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YEARBOOK  
5768 (2007/2008)**

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**EURO-ASIAN JEWISH YEARBOOK – 5768  
(2007/2008)**

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## THE KRYMCHAKS: CURRENT STATE OF THE COMMUNITY<sup>1</sup>

Mikhail Kizilov  
(Simferopol' – Oxford)

### **Introduction**

*The article by Mikhail Kizilov is dedicated to the vanishing community of the Crimean Jews, a.k.a. the Krymchaks. Today the Krymchaks are scattered around many countries of the world. As a consequence of assimilation and dejudaization processes they have almost entirely lost the peculiar ethnic and cultural features which made them attractive to many researchers in the course of the last few decades. The author of the article, a professional historian who received his doctoral degree at Oxford, provides an objective and unbiased analysis of the current state of the Krymchak community. The main problem of studying the history, ethnography and language of the Krymchaks lies in the fact that today this topic is analysed by members of the Krymchak community who did not receive a systematic historical education. As a consequence, they come to the “wrong conclusions regarding the ethnic history” of their own community. Mikhail Kizilov offers us a comprehensive survey of the topic and uses varied (for such a comparatively short article) bibliographic material, including unpublished sources.*

*In my opinion, the scholar is right when he supposes that the community was formed in the late Middle Ages / early modern times on the basis of common Tatar cultural and linguistic background. He somewhat ignores the fact that this process continued also in the course of the 19th century through the active absorption of the Jewish emigrants coming to the Crimea from the western provinces of Russian empire which were included into the Pale of Settlements. This is why the community became many times larger: from around 800 souls in*



*1783 to almost 7000 souls in 1913 (estimation). The author is absolutely right when he emphasizes the artificial nature and the late character (first half of the 19th century) of the ethnonym “Krymchak” in the context of the general history of the Crimean Rabbanites. Especially interesting is his analysis of different concepts of the ethnic origin of the Krymchaks which were formed in the post-war period and were developed in the 1970s / early 21st century. These concepts are inseparably connected with the historical and political processes of the Soviet and post-Soviet era. It was during this period that, on the one hand, numerous most interesting historical-linguistic studies appeared, and on the other hand, various theories-“mythologemes” emerged. Disintegration of the Soviet Union, dispersion and emigration of the Krymchaks to Israel, USA and Germany, passing away of representatives of older generation who kept traditions and language – all this does not provide any optimism regarding the future of the community which dwindles before our very eyes...*

*I would like to use the opportunity to thank Mikhail Kizilov for his objective study, analysis of the problem, and optimism regarding “the ethno-cultural renaissance of this most interesting community.”*

**Mikhail Gurdzhi, Arad, Israel  
May 2008**

### A survey of the history of the community

Modern ethnography defines the Krymchaks as an ethnic entity formed as amalgam of several Jewish groups which settled in the Crimea in the first centuries A.D., in the Middle Ages, and in early modern time. “The Krymchaks” is a very late and in many respects artificial term which appeared in the first half of the 19th century, soon after the annexation of the Crimea by the Russian Empire (1783). This term was invented to designate the local Turkic-speaking Rabbanite Jews who were distinctly different from the rest of the Jewish population which began settling in the Crimea after 1783. One of the Krymchaki leaders, Isaac Kaya (1887–1956)<sup>2</sup>, explained the meaning of this term as follows: “The Krymchaks represent a special group of Jews who live in the Crimean peninsula since ancient times and in many respects adopted Tatar culture”<sup>3</sup>.

The Krymchak community was formed in the Crimea from the late Middle Ages through early modern times by emigrants of various Jewish communities of Europe, Asia Minor, the Caucasus and the Near East. Among these emigrants there were not only the Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazic Jews, but also Graeco-, Ladino-, Tat-, and Arab-speaking Jews from Byzantium (Ottoman Empire), Spain, Italy, the Caucasus, Russia, and some Oriental countries. Surnames of modern Krymchaks are eloquent witnesses to the varied geographic origin of Krymchak settlers. Thus, for example, the surnames Berman, Gutman and Ashkenazi (and its Krymchaki form “Achkinazi”) belonged to Yiddish-speaking emigrants from Europe and Russia; Abraben, Piastro, Lombrozo and Trevgoda – to Sephardic Jews from Italy and Spain; Bakshi, Stamboli, Izmirli, Tokatly, and Mizrahi – to Jews coming from the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim East. The surnames “Lekhno” and “Varshavskii” belonged to emigrants from Poland, “Gota” and “Weinberg” – from Germany, “Gurdzhi” – from the Caucasus, etc. Many surnames attested the Crimean origin or professions of their owners: “Mangupli” means “from Mangup” (a medieval stronghold in the Crimea), “Demerdzhi” – “smith,” while “Taukchi” – “poultry farmer.” About 40 percent of the Krymchaki surnames are derivatives from Hebrew (e.g., Peisah, Purim, Rabenu, Levi, Bentovim, Ra-failov, etc.).<sup>4</sup>

The Krymchak community became a unified community formed out of members of different Jewish *'edot* perhaps only in the seventeenth through the eighteenth centuries. Furthermore, ethnic processes of acculturation/ amalgamation within the community continued also in the nineteenth century. Starting from medieval times the Crimean Rabbanites, as well as their neighbours, non-Talmudic Crimean Karaites, were under the strong Tatar influence which, however, was limited only to the sphere of culture, language, and every day life and customs. Especially important was a linguistic aspect: the Crimean Rabbanites (Krymchaks) adopted the Krymchak dialect (or, rather, ethnolect) of the Crimean Tatar language as the language of their every day use. Starting from the nineteenth century some Krymchak authors (apparently following leaders of the Karaite community) sometimes called the Krymchak ethnolect “Cagatay/Dzhagatay language.” This tendency became stronger after the war since in the period of Stalin’s deportations it was dangerous to acknowledge the fact that the Krymchaks spoke the Tatar language. This is why after the war and after the disintegration of the Soviet Union many Krymchak leaders claimed that the Krymchaks spoke “Krymchak” or “Cagatay” language<sup>5</sup>. These claims, however, merely demonstrate changes in the ethnic identity of the Krymchaks and have nothing to do with linguistics. Similar ideological (and not scholarly) reasons forced many Crimean Karaites and Turkologists to claim that the Crimean Karaites spoke some sort of a separate “Karaim language,” whereas in fact they certainly spoke an ethnolect of Crimean Tatar<sup>6</sup>. In fact, Dzhagatay (Cagatay), the official language of the Golden Horde is considerably different from the Krymchak and Karaim ethnolects of Crimean Tatar<sup>7</sup>. Majority of modern linguists came to the conclusion that in spite of a number of phonological and lexical differences, the Krymchak ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language cannot be considered a separate Turkic language<sup>8</sup>. This fact was certainly realized by Krymchak authors as well: Nisim Levi Chakhchir, for example, called this language “the Tatar language which we use among ourselves”<sup>9</sup>. The Krymchaks who took part in the census of 1913 also called their native language “Tatar” or “Crimean-Tatar”<sup>10</sup>. Isaac Kaya, the author of numerous primers and manuals of the Crimean Tatar language and Krymchak ethnolect, also called the Krymchak’s spoken language “Tatar”<sup>11</sup>.

This is why in my article I shall call the Krymchak’s Turkic language “the Krymchak ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language” (or, in abridged form, “the Krymchak ethnolect”). From the eighteenth through the twentieth century this ethnolect was used to compose secular and religious works,

fairy-tales, songs, and verses; furthermore, the Krymchaks also translated a number of sacred texts from Hebrew into the Krymchak ethnolect. In spite of the active use of the Krymchak ethnolect for literary purposes, Hebrew remained the main language of liturgy, prayers, correspondence, tombstone inscriptions, and scholarly treatises perhaps until the beginning of the twentieth century. Some Krymchaks continued to use the Krymchak ethnolect and Hebrew characters even after the Second World War<sup>12</sup>.

In 1913 the Krymchak community carried out a community census. According to the census there were about five (or seven) thousand Krymchaks in the Russian Empire. Before the beginning of the Second World War there were about eight thousand Krymchaks. Majority of them lived in Simferopol, Karasubazar, Kerch, Theodosia, and Sevastopol<sup>13</sup>. In the Soviet period the Krymchaks began more actively using Russian, but still remembered their ethnolect. In interwar years the Krymchaks largely switched from the Hebrew font to Latin characters (a similar reform took place among the Crimean Tatars). At the same time the Soviet atheist regime closed the Krymchak synagogue (called by the Krymchaks also *qahal* or *qa'al*)<sup>14</sup>. In the interwar period most Krymchaks lived in Simferopol. At the end of the 1920s – early 1930s emigrants from Karasubazar founded two Krymchak kolkhozes – “Krymchak” and “Yeni Krymchak”<sup>15</sup>. The development of the Krymchak community in the Crimea was disrupted by the German occupation. About 70-80 percent of the Krymchaks were massacred by the Nazis while the “solution” of the “Jewish question” in the occupied Crimea. It seems that none other ethnic group which lived in the Soviet Union suffered as much as the Krymchaks<sup>16</sup>.

*Friends, we erred,  
We remained in the Crimea.  
We were sacrificed  
In the fields of the Crimea...  
Oh my people, is there any remedy  
Against our misfortune?  
It means that this is their destiny!  
Do not forget our misfortunate people  
Died from the hands of the soldiers...*

This is how these events are described in a folk song composed in the Krymchak ethnolect by an anonymous Krymchak author who apparently managed to survive the Holocaust in contrast to his brethren massacred by

the Nazis<sup>17</sup>. The Krymchak community never managed to recover from the tragedy. After the war there were 700–750 Krymchaks living in the Crimea; 2.000 lived in the whole of the Soviet Union in 1959, and only 1448 in 1989<sup>18</sup>. Thus, by the end of the 20th century the community turned out to be on the brink of extinction.

This article is dedicated to the analysis of the current state of the Krymchak community of the former USSR and other countries of the world. I pay special attention to the complicated problem of the ethnic identity of the Krymchaks, to the analysis of literature recently composed by Krymchak authors<sup>19</sup>, and to the future of this vanishing ethnic minority. This article was composed on the basis of written and ethnographic sources, and also on the series of interviews with members of the Krymchak communities of the Crimea, Russia, Israel, and America.

### **Current state of the Krymchak communities of the world in different countries**

According to our estimates there are about 1.200–1.500 Krymchaks in the world today (largely in the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea (Ukraine), Russia, Israel, and USA). The Crimean Krymchak community is perhaps the most interesting Krymchak *'edah*. Unfortunately, at the moment the Krymchak community in the **Crimea** is very small: according to the census of 2002 there were only 204 Krymchaks living here<sup>20</sup>. Since 1989, the life of the community is largely administered by the society “Krymchakhlar”. According to Igor Achkinazi, in 1992 the local Krymchaks tried to restore religious traditions of the Krymchaks and create a religious organization called “*Qahal ha-qodesh* according to the Caffa rite” – but they were not a success in this undertaking, apparently, having received little response from the members of the community<sup>21</sup>. From 1997 to 2002 the society “Krymchakhlar” was headed by V.M. Lombrozo (1943–2002)<sup>22</sup>. Since 2002 it is headed by Yuri Purim<sup>23</sup>. The society “Krymchakhlar” has its branches practically in all large Crimean towns. The society also organized a small ethnographic museum<sup>24</sup>. In spite of the fact that the museum houses some interesting objects, there is only one Krymchak manuscript (a collection of religious poetry) which is kept there at the moment. Unfortunately, most important objects which could be displayed there were lost during the Holocaust and after the war.

According to our estimates, there are only 2–3 Krymchak manuscripts which are kept in the Crimea today. Unfortunately, the rest of the

manuscript collections of the Krymchak folk poetry (the so-called *conka/dzhonka* (pl. *conkalar*)) seem to be lost<sup>25</sup>. The society “Krymchakhlar” publishes the almanac entitled “Krymchakhlar. Cultural Heritage of the Krymchaks”. The almanac includes materials related to the history, ethnography, and culture of the Krymchaks. Furthermore, the almanac also reprints Krymchak-related publications issued elsewhere; a part of the almanac is dedicated to the poetry and prose about the Krymchaks. In our opinion, the almanac is much more impressive than similar periodicals published by other ethnic minorities of the Crimea. Its editorial board and authors, not being historians or scholars, decided to collect all available memoirs relevant to Krymchak history from the 19th through the 20th century. Representatives of other Crimean ethnic societies often try to write the history of their peoples by themselves – which often makes their work highly unprofessional and biased. Among members of the community one should especially distinguish such interesting figures as the historian Igor Achkinazi (1954–2006)<sup>26</sup>, philologist and artist David Rebi<sup>27</sup>, journalist and writer Mark Purim (Agatov). December, 11 is officially recognized by the Crimean Parliament the “Day of memory of the Krymchaks and Jews of the Crimea – victims of Nazism”. On that date the flag of the Autonomous Republic Crimea is officially flown at half-mast as a symbol of respect with regard to the Krymchaks and Ashkenazic Jews who perished during the Nazi executions from November 1941 until July 1942<sup>28</sup>.

There are quite a few Krymchak historical monuments in the territory of the Crimean peninsula today: three buildings of Krymchak synagogues (now called by the Krymchaks only *qa'al*)<sup>29</sup>, remnants of Krymchak cemeteries, Krymchak streets and alleys almost in every large Crimean town. Highly symbolical is also the site of the mass execution of the Krymchaks and Ashkenazic Jews at the 9<sup>th</sup> kilometre of the Theodosia road in the vicinity of Simferopol'<sup>30</sup>. In the Crimea the Krymchaks lived predominantly in Simferopol', Sevastopol', Eupatoria, Theodosia, and Kerch. Only one Krymchak, Yakov Mangupli, lives now in the traditional Krymchak centre, the town of Karasubazar (Belogorsk)<sup>31</sup>.

Many Krymchaks are patriots of the Crimea and Russia, many of them protest against the official subdivision of the Crimean peoples into “korennye” (lit. “rooted,” in the sense of “aboriginal, autochthonous”) and “prishlye” (i.e. “newcomers”)<sup>32</sup>. Unfortunately, at the moment, as a result of the atheist policy of the Soviet Union, the Krymchak community almost entirely lost its traditional culture. Not more than 5–7 Krymchaks in the Crimea and other countries and regions are capable to speak the Krymchak

ethnolect<sup>33</sup>. Furthermore, they have almost entirely lost their religious and ethnic traditions. The so-called *tqun*<sup>34</sup>, the rite dedicated to the memory of the Krymchaks who died from 1941 to 1942, remained perhaps the only ethnic and religious holiday which is still being observed by the Krymchaks. This rite was first performed in Simferopol' in 1945. On that day the Krymchaks from all of the Crimea get together (currently in the building of the "Krymchakhlar" society in Krylova Street), perform memorial service-*qadish*, sing ritual songs *pyzmon* (from Heb. *pizmon*), and also songs in the Krymchak ethnolect devoted to the tragic destiny of the massacred Krymchaks. Traditional Krymchak food is served during the performance. Tqun takes places twice a year, in the evening, first in July–August and for the second time – on December, 11 and 12. In the morning, irrespective of the weather, those who take part in the ceremony arrive to the 9<sup>th</sup> kilometre of the Theodosia road, to the memorial on the site of the execution of the Krymchaks and Ashkenazic Jews<sup>35</sup>.

The Krymchak community of **Russia** is comparatively large. More than a hundred Krymchaks live in Novorossiisk. First Krymchaks settled in this city apparently at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A large number of the Krymchaks moved to Novorossiisk in 1941, when some Krymchaks managed to escape from Nazi-occupied Kerch. According to oral communications, today the local Krymchaks do not maintain any organized community life.

Dispersed Krymchak families live in other Russian cities. There is a small community living in St. Petersburg. T.I. Trevgoda was its head until 2007<sup>36</sup>. A composer A. Bakshi and a singer L.S. Bakshi live in the capital of Russia, in Moscow. They have recently published a CD collection of traditional Krymchak songs<sup>37</sup>. Alexander Tkachenko, football player, defender of human rights, litterateur, director of the Russian PEN-Centre, also lived in Moscow until his untimely death in December 2007. A few days before his death he published a book "The Dream of a Krymchak, or Alienated Land" which represents a collection of short stories about the life and history of the Crimean Krymchaks.<sup>38</sup> V.I. Baginskaia, a poet and translator of poetry from the Krymchak ethnolect into Russian, lives in Krasnodar<sup>39</sup>.

Some Krymchaks live in **Abkhazia**. A small community was established in the town of Sukhumi in the second half of the nineteenth century. There were 152 Krymchaks living in Sukhumi in 1926. The community maintained close contacts with local (especially Georgian) Jews. Nevertheless, in the 1980s the local Krymchaks stopped celebrating tqun, visiting synagogues, performing circumcision, etc.<sup>40</sup>

There are about 200 Krymchaks in **Ukraine** (outside the Crimea).<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, because of the fact that they do not maintain any communal activity we do not have any data about their life.

The largest Krymchak community lives in **Israel**. According to some data, there are about 600–700 Krymchaks. Most of them are recent emigrants from the Crimea, St. Petersburg and Novorossiisk; among them one can meet such surnames as Gurdzhi, Dondo, Khondo, Chulak, Pesach, etc. The Krymchak community in *Erets Yisrael* was established at the end of the 19th century as a result of the activity of Hayyim Hizkiyahu Medini (1832–1904), the Krymchak enlightener and rabbi in Karasubazar from 1866 to 1899. Born in Jerusalem and invited to the Crimea from the Ottoman Empire, Medini is known as outstanding Jewish thinker, the author of the encyclopaedic work *Sedeh Hemed* in 12 volumes. A number of Krymchaks followed Medini after his departure to Hebron in 1899<sup>42</sup>. The next wave of the Krymchak resettlement to Palestine took place in 1921/1922. Many Krymchaks emigrated to Palestine in this period avoiding the famine and turmoil after the revolution in the Crimea. According to Dan Shapira, from the 1930s through the 1950s, in Hebrew, the term “Krymchak” meant as much as a “hard man who is doing physical work”. The Krymchak community in *Erets Yisrael* had its own synagogue in Tel Aviv which functioned according to Sephardic religious tradition until 1981.

In the 1990s the diminishing Krymchak community of Israel was reinforced by the emigrants from the former USSR. M. Chulak, an active member of the “Krymchaklar” society, having emigrated to Israel, tried to organize Krymchak repatriates into a community and celebrate tqun ceremonies. Unfortunately, at the moment the Krymchak community in Israel is not organized and does not maintain any community life. Mikhail Gurdzhi, the graduate of the History Faculty of Simferopol University, is perhaps the only Krymchak historian currently living in Israel. He is the author of several important articles on the history of the Krymchaks in the Crimea.<sup>43</sup>

Most members of the community prefer getting assimilated by local Israel culture and forget about their Krymchak origin. One may explain their unwillingness to preserve their ethnic identity by the fact that most of the Krymchak emigrants to Israel possessed virtually no knowledge about their ethnic and cultural traditions. Mixed marriages with local Jews was another major factor which promoted rapid assimilation of the community.

Krymchak emigration to **America** began during the First World War, in 1915, and continued until 1925. In 1920 these emigrants organized “The First Brotherhood of Crimean Jews of America”. Saadiah Mangupli was the



first president of the brotherhood; among its members one could find representatives of such families as Ashkenazi (Achkinazi), Mangupli, Rabeno, Hakhamov, Kokoz, Cohen, Tokatly, Purim and others. In 1938 and 1939 many Krymchaks emigrated to USA as a result of Arabic pogroms. At that moment the Krymchak community of America consisted of about 250 Krymchaks. Most Krymchaks managed to emigrate to USA thanks to the help of the family of Manya Ashkenazi<sup>44</sup>. The family of Ralph Bakshi was among those who emigrated from Palestine to America in 1939. Later Ralph Bakshi became one of the most important producers of cartoons<sup>45</sup>. A few Krymchak families emigrated to America after the war. In the 1940s the Brotherhood purchased a piece of land in the territory of Long Island and established there two Krymchak cemeteries. The local Krymchaks normally spoke the Krymchak ethnolect, English, Russian, and Yiddish<sup>46</sup>. They used the house on Saratoga Avenue in Brooklyn as a synagogue. The Brotherhood carried out philanthropic activity and collected money to help the Krymchaks in the Soviet Union, and the Jews in Israel and the Crimea. After the war the local community did not remain estranged from assimilation processes: most of them had mixed marriages with American Jews. Since the 1990s the office of the president of the Brotherhood is occupied by Israel Rubin (Rabeno). In his opinion, several hundred descendants of Krymchak emigrants are still living in America. Many of them do not have surnames of their ancestors, have no idea about Krymchak history and culture, and consider themselves American citizens of Jewish and/or Krymchak origin. Most American Krymchaks are well-educated people, physicians, teachers, etc. According to Israel Rubin, none of them remembers the Krymchak ethnolect, and only some – remember Russian<sup>47</sup>.

Dispersed Krymchak families live in other countries, such as Canada, Germany, etc.<sup>48</sup> Some readers may be excited to know that the dry cargo ship “Krymchakhlar”, which sails under Cambodia flag, belongs to “Sovfracht”. Krymchak D.Yu. Purim is the head of the assembly of directors of this organization<sup>49</sup>.

### **Problem of the ethnic identity of the Krymchaks**

As it has been shown above, the Krymchaks live in different countries of the world. Paradoxically, the Krymchaks have no unanimity of opinion about their ethnic history, origin, and identity. The identity of the American and Israel Krymchaks seems to be comparatively straightforward: they consider themselves either “Krymchaks of Jewish origin,” or “Jews of Krymchak origin”. Some of them prefer to forget about their Krymchak origin and identify

themselves with their larger ethnic environment (Jews in Israel; Jews and Americans in the USA). Others simply do not delve too deeply into the problem of their ethnic origin.

The identity of the Krymchaks living in the former USSR is much more convoluted. At the moment the community is divided into several different groups. One can distinguish several most important of them: followers of Jewish identity; protagonists of Turkic origin of the Krymchaks; “apathetic,” and “hesitant” ones. Followers of Jewish identity openly or secretly consider Krymchaks people being of Jewish origin and they take part in the activity of “Hesed”, “Sokhnut”, and other Jewish organizations.<sup>50</sup> Lev Kaya (1912-1988), son of the aforementioned Isaac Kaya, was perhaps the most active supporter of Jewish identity of the Krymchaks. Author of numerous hitherto unpublished works on the history of the Karaites and Krymchaks, Lev Kaya always considered himself a Jew-Krymchak and was sorry that he could not get proper religious education. “I am Jewish! – with emotion exclaimed he in his letter to Abram Torpusman. – I am not guilty that circumcision was the only thing that I managed to do. Furthermore, a few times I managed to put on a *tefilin*.”<sup>51</sup>

“Apathetic” Krymchaks normally prefer not to think too much about their ethnic origin – even though they normally continue considering themselves to be Krymchaks and have no desire to forget about it. “Hesitant” ones do not have any particular views regarding the ethnic history of the Krymchaks. They know the arguments of the followers of “Jewish” and “Turkic” parties, but do not develop any homogenous opinion about the problem of the ethnic origin of the Krymchaks for themselves. “We ourselves do not know whence we came here [i.e., to the Crimea],” – this is how they answer the questions regarding the ethnic origin of the Krymchaks.

Views of the followers of the “Turkic theory” are especially interesting. Some of the Krymchaks (especially their intellectual and ideological leaders) are of the opinion that their people are the product of the long mixture of various (mostly Turkic) ethnic groups. The problem of presence of the Turkic element in the identity of the Krymchaks certainly deserves to be analysed in detail. Dejudaization processes among the Krymchaks and the mythologeme about their “Turkic” and “mixed autochthonous” origin are not new. Their roots go back to the most tragic period in the Krymchaks’ life, 1941/1942, when the community (first time in its history!) declared its non-Jewish origin in the petition directed to the Nazi administration in the occupied Crimea. As has been mentioned, in terms of their life-style and traditions the Krymchaks were very similar to the local Karaites. Their only dif-

ference was the Krymchaks' recognition of the Talmud and lack of the elaborated mythologeme about their non-Jewish origin. Among the Karaites such mythologeme existed approximately from the end of the nineteenth century. That is why in 1939 Nazi ideologists, with some unwillingness, accorded the Karaites the status of non-Semitic population. Having received the news about the salvation of the Karaites, who managed to trick the Nazis by "proving" their Turkic origin, the Kerch Krymchaks with Isaac Kaya as their head also decided to act. Like the Karaites, they tried to pose themselves as descendants of the Turkic Khazars, who accepted Judaism as their religion in medieval times. They submitted to the Nazi administration of the city several documents about the history of the Krymchaks which apparently attested their non-Jewish origin<sup>52</sup>. Unfortunately, this time the Nazis were not fooled by these pseudo-historic statements – most likely because of the fact that they already knew that the Karaites were the only "real" descendants of the Khazars. Nevertheless, it seems that these attempts to trick the Nazis, who invested some time to examine these claims, managed to postpone the immediate annihilation of the Krymchaks. As a result, 800 Krymchaks managed to leave the Crimea and escape from the Nazis after the Kerch landing of Soviet troops at the end of December 1941<sup>53</sup>. Practically all other Krymchaks who lived in the occupied Crimea were doomed to death.

Paradoxically enough, the idea about the non-Jewish Turkic origin of the Krymchaks, which was first formulated during the Holocaust, survived in the war. Roman Freund, who studied dejudaization processes in the Karaite community (a comparative analysis of the Karaite, Krymchak, and mountain Jews' dejudaization seems to be most fruitful<sup>54</sup>), suggested distinguishing "endogenous" and "exogenous" dejudaization, i.e. dejudaization caused by internal and external factors<sup>55</sup>. Whilst analyzing the Krymchak, Tat, and Karaite dejudaization one can clearly see the work of both types of dejudaization. Leaders of the community who remained alive after the war still remembered horrors of the Holocaust and mortal danger of their belonging to the Jewish nation. After the war, against the background of Stalin's purges of Jewish doctors, and later anti-Zionist persecutions, Jewish origin still remained a considerable danger. These "external" factors started the process of endogenous, i.e. "internal", dejudaization of the Krymchak community at that time. Furthermore, while being deprived of their religion during the Soviet times and speaking the Turkic dialect, the Krymchaks felt more and more alienated from the aspirations of Soviet Ashkenazic Jewry.

That is why after the end of the war a part of Krymchak intellectuals (e.g., Evsei Peisah, Boris (Veniamin) Achkinazi) began to disseminate the

idea about autochthonous, Turkic and generally speaking non-Jewish origin of the Krymchaks. Evsei Peisah became the author of the entry about the Krymchaks in the Large Soviet Encyclopaedia where he stated that the Krymchaks represented a combination of Jewish and Turkic settlers with possible admixture of Italian elements<sup>56</sup>. In their correspondence Krymchak leaders openly confessed that they copied their “autochthonous-Turkic” theory from the Karaites<sup>57</sup>. Lev Kaya wrote emotionally about it: “This Karaite mould [Rus. *plesen’*, i.e. idea about non-Jewish origin] became widespread among the Krymchaks likewise”<sup>58</sup>. At the same time the Krymchaks, as well as the mountain Jews-Tats, were actively used by Soviet ideological leaders as the example of the postulate that the Soviet Jews rejected Zionism and understood themselves as people of “local” and “autochthonous” origin<sup>59</sup>. In spite of the fact that many members of the community accepted the theory formulated by Evsei Peisah (1903–1977)<sup>60</sup> and Boris (Veniamin) Achkinazi, other members of the community, first of all Z. Borokhov and Lev Kaya, did not accept it. They publicly opposed it and continued supporting traditional theory of Jewish origin of the Krymchaks<sup>61</sup>. Lev Kaya, for example, wrote about the followers of the Turkic theory: “The Krymchaks made a new idol, a new golden calf, and began with delight dancing around it praising their new deity”<sup>62</sup>. Furthermore, he even tried to gather a communal *beit din* (Heb. “court of justice”) in order to condemn actions of the most fervent protagonists of the Turkic theory<sup>63</sup>.

The idea about the “autochthonous” and “Turkic” origin of the Krymchaks progressed especially rapidly at the end of the 1980s through the beginning of the 1990s, at the time of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and emergence of ethnic societies in the Crimea. It seems that at that time “external” dejudiaization factors stopped being valid because the Soviet Union (and, later Russia and Ukraine) did not follow Stalin–Brezhnev policy of oppressing Jewish population. Furthermore, other “external” factors, namely, Israel’s programme of repatriation stimulated development of Jewish sentiments among the Krymchaks. As a result, at the beginning of the 1990s many Krymchaks realized that they belonged to Jewish nation – and emigrated to Israel. This is why perhaps the voices of those followers of Turkic theory, who remained in the Crimea, became especially loud. Furthermore, observing the development of the Crimean Tatars’ case in the Crimea, the Krymchaks and the Karaites have an example of successful construction of ethnic identity with Turkic component and “autochthonous” claims. Thus, Krymchak leaders could clearly see that by posing themselves as “autochthonous” and “Turkic” group they could get additional subsidies from the state.

So, in the beginning of the 1990s – early twenty first century there was a rise of Turkic sentiments among the Krymchaks<sup>64</sup>.

It is known that every romantic nationalist theory always needs some sort of “scientific” basis and justification. Two historians of Krymchak origin, Boris (Veniamin) Achkinazi<sup>65</sup> and Igor’ Achkinazi, actively popularized and elaborated the Turkic and autochthonous theories of the Krymchaks’ origin in the 1990s. In contrast to the modern Crimean Karaites, followers of Turkic theory of Karaite origin, who have professional philologists and/or historians in their communities, abovementioned Krymchak authors are professional historians, graduates of Soviet and post-Soviet universities. Unfortunately, publications by these scholars, despite their rich historiographic basis and some interesting data, treat Krymchak history in a biased way and use argumentation of a very doubtful character, especially from the field of anthropometry<sup>66</sup>. Highly interesting is that Igor Achkinazi, who himself called the theory about Khazar origin of the Krymchaks a “mythologeme”, nevertheless, came to the conclusion that “a number of material sources, archaeological, ethnographic, and anthropological data together with linguistic features of the Krymchak language [*sic*] and other data, allow one to come to the conclusion that the nucleus of the Krymchak ethno-religious group was formed by poly-ethnic emigrants from the Khazar Kaganate”<sup>67</sup>. Alas, an objective analysis shows that all the aforementioned archaeological, ethnographic and anthropological sources do not support the theory about Khazar origin of the Krymchaks. Furthermore, they disprove it<sup>68</sup>. At the same time thousands of published and archival sources, letters, verses, historical chronicles, treatises, etc., which were composed by the ancestors of modern Krymchaks, on the contrary, attest to the careful preservation of Jewish religious and intellectual values by the Krymchaks. The sources also attest the Jewish identity of the Krymchaks before the Second World War and after it.

The theory about the Turkic origin of the Krymchaks, which was supported by Boris (Veniamin) Achkinazi and Igor Achkinazi using historical data, recently received a highly interesting support from philological and linguistic perspective. The Krymchak philologist, David Rebi, came to the conclusion that the Krymchaks are descendants of the Khazars. Furthermore, he concluded that the Krymchaks are descendants of Altaic peoples who ethnically are not related to the Jews<sup>69</sup>. What made David Rebi come to such a conclusion? It should be said that David Rebi made quite an outstanding achievement. At senior age he managed to revive the command of the Krymchak ethnolect (which Mr. Rebi himself calls only the “Krymchak”

or “Dzhagatay” language) which he had not used since he was seven. He did not only revive it, but also began teaching it in the summer school for the Krymchaks in Simferopol (at the moment it does not exist). Furthermore, he himself learned the Hebrew alphabet and the Krymchak handwriting in order to read original manuscripts in the Krymchak ethnolect. Having analysed a few manuscripts and having published a few articles and translations from the Krymchak ethnolect, Mr. Rebi, unfortunately, came to wrong conclusions regarding the Krymchaks’ ethnic history. According to his own words, before 1989 he thought that the Krymchaks’ ancestors were “the Jews who came to the Crimea from Palestine in the first century”<sup>70</sup>. Having read Krymchak manuscript *conkalar*, however, he discovered there references to *Tengri* (*Tanry*) and *Allah*. On the basis of this discovery he came to the conclusion that “being officially recognized as Judaists, the Krymchaks, in fact, always remained Muslims in their souls...”<sup>71</sup> In his opinion, the Krymchaks inserted the name of the pagan deity of ancient Turks, *Tengri*, in the texts of Jewish prayers as a rudimentary remnant of pagan beliefs of their Turko-Altai ancestors.

Alas, the weakness of this argument is evident to anyone knowledgeable in religious traditions of Turkic-speaking peoples. In the early modern times the term *Tengri* / *Tanry* was used in Turkic languages to denote the concept of God in general, not in the sense of “the pagan deity of heaven among the ancient Turks and Khazars.” In the same way the term *Gott* became the term to denote the concept of God in general, not one of pagan deities of the early Germans. Among the Turkic-speaking Jewish groups the term *Tengri*/*Tanry* was a translation of the Hebrew name of God (*Adonai*, *Elohim*, etc.). This term is to be found in all accessible translations of the Bible into the Karaim language and Karaim ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language. There this term is certainly used in the sense of *Adonai* or *Elohim*<sup>72</sup>. Let us take as an example a bilingual collection of religious poetry in Hebrew edited and translated into the Krymchak ethnolect by Nissim Levi Chakhchir. The Hebrew term *Elohim* is translated into the Krymchak ethnolect as *Tanry* in all verses and songs published in this collection<sup>73</sup>. Among the Kypchak-speaking Armenians of Podolia and Galicia the term *Tengri* was used for the translation of the texts of the Old and New Testament – and certainly had nothing in common with the pantheon of ancient Turks<sup>74</sup>. There are thousands similar examples of the use of the term *Tengri* by Turkic-speaking peoples.

Similar is also the situation with the term *Allah* and its use among Turkic-speaking peoples. The term *Elohim*/*Adonai* is normally translated as

*Allah* in the modern translation of the Bible into the Turkish language<sup>75</sup>. The term *Allah* is often used by Jewish Turkic-speaking groups to translate the Hebrew terms *Elohim* and *Adonai*<sup>76</sup>.

Thus, not a single linguistic, ethnographic, epigraphic and other type of source is able to prove non-Jewish origin of the Krymchaks. Unfortunately, today the Turkic theory of the ethnic origin of the Krymchaks, despite its absolute pseudoscholarly character became the main version of Krymchak ethnic history in the Crimean and Ukrainian press. Furthermore, it is recognized by the majority of the academic institutions in the Crimea and Ukraine<sup>77</sup>. In our view, the non-academic character of this theory was convincingly demonstrated by Andrei Mal'gin, who was one of the earliest Crimean scholars to pay attention to dejudaization process among the Karaites and Krymchaks: "Jewish culture, whose monuments can be traced in the Crimea at least from the first century B.C. does not need any additional arguments to prove its native presence in this land; to prove it one does not need to look for any Turkic or other evidence"<sup>78</sup>.

In the conclusion I would like to attempt to forecast the future of the Krymchak community. The majority of my respondents, as a rule, with sorrow stated that "Only memories about us will remain in twenty-year time". I do not think that one necessarily has to be so pessimist. The press speaks about disappearance of the Karaites from the beginning of the twentieth century – and yet, the Karaite community, be it in Europe, Israel or USA, is still alive. Furthermore, I would like to point out as an example of the Samaritan community which managed to revive and to some extent restore itself: in 1901 there were only 150 Samaritans, while in 2004 – 654<sup>79</sup>. In my opinion, the continuation of the existence of the community depends first of all on the Krymchaks themselves. If they will be able to make Krymchak youths of the Crimea, Russia, and Israel interested in Krymchak history and culture – who knows, maybe we shall see the renaissance of this most interesting ethnic group.

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Official site of Ralph Bakshi <www.ralphbakshi.com>

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Mikhail Chlenov (Moscow) who inspired me to compose this article. I am also grateful to Yuri Purim, the head of the Krymchak society “Krymchakhlar,” Raisa Berman (Levi), David Rebi, Ludmila Bakshi and other members of the Krymchak community who shared with me their memories about the Krymchaks. A word of thanks also goes to the Krymchak historian Mikhail Gurdzhi (Israel), Israel Rubin (Rabeno), the head of the Brotherhood of Crimean Jews of America, and Professor Dan Shapira (Israel).

<sup>2</sup> Concerning his biography, see *Korobach N. Vydayushiysya prosvetitel' I.S. Kaya // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 30. Gurdzhi M.Ya. Grazhdanin, uchenyi, che-lovek // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 32–37.*

<sup>3</sup> *Kaya I.S. Po povodu odnoi krymchakskoi rukopisi // Izvestiya Tavricheskogo Obshstva Istorii, Arheologii i Etnografii. 1927. №1 (58).P. 100.* The term “Krymchaks-Jews” («крымчаки-евреи») was first used on Aug., 18 1859 in the petition of Jewish land-owners of the colony Rohatly-koy to petite bourgeoisie of the town Karasubazar («обращении евреев-землевладельцев колонии Рогатликой в мещанство города Карасубазара»). In the documents of the 18th–19th centuries the Krymchaks called themselves in Tatar “srel balalary” or in Hebrew “benei Yisrael”, i.e. “sons of Israel”. In early modern Tatar sources the Krymchaks were called yehudiler and chufutlar. Both terms should be translated as “Jews”; the term chufutlar had somewhat derogatory character. There is no doubt that the term “Krymchaks-Jews” (later shortened to “Krymchaki” in Russian and “krymchahlar” in Tatar) is a calque from Crimean Tatar “yahudiler kyrymcha” (i.e. “Jews in the Crimean manner/way”). This is how, apparently, the Turkic-speaking Crimean Rabbanite Jews could be called by the Russian administration. For more information on Krymchak history: see Krymchaki // *Kratkaya evreiskaya enciklopediya. Tom 4. Ierusalim, 1988. S. 603–612. Kupovetskii M.S. Dinamika chislennosti i rasselenie karaimov i krymchakov za poslednie dvesti let // Geografiya i kul'tura etnograficheskikh grupp tatar v SSSR. M.: Nauka, 1983. P. 75–93; Kupovetskii M.S. K etnicheskoi istorii krymchakov // Etnokontaktnye zony v Evropeiskoi chasti SSSR. M., 1989. P. 53–69; Zand M. Notes on the Culture of the Non-Ashkenazi Jewish Communities Under Soviet Rule // Jewish Culture and Identity in the Soviet Union. N.Y.; L., 1991. P. 378–444; Kizilov M. Krymchaki // Ot kimmeriicev do krymchakov. Izd. 2. Simferopol', 2004. P. 270–283; Khazanov A. The Krymchaks: a Vanishing Group in the Soviet Union. Jerusalem, 1989; Keren I. Yahadut Krym mi-kadmutah ve-'ad ha-shoah. Jerusalem, 1981. The article by Dan Shapira is especially important for*

understanding relations between the Karaites and the Krymchaks: *Shapira D.* Some Notes on the History of the Crimean Jewry from the Ancient Times Until the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, With Emphasis on the Qırımçaq Jews in the First Half of the 19th Century // *The Jews and the Slavs.* 2007 (in press).

<sup>4</sup> *Weissenberg S.* Familii karaimov i krymchakov // *Evreiskaya starina.* SPb., 1913. Vyp. 3. P. 384–399; *Kotler I.* Crimean Jewish Family Names // *Avotaynu* 5:1 (1989).

<sup>5</sup> E.g., *Rebi D.I.* Krymchakskii yazyk. Krymchaksko-russkii slovar'. Simferopol, 2004. P. 4; *Krymchaki/ Sost. V.M. Lombrozo, D.I. Rebi.* Simferopol, 2001. P. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Concerning this, see more in *Shapira D.* Tendencies and Agenda in Karaite and Karaite-related Studies in Eastern Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century // *Pinkas* 1 (2006). P. 333–355.

<sup>7</sup> *Henderson E.* Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia. London, 1826. P. 334. For more information on the mythologeme about the use of the “Dzhagatay” language by the Krymchaks, see: *Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... P. 3–4, 48–51. On the real Dzhagatay language, see: *Eckmann J.* Das Tschaghataische // *Philologiae Turcicae Fundamentae/* Ed. by J. Deny, K. Gronbech, H. Schneel, and Z. Velidi Togan. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1959. Vol. 1. P. 138–160.

<sup>8</sup> *Erdal M., Ianbay I.* The Krimchak Book of Miracles and Wonders // *Mediterranean Language Review* 12 (2000). P. 39–139; *Ianbay I., Erdal M.* The Krimchak Translation of a Targum Šeni of the Book of Ruth // *Mediterranean Language Review* 10 (1998). P. 1–53; *Yanbai Ya.* Tyurkskaya literatura krymchakov // *Materialy po istorii, arheologii i etnografii Tavriki.* Vyp. 8. 2001. P. 502–509; *Polinsky M.* The Krymchaks: History and Texts // *Ural-Altische Jahrbücher/Ural-Altaiic Yearbook* 63 (1991). P. 123–154.

<sup>9</sup> “Sfat tatar ha-medubaret beinenu poh bi-medinat Qrym” (see the title page of *Seder agada shel' Pesah.* Translated into Tatar by Nisim Levi ben Mordehai Chahchir. Petrokov, 1904).

<sup>10</sup> *Chernin V.Yu.* O poyavlenii etnonima «krymchak» i ponyatiya «krymchakskii yazyk» // *Geografiya i kul'tura etnograficheskikh grupp tatar v SSSR.* M.: Nauka, 1983. P. 98.

<sup>11</sup> *Kaya I.S.* Po povodu... P. 100.

<sup>12</sup> See the letter by Shlomo ben Yaakov Tat-Bohor to A.D. Peisah (1953). D.I. Rebi's personal archive.

<sup>13</sup> *Kupovetskii M.S.* Dinamika chislennosti... P. 84–86; cp. *Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... P. 16–17.

<sup>14</sup> *Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... C. 33. Unfortunately, at the moment the Crimean mass-media and modern Krymchak authors use exclusively the term qa'al to denote their houses of prayer. They seem to be unaware of the fact that the word qa'al (from Heb. qahal) is merely a colloquial term to denote more literary Heb. beit ha-kneset or synagogue (cf. Yiddish “Shul”). According to Dan Shapira, this word was loaned by the Krymchaks from Judezmo (private communication).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> *Spektor Sh.* Shoat ha-yehudim ha-krimchakim bi-tkufat ha-kibush ha-natsi // *Pe'amim* 27 (1986). P. 19–25, esp. 25; *Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... P. 20–23, 34; cf. *Loewenthal R.* The Extinction of the Krimchaks in World War II // *American Slavic and East European Review* 10: 2 (1951). P. 130–136.

<sup>17</sup> *Filonenko V.I.* Krymchakskie etudy // *Rocznik Orientalistyczny.* 1972. № 25. P. 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Achkinazi I.V.* Krymchaki. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk. Simferopol, 2000. P. 136.

<sup>19</sup> From Internet resources one may use the collection of the articles about the Krymchaks available on: [www.turkolog.narod.ru/info/N10.htm](http://www.turkolog.narod.ru/info/N10.htm). Until recently there were two community sites in English ([www.krymchaki.com](http://www.krymchaki.com)) and Russian languages. Unfortunately, none of them is functioning at the moment.

<sup>20</sup> *Sumina N.* Krymchane – uchastniki rabochei gruppy OON // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 60.

<sup>21</sup> *Achkinazi I.V.* Krymchaki. Kratkii ocherk etnicheskoi istorii // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Concerning his biography, see: *Bakshi N., Pirkova D. V.M.* Lombrozo // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 33–34.

<sup>23</sup> Concerning his biography, see: *Mashchenko A.* Predposlednie krymchaki // Krymskoe vremya. 17.04.2003. № 70. P. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Concerning the museum, see: *Bakshi N.* Edinstvennyi v mire... (O muzee krymchakskogo naroda) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 41–42; *Purim Yu.* Muzei rasshiraetsya // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 65–66.

<sup>25</sup> A. Khazanov was able to locate only one conka in Simferopol' in 1984 (*Khazanov A.* Krymchaks... P. 6). In January 2007 I worked with the conkalar by S. Bakshi (1895) and I. Gabbay (1914) (at the moment in David Rebi's private collections). Much more impressive are collections of Krymchak manuscripts in St. Petersburg and Jerusalem archives (*Yanbai Ya.* Tyurkskaya literatura... P. 502–509).

<sup>26</sup> Concerning his biography, see: *Zin'ko V.* Pamyati I.V. Achkinazi (25.06.1954 – 10.03.2006) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol, 2007. P. 28–29.

<sup>27</sup> Concerning his biography, see: *Yansen S.* Poslednii iz krymchakov // Krymskoe vremya. 19.02.2003. № 31. P. 6; *Yansen S.* Khranitel' yazyka chagatai // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol, 2005. P. 34–39.

<sup>28</sup> See the decision №1093 – 4/04 of 20 Oct. 2004 published in “Krymchakhlar” № 1 (2005). P. 86.

<sup>29</sup> In Simferopol' (33 Krasnoznamennaia Street), Eupatoria (8 Stepovoi Alleyway), and Belogorsk. None of these monuments preserved its original style and can hardly be used for religious purposes. Nevertheless, the buildings of the synagogues remained as well as some decorative elements, such as the Stars of David, etc.

<sup>30</sup> In 2004 a memorial sign was erected on site of the execution of the Krymchaks in the vicinity of Udarnoe village (this village had been earlier called Krymchak; it is located in the vicinity of Belogorsk) (*Sumina N.* Oni gibli ryadom s rodnym domom // Respublika Krym. 3.12.2004. № 47. P. 10).

<sup>31</sup> *Yakimova N.* Poslednii krymchak // Pervaya Krymskaya. 3.12.2004. P. 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Purim M.* Mihail Piastro: «Krymchakam ne nuzhen status korenного naroda» // Krymskoe vremya. 10.08.2005. № 88. P. 20; *Purim M.* V Krymu ne tol'ko govoryat – dumayut na russkom yazyke // Krymskoe vremya. 3.08.2006. № 85. P. 6.

<sup>33</sup> In 2002 I was honoured to meet Raisa Petrovna (Rachel, daughter of Pinhas) Berman (Levi), who still could speak the Krymchak ethnolect. Mrs. Berman informed me that she still could compose poetry in this language. Recordings of her songs were included in the collection of the Krymchak folk-music (see below). According to Mark Purim (Agatov), the late Mr. David Weinberg (Eupatoria) also could speak the Krymchak ethnolect (*Purim M.* Legenda o rastrelyannom narode // Krymchakhlar 2–3 (2007). P. 150). Mr. David Rebi is able to read manuscripts composed in the Krymchak ethnolect. These seem to be prob-

ably the only remaining Krymchaks who are capable of speaking / reading the Krymchak ethnolect today.

<sup>34</sup> The word *tqun* comes from Heb. *tiqqun* (“correction, establishing of order” – a Qabbalistic term used in some prayers). According to Mikhael Zand, this term is an abbreviation of *tiqqun yom ha-zikkaron* (“establishing order to celebrate a memorial day”) or *tiqqun ha-neshamah* (i.e. “establishing order to pray for the soul”), i.e. the Krymchak analogue of the Ashkenazic Yortsait (*Zand M. Notes...* P. 399–400).

<sup>35</sup> *Manevich I. T'kun. Istoki tradicii // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 79–81; Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk... P. 126–128; Zand M. Notes...* P. 399–400.

<sup>36</sup> *Sumina N. Pamyati T.I. Trevgoda (16.11.1919 – 1.01.2007) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 30–31.*

<sup>37</sup> *Krymchakskie pesni: The Folklore of the Krymchaks/ Sost. L.S. Bakshi, A. Bakshi. Solyd Records, 2004. This disc appeared thanks to the support of the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund and VAAD of Russia. For a review see: Charukhova E. Muzyka na fone vzdokhov // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 43–44.*

<sup>38</sup> *Tkachenko A. Son krymchaka, ili Otorvannaya zemlya. M.: Hroniker, 2007. Tkachenko's mother was O. Zengina from Karasubazar (Belogorsk). Concerning his biography and contacts with the famous Soviet poet, Andrei Voznesenskii, see: Sumina N. «Rov»: postskriptum // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 112–117.*

<sup>39</sup> *Багинская (Гурджи) В.И. Народные песни и пословицы крымчаков* <http://www.turkolog.narod.ru/info/1432.htm> Concerning her biography see: *Baginskaya V.I. Bez etogo ne myslyu zhizni // Krims'ka svitlicya. 1.11.2002. № 44; Baginskaya V.I. Vstrecha // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 141–143.*

<sup>40</sup> *Khazanov A. Krymchaks... P. 19. Concerning the Krymchak community of Sukhumi, see the article by Mikhail Chlenov in this volume.*

<sup>41</sup> *Sumina N. Krymhane – uchastniki rabochei gruppy OON // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 60.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ben-Yaakob A. Medini, Hayyim Hezekiah ben Raphael Elijah (1832-1904) // Encyclopedia Judaica 11. Jerusalem, 1971. P. 1216–1217.*

<sup>43</sup> *Gurdzhi M.Ya. Grazhdanin, uchenyi, chelovek // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 32–37; Gurdzhi M.Ya. Istochniki po etnicheskoi istorii krymchakov // K'asevet. 1991. № 1/21. P. 18–19; Gurdzhi M.Ya. K istorii blagotvoritel'noi deyatel'nosti krymsko-iudeiskoi obshiny (unpublished). Unfortunately, at the moment Mikhail Gurdzhi is not engaged in scholarly activity.*

<sup>44</sup> See the unique family chronicle about travel's of Manya Ashkenazy's family from the Crimea through Turkey to Palestine and from there to America: *Ashkenazy M. To Live in Peace. The Story of Manya Ashkenazy: An Autobiography* (unpublished; see: <http://members.aol.com/askinazy/page2.html>).

<sup>45</sup> See his official site: [www.ralphbakshi.com](http://www.ralphbakshi.com). Bakshi was the author of the first cartoon version of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (1978), scandalous cartoon *Fritz the Cat* (1972), and many others.

<sup>46</sup> *Keren Y. Yahadut... P. 318.*

<sup>47</sup> This part of my article is based on my correspondence with Isaac Rubin. In addition to his letters, I should also mention his unfinished article “The First Brotherhood of Crimean Jews of America” (4 pp. + copies of the minutes of the Brotherhood assemblies in

1946/7); idem, Who were the Krimchaks? A Vanishing Remnant of Rabbinic Jews (popular monograph about the Krymchaks; in preparation); idem, Chanukah Came Early... (memoirs about Isaac Rubin's trip to Israel and accidental encounter with his Krymchak relatives in Beit Shemesh; available on [www.turkolog.narod.ru](http://www.turkolog.narod.ru)); see also *Rubin I. Pervoe bratstvo krymskikh evreev Ameriki // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 71–73.*

<sup>48</sup> To give an example, Isaac Khondo, the author of the most interesting memoirs about his life in the Crimea and USSR from 1917 onwards (*Хондо И. Крымчак из города Капачубазара www.turkolog.narod.ru/info/152.htm*).

<sup>49</sup> *Purim Yu. Nash okeanskii tezka // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 64–65.*

<sup>50</sup> Preservation of the elements of Jewish identity by the Krymchaks after the war can be clearly seen in the series of interviews conducted by Velvl Chernin (*Khazanov A. Krymchaks... P. 55*). According to Lev Kaya, only 5–7 Krymchaks attended synagogues in the 1970s (L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 19.11.1979. P. 3–4 // Archive of VAAD of Russian in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya). Some Krymchaks began attending the Hassidic synagogue in Simferopol' after 1991.

<sup>51</sup> L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 29.01.1983. P. 5 // Archive of VAAD of Russian in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya. Concerning Lev Kaya's biography see: *Gurkovich V.N. Etnograf po prizvaniyu (Lev Isaakovich Kaya) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol, 2007. P. 51–59*. A part of Kaya's archival collection, which represents a unique source of information concerning the history of the Karaites and Krymchaks, is currently kept in VAAD of Russia (I am grateful to Mikhail Chlenov, the president of VAAD, for giving me permission to use this collection). Especially interesting is perhaps Kaya's unpublished work "Materialy o krymchakakh KOGA" // Archive of VAAD of Russian in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya. See also: *Belyi O.B. Nauchnyi arhiv L.I. Kaya v Bahchisaraiskom gosudarstvennom istoriko-kul'turnom zapovednike // Istoriya i arheologiya Yugo-Zapadnogo Kryma. Simferopol', 1993. P. 239–246.*

<sup>52</sup> *Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk... P. 122* (with reference to Z. Borokhov's memoirs). This is why the Nazi head of the police and SD, who apparently read these documents, mentioned that the Krymchaks "stated that they were a branch of Tatar tribe" ("...утверждают, что являются ветвью татарского племени...": *Unichtozhenie evreev v SSSR v gody nemeckoi okkupacii/ Red. I. Arad. Ierusalim, 1992. P. 181–182*). Lev Kaya, the son of Isaac Kaya, mentioned that the statement that his father proved non-Jewish origin of the Krymchaks was a lie invented by E. Peisah and B. Achkinazi (L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 19.01.1982. P. 7 // Archive of VAAD of Russia in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya). At the moment I can not decisively state who is right in this discussion.

<sup>53</sup> *Purim Yu. Moe voennoe detstvo // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 123–125.*

<sup>54</sup> E.g., *Dymshitz V. Bor'ba za sushestvitel'noe // Narod knigi v mire knig. Evreiskoe knizhnoe obozrenie 50 (2004). P. 6–13.*

<sup>55</sup> *Freund R. Karaites and Dejudaization: A Historical Review of an Endogenous and Exogenous Paradigm. Stockholm Studies in Comparative Religion 30. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1991.*

<sup>56</sup> *Peisah E. Krymchaki // BSE. 3rd ed. Vol.13. M., 1973. P. 518.*

<sup>57</sup> *Khazanov A. Krymchaks... P. 37–38.* Khazanov had access to letters by the leaders of the Krymchak community in the 1980s.



<sup>58</sup> L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 15.04.1981. P. 6 // Archive of VAAD of Russia in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya.

<sup>59</sup> *Khazanov A. Krymchaks...* P. 47.

<sup>60</sup> Concerning his biography see: *Achkinazi I.V. Sokhranit' dlia budushchikh pokoleonii // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 27–29; Borokhov A.D. Leningradskie vstrechi (Vospominaniya o E.I. Peisahe) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 38–41. The Evsei Peisah prize is annually given to those who managed to make an important contribution to the history and culture of the Krymchaks.*

<sup>61</sup> *Kupovetskii M.S. K etnicheskoi istorii...* P. 65.

<sup>62</sup> L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 15.05.1981. P. 1 and 1.01.1983. P. 2 // Archive of VAAD of Russia in Moscow. Fond of L.I. Kaya.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> E.g., *Lombrozo V.M. Vklad krymchakov v istoriyu i kul'turu Kryma // Vestnik Krymskih chtenii I.L. Sel'vinskogo. Vyp. 2. Simferopol', 2003. P. 109–124; Levi E. Yu. Krymchaki: etnos i religiya // Bogi Tavridy. Sevastopol', 1997.*

<sup>65</sup> B.M. (V.M.) Achkinazi is the author of a few articles and a collection of Krymchak proverbs: *K'rymchahlyryn' atalar sözy: Poslovicy i pogovorki krymchakov/ Sost. B.M. Achkinazi. Simferopol', 2004. Concerning his biography see: Achkinazi I.V. B.M. Achkinazi (1927–1992) // K'rymchahlyryn' atalar sözy: Poslovicy i pogovorki krymchakov/ Sost. B.M. Achkinazi. Simferopol', 2004. P. 3–7.*

<sup>66</sup> In his early publications Igor' Achkinazi did not have a unanimity of opinion regarding the Krymchak's ethnic history (e.g., *Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Proiskhozhdenie. Veroispovedanie. Istoriya. Kul'tura. Tradiciya // Spektr. 1997. №3 (17). P. 22–39; Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Istoriograficheskii obzor po publikatsiyam XIX – nachala XX v. // Materialy po istorii, arheologii i etnografii Tavriki. Vyp. 1. 1990. P. 165–181*). In his later works he started to support the idea of Turkic and autochthonous origin of the Krymchaks (e.g., *Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki // Tyurkskie narody Kryma: Karaimy. Krymskie tatar. Krymchaki/ Otv. red. S.Ya. Kozlov, L.V. Chizhova. Seriya "Narody i kul'tury". M.: Nauka, 2003. P. 371; Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Kratkii ocherk etnicheskoi istorii // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 8–9*). Nevertheless, his monograph, based on his doctoral dissertation and its chapters dedicated to the twentieth-century events, are quite interesting and useful (*Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk...*). The book by Erdoğan Altınkaynak is nothing but a Turkish retelling of this book (*Altınkaynak E. Kırımçaklar (Kültür – Tarih – Folklor). Haarlem: SOTA, 2006*). Quite important is also his early article: *Achkinazi I.V. Pogrebal'nyi obryad krymchakov // Materialy po istorii, arheologii i etnografii Tavriki. Vyp. 3. 1993. P. 193–198.*

<sup>67</sup> *Achkinazi I.V. Krymchaki (nasledniki hazar: mifologema ili real'nost'?) // Materialy Sed'moi Mezhdunarodnoi konferencii po Iudaïke. Tezisy. Moskva, 2000. P. 21–23.*

<sup>68</sup> All written or epigraphic “sources” allegedly attesting Khazar origin of the Krymchaks were in fact forged by Abraham Firkovich. Not a single linguistic, ethnographic or any other source provides us with any information about mixed marriages among the Crimean Jews, Khazars, Cumans, and other Turkic peoples. Equally fruitless are attempts to prove Khazar origin of the Krymchaks with the help of anthropological data.

<sup>69</sup> *Rebi D.I. Kto my i otkuda? // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 2–3. Simferopol', 2007. P. 13–17; Rebi D.I. O chem povedali «dzhonki» (novoe o krymchakah) // Krymchakhlar. Vyp. 1. Simferopol', 2005. P. 24–26.*

<sup>70</sup> *Rebi D.I.* Kto my i otkuda? P. 13.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 17. One should mention the fact that in spite of good knowledge of the Krymchak ethnolect, David Rebi is not too knowledgeable in the field of Jewish tradition and Hebrew. To give one some examples, in his dictionary of the Krymchak language (the only existing dictionary of this ethnolect!) he translates the term *avodah zarah* (Heb. “idolatry”) as “motherland”; *beit-emderash* (sic) as “hut of boughs” and “place for prayers and sermons”, etc. (*Rebi D.I. Krymchakskii yazyk*. P. 53, 77). Other than that, his translations and his dictionary have some scholarly value.

<sup>72</sup> E.g., one of the earliest studies in this field: *Henderson E. Biblical Researches...* P. 334.

<sup>73</sup> *Sefer neimot be-yemin NeTSaH*. Transl. Nisim Levi ben Mordehai Chahchir. Jerusalem, 1902.

<sup>74</sup> *Pritsak O. Das Kiptschakische // Philologiae Turcicae Fundamentae/* Ed. by J. Deny, K. Gronbech, H. Schneel, Z. Velidi Togan. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1959. Vol. 1. P. 86.

<sup>75</sup> *Shapira D. Miscellanea Judaeo-Turkica. Four Judaeo-Turkic Notes: Judaeo-Turkica IV // Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 27 (2002). P. 488.

<sup>76</sup> Henderson mentions that the Karaites avoided the term Allah in order to avoid any association with Islam (*Henderson E. Biblical Researches...* P. 334). Nevertheless, the Karaites also sometimes used this term in their translations of the Bible and other religious and secular texts (e.g., the document № 8595 in the Karaim ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York: *Miller Ph. Karaite Separatism in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Joseph Solomon Lutski's Epistle of Israel's Deliverance*. Cincinnati, 1993. P. 232).

<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, this very point of view was reflected in the book: *Tyurkskie narody Kryma: Karaimy. Krymskie tatory. Krymchaki/* Otv. red. S.Ya. Kozlov, L.V. Chizhova, Seriya “Narody i kul'tury”. M.: Nauka, 2003. It is striking that this absolutely ignorant book, where the Karaites and Krymchaks are called “Turkic peoples” and the word “cenotaph” is twice written as “cenataph” (see *ibid.*, captions to illustrations 6 and 7), was published by such a prestigious (in the Soviet past) academic publishing house as “Nauka”. Furthermore, its title page indicates that the book was approved by four leading academic institutions of the region: Russian Academy of Sciences, Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (see a highly critical review of this book: *Zaitsev I.V. Recenziya na knigu: «Tyurkskie narody Kryma: Karaimy, Krymskie tatory, Krymchaki» // Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*. M., 2005. № 1. P. 167–169. Ilya Zaitsev also informed me that the original version of his review was much harsher than the one that was published).

<sup>78</sup> *Mal'gin A.V. Novye elementy v identichnosti karaimov i krymchakov v sovremenom Krymu // Etnografiya Kryma XIX – XX vv. i sovremennyye etnokul'turnyye processy. Materialy i issledovaniya/* Red. M.A. Aradzhioni, Yu.N. Laptev. Simferopol', 2002. P. 93.

<sup>79</sup> *Snopov Yu.A. Samarit'yane: istoriya i sovremennaya etnosocial'naya situatsiya // Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*. 2004. № 3. P. 81–83.