of the word colonialism to Crimea and Southern steppes of what now is Ukraine was common for the 19th century Russian historiography. One of the contemporary proponents of this approach is Edward Lazzerini.[39] Despite the use of the term, there are not that many scholars who describes Crimea as the Russian colony. Those who do, usually study the history of Eurasian region and internal cultural boundaries within it. For example, Michael Khodarkovsky analyses the history of Muscovy/Russian imperial relations with the 'Wild Steppe,' which leads him to an argument that "Russia was no less a colonial empire than any of the other Western European powers."[40] The scope and the time period of Khodarkovsky's focus however, is slightly earlier than the period when the Russian settler colonial project

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[36] Vera Tolz, "Constructing Race, Ethnicity, and Nationhood in Imperial Russia: Issues and Misconceptions," in *Ideologies of Race: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in the Global Context*, 29.

[37] Ibid., 44.

[38] Brigid O'Keeffee, "The Racialization of Soviet Gypsies: Roma, Nationality Politics, and Socialist Transformation in Stalin's Soviet Union," in *Ideologies of Race: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in the Global Context*

Adrienne Edgar, "Children of Mixed Marriage in Soviet Central Asia: Dilemmas of Identity and Belonging," in *Ideologies of Race: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in the Global Context.*

[39] Edward L. Lazzerini, "Local Accomodation and Resistance to Colonialism in Nineteenth Century Crimea," in Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (eds.) *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Indiana University Press, 1997).

[40] Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of Colonial Empire, 1500-1800* (Bloomington, In: Indiana University Press, 2001), 6.

begins in Crimea. Besides, the concept of settler colonization, allows for a broader argument both in terms of the scope of colonization and in terms of its length.

Since 1970s there have been several serious studies of the history of Crimean Tatars. Alan Fisher's *The Crimean Tatars* that came out in 1978 presents a short survey of the history of Crimean Tatars during the age of Crimean Khanate, Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.[41] Due to being one of the first English-language works on the topic in the 20th century, this survey became one of the classical texts, summarizing the history of Crimean Tatars. Fisher's narrative, however, at times follows the path of the Russian historians. For instance, he describes the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire as a peaceful act by an Enlightened monarch, with no mention of repressions against the local population that followed this act. Contemporary works on a similar topic by Brian Williams address the issues of Crimean Tatar identity creation and their repatriation to their homeland.[42] Williams presents a rather balanced narrative, when it concerns the focus of his research – identity formation, while again repeats commonly accepted 'truth' about the 18th century annexation of Crimea. One more monograph that is worth mentioning here is a study of Crimean Tatar social memory by Greta Uehling.[43] This research presents rather interesting results of a number of field trips to Crimea during which the author recorded the process of memorization and dealing with trauma among the Crimean Tatar people, their perception of their community, and their homeland.

One of the monographs that this dissertation comes relatively close to in terms of the topic and chronology is *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition and Conflict* by Gwendolyn Sasse.[44] Sasse uses an interesting approach in which she looks at the history of the post-Soviet Crimea problem as a center-periphery struggle between the

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[41] Alan Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978).

[42] Brian Glynn Williams, *The Crimean Tatars: The Diaspora Experience and the Forging of a Nation* (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2001).

Brian Glynn Williams, *The Crimean Tatars: From Soviet Genocide to Putin's Conquest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[43] Greta Uehling, *Beyond Memory: The Crimean Tatar's Deportation and Return* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[44] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007).

government in Kyiv and the local Crimean elites. While Sasse provides an interesting and deep analysis on the Crimean problem, it seems to be lacking some internationalization. The presumption that the conflict over Crimea was an internal Ukraine's problem *is* in fact a reflection of the Russia's settler colonial policies implemented after 1991. In a dialogue (extended in time) with Sasse this dissertation offers an alternative view of Crimean question that is focused on international aspects of the conflict.

Methodology and Sources

The chronological focus of this research lays between 1991 and 1997, starting with the year that marks Ukraine's declaration of independence, when Crimea officially became part of a non-Russia centered state, and ending when the Ukrainian and Russian governments signed the so called "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership" in which both sides mutually refused any territorial claims to each other. However, parts of the thesis are outside this chronological focus, to provide context, since the Russian settler colonial project in Crimea started long before 1991 and continues today and this requires some exploration, what came before and after.

This study uses a variety of sources and research methods. The primary sources include newspapers, archival documentation of the Central State Archive of Civic Organizations of Ukraine; records of the Russian parliamentary meetings, and oral interviews. The various methodologies used in this study include locating and data analysis of primary documents, discourse analysis and oral history.

In order to analyze Crimean post-Soviet political and social dynamics it was necessary to accumulate media texts that were a primary source for political, social, economic and cultural news within Crimea during the period in focus. As daily newspapers were one of the primary sources of information in Crimea, this study analyzes materials from two most common newspapers on the peninsula, as well as the most common newspaper in the city of Sevastopol – *Krymskaia Pravda*, *Krymskaia Gazeta* (previous names – *Sovetskii Krym* and *Kurortny Krym*) and *Slava Sevastopolia*. All selected texts had to fit into one of the following categories: articles describing national relations in Crimea; political propaganda in support of the political initiatives of the local Crimean authorities; articles discussing the political status of Crimea, Sevastopol, Black Sea Fleet;

texts written on historical topics; articles describing political relations within the triangular Kyiv-Simferopol-Moscow; texts on religious topics.

In addition to Crimean newspapers this research analyses texts published in the *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* ("Russian Newspaper") – a newspaper of the Russian government that appeared in 1990. Although this newspaper is Russia-centered, it did include texts presenting Russian points of view (official and analytical) on the issues relating to Russia-Ukraine negotiations, Crimea, Black Sea Fleet, and the status of Sevastopol and Crimea. The rhetoric of these sources allow the researcher to touch on the analysis of the Russia's post-Soviet identity crisis related to the loss of the empire and fear of further deconstruction of the state.

The same limitation applied to the selection of archival sources. This research uses documents from the Ukrainian Central State Archive of Civic Organizations (TsDAHO Ukrainy) and published collections of documents on Crimea, related to the deportation and repatriation of Crimean Tatars. In particular, the TsDAHO Ukrainy contains the following funds that are used in this research: Fond 1 – Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine; Fond 270 – *Narodny Rukh Ukrainy* ("People's Movement of Ukraine"); Fond 271 – *Ukrains′ka Respublikans′ka Partiia* ("Ukrainian Republican Party"); Fond 272 – *Demokratychna Partiia* ("Democratic party"); Fond 333 – *Ukrains′ky Natsionalny Komitet Molodizhnykh Orhanizatsii* ("Ukrainian National Committee of Youth Organizations"). Those fonds have been selected among others, because they contained at least fragments of information on the activities of the respective organizations in Crimea. Either the movement represented by those organizations was weak, or the documents related to the activity of those organizations remain in private archives of their former members. The documents related to the routine party documentation (e.g. financial reports, local administrative issues related to construction or food supply) were generally omitted.

This research also includes 19 oral interviews with Crimean Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar civic activists, journalists, politicians and navy officers, who took an active part in the processes under research in early 1990s. The principle of selection of respondents for oral interview included the following criteria: the respondent does not permanently live on the

territory of Crimean Peninsula; the respondent participated in social activism in Crimea during the 1990s, and/or the respondent was a journalist reporting on Russia-Ukraine relations during the stated period, and/or the respondent was on active military duty in the Black Sea Fleet and transferred to the Ukrainian Naval forces, or the respondent is a Crimean Tatar national, who participated in the Crimean Tatar national movement. Due to the Russian occupation of Crimea and continuous political repressions against active and potential political opponents to the fact of the annexation, this research cannot include persons, whose participation in the research could put them at risk. All oral interviews are used upon receiving written consent from participants. The participants received detailed information about the parameters of their participation and their right to withdraw from the research at any time. The use of names of the respondents in the research is consentual as well.

Records of the Russian State Duma that are available on the official website of the Russian parliament serve as an additional source that enables an analysis of the Russian political debates in relation to Crimea, Black Sea Fleet and Ukraine in general. This type of sources demonstrates the importance of the Crimea question for the internal Russian political process of nation and state-building. Due to their limited availability, this research only included records since the year 1994.

The fact of the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014 puts certain limitations for this study in terms of source selection. Due to the reasons of personal security of the researcher and respondents, as well as scholarly ethics, it was impossible to access sources or conduct interviews on the territory of the occupied peninsula or Russian Federation. As a result, archives and materials that relate to the researched topic and exist within the archives of Simferopol and Moscow (and do not have electronic copies) were inaccessible. This, however, does not influence the general framework of this research that analyses Crimea as a Russian settler colony. The inability to access some primary sources only sets research goals for the future studies that should broaden and further complicate the narrative sketched in this research.

The main analytical method of this research is discourse analysis. The focus of this analysis is not so much on particular events and their sequence, as on the cultural and

political context which allows those events to happen and shapes them and their interpretation and collective remembrance. To an extent this relates to Foucault's method described in the *Archeology of Knowledge*. According to Foucault, discourse is a set of statements, organized in a particular way and produced under the influence of a particular time and space. Discourse analysis focuses on the power relations that exist in people's expressions and practices. Every text and every image (material or imaginary) that forms the discourse of Crimea's past and present should be analyzed through settler colonial lenses, in order to separate indigenous and imperial narratives. This kind of approach sets a task that is almost impossible to reach within a single study. However, it provides a scholar with a set of instruments that can further allow scholars to deconstruct and (using Paulette Regan's term) "unsettle" the existing knowledge (and its bearers) about Crimea. In addition, this method allows one to define the "Russian influence" broadly: in the case of post-Soviet Crimea this phrase includes the settler colonial legacy that determined(-s) social relations within the peninsula as well as direct interference of the Russian actors into Crimea's social and political processes.

The analysis of discourse on the level of a personal expression often leaves questions like motives and ideology open. Statements that formulate discourse or that exist within a particular discourse are not always conscious. In the case of Crimean settler colonialism this means that actors do not always know that their words and practices fit into a particular mode of behavior that we define as settler colonial. Neither do they operate with terms that scholars use as their analytical instruments. As it often happened in settler colonies, colonization created a 'parallel reality' (often defined as myth, lies or manipulation by the colonized), which nevertheless remained the only "true reality" for the colonizer. The immediate difference between the realities of the colonizer and the colonized is that the former is the only reality that can publicly manifest itself. Colonizers' reality becomes the 'common knowledge' for the society in which it operates.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the Russian settler colonial project in Crimea before 1991. Over the course of 200 years of Russian imperial and Soviet colonization of

Crimea, the peninsula's space has been written into the general cultural and political space of the empire. The settler colonization of the peninsula meant the displacement of the indigenous local population and their replacement by Russian-backed (and often Russian speaking and ethnic) settlers. This substitution influences all spheres of civilian life, and it reshaped the Crimean space itself. The very notion of what *Crimean* means and who *Crimean* is changed. It is not a coincidence that Soviet authorities often referred to Crimean Tatars as to 'Tatars' or 'former Crimean Tatars'. The result of the colonization policies of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union created 'new' Crimeans – mostly Slavic people, born in Crimea, whose ancestors (usually parents or grandparents) came or were moved to Crimea in the not so distant past. Being born in Crimea allows those people to claim this land as *their home* in contrast to Crimean Tatars.

Chapter 2 of this study looks at the post-Soviet identity crisis in Russia, Ukraine and Crimea in particular. This crisis was closely linked to the attempts of the Russian state and political elites to define the 'new' Russia, as well as Russians both within and outside the Russian Federation. As a result, two terms emerged: *Russkii* (ethnical category) and *Rossiianin* (political category) that both translate into English as "Russian." The entrance of those terms into Russian foreign policy influenced the relationships between Russia and former Soviet republics. Russians outside of Russia became an instrument of the foreign policy of the Russian state, a pressure point that kept former Soviet republics within the Russian orbit. The uncertainty of Ukrainian post-Soviet identity as well as the emergence of local identities (Crimean as one of them) were parallel to the identity crisis in Russia. The choice of identity and political allegiance was not pre-defined in Crimea, especially because it was directly linked to the problem of prestige. This chapter sets a broad cultural and political context in which the post-Soviet transformation of Crimea existed. It further looks and the post-Soviet identity crisis – a topic that in itself is not new – through the postcolonial lens.

Chapter 3 focuses on the political processes within Crimea itself. It argues that the main goal of Crimea's post-Soviet leadership was to preserve their personal (political and economic) power. In order to achieve this goal, Crimean political leaders fought to preserve the settler colonial institutions in Crimea. It was their personal, as well as

institutional interest to allow as little change in Crimea as possible. The proclamation of Ukrainian independence and repatriation of Crimean Tatars put this settler colonial 'peace' at risk. This chapter addresses the challenges that Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar national movement posed to the settler colonial institutions of Crimea. It further shows ways in which Crimean settler colony adjusted to a new reality and resisted the challenge.

Chapter 4 focuses on the role of Crimean media as institutions of a settler colonial power. In a settler colonial context the control over the narrative is one of the most important instruments of power. Crimean newspapers and the narrative that they supported maintained the settler's monopoly over the truth as well as the dominance of the pro-Russian informational discourse. Arguably, the lack of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar influence in the informational sphere was one of the most important reasons why decolonization did not happen. Newspapers effectively marginalized the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar movement, while mobilizing resistance of the Russian-speaking population of Crimea against the imaginary threats, coming from Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar nationalists.

Chapter 5 brings an international dimension to the story. In the previous chapters Russia is constantly but invisibly present in the picture. This chapter, however, shows direct Russian political interference in Crimea. Russian and Crimean politicians paid frequent visits to each other, and Russian deputies even participated in political protests on Crimean territory. This chapter pays special attention to the Black Sea navy as a hybrid settler colonial institution that formally responded to both Ukraine and Russia, was co-funded by both states, but in fact was under full Russian control. This chapter further explores the hybridity of local Crimean authorities that operated under Ukrainian sovereignty, but often defended Russian state interests and Russia diplomatic demands at the negotiation table. Finally, this chapter looks at the ways in which Black Sea Fleet command conducted public attacks on masculinity of the Ukrainian navy officers in order to support the perception of Russian national prestige in Crimea and diminish the political influence of the Ukrainian state institutions within the peninsula.

All of the chapters in general provide a relatively brief overview of the continuity of the Russian settler colonial project on the territory of Crimea. This continuity is strikingly

persistent throughout centuries of history: Crimean settler colony survived some drastic political changes, wars and revolutions, as well as dissolution of empires and creation of new ones. Arguably, this same settler colonial project exists in Crimea today.

Chapter 1

1 Putting Crimea In a Settler Colonial Context

Russian settler colonization of Crimea that started in 1783 went beyond a simple resettlement of the Russian imperial administration, military and settlers from other parts of the empire. Imagining Crimea as a colony, where settlers simply 'came' is a simplification of the narrative. This is why the concept of *settler* colonization with its broad scope is important. The process of colonization of Crimea involved a range of measures, including a creation of a settler's myth, displacement (direct and indirect) of local population, disruption of local cultures, traditions and way of life. Eventually, settlers did not just 'come' to Crimea. They brought their own 'world' and pushed the existing Crimean 'world' out, putting the local population in a position of foreigners on their native land.

Settler's myth as the main justification/ explanation of the settler colonial process is very important. It reflects the empire's rhetoric that it uses to describe the occupation of a foreign land and indigenous displacement in positive (today we say – democratic) terms. It starts with the official language of the imperial documents that is then preserved in historiography. It makes historiography a political instrument: in a settler colonial context the commonly repeated statement about winners, who control history becomes more true than anywhere else. The Russian settler's myth about peaceful annexation of the Crimean Peninsula survived until today. It remains widely repeated by historians. This statement, however, does not really reflect on what actions constitute violence. Religious persecutions, constant suspect of treason on the basis of religion and nationality, disruption of local traditions, deprivation of land and other economic resources may not be examples of physical violence, but those are important enough factors that allow us to argue that the annexation of Crimea *was* violent.

The concept of settler colonialism enables an argument that relates to chronology as well. For some reason historians who talk about Crimea as a colony do not apply the term beyond the 19th century. Somehow, as it appears, a colonized territory stops being a colony, once the empire controls it 'for long enough'. Once settlers and their children

become the majority of the Crimean population, the peninsula automatically becomes a part of the 'Russian land' (a phrase that has different meanings, depending on the time period). This, however, is an element of a settler's myth on its own. It allows the empire to describe the displacement of indigenous people as part of a 'natural process' and therefore claim one's own indigeneity on the occupied land. This chapter focuses on the application of the concept of settler colony to Crimea. It argues that a foreign invasion does not become *less foreign* on the premise that empire controlled the occupied territory for long enough and formulated a settler's myth.

1.1 Crimea As a Settler Colony: "Colonizers Come to Stay"[45]

The formal incorporation of Crimean Khanate into the Russian Empire took around 15 years of political and military struggle between the Russian and the Ottoman empires as well as the forces inside the Crimean Khanate itself. As a result of a Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774, which ended with the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji, the Crimean Khanate, which had previously been a client state of the Ottoman Empire, became formally independent. In fact, Crimean Khan became a client of the Russian imperial crown. Sahib II Giray was elected as Khan while Russian Empire maintained a certain military presence on the territory of Crimean Khanate. In 1775 Devlet IV Giray overthrew Sahib and returned to the throne that used to belong to him during the Russo-Turkish war. He then appealed to the Ottoman sultan to cancel the treaty which recognized the independence of Crimea and to return to the former Ottoman patronage over peninsula. However, already in 1777 Russian troops occupied Crimea, overthrew the ruling Khan and brought another Khan, Sagin Giray, to power.

The intervention of the Russian Empire into Crimean Khanate involved a complex of measures, aimed at securing control over peninsula. Those measures were not always military and to a large extent relied on the ability of the imperial authority to dictate the narrative about the ongoing events. This control over the narrative, the ability to speak for

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[45] Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference...": 868.

Crimea and its population grew with the increase of Russian influence on the peninsula. In 1778 Russian troops organized and fulfilled the deportation of Crimean Orthodox Christians (mostly Greeks, Armenians, Georgians, Bulgars) from the territory of Crimea into the newly created *Novorossiyskaya gubernia* (New Russia Governorate). The official reason for such removal was to "protect" fellow Orthodox believers from the "Muslim oppression". [46] The Christian church existed in Crimea since 4th century, therefore, Crimean Christians hardly needed protection of the Russian empress. This deportation, however, helped Russian authorities to undermine and socio-economic structure of the Crimean Khanate (Crimean Christians performed important economic roles within the state)[47] and to 'settle' the steppe of the northern Black sea region.

The discourse of 'settling the empty land,' or 'taming the wild nature' is very common in a settler colonial context. It closely connects to the colonizer's understanding of the level of development of the population that occupies the land prior to the colonization. In her comparative study of British, Spanish and Portuguese colonies in Americas Patricia Seed shows that the worldviews of the colonizers (and not the local traditions of the colonized) defined the colonial system that formed in the colonized space.[48] For instance, Seed mentions the British understanding of land ownership according to which they saw the land that was not agriculturally developed as "wasted" and "empty". And therefore, they saw their own right to take it.[49] Of course this meant that any land, occupied by nomadic people, fell under the category of "wasted." British colonists evaluated the land ownership rights according to their own traditions and did not consider the cultural nuances of the indigenous peoples. Similar to their European counterparts in North America or Australia, Russian officials declared the need to 'settle' the *Novorossiyskaya gubernia* – the land that was occupied by Nogai nomad – and therefore they encouraged

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[46] Vadym Dzyvaga "Odna z pershykh deportatsii imperii. Iak kryms′kymy hrekamy zaselyly Dyke Pole", *Istorychna Pravda,* February 17, 2011, http://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/4d5d9409e6b44/.

[47] Stanislav Kulchytsky, Larysa Yakubova, *Krymskii Vuzol* (Kyiv: Klio, 2019), 64.

[48] Patricia Seed, *American Pentimento. The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

[49] Ibid., 30.

Western colonists to come to the Southern steppes of what now is Ukraine. [50] This policy of 'settlement' reflected in the plot of the *Dead Souls* by Nikolai Gogol: the main character – Pavel Ivanovich Chichikov – comes to the town N to buy serfs that previously died but were still registered as alive. In the 11th chapter of the novel Chichikov says that dead serfs were to be 'transferred' (legally, not literally) to the *Tavricheskaya* and *Khersonskaya gubernia*, "where the lands now are being given away for free, just settle them".[51]

The fact that the land of Northern Black Sea region needed to be 'settled' speaks to one more similarity between the British and Russian imperial policies – that is a certain variation of systematic xenophobia towards the nomadic people.[52] Nogai are one of the communities within the Crimean Tatar people, but the rhetoric of 'settlement' seems to only appear regarding the lands which were under control of nomads. The Muslims of Crimean Khanate already were the 'Other' for Orthodox Christian Russian Empire. However, while the Manifesto of Catherine II guaranteed (at least verbally) the rights of Crimean Tatar people on the peninsula, the rights of steppe nomads seem to not been considered.

In his article, dedicated to the period of the Crimean annexation by the Russian Empire Andreas Schönle argues that Crimea became a self-representation project for Catherine II, upon its annexation.[53] He argues that for Catherine Crimea was supposed to resemble the garden of Eden; the Russian imperial project of creating gardens across Crimea was a project of pacifying Crimean wilderness. Schönle does not use the concept of settler colonization, but what he describes effectively fits into the classical example of

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[50] Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2001), 51.

[51] Nikolai Gogol *Mertvye Dushy, Revisor, Povesti* (Moscow: Ripol Classic, 2007), 243.

[52] In both English and Russian languages one can only 'settle' what is empty. The Russian world *zaselit'* presumes that the territory is not occupied by anyone. The language of settlement is still common in the Russian narrative about the past, especially when it comes to the territories to the East of Ural mountains (Siberia).

[53] Andreas Schönle, "Garden of Empire: Catherine's Appropriation of the Crimea," in *Slavic Review* 60, no. 1 (Spring, 2001): 3.

colonizer's 'taming of the wilderness' in the colony. The garden, created by Crimean Tatars, according to Schönle, were not organized enough, as good as wild in eyes of the Russian imperial administration. This in turn is another argument in favor of the settler colonial concept. For the colonizing empire, especially during the times of Enlightenment, bringing civilization into wilderness is a classical approach towards the newly occupied land. If Catherine was an enlightened monarch, as historiographical tradition seems to suggest, this 'civilizational' aspect of her government's policy towards the colonized peoples needs to be considered in the first place.

The Manifesto of Catherine II allows to draw additional parallels between the Russian and British colonialism. Besides the same chronological period – the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire coincided in time with the golden age of British colonialism – the text of the Catherine's Manifesto repeats arguments that are similar to those used by the British empire to justify the colonization of non-European nations. The Manifesto of Catherine II uses rhetoric, which scholars of the postcolonial studies describe as 'benevolent colonialism'. This term refers to the colonizers' argument that colonization brings the 'light of civilization' to the colonized. This narrative, completely created by the colonizer, describes the colonized peoples as 'uncivilized', 'childish', 'unable to govern themselves'. The rhetoric of the colonizer often aims at emphasizing the moral and cultural superiority over the colonized, colonizer appears less violent (less 'wild'), more reasonable and of course generous, because the act of colonization is said to 'give a chance' to the colonized, an opportunity to one day match up to the civilized society. According to Catherine's Manifesto, Russian Empire granted independence to Crimean Khanate, but Crimean Tatars "started acting contrary to their own benefit" and their Khan "was preparing to return them to the yoke of the former rule". Therefore, "we [the empress] were forced to […] accept loyal Tatars under our patronage, give them freedom, to elect another lawful Khan instead of Sagib Giray and to install his rule". These costly operations that involved the army did not bring complete peace, and Crimean Tatars started a new "revolt". A new invasion of the Russian Empire, according to the Manifesto, was the only way to bring peace among Crimean Tatars. The empress came to the conclusion that former control of the Ottoman empire over Crimea was a way to restrain Khanate's aggression against the Russian Empire. This is why she believed

that "turning them [Crimean Tatars] into an independent land, while they are *uncapable to reap the fruits of such benefits* [my emphasis], serves as [a cause of] trouble, additional costs and effort for our troops". That said, according to Catherine II, Crimean Khanate was unable to remain a peaceful independent state, and because there was a risk that Ottoman empire might return its control over Crimea, Russian empress decided (was 'forced to') to incorporate the land. The empress also promised to protect the proprietary and religious rights of newly incorporated clients and to grant them rights that were equal to rights of other peoples within the empire.

This Manifesto became the foundation of the settler's myth, which was meant to explain and justify the rightfulness of the imperial annexation of the peninsula. According to this myth, the annexation did not constitute an aggression, but a benevolent act of bringing civilization into the wilderness, an act of appeasement. The Manifesto of Catherine II rhetorically treated Crimean Khanate as an object of policies of two empires – Russian and Ottoman. Russian Empire saw its right to annex the peninsula to preserve the security of its own South-Western borders. This attitude, as we will see below, persisted and transferred into the historical narrative about Crimea. Arguably, the attitude towards Crimean Khanate as a quasi-state with no agency persisted in Russian historiography until today. From the times of this annexation, the history of Crimea became a part of a general imperial historical narrative. In a settler colonial context history merges with politics closer than anywhere else, it simply becomes *one of* the institutions of power that are there to reinforce the imperial domination. Franz Fanon, Homi Bhabha and Edward Said paid specific attention to the problem of historiography of a colonized space. Fanon describes that historiography in a following way:

> "The colonist makes history and he knows it. And because he refers constantly to the history of his metropolis, he plainly indicates that he is the extension of this metropolis. The history he writes is therefore not the

history of the country he is despoiling, but the history of his own nation's looting, raping, and starving to death."[54]

Russian classical historians, creators of the Russian historical narrative in the 19th century saw the annexation of Crimea as a natural process, an act of self-defense that was necessary to protect peace in the region. In other words, they were establishing a tradition (a consistent narrative), developing the settler's myth, started by Catherine's Manifesto. The image of Crimean Tatars has traditionally been negative in Russian (and Ukrainian) historiography since its inception in the 19th century. Therefore, hardly anyone doubted the validity of the empire's justification for the annexation. For example, the author of one of the first general histories of Russian state, Nikolai Karamzin, saw Crimea as a traditional source of a threat to Muscovy. He calls it "a new nest of predators, known under the name of Crimean Tatars, which disturbed our Fatherland until the latest times."[55] Similarly, Vasiliy Kliuchevsky talks about the history of relations between "Russia" and Crimean Khanate as of a constant struggle in the region. While doing so he uses the rhetoric that describes Crimean Tatars as "hordes of bandits" (*shaika razboinokov*) – as a violent society with a constant criminal behavior.[56] Therefore, the suppression of that threat "posed a territorial aim [to the Russian Empire] in the South."[57] Apparently, not only was the expansion to Crimea of interest to the imperial authorities, but also its right. According to Kliuchevsky, the problem of expansion to the south-west "was posed [in front of Catherine II] by the centuries-long commands of history," it was necessary "to move the Southern border of the state to its natural measures, towards Northern shore line of the Black Sea with Crimea and the Sea of Azov and up to the Caucasian mountains."[58] The argument that the annexation of Crimea was necessary to remove the threat coming from the aggressive Crimean Khanate is reminiscent of

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[54] Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth*, 15.

[55] Nikolai Karamzin, *History of the Russian State,* Vol. 5 (St. Petersburg: Tipografia N. Gracha, 1819), 365.

[56] Vasiliy Klyuchevskiy, *Russkaya Istoria. Polnyi Kurs Leksiy*, Vol. 1(Moscow: AST, 2002), 558.

[57] Ibid., Vol. 3, 319, 328.

[58] Ibid., 319.

arguments used by the US authorities to justify their expansion to the West during the same historical period. In the American context, the lands were occupied and conquered in order to 'establish peace' and this process did not stop until the colonists reached 'the natural measures' (using Kliuchevsky's term) of the continent.[59]

Another classical Russian historian, Sergey Soloviov, described the annexation of Crimean Khanate in the following way:

> "There is no reason to say much about the historical importance, for the whole world, of the acquisition of the Northern shores of the Black Sea by Russia, in other words: by Europe.
>
> The Steppes, which for so many years were a free space for nomadic hordes, through which nearly all people plundering the European Christian world went, all of those Scourges of God, now those Steppes entered into the borders of the European Christian state, surrendered to civilization, became a bread basket of Europe, and accommodation for their colonizers."[60]

Crimea became a space against which the Russian Empire could self-identify: while it Europeanized the empire itself, it opened opportunities for the Orientalization and exoticizing of the Crimean local population. It is interesting to see how according to Soloviov the Russian Empire became a part of the European civilization, compared to the Crimean Khanate. The rhetoric of "civilizing" the uncivilized copied the Western colonial rhetoric and, from the time of Soloviov, the image of Crimean Khanate as non-civilized entered historiography. Soloviov's text mirrors the temptation of certain Russian political and intellectual elites of the empire at the time to join the 'club of European civilized nations.' Crimea, with its mostly Muslim population that used to be under

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[59] Walter L. Hixon, *American Settler Colonialism. A History* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)*, 90-92, 113-114.

[60] Sergey Soloviov, "The Reign of Catherine II" in *Russian History, accessed* April 10, 2019 http://www.bibliotekar.ru/istoria-soloviev/48.htm.

control of the ultimate 'Other' in European eyes[61], the Ottoman empire, allowed the Russian Empire to create their own Orient, their own 'East' and to 'Europeanize' themselves in eyes if the Europeans. Alexander Pushkin was one of the first to describe Crimea in oriental terms in his letters and poems and, therefore, to create an oriental image of Crimea in the imperial 'high culture.'[62] Pushkin sees Crimea as an exotic land, where violent Tatars ("whip for peoples") used to wallow in "luxurious laziness".[63] In another poem Pushkin sees Crimean shores in their "marital shine" that caused him "feverish anxiety" (sexual?) when he saw it.[64] This kind of anxiety wasn't unusual for the colonist traveler when arriving to the colonized land. Edward Said builds his study of *Orientalism* around similar texts of the European colonizers. Orientalizing Crimea wasn't unusual as well – many European travelers did so in their texts, imposing their cultural stereotypes about exotic East onto the local Crimean Tatars.[65]

The incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Empire changed that ethnic composition of the peninsula. The proportion of Crimean Tatars, the majority population before 1783, reduced gradually throughout the 19th century, while the proportion of Slavic settlers was gradually increasing. Although the Manifesto of Catherine II promised to protect religious and proprietary rights of the empire's new clients, the incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Empire brought changes to the social and economic structure of the peninsula. A constant emigration of Crimean Tatar people throughout the 19th century happened due to massive land deprivation and tightening state control over the Muslim

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[61]Said, *Orientalism*, 59;

More on the "Turkish Other" see: Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other. "The East" In European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 39-62.

[62] Although in "The letter to baron Delvig", written in 1824, Pushkin talks about coming to Europe from Asia after getting off a ship in Crimea.

[63] A quote from the poem "Bakhchisarayskiy Fontan" ("The Fountain of Bakhchisaray") by Alexander Pushkin.

[64] A quote from "Puteshestvie Onegina 1825-1830" – the last chapter of the poem "Yevgeniy Onegin" that Pushkin removed from the final version of the text.

[65] See for example: Roman Koropeckyi, "Orientalism in Adam Mickiewicz's Crimean Sonnets" in *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 45 #4 (2001): 660-678.

religious institutions.[66] Catherine II established an institution of Muslim Spiritual Assembly, which was supposed to maintain spiritual autonomy from the state.[67] In fact, the religious policy of the Russian Empire on the newly acquired land was to break the spiritual connections between Muslims of Crimea and of the Ottoman Empire, and to ensure loyalty of Crimean Mufti to the Russian throne. According to a scholar of Crimean Tatar history Valerii Vozgrin, imperial authorities deported the most authoritative mullahs from Crimea, repressed pilgrims who travelled to the Ottoman empire and introduced loyalty checks for candidates who were to take any religious positions. From now on, any Crimean Tatar who visited the Ottoman empire or received education abroad could not become mullah, Mufti was elected among three candidates, approved by the governor.[68]

Another serious change that came to Crimea after the annexation related to land ownership and rights of Crimean Tatar peasants. Pre-19th century Crimean Khanate had ten forms of land ownership, including the communal ownership over certain lands. For instance, peasants had a right to use the pasture lands and woods of nobility – a rule, based on the Sharia laws.[69] However, the principles of land ownership in the Russian Empire were different, land could only be privately and state-owned. As Valeriy Vozgrin says in his monograph, the first stage of implementation of the new land ownership rules was to declare the land that formerly belonged to Khan and to emigrants as "empty" – *pustoporozhniy* – without any consideration about the local peasants that lived on the land. The imperial authorities also started to redistribute lands among local and Russian nobility that caused serious damage to Crimean forests and orchards, destroyed by

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[66] Austin Lee Jersild, "From Savagery to Citizenship: Caucasian Mountaineers and Muslims in the Russian Empire," in Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (eds.) *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Indiana University Press, 1997), 102.

[67] Mara Kozelsky, *Crimea in War and Transformation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 27.

Russian Orthodox church had a collegial form of rule – Synod – since the time of Peter I and until the revolution of 1918. Arguably, the introduction of collegial rule over the church was necessary to assure control of the emperor over spiritual life. Muslim Spiritual assembly mirrored the similar institution for the Orthodox church.

[68] Vozgrin, *Istoricheskie…*, 305-306.

[69] Ibid., 173.

colonists.[70] New land owners exploited the fact that peasants could not prove their ownership over land, peasants were also often forced to work for new land owners in form of a statute labor; Brian Williams believes that this practically turned Crimean Tatar peasants into serfs.[71] The complex of those actions provoked emigration of Crimean Tatar people to the Ottoman empire. Together with an extensive use of natural resources and inability to organize agriculture in dry lands of Crimea, this caused economic crisis in the region and therefore, more emigration. In return, imperial authorities encouraged migration of Slavic and European colonists to Crimea.

Despite these serious changes that started with the beginning of the Russian settler colonial project in Crimea, historiography (both classic and contemporary) continues repeating the settler's myth about the peaceful incorporation of Crimea into the Russian Empire. Alan Fisher, one of the classical scholars of Crimean history in the English-speaking world, believes that Catherine II was an Enlightened and progressive monarch, who decided to use soft power and minimal changes, after Crimea's annexation.[72] Already mentioned Andreas Schönle, upon describing policies that constitute classical examples of settler colonialism, repeats a common statement that Catherine's Manifesto guaranteed the preservation of local rights and traditions in Crimea.[73] In her monograph about the Crimean War Mara Kozelsky demonstrates that the war of 1853-1856 was a turning point in the Russian Empire's religious tolerance towards Muslim population of Crimea.[74] The author shows that the war escalated the Russian fear of 'internal enemies' and opened ways for further 'Othering' of Crimean Tatars in the imperial society. This 'othering' came simultaneously with the rise of Orthodox nationalism of Nicholas I and creation of historical myths about the origins of the Russian state.[75] Eventually, this

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[70] Vozgrin, *Istoricheskie…*, 276-277.

[71] Williams, *The Crimean Tatars: From Soviet Genocide to Putin's Conquest,* 15.

[72] Fisher, *The Crimean Tatars*, 70.

[73] Schönle, "Garden of Empire: Catherine's Appropriation of the Crimea," in *Slavic Review* 60, no. 1 (Spring, 2001): 6.

[74] Kozelsky, *Crimea In War and Transformation*, 9.

[75] Ibid., 11.

brought a policy of state xenophobia against the non-Christian population. But before she turns to the main point of her research, she also repeats a common statement that the incorporation of Crimea went almost unnoticeably for the local population.[76] In his article on the analysis of Orientalism in Adam Mickiewicz's Crimean Sonnets Roman Koropeckyi says that "Russian policies in Crimea were aimed at absorbing the former Khanate as painlessly as possible".[77] Brian Williams cites Alexandre Bennigsen to support the claim that the annexation of Crimea was a "humane affair", happened "during one of the most liberal periods in Russian history", and that imperial authorities did not use any forceful methods to convert local Crimean Muslims to Christianity.[78] (Therefore, Crimean Tatar population fled Crimea en masse despite the "noble intentions" of Catherine II".[79]) Williams believes that the narrative about Russian *mission civilsatrice* in Crimea survived through the Soviet times and is widely accepted by post-Soviet Russian historical narrative.[80] While he criticizes this kind of historiographical approach, at times he seems to share it, at least in the following phrase: "As was the case in other colonial empires, the impact of the Russian colonial rule on the Crimea was seen by the native population as having been negative in spite of the benefits this community undoubtedly received from their colonial rulers…"[81] The thesis about benevolent Russian colonialism[82] in Crimea survived since the time of Catherine II and entered into Western historiography: the native population of the land can't evaluate the impact of the empire's colonial rule, empire does this instead.

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[76] Kozelsky, *Crimea In War and Transformation*, 5.

[77] Koropeckyi, "Orientalism in Adam Mickiewicz's Crimean Sonnets" in *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 45 #4 (2001): 665.

[78] Williams, *The Crimean Tatars…*(2001)*, 82.

[79] Ibid., 106.

[80] Ibid., 73.

[81] Ibid., 109.

[82] It seems that according to most historians of Crimea there are certain limits within which the empire's actions can be considered 'peaceful' and 'humane', which is of course a value judgement. In Crimea's case forceful annexation of the territory, expropriation of land, disruption of local traditions, exploitation of local peasants, colonization and religious xenophobia falls within the norms of such behavior.

There seems to be another historiographical approach that distinguishes the governmental policies towards the traditions of local Crimean people and measures taken by separate Russian landowners/colonists. This kind of distinction allows to 'transfer' responsibility from the government of the colonized territory towards the private practices. From the point of view of settler colonial theory (where colonization "is a structure not an event") this approach is not constructive. A collective work on the history of Crimea, published by Russian historians in 2015 does not directly talk about civilizing missions of the Russian Empire. The language of benevolent colonialism is not openly present in the text, however, the authors still tend to justify colonization by the "high price" which Russian state paid in struggle with Crimean Khanate. The authors describe this struggle as a conflict of civilizational worlds: "semi-nomadic steppe [world] and settled agricultural [world]": "The Russian peasant honestly did not understand how his plowing on a tiny piece of untaken land could bother the steppe person, while the Crimean and Nogai Tatar […] saw it as his inherent right to sell this peasant and his wife".[83] Here again we see how the colonized becomes an aggressor and the colonizer invades a foreign land for the purpose of self-defense. According to the text, after the annexation the peninsula became devasted due to the mass emigration of the local population.[84] The authors describe the unsuccessful attempts of the local governor and provincial authorities to solve the problems and Crimean Tatars and to stop the exodus. Among the reasons for emigration the book mentions "the lack of trust" to the authorities from Crimean Tatar population, "conservatism" of certain groups of Crimean Tatar people and mistakes of local administrators, made without orders from the higher governors of the territory.[85] Some recent examples of Ukrainian historiography seem to follow a similar pattern. A recent book by distinguished Ukrainian historians Stanislav Kulchytski and Larysa Yakubova *Krymski Vyzol* (Crimea's Knot) mentions a "tolerant attitude" of the government towards

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[83] Vadim Khapaev, A. A. Nepomniashchy, I.A. Spivak, *Istoriia Kryma* (Moscow: OLMA Media Group, 2015), 113.

[84] Ibid., 173

[85] Ibid., 173-174

the local population.[86] On the following pages of the text (see a chapter on imperial policies of colonization, for example) the authors talk about the ways in which those local traditions were being ruined by colonizers. The book describes the devastative effect of imperial colonization of Crimea in the spheres of demography, economy, natural resources, culture, religion of the local population. The imperial government and its representatives in Crimea enabled and often actively supported the expulsion of local population from Crimea. Therefore, it is unclear what is the analytical value of the statement about the tolerant attitude of the empire towards Crimean locals. This small episode demonstrates how hard it might be to break away from historiographical traditions, constructed and supported by the empire for several centuries. Unfortunately, Ukrainian historiography made critically small progress towards deconstruction of the imperial narrative, while Ukrainian historians often supported this narrative.

Scholars of the 19th century Russian Empire mention that the imperial authorities did think about their subjects in ethnic terms, at least in the second half of the century. Pavel Polian argues that the imperial center created and used 'a map of loyalty' of non-Russian nations, which defined the policy of the imperial center towards the borderlands, populated mostly by non-Russian people.[87] Those non-Russian people were seen as a potential threat to the integrity of an empire – Crimean Tatars were only one of the border nations that was seen as a source of a threat. Therefore, 'settling' the borderland and pushing the local people away from their land was a method to secure the empire. At the same time, during the Crimean war, Russian emperor Alexander II encouraged Crimean Tatar population to leave the Crimean Peninsula and called them "harmful population".[88] Valeriy Vozgrin quotes Russian newspaper of 1887 which said: "In order to enforce Russian rule on the newly acquired territories [Crimea] it was necessary to populate it with purely Russian people".[89] Edward Lazzerini says that the analysis of police reports

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[86] Kulchutski, Yakubova, *Krymski Vuzol,* 42.

[87] Pavel Polian, *Ne po svoei vole: istoriia i geografiia prinuditelʹnykh migratsii v SSSR* (Moscow: Memorial, 2001), 11.

[88] Kozelsky, *Crimea in War and Transformation*, 170.

[89] Vozgrin, *Istoricheskie…*, 286.

of the time in Crimea "easily creates the impression that Tatar-Russian relations were inevitably and permanently hostile; that the authorities (central and provincial) would have liked nothing better than to see the peninsula emptied of its dominant native population; that provincial officials were fundamentally and typically indifferent to the needs of those for whom they were responsible; that chauvinism always deeply colored Russian attitudes, and that Russification, once embraced as official policy in the early 1880s, represented its logical extension; that the interests of Tatars were mostly unprotected and local concerns were mostly subordinated to imperial dictates".[90]   In order to fulfil this policy the government granted land to retired soldiers and conducted a (forced) resettlement of Russian women so that they could become wives for these soldiers.[91] The use of women in colonization is a widely researched topic in Western historiography. Traditionally, for the empire, white women were bearers of 'pure' culture and civilization, an instrument that allowed to 'civilize' the new land.[92]

The deprivation of the indigenous of their land, a restriction on the indigenous people in exercising their culture, traditions, religious autonomy *constitutes violence*. Crimean Tatars fled their homeland *en masse* throughout the whole 19th century. This migration happened due to the systematic invasion by the empire into the *foreign* land (again – "invasion is a structure, not an event"). Contrary to the tradition that sees the annexation of Crimea as a peaceful process, the absence of mass *physical* murder of the population does not make the process peaceful. The imperial government and its representatives in Crimea enabled and often actively supported the expulsion of local population from Crimea and encouraged resettlement from other imperial territories. The narrative about the annexation of Crimea in 1783 demonstrates how hard it might be to break away from

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[90] Edward J. Lazzerini, "Local Accommodation and Resistance to Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century Crimea", in *Russia's Orient…,* 170-171.

[91] Vozgrin, *Istoricheskie…*, 286.

[92] More on the role of women in colonization: Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power. Race and the Intimate In Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

historiographical traditions, constructed and supported by the empire for several centuries. Unfortunately, historians made very little progress towards the deconstruction of this imperial narrative.

The narrative about peaceful colonization is common for settler colonial societies. Every colonizer wants to justify his presence in a colonized space and finds the reasons why the empire is not responsible for the death of the indigenous cultures and peoples. For instance, contrary to the history and narratives of the United States, Canada manifested itself as a 'peaceful colony', where rights of the indigenous peoples were not violated. This, however, did not prevent Canadians to erase Indigenous people from their land, geography, cultural space and historical narrative. This myth about peaceful colony also ignored the history of residential schools for Indian children in Canada.[93] The history of the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Empire in late 18th century, as we see above, has a similar myth of 'peaceful colonization' that persists in monographs until present day. The narrative proposed by Catherine II in which she promised to defend the rights of Crimean locals appears in many contemporary texts. Ironically, those same texts often prove the inconsistency of this narrative. But, as we saw above, authors tend not to go far enough to directly deny it. In the meantime, the cultural memory of Crimean Tatars themselves describes the episode of the 18th century annexation as a national tragedy. Brian Williams addresses the differences in historical interpretations throughout his book. In the opening pages he mentions the historical struggles between national histories in Eastern Europe and says: "All too frequently Westerners take the nationalist jargon and historic claims to land of this sort by competing national groups at face value and do not subject them to critical scrutiny".[94] One might add that due to the historical role of Russia as an imperial center, Westerners tend to take *Russian* nationalist jargon and claims to land at face value – in historiography and in geopolitics. Crimea is a perfect example of this.

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[93] More about residential schools in Canada: Paulette Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).

[94] Williams Brian, *The Crimean Tatars…*(2001)*, 7.*

1.2 The Settler Colonial Project Survives the Fall of the Empire: Crimea in the 20th Century

The revolution in the Russian Empire of 1917 and the creation of the Soviet Union brought the national problem to the center of the state's attention. Terry Martin believes that communist elites paid close attention to the national problems of the Austrian and Ottoman empires and the reasons why those empires fell. Their anti-imperial rhetoric and national policies were meant to prevent similar processes within the Soviet Union.[95] A settler colonial project in Crimea was paused for the time while the Soviet state experimented with the positive discrimination of non-Russian nations. After the experiment with *korenizatsiia* ended, the Soviet state returned to policies, aimed at homogenization of the Soviet nations into one Soviet people. Due to its geographical specificity Crimea became a melting pot where settlers – representatives of different nations – developed their Crimean identity. Soviet authorities played an important role in this process, shifting Crimea's demography, geography, culture, economy and history according to the needs of the empire.

The policy of *korenizatsiia* did not quite fit into the communist ideology on national relations. As Yuri Slezkine put it "Nations might not be helpful and they might not last, but they were here and they were real."[96] Not being able to erase national diversity, party leaders started a program that Terry Martin defines as an 'affirmative action,' when 'less developed' had to be manually 'brought up' to the level of more progressive peoples of the Union.[97] This formulation comes from the idea of a linear progress of different societies. It demonstrates that the Soviet government did think about nations in hierarchical categories. This hierarchy existed not only in thoughts, but in institutions as well – the level of autonomy of each Soviet nation depended on its 'level of development'. Therefore, the reduction of the autonomy level signified changes in the

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[95] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923*-1939 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 19.

[96] Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," Slavic Review: 53-2 (1994), 416. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2501300.

[97] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 20.

hierarchy. Anatoly Khazanov points out that the blending of nations in the Soviet Union was actively enforced through the reduction of institutional autonomy of different nations.[98]

During the late 19th century and early 20th century Crimean Tatars had several cultural waves that provoked nation-construction. Those processes were similar and parallel to nation-building of neighboring Ukrainians and Russians and were mostly connected with the name of Ismail Gasprinski and later Young Tatars. The forceful installment of the Soviet power in Crimea resulted in eradication of some of the national activists, but also brought the local Crimean variation of *korenizatsiia.* In 1921 Crimea was organized into the Autonomous Soviet Socialist republic that was abolished in 1945 after the deportation of Crimean Tatars. Brian Williams believes (and so do representatives of Crimean Tatar National movement) that Crimean ASSR was a national autonomy of Crimean Tatars created in recognition of Crimean Tatar national rights.[99] The existence of their own autonomous republic put Crimean Tatars at a relatively high position among the Soviet nations. According to Williams, *korenizatsiia* in Crimea allowed the development of Crimean Tatar culture and language, completed a process of construction of Crimea as a national territory of Crimean Tatars. During this time, archeological studies proved the indigeneity of Crimean Tatar people in Crimea.[100] Just like for other nations *korenizatsiia* for Crimean Tatars ended with political repressions of the new intellectual elites (in Ukrainian context this period is called 'executed Renaissance'), thousands of Crimean Tatars were deported to Siberia in 1930s.[101]

The national policies in the Soviet Union had both territorial and ideological dimensions. In the 1930s, Stalin turned to what Erich Brandenberger defines as "Russocentrism." He advocated that the Russian national group was the dominant, 'elder brother' in the 'union

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[98] Anatoly M. Khazanov, *After the USSR: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 11-12.

[99] Williams, *The Crimean Tatars…* (2001)*,* 31.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.*,* 367.

family'.[102] Not only did this precipitate an ideological shift in the cultural and historical representation of non-Russian nations, it also included a twist in the Soviet borderland politics. The concept of 'borderland' lines or regions, according to Terry Martin, appeared in Soviet official documents in 1923.[103] These regions were populated by mostly non-Russian nations and were used by the Soviet authorities to influence the national minorities of neighboring countries (mostly Ukrainian in Poland) – so called "Piedmont principle" by Terry Martin. For instance, the autonomy of Crimean Tatars in Crimea, according to Brian Williams, could serve the aim of spreading communism in the Muslim Middle Eastern countries.[104] In 1930s, however, the Piedmont principle got an 'inverted' understanding. Rather than using national minorities within the Soviet Union to influence other countries, Soviet state was now afraid of the foreign influences on non-Russian peoples. This resulted in what Martin calls 'Soviet xenophobia" – a fear that turned non-Russian peoples of the USSR into potential enemies, and a threat to the unity of the state.[105]

In 1944, the Soviet government accused Crimean Tatars of collaboration with Nazis and forcefully deported them outside of Crimea into the Central Asia. As a result of the deportation, the Soviet government made a number of steps that aimed to erase the indigenous presence in Crimea. Crimean ASSR was turned into a regular *oblast*; the abolition of national autonomy for Crimean Tatars, therefore, reduced their status within the hierarchy of nations. From this time, Soviet official documents do not refer to Crimean Tatars by their name – communist party documentation often refer to them as to "Tatars that used to live in Crimea", personal identification papers said "Tatar" in the lines that registered nationality. The deprival of the indigenous population of their name comfortably fits in the Lorenco Veracini's description of 'sovereign displacement', conducted by the colonizer in the colony. In addition, Soviet government started

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[102] David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931-1956* (St. Petersburg: DNK, 2009), 13.

[103] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire,* 314.

[104] Williams, *The Crimean Tatars…* (2001)*,* 363.

[105] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire,* 325.

changing geographical names and changed Crimea's historical narrative. Together with a wave of settlers that were brought from Russian and Ukrainian republics, these actions of the Soviet government created a completely different cultural, geographical and ethnic space – the indigenous people were completely removed and had to be assimilated elsewhere, settlers created a new community in Crimea – from now on this community could imagine itself as *local.*

The tradition to explain the deportation of Crimean Tatars with their alleged 'collaboration' with Nazis is a yet another example of the settler colonial narrative distortion. Up to this day the historiography, including that of Crimean Tatars themselves, talks about the Crimean Tatar collaboration with Nazi Germany as the reason for the deportation. Crimean Tatar historians and activists often try to vindicate their nation, arguing that the whole group is not responsible for the collaboration of the few. The point here is not whether or not representatives of the Crimean Tatar nation were fighting in German military units. Representatives of many other Soviet nations did so as well. The point is to undermine the legitimacy of the nation's presence in its native land, by presenting them as traitors against *the Soviet Fatherland*, to put the nation in an inferior position on *Crimean* land, so that Crimean Tatars must spend the next 80 years trying to prove that they were not traitors, while side-stepping the question of their national rights. In the meantime, of course, the aim was to secure a border, to settle Crimean Peninsula with 'more loyal' population in the case of the future wars. A potential conflict with Turkey after the Second World war might serve as one of the real reasons for the deportation. Crimean Tatars were not the only nation that was deported from Crimea.

After the Second World War, Crimea, as much of the rest of the war-affected territories, was devastated. Its agriculture was in ruins, and an overwhelming majority of its pre-war population was either killed or deported. Therefore, the main goal of the Soviet authorities during the next decade after the war was to settle Crimea and to restore its agricultural production. The economic necessities of the peninsula, how they were seen by the government, required more people, able to work in agriculture – peasants from collective farms, mostly from Russian and Ukrainian Republics. During 1944 alone

Soviet government resettled 62 thousand people to Crimea. As of 1947 there were 2337 families that had been previously resettled to Crimea, however, more than a half of them left back to their original place of residence due to complicated living conditions.[106] From 1949 to 1954 Crimea, and southern regions of Ukraine (Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Kyrovohrad, Stalino, Dnipropetrovsk regions) received approximately 108 400 families. According to the Ukrainian Communist party reports, "a significant number" of settlers had to return to their original homes because of the poor living conditions on the new place.[107] In 1967, the Crimean regional party committee sent a report to the secretary of the Ukrainian Communist party Central Committee Petro Shelest, informing them about 101 707 families (406 828 people) who were living in Crimea as a result of a planned resettlement program.[108] Unfortunately, this document does not go into details about specific time spans during which people arrived to Crimea. In the meantime, it does say that 162 000 people came from the Russian Soviet republic, while 244 700 people came from Ukraine.[109]

Resettlement proceeded according to a state plan. For instance, the plan required the movement of 17 thousand families to Crimean collective farms (Kolkhoz) and additional 800 families to Soviet state farms (Sovkhoz) between 1954 and 1958. This meant that in 1955, Crimea had to receive and accommodate at least 3000 families.[110] In her article, dedicated to the settlement process, Elvira Seitova notes that starting from 1956 the

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[106] Olena Hazizova, "Post-Deportation Crimea in Sociodemographic specification of the Ukrainian SSR and Historical Processes of Independent Ukraine," *Ukrainoznavstvo*, no 4(65), 2017: 195.

[107] Chief of the Agricultural Sector of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine Andrienko to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, "Dovidka pro stan hospodars´koho vlashtuvannia pereselentsiv v pivdennykh oblastiakh USSR," September, 1954, Central State Archive of Civic Organizations of Ukraine (TsDAHO Ukrainy hereafter), fond 1, op. 24, no. 3587, 44.

[108] V. Nikitchenko, F. Halukh, I Holovchenko to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine P. Shelest, "Spravka o vyselennykh iz Kryma lits tatarskoi I drugikh natsional´nostei I sniatii s nikh ogranicheniia po spetsposeleniiu," 15 April, 1967, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 6321, 14.

[109] Ibid.

[110] "Spravka k proektu postanovleniia Soveta Ministrov SSSR 'O merakh po dal´neishemu razvitiiu sel´skogo khoziaistva, gorodov I kurortov Krymskoi oblasti, Ukrainskoi SSR'", 1954, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 3672, 17.

number of families that Crimea had to accept in a year increased to 4-5 thousands.[111] The state promised the settler to provide them with preferential treatment: housing (or loans to build a house), jobs, household (property around the house). The government also created a system of reimbursement that allowed settlers to surrender their property to the state at the place of their origin and to receive the same kind of property in Crimea; the government also funded transportation of property.[112]

In earlier stages of settlement, the government redistributed the property and housing of the deported people. However, the need to build new houses appeared really quickly; a shortage of housing was the main problem for settlers and the government for years to come. In 1958, due to dissatisfactory living conditions, 1722 settler families, who moved to Crimea that same year, abandoned their new homes.[113] Here is one illustration of the living conditions:

> "... 1408 families [*of those who moved in 1958 – M.S.*] were assigned living space in houses of Kolkhoz and Sovkhoz workers as well as premises that are not suitable for living /barns, kitchens etc. ...In the Kalinin Kolkhoz in Zuiski area settlers are placed in a tobacco drying barn, which is completely unsuitable for living; in the meantime, 16 houses with minor unfinished places are not being completed by the builders."[114]

Together with the planned settlement, Crimea had to receive a flow of settlers that were not included in the government program. Allegedly, many of them came to Crimea

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[111] Elvira Seitova, "Pereselenskyi protses do Krymu v 1944-1964 rokakh: prychyny, khid, pomylky, resultaty," *Istorychnyi arkhiv* (Chornomors`ky Derzhavny Universytet imeni Petra Mohyly) 6, 2011: 55.

[112] Letter from Chairman of the Council of Minister of the Ukrainian SSR N. Kal´chenko to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, 16 January 1956, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4290, 39-40.

[113] "Zvit pro vykonannia planu orhanizovanoho naboru robitnykiv i pereselennia v 1958 rotsi," 1959, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 31, no. 1315, 9.

[114] S. Kostiuchenko, Deputy Chief of the Main directorate for organizational recruitment of workers, to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine and to the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, "Dovidka pro stan pryiomy, hospodars´koho vlashtuvannia pereselentsiv I budivnytstva dlia nykh budynkiv u kolhospakh I radhospakh Kryms´koi oblasti," June, 1958, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 31, no. 1034, 208.

hoping to receive preferences that came with settling the 'empty region.' Sometimes they succeeded. For example, in 1963 the Crimean regional committee of the Communist party reported on a labor shortage in the region, and appealed to the Secretary of Ukrainian Central Committee Mykola Pidhorny to allow preferences for 4260 families (more than 10 000 able-bodies persons of working age) that moved to Crimea outside of the state plan.[115] The unplanned migration is a rare topic in Communist party documents. Usually, it is mentioned in connection with conflicts, when unplanned settlers try to 'fill the spots' in the state plan and to receive preferences. However, there is no doubt that people moved to Crimea outside of the plan as well as within the state programs. The level of the governmental control over this process is a question for further research. However, we can at least say that migrants had to meet certain criteria to be able to be registered in Crimea.

In 1956 the government partially rehabilitated Crimean Tatars and other deported nations. The administrative supervision by the enforcement services was lifted (at least officially) as a result of Khrushchev's destalinization. Deportees could now leave special settlements. However, destalinization did not go far enough to allow deported nations to return to their homeland, or to get financial compensation for the lost property. On March 15 1954 Crimean secretary of the regional committee Dmytro Poliansky appealed to the secretary of Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist party Oleksiy Kyrychenko, asking to forbid "all [those] administratively resettled in 1944 to return and live on the territory of Crimean region."[116] Consequently, Oleksiy Kyrychenko appealed to Khrushchev stating "Crimean region is a border area and settling it by former special settlers [*in this case Bulgarians, Greeks and Hungarians – M.S.*] is undesirable."[117]

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[115] I. Lutak, Secretary of Crimean village regional committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, N. Moiseev, chairman of Crimean village regional executive committee to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine Podhorny N.V., 27 March 1963, fond 1, op. 31, no. 2222, 26.

[116] D. Poliansky, Secretary of Crimean regional committee, to the Secretary of the Central committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, Kirichenko A. I., 15 March 1954, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 3614, 6.

[117] Ibid.

These same limitations were applied to Crimean Tatars as well, after their rehabilitation. It seems like 'the wind of change' of destalinization allowed Crimean and Ukrainian party functionaries to predict what rehabilitation of deported peoples could bring for Crimea, and they wanted to avoid it. It was due to Stalin's politics, condemned by 1956, that deported people became special settlers. But former special settlers were undesirable in a border region due to the same iteration of Soviet xenophobia that lead to the deportation in the first place.

The communist party could denounce and condemn the deportation, but the deportees had to remain aliens, or they had to blend with the rest of the Soviet peoples. Their repatriation to Crimea would allow them to physically concentrate and to tie their identity to their land, undermining the legitimacy of settlers' presence, and so undermine the project of a new Crimea, launched by the government. As we saw above, the 1950s and 1960s were the times when Crimea was in need of agricultural labor. Even so, the mostly agricultural population of Crimean Tatars was not allowed to repatriate. The liberalization of Soviet politics forced the government to change decorations, but the system of displacement remained in place. Ironically, the party officials indirectly acknowledged this motivation. Communist party documents often argue that repatriation of Crimean Tatars would undermine the living standards of Crimean settlers, since they would have to return property to repatriates.[118] Party documents also mention worries of Crimean settlers regarding the possible return of Crimean Tatars, since they "find their property and claim their rights for it."[119]

The metropole controlled the discourse and changed it according to the times. Since 1956, the documents of Central committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party show frequent appeals from local Crimean party groups, emphasizing the risks of "nationalistic activity of some parts of Crimean Tatar intelligentsia." According to those appeals,

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[118] P. Shelest, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine to the Central Committee of the Communist party of the USSR, 22 June 1966, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 6166, 3.

[119] Ibid., 4.

Crimean Tatar activists "...use their visits to Crimea to find different historical and archival sources, which would prove that Crimea is allegedly native Crimean Tatar land, and to demand their return to Crimea, based on these sources" (1958).[120] The party was clearly aware of the importance of historic claims to the Crimean space by Crimean Tatars, and of the threats this posed to the system that was being established. In June 1955, the Crimean regional committee requests Oleksiy Kyrychenko to ask Khrushchev to allow the renaming of Crimean geographical landmarks in the following way:

> "Crimean region has a number of geographical landmarks /mountains, rivers/ with Turkish and Tatar names that remind our people the times of hard suffering from bandit hordes of Turkish sultans and Crimean khans…With the aim to restore the names that correspond to the historical events and natural environment, to specify and arrange the existing names, CC CP [Central Committee of the Communist party] of Ukraine asks permission to change names of the listed geographical landmarks and to give them names that correspond to the historical events and interests of our people."[121]

This was a process of further adaptation of the land to the new realities – the colonizer needed to write himself in the geography of the colonized space, and to erase the signs of an indigenous past. Of course, this is also a way to claim this space, to recreate its image, to give a colonizer an argument for his own indigeneity. The rhetoric is important: a colonizer presents the colonized as an aggressor that has to be 'tamed' and 'forced to peace' (let's remember a plethora of American movies about 'Wild West' to compare). Therefore, it becomes necessary to revoke the old myth about "bandit hordes" and to villainize Crimean Tatars. The memory about them had to be wiped off.

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[120] N. Podgorny, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine to the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union on the activity of the 'nationalistic elements' among Crimean Tatars, October 1958, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4740, 71-72.

[121] A. Kirichenko, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of the USSR Khrushchev N.S., June 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 31, no. 277, 22.

The process of claiming of the space included Crimean museums and the Soviet historical narrative as well. The historical narrative, in the meantime, presented Crimean Tatar past as that of a 'primitive,' 'uncivilized' nation, which was always dependent on the Ottoman empire and never had its own statehood.[122] In addition, Soviet historiography constructed Crimea as a historically Slavic land. One such book called *Sketches of Crimean History* was published in 1951 by Pavel Nadinski.[123] Nadinski's monograph claimed that Scythians were "direct ancestors" of Eastern Slavs and therefore, Crimea was an indigenous Slavic territory.[124] Not only this contradicted the work of Soviet archeologists of 1920s, such claim connected Crimea to the general Russo-centric historical metanarrative of the Soviet state and allowed to describe Crimean Tatars as yet another colonizers of the historically Slavic land. In response to the book by Nadinski, the Academy of Science of the USSR organized a conference in 1952, to standardize the historical narrative of Crimea.[125] Even for the ideologically dominated historical community of the USSR Nadinski's connection between Scythians and Slavs sounded too unsubstantiated. Participants of the conference agreed that there was a need to emphasize the presence of Slavs in Crimea as early as medieval age.[126]

Forging the origin myth is common for the settler colonial space. Walter L. Hixon defines this kind of historical policy as historical denial. He says:

> "Historical distortion and denial are endemic to settler colonies. In order for a settler colony to establish a collective usable past, legitimizing stories must be created and persistently affirmed as a means of naturalizing a new historical narrative. A national mythology displaces the indigenous past…

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[122] Gwendolyn Sasse, *The Crimea Question: Identity, Transition, and Conflict* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 69.

[123] Pavel Nadinski, *Ocherki po istorii Kryma*, vol. 1 (Simferopol: Krymizdat, 1951), 21.

[124] Ibid.

[125] D. A. Lomakin "Crimean Scientific Session AS USSR in 1952 and the Development of Crimean Studies in mid. 20th Century", *Pytannia Istorii Nauki i Techniki* 2 (2009): 10-17. Accessed July 15, 2019 http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/79195/03-Lomakin.pdf?sequence=1.

[126] Ibid.

Becoming the indigene required not only cleansing of the land, either through killing or removing, but sanitizing the historical record as well."[127]

The approach of the Soviet historiography somewhat liberalized only towards the *perestroika* period of 1980s. A collective work by scholars from the Academy of Science of the USSR *Krym: Proshloe i Nastoiashchee* (*Crimea Past and Present*) makes an attempt to find a middle ground between rehabilitation of Crimean Tatars and not putting too much responsibility for their repression on the Soviet state.[128] For instance, the books says that Crimean Tatar ethnicity formed gradually under the condition of multiculturalism of Crimea.[129] Therefore, Crimean Tatars appear as one of the indigenous groups of Crimea. Apparently, this book represented an attempt to create an ideological basis for the repatriation of Crimean Tatars in late 1980s.

During the second half of the 20th century Crimea's space was being constructed as a resort for the whole Soviet Union ("all-Union sanatorium"). This meant that Crimean had to become a 'common' place for all nations of the Soviet Union, to belong to everybody at once. More importantly, Crimea was a resort destination for the Soviet elite. In order for the resort to develop better and be able to accommodate common Soviet vacationers and party elite, the local government changed the inner administrative layout of Crimean region. Southern shores of Crimea (traditional holiday destination of the Russian imperial nobility and monarchial family) continue playing a role of resting place for the Soviet communist party elites. The government also adopted a plan to build more recreational facilities.[130] Crimean economy became heavily concentrated on two spheres: military and

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[127] Walter L. Hixon, *American Settler Colonialism.,*11.

[128] S.G. Agandzhanov and A. N. Sakharov eds., *Krym Proshloe i Nastoiashchee* (Moscow: Mysl', 1988).

[129] Ibid., 18-22.

[130] Serdiukov, Chief of the directorate for construction and urban economy of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, Bibikiv Deputy Chief of the directorate for construction and urban economy of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, 8 June 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4078, 263.

P. Neporozhnii to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine Kirichenko on administrative planning of Southern areas of Crimea," 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4078, 265-282.

recreation. These two economic spheres defined Crimea culturally, socially and economically.

1.3   The Military Aspect of Settler Colonization

Parallel to the resettlement of the agricultural population to Crimea, from the 1950s the Soviet government started a process of reducing the number of active military personnel. This surprisingly affected Crimea as well, since a significant number of demobilized and retired soldiers and officers came to Crimea for permanent residency. Based on the available sources, we cannot draw a global conclusion about the influence of retired military personnel in creating a settler colonial system in Crimea. We can only assume the existence of some tendencies. Besides, when it comes to the influence of the (former) military on society, the question is not as much about the size of the group, as about the social status and character (world view/political affiliations/identity) of a Soviet officer and soldier. The Soviet state supported the prestige of former (and current) officers that wanted to settle in Crimea, which was likely to influence the way this prestige (as well as national hierarchies) was perceived by residents of Crimea.

In 1955, a decree by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union reduced the size of the personnel of Tavrida[131] military district. According to the report by the commander of the district, Colonel-General Liudnikov, 530 out of 1,336 officers, retired that same year, were to settle in Crimea. The report also said that, of the 934 officers who retired during the previous years, 387 stayed in Crimea.[132] A different document provides us with different numbers: 731 officers came to Crimea and registered themselves between September 1 and December 20, 1955. Most of those officers chose to live in urban areas – Sevastopol (247 persons) and Simferopol (231 persons).[133] This

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[131] One of the traditional names for Crimea and nearby area.

[132] Colonel General Liudnikov, Commander of Tavrida military district to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine on demobilization in the armed forces, 22 September 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4092, 114.

[133] M. Karpenko, Secretary of Crimean regional committee to the Administrative directorate of the Central Committee of the Communist party, "Informatsiia o khode vypolneniia postanovleniia TsK KP Ukrainy i Soveta Ministrov Ukrainskoi SSR ot 24.IX. 1955 g. 'O trudovom I zhylishchnom obespechenii ofitserov,

meant that roughly one third to a half of the retired officers of the Tavrida military district chose to stay in Crimea. A similar tendency was in place in the Black Sea Fleet. According to its commander, Vice-Admiral Parkhomenko, out of 1494 officers who retired in 1955, 941 stayed in Crimea; out of that group, 530 of them stayed in Sevastopol.[134] In total, from April 1953 to December 20, 1955, Crimea accepted 3268 retired officers.[135]

The tendency to stay in urban areas can be traced in the primary sources. On April 28, 1956, a secretary of the Crimean regional committee Kliazkin reported that "The majority of retired officers came for the permanent residency into the cities: Simferopol, Sevastopol, Yevpatoria, Kerch, Feodosia and Yalta. In those cities we have registered 2008 retired officers, or 86% of those who retired after September 1955."[136] From April 1953 to June 1956, Crimea accepted 5140 officers, 88% of them settled in cities, 2035 of them stayed in Sevastopol and Simferopol.[137] Major Crimean cities were receiving the majority of retired military personnel. Based on the fact that Sevastopol was a city with restricted access and a base of the Black Sea Fleet, this kind of tendency made this city overwhelmingly militarized.

In the 1960s, the Soviet army went through another wave of reduction of personnel; the law came out on January 19, 1960. Three year later, on January 7, 1963 a secretary of

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uvol´niaemykh iz Sovetskoi Armii i Voenno-Mosrkogo flota v zapas' po Krymskoi oblasti," 24 December 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4092, 202.

[134] Vice-admiral V. Parkhomenko, Commander of the Black Sea Fleet to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, 18 October 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4092, 126-131.

[135] M. Karpenko, Secretary of Crimean regional committee to the Administrative directorate of the Central Committee of the Communist party "Informatsiia o khode vypolneniia …," 24 December 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4092, 202.

[136] V. Kliaznika, Secaretary of the Crimean regional committee, to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, "Informatsiia o vypolnenii Postanovleniia Sekretariata TsK KP Ukrainy ot 10 Marta 1956 goda," 28 April 1956, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4404, 50.

[137] N. Surkin, Secretary of Crimean regional committee, to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, "Informatsiia o trudovom ustroistve i zhylishchnom obespechenii ofitserov, uvolennykh v zapas i otstavku," 26 July 1956, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4404, 79.

Crimean regional committee wrote in his report that as of January 1, 1963 Crimea received 4559 retired officers. Again, the majority of those people – 3375 officers – stayed in cities of Simferopol (1151), Sevastopol (1831), Kerch (407), Yalta (196), Yevpatoria (380), Feodosia (368). The report said that only 20.6% of those people were not receiving pensions.[138] A few months later, on April 14, 1963 a secretary of the industrial regional committee reported that, as of January 1, 1963 Crimea received 4632 officers, retired as a result of the law of 1960. Again, 4499 of those people stayed in the cities.[139]

With a help of the local party organizations, demobilized and retired officers received housing and jobs in Crimea (in addition to military pensions). Whenever this was necessary, a state funded their additional education to employ them in new professions. Of course, this process did not go without problems, but in general, the state kept its promises. As of December 24, 1955, 586 out of 731 officers, who came to Crimea that same year from the Tavrida military district, received housing.[140] Tavrida military district and the Black Sea Fleet were leading in providing its retired personnel with jobs. As of December 15, 1955, Tavrida military district completed the job supply plan by 75%, Black Sea Fleet fulfilled the plan by 108.5%. For the sake of comparison – Kyiv military district showed 53.8%, Odesa – 61.6%, Transcarpathian district – 62.6%.[141] In exact numbers, according to the secretary of Crimean regional committee Steshov, between 1960 and 1962 the party organizations found jobs for 3287 officers, additional 236 persons were receiving an additional professional training. In the meantime, as of January

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[138] B. Steshov, Secretary of Crimean regional committee, to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine on material support of demobilized servicemen, 7 January 1963, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 31, no. 2327, 22.

[139] Secretary of Crimean industrial regional committee on material support of demobilized servicemen, 13 April, 1963, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 31, no. 2327, 84.

[140] M. Karpenko, Secretary of Crimean regional committee to the Administrative directorate of the Central Committee of the Communist party "Informatsiia o khode vypolneniia …," 24 December 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4092, 202.

[141] A. Mogila, Chief of the Main directorate for recruitment of workers and resettlement at the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR, to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, Information as of 15 December 1955, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 4092, 160.

7, 1963 (the date of the report) only 10 officers were not employed; all of them were offered a job, but refused, asking for administrative (managerial) positions. The report also said that from January 1960 to January 1963 Crimean region received 4559 retired officers, 4140 of them were provided with housing.[142] The request for jobs with higher level of responsibility was not uncommon for the retired officers, though many of them did go to work in different spheres of production. Apparently, higher ranking officers saw themselves worth higher social status after the retirement.

While the documents show a desire by the officers to attain a high social status and a civilian job posting that correlates to that rank (together with military pension and free housing), they do not show whether their rank within the army justified their request. What we do see, however, is that the state set up its retired officers to have a higher social status in civilian life. In addition, in places where the authority of the military was high (like Sevastopol), naturally the place of the retired servicemen in society was higher. In addition, we have to note that officers rarely retired without families. Some of them even created whole military dynasties. Besides, the documents do not reflect numbers of non-officer military personnel, who also came and settled in Crimea. This multiplies the number of Crimean residents being connected to the army and fleet, which of course influenced how society functioned. Just like in other settler colonies this also reserves a special role of women as creators of the settler population that can later claim its 'locality'.

Army and fleet by definition is a highly masculine strictly hierarchical structure. It does not only train people involved in it, but also indoctrinates them. Political instructors were present in every single unit of the Soviet armed forces. Retired officers came to Crimea with their specific views of how society and social hierarchies functioned. The settler colonial structure that existed in Crimea put them at the top of the pyramid. We will see

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[142] Steshov, Secretary of Crimean regional committee, to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine on material support of demobilized servicemen, 7 January 1963, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 31, no. 2327, 22.

how the military will be one of the groups that resisted the attempts of breaking this structure in the 1990s.

When reading about places like Sevastopol in the documents of the CPU archive, it is not always clear who is in charge of the city – civil administration, or the military command of the Black Sea Fleet. After the Second World War the military command made significant attempts to define the way the city had to be rebuilt – Black Sea Fleet and its history became embedded in the architecture of the space.[143] At some point during the second half of the 20th century, Sevastopol stopped being a city hosting a military base, it *became* a military base. The navy infrastructure went beyond the territory of the city, naturally the access to it was restricted.

In 1966 a commander of the Black Sea Fleet, admiral Gorshkov requested the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine to appeal to the central Soviet government in order to restrict access to Sevastopol and "areas of strategic importance around it" for civilians due to the worsening of the living conditions of his personnel:

> "...after the free access to Sevastopol was allowed, the number of petty crimes and sexually transmitted diseases in the city went up, the conditions of utility services worsened. This leads to the worsening of discipline as well as moral and political state of the personnel, which serves in units, deployed in Sevastopol."[144]

The reasoning, expressed in this piece, is very interesting. It reflects the level of control of the command over the everyday life of their subordinates. The navy command traditionally played an important role in the social and political life of the city. The commander of the fleet, although not a position within a civilian administration, was an important figure in the city's hierarchy. The fleet itself constitutes an extended and

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[143] For more on the post-Second World War reconstruction of Sevastopol: Karl Qualls, *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol After World War II* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009).

[144] Admiral Gorshkov, Commander of the Black Sea Fleet, to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine," 9 November 1966, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 6162, 45-46.

complicated structure that united active military bases, ships, units of support, navy aviation and military engineering units. The construction department of the fleet built a significant part of the city of Sevastopol. The town of Balaklava hosted secret nuclear capable submarine bases. Admiral Gorshkov requested to "close the city for the free access by Soviet citizens, introduce a special passport regime and to deport people, who conduct inappropriate lifestyle, out of the city."[145] The access to the city eventually became restricted, even for tourists. Apparently, this made a possibility of migration to the city very complicated, restricted only to exclusive groups of society. This also created a perception of exclusiveness/uniqueness/highness of Sevastopol and its residents among Sevastopolians.

The influence of the military on Crimean life is hard to undervalue. Therefore, this topic is one of the major problems for this study. The role of the military in the Soviet society, its place in the social hierarchy as well as very particular political indoctrination of Soviet servicemen played an important role for the Crimean community, due to a relatively high percentage of active and former servicemen living there. The retired military personnel, who came to live in warm Crimean climate, did not leave the peninsula with the fall of the USSR and proclamation of Ukrainian independence. Crimea, and the city of Sevastopol especially, remained a highly militarized society well into the post-Soviet times.

By 1991 the settler colonial project in Crimea had been going on for around 200 years. During this period two Russia-centered empires, Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, occupied the Crimean Peninsula, marginalized its local population and stimulated migration that ended with a forceful deportation of Crimean peoples in 1944. In addition, both imperial regimes created very similar historical narratives that were very similar in content: both presented Crimean Tatars as a 'backward', 'uncivilized' and 'aggressive' nation, both narratives accused Crimean Tatars in treason and cooperation with an enemy during the war. Finally, both imperial regimes 'settled' the Crimean space with the

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[145] Admiral Gorshkov, Commander of the Black Sea Fleet, to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine," 9 November 1966, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 24, no. 6162, 45-46.

population that was considered to be loyal to the empires, eventually this lead to the creation of a new local identity of the colonizers. As a result, after 200 years of settler colonial policy Crimea's cultural, demographic and geographic space completely changed; the very meaning of *Crimean* changed. Crimea became a melting pot, a highly militarized society, where representatives of multiple ethnicities were supposed to melt together into a loyal 'Soviet people'. It also became a resort, a holiday destination place for the communist elite and a tourist dream for most other Soviet citizens.

1.4   Conclusion

The rhetoric of the Russian officials and state propaganda regarding the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 is strikingly similar to the settler's myth, established by the Manifesto of Catherine II and subsequent historiographical tradition. In both cases the empire argued that this annexation was necessary for the benefit of local population that was willing to join the Russian state. In both cases the empire framed the annexation as a protection of Crimean residents from anarchy – either political instabilities within Crimean Khanate, or the disruption of political life that happened after the Ukrainian Euromaidan. Both myths, ironically, assured the Crimean population about the preservation of their rights and traditions. After 2014 the Russian administration of the so called 'Republic of Crimea' even granted official status to Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar as well as Russian languages within the republic. In reality, however, this status is largely celebratory: Russian continues to be the only dominant language, while Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar are being restricted unofficially, despite the existing 'legislation'. The annexation of 2014 demonstrates that settler colonialism transcends time, that colonization and its methods are not abstract concepts of the 19th century that are restricted to the history texts.

Since 1783 the settler colonial project of the Russian Empire and, subsequently, the Soviet Union continued systematic displacement of the local Crimean population and replaced it with settlers. Both empires reshaped Crimean landscape, environment as much as they reshaped cultures and psychology of the colonized peoples. Colonization happened in the space of history, daily life, geographical landmarks. Eventually, the

empires were creating (or aiming to create) their own world within the occupied land. This was done through the range of actions "that otherwise appear distinct".

In order to avoid a Manichean dichotomy it is important to mention that as everything, settler colonialism is always a project, performed by people, who make mistakes. Imperial policies are never absolutely consistent. Imperial administrations 'make mistakes' which enable indigenous resistance. As Homi Bhabha argues, colonization is a process that influences *both* cultures, despite the intentions of either of them. Subsequent chapters address this complexity in a context of post-Soviet period in a broader detail.

Chapter 2

2 (Post-)Imperial Crisis of Identity

On January 28, 1992 U.S. President George H.W. Bush spoke to the American nation in his State of the Union Address. Standing in front of a joyful room of Members of Congress and guests, President Bush announced that United States was entering a new historical period "as an undisputed leader of the age." The "failed system" of communism "died this year" and "by the grace of God, America won the Cold War" – proclaimed Bush, causing a burst of applause.[146] Whether intentionally or not, this speech by the American President gave more signals to the world than one might expect. This is ironic, because as Serhii Plokhy shows in his *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union*, it was in fact George H.W. Bush who made an enormous effort trying to prevent the fall of the Soviet Union.[147] Many veterans of the Ukrainian national movement remember the episode that Plokhy describes in his book: a visit of the American President to the Ukrainian Soviet Republic just few months prior to the proclamation of independence with the intent to persuade Ukrainian leaders to preserve the Soviet Union.[148]

The historic speech of the American President was for sure heard in Moscow. The failure of the largest empire in the world, a crash of the socialist camp in Eastern Europe and the loss of some 'core historic lands' became a painful combination of challenges that Russian elites and society have been trying to find answers for since the 1990s. These challenges increased with the necessity for painful economic and institutional reforms as well as the general poverty of the population. Those challenges have not been simply political or economic, but cultural – after the fall of the Soviet Union Russian society

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[146] George H. W. Bush, "January 22, 1992: State of the Union Address", *Miller Center*. Accessed March 19, 2020: https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/january-28-1992-state-union-address.

[147] Serhii Plokhy, *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 49, 57.

[148] Ibid., 63-65.

found itself uncertain of its own identity, future of the state and the very boundaries between the "Self" and "Other." In other words, the fall of the Soviet Empire raised questions an answer to which was known to previous generations. The questions concerned the understanding of Russia, its boundaries, its place in the world as well as the very meaning of the word *Russian*. Those questions rose before a nation that lost its empire and 'great power' status with it. It was a nation that experienced (-s) a serious inferiority complex and formulated (-s) its foreign relations in an attempt to compensate it. In 2016, Vladimir Putin made an ironic statement that "Russia's borders end nowhere."[149] Over the course of his dictatorship that started in 2000 Vladimir Putin, consciously or not, has been trying to respond to President's Bush State of the Union address, and revenge for the "biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century" as Putin called the fall of the USSR.[150]

The Soviet Union fell, but the 'system' persisted. The post-Soviet political, cultural and social dynamic operated within the discourse of the Soviet imperial standards: the style of rule, worldviews, social hierarchies and unspoken rules were informed by that discourse. The US President celebrated victory over communism. Meanwhile, the new post-Soviet president in Russia seemed democratic, modern and whiling to bring his country to the Western standards. Of course, such process was not supposed to be an easy one. But eventually, Russia was expected to join the 'club' of the democratic 'civilized'[151] countries. The celebrations by Bush based on the presumption that after the fall of communist Eastern Europe had only one way to go – towards the Western-style democratic market economy. Post-Soviet history, however, proved that assumption wrong.

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[149] In Russian this phrase sounded: «Границы России *нигде* не заканчиваются» - with the double negative language structure that is just as uncommon in Russian language, as in English. Quote retrieved from: Rossiya 24, "Putin – detiam: granitsy Rossii nigde ne zakanchivaiutsia", *Official YouTube Channel of the All-Russian TV and Radio Broadcasting Company*, Accessed March 19, 2020 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5JFY5cMDvc.

[150] President of Russia, *Poslanie Federal'nomy Sobraniiu Rossiiskoi Federatsii*, April 25, 2005. Access: http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931

[151] In 1990s Russian press and politicians often used the phases like 'civilized countries' or 'civilized world' to refer to the countries of the developed capitalist West.

This chapter provides a general cultural and political context that existed during the early post-Soviet years and during the early years of the Ukrainian and Russian post-Soviet state-building. The Crimea question, the competition of Ukraine and Russia for the peninsula, as well as Crimea's own post-Soviet settler colonialism existed within the wider cultural and political processes that began with the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Due to the development of the post-Soviet and post-communist studies, there is hardly any necessity to analyze the transitions of identity in close detail. However, the introduction of post-colonial lenses and critical theory might add a somewhat different angle to the known topics. It seems at times that scholarly analysis of post-communist transition at times becomes too analytical, too distanced from the Russian cultural context (which is another well-researched topic, of course), too 'white-washed' and mechanical. The 'unofficial,' 'unspoken' dimension of Soviet relations (political, inter-ethnic, cultural, hierarchical) persisted. Moreover, the center of the fallen empire retained a significant informational and cultural dominance within its (former) colonies.

The identity crisis in Russia and in Ukraine, though of different natures, defined the social and political responses to conflicts between Russia and Ukraine. This chapter demonstrates that Russia's persistent desire to control Ukraine (and Crimea) was routed in the imperial identity and the desire to restore the status of the 'great power.' Ukraine's weak responses to Russia's (mostly informational) attacks, happened due to the problematic experience of decolonization, not just for ordinary citizens, but also for intellectual and political elites. Both countries, both societies needed to define their boundaries. And because the imperial historical narrative inseparably connected Ukrainian and Russian peoples, both societies often had to define themselves in relation to one another. Crimea was a microcosm of these complicated Ukraine- Russia relationships. The population of Crimea, apart from its local specificities, was a Soviet population and retained most of the popular standards and stereotypes of Soviet society.

2.1   The Eastern European 'Mimic Man': Making Russia Great Again

Describing/analyzing the crisis of identity with the use of Homi Bhabha's theory seems ironic, since any kind of identity, according to Bhabha, is ambivalent and exists in a constant transition.[152] Furthermore, an interpretation of culture (identity) is a form of its simplification that exists in a particular time and space.[153] In other words, one might interpret Bhabha's words by saying that the analysis of culture and transition of identity is an unfulfillable task, because such analysis has little to do with culture. What can be fruitful for the sake of this research is an attempt to put Bhabha's 'mimic man' in a cultural context of Larry Wolff's 'invented' Eastern Europe and Alexander Etkind's Russia 'as an empire that colonizes itself'.[154] A combination of those three authors might help to describe the relationships between Russia, its former empire, and the West that at different historical stages have been if not hostile, then competitive.

The hierarchical division (cultural, political, economic) between Western and Eastern Europe defines the 'civilizational standards' on the continent. Larry Wolff provides an extensive study of how Western intellectuals of the Enlightenment invented the concept of 'Eastern Europe' as a Western Europe's 'Other'.[155] This invention built on the European tradition of defining the 'Other' as uncivilized that became a foundation and ideological justification for the European colonialism. The invention of 'Eastern Europe' established a modern hierarchy in which the eastern part of the continent appeared in an 'in-between space' between the West and the 'Orient'. The invention of a hierarchy *within* the European continent (or within what was thought of as a European continent) was a part of a general process of the use of an Enlightened knowledge as an instrument of power and domination, exercised by the (Western) European empires in their overseas colonies. Although the division was established back in the 19th century, Wolff starts his

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[152] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 13-15.

[153] Ibid., 54.

[154] Alexandr Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 2.

[155] Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: the Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

narrative with the 1946 Fulton speech of Winston Churchill and demonstrates that this division persisted well into the 20th century.[156] Wolff's argument can (and should) definitely be extended both in terms of chronology and content. In the 21st century the mental map of Eastern Europe for many people in the world hardly means more than an 'in-between space'. Eastern Europe continues to be 'lesser Europe' – culturally, economically and geopolitically. The knowledge about Eastern Europe continues to be mostly stereotypical: how could it be different if most Western scholars who claim to study Eastern Europe specialize in Russia and seem to think of the region as homogenous?

To an extent, Eastern Europe is a Bhabha's 'mimic man' – a colonized individual that was educated to 'reach the cultural standards of civilization' of the colonizer, the 'Other' that is "almost the same [as us – civilized colonizers], but not quite".[157] That makes the whole discourse of Eastern Europe colonial, without making Eastern Europe a political colony of the West. While trying to follow the cultural example of the West as a superior civilization, Eastern Europe mimics the West in an attempt to be recognized as equal – an unreachable goal in a colonial discourse, where the (cultural, political, economic) domination is exercised through the perception of one's level of development. This colonialism is subtle, because it does not involve an actual direct military or political domination, but only a strong cultural perception of West's 'more advanced' position. Western scholars of colonialism do not write about it. To them, the history of colonialism is a story of the 'First' and the 'Third' worlds. The 'Second' world is completely absent from their 'map', creating what Alexander Etkind called "a hole in the image of the world".[158] One of the characteristics of a 'mimic man' is a desire to resemble the 'master'

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[156] Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe...*, 1.

[157] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 122.

In the Eastern European context Bhabha's 'mimic man' meets with his equivalent – Turkic definition of 'mankurt'. According to a Kyrgyz legend, mankurts were people with the erased memory. Captured as prisoners of war, they underwent tortures that made them forget their nationality, language and culture. The term is now generally used within the post-Soviet space to describe a colonized individual that tries to mimic the colonizer.

[158] Etkind, "Dyra v kartine mira: pochemu kolonial´nye avtory pisali o Rossii, a postkolonial´nye net," Translated by Vladimir Makarov in *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2011): 99-116.

– that example of true civilization of development that the (Western) European represents. Bhabha's 'mimic man' is somewhat similar to Franz Fanon's colonized subject in a 'white mask'. In both cases the authors talk about the knowledge (and control over the colonial narrative) as an instrument of power and domination. What is different is that Bhabha's 'mimic man' is a result of a conscious creation by a colonizer, while Fanon's black colonized subject *decides* to put on a 'white mask' to resemble white person. The result for both colonized is an 'in-between space', although Bhabha's 'mimic man' seems to be 'more visible' to the colonizer, since mimicry allows "partial representation".[159]

Alexander Etkind looks at the history of Russian attempts to resemble Western European empires. He argues that until the 19th century Russian imperial elites treated the non-privileged classes of society as subjects that needed to be colonized. In the meantime, they saw the West as their cultural example. As the empire grew and expended its borders externally, there still remained placed within the empire that Russian authorities and intellectuals saw as backward and uncivilized.[160] Therefore, the metropole and colonies of the Russian empire existed *within* the body of the empire, making Russia an empire and a colony at the same time. Etkind shows the unevenness of the Russian imperial rule throughout the Russian imperial history. The history of the Russian imperialism to a significant extent becomes a history of a mimicry, an attempt of the Russian imperial elites to draw civilizational line between themselves and the lower classes. By drawing this line, the imperial noblemen of course defined themselves as representatives of the civilized West. This, however, was not necessarily true for the West. Etkind's quote of Rudyard Kipling "the Russian is a delightful person till he tucks his shirt in" only confirms the existence of the Russian empire in an 'in-between space' for the Western European intellectuals.[161]

Etkind's concept of 'internal colonization', especially in the context of the Russian

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[159] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 126.

[160] Etkind, *Internal Colonization…*, 17.

[161] Ibid., 36.

empire, at times seems confusing. The author himself calls 'internal colonization' an oxymoronic term.[162] The text does not suggest a clear distinction between internal and external colonization in the history of the Russian empire. It also assumes that colonization does not necessarily have to mean foreign invasion.[163] It is not always clear when the author uses the term 'colonization' in the meaning of Russian historians of the 19th century, and when he refers to it from a present-day perspective. The difference (cultural, educational) between classes and the process of 'forging of nation' ('imagining communities') in Europe in the 19th century led to 'internal colonization' in practically every country. In this case, the analytical value of the term for present-day analysis is not quite clear. Especially in the case of the Russian empire, where Russian imperial narrative claimed the land of present-day Ukraine and Belarus to create a narrative of a single nation, a 'core' of the Russian empire. It is unclear what kind of colonization, according to Etkind, took place on the territory of Ukraine and Belarus, 'internal', or 'external'. For the 19th century Russian imperial intellectuals those lands were an integral part of 'Russia', due to necessity to historically connect the Russian empire and Kyivan Rus. But even those intellectuals saw the differences (at least linguistic) between Russians and Ukrainians, Orientalized Ukrainians and compared Ukrainian peasants to Black slaves of North America.[164] What Etkind does show, however, is a history of mimicry of the Russian imperial elites, the attempt of the Russian empire to resemble Western empires and the exchange of imperial knowledge between empires.

In the context of "Eastern Europe" (as a geographical/political/cultural/mental construct) Bhabha's 'mimic man' becomes a layered concept. A desire to resemble a 'civilizational standard' encourages Russian empire to import some imperial practices from the West. Unlike British imperial authorities, however, the Russian empire incorporated elites of the colonized nations. While racial dynamic was present in the context of the Russian and Soviet empires, it was also different from the Western traditions of racism and racial

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[162] Etkind, *Internal Colonization…*, 2.

[163] Ibid., 7.

[164] Mykola Riabchuk "Ukrainians as Russia's Negative 'Other': History Comes Full Circle," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49, no. 1 (2016): 77.

segregation.[165] In the meantime, Russian imperialism contributed to the creation of a lower layer of 'mimic man' that now saw Russian culture as an example of civilization – those are representatives of non-Russian nations in Eastern Europe who see Russian culture as their example. Alexander Etkind and Alexey Miller talk about the unifying role of Russian culture and literature that was meant to become a shared culture among the subjects of an empire, an element of a "cultural hegemony" and a creator of Russian nationalism.[166] Of course to get such role, Russian culture had to become 'superior' within the multiethnic empire. This role of a dominant culture persisted through the fall of the Russian empire into the Soviet times. Alexander Etkind believes it is wrong to analyze the Soviet Union as a "reincarnation of the Russian empire."[167] To an extent, this depends on the point of view. For a Russian scholar the Soviet Union was indeed quite different from the Russian empire. For the non-Russian nations, however, there was more continuity in imperial policies. One of such elements that were imported from the pre-revolutionary times was the role of the Russian language, culture and history as an instrument that kept the multiethnic Soviet empire together. This was a method to make Russians a cultural example for other Eastern Europeans. The role of the Russian language and culture, defined by the state, put Russians in a position of civilized colonizers in the region. The idea of a unifying role of the Russian culture persisted into the post-Soviet era as well, up to these days Russian imperialist thought defines the territorial claims based on the shared cultural experience – exposure to Russian language and literature. In addition, as shown by Etkind and by scholars of the Soviet society, both empires disregarded the peasant class as backward and underdeveloped.

'Mimic man' is a product of an instilled inferiority complex. The very definition of this term by Bhabha presumes the hierarchy of cultures of the colonizer and the colonized.

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[165] David Rainbow, "Race as Ideology: An Approach," in *Ideologies of Race: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in the Global Context*, 10.

[166] Etkind, *Internal Colonization…,* 168-169.

Alexey Miller, *Imperiia Romanovykh i natsionalizm: ėsse po metodologii istoricheskogo issledovaniia* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2006), 152.

[167] Etkind, *Internal Colonization…,* 249.

From this point of view, Soviet and Russian (post-Soviet) imperialism and anti-Western antagonism suggest compensatory behavior, an attempt to 'match' (and surpass) a cultural example. The struggle of the Russian imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet Russian 'mimic man' has been to be recognizes as equal by the great powers of the West. The fall of the Soviet Union and the 'loss' of the Cold war to the United States and the 'West' predetermined the focus of the Russia's social debate (among other topics) around the restoration of a 'great power' status. For a whole decade after 1991 Russian officials and informational sources tried to emphasize the importance of Russia in the international relations. One of the steps towards reaching this goal was to get recognition as a successor state to the Soviet Union and to keep the permanent membership in the UN Security Council (as well as later admittance into the G7 group).[168] Russian authorities paid significant attention to the maintenance of their state's influence within what they saw as their domain (sphere of influence) – the post-Soviet region. This sphere of influence was what made the Soviet Russia an empire. In the post-Soviet times this sphere of influence was what kept Russian Federation 'great'. The topic of 'greatness' of Russia appeared in various contexts in speeches of Russian parliamentarians, members of the government, president's addresses. Most of the times it was directed at the domestic audience. Simply speaking, there were generally two contexts in which this topic appeared: to demonstrate that Russia in its new borders was still 'great' and influential (and was recognized as such by the West) and to state that although Russia was going through hard times, it still retained potential to regain its 'greatness' and to restore its former influence. In other words, in eyes of the Russian politicians Russia was 'great', but humiliated and, therefore, had a right to restore its previous rightful influence.

Given a very complicated economic situation in Russia, especially during the early transition period in the economy, Russia's 'great power' status was increasingly hard to maintain. During the early post-Soviet years the Russian government was unable to feed its citizens and therefore had to accept humanitarian aid from the West. The IMF credit

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[168] Elizaveta Leont´eva, "Kogda my ushli ot messianstva… Beseda s ministrom inostrannykh del Andreem Kozyrevym o suti sovremennoi rossiiskoi diplomatii," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, January 22, 1992.

Ruslan Khasbulatov, "O vneshnej politike i diplomatii Rossii," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, March 6, 1992.

program that the West started in Russia to support its economy might have been economically helpful, but also humiliating. The fact that officials from international institutions were to decide Russia's fate was akin to a challenge of Russia's agency and sovereignty. During one of the press-conferences in July 1992 President Boris Yeltsin stated that he would not allow the IMF to "bring us to our knees," because "Russia is a great country."[169] In order to maintain the image of a 'great country' for the domestic audience, it was important to emphasize the Russian crucial role in solving various international problems. Articles in the Russia's governmental newspaper argued that the new international system "is impossible without Russia" and that Russia will not be "a passive observer [*statist*]" within the international system.[170]

The desire to emphasize its agency on the international stage and to support the claims for the 'great power' status suggests a need of the Russian authorities to receive moral/political compensation for the loss in the Cold war. Russian military power and nuclear power status played an integral role in a construction of this post-Soviet 'greatness.' News articles regarding the international negotiations between Russia and the West (United States), published by the *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* emphasized the importance of Russia during these negotiations. Russian observers and analysts described the negotiations between the American and Russian presidents over the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II as a conversation between presidents "of two great states."[171] Therefore, the need for cooperation between the US and Russia came out of the fact that those were "two most powerful nuclear states" – the emphasis here is on a military power, but not on economic, cultural or any other kinds of exchange.[172] It was important for those contributors to emphasize that Russia was a country that defined the international agenda as it used to, that decisions of the Russian authorities influenced

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[169] ITAR-TASS, "Stanet li 'Bol´shaia Semerka' 'Bol´shoi Vos´merkoi' Press-konferentsiia B. N. Yeltsina v Kremle," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, July 6, 1992.

[170] Vladimir Kuznechevski, "Novy mirovoi poriadok bez Rossii nevozmozhen," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, July 11, 1992.

[171] ITAR-TASS, "SNV-2: dogovor v interesakh sotrudnichestva. Ob ėtom govorili na sovmestnoi press-konferentsii 3 janvaria prezidenty dvukh velikikh derzhav," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, January 5, 1993.

[172] ITAR-TASS, "V interesax Rossii," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, January 12, 1993.

people's lives globally.

By mid and late 1990s the rhetoric of the Russian President (as well as some experts and journalists) towards the West became more hostile. The narrative demonstrated an idea that Russia's international stance after 1991 was precarious, but at last the state was getting ready to reclaim its position in the world. In 1995, for instance, the first issue of the *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* published an article titled "Superpower Without Tutelage."[173] The author, Mikhail Shchipanov, argued that United States undervalued the great power status of the Russian Federation. According to Shchipanov, Russian interests went beyond Russian borders, as some American officials had argued: "As many political science experts believe, during the coming year all questions regarding the status of Russia as a great power will be dropped," "in Moscow [officials/representatives/negotiators] just stopped being so submissively susceptible to moral preaching as, for example, two years ago."[174] At that time NATO was expanding to the East, to the former territories controlled by the Soviet Union, which caused protests from the Russian leadership. The narrative about Russia 'getting back to its feet' on the international arena had obvious built-in hints about Western dominance that Russia needed to resist. The 'great power' status was necessary for Russia as an element of identity that proved the state's 'maturity,' its ability to 'match' the West in terms of power and, therefore, sovereignty and agency.

The West, especially the United States and the NATO block, were presented to the Russian public as a threat, as aggressive institutions with aggressive external military, economic and political behavior. This was an old Soviet image of the Western 'Other' that was now employed in the construction of the post-Soviet Russian state and identity. Identification against the 'Other', according to Homi Bhabha is one of the stages of self-identification.[175] The oxymoron-ness of Russia's self-identification as an opponent of the West was in the fact that Russia was heavily dependent on Western economic aid.

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[173] Mikhail Shchipanov, "Sverkhderzhava – bez opeki," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, January 1, 1995.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 63.

Russian politicians had to send positive and friendly messages externally, while continuing its anti-Western rhetoric for domestic audience. In winter of 1999 Daniel Triesman, a political science professor at the University of California at that time, argued in his article in the *Foreign Policy* that the West should not pay attention to the Russian anti-Western rhetoric and to leave Russia "a face-saving way" to return to the "cordial relations" with the West.[176] Although this opinion might not be representative for the Western scholarly community regarding the attitude towards Russia, the quote is ironic giving the use of a similar rhetoric by Western politicians after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. The fact of the matter is, Western countries continued their support for what many saw as a new 'democratic' Russia and did not pay much attention to the gradual intensification of the anti-Western and anti-NATO rhetoric of the Russian politicians and opinion-makers.

Another method for claiming 'great power' status or to persuade foreign (and domestic) audiences that Russia had this status was to retain Russia's domination in the former Soviet Union. In fact, after 1992 Russian authorities invented a term "near abroad countries" as a way to refer to the former republics of the Soviet Union. This "near abroad" was a yet another 'in-between' space. For post-Soviet Russian politicians "the near abroad" was not a foreign territory, but a space of (former) Russian possessions, a territory of the natural spread of Russian political and cultural influence. Russian internal social debate over the future of the Russian state constantly involved the discussion of the 'millions of Russians' that appeared outside of Russia after the fall of the USSR. Identifying various groups (mostly Russian speaking) outside of Russia as 'Russians' eventually formulated a problem of definition of *'Russian'* within the domestic space. Any significant social changes in the former Soviet republics – mostly related to state and nation building – caused a sensitive reaction from Russian politicians and observers. The creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (the official way to refer to the "near abroad countries") from the Russian point of view was supposed to be a first step towards further integration and (possible) restoration of the Soviet Union in a new

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[176] Daniel Triesman, "After Yeltsin Comes…Yeltsin", in *Foreign Policy* , 117 (1999-2000): 85.

format.

Russian diplomacy and President Yeltsin tried to use the structures of the CIS to enforce a Russian stance on the international stage. Their fight for the CIS control over the former Soviet military in former Soviet republics resembled an imperial fight for preservation of control over colonies. During the transition period the former strategic forces of the Soviet army went under the joint command of the CIS. In reality, however, the commander of the CIS armed forces Marshall of Aviation Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov was a former Soviet Minister of Defense. Marshall Shaposhnikov could hardly be an independent figure. He responded to President Yeltsin personally, attended meetings of the Russian Parliament and was fully integrated into the new Russian political and institutional context.[177] What this meant is that while formally the armed forces of the former Soviet Union (including nuclear weapons) were under joint command, it was in fact the Russian President who had real control over those forces and represented CIS militarily on the international stage. In addition to that, as early as in 1992 Russian President Yeltsin offered the members of the CIS to represent their interests during the meeting of the G7 group.[178] At the time, Russia was not part of G7, but really wanted to be admitted there. This however had to happen on 'equal' terms. The West had to invite Russia into the G7. Public 'application' to join the group was considered unworthy.[179] In 1994 during his presidential address to the parliament Yeltsin said that strong Russia is the most serious guarantor of stability in the post-Soviet area.[180] Russian demand for recognition based on its perception of one's influence in the region. From the formal point of view, CIS was a group of newly independent states that agreed to have some shared institutions during the post-Soviet transition period. But here again a historian meets a 'gap' between official rhetoric and reality: Russian politicians and observers

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[177] Ol´ga Burkaleva, Robert Minasov, "Voprosov mnogo. I na vse nyzhno otvetit´," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, February 23, 1992.

[178] ITAR-TASS, "Stanet li 'Bolshaja Semerka' 'Bol´shoj Vos´merkoi' Press-konferentsiia B. N. Yeltsina v Kremle," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, July 6, 1992.

[179] Ibid.

[180] "Strategicheskaia cel´ - sozdat´ protsvetaiushchuju stranu. Vystuplenie prezidenta Rossii v Federal´nom Sobranii," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, February 25, 1994.

often saw no distinction between the CIS institutions and those of Russia, just like in the Soviet times Russians associated themselves with the whole state, but not with just a single republic. Post-Soviet Russian authorities acted on a presumption that the world was divided into domains, and the CIS was their sphere of influence.

Russian policy towards the CIS region was neither internal, nor foreign. To a large extent Russian policy in "the near abroad" depended on and influenced the Russia's internal debate of the national and territorial boundaries of a new post-Soviet country. The idea of Russians as 'the most divided nation' of the Soviet Union appeared in the international debate right after the fall of the USSR. Russian politicians from different political camps as well as journalists and scholars contributed to the creation of the image of 'oppressed Russian people' in the non-Russian post-Soviet states. The fact that the term *Russian* was under debate in Russian Federation itself allowed the image to include not just *ethnic* Russians, but *Russian-speaking* population of the former Soviet Union. It was then Russian president and state institutions who proclaimed themselves responsible for the protection of the Russian-speakers from 'oppression'. 'Oppression' included, for example, language and citizenship laws in the Baltic states that made the knowledge of the state language a necessary requirement in order to obtain citizenship. And when the Ukrainian authorities began to stamp old Soviet passports with the Ukrainian coat of arms to confirm Ukrainian citizenship, this was also considered an attack on people's rights.[181] The Russian public saw the necessity to develop a new post-Soviet Russian statehood. But when other former Soviet republics did the same, those actions were criticized and labelled 'nationalist.' Any successes in Russia made the country a 'great state,' any failures in countries of the post-Soviet region (especially Slavic ones) made Russia even 'greater.' Russian media paid specific attention to the economic problems in non-Russian post-Soviet republics. For example, Ukraine's energy resources debt before Russia became a matter of political manipulation and popular jokes at the time.

Russia's carrot and stick approach towards the 'near abroad' in 1990s often resembled

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[181] Yurij Stroganov, "Russkij vopros v Litve," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, April 16, 1992.

Svetlana Shevchenko, "Trezubec na krymskie pasporta," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, June 26, 1992.

the relations between the former metropole and its independent colonies, described by Franz Fanon. Fanon says that after the fight for independence is over, and the metropole has to accept the loss of a colony, it sets barriers (political and economic) for the development of a newly independent state. The fact that metropole's economy benefited from the resources extracted from the colony is often ignored.[182] The logic of the former metropole, in Fanon's words, is the following: "If you want independence, take it and suffer the consequences."[183] Russian rhetoric about the 'brotherhood' of three Slavic nations (Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians) came in hand with the 'energy blackmailing,' when Russian authorities received political concessions from Ukrainian and Belarusian governments in exchange for lower gas and oil prices. The Ukraine-Russia negotiations over the separation of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, for instance, were heavily influenced by the energy debt that Ukraine had before Russia.

Russia's understanding of its imperial multiethnic 'Self' is based on a deeply instilled privilege that allowed Russian nationals to not see the discrimination towards non-Russian languages and cultures. This is why, when non-Russian Soviet republics proclaimed independence, many Russians could not comprehend the reasons. In one of their reports analysts from the Ministry of Science of the Russian Federation called the new Russian state borders "unusual" for the Russian people.[184] A month later, in May 1992, Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoy in his article titled "Blindness" said: "people who did not remember about their nationality for decades, now suspiciously look at their neighbors…"[185] The phrasing in Russian seems to have a note of disappointment, surprise and bitterness in it: for decades everybody seemed to accept the dominant position of the Russian culture around the USSR, but suddenly this 'common sense' was under attack. Russia lost the empire and this loss was painful: nobody expected that

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[182] Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 54

[183] Ibid.

[184] Otdel ekspertno-prognoznykh issledovanii centra 'Istina' minnauki RF, "Rossiia v SNG. Interesy i polityka," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, April 6, 1992.

[185] Aleksandr Rutskoi, "Osleplenie. Vitse-president Rossii Rutskoi: Ja s gorechiu i trevogoi smotriu na deistviia ukrainskikh vlastei," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, May 20, 1992.

nations of the Soviet Union would suddenly want to build different states, separately from Russians. Moreover, nobody expected non-Russian nations to manifest their non-Russian-ness so openly: to create\revive their historical narratives, to protect their national languages, to require *Russians* to know the local languages of the territories they lived on. The formal ideology of the Soviet Union was that of the 'brotherhood of nations.' In that brotherhood there was one elder brother – Russian – 'first among equals.' The destruction of that status quo, and even more so – the *willingness* of non-Russian people (especially Slavic nations – Ukrainians and Belarusians) to self-identify was hurtful for the Russian identity. The inability to see and identify privileges did not prevent representatives of Russian minorities from actually *feeling* oppressed in the non-Russian post-Soviet states.

 In his article on the Soviet national policy that was published in *Slavic Review* in 1994 Yuri Slezkine uses the concept of "USSR As a Communal Apartment" to describe the approach of the Soviet government and communist ideologists to inter-ethnic relations and hierarchies. Given the time when the article appeared, it might have been the author's way to respond to the abovementioned painful experience of self-identification of the Russian nation. Throughout the article the scholar talks about the Soviet policy of *korenizatsiia* (indigenization) that Soviet authorities (and Vladimir Lenin personally) launched in 1920s. Slezkine quotes one of the communist representatives Iosif Vareikis, according to whom "the USSR was a large communal apartment in which 'national state units, various republics and autonomous provinces' represented 'separate rooms'".[186] Slezkine argues that this policy of the Soviet authorities created separate 'rooms' for every nation, but Russian, due to its imperial and aggressive past.[187] Therefore, Russians of the Soviet Union did not have their own 'room':

> "In the center of the Soviet apartment there was a large and amorphous
> space not clearly defined as a room, unmarked by national paraphernalia,

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[186] Yurii Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review 53*, no. 2 (1994): 415.

[187] Ibid., 423.

unclaimed by 'its own' nation and inhabited by a very large number of austere but increasingly sensitive proletarians."[188]

Speaking about the policy of indigenization the author describes the forceful nature of conversion to the language of the republic in schools and other state institutions. He emphasized that Soviet authorities did everything possible to make non-Russian languages "as different as possible."[189] With the official reversal of indigenization in 1930s, the Russian nation gained more influence in the state. Russians increasingly started to identify with the Soviet Union in general.[190] Russians started to "bully their neighbors and decorate their part of the communal apartment (which included the enormous hall, corridor and the kitchen *where all the major decisions were made*) [my emphasis – M.S.] but they did not claim that the whole apartment was theirs…"[191] After 60 years of the Soviet national policy, according to Slezkine, all republics got "a native control."[192] When the Soviet Union fell, the result of the Soviet national policy, was the following:

"…the tenants of various rooms barricaded their doors and started using the windows, while the befuddled residents of the enormous hall and kitchen stood in the center scratching the backs of their heads. Should they try to recover their belongings? Should they knock down walls? Should they cut off the gas? Should they convert their 'living area' into a proper apartment?"[193]

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[188] Yurii Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment…", 434.

[189] Ibid., 431.
Some contemporary scholars directly reject this statement. The analysis of various editions of the Ukrainian language dictionary (as well as codified grammar rules) shows that during and after the *Ukrainization* process there was a tendency to eliminate traditional Ukrainian language patterns and synonyms and to replace them with those that sound similar in Russian. See for example: Larysa Masenko (ed.), *Ukraïnsʹka mova u XX storichchi: istoriia linhvotsydu. Dokumenty i materialy* (Kyiv: Publishing House "Kyiv Mohyla academy", 2005).

[190] Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment…": 443.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Ibid., 450.

[193] Ibid., 452.

The reason for such a long description of a scholarly article is that it well reflects the thinking of many in Russia during the time when it was written. It demonstrates how even a highly professional historian still exists in his own cultural and national context. Upon presenting an idea that Russians were the oppressed nation in the Soviet Union, the author finishes by asking rhetorical questions about the Russia's future. The cultural context in which these questions appeared did not need to explain, for example, how Russians' 'belongings' *appear* in rooms of other families of the apartment? Who gave them *a right* to knock down walls? If Soviet Union indeed was a communal apartment, then it would be impossible for residents of a hallway to have property in all the rooms. The phrasing here suggests an existence of a certain 'common sense' – aspects of life that do not need explanation. Apparently, Russia's claims (territorial, cultural and other) to former Soviet republics constituted that 'common sense'. Contrary to Slezkine's arguments, his final rhetorical questions suggest that Russians did claim the whole territory of the Soviet Union and therefore felt entitled to interfere in domestic relations of newly independent states. The very crisis of Russian identity came out of the understanding that it was no longer possible to 'store belongings' and to access them at any time in rooms of other families; that 'knocking down walls' could become harder, when the residents do not recognize the authority of decisions, adopted in the kitchen.

Yuri Slezkine describes indigenization as a forceful experience but does not directly call it painful for Russians. His description of the Soviet foreign policy, however, suggests that Russians were oppressed by the Soviet state. An idea that Russians were victims of the Soviet Union was very popular in late 1980s and early 1990s. Basically, this was one of the ideas that created an ideological foundation for the proclamation of Russia's sovereignty (and later independence) within the Soviet Union.[194] These ideas seem common for the Russian nationalist thought of that time. Indigenization (and especially *Ukrainization* as a local variation of that policy) was a painful experience of the *Russian* past. This is especially visible in an essay "How Should We Organize Russia" that Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a Soviet dissident and influential Russian nationalist, published

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[194] Vera Tolz, "Conflicting 'Homeland Myths' and Nation-state Building in Post-Communist Russia," *Slavic Review 57*, no. 2 (1998): 280.

in 1990. Solzhenitsyn's essay is a good example of 'oxymoron-ness' of the post-Soviet culture and politics. On the one hand, the author recognized the existence of Ukrainian and Belorussian nations that are separate from Russian. On the other hand, his messages mirrored the dominant historical narrative. In Solzhenitsyn's views those three nations were "one people" (*odin narod*) that came from the Kyivan Rus.[195] The essay combined what looks like opposite proposals for the future of Russia. As anti-imperialist and anti-communist, Sozhenitsyn was sure that Soviet Union had to be dissolved, that Russia had no resources to maintain an empire and needed to focus on itself instead. On the other hand, he proposed to create a 'Russian Union' that would consist of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.[196] This project would of course be viewed as imperial by many Ukrainians and Belarusians. Solzhenitsyn accepted the idea of independence of Ukraine and Belarus. But such independence had to be proclaimed on region by region basis. That way every region of Ukraine would have to vote which country to join. This proposal came from an assumption that many regions of Ukraine would vote to join Russia and not Ukraine. "Where does this gesture come from – to chop Ukraine off the alive [body] (including the part where there was never Ukraine, like 'Wild Steppe' of nomads – Novorossia or Crimea, Donbass and up to the Caspian sea)" – exclaims Solzhenitsyn in his address to Ukrainians.[197] In other words, if Ukraine decided to proclaim independence, it would have to pay for it with its territories. In Solzhenitsyn's mind, both Russians and Ukrainians suffered from communists, and therefore, those were communists who were responsible for the crimes of the Soviet past.[198] He acknowledged that "forceful Russification" of Ukraine was a crime, but to him "forceful Ukrainization" of Ukraine was also a crime.[199]

Aesthetically, Solzhenitsyn's essay reflects the attitude of Russian nationalists to Ukraine

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[195] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "Kak nam obustroit′ Rossiiu. Posilnye soobrazheniia" in Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. *Pulitsystika*, Vol. 1 (Yaroslavl: Verkhne-Volzhskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel′stvo), 544.

[196] Ibid., 540-542.

[197] Ibid., 545.

[198] Ibid., 546.

[199] Ibid.

and Belarus. It reflects this same bitterness and surprise that Alexander Rutskoy called "Blindness". It also demonstrates that the author is well aware (at least subconsciously) of a socially constructed privileges, granted to his nationality, but is not ready to acknowledge them. Maybe this is the reason why he starts his address to Ukrainians and Belarusians by claiming that he is "kin" to them: "I myself am almost half Ukrainian."[200] This kind of claim for having relation to Ukraine, coming from Russian nationals was *very* common at that time. Making such statement meant that the speaker claimed the right to express on Ukraine's matter and not be accused of Russian chauvinism. This kind of claim for 'Ukrainian-ness' appeared in and outside newspaper debates very regularly. The question of Ukraine for the Russian nationalism, therefore, was two-dimensional. On the one hand, Soviet tradition, and, therefore, the Russian political establishment, recognized the existence of a separate Ukrainian (and Belarusian) nation. On the other hand, Ukrainians were 'the same people' (based on the Russian perception of Ukraine's similar culture and language) with Russians. This was why any manifestation of Ukraine's desire for independence equaled 'betrayal' and caused resentment. One of the ways to prove that would be to look at the use of Ukrainian words *samostiynist, nezalezhnist, svidomist* (self-governance, independence, [national] consciousness) in the Russian language.[201] It was (is) common for the Russian information sources to transliterate (rather than translate) those words and use them in Russian-language texts whenever it was necessary to express emotionally loaded disrespect to the fact of Ukrainian independence, culture, language and history.[202] Such appropriation of linguistic elements of another culture had an embedded hint of xenophobia, an attack that was clear enough to be understood and covert enough to seem appropriate for a public space.

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[200] Solzhenitsyn, "Kak nam obustroit´ Rossiju…", 544.

[201] The list of words that are often transliterated involves almost exclusively those used to describe patriotic feelings towards Ukraine, or Ukraine's state symbols.

[202] Although, Ukrainian and Russian languages are relatively similar and have a large number of words that two languages share, Ukrainian words *nezalezhnist'* and *samostiynist'* sound differently from Russian *nezavisimost'* and *samostoyatelnost'*. The use of Ukrainian words, transliterated into Russian sent a clear message about the writer's/speaker's intention, without the need to openly manifest the attitude towards Ukraine. On the other hand, to those not familiar with this context (foreign observers, for example), the use of the Ukrainian words in the Russian text would not mean much.

Solzhenitsyn, of course, did not represent the Russian authorities in 1990s. The Yeltsin's circle was very heterogeneous and changed over the decade. Back in early 1990s it was generally believed that Yeltsin brought a group of democrats with him. One of the members of this circle in early 1990s, Galina Starovoytova, claimed that Solzhenitsyn's essay had a great influence on the first Russian president.[203] She herself expressed very similar views, describing Russia as a colony of the Soviet Union and preoccupied with the protection of 'Russian minorities' outside of Russia.[204] As time passed, the authoritarian tendencies of Yeltsin's presidency grew. The small group of democratic politicians, who indeed supported Yeltsin, did not get the real power in the state.[205] In the meantime, old Soviet military elites and former party *nomenklatura* (including the opposition within the Communist party) became the forces that Yeltsin relied on. Nationalist ideas were not alien to those groups, although, they often took a milder form than that expressed by Solzhenitsyn. New Russian state adopted pre-revolutionary state symbols, which corresponded to the nationalists' view of pre-revolutionary Russia as an example that the new state had to follow: in 1993 Russian president issued a decree which changed the Russian coat of arms to the double-headed eagle with three crowns; in 1990 the Supreme Council of the Russian SFSR adopted a new state anthem – although it had no words, the composition "The patriotic song" was written by Mikhail Glinka in 1895; in 1991 the Supreme Council adopted a new flag – another pre-revolutionary symbol of the state. Following the example of many post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe post-Soviet Russia was building a new state on the pre-communist (in this case – imperial) symbols.

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[203]Galina Starovoitova, Interview by Vitalii Portnikov, (Moscow, 1997) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union. The Oral History of Independent Ukraine 1988-1991*. Accessed March 20, 2020: https://oralhistory.org.ua/interview-ua/566/.

[204] Starovoytova seems to be a good example of tragedy of the Russian liberal ideology. Russian liberals appeared among those who approached power in early 1990s. Their democratic views provided an ideological shield for the Yeltsin's government during the first years of presidency. Liberals themselves, however, were never *given* power, neither have they played an important enough executive role. In some spheres, like 'protection of Russian minorities', or Russian presence in Crimea Russian liberals did not differ too much from nationalists in terms of proposed policies. They expressed same concerns, but were less aggressive and, therefore, less noticeable.

[205] Liliia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999)*, 17-18.

The problem of imperialism within the Russian identity has been a matter of an ongoing debate among scholars. Vera Tolz, for instance, argues that there has been a certain tradition of understanding the Russian empire as the Russian nation-state.[206] In other words, national identity is closely tied to the territory of the multinational empire. In turn, Geoffrey Hosking argued that the history of the Russian imperial building prevented the development of the Russian national identity.[207] The Late Russian Empire, according to Hosking, did not have citizens that could formulate a civic national identity. What is more the empire was too multiethnic, its Russian elites were too different from Russian peasants to rely on ethnic nationalism.[208] In other words, according to Tolz and Hosking, Russian *national* identity approached the Soviet times being closely dependent on empire. And the Soviet period hardly changed that. On the other hand, Alexey Miller argues that already in 19th century Russian nationalists saw a clear distinction between the 'core Russia' and the non-Russian possession of the empire.[209] Miller argues that "a willingness to consolidate the nation…does not at all means a desire to 'dismiss' the empire".[210] Therefore, he believes that the view of Russian 19th century nationalism as a movement that wanted to create a nation-state out of the empire is a simplification. Miller states that during the debates on the 'boundaries of Russian-ness' Russian nationalists never tried to claim the whole territory of the state as Russian national space.[211] He then points to the fact that Russian nationalism developed in opposition to the Russian empire, although it did influence the "official nationalism" of the state.[212]

These views on Russian nationalism are important here for several reasons. First of all, the tradition in which Russian nationalism opposes but also influences the official

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[206] Vera Tolz, *Russia Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2001), 155-156.

[207] Geoffrey Hosking, "Empire and Nation-Building in Late Imperial Russia," in *Russian Nationalism Past and Present*, edited by Geoffrey Hosking and Robert Service (London: Macmillan, 1998), 19.

[208] Ibid., 21.

[209] Miller, *Imperiia Romanovykh i natsionalizm,* 149.

[210] Ibid., 150.

[211] Ibid., 156.

[212] Ibid., 153.

ideology of the state is clearly visible since 1990 and even now.[213] Secondly, when Miller argues that Russian nationalists were not trying to turn an empire into a nation-state and Russify non-Russian territories, it seems very natural to him that Ukrainian and Belarusian lands constituted a Russian 'core' to Russian nationalists. This is true, of course, but this should bring some important modifications to the Miller's argument: although Russian nationalist project in the 19th century did not try to turn the whole empire into a nation-state, it still envisioned Russification of Ukrainian and Belarusian lands, an imperial policy. In other words, this project was a direct predecessor of the 'anti-imperial' proposal of Solzhenitsyn to create 'Russian Union'. Miller acknowledges this, when he talks about the symbolic power of the city of Kyiv for the Russian nationalist thought.[214] From this point of view the concept by Vera Tolz of 'Russian empire as a nation state' seems more valid than Miller would like. In the Tolz's words:

> "… the idea that the new Russia should be primarily the state of Russian speakers who enjoy a legally defined dominant status, as well as the idea that the Slavic nucleus of the USSR should reunite, attracts the largest support within the Russian Federation."[215]

This idea of Russian *national* identity presumes the necessity of *imperial* control over the Ukrainian and Belarusian Slavic peoples. The irony here is that such control would not be considered imperial by proponents of such idea.

This struggle to define the boundaries to a large extend determined the Russian policy in the 'near abroad': appeals to the need of protection for the Russian-speaking people, lack of clear distinction between Russians and Russian-speakers, territorial claims for Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, fight against 'revisionism' of history, against national symbols of the former Soviet republics (Ukraine, in particular) etc. Arguably, such crisis resulted in

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[213] Most contemporary radical Russian nationalist movements oppose the Russian government. They fly the 'imperial flag' (black, yellow, white flag that was a symbol of the Russian empire in the second half of the 19th century), and argue that Russian nation is oppressed by the state, because it's national territory is not defined within the Russian Federation.

[214] Miller, *Imperiia Romanovykh i natsionalizm,* 159-160.

[215] Tolz, "Conflicting 'Homeland Myths' and Nation-state Building in Post-Communist Russia": 293.

the lack of consistency of the foreign policy towards the region. Russian authorities unofficially supported the war in Transnistria that was meant to prevent Moldova's 'unification' with Romania. *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* published articles that paid tribute to Russian 'volunteers' fighting against Moldova's government forces and predicted that similar scenario could happen in Baltic states, where 'oppressed Russian-speakers' could start an uprising.[216] In the meantime, Russian authorities were not ready to get into a similar conflict with Ukraine. This is why, while Russian Supreme Council expressed claims for the Ukrainian city of Sevastopol, Russian president and government publicly denounced such position.[217]

Apart from those external challenges to the Russian identity, there was a strong fear that Russian Federation can continue falling apart and follow the path of the Soviet Union. Not all autonomous republics within the new Russian Federation were willing to sign the Federation treaty, proposed by Yeltsin. The republic of Tatarstan (as well as Yakutia and some others) and its local elites, for instance, was able to create a real challenge to the center: proclaim sovereignty, elect local president and disapprove of the Federation treaty.[218] The lack of unity among the different parts of the Russian Federation in addition to the permanent political and economic crisis (as well as unprecedented crime rates) created an atmosphere of depression within the society. The first war in Chechnya that started in 1994 brought a certain rise of nationalism and patriotism in the Russian society. Surprisingly, this rise corresponds to the statements about the Russian international 'greatness' mentioned above.

In order to resolve the problem of integrity of a new state Russian authorities began to forge a new *Russian*, as a political category – *Rossiyane*, instead of ethnic *Russkie*, both

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[216] Gennadii Melkov, "Naemniki? Aggressory? Dobrovol´tsy," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, June 10, 1992.

 Yurii Stroganov, "Po severo-vostoku Estonii brodit prizrak Pridnestrov´ia," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, July 1, 1992.

[217] United Nations Security Council, "Letter Dated 19 July 1993 From the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council" S/26109, July 19, 1993. Accessed March 23, 2020: https://undocs.org/ru/S/26109.

[218] Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality,* 77.

translated into English as *Russians*.[219] To an extent the introduction of a new political term might resemble a plan to develop a modern political nationality: no matter the ethnic background, all citizens of the Russian Federation became *Rossiyane*. On the other hand, combined with a public denouncement of ethnic nationalism, such national policy resembled Soviet national policy of the 'brotherhood of nations'. Post-Soviet Russian Federation, just like the Soviet Union, declared the importance of non-Russian national and cultural rights. In 2000s and especially after 2010 such national policy yet again resembles gradual Russification campaigns of the past. To an extent this means that what was seen as a creation of a political nationality in 1990s, turned into the development of an imperial state. The biggest difference between the Russian and the Western imperialism is that while the West drew various lines between the metropoles and colonies, Russian imperialism, in fact, often destroyed those lines and wished to assimilate colonized minorities. Therefore, while a creation of all-encompassing identity in the Western context looks like a creation of political nationality, this is not necessarily true for Russia. The official Russian ideology in 1990s was not ethnic nationalist, but (state, cultural) nationalism was constantly present, even if not acknowledged; (cultural) Russians continued to be the dominant nationality. The term *Russian* continued to be undefined – the ethnic category was too narrow even for Russian Federation, while the political category was so broad and flexible that could potentially involve the whole post-Soviet region, or at least its Slavic and/or Russian-speaking part.

2.2   Forging a Ukrainian Post-Soviet Identity

Ukraine's post-Soviet identity and the process of state-building went through a crisis of

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[219] Ukrainian language does not have such distinction in relation to Russians as well. Ukrainian word *Rosiiany* that resembles *Russian* as a political category (*Rossiiane*) describes both ethnic and political categories. Meanwhile, Ukrainian word *Rus'ky* that might resemble Russian ethnic term (*Russkii*) points to the legacy of the Kyivan Rus' and the historical name that used to be attributed to contemporary Ukrainian lands until as late as 18th century. Ukrainian historian of the early 20th century and the creator of the modern Ukrainian historiography Mykhailo Hryshevski named his 11 volume history *The History of Ukraine-Rus'*. The application of the ethnonym *Russian* to the population of Tsardom of Muscovy was a modern invention, related to the creation of the Russian Empire in the 18th century. That was also a way to set empire's claim for the lands and history of the Kyivan Rus'. For more see: Mykola Riabchuk "Ukrainians as Russia's Negative 'Other': History Comes Full Circle" in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 49 (2016): 75-85.

its own. This crisis had some similarities with the Russian one but did not involve any ambition for great power status. Ukraine did become a legal successor of the Ukrainian SSR, which automatically made it a member of the UN. Other than that, the whole system of international relations and internal state building had to be built from scratch. The newly independent republic inherited a large and heterogeneous population, a system of economy that was integrated with the economies of other Soviet republics, an enormous army that it did not at first control, the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world, and extreme poverty.

Ukraine's new political elites, at the time of independence, could hardly fit for the role of state builders. Speaking in terms of colony-metropole relationships, the new Ukrainian political elites were a Soviet version of colonial administration. Their managerial experience during the Soviet past did not involve policy creation on a scale of an independent state, but only fulfillment of instructions that came from the state capital. Neither did they have much experience in international relations. The Foreign Ministry of the Ukrainian SSR had mostly ceremonial functions. Russia also 'inherited' the vast majority of the foreign real estate from the Soviet Union. This meant that diplomats of the new Ukraine often did not even have places to work.

Most top politicians of independent Ukraine were part of the former communist *nomenklatura*. The first President of Ukraine, Leonid Kravchuk, was elected from a position of a chairman of the Supreme Council. Previously, he served as a secretary for ideology in the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party. His main political opponents belonged to *Narodny Rukh* (People's movement) party – a heterogenous group of proponents of the Ukrainian independence that united people from the nationally-oriented intelligentsia all the way to the right side of the political scale. Their leader, Vyacheslav Chornovil, came second during the first presidential elections. The Soviet past of both the government and the opposition defined thinking to a large extent. People who appeared at the top of the Ukrainian politics came from a Soviet province and operated with Soviet economic and ideological/humanitarian categories. They had to build a state for a nation that relatively few in the world had known of and that did not have a strong memory of statehood in the past. Despite being in opposition, *Narodny*

Rukh had a great influence on the new Ukrainian ideology and society, playing a role of 19th century *budyteli*.[220] Their efforts contributed to gradual 'Ukrainization' of Leonid Kravchuk himself.

Ukraine inherited a very large and mixed population. A significant part of the population was nationally Russian. Another large portion was 'de-nationalized' – Sovietized. During the Soviet times every person was 'born into' a nationality. Therefore, an understanding of national belonging became a blurred concept – some people claimed their belonging to nationality based on their ethnicity, or ethnicity of their parents. Some people defined their nationality based on their place of birth. This did not necessarily mean that they shared a national culture of 'their' nationality. Some people identified with 'Soviet' pan-nationality. A study by Paul Pirie, published back in 1996 demonstrated how vague were the categories of self-identification in Southern and Eastern Ukraine, where the majority of the population was Russian-speaking, but often identified themselves as Ukrainian.[221] The study by Pirie and other similar studied of post-Soviet identities in non-Russian post-Soviet states demonstrate the methodological flaws and any official censuses and data collection regarding people's self-identification. The vast majority of the Ukrainian population claimed their belonging to the Ukrainian nation, more than a half of Ukrainian residents named Ukrainian as their native language. However, each respondent could have one's own understanding of those questions and one's own identity.

One of the most interesting terms in Homi Bhabha's writing is that of "unhomely world" and feeling of "unhomed" by the colonized subject. According to Bhabha, to be "unhomed" does not literally mean 'to be homeless'. This term refers to a marginalized feeling, when a person cannot find one's own place within the dominant cultural/political discourse.[222] Being 'unhomed' in a broad sense means being political/culturally displaced, based on certain characteristics (race, gender, class, nationality etc.). Unhomed

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[220] Those who awake; a term refers to 19th century intelligentsia, who started 'nation awakening' projects among various Slavic peoples.

[221] Paul Pirie "National Identity and Politics in Southern and Eastern Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies 48*, no. 7 (1996): 1079-1104.

[222] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 15-16.

person distorts the public and private spheres of life by manifesting one's own 'in between' existence publicly. This manifestation happens when 'unhomed' brings public attention to what's supposed to stay undefined, within the limits of one's home.[223] In a hierarchical colonial space feeling of unhomed is more than just a reference to one's social, cultural or political state, but also to psychology of a colonized individual that decided to challenge the status quo. 'Unhomed' in Homi Bhabha's writing refers to a variety of types of displacement. It ranges from feminist critique of the patriarchal domestic space to which women are limited to racial discrimination in settler colonial societies. In the context of national inequality of Eastern Europe the state of 'unhomed' might signify a covert unofficial assimilation under the façade of rhetoric of equality. In the most simple sense this feeling can be described with a quote from 19th century Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko:

> "It does not touch me, not a whit,
>
> If I live in Ukraine or no,
>
> If men recall me, or forget,
>
> Lost as I am, in foreign snow,—
>
> Touches me not the slightest whit.
>
> Captive, to manhood I have grown
>
> In strangers' homes, and by my own
>
> Unmourned, a weeping captive still,
>
> I'll die; all that is mine, I will
>
> Bear off, let not a trace remain
>
> In our own glorious Ukraine,
>
> Our own land — yet a stranger's rather…"[224]

Born to a family of serfs, Taras Shevchenko became one of the original *budyteli* of the Ukrainian sense of nationhood. His sense of 'unhomed' comes from a feeling of being

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[223] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 18-19.

[224] Taras Shevchenko, "Meni Odnakovo, Chy Budu…", translated by Vera Rich. Accessed March 23, 2020: https://taras-shevchenko.storinka.org/in-the-fortress-it-does-not-touch-me-not-a-whit-poem-of-taras-shevchenko-ukrainian-to-english-translation-by-vera-rich.html.

unfree, whether in his native land, or not. "Our own land – yet stranger's rather" – reflects Shevchenko's understanding of foreignness of the Russian imperial rule in Ukraine, a feeling of a person that feels alienated and marginalized in his own land. To the poet this marginalization does not differ from the kind that he experiences 'abroad'. Shevchenko's poems became a foundation for the Ukrainian pantheon of heroes, and, to a large extend, for a separate Ukrainian identity. Shevchenko himself became one of the Ukrainian heroic pantheon. His poetry defined the mode of Ukrainian patriotism in the 19th century, and, arguably, throughout the 20th century and post-Soviet decades. The importance of his figure was so strong that his place in the Ukrainian culture and symbolic pantheon was not challenged (but, rather, appropriated) by the Soviet rule.

Soviet national policies made bearers of the Ukrainian culture and identity unhomed. On November 5, 1968 when Kyiv was preparing for celebration of an anniversary of the October revolution, people on the central street – Khreshchatyk – heard a yelling "Down with occupants," "Live independent Ukraine. They then saw Vasyl Makukh, who set himself on fire and ran to the center of the street. His act of a public suicide was a protest against the Soviet policy of Russification of Ukraine. By making his own body a living torch, Makukh did exactly what Homi Bhabha refers to when describes the distortion of public and private spheres. He reclaimed his agency, his right for an identity and his own independence by publicly manifesting what no one else could. He brought his own private problem – that of Russification and assimilation of Ukrainian culture and identity – into the public domain. Everybody knew of that problem, but nobody dared to articulate it. He protested by setting his own body on fire – another element of a private domain – in a public space. For a regime that tried to control people's bodies and thoughts such act of reclaiming one's self was a political act in itself. The reaction of the agents of the regime – Soviet police and KGB – also confirms this distortion: when they saw a person on fire and heard his statements, their response was to remove people from overcrowded Khreschatyk street, to reduce the number of witnesses of this political statement, to keep private what 'is supposed to be' private. Vasyl Makukh died in a hospital. KGB then tortured his sister and interrogated his family members. They tried to find out whether Makukh was a member of any underground nationalist organization. His wife Lidia lost her job and had to live in poverty, bringing up their children. Vasyl Makukh died, but his

family had to bear responsibility for his actions. On January 21, 1978 Oleksa Hirnyk followed the example of Makukh and set himself on fire near the grave of Taras Shevchenko. This place was not as public as Khreshchatyk, but it was symbolic. That was a manifestation of unhomed near the grave of another unhomed. It signified a centuries-long continuity of oppression against the group that both of them represented. In his leaflets Hirnyk called on the Ukrainian people to resist Russian occupation and Russification of Ukraine. One of the leaflets said:

> "In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the proclamation of independent Ukraine by the Tsentralna Rada [Central Council] on January 22, 1918. On January 22, 1978 Hirnyk Oleksa from [the town of] Kalush burned himself, as a sign of protest. Is this the only way one can protest in the Soviet Union?!"[225]

The KGB did everything possible to keep this act of protest in secret, it only became widely known after 1991. That same year, in 1978 a Crimean Tatar Musa Mamut set himself on fire in protest against the state oppression of Crimean Tatars. An act of a public suicide in such a demonstrative form is inconceivable, unless a psychology of unhomed is in consideration.[226]

One of the main instruments of colonial rule, according to Homi Bhabha, is the power to create and reproduce stereotypes about the colonized.[227] Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, as a creation of 'Other' bases itself of the Western colonial power to create stereotypes about the Orient, to substitute the real culture of the colonized with a colonizer's artificial construct. In this context, it is important to consider Mykola Riabchuk's description of the 'Khohol'/'Little Russian' stereotype that was created in the

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[225] Natalia Patrikeeva, Yaroslava Trehubova, "Proty okupatsiï i rusyfikatsiï Ukraïny: 40 rokiv vid samospalennia Oleksy Hirnyka," *Radio Liberty*, January 20, 2018. Accessed March 23, 2020: https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/28985707.html.

[226] As this text was being written, on September 10, 2019 an Udmurt national Albert Razin, a professor of philosophy at the Udmurt State University in Izhevsk, burned himself in protest against Russian assimilation of Udmurt ethnicity and language.

[227] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 100.

Russian empire and evolved through the Soviet times as a representation of Ukrainians. According to Riabchuk, Russian political tradition created a 'norm' of 'good' Ukrainian-ness: they had to accept that Russians and Ukrainians were "almost the same people" and therefore, be open to cultural assimilation of Russians:

"All 'Little Russians' in both pre-Soviet and Soviet times had to be fully aware of both forms of sanctioning in case they dared to question or overstep the boundaries of the second formula of 'almost the same people.' All of them could be either symbolically downgraded to the level of backward, uncultured serfs (or, eventually, kolkhoz slaves), or totally excluded socially from life as obsessed nationalistic freaks or, worse, malicious criminals."[228]

This stigmatization created a situation in which Ukrainian language, as one of the most evident markers of nationality, became associated with backwardness of the rural area.[229] As a result, a migration of predominantly Ukrainophone rural population to the Russian-speaking cities of the Soviet Ukraine did not lead to the Ukrainization of the city, but to Russification of the rural migrants. This is an example of how a socially constructed perception of prestige contributes to the creation of social and inter-cultural hierarchies and leads to assimilation of a subaltern culture. In words of Riabchuk "Most Ukrainians had to either give up their linguistic-cum-cultural deviations and accept the socially constructed 'normality', or fight an uphill battle for their identity against the powerful 'common sense' that automatically requalified their cultural deviation into political deviation."[230]

In Soviet and post-Soviet discourse anecdotes about different nationalities were one of

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[228] Mykola Riabchuk, "Ukrainians As Russia's Negative 'Other'" in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 49 (2016): 78.

[229] Ibid., 79.

By the way, the same image of 'backwardness' was assigned to other non-Russian languages of the Soviet Union; the image of 'backward' Belarusian language puts it on the edge of extinction.

[230] Ibid.

the popular ways to spread stereotypes, embed them into the everyday culture and to assert the dominance of Russians within the hierarchy of nations. Western scholars have been analyzing Soviet political jokes and anecdotes for decades now. CIA even collected Soviet jokes about political leader and political system of the state. While jokes about the Soviet system were common, anecdotes about nationalities were numerous as well. They often ridiculed accents and a manner of speaking by representatives of non-Russian Soviet nations. This especially related to the people of Caucasian region and indigenous nations of the North – on obvious element of the racial dynamic that most scholars of the Soviet history prefer to ignore. Other anecdotes satirized about national traits of different nationalities, described Russians as winners in all unsolvable and unpredictably hard situations. The role and the content of the Soviet (and post-Soviet) anecdotes on inter-national topics as a instrument of cultural (and psychological) domination awaits an extensive study. In particular, it would be important to compare the ways anecdotes ridiculed opponents in the Cold war *and* non-Russia nations within the USSR. Jokes are a kind of instrument that is subtle and covert, it embeds stereotypes on a structural subconscious level. A recipient is not always aware or does not see that his or somebody else's identity is under attack. In the post-Soviet times jokes targeting nationalities were very responsive to the current political need. Mid- and late 1990s, for example, were a time of conflict between Russian and the Baltic states (Estonia, for instance) over the right of the Russian-speaking minorities. This coincided with the time, when jokes about 'slow' Estonians appeared regularly in various comic TV shows in Russia. Similarly, political problems between Russian and Ukraine coincided with jokes related to Ukrainians, who constantly 'stole' Russian gas, ate *salo* (pork fat) with garlic and wore *sharovary* (traditional Cossack pants). No Ukrainian image went without either of those elements. Needless to say that given the Russian dominance in Ukrainian television and popular culture throughout 1990s and 2000s, those jokes targeted not just Russian internal audience, but also audience of other post-Soviet countries.

These stereotypes and socially constructed hierarchies evolved into the post-Soviet times. To an extent they exist even today, when native Ukrainian speakers switch to their own poor and often unusual-sounding version of Russian language, when they come to the big city. This leads to the creation of the colonized identity – exactly those 'white masks'

over the black skin, described by Fanon. These masks exist within national, rather than racial terms. The existence of these stereotypes and hierarchies lead to several important consequences that characterized Ukrainian society in 1990s. The first is a responsive nature of the whole 'Ukrainian project' in early post-Soviet years (and to a certain extent even today). The second, is deep inferiority complex embedded into the society by centuries of imperial rule, a complex which was common for both nationally-minded Ukrainians and those possessing 'Little Russian' colonized identity. Finally, the inability to openly analyze and consider the Ukraine's colonial past from the point of view of a serious scholarship, rather than simple nationalistic/colonial myths contributed to internalizing of the historic past and conservation of social complexes and stereotypes about the 'Self' and the 'Other'. The inability of the Ukrainian society to openly discuss and process the complicated past is a product of colonized psychology and lack of control over one's own informational sphere. It leads to serious lags of the development of a civil, rather than ethnic national identity. Taras Kuzio argues that the inability of the Ukrainian society to develop civic national identity came as a result of its competition with the ethnic national identity.[231]

The responsive nature of the 'Ukrainian project' refers to the control over discourse. It is a constant need to justify decisions and actions, as well as respond to the accusation of the colonizer. In a (post-) colonial situation this kind of work takes most of the available resources. Therefore, the process of decolonization that involves restoration/reinvention of the natural culture and identity becomes even more complicated. Early Ukrainian state builders often focused on the rejection of what they saw as the Russian colonial legacy. Given the problem of limited resources and lack of cultural instruments of decolonization, this produced multiple (often ridiculous) historical myths about the glory of Ukraine and Ukrainians, which replaced the real history and gave way to opponents' criticism. But what is more important, Ukrainian post-Soviet mainstream (that includes former Soviet *nomenklatura*) of course failed to step away from the popular Soviet image of the Ukrainian culture as only limited to Cossack traditional outfits, food and folk

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[231] Taras Kuzio, "History, Memory and Nation Building in the post-Soviet Colonial Space", in *Nationalities Papers 30*, no. 2 (2002): 243.

songs. Nation-oriented intelligentsia from the *Narodny Rukh* also viewed the nation in cultural and ethnic terms and, ironically, did not step far enough away from the Soviet stereotyping of the Ukrainian culture.[232]

One of the popular myths that appeared in 1990s was that Mykhailo Hrushevski was the first president of the Ukrainian state during the period of revolution and prior to the Bolshevik invasion of Ukraine. The history of Ukrainian statehood of the revolutionary period returned to the historical narrative. Therefore, the classical Soviet Ukrainian anti-hero Symon Petliura joined the pantheon of Ukrainian heroes. Symon Petliura was a socialist Ukrainian politician of the revolutionary era, who headed the anti-Bolshevik struggle. Soviet mythology created an image of him as an ultimate Ukrainian anti-hero, representative of the 'Ukrainian nationalism.' In the post-Soviet pantheon of heroes Petliura was joined by the 17th century Cossack hetman (warlord) Ivan Mazepa. Mazepa was known for his alliance with Charles XII of Sweden against Peter I. This made him an ultimate Ukrainian 'traitor' and anti-hero of the pre-Soviet times. A third character who appeared in the pantheon, although with restrictions, was Stepan Bandera. He was a Ukrainian far-right nationalist, whose proponents organized a guerilla war against Nazi and Soviet armies during the Second World war. In the narrative of a Soviet and Russian propaganda, Bandera was an ultimate 'Ukrainian Nazi', again representing the 'treacherous' character of the Ukrainian nation. All three of these characters to a significant extent were a response to the empire's narrative. If the empire hated them so much, Ukrainian nationalist though had to rehabilitate them. In a similar fashion the very term 'nationalism' was rehabilitated in mass consciousness, representing an active fight for one's independence, rather than aggression against other nations. In addition, Ukrainian historians and politicians raised questions of Holodomor, political repressions of Ukrainian intelligentsia and other crimes of the Soviet state in Ukraine. None of those changes came easily. Every element that challenged Soviet historiography caused fierce criticism both inside and outside Ukraine, especially in Russia. Ukrainians were accused of nationalism and extremism, their claims for the history of Kyivan Rus' provoked jokes

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[232] Kuzio, "History, Memory and Nation Building in the post-Soviet Colonial Space", in *Nationalities Papers 30*, no. 2 (2002): 243.

that emphasized an artificial nature of such claims.

Soviet Ukraine did not have a historical narrative that was separate from the Russian history in any way. An 'absence' of history (in this case – history of statehood) of Ukraine was the main argument in hands of those, who believed that Ukraine was an artificial fake state. Any attempts to create, or recreate, such narratives got under heavy criticism as 'falsification' and 'rewriting' of history. Ukrainian political and intellectual elites, therefore, had to prove to the outside critics and to their very population that independent Ukrainian state had a (historical) right to exist. Even the very name of the state became a target. There are two main explanations of what did the name 'Ukraine' originally mean. Some scholars argued that in medieval times it often described a 'country', a particular territory, united by certain characteristics, literal opposite to the word 'abroad'. Mykhailo Hrushevski originally described Ukraine as a border territory – a description of a small piece of land that gave its name to the whole country. A version of Ukraine as a borderland became popular among Soviet and Russian scholars. Due to alleged self-evidence of this version, it easily became politically instrumentalized and turned into insult. In a perception of many, Ukraine was *U-kraina* (*u kraya* = 'on the edge') – a country on the border/borderland [of Russia]. A 'borderland' has no right for agency or history of its own, it is an object of influence, a space of competition between two rival agents. And if Ukraine is a 'borderland' than of course another myth of Russian nationalists gains a lot of sense – Ukrainian nationality was an 'invention' of the Austrian imperial authorities that competed with the Russian empire.[233] This myth has obvious links to the later Soviet understanding of the Piedmont principle, described in Chapter 1. The perception of Ukraine as a borderland became an integral part of the Western scholarship and one of the first elements of the Western narrative of Ukrainian history. It even got into the broader Western political theories: Samuel Huntington described Ukraine as a country divided by the 'clash of civilizations', a country on the edge of two

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[233] Another author of the 'invention' often appears to be Polish. In that version, Ukraine 'has always been' a contested territory between 'Russia' and 'Poland' (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). Therefore, Ukrainian language is a Polonized version of Russian. The most recent appearance of this myth in a public sphere came from Vladimir Putin himself in late 2019.

competing civilizations.

It is not always clear what comes first – a myth about Ukraine being a 'divided' nation, or the division itself. The statement that Ukraine is divided between the East and the West has been around analytical texts as long as an independent Ukrainian state exists. It often seems however, that the 'division' became an 'invented tradition', a result of long-lasted stereotyping of different parts of the country, a result of an imperial rule. Politics and history of other countries of the world demonstrate that divisions within societies (different political views, economic and social circumstances, even different traditions) are more of a norm than exclusion. In Ukraine, however, at least until very recent times, the geographical division was the main element of political analysis. Further chapters will discuss the way the image of Western Ukraine was constructed in Crimea. This process was not a post-Soviet invention, but rather a Soviet tradition. At some point, those political stereotypes enter scholarship and analytics, embed themselves in beliefs of the population and to an extent become real – if not in what they project, but at least in influence on the everyday reality.

One way prove the Ukraine's right for statehood was through the rehabilitation of the pre-revolutionary Ukrainian historiography (including Mykhailo Hrushevski as a creator of the Ukrainian historical meta-narrative) and mass research of the 'blank spots' of Ukrainian past. As Taras Kuzio states, after 1991 Ukrainian historians started asking questions 'why?' and 'who is responsible?'[234] The Ukrainian diaspora played its role too: *A History of Ukraine* by a Canadian-Ukrainian Orest Subtelny often was *the only* non-Soviet history of Ukraine, available to Ukrainians in early 1990s. Ukrainian state and elites were forging the nation and reviving (inventing) historical roots of that nation in the past. One of the symbols of the new Ukrainian state – a golden trident – became a direct reference to the history of the Kyivan Rus' and its prince Volodymyr. Ukraine linked itself to the medieval history of its own land, which automatically became a direct challenge for the Russian historical narrative and Western historical narrative of Russia. Until that time, the topic of Kyivan Rus' was 'reserved' for the Russian historians, and

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[234] Taras Kuzio "History, Memory and Nation Building…": 251.

Russians were believed to be the main successor of the Kyiv's medieval past.[235]

Another problem was that the creators of the new state- and nation-centered narratives in Ukraine were bearers of all the mentioned myths as well, even though they themselves believed they were undoing the empire. They often alienated those parts of society that did not fit into their own parameters of patriotism, and tended to speak past, rather than spoke *to* their opponents. One of the examples would be an attempt of quasi-colonization ('internal colonization') of Ukraine's East and South by nationally-minded Ukrainian intelligentsia through the organization of music festivals (Chervona Ruta festival as an example) and other cultural and political initiatives.[236] As noble and positive as those initiatives were for the development of Ukrainian culture, they weren't and couldn't be a basis for dialogue between different parts of the country. Actions of the nationally-minded intelligentsia, put in the Soviet political context and the context of Russian informational domination, provoked the creation of myth about the nature of those initiatives. Pro-Ukrainian intelligentsia often lacked strategy and/or clear path to the clear goals, reducing their actions to self-reassuring symbolism. Being the bearers of the imperial myths, they often went to the opposite side of the spectrum, presuming that undoing myths means enforcing their direct opposites. As a result, those colonization attempts provoked resistance and often reinforces the existing cultural myths. They did, however, contribute to deconstructing of stereotypes between different parts of the country. But this effect was smaller than could be expected.

As much as during the Soviet times, in the post-Soviet decades Russian language remained to be a Ukraine's link to the world culture, literature and scholarship. The lack of financial resources, the lack of professional translators and the lack of attention of the state to this issue contributed to the situation, when Ukrainians read Russian language translations of the world's literature. This automatically made Russian language compulsory for any person who wanted to be an educated member of society and

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[235] Taras Kuzio "History, Memory and Nation Building…": 251.

[236] Taras Mel´nyk, interview by author, June 8, 2019.

Bohdan Sobutsky, oral interview by author, June 26, 2018.

contributed to the stereotype high culture and scholarship could not be in Ukrainian language. University of Kyiv Mohyla academy, established in 1992, might have been one of the most successful projects that addressed this issue. It was found by a group of Ukrainian intellectuals as a university that was meant to educate a new post-Soviet generation of the Ukrainian intellectual elite. From the start the university had two languages of operation – Ukrainian and English. This encouraged students to build direct links between Ukraine and the world culture and exclude Russian language and Russian state from the role of an intermediary.

The problem of Russian control over the media in Ukraine in 1990s appeared in this text already. Following chapters will show that it was an important factor of Russian (post-) colonial control over Crimea. There is a need to emphasize that Russian presence in the Ukrainian media space was a challenge that prevented the internal dialogue, supported internal myths and contributed to the recreation of the (post-) colonial inferiority complexes. In many spheres Ukrainian actors (whether 'pro-Russian' or 'anti-Russian') existed within the political and cultural frameworks, set by the foreign Russian actors. The very dichotomy of 'pro-Russian' and 'anti-Russian' (nationally-minded) Ukrainians came out of the post-colonial/ post-imperial political discourse.

Finally, whether nation-minded or 'pro-Russian', more than anything else, post-Soviet Ukrainians were *hungry* people. Extremely harsh economic conditions created a sense of nostalgia for the Soviet past as early as within the first half of the 1990s. This kind of nostalgia, in fact, was common for the countries of the former socialist camp. Hard economic conditions, complicated transformation to market economy as well as the Soviet mentality (lack of understanding within all social groups of how market economy functions) often led to a situation, when people voted for economic populists. Economy, or perception of economy, also often defined political orientation of people. And if the economic condition in Russia was better, then it became much easier to campaign in favor of closer economic (as well as political and cultural ties) with the north-eastern neighbor. Post-Soviet stereotypes, perception of national prestige and inferiority complexes combined with never stopping economic crisis. Russia was in its own crisis, but everyone believed (and all Russian media said so) that the economic conditions in

Russia were much better than in Ukraine. People were stockpiling what they could and often had nothing to feed their children with. Many of them did not have time or desire to consider problems of nationality, identity, future of their country or its political orientation.

2.3   Conclusion

After the fall of the Soviet Union Crimea appeared in between of the two nation- and state-building projects that were often being created in opposition to each other. Crimea, as part of the sacred pantheon of Russian imperial mythology became a part of the post-Soviet Russian nationalist discourse. Imagined as a place of the Russian glory, Crimea seemed to offer to Russians what they had lost with the fall of the Soviet Union – mightiness and greatness of their state. The importance of Crimea for the Russian post-Soviet nationalist thought came out of the dominant historical narrative that which defined Crimea as an integral part of the Russian culture and history. There was no economic, strategic or any other rational reason for the post-Soviet Russia to remain involved in the internal Crimean politics. The only reason based on the imperial legacy and nostalgia for the historic 'glory' that Russians read about in the history books. It was a matter of a national pride that Crimea (and Ukraine) remained within the Russian sphere of influence; in future this sphere could potentially become an outpost for the restoration of the empire. In other words, Russian post-Soviet state and Russian post-Soviet nation got trapped in the *Russian* imperialist narrative, formulated by the Russian and Soviet empires.

The Ukrainian state and nation-building project often developed in opposition to the Russian state, as well as in opposition to the Soviet past. This often meant (re-) inventing the historical narrative and national identity, proving one's own right for statehood. The latter was a reflection of deep inferiority complexes, instilled in members of a very heterogenous group of those who called themselves 'Ukrainian.' Having no other political, cultural, economic example other than the Soviet, Ukrainian political and intellectual leaders often tried to build a state that would be different from the Soviet, but with the Soviet instruments. Early 1990s in Ukraine seem to have been a time of energetic social activism, but very passive state. Ukrainian intelligentsia often had to

prove to the Ukrainian population itself that Ukrainian language and culture were not a point of shame, not a sign a rural (and therefore 'uncivilized') background. In places like Crimea, this last statement was even harder to prove than elsewhere, due to the competition with the Russian nationalist project and overall political environment of Crimea.

Chapter 3

3 Challenge to the Status Quo and Response of Crimea's Elites

Crimea entered the post-Soviet historical period as a Russian settler colony. The political, economic and cultural power on the peninsula laid within the settler colonial institutions. The uniqueness of such position was in the fact the Crimea appeared as part of a unitary and independent post-Soviet Ukraine, while the source of its colonial system was in Russia, in a metropole of a former Soviet and Russian empires. Crimean elites, who were at the top of the settler colonial institutions, were isolated from the politics of the Ukrainian SSR and traditionally oriented at Moscow. This traditional orientation pre-defined their allegiance in the post-Soviet era. Crimean settler colonial institutions and people in charge of them went to an extensive effort in order to protect the settler colonial status quo on the peninsula, as it assured the preservation of the existing power relations.

The history of the 'Crimea's' fight for autonomy in the 1990s, therefore, was nothing else than a fight of the local political elites and settler colonial institutions for the preservation of their traditional powers and structures. This fight happened through the use of the available colonial resource, like land distribution, culture, propaganda in the media, policing and administrative resource. In addition, it relied on the political, cultural and economic help and support from the (former) imperial center (see Chapter 5). A component of that fight remained purely external, as a controlled conflict on a territory of Ukraine was a useful political instrument for the Russian authorities. That instrument allowed to question the territorial integrity of Ukraine and increase or decrease the intensity of a pro-Russian separatist movement in Crimea, depending on the political loyalty and foreign policy orientation of the Ukrainian elites.

The timeline of this struggle begins with a mobilization of the Crimean communist elites by the end of 1990. This was when the Crimean regional deputies proclaimed the republican status of the peninsula and declared sovereignty of 'Crimeans' over the peninsula. The rise in political status of the Crimean region and its elites corresponded to a general Ukraine's drift towards independence from the Soviet Union and therefore,

could be seen as a blackmailing tactic, aimed at preservation of the USSR. The split within the Crimean political circles that came with the election of Yurii Meshkov as a president of Crimea in 1994 marked a temporary replacement of the Crimean communists with the overtly pro-Russian populists at the top of the Crimean settler colonial system. Both camps, however, despite being political opponents, existed within the pro-Russian settler colonial discourse and envisioned Crimea as a 'historically Russian' land. Arguably, the appearance of the overt pro-Russian populists at the top of the Crimean institutions stopped the Crimea's drift towards larger conservation of the status quo. The election of Meshkov and pro-Russian Crimean Supreme Council eventually gave Ukrainian central authorities enough excuse to interfere and increase their presence on the peninsula.

The communist settler colonial status quo did not equal to an immediate secession from Ukraine and joining Russia, but an intermediary status *between* the two states, akin to the one that Crimea had during the Soviet times. The Soviet image of Crimea as an all-Soviet resort and a home port for the Black Sea Fleet defined the image of Crimea's preferable future – that in close alliance with Russia, transmitted by the local press and authorities. The Black Sea Fleet, as a settler colonial institution that was *de facto* controlled by the Russian government actively participated in this fight for the Crimean status quo. Russian anti-communist atmosphere of early Yeltsin's years was not the most preferable environment for the early post-Soviet Crimean elites. This was another reason why joining Russia was not desirable for them. However, the ability to maintain contacts with the Russian politicians and state institutions gave leverage to the Crimean elites in their fight with the Ukraine's center. It also provided political bonuses for the various Russian politicians that could be used in a domestic Russian political struggle. This intermediary status of Crimea seemed also relatively comfortable for the (former) communist elites of the independent Ukraine. Having no deep understanding of the Crimean social and political environment, Ukrainian elites relied on the information they received from the communist Crimean counterparts. Crimean autonomy, therefore, was a slim balance that 'froze' the conflict and postponed it until better times.

This settler colonial balance, however, did not correspond to the desires of two decolonization movements – Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar – that appeared in Crimea with the fall of the USSR. The pro-Ukrainian movement was part of a general Ukrainian democratic and anti-communist trend, aimed at 'national awakening' and state-building. The Crimean Tatar decolonization movement was an extension of a decades-long Crimean Tatar fight for their repatriation and restoration of their national rights on their indigenous land. Both these movements in Crimea were in a similar position, as they both challenged the settler colonial status quo and aimed to redefine Crimea in a new way. Both these movements often supported each other and coordinated their efforts, despite the fact that a substantial part of the pro-Ukrainian activists happened to share the imperial stereotypes about Crimean Tatars. Both these movements were 'othered' by the settler colonial institutions in a similar way – through repression and accusations of extremism on the one hand, and employment of democratic rhetoric for imperial purposes on the other hand.

3.1   What Does the Status Quo Look Like?

In the morning of August 19, 1991 Soviet radio announced the creation of the State Committee on the State of Emergency (GKChP) in the USSR. In their address to citizens of the Soviet Union, members of the Committee, headed by the vice-president of the USSR, announced that President Gorbachev was unable to perform his duties due to his health condition. They also criticized the politics of *perestroika*, and argued that the power in the USSR lied in the hands of forces that were willing to destroy the state. By August 22 it became clear that the Committee lost and that what would later be described as a coup d'état failed. However, throughout the day of August 19th little was that clear. Members of the Committee pulled the Soviet troops to Moscow and for some time had it under control. Their fate to a significant extent depended on the reaction of the Soviet republics to the coup. The August coup served as a trigger, a last straw, for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The reaction to the coup from the regional communist elites illustrated their desire for personal survival and the increased independence from the center that they were gaining.

As it came out later, after the coup failed, the Central Committee of the communist party of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic sent out instructions to the regional committees of the Communist party telling them to support the Committee. However, the central Ukrainian authorities, the republican parliament and its chairman Leonid Kravchuk, did not rush to recognize the new regime, demonstrating a split between the party and the state authorities of the republic. Neither did they publicly oppose it. Later Kravchuk claimed that during the private meeting with the Committee's envoy to Ukraine, general Valentin Varennikov, he refused to impose martial law. Kravchuk formally argued that Varennikov did not have a written document from GKChP that could confirm his authority, neither was there a need to tighten control over Ukraine's population.[237] This kind of political flexibility as a special feature of Kravchuk's character became one of the symbols of the early post-Soviet years in Ukraine.[238] It seems, however, that Kravchuk was not the only possessor of such flexibility, even if he appeared to be one of the best. The unspoken culture of Soviet politics made the ability to maneuver and to predict 'the direction of the wind' a question of survival. About eight hundred kilometers from Kyiv, the head of the Crimean parliament Mykola Bahrov adopted a similar 'wait and see' strategy. This, of course, would allow him to take the side of a winner in the conflict and argue that the choice had been made immediately. Several years later, when Bahrov was writing his memoirs, he claimed that his only goal was to preserve peace in Crimea.[239] The August coup was quelled in Moscow as a result of public demonstrations and Yeltsin's decisiveness combined with the indecisiveness of coup organizers. But it showed how loose the chain of the Soviet command was, how autonomous the regional elites were, and how non-ideological the political system was.

Several years after the coup there still was some uncertainty as to who stood behind it and

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[237] Leonid Kravchuk. Interview by Mykola Veresen' and Vitalii Portnikov (Kyiv, 1997) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union. The Oral History of Independent Ukraine 1988-1991*. Accessed March 30, 2020: http://oralhistory.org.ua/interview-ua/510/.

[238] The common anecdote at the time, pointing to this feature was the following: "The rain started. Somebody offers Kravchuk an umbrella. He refuses: 'Thank-you, I'll manage to walk in between rain drops'".

[239] Nikolai Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog* (No publishing information, 1995), 178.

what its goals were. Some even presumed that Gorbachev himself saw the ineffectiveness of his reforms and the risk of the dissolution of the state and therefore inspired a conservative revolution.[240] The coup itself seemed unusual to the Soviet politicians in Ukraine. Memoirs of multiple people reflect that many experienced this time as one in which they constantly expected to be arrested by the secret police. One of the leaders of Ukrainian *Narodny Rukh,* dissident and Soviet political prisoner Viacheslav Chornovil, remembered that he was at a music festival, "Chervona Ruta" in Zaporizhzhia, when he heard the news about the coup. Chornovil remembered that somebody woke him up in the morning, bringing the news about the coup: "I calmly replied to him that the coup is probably not something serious, because right now I am here finishing my sleep, seeing dreams, and not [staying] in a prison cell of some kind…"[241] Deputy chairman of the Ukraine's parliament at that time, Volodymyr Hryniov, believed that Ukraine's refusal to sign a new union treaty within the USSR could be one of the triggers of the coup. He described the coup as "a poorly prepared action, with no elaborate strategy," a sign of despair of the ruling elites.[242] In his interview Hryniov also mentioned that the absence of immediate arrests by the KGB was one of the signs that the coup was not well-organized, or was not planned to be a serious act.[243]

The Central Committee of the Communist party of the Ukrainian Soviet republic sent directives to support the coup. But the party itself at the time was already split, and it no longer had the overwhelming control over the state and society that it had possessed in the past. Multiple sources claim that most regional committees in Ukraine were split between the elder majority of the conservative 'hardliners' and the younger generation of

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[240] Nikolai Bagrov*, Interview by Mykola Veresen' (Ukraine, 1996) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union. The Oral History of Independent Ukraine 1988-1991.* Accessed March 30, 2020: http://oralhistory.org.ua/interview-ua/372/.

Volodymyr Hryniov. Interview by Mykola Veresen' (Kyiv, 1996) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…* Accessed March 30, 2020: http://oralhistory.org.ua/interview-ua/239/.

[241] Vyacheslav Chornovyl. Interview by Marta Kolomiets (Kyiv, 1996) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…* Accessed March 30, 2020: http://oralhistory.org.ua/interview-ua/648/.

[242] Volodymyr Hryniov. Interview by Mykola Veresen' (Kyiv, 1996) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…*

[243] Ibid.

communist reformers. The former were accustomed to following the party line. Therefore, they followed the direction of Gorbachev's *perestroika* in spite of their own internal opposition to it. The latter supported the *perestroika*, but they often lacked political experience and remained the minority within their respective regional committees. One administrative step below the regions, in the district committees the situation was similar. Leonid Kravchuk believed that not only did the secretaries of district committees had the most power due to their constant communication with people, most of them in Ukraine belonged to the group of conservative hardliners.[244] Crimean regional committee was no different from others in terms of these internal divisions. In the Crimea specifically, the party hardliners did not like Kyiv politicians' slow movement towards Ukrainian sovereignty in the late 1980s, especially that of Leonid Kravchuk.[245]

The tendency towards the creation of autonomous republics in late 1980s and early 1990s demonstrates that the problem of regional alienation was common throughout the Soviet Union. Towards the end of 1980s the power of local (regional) elites within the Soviet Union grew as the center had an increasing number of challenges to respond to. Therefore, in Crimea issues like the repatriation of Crimean Tatars gradually became a local problem of the Crimean regional committee, rather than an issue of concern to Soviet central authorities.[246] Thus, Crimean authorities in Simferopol gained more authority over Crimea's internal problems. Meanwhile, Leonid Kravchuk emphasized "the unbelievable centralization" as a characteristic of Moscow's control over the republican authorities in Kyiv.[247] The Soviet center was simply losing control over certain regions and seemed to focus on keeping the union together by controlling the republican centers. To an extent this means that Russia's problem with the sovereignty of

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[244] Leonid Kravchuk. Interview by Mykola Veresen' and Vitalii Portnikov (Kyiv, 1997) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…* Accessed March 30, 2020: http://oralhistory.org.ua/interview-ua/510/.

[245] Andriy Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

[246] Andriy Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog*, 27.

[247] Leonid Kravchuk. Interview by Mykola Veresen' and Vitalii Portnikov (Kyiv, 1997) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…*

the Republic of Tatarstan and the war in Chechnya had similar background reasons with the problem of Crimean separatism within Ukraine – a pattern of alienation among local elites from the center and their desire for more political and economic control over regional and local affairs. With Crimea, however, the situation was more complicated, since Russian political and governmental actors actively interfered. The system of power that formed in Crimea towards the end of the 1980s suggests that the peninsula was a relatively isolated region that was formally subordinated to the vertical of power of the Ukrainian SSR, but culturally and politically oriented at Moscow. In other words, Crimea's settler colonial system remained in place and was oriented at the metropole, despite its existing formal status as part of and subordinate to Ukraine.

Memoirs by Mykola Bahrov that came out in 1995, as well as his interview with Mykola Veresen' shortly after, leave an impression that the author never abandoned the strategy of adjusting his views to the dominant opinion of the time in order to stay safe. More or less this could probably be expanded as a characteristic of the elites at that time. In the meantime, according to Andriy Klymenko, Bahrov did not share as conservative an approach to Crimean politics as the first secretary of Crimean regional committee, Andriy Hirenko.[248] In his memoirs Bahrov argues that he had never supported the idea of Crimean separatism, but did fight for Crimea's political and economic autonomy within Ukraine.[249] Galina Starovoytova even argued that during the referendum for the independence of Ukraine. Mykola Bahrov came into personal agreement with Leonid Kravchuk and had to assure him that Crimea supported Ukrainian independence. In return, according to Starovoytova, Kravchuk promised Bahrov that he would grant autonomy to the Crimean Peninsula.[250] Whether this was a real agreement or just a conspiracy theory popular among Russian politicians, this kind of maneuvering fits into what seems to be a portrait of Mykola Bahrov as a political figure. It also to a large extent

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[248] Andriy Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

[249] Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog,* 104.

[250] Galina Starovoitova. Interview by Vitalii Portnikov (27 December 1997) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…* Accessed April 4, 2020: https://oralhistory.org.ua/interview-ua/566/.

characterizes the political climate of Crimea in early post-Soviet years. Following this same pattern of behavior, Mykola Bahrov supported the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.

In *The Crimea Question* Gwendolyn Sasse looks at the peninsula as a culturally, historically, ethnically and geographically distinct region of Ukraine, "a world in itself."[251] Crimean political elites traditionally had a very close connection to Moscow and were somewhat alienated within the political structure of the Ukrainian SSR. Crimea had been a holiday destination for all Soviet elites and therefore, the secretary of Crimean regional committee traditionally had personal access to the Soviet Secretary General as well as members of the Central Committee and other high-standing politicians from Moscow. It was part of the routine of the regional representatives to meet and greet Moscow visitors at the Simferopol airport, to entertain them, to attend closed parties and to get drunk with the Soviet leadership.[252] Such a short distance to the first persons of the state was a matter of prestige, as well as responsibility. In the meantime, the way Mykola Bahrov describes the position of Crimean party officials in the Ukrainian SSR, it seems that traditionally they had little chance of career advancement within the republic.[253] This contributed to the internal alienation of Crimea within Ukraine and added to the reasons why orientation towards Moscow traditionally looked more advantageous for the regional elites. For the Crimean elites, the peninsula was more of a part of the Soviet Union, rather than of Ukrainian republic within the Soviet Union.

None of the Soviet republics had control over the Soviet military. According to President Leonid Kravchuk, during the coup of 1991 the authorities of the Ukrainian SSR had no military forces to protect them in case of a possible attack.[254] General Morozov, the first defense minister of an independent Ukraine, confirmed that in early months of the

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[251] Sasse, *The Crimea Question*, 4.

[252] Andriy Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

[253] Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog*, 11.

[254] Leonid Kravchuk. Interview by Mykola Veresen' and Vitalii Portnikov (Kyiv, 1997) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…*

independence the commanders of the Ukrainian military districts reported to Moscow.[255] In early months after the fall of the USSR Russian president and government went to an enormous effort to preserve the control over the former Soviet military, by trying to transfer it under the 'joint' command of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The Black Sea Fleet constituted a separate military district, and the commander of the fleet reported personally to the Soviet Ministry of defense. After the fall of the USSR the fleet was transferred under the control of the CIS, as part of 'strategic forces'.[256] The fleet itself was not restricted to the city of Sevastopol, but included warehouses, airfields, military bases, cultural institutions and military media that spread out across Crimea. This made it one of the dominant military and political forces on the peninsula.

The presence of a military force that responded to Moscow even after the fall of the Soviet Union is a key factor in the analysis of the Crimean colonial status. Apart from being a Soviet resort, Crimea also hosted a Black Sea Fleet that was spread around the peninsula. Due to the high social status of Soviet military and its significant presence in Crimea, the fleet command constituted yet another group of Crimean elites that oriented themselves toward Moscow, not Kyiv. Both the historical narrative of the 'Russian' (here again the imperial term has been confused with the national) Black Sea Fleet as well as political indoctrination served as strong arguments in favor of preservation of the Russian control over the fleet.[257] Admiral Igor Kasatonov, appointed to the position of fleet commander immediately after the coup of 1991, owed his appointment to his commanders in Moscow. During the early post-Soviet years admiral Kasatonov became an influential military as well as political figure. His personal authority as a second-

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[255] Kostiantyn Morozov. Interview by Mykola Veresen' (Kyiv, 1995) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…* Accessed April 4, 2020: http://oralhistory.org.ua/interview-ua/632/.

[256] Many Ukrainian politicians and officers argued at the time that defining the Black Sea Fleet as 'strategic' was a pure manipulation, aimed at the preservation of the Russian control over the fleet.

[257] The historical narrative insisted that, just like Crimea, the Black Sea Fleet 'has always been' Russian. Therefore, Ukraine or any other country did not have any historical rights for it. In the meantime, the history of the fleet and its presence in the city of Sevastopol served as a foundation for the local Sevastopolian identity. In other words, the fleet had to remain Russian and it had to stay in Sevastopol, because 'historically' this was fair. This, of course, gave a serious political power to the fleet command and those politicians who had control over the fleet. Black Sea Fleet was a 'local' settler colonial institution that remained under the control of the (former) metropole.

generation commander (his father commanded the Black Sea Fleet as well) made his political opinions, choices and statements influential not just for the town of Sevastopol, but also within the rest of Crimea. Admiral Kasatonov was highly respected within the fleet both by the pro-Russian side and even by some Ukrainian officers.[258] Admiral Eduard Baltin, who replaced Kasatonov in 1993, seemed to have less personal influence. However, his very position as commander of the fleet made his opinions influential and he often defined public opinion. The ability of Moscow to maintain control over the Black Sea Fleet during the early 1990s enabled this large military (settler colonial) structure to remain a powerful instrument of political influence and military-informational subversion that assured Russia's direct influence in Crimea, unmediated by Ukrainian officials. The political stance of the fleet command was important for the political debates within the peninsula, since fleet officers and their families were also voters in elections. Institutions of the fleet conducted open and subversive informational operations, coordinated pro-Russian political protests and even used force against Ukrainian armed forces in order to reach small tactical and strategic political victories (See Chapter 5).

The structure of the Soviet Crimean society, as well as Soviet societies in general, put military and communist party functionaries in the most dominant positions. In Crimea, however, due to its relative geographical isolation, and its status as a border region, the local elites did not have any competition from other social groups. The Communist party or Komsomol, even on the very bottom level, gave people the necessary administrative experience, management skills and social connections to set them up for successful political careers in the post-Soviet era.[259] Those people knew how the Soviet society functioned, how the decision making process worked, and how one does politics in an environment that presumes strict control. By the time the Soviet Union fell, the former party officials were basically the only social group that was prepared to take power – in the government, on the emerging market, or both. Therefore, it is not a surprise that in

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[258] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

[259] Bohdan Moroz, interview by author, August 11, 2018.

post-Soviet spaces, former party or Komsomol officials evolved into post-Soviet political and business elites.

Emerging organized crime operations also became an important factor in politics and on the market as well, but they quickly came into cooperation with the political elites. Crimea had regional (according to their area of operation within the peninsula) and ethnic groups of organized criminals, most famous being *Seilim* and *Bashmaki*. At times their power within cities (Sevastopol, for instance) was bigger than that of official state authorities.[260] The connection between organized crime, politicians and (former) Soviet security services created another connection between political and economic power that requires further research. The political flexibility of Mykola Bahrov, and as we later will see, admiral Igor Kasatonov, were not unique for the early post-Soviet politics. All leaders, at all levels of state service appeared in front of a choice, and their first priority was to preserve their own careers (and sometimes freedom). By the late 1980s not many people in the Soviet Union still believed in the orthodox ideas of Marxism-Leninism. However, Soviet political practices and narratives often informed the worldviews (and the image of the future) and were used as a 'common sense' during the political agitation of post-Soviet times. Post-Soviet rhetoric of 'brotherhood' between Russia and Ukraine, understanding of Russia's regional political and cultural lead (as a former center of a Soviet empire) was common among people from various political camps. In Crimea, for example, even forces that were considered 'anti-Russian' felt necessary to emphasize the non-radicalism of their policies towards Russia.

Another important way in which Crimea oriented at Moscow was its economy, which concentrated around the supply of the military. By late 1980s, the Black Sea Fleet had around 150,000 military personnel (not including civilians, working for different fleet structures).[261] In addition to that, Crimea hosted a number of factories that produced strategic military equipment (military ships, missile control systems, parachutes,

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[260] Vasyl′ Zelenchuk, interview by author, August 29, 2019.

[261] Anriy Klymenko, Tetiana Huchakova, "'Povernennia do SRSR' Styslyi ohliad ekonomiky okupovanoho Krymu", Article manuscript, Maidan of Foreign Affairs, 2017.

torpedoes, tank sights etc.) and employed another 100,000 people.[262] This made the Soviet Ministry of Defense one of the major employers on the peninsula, a population of which in late 1980s was around 2.2 million people. In addition to direct military employment, Crimea also hosted industries that served the military indirectly. Crimea had a well-developed fishing industry that employed experienced navy personnel after retirement. In Northern Crimean areas settled after the Second World war, farms and factories produced fresh and processed fruits and vegetables. Southern Crimea boasted multiple institutional resorts. Different institutions all over the USSR distributed vouchers among their employees that allowed people to spend holidays in Crimea. Although the number of tourists was very high, their trips were often funded by the state and therefore did not bring profits to the state budget.[263] Large portions of the Crimean economy were oriented at the state center and were controlled at the central Soviet Union level. This means that a substantial part of Crimean society depended on Crimea's economic ties with Moscow. This made Crimea's position within Ukraine largely symbolic and mostly politically irrelevant.

By the late 1980s, due to the Soviet national policies in the border regions and large Soviet military presence, Crimea became possibly one of the most Sovietized regions of the Soviet Union. The population of Crimea consisted almost completely of Sovietized settlers and their children (see Chapter 1). Coming as settlers, they were not bound by social traditions and norms of their homelands and therefore the Soviet identity had no local national traditions to compete with. This population was "indoctrinated," de-nationalized and often politically passive. This population also had a higher concentration of people, who exercised privileges (national, social) that were less common in other regions of the USSR. Due to the high concentration of retired military servicemen, *Soviet* (not Ukrainian and not Crimean) social and national hierarchies became embedded in Crimean life. The high concentration of military-industrial production on the peninsula made this region dependent on the Soviet state defense programs, which provided

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[262] Klymenko, Huchakova, "'Povernennia do SRSR'…"

[263] Andriy Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

Crimean factories with orders and, therefore, money flow. The presence of the Black Sea Fleet meant that a significant portion of active military personnel and their families lived in Crimea, where their future was directly dependent on the future of the fleet. The presence of the fleet as well as high ranking resorts assured Crimea's better supply with necessary products at times of deficit. Therefore, Crimea was a relatively privileged region within the Soviet Union, with many direct ties to Moscow, and its inhabitants viewed any changes in that status quo as a threat to their relatively high 'quality of life.' Hence, they would view any shift in Ukraine's power in the region as a threat to their own interests.

3.2 Preserving Settler Colonial Status Quo: A Fight for Autonomy

The fall of the Soviet Union, the proclamation of the independence of Ukraine, and the repatriation of Crimean Tatars to Crimea became the main challenges for the settler colonial institutions on the peninsula. The fight for autonomy that Crimea's elites conducted throughout the 1990s was a part of the effort to preserve the Soviet-era status quo on the peninsula and to allow as little change as possible. Crimean cultural, political and social space was a settler colonial construct of the Soviet empire. The official branches of local power on the peninsula served as colonial institutions of power that were meant to preserve the settler colonial regime. Therefore, the history of the political struggle of Crimean elites against the constructed threat of 'Ukrainization' and 'Tatarization' of the peninsula was not simply a separatist movement. Neither was it solely a struggle between the state center and periphery, but a fight of the colony – colonial institutions – for their survival, reproduction and connection with the metropole. Crimean elites fought to preserve Soviet life and the privileges that they had enjoyed in Crimea prior to 1991. Contrary to the arguments of some scholars, Crimean autonomy did not prevent a conflict, but changed its nature. Crimean autonomy conserved the settler colonial regime and prevented decolonization. Therefore, a 'conflict' (though hidden, not military) still took place and slowed the social transition away from the Soviet past. In addition, the path towards autonomy was a fight of the Crimean political elites for personal power. The presidential competition between Mykola Bahrov and

Yurii Meshkov was a competition between people of a very similar worldview and political orientation, but different tactical approach.

It was common at the time to use democratic rhetoric and to appeal to international standards in order to promote one's own (often imperialistic and undemocratic) agenda. The last year of the Soviet Union in Crimea was a year of referendums. Crimea (as a part of the Ukrainian SSR that was itself a part of the USSR) held three of them: on the status of the peninsula (local referendum), on preservation of the Soviet Union (all-Soviet referendum) and on Ukrainian independence (all-Ukrainian referendum). Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost'* among other things created a 'political fashion' of democracy and plebiscites. This was the beginning of what Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way refer to as 'competitive authoritarianism'.[264] The existence of a new fashion did not automatically bring democracy the same way as the existence of democratic form does not necessarily assure the democratic content. Crimean leaders tended to dress their words in democratic garb, but underneath it was the same old system – they relied on Moscow to grant them the power to control local politics and culture in Crimea. Ukraine was not part of their equation as far as they were concerned. Both Mykola Bahrov and Leonid Kravchuk demonstrate in their memories that referendums served as political tools to maintain the status quo.[265] The results of the referendums could be interpreted and twisted according to the need of those who conducted the interpretation. The percentage of people voting for or against a particular question in this case was important: those polling numbers were necessary to confirm political decisions that had already been made. One such twist could be found in Bahrov's memories in relation to the referendum on the Ukraine's independence. He says, in particular, that Crimean people voted for the independence of Ukraine, but not for Crimea to be a part of this independent Ukraine. Moreover, he said that Crimeans supported the independence of Ukraine, because they wanted to be a part

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[264] Steven Levitsky, Lucan Way *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5-7.

[265] Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog*, 204.

Leonid Kravchuk. Interview by Mykola Veresen' and Vitalii Portnikov (Kyiv, 1997) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers, *The Collapse of the Soviet Union. The Oral History of Independent Ukraine 1988-1991.*.

of the Soviet Union.[266] This interpretation, by the way, was not exclusive to Bahrov and existed in the Crimean press as well.

The referendum on the status of Crimea was the first referendum ever held in the USSR. This was the first serious challenge to the integrity of Ukraine from the local Crimean elites. It took place on January 20th, 1990 – about half a year after the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR proclaimed the state sovereignty of Ukraine within the Soviet Union. The referendum asked the Crimean population whether it was necessary to 'restore' the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (that existed prior to 1945) as an equal participant of the new Soviet Union treaty. In other words, Crimean population was to decide whether Crimea had to become an autonomy within the Ukrainian republic. And whether that autonomy should decide on its membership in the USSR separately from Ukraine's center.[267] More than 90% of voters, according to the official results, answered positively to the referendum's question. The rhetoric of the 'restoration' of the republic pointed to the status of Crimea within the Soviet Union prior to 1945. According to Bahrov, the problem of the status of Crimea was a direct response to the proclamation of the Ukrainian sovereignty:

> "The increasingly active movement of Ukraine on the path towards sovereignization, support of this point of view by the majority of republic's authorities and deputies of the Supreme Council of Ukraine, as well as a simultaneous rise of nationalistic spirit caused reasonable caution of the Russian-speaking majority of Crimea."[268]

In an interview Andriy Klymenko, who served as a secretary of ideology in the Crimean regional committee, described the campaign for the Crimean autonomy in a very similar

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[266] Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog*, 207.

[267] The referendum question was very 'loaded'. The questions of autonomous status and participation in the USSR were tied together. This suggested a potential possibility (or even an open blackmail by the Crimean elites) of Crimea's secession from Ukraine in a case if Ukrainian authorities refused to keep their republic within the renewed USSR. On the other hand, the 'autonomy' would automatically raise the status of Crimean leadership from that of leaders of an ordinary region to that of the autonomous republic.

[268] Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog*, 93.

way: as a response to the increasing national awakening in Ukraine, a risk that Ukraine might leave the USSR and thus threaten the Moscow connection of the Crimean authorities.[269] What caused a special concern, according to Bahrov, was the law on languages of the Ukrainian SSR that proclaimed Ukrainian as the only state language of the republic. Although that law was mild towards non-Ukrainian speakers, its adoption caused anxiety (mostly constructed by the media) that is very common in a situation when the privileged group is about to lose its privilege. In 1996 the journalist from Moscow Volodymyr Kovalenko described such Russian anxiety of the late Soviet and early post-Soviet times in the following way: "In other words, it is a liquidation of the domination that is often perceived as oppression. But those are, of course, different things."[270] It is worth noting that this 'fake oppression' is common for many societies and for many debatable social issues. It is common, for example, to hear that deconstruction of male privilege or white supremacy oppresses white male population in North America or elsewhere with a similar racial and gender dynamic. In other words, liberation movements are often perceived as movements for oppression of the dominant group by members of that group. Moreover, framing members of those movements as "radicals" proves to be an effective instrument of diminishing their efforts. The anxiety of the Russian-speaking population in the post-Soviet republics is of the same nature. The only substantial difference is that the Russian *state* has been willing to construct and instrumentalize that anxiety (by speaking of them as victims of independence movements) and to use it in its foreign policy.

In Crimea's political and social context, this anxiety had a settler colonial component as well. In 1989 it became apparent that the repatriation of Crimean Tatar people to their homeland was a question of time. By 1991 the majority of Crimean Tatars still lived outside of Crimea and therefore, this nation did not constitute a significant portion of the Crimean population. When Mykola Bahrov and the rest of the Crimean authorities spoke about "taking into account the points of view of all Crimeans", this was another settler

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[269] Andriy Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

[270] Vladimir Kovalenko, "Sosed s kamnem za pazukhoi" in *Politicheskii "utiug" kotoryi istoriia zabyla vykljuchit´* (Kyiv: 'Dnipro', 1996), 12.

colonial distortion of the narrative, since the original Crimeans – Crimean Tatars – had no access to the decision making process over the status of their land.[271] The local referendum (on the autonomy of Crimea) of January 20, 1991 was perceived by Crimean Tatars as an attempt of the colonial institutions to preserve their own power and to prevent the disruption of the status quo that would come with the repatriation of several hundred thousands of the indigenous people. Even the National Movement of Crimean Tatars (NDKT), which was more moderate and tolerant of the Soviet government, protested against the format in which Crimean autonomy was being constructed: "At this stage the formation of structures of the Crimean ASSR is happening in a counterpoise to the reconstruction of the national unity of Crimean Tatar people and its equality, this means all power responsibilities are being concentrated in those structures of the Crimean ASSR…". While they did not reject the creation of the Crimean ASSR, they wanted it to be a form of Crimean Tatar statehood, as opposed to the "form of the government [created by] by 'incoming ethnicities'" – exactly what Crimean autonomy became to be.[272] A younger, and more radical, generation of Crimean Tatar activists – Organization of Crimean Tatar National Movement (OKND) also issued a number of statements condemning the referendum. As a result, Crimean Tatars, who had already repatriated to Crimea and could participate in the referendum, boycotted the voting.[273]

Crimean authorities were very conscious about the unavoidable repatriation of Crimean Tatars to Crimea and feared it. Decades of campaigning by Crimean Tatar activists and other Soviet dissidents along with gradual opening of the USSR to the world pushed the Soviet authorities towards sanctioning the repatriation. In words of Andriy Klymenko: "Everybody understood the unavoidability of repatriation and its consequences. This is why it was important to appear at the top of this unavoidability".[274] The debate over land

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[271] Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog*, 98.

[272] Natsional´noe Dvizhenie Krymskikh Tatar, "K voprosu o Kurultae 01.05.1991." Accessed April 4, 2020: http://ndkt.org/k-voprosu-o-kurultae-01.05.-1991-g.html.

[273] Gulnara Bekirova, *Piv stolittia oporu: kryms´ki tatary vid vyhnannia do povernennia (1941-1991). Narys politychnoi istorii* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2017), 371.

[274] Andriy Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

between repatriated Crimean Tatars and Crimean authorities will be discussed below. For now it is important to note this hypocrisy that arises every time that Crimean authorities had to deal with the indigenous repatriation. On the one hand, the overall Soviet policy dictated that Crimean Tatars would repatriate to Crimea, receive land and equal national rights. On the other hand, Crimean authorities (none of whom was Crimean Tatar) distributed substantial portions of the land and organized a referendum on the status of the peninsula *prior* to the indigenous repatriation and later said they were unable to provide land to repatriates due to the fact that all land had already been distributed. Again, this speaks to the definition of settler colonialism as a "structure, not an event" – a range of related policies "that otherwise appear distinct."

Another bitterly ironic aspect of that referendum was the way Crimean authorities co-opted Crimean Tatar existence and their historical rights in order to enhance the settler colonial status quo. Mykola Bahrov argued, for instance, the autonomy of Crimea was necessary to preserve the inter-ethnic peace among the multi-national Crimean population.[275] Crimean Tatar activists demanded repatriation and restoration of their autonomy in Crimea for years prior to the referendum, but every time the Soviet authorities stated that these goals "had no reasonable basis".[276] Suddenly, just few years later the 'reasonable basis' was found by the local Crimean elites. The fact that Crimean Tatar organizations boycotted the referendum did not prevent the Crimean authorities from arguing that Crimean autonomy was necessary in order to protect the national rights of Crimean Tatars. In addition, Crimean newspapers launched an informational campaign, arguing that Crimean autonomy before 1945 was territorial and not national. As was mentioned in the first chapter, this might had been true in form, but not in the content, since during *korenizatsia* Crimean Tatars were perceived as the indigenous nation on the Crimean Peninsula. Crimean autonomy was cancelled by the Soviet authorities after the removal of indigenous people from Crimea. Therefore, in 1990 the

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[275] Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog*, 103.

[276] "Povidomlennia Derzhavnoi komisii, stvorenoi dlia rozhliadu zvernen´ hromadian z chysla kryms´kykh tatar" in *Kryms´ki tatary: statti, dokumenty, svidchennia ochevydciv* edited by Yurii Danyliuk (Kyiv: Ridnyi Krai, 1995), 264-266.

Crimean settler colonial institutions pointed to the history of indigenous autonomy in Crimea and used that history to argue for the colonizer's autonomy. By doing so they tried to preserve their own existence at time of political turmoil and increasing challenges from Crimean Tatar movement and Ukrainian state.[277]

In 1995 Bahrov argued in his memoirs that his political activity had nothing to do with separatism, but only with fighting for 'Crimean interests'. He argued that Crimea had close cultural and historical ties with Russia, but economically it would be more beneficial for Crimea to be an autonomous region within Ukraine.[278] In cultural and national spheres he stood for 'equality', but this looked like a Soviet-style equality, where all non-Russian nations had to 'fit in the empty spaces' left by the dominant Soviet/Russian culture and be as ceremonial as possible. Bahrov's ideal for the Crimea's status was a double protectorate of Russia and Ukraine over the peninsula.[279] In other words, the Soviet system was the ideal and Bahrov fought for it, adopting his political rhetoric according to the current political climate. The idea of a "double protectorate" in Crimea existed in the political sphere for a while. Retrospectively it looks like a way for its proponents to 'freeze' the Russia's claims on Crimea until the time when Russia was ready to reclaim that space, while maintaining Russian and pro-Russia political agendas.

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[277] Another interpretation of the referendum of January 20, 1991 says it had nothing to do with Crimean Tatars. While indeed the idea of Crimean autonomy came as a response to Ukraine's aspirations for sovereignty, the referendum was a way for the Crimean communist authorities to seize the initiative from the overtly pro-Russian forces that were fighting for power. Andriy Klymenko says he was in the room together with the second secretary of Crimean regional committee Leonid Hrach and the head of the Crimean division of the historical and human rights society "Memorial" Yurii Meshkov (future president of Crimea), when they discussed the referendum. Klymenko says he was invited to the room as a witness after Meshkov asked for a meeting with Hrach. Meshkov "came to *inform* [vocal emphasis by Klymenko] that within a few months 'they' [apparently he meant people supporting him] were going to organize a congress of deputies of all levels in Crimea to proclaim a Crimean ASSR". Meshkov was a leader of pro-Russian organizations in Crimea at that time and it was widely believed in the Crimean regional committee that he had direct support from Moscow. Therefore, according to Klymenko, a referendum became a result of a careful political game by Leonid Hrach: he did not contradict Meshkov in order not to become his open political rival, but organized a referendum on his own terms.

[278] Bagrov, *Krym: vremia nadezhd i trevog*, 104, 149.

[279] Ibid., 105.

During all three referendums that took place in Crimea in 1991 the Crimean authorities and media (that existed within the Soviet/pro-Russian discourse and was state-controlled) campaigned for the preservation of the status quo. First, they promised Crimea's prosperity and autonomy during the January 20, 1991 referendum. Then, they joined the Soviet communist party to argue for the need to preserve the 'Soviet homeland' and only reform the union treaty during the all-Soviet referendum of March 17, 1991.[280] Prior to the referendum of December 1, 1991 on the independence of Ukraine, they argued that Ukraine would not survive on its own, as an independent state.[281] As a result of the first referendum, the Ukrainian Supreme Council adopted a law that 'restored' Crimean autonomy.

The intermediary status of Crimea between the two states, seemed to be the acceptable compromise for all sides at the time. One of the reasons why Crimean communists were not willing to join Russia immediately was their fear of Yeltsin's decommunization efforts. Autonomy within Ukraine with Ukraine's former communist leadership guaranteed that Mykola Bahrov, Leonid Hrach and the rest of Crimea's political elites would remain in power and not witness their influence dissolve among numerous Russian political movements. Such intermediate position – with pro-Russian rhetoric, but autonomous status within Ukraine – seemed to be the best possible solution for all sides. For Ukrainian leadership Crimean autonomy postponed (if not solved) the problem of territorial integrity. Post-communist Ukrainian elites and Crimean communists had a level of mutual understanding. General Morozov says that Kravchuk (and therefore, the authorities in Kyiv) often assessed the situation in Crimea based on the information,

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[280] For example: "Za suverennuiu sotsyalisticheskuiu Ukrainu v obnovlennom soiuze. Zaiavlenie Tsentral′nogo Komiteta Kompartii Ukrainy," *Kurortny Krym*, February 6, 1991.

"Zachem nam nuzhen soiuz. Pamiatka uchastniku predstoiashchego referenduma o sokhranenii SSSR," *Kurortny Krym*, February 19, 1991.

"Skazhem 'Da' soiuzu SSR – obnovlennoi federatsii suverennykh sotsialisticheskikh respublik," *Kurortny Krym*, March 5, 1991.

[281] V. Selivanov, "K suverenitetu ili camoizoliatsii?," *Kurortny Krym*, March 13, 1991.

provided by Bahrov.[282] In that regard, Bahrov was a comfortable counteragent for Kravchuk. For the Russian government and president, the intermediate status of Crimea allowed them to preserve their pressure point in Ukraine without getting into the international conflict over territory. In case of necessity it was always possible for the Russian authorities to use Crimean elites in order to make the Ukrainian government more flexible. This, however, was not a shared interest among all of the Russian politicians. For Crimean elites the autonomy turned Crimea (and its precious property) into their personal domain; they also got much space to navigate between Ukrainian and Russian states in case political situations required that.

Mykola Bahrov claims that his fight for Crimean autonomy was not part of a separatist campaign, however, that looks like a retrospective adjustment of his political views. During a press conference by the Crimean regional committee in November, 1990 the present members of the party officials treated the referendum on the Crimean autonomy as "a first step" on the way towards the "restoration of the statehood" of Crimea and possible future change of its territorial belonging.[283] On its way towards autonomy Crimean communists took a similar path to the sovereignty of Crimea, as did other autonomies and republics within the Soviet Union. Just like Ukrainian authorities in Kyiv, Crimean deputies first adopted a Declaration on the state status of Crimea (November 12, 1990), which proclaimed the "restoration of the statehood".[284] Then, on September 4, 1991 the Supreme Council of Crimea adopted a declaration on the sovereignty of Crimea. This was followed by the events of May 5 and May 6, 1991, when Crimean deputies voted for the proclamation of Crimea's self-determination (*samostoyatelnost´*) – a vague term that sounded similar, but not identical to independence – and adopted a constitution of the republic. These declarations were immediately followed by decrees in which local authorities took control over state and

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[282] Kostiantyn Morozov. Interview by Mykola Veresen' (Kyiv, 1995) in Margarita Hewko, Sara Sievers. *The Collapse of the Soviet Union…*

[283] I. D´iakov, "Referendum: za chto budem golosovat´. Press-konferentsiia v obkome partii," *Sovetskii Krym*, November 16, 1990.

[284] "Deklaratsiia o gosudarstvennom i pravovom statuse Kryma," *Sovetskii Krym*, November 15, 1990.

Communist party property located in Crimea.[285] Each of those declarations marked another step further towards distancing Crimea from Ukraine, and followed a similar pattern to the Ukrainian SSR which used similar measures in its path towards state independence. By following a similar pattern the Crimean elites arguably wanted to claim similar legitimacy for their actions, suggesting (although not openly) that they were following precedent that was set up by Kyiv. In that regard Bahrov's rejection of separatism accusations seems unconvincing. Moreover, each of the declarations by the Crimean Supreme Council did not fit into the legal framework of the unitary Ukrainian state, while Ukraine's right for independence formally existed in the Soviet constitution. Declarations by the Crimean elites often appeared in response to Ukraine's distancing from the Soviet state structures. For example, the declaration of sovereignty of Crimea appeared eleven days after Ukrainian parliament proclaimed Ukraine's state independence. In other words, the route that Crimean elites took towards the autonomy to a large extent looked like a blackmailing campaign aimed at keeping the authorities in Kyiv inclined to stay within the Soviet Union or any integration projects that were meant to replace it.

Both Bahrov and Meshkov were oriented towards Russia in their worldviews, as well as cultural and political experience. Communist elites of Crimea, just like various pro-Russian social, political and human rights activists around Meshkov, did not disagree over a preferred cultural image of Crimea, its historical narrative and the desired inter-ethnic dynamic. Bahrov might have been slightly moderate in his views, leaning towards the classical Soviet rhetoric of the 'brotherhood of nations'. This was the main reason why Meshkov and the pro-Russian 'Republican Movement of Crimea' (RDK) were able to take the political initiative and gain support from all of the pro-Russian movements in Crimea. Demands and statements by RDK were 'sharper' and clearer. They also coincided in time with the beginning of tensions over the Black Sea Fleet and rise of the 'Ukrainian nationalist scare' in the Crimean press. But after Yurii Meshkov became

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[285] "Zakon Krymskoi Avtonomnoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki ob ob″ektakh gosudarstvennoi sobstvennosti v Krymskoi ASSR i imushchestve KPSS, nakhodiashchemsia na territorii respubliki," *Kurortny Krym*, September 14, 1991.

Crimea's president, he adopted a very similar moderate national rhetoric.[286] This rhetoric, however, did not reject the fact that both leaders saw Russian-speaking people as their main electoral base. During the presidential campaign both Mykola Bahrov and Yurii Meshkov had very similar programs. The only significant difference was the speed at which candidates promised to move towards establishing closer ties with Russia: while Bahrov argued for the gradual increase of Crimean autonomy that could create a legal basis for a possible transfer of the peninsula, Meshkov argued for an immediate referendum on the status of Crimea.[287] Meshkov also argued for the introduction of Russian currency in Crimea, creation of the 'republican guard' and direct energy negotiations between Crimea and Russia.[288] Both Bahrov and Meshkov saw Crimea as a 'bridge' between Russia and Ukraine – an obvious reference to the Soviet 'brotherhood of nations' rhetoric that favored the Russian speaking population. The idea of a 'bridge' between Russia and Ukraine was popularized for a significant period of time throughout 1990s. Such hybrid intermediary status was supposed to assure the preservation of settler colonial institutions and give the Russian government an instrument of influence over Ukraine's foreign policy.

The biggest difference between Meshkov's pro-Russian organizations and Bahrov's Crimean communist nomenclature was the structure of their support. Both groups, as was common at the time, had close ties to various organized crime groups in Crimea.[289] In addition to that Meshkov received political support from the Black Sea Fleet and large business, represented by the company IMPEX-55. Volodymyr Prytula, who worked as a journalist in Crimea at the time, says there was unconfirmed information that Meshkov's Republican Movement of Crimea ('RDK') also 'inherited' money from the dissolved

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[286] Elena Gornaia, "Skvoz′ tuman kremnistyi put′ blestit. Sto dnei presidenta Yuriia Meshkova," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, May 19, 1994.

[287] "Put′ Kryma – soglasie, poriadok, reformy! Predvybornaia platforma nezavisimogo kandydata v Presidenty Respubliki Krym N. V. Bagrova," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, December 28, 1993.

Y. A. Meshkov, "Predvybornaia programma kandidata v presidenty Respubliki Krym ot Respublikanskoi partii Kryma (partii RDK) Meshkova Yuriia Aleksandrovicha," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, January 6, 1994.

[288] Ibid.

[289] Vasyl′ Zelenchuk, interview by author, August 29, 2019.

communist party and received some finances from Russia directly.[290] In other words, Bahrov represented a 'more local' movement in Crimea (presuming settler colonial authority can possibly be local), while Meshkov clearly relied on more distant Russian interest and Russian politicians. Meshkov's cabinet consisted of numerous Russian citizens, 'imported' from Moscow and appointed in direct violation of the Ukrainian legislation. Probably due to this flexibility and ability to adapt to political circumstances, Bahrov received support as better of the two bad candidates from the Crimean Tatar movement prior to the Crimea's presidential elections.[291]

Since Bahrov relied on administrative resources and control over the media, it was surprising that he lost the elections. The head of the Crimean parliament relied on the leftovers of the communist power structures on the peninsula. But his administrative monopoly started to fade. Mykola Savchenko recalls in his book that the command of the Black Sea Fleet sent a signal down the fleet structures to support Yurii Meshkov, as opposed to Bahrov.[292] RDK conducted a very active political and informational campaign in Crimea for two years prior to the presidential elections. Combined with harsh economic problems in Ukraine (and Crimea in particular), institutional support from Russia and uncertainty of Ukraine's policy towards Crimea, the victory of Meshkov does not seem that surprising. Finally, considering the nature of propaganda, transmitted by the Crimean press, especially in the spheres of national and cultural policies, it would be safe to say that Crimean communists themselves paved a way to the younger and more energetic populists who shared very similar views.

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[290] Volodymyr Prytula, interview by author, May 22, 2019.

[291] According to the statement by Mustafa Dzhemilev, the head of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis at the time, the elections of the president of Crimea violated the rights of Crimean Tatar people. He further said that Mejlis was going to boycott the elections, but decided to change the position, because the president of Crimea would be elected despite the boycott by Mejlis and Crimean Tatars. Therefore, Mejlis decided to endorse Bahrov. According to Dzhemilev, this did not mean political alliance, but an endorsement of a candidate that did not want to immediately secede Crimea from Ukraine. ("Po mneniiu glavy krymskogo medzhlisa, vybory presidenta v respublike ignoriruiut prava krymskotatarskogo naroda," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, January 19, 1994.)

[292] Nikolai Savchenko, *Anatomiia Neob"javlennoi voiny* (Kyiv: Ukrains´ka Perspektyva, 1997), 154.

Russian nationalistic movement that existed in Crimea at the time appeared to be significantly more conservative and radical in comparison to the forces that came to power in Russia itself. Close circles of President Yeltsin included people with various ideological positions, including nationalists. Russian parliament (both Supreme Soviet and later the State Duma) had even larger representation of conservative forces (including communists, who appeared to be very nationalistic). Crimean nationalistic movement of Russians consisted for the most part of retired and active servicemen of the Soviet army, fleet, security services. Therefore, when some of them made political careers in Russia, they often became members of nationalistic political organizations. One of the post-Soviet commanders of the Black Sea Fleet, for example, admiral Baltin ran for the membership in the Russian State Duma in 1995 as part of the electoral block 'Za Rodinu' ('For Fatherland'). Surprisingly, admiral Baltin started his campaign, *while* he was a commander of the fleet; he organized meetings of the fleet personnel with the electoral block in a cultural center for navy officers in Sevastopol ('Dom ofitserov'). Block 'Za Rodinu' promised to end the 'colonial dependence' of Russia on the West in "political, economic and spiritual spheres."[293]

That populism and the speed at which Meshkov began to move towards closer integration with Russia provoked Kyiv's political intervention and abolishment of Crimean constitution (as well as the institution of Crimea's presidency) in March, 1995. Ultimately it appeared that Bahrov's approach of slow movement towards autonomy and preservation of Crimea's hybrid colonial status in-between two countries reflected the acceptable balance between Russia and Ukraine. The fact the Meshkov in his policies oriented at the anti-Yeltsin opposition forces (mostly nationalists and nationalistic communists) did not add to his support from the Russian government as well. Using Crimea as an outpost to influence Ukraine's foreign and internal affairs was more valuable for the Russian government than annexing the peninsula. During his presidency Yurii Meshkov acted much like other presidents of the post-Soviet space, demanding the increase of presidential authority and getting into political rivalry with the Crimean

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[293] "V bloke 'Za Rodinu'," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, December 9, 1995.

parliament (where his allies during the presidential race held the majority). Unlike Yeltsin, Meshkov lost the fight with his former political ally and the head of the Crimean parliament Sergey Tsekov. The interference of the Ukrainian parliament restored the balance that was lost with Meshkov's presidency and eventually returned Crimean communists to power within the republic.

Gwendolyn Sasse looks at the struggle for the Crimean autonomy as a center-periphery negotiation that ultimately led to the conflict prevention. She argues, in particular, that the process of negotiating the vague autonomy that Crimea had within the centralized Ukraine prevented an open ethnic collision.[294] While to an extent this might be true, this approach largely avoids the fact that from the very beginning the fear of 'Ukrainization' of Crimea was a media construct of the Crimean settler colonial institutions and Russian nationalistic politicians (See Chapter 4). The ethnic conflict in Crimea in 1990s did in fact happen, although it did not take a systematic violent form and was limited to isolated examples of ethnic tensions. Rather than solve the conflict, the creation of Crimean autonomy conserved and preserved it – preserving settler colonial institutions at a cost of rights of the indigenous peoples of Crimea and Ukrainian nationals. Finally, settler colonialism is at base a type of *foreign* invasion. Therefore, it presumes the existence of a conflict – violence can happen internally, without active physical collisions. Cultural and linguistic oppression of the indigenous people, Crimean Tatars, as well as the Ukrainian population of Crimea also constituted violence, as it prevented those nations from equal development and exercise of their rights.

The political struggle for Crimean autonomy throughout the 1990s ultimately happened with an aim of the local communist elites to preserve their own power – mainly by essentially preserving the status quo from Soviet times reframed in the new "democratic" language of referendums. In addition to attempting to keep Ukraine integrated into the Russia-centered political union, in order to keep Crimea closely connected to Russia (which preserved their power and privilege) Crimean communists fought for their

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[294] Gwendolyn Sasse "Conflict Prevention in a Transition State. The Crimean Issue in Post-Soviet Ukraine", *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 8, # 2 (2002): 2.

personal political future and economic opportunities that emerged with post-Soviet privatization of Crimean property. In this struggle they navigated carefully between Russia and Ukraine, promoting an idea of Crimea as a 'bridge' between two post-Soviet states – a space with ties to both, which either might use as leverage against the other. In other words, Crimean settler colonial institutions negotiated their own survival, entering into temporary alliances with various political groups in Ukraine and Russia. The in-between status of the settler colony was in fact a (temporary) aim of those elites. The temporary victory of the pro-Russian populists in Crimea highlighted the fact that in the 1990s Yeltsin's government had no interest in annexing Crimea. An intermediate colonial status for the peninsula - with overwhelming Russian informational and political influence allowed the Russian government to maintain political control over the whole of Ukraine by having a core of an organized and controlled separatist movement inside Ukraine that could create domestic problems for the government in Kyiv, if Ukraine did not cooperate.

3.3   Crimean Tatar Challenge: Conflict of Sovereignties

The power of post-Soviet Crimean authorities and their conservative system came from the perception that there is only one possible and generally accepted vision of Crimea – its past, present and future. This perception came from the fact that for several centuries a very particular and carefully selected set of forces controlled the interpretation of Crimean history, in service to the imperial center. The political, cultural and informational sphere in Crimea did not allow for competing narratives. The public narrative about Crimea looked like it had no alternative – it was pro-Soviet in a way that was sometimes easy to mistake for pro-Russian-ness. Although they were not given any public space or attention, alternative histories existed and they were not less real, although not supported by the media machine. One of the most immediate political challenges to the Crimean political status quo was the Crimean Tatar national movement: the struggle for decolonization and to dismantle the settler colonial system. The repatriation of Crimean Tatars was a process that Crimean settler colonizers feared and tried to prevent for several decades. As was mentioned above, when the repatriation became inevitable, the local Soviet institutions in Crimea tried to take the process under

control in order to prevent or distort the decolonization. Those same institutions that contributed to the creation of the image of 'evil Crimean Tatar hordes' were now responsible for the repatriation. This, of course, meant that given the past history of relationships between the representatives of the Crimean Tatar nationalist movement and the state authorities, the colonized did not trust the colonizer, and expected them to sabotage the repatriation. The struggle between Crimean Tatars and Crimean authorities since late 1980s fits into the settler colonial dynamic of the struggle for (and against) decolonization. In Crimea, these include conflicts over land, over the status of sovereignty in Crimea, and over national equality of various national groups within the peninsula based on the Crimean Tatar understanding of their national sovereignty, and the colonizer's denial of the indigenous sovereign rights.

Even though after 1989 the Soviet authorities officially approved the repatriation of Crimean Tatars and denied the myth about the 'traitor-nation', the image of 'Tatar Nazi collaborators' remained in the mass consciousness of the Crimean population. Ukrainian communist party documents of the late 1980s recorded a number of letters and telegrams sent by non- Crimean Tatar Crimeans to different state institutions, condemning the repatriation.[295] The fear and chauvinism of the colonizers did become physical, according to the collective telegram, sent by Crimean Tatars to Kremlin:

> "Instigators of the covert reaction and their condonation by the local authorities resulted in a fact that chauvinistic passions heat the situation in Crimea to its limits. At nighttime bandits, armed with knives, chains, bats break into the homes of Crimean Tatars, beat innocent people until they lose consciousness, run over elderly and women with their cars. We are afraid that this can cause response and this is dangerous."[296]

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[295] "Presidium Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR. Ob obrashcheniiach grazhdan po voprosam, sviazannykh s krymskimi tatarami," 28 August, 1987, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 25, no. 3271, 4.

[296] Telegram to Mikhail Gorbachev from a group of Crimean Tatars, "Moskva. Kreml´. General´nomu Sekretariu TsK KPSS, Predsedateliu Presidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR Mikhailu Sergeevichu Gorbachevu," 4 June 1989, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 32, no. 2555, 42.

Chauvinism did not appear without a reason, but was unofficially constructed by the Crimean system of power. While the official state propaganda spoke about reconciliation and a peaceful, multi-national Crimean society, unofficially Crimean Tatar repatriates continued to be stigmatized. Volodymyr Prytula remembers that in late 1980s he was among employees that were invited for collective meetings at his work place.[297] Prytula claims that these kinds of meetings were regular in Crimea at that time and were organized by the communist party branches. Their goal was to 'warn' the employees about the coming Crimean Tatar 'threat', to tell them to protect their children and property.[298] Several respondents also mentioned that Crimean Tatars were racialized in day-to-day Crimean life. To the non-Crimean Tatar residents of Crimea, Crimean Tatars were unknown Muslims, therefore, traditional stereotypes merged with the party propaganda: Crimean Tatars were described as 'violent' ('they will come and start slaughtering people') and 'uncivilized'. Unofficially, during the quarrels and fights, contrary to the Soviet policy of anti-racism, it was possible to hear people calling Crimean Tatars 'black'.[299] The Crimean authorities at various levels promoted a fear of Crimean Tatars in the society and in late 1980s that fear was very real among Crimea's population, although of course it was unjustified.[300] When Ilmi Umerov (future deputy prime-minister of Crimea, future deputy head of Crimean Tatar Mejlis and a political prisoner of Russia after 2014) returned to Crimea in 1988, he was first accepted for a doctor position in one of the clinics in the town of Bakhchysarai. However, when the chief physician of the hospital found out that Umerov is a Crimean Tatar by nationality, he rejected Umerov's candidacy, even though a hospital was in need of doctors.[301] Without a job a Crimean Tatar repatriate could not receive Crimean registration and,

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[297] Volodymyr Prytula, interview by author, May 22, 2019.

[298] Ibid.

[299] Ibid.

[300] Aider Muzhdaba, interview by author, June 22, 2019.

Andrii Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

Ilmi Umerov, interview by author, June 24, 2019.

[301] Ilmi Umerov, interview by author, June 24, 2019.

therefore, would not be allowed to live on the peninsula. This story of Umerov was very typical for Crimean Tatar repatriates at that time. They often came to Crimea after selling all their property just to be deported again and to lose homes they had bought in Crimea with their life savings. Officially, the repatriation was a state policy. But repatriates had to fight an uphill battle with the state bureaucratic machine, as well as systematic xenophobia at every step of their repatriation. This political hypocrisy of the Soviet settler colonial institutions towards the colonized peoples had been an effective method of the imperial institutions that they used to respond to challenges.

This pattern in the unfair treatment of repatriating Crimean Tatars is an example of a broader trend in Soviet-style settler colonialism. Being at the 'highest stage of imperialism' (using Terry Martin's terms again) from its inception Soviet state and institutions had an extensive experience of hiding imperialism behind the democratic curtain and anti-imperial rhetoric. The Soviet Union was a state which pointed fingers at the American racism, pretending that the socialist society of the communist state had ended racism as well as national, gender or any other prejudice. The Soviet state did indeed distort some traditional patriarchal gender dynamics the same way as it 'formally' eliminated other forms of oppression. As demonstrated by the authors of *Ideologies of Race: Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union in the Global Context*, Russian empire and the Soviet Union maintained racial relations that were different from the Western imperial context, but not absent.[302] Although Soviet Union officially conducted anti-racist policies, racial relations and oppression existed on the social (unofficial) level.[303]

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[302] David Rainbow (ed.), *Ideologies of Race: Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in the Global Context* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019).

[303] Racial relations during the Soviet period are a focus of the several chapters within the collection. Here are just few examples that demonstrate the presence of racial thinking within the Soviet state and society. Different national groups underwent different (racial treatment), but racialization was only exclusive to a single national group: Brigid O'Keeffe, "The Racialization of Soviet Gypsies: Roma, Nationality Politics, and Socialist Transformation in Stalin's Soviet Union" in *Ideologies of Race: Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in the Global Context*, edited by David Rainbow (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019).

Adrienne Edgar, "Children of Mixed Marriage in Soviet Central Asia: Dilemmas of Identity and Belonging," in *Ideologies of Race: Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in the Global Context*, edited by David Rainbow (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019).

The history of the Soviet cultural stereotypes about Crimean Tatar and other Soviet nationalities fits into the broader image of unofficial systematic racism, analyzed by the authors of the abovementioned collection. Soviet Union never eliminated inequality in spheres of race, gender or nationality, but often removed it from a public into a private sphere, denying its existence in ways that made it impossible to fight. Soviet regime, especially post-Stalinist versions of it, used democratic rhetoric and appeals to international law in order to promote an imperialist agenda. The more the state was opening itself to the West, the more it was important for the USSR to maintain a democratic face.

After the decades during which generations of Crimean Tatar activists fought for their repatriation to Crimea, at some point the Soviet regime could not ignore this effort any longer. So in order to control repatriation, the Soviet state created institutions responsible for the repatriation plan. Following the tendency of formal democratization, those institutions had to involve the representatives of Crimean Tatars. The Crimean Tatar presence was also important to grant legitimacy to the decisions made by the established coordinating bodies. The logic of the preservation of the Crimean status quo, however, demanded that Crimean Tatars' presence had to be as invisible as possible. This often meant that the state needed a *particular* kind of Crimean Tatar members, those willing to cooperate with the colonizers. Soviet state institutions traditionally did not recognize the coordinating bodies of the Crimean Tatar national movement as representatives of Crimean Tatar people. In 1990, for example, the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist party of the Soviet Union stated the following:

> "However this work [on repatriation – M.S.] becomes more complicated due to the absence of the competent body that would represent Crimean Tatar people.

Some of the questions that are addressed by Adrienne Edgar in relation to Soviet Central Asia have lots of exporting potential towards other regions of the USSR. Defining national identity according to the language, territory and nationality of one of the parents (usually *father*) was common for other Soviet republics as well.

The existing national self-organized unions do not cover all of the Crimean Tatar people and do not represent the whole spectrum of its interests. Some of their leaders share extremist, nationalistic stand, they refuse of the constructive cooperation with the Soviet and party organs." [304]

In other words, the state authorities were not pleased with the demands that were announced by the representatives of the Crimean Tatar national movement during the negotiations. Therefore, using their position of authority, instead of looking for a compromise, the empire was willing to change the opposing side at the negotiating table. Not only this would create a façade of the state agreeing with the Crimean Tatar people, but also take away political legitimacy from the Crimean Tatar activists. The statement about the lack of the *constructive* and *competent* body is directly linked to the accusation against Crimean Tatar activists of extremism and nationalism. This kind of accusation was commonly applied to any non-Russian that wanted to develop their own national culture and language. Any criticism of the Soviet national policy (even coming from loyal communists) traditionally fell under the category of extremism/ nationalism and, therefore, dissent from the Soviet values.

Repatriation efforts by the government had to involve coordination with the Crimean Tatar national movement (Crimean Tatar activists and civic organizations). However, the state was reluctant to coordinate with the popular leaders of the movement, as this would give them additional legitimacy. This reluctance to coordinate often involved a whole range of measures, including the creation of loyal national organizations that would serve as national representatives, but in fact be the government's proxies. Real activists remained under the constant pressure of secret police surveillance, including a number of introduced activists who cooperated with KGB. KGB, in fact, was known to have departments that were responsible for working with 'national problems,' or even provoking some of them to aid in imperial power centralization. The only way activists

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[304] Secretary of Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine V. Ivashko to Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, "O sozdanii Soiuznogo soveta krymsko-tatarskogo naroda," 19 May 1990, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 32, no. 2770, 109.

could maintain legitimacy in this context was through a constant mobilization of popular support. In order to limit that legitimacy, authorities tried to limit their interaction with activists that would suggest their recognition. For example, in October, 1990 Yalta municipal council forbade its presidium and executive commissions to conduct negotiations or sign any agreements with "persons whose authority is not recognized by The Committee on the Deported Peoples".[305] Such state-recognized representative bodies that were meant to solve the Crimean Tatar problem appeared from time to time. The process of their creation often resembled the state's desire to hold decolonization under control. The quoted document suggested a creation of the "United Council of Crimean Tatar people" that was supposed to represent Crimean Tatars and "together with Soviet and party organs would put into practice the solution of Crimean Tatar problem".[306] In other words, it was up to the empire/state to decide who had a right to represent Crimean Tatars and how the problem of their national rights should be solved. Ideally, for the Soviet institutions, would be to negotiate with their own proxies, who happened to be Crimean Tatars.

On January 29, 1990 under the instruction of the Soviet central government, the government of the Ukrainian SSR created a State Commission On the Problems of Crimean Tatar people, tasked with coordinating the repatriation. Only 5 out of 25 members of the commission were Crimean Tatars.[307] Already in May 1990 Crimean Tatar members of the commission were accused of "heating the situation, unconstructive behavior, disorganizing the commission's work, posing unreasonable demands".[308] Both

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[305] "Reshenie Yaltinskogo gorodskogo Soveta narodnykh deputatov ot 12 oktiabria 1990 g. O sostoianii raboty I dopolnitel´nykh merakh po vydeleniiu zemel´nykh uchastkov pod individual´noe zhylishchnoe stroitel´stvo," *Sovetskii Krym*, October 18, 1990.

[306] Secretary of Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine V. Ivashko to Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, "O sozdanii Soiuznogo soveta krymsko-tatarskogo naroda," 19 May 1990, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 32, no. 2770, 110.

[307] A message by the deputy chairman of the Council of Minister of the Ukrainian SSR A. Statinov to the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, "O provodimoi Sovetom ministrov USSR rabote po resheniiu voprosov, sviazannykh s organizovannym vozvrashcheniem krymskikh tatar v Krymskuiu oblst´", 23 May 1990, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 32, no. 2770, 112.

[308] Ibid., 113.

sides saw the repatriation process and its outcome differently. For the Crimean Tatar national movement and the people who supported it, repatriation was a first step towards the restoration of Crimean Tatar national rights in Crimea. The state, and especially Crimean institutions, saw Crimean Tatar activists as 'disruptors of peace' and discussed all kinds of problems associated with the repatriation. The reports of this commission often looked like an attempt to cover passiveness (or even sabotage) with empty statements and statistics that were meant to represent successful performance of the job. The commission pointed to the lack of action plan within the republic and absence of action from higher authorities. One of the reports from August 14, 1990, for example stated that the state plan was to provide accommodation for 8,400 families who would repatriate to Crimea before June, 1991. The report also emphasized that the local authorities provided at least some kind of housing to another 20,000 people. This statistic, however, does not look as promising, considering that already in 1990, according to the official statistics, the number of repatriates had reached 90,000 people.[309] This number increased by several times in just few years to come.[310]

Everybody in Crimea spoke about the necessity to prevent the ethnic tension and armed conflicts that arose elsewhere within the Soviet Union. Crimean regional committee and executive branches of government put all the responsibility for the potential conflict on Crimean Tatars.[311] In 1990 a secretary of the Crimean regional committee of the Communist party, Leonid Grach, wrote: "The aim to return as soon as possible on any conditions creates substantial problems for incomers as well as for local population of separate cities and districts. The level of social wellbeing of people is getting worse."[312]

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[309] "V gosudarstvennoi komissii po problemam krymskotatarskogo naroda," *Sovetskii Krym*, August 14, 1990. 3

[310] As repatriation proceeded there were some popular rumors that demonstrated a yet another fear of the Crimean colonizers – a potential threat that Turkish Crimean Tatar diaspora of approximately 5 million people would repatriate to Crimea as well. A repatriation of that many Crimean Tatars would allow them to outnumber the colonizers and make them an absolute majority on the Crimean Peninsula, whose total population was slightly larger than 2 million people.

[311] "Krepit′ Druzhbu Vsekh Natsii i Narodnostey Kryma", *Sovetskii Krym,* January 9, 1990.

[312] L. Grach "Krymskie Tatary: Reshenie Dolzhno Ustraivat′ Vsekh", *Sovetskii Krym,* May 29, 1990.

This had been one of the main arguments of local Crimean communists against repatriation: population increase would disrupt the economy of 'locals'. The "as soon as possible part" is also bitterly ironic, as Crimean Tatars fought for repatriation for 40 years. Crimean Tatars were not considered local and therefore their rights on their indigenous land were secondary. The debate over who is local to Crimea went on throughout 1990s and had some important political influence. As Greta Uehling notes in the introduction to her monograph, "…in a sense, past events are not really past." She continues by quoting one of the respondents she met during her fieldwork in Crimea: "For the Soviet people, the thirties, the forties, the fifties – are history. For Crimean Tatars, they are now…. They live history."[313] Uehling also makes an important note that later in this research will be confirmed with the use of different sources: that the battle over history and memory in Crimea in 1990s (and 2000s) was in fact a battle over who gets the right to be in the space, to control it, profit from it, claim it, and have sovereignty over it.[314] Constructing an image of Crimean Tatar as non-local became an important twist in the settler colonial informational politics that will be discussed below.

The conflict over land was a direct result of all the above mentioned problems and conflicts between Crimean Tatar repatriates and the Soviet colonizers. The lack of trust between the opposing sides and bureaucratic barriers for the repatriation led to a situation in which Crimean Tatars just started repatriating on their own terms. This is when *samozakhvat-s* became a part of Crimean politics. The term was created by the authorities as a way to condemn what they saw as illegal occupation of land by Crimean Tatar people. *Samozakhvat* literally means 'self-acquisition' and translates as an understanding that the action described is a direct violation of the law, that the land is forcefully captured by its occupants. The term itself turn the colonized into colonizers and aggressors into victims, which is a yet another common narrative distortion used by settler colonial authorities to delegitimize indigenous people as societies attempt to decolonize. One of the Crimean Tatar respondents, Aider Muzhdaba, says he does not see

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[313] Greta Uehling, *Beyond Memory. The Crimean Tatars' Deportation and Return* (NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 10.

[314] Ibid., 16.

any particularly negative meaning in the term *samozakhvat*. Although, he does use an alternative term – *samovozvrat* – self-return, as opposed to self-acquisition.[315] The reason why Muzhdaba personally does not consider the term abusive probably comes from the understanding that the accusation at its basis is overtly and obviously wrong. It is one of the instances when the colonized 'bursts into laughter' (metaphorically, not literally in this case) in response to yet another colonizer's myth.[316]

Prior to the expected repatriation of Crimean Tatars, Crimean authorities began to distribute free land to the Slavic (roughly Russian and Ukrainian) residents of Crimea. Volodymyr Prytula remembers that *dachas* – Soviet equivalent of seasonal homes, small pieces of land usually outside of the urban areas – were distributed specifically prior to the repatriation of Crimean Tatars: "They even gave me land. We were young specialists who had just come and worked only for half a year. They gave us a share of land for dacha. That was on Sapun-hora [Mount Sapun]. With no problems. But for the Crimean Tatars there was no land."[317] This of course speaks to the fear of revolt described by Fanon, experienced by the colonizer that was discussed in the first chapter. The hint of surprise in Prytula's words is real – the land in Crimea was a precious asset, which everybody wanted to receive; and therefore people had to earn it with years of labor. But the repatriation of Crimean Tatars made this asset available very quickly to people on the basis of their non-Crimean Tatar nationality. This access to land translated into a socio-economic factor, as restriction of Crimean Tatar access to land generally reduced their economic status and political influence on the peninsula, especially in the age of post-

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[315] Aider Muzhdaba, interview by author, June 22, 2019.

[316] The kind of laughter described by Franz Fanon, when the colonized *knows* that the accusations of the colonizer are forged specifically to reinforce the colonial hierarchy. Fanon describes this kind of laughter in a context when a colonized black person laughs at the statements by white people, who deny his humanity: "The colonized know all that and roar with laughter every time they hear themselves called an animal by the other. For they know they are not animals. And at the very moment when they discover their humanity, they begin to sharpen their weapons to secure its victory" (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 8). The gravity of emotions, described by Fanon are, of course much more radical than in the case of Crimean Tatars. It seems that those two sentiments are located on the same scale, just in different places within the spectrum.

[317] Volodymyr Prytula, interview by author, May 22, 2019.

Soviet privatization.[318] In Crimea's context, settler colonial institutions were preparing ahead of time to severely limit the potential of the future decolonization process and worked to preserve the status quo in all spheres, including land ownership.

The representatives of the local institutions of power consistently framed Crimean Tatars as migrants, rather than repatriates. Therefore, they described the allocation of land for Crimean Tatar families as a favor, rather than their responsibility. In January, 1991 the head of the Perovksi village council and a director of the poultry farm 'Yuzhnaia' V. Verchenko protested against the Crimean Tatar self-return of land. He complained in particular that "they" (the village or the farm) decided to cooperate with Crimean Tatars and even allocated land for 34 families. And instead of gratefulness that Verchenko expected from them, Crimean Tatars protested against the 'rightful' allocation of land for farm workers and seized additional land for themselves.[319] On the one hand Verchenko argued that Crimean Tatars received as much as was possible to give to them. On the other hand, providing land for workers' summerhouses was 'legal'. In this distorted narrative the head of the village council presumed that the settlers' need for summerhouses was no less important that the need of the indigenous repatriates for *homes*. Therefore, he put the responsibility for the conflict on the Crimean Tatars, describing their actions as "inhumane". He further called on both "those who live here" and "those who come here" to restrain from aggravating the already complicated situation.

Both Crimean Tatar respondents, Ilmi Umerov and Aider Muzhdaba, when asked about the Crimean Tatar seizure of land, tell a similar story. Crimean authorities distributed land en masse, but not to Crimean Tatars. The response Crimean Tatars received every time they asked for land to be given to repatriates to build homes was that the state did not have any free land to distribute. Activists that took part in the seizure of land say they

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[318] Uehling, *Beyond Memory*, 16.

[319] V. Verchenko, "U naz odin kolodets…Neuzheli zakhvatyvat′ zemliu 'interesnei', chem poluchat′ na zakonnom osnovanii?," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 5, 1991.

had studied maps carefully to determine the land that was not in use by anyone.[320] Then they organized and built protest tent camps, claiming that this land could be distributed to them. Sometimes the authorities found out in advance where Crimean Tatars would build their protest camp and distributed that land for private use overnight.[321] Sinaver Kadyrov, Crimean Tatar activist and one of the last political prisoners of the USSR, claims Crimean authorities actively involved organized crime in fighting with Crimean Tatar movement.[322] Every time the protest tent camp appeared, the authorities claimed that Crimean Tatar occupied the land illegally and in fact *stole* it from either private owners or collective farms. From time to time the authorities used riot police to disperse the protest camps. One of such attacks in 1992 against the camp near Alushta ended with arrests of Crimean Tatar activists. In return, Crimean Tatar activists stormed the parliament of the Crimean autonomy. A demand to release prisoners gradually turned into a general political protest.[323]

One of the major arguments of the Crimean local authorities against Crimean Tatar seizure of land was that it violated the law. Crimean Tatar seizure of land did technically violate Soviet legislation. But in a settler colonial context, as shown by Olúfémi Táíwò and many other scholars of postcolonialism, the legal system of the state protects the settler colonial regime.[324] The history of the Russian imperial and the Soviet presence in

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[320] Aider Muzhdaba, interview by author, June 22, 2019.

Ilmi Umerov, interview by author, June 24, 2019.

[321] Sinaver Kadyrov, interview by Maksym Sviezhentsev and Martin-Oleksandr Kisly, July 13, 2019.

[322] Ibid.

[323] Kimitaka Matsuzato (ed.), *Regiony Ukrainy: Khronika i Rukovoditeli*, Vol. 3. *Krym i Nikolaevskaia oblast´* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2009), 45.

[324] Olúfémi Táíwò, *How Colonialism Preempted Modernity in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

Also see works by Deborah Rosen, for example: Deborah A. Rosen, *Border Law: The First Seminole War and American Nationhood* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015).

Jody Byrd, in addition to providing an interesting study of indigenous critical theory, touches on some contemporary legal issue in the US, demonstrating how states that are thought to be contemporary paragons of liberal democracy act as settler empires towards the indigenous people: Jody A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

Crimea suggests that laws did not function equally in relation to different national groups. The law and the language of equality, as one of the institutions of the settler colonial power was used by the local authorities to prevent and sabotage the repatriation process. The demand for land by Crimean Tatars often accompanied mass protests in front of the government buildings. One of such protest in the town of Yalta in 1990 was declared unsanctioned: when activists submitted a request to sanction a protest in front of the municipal authorities buildings, they got rejected and offered a place in an open-air cinema (a place where they would not be as visible for public) instead.[325] Finally, in a statement by Yalta municipal council that condemned Crimean Tatar protests, the council ordered distribution of land 'on equal terms' to Crimean Tatar and 'local' residents of the area. The municipal also limited the possibility of Crimean Tatar repatriation to the area only to those who were personally deported from the area or who could prove that their closest circle of relatives had been deported from the area.[326] The first statement meant that under the use of equal national rights rhetoric, the authorities were going to distribute a limited land resource to non-Crimean Tatars, limiting the indigenous access to the land. And in addition, they further limited Crimean Tatar access to settling in Southern region of Crimea by requiring them to prove their lineage, making the positive result almost impossible. In the meantime, the precious land of the Southern Crimea was to be *legally* distributed among 'local people' – settlers – behind the façade of repatriation efforts.

Crimean Tatar attempts to acquire land fit into the theoretical framework of the *third space of sovereignty*, defined by an American political scientist Kevin Bruyneel.[327] According to Bruyneel, a *third space* of sovereignty, is an indigenous way to challenge the imperial "spatial and temporal boundaries, demanding rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler state while also challenging the imposition of colonial rule on

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[325] Petr Makukha, "Vozvrashchenie," *Sovetskii Krym*, June 20, 1990.

[326] "Reshenie Yaltinskogo gorodskogo Soveta narodnykh deputatov ot 12 oktiabria 1990 g. O sostoianii raboty I dopolnitel′nykh merakh po vydeleniiu zemel′nykh uchastkov pod individual′noe zhylishchnoe stroitel′stvo," *Sovetskii Krym*, October 18, 1990.

[327] Kevin Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of US-Indigenous Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

their lives".[328] Such understanding comes from a premise that the indigenous people have a sovereignty of their own, separate from the sovereignty of the imperial state. This also means that the indigenous sovereignty is not a gift of the empire and therefore, the colonizer is unable to take it away.[329] Crimean Tatars were Soviet citizens. They recognized the Soviet authority and even appealed to Lenin's writing in their fight for national rights. They received Soviet education and utilized the opportunities of the Soviet welfare system. In that regard, Crimean Tatars existed within the legal space of the Soviet state. On the other hand, Crimean Tatars had a strong indigenous identity and saw Crimea as a basis on which that identity stood. That said, Crimean Tatar seizure of land was an act of resistance based on the understanding that the indigenous right to the land and indigenous sovereignty comes before the imperial laws. That way, the self-acquisition of land was more than just a fight for private property, but a people's claim for their right to live and self-govern in Crimea. When analyzing the methods of Crimean Tatar resistance to the Soviet state, Greta Uehling pays specific attention to the appropriation of Marxist-Leninist rhetoric by Crimean Tatars. She further says that Crimean Tatars entered into a dialogue with the state and played a role of educators, teaching the state officials about the history and rights of their people.[330] One of the methods of resistance, according to Uehling, was the appropriation of the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric in order to teach the state that it violated its own legal and ideological norms.[331]

The reason why the self-acquisition of land by Crimean Tatars was often met with resistance, hostility and the language of blackmail from the local authorities had a long-lasting significance in the sphere of power dynamic on the peninsula. By coming on their own terms, claiming the land and creating their own political institutions Crimean Tatars claimed agency in the colonized space and prepared to distort the settler colonial system.

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[328] Bruyneel, *The Third Space of Sovereignty…*, xvii.

[329] Ibid., xiv.

[330] Uehling, *Beyond Memory,* 150.

[331] Ibid.*,* 145, 150, 151-152.

In June 1991 Crimean Tatar demands for national sovereignty entered the sphere of organized politics. Activists of the Crimean Tatar national movement organized *Kurultai* in the city of Simferopol – an all-nation congress, where delegates from Crimean Tatar communities elected the Crimean Tatar representative body – *Mejlis.* From that time forward, the national movement entered the sphere of politics, in addition to social activism. What was more important during the Kurultai was that the assembly adopted a resolution which proclaimed the *national* sovereignty of Crimean Tatar people on Crimean land: "Crimea is a national territory of Crimean Tatar people, where only this people has a right for self-determination the way this right is mentioned in international legal acts, recognized by the international community".[332] Crimean Tatar repatriation efforts, acquisition of land and political organization are obviously connected processes, but all together this was an effort for decolonization of the peninsula in the post-Soviet era.

Mejlis became 'the competent representative body' that was 'lacking' in Crimean Tatar representation, according to the state authorities. However, the Soviet state was not ready to recognize Mejlis as a counteragent at negotiations. On July 2, 1991 a head of the ideology section of the CC of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Ivan Musienko, issued a report to the CC, informing about and condemning *Kurultai* and its decisions: "...in fact Kurultai turned into a party congress of the nationalistic extremist organization – Organization of Crimean Tatar National Movement /OKND/, - that tried to use this congress in order to give its anti-Soviet program a look of the people's support".[333] The decisions of the Crimean Tatar congress, according to Musienko, cause "negative reaction of the population of the autonomous republic [of Crimea], objectively lead to the aggravation of the inter-national tension in the region."[334] Therefore, Musienko advised Crimean regional committee to start an ideological campaign against the decisions of

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[332] "Kurultai: den´ tertii," *Kurortny Krym*, June 29, 1991.

[333] Message by I. Musienko, head of ideology section of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, "Pro kurultai /z'izd/ kryms´ko-tatars´koho narodu," TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 32, no. 2921, 25.

[334] Ibid., 26.

Kurultai in the local press and in the areas of concentration of Crimean Tatars in order to explain "socio-historical and juridical impossibility of the demands of the creation of the national-territorial autonomy of Crimean Tatars in the region".[335]

The memoirs of Mykola Bahrov record his attitude towards the *Kurultai*. Once again, a negative attitude hid behind a democratic and appeasing rhetoric: "…we understood the plan to hold Kurultai in Simferopol on June 26-30, 1991. However, our position from the beginning was based on [a statement] that the question was about the representative body acting within the [norms of] legislation and not claiming an alternative power."[336] Rhetorically Bahrov remains democratic – he is ready to recognize the representative body of Crimean Tatars – but in reality the requirement to follow the 'norm of legislation' is a vague enough formulation to be able to manipulate it, especially in a settler colonial environment. Just few pages later Bahrov says that leaders of the Organization of Crimean Tatar National Movement were not ready for dialogue with the authorities, that their political demands scared the 'Crimeans'.[337] This was why the authorities negotiated with a more moderate Crimean Tatar organization – National Movement of Crimean Tatars.[338] National Movement of Crimean Tatars (NDKT) consisted of the older generation of activists (often sharing communist ideology themselves) that were ready to negotiate and find compromises with the Soviet government. Their opponents – Organization of Crimean Tatar National Movement – were younger and more radical, and anti-Soviet by ideology.[339]

The Crimean Supreme Council did not recognize the legitimacy of Crimean Tatar declaration of national sovereignty and criticized it for 'nationalism', while the "so

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[335] Message by I. Musienko, head of ideology section of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Ukraine, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, "Pro kurultai /z'izd/ kryms´ko-tatars´koho narodu," TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 1, op. 32, no. 2921, 26-27.

[336] Bagrov, *Krym: vremja nadezhd i trevog*, 126.

[337] Ibid., 128.

[338] Ibid., 130.

[339] Svetlana Chervonnaia, "Krymskotatarskoe natsional´noe dvizhenie (1994-1996)", *Issledovaniia po prikladnoi i neotlozhnoi etnologii № 101* (Moscow: Institut antropologii i etnologii RAN, 1997), 10.

called" Mejlis was accused of destabilizing the inter-ethnic peace in Crimea.[340] As Andriy Klymenko described it, those terms were very new for the Crimean politicians and general public at the time. To many of them 'national sovereignty' of Crimean Tatars sounded like a claim for unilateral control over the peninsula.[341] Therefore, the Supreme Council of Crimea adopted a decree on July 29, 1991 that condemned Crimean Tatar *Kurultai*, proclaimed the Mejlis illegitimate and denounced Crimean Tatar declaration of sovereignty and national symbols as signs of nationalism.[342] Crimean Tatar sovereignty over the Crimean Peninsula disrupted the settler colonial regime that existed for two centuries. The very existence of the indigenous Crimean Tatars in Crimea undermined the settler's myth about 'brotherhood of nations' and Crimean 'multinationality'. This is why, Crimean authorities could not possibly recognize Mejlis as a legitimate power. Crimean Tatar sovereignty delegitimized the very foundations of the Crimean settler colonial status quo. This is why it was vitally important to denounce Crimean Tatar claims as nationalistic.

The Ukrainian state authorities did not recognize Mejlis as well. In that regard the government in Kyiv supported the status quo in Crimea and undermined its own power within the peninsula. It was easier for Kyiv's post-communist politicians to find agreement with former communists in Simferopol, rather than look for political allies among Crimean Tatars. Maybe part of the reason was that Mejlis consistently supported Ukrainian national-democratic forces (*Narodny Rukh,* in particular) and not former communists during elections. And in the meantime, throughout the 1990s and after, Mejlis was Ukraine's ally in Crimea, often without getting support in return. Due to the mobilization of Crimean Tatar people and mass repatriation, Mejlis quickly became an important factor in Crimean local politics. Leaders of Mejlis formulated political

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[340] "Krymu – grazhdanskii mir i natsional′noe soglasie. Obrashchenie Presidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta i Presidiuma Soveta Ministrov Kryma k grazhdanam Respubliki Krym," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, October 8, 1992.

[341] Andrii Klymenko, interview by author, August 8, 2018.

[342] "Postanovlenie Verkhovnogo Soveta Krymskoi ASSR O s″ezde (kurultae) predstavitelei krymskikh tatar," *Slava Sevastopolia*, August 2, 1991.

demands based on the premise that the fate of Crimea could not be decided without Crimean Tatars. They demanded facilitation of repatriation and pointed to the multiple problems that stood in front of repatriates in Crimea. The acquisition of land was just one of them. In addition, Crimean Tatar repatriates faced problems with receiving Ukrainian citizenship and all questions that directly depended on that – education for children, job opportunities, political representation, among others.

As a head of the Crimean parliament, Mykola Bahrov advocated for Crimean *territorial* sovereignty. The arguments in favor of it mostly repeated the Soviet rhetoric of 'brotherhood of nations', adjusted to the reality of post-Soviet time. Besides, the claims for the territorial sovereignty based on the historical claim that the Crimean autonomy in early 1920s had a territorial form. This way, the proponents of the territorial autonomy (and opponents of Crimean Tatar national autonomy) could employ history for their political arguments and preserve the settler colonial sovereignty over land. At times, it looked like Crimean authorities as well as Crimean press were trying to forge a separate multinational Crimean identity. 'Multinationalism' propaganda appealed directly to Soviet traditions and historical narratives. Statements about a historically 'multinational' Crimea were a way to employ history into the everyday politics and argue that Crimean Tatars had no more rights for the Crimean land that any other national group in Crimea. In that regard the Crimean settler colonial system used the old methods of political warfare instead of inventing new ones.

For Crimean Tatar respondents, the sense of their national sovereignty seemed intuitive, even when they were not quite sure about the meaning of the term. It stems from the understanding that the land of Crimea is part of their identity, part of their families' history. Surprisingly, Ismail Ramazanov and Sinaver Kadyrov (representatives of different generations of Crimean Tatars) both described Russian policies in Crimea in settler colonial terms, even though both were unaware of settler colonial theories. For Ismail Ramazanov, who was born in Uzbekistan and repatriated to Crimea as a child in 1993, the sense of belonging to "my people" and "my land" is extremely powerful: "My fight for my nationality started in 1993. My peers [children of the same age] called me Uzbek. How can I be Uzbek, if everything here is mine? All mountains, all rivers have

Crimean Tatar names. My Khans [leaders of Crimean Khanate – Crimean Tatar state] are buried here".[343] He then continued with a story about the house of his great-grandfather and a cornel tree that his great-great-grandfather planted near the foot of the mountain.[344] Their family went to find the house (that they lost as a result of the deportation) and the tree upon returning to Crimea. When Ramazanov's grandfather asked the present owners of the house to be allowed to step into the yard for a family prayer, they were denied. This sense of belonging to his nationality is interesting to observe in a person, who was just starting elementary school in 1993. This awareness of the deportation probably developed as a result of repatriation and becoming the 'Other' in Crimean space. Ramazanov's words about the native land represent what Uehling describes as Crimean Tatar responsibility *for* the land that is a source of their sense of national identity.[345] Of course, in the case of a representative of a younger generation, the researcher deals with socially constructed memory. The emotional attachment to this memory probably even increased after the 2014 annexation of Crimea, creating a perception of a single sequence of the Russian imperial policy – since 1783 to this day. It is worth mentioning, however, that identity in general is a social construct. And Russian identity in Crimea, the image of the 'Russian' Crimea is no more or less of a construct that any other identities that exist in Crimea or elsewhere. The fact that Crimean Tatar identity or memory is socially constructed does not delegitimize it. And the idea of being responsible for one's native land or *belonging to* the land is strikingly similar to the ideas that were common among the indigenous peoples of North America in relation to their native land.[346]

Throughout the conversation Ramazanov emphasizes the original Crimean Tatar geographical names for every place he mentions. Other Crimean Tatar respondents, like

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[343] Ismail Ramazanov, interview by author, July 9, 2019.

[344] In a region of 'Bloodlands' (Timothy Snyder's term) being able to point at a tree, planted by one's 4th generation ancestor is not a very common ability. This is especially true in Crimea, where the majority of the population are settlers.

[345] Uehling, *Beyond Memory*, 15.

[346] More on this: Annie L Booth, "We are the Land: Native American Views of Nature," in *Nature Across Cultures. Science Across Cultures: The History of Non-Western Science*, Vol. 4, edited by Selin, Helaine, 329-349. (Springer, Dordrecht: 2003).

Aider Muzhdaba and Ilmi Umerov, do the same – often referring to the place by Crimean Tatar name and only after that giving the current official name of the place. This demonstrates the awareness of the indigenous people of the necessity to record this indigeneity and to resist the active policy of the empire to erase it. It also demonstrates how settler colonization takes place in the space of linguistics: language, names and geography traditionally become targets of settler colonization. Ramazanov also sees himself a direct victim of the Stalin's policy that he describes as a genocide: "Because of Stalin's repressions I could not be born in my native land… I cannot tell myself that I am hundred percent Crimean Tatar. [They] deprived me of the opportunity to be born in my native land."[347] The Crimean Tatar understanding of home and repatriation demanded that they be repatriated to the exact same village from where their ancestors had been deported. However, certain areas, especially in Southern parts of Crimea, became restricted for Crimean Tatars. They also tended to receive permission to live in rural, rather than urban areas. Most Crimean Tatar repatriates ended up repatriating wherever it was possible within Crimea and had no opportunity to choose.[348]

One of the things Crimean Tatars did get in terms of their political demands was the national quotas during the elections to Crimean Supreme Council of 1994. Those quotas gave Crimean Tatars a right to elect 7 delegates to the council. This measure was temporary and lasted a single election cycle. Officially this was a recognition of the fact that Crimean Tatar people were in the process of repatriation and often had problems acquiring citizenship. Therefore, there was a need to assure Crimean Tatar representation in the Supreme Council. Mykola Bahrov became one of the proponents of the national quotas for the Crimean Tatars and to a large extent they were approved on his effort. While this was an important development in recognition of Crimean Tatar national rights, this hardly led to dismantling the settler colonial system in Crimea. It is possible to say that Bahrov was eventually 'educated' by the persistence and argumentation of Crimean

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[347] Ismail Ramazanov, interview by author, July 9, 2019.

[348] Uehling, *Beyond Memory*, 211-219.

Tatar activists.[349] On the other hand, of course, Bahrov did get an endorsement of Crimean Tatar Mejlis during his presidential race against Yurii Meshkov.

3.4   Ukrainian Activists: Constructing a Narrative of Ukrainian Crimea

The Ukrainians' challenge to settler colonial institutions of power in Crimea was of a different kind than that of Crimean Tatars. Unlike Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians were not an indigenous group on the peninsula and, unlike Russians, they did not have an imperial narrative of the past to argue for their rightful presence in the space. In terms of the development of Ukrainian national culture and language in Crimea (and, therefore, cultural claims to Crimea as a homeland), Ukrainians were not much better state than Crimean Tatars, even though technically Crimea had been part of the Ukrainian SSR since 1954. What Ukrainians did have was state sovereignty over Crimea and a certain level of national awakening in early 1990s. Ukrainian activists in Crimea tried to challenge Russian settler-colonial institutions of power and claimed to be fighting for the decolonization of Crimea, as a part of a general Ukrainian decolonization (de-Sovetization, de-Rusification) process. Their main goal was to preserve Crimea as an integral part of Ukraine and resist the pro-Russian nationalist movement within the peninsula. Partially this meant changing the language hierarchy within the peninsula and demanding local authorities to enable functionality of the Ukrainian language. Often, however, these efforts amounted to attempts to *re*-colonize Crimea into a Ukrainian place. The pro-Ukrainian movement relied on activists, nationally minded intelligentsia and several small anti-communist opposition parties. It had little to no support from the state, but did get support from Ukrainian activists in the rest of Ukraine. In addition, the Ukrainian movement was able to coordinate with the Crimean Tatar movement. Both movements had slightly different goals, but had a common opponent, represented by the

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[349] The question of 'educating' the government is covered in length by Greta Uehling. The phenomenon of entering into a dialogue with the colonizing power as a way of resistance probably does require additional analysis. By entering into a dialogue and framing it as a pedagogical process, the colonized seizes agency and authority and disrupts the authority of the colonizer. The history of the North American settler colonialism demonstrates the same educating strategies adopted by the Native Americans in resistance to their colonizers.

pro-Russian nationalist forces. Although the network of Ukrainian activists in Crimea developed across the whole peninsula, this section will focus on the two main centers of its activity – Sevastopol and Simferopol.

Ukrainian activists in Crimea, in general, campaigned for the deeper involvement of the Ukrainian state in support of the Ukrainian culture, language in Crimea, as well as in the competition with institutions and agents of influence of the Russian state. Their state-building views, however, did not involve a support of the post-Soviet Ukrainian government. As was mentioned earlier, during the times of Kravchuk at least, the authorities in Kyiv often received information about the situation in Crimea from the local communists. Ukrainian activists, meanwhile, often oriented at the nationally-minded anti-communist opposition. They criticized (and continue to do so today) the Ukrainian authorities in Kyiv and their passive approach towards the Crimea problem. Therefore, they often tried to compensate the passiveness of the Ukrainian state with their own activism. Often this meant putting their own careers at risk for the opportunity to exercise their national rights, to be Ukrainian in Crimea and to not be targeted for that.

Surprisingly, the importance of Sevastopol for the pro-Ukrainian movement had similar reasons to why Sevastopol was important for Russia. As a navy base, Sevastopol had a considerable number of officers and sailors who came to serve from elsewhere in Ukraine. That was a potential social base for the pro-Ukrainian movement. In the December 1, 1991 referendum, 57% of people in Sevastopol supported the independence of Ukraine. This was even higher than in the rest of Crimea, which was surprising, considering the image of Sevastopol as a pro-Russian stronghold. Ukrainian officers report that an absolute majority of the Black Sea Fleet supported the Ukrainian independence and were ready to serve under Ukrainian jurisdiction.[350] Volodymyr Prytula claims that his sources among fleet officers informed that there had been a

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[350] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

Mykola Huk, interview by author, August 18, 2018.

Savchenko, *Anatomiia Neob"javlennoi voiny*, 15.

centralized order from the fleet command to support the Ukrainian independence.[351] Other respondents, who served in the Black Sea Fleet, such as 2nd rank captain Mykola Huk and 1st rank captain Yevhen Lupakov, do not mention this order in their interviews. Moreover, upon being approached with a request for clarification, Yevhen Lupakov directly rejected that statement: "Who would give such an order? What would be the consequences for that person?"[352] Prytula's description of Sevastopol, however, aligns with the way 1st rank captain Lupakov speaks about Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet – as a militarized city and a military base, which together with their residents and servicemen were ready to "fulfill orders," often independently from personal beliefs.[353] It was Sevastopol rather than Simferopol, according to Prytula, that happened to be more organized and effective in terms of Ukrainian activism in the Crimean Peninsula.[354]

In 1989, after the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR adopted the law "On languages", activists in Sevastopol started *Tovarystvo Ukrain'skoi Movy imeni Tarasa Shevchenka* (Association of Ukrainian language of Taras Shevchenko). This association later became known as *Tovarystvo "Prosvita"* (Association "Enlightenment"), a known circle of Ukrainian intelligentsia in the city. It was one of the main organizations to carry out Ukrainian activism and promote Ukrainian statehood and culture on the territory of Crimea. 2nd rank captain Mykola Huk, a military journalist for the Black Sea Fleet newspapers "Vympel" and "Flag Rodiny" became the first head of this organization. His efforts to support Ukrainian language and culture in Crimea predated *Tovarystvo Ukrain'skoi Movy.* He had previously tried to organize a Ukrainian language school for his daughter, and as a result Mykola Huk began to suffer under pressure from his superiors at work. In 1988 he was accused of Ukrainian nationalism (charges that were rejected later), which put him in danger of being kicked out of the communist party.[355] In

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[351] Volodymyr Prytula, interview by author, May 22, 2019.

[352] Yevhen Lupakov, personal email communication, December 8, 2019.

[353] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

[354] Volodymyr Prytula, interview by author, May 22, 2019.

[355] Just like in the case with Crimean Tatar defense strategies mentioned above, appealing to Leninist rhetoric becomes an interesting component of dissent here and is emphasized during the interview.

1989 he was removed from his position on the fleet newspaper "Flag Rodiny" for his political views. Military newspapers were official institutions of propaganda, and Huk had been trained in a military school to become a part of this institution of propaganda. His removal from writing for the paper indicated that, to his superiors in the Black Sea Fleet, any kind of political dissent was akin to treason.[356] *Tovarystvo Ukrain'skoi Movy* was created shortly after that and united several dozens of Ukrainian-minded people in Sevastopol.

The content of Ukrainian activism in Sevastopol in early 1990s developed out of several social components that coincided: the fall of the Soviet Union and the general demotivation of pro-Soviet forces, a relatively large group of politically neutral people, the novelty of political activity in general and a sense of national awakening among pro-Ukrainian activists. *Tovarystvo Ukrain'skoi Movy* and later *Prosvita* manifested themselves as cultural organization, promoting Ukrainian language and culture. They organized a Ukrainian choir and theater, they also held traditional Ukrainian Christmas celebrations – *Vertep*. In a colonial situation with strict national hierarchies and boundaries, these were highly political activities. On the other hand, the official Soviet rhetoric on national equality enabled them to promote Ukrainian language and culture without being openly anti-Soviet (or anti-systemic). Mykola Huk, a communist himself at the time, says he even invited representatives of the Communist party to the first meetings in order to emphasize its apolitical nature.[357] The "oxymoron space" of Soviet and post-Soviet political and social life (when official rhetoric did not correspond to real actions) was not only an imperial form of oppression, it also enabled such resistance maneuvers from non-dominant groups. While Ukrainian activism in Crimea claimed emphatically to be apolitical, the existence of organizations like these, and their goals, *were* thoroughly political, because they disrupted the colonial monopoly over cultural and political socialization.[358]

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[356] Mykola Huk, interview by author, August 18, 2018.

[357] Ibid.

[358] The example with the invitation of a Communist official to the meetings of *Prosvita*, as well as the existence of organization like *Prosvita* in a place like Sevastopol, demonstrates inconsistencies that are

The goal of Ukrainian activists in Crimea was to promote Ukrainian statehood on the peninsula and resist the attempts to secede it from Ukraine. The promotion of the creation of Ukrainian armed forces on the territory of Crimea was an important step towards those goals. Taking control over the Black Sea Fleet and the creation of the Ukrainian navy forces turned into a race between Russia and Ukraine (more on this in Chapter 5). At times, this was *literally* a race, when Ukrainian and Russian officers were trying to get into military bases ahead of their competitors in order to convince local commander, officers and servicemen either to pledge allegiance to Ukraine or to remain under the control of the fleet command.[359] The result of that race defined the balance of power on the peninsula. In this race, Ukrainian activists/officers were the main power and source of expertise regarding the creation of the fleet. Their main problems were lack of timely political support from the state, fierce resistance from the fleet command and other fleet institutions (media, for example), as well as marginalization from other Crimean settler colonial institutions. Accordingly, the Russian side in this race had control over the fleet structures, as well as political support from the Russian state authorities, including President Yeltsin himself.[360]

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common in actions of any empire. Controlling every single step of the members of the society requires an enormous amount of resources. Therefore, at times various *actors* within the imperial discourse make mistakes, use bad judgement, or become open to corruption. A representative of the party who came to the meeting of *Prosvita* probably understood what was going on. But he was specifically invited to the meeting, because he would not have any *formal* reason (or motivation) to start a fight against the organization. Moreover, his presence at the meeting *legitimized* the meeting itself. Inconsistencies like this change the characteristic of the imperial relations from being strictly 'carved in stone' to being a constantly changing dynamic. This reminds of one of Homi Bhabha's characteristics of colonial ambivalence – a discourse that exists "at the crossroads of what is known and permissible and that which though known must be kept concealed; a discourse uttered between the lines and as such against the rules and within them" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 128).

[359] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by the author, August 27, 2018.

[360] Lupakov further remembers that in early days of the Ukrainian navy forces, Ukrainian officers did not have other choice but to use the military communication system of the Black Sea Fleet, which was of course controlled (and listened to) by the respective branches of the fleet. The same problem was in the newly established Ministry of Defense in Kyiv. Lupakov says that in early 1992 the Ministry of Defense only had two phone lines. Therefore, it was almost impossible in critical situations for the officers in Crimea to reach the ministry by phone to let the authorities know there were people in Crimea, willing to serve Ukraine.

The fight for the creation of the Ukrainian navy started when a group of officers of the Black Sea Fleet decided to establish a local branch of the *Spilka Ofitseriv Ukrainy* (Association of officers of Ukraine) in Crimea. Unlike anywhere else in Ukraine, in Crimea and within the units of the Black Sea Fleet, membership in the officers' association had to be kept secret. Membership in the association meant immediate dismissal from the fleet. 2nd rank captain Mykola Huk became one of the delegates to the 1st congress of officers in Kyiv on July 28, 1991, where the association was established. Captain Huk says his participation in the congress became known in the Communist party and in the fleet. The commander of the fleet, admiral Mikhail Khronopulo, sent a report to the Soviet minister of defense asking for permission to dismiss Huk from duty before the end of his commission, due to his "anti-party and anti-Constitutional activity".[361] Huk was also told he was going to be arrested and imprisoned. The process was stopped due to the coup d'état of GKChP, which led to many people being dismissed from the fleet.[362] In 1991, even after the proclamation of Ukrainian independence, *Spilka* existed as an underground movement in the Black Sea Fleet. Every gathering of *Spilka* members resulted in the official dismissal of the unit commanders that had hosted them, even though these repercussions contradicted all norms about the creation of separate post-Soviet armed forces. As a result, officers had to meet at a secondary school, calling themselves the association of gardeners.[363] *Spilka* played an important role in the establishment of the Ukrainian navy; it's officers were the first to pledge loyalty oaths to Ukraine and to organize a wide campaign within the fleet to encourage other servicemen to do the same. Of course this meant burning their cover and suffering dismissal from Black Sea Fleet service. The organization of the Ukrainian navy forces (established in April, 1992) was completely comprised of officers who had previously pledged allegiance to Ukraine and were dismissed for doing so.[364]

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[361] Anatolii Danilov, *Ukrains´ky flot: bilia dzherel vidrodzhennia* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo imeni Oleny Telihy, 2000), 47.

[362] Mykola Huk, interview by author, August 18, 2018.

[363] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

[364] Danilov, *Ukrains´ky flot: bilia dzherel vidrodzhennia,* 226 -227.

As an underground movement within a military institution filled with counter-intelligence and security service agents, *Spilka* could not recruit members openly. Captain Huk, as a military journalist, used to walk around ships carrying a Ukrainian newspaper *Literaturna Ukraina* (Literary Ukraine) so that he could assess the reactions of other seamen to his choice of reading material. In this way, he saw the attitude of his colleagues towards Ukraine. He also met people in bookstores next to the shelves with Ukrainian-language literature.[365] *Literaturna Ukraina* happened to be important for Yevhen Lupakov as well: he found a drafted sailor reading the newspaper in the washroom on a military base and ordered him to show what he was reading. Lupakov claims that this was how he got exposed to that newspaper. A soldier was receiving the newspaper from his parents (it was not accessible in newspaper kiosks of Sevastopol) in mail and further on shared it with Lupakov. Reading that newspaper for Lupakov became a defining time for his identity that, as he claims, had previously been Soviet. He says that he had never thought of Ukraine as something different from the Soviet Union: "For the most part of my life I was a good janissary. I served occupants faithfully and loyally."[366] But *Literaturna Ukraina* made him question the reality he lived in. As a higher ranking officer he still could not locate *Spilka* members as they considered him too dangerous (too high in the rank and, therefore, potentially loyal to the system) to approach. Therefore, Lupakov had to find his way into *Spilka* on his own by persuading an uncovered member to trust him.[367]

Explaining a motivation of the Black Sea Fleet officers to pledge allegiance to the Ukrainian state is a question that is very hard to answer. It seems that late 1980s and early 1990s were a breaking time, when many people behaved contrary to the general expectation. Joining an underground organization or dissenting from the standards of

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[365] Mykola Huk, interview by author, August 18, 2018.

[366] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

Lupakov here references a historical image of Ottoman military infantry units (14th to 19th century) that were being created out of the prisoners, captured during wars. In a Ukrainian context janissary represents a person, who was brought up by the enemy and sent to fight against his own people.

[367] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

political behavior for a Soviet military officer, especially prior to August, 1991 meant putting their career, freedom and even the future of their families at risk. The Soviet system of military education, background checks, political indoctrination and oversight by security services could hardly allow disloyal people to build military careers. Mykola Huk, although originally he came from Western Ukraine, was a trained military propagandist. Yevhen Lupakov came from Mykolaiv region (Southern Ukraine). He reached a rank of 1st rank captain and served as a deputy commander of the 14th submarine division, armed with nuclear weapons. Apparently, he could only reach this kind of status, because he was considered loyal to the state. The first commander of the Ukrainian fleet, vice-admiral Borys Kozhyn, served as a commander of the navy base of the Black Sea Fleet. At the time when he became a commander of the fleet, he, an ethnic Russian, could not speak a word of Ukrainian language. The officers around him created an environment in which the Ukrainian navy headquarters conducted all correspondence and communication in Ukrainian.[368] The time period might be at least partially responsible for such dramatic changes in their allegiance. *Perestroika* in the Soviet Union and the sense of a coming political instability allowed access to knowledge that had not been available before. It is hard to measure the extent to which the social movements in the Ukrainian SSR for the democratization and Ukrainian state-building reached navy officers in Crimea. On the one hand, they were all educated people and knew from the very experience of their service that in the Soviet Union words often did not correspond to actions. On the other hand, Soviet military and navy was an institutions that isolated personnel from the rest of the society. As unlikely as this was, those officers became part of the general social movement in Ukraine. Due to their military experience they were able to convert military discipline into serious political results.[369]

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[368] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

[369] Historical records say that President Kravchuk issued an order to form Ukrainian navy on April 5, 1992. But personal memories of the Ukrainian navy veterans record the context. Ukrainian officers in Sevastopol knew in advance that Russian President Yeltsin was going to issue an order that take control over the Black Sea Fleet. The fleet command would of course follow that order, which meant that Ukraine was going to lose the fleet. Therefore, it was important to force the Ukrainian government to act first. An envoy from Sevastopol reached Kyiv on Sunday, April 5, 1992, when all the state institutions were of course closed. The order of President Kravchuk came out that same day. President Yeltsin issued his order on April 7, 1992. That led to the political collision between two states.

Further activity of *Spilka* members focused around turning officers and military units of the Black Sea Fleet to the Ukrainian side. According the legislation of the new Ukrainian state, all military units located on the territory of Ukraine had to switch to be under Ukrainian command. Multiple officers of the Ukrainian navy forces claim that in 1992 the vast majority of the Black Sea Fleet personnel was ready to accept Ukrainian allegiance.[370] This was not always due to the Ukrainian patriotism (although this often was the case), but due to their lack of confidence in the future Russia's presence in Crimea and their desire to remain on the Crimean Peninsula. Two major barriers prevented a mass transfer of the fleet to Ukrainian control: a lack of quick and decisive support from the political leadership in Kyiv for the initiatives of Ukrainian navy officers and systematic repressions from the fleet command against any dissent. This was a key failure of Ukrainian political leadership because the Black Sea Fleet was one of the main forces that enabled the reproduction and support of Russian settler colonial influence in Crimea.

Meanwhile, street activism by the Ukrainian organizations became the main advocate of the Ukrainian state in Crimea. *Prosvita* actively supported the referendum on Ukrainian independence, organized Ukrainian-language schools and held Ukrainian cultural events, privately and publicly. Two of the Ukrainian activists in Sevastopol at that time, Mykola Vladzimirsky and Mykola Huk believe, for instance, that the pro-independence outcome of the referendum on the Ukraine's independence in Sevastopol was due to the vitality of the Ukrainian community there.[371] Prior to that referendum, *Prosvita* managed to

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[370] Danilov, *Ukrains'ky flot: bilia dzherel vidrodzhennia*, 96.

Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

Mykola Huk, interview by author, August 18, 2018.

[371] Mykola Vladzimirsky, interview by author, August 22, 2018.

Mykola Huk, interview by author, August 18, 2018.

There is a certain sense of romantism in a way Mykola Huk and another anonymous activist (who was present during the interview) describe their activism. They mention, for example, how prior to the referendum in addition to walking from doorstep to doorstep, they spread leaflets in support of the Ukrainian independence. The leaflets that were glued to street posts were being removed overnight. Therefore, activists of *Prosvita* climbed each other's backs in order to be able to glue leaflets high enough so that they could not be removed.

delegate several of its members to the Sevastopol municipal council during the municipal elections of 1990. Those municipal deputies formed a group called 'Ukraine' in the city council. This, of course, disrupted the existing Russian national status-quo, and threatened to change national dynamics. Sevastopol was "a city of Russian glory" and therefore, no alternative narratives could be allowed to exist. For example, in 1990 a group of Sevastopol municipal deputies initiated a creation of the first Ukrainian-language school in the city. One of the initiators and member of the *Prosvita*, 2nd rank captain and a municipal deputy Vadym Makhno later stated that he received anonymous death threats over the phone because of his support for the school.[372] Municipal deputy Leonid Amelkovych also received threats from unknown people, activist Bohdan Yenal even appealed to KGB for protection and changed his phone number. Resistance to pro-Ukrainian representatives on the municipal council came from the local authorities and local pro-Russian civic organizations, and from within the Black Sea Fleet.[373]

By 1993 *Prosvita* developed into an extended structure which united several different initiatives. Alongside close cooperation with the Union of Ukrainian Officers, its activists created a Greek Catholic religious community in the city, as well as a *Sojuz Ukrainok* (Union of Ukrainian women), both headed by Bohdana Protsak. Protsak also organized *Plast* – a scouting organization for children that was actively developing across Ukraine in the early 1990s. In a context in which the Ukrainian state provided little to no support to the community, activists were actively creating social structures and cultural institutions on their own. This, in turn, disrupted the existing empire's system of body politics – Foucault's term for the state's system of socialization that assures the upbringing of the 'right' member of society. *Prosvita* was the basis for all Ukrainian events in Sevastopol and provided support for Ukrainian activists from outside of Crimea when they visited.

Ukrainian activism in Simferopol, according to Volodymyr Prytula, was less organized and went through constant internal conflicts. It consisted of the local university student

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[372] S. Mihailov "Voskresnaya Shkola 'Laskavo Prosymo'", *Slava Sevastopolia,* November 30, 1990.

[373] Danilov, *Ukrains'ky flot: bilia dzherel vidrodzhennia*, 27.

movement, based in the Simferopol State University (later – Tavriisky National University of Vernadsky) as well as local branches of the all-Ukrainian parties and civic organizations. The Black Sea Fleet did not have much influence in Simferopol, which allowed for relatively more freedom in pro-Ukrainian activism. The factor of repatriating Crimean Tatars and coordination between pro-Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar organizations further reduced the influence of pro-Russian activists and contributed to the development of pro-Ukrainian influence, compared to Sevastopol.[374] For Andriy Ivanets and Andriy Shchekun, who were students at the Simferopol State University at the time, student organizations (Ukrainian student association, 'Zarevo', Student brotherhood) and cooperation with *Narodny Rukh* party (including its younger branch – *Molody Rukh*) became the first steps into political activism.[375] The department of history as well as the linguistic department of the University became a source of activists, both pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian.[376] Students participated in demonstrations, and campaigned for flying Ukrainian flags over state institutions. Their goal was to show that Crimea had more than one dimension, and that its identities included both Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar.[377]

Archival documents show that Ukrainian political parties in Crimea were constantly in lack of resources. For example, as of November, 1992 the local branch of *Narodny Rukh* in Crimea had 51 members.[378] This meant that *Rukh* could not establish municipal branches in all Crimean towns and therefore political activity required a lot of financial and human resources. To facilitate this work, *Rukh* members identified local municipal deputies who could potentially support pro-Ukrainian activity.[379] Informational resources were a general problem as well, as fight for Crimea often took place in the sphere of

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[374] Andrii Ivanets, interview by author, June 27, 2019.

[375] Andrii Ivanets, interview by author, June 27, 2019.

Andrii Shchekun, interview by author, June 4, 2019.

[376] Andrii Shchekun, interview by author, June 4, 2019.

[377] Andrii Ivanets, interview by author, June 27, 2019.

[378] Information from the Crimean local branch of Narodny Rukh to the head of secretariat of Narodny Rukh Boichyshyn M. I., 18 November 1992, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 270, op. 1, no. 154, 3.

[379] Letter by V Tsymbaliuk, head of Odesa regional organization of Narodny Rukh, to Oleksandr Lavrynovych, 12 April, 1992, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 270, op. 1, no. 154, 13.

propaganda. A letter from the Odesa regional organization of *Rukh* Volodymyr Tsymbaliuk to the deputy chairman of *Rukh* council Oleksandr Lavrynovych emphasized the lack of informational resources, and especially people who were capable to publicly debate with pro-Russian opponents:

"Propagandist forces are weak. On 12.04.92 [April 12, 1992] there had to be a 'Round table' on television with a participation of URP [Ukrainian Republican Party], Rukh, 'Grazhdansky Forum Kryma' [Citizens' Forum of Crimea] on the one side and various chauvinistic groups – on the other [side]. From the Russian chauvinists such bison [meaning experienced, well-prepared person] will be speaking as philosophy professor Sagatovsky and others. From our side there are no people who would be even close to that level."[380]

In another letter, from the Democratic party of Ukraine, addressed to the President Kravchuk and Ukrainian parliament, the authors emphasize the informational isolation of Crimea from the rest of Ukraine. The letter emphasized the violation of the Ukrainian legislation by the Crimean local authorities and Russian politicians who visited Crimea and demanded protection of the national rights of Ukrainians. The Democratic party also called for the state support of the national rights of Crimean Tatars:

"The condition of the Ukrainian community in Crimea remains to be a condition of despised, persecuted minority. Still there has not been opened a single Ukrainian school, while the number of lessons of Ukrainian language is reduced to one-two in a week. The official language of Crimea is announced to be Russian, while [they named] Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar the state languages, as if [this is a] mockery. The Crimea's law on education contradicts the law on languages in Ukraine and puts the Ukrainian language at the level of foreign. […] Ukrainian language, literature, history of Ukraine have to be studied in full in all schools and educational institutions of Crimea. Political

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[380] Letter by V Tsymbaliuk, head of Odesa regional organization of Narodny Rukh, to Oleksandr Lavrynovych, 12 April, 1992, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 270, op. 1, no. 154, 14.

actors and officials that come to Ukraine privately [meaning Russian officials visiting Crimea] and start anti-Ukrainian and anti-state activity have to be deported outside of Ukraine. It is necessary to open access for Ukrainian media to Crimea, stop the incitement of ethnic hatred, support the return of Crimean Tatar people to its historical homeland and restoration of its national rights."[381]

The scope of the problems of the Ukrainian community in Crimea was very wide, while the number of activists was relatively low. Therefore, the immediate focus of their activity was cultural and informational. They campaigned for the creation of Ukrainian-language classes in schools, and promoted the creation of an independent Ukrainian church. The creative Association 'Ostrov Krym' ('Island Crimea') established a pro-Ukrainian radio program at the local state radio station. In the meantime, *Tovarystvo vchenykh "Krym z Ukrainoiu"* (Association of scientists "Crimea with Ukraine") found by Petro Volvach organized a campaign where Crimean scientists used their authority to conduct counter-propaganda in response to the pro-Russian narrative. They launched a propaganda campaign, providing economic and social reasoning for why Crimean should remain part of Ukraine.[382] This was an effort aimed at the establishment of a new and complicated narrative of Crimea. It challenged the monopoly of the local institutions over the definition of what Crimea and Crimean should mean. Eventually, as those activists argue, this helped prevent the annexation of the peninsula in the mid-1990s.

In Simferopol, and in the rest of Crimea besides Sevastopol, organizational power for pro-Ukrainian activism was imported from other parts of Ukraine. In order to coordinate among various pro-Ukrainian organizations and parties, a Ukrainian Member of Parliament, Mykola Porovsky, came to Crimea to organize a coordinating body called Committee "Krym z Ukrainoiu" ("Crimea with Ukraine"). This committee, established in 1992, organized congresses of Ukrainians of Crimea that were significant political events for Ukrainian activists. Again, the significance of the congresses was that they

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[381] "Zvernennia Druhoho Z'izdu Demokratychnoi Partii Ukrainy do Prezydenta Ukrainy L. Kravchuka, do Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy," TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 272, op. 1, no. 41, 41.

[382] Petro Volvach, interview by author, May 31, 2019.

demonstrated the presence of pro-Ukrainian forces on the peninsula, contrary to the official propaganda. Part of the effort to challenge the dominant narrative of Crimea was the establishment of the Ukrainian-language newspaper "Kryms´ka Svitlytsia" which began to publish in 1992. Significant effort was put into the creation of schools and classes in which Ukrainian was the language of education. Between 1999 and 2004 Crimea had more than 600 classes of this kind in addition to 7 schools. The Ukrainian gymnasium in Simferopol was created as a result of effort by Ukrainian activists, it provided a high level of education and had higher demand that it could possibly meet. Andriy Ivanets says that even pro-Russian activists were trying to send their children to this gymnasium, due to its good quality.[383]

The fact that activism was imported also means that it contained a component of colonization effort. Activists themselves saw this effort as decolonization of Ukraine which Crimea was a part of. Ukrainians from the mainland Ukraine going to Crimea describe their efforts in terms of 'bringing Ukrainian-ness' to this Russified (or, to be exact, Sovietized) region. In 1992 the head of the Kyiv branch of the *Spilka Ofitseriv Ukrainy* colonel Kostiuk addressed the head of the Ukrainian Republican Party Levko Lukianenko suggesting that university graduates from Western Ukraine should be sent to work in Eastern and Southern parts of the country. According to the suggestion, the young specialists from Western Ukraine were supposed to "bring a word of truth to the Southern and Eastern regions of Ukraine, restore our national rituals, traditions and inculcate love for the Ukrainian language."[384] Bohdan Sobutsky and Taras Melnyk, the organizers of the Ukrainian music festival "Chervona Ruta", said they established the festival specifically to spread Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian music to the most Russified regions of the country.[385] The festival was a week long and served as a stage

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[383] Andrii Ivanets, interview by author, June 27, 2019.

[384] Letter from Colonel R. Kostiuk, head of Kyiv organization of the Spilka Ofitseriv Ukrainy, to L. Luk'ianenko, head of the Ukrainian Republican Party, January 15, 1992, TsDAHO Ukrainy, fond 271, op. 1, no. 73, 1.

[385] Taras Melnyk, interview by author, June 8, 2019.

Bohdan Sobutsky, interview by author August 26, 2018.

for young musicians from all over Ukraine. The only requirement was that they had to sing in Ukrainian. In 1995 this festival came to Sevastopol and Simferopol. Bohdan Sobutsky says the organizers were very cautious about coming to Crimea, because the peninsula had a reputation as a pro-Russian space that was hostile to everything Ukrainian.[386] In other words, the perception of Crimea exactly corresponded to the image that Crimean authorities transmitted on the outside. But the resistance to the festival came only from a few dozen Russian activists, although there was a certain level of suspicion from the authorities. The turnout of people was large, and the Nakhimov square in Sevastopol was filled with people during the final concert.[387] Eventually, Sobutsky says, his pre-existing perception of Sevastopol and Crimea being anti-Ukrainian turned out to be wrong.[388]

Resistance to Ukrainian activism was organized systematically and relied primarily on existing institutions of power, and pro-Russian organizations. The political and cultural ambivalence in which Ukrainian organizations operated introduced traditional Soviet methods of dissent into a conservative Soviet society in Crimea. In Sevastopol, the fact that *Prosvita* united educated intelligentsia and military officers – often people with high esteem in the city – further enhanced its influence and increased its danger to the institutions of power. In addition to the dismissal or repression of pro-Ukrainian officers, these institutions also launched a coordinated informational campaign against any pro-Ukrainian activity in Crimea, based on their understandable perception of these as a threat to their own power.

It is, of course, hard to evaluate the extent to which Ukrainian activists were effective in their actions. They were not numerous, but their actions were very energetic and attracted attention. Multiple respondents say that the general public was tolerant of public pro-Ukrainian manifestations. While the immediate counterparts – pro-Russian civic

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[386] Bohdan Sobutsky, interview by author August 26, 2018.

[387] At some point in the middle of a concert unknown people cut the main cable that supplied the stage with electricity. This paused the concert for a bit, but organizers and local activists expected problems with energy supply and prepared generators.

[388] Bohdan Sobutsky, interview by author August 26, 2018.

organizations – had support from authorities, fleet command and some Russian politicians, they still could not boast of having wider public support. The majority of people in Crimea were not active politically. Most of them, in fact, seemed to be more pro-Soviet than pro-Russian, as their votes suggested during the elections of 1998. However, the existing structures of power and their control over media was successful in presenting a very particular, one-sided image of Crimea. If, according to Homi Bhabha, stereotype is one of the main instruments of colonial power, then Crimean and Russian authorities used this instrument well. At some point it is necessary to question the relation between creating and transmitting stereotypes about a certain society and construction of that society according to the stereotypes.

3.5   Conclusion

After the fall of the USSR Crimea remained a special region within Ukraine. It almost lived in its own world, and was only connected to the rest of the country with a narrow strip of land that is only seven kilometers wide in its narrowest spot. In early 2000s some radically pro-Russian advocates even proposed to organize a mission and to dig across the Isthmus of Perekop to make Crimea an island. Their dislike towards the Ukrainian state and influences coming from Ukraine, as well as the persistent threat of 'Crimean Tatar invasion' was turning into a desire to separate from Ukraine not just politically, but physically, geographically. Making Crimea an island would not make it closer to Russia, of course, but this desire reflected constant insecurities of the colonizer and the desire to conserve everything the way 'it has always been,' a desire to prevent changes by all possible means.

It seems at times that the idea of 'islandisation' of Crimea has been around for much longer than the recent two decades. A famous fiction novel "Ostrov Krym" ("Island Crimea") by Vasilii Aksenov that came out in 1981 described an alternative version of history that presumed an outcome of the civil war in the Russian Empire in which Crimea was an island under control of the White army. In the narrative by Aksionov, Crimea preserved itself as a 'Russian state' in opposition to the Soviet Union and turned into a prosperous, developed country. The novel became very popular in 1990s and possibly contributed (culturally) to further alienation of the peninsula.

Both the novel and the desire to dig across the Isthmus of Perekop are a reflection of a local settler's identity, formed under the influence of geographical isolation. This identity is not shared by *all* residents of Crimea, but it reflects the *only* narrative that can be freely expressed and transmitted to the outside world. Even in a fiction novel by Aksionov, there was no place for the Ukrainian or Crimean Tatar narrative on the peninsula. The novel was a story by a settler about settlers and their 'island' identity. It is a bitter irony that in 2014 Sergey Aksionov, a namesake of the author of "Ostrov Krym," and a so called "prime-minister of the Republic of Crimea" effectively *turned* Crimea into an island. And even after the annexation by Russia Crimean population preserved a sense of distinctiveness and isolation from citizens and society of the Russian Federation.

Chapter 4

4   Media as an Instrument of Settler Colonialism

In 2016 the Oxford dictionary named the word 'post-truth' as the international Word of the Year.[389] In the form of an adjective the word 'post-truth' is defined by Oxford dictionaries as "relating to circumstances in which people respond more to feelings and beliefs than to facts."[390] Since the time when the word 'post-truth' entered international political and media spheres, media scholars and journalists, as well as political scientists, have been considering the reasons and the outcomes of this new informational environment. The US presidential elections of 2016 served as a wake-up call, drawing the public attention to the power of social media networks and the so-called 'bot farms' that were able to challenge the conventional media's monopoly on information. New technologies and means of communication of the 21st century have created a problematic trend in public discourse: emotions matter more than facts and, therefore, become more popular and prevalent in media markets. Emotion- and opinion-driven information in the post-truth era, a distorted reality produced en masse by political and state propaganda, and the way they are deployed in information warfare, have created a crisis in journalistic standards. Information has become a space of international warfare just as central and important as trade, energy markets, and military conflicts.

The term 'post-truth' relates not only to the act of reception of the information – when people trust informational statements based on their beliefs and worldviews, not evidence - but also to the *production* of that information as well. In the post-truth media, facts do not matter, because the now outdated journalistic standard of "equal representation" of all sides of a conflict require the media to give equal attention to facts and to manipulations. As a result, the audience is either confused by conflicting reports that are framed by the

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[389] BBC News, "'Post-Truth Declared Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionaries," *BBC*, November 16, 2016. Accessed: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-37995600.

[390] Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, "Definition of Post-truth Adjective From the Oxford Learner's Dictionary," *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries*. Accessed: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/post-truth.

idea that "every side is right in its own way," or dismisses information that challenges their pre-existing beliefs and chooses to believe in whatever best fits their belief systems. As a result, society exists in a space where there is 'more than one truth;' all of them look legitimate and, given the high speed and saturation of the news cycle, there is no time to study the nuances. In other words, it is a space where truth simply does not exist, because *anything* could be questioned by simple manipulations and distortions of the narrative. What is more, these modern post-truth media practices enable authoritarian states to mask propaganda as news, by covering it with a façade of journalistic objectivity and offering it as one of the "truths" available.

The terminology of 'post-truth' appeared after the American presidential elections of 2016, when it became apparent that social media enables mass manipulation of public opinion. What became even more concerning was that such manipulation could be done by a foreign state with an aim to interfere in US domestic politics. Internationally, 'post-truth' has a close relationship with another term – 'hybrid war', used to describe the Russian military and informational aggression against Ukraine that started with the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Hybrid war includes not only military violence, but also informational manipulations, narrative distortions, and appeals to emotions, all aimed at demotivating one's opponents. The aim of a hybrid war is to destroy the opponent with their own hands, to conduct unofficial warfare without formally recognizing one's military involvement. 'Post-truth' and distortion of information provides an enormous opportunity for that: since Russia started its hybrid war in 2014 by invading Ukrainian Crimea and later Donbas, the international community always *knew* that the war has been waged by Russia. But the official Russian propagandist narrative about this war remains to be an 'alternative truth' and Western media remain to be one of the means by which this propaganda spreads.[391] No matter such close connection with the 'post-truth,' 'hybrid war' never became an Oxford dictionaries "Word of the Year".

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[391] One of the most timely and persuasive books on the topic became Timothy Snyder's *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018). The book became one of the New York Times bestsellers. The way the author addresses the 2016 US presidential election suggests a very close connection to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Snyder's book serves as a reminder and a strong argument, suggesting that the world's West-East influences are mutual. Therefore, contrary to the

Elements of 'post-truth' – the intentional manipulation of facts using the audience's emotions in order to reach political goals – in forms of state propaganda have been part of politics, warfare, colonialism for decades, even for centuries.[392] The concept of 'post-truth' would be interesting to compare to any history of imperial propaganda in colonized territories. Propaganda, especially in the 20th century, often appealed to emotions in its methodology. Control over the narrative, over cultural stereotypes, over history and, therefore, the interpretation of the present, is closely tied to the history of the European settler colonialism. The languages of orientalism, racial segregation, benevolent colonialism, or framing the colonized as inferior and violent have been based on appeals to emotions, rather than facts – the emotions of colonizers, who were inclined to believe, support and reproduce colonial myths imposed on colonized bodies and minds. In that regard, 'post-truth' as a phenomenon seems to be much older than the term itself. What is new here, however, is that for the first time these imperial methods of informational aggression were effectively used against one of the most powerful states of the 'First World' (and one of the most powerful settler colonial states). In that regard, this is similar to what Mark Mazower argues in his *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe*. He says, in particular, that the uniqueness of Hitler's regime was not in its racism and colonialism per se, but in the fact that for the first time Europe became a target of these (originally European) policies that were typically aimed at other parts of the world.[393]

The history of modern 'post-truth,' Russian informational operations in Ukraine's Crimea, dates back to the early 1990s. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Crimea served as one of the testing grounds for hybrid war, or military-informational operations. This chapter focuses on the role of media as an instrument of the settler colonial system in Crimea. It argues that after the fall of the Soviet Union, media and propaganda became

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traditional beliefs, events in Eastern Europe might have serious impact elsewhere. In this context Edward Lucas's *The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) serves more as a desperate warning that many were not ready to listen to.

[392] Note, for example, what Sun Tzu wrote about propaganda and psychological warfare in *The Art of War*.

[393] Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008).

the main instruments used by settler colonial institutions in Crimea to reproduce Russian narratives there, which they deployed to reproduce their legitimacy and ensure their survival. Until 1995 Russian TV broadcasts were dominant in the informational sphere of Ukraine. This created a monopoly of pro-Russian media in Crimean informational spaces, which enabled the Russian government to frame itself as always on the 'right' side during every political conflict with Ukraine. That, in turn, heavily influenced public opinion in Crimea.

Local Crimean settler colonial institutions inherited formal and informal control over the main informational instruments in Crimea since the Soviet times. The newspaper *Sovetskii Krym* initially was a printing organ of the Crimean regional committee of the Communist party, of the regional Council of deputies, Yalta municipal committee and Yalta municipal council of deputies. In 1991 the newspaper changed its name to *Kurortny Krym* and advertised itself as an independent media. But already next year – in 1992 – the newspaper again reorganized under the new name – *Krymskaia Gazeta.* It also became an official printed voice of the local Crimean government. *Krymskaia Pravda* was one of the most highest circulation newspapers in Crimea. More importantly, *Krymskaia Pravda* preserved the old means of delivery of the issues to readers. Until the fall of the USSR it was an official printed voice of the Crimean regional committee of the Communist party. After 1991 it advertised itself as an independent newspaper. Since 1992, however, the content suggests a gradual increase in sympathy towards the pro-Russian parties of Yurii Meshkov. Finally, *Slava Sevastopolia* once again was a former printed voice of Sevastopol municipal committee. After 1991 it announced itself as an independent media but preserved the traditional editorial policies and prevalence within the city.

Just like in other settler colonies, cultural stereotypes became the main weapon that Crimean institutions transmitted in their fight against 'Others' – Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars. Crimean media promoted the idea of multinational autonomy, a direct evolution of the Soviet 'brotherhood of nations' that stood for resistance to changes that Ukrainian activists and Crimean Tatar repatriates demanded. Simultaneously, Crimean newspapers 'othered' the pro-Ukrainian movement (as well as Ukrainian state and culture) and Crimean Tatar national movement. Activists from both those groups were accused of

nationalism and extremism. Newspapers and their commentators suggested that both movements were not 'local' to Crimea and described forceful collisions as a fight of the local Crimean population against the external threat. The rhetoric of colonialism turned the colonizers into colonized and aggressors into victims. Those were Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian activists who, each group in their own way, were described as disruptors of peaceful life. Their cultures, underdeveloped and backward, their political demands could only exist as long as they did not affect the life of the 'local population.' In other words, decolonization was never supposed to happen.

In addition to othering everything Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar, Crimean newspapers reproduced and formulated the 'appropriate' narrative of peninsula's past, present and used historical argument to support the image of a particular future. Here again those images were supposed to reproduce the Soviet status of Crimea with little or no changes. Crimea 'required' autonomy due to its difference from the rest of Ukraine and historical 'multinationalism.' Crimean propaganda argued that due to the fact that historically Crimea was populated by dozens of ethnic groups, none of the existing ethnicities had a right to claim the indigenous status. Therefore, according to this narrative, all nationalities that lived in Crimea all together constituted the 'Crimean people' and had to have "equal rights." 'Multinationalism' became a way for the Russian and Crimean authorities to employ democratic rhetoric about protecting national minorities in order to promote legacies of colonialism. What this meant in reality was that Crimea required autonomy due to its 'Russianness.' 'Crimean people' most often meant 'Russian-speaking people', and closely resembled a Soviet concept of 'Soviet people'. Therefore, 'multinationalism' most closely resembled another Soviet concept of 'brotherhood of nations.' As a result, the Crimean Peninsula was supposed to become a 'bridge', and 'in-between space' between Ukraine and Russia. This would allow a peninsula to remain a 'shared' resort (shared among post-Soviet countries, mainly Russia), while Sevastopol was meant to remain the main base of the Black Sea Fleet. In a certain sense for Russia this was a way to control Crimea without reshaping state borders.

The instrumentalization of the Soviet cult of the Second World War played an important role in solving political debates and defining Crimea's future. In the local Crimean

iteration, the history of the Second World War closely related to the Sevastopolian myth, which was a part of the local identity. The after war period of restoration of Crimea also related to the story, since residents of Crimea in 1990s either came to Crimea after the war, or were born by settlers. The narrative of coming to restore the peninsula from ruins resembles similar settler colonial narratives about developing the unclaimed land. This narrative was an important component of the settler's myth that allowed settler society to claim indigeneity in Crimea.

If Crimea were to remain part of Ukraine, then Ukraine itself had to integrate closer with 'Slavic brothers' – Russia and Belarus. The idea of such integration, mixed with Soviet nostalgia and rising ideology of Russian Christian Orthodoxy, became very popular in the Crimean informational space in mid-1990s. This very conservative view at the future of the peninsula presumed an extensive economic, political and military influence from Russia. Crimea united cites of memory (in a broad definition by Pierre Nora) of both Russian/Soviet imperial, as well as Russian national identities. The popular narrative of Crimean history included hardly anything besides the Russian and Soviet imperial presence. In sum, Crimean newspapers defined, who was the 'friend' and who was the 'foe'. According to those definitions the influence of the Ukrainian state in Crimea was supposed to be minimal or non-existent.

Having monopoly over the interpretation of the past *and* present, newspapers did not necessarily need to reflect public opinion, but could *formulate* it. Michael Foucault describes the ways in which newspapers serve as disciplinary (biopolitical) institutions. According to Foucault, shortly after their inception newspapers showed societies the standards of the 'right' and 'delinquent' behavior. Everyday publications about crimes and its punishment accustomed society to the constant presence of juridical and police supervision.[394] In addition, Benedict Anderson emphasized the role of the press in forging social identities. Press sets the standards of social behavior and often defines social norms. In the Crimean context, newspapers made an attempt to forge a 'Crimean'

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[394] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 286, 287.

multinational identity in order to counter Crimean Tatar claims for indigeneity. Newspapers set the standards for what was thinkable and printed the dominant narrative of public discussion. This kind of power is not obvious, but very important in a settler colonial environment, especially in a society where there is a dominance of a particular group over the information. This power allowed Crimean (and Russian) authorities to transmit and produce various myths through the press that benefitted Crimean settler colonial institutions in the short-term, but also formulated a specific image about Crimea - both for Crimeans and outsiders – as a Russian place.

The oxymoronic/hybrid space of post-Soviet politics further enabled a *carefully presented* plurality of opinion – just enough to create a democratic façade for propaganda. Examples of pro-Ukrainian views appeared rarely as examples of 'news from the opposite camp'. Those pieces served as evidence that the evil 'Other' exists, that the 'enemy does not sleep' and only waits for the right moment. In general, the Crimean informational sphere existed within the same (post-) colonial discourse. Heavily dominated by the Russian information space, this discourse was fueled by the cultural, ethical and moral code of the Soviet epoch. Various ideas and informational operations that came from different agents often narrowed down to an idea of Crimean autonomy (preservation of the status-quo) with a unilaterally pro-Russian political orientation. Thus, Crimean autonomy was constructed as something that existed only because of its essentially Russian identity. Crimean media was pluralist only regarding the *extent* to which one could like Russia and dislike Ukraine but did not any reality in which Crimean residents might like and contribute to the development of the state in which they lived.

4.1   Transmitting the Image of the Crimean Past, Present and Future

The Soviet historical narrative of the Second World War defined the behavioral standard for the appropriate 'present' political and social activity in Crimea. In the Crimean post-Soviet context this meant that newspapers used a common historical narrative and Soviet-constructed social memory in order to transmit and reproduce a framework of values that then applied to the interpretation of present events and future preferences. References to the Second World War, and to the local Crimean chapter of that historical myth – the

second defense of Sevastopol – appeared frequently (both during and outside the anniversary dates) and defined the basic simple ground for the Crimean identity as part of the Russian/Soviet glorious past. Simply speaking this meant that Crimean newspapers described Manichean world in which the evil closely associated with Nazis, while the good was a continuation of Crimea's 'glorious past.'

The city of Sevastopol was one of the main centers that reproduced the myth of the Second World War. One of the most popular and numerous newspaper within the city *Slava Sevastopolia* published articles related to the history of Sevastopol and Nazi siege of the city (the "Second glorious defense") very frequently, forging the history of defense part of the local identity of the city residents. The topic of the war did not limit to the specific time of the year, although newspapers paid special attention to anniversaries like 'Victory Day' (May 9) and the anniversary of the German-Soviet war (June 22). At other times, it was common to see articles like the one published by *Slava Sevastopolia* in January 1990, titled "Sevastopol is Our Honor and Consciousness" ("Sevastopol′ chest′ nasha i sovest′"). This article told stories about 'ordinary Sevastopolians' who defended Sevastopol and/or fought in other parts of the Soviet-German front.[395] Articles under the same title/rubric, providing facts about the history of the war, appeared several times per month.[396]

With a powerful historical myth that existed in Sevastopol, even 'ordinary' events were evaluated through the prism of the war. For example, in January 1990 *Slava Sevastopolia* reported that the city accepted displaced people, victims of ethnic pogroms, from Baku (Azerbaijan SSR):

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[395] "Sevastopol′ - chest′ nasha i sovest′," *Slava Sevastopolia*, January 12, 1990.

[396] For example: "Sevastopol′ - chest′ nasha i sovest′," *Slava Sevastopolia*, February 20, 1990.

"Sevastopol′ - chest′ nasha i sovest′," *Slava Sevastopolia*, February 28, 1990.

"Sevastopol′ - chest′ nasha i sovest′," *Slava Sevastopolia*, March 7, 1990.

"Sevastopol′ - chest′ nasha i sovest′," *Slava Sevastopolia*, March 20, 1990.

"Sevastopol′ - chest′ nasha i sovest′," *Slava Sevastopolia*, March 30, 1990.

"A disaster that fell on families of Baku servicemen concerned the whole country, including Sevastopol – a city of naval glory, a city [where people] know the price of the true friendship, where it is common to lend a shoulder [help] to those who appeared in trouble".[397]

This reporting on the help that the city provided to displaced persons reinstated the historical myth. It also set the standard according to which the glorious past required glorious actions in present. In other words, city residents had to meet challenges and give to those in need in a similar fashion as residents of Sevastopol did when the Nazi army besieged the city.

Sevastopolian myth combined the history of the 'glorious' second defense of Sevastopol with the initial imperial myth – the first defense that took place when the Russian imperial army fought against the allied forces in the Crimean war.[398] This meant that pre-revolutionary imperial historical mythology of Sevastopol was rehabilitated back in the Soviet times, after the Second World War. It built a direct connection between the glory of the Soviet soldier in the Second world war with the glory of his 'ancestor', soldier of the Russian imperial army. They both had to defend 'Fatherland' from the foreign (Western) invasions. The myth was of course settler colonial as it presumed that the city was found by the order to Catherine II specifically as a naval fortress. Just like in other settler colonies, where the pre-colonial history becomes erased, Sevastopolian myth had little to no attention to the small Crimean Tatar town of Aquar that existed there (not to mention the town of Balaklava that had its own history for thousands of years before the Russian imperial invasion).[399]

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[397] "Gorod prinimaet bezhentsev," *Slava Sevastopolia*, January 30, 1990.

[398] Serhii Plokhy, "The City of Glory: Sevastopol in the Russian Historical Mythology," *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 3 (Jul. 2000): 378.

[399] For a short period of time after the 'founding' the town did preserve a name Aquar. The name did return for a short period of time in 1783-1784 and 1797-1826 in a more Russified form – Akhtiar. The name 'Sevastopol' that comes from the Greek for 'the city of glory' was meant to further connect the history of the Russian empire to the history of Byzantium (due to the Byzantine town that existed here in Medieval times). Its importance was further enhanced by the fact that Kyivan prince Volodymyr accepted Christianity in the Byzantine town of Chersonesus in 988. The town of Chersonesus and its remains are still located on one of the peninsulas within the present-day Sevastopol. Such powerful Christian myth further

The glory of the past did not just require the city to help others in need, it also demanded city's pro-Russian (or pro-Soviet) political affiliation, because it appealed to the historical experience of the *Soviet* past. This was how the municipal deputy V. M. Parkhomeko characterized Sevastopol during one of the meetings of the municipal council in 1993 (the newspaper reported his words as an indirect speech):

> "The city in the present moment remains the only undefeated territory of the Soviet Union within the space of our formerly great Fatherland. There is an indirect confirmation for this – waving red flag on the highest point of Sevastopol - Khrustal′ny cape, as well as flags with hammer and sickle on the ships of the Black Sea Fleet."[400]

The Russia-Ukraine negotiations over the Black Sea Fleet, electoral choices and national identification went through the moral filter of Sevastopolian memory of the Second World War, and Sevastopolian myth of glory that was connected and predated the Second World War. Mentioning of the Black Sea Fleet in Parkhomenko's statement was dictated by the overall discourse. The popular image of the 'Russian city' united with the 'Russian fleet' persuaded the city's residents that Sevastopol would not survive without the presence of the fleet; that fleet was part of Sevastopol's identity.[401] Neither was it acceptable to separate the fleet or change its status to anything but Russian.

Slava Sevastopolia served as a temporal bridge that connected present-day Sevastopolians (most of whom of course came to the city after the Second World war) to

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erased the claims of the local Crimean Tatar Muslims for this territory. Crimean Tatars often refer to Sevastopol as Aquar.

[400] "Glavnaia trevoga: sokhranit′ mir na sevastopol′skoi zemle," *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 28, 1993.

[401] For example: E. Yurzditskaia, "Istoriia i pamiat′. Beseda s pomoshnikom komanduiushchego Chernomorskim flotom po rabote s lichnym sostavom kontr-admiralom A.A. Penkinym," *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 24, 1993.

V. Shalamaev, „Prazdnik, kotory vsegda ostaetsia s nami," *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 27, 1993.

A. Kostenetskiy, "Gerb Sevastopolia, kakim emu byt′?," *Slava Sevastopolia*, September 6, 1994.

their 'ancestors' from the first and second 'glorious' defenses. Readers were invited to contribute to the reproduction of the myth and tell stories about Sevastopol's past that they heard. This was a constant exchange of narratives between the newspaper and its readers (there was a regular rubric titled "To Sevastopolians about Sevastopol") in which the cult of the city's Second World War history stood in the foundation of the city's life. In the process of reproduction of social memory and historical mythology newspapers were *the actors that pretended to be mediators* that gave platform for the collective memorization. Second World War, as well as Sevastopolian myth became one of the main arguments in the foundation of the Russian territorial claims for Crimea.[402] It consolidated Russian identity of the city against 'Others' – Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, and later (in 2000s) – the West and NATO.

Outside of Sevastopol the image of 'Russian' Crimea dominated the cultural and political discourse. The instrumentalization of history was also relatively active but seemed less emotional than in Sevastopol. The narrative of Crimean history consisted mainly of stories about famous military events of the previous two centuries, as well as cultural figure who either admired Crimea in their art or worked in Crimea. Publications regarding 'Days of Chekhov' in Yalta, visual art of Aivazovsky, as well as glorious history of the Russian (*russkii* – ethnic term) fleet and army forged a perception that Russian history *was* Crimean history.[403] Almost exclusively those stories represented a narrative of a settler colonizer in a colonized land, a history that was roughly 200 years old, with only rare mentioning of the time prior to the annexation the peninsula by the Russian empire. The cultural image of Crimea in the present also remained exclusively Russian in newspaper articles. The section of the newspaper that advertised cultural

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[402] In 1994 the Sevastopol municipal council approved a song "Legendary Sevastopol" as city's anthem. The text of the song, written in 1954 by the Soviet poet Petr Gradov praised the city's glorious past and characterized it as "pride of Russian [*russkikh* – term that refers to ethnic Russians] sailors".

[403] M. Lytkina, "I zagovorila istoriia," *Sovetskiy Krym*, October 6, 1990.

Tatiana Barskaia, "Nas rodnit Chekhov," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, April 10, 1993.

Tatiana Barskaia, "Smeites´, chtoby ne plakat´," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, April 1, 1994.

Grigoriy Piatkov, "'Byl nekiy den´, byl nekiy chas…' Ivan Bunin v Krymu," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, July 2, 1994.

events consisted almost exclusively of the Russian cultural symbols. Very often these included exhibitions by the famous artists of the past, or classical plays from the Russian literature, staged in theatres named after Russian figures.

The Russian imperial period merited special attention, especially the time when Crimea was annexed by the empire in the late 18th century and then the times of late Romanovs. Due to the popular newspaper format, the historical narrative at times became even more radical than the one found in historical books. It reaffirmed and radicalized the settler's myth in order to prove Russia's historical rights for Crimea. For example, one such article from 1993 was dedicated to the anniversary of the manifesto by Catherine II by which the Russian empire annexed Crimea. According to the article, the annexation happened peacefully, although it was a result of the Russo-Turkish war. The deportation of the Christian population of Crimea by the Russian army in 1779 is described as a choice of that population that was made "due to the nervous political situation."[404] Furthermore, the article argue that the 'independence' of the Crimean Khanate (which in fact was a protectorate of the Russian empire) led to political instability and that *forced* Russian empress to take the peninsula under control:

> "Chaos – economic and political – became even stronger. Towns were becoming empty and turning into ruins, fields were being choked with weeds, orchards were growing wild… What else could be done in this circumstance, besides what did the government of Catherine II that announced all lands of the *former* [my emphasis] Khanate a Russian territory?"[405]

The article ended with an appeal to 'Rukh newspapers' arguing that the 'diplomatic victory' (as opposed to military occupation) of the Russian empire was never challenged by anyone and therefore, Russia had a historic right for Crimea.[406] The settler's myth in this article resembled similar myths of other settler colonial empires: the annexation was

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[404] B. Chupikov, "Manifest imperatritsy. 19 aprelia ispolniaetsia 210 let so dnia prisoedineniia Kryma k Rossii," *Krymskaia Pravda*, April 17, 1993.

[405] Ibid.

[406] Ibid.

in fact an act of pacifically, of bringing peace and order. The colonizer simply 'did not have any other choice': by the time Crimea was annexed, Crimean Khanate 'did not exist anymore'.[407] The fact that the 'chaos' was a direct result of the Russian military presence in Crimea remained unnoticed. More importantly, this narrative was supposed to respond to the Ukraine's claims for the peninsula and deny them.

The line between the post-Soviet 'multinational Crimea' and 'Russian Crimea' was very fine and resembled a relationship between the categories of 'Soviet' and 'Russian' identity (or even Russian imperial and Russian national). Non-Russian histories of Crimea appeared in a secondary role as small streams within the large Russian river of history. In a typical oxymoronic post-Soviet way, statements about the 'equality' of all Crimean nations somehow did not appear to contradict other statements against Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar 'nationalisms' or the historically 'Russian' Crimea. Crimea's past consisted of a single Soviet-style narrative, adopted to new post-Soviet circumstances. The way newspapers told stories of Crimea's history focused on the history of Crimea as part of the Russian empire and the Soviet Union. Any narrative in which anything Crimean might have been opposed to anything Russian or Soviet was either absent or used as an example of the enemy's story.

The settler colonial monopoly over the narrative eventually became the only known truth about Crimea. Thus were newspapers a powerful settler colonial institution that enforced and reproduced the main element of settler colonization – the settler's myth. It trapped speakers within an unending circle: the monopoly over the definition of what Crimea historically was (is) reproduced (-s) the image of the cultural belonging and eliminated (-s) all the challenging narratives; the absence of challenging narratives confirmed (-s) the validity of the initial settler colonial claim. According to the settler's myth, Crimea 'was Russian', because according to the settler's narrative 'it has always been Russian.' Just like in other settler colonies, Crimean history 'always' meant only roughly the past 200

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[407] This is strikingly similar to the argument that Russian state propaganda makes regarding the 2014 annexation of Crimea: the "reunification" happened became the Ukrainian state 'stopped existing' as a result of the revolution on Maidan.

years, but that historically short period of time was substantial enough to claim the space as Russian. The fact that Russian cultural figures of the past visited Crimea and wrote about Crimea, that Crimean landscape (geographical and cultural) was written into the Russian discourse obviously reinforced that image that the peninsula belonged within Russian cultural space.

The idea of a historically 'multinational' Crimea promoted by Crimean authorities and press served as a way of resistance to decolonization attempts from Ukrainian activists and indigenous Crimean Tatars. When the repatriation of Crimean Tatars became a matter of time, the settler colonial institutions needed a new justification of the systematic oppression against the indigenous, necessary to preserve the myth of Russian Crimea and, therefore, Russian power in the peninsula. The 'Multinationality' of Crimea meant that there were no indigenous peoples with special or prior claims to Crimean identity, and that all ethnicities present in Crimea were entitled to 'equal' rights. This borrowed democratic and civil rights language to make "multiethnic" appear to be the modern and fair model for (present and future) national relations in Crimea. "Crimea cannot be seen as somebody's national territory", said Bahrov in 1993 yet again, newspapers had been following this message.[408] This democratizing rhetoric was a direct inheritance from the Soviet concept of the 'brotherhood of nations', but limited to a particular peninsula. The concept of 'multi-nationality' worked the same way – its proponents advocated 'national equality' and opposition to all kinds of oppression. However, effectively this meant the Soviet-style national equality that benefited Russian culture and history, as well as opposition to decolonization of inter-ethnic relations. In 1996 *Krymskaia Gazeta* dedicated a separate regular column, titled "Multinational Crimea," where contributors tried to persuade readers that 'national sentiment' was politically harmful and led to inter-

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[408] "Nikolai Bagrov, Predsedatel´ Verkhovnogo Soveta Kryma: nekotorye razdum´ia o perezhyvaemom vremeni, sud´be Kryma, putiakh vykhoda iz krizisa," *Krymskaia Gazeta,* August 31, 1993.

Projects like the children's magazine *Krymusha* appeared as well. Its goal was to educate children about the Crimean nature, history and multinationality. The magazine received financial support from the Crimean government. Effectively, this project was forging a local multinational Crimean identity and socialized children within that identity.

ethic collisions.[409] Eventually, 'multi-nationality' became the main concept regarding the inter-ethnic relations on the peninsula that survived all changes in personalities of Crimean leadership and political clashes.

Crimea was 'multinational', but that was supposed to be a very particular image of multi-nationality in which all ethnic-nationalisms subsumed into one version of "Crimean" that recognized Crimea as a specific corner of Russia, or, rather, the Soviet Union. For example, the section of the newspaper *Sovetskii Krym* from December 27, 1990, dedicated to the referendum on the status of Crimea, published a short note on the language situation in Crimea. The note says that 82.6% of the Crimean population considered Russian to be their native language. According to the note, only 3.1% of the Crimean population did not consider their knowledge of Russian perfect, but were fluent enough to communicate. Ukrainian was the self-described native tongue of 13.6% of the Crimean population.[410] The way this statistic is presented suggests the message the authors were aiming to send. For instance, the memo shows the percentage of Russians and non-Russians who consider the Russian language as their native language. It also shows the percentage of people who can communicate in Russian. The logic of comparison would require presenting the same kind of information for Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar or other languages. But this memo simply does not mention the number of people who can comprehend or communicate in Ukrainian, or Crimean Tatar. In sum, this leads to the conclusion that in Crimea the Russian language is shared among various nationalities and is therefore the simplest and the only shared language of communication. Put in the broader context, this memo suggests that Crimea is an overwhelmingly Russian-speaking territory, is therefore different from the rest of Ukraine, and needs to be able to "protect" itself.[411] This argument persisted throughout

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[409] Editorial introduction to the column "Mnogonatsional′ny Krym," *Krymskaia Gazeta,* March 22, 1996.

[410] "Iazykovaia situatsiia v Krymu," *Sovetskii Krym*, December 27, 1990. 0

[411] And it is important to remember what was mentioned in Chapter 2 – throughout the 1990s the line between 'Russia-speakers' and 'Russians' became very thin due to the tendencies within the Russian nationalistic thought and state policies.

the 1990s and appeared every time there was a political clash between Simferopol and Kyiv or Kyiv and Moscow.

The instrumentalization of history also played an important role in promoting political autonomy of the Crimean Peninsula. During the referendums of 1991 historical arguments dominated the debate over the status of Crimea.[412] Proponents of autonomy argued in favor of Crimea's right for it, citing the historical precedent of Crimean autonomy before 1944. Ironically, Crimean Tatars used that same historical precedent to advocate for their own national autonomy in Crimea. This eventually turned into a long debate over history: Crimean authorities tried to prove that the pre-war Crimean autonomy was territorial, Crimean Tatars argues that it was national in character. Therefore, when Crimean Tatar *Kurultai* (national assembly) adopted a declaration of Crimean Tatar national sovereignty in Crimea with a right to self-identify, Crimean newspapers launched an attack against Crimean Tatar 'nationalists'.[413] After the fight for Crimean autonomy was over, historical arguments were further used to challenge the legality of Crimea's subordination to Ukraine. They also lingered on as 'common knowledge', a shared narrative, and appeared in a public space again whenever conflict arose. The debate over the nature of the Soviet Crimean autonomy persisted, and in October 1996 it showed up in the newspaper again.[414]

Beginning from about 1993 there was a visible switch in the narrative about Crimea's preferable future. By that time the economic problems of first post-Soviet years had caused an increase in nostalgic sentiment for the Soviet past. Pro-Russian/Soviet Crimean newspapers cultivated and supported that sentiment. They did so via a new broad narrative propagated a new union between 'Slavic peoples.' The mobilization of the pro-

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[412] For example: D. Ivanov, "Pravo na vlast′. Utichnim fakty," *Sovetskii Krym*, November 1, 1990.

P. Evgrafov, "Pravovoy put′ k gosudarstennosti Kryma," *Sovetskii Krym*, November 22, 1990.

A. Biriukov, L. Levchenko, "Za suverennuiu Tavridu," *Kurortny Krym*, September 28, 1991.

[413] O. Shakhniuk, "Pod flagom zashchity interesov naroda shel v Krymu kurultai. A ne potriasut li ėti piat′ dnei Krym," *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 6, 1991.

[414] Vlaminir Broshevan, "Krymskaia Respublika – most mezhdu Sovetskoi federatsyei, Turtsyei i musul′manskim Vostokom," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, October 18, 1996.

Russian movement that started from 1992 contributed to this change of the narrative. Among all the Slavic peoples, the proponents of unity for some reason chose only three peoples – Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. *Krymskaia Gazeta* regularly published materials, dedicated to the 'Slavic brotherhood'. The festival, dedicated to the 'Slavic literature and culture' (single literature and single culture) became annual and received acknowledgement by *Krymskaia Gazeta* on its front pages.[415] In May 1993, the newspaper informed about the creation of the Slavic Economic Union in an article titled 'The power is in Unity'.[416] In other words, the readers were supposed to be educated about the 'Slavic unity' and accept it as the main orientation for Crimea's future.

Eventually, 'Slavic' was again becoming very close in meaning to *Russian*, at the end of the day nobody was trying to unite with Polish, or Czech cultures and literature. While 'reunification' of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus suggested Russia's leadership in the new union. In 1993, *Krymskaia Pravda*, for instance, published an article titled "What is there for Slavs to divide?" ("Chto zhe delitʹ slavianam?"). The title of course suggested that Slavic peoples simply did not have reasons for arguments and quarrels. The text of the article, however, argued that "not from historic, not from legal or economic point of view Ukraine has no right for Crimea, Sevastopol, [Black Sea] Fleet."[417] The idea of Slavic unity, as well as the logic of friendship, described in this quote, resembled Russian nationalistic reunification projects, proposed by Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, mentioned earlier in Chapter 2.

'Slavic unity' (in addition to Crimea's Russian-dominated 'multinational peace') became one of the officially proclaimed political goals of multiple local Crimean political parties. To a large extent it resembled a movement for the restoration of the USSR. For example, in 1995 *Krymskaia Gazeta* published an interview with Ivan Yermakov, chairman of the "Union for Prosperity and Unity" (Sojuz Protsvetania i Yedinstva). The interview presented an exchange of predictable questions, and both the journalist and the

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[415] Vladimir Aleksandrov, "Svet slova," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, April 20, 1993.

[416] V. Litov, "Sila – v edinstve," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, May 26, 1993.

[417] A. Dorokhov, "Chto zhe delitʹ slavianam?," *Krymskaia Pravda*, June 30, 1993.

respondent seemed to know the answer ahead of time. When commenting on the issue of internationality, the journalist referred to the example of the United States, saying that "In the United States the number of nations is not smaller [than in the USSR], but they hold on to each other…". In response Yermakov explained that this was exactly the reason why his organization declared a goal to "unite people of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus", that the USSR was artificially destroyed and that the future social protection lays in unity of 'Slavic nations.'[418]

Parallel to Slavophilic sentiment there is a gradual increase of influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in the press beginning from about 1992. The local Crimean eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church merited a page within the *Krymskaia Gazeta* under the column 'Crimea Orthodox' ('Krym Pravoslavny') that came out roughly once in two weeks. The page included some common information about the nuances of the Christian religion, along with articles dedicated to the presence of the Orthodox church in Crimea. For several years this column regularly appeared in the newspaper, encouraging people to come to the Orthodox Church. In addition to general information related to Christian faith, 'Crimea Orthodox' seldomly touched on political questions. In 1994, for example, there were few articles, dedicated to the relationships between Christianity and patriotism. They described "patriotism" and "death for the Fatherland" as actions that are celebrated by the church.[419] Later, in 1996, 'Orthodox Crimea' promoted the 'unity' of the Russian Orthodox church, protesting against the separation of Estonian Orthodox church from the Russian and informing its readers that the Crimean bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox church of the Kyivan patriarchate represented an unrecognized sinful organization that was trying to bring schism to Crimea.[420]

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[418] Pavel Sholokhov, "Pochemu ėtot soiuz ne stremitsia k vlasti," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, October 12, 1996.

[419] Igumen Filaret, "Patriotizm i khristianstvo," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, July 29, 1994.

"Dolg sluzheniia otechestvu," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, August 5, 1994.

[420] "K situatsii v Estonii," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, March 15, 1996.

Vladimir Ivanov, "Raskol v Krymu nedopustim, no est′ sily, kotorye radi ambitsyi idut nan ego," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, August 30, 1996.

In 1996 the Christian and Slavophil elements of the newspaper surprisingly merge into one narrative. That year *Krymskaia Gazeta* includes a separate subsection, dedicated to the 'Slavic unity'. The subsection is called "Slavic Dialogue, a newspaper in a newspaper", and has its own structure and issue numbers.[421] The first and the following issues of "Slavic Dialogue" opened with quotes by famous pan-Slavist of the 19th century Nikolai Danilevski: "For every Slavic [person] after God and Church there can be no more important idea than unification of Slavs".[422] The 'newspaper inside a newspaper' was dedicated to the idea of 'Slavic unity' and unification of the 'Slavic culture'. It also propagated the common Russian and Soviet historical narrative, according to which Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians came out of the same 'cradle' of Kyivan Rus, and therefore are destined to stay united in their 'brotherhood'.[423] The question of *political* presence of the Russian Orthodox church on the territory of Crimea is yet to be researched. A preliminary conclusion, based on newspaper material, suggest that the church was a yet another proponent of Ukraine's (and Crimea's) integration with Russia. A quote by Danilevski that opened every issue of 'Slavic Dialogue' imported Slavophilic ideals of the 19th century into the post-Soviet era. It also referenced a conservative intellectual movement within the 19th century Russian nation-building processes that advocated for the 'special path' of the Russian empire that was supposed to be distinct from accepting the European civilization.[424] In other words, Slavophil ideas in early post-Soviet years in Crimea represented one of the sides of the debate within the Russian nationalistic thought that was going on in Russia at the time.

The idea of 'Slavic brotherhood' that openly associated with the idea of unity with Russia was actively popularized by the press and civic movements in Crimea in mid-1990s. Partially the reason for this was that the Russian state policy was to maintain its ideological and political control over the peninsula within the body of the Ukrainian state. Through the ideas of 'brotherhood' spread by means of Crimean newspapers and local

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[421] "Slavianskiy dialog. № 1. Gazeta v gazete," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, January 4, 1996.

[422] Ibid.

[423] "Slavianskiy dialog. № 2. Gazeta v gazete," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, January 18, 1996.

[424] Tolz, *Russia Inventing the Nation*, 62, 63.

political forces Russia could maintain control over the domestic political processes in Ukraine and influence Ukraine's foreign policy by creating 'local instabilities' whenever this was necessary. 'Slavic brotherhood' to a large extent became a developed version of the idea of Crimean multinationalism. The line between those ideas was very fine, especially due to the fact that those ideas were advocated by the same social forces within Crimea. Multinationalism, unity and brotherhood appeared to be positive (even 'democratic') messages that all represented the same goal – supporting the dominance of Russian culture within the peninsula and local settler colonial institutions. It also meant the increasing framing of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars who rejected "Slavic Unity" as separate. As with any ideology, Crimean multinationalism required an 'Other' to help consolidate support into a single identity. In Crimea those 'Others' were Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar 'nationalists,' against whom the consolidation of pro-Russian forces was happening.

4.2   Besieged Fortress: Forging the Image of the Ukrainian 'Other'

The control over the informational sphere by the Russian-dominated institutions of the Crimean settler colony enabled the system to adapt to change and resist decolonization. The fall of the Soviet Union and the repatriation of Crimean Tatars to Crimea created a space for possible decolonization, but settler colonizers fear of any threat to their dominance encouraged them to enter into a new campaign of information manipulation. The fear of "Ukrainian nationalism" and "Crimean Tatar extremism" to a large part was politically and informationally constructed. The villainization of famous political figures as 'Ukrainian nationalists,' as well as Crimean Tatar 'extremists' and 'traitors,' was solely based on a media campaign to instill fear in Crimean voters so that they would support politicians who offered them 'protection'. This informationally constructed fear combined a threat of mass violence coming from 'nationalists' as well as forceful cultural assimilation in a form of 'Ukrainization' or 'Tatarization.' The media narrative treated cultural assimilation of Russian-speaking people of Crimea in the same way as if this was physical violence. Russification of Crimea that happened prior to this, in turn, was considered a 'natural' process.

The colonizer's fear of a revolt by the colonized, of a violent decolonization, is an important aspect of colonial dynamic, according to Franz Fanon.[425] Fanon, rather radically, argues that violence is in fact important for the decolonization to be successful, since decolonization presumes a destruction of colonial system and creation of a new one. In the case of Crimea, however, the colonizers' fear became instrumentalized by the settler colony (and the Russian metropole), despite the fact that Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar organizations in Crimea emphasized their non-violent approach to political competition. Through the rumors, manipulations and speculation with facts, Crimean media warned its readers about the need to mobilize in face of the coming violence from Crimean Tatars and assimilation attempts from Ukrainians. Crimean media were among those who constructed the image of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar 'Others'. And because Crimea was 'multinational' by ideology, 'othering' officially targeted only 'specific type' of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars. Technically, those attacks were not considered attacks against whole nations. As often happens in such instances, it was up to the settler colonial institutions to set the standard of 'good' Ukrainian and Crimean Tatars. Those who did not fit this standard, because they promoted national language and culture, advocated for an independent Ukrainian state or demanded real national equality, were denounced as nationalists and extremists.

The fear of a 'Ukrainization' in Crimea appeared during the Soviet times, after Crimea was transferred to the Ukrainian SSR in 1954. The first secretary of the CC of the Communist party of Ukraine, Mykola Pidhorny, stated in 1954 that all fears related to the Ukrainization of Crimea had no grounds.[426] According to Pidhorny, "…it is important to keep in mind that there are a lot of oblasts in the Ukraine that are similar to Crimean…where the school education is conducted in Russian language, the language of the documents is also Russian. I assume that the same will be in Crimean oblast."[427] As a

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[425] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (NY: Grove Press, 2004), 2.

[426] "Z vystuou pershoho sekretaria TsK KPU M. Pidhornohona XXV-y Kryms´kiy oblasniypartiinii konferentsii pro poriadok vprovadzhennia ukrains´koi movy na pivostrovi," March 10, 1954, in *Krym v umovakh suspil´no-politychnykh transformatsii*, ed. by Valerii Smoliy et al. (Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine, National Academy of Science of Ukraine, 2016), 175.

[427] Ibid.

result, the Crimean educational system was poorly integrated into the educational system of the Ukrainian SSR.[428] The fear of 'Ukrainization' in the 1950s was a direct reference to a complicated social memory of Russian nationals from the Soviet politics of *korenizatsia* in 1920s. This fear and this collective trauma (that was already mentioned in Chapter 2) was present in 1950s, just like in 1980s and throughout the post-Soviet years up to the present. Since 1954, and until the mid-1990s, Crimea had no schools or classes where Ukrainian was the language of education.[429] All governmental structures and cultural events (with few exceptions) used Russian as their primary language of communication. This, in fact, meant that Ukrainian nationals in Crimea were discriminated against and unable to exercise their national languages and culture. But every time when there was a risk to the Crimean settler colonial institutions, the population of Crimea was told that the Ukrainian state was about to force everyone to speak Ukrainian. This instilled fear, but it did not represent a real possibility. The fear, however, lingered on and that mattered to subsequent events.

Ukraine's path towards sovereignty and independence, as was mentioned earlier, stimulated a parallel movement for autonomy among Crimean local elites interested in maintaining the settler colonial status quo. They used the threat of 'Ukrainization' to stimulate public support for the 'restoration' of Crimean autonomy, 'statehood' or any

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(N.B. in order to translate the original style, the Russian phrase "na Ukrainie" is translated here with the use of the definite article – "in *the* Ukraine". The use of the definite article 'the' in front of the name Ukraine is considered inappropriate today, since Ukraine is an independent state. However, in 1954 Ukrainian SSR was part of the USSR. In addition, "the Ukraine" is the most accurate way to represent the meaning of the Russian "na Ukrainie" (with the article "na", instead of "v").

[428] Bohdan Moroz, interview by author, 11 August, 2018.

[429] In a Soviet and post-Soviet educational system 'class' refers to a stable group of students who have the same curriculum and receive education as a group throughout their years in school. This group is managed by a classroom teacher, who is responsible for social and behavioral education of the class, in addition to the subject they teach. Starting from middle school classes are assigned a teacher for every subject, but the classroom teacher remains a main tutor.

In Crimea Ukrainian language existed in schools as a separate subject. But the educational system functioned in Russian. There was no schools with Ukrainian as language of education, neither there were specific classes within schools where Ukraine could be more than just another subject.

other path that would allow distancing from Ukraine and integrating with Russia. The newspaper articles regarding the dangerous 'Ukrainization' movement often came out as op-eds, which created a perception that the topic had a wide public resonance. They usually argued that Crimea was different from the rest of Ukraine, that it was too ethnically diverse to become seamlessly part of Ukraine, and that therefore it required an autonomous status that would protect it from assimilation by Ukraine. One such article, published in July 1990, even before the referendum on the status of Crimea was announced, argued that the multinational status quo in Crimea should be preserved. The author claimed that

> "Equally inappropriate are slants towards Ukrainization, which has been going on in Crimea since 1954, when the Crimean oblast was transferred to Ukraine from RSFSR. Impermissible is Tatarization on the basis of the status of 'indigenous people'. Or Russification on the basis of the numeric majority of the Russian population in Crimea."[430]

The rhetoric/façade of equality, demonstrated in this quote was a common instrument of a narrative distortion. Crimea was a settler colony, whose Sovietized settler population spoke Russian almost exclusively. Throughout the Soviet period, the Ukrainian-ness of the peninsula was reduced to some celebratory rituals – elements of the Ukrainian folk culture that were inserted into the public space (Soviet representation of non-Russian Soviet cultures that were mostly reduced to songs, dances and national cuisine). Crimean Tatars were deported in 1944 and since then were repeatedly deported from Crimea every time individual families made attempts to repatriate to their native land. But to the author of this and many other articles, Ukrainization had been "going on since 1954" and "Tatarization" was a real threat. Russification only appears on the list of threats in order to create the democratic façade – by 1990 the Russification of Crimea was not a threat, it was a fact.

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[430] V. Ponomariov, "Krym v novoi federatsii," *Sovetskii Krym*, July 3, 1990.

These supposed fears of 'Ukrainization' and 'Tatarization' were really the fears of the colonizer that they might be (re)colonized. After 1991 Crimean settlers made up a majority in Crimea, but they were a minority within the new independent Ukrainian state. Therefore, they feared that the settler colonial institutions that served to protect the settler colonial power dynamic might disappear. In that case playing a victim appeared to be an effective political and informational tactic of preservation of the status quo. In terms of power and cultural hierarchies, however, Russian speakers held the dominant position in the informational sphere of Ukraine throughout the 1990s. From the point of view of power dynamic pro-Russian Crimean settlers and Russian cultural discourse were dominant not just in Crimea, but in much of Ukraine. This created an interesting dynamic, in which a Russian-speaking minority had in fact stronger voice/had more power (culturally and informationally) than the Ukrainian-speaking majority. Within Crimea this minority did not recognize itself as such and claimed the rights of a majority. Meanwhile, on the international stage Russian state forged an image of Crimean Russian-speaking minority that required protection.

The fear of being colonized could only appear as a result of the act of social 'forgetting' – the erasure of the social memory of settler colonization of the Crimean land and the development of the local quasi-indigenous identity of 'Crimeans'. The act of settlement was either erased, ignored, most often ignored, or justified with the narrative of 'rebuilding Crimea after the Second World War'. According to that narrative, the new Crimeans (settlers) had a right to the land because they had contributed to the rebuilding of the Crimean economy, and no indigenous competitor had more right to it because they had not. Furthermore, the idea that Crimea was 'multinational,' stripped of any historical context, became a smokescreen allowed to forget about the existence of indigenous Crimean Tatars (who, of course could not participate in rebuilding of Crimea after the war because they had been deported). According to the settler institutions and media, 'the indigenous' of Crimea could not be defined on such a "multinational" peninsula.[431]

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[431] This seems to be parallel with the contemporary 'post-truth' issues: when there are 'too many' truth's, which is why a single truth is impossible to define. Hence, manipulation becomes no worse than 'any other' truth.

Claiming the indigeneity by any specific national group (Crimean Tatars, in particular), other than the Sovietized Russian-speaking multi-ethnic population of Crimea was considered an act of extremism by both Soviet and post-Soviet standards of inter-ethnic relations.

To further discredit it, settler-colonial media framed the threat of 'Ukrainization' as coming from outside of Crimea, and from a very particular kind of Ukrainian-ness – the 'Western Ukraine'. This required the creation and reproduction of a particular image of the Western Ukraine and its people. Throughout Soviet times Western Ukrainians were considered nationalistic (and therefore, hostile to USSR), due to the history of the Ukrainian nationalist movement and the Ukrainian Insurgent army (UPA) that operated in the region during the Second World War. According to the Soviet historical narrative, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army was an ally of Nazi Germany and fought on its side in the Second World War. The history of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and its military branch – UPA – was almost exclusively connected (in a popular narrative) to the name of the leader of one of its branches – Stepan Bandera. It was common to refer to the Ukrainian nationalists as 'banderites', followers of Bandera. The historical myth of the Soviet Union, which placed the victory of the 'Soviet people' against Nazi Germany at the center of state ideology, operated by villainizing all opposing ideologies as somehow the same. The anti-Soviet nature of the Ukrainian nationalistic movement of the Western Ukraine, therefore, became closely associated with Nazi collaboration. Similarly, Soviet propaganda represented Crimean Tatars as a 'traitor nation' (rather than as a group of people deported from their homeland in service to Russia's settler colonial project in Crimea). Being accused/suspected of Ukrainian nationalism meant being accused of Nazism and of the desire to forcefully spread one's identity. Therefore, the image of the Western Ukraine, as a center of the 'wrong' Ukrainian-ness appeared in Crimean newspapers whenever it was necessary to identify the Ukrainian threat.

For example: "My – krymchane," *Sovetskii Krym*, October 11, 1990.

The People's Movement (*Narodny Rukh*) that became active in the Ukrainian SSR with *perestroika,* and that campaigned for the democratization of the Soviet Union, was immediately described as Western Ukrainian, which was a simplification, but not a complete inaccuracy. Throughout the late 1980s and into the 1990s, Soviet Ukrainian and Crimean newspapers published articles that constructed an image of the nationalistic *Narodny Rukh* as a threat to all peace-loving Soviet people. Crimean authorities used specifically this image as a boogey-man to support the necessity of the Crimean 'autonomy.' During the all-Soviet referendum on the preservation of the USSR, for instance, *Rukh* was presented (and painted in caricatures) as a radical separatist organization that was willing to chop the branch called 'Ukraine' off the tree called 'USSR,' while sitting on that branch.[432] During further years, Crimean newspapers referred to 'Rukh', 'democrats' or 'nationalists' interchangeably, suggesting that there was nothing democratic about the movement.

Beginning in November 1990, when the Crimean referendum was announced, Crimean media started a propaganda campaign in support of what they called "Crimean autonomy." One of the main arguments used to denounce opponents of the referendum could be represented in the following quote:

> "There are calls from the repatriating Crimean Tatars, as well as a *certain category* [my emphasis] of Ukrainians to boycott the referendum due to various reasons. *I will not tire you by naming them* [my emphasis]. But the main idea of a boycott should be bluntly clear to everyone – to 'claim' the multinational Crimea for one's own nation exclusively. Tatars demand that Crimea becomes a Tatar republic, Ukrainian nationalists – [demand] Ukrainization of the peninsula."[433]

The claim that Crimea is a shared territory among various ethnic groups was never denied by anyone. However, settler colonial institutions attributed it to Ukrainian and Crimean

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[432] V. Selivanov, "K suverenitetu ili samoizoliatsii?," *Kurortny Krym*, March 13, 1991.

[433] V. Chmarov, "Kakoi komu nuzhen Krym?," *Sovetskii Krym*, December 25, 1990.

Tatar activists in order to distort their arguments, and mobilize support for themselves. This claim allowed the settler colonial Crimean institutions to maintain the image of inter-ethnic equality and fairness to all nationalities of Crimea, while supporting a Russian dominated status quo.

One of the most widespread newspapers of Crimea *Krymskaia Pravda* advocated for the 'restoration' of the Crimean autonomy by promising its readers that this would allow to solve "the national problem" of Crimea. While Crimean Tatars, boycotted the referendum, the newspaper cited the position of the representatives of other non-Russian nationalities that supported the autonomy. One such article was written by the deputy chairman of the Greek cultural community K. Apostolidi. The authors argued that

> "Our people is confident that the autonomy in particular will facilitate this path [towards restoration of the national culture]. This is why it [the people] states that only Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic [built] on the international [in a sense of multinational] basis as a subject of a renewed federation and participant of the Union treaty will assure a full equality and free development of all nations that inhabit our Crimean land".[434]

Firstly, this article was meant to reject a common criticism of the opponents of the referendum about the Russo-centrism of the future autonomy. Secondly, it demonstrated a support for the autonomy from the representative of non-Russian nationality. More interestingly, however, this article was published beside another text, dedicated to Stepan Bandera, Ukrainian nationalism and the horrors of the Second World War. The text began with an appeal to the social memory, and emotions about the Second World war that had been cultivated by Soviet propaganda for decades:

> "On the one hand, the name of Bandera, not just for the Ukrainian people, but also for neighboring peoples, is a symbol of arsons, subversions, robberies and murders, the embodiment of everything most criminal. It is an incarnation of a

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[434] K. Apostolidi, "Kto my i otkuda?," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 3, 1991.

horrific violence, paranoiac sadism, blood curdling screams and howls of those tortured during the 'sparrow nights' […] On the other hand, for part of the population of the western region of Ukraine, especially Galicia, the name of Bandera is a symbol of glory, heroism, and 'martyrdom' for 'mother' [*nen′ku* – the author here uses the transliteration from Ukrainian] Ukraine."[435]

Within several days in January 1991, several weeks prior to the referendum, *Krymskaia Pravda* published articles in support of the Crimean autonomy alongside historical notes about Ukrainian nationalists. Most those articles specifically emphasized the aggressiveness of the Ukrainian nationalists and national equality that would come with the autonomy.[436] This of course created contrast between the risk and the opportunity and manipulated readers, pushing them to mobilize around the idea of the Crimean autonomy.

At times Crimean newspapers gave space to the opponents of the mainstream media narrative. Some key statements by the politicians from the 'Ukrainian nationalist' political camp did reach Crimean readers. On September 21, 1990, for example, the newspaper *Sovetskii Krym* published a full text of the speech that Levko Luk'ianenko gave to the Crimean local deputies.[437] The article came out with an editor's comment saying that the speech was controversial and therefore many readers would want to be able to know its content. Publications of this kind created a perception of 'balanced journalism'[438] and therefore made propaganda more credible. On the other hand, within

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[435] V. Maslovsky, "Bandera: znamia ili banda," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 3, 1991.

[436] Here are just few examples when *Krymskaia Pravda* accompanied articles, dedicated to referendum with historical notes on the Ukrainian nationalism. A series of publications by Maslovsky was not written specifically for *Krymskaia Pravda*, therefore, it was a conscious choice of the editor to place that series during the referendum campaign:

"Chto nam dast avtonomiia?," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 4, 1991.

V. Maslovsky, "Bandera: znamia ili banda," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 4, 1991.

"Kak my budem golosovat′?," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 5, 1991.

V. Maslovsky, "Bandera: znamia ili banda," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 5, 1991.

[437] Levko Luk'ianenko, "K voprosu o statuse Kryma," *Sovetskii Krym*, September 21, 1990.

[438] Quite like today's Russian federal TV channels invite same narrow group of people to their political talk shows. Those people are supposed to represent 'nationalistic Ukrainians' during the show. On the one hand their presence creates a perception that both sides of a conflict receive representation. On the other hand,

the context of the larger narrative, these infrequent publications representing the opposition just provided "evidence" that "nationalists" should be feared by the public. The appearance of the opposite view did not represent an attempt for a dialogue. Neither did it represent the freedom of speech, as editors often claimed. It showed that the enemy was real, that the image of Crimea as a 'besieged fortress' was in fact a reality.

In order to resist the potential increase of the pro-Ukrainian sentiment among readers, Crimean press provided examples of what the 'good' Ukrainian should not be. The image that settler media constructed of the Western Ukraine and Ukrainian-ness attributed a certain level of civilizational backwardness to them. This perception was closely related to the aforementioned image of nationalism, since Soviet propaganda described all nationalists as narrow-minded, backward, aggressive people. As a nationalist (narrow-minded) project, an independent Ukraine was perceived as an ultimately anti-Russian (and presumably anti-Crimean), no matter what the Ukrainian government did. Presumed anti-Russian-ness of Ukraine contradicted the plans of the Crimean settler colonial institutions to keep close ties with Russia. It also associated anti-Russian-ness with potential discrimination of the Russian-*speakers.* For example, in 1993 one of the regular contributors to the *Krymskaia Gazeta* (and later its editor in 1999 to 2012) Petr Makukha entered into a debate with M. Misiakov regarding the relationships between Russians and Ukrainians. In one of his open letters Makukha addressed the traditional Soviet statement that Russians were 'the older brother':

> "[…]we should not forget that among equals everyone is older. Don't you think so? However, Nature and History ruled so that the people of Ukraine at all times, while fighting off the pressure of pans [Polish noblemen] and beys [Turkish and Crimean Tatar noblemen] gravitated with its soul towards the

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the show is built around public humiliation of the position that those 'professional Ukrainians'
(professional, because those are often same people and they are getting paid for participation) represent.

blood brother – the people of Northern Rus´ that appeared today (and that happened before) to be richer than us, Ukrainians, in certain things."[439]

In 1993, when Makukha wrote this, the Soviet historical narrative, presented in this quote was still dominant. It is interesting, however, how rhetorical twists allow the author to turn the presumable 'difference in age' into equality in order to fight off the accusations of chauvinism. In a language of multinationalism, Russians and Ukrainians were perceived to be equal. But inequality appeared in a rhetoric of age, and was only possible as a result of the Russian cultural and political dominance. The rhetoric of 'older brother' was of course a part of the Russian nationalist discourse, that was acceptable in a Soviet and post-Soviet seemingly anti-nationalist environment. Appeals to 'nature and history' follow the Soviet historical narrative of course, but also reminds one of Klyuchevski's descriptive strategy of the 19th century that used the 'commands of history' as an explanation of the Russian imperial expansion to what is now Southern Ukraine and Crimea.

Another sarcastic twist later in the text allowed Makukha ridicule what he saw as the Ukrainian nationalism by ascribing it a goal to become "above everyone". Makukha comes up with a sarcastic etymology of the word 'khokhol' – a derogatory way that Russians use to address Ukrainians – and suggests to tie the word to the following meaning:

> "Why would we not go further and, link the word 'Khokhol' to, say, Germano-English [language], where 'hoch' – tall, taller, and 'all' – all, everyone. Then there would be [that would mean] nothing but Germano-Arian 'ubermensch', 'above all' that said – overhuman!.. It seems that you would like that more than amorphic Mongol-Tatar [name]".[440]

The debate over the etymology of the word 'Khokhol' in this exchange seems pseudo-historic in the first place, and in no way Makukha suggests his etymology seriously. But

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[439] Petr Makukha, "Istina v shorakh," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, July 8, 1993.

[440] Ibid.

the last sentence in the quoted piece contains an accusation of fascism, directed at the opponent. Makukha draws clear parallels between the views of his opponent and German Nazis, invoking a whole complex of cultural and historical associations with the Nazi-Soviet war.

In order to discredit 'Ukrainian nationalists' (and by extension the Ukrainian state) and frame them as a threat, parallels between Ukrainian-ness and Nazism appeared relatively often in Crimean news. Newspapers linked the new Ukrainian state symbols to the history of German occupation in the Second World war in order to delegitimize them. In October 1991, the newspaper *Slava Sevastopolia* published an article by A. Mareta about the song "Shche ne vmerla Ukraina" ("Ukraine has not died yet") that was being suggested to be (and later became) the Ukrainian national anthem. The author of the article said he remembered how Hitlerites promoted the song in the occupied Ukraine in 1941 and how they banned it after the project of a Ukrainian protectorate of Germany was off the table. He argued that although the song represented a unique piece of art, and was adored by some and targeted by others for nationalism, it should not become a state anthem, because "the use of art in political, nationalistic or other conjuncture [conjuncture here is synonymous to 'trend', 'circumstance'] goals will not lead to anything good."[441] The author of the article does not call the song nationalistic, but his story starts with Hitlerites, and only after that does the reader finds out that the text predated 1941. In addition, he basically validates the accusations of nationalism by arguing against its use for political purposes. Another article came out in the opinion section of *Krymskaia Gazeta* in 1993, after the Ukrainian parliament adopted the Ukrainian state coat of arms and a flag. Here is how the author, Il´ia Neiachenko, responded to this:

> "Unfortunately, the Supreme Council of Ukraine under the pressure of
> national-radicals [another reference to nationalists/Western Ukraine] in a hurry,

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[441] A. Mareta, "'Shche ne vmerla Ukraina' – shedevr ukrainskogo pesennogo iskusstva. Byt´ li emu sovremennym gimnom?," *Slava Sevastopolia*, October 1, 1991.

outside of its competence, adopted the symbols – a trident and blue and yellow flag, by which caused tension and conflict within the society…"[442]

According to Neiachenko, the trident was "an esoteric…sign of ancient Aryans, that is where the swastika comes from […] Trident – is a symbol of intimidation and violence that has a specific demonic meaning."[443] Neiachenko believed that those symbols were unacceptable, due to their popularity among "nationalists during the civil and the Great Patriotic" wars. "In the meantime, the hammer and sickle that are now being renounced have been clear and acceptable – they have been a sign of labor".[444] As seen in this last quote by Neiachenko, there was no need for the 'Ukrainian-ness' to have even a slight/alleged connection to the history of German Nazism. The authors came up with a bizarre and completely false connection between Ukrainian symbols, the Ukrainian state, and views of the Ukrainian politicians, to Nazism.

The method of making the connection between Ukrainian-ness and Nazism implicit by placing an article propagating a certain policy alongside the historical note on Ukrainian nationalists in the Second World war also appeared in *Krymskaia Gazeta.* For instance, on December 2, 1992 the newspaper published two seemingly unrelated texts on the same page. One article, titled "Regarding Stamps in the Passport" ("Vokrug shtampa v passporte") suggested an interview with a government official regarding the new legislative norm that required new Ukrainian citizens to confirm their citizenship by stamping the Ukrainian trident into their old Soviet passports. The interview itself represents a simple exchange of questions and answers, aimed to provide information to the newspaper readers. It begins, however, with a journalist's introduction that cites multiple unidentified publications on the topic and opinions of multiple unidentified Crimeans who protest against "'sealing' [*klejmit′* – the word here specifically refers to putting a seal on cattle] the passports with a trident".[445] The journalist here did not claim

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[442] Il′ia Neiachenko, "I simvoliku – na referendum?...," *Slava Sevastopolia*, October 20, 1993.

[443] Ibid.

[444] Ibid.

[445] "Vokrug shtampa v pasporte," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, December 1, 1992.

the authorship over the application of this specific word to this context and therefore, relieved himself of responsibility for it. But the word still appears in the article and does build negative analogies around the Ukrainian coat of arms and citizenship. The second article on the page talks about the new far-right Ukrainian organization – National Socialist Party of Ukraine – that had been created in Western Ukraine. The article titled "Sieg Heil in Galicia?" ("Zig Hajl v Galichinie?") uses a mix of disturbing facts and author's assumptions in order to concoct an image of 'Nazi Western Ukrainians'.[446] Those two articles put in a context of one another again associate Ukrainian-ness with Nazism, hostility, and threatened changes to the Crimean way of life.

The topic of nationalism, and by extension anti-democratism, of Ukraine was one of the main themes in *Krymskaia Pravda* throughout the early 1990s. Eventually, it seemed that this newspaper became one of the main instruments that mobilized people around the pro-Russian RDK – Republican Movement of Crimea. One of the typical articles, titled "New 'discoveries' of historians of Ukraine", that came out in 1992 connected Ukrainian nationalism to anti-democratism: "Calls for democracy today are nothing else than anti-Ukrainian activity…" It further argued that ideas of Ukrainian nationalism premised on 'forged history' of Ukraine.[447] Articles of this kind, dedicated to unmasking the Ukrainian nationalism and the fake Ukrainian history were a regular material in this newspaper. This narrative had its own connection to the threat of 'Ukrainization.' The newspaper regularly published articles and letters, when authors protested against 'rewriting of history' during the lessons in schools. On the one hand they suggested that Ukraine as a state had no historical reasons for existence. On the other hand, they suggested that Ukrainian nationalism was a deathly threat; that Ukrainian nationalism defined the politics in Kyiv and were now going to target the Russian-speaking people of Crimea, more dangerously - children.[448]

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[446] "Vokrug shtampa v pasporte," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, December 1, 1992.

[447] Mikhail Kil´chitsky, "Novye 'otkrytiia' istorikov Ukrainy," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 18, 1992.

[448] Here are few typical examples of articles that address a 'threat' of the spread of Ukrainian nationalism through the historical narrative. Note, this was a very common topic in the newspapers, therefore, the problem of 'rewriting of history' eventually entered into political space and was instrumentalized during elections:

Forging and supporting an image of Western Ukraine and members of the Ukrainian national movement as nationalistic mobilized Soviet ideological values into the post-Soviet political struggle. The hybridity and oxymoron-ness of the Soviet and post-Soviet social and political norms made it possible for Crimean settler colonial institutions and Russian state to use control over information in order to promote chauvinistic and imperialist statements as democratic and 'civil'. The Soviet system of values separated Ukrainians into two types; the 'correct' – Soviet – and 'wrong' – nationalistic.[449] Attacks against 'Ukrainian-ness' were not presented as attacks on all Ukrainians, only against the 'smaller portion' of narrow-minded nationalists that happened to influence the government, supposedly contrary to the desire of the majority of the population.[450]

Not only the Western Ukrainians were 'nationalistic,' their Ukrainian language (which their tried to 'enforce' on the rest of Ukraine) was also 'fake'. The local Western Ukrainian dialects that had more in common with Polish and were less Russified than

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Mikhail Kil´chitsky, "Novye 'otkrytiia' istorikov Ukrainy," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 21, 1992.

I. Il´kiv, "Vnachale bylo slovo,"*Krymskaia Pravda*, June 19, 1992.

V. Kliuchevskoi, "RDK – ėto russkoiazychnoe obshchestvo Kryma," *Krymskaia Pravda*, October 21, 1992.

V. Terekhov, "Nasha opora – russkaia obshchina," *Krymskaia* Pravda, July 23, 1994.

Grigoriy Staroverov, "Natsionalizm v Sevastopolie ne proidet," *Krymskaia Pravda,* August 9, 1994.

A. Samarin, "'Vperedi gnali ukraintsev…' Chto vdalblivaiut v golovy nashym detiam," *Krymskaia Pravda* November 4, 1995.

M. Smirnova, "Natsionalisticheskie illiuzii ili illiuzornye natsii?," *Krymskaia Pravda*, December 1995, 1995.

[449] More on the use of Second world war in politics, for example: Amir Weiner, "The Making of Dominant Myth: The Second World War and the Construction of Political Identities within the Soviet Polity", in *The Russian Review* 55, no. 4, 1996: 638-660.

[450] Compare this to the Russian state propaganda after the Ukrainian Euromaidan in 2014. The Russian state propaganda has been referring to the post-revolution Ukrainian government as to illegal rioters (junta), brought to power by force of an aggressive nationalistic minority. And when that 'junta' was replaced after democratic elections in 2019, the propagandist statements continued to say that the new government (although not junta anymore) remains under the influence of the aggressive nationalistic minority, contrary to the desire of the Ukraine's majority.

Eastern Ukrainian were announced unauthentic and Polonized.[451] In opposition to those 'wrong' Western Ukrainians the media promoted an example of what the 'right' Ukrainian was. Some newspaper articles and 'letters from the readers' summarized all the elements of the dichotomy between 'right' and 'wrong' Ukrainians. For example, Z. Ul′iantseva from the town of Kerch wrote a letter to the newspaper *Krymskaia Gazeta* in 1993 titled "I am Ukrainian as well" ("Ya tozhe ukrainka"):

> "I am Ukrainian. I studied at school in Ukrainian and graduated from the pedagogical college in Ukrainian. I like my language a lot, but only the literary [language], the correct one, not the one that most people in Western oblasts of Ukraine speak…."

One sentence later:

> "I am horrified to think that my grand-children will have to forcefully learn the Ukrainian language, that they will read in the [books of the] history of Ukraine about the 'courage and bravery' of UPA [Ukrainian Insurgent Army] […] Regarding the neglect of the Ukrainian language, it never happened […] [Whenever we meet for celebrations with friends] I sing Ukrainian songs with pleasure."[452]

The language of this letter is of course Russian, although this could be determined by the language of the newspaper which is Russian as well. But it is important to note the clear cultural and political messages that the author reproduces in the text. The very title of the text suggests victimization: the author believed that she was being excluded from her nationality. Further claim suggested that there was nothing wrong with the *correct* Ukrainian language. The text also suggested that learning Ukrainian was only possible

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[451] In Ukrainian, as in any other language, local dialects do not correspond to the literary language. Therefore, dialects that border Poland, historically developed regional vocabulary that was more similar to Polish than other Ukrainian dialects. The same development of dialects happened on the other side too – in the regions close to Russia. Similarly, the dialects of Ukrainian and Belarusian that border one another are also very close.

[452] Z. Ul′iantseva, "Ya tozhe ukrainka," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, June 16, 1993.

under pressure, not by a conscious choice. Meanwhile, the definition of correctness of the language remains unclear and seems to be reduced to the geographical origin of the speaker.[453] Ul′iantseva also repeats a stereotypical view of the Ukrainian language and culture as something reduced to (folk) singing and uses singing as an evidence that the language is not neglected. But the fact that she only applied language to sing songs *was* a sign of neglect and cultural appropriation. It represented the limited space in which the non-Russian Soviet cultures were reduced to – songs, dances and elements of cuisine. In other words, those cultures were reduced to the past, deprived of ability to develop in present and for sure having no future.[454] Limiting a culture to that space was used to reduce its influence and meaning *and* to argue that the culture received state support, in the meantime. To an extent this repeats Olúfémi Táíwó's definition of sociocryonics – a colonizers policy to invent and support 'the indigenous' traditions in order to keep the colonized society less developed, to 'freeze' the indigenous culture and society in time. In a settler colonial environment sociocryonics becomes a basis of a colonized 'backwardness' that colonizers use to justify colonization.[455] Similar arguments exist in the studies of Soviet national policies. The Soviet state defined the appropriate boundaries and historical narratives for non-Soviet cultures – elements that were allowed to exist in the Soviet political space, and it also indicated those that were forbidden. In that regard, the letter by Ul′iantseva, despite how self-contradicting it is from the contemporary point of view, fits into the cultural and political standards of the Soviet society[456]. It follows the oxymoronic pattern of Soviet cultural policies.

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[453] One might safely assume that according to those views about the inauthenticity of Western Ukrainian dialects, the Ukrainian language of the Ukrainian Communist party documents was 'correct'. However, some of those documents that can still be accessed in archives were written in such creole mixture of Russian and Ukrainian that a bilingual Ukrainian and Russian speaker would have a hard time to understand them.

[454] North American context demonstrates similar political approaches to the Indigenous nations and definitions that the state use to recognize a person as indigenous. Those definitions often imply the inability of the Indigenous culture and society to modernize. And in case that happens, the modernized indigenous ceases to be recognized as such.

[455] Táíwó, *How Colonialism Preempted modernity in Africa*, 11-12.

[456] A very similar text, describing a 'good Ukrainian' came out in *Krymskaia Pravda* in 1993. The article "A thing or two about the Ukrainian humor" included a statement by a Ukrainian comedian Vasilii Kochmala, who denied any discrimination against himself and the Ukrainian language during the Soviet times. Just like Uliantseva, he further spoke about the Western Ukrainian dialect that was being 'inflicted'

Another popular propagandistic argument against 'Ukrainization' (that also relates to sociocryonics) used the general perception of Ukrainian culture as 'rural' and 'backward' (discussed in Chapter 2). In 1994 the newspaper *Slava Sevastopolia* published a letter by B. Maksimov titled "In Whose Hands Is the Power?" ("V chiich rukakh vlast´?"). The author argues that the rise of Russian nationalist sentiment in Sevastopol happened due to "the 2 years of attempts of crawling Ukrainization."[457] He further argues that it was impossible to open Ukrainian schools in Sevastopol because they would not be popular among the residents of the city who "are all Russian".[458] This statement was, of course, false, because by 1994 the fight for the creation of a single Ukrainian school in Sevastopol had been going on for several years. B. Maksimov further argued that Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages were simply not 'civilized' enough to be necessary for people in future:

> "With all the respect to the Ukrainian and Tatar [Crimean Tatar] languages and cultures, I have to say that it is not the study of national languages and the 'history' of Ukraine that had been invented in Lviv [Western Ukraine], but a core educational reform and the study of languages of world communication (Russian, English, German, French, Spanish etc.) will contribute to the flourishing of the city [Sevastopol] and the increase of its intellectual potential."[459]

There is an obvious distinction in this quote between languages and cultures that can and cannot contribute to the intellectual development of the society; cultures that have

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onto the rest of Ukraine: Svetlana Sukhanova, "Koe-chto ob ukrainskom iumore," *Krymskaia Pravda*, March 4, 1993.

[457] B. Maksimov, "V chiich rukakh vlast´?," *Slava Sevastopolia*, September 10, 1994.

[458] Ibid.

[459] Ibid.

futures, and that are 'frozen' in the past.[460] Ironically, among the languages that are useful to learn the author lists exclusively languages of large European colonial empires. And 'smaller languages' are simply 'not necessary', due to their 'inability' to develop society intellectually. Note that the historical narrative of the post-Soviet Ukraine does not deserve to be mentioned without quotations marks as well, since Ukraine simply *cannot* have its own history that is separate from the Russian. This quote speaks to the perception of national prestige and civilization in the post-Soviet environment as much as to the ability of the imperial speaker to normalize chauvinism through the use of prudent 'tone of voice' and word choice.

It is not the content of the opinions, but the ability to achieve an aura of 'civility' through the control over media that defines the 'right' and 'wrong' sides in the political debate. The quoted letters are representative of the common settler colonial rhetoric, put in a cultural and political context of the Soviet Union and post-Soviet societies. The newspapers that published those letters validated the opinions of the authors and create a perception of them as the 'norm'. And it is not this 'norm', but the views that challenge it are targeted as examples of extremism and nationalism. The settler-controlled Crimean press transmitted a very particular image of 'normal' society, 'correct' ethnic relations and what 'equality' should looked like. In the meantime, it was very effective at constructing an image of a 'foreign threat' coming from the rest of Ukraine. The constructed image responded to the 'demand for democracy' of the time and therefore painted 'Us' – settler colonial institutions – as paragons of change and democracy, and defenders of human rights. Meanwhile, the other side – 'Them' – were represented as 'Ukrainian nationalists' (a definition that was applied to people with very different political views) who were willing to violate human rights. This rhetoric and distinction

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[460] Articles of this kind that supported the image of Ukrainian-ness as 'backward' were common. One of those articles, titled "From civilization to the cave?" criticized Ukrainian radio broadcast for the use of Ukrainian language and attempts to 'inflict' the ideas of Ukrainian nationalism. An obvious contrast between 'civilized' and 'cave' society – overtly chauvinistic, but also imperial rhetoric – suggested of course that Ukraine did not belong to the 'civilized' world. A. Filin, "Iz tsyvilizatsii v peshcheru? Razmyshleniia o peredachakh natsional′nogo radio Ukrainy," *Krymskaia Pravda*,December 22, 1995.

between 'Us' and 'Them' was extremely persistent and did not change significantly with time.

Stories about 'Ukrainian nationalism' are strikingly repetitive and appeal to the same emotional triggers throughout the whole period under research. The description of the Congress of Ukrainians in Kyiv that came out In *Krymskaia Pravda* on January 28, 1992 appealed to gender stereotypes that were used in order to characterize the event as 'Russophobic hysteria.' Yurii Makeev, the author of the article titled "In which direction does the hetman's warder point?" ("Kuda ukazyvaet bulava get´mana?", began the description by pointing out the emotional atmosphere:

> "As you know, women are much more emotional than men. They are very sensitive to the psychological state of the environment, they easily get infected with it. By looking at women's speeches during the congress, it is easy to understand a whole atmosphere. Warmed to the boiling stage the national idea almost ripped the cover off of the caldron, and representatives of the organizational committee, who were sitting in the presidium, had a hard time keeping the meeting within proper limits."[461]

The author argued that in such atmosphere the participants of the meeting were not capable of any conscious thinking. The author described 'Ukrainian nationalists' as people driven by emotions and ideology. The readers were supposed to recognize the level of danger, coming from such description. And for those who did not read between the lines, *Krymskaia Pravda* published another text just few days later. The author of the letter to the editor said: "Nationalism, no matter whose, is scary. At this point the most dangerous is Ukrainian. It threatens not only Crimeans and residents of Eastern Ukraine, but also people beyond Ukraine. The evidence of that – the nationalistic sabbath during the Congress of Ukrainians in Kyiv. If this continues like this, today's nationalism will become fascism."[462]

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[461] Yurii Makeev, "Kuda ukazyvaet bulava get´mana?," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 28, 1992. 6

[462] M. Riaboshapko, "Segodnia natsionalizm – zavtra fashizm," *Krymskaia Pravda*, February 6, 1992.

Sometimes the right-wing political groups in Ukraine (willingly or not) legitimized the statement of the Crimean propaganda about the Ukrainian threat. In March, 1992 a group of Ukrainian activists and politicians (representing the right political spectrum), led by the Ukrainian MP Stepan Khmara came to Sevastopol in what was called a 'train of friendship'. This visit became a true gift to the Crimean propaganda, from the Ukrainian far-right, as it provided evidence to all threats and fears that had been cultivated in Crimea previously. The coverage of the visit by Khmara and UNSO (Ukrainian Nationalistic Self-Defense) started several days before the visit itself with the first article published on February 29, 1992 and titled "The Third Storm of Sevastopol?" – a yet another reference to the history of 'heroic' defenses of Sevastopol.[463] This visit was described as an invasion that had to be repelled by Crimeans.[464] Ukrainian officers who served in Ukrainian navy forces at the time, Anatoliy Danilov and Mykola Savchenko, mention this visit in their recollections on the history of the Ukrainian fleet. They describe Khmara's visit as a turning point that gave rise to the active pro-Russian movement in Crimea.[465] This pattern repeated itself strikingly in 2014, when, during the annexation of Crimea, Russian propaganda outlets spoke about 'trains of friendship' filled with aggressive nationalists, who were coming to Crimea from the Western Ukraine to kill local residents. The alleged defense from those nationalists once again was proclaimed the 'Third Defense of Sevastopol'. Therefore, according to propaganda, Russian aggression in 2014 was actually the defense of Crimea from Ukrainian nationalists.[466] There is persistence and repetition of the same propagandist narratives over time in Crimea, which may in part be due to its geographical isolation as a peninsula, low social mobility, absence of professional journalism, strong persistence of

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[463] M. Vasil′ev, "Tretii shturm Sevastopolia?," *Krymskaia Pravda*, February 29, 1992.

[464] G. Dmitriev, "Provokatsiia ne udalas′," *Krymskaia Pravda*, March 3, 1992.

[465] Anatoliy Danilov, *Ukrainskiy Flot: Bilia Dzherel Vidrodzhennia* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Oleny Telihy, 2000), 177.

Nikolai Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob″iavlennoi voiny* (Kyiv: Taki Spravy, 1997) , 40.

[466] This also speaks to what has been alleged in a Ukrainian public sphere for a long time – a covert support of the Ukrainian extreme right groups by the Russian government in order to use them as a boogey men of propaganda. Whether or not there is an active support, Ukrainian far right organization, besides having low popularity even at times of war, perform a very useful role, confirming Russian post-truth.

propaganda and 'post-truth' hybrid warfare. This particular kind of isolation may make Crimea especially vulnerable to informational manipulation. The same statements, same images and same informational constructs are recycled and effectively used again and again.

'Ukrainian nationalism' and, by extension, everything Ukrainian, was perceived as external to Crimea – a threat, coming from the outside. Every time there was a pro-Ukrainian cultural or political (which in this case is the same) event happening in Crimea, it was described in terms of 'them' coming to 'us'. This image performed two important functions: it naturalized the idea that Crimea was not Ukrainian – Ukrainians came from outside Crimea; and therefore it promoted the isolation of Crimean society from the rest of the state (and prevented integration with Ukraine). Second, by making Crimea a potential victim of this outside threat, it pushed Crimean residents towards their only savior – Crimea's settler colonial institutions that promised to keep them safe from Ukrainian nationalists. When later in the year Ukrainian activists organized an All-Crimean Congress of Ukrainians that took place in Simferopol in 1992, Crimean newspapers paid specific attention to the origin of the delegates. It was understood to be of particular importance throughout the coverage to find out how many people were from Crimea and how many came from the rest of Ukraine.[467] When it became known that the majority of the congress attenders were from Crimea, the emphasis shifted to the role of the visitors: they were the minority, but they 'dictated the agenda.' This was how N. Kharitonov, a board member of the Society of the Russian culture in Crimea (Obshestvo Russkoi Kultury v Krymu) described the congress upon attending it. The article talks about "visitors", famous members of Ukrainian national movement (Viacheslav Chornovil, Ivan Drach and others), who led the and 'almost exclusively' spoke at the meeting.[468] The author emphasized the "nationalistic" agenda of the meeting – members of the congress demanded more presence of the Ukrainian state on the peninsula, they

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[467] N. Semena, "Na puti k soglasiiu," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, October 13, 1992.

[468] N. Kharitonov, "My natsionaly, a ne natsionalisty", *Krymskaia Gazeta,* November 3, 1992.

also expressed support for the "extremist" Crimean Tatar National movement.[469] In another instance, an article by the 'Crimean writer' Stanislav Slavich says that "Lack of trust towards Russia – is a characteristic element of the Ukrainian national actors" and they "inflict" it into people's minds during the congresses, contrary to the desire of the majority.[470] The argument makes a full circle: Western Ukraine is a region of Ukrainian nationalists, they try to inflict (with force, like Nazis did) their views and culture onto Crimea, therefore, Crimea has to protect its way of life against this invasion; as a result, everything Ukrainian is nationalistic and not Crimean, and Crimean cannot be Ukrainian. On the top of all that – Ukraine was presented as an 'anti-Russian project'. Ukraine's attitude towards Russia was one of its most important characteristics. Therefore, the goals and ideology of Ukrainian activists in Crimea went contrary to the propaganda's perception of Crimea's past, present and preferable future.

This attitude towards Ukrainian-ness as something external to Crimea extended to the attitude towards the Ukrainian state. The way the Crimean press referred to Ukraine creates a perception that Ukraine was a foreign country. News 'from Ukraine' and from Russia (another external country due to the existence of the border, the 'lost' Fatherland) appeared on newspaper pages simultaneously, as events that were equally removed from Crimea. In the meantime, the primary attention of the press focused on the 'Republic of Crimea' and decisions made by its governing bodies. This, of course, enhanced and forged Crimean regional identity, but also through the rhetoric of self-governance provided a power monopoly to the local Crimean politicians. Any involvement of Kyiv into Crimean political processes was characterized as undemocratic interference, or even outright invasion. The creation of the institution of the president of Crimea in 1994 and the election of Yurii Meshkov did not change this perception of Ukraine, but enhanced it. Crimean media followed the populist policies of Meshkov and validated his attempts to conduct independent foreign politics and enter into international agreements.

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[469] N. Kharitonov, "My natsionaly, a ne natsionalisty", *Krymskaia Gazeta,* November 3, 1992.

[470] Stanislav Slavich, "Golos krovi?," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, October 27, 1992.

Such attitude towards Ukraine in the newspapers defined the way in which media characterized the events surrounding the Black Sea Fleet. Here again, Ukraine and 'Ukrainian nationalists' played a role of aggressors, who tried to seize the fleet, which meanwhile was located on Ukrainian territory. Newspapers published dozens of letters and article, dedicated to the courage, dignity and loyalty of the fleet sailors and officers.[471] *Krymskaia Pravda* celebrated officers who resisted orders of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense (see more on Chapter 5) and described them as heroes.[472] On the other hand, there existed a 'humane' narrative, according to which fleet servicemen were residents of Crimea and therefore – Crimeans. The question of 'economic support of servicemen and their families' turned into a serious political question. The presumption, of course, was that Ukraine's actions would lead to worsening of that economic prosperity, because Ukraine would not have resources to finance the fleet. That last thought was actively supported by the fleet command, newspapers and various Ukrainian and Russian politicians.

The change in elites did not deconstruct the settler colonial institutions, rather new leaders took up the old myths to consolidate their hold on power. Media continued to be an instrument of propaganda, controlled by local Crimean politicians. It projected images that were necessary for the preservation of the political and social status quo. With the failure of Meshkov and the pro-Russian movement in Crimea in 1995, the level of emotional tension in relation to Ukraine in Crimean newspapers became somewhat lower. However, the myth of the 'Ukrainian nationalism' continued to exist and was revoked according to the political needs. By 1995 the Ukrainian government increased its control over Crimea. It also became apparent that Russian political elites were not ready to start a war with Ukraine over Crimea, but rather decided to use Crimea in order to manipulate Ukraine's domestic and foreign policy from the inside. The Crimean press became an important instrument that helped reach this goal. In a situation when Kyiv tightened its

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[471] Grigoriy Staroverov, "Sevastopol′, Chernomorsky flot," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 15, 1992.

[472] For example: T, Riabchikova, "General Kuznetsov chest′ imeet," *Krymskaia Pravda*, May 5, 1992.

Grigoriy Staroverov, "Flot vystoial i chesti ne uronil," *Krymskaia Pravda*, August 19, 1992.

G. Nemirovskiy, "Zeberem 'flazhok' dlia 'flota'!," *Krymskaia Pravda*, April 16, 1993.

political control over Crimea in 1995, media remained an important settler colonial institution that allowed local political elites and foreign Russian agents to maintain control over the information and manipulate the political views and identities of Crimean people by constructing "truths" contrary to history and reality.

4.3 De-Indigenizing the Indigenous: The Fluidity of the Anti-Crimean Tatar Xenophobia

The repatriation of Crimean Tatars created an obvious tension in the everyday life of the colonizer and the colonized in Crimea, as well as between the colonized and the settler colonial institutions. Although at first they were invisible, eventually the political debates and clashes between the repatriates and the local Crimean authorities got covered by the press. Through the newspapers the Crimean residents were supposed to find out the 'truth' about the political events and the struggle that Crimean Tatars waged for repatriation and restoration of their rights. Once they were on the peninsula, speaking for themselves (inconveniently), the pro-Russian Crimean press changed its attitude toward the Crimean Tatar issue very quickly, as shown above. Therefore, the narrative regarding the acceptance of Crimean Tatars seems to have been crafted on-the-go. And while the policy of the late USSR and post-Soviet times was to allow Crimean Tatars to repatriate, this was done begrudgingly, with an effort to allow them to change as little as possible in Crimea. Newspapers were the institution that justified this fight against decolonization. They painted Crimean Tatar activists as aggressive nationalists, who were provoking the peaceful multinational Crimean population into an inter-ethnic conflict over nothing.

The attitude towards the Crimean Tatar activists that appeared in Communist Party documents in the late 1980s (Chapter 3) became the narrative for the local Crimean newspapers, controlled by the party. The narrative described the deportation of Crimean Tatars as a mistake, but the demands of the Crimean Tatar movement, according to that narrative, were 'nationalistic' and unreasonable. In Crimean newspapers, reporters often posed loaded questions and pushed their respondents towards a particular answer. For instance, the interview with the chairman of the Yalta municipal council V.V. Brailovsky (already mentioned in Chapter 3) demonstrated the 'constructive' approach of the bureaucrats, who promised to "allocate land" versus the 'provocative' behavior of

protestors.[473] The interview and its publication became a platform that allowed Brailovsky to say that protestors were given a designated place (away from a public eye) to express their opinion, but they decided to protest under the municipal council. This step, according to Brailovsky, constituted a "psychological pressure" and "aggravates the problem."[474] This point of view seems to be shared by the interviewer, Petr Makukha, who supports the conversation with the following statement: "Indeed, there is a lot to talk about, a lot to do, so that the return of Crimean Tatars does not resemble their expulsion."[475]

This interview was one of those publications that created a perception that the authorities were truly trying to help, but nothing was enough for the activists. Here again the colonized (Crimean Tatars) are painted with accusations of 'uncivility' and 'aggression' by the colonizer. Here again, the colonized appears to be 'unreasonable' because of their demand for decolonization. The quoted phrase by Makukha is important and could be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, further debates demonstrated an argument that repatriation of Crimean Tatars should not violate the rights of the Crimean residents. If that was Makukha's idea, then he possibly was trying to say that a 'mistake' that the state committed towards Crimean Tatars should not be repeated through limiting the rights of 'local' people as a result of Crimean Tatar repatriation. On the other hand, some argued that repatriation was a process, provoked by the 'nationalistic minority' and went against the true interests of Crimean Tatars themselves. In that case, the repatriation of Crimean Tatars to Crimea in its effect was compared to their 'deportation' from their places of residence, due to the poverty and lack of opportunities that awaited repatriates in Crimea. Therefore, according to that argument, the repatriation process had to go slower and according to the plan. Both those arguments existed in a public sphere and were used by opponents of repatriation. A suggestion that there is a risk that repatriation might mirror

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[473] Petr Makukha, "Vozvrashchenie," June 20, 1990.

[474] Ibid.

[475] Ibid.

The phrase by Makukha is vague in its original – Russian – version. It is not quite clear how exactly can the repatriation resemble the deportation.

the deportation was not just a friendly pass by the interviewer for the government official. It also constituted a distortion of the narrative about the deportation and repatriation. It was based on the generally accepted assumption (accepted as a result of decades of consistent struggle) that deportation was a negative event in history. But this time the journalist, and the settler colonial institution that he represented, made an attempt to hold the deportation against the deportees – it was their fault that deportation was a negative event in history.[476] And even if this phrase was a thoughtless mistake, there are enough similar phrases by other speakers that show the pattern of this particular distortion.

The image of Crimean Tatar 'extremists' was similar to the image of Ukrainian nationalists. The main argument here again was that Crimean Tatar 'extremists' would try to bring the inter-ethnic conflict to Crimea by trying to claim unfair or unequal privileges for Crimean Tatar people. In order to fight Crimean Tatar demands, Crimean authorities and media manipulated the arguments of their opponents, of course, by trying to ascribe them extremist goals that they often did not share. This later enabled them to describe Crimean Tatar activists and Mejlis in particular, as *initiators* of the conflict. The newspaper *Krymskaia Gazeta* published letters that were sent to the Crimean Supreme Council and Council of Ministers, addressing Crimean Tatar threat: "Actions of 'Mejlis' – is a tragic path towards polarization of Crimea along ethnic lines, its consequences are unpredictable", "Of course, the deported people should return to Crimea, but this return should come along with the respect to law, stable sociopolitical situation of Crimea, and without discrimination of rights of the multinational people, who live here".[477]

Yet again those quotes are examples of the distortion of reality. Crimean authorities fought against repatriation by using the legacy of institutional oppression of Crimean Tatars. Later they distributed land among Crimean residents so that it did not fall into Crimean Tatar hands (see Chapter 3). Crimean Tatars were not allowed to return to

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[476] Much like the US civil war was blamed on the slaves, as if slaves had invented slavery.

[477] "Telegrammy, postupaiushchie v ėti dni v Verkhovny Sovet I Sovet Ministrov Kryma," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, October 10, 1992.
Those letters and telegrams were collective, signed by representatives of workers and national organizations. This kind of letters constitute a separate epistolary style of the Soviet-era letter-writing.

certain areas, where they were unwelcome – southern shores of Crimea, city of Sevastopol etc. Previously, for 40 years Crimean Tatars were not allowed to live in Crimea because of their nationality, they could not purchase houses or get official job. At the time when the above quoted newspaper articles were published, most Crimean Tatars did not have citizenship and could not send their children to schools, because they were Crimean Tatars. But of course, now it was the Mejlis that 'polarized Crimea along the ethnic lines'. Of course, Crimean Tatars had to respect the law that reinforced their subjugated cultural, economic political and social position. It was only the socio economic life and comfort of the Crimean residents (most of whom came to Crimea to replace Crimean Tatars and other deported nations) that mattered. Repatriation was supposed to happen without any inconveniences to the settler colonizers, without any distortion of the power dynamic. In other words, according to the prevailing settler colonial view, repatriation was not supposed to bring decolonization.

As with Ukrainians – who were constructed as outsider nationalists from Western Ukraine – Crimean Tatars were also painted as threatening outsiders. The deep irony, of course, is that they were the indigenous inhabitants of Crimea. But that is just all the more reason, in a settler colonial context, why Russian settler colonial interests needed to reframe them as outsiders and others. This was accomplished in Crimea via the story of land 'self-return'. The narrative of a struggle over land between the repatriates ('outsiders') and Crimean residents ('locals') appeared in multiple places. It could not openly call Crimean Tatars foreign to Crimea, as the repatriation technically was their recognized right. Therefore, just like in the quotes above, this narrative often spoke about the necessity to respect the rights of Crimean residents/ local population, which already suggested that their opponents were not 'local' to Crimea. It began from the Soviet times, of course. Back in 1990 after one of the collisions between the riot police and Crimean Tatar camp, the newspaper *Sovetskii Krym* published an article that seemed to condemn the collision. The journalist, Galina Kostina, titled her story "We Will All Be Ashamed for Today." She wrote about the attack of police and 'local people' on the Crimean Tatar protestors under the Yalta municipal council and on the land that Crimean Tatars had

'self-returned' to (that same council whose chairman gave an interview quoted above). [478]
While trying to find a balance in the presentation of the story, a journalist turns the text
into a covert justification of the attack: one side was demanding "law and order", while
"Tatars" (here we see a deprivation of the indigenous of their name) did not agree to wait
longer (were impatient) for the repatriation process to finish.[479] The rhetoric of the article
is crafted in the tradition of the settler colonial culture: Kostina repeatedly talks about the
collision between "the local population" and "Tatars." In this narrative the colonizer and
the colonized seem to switch places, making the former a potential victim of a
colonization of the latter. The riot police, according to this report, took the side of the
attackers, removing building materials that Crimean Tatars brought for themselves.
According to Kostina, "a crowd that came to the Crimean Tatar tent camp rushed to take
down tents, and police could not prevent that from happening."[480] It is hard to believe
that an institution that proved to be very capable in suppressing protests in the Soviet
Union suddenly lost control over the crowd that attacked a Crimean Tatar camp.

As with Ukrainian question, the problems with Crimean Tatar repatriation always came
from 'nationalists.' In September 1991, a group of Crimean Tatars 'self-returned' land in
the town of Yevpatoria. The article that covers this story refers to Crimean Tatars
exclusively as 'Tatars', 'repatriates', and 'deportees'.[481] The reason for the
'*samozakhvat*' ('self-acquisition' – the term used by the authorities and media) of land,
according to the journalist, V. Shcherbinin, laid in the sphere of politics:

> "The spring of the current self-acquisition was tightening not in Yevpatoria,
> but in the great spaces of Central Asia, where the process of migration is
> artificially accelerated by the national political forces".[482]

[478] G. Kostina, "Nam vsem budet stydno za ėtot den´", *Sovetskii Krym*, October 2, 1990.

[479] Ibid.

[480] Ibid.

[481] V. Shcherbinin, "Samozakhvat," *Kurortny Krym*, September 21, 1991.

[482] Ibid.

This quote not only refers to the repatriates as just 'migrants,' but makes a reference to the image of nationalistic Crimean Tatar politicians, who 'artificially accelerate the repatriation'. Further in the text Shcherbinin explains in detail why such a fast repatriation of Crimean Tatars prevented the town of Yevpatoria from developing. The author emphasized that the small town could not absorb that many people, suggesting probably that the repatriating Crimean Tatars were to blame for the Yevpatoria's potential problems of development. While Crimean Tatars claimed that people in Uzbekistan, where they had been deported to, forced them to repatriate to Crimea (and violence like that did happen at the time), Shcherbinin wrote that this was false and that many 'migrants' did not even cancel their registration in places where they lived, and came to Crimea "for reconnaissance, with an aim to reserve land plots."[483] By this Shcherbinin seemed to diminish the reasoning behind repatriation hinting that people were driven by possible economic gains, rather than the idea to return home. Finally, Shcherbinin refers to the image of an 'aggressive Tatar' that brought disruption to Crimean land: "Hostility, conscious disregard of law is becoming a norm of conduct for the most aggressive portion of migrants".[484]

In this and other stories about the Crimean Tatar repatriation the basic principle for the journalists and Crimean politicians was to preserve the 'rights' of the 'local Crimean population' – settlers – first. Local almost becomes a replacement for indigenous, and is used to erase the prior claim of Crimean Tatars, or at least to compete with its meaning. The fact that Crimean Tatars had been deported from their homeland and lost all their property in Crimea (in favor of settlers, who often moved into empty Crimean Tatar homes) technically was acknowledged, but did not bring liability to the current "Crimean locals". Simply speaking, the settler colonial institutions adopted a position according to which the deportation was bad, and therefore no elements of it could be applied to 'Crimean residents' during the repatriation. This was the colonized that had to adjust to

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[483] V. Shcherbinin, "Samozakhvat," *Kurortny Krym*, September 21, 1991.

[484] Ibid.

the colonizer, not vice versa. Any attempts to change that met with the references to law and accusations of aggression.

This narrative about the 'nationalistic minority', represented by the Mejlis, that provoked all Crimean Tatars to repatriate, even when it was supposedly "contrary to their own interests" survived into the post-Soviet era. The narrative itself was very paternalistic, of course, because it presumed that the speaker knew Crimean Tatar interests better than Crimean Tatars themselves. It makes resistance to decolonization inevitable, and its possible failure becomes a an evidence that decolonization had been doomed in the first place – a lesson against possible future attempts to decolonize. This narrative appeared in statements by politicians, but also in questions by journalists, which suggests an attempt to influence public opinion, and to 'dominate the truth'. In 1994 Elena Gornaya interviewed an ethnic Crimean Tatar, Enver Abliakimov, who was a vice-president of the Chuvashia republic within the Russian Federation at the time.[485] The delegation from the Chuvashia visited Crimea, therefore, Gornaya conducted a somewhat typical interview, with the exception of the fact that her respondent had a certain relationship to Crimea. One of the questions that Gornaya asked included her own evaluation of the repatriation of Crimean Tatars:

> "[…] was it not a mistaken decision to return Crimean Tatars to Crimea simultaneously and in an organized way? That said, immediately rip dozens of thousands of people off of their conventional life, from permanent places and to lead their way to the place where nobody could welcome them properly, I mean economically."[486]

In other words, Gornaya herself believed that the repatriation was a mistake and normalized that message. Her message reproduced an idea that the failure of

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[485] Elena Gornaia, "Enver Abliakimov, krymskii tatarin, vitse-president Chuvashskoi Respubliki," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, July 2, 1994.

[486] Ibid.

decolonization would be the fault of the colonized Crimean Tatars and their leaders.[487] Again, the way this question is formulated presumes that repatriates did not have power over their decision but followed somebody's lead.

The interview by Gornaya is one of example of the way that Russian settler colonial interests, using Crimean newspapers, conducted information warfare against the Crimean Tatar struggle for their national rights. The conversation focused on the inter-ethnic relations in the Russian Federation. The main underlying argument that readers could get from the text was that the Russian state solved the inter-ethnic tension by federalizing and giving rights to national minorities. Therefore, this approach could serve as a guideline for Ukraine, Crimea, or Ukraine in Crimea. One of the later questions by Gornaya included a statement that directly related to Crimean politics: "It seems like you [Chuvashia republic/Russian Federation] do not have that prejudice that is popular in some places, like 'indigenous – non-indigenous'?".[488] Such a reference to the fight of Crimean Tatars for their national rights in Crimea was of course intentional. And according to this reference, the demand of the colonized to restore their sovereignty and national rights was a prejudice – a sin against settlers, not a justified right. The colonizer could not and did not recognize Crimean Tatars as the indigenous people. Indigeneity went directly against the ideology of multinational Crimea, where 'nobody was indigenous,' suggesting that any group was amounted to "prejudice," and this is why the power should remain within the "unprejudiced, fair" settler colonial institutions.

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[487] The history of Russia-Ukraine relationships of 2000s and later demonstrated two other instances of similar imperial narrative. They reflect a certain propagandist approach of the empire that sees the necessity to diminish the very idea of democratic protests and changes in Ukraine and blame Ukraine's political and economic hardships on those who attempted to fight for change. The immediate examples would be the interpretation of two revolutions on Kyiv's Independence square – Orange Revolution of 2004 and the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. After both revolutions Russian state went to an extensive effort to create instability and economic problems in Ukraine, and even launched a military and economic aggression against Ukraine in Crimea and Donbas. In both cases, however, the main Russian explanation for Ukraine's instability (political, economic) and war was not the Russian aggression, but an attempt of Ukrainians to force domestic changes. In other words, again, failures of reform and decolonization are blamed on the very attempts to conduct those reforms.

[488] Gornaia, "Enver Abliakimov, krymskii tatarin, vitse-president Chuvashskoi Respubliki," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, July 2, 1994.

The interview with Abliakhimov demonstrates an image of a Crimean Tatar that is surprisingly similar to the image of the 'good' Ukrainian, mentioned above. Abliakhimov himself said that his family was deported from Crimea in 1930, during the collectivization. Therefore, the deportation of 1944 was not a traumatic experience for his family, and it did not influence his identity the way that deportation shaped other Crimean Tatars. Abliakhimov identified himself as Russian during the interview, although he admitted that his family "respects the Crimean Tatar traditions – national cuisine, language".[489] Abliakhimov said he did not know the Crimean Tatar language very well, but his Crimean Tatar was "relatively purified…without the mixture of Central Asian linguistic layers, which are characteristic of the language of Crimean Tatars, who lived in Uzbekistan for a long time".[490] Just like in other cases of non-Russian post-Soviet nationalities, the respect towards national culture here reduces to eating national food and speaking the language in limited ways. Just like with the image of Western Ukrainians and their language, this interview makes a slight suggestion that the language of Crimean Tatars is not 'pure' enough, because it mixed with the local languages in Uzbekistan. The Crimean Tatar presence in Uzbekistan was not a collective choice of the nation, but here the respondent comes close to questioning the authenticity of repatriates.

The more overt challenge of the Crimean Tatar authenticity happened before. In April, 1992 *Krymskaia Gazeta* published an article "National crafts – factor of increase of employment" ("Natsyonal'nye promysly – faktor povysheniia zaniatosti"). On the one hand, the article argued that Crimean Tatar traditional craftsmanship could be a potentially good way to make money in times of crisis. On the other hand, the author B. Finogeev made a remark about the Crimean Tatar authenticity:

> "Meanwhile it is necessary to acknowledge that the loss of the national distinctiveness and originality [*samobytnosti i original'nosti*] by Crimean Tatars under the influence of their long-term residence in places of deportation

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[489] Gornaia, "Enver Abliakimov, krymskii tatarin, vitse-president Chuvashskoi Respubliki," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, July 2, 1994.

[490] Ibid.

will, I think, complicate a revival of the national culture in its full primordiality [*pervozdannost´*]."[491]

The challenge to originality ('primordiality') is another way of the settler colonial discourse to call the indigeneity into question. Other settler colonies demonstrate similar examples, when bastardized language or culture become a premise which settler colonies use in order to question the 'purity' of the native blood.[492] The demand for 'primordiality' further denies the right of the Crimean Tatar culture to change, it denies the right of Crimean Tatars to be modern and to *remain* Crimean Tatars simultaneously, a right that was never in question for the Russian culture. The celebration of Crimean Tatar cultural 'originality' eventually became part of the discourse that Crimean Tatars themselves seemed to support. At the end of the day, preservation of the national culture in places of deportation *was* the challenge that Crimean Tatars recognized collectively. Therefore, when Crimean Tatar national culture was celebrated for folklore, traditionalism and originality, partially this was due to the experience of Crimean Tatars themselves, but partially this was due to the imperial discourse.

The description of the Crimean Tatar national cultural events at times included elements of Orientalization, a tradition of othering that also typically includes framing exotic cultures as trapped in the past. To an extent the image of the Orientalized Crimean Tatar culture contributed to the statement that Crimean Tatars were not quite 'local'. In addition, this image helped create a myth of inter-ethnic peace and national equality in

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[491] B. Finogeev, "Natsyonal´nye promysly – faktor povysheniia zaniatosti," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, September 17, 1992.

[492] In a North American context lack of originality for culture or language historically served as a premise for assimilation; it became a reason for the settler colonial power to 'legally' take away the indigenous rights. See for example: Theda Perdue, *Mixed Blood Indians Racial Construction in the Early South* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2005).

Furthermore, in the introduction to the edited collection on the theory of Native studies, Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith mention contemporary issues in the United States, when courts deprive the indigenous people of their rights on the premise that a person does not live according to the descriptions by anthropologists:

Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, "Introduction" in *Theorizing the Native Studies*, edited by Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 5.

Jody Byrd, *The Transit of Empire* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

Crimea. Just like presentation of opposing views by the Crimean newspapers created an image of 'balanced journalism'. Orientalization of the Crimean Tatar culture often happened in articles devoted to the cultural events in Crimea. One such article, called "Khaitarma Sings and Dances" ("Poet i tantsuet 'Khaitarma'"[493]) described the performance of the Crimean Tatar folk ensemble in the following way:

> "The performance of 'Khaitarma' is a unique [*svoeobraznyi* – might also be translated as 'exotic', 'original', and 'peculiar'] decoration for one of the most popular Eastern holidays that are going on now – Ramadan".[494]

Ramadan is, of course, a religious holiday, celebrated by Muslims all over the world. Ramadan existed in Crimea long before the peninsula became part of the Russian empire, or the Soviet Union, long before Slavic peoples became the majority in Crimea. In those terms, Ramadan is more 'local' to Crimea (and not 'Eastern') than the editorial board of the *Kurortnyi Krym* newspaper, which published this article without naming its author. While the article seemed to celebrate Crimean Tatar national culture, it described it in exotic terms, and admired it much like Western colonists admired the exotic cultures of East Asia.[495]

In October 1991, the same newspaper *Kurortnyi Krym* published two short notes, dedicated to the festival "Shelkovy put´-91". Both notes came under a shared title "Dialog kul´tur – velenie vremeni". One of them described a performance of the Crimean Tatar ensemble. This description Orientalized and exoticized Crimean Tatars yet again:

> "Gifts of the generous Crimean nature that are a delight for eyes, tantalizing smells, summer-like warm sun, multilingual speech… and in imagination arises a tempting picture of the Eastern bazaar, where goods come from all

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[493] *Khaitarma* is a name of the Crimean Tatar folk dance. In this case it is a name of the Crimean Tatar ensemble that specialized in folk songs and dances.

[494] "Poet in tantsuet 'Khaitarma'," *Kurortny Krym*, March 27, 1991.

[495] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1977), 51, 75.

sides of the world, where everything is soaked with mysterious charm of lovely tales of Scheherazade".[496]

This quote resembles the 19th century tradition of the Russian poets and writers to describe Crimea in oriental terms (quotes by Aleksander Pushkin, mentioned in Chapter 1), it represents a pride of the 19th century Russian imperial subject to obtain their own, 'Russian East' in one of the most western geographical areas of the Russian empire – Crimean Peninsula. In this text, the author again admired Crimean multiculturalism while othering it in ways that deny indigenous status to Crimean Tatars and incorporates all kinds of stereotypical cultural references from the Arab world. In this cultural construct Crimean Tatars were supposed to represent 'the Orient', 'the bazaar' and 'Eastern exotics':

> "Of course, Sudak fair is far from the real Eastern bazaar, but a unique [again – *svoeobraznyi*] coloring was created by the performance of an ensemble of Crimean Tatars 'Krym' ['Crimea']. Antique headdresses and white-toothed smiles twinkled in the sunlight, necklaces tingled and multicolored outfits fluttered. And oh what ladies those were!"[497]

The last exclamation finalized what the author was stumbling around throughout this short text. The picture was now complete – the indigenous folk ensemble played a very particular role at the event. The ensemble created an atmosphere of the 'Orient' for the settler colonizer and enabled colonial phantasies about exoticism and sensual the 'Eastern' bodies. A (recently) post-Soviet Slavic attendant of the festival joined the imaginary 'civilized world' and drew a clear color line between himself and the exotic indigenous ensemble. The ensemble was there to 'create a coloring', to entertain the colonizer with their 'white-toothed smiles' and colorful outfits. The colonizer was there to enjoy the atmosphere, to fantasize about female bodies, to see the difference (including

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[496] "Dialog Kul´tur – velenie vremeni," *Kurortny Krym*, October 19, 1991.

[497] Ibid.

the difference in power) between 'Us' and 'Them'. He was there to exercise the power, given to his nationality: to consume the spectacle, and to write the narrative.

Four years later, descriptions of the Crimean Tatar festival in 1995 did not contain Orientalist language. The number of articles, describing Crimean Tatar cultural events generally decreased. One article, dedicated to the Days of Crimean Tatar culture, emphasized Crimean multiculturalism and celebrated the fact the Crimean Tatars had managed to preserve their culture and 'originality' in places of deportation.[498] The cultural sites, however, remained to be colonized. Therefore, Crimean Tatar ensembles and theaters performed on the stages of 'Russian academic' theaters, named after Russian writers. The examples of Orientalization still appeared from time to time. In 1995, for instance, *Slava Sevastopolia* reported about a play themed on the poem "Bakhchysaraiski fontan' by Aleksander Pushkin in a news section. A short description of a play mentioned that the director followed a "genre of poetic legend, giving it [a play] some Eastern coloring [*vostochny kolorit*]".[499] While this was not an example of exoticizing of Crimean Tatar culture per se, it built on the 19th century tradition of exoticizing and Orientalization of Crimea.

The admiration of the Crimean Tatar culture did contribute to the image of peaceful multiculturalism, carefully maintained by generations of Crimean politicians. Partially this could be explained by the fact that by 1995 the settler colonial framework of Crimea had adapted to the new circumstances and secured its existence. But also this was a time of a new 'balance', reached after the fall of Yurii Meshkov. In that balance Crimean Tatars were still discriminates, but at least got *some* representation in governmental institutions, namely Ilmi Umerov, who served as a deputy Prime Minister of Crimea. The image of multiethnic Crimea with the real Soviet national hierarchy and prestige was preserved, and all political and social forces more or less recognized it. It was no longer necessary to exoticize Crimean Tatars, at least temporarily. In addition, since roughly

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[498] Tatiana Agarkova, "Est´ nash narod, rodina, iskusstvo," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, September 27, 1995.

[499] "Novosti," *Slava Sevastopolia*, March 2, 1995.

1994 Crimean newspapers dedicate significantly less publications to Crimean Tatar culture, and mostly mention Mejlis to describe political events.

The image of the Crimean Tatar 'Other' in the newspapers combined accusations of extremism and nationalism, Orientalized Crimean Tatars and framed them as invading outsiders in order to present Crimea as a multicultural paradise: combined these things and undermined Crimean Tatar claims to their rights as indigenous people. The element of Crimean Tatar 'nationalism' were shared with the image of the Ukrainian 'Other', although not as developed as in the case of Ukraine. The Orientalization is quite an interesting example of a revival of 19th century Russian imperial mythology and its application to early post-Soviet Crimea. Orientalization reinforced settler colonial mythology and emphasized the cultural/racial line between Crimean settlers and repatriates. It also partially supported a claim that Crimean Tatars were not actually local to Crimea (whether because of the deportation, or because of the historical narratives) and therefore, could only have a right to 'mix into' the Crimean mosaic, rather than maintain a separate indigenous identity.

4.4   Conclusion: Post-truth? Has There *Been* Truth?

In their introduction to the collection on Indigenous theory Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith mention a common indigenous criticism for the term postcolonial theory: "Postcolonial? Have they left yet?"[500] The criticism refers to the fact that most settler colonies today remain colonized spaces, while the prefix 'post-' in the 'postcolonial' suggests a turn into something new, and era *after* colonialism. While there also exist explanations of the term in response to this criticism that justify the 'post-', it is hardly possible to escape the chronological meaning that embedded in it.

Having a similar approach in mind, there might be a need to criticize and reconsider 'post' in the term 'post-truth'. The term exists as a characteristic of what is considered to be a modern phenomenon of a digital era. It presumes that at some point – probably in

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[500] Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith, "Introduction" in *Theorizing the Native Studies*, edited by Audra Simpson and Andrea Smith (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 13.

2016 – there was an important turn that moved the humanity from the era of 'truth' into something different. While for some people that might be the case, this approach seems to be rather Western-centric. The history of imperialism and colonialism, especially in the era of information has little to do with 'truth' and much more – with appeals to emotions, informational manipulations, cultural stereotypes, empire's control over the narrative. In other words, Crimea has existed in 'post-truth' for over two centuries now, the digital era only discovered a more modern methods to support it.

The lack of control over the informational sphere was one of the main reasons why Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar political movements in Crimea were not able to effectively start the decolonization process. Crimean settler colonial institutions inherited control over media and instruments of propaganda since the Soviet times. They also inherited the cultural and political discourse which had constructed national stereotypes about Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians. The use of those stereotypes, their political instrumentalization was one of the factors that enabled Crimean politicians to preserve the settler colonial status quo in Crimea's national relations.

The image of Crimea's past, present and future, presented by the main Crimean newspapers, existed within the Russian or at least Russo-centric cultural and political discourse. It hardly depended on the personality of those who were in power at the Crimea's council of ministers or who held the majority in the Crimea's supreme council, as long as those politicians did not resist and even supported this discourse. Readers of *Krymskaia Pravda* and *Krymskaia Gazeta* received regular signals that Crimea could not survive (culturally, politically, economically, identically) without close integration or incorporation into the Russian Federation. The instrumentalization of history by invoking the settler's myth suggested there had been no successful preliminary experience of Crimea's existence outside of 'Russia.' The economic hardships of the young post-Soviet Ukrainian state, along with the increased crime rates on the peninsula, suggested that the *present* experience outside of Russia was not successful as well. Therefore, Crimean press (and various civic movements, including movements that were closely integrated with the processes of post-Soviet Russian nation-building) played with the emotion of

nostalgia and suggested Crimean residents to mobilize around the idea of the new Soviet (Slavic) Union.

A threat of violent 'nationalism' – Ukrainian or Crimean Tatar reflected the desire of colonizers to turn themselves into victims and mobilize public support in opposition to the common enemy. By ascribing the term 'nationalism' to every instance of Ukrainians' and Crimean Tatars' fight for their national rights, local settler colonial institutions employed the rhetoric of democracy and human rights to promote the settler colonial agenda. Crimean 'multinationalism', in turn, was a combination of this democratic rhetoric modeled after the Soviet idea of the 'brotherhood of nations,' where all nations were 'equal' and led by the Russian culture, language and history.

Crimean newspapers performed a role of a yet another settler colonial institution in Crimea, which 'othered' Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in similar ways. In both instances the narrative suggested that neither Ukrainians, nor Crimean Tatars really 'belonged' in Crimea. Ukrainian activists were described as envoys of the Western Ukrainian nationalists, who came to Crimean to assimilate the Russian-speaking population. While Crimean Tatars were not recognized as indigenous and therefore were treated as a group with unreasonable demands for preferential treatment in a space where 'nobody could claim indigeneity'. In the case of Crimean Tatars their religion and culture left some space for the colonizer to exoticize and Orientalize them. Eventually newspapers described Crimean Tatar cultural events as historical records from the past, and not a modern culture of the present day.

In sum, the control over the informational discourse allowed the settler colonial institutions to normalize settler colonialism and prevent decolonization. It also allowed Russian state and government to retain informal (but very open) control over the local Crimean political and informational sphere. While Russian state effectively supported and promoted this imperial discourse, the position of the Ukrainian government was effectively static. Ukrainian governmental institutions were either bearers of the Russian imperial discourse about Crimean Tatars or did not have enough resource (not just

financial, but also analytical and intellectual) to meaningfully intervene and compete with the 'Othering'.

Chapter 5

5 Where Is the Boundary Between Internal and International?

"Using force to impose brotherly relations is the only method that has historically proven its efficiency on the Ukrainian direction. I do not think that any other method will be invented."

Vladislav Surkov, former advisor to the president of Russia Vladimir Putin on Ukraine (2013-2020).[501]

The struggle of settler colonial institutions in Crimea for preservation of their power and fight against decolonization was as much a matter of international relations, as it was a matter of internal Ukrainian affairs. This chapter will look at the role of Crimea in Russian domestic politics, the international activities of the local Crimean authorities, as well as political and cultural role of the Black Sea Fleet and its command structure. Drawing on Homi Bhabha's concepts of ambivalence and hybridity, it will argue that the conflict over Crimea has always had a pronounced international dimension that was enhanced by the hybridity of social and political processes in early post-Soviet years. In the case of Crimea, local settler colonial institutions, as well as the Black Sea Fleet existed in an 'in-between space' between Russia and Ukraine. Therefore, the ambivalence of these imperial relations was instrumentalized and used by the (former) imperial metropole in order to reinforce the imperial hierarchy. The early post-Soviet years in Crimea were what Bhabha has called a 'hybrid moment of political change', a period during the process of transformation when the object of change is not what it used to be anymore, but not yet what it is going to become.[502] In a post-Soviet Crimean

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[501] Alexey Chesnakov, "Surkov: mne interesno deistvovat´ protiv real´nosti," *Aktual´nye kommentarii*, February 26, 2020. Accessed April 27, 2020: http://actualcomment.ru/surkov-mne-interesno-deystvovat-protiv-realnosti-2002260855.html.

[502] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 41.

context this was a period when informal contacts between various social and political agents was often more important than their formal responsibilities.

Hybridity in the post-Soviet Crimean space is useful to describe the 'moment of political change'. It helps to illuminate the *vacuum* of legislation, statehood, loyalty, sovereignty and identity that appeared in Crimea after the fall of the Soviet Union. Hybrid institutions in the territory of Crimea often existed outside of the legal norms, or even contrary to the legal norms of the state in which they existed. Moreover, the legal norms that were supposed to regulate the presence of those institutions in Crimea often did not exist themselves. Changes and decisions often relied on the late Soviet political traditions and social understandings of 'normality' and authority, combined with a general perception of chaos and an absence of legal norms. This often made those hybrid institutions an extension of the Russian foreign policy within the body of a Ukrainian state. Finally, in the context of Crimea, hybridity is a way to step away from binary understanding of this space. The binary notion that politics is either domestic or international does not apply here. Crimean politics – however local – are also always already international. Because Crimean people and institutions are also deeply shaped by Ukraine/Russia/Crimean Tatar concerns. And international interest in Crimea is not just about Crimea, it is also about reinforcing and justifying myths of self (of Russian self or Ukrainian self or Crimean Tatar self) that rely on particular ways of framing and relating to Crimea as a place and political entity.

Scholars who addressed the issue of 'Crimean separatism' of 1990s have taken various approaches in analyzing the topic. Some look at it as a center-periphery struggle between Kyiv and Simferopol. Others look at Crimea as a borderland, a crossroad of Russian and Ukrainian political cultures and systems.[503] After the annexation of 2014 many analysts

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[503] For example, the Institute of history of the National Academy of Science of Ukraine published a monograph that studies 'regionalism' of Crimea and Donbas and describes Crimea's post-Soviet autonomy as an 'acceptable compromise' that allowed to avoid international conflict: Yaroslava Vermenych, *Fenomen Pohranychchia: Krym i Donbas v doli Ukrainy* (Kyiv: Institute of History of the National Academy of Science, 2018), 212-213.

Furthermore, Gwendolyn Sasse analyses the 'Crimea question' as a center-periphery struggle between Ukrainian center and Crimean elites. Back in 2002 she also looked at Crimea as 'conflict that did not

claimed they had predicted a future aggression, others took the conflict as completely unexpected. The presence of Russia in these analysis is always known and assumed, but hardly analyzed. What unites the existing scholarship on Crimea in 1990s is an assumption that between 1991 and 2014 there had been a period of peace – *absence of conflict.* That assumption presumes that Crimea was a center of *potential* instability, an 'insurgent region' that demanded higher status of autonomy due to its historical connections to Russia and Russian-speaking population.

A mutual 'desire' of the Russian state and the Crimean autonomy to 'reconciliate', therefore, is assumed to be something natural. This, in turn, triggers two more lines of thought. One assumes that post-Soviet Ukraine generally is a state with "artificial" borders (a statement popularized by Russian propaganda and some scholars). A second line frames 'Crimean separatism' as an internal movement, fueled by the 'oppressed' Russian minorities, but only supported by some Russian politicians. This supposed movement for Crimean separatism is often recognized as one of the main *internal* challenges to the post-Soviet Ukrainian state. Contrary to those lines of thought, this chapter will argue that 'the internal conflict between Kyiv and Simferopol' is another political and diplomatic construct, created in order for Russia to wage a hybrid intervention into Ukraine's domestic politics.

This research demonstrates that the Russian settler colonial project is a conflict that *never stopped* or paused, that there was no time of absence of conflict. The previous chapters have already shown that the 'conflict that did not happen' approach does not quite fit into the wider context of Crimean history. This chapter will further argue that while the Crimean conflict had elements of domestic problem within the body of the post-Soviet Ukrainian state, it was in fact a multifaceted international conflict that played out on local, regional, military, national, and international stages. Firstly, settler colonization is

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happen,' due to the diplomatic flexibility of Ukrainian and Crimean political elites: Gwendolyn Sasse, "Conflict Prevention In a Transition State: The Crimean Issue in Post-Soviet Ukraine" in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 8, #2 (2002): 2.

international by definition because once it is made visible, it requires that one recognize the existence of distinct sovereign entities (nations, in modern era), one of which is invaded and "settled" by another. The fact that Crimea was annexed by the Russian empire and later became part of the Soviet Union does not erase the existence of a Crimean Tatar space/place/nation there, nor that it continues to exist under colonization. Neither does a settler colony stops being a settler colony, unless the decolonization is achieved. In a narrower sense, in the more immediate context of the 1990s, the Russian state and Russian non-state agents influenced Crimea's internal politics and identity processes. Crimean 'regionalism,' or settler colonialism, was able to survive for two major reasons. As discussed above, the local political elites and settler colonial institutions fought for the preservation of the status quo. But in addition, the Crimean settler colony received invaluable financial, ideological, informational, intellectual and diplomatic help from what now (after the fall of the USSR) became a foreign entity – the post-Soviet Russian state.

The post-Soviet Russian state served as an example for the local Crimean political movement and settler colonial institutions. The boundary between the internal and international struggle was thin and often transparent. Post-Soviet politics existed in the sphere of unspoken rules or political traditions, inherited from the Soviet times, rather than in the sphere of the formal law. In fact, at the time of the transformation many actions were taken in a situation when the old political/legal norms or practices became outdated and new ones had not yet been created. While Crimea appeared to exist within the state sovereignty of the newly independent Ukraine, a lot of the institutional power rested with the Russian political and military agents. Local Crimean branches of government as well as institutions like the Black Sea Fleet coordinated their effort or directly responded to the Russian state authorities contrary to the policies of the Ukrainian government. Russian influence on the territory of Crimea could not be taken for granted: it was institutionalized and maintained by both the settler colonial institutions inside Crimea, external Russian political forces, and the Black Sea Fleet. However, until 1997 the Black Sea Fleet does not quite fit into the description of either Russian or local Crimean forces. This chapter will look at the influence of the Black Sea Fleet, and will argue that it operated as one of several "hybrid" institutions, that is, it combined both

local Crimean settler elites and external Russian interests in its work to maintain Russian settler colonialism in Crimea.

5.1   Not Fully Within, Not Fully Outside: Crimea and Ukraine in Russian Political Debates and Diplomacy

The fall of the Soviet Union made the relations among the former Soviet state foreign in form, but not in content. Different non-Russian post-Soviet republics took their independence differently. Some countries oriented at the West immediately, some sought a new integration with the Russian Federation, while others started a long history of maneuvering between the West and Russia. In Ukraine the attitude towards Russia as a foreign country to a large extent depended on political affiliation. While the anti-Soviet ('nationally-minded') forces wanted to make Russia-Ukraine relationships truly foreign, many groups within Ukraine (and many members of the post-Soviet government) appeared within a political range between building an independent country separate from Russia and having close friendly relationships with the former Soviet center. In Russia, however, the relationships with Ukraine never appeared to be completely foreign. The Russian parliament, first Supreme Council and then State Duma, had a separate committee responsible for the legislation in the sphere of the Commonwealth of Independent States that effected the Russian-speaking population outside of Russia. Russian policy towards Ukraine and Crimea, made with "Russian speakers" in mind, was an extension of Russian domestic politics and efforts to preserve its empire and recreate Russian national identity after the USSR. Maintaining a strong influence in Crimea and Ukraine was a general consensus among the Russian politicians, but the level of control Russia ought to exert was a matter of debate.

Neither Russian nor Ukrainian political elites were homogenous at that time. The debates that are at the center of this analysis were often waged by politicians who were not always responsible for making decisions. In addition, domestic political tensions in Russia often influenced the tenor of their political statements. During his two presidential terms, President Boris Yeltsin had a conflict with the legislative branch. Therefore, some

of the Russian Parliament's decisions about Ukraine and Crimea were directed at the domestic Russian nationalist audience and were really part of its political struggle with Yeltsin. However, the debates on Ukrainian and Crimean matters represented the political climate and reflected the opinions of a certain number of citizens of the Russian Federation. Even when some openly aggressive decisions by the Russian Parliament were not fulfilled by the executive branch, they often pushed Yeltsin's cabinet towards accommodating nationalistic policies.

The possibility of a territorial conflict between Russia and Ukraine over the Crimean Peninsula appeared right after Ukraine proclaimed its independence. A journalist Vitalii Portnikov remembers his interview with the Ukrainian deputy prime-minister Kostyantyn Masyk, who claimed that Boris Yeltsin consulted his military advisors regarding the possibility of a nuclear strike against Ukraine in 1991.[504] In October 1991, after the proclamation of the independence of Ukraine, but before the referendum of December 1, Vitalii Portnikov published an article describing the latest political developments between Ukraine and Russia. In particular, he described tension between the vice-president of the Russian SFSR Rutskoi and Ukraine's prime-minister Fokin. Ukraine's desire to maintain international border and customs control with Russia (as opposed to border-free regime) elicited responsive sanctions from the Russian government. For example, Russia restricted a supply of paper to Ukraine. This eventually led to a shortage of paper for Ukrainian newspapers right before the referendum on Ukraine's independence, a problem that potentially reduced the propaganda resources of the state prior to referendum.[505] In subsequent years Russian politicians often used resource blockades as a leverage during the conflicts over cultural, political and ideological matters. Resource diplomacy (most commonly referred to as 'gas diplomacy') has been an influential instrument for keeping Ukraine within the Russian sphere of influence.

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[504] Vitalii Portnikov, interview by author, July 12, 2019.

Vitalii Portnikov, "Yeltsin Obsuzhdal s voyennymi vozmozhnost iadernogo udara po Ukrainie, soobshil pervy Vitse-Premier Ukrainy Konstantin Masik korrespondentu 'NG'", *Niezavisimaia Gazeta*, October 24, 1991. Accessed: https://yeltsin.ru/uploads/upload/newspaper/1991/nzv10_24_91/index.html.

[505] Vitalii Portnikov, "Ukraina – Rossiya: voyna mirov", *Baltiiskoe Vremia*, October 31, 1991.

The desire to maintain control over Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet was common among different political groups within the Russian parliament, it united the government and opposition. On January 9, 1992, for example, several MPs from the opposition deputy group 'Russia' Sergey Baburin, Nikolai Pavlov and Valeriy Khairuzov addressed President Yeltsin with an open letter.[506] The letter demanded the preservation of the unity of the Soviet armed forces on the territory of post-Soviet republics. The authors also demanded denunciation of any bilateral agreements between Russia and Ukraine regarding borders in return for Ukraine's movement away from "Russia-Ukraine unity". In particular, this meant cancelling all acts and agreements of 1954 by which Crimea became part of the Ukrainian SSR. The letter also suggested to allow any Ukrainian regions to join Russia on region-by-region basis.[507] The deputy group 'Russia' in the Russian Supreme Council[508] was a group of nationalists, who were in opposition to President Yeltsin. The proposal that they made in the letter was almost identical to the views expressed by Alexander Solzhenitsyn on the future Russian state-building (see Chapter 2). On January 11, 1992 President Yeltsin himself said that "Nobody, including [president of Ukraine] Kravchuk, will take the Black Sea Fleet away from Russia".[509] He also stated that the fleet in Sevastopol was under his personal protection and ordered navy officers to not pledge allegiance to Ukraine.

Early 1992 was still a time when the Russian authorities hoped to restore some form of the Soviet Union under a different name. Therefore, a preservation of control over the former Soviet military became a matter of fulfillment of this goal. Throughout January 1992 the newspaper of the Russian government *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* published materials about the Black Sea Fleet almost every day. They often came along with the repetition of the Russian historical myth of Crimea: Crimea had to belong to Russia, because Russian

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[506] "Separatism politikov razryvaet edinstvo narodov," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, January 9, 1992.

[507] This, in turn, would open legal way for the annexation of those regions of Ukraine that border Russia.

[508] The name of the lower house of the Russian parliament until 1993. After the crisis of 1993, when President Yeltsin dissolved the Supreme Council and after the elections that followed, in December 1993 the lower house of the Russian parliament received a name State Duma.

[509] TACC, "B. Yeltsin v povolzh`e," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, January 11, 1992.

(*Russkiye* – ethno-national term) soldiers spilled their blood on that land.[510] Due to the existing myth (described in Chapter 4) the claims for Crimea and for the fleet were interchangeable. Controlling the fleet meant controlling Crimea and vice versa. With an aim to preserve a united armed forces (and within a political fashion of plebiscites) the commander of the armed forces of the CIS general Shaposhnikov organized 'All-Army Congress' that was broadcasted live on Channel 1 (and therefore watched by people all over the post-Soviet area).[511] The congress was meant to demonstrate that the army *itself* (a structure that is created to fulfil orders without negotiation) wanted to remain unified. In other words, Russian elites were trying to reduce the damage and restore control that they lost after the fall of the USSR by using the institutions of power of the deceased state.

As a result of this increased emotional tension around the issue of Crimea, on January 24, 1992 the Russian Supreme Council authorized its committees to analyze the legality of the decrees of 1954 that transferred the peninsula to the Ukrainian SSR.[512] Technically this meant that the parliament of one of the former Soviet republics decided to amend decisions made on the all-Soviet level. This eventually led to the decree of the Russian Supreme Council, adopted on May 21, 1992 that proclaimed the necessity to "regulate the question of Crimea through the interstate negotiations between Russia and Ukraine".[513] The decree cancelled the decision of the presidium of the Soviet Supreme Council that transferred Crimea from Russian to the Ukrainian Soviet republic in 1954. The response of the Ukrainian parliament denied the juridical right of the Russian authorities to cancel the decisions of the non-existing Soviet state institutions. Ukrainian deputies also refused of any international negotiations regarding the state borders of the country and accused the Russian parliament of interfering into Ukrainian internal politics

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[510] Anatoliy Usoltsev, "Na gran razvala postavili armiiu ambitsii politikov," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, January 13, 1992.

[511] Vladimir Zelentsov, Vitalii Potapov, Vladimir Sheleketov, "'Velikiy nemoi' zagovoril," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, Janurary 20, 1992.

[512] Olga Burkaleva, Robert Minasov, "Zatyanut′ poyasa ili narastit′ moshnosti pechatnogo stanka?," *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, January 25, 1992.

[513] "Postanovlenie Verkhovnogo Soveta Rossiyskoy Federatsii," *Vechirniy Kyiv*, June 3, 1992.

(here one can see how the framing of Crimea as international or internal has been historically politicized).[514] On July 9, 1993 the Supreme Council of Russia adopted a decree that recognized the Russian status of the city of Sevastopol. The decree did not have any serious results, since even the Russian government opposed it: conflict between the Russian legislative and executive state powers was underway. On July 19, 1993 the Russian representative to the UN addressed the Secretary of the UN Security Council with a letter issued by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[515] The letter expressed disapproval of the decree, adopted by the Russian parliament. The Russian government expressed that its goal was to adhere to the international law and Ukraine's sovereignty over Crimea. However, the same letter included a sentence that characterized as 'negative' the "consequences of the administrative decisions by the leadership of the former USSR regarding the territorial question."[516] This demonstrates that although the Russian leadership refused to use force to solve the problem of Crimea, they still saw Crimea as a territory that Russia had a right for, if not legally, then morally.

An idea of what kind of information Russian politicians received from policy experts of the Russian Academy of Science comes from a secret policy document, published by the Kyiv newspaper *Vechirniy Kyiv* in June 1992.[517] The editorial board claimed they obtained the original copy of the secret document that was accessible to only a narrow circle of Russia's highest ranking politicians.[518] The document presented Russia and Ukraine as countries that went opposite directions in their development: while Russia was opening itself to the market economy and building democracy, Ukrainian political elites were creating a "mild national-fundamentalist" regime.[519] Therefore, experts predicted no

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[514] "Postanova Verkhovnoi Radu Ukrainy," *Vechirniy Kyiv*, June 3, 1992.

"Zayava Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy," *Vechirniy Kyiv*, June 4, 1992.

[515] Y. Vorontsov, "Pis´mo postoiannogo predstavitelia Rossiiskoi Federatsii pri Organizatsii Ob'edinennykh Natsii ot 19 iiulia 1993 goda na imia predsedatelia Soveta Bezopasnosti," S/26109, 19 July 1993, *United Nations*. Accesses April 28, 2020: https://undocs.org/ru/S/26109.

[516] Ibid.

[517] "Politicheskaya kuchnia Rossii: fariseystvo i dvulichie," *Vechirniy Kyiv*, June 14, 1992.

[518] "Yak Rosiia do nas stavyt'sia?", *Vechirniy Kyiv*, May 28, 1992.

[519] "Politicheskaya kuchnia Rossii: fariseystvo i dvulichie," *Vechirniy Kyiv*, June 14, 1992.

good relationships between the two states in the near future. The desire of the Ukrainian elites to build a separate economy, maintain customs control on the borders, create separate armed forces etc. constituted 'unfriendly actions' in the eyes of the Russian experts and Russian politicians.[520] Meanwhile, the anti-Russian statements made in the Ukrainian informational sphere supported these experts' arguments. The report acknowledged that anti-Russian rhetoric in Ukraine was often responsive, as it appeared as a reaction to "the firm statements of Russian officials". This, however, did not reject the statement about 'anti-Russian-ness' of the Ukrainian state, since experts were sure that "the [anti-Russian informational] campaign would still go own, even if there were no such statements" from the Russian representatives.[521]

Much like in other historical examples of relationships between the imperial center and its peripheries, this report demonstrates the lack of knowledge of empire about its subjects. The postcolonial theory often describes how empires operate with stereotypical knowledge about their subjects. This knowledge is originally created to control, however, once it becomes dominant, it starts to provide the colonizer with a distorted knowledge about the colonized. This report is an example of what Homi Bhabha calls 'cultural translation'.[522] It is an interpretation of the local Ukrainian politics and practices through the Russian cultural symbols. This report resembles the attitude of the Russian political elites towards Ukraine and Ukrainian nationalists, mentioned by Vitalii Portnikov above. It repeats the stereotypical knowledge about Ukraine that originated in the Soviet times. The experts that created it had an obvious tendency to exaggerate Ukraine's anti-Russianness and diminish Russian anti-Ukrainian-ness. Based on the policies that the report defines as anti-Russian, there was hardly anything that an *independent* Ukraine could do to not be characterized as an unfriendly state. Russian politicians, who made anti-Ukrainian statements, according to this report, were not influential on the general

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[520] "Politicheskaya kuchnia Rossii: fariseystvo i dvulichie," *Vechirniy Kyiv*, June 14, 1992.

[521] Ibid.

[522] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 233.

political stage. On the other hand, Ukraine's far-right organizations were presented as forces that formulated the agenda in Ukrainian politics. [523]

With the available sources there is no way to check whether the policy recommendations of this report turned into an actual Russian policy towards Ukraine. However, the history of those relations suggests an indirect evidence that the Russian political authorities and diplomats either listened to the experts or held very similar policy ideas on their minds. While they understood direct military conflict with Ukraine as the least favorable option, a combination of diplomatic appeasement and pressure was the approach that Russian diplomats were advised to take.[524] The report described this approach as "active friendly ignoration" (*aktivnoe druzhestvennoe ignorirovanie*) of the Ukrainian counter-agents. Russian political discourse was to get rid of the anti-Ukrainian statements completely and publicly demonstrate its openness and democratization to the rest of the world. On the other hand, the diplomatic approach behind the closed doors was supposed to be firm and even harsh. The report advised Russian diplomats to use the available diplomatic means in order to limit the Ukraine's economic growth and independence from Russia. The international community had to become an arbiter of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Therefore, Russian diplomats were supposed to emphasize the autocratic nature of the Ukrainian state and draw foreign attention to the most radical anti-Russian statements of Ukrainian political agents. This would eventually tie Ukraine to Russia politically. In addition, Russian economy would receive a larger portion of the Western investment and help that was directed into the post-Soviet region. Finally, the report emphasized the importance of public diplomacy, unofficial contacts and non-governmental organizations, which would alter Ukraine's political positions from inside. In other words, the 'active friendly ignoration' was a recommendation to build a façade of friendliness towards Ukraine and to press on it diplomatically behind the closed doors. Eventually, a Ukrainian public response to pressure had to be used against Ukraine and contrasted with a façade of friendliness.

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[523] "Politicheskaya kuchnia Rossii: fariseystvo i dvulichie," *Vechirniy Kyiv*, June 14, 1992.

[524] Ibid.

In May 1992, the newspaper *Literaturna Ukraina* published another report, created by Russian experts from the Russian Science Foundation (*Rossiiskii Nauchny Fond*). The report appeared as a result of a research trip to Crimea and interviews with the deputies of the Crimean Supreme Council, as well as journalists and civic activists.[525] The text again included a description of the state of affairs in Crimea and recommendation part that suggested policies for the Russian government. According to the authors, the economic hardships in Ukraine, policies of 'Ukrainization' and repatriation of Crimean Tatars to Crimea provoked a rise of a popular anti-Ukrainian movement within Crimea. The repatriation, by the way, was characterized as a policy of the Ukrainian authorities that was supposed to "change the ethno-political situation in Crimea." In other words, the Ukrainian government was indirectly accused of implementing colonial policies in Crimea. Which means that narrative turned decolonization into colonialism. The report also acknowledged that the decolonization movements in Crimea threatened the existing status quo on the peninsula. The report called for a "balanced solution" of the Crimean Tatar problem, not specifying what it meant, but based on the debate one would assume that 'balanced' meant a situation where Russian retained influence on the peninsula. As was shown in Chapters 2 and 3 the internal Crimean debate often had similar voices calling for 'reasonable' approaches towards repatriation. This further suggests the existence of a shared political and informational space between the Russian political circles and Crimean political elites. In this case Russian experts mirror the settler colonial discourse of Crimea itself, and apparently support the preservation of that discourse by appealing to the Russian politicians with recommendations. The report emphasized the importance of Crimea and its ports in the Russian foreign trade. Russia could not afford to lose its ports. Therefore, the recommendation was to integrate Ukraine into the structures of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). And in case Ukrainian government refused to integrate, the text proposed Crimea's 'self-determination' as a possible solution of the problem. [526] In any case, the Russian government had to maintain

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[525] "Suverenitet Kryma: problemy i perspektivy," *Literaturna Ukraina*, May 14, 1992.

[526] Ibid.

control over Crimea not just for the sake of the Russian national myth, but also for economic reasons.

Presenting the conflict between the Ukrainian center and Crimea as an internal problem of Ukraine, rather than a territorial conflict with Russia, was one of the key recommendations of the experts. Further events revealed that not only was this approach taken by the Russian government, it became the basis for the dominant interpretation of the Crimea problem. This interpretation appears in historiography, political analysis and public opinion to this day. Presenting the conflict as internal to Ukraine removed potential accusations of Russia's interference. It allowed Russian to continue its hybrid intervention in Ukraine's domestic politics. It was hybrid in the sense that by framing Crimea as an "internal" Ukrainian problem, Russia could enter as the "champion" of the downtrodden Crimeans who were being victimized by nationalistic Ukrainians, even as Russians retold Crimean history as a Ukrainian colonial plot. Statement about the internal character of the conflict in Ukraine was a politically and informationally constructed narrative. Throughout the post-Soviet years Russian diplomats managed to create a façade of Russia's non-presence in the domestic politics of other countries, while in fact such presence was often very influential. This approach provided multiple benefits: Russia preserved an image of a democratizing state and preserved good diplomatic relationships with the West, while it continued dominating in the post-Soviet region. Russian state, diplomacy and experts claimed to have an exclusive knowledge about the region, which allowed them to be invisibly present in Western diplomatic relations with post-Soviet republics. The discourse of 'oxymoron space' (mentioned in previous chapters) allowed Russia to implement the word 'self-determination' in order to send a clear message as to what kind of subversive operations were to be used if the Ukrainian government decided to radically break with the CIS.[527]

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[527] Furthermore, the events that started in 2014 and after demonstrate practically *how* the plan of self-determination could be fulfilled: special operation by a limited number of security service officers and special force take control over the area; furthermore, they organize a 'plebiscite' that would provide a propagandist image, demonstrating that local population is willing to join Russia; the whole operation is accompanied by active state propaganda.

After the constitutional crisis that happened in Moscow in late September of 1993, the new constitution of Russia abolished the Supreme Council and established a two-chamber parliament. The new State Duma (lower house) was elected in December of the same year. The deputies played an active diplomatic and political role in supporting the morale of the pro-Russian movement in Crimea. They demanded that Yeltsin's government act more decisively in solving the problem of the Black Sea Fleet and the status of Crimea. One of the major demands was to connect the issue of the status of Crimea within Ukraine to the Russia-Ukraine Treaty on Friendship that had been prepared by diplomats of the two countries for several years and was signed in 1997. While Russian executives often repeated that Crimea was an internal problem of Ukraine, Russian MPs attempted to make it an internal problem of Russia. What all sides agreed on was the necessity to preserve Russian military power on the territory of Sevastopol in form of the Black Sea Fleet.

Crimean internal political process had a constant oversight from the Russian state institutions. For example, on January 21st, 1994 the seating records indicate a short interaction between the head of the CIS committee Konstantin Zatulin and deputy minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov.[528] The question by Zatulin expressed concerns over the future presidential elections in Crimea, a possibility of their cancellation by the Ukrainian parliament and possible conflict that could rise around this.[529] The second round of presidential elections in Crimea took place on January 30th, 1994. According to Zatulin, that was a day when the Russian Parliament was on a break and could not react, if the Ukrainian parliament decided to cancel the elections. This suggests that Zatulin saw a possibility and necessity of such reaction in relation to the political process inside a different state. The deputy requested the Russian Foreign Ministry to make sure that the elections in Crimea take place. Therefore that internal

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[528] The irony of this interaction is that both of these figured played an important role during the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Konstantin Zatulin currently serves as a director of the Institute of Diaspora and Integration (Institute of CIS). Sergey Lavrov is a Russian foreign minister.

[529] Federal´noe Sobranie Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma zasedaniia 21 ianvaria 1994 g.," 21 January, 1994, *State Duma of the Russian Federation Official Website*. Accessed April 28, 2020: http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/3247/.

'center-periphery' struggle between Kyiv and Simferopol was accompanied by a diplomatic and political pressure from Russia. During the further meetings of the Duma Konstantin Zatulin, as well as the faction of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia[530] was one of the major initiators of any discussion of Crimea.

Russian MPs visited Crimea regularly, met with the Black Sea Fleet command, pro-Russian civic organizations and politicians of different kinds. Their moral and financial support contributed to the organization of the pro-Russian movement in Crimea. Until the elections of the Crimean President and Supreme Council in 1995, the command of the Black Sea Fleet seemed to be the main outpost of the Russian influence on the peninsula. Therefore, the election of Meshkov as the President of Crimea looked like a result of coordination between the Russian MPs, local pro-Russian movements and the Black Sea Fleet command. The fleet itself went into a state of high alert, preparing for a possible intervention of Ukrainian nationalists into Crimea.[531] Even at times when the Russian president switched from liberal democracy towards neoconservatism, Crimean pro-Russian movement seemed to be more conservative than the Russian government. In addition, a number of domestic problems with the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation itself, restrained Yeltsin's ability to begin an open interference in Crimea. Instead, the Russian government switched to the tactics of soft influence, which delayed the final solution of the Crimea question until more favorable domestic and international conditions come. In other words, Yeltsin's government seemed to adopt the tactics of 'active friendly ignoration' as advised by the expert community.

The question of Crimea, Sevastopol and the Black Sea Fleet was a matter of internal politics for Russian MPs and the government. Crimea remained a point of criticism

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[530] Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia, headed by Vladimir Zhyrinovsky has been a member of the Russian Duma during all post-Soviet convocations. The party has always positioned itself in 'opposition' to the governments of Yeltsin and then Putin. They, however, have been a specific kind of opposition that plays a useful role for the autocratic regime. In the oxymoron space of post-Soviet politics the 'liberal-democratic' ideology of Vladimir Zhyrinovsky is closer to an aggressive nationalism, than to liberal democracy. More on Zhyrinovsky: Andreas Umland, "Vladimir Zhyrinovsky in Russian Politics: Three Approaches to the Emergence of the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia, 1990-1993." PhD Diss. ., Freie Universität Berlin, 1998.

[531] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny* , 155.

against the executive power in Russia, especially in the context of Yeltsin's constant fight with the legislative branch for power. On March 17, 1995 Konstantin Zatulin protested the intervention of the Ukrainian government into the political crisis in Crimea. According to Zatulin, the reason why the Ukrainian center acted decisively and abolished the position of the Crimean President was the fact that Russia got militarily engaged in Chechnya. Zatulin demanded that the government of Yeltsin withdraw from all negotiations with Ukraine and introduce economic restrictions against Ukraine as a retaliation to an attack at the Crimean autonomy.[532] For the Russian nationalist thought Crimea remained an important factor of restoration of the 'great' Russian state, that had allegedly been lost with the fall of the USSR. Russian nationalistic forces successfully instrumentalized a question of Crimea as a point of Criticism against the Russian president. They organized visits of famous Crimean activists to speak to the Russian Duma. For example, April 14, 1995 the chairman of the Crimean Supreme Council Sergey Tsekov spoke to the Russian Duma. He criticized the Russian executive government for its passiveness regarding the support of Crimea. He also asked the Russian MPs for help and claimed that "…a disrespect expressed towards Crimea, in my opinion, is first of all a disrespect towards Russia." He further claimed that Crimea should not be a matter of a foreign politics for Russia:

> "It should not be that for Russia the situation with Crimea is solely an internal problem of Ukraine, from the point of view of history, national composition and international law".[533]

The 'disrespect towards Crimea, according to Tsekov, was an interference of the Ukrainian central government into the political crisis between the Crimean president and Supreme Council, a demand of the central authority to the autonomous republic to adhere

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[532] Federal´noe Sobranie Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma zasedaniia 17 marta 1995," 17 March, 1995, *State Duma of the Russian Federation Official Website*. Accessed April 28, 2020: http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/3081/.

[533] Federal´noe Sobranie Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma zasedaniia 14 aprelia 1995," 14 April, 1995, *State Duma of the Russian Federation Official Website*. Accessed April 28, 2020: http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/3070/.

to the state legislation. For Tsekov and those Russian MPs who invited him into the Duma, however, this was not a matter of the Ukraine's domestic politics, but an open challenge to Russia. Furthermore, on November 6, 1995 a representative of a so-called *Rossiiskaya Obshina Sevastopolia* (Russian Community of Sevastopol) Raisa Teliatnikova addressed the Russian Duma, asking for help and support. Teliatnikova complained about the restrictive measures that the Ukrainian authorities imposed against the Russian community. According to Teliatnikova, "We deny accusations of appeals towards violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. As of today, all juridical base confirms the Russian status of Sevastopol."[534]

Both appeals – of Tsekov and of Teliatnikova – were based on the Russian nationalistic understanding of the state honor, glory, and pride. According to those views, Crimea was an external part of Russia and therefore, Russian state had responsibility (not just the right) to interfere into its matters. This Russian nationalistic thought aligned closely with the world traditions of imperialism. The very notion of responsibility of the metropole over its colonies resembles classic imperialist views according to which the metropole plays the role of the parent, while colonies are the children. Teliatnikova's denial of the accusation of undermining Ukraine's territorial integrity fits within this discourse of familial connection between the Russia and Crimea. In a common discourse of international relations, advocating for secession of the city from one state to another without consent constitutes undermining the territorial integrity. In an imperial discourse, where colonies are children of the metropole, the secession of that city would constitute *reunification*, or restoration of children into their family. The imperial discourse is of course the one that formulates the alternative reality of social and political order. That exact discourse came into force with the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.

The history of Russian settler colonialism in Crimea created a powerful cultural and historical myth to justify itself. That myth influenced not just the population of Crimea, it

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[534] Federal´noe Sobranie Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Gosudarstvennaia Duma, "Stenogramma zasedaniia 6 oktiabria 1995," 6 October, 1995, *State Duma of the Russian Federation Official Website.* Accessed April 28, 2020: http://transcript.duma.gov.ru/node/3018/.

also influenced Russia itself, making the Russian nationalistic discourse and the problem of Russian national identity a hostage of the settler colonial myth about Crimea. This made the problem of Crimea a powerful political instrument in Russian domestic political struggles. As a result, no matter their political affiliation, all participants of the Russian political chessboard were discursively required to fight for the preservation of the Russian influence in Crimea or be branded as traitors to Russia. The debate, therefore, was not whether to intervene in Crimea, but about the amount of resources that each party was ready to dedicate to the intervention.

5.2　　Hybridity of Crimean Settler Colonial Institutions

Crimea's hybridity, as an in-between space between Ukraine and Russia, was not just an instrument that helped manipulate public opinion, but also a space of maneuver for the Crimean politicians. It was also a way for Russian diplomacy and politics to open 'a second diplomatic front' within the Ukrainian delegations that participated in various negotiations. There were two types of hybrid institutions in Crimea: those that were formally Ukrainian local branches of government, located in Crimea; and those that were nominally international, but *de facto* Russian, Black Sea Fleet that conducted informational and military operations in the territory of Ukraine. The Russian government had close relationships and influence over both types of institutions and went to an extensive effort to help local Crimean authorities preserve their agency in relationships with the central Ukrainian government. Due to the amount of discursive (cultural), political and military influence that Russian state had over the Crimean institutions of power and social processes, the Crimea question was a low-key international conflict throughout the post-Soviet history of Russia-Ukraine relations. The hybridity of Crimean state institutions were an important component of that conflict.

During the period of time (1991-1994), when Mykola Bahrov was the chairman of the Crimean Supreme Council, his efforts were mostly aimed at the preservation of a settler colonial status quo in Crimea, as discussed in Chapter 3. This included a support for the domination of the Russian cultural, historical and informational discourse in Crimea, as well as strengthening of the autonomous status of the peninsula within Ukraine. The absence of any immediate and decisive actions aimed at the secession of Crimea from

Ukraine to Russia allowed Bahrov to present himself as a fighter for Ukraine's territorial integrity in 1997. On the other hand, Mykola Bahrov did not oppose the development of the pro-Russian nationalist movement in Crimea. Moreover, during and after the Crimean Presidential elections in 1994 Mykola Bahrov advocated for closer economic and political ties with Russia, and supported Meshkov's appointment of Yevgeniy Saburov as a Deputy Prime Minister of Crimea.[535] Bahrov's political style made his political orientations and hybridity very subtle and enabled him to maneuver between an appearance of pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian orientation.

The stronghold of the pro-Russian movement until 1994 in Crimea was of course the Black Sea Fleet and its command. Over the course of 1992-1993 Ukrainian and Russian presidents met 5 times to discuss issued regarding the future of the Black Sea Fleet. Those meetings were an attempts to mediate conflicts between the militaries of two states that were happening in Sevastopol and all over Crimea. This was when Ukrainian officers actively pulled the fleet to the Ukraine's side and the fleet command resisted with harsh pressure against them. During the first two meetings in Odesa and Dahomys on April 30 and June 23, 1992 both sides have agreed to refrain from one-sided actions regarding the separation of the Black Sea Fleet property. The later agreement in Dahomys also allowed servicemen to pledge allegiance to the state of their choice and not be pressured for that. During the meeting in Yalta on August 3, 1992 Yeltsin and Kravchuk agreed to put the fleet under joint command of two states (as opposed to the command of the CIS) and introduced a 'transitory period' until 1995. This meant that both sides agreed to continue negotiations for the next 3 years. Upon an intermediary meeting in Moscow on June 17, 1993, where both sides agreed to speed up the negotiations, Yeltsin and Kravchuk met again in Masandra (Crimea) on September 3, 1993. The Masandra agreement put the majority of the fleet under the Russian control. President Yeltsin proposed to buy the Ukraine's part of the fleet by writing off the Ukraine's state debt. The final agreement that separated the fleet, however, did not come until 1997.

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[535] Elena Gornaia, "N. Bagrov prizyvaet sozdat´ normal´nye usloviia dlia raboty presidenta i ispolnitel´noi vlasti," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, February 24, 1994.

According to the agreements made by two presidents, the fleet was supposed to receive conscripts from Ukraine and Russia in equal proportions. Moreover, both countries were supposed to finance the fleet equally and appoint a commander of the fleet jointly. Throughout the years of negotiations, from 1992 to 1997, the positions of the Russian diplomacy in the question of the preservation of the fleet went from high risks of completely losing the military presence in Sevastopol, to getting a majority (around 80%) of the fleet's property and an extremely low cost of rent of the military base. The factors that contributed to such enormous success were: cooperation of the fleet command that *de facto* was under full Russian control, cooperation of the local authorities in Sevastopol, economic hardships of Ukraine, and the Russian diplomatic style that delayed the final agreement for as long as it was necessary to get a preferable result, and the ability of the Russian diplomats to influence the composition of the delegation across the negotiating table.

Contrary to the agreements between two presidents, the fleet personnel did not have a right to choose the country and the allegiance. The emergence of an active Ukrainian movement to control the Black Sea Fleet caused resistance from the fleet command. The question of allegiance of the fleet officers became a matter of competition and propaganda. Both sides tried to persuade the majority of the personnel that their choice would guarantee a more preferable future for the fleet and for the serviceman personally. In this competition, the fleet command had an administrative power to remove officers from their positions. Therefore, officers, who pledged allegiance to Ukraine were being dismissed under various reasons. President Yeltsin personally participated in this competition for the mind of the personnel. In January 1992, a group of ships left Sevastopol for Novorossiysk (Russia) where President Yeltsin secretly visited the antisubmarine cruiser ship 'Moskva'. This visit was meant to support the morale of the servicemen and assure then that the Russian state would fight for control over the fleet.[536]

What this story of negotiations and competition demonstrates is a diplomatic approach of Russia towards the problem of the fleet and relations with Ukraine. Russian diplomats

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[536] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny* , 25.

were able to twist the narrative and to buy the Russian side some time. The demand to 'refrain from one-sided actions' was almost exclusively applied to Ukraine and its officers. While the final decision was not being made, Russian command was clearing the fleet personnel off of the pro-Ukrainian officers, who pledged allegiance to Ukraine. Eventually, this created a situation in which not having a final agreement on the fleet meant that Ukraine would have *no fleet*, since it would not have active navy officers to serve in it. The fleet *technically* was supposed to hold neutrality in a conflict between the two states, Crimean state institutions were supposed to defend the Ukraine's interest. But the former and the latter took an active pro-Russian stance. The psychological, informational, economic and political pressure organized by the fleet command and local Crimean state institutions constituted one-sided actions that were forbidden by the agreements of two presidents. But they have never been described as such in the press, since the press performed a function of a settler colonial institution that defended the pro-Russian status quo. Quite the contrary, it was Ukraine and its officers who were constantly being accused of aggression.

The hybridity of the Black Sea Fleet and its command allowed Admiral Kasatonov (later – Admiral Baltin) to support the local pro-Russian movement in Sevastopol without being identified as an "outside" Russian influencer. Mykola Savchenko mentions how a group of fleet servicemen 'went for a walk' in downtown Sevastopol during one of the public demonstrations by the *Respublikanskoe Dvizhenie Kryma* ('Republican Movement of Crimea', the main pro-Russian organization of Crimea at that time).[537] This pretense of an "innocent" walk in fact increased visually the number of people participating in the protest. Such walk (as they are always consist of an officer in charge of a group of lower-rank servicemen, sailors or cadets) was meant to influence the servicemen as well. A fight for the hearts and mind of the personnel was an important component of the fight for the fleet. Therefore, it was important that fleet servicemen hear cheering of support from the *pro-Russian* activists. According to Savchenko,

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[537] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny*, 35.

"Under the command from the press-center [of the Black Sea Fleet] a group of [pro-Russian] yelling women of retired age could organize a protest at any moment in any necessary place…".[538]

Those small rallies of active pro-Russian women of a retired age became a constant instrument of political struggle throughout 1990s and well into 2000s. One of the pro-Ukrainian activists in Sevastopol at the time, Mykola Vladzimirski remembers that those small rallies of pro-Russian activists accompanied every pro-Ukrainian event in Sevastopol. He further points out that the newspapers always made it sound like those rallies were numerous. In particular, Vladzimirski emphasizes that newspapers never published general pictures of the crowd, but only specific people with specific slogans.[539] The general analysis of Crimean newspapers between 1990 and 1997 confirms this statement by Vladzimirski; newspapers indeed often covered pro-Russian protests in Sevastopol, but they rarely mentioned the number of participants or showed pictures of the crowd. Vladzimirski further points out that using local activists to force the Ukrainian government to make a necessary decision in Russian and fleet's favor was a constant routine, practiced in Sevastopol and Crimea.[540]

Memories of Ukrainian navy personnel allow to draw conclusions about the existing coordination between the pro-Russian civic movement in Sevastopol and the command of the Black Sea Fleet. Anatoliy Danilov quotes recollections of Admiral Kozhyn, who described his first day as a commander of the Ukrainian Fleet. According to Kozhyn, that day in April 1992 he came to the office of Admiral Kasatonov, but was unable to speak to him. Admiral Kasatonov was having a meeting with all commanders of the fleet formations as well as with several heads of pro-Russian civic organizations in the city. The meeting, according to admiral Kozhyn, was dedicated to coordination of actions

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[538] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny* , 35.

[539] Mykola Vladzimirski, interview by author, August 22, 2018.

[540] Ibid.

aimed at resistance to 'Ukrainization of the fleet'.[541] The level of organizational support that the fleet gave to Russian nationalist organizations often kept those organizations alive. In addition to that, as claimed by Savchenko, Admiral Kasatonov had direct relationships with Russian MPs. One of those MPs a leading member of Russian nationalist forces in the Duma Sergey Baburin.[542] The emergence of the active pro-Russian movement in Sevastopol coincided in time with the emergence of the initiative of Ukrainian officers to create Ukrainian navy. In addition, those events coincided in time with active initiatives by the Russian MPs that aimed to cancel the document of 1954 that transferred Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR.

The position of the fleet commander gave Kasatonov enormous political influence within Sevastopol and even outside of it. Kasatonov often made political statement and took a clear public stance on political conflicts between Russia and Ukraine.[543] The commander used force against Ukrainian officers whenever he felt necessary. For example, on April 7, 1992 Admiral Kasatonov deployed 4 armored vehicles and 2 armed platoons from the 361st Yevpatoria regiment of the 126th division of the coastal guard to the settlement Novoozerne, where a Crimean Navy Base had planned to pledge allegiance to Ukraine.[544] In August 1992 when the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense took control over the military school in Sevastopol, Admiral Kasatonov deployed marines to seize the school and place it under the fleet's control.[545] The military school was not an institution within the Black Sea Fleet and therefore it was outside of Kasatonov's jurisdiction. However, the commander overstepped his responsibilities, knowing that he commanded the largest

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[541] Danilov, *Ukrainskiy Flot: Bilia Dzherel Vidrodzhennia*, 217.

[542] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny* , 35.

[543] For example, during his press conferences in early 1992 Kasatonov accused Ukraine's Ministry of Defense of unreasonable claims for the fleet: G. Staroverov, "Press-konferentsiia komanduiushchego ChF," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 9, 1992. He further accused Ukrainian officers of waging blackmailing campaign and condemned the visit of the Ukrainian nationalists to Sevastopol (discussed in Chapter 4): M. Bakharev, "Flot, Sevastopolʹ, Krym – nerazdelimy. Komanduiushchii Chernomorskim flotom otvechaet na voprosy korrespondenta 'Krymskoi Pravdy'," *Krymskaia Pravda*, March 12, 1992. Kasatonov also publicly endorsed the proclamation of Crimea's 'self-determination' in May, 1992: "Press-konferentsiia komanduiushchego ChF," *Krymskaia Pravda*, May 8, 1992.

[544] Danilov, *Ukrainskiy Flot: Bilya Dzherel Vidrodzhennya*, 221.

[545] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny*, 86.

military force on the territory of Crimea. Admiral Kasatonov denied his responsibility to follow orders from the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, and openly acted against the newly created Ukrainian navy forces. Furthermore, Mykola Savchenko claims that the control over the construction departments of the fleet allowed Kasatonov to control the distribution of housing among the fleet personnel. Savchenko says that the construction departments were financed by Ukraine and therefore built housing with the Ukrainian money. But it was Kasatonov who had the power to distribute housing, which was why Ukrainian officers did not get it.[546]

The position of the local authorities in Sevastopol aligned with that of the Black Sea Fleet command. Unlike Admiral Kasatonov, who was supposed to be neutral, Sevastopol municipal authorities were supposed to act within the sovereignty of Ukrainian state. However, they too appeared in a hybrid space, often acting as Russian agents of influence within the diplomatic delegations of Ukraine. The chair of the Sevastopol municipal council Viktor Semenov as well as other representatives of the municipal government went to an extensive effort in order to 'represent' the interests of Sevastopol during the Ukraine-Russia negotiations about the fate of the Black Sea Fleet. In June 1993 Viktor Semenov even conducted his own trip to Moscow to conduct negotiations with President Yeltsin regarding the possibility of Russian financial support of Sevastopol.[547] As representative of the municipal authorities, Semenov was in no position of conduction negotiations with foreign governments. The meeting between a chair of municipal council and a president could hardly fit diplomatic protocols, considering the difference in status of two negotiators. However, *Slava Sevastopolia* described that visit as if the city of Sevastopol was not a part of the Ukrainian state, but an independent entity.

The position of the Crimean settler colonial institutions, both local state authorities and the fleet, between the two states is a reflection of Homi Bhabha's description of colonial

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[546] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny*, 92-93.

The problem of housing was reflected in an open letter of Ukrainian officers to the head of the Ukrainian parliament Ivan Plush. *Slava Sevastopolia* shows a reflection of that letter in a publication that denies the arguments of the Ukrainian officers: L. Bleskin, "Opyat process poshel," *Slava Sevastopolia*, April 1, 1993.

[547] "V Moskvy s rabochim vizitom", *Slava Sevastopolia*, June 8, 1993.

hybridity. Bhabha uses this term to describe a process of translation that happens between cultures of the colonizer and the colonized during colonization. A result of this translation is creation of an in-between space that influences identity and culture. Being in that hybrid space means being in two places at once – not quite in the place of the colonizer, but also not in a place of a colonized. In a completely new hybrid space, which is still a product of colonialism, "the presence of colonialist authority is no longer immediately visible."[548] Colonization stops being so obvious. In the case of Crimea hybridity of local settler colonial institutions means that same subtle in-between space. Their hybridity is an instrument of preserving the domination after the formal disintegration of the empire. It is a way to rely on informal connections, hierarchies and institutional subordination of a state that did not exist anymore. In addition, hybridity is a way for the Russian political agents to interfere while pretending that there is no such interference, that the agency lies purely with the local Crimean institutions. *And at the same time* it is a way for the Russian agents to claim that their presence in Crimea *is not* an interference. Soviet Union did not exist, but the rules it established and structures of governance, as well as logic of governance persisted into the post-Soviet times. This allowed the fleet command to take an active side in a political debate. This also allowed the municipal authorities to overstep their power and conduct negotiations with a foreign state.

The hybridity of Semenov's political position could be illustrated by a quote from a press-conference that took place in July 1993. When asked about his attitude towards the claims of the Russian parliament to take control over the city of Sevastopol the chairman of the Sevastopol municipal council said: "This is an extremely complicated question. But we live in Ukraine, according to the laws of Ukraine. From these positions we should evaluate the decision of the Russian parliament as interference into [Ukraine's] internal affairs. *However, there are some juridical problems here* [emphasis is mine]."[549] The last sentence of this response turns a reaction of the Ukrainian municipal official into a reaction of a representative of a hybrid institution. On the one hand, Semenov defends the

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[548] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 163.

[549] V. Shalamaev, "Tochka otscheta za kotoroi mozhet posledovat vzryv," *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 22, 1993.

official positions of the Ukrainian government. However, when he invokes the "juridical problems," he referenced the arguments of Russian politicians who argued that Sevastopol was not part of the decree of 1954 that transferred Crimea to Ukraine, and therefore, Sevastopol *legally* remained a part of Russian SFSR after 1954.

When Russia and Ukraine started negotiations regarding the Black Sea Fleet, pro-Russian activists in Crimea as well as Crimean state institutions launched an informational campaign with a demand to 'listen to the voice of Crimeans' during the negotiations. In January, 1992 Mykola Bahrov personally addressed Kravchuk asking him to refrain from any serious moves regarding the Black Sea Fleet.[550] That was when Ukrainian officers and activists in Sevastopol required and demanded support from the Ukrainian state. The voice that Ukrainian and Russian authorities had to listen to was a pro-Russian voice that demanded the preservation of the unity of the Black Sea Fleet. The fleet itself had to remain under Russian control. 'The public' also demanded that representatives of Sevastopol and Crimea had to be present during the negotiations about the fleet. This created domestic pressure within Ukraine that obviously weakened its positions during the negotiations with Russia. The fleet, civic organizations related to it and local authorities acted as a subversive force within Ukraine that acted in the interests of the opponent.

The municipal authorities of Sevastopol, by means of the local newspaper, presented themselves as a 'third party' of negotiations regarding the fleet and argued that 'the voice of Sevastopol' had to be taken into consideration while the final decision on the fleet was made.[551] The position of the municipal authorities of Sevastopol regarding the unity of the Black Sea Fleet corresponded to the position of the Russian delegation. Yet Viktor Semenov, although pro-Russian, was part of the Ukrainian, not Russian, delegation. In another instance, in response to the criticism from the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, representatives of the Black Sea Fleet proposed to consult the Sevastopol municipal

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[550] "Problema zhdet resheniia," *Krymskaia Pravda*, January 9, 1992.

[551] A. Skripnichenko, "Ukraina s Rossiey deliat. Sevastopol khochet priumnozhyt´," *Slava Sevastopolia*, February 24, 1993.

council and the Supreme Council of Crimea as to the legitimacy of the fleet's actions.[552] The majority of the municipal council of Sevastopol openly supported the idea of keeping the Black Sea Fleet within a single structure and not divide it between Russia and Ukraine.[553] During the seating of the municipal council of Sevastopol, deputies often spoke in favor of Russian control over the whole fleet, and supported messages that were distributed by the Russian command: the fleet was loyal to Russia, Ukraine had no money to own fleet, division of the fleet would destroy it, residents of Sevastopol would lose economic stability.[554] Moreover, representatives of the fleet command even took part in the council meetings and participated in discussions on the social situation in the city.[555] The ability of the Black Sea Fleet to appeal to opinion of the local Crimean institutions demonstrated an ambivalence of the whole situation: the fleet technically was an 'outer' force that did not have a right to interfere into the domestic politics of Ukraine. But the existence of local Crimean state institutions made the diplomatic position of Ukraine itself internally split. This is how the fleet command was able to appeal to the opinion of local Crimean politicians in order to resist Ukraine's government. And in that political struggle between the fleet and the Ukraine's Ministry of Defense, Russia was not even officially present in the conflict.

In order to weaken the Ukraine's diplomatic position at the negotiation table, the municipal council of Sevastopol decided to further reinforce an argument about the public endorsement of the unity of the fleet. During the meeting of the council on July 28, 1993 the majority of the deputies adopted a decree which proclaimed a plan to conduct an opinion poll among residents of Sevastopol on the status of the city and the fleet.[556] The poll was supposed to be organized on September 26, 1993, simultaneously with an all-Ukrainian referendum of no confidence to the Parliament and the President. The

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[552] V. Shalamaev, "Ne nado zakladyvat v nashy otnosheniya minu zamedlennogo deistviya," *Slava Sevastopolia*, April 20, 1993.

[553] "Kogda nas bez nas zheniat poluchaetsia plokho," *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 7, 1993.

[554] Ibid.

[555] "Glavnaya trevoga – sokhranit´ mir na sevastopolskoy zemle," *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 27, 1993.

[556] A. Kostenetskiy, "Sevastopol – glavnaya basa Chernomorskogo flota. 'Da' – 'Net'". *Slava Sevastopolia*, August 6, 1993.

referendum, however, was cancelled by the Parliament's decree.[557] Therefore, the poll on the status of Sevastopol happened on June 26, 1994, together with the municipal elections in Sevastopol and presidential elections in Ukraine. Its results showed that 89% of the turnout voted in favor of making Sevastopol a main base of the united Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation.[558] The framing of the question offered a single option for the status of Sevastopol. This question, meanwhile, was formulated by members of the municipal council, which operated under the Ukrainian jurisdiction. The results of the poll were later used during various Russia-Ukraine negotiations as an argument for the Russian presence in the city. They confirmed a popular belief that there was a link between the interests of the Russian fleet and the interests of Sevastopol residents. The official turnout for the poll was around 187,714 people, which at that time constituted ~52% of the population of the city.[559] It is hard to argue about the real reasons for the opinion poll to be organized. However, the results of the poll turned out to be very helpful for the Russian diplomats.

The cooperation between the fleet command and the municipal council was not out of the ordinary for Sevastopol. The Black Sea Fleet owned enormous amounts of land and infrastructure within and outside of the city of Sevastopol. It is not the coordination and relationships themselves, but the form which they took is of interest. And after the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the problem of the status of the fleet, those relations became a breach between the state and juridical boundaries of Ukraine and Russia. The more it became clear that the Ukrainian fleet forces would emerge in Sevastopol, contrary to the desire of the Russian side, the more Russian fleet command attempted to reduce the Ukrainian military presence in the city. In 1995, for example, the newspapers of Crimea reported on a conflict that emerged around the deployment of the Ukrainian fleet to the Balaklava bay. According to the agreements, the military bases in

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[557] Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, "Pro provedennia vseukrains´koho referendumu shchodo dovir'ia (nedovir'ia) Presydentu, Verkhovnii Radi Ukrainy," 3283-XII, 17 June 1993, *Supreme Council of Ukraine Official Website*. Accessed April 28, 2020: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3283-12.

[558] "Itogi oprosa grazhdan po statusu goroda Sevastopolia sostoyavshegosia 26 iunia 1994", *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 29, 1994.

[559] Ibid.

Balaklava bay had to be transferred from the Russian Black Sea Fleet to the Ukrainian fleet. The Russian fleet command, however, decided to transfer the territory of the base to the municipal authorities of Sevastopol. The article by 1ˢᵗ rank captain Vladimir Pasiakin, published in *Krymskaya Gazeta* on January 20ᵗʰ 1995 warned the readers about a possible "capture of Balaklava" (by Ukrainian fleet) and argued that a transfer of the base to the authorities of Sevastopol meant transferring it to Ukraine.[560]

This example once again demonstrates a hybridity in which the Black Sea Fleet and the municipal authorities in Sevastopol operated at that time. The parts of the Black Sea Fleet that were located in Crimea based on *Ukrainian* land. Therefore, technically it was not a jurisdiction of the fleet to decide how Ukraine was supposed to control this land. From the official point of view a military institution of a foreign state transferred a piece of property to the local authorities, under the Ukrainian sovereignty and jurisdiction. In fact, the fleet transferred the base into a jurisdiction of civilian authorities who had questionable loyalty to the Ukrainian state. By doing so they deprived the Ukrainian side of authority over its own property and land. From a formal point of view, the presence of a Ukrainian military base on that territory would become a matter of internal Ukrainian negotiations between the ministry of defense of Ukraine and the Sevastopol municipal council – a matter of domestic, rather than an international conflict. This would delay or even remove a possibility of a Ukrainian military control over the Balaklava base, this would also put Russia outside of the conflict.

Another military component of influence of the Black Sea Fleet was its intelligence. Mykola Savchenko claims that the intelligence of the Black Sea Fleet never underwent the reduction of its personnel since 1992.[561] He further argues that the activity of the Russian Main Directorate of Intelligence (GRU, military intelligence) happened in Crimea openly; Russian state even established headquarters of the Russian state bank in Sevastopol in order to be able to transfer finances to Crimea and prevent the Ukrainian

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[560] Vladimir Pasyakin, "Gotovitsia zakhvat Balaklavy?", *Krymskaya Gazeta*, January 20, 1995.

[561] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny*, 255.

government from tracing the transactions.[562] Mykola Porovsky, a Ukrainian MP between 1990 and 1998 claims he personally had access to secret counter-intelligence information about the operations of Russian security services and military intelligence in Crimea.[563] In his publication from 1996 Mykola Porovsky claimed that Russian security services were actively implanting spies inside the Ukrainian armed forces and navy.[564] He further claimed that Russian intelligence inherited the operative network from the Soviet times, some of the secret bases of the Soviet period on the territory of Ukraine and Crimea that only responded to the central Soviet authorities. Therefore, Ukrainian government and local branches of KGB (which then turned into Ukrainian secret service) did not even know about the existence of those secret bases.[565]

In 1994 the Russian nationalist movement in Crimea managed to take full control over the Crimean Supreme Council and elect a pro-Russian populist as a President of Crimea. Not only this did not solve the problems of the Crimean population, but contributed to the hybridity of the Crimean institutions. The election of Yurii Meshkov as president of Crimea on January 30, 1994 was the result of an informational campaign waged by the Crimean press which led to the mobilization of the Russian nationalist movement on the peninsula. Cooperation between the Meshkov's Republican Movement, the Black Sea Fleet, and Russian political agents was an important factor as well. As early as April 29, 1994 president Meshkov together with the chairman of Sevastopol municipal council and the command of the Black Sea Fleet, issued a common statement which demanded 'Crimea's participation' in the negotiations over the Black Sea Fleet.[566] This way Russia introduced a third party into negotiations, which it controlled and by doing so increased its own control over the outcome.

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[562] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny*, 256.

[563] Mykola Porovsky, interview by the author, May 25, 2019.

[564] Nikolai Porovsky, "Sekretnye operatsii protiv 'soseda-brata' vedytsia ves´ma tshchiatel´no," in *Politicheskii "utiug" kotoryi istoriia zabyla vykljuchit´*, 59.

[565] Ibid., 60.

[566] "Zaiavlenie presidenta Respubliki Krym, predsedatelia sevastopol´skogo gorodskogo Soveta narodnykh deputatov i komanduiushchego Chernomorskim flotom," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, April 29, 1994.

The populist initiatives of Meshkov and his allies were eventually what brought his power down. After the inauguration the Crimean President actively started engaging in foreign negotiations with other countries. The success of those negotiations was questionable, as even Meshkov's 'business trip' to Moscow did not lead to a meeting with President Yeltsin.[567] Crimean newspapers, however, described Meshkov as an negotiator equal to the presidents of Ukraine and Russia, and spoke of Crimea as if it was a separate state. The appointment of Yevgeniy Saburov, a citizen of Russia, as Crimea's Deputy Prime-Minister was a directl violation of the Ukrainian legislation at that time. This, however, did not prevent Meshkov from proposing the candidacy of Saburov, nor the Supreme Council of Crimea from approving it. The conflict between Yurii Meshkov and the Chairman of the Crimean Supreme Council, Sergey Tsekov, was eventually the formal reason for the intervention of the Ukrainian government. Tsekov and Meshkov were political allies during the election cycle and came to power on a single wave of Russian nationalism. Their conflict and eventual failure in 1995 decapitated the pro-Russian movement in Crimea and marginalized it.

Therefore, in 1995 Russian authorities decided not to start an open territorial aggression against Ukraine in Crimea. They did, however, preserve Russian military presence in Sevastopol as well as cultural and informational control over the Crimea's political discourse. Black Sea navy continued to perform its hybrid roles as a point of cultural and political influence of Russia on the territory of a foreign country. For examples, in 1996 the fleet command began cooperation with the so called Cossack movement of Crimea, a paramilitary organization, created in order to militarize Crimean youth. In cooperation with Cossack, the Black Sea Fleet was engaging in the "military-patriotic upbringing" of the Crimean youth and military personnel of the fleet. The fleet also provided infrastructure, military camps and shooting ranges for the use of the Cossack movement. [568] Once again, the hybridity (and irony) of the situation arises, when one considers that this is a story about a foreign (Russian) fleet cooperating with local (Crimean)

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[567] Elena Gornaia, "President zaiavil, chto perekhodit ot deklaratsii k delu," *Krymskaia Gazeta*, February 18, 1994.

[568] "S kem vy krymskie kazaki?", *Krymskaya Gazeta*, July 18, 1996.

paramilitary organizations of a different country (Ukraine) in the sphere of ideological upbringing of the youth of that country.

In February 2014, the military units of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, stationed in Crimea under the international agreement between Ukraine and Russia, left their military bases and took control over the administrative buildings of the local Crimean Parliament. In addition to that, they surrounded the Ukrainian military bases and blocked Ukrainian servicemen inside those bases, demanding surrender. This act of an international aggression signified that Russian authorities finally decided to play the card that they had long fought to preserve. Russian military action in Crimea has not always been the major plan, but its presence on the peninsula has always made such plan possible.

5.3   Russian Prestige and Military Masculinity in Crimea

In November 1994 the so called 'Chechen opposition' failed to overthrow the President of the Chechen republic of Ichkeria, General Dzhokhar Dudayev, whose main policy aimed at the independence of Chechnya from the Russian Federation. As a result of a failed attack on the Chechen capital Grozny, Dudaev's forces killed and captured many Russian regular servicemen and officers (in addition to successfully burning multiple Russian tanks), who were supposed to imitate an internal conflict within the Republic of Ichkeria. When it became apparent that the failed coup was waged by Russian regular armed forces, the failure became a personal military loss of the Russian state, Russian president Boris Yeltsin and the Russian army. What was more important – this was a challenge to the military 'greatness' of the Russian military that came out of the small rebellious republic, whose whole population size was comparable to the number of troops available to the Russian federal government. This failure was so humiliating that the Russian minister of defense general Pavel Grachev had to deny the participation of the Russian regular troops in the assault of the city of Grozny. With an ironic smile on his face Grachev said:

> "Firstly, if it was an action by the Russian army, I would never allow tanks to enter the city. That is already an [example of] wild incompetence. Secondly, if

it was a fight of the Russian army, one paratroop regiment could solve all the issues within two hours".[569]

Similar tactics were used 20 years later. Russian military involvement in the occupation of Crimea in 2014 was not acknowledged by Vladimir Putin until it became apparent that the operation was successful. Until that time, the world referred to the invaders as 'little green men' without military insignias, although they had Russian ammunition and military training. The acknowledgement of the Russian military presence came from Putin himself, when, already *post factum* Putin recognized that "they never concealed the fact" that Russian armed forces participated in blocking Ukrainian military bases in Crimea.[570] This was not true. During his conversation with journalists in March 2014 (before the annexation of Crimea was complete), Putin called the invading men a 'self-defense forces' (with a clear reference to the Euromaidan self-defense units, legitimized by the international community) and denied their affiliation with the Russian army.[571] When Russia continued its aggression against Ukraine into what is now a war in the eastern Donbas region, yet again the Russian President did not acknowledge the involvement of Russian regular troops in the conflict. Over the 6 years of war, however, one of the arguments that was meant to confirm Russian innocence was the state of the fighting itself. On multiple occasions, multiple speakers, including state propaganda and members of the Russian parliament, repeated the same phrase: "If the Russian army was in there [Donbas] the war would have been over long time ago".[572] Other iterations of

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[569] Aleksei Pobortsev, *Po tu storonu voiny. Chechnya 1989-1996 gody*, Episode 3 (NTV TV Channel, 2005), YouTube Video, 45:51. Accessed April 28, 2020: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zybxhmRvwto.

[570] "Putin nazval neadekvatnoi reaktsiiu Zapada na vkhozhdenie Kryma v sostav Rossii," *Interfax.Ru*, November 17, 2014. Accessed April 28, 2020: https://www.interfax.ru/russia/407483.

[571] "Piat′ stadii priniatiia. Kak Putin rasskazyval o rossoiskikh voennykh v Krymu," *Nastoiashchee Vremia*, June 5, 2018. Accessed April 28, 2020: https://www.currenttime.tv/a/five-states-of-vladimir/29273395.html.

[572] Vladimir Soloviov, Anna Shafran, "So Skripalem nelovko poluchilos′," *VestiFM*, October 3, 2018. Accessed April 28, 2020: https://radiovesti.ru/brand/61007/episode/1936369/.

"Nikonov: Chtoby vyvesti voiska RF s Ukrainy, ikh nado tuda snachala vvesti," *Regnum*, December 14, 2017. Accessed April 28, 2020: https://regnum.ru/news/polit/2357598.html.

that phrase included promises 'to seize Kyiv' or Lviv within two weeks, or two days, depending on the speaker.

The difference between the Russian aggression in Donbas and Crimea (or Transnistria in 1992, or Chechnya in 1994) is that the former is not over yet and, therefore, not victorious. It took two wars (one of which was lost), years of fighting and the lives of thousands of Russian soldiers to return the Chechen republic to Russian federal control. Donbas may yet be lost, a risk that apparently is too high for the support of Russian understandings of 'self,' and for the Russian military masculinity and national identity. Such a great power, as Russia is (and 'has always been!'), cannot afford to fail in a military operation against the tiny Chechnya, or against the 'little brother'/'failed state' of Ukraine. The difference in power status *requires* that the war is not just victorious, but the victory has to be total, the enemy has to be humiliated, the resources spent for the war have to be minimal and, moreover, everything has to happen *fast*. The great power mentality requires the Russian state authority and military to comply with the myth they created for the sake of their own regime and their own political structure. Ironically, this makes the Russian state and Russian society prisoners of their own myth, much like patriarchal social structures limit men in addition to imprisoning women (albeit with comparatively more power). In case of the Russian state and government, when the standards of greatness are not met, the war often becomes erased from the discourse. In fact, in that case it does not *become* part of the discourse in the first place; the loss remains unclaimed.

Russian military presence in Crimea in 2014 was a direct result of a struggle that took place on the peninsula during the separation of the Black Sea Fleet in the 1990s. The military and political aspects of that struggle have been on the surface and are widely analyzed by scholars. This section will argue, however, that the competition in the space of prestige (military, national) and masculinity defined the overall discourse in which the competition took place. In order to maintain control over the Black Sea Fleet and preserve the Russian presence in Crimea, the fleet command used informational, political and military instruments to fight the pro-Ukrainian dissent among the military personnel, as well as oppose the presence of the Ukrainian navy in Sevastopol. While the political

solution of the fleet problem was being constantly postponed, campaigns of disinformation, censorship and psychological pressure became the main weapon in order to maintain control over the fleet structure and keep most of it within the Russian control. The rhetoric and the model of behavior chosen by the Black Sea Fleet commanders often resembled rhetoric addressed to the enemy on the battlefield. However, the fleet command has never actually acknowledged the existence of such battle. Much like in other cases mentioned above. The problem of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea in 1990s had much to do with the Russian perception of one's own national and military prestige and greatness. Russian state as well as military command often demonstrated a battle-like behavior, maintaining the image of their own military greatness and competing with their Ukrainian opponents on the battlegrounds of masculinity. In the context of Crimea, where Russia competed with Ukraine for political and military influence, competitions in the space of prestige also meant competitions for the hearts and mind of younger generations, future conscripts or officers of the navy. The fleet needed personnel and a substantial portion of it came from Sevastopol and Crimea.

The connection between the military masculinity, officer's honor and prestige is not obvious. This section, however, will argue that such connection exists, if not in the military in general, then in the case of Sevastopol in particular. As a city that was mostly populated by navy servicemen and their families in early 1990s, Sevastopol was a highly militarized masculine space. The standard of masculinity, or in other words, the standards of appropriate manliness required young people to join the armed forces, go study in the navy military school, commit to the service in the navy. Partially this resembled a general Soviet discourse according to which the military 'made' men out of boys. In the case of Sevastopol this image was specialized – the standard required service in the navy to which everyone was somehow related. Crimean newspapers published celebratory articles dedicated to conscripts and officers, who served in the Black Sea Fleet, suggesting them as an example for the rest of the society. Within the context of this militarized masculinity, the image of the officer was of a special importance. In a public discourse, in the sphere of information and propaganda, an officer was inseparably connected to his honor. Honor was a component of officer's masculinity, since failure to comply with standards of honor (or with the perception of those standards) turned an

officer into a 'lesser man.' This is not to say that all officers of the Black Sea Fleet were exceptional honorable people. In early 1990s the problem of theft of the fleet's property was especially serious. But in a *public* discourse an officer had to maintain a certain image. An attack on that image compromised the officer personally, but also it undermined the authority of the institution he represented. Therefore, as this section further argues, an attack on the military honor in the context of Sevastopol, was a claim against the manliness of the person who was under attack; furthermore, it was a way for the colonizing force (Black Sea Fleet) to preserve control over the definition of standards of honor and therefore, to preserve its prestige and political influence.

During a short period of time after the dissolution of the USSR and the proclamation of Ukrainian independence, the position (political, military) and future of the Black Sea navy in Crimea was very uncertain. The fleet commander Admiral Kasatonov was a very influential person in the fleet and, by extension, a very noticeable figure in the city of Sevastopol and Crimea. Kasatonov is known as a person who became a vocal defender of the Russian interests in Sevastopol. However, officers remember when commander Kasatonov ordered his fleet to transfer under Ukrainian command. During the period of uncertainty in 1991, Admiral Kasatonov appeared in front of a complicated choice, just like politicians of that time. Upon taking some time to consider his options, Admiral Kasatonov ordered his fleet to prepare to pledge allegiance to Ukraine. Being a deputy commander of the submarine division, Yevhen Lupakov received a secret message via military secure link on January 3, 1992. The message from the commander Kasatonov ordered the fleet to disconnect a system of nuclear launchers "Viuga" ("Snowstorm") from Moscow's control and to respond to Kyiv only. The message also ordered to prepare for the official pledge of allegiance of the fleet personnel to Ukraine.[573] Kasatonov cancelled these orders on January 9, after the Ukrainian president Leonid Kravchuk publicly expressed discontent with Kasatonov's speech given during the all-Ukrainian meeting between the army command and the President. Anatoliy Danilov

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[573] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny*,, 17.

confirms these facts in his book, noting that all this information became publicly known only with time.[574] Mykola Savchenko confirms this episode with Kasatonov's orders, and mentions that the creation of the 'heroic Russian Admiral Kasatonov' was solely a work of the Russian newspapers, who 'made' Kasatonov Russian even before he knew that.[575]

In 1992 Admiral Kasatonov emerged as a commander of the Black Sea Fleet who officially responded to the Ukrainian and Russian presidents. His task was to allow the fleet personnel to choose their allegiance freely, as per the inter-state agreements between the two presidents. However, that short period of 'weakness', when the admiral almost submitted to Ukraine, as well as the necessity to correspond to the image of the Russian hero, created by the media, defined the admiral's further policies within the fleet. Here is the characteristic that Mykola Savchenko, a press officers of the fleet, gave to Admiral Kasatonov:

> "As members of the press center we happened to meet with Admiral Kasatonov fairly often, sometimes several times a day. Apart from all of his severity and commander's arrogance that penetrated his bones during the years of fleet service, [apart from] his self-esteem and pride, and more often his disrespect to lower ranks, confirmed by hundreds of examples, he liked journalists and addressed them with respect and attention. Later this quality became one of the decisive factors in the creation of his image".[576]

Black Sea Fleet inherited (from USSR) a social and media infrastructure, built around the reinforcement of the masculine prestige of its personnel. Newspapers in Crimea and Sevastopol in particular formulated social discourse in which all young men were supposed to serve in the army. Stories about the heroic past of Sevastopolian sailors created a direct succession line between the past and the present. In that regard, newspapers of Crimea were not unique. In her analysis of the reconstruction of Soviet

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[574] Danilov, *Ukrainskiy Flot: Bilia Dzherel Vidrodzhennia*, 68.

[575] Savchenko, *Anatomiia neob"iavlennoi voiny*, 19.

[576] Ibid., 16.

masculinity after the Second world war Claire McCallum emphasized the importance of media, visual art and museums in that process.[577] Sevastopol, with its hundreds of museums and military monuments is a city built around masculinity. As demonstrated by Karl Qualls, in fact, the whole post Second World war reconstruction of Sevastopol centered around building a 'city of military glory'. Fleet command actively participated in conceptualizing that reconstruction.[578] Therefore, after the Second World War Sevastopol emerged as a city whose only purpose was to be a military base. In addition to hosting the base, the city was built to socialize men in a very particular military tradition.

As Admiral Kasatonov and pro-Ukrainian officers appeared on the opposite sides of the imaginary barricades, this whole fleet infrastructure was employed to fight the dissent. Every instance of the military units transferring under Ukrainian command was followed by a press statement of the Black Sea Fleet press-service and/or a commander himself calling its legitimacy into question. Those statements usually included accusations of illegal seizure of ships, and "one sided solution of the fleet's problems" which were contrary to the Russia-Ukraine agreements on the fleet.[579] As it is already clear, the commanders of the ships that pledged allegiance to Ukraine lost their positions immediately. On July 2, 1992 the newspaper *Slava Sevastopolia* informed that the personnel of the minesweeper boat "Sygnalshyk" together with its captain pledged allegiance to Ukraine.[580] The newspaper said that the commander of the ship, 3rd rank captain Teymar Suleimanov, was temporarily discharged from his position by the unit command and that the same day representatives of the Ukrainian ministry of defense were not allowed into the ship.[581] Yevhen Lupakov mentioned captain Suleimanov in his interview as well. According to Lupakov, the discharge was not temporary, but

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[577] Claire E. McCallum, *The Fate of the New Man. Representing and Reconstructing Masculinity in the Soviet Visual Culture, 1945-1965* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2018), 13, 14.

[578] Karl Qualls, *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

[579] "Zayavlenie Voyennogo Soveta Krasnoznamennogo Chernomorskogo Flota", *Slava Sevastopolia,* July 3, 1992.

[580] "Signalshyk prisyagnul Ukraine", *Slava Sevastopolia,* July 2, 1992.

[581] Ibid.

permanent. The fleet command accused captain Suleimanov, an Uzbek, of being a "Ukrainian nationalist".[582]

The attacks that Admiral Kasatonov made regarding the officers of the newly created Ukrainian navy forces were aimed to question Ukrainian officers' honor. From the formal point of view there was nothing wrong with the officers who were willing to serve in Ukraine. Therefore, the fleet command questioned their personal integrity, honesty and by extension – masculinity. This also allowed them to wage an 'undeclared war' (term used by Mykola Savchenko in title of his memories) and not recognize an obvious struggle that everyone knew about. On July 4, 1992 the newspaper *Slava Sevastopolia* dedicated its front page to the transcript of a press-conference by the commander of the Black Sea Fleet Admiral Kasatonov, regarding the general state of affairs with the fleet and political struggles around it. Commander Kasatonov felt free to express his personal views on politics around the fleet and actions of Ukrainian servicemen (his former colleagues).[583] The tone in which Admiral Kasatonov mentioned representatives of the newly created Ukrainian fleet comes out in the interviews as slightly imperious. When answering the question about his relationships with the rear admiral Boris Kozhyn (the first commander of the Ukrainian fleet), Admiral Kasatonov said:

> "...Boris Borisovich said they are good. Comrades, this is a mistake. We have no relationships. He positioned himself that way. His people from the operative group [of the Ukrainian fleet] positioned themselves that way – they peek, oversee, overhear, climb fences of military bases, render provocative impending [it is unclear what exactly Kasatonov meant], collect some kind of information."[584]

Kasatonov also added that he "had condolence" for Boris Kozhyn when he was appointed as a commander of the garrison, because "how can a man fulfill his obligations, that he

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[582] Yevhen Lupakov, interview by author, August 27, 2018.

[583] E. Yurzditskaia "Process Delenia Flota Budet Trudnym, Muchitelnym, Dolgim...", *Slava Sevastopolia*. July 4, 1992.

[584] Ibid.

cannot fulfil" due to the absence of military units under his command.[585] The message that was given to the newspaper readers was very clear: the Russian fleet and Russian command are serious trustworthy institutions that do not engage with dishonorable actions like low-key espionage or conspiracy. The Russian side fulfills all agreements and does not break them. Only a tiny number of servicemen, according to Kasatonov, expressed their desire to serve in the Ukrainian fleet, despite the supposedly provocative psychological pressure, conducted by the Ukrainian operative group. Answering a question about the minesweeper boat "Sygnalshyk" Kasatonov characterized its switch to Ukraine's command as "nationalistic action, illegal, unauthorized".[586] He then says that the ship commander was not event present on the ship at the time, while simultaneously slandering him: "the commander of the ship Suleimanov zips around: one day he asks to let him join his brothers to protect Azerbaijan with a gun, the other day he asks to release his brother, then he talks about the unity of the fleet and moratorium [on its separation]."[587] Chis characteristic of Suleimanov also suggested that the person was not able to hold on to his opinion and his word. This made him a bad officer, unworthy to be in the fleet, or to command the ship, be an example to the crew he had under his authority.

Declaring the enemy's victory 'unworthy', decreasing its value and turning it into a moral defeat is a common military response to losses, according to Wolfgang Schivelbusch.[588] In this case the motivations behind the Kasatonov's statements appear to be similar attempts to devalue Ukraine's victories within the Black Sea Fleet. The moral victory, according to the admiral, was on the side of the (Russian) Black Sea Fleet. The characteristic that Kasatonov gives to the Ukrainian officers again seem creates a perception of moral superiority of the speaker and his fleet. 'Peeking, overseeing,

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[585] E. Yurzditskaia "Process Delenia Flota Budet Trudnym, Muchitelnym, Dolgim...", *Slava Sevastopolia*. July 4, 1992.

[586] Ibid.

[587] Ibid.

[588] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*, trans Jefferson Chase (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), 16.

overhearing, climbing fences', is a behavior unworthy of a navy officer and standards of proper behavior. In that quote, Kasatonov did not just comment on the events, but characterized his opponents as unworthy spies. To confirm that, many of the Ukrainian officers who came to serve in a newly created Ukrainian navy were formally discharged from their previous place of service for humiliating reasons and given no right to continue to wear uniform – a measure that had been previously applied exclusively to criminals.[589] That was another attack on their honor, and the honor of the Ukrainian navy. An attack on the enemy's masculinity, by attacking his military prowess or prestige, was a common instrument of the Soviet cultural and political tradition. One of the issues that Erica Fraser discusses in her monograph is the use of sexualized and feminized images of Western diplomats, politicians and military officers in the Soviet visual culture: "By portraying foreign military authorities as feminized, queer, or in some ways sexually deviant, *Krokodil* introduced an explicitly gendered framework for adjudicating Soviet military strength".[590] She argues, for instance that there was an important aspect of the Cold War that constituted "masculinity contests" between the opponents.[591] Similarly, Maya Eichler analyses the first Russia-Chechen war as a competition of a militarized, honored Russian masculinity against the aggressive masculinity of Chechens.[592] Kasatonov's comments seem to arise out of that discourse of military masculinity, therefore, his further actions and statements were based on the premised that there was a single 'true' fleet in Sevastopol – the Black Sea Fleet.

Crimean newspapers, especially *Krymskaia Pravda* contributed to the forging of the image of proper manliness in the military. In early 1992 the Ukrainian Ministry of

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[589] That was how captain Yevhen Lupakov was discharged from the Black Sea Fleet, for instance. A 'normal' procedure in this case would be to transfer an officer from the one fleet to another, without characterizing them negatively in their personal files.

[590] Erica L. Fraser, *Military Masculinity and Postwar Recovery in the Soviet Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 79.

[591] Ibid.

[592] Maya Eichler, "Russia's Post-Communist Transformation," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 4 (2006): 489-490.

Defense decided to remove Major General Kuznetsov from a position of commander of the army corps, located in Simferopol. In response to his dismissal, the general refused to dismiss; he further received public support from the pro-Russian Republican Movement of Crimea as well as the informational support of the *Krymskaia Pravda* itself.[593] The reason for the dismissal, according to the newspaper material was that general Kuznetsov said he would not fight against Russia in a hypothetical scenario of international conflict. In any military of any country this of course would constitute a serious enough reason for dismissal. However, in Crimea the newspaper and the general himself presented a situation as a dishonorable action of the Ukraine's Ministry of Defense. General Kuznetsov was described as a paragon of honesty and consciousness. The newspaper materials contrasted Major General Kuznetsov with his opponents specifically in relation to their honor. Over the course of May, 1992 *Krymskaia Pravda* published at least five articles, dedicated to the protest of general Kuznetsov.[594] They all described him as an honorable officer, who could not violate the standards of officer's honor and was repressed for that by Ukraine's Ministry of Defense. Eventually, after a month of collective protests and hunger strike, Major General Kuznetsov decided to move to political career and ran for the Crimean Supreme Council.[595] A personal characteristic of the candidate during the electoral campaign connected his traits of character and his military profession to manliness. In an article dedicated to his political nomination, general Kuznetsov was described as a hardworking, patriotic person, who was always ready to help those in need, "this is why Valeriy's choice of an exclusively manly profession – defender of the Fatherland is not a coincidence". [596]

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[593] Tatiana Riabchikova, "General Kuznetsov chest′ imeet!," *Krymskaia Pravda*, May 5, 1992.

[594] Tatiana Riabchikova, "General Kuznetsov golodaet, a komanduiushchii ne v kurse," *Krymskaia Pravda*, May 9, 1992.

Tatiana Riabchikova, "General V. E. Kuznetsov: 'Ia budu stoiat′ do kontsa'," *Krymskaia Pravda*, May 12, 1992.

Tatiana Riabchikova, "Soldatam i ofitseram teriat′ nechego, krome chesti," *Krymskaia Pravda*, May 13, 1992.

Tatiana Riabchikova, "Rasprava nad generalom," *Krymskaia Pravda*, May 15, 1992.

[595] V. Lepikhov, A. Barannikov, T. Kliuev, "Chelovek sovesti i chesti," *Krymskaia Pravda*, June 2, 1992.

[596] Ibid.

The conflicts on the Black Sea Fleet were evaluated by standards of officer's honor as well. On July 21, 1992 the command of the patrol vessel SKR-112 gave an order to raise a Ukrainian flag and to move to the port of Odesa. This story became very famous for the level of tension it created. The fleet command ordered the dissenting ship to stop and even organized a chase by the navy and air force. This almost led to an armed collision between two countries. The story of SKR-112 became a small victory for the Ukrainian side and a loss for the Russian side. On July 24, 1992 *Slava Sevastopolia* dedicated its front page to the press-conference given by Admiral Kasatonov, where he again presented his view on the conflicting events between Russian and Ukrainian servicemen and commented on the future of the Ukrainian fleet.[597] The case of SKR-112 demonstrated that the real situation in the fleet was different from the narrative of the Russian command. The goal of Admiral Kasatonov, therefore, was to diminish the victory of the Ukrainian side. According to the admiral, only a half of the personnel of the SKR-112 pledged allegiance to Ukraine; 15 out of 66 servicemen kept their old pledge, while 8 more servicemen pledged allegiance to the Commonwealth of Independent States.[598] He also said that he knew about the allegiance of the ship commander lieutenant captain Nastenko and the commander of the brigade headquarters 2nd rank captain Zhybarev. However, "they were not removed from their positions [...] although you know my approach [to this kind of situations] [...]They gave me a word of officer's honor and swore that they would not get out of control and would not allow illegal actions."[599] Kasatonov continued by saying that captain Zhybarev was removed from his position for "forging documents and covering the facts of embezzlement of weapon on another ship."[600] Yet again Kasatonov accused his Ukrainian opponents of not using the "civilized" methods (but "cheap provocations").[601]

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[597] E. Yurzditskaia, "Esli opiat´ pravookhranitelnye organy ne dadut otsenki zakhvatu korablia, vozmozhny novye protivozakonnye deistviia s nepredskazuemymi posledstviiami", *Slava Sevastopolia*. July 24, 1992.

[598] Ibid.

[599] Ibid.

[600] Ibid.

[601] Ibid.

Kasatonov's attacks were an example of instrumentalization of gendered language in order to promote colonial power: he supported the authority of the institution that he represented by claiming that the emerging competitors to his power were 'lesser men.' This press-conference confirmed the narrative of the Ukrainian officers, who claimed that Russian command conducted psychological pressure against them. No agreement between Russia and Ukraine at that point forbade pledging allegiance to Ukraine. In fact, every serviceman had a right to choose their allegiance. However, the Black Sea Fleet command treated Ukrainian officers as traitors and criminals. Nowadays, it would be hard to find out the true reason for the removal of captain Zhybarev from his position. However, it seems that charges of 'forging documents' that was mentioned by Kasatonov, fits into his general narrative about Ukrainian officers being 'small', 'dishonest', 'uncivilized' people, who would always betray their word of an officer. As much as this press-conference was meant to cover the real situation in the fleet, it was also a way for the command to present their own narrative about the conflict and to get a victory on the informational battleground, which could help cover the loss of the military ship. Cases such as the one with SKR-112 made it harder for the Russian command to demonstrate the loyalty of the vast majority of the fleet personnel to the idea of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. It was still important, however, to show that the desire to serve in the Ukrainian army was an exception, rather than a rule. Even on the SKR-112, according to the fleet command, Ukrainian loyalty was not shared by the majority.

The logic of informational warfare and psychological pressure against the Ukrainian navy forces allowed Admiral Kasatonov and the fleet chain of command to not acknowledge the existence of a conflict between the navies of Ukraine and Russia. In April 1993 a group of Ukrainian officers publicly addressed the chairman of the Ukrainian parliament Ivan Pliushch, asking for protection against the psychological warfare waged against them by the command of the Black Sea Fleet.[602] In response *Slava Sevastopolia* published a full interview with the chairman of the Officers' Coordination Council of the

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[602] L. Bleskin, "Opiat′ process poshel," *Slava Sevastopolia*, April 1, 1993.

Black Sea Fleet[603] 1st rank captain V. Volodin. Captain Volodin emphasized that the responsibility for the conflict lay solely with the Ukrainian officers. Further, he said that the letter "cites fantastic factoids that those servicemen who demonstrated loyalty to Ukraine are being kicked from the Black Sea Fleet, that they are forbidden to appear in their military units".[604] In fact, multiple stories of the Ukrainian officers showed exactly that, but for some reason the fleet command refused to acknowledge the existence of such policies.

The comments that Admiral Kasatonov made publicly suggested that the Black Sea Fleet was on the defensive against the aggressive actions of the Ukrainian officers. In the meantime, Admiral Kasatonov regularly informed the public that Ukrainian officers and military cadets are "befooled people, because the Ukrainian fleet will not need that many navy officers". [605] There is a certain level of patrimonial superiority embedded in this phrase, which characterizes the generally dismissive attitude that the Black Sea Fleet command portrayed as it tried to inculcate disdain for Ukraine in public perception. After Admiral Kasatonov became the deputy commander of the Russian navy forces and moved to Moscow (in 1992), he continued making statements on the issues of Sevastopol, accusing Ukraine of starting the conflict with Russia. One such interviews, for example, talked about the "forceful Ukrainization" of the fleet by the "destructive forces" among the Ukrainian navy. According to Kasatonov, the flying of the Russian navy flags on the Black Sea Fleet ships was a response of the fleet personnel to the aggressive actions of Ukraine.[606] In this interview Kasatonov tied the separation of the Black Sea Fleet to the "fall of the system" that led to a general poverty of the military personnel.[607] This connection between the economy, the unity of the fleet, the status of

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[603] This co-ordinational body, according to Mykola Savchenko, was specifically created by Admiral Kasatonov to provide legitimacy and an image of the officers' support to the commander's policies.

[604] V. Shalamaev, "Ne nado zakladyvat′ v nashy otnosheniia minu zamedlennogo deistviia," *Slava Sevastopolia*, April 20, 1993.

[605] E. Yurzditskaia, "Vse Reshat Presidenty", *Slava Sevastopolia*. September 30, 1992.

[606] E. Yurzditskaia, "Beseda s pervym zamestitelem glavnokomanduiushchego VMF Rossii admiralom I.V. Kasatonovym," *Slava Sevastopolia*, June 8, 1993.

[607] Ibid.

Sevastopol, and the Russian military presence in the city became one of the major myths in the post-Soviet Sevastopol. According to that myth, the wealth of the population of Sevastopol directly depended on a united and mighty fleet. And such fleet could only be Russian, because the Ukrainian state was not capable of funding its own navy forces.

There was a clear contrast in characterization of the Black Sea Fleet and Ukrainian navy forces in Crimean newspapers. In 1992 *Krymskaia Pravda* on different occasion gave personal characteristics of the commanders of the both military formations. The article dedicated to Vice-Admiral Kozhyn, a commander of the Ukrainian navy, was titled "The admiral came through the garden" (*Admiral prishel ogorodami*). The article accused admiral Kozhyn of corruption, but more importantly, it accused the commander of the Ukrainian navy of not having enough courage (*muzhestvo* – bravery, manhood) to warn his colleagues in the Black Sea Fleet that he was going to transfer to the Ukrainian navy:

> "I personally really doubt that everything is normal, if the commander of the Navy Forces comes to the [captain's] bridge through gardens and everyone thinks this is fine".[608]

The metaphor of 'coming through gardens' means to sneak around, to move to the goal secretly, behind everyone's back. The main argument of the article was that Vice-Admiral Kozhyn took the commander's position in a dishonorable way and this undermined an honor of the whole Ukrainian navy.

In contrast to this image of Kozhyn, the same newspaper published a characteristic of Admiral Kasatonov just a month later. According to that characteristic, Admiral Kasatonov continued the best traditions that existed in the Russian navy:

> "In the old Russian [*Russkii* – ethnic term, but in this case the author did not differentiate] fleet a navy elite was being cultivated, only noblemen could become officers. A fruit bearing tree chopped to its root left behind some sad and bright memories about the Russian navy officer, as a gauge of devotion to

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[608] L Bleskin, "Admiral prishel ogorodami," *Krymskaia Pravda*, May 26, 1992.

duty, nobleness of communication, culture, soaked in [his] blood, high reverence to women. Those people are gone, but traditions persisted."[609]

The argumentation in favor of the presence of the Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol was based exclusively on the perception of the Russian prestige, Russian patriotism and Russian history. The fact that the Black Sea Fleet formally remained under the joint command, was funded by both countries and received conscripts in equal proportions from Ukraine and Russia, remained completely outside of the narrative. As demonstrated above, media played an important role in supporting that prestige. Apart from regular publications about the heroic past of the city of Sevastopol and its navy, *Slava Sevastopolia* regularly published interviews with various commanding officers of the Black Sea Fleet. Journalists usually behaved very favorably towards the officers of the Black Sea Fleet. For example, in an interview with a rear admiral A.A. Penkin (an assistant to the commander of the Black Sea Fleet) both the reporter and the respondent spoke about the unity of Sevastopol and "the fleet", about "our memory", "our people".[610] During the interview rear admiral Penkin once again started with reciting the grand narrative of Sevastopol's 'glorious history', and reminded the readers (although there was hardly any necessity for that, considering the daily content of *Slava Sevastopolia*) of a link between the past and the present glory of Sevastopol and its fleet. At times, the reporter, E. Yurzditskaia, turned to an open adulation, one of the questions incorporated a statement that "nobody doubts the wisdom of the fleet command". A few paragraphs earlier, the journalist asked rear admiral Penkin to confirm that the fleet "would be a guarantor of our peace".[611] The image of the Black Sea Fleet was supposed to be an image of the defender, guarantor of stability and peace. That image was of course very patrimonial, the peace was to be given to Sevastopolians by means of the presence of the Russian military, which officially was not yet Russian, but international.

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[609] Svetlana Sukhanova, "Admiral Kasatonov: 'Liubov´ moia, bol´ moia – flot," *Krymskaia Pravda*, June 20, 1992.

[610] E. Yurzditskaia, "Istoriia i pamiat´. Beseda s pomoshnikom komanduiushchego Chernomorskim flotom po rabote s lichnym sostavom kontr-admiralom A.A. Penkinym," *Slava Sevastopolia*, July 24, 1993.

[611] Ibid.

Ironically, the same reporter E. Yurzditskaia, had an interview with the commander of the Ukrainian navy, vice-admiral Volodymyr Bezkorovainyi. While the interview with an advisor to the Black Sea Fleet commander rear admiral Penkin took the front page of the issue, the interview with the commander of the Ukrainian fleet was to be found on the third page. In addition to that, almost every question for the vice admiral from the journalist contained accusations and open disrespect, not common towards the high ranking navy officers. Immediately after the introduction to the interview the journalist posed a question that looked more like a prelude for a debate:

> "I address you on behalf of Sevastopolians and I undoubtedly want to touch on the atmosphere of co-existence. The very entrance of the Ukrainian navy forces into Sevastopol was painful because the city has been a base of the Black Sea Fleet since the dawn of time [*ispokon vekov*]. There are common traditions [between the fleet and the city], every family is related to the sea in one way or another. The ideology of the Ukrainian navy forces was created 'on the knee' [at bench scale, very quickly, without deep consideration], its founders were the people of land [*sukhoputnye* – people of land, as opposed to people of sea]: a colonel of the military department at the Lviv institute, former commander of the automobile battalion etc. […] The fleet itself cannot provoke condemnation, but certain personalities who were at the basis of its [fleet's] creation were surprising, they did not add to its [fleet's] honor. How are you planning to proceed with the personnel policy?"[612]

The second half of this statement/question contradicts its first half. The reporter makes an extreme effort, trying to say that it is not the Ukrainian fleet itself that is a problem, but the fact that it was created by 'land people' and consisted of officers with questionable reputation. But earlier in the statement she emphasized that the problem was exactly in the fact that the fleet was Ukrainian. The presence of the Ukrainian fleet in the ports of the city contradicted the settler colonial historical narrative, according to which, 'the

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[612] E. Yurzditskaia, "'Lomat´ istoriiu nel´zia, no i zakonservirovat´ proshloe nevozmozhno' Beseda s komanduiushchim VMS Ukrainy," *Slava Sevastopolia*, November 23, 1993.

dawn of time' was just two centuries ago. It was by means of the 'wise' Black Sea Fleet command and this very newspaper, *Slava Sevastopolia*, that the honor and reputation of the Ukrainian navy officers was damaged, but now it was a commander of the Ukrainian fleet who had to take responsibility for that.

Every mentioning of the Black Sea Fleet (which attached to the history of the 'Russian' fleet without need for any explicit reference) associated with the words 'glory', 'honor', and 'loyalty'.[613] On the other hand, the Ukrainian navy came up in association with scandals and 'provocations' for which the Ukrainian side was held accountable every time. In addition to being a complete opposite to the Russian fleet (e.g. 'not glorious', 'dishonorable', and, more importantly, 'not loyal') the Ukrainian fleet was also 'poor' and 'greedy', just like the Ukrainian state. For example, this is how *Slava Sevastopolia* commented on the Ukrainian demands to receive rent payments for the Ukrainian land that was in use of the Russian military bases. Once again, Russian side is presumably on the defensive here, while the Ukrainian side poses 'unreasonable demands' and desires to live off the Russia's funds:

> "One gets the impression that this is an approbation of an option of lease of Sevastopol by Russia. The Ukrainian side sees in it [in the idea, or in Russia] a sort of a magic tablecloth [*skatert' samobranka*[614]]. It looks tempting [for Ukraine] to be able to use the lease to force Russia to serve everything according to the menu, created by Kyiv".[615]

Starting in 1994 the economic aspect of the Russian prestige in Sevastopol became even more powerful. The municipal government of Moscow, headed by Yurii Luzhkov, established a financial fund 'Moscow – Sevastopol' that financed the construction of the

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[613] For example, here is an article that has that particular title: E. Yurzditskaia, A. Marega, "Tri veka Rossiiskogo flota: Vernost´. Slava. Pamiat´," *Slava Sevastopolia*, October 28, 1993.

[614] An element of folklore that is shared among many cultures in Europe. The magic tablecloth serves its master any dish they desire and then cleans everything afterwards. In this particular case the metaphor is used to accuse the Ukrainian side of unreasonable demands directed at the Russian side, of a desire to live on the Russian budget.

[615] L. Bleskin, "Zaplombirovali," *Slava Sevastopolia*, October 19, 1993.

housing and cultural institutions for the servicemen of the Black Sea Fleet. By the way, that same fund provided financial support for the 'Russian Community of Sevastopol', a pro-Russian movement within the city. In late December 1994 Yurii Luzhkov, as well as the whole government of Moscow and the Russian ambassador to Ukraine participated in distribution of the apartment keys.[616] The housing complex was constructed within just 9 months. During further years Moscow's municipal government built more than one such apartment complex for the Russian officers and their families. In 1999, for example, they constructed a primary and secondary school for children of the Russian officers. Every such event appeared on the front page of *Slava Sevastopolia* and was celebrated as an enormous help from Russia.[617] Simultaneously, the newspaper often published articles about the financial hardships of the Ukrainian state and Ukrainian government right beside the articles regarding the Russian aid.[618]

The fact that Russian financial support of the Russian prestige in Sevastopol was a matter of foreign policy was stated openly: Sevastopol was considered an 'outpost' of Russia on the territory of Crimea and Ukraine in general.[619] During his speech to the Russian state Duma in 1994, Admiral Baltin said: "From a political perspective, Sevastopol with its clearly expressed mentality is the last chance for Russian to strengthen its positions in Crimea".[620] This was the admiral's reaction to the political crisis between the Crimean president Meshkov and the Crimean Supreme council that ended with the interference of the Ukrainian government. In those circumstances the role of the fleet as a political institution on the territory of a foreign state increased tremendously. It became a display that was supposed to advertise the 'Russian prosperity' among the residents of Sevastopol and Ukrainian servicemen. The Russian military contingent in Sevastopol received

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[616] V. Shalamaev, "Sviazuiushchaia nit′. Mer Moskvy Yurii Luzhkov vruchil kliuchi novoselam," *Slava Sevastopolia*, December 27, 1994.

[617] See also: L. Bleskin, "Prazdnik nadezhdy," *Slava Sevastopolia*, February 25, 1995.

[618] V. Shalamaev, "Izhdiventsy podnimaiut vikhri v pustoi kazne," *Slava Sevastopolia*, February 25, 1995.

[619] V. Shalamaev, "Sviazuiushchaia nit′. Mer Moskvy Yurii Luzhkov vruchil kliuchi novoselam," *Slava Sevastopolia*, December 27, 1994.

[620] "Otveta na vopros poka ne sushchestvuet," *Slava Sevastopolia* November 17, 1994.

special care, housing and unprecedently high salaries, not just by the standards of the Russian navy, but especially in comparison to the Ukrainian servicemen.

After the Ukraine-Russian agreement of 1997 that separated the two fleets in Sevastopol, the sole function and purpose of the Russian Black Sea Fleet was to maintain the myth about the glorious Russian past of Sevastopol (and Crimea), and about Russian military might and prestige. Due to its reduced technological potential and geography, for the most part of the 2000s, the Russian Black Sea Fleet could hardly perform any important strategic functions in the area. It still however, was capable of overshadowing the Ukrainian navy forces and the Ukrainian military presence in the city of Sevastopol, demonstrating who was the real master on the land. The demonstration again, was mostly in the spheres of economy, history and social memory. Russian officers received increased financial support from the state, compared to that of Ukrainian servicemen. Russian officers were provided housing and schooling for their children. That was in addition to the whole city infrastructure, media, sites of memory, cultural events etc, that continued to support and reinforce the historical mythology. The unspoken competition between the Russian and the Ukrainian fleet continued the whole time. Even fireworks and parades, organized during the Fleet Day celebrations, became a matter of competition – with the city residents discussing whose parade and fire show, Ukrainian or Russian, was more impressive. This competition was again a battle over masculinity and prestige: over which fleet is mightier, whose officers are more 'manly', whose fireworks are more impressive. Ultimately, it was a competition between the two states over the minds and identity of the population, an unspoken understanding that people choose their identity according to their perception of prestige.

5.4   Conclusion

The hybridity of the settler colonial institutions in Crimea significantly reduced the level of control that Ukraine had over this territory and increased an 'invisible' presence of the Russian political, military and financial agents. From the formal standpoint Crimea existed under the sovereignty of Ukraine, the institutions in Crimea formally were not Russian. This made the political conflict in Crimea look like in was an internal problem of Ukraine with the local separatist groups. The conflict, however, was international, also

often not acknowledged by the Russian side. It was due to the hybridity of the Black Sea Fleet and local Crimean authorities that Russia received the negotiating position regarding the fleet in the first place. Initially, right after the fall of the Soviet Union, a general assumption was that Ukraine would take control over the Black Sea Fleet. Pro-Ukrainian officers of the fleet started an active campaign, trying to achieve that goal. But due to indecisiveness of the Ukrainian state, Russian politicians received time for mobilization and taking control over the process. After the conflict over the fleet became international, every meeting between the Ukrainian and Russian presidents postponed the approval of the final decision. This, in turn, demoralized the pro-Ukrainian portion of the fleet, mobilized the pro-Russian movement and gave time to the fleet command to get rid of the pro-Ukrainian officers within the fleet.

The question of the fleet suddenly became important for President Yeltsin personally, as well as for the opposition to his government. The way the historical myth about Sevastopol, Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet was invoked in the Russian political discourse suggests that various political forces used this topic for the internal political competition. The control over the military on the territory of a (formerly) subordinate state preserved control. The level of influence that Russian politicians had in Crimea allowed them to artificially create a point of internal instability within Ukraine and use this instability to influence Ukraine's policies. Structures of the Black Sea Fleet conducted reconnaissance, infiltrated Ukrainian armed forces, supported and mobilized the local pro-Russian movement, conducted informational operations on the territory of Crimea. All this remained in the sphere of 'unspoken' as the high-standing Russian politicians usually refrained from radical anti-Ukrainian statements regarding Ukraine.

In addition to preserving its own control, Russian institutions started a fight against the Ukrainian presence on the peninsula. Russian state tried to support the dominance of the image of its greatness and mightiness within Crimea, in addition it diminished the image of Ukrainian statehood and its armed forces. Not only this meant to turn the Crimean population on the pro-Russian side, Russian informational resources went to an enormous extent to encourage Crimean residents to serve in the Black Sea Fleet. Any fleet is an institution that is highly dependent on skilled professionals. The informational attacks

against the Ukrainian officers' manliness and honor ultimately were a fight for the loyalty of Crimean population: *future servicemen* and their parents. If the fleet was a place 'to become a man,' it was important to make sure everyone knew *which* fleet would breed that.

6   Conclusions

This research demonstrates that the analysis of settler colonialism is not limited to the history of Western imperial studies and might (and should) be applied elsewhere. The application of settler colonial theory to the history of Crimea does not just open room for alternative narratives of the peninsula's past, present and future. It begins the process of decolonization from its very basics – academic knowledge that has so far been entangled in imperial mythology. The focus on the history of the Russian and Soviet settler colonialism in Crimea also challenges the narrative, according to which the Russian Empire does not fit into the analytical schemes of Western imperial historiography. Instead, this study demonstrates, that Russian and Soviet empires often operated within a similar imperial logic as their Western counterparts. And while there have been some obvious nuances in the logic of the Russian and Soviet settler colonial project, the general idea of the indigenous displacement (physical, cultural, linguistical, historical – discoursal) persisted. The Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the contemporary Russian Federation all worked to construct Crimea as a 'natively Russian' land by removing the indigenous peoples (Crimean Tatars in particular, as the largest and most politically organized of the groups) and marginalizing their cultures and histories.

The uniqueness of the Crimean case as well as the historical period – the early post-Soviet years after 1991 – is that for the first time in about 200 years Crimean Peninsula appeared outside of the imperial sovereignty of the Russia-centered empire. Unlike many other settler colonies, Crimea did not gain independence from the metropole (did not even seek that independence) but appeared on the periphery of a yet another independent state – Ukraine – that had just started a state-building and decolonization project of its own. This separation between Crimea and its metropole was even more hurtful because it enhanced the identity crisis that the Russian nation experienced after losing much of its empire. Crimea and Sevastopol in particular, together with the Black Sea Fleet that was stationed there, served as an important factor in the internal Russian political debates. This was due to the historical importance of the Crimean space for Russian national thought. The Crimean settler colony therefore serves as a good example of the entrapment that the imperial narrative imposes on its colonies and *on the metropole itself*.

The Russian colonial narrative about Crimea defined the direction in which the post-Soviet peninsula developed, but also it forced Russian public discourse to interfere into Crimea as well as into the rest of Ukraine.

The political struggles of 1990s in Crimea and *about* Crimea were in fact a struggle about the preservation of the settler colonial status quo. Different players in this political game needed the preservation of the status quo for different reasons. Local Crimean elites were simply interested in preservation of their personal power and were not willing to dissolve inside the larger state projects of Ukraine or Russia. Their only chance for the preservation of their power was to 'freeze' the Soviet Union on a territory of a single peninsula. Advocating for Crimea as an in-between space ultimately was an advocacy for the status that Crimea had during Soviet times. This advocacy of course happened within the cultural and political discourse of the Soviet past which at that point had hardly have a chance to fully become 'past.' The competition of local Crimean elites, people like Mykola Bahrov and later Yurii Meshkov, with the government in Kyiv was only possible within the mode of 'in-between space.' The presence of Russia, its authority as a (former) metropole and its entrapment in its own imperial myth provided Crimean politicians with some leverage in their political fights for 'autonomy.'

The Crimean example is a yet another demonstration that decolonization does not happen automatically with the fall of the empire. As shown extensively by other studies of colonialism, imperial inequality is never limited to the *legal* inequality. Whether the premise (formal reason for discrimination) is race, gender, nationality or something else, the pattern of imperial oppression is more or less the same. Colonization always happens on the level of culture and psychology, in addition to other spaces. Settler colonization as a "structure, not an event" should be understood broadly; settler colonization changes the discourse, the reality in which colonizers and colonized operate. The fall of the Soviet Union did not erase the settler colonial institutions that formulated, reproduced and supported settler colonialism on the peninsula. The structural displacement of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians throughout 1990s, as well as before that, persisted and only adapted to the new post-Soviet reality in which the metropole appeared within a different state. Both Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian decolonization movements as well as the

development of the Ukrainian statehood challenged the settler colonial status quo in Crimea, and provoked resistance, but never erased the settler colonial structures.

There were two immediate challenges to the efforts of the settler colonial institutions to retain power – those were Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar decolonization movements. Both those movements provided alternative narratives about Crimea and demonstrated the presence of a 'reality' that was being erased from public discourse. The Ukrainian movement was part of the larger state-building project that was happening in the country in general. It was based on the understanding that there were certain Russified regions of the country where the presence of Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian language needed to be restored. Members of those movements often acted within the logic of the empire that they were fighting – inversing the norms of the Soviet society into what they saw as Ukrainian norms, by using methods that were informed by the Soviet practices. While trying to decolonize they often stayed within the cultural norms, created for the Ukrainian culture in the Soviet Union. In the case of Crimea, for instance, this decolonization project often involved elements of (re-) colonization. While many of them supported the attempts of Crimean Tatars to restore their rights of the indigenous people, others repeated the narrative of the colonial empire and feared that giving 'too much' power to Crimean Tatars might challenge Ukraine's territorial integrity. Ukrainian activists were not numerous, but very active. Their cultural initiatives often crossed the thin line (that mostly existed only in their own consciousness) between culture and politics. At the end of the day, although not indigenous, Ukrainians of Crimea were in a position of a colonized people and therefore their cultural initiatives were inherently political.

Crimean Tatars, in turn, represented a local Crimean decolonization project. They were better organized, but their existence within the Crimean space posed greater danger to the settler colonial institutions. The repatriation of the people that had 'Crimean' written into their name disrupted all the settler colonial myth about 'multinationality' of the peninsula. That is not to say that Crimea historically was not a multinational space, it was just that the dominant national group that retained power historically had nothing to do with that multinationalism. Whether actively or not, Crimean settler colonial institutions were aware of their foreign nature. Their fight against Crimean Tatar national sovereignty

and indigeneity eventually turned into promoting one's own indigeneity in a form of 'multinationalism.' The Crimean Tatar fight for land, meanwhile, demonstrated a way of indigenous resistance to the attempts of the institutions of power to reduce the effects of decolonization. The logic of settler colonialism reduced the indigenous access to land and by extension – to economic and political resources. Unfortunately, the Crimean Tatar movement often had to resist not just the local Crimean authorities, but the Ukrainian state as well. For many years Ukrainian post-communist elites saw in Crimean Tatars a threat to the state, rather than allies.

As in other settler colonies and colonial relations, the control over the narrative, the ability and an exclusive right of the settler colonial institutions to define the 'truth' was one of the main instruments of reproduction of the settler colonial status quo. Local Crimean newspapers, as well as the Russian media space that was still present in Crimea played an important role in forging the local Crimean 'multinational identity,' reproducing traditional cultural stereotypes about Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar 'nationalists' and effectively marginalized those decolonization movements. Because the support of settler colonial regime meant as little change as possible, a lot of cultural and political messages, as well as the historical grand narrative, were directly inherited from the Soviet times. The role of history, or rather – a public construction of collective image of the past was meant to answer questions about the future. And because the historical narrative spoke about *Russian* Crimea and the *Russian* Black Sea Fleet, that often was an important enough reason to believe that Russia should retain its control within the Crimean space. The control over the truth served as a justification for the continuation of the settler colonial policies of the local Crimean elites. Eventually, the logic of the narrative was to create an image of Crimea as a space with a single political opinion. Those who resisted this image – Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar activists – were proclaimed 'alien' to Crimea. This in turn was meant to mobilize Crimeans against an external threat.

The power of the construct of unilaterally pro-Russian Crimea is yet to be realized. Eventually it created a self-fulfilling circle in which everyone 'was meant' to think the same way 'as did everyone else.' This not only supported Russian political influence on

the peninsula, this image changed the way Ukrainian and international politicians (as well as scholars) approached the Crimea question. The settler colonial monopoly over the truth empowered Russian claims to this space while erasing alternative narratives that Ukrainian state-building projects could rely on. The story of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and Ukraine's as well as international continued response to that annexation suggests a lack of knowledge about Crimea; since a popular perception of the peninsula is a result of a Russian imperial construct. The role of Western observers and their support of the dominant imperial narrative under the façade of democratization is a topic that requires further analysis. Russian authorities as well as Crimean elites managed to successfully employ the rhetoric of democracy, human right and international law (and continue to do so today) in order to promote the colonial agenda. The inability of the West to identify this problem, as well as the dominance of Russia within the academic research of the Eastern Europe often created a situation when decolonization processes were slowed not just by the criticism of the former empire, but also with 'objective' criticism from the Western 'arbiters.'

The presence of Russia in this image is obvious and invisible at once. From the beginning settler colonialism always constitutes *foreign* invasion. Therefore, the very presence of local Crimean settler colonial institutions is an effect of the Russian imperial invasion. Analyzing this invasion as a 'conflict that did not happen' or in any other way that normalizes it contributes to the enforcement of the settler colonial myth. Crimean settler colonial institutions, never broke ties with the metropole, after the Soviet Union disappeared. Russian political, informational, economic as well as military presence in Crimea guaranteed the preservation of the status quo that Crimean authorities fought for. Russian-controlled institutions on the territory of Crimea, mostly the Black Sea Fleet, appeared in an in-between space, where they technically operated under joint sovereignty of Ukraine and Russia, but in fact remained an extension of the Russia's political, informational and military power. Efforts of the Black Sea Fleet command reduced a potential challenge that could come with the creation of Ukrainian naval forces. Repressions against Ukrainian officers that came from the fleet command, as well as cooperation of the Black Sea Fleet with the local Crimean authorities demonstrated the extent to which military presence in Crimea was important for Russia, as well as for the

local settler colonial institutions. The presence of the Black Sea Fleet enabled open activity of the Russian military intelligence and security services on the territory of Crimea – a topic that awaits further in-depth research. Russian politicians and financial institutions financed the pro-Russian movement in Crimea, in addition to mass propaganda. Considering the cooperation with the local Crimean settler colonial institutions, for much of 1990s Russia had more influence over Crimea that Ukraine itself. This allowed the Russian government to use Crimea as a pressure point against the Ukrainian government and influence Ukraine's domestic and foreign policies. In the meantime, the absence of open aggression against Crimea facilitated the preservation of 'democratic image' in interactions with the West and reception of the financial aid and investment that Russian Federation was so in need of at the time.

This project has room for further research, particularly in two directions. The first is the role of women in Crimean post-Soviet political and social processes. Scholarship of settler colonialism pays specific attention to the role of women in settler colonies, as they are the ones that created the settler society. They reshape settlers into 'locals,' children of the colonizers, who claim indigeneity in the colonized land. While women were present on the margins of political debates, post-Soviet settler colonial society kept trying to limit the space of their operation to domestic sphere. This was contrary to the official Soviet policies of gender equality that, as shown by multiple studies, looked different on paper than in real life. A limited number of sources, even in newspapers, however, demonstrate female presence in mediating inter-ethnic and other clashes inside Crimea. Women were very active in social, cultural and political life on all sides of the imaginary barricades, contrary to multiple statements in newspapers that 'woman's place is at home' with children. The second important topic to consider is the role of church in Crimean politics. The history of cooperation between the Russian Orthodox hierarchy with the KGB is a known fact, although not deeply researched. In the Crimean space the Russian Orthodox church because a yet another influential institution that promoted the pro-Russian ideology among the believers. It also served as a basis for pro-Russian paramilitary organizations; Crimean Orthodox hierarchy often coordinated their actions with the command of the Black Sea Fleet.

The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 only confirmed the settler colonial nature the life on the peninsula, as well as the policies of the Russian state. The fact that Crimean Tatars became the primary target of repressions confirms that for the settler's empire the existence of indigenous people on the colonized territory serves as the main threat to the colonizer's myth. Russian security services' attempt to look for 'Muslim terrorism' demonstrates structural racism of FSB as an institution of power. Meanwhile, systematic settlement of the occupied peninsula with Russian citizens shows that settler policies remain the primary method of taking control over the occupied land. Since 2014 Russian state propaganda, as well as Russian state institutions have not demonstrated *anything* new in terms of the narrative or methods of control. They displaced the indigenous (not just physically, but culturally and politically), brought settlers, reinforced the settler's myth about 'historically Russian Crimea' and appealed to the democratic practices by holding a so called "referendum" on the status of the peninsula while Russian propaganda once again created a myth of "peaceful reunification."

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Appendices

Appendix 1 NMREB Letter of Ethics Approval

![Western Research logo]

Date: 16 July 2018

To: Marta Dyczok

Project ID: 111688

Study Title: Russian Settler Colonial Project in a Post-Soviet Crimea (1990-1997): Creating a Community of 'Foreign Natives'

Application Type: NMREB Initial Application

Review Type: Delegated

Full Board Reporting Date: August 3 2018

Date Approval Issued: 16/Jul/2018

REB Approval Expiry Date: 16/Jul/2019

_____

Dear Marta Dyczok

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

Documents Approved:

Document Name	Document Type	Document Date	Document Version
Attestation Letter	Additional Consent Documents	09/Jul/2018	Clean
Email Consent Script_Sviezhentsev	Recruitment Materials	10/Apr/2018	1
Email Consent Script_Sviezhentsev (Ukrainian)	Additional Consent Documents	15/Jun/2018	Clean
Question Sample_Sviezhentsev	Interview Guide	11/May/2018	1
Question Sample_Sviezhentsev(Ukrainian)	Additional Consent Documents	05/Jul/2018	Clean
Sviezhentsev_Consent	Written Consent/Assent	01/Jul/2018	Clean
Sviezhentsev_Consent(Ukrainian)	Additional Consent Documents	15/Jun/2018	Clean

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Kelly Patterson, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).

Appendix 2 NMREB Extension of Ethics Approval

![Western Research logo]

Date: 2 July 2019

To: Marta Dyczok

Project ID: 111688

Study Title: Russian Settler Colonial Project in a Post-Soviet Crimea (1990-1997): Creating a Community of 'Foreign Natives'

Application Type: Continuing Ethics Review (CER) Form

Review Type: Delegated

Meeting Date: 16/Jul/2019

Date Approval Issued: 02/Jul/2019

REB Approval Expiry Date: 16/Jul/2020

_____

Dear Marta Dyczok,

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board has reviewed this application. This study, including all currently approved documents, has been re-approved until the expiry date noted above.

REB members involved in the research project do not participate in the review, discussion or decision.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Daniel Wyzynski, Research Ethics Coordinator, on behalf of Prof. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).

Curriculum Vitae

Name:	Maksym Sviezhentsev
Post-secondary Education and Degrees:	University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy Kyiv, Ukraine. 2008-2012 B.A.
	University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy Kyiv, Ukraine. 2012-2014 M.A.
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	Professor Kenneth Hilborn Doctoral Completion Award, Western University. 2019
	Professor Kenneth Hilborn Graduate Student Award for Research & Conference Travel Western University 2017, 2018.
	Ivie Cornish Memorial Fellowship in History Department of History, Western University 2017
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Publications:

Sviezhentsev, Maksym. "Russians 'Some to Stay': Settler Colonialism in Crimea" in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies Journal* (submitted for publication).

Sviezhentsev, Maksym. "Settler Colonialism in the USSR: Creation of Post-Soviet Crimea" in Academic Notes of NaUKMA, 194 (2017): 72–81. http://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/handle/123456789/12231. [Ukrainian Language Edition]

Sviezhentsev, Maksym. "Soviet Army and Polish People in 1944: What Do Sources Tell Us" in Magisterium. Historical Issues, 54 (2015): 39–43. http://ekmair.ukma.edu.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/6847/Sviezhentsev_Radianska_armiia.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [Ukrainian Language Edition]