Rudolf A. Mark

Deportations in the Context of World War II

As Charles King mentioned in his book *The Black Sea*, the forced movement of people as refugees from armed conflicts or settlers uprooted by governments and resettled in new areas or environments did not present a new phenomenon around the Black Sea in the twentieth century.[1] Before, during, and after World War I, a large number of individuals or groups living around the Black Sea were declared enemies of states and empires and fell victim to physical attacks or forced emigration. Moreover, there were organized campaigns of ethnic cleansing, accompanying, for instance, the fighting in the Caucasus, the Balkans, and Crimea during the war on the peninsula from 1853–56 and in its aftermath. In 1923, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference, the Greek-Turkish War of 1919–23, and the Peace Treaty of Lausanne, ca. 1.4 million Greeks had to abandon Turkey, whilst 400,000 "Turks" had to leave their homesteads in Greece, to mention only the largest groups. This was an act aiming to create a homogenous Turkish nation by means of ethnic cleansing. This can be seen as a parallel to the same efforts made by Greece and Bulgaria before World War I. And Lausanne corroborated this policy with the agreement of the international community.[2]

During World War II,[3] the deportations and resettlements by the Soviet administration took on a new character, not only with respect to the number of people affected, but also in terms of policy and strategic objectives. However, we must not equate "deportation" with "genocide" as defined by the 1948 United Nations (UN) Convention as "acts committed with intend to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."[4] The same holds true with regard to the term "ethnic cleansing,"

1 Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford: University Press, 2006), 207; Justin Mccarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922* (Princeton, N. Jersey: Darwin Press, 1996).
2 Ulf Brunnbauer and Michael G. Esch, "Einleitung: Ethnische Säuberungen in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Definitionsmacht, Utopie, Vergeltung: 'Ethnische Säuberungen' im östlichen Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts,* ed. Ulf Brunnbauer and Michael G. Esch (Berlin: LIT VERLAG, 2006), 15–17; Pertti Ahonen, Gustavo Corni et al., *People on the Move: Forced Population Movements in Europe in the Second World War and its Aftermath* (Oxford: Berg, 2010), 3–10; Stanford J. Shaw, "Resettlement of Refugees in Anatolia, 1918–1923," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 58–75; Holm Sundhaussen, "Die Ethnisierung von Staat, Nation und Gerechtigkeit: Zu den Anfängen nationaler 'Homogenisierung' im Balkanraum," in *Auf dem Weg zum ethnisch reinen Nationalstaat? Europa in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* ed. Mathias Beer, 2nd rev. ed. (Tübingen: Attempto-Verl. 2007), 69–90; René Hirschon, ed., *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003).
3 For this chapter on World War II, see Tal Bruttmann, Laurent Joly, and Annette Wieviorka, *Qu'est-ce qu'un déporté? Histoire et mémoires des déportations de la Seconde Guerre mondiale* (Paris: CNRS, 2009).
4 UN General Assembly, Resolution 260 A (III), Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, No. 1021 (December 9, 1948), https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2078/volume-78-I-1021-English.pdf; for the situation in single countries, see the articles of Detlef Brandes, Michael G. Asch, and Marie-Janine Calic in Brunnbauer and Esch, *Definitionsmacht*, 77–143; also Holm

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the intention of which is—according to Naimark's definition—"to remove a people and often all traces of them from a concrete territory [...] to get rid of the 'alien' nationality, ethnic or religious group and to seize control of the territory they had formerly inhabited."[5] At the same time, we cannot ignore historical experience that evidences deportations as a first phase of ensuing acts of genocide.

Under the rule of the Moscow grand princes and tsars, deportations and resettlements of people had been administrative measures of Russian internal policy from time immemorial. In Soviet times, when the "nationalities question" formed an essential issue of Bolshevik state building, resettlements of populations, the reorganization, and even the renaming of territorial groups were used as a means to prepare, stabilize, and secure the realm of Soviet rule. Although the Bolsheviks conceived their future state as an internationally designed political entity, the implementation of their rule demanded a consolidation in terms of securing territory and establishing power structures. To this end they had to overcome the centrifugal movements which during the Civil War had almost flung the Bolshevik revolution to the abyss.

The so-called "Leninist" or "liberal" nationalities policy of the 1920s was a result of these experiences. After some disputes, the Soviet leadership opted for a federalist state structure. This concept envisaged ethno-territorial units and substantial rights of autonomy. To some degree, the latter were also granted to diaspora communities living outside of national entities.[6] They were allowed to have their own schools and cultural institutions as well as their own Soviets in the republics of other nationalities. By strengthening national cultures—the so-called policy of *korenizatsiia* ("rooting")—nationalist and separatist aspiration were to be neutralized and a process of rapprochement of the peoples was to be promoted through the development of a supranational class consciousness. However, *korenizatsiia* did not fulfill these expectations. For, rather than a socialist melting pot, the Soviet Union became the experimental field of new nations. This was the case especially in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where

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Sundhaussen, "Ethnische Säuberung," in *Lexikon zur Geschichte Südosteuropas,* ed. Edgar Hösch, Karl Nehring, and Holm Sundhaussen (Vienna: Böhlau, 2004), 221; Hans Lemberg, "'Ethnische Säuberung': Ein Mittel zur Lösung von Nationalitätenproblemen?," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte: Beilage zur Wochenzeitung Das Parlament*, November 6, 1992; Georg Brunner, "Minderheiten und Recht: Die völkerrechtliche Lage," in *Nationen, Nationalitäten, Minderheiten: Probleme des Nationalismus in Jugoslawien, Ungarn, Rumänien, der Tschechoslowakei, Bulgarien, Polen der Ukraine, Italien und Österreich 1945–1990,* ed Valeria Heuberger et al. (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1994), 43–51.

5 Norman N. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Harvard: University Press, 2001), 3.

6 For more details on the Soviet nationalities, see Rudolf A. Mark, *Die Völker der ehemaligen Sowjetunion: Die Nationalitäten der GUS, Georgiens und der baltischen Staaten. Ein Lexikon* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992); Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Terry D. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalities in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Gerhard Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätenpolitik in der Sowjetunion: Von der totalitären Diktatur zur nachstalinschen Gesellschaft* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1986).

new nations were created and national Soviet Republics were established between the Pamir, Köpet Dag, and the Black Sea. In order to create administrative units which met Moscow's political, economic, strategic, and ethnic-cultural aims in the region, districts were reorganized and nationalities were divided, separated, or resettled.[7] There were also aspects of safeguarding the North Caucasus, a theater of ongoing resistance to Russian and Soviet rule ever since the beginning of the Russian conquest. Revolts occurred regularly not only in the mountains of Chechnya; guerrilla warfare was a permanent phenomenon throughout the region.[8]

Moreover, in the 1930s the Stalin regime embarked on a policy of ethnic cleansing in the border regions of the entire Soviet territory.[9] The deportations during World War II can be categorized in terms of this policy, although not all of the peoples and ethnic groups it pertained to were affected in the same way:

1 Greeks

Greeks had settled on the shores of the Black Sea since the beginning of Greek colonization more than 2,500 years ago. They exerted a dominant influence throughout the region, as we may learn from the names of the most important cities and regions, such as Simferopol (Crimean Tatar: Aqmescit), Alushta, Evpatoriia (Crimean Tatar: Kezlev), Kherson, Bosporos (Kerch respectively Cimmerian Bosporus), or even Sevastopol (Crimean Tatar: Aqyar). Stalin put an end to this history.

By 1939, the Soviet census showed 286,400 Greeks, ca. 20.000 of whom lived in Crimea, while the majority formed part of the population in the Black Sea littoral of Georgia and Southern Russia.[10] In 1937, many Soviet Greeks were already leaving their national raion in Krasnodar Oblast for Greece when by dint of Ezhov's terror Greek cultural and political institutions were closed down and Greek publications forbidden.[11] In 1939, Greeks were deported from the Kuban region to Vladivostok and the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). In 1941/42 they were followed by the majority of

7 Barbara Pietzonka, *Ethnisch-territoriale Konflikte im Kaukasus: Eine politisch-geographische Systematisierung* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1995), 82–83.

8 Paul B. Henze, "Circassian Resistance to Russia," in *The North Caucasus Barrier: The Russian Advance Towards the Muslim World,* ed. Marie Bennigsen-Broxup (London: Hurst &Co., 1996), 105; Abdurahman Avtorkhanov, "The Chechens and the Ingush during the Soviet Period and its Antecendents," in Bennigsen-Broxup, *The North Caucasus Barrier,* 146–83.

9 Viktor Dönninghaus, "'Trojanisches Pferd' für Stalin? Die Deportationen nationaler Minderheiten in den 1930er Jahren," *Nordost-Archiv* XXI (2012): 34–63; Grégory Dufaud, "La déportation des Tatars de Crimée et leur vie en exil (1944–1956): Un ethnocide?" *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire* 96, no. 4 (2007): 151–62; Juliette Cadiot and Marc Elie, *Histoire du Goulag* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 2017), passim; J. Otto Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937–1949* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1999), 9–14; Terry D. Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," *Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998): 813–61.

10 Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 120–21.

11 Jean-Jacques Marie, *Les peoples déportés d'Union Soviétique* (Brussels: Editions Complexe, 1995), 106.

Greeks in Southern Russia, who were deported to Siberia and Central Asia (Jambyl [Russian: Dzhambul], Qaraghandy [Russian: Karaganda], Almaty [Russian: Alma-Ata], Kokchetav, Osh,[12] and Fergana Oblasts).[13] After the withdrawal of the German occupiers in 1944, further groups of Greeks were banished from Crimea, including small groups of Turks and Iranians. They were shipped to Uzbekistan and Siberia. Among them were more than 4,200 people destined for special settlement.[14]

The ethnic cleansing of the peninsula and the adjacent regions continued until 1950,[15] when the last group of Greeks (27,000) together with other "foreign passport holders" were exiled from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Russian and Ukrainian Black Sea coast to be settled in the southern oblasts of Kazakhstan.[16] After the defeat of the Greek People's Army in Greece in 1949, in Moscow Greeks were regarded with suspicion of treason. Moreover, the then leadership of Georgia, steered by Beria's intrigues behind the scenes, was imbued with an ardent nationalism and the idea of creating an ethnically homogenous republic.[17]

All in all, by 1949 approximately 70,000 Greeks had been deported, most of them being settled in Central Asia. Smaller groups lived dispersed across the territory of Siberia.[18] On January 1, 1953 the Soviet authorities counted 52,112 exiled Greeks. They were released from special settlements in the course of the "Thaw" after Stalin's death. However, it was only in 1972 that the deported Greeks were granted freedom of residence[19] and were allowed to return to their traditional areas of settlement. There, however, the Soviet government did not restore the Greek institutions they had established before deportation. After the decay of the USSR in 1991 most Greeks opted to emigrate.[20]

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12 Vlassis Agtsidis, "Asie centrale et Sibérie, territoires de la déportation," in *Les Grecs Pontiques: Diaspora, identité, territoires*, ed. Michel Bruneau (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1998), 157–75; N° 3.75, "Postanovlenie GOKO N° 1828ss O dopolnitelnom vyselenii iz Krasnodarskogo kraia i Rostovskoi oblasti Grekov – inostrannykh poddannykh i lits, priznannykh sotsialno opasnymi," May 29, 1942, in *Stalinskie deportatsii 1928–1953*, ed. Nikolai L. Pobol and Pavel M. Polian (Moscow: MFD Materik, 2005), 387–89.

13 N° 3.163, "Dokladnaia zapiska zam. Narkoma NKVD UzbSSR I. A. Meera nachalniku otdela spetsposelenii NKVD M. V. Kuznetsovy," July 29, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 514–15.

14 Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 122; Agtsidis, "Asie centrale," 171.

15 Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing, 122–24;* Tsypylma Darieva and Florian Mühlfried, "Kontaktraum Kaukasus: Sprachen, Religionen und Kulturen," *Osteuropa* 65, no. 7–10 (Summer 2015): 49.

16 N° 4.27, "Prikaz ministra vnutrennikh del SSSR N° 00525, Ob obespechenii perevozok, rasseleniia i trudovogo ustroistva vyselentsev s territorii Gruzinskoi, Armianskoi i Azerbaidzhanskoi SSR, a takzhe poberezhia Chernogo moria," June 2, 1949, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 671; Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), 169.

17 Agtsidis, "Asie centrale," 172.

18 Agtsidis, 171–72.

19 Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansings*, 125–26.

20 Pohl, 127.

2 Moldovans

In the aftermath of the Hitler-Stalin Pact in August 1939 and after the outbreak of World War II, the Soviet Union annexed Bessarabia after an ultimatum that forced Romania to cede this province to Stalin in June 1940. In August 1940, the Supreme Soviet in Moscow founded the Moldavian SSR, uniting Bessarabia with six districts of the then disbanded Moldavian ASSR (Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic)[21] situated on the left bank of the Dniester. The rest of the territory remained with the Ukrainian SSR. In order to safeguard the newly gained acquisition, in June 1941 some 4,342 people were arrested and 13,885 banished from the Moldavian SSR.[22] In addition, more than 10,000 Polish refuges and colonists from the Chernivtsi (Romanian: Cernăuți, Russian: Chernovtsy) and Izmail Oblasts of the Ukrainian SSR were deported to the ASSR Komi and Siberia's Omsk and Novosibirsk Oblasts, while smaller groups were transferred to different settlements and plants in the regions Akmolinsk, Orsk, and Tashkent in Central Asia.[23] The deportation of Moldovans and Romanians was, so to speak, organized in parallel to those accomplished in the annexed eastern territories of Poland in the years 1939–41. Alleged "anti-Soviet elements" were removed (*iziatie*) in a radical way. Probably in order to destroy social ties and to make acts of resistance more difficult, families were torn apart, the heads arrested by the police, and the remaining incriminated people were resettled as "active members of counterrevolutionary and participants of anti-Soviet, nationalist, and White Guard organizations." Furthermore, former secret police officers, gendarmes, leaders of police forces, and prison guards, but also ordinary policemen and warders were arrested if evidence could be found against them. The same regulations applied to former Romanian, Polish, and White Guard officers as well as refugees from the Soviet Union. The largest group consisted of imprisoned "great landowners, owners of large factories, and high officials of the former state apparatus."[24] The composition of the deportees indicates that in the annexed territories the traditional public, administrative, and social-economic structures

21 Whereas the SSR was a sovereign state with (theoretically) full political power on its territory within the Soviet Union, an ASSR formed part of the administrative and political structures of a given SSR. In principle the ASSR enjoyed some sort of cultural autonomy and had its own administration, but was subordinated to the SSR's government.

22 N° 2.69, "Soobshchenie zam. Narkoma NKGB B. Z. Kobulova I. V. Stalinu, S. M. Molotovu i L. P. Berii o khode operatsii po iziatiiu antisovetskogo elementa v Moldavskoi SSR, Chernovitskoi i Izmailskoi oblastiakh USSR," June 13, 1941, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii,* 210–11.

23 N° 2.68, "Zapiska po 'VCH' zam. Narkoma NKVD SSSR V. V. Chernysheva narkomu NKVD USSR V. T. Sergienko i narkomu NKGB USSR P. Ia. Meshiku o sledovanii eshelonov so spetspereselentsami iz Moldavskoi SSR," June 12, 1941, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii,* 209–10; N° 2.71, "Zapiska po 'VCH' nachalnika UNKVD po Omskoi oblasti A. M. Kotliarova zam. narkoma NKVD V. V. Chernyshevu o rasselenii spetspereselentsev," June 14, 1941, Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii,* 212–13.

24 N° 2.72, "Dokladnaia zapiska narkoma NKGB MCCR N. S. Sazykina narkomu NKGB SSSR V. N. Merkulovu o rezultatakh operatsii po iziatiiu antisovetskogo elementa na territorii Moldavskoi SSR," June 19, 1941, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii,* 212–14.

were to be weakened or abolished and national elites, as agents of Romanian or Moldovan culture and ethnic orientation, were to be eliminated.[25]

3 Germans

After Russia's conquest of the Crimean Khanate, groups of Romanians, Bulgarians, and Greeks from the Ottoman Empire, Russians from Poland, Swedes from Dagö (Russian/Estonian: Hiiumaa) and—beginning in 1787—German immigrants were allowed to settle as colonists on the entire territory that stretched from the Don in the east to the Budjak (Romanian: Bugeac, Russian: Budzhak) steppe in Bessarabia. Crimea too was included.[26] In the late nineteenth century, these "Black Sea Germans" numbered some 270,000 persons.[27] They were privileged, and on the whole enjoyed economic progress and prosperity. Migrations within the Russian Empire, overseas emigration, the cataclysms of World War I, the Civil War, and Sovietization under Stalin reduced their figures. On the eve of the German–Soviet War in 1941, some 50,000 Germans lived in the Crimean ASSR,[28] forming 4.6 percent of the entire population.[29] German national raions existed in the Odesa, Mykolaiv (Russian: Nikolaev), and Zaporizhzhia (Russian: Zaporozhe) Oblasts, and were home to more than 150,000 people.[30]

In September 1941, approximately 60,000 Germans were deported from Crimea to Kazakhstan and to the Ural region.[31] A year later, they were followed by smaller groups of Germans and stateless persons removed from Krasnodar Krai and Rostov Oblast (encompassing Germans, Greeks, Italians, Romanians, and Crimean Tatars).[32] With the arrival of the German troops, the remaining Black Sea Germans were brought under the control of the Nazi authorities, who used this group for the aims of NS settlement policy or for the "Germanization" of other occupied areas.[33] In 1944, the German retreat forced the former Soviet subjects to follow the withdrawing *Wehrmacht* troops to Ger-

25 N° 2.69, 210–11; N° 2.71, 212; N° 2.72, 213–14.

26 Detlef Brandes, "Einwanderung und Entwicklung der Kolonien," in *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Rußland,* ed. Gerd Stricker (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1997), 71.

27 Brandes, 91.

28 The Crimean ASSR was part of the RSFSR (Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic).

29 Dmitrii Riabushkin, "Krym," in *Regiony Ukrainy: Khronika i rukovoditeli,* ed. Kimitaka Macuzato, vol. 3, *Krym i Nikolaevskaia oblast* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center Hokkaido Univ., 2009), 18.

30 Meir Buchsweiler, *Die Volksdeutschen in der Ukraine zwischen den Weltkriegen und zu Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs* (Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1986), 1–2.

31 N° 3.21, "Spravka zam. nachalnika otdela spetspereselenii NKVD M. V. Konradova o chislennosti nemtsev, evakuirovannykh iz Krymskoi ASSR," ca. September 11, 1941, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 325.

32 N° 3.75, 387–88.

33 Alfred Eisfeld and Vladimir Martynenko, "Filtration und operative Erfassung der ethnischen Deutschen in der Ukraine durch die Organe des Inneren und der Staatssicherheit während des Zweiten Weltkriegs und in der Nachkriegszeit," *Nordost-Archiv* XXI (2012): 104–81.

many. After victory they were "repatriated" by the Soviet occupation force to the USSR, mainly to Siberia, the Kazakh SSR, and the Komi ASSR, to join Germans who had been deported to labor camps after being sentenced to "special settlement."[34] They were released from these prison-like colonies in the course of the "Thaw" after Stalin's death. However, the deported Germans were refused the right of freedom of residence until Gorbachev's rule. He initiated their rehabilitation when he granted them the status of politically repressed victims in the early 1990s.[35]

4 Italians

Since the end of the eleventh century, Venetian and Genoese merchants lived in places like Bosporos, Sudak, Caffa, and others. Even after the Ottoman invasion and ensuing destruction in the fifteenth century, Italians could survive in the peninsula.[36] At the end of the nineteenth century, there remained some hundred persons in the Taurida und Kherson Governorates.[37] In the context of World War II, Italians fell victim to deportations at various times, first in January 1942, when ca. 500 Italians were banished from Kerch and resettled in Akmolinsk Oblast.[38] Together with the Crimean Tatars, the last remaining Italians also had to leave the peninsula in the autumn of 1944.[39]

5 Crimean Tatars

Turko-Tatar nomads had been living in the Crimean Peninsula since the Middle Ages. They formed the largest group among the subjects of the Crimean Khanate, which emerged as an Ottoman vassal state after the decline of the Tatar Golden Horde in the late fifteenth century. In the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca 1774, the Ottoman sultan renounced his suzerainty over the Khanate, which was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1783 and 1792. The colonization of the entire region was characterized by an ongoing decrease in the Tatar population, whilst an influx of colonists from the inner Russian governorates, the Balkans, and German lands changed the ethnic composition of the conquered peninsula. This is one major reason why the Crimean ASSR, founded in October 1921, was inhabited by more than 390,000 Russians (51.5 percent of the entire population), Jews and Krymchaks (7 percent), Germans (5.9 percent), Greeks (3.5 per-

34 Eisfeld and Martynenko, 166–70.
35 Eisfeld and Martynenko, 179.
36 Valerii E. Vozgrin, *Istoricheskie sudby krymskikh tatar* (Moscow: Mysl, 1992) 119–24.
37 *Die Nationalitäten des Russischen Reiches in der Volkszählung von 1897. B: Ausgewählte Daten zur sozio-ethnischen Struktur des Russischen Reiches – Erste Auswertungen der Kölner NFR-Datenbank*, ed. Henning Bauer, Andreas Kappeler, and Brigitte Roth (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1991), 238.
38 "Prilozhenie 2," in Eisfeld and Martynenko, "Filtration," 793.
39 Rudolf A. Mark, "Die Deportation der Krimtataren," *Nordost-Archiv* XXI (2012): 208.

cent), Bulgarians (1.7 percent), and Armenians (1.6 percent), while Poles, Karaims, Estonians, and "Tsigany" (Roma) numbered less than 1 percent each, with the Crimean Tatars forming the largest minority, constituting 25.9 percent of the population.[40]

In May 1944, after the withdrawal of the German occupation force, the GKO (State Committee of Defense) issued a resolution to remove all the Crimean Tatars from the peninsula to settle them in Uzbekistan and distant districts of the RSFSR. Thus, some 191,044 people were evicted, 151,600 of whom were shipped to Uzbekistan while 40,000 Tatars were banned to different places in the RSFSR.[41]

However, the exact number of Crimean Tatars deported has yet to be established. Most analysts of the issue state numbers running from 190,000 to 210,000 persons. The latter number includes 9,000 demobilized Crimean Tatars of the Soviet army, who had to join their families in the special settlements assigned to them. In early 1940, the Crimean Tatars in the peninsula had encompassed 218,179 persons, or 19.36 percent of the total population.[42] These figures are in accordance with those stated by the Soviet authorities as well as with those used by non-Soviet historians.[43]

However, quite a number of Crimean Tatars deserted to the invading German forces when the Soviet troops evacuated the peninsula. Moreover, the German occupation regime forcefully shipped thousands of Crimean Tatars into the Reich to work there as "Ostarbeiter" in agricultural and industrial plants.[44] At the same time, in 1942 the German High Command recruited a Crimean Tatar Legion consisting of 20,000 soldiers to serve as reserve policemen.[45] However, according to other calcula-

40 Riabushkin, "Krym," 18.

41 N° 3.152, "Telegramma zam. Narkoma NKGB B. Z. Kobulova i zam. Narkoma NKVD I. A. Serova Narkomu NKVD L. P. Berii ob okonchanii operatsii po vyseleniiu Krymskikh tatar," May 20, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 501–2; N° 3.153, "Donesenie Narkoma NKVD L. P. Berii I. V. Stalinu i V. M. Molotovu ob okonchanii operatsii po vyseleniiu Krymskikh tatar," May 20, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 502; Polian, *Against Their Will*, 152.

42 Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansings*, 111; Riabushkin, "Krym," 18.

43 "Iz dokladnoi zapiski Narkomu vnutrennykh del L. Berii, 22 aprelia 1944 g.," in N. F. Bugai, "'Pogruzheny v eshelony i otpravleny k mestam poselenii': L. Beriia–I. Stalinu," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 1 (1991): 151; Ismail I. Aliev, *Etnicheskie repressii* (Moscow: RadioSoft, 2009), 217; D. M. Ediev, *Demograficheskie poteri deportirovannykh narodov SSSR* (Stavropol: Izd. StGAU "Agrus" et al., 2003), 242; Refat I. Kurtiev, ed., *Deportatsiia Krymskikh tatar 18 maia 1944 goda: Kak eto bylo* (Simferopol: Izdat. Odzhak, 2004), 6; Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätenpolitik*, 139; Ann Sheehy and Bohdan Nahaylo, "The Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans and Meskhetians: Soviet Treatment of Some National Minorities," Minority Rights Group, Report No 6, Third Edition, London, 1980, 8.

44 Brian Glyn Williams, *The Crimean Tatars: The Diaspora Experience and the Forging of a Nation* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 381; Gulnara Bekirova, *"My videli ad na zemle…": K 70-letiiu deportatsii Krymskotatarskogo naroda* (Kiev: Izd. "Stilos", 2014), 112.

45 Brian Glyn Williams, "The Hidden Ethnic Cleansing of Muslims in the Soviet Union: The Exile and the Repatriation of the Crimean Tatars," *Journal of Contemporary History* 37, no. 3 (2002): 328; Joachim Hoffmann, *Die Ostlegionen 1941–1943: Turkotataren, Kaukasier und Wolgafinnen im deutschen Heer* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1976), 39–49; G. Bekirova, *Piv stolittia oporu: Krymski tatary vid vyhnannia do povernennia (1941–1991 roky). Narys politychnoi istorii. Predmova Mustafy Dzhemilieva, pisliamova Refata Chubarova* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2017), 48–49; "Tagebuch A.O.K. (Armeeoberkommando) 11 Abt. Quartiermeis-

tions, only 10,000, that is, 5 percent of the Crimean Tatar population, collaborated with the German occupiers.[46] And it stands to reason that many persons who had collaborated with the occupation forces left Crimea 1944 in the course of the German retreat from the peninsula. According to Soviet sources, 20,000 Crimean Tatars joined the withdrawing German forces.[47] Therefore the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, L. P. Beria, reported to Stalin on May 10, 1944 on first measures taken against Crimean Tatars and proposed the forced relocation of all Crimean Tatars because they had "defected from the Red Army and fought against the Soviet Union with a weapon in hand,"[48] as he put it. At the same time, some 6,000 Tatars fit for military service were called up to the Red Army, whereas a special contingent of 5,000 became forced workers in the coal mining company *Moskvougol.*[49]

6 Deportation and the Special Settlement Regime

Since research on and descriptions of the deportations were restricted in the Soviet era, it was only after the USSR came to an end that studies based on archival research were published. The Soviet authorities not only monopolized history but also attempted to control memory. Therefore, in addition to other reasons, contemporary researchers cannot draw on personal memories of the deportees, but on so-called "postmemories." These "are distinguished from memory by generational distance and from history by personal connection," as established by recent analysis.[50]

From June 18 through 20, 1944, the Crimean Tatars—the majority children, woman, invalids, and the elderly—were rounded up by ca. 30,000 "fighters and officers of the

ter 2 mit 19 Anlagen (G 27-G 45) 14.–15.09.1942 (Bericht der Einsatzgruppe D des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei (SD) über das Ergebnis der Freiwilligenwerbung, die Aushebung und die gemachten Erfahrungen; Stand 15.02.1942," in *Sewastopol, Krim: Dokumente – Quellen – Materialien – Zitate; ein Arbeitsbuch*, ed. Hans-Rudolf Neumann (Regensburg: S. Roderer Verlag, 1998), 3:1392–1406.

46 Karl Heinz Roth and Jan-Peter Abraham, *Reemtsma auf der Krim: Tabakproduktion und Zwangsarbeit unter der deutschen Besatzungsherrschaft 1941–1944* (Hamburg: Edition Nautilius, 2011), 235.

47 Williams, *The Crimean Tatars*, 382.

48 N° 3.147, "Pismo narkoma NKVD L. P. Berii I. V. Stalinu o tselesoobraznosti deportatsii Krymskikh tatar v Uzbekistan," May 10, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 496. Kerstin S. Jobst, *Geschichte der Krim: Iphigenie und Putin auf Tauris* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 184–287, provides a critical assessment of the issue and recognition of the Tatars' part in the war against the *Wehrmacht.*

49 N° 3.152, "Telegramma zam. narkoma NKGB B. Z. Kobulova i zam. narkoma NKVD I. A. Serova narkomu NKVD L. P. Berii ob okonchanii operatsii po vyseleniiu krymskikh tatar," May 20, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 502.

50 Greta Lynn Uehling, *Beyond Memory: The Crimean Tatars' Deportation and Return* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 84; Aurélie Campana, "La mobilisation des Tatars de Crimée pour leur réhabilitation: entre légalisme et rhétorique victimaire," *Raisons Politiques* 30, no. 2 (2008): 91.

NKVD [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs]."[51] The deportees had to get ready for transport within less than an hour, and hence most of them were unable to take food and appropriate clothing for the shipment. They had to board wagons that had been used as cattle trucks. These were dirty, unhygienic, overcrowded, with inadequate sanitation. Dead bodies were handled like waste and disposed accordingly, i. e., thrown in ditches during train stops.[52]

The transport was a harrowing experience for those affected. According to the NKVD report, 191 people died, a figure which seems unbelievable given the circumstances of the transport and the observation of eyewitnesses. The literature reports 7,890 deaths, which would have been equivalent to 4.1 percent of the deportees.[53]

The Crimean Tatars, who were mainly deported to the Uzbek SSR, were given the status of special settlers. This made them second-class Soviet citizens living under a punitive regime. They had to live in special settlement camps surrounded by barbed wire and, moreover, they were obliged to do "socially useful work"—meaning hard labor in various branches of industry. Any violation of the regime imposed on the deportees was severely punished. It was only after Stalin's death that the special settlements were abolished in 1956. Since the deportees were still needed as a labor force in the exile areas, they, like the Germans and the Meskhetians, were prevented from returning to their home regions. It was not until the late1980s and Gorbachev's rehabilitation policy that they finally were allowed to resettle their Crimean homelands. There, however, they were not welcomed with open arms. In the course of forty-five years, their peninsula had become home to Slavic people who had moved there from various parts of the Soviet Union.

In addition to the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, from May–June 1944 some 12,242 Bulgarians, 15,040 Greeks, 9,621 Armenians, 1,119 Germans, and 3,654 other "foreigners" were banished from Crimea.[54] The last group included 3,531 Greeks, 105 Turks, and sixteen Iranians with expired passports.[55] The majority of these deportees were destined for settlement in various oblasts of the Kazakh SSR or Fergana Oblast in the Uzbek SSR. Others were transferred to oblasts of the RSFSR or to the Bashkir

51 N° 3.166, "Predstavlenie narkoma NKVD L. P. Berii o nagrazhdenii uchastnikov operatsii po vyseleniiu Krymskikh tatar i predstavitelei drugikh natsionalnostei s territorii Kryma," July 5, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii,* 518.

52 Kurtiev, *Deportatsiia*, 41; Mark, "Die Deportation," 209–10.

53 Gulnara Bekirova, *Krymskotatarskaia problema v SSSR (1944–1991*) (Simferopol: Odzhak, 2004), 29–30; Timur Sh. Dagzhi, *Stalinskii genotsid i etnotsid krymsko-tatarskogo naroda: Dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii* (Simferopol: Simferopolskaia Gorodskaia Tip., 2008), 48.

54 Polian, *Against Their Will*, 153.

55 N° 3.161,"Soobshchenie PO 'VCh' zam. narkoma NKVD I. A. Serova narkomu NKVD L. P. Berii o zavershenii operatsii po vyseleniiu iz Kryma grekov, bolgar, armian, a takzhe inostrannykh poddannykh," June 28, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii,* 512–13.

ASSR, where they were employed as a labor force in the agricultural sector and in industrial enterprises.[56]

In 1949 a report of the second department of the Soviet Ministry of Home Affairs listed more than 30,000 people representing fifty-eight nationalities who had been banished from Crimea and adjacent regions in the course of the resettlement of Germans. Among them we find, besides the ethnic groups already mentioned: Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Balts, Jews, Austrians, Abazins, Hungarians, Czechs, Adygei, and many others.[57]

7 Meskhetians, Kurds, Khemshids, and Other Nationalities

"In order to improve the conditions for the defense of the state border in the area of the Georgian SSR"[58] in November 1944, 91,095 Meskhetians,[59] Kurds, and Khemshids[60] —according to other sources some 90,000 to 116,000 people—were banished from the Georgian-Turkish border and deported to the Kazakh, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz SSRs.[61] However, among the 25 trains dispatched from Georgia were—for reasons that are unclear —two railway cars transporting Roma,[62] and beside them were shipped local Turkmens and the small group of Turkic Karapapaks.[63] As the result of an organizational

56 N° 3.175, "Pismo narkoma NKVD L. P. Berii i V. Stalinu o tselesoobraznosti deportatsii bolgar, grekov i armian iz Kryma", May 29, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 508–9; N° 3.158, "Postanovlenie GOKO N° 5984ss O vyselenii s territorii Krymskoi ASSR bolgar, grekov i armian," June 2, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 510.

57 N°105, "Spravka o kolichestve lits drugikh natsionalnostei, nakhodiashchikhsia na spetsposelenii, vyselennykh s nemtsami, s vyselentsami Kavkaza, Kryma, no ne vkhodiashchikh v sostav etikh kontingentov," December 31, 1949, in *Deportatsiia narodov Kryma: Dokumenty, fakty, kommentarii*, ed. F. Bugai (Moscow: INSAN, 2002), 114.

58 Quoted in Pietzonka, *Ethnisch-territoriale Konflikte*, 117.

59 Meskhetians is the term widely used in the Province of Meskhetia or in the Adjarian ASSR in Georgia. The majority of the Meskhetian Turks in Turkey refer to themselves as "Ahiska Turks"; Andrej Khanzhin, "Durable Solutions for Meshketian Turks: The Issue Revisited," *European Yearbook of Minority Issues* 4 (2004/2005): 496.

60 Ca. 9,000 turkicized Armenians settled next to Meskhetians and Kurds near the Turkish border. More than 10,000 lived on Turkish territory, Simon, *Nationalismus und Nationalitätenpolitik*, 275; Aleksandr M. Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War*, trans. George Saunders (New York: Norton, 1978), 11.

61 N° 3.176, "Dokladnaia zapiska narkoma NKVD L. P. Berii I. V. Stalinu, V. M. Molotovu, G. M. Malenkovu o provedenii operatsii po pereseleniiu turok, kurdov i khemshidov iz pogranichnykh raionov gruzinskoi SSR," November 28, 1944, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 534; N° 3.181, "Spravka o kolichestve spetspereselentsev drugikh natsionalnostei, ne kchodiashchikh v sostav semei spetspereselentsev iz Gruzii," March 7, 1952, in Pobol and Polian, *Stalinskie deportatsii*, 538; Polian, *Against Their Will*, 155.

62 Polian, *Against Their Will*, 155; N° 3.181, 538.

63 Turkicized Kurds.

error, they were joined by minor contingents of Turks, Cherkess, Abkhaz, Avars, and Lazi from Ajaria.[64] According to some sources, the deportees numbered 200,000. At the beginning of the deportation, they had been told that they were being evacuated temporarily in view of the approaching *Wehrmacht.*[65] After the war, some of the deported groups were allowed to return to their homesteads.

In the May and summer of 1949, the cleansing of the Black Sea coast was continued. Greek citizens, stateless Greeks, small groups of Armenian Dashnaks,[66] and former Turkish and Greek passport holders were banished from the territories of the Transcaucasian SSRs as well as from the Ukrainian and Russian Black Sea coast. The exiled group probably encompassed more than 45,000 people.[67]

8 Reasons for the Deportations

There were many reasons for the deportations and the shifts in peoples. With regard to Crimea, in early 1944, the Soviet leadership seemed to have considered a resettlement of the Crimean Tatars and their replacement by Jewish people, in order to create a Jewish Autonomous or a Jewish Soviet Republic in the peninsula. However, for practical reasons, the idea swiftly lost its appeal.

In the case of the Crimean Tatars, alleged betrayal and collaboration with the German occupying power played a role. It was a widespread phenomenon during the war —and not least a question of survival in the face of ubiquitous violence and death threats on the part of the invaders. The Russian Germans and the Crimean Tatars can serve as examples here. Moreover, the German occupying forces, the *Wehrmacht* and National Socialists organizations had committed acts of genocide, killing Jews, Krymchaks,[68] and Roma,[69] crimes the Soviet leadership could use for accusations of collaboration. In addition, alleged criminal activities such as smuggling on the Caucasian borders or the formation of armed gangs[70] were used to justify the deportation of smaller nationalities and ethnic groups such as Meskhetians, Kurds, Karapapaks, and related peoples. Accusations of kinship relations across borders with the Turks and al-

64 A socialist-nationalist party that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century advocating national-cultural autonomy. After the Civil War, its partisans had to surrender to Bolshevist rule in Armenia.

65 Sheehy and Nahaylo, *The Crimean Tatars*, 24.

66 A socialist-nationalist party that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century advocating national-cultural autonomy. After the Civil War, its partisans had to surrender to Bolshevist rule in Armenia.

67 N° 4.27, 671; Polian, *Against Their Will*, 169.

68 Tatarized Jews or Tatars following the Mosaic covenant.

69 Norbert Kunz, *Die Krim unter deutscher Herrschaft (1941–1944): Germanisierungsutopie und Besatzungsrealität* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2005), chapter 7; Rudolf Loewental, "The Extinction of the Krimchaks in World War II," *The American Slavic and East European Review* 10, no. 2 (1951): 130–36.

70 N° 3.176, 534; Polian, *Against Their Will*, 155.

leged intentions to emigrate were also made against these peoples as well as against the Khemshids. With the forced relocation, the Soviet leadership allegedly sought to eliminate recruiting fields of informants, spies, and potential collaborators for the Turkish intelligence services.[71]

However, more crucial to the Soviet leadership were intentions to meet economic targets and serve political-strategic interests via this policy. The mobilization of the Soviet population for the armed struggle against the German aggressor deprived the most important economic sectors of labor on an enormous scale. Moreover, in order to preserve them from destruction by the enemy, numerous companies and production plants had been evacuated to the east and to Central Asia via the Volga before the beginning of the war. In addition, existing plants were expanded and new production facilities were constructed.

This eastward shift had already taken on enormous dimensions by 1943[72] and required corresponding labor power. Therefore, disposable, cheap labor,[73] such as that which deported Germans and Crimean Tatars would provide, was highly welcome in the new industrial areas, in the agricultural sector, and in various other economic zones.[74]

However, in the course of the war and in view of international developments, new considerations took precedence for the Soviet leadership. With regard to the Black Sea and Crimea, these pertained to Soviet prospects of acquiring the status of a Great Power state but also to issues of safeguarding border areas the possession of which could be menaced by claims of adjacent countries. So, at the beginning of 1944, Stalin and his accomplices seemed to have envisaged a resettlement of the Crimean Tatars and their replacement by Jewish people, in order to create a Jewish Autonomous or a Jewish Soviet Republic in the peninsula. However, for practical reasons, the idea swiftly lost its appeal.[75]

To be sure, no less important were political-strategic interests with regard to Turkey and the Western powers, then competing with one another for dominance in the Mediterranean region. Atatürk's successor, İsmet İnönü, had signed a treaty of friendship with Germany in 1941, which was endorsed until the summer of 1944. At the same time, contacts developed between Turkey, the United States, and Great Britain were regarded by Stalin with growing suspicion. It was fuelled by reports about the Turkish government laying claim to Soviet territories stretching from Crimea to the Caucasus

71 N° 3.176, 534.

72 Manfred Hildermeier, *Geschichte der Sowjetunion 1917–1991: Entstehung und Niedergang des ersten sozialistischen Staates* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998), 636–37.

73 Frederick Kagan, "The Evacuation of Soviet Industry in the Wake of 'Barbarossa': A Key to Soviet Victory," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 8, no. 2 (1995): 393; John Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941–1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (London: Longman, 1991), 60–61.

74 Mark, "Die Deportation," 224–25.

75 Bekirova, *My videli ad,* 9.

and Central Asia.[76] Finally, in November 1945, Moscow terminated its treaty of neutrality with Ankara of 1925, arguing the convention no longer complied with the profound changes that had occurred during World War II. Soviet calls for the cession of areas in the South Caucasus and for bases at the straits followed suit.[77] They determined Stalin's policy towards Turkey in the years to come. Stalin aimed to control the Black Sea coasts and the Turkish straits to achieve a revision of the Montreux Convention that would enable him to establish the Soviet Union as a Mediterranean power. Moreover, between the wars, international relations within the Black Sea region were critical insofar as clarification of interstate border lines "lagged behind other parts of the world."[78] The Montreux Convention of 1936, the strategic competition of the Great Powers in the Middle East, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Balkans added to the region's significance in the context of British and Soviet imperial rivalry for control over the Turkish straits.[79]

9 Turks and Jews in Bulgaria

As mentioned above, before World War II Bulgarians had been settling widely spread on a territory stretching from Crimea to the western littoral of the Black Sea. During the war, most of these Bulgarians fell victim to ethnic cleansing. This policy was continued after the war.

However, resettlements as means of consolidating crucial peripheries or creating ethnic homogeneous states were not restricted to the Soviet Union. Having eliminated its political opponents and established Bulgaria as a communist republic similar to the USSR, the country's Communist leadership under Valko Chervenkov executed a policy of societal and ethnic homogenization, the minorities being subject to systematic assimilation, repressions, and threats of expulsion.[80] As a loyal Stalinist and follower of the Soviet model, he initiated purges of the party and a profound transformation of state and society. This includes the nationalization of land and the collectivization of agriculture.

The Turkish population, comprising ca. 625,500 people, formed the largest minority in Communist Bulgaria. They lived mostly in closed communities and differed from the majority population by religion, language, and cultural diversity.[81] This may have been

76 N° 91, "Kopiia, 14 sentiabria 1945 g.," in Bugai, *Deportatsiia*, 100; Dufaud, "La déportation," 8.

77 Klaus Kreiser and Christoph K. Neumann, *Kleine Geschichte der Türkei,* 2nd edition (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, jr., 2008), 393.

78 King, *Black Sea,* 216.

79 Süleyman Seydi, *The Turkish Straits and the Great Powers: From the Montreux Convention to the Early Cold War, 1936–1947* (Istanbul: The Issis Press, 2003), 150.

80 Hans-Joachim Härtel and Roland Schönfeld, *Bulgarien: Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1998), 213.

81 Härtel and Schönfeld, 214.

regarded as an obstacle to social integration and Communist rule. For these or other reasons, on the basis of a Bulgarian-Turkish treaty of 1925, regulating the emigration of Turks, 154,000—according to other sources up to 220,000—Turks were forced to emigrate to Turkey after agreements with Ankara in 1950 and 1951.[82] Most of the expulsed came from Southern Dobruja, which in 1940 was transferred by Romania to Bulgaria, whose possession of this territory had been confirmed by the Paris Peace Treaty.[83]

Mutatis mutandis, this also seems to have been the case regarding the Jewish citizens of Bulgaria. They, too, fell victim to growing pressure from Communist rule. At the same time, Zionism grew among the Jews who had survived the Holocaust and was exploited by the leadership in Sofia for its own ends. Hence the Jewish population of about 45,000 people was induced to emigrate to Israel, with the Bulgarian government supporting this exodus,[84] although it could be said that this suited the interests of both parties.

There were many reasons for the deportations and the shifts in peoples in the Black Sea region in the context and aftermath of World War II. As mentioned above, resettlements were accomplished for internal reasons as well as in view of international politics. The Soviet leadership under Stalin strived to secure newly annexed territories by way of eliminating national elites but also by forced ethnical homogenization. This also pertains to Bulgaria insofar as the seizure of power by the Communists was followed by a policy of ethnic cleansing. The new regime had to create a fitting societal environment in order to ease its installation.

82 Gotthold Rhode, "Die südosteuropäischen Staaten von der Neuordnung nach dem I. Weltkrieg bis zur Ära der Volksdemokratien," in *Handbuch der europäischen Staaten*, ed. Theodor Schieder, vol. 7, *Europa im Zeitalter der Weltmächte* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979), 1264; *Lexikon der Vertreibungen: Deportation, Zwangsumsiedlung und ethnische Säuberung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Detlef Brandes, Holm Sundhaussen, and Stefan Troebst (Vienna: Böhlau 2010), 663–64.

83 Härtel and Schönfeld, *Bulgarien*, 199, 215; King, *Black Sea,* 228.

84 Rhode, "Die südosteuropäischen Staaten," 1265; Yulian Konstantinov, "Strategies for Sustaining a Vulnerable Identity: The Case of the Bulgarian Pomaks," in *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State,* ed. Hugh Poulton and Suha Taji-Farouki (London: Hurst Company, 1997), 47.