

Crimean Tatars:

Remembrance of Deportation and the Young Generation

Deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944 to Middle Asia is a very peculiar event in European history. That year the Soviet authorities decided to make total deportation of a number of nations living in the USSR (including Crimean Tatars, Chechens, Kalmyks and others). These nations became one of the last victims of the Second World War. The most important feature of Crimean Tatar deportation is that still the aftermath of this event is very visible today. Unlike other deported nations, Crimean Tatars could not return back home to Crimea till 1989. Today, the majority of Crimean Tatars came back to Crimea, but they still face very large social and political consequences of the Deportation.

The object of our research is very actual and important for all-European historical memory as it is an illustrative example of a historical event happened during the Second World War which effect we feel till the present day. We believe that remembrance of Deportation of Crimean Tatars is an integral part of European Paths of Remembrance, and that its study will be beneficial to common European historical memory.

The aim of our project is to study and analyze existing patterns and aspects of remembrance of Deportation of the young generation of Crimean Tatars, determine relation between their collective remembrance and individual memories. It is also very important to understand the connection between young and old generation of Crimean Tatars in the sphere of family memories as well as to find out what parts of national memory are well-known to young generation and what parts of this memory are ignored. Another important dimension of our study – is to find out how the remembrance of Deportation influences self-consciousness and self-identification of young Crimean Tatars.

Our research will consist of a number of interviews in several towns and villages of Crimean peninsula with young Crimean Tatars of high-school and student age. During these interviews we would like to focus on personal memories of these young people, as it is very important to understand what parts of national historical memory they have adopted. As the older witnesses of Deportation are passing away, the new generation of Crimean Tatars will become the main bearer of national memory. During our research we will be focusing on two major approaches – the first approach is to study and analyze general trends and patterns in remembrance of young Crimean Tatars. It will be realized by analyzing the answers of interviewees on our questionnaire. The

second approach is gathering of personal memories of the interviewees on the history of their families. It will be realized during our oral history interviews with young Crimean Tatars.

In our research we would like to combine the method of oral history and active observation with other qualitative techniques (such as in-depth interviews). Such combination of methods will give a good opportunity to carry out an effective sociological research of general trends in the sphere of remembrance of young Crimean Tatars, as well as to collect their personal memories which were passed to them from older generations. We plan to conduct semi-structured interviews with our interviewees and make them reply on the questions from questionnaire. Such an approach gives the researchers certain flexibility in conducting the interviews – what leads to receiving of more relevant and important information from young people. Also we would like to record the interviews and collect them in a special brochure. The gathered data will help us to understand how the patterns of memory are passed down to young Crimean Tatar generation from their parents and grandparents.

We believe that our combined method will be useful for further researchers of certain ethnic groups and regional communities. Our team will try to gain maximum benefit from its diverse national composition, exchanging different views and positions during the realization of the project.

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