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Eco-nationalism: Anti-nuclear Activism and National Identity
The National Enclaves: Tatarstan and Crimea

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Executive Summary

This paper represents an important case study chapter in my forthcoming book, Eco-nationalism: Anti-nuclear Activism and National Identity in Russia, Lithuania, and Ukraine (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996). In this book, I trace the rise of the anti-nuclear power movement during the early perestroika period, its unexpected successes in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and its eventual withering away after 1991. I argue that rather than representing strongly held environmental and anti-nuclear convictions, the widespread anti-nuclear protests of the late perestroika period reflected an explosion of anger and resentment against Moscow's domination. For some, anti-nuclear activism was simply a surrogate for nationalism — a way to voice opposition to Moscow's imperial treatment of the republics at a time when overt nationalism was considered dangerous. For others, it was a front for anti-communist protest and a way to demand greater local self-determination. In all cases, however, its political component far outweighed environmental and nuclear safety concerns.

Chapter Seven, "The National Enclaves: Tatarstan and Crimea," represents a particularly important part of the study because it allows me to trace the eco-nationalist phenomenon into the post-Soviet era. While in most of Lithuania, Ukraine, and Russia, nationalist fervor subsided with the breakup of the USSR, in the national enclaves (which did not receive independence in 1991), the potential for continued national and eco-national mobilization persists to this day. In this chapter, I trace the development of the anti-nuclear and nationalist movements in two particularly important national enclaves -- Tatarstan (Russia) and Crimea (Ukraine) -- and attempt to reach some conclusions as to the strength of nationalist mobilization in these regions and the threat ethnic nationalism may pose to the stability of the post-Soviet order.

The conclusions of this study are encouraging for the continued stability of both Russia and Ukraine. In neither Tatarstan nor Crimea were the environmental and anti-nuclear movements strongly oriented toward ethnic nationalism. In Crimea, ethnic Russians and
Ukrainians worked side-by-side to halt nuclear construction in their region and there was no sign that ethnic cleavages divided the slavic population of Crimea. In Tatarstan, the potential for ethnic conflict between Russians and Tatars has clearly been present throughout the perestroika and post-Soviet period, but political entrepreneurs have worked assiduously to unify the population and ethnic nationalism appears to play little role in the mobilization of the environmental and anti-nuclear movements. In both Crimea and Tatarstan, demands for increased economic autonomy have been voiced by members of both of the leading ethnic groups and these economic aspirations appear to unify rather than divide the population. The absence of a strong overlap between environmental/anti-nuclear and ethnic nationalist movements supports the hypothesis that ethnic divisions do not penetrate deeply into these societies and leads to optimism as to the potential for continued stability in these regions.
Chapter Seven
The National Enclaves: Tatarstan and Crimea

While the boundaries of the fifteen republics of the USSR provided the focus for many of the most prominent independence movements of the perestroika period, the drive for national autonomy was not limited to the titular national groups of the fifteen republics. The Soviet Union was composed of over 100 different national groups, many with substantial populations and well defined territorial boundaries. In fact, 30 nationalities had populations between 100,000 and one million, while 22 more possessed populations exceeding one million. Clearly, the urge for national self-determination was unlikely to be fulfilled merely by the dissociation of the USSR into its fifteen constituent republics.

As was the case with the titular national groups of the republics, the drive for national autonomy by minority nationalities was fueled by the longstanding administrative boundaries of the former USSR. Each republic was divided into a number of territorial subunits, including autonomous soviet socialist republics, krais, and oblasts. In many cases, these administrative boundaries once again overlapped with those of the dominant nationality in the region. Thus, those minority nationalities within each republic with a feasible claim to a subunit of the republic often rejected the independence goals of the republic’s titular nationality and instead pursued their own objectives of national autonomy. This tendency, which was first observed prior to the dissolution of the USSR, has continued to plague many of the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. This chapter considers the linkage between national sovereignty and anti-nuclear movements in two particularly important national enclaves: Tatarstan (Russia) and Crimea (Ukraine).

In Russia, the republic’s multinational composition has provided ample opportunity for enclaves of minority nationalities to pursue their own political objectives. Within the Russian Federation, twenty-one autonomous soviet socialist republics existed whose boundaries had earlier been established according to ethnic principles. To many, these ethnically delineated republics continue to represent a powder keg for Russia, possibly setting the stage for the Russian Federation to replicate the path of the USSR and to fragment along ethnic lines. While most of these republics have yet to openly challenge Russia’s authority, the republics of Chechnya and Tatarstan have proven particularly troublesome for Moscow. In late 1991, Chechen nationalists unilaterally

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dissolved the Chechnya-Ingushetia ASSR and proclaimed the birth of an independent Republic of Chechnya. Similarly, in March of 1992, the population of Tatarstan passed a referendum declaring the republic a sovereign state whose relations with Russia should be regulated by treaties between equal partners. While the Chechens ultimately failed to resolve their differences with the Russian Federation and have suffered disastrous consequences, the Tatars have made significant progress in normalizing relations with Moscow and have recently concluded a bilateral treaty regulating key transactions between Russia and Tatarstan. The treaty, however, stops short of recognizing Tatar sovereignty or independence and it is unclear whether this measure will ultimately resolve the standoff between Moscow and Kazan.

Because Tatarstan was targeted for a new nuclear power station in the 1980s, anti-nuclear mobilization once again provides a lens through which to view the emergence of nationalism in the region. As elsewhere, the nuclear power issue was one of the first to mobilize the masses in Tatarstan and its linkage to nationalist mobilization in the republic provides insight into the strength and nature of the Tatar national identity. How potent was Tatar nationalism after four centuries of domination by Russia? Was the anti-nuclear movement simply a surrogate for Tatar nationalist objectives? Or did centuries of russification blur the boundaries between Tatar and Russian identities and lead to the confusion in defining national boundaries observed in Ukraine?

In Ukraine, the ethnic situation is far simpler than in Russia. While pockets of non-Ukrainian ethnic minorities do exist, most minority groups are small, politically weak, and lack clearly defined preexisting territorial boundaries to assist in the mobilization process. The situation of the largest ethnic minority in Ukraine -- the Russians -- however, may provide the potential for intense interethnic conflict within the newly independent country of Ukraine. Because Russians, which make up almost one quarter of Ukraine's population, are dispersed across most of the country, at first glance opportunities for Russian separatism in most of Ukraine appear slim. The situation in the Crimean region of Ukraine, however, does provide cause for concern. Because Crimea was only recently transferred from Russian to Ukrainian jurisdiction (1954), has an overwhelming Russian majority, and has been closely associated with Russia (not Ukraine) for several centuries, the potential for the emergence of a Russian national independence movement in Crimea during the perestroika period and after has been substantial.

As in Tatarstan, anti-nuclear protest represented the first instance of mass mobilization in Crimea. By the late 1980s, the Crimean nuclear power station was nearing completion and preparing to go into operation and presented a clear target for budding activists on the Crimean peninsula. Whether the mass movement that emerged was linked to nationalist goals in Crimea, however, was not immediately clear. Was the anti-nuclear movement simply a surrogate for Russian nationalism? Or was it perhaps a shield for the growth of a Crimean Tatar national movement -- a smaller minority group also present on the Crimean peninsula? Or, like its
counterparts in the Russian regions of the RSFSR, was the anti-nuclear movement in Crimea largely dissociated from nationalist mobilization?

In the two cases that follow, the enclaves of Tatarstan and Crimea, the linkages between anti-nuclear activism and nationalist mobilization which are revealed display subtle differences. While the anti-nuclear movement did provide the context through which long dormant Tatar national identities could be revived and reborn in Tatarstan, the movement played a far less important role in nationalist mobilization in Crimea. As with the preceding cases, this variation in the linkage between anti-nuclear mobilization and nationalism highlights key differences in the strength and identities of the national communities present in these regions.

Tatarstan: The Resurgence of the Dormant Tatar Nation

The territory formerly known as the Tatar ASSR is located in Central Russia, with its capital city of Kazan well situated along the Volga River. The region is home to the Volga Tatars, a Turkic, muslim group that traces its heritage in the region back for centuries. While the origin of the Volga Tatars is still debated -- some historians tracing its introduction to the region back to the Golden Horde which swept through central Russia in the 13th century while others arguing that its roots lie with the Volga Bulgars who first settled in the region in the 8th century -- it is undisputed that the Volga Tatars have a strong historical claim to the land along the Volga. Since the conquest of the region by Ivan the Terrible in 1552, however, the Tatars have been under continuous Russian domination resulting in repeated attempts to break free of Moscow's tutelage and to reassert their independence.

By 1917, a strong Tatar nationalist movement had emerged determined to throw off the yoke of Russian imperialism. In the civil war that followed the Bolshevik seizure of power in October of 1917, however, the Tatars found it necessary to choose sides and were enticed over to the Bolsheviks by grandiose promises of greater autonomy for the muslim peoples of the new union. As the civil war began to wind down, two autonomous soviet socialist republics were created in the region: Bashkir ASSR (1919) and Tatar ASSR (1920). The boundaries of the two autonomous republics, however, were drawn without regard for the ethnic heritage of the region with more than three quarters of the Tatar population being left outside the borders of the Tatar ASSR and Tatars in fact composing the largest ethnic group in the new autonomous republic of Bashkir. The poor overlap between the boundaries of the Tatar ASSR and the population distribution of Tatars in Russia has long complicated the Tatars' struggle to establish a Tatar nation-state and has continued to be an important factor in Tatar-Russian relations to this day.

Throughout the 70 year history of the USSR, the Tatars repeatedly demanded that their position in the union be upgraded to that of a union republic. With the founding of the USSR in 1922, the Tatars were granted only the status of an autonomous republic within the Russian
Republic -- a component of Russia rather than an equal. Their request for union status, first in 1922 and later with the adoption of the constitution of 1936, was consistently denied. Periodically resurfacing in the 1960s and 1970s, the issue of the Tatar ASSR’s status as a subunit of Russia has been a continuous source of irritation for the Tatars. As Tatars make up the second largest ethnic group in Russia (behind the Russians themselves) and the fifth largest in the entire USSR (after the Russians, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, and Belorussians), their claim to greater rights to union republic status than the Kirgiz, Balts, etc. was not without foundation.

By 1989, the ethnic composition of the Tatar ASSR had changed dramatically since the days before the Russian conquest of 1552. Because the Tatar territory represented such a key strategic region, opening a gateway to Siberia, providing access to the Caspian Sea, and controlling trade routes along the Volga, its capital city of Kazan quickly grew into a major Russian trading center. Russians flooded into the region, thus beginning the shift in ethnic composition that was to continue well into the twentieth century. During the Soviet period, Tatar ASSR became a major industrial center for the USSR, with a high concentration of heavy industry, military production, and oil extraction facilities. Once again this implied an immense inflow of Russians to tend to the growing industrial sector. The result of this continuous Russian migration was the dilution of the Tatar population until by 1989, Tatars represented only 48.5% of the population of Tatar ASSR (43.3% of the republic was ethnically Russian).

Over the past several centuries, the Volga Tatars have struggled to resist the almost overwhelming pressures toward russification. Despite harsh persecution of their muslim traditions and faith, particularly during the Stalin period, the Tatars have managed to maintain a strong religious orientation. Their attempts to preserve Tatar language and culture against the onslaught of russification, however, have been less successful. Lacking the status of a union republic, the indigenous language and culture was even less protected than in the fifteen union republics. National elites were granted fewer opportunities for upward mobility, and by the late 1980s, Tatar culture was viewed by many as in danger of extinction. During the 1960s, Tatar language schools had been completely eliminated and the older generation of Tatars feared that the Tatar language would die with them. Due to the heavy influx of Russians to the cities of the Tatar ASSR, urban Tatars were especially vulnerable to russification. Intermarriage was common between Russians and Tatars and by the late 1980s, the Tatars’ sense of a distinctive national identity was clearly threatened.

The ethnic composition of the Tatar ASSR, split almost evenly between Tatars and Russians, along with the long history of russification of the region, made the potential for nationalist mobilization in the region uncertain. Would the introduction of perestroika mean the growth of a unified Russian-Tatar front, or would these new freedoms of expression and action bring the rebirth of a long dormant sense of Tatar national identity? In looking at the Tatar case, it is
immediately obvious that the population of Tatar ASSR lacked the unified sense of national identity and history that characterized the Lithuanians in the late 1980s. If mobilization was to occur along ethnic national lines, it would require the resuscitation of an endangered sense of nation and a slow, arduous process of redefining national identity. Unlike the Ukrainian case, however, the languages, cultures, and religious traditions of the two dominant ethnic groups were quite distinctive and people were unlikely to suffer the confusion of national identity that occurred between Russians and Ukrainians in Ukraine. Thus, the potential for a growing nationalist schism in the population of Tatar ASSR was clearly present, and it only remained to be seen whether nationalist political entrepreneurs would be able to play upon ethnic differences and successfully trigger mobilization along ethnic lines.

Social Mobilization in the Tatar ASSR

As elsewhere in the Soviet Union, social activism in Tatar ASSR began with the relatively "safe" issues of ecology, culture, and history. In 1987 and 1988, small discussion clubs began to coalesce and the first tentative steps were made toward mass mobilization. Early mass actions were linked almost exclusively to environmental questions. Heavy industrialization of the republic had created a myriad of environmental problems which had long gone unchecked. Extensive contamination of the air, water, and soil of the Tatar ASSR made the republic ripe for the emergence of a strong environmental movement.

During 1987 and 1988, government plans to construct buildings or production facilities in wooded or recreation areas formed the focus for Kazan's early environmental activists. Students and faculty at the republic's prestigious Kazan State University provided the initial leadership in mobilizing the population to oppose unwanted development projects. Mobilization began slowly with the first issue tightly linked to the interests of the Kazan State University community. In 1987, it was learned that the government planned to raze a popular wooded area contiguous with the university in order to make way for a construction project. Students and faculty associated with the city's most active druzhina (an official student environmental club) in the university's biology department strongly opposed the project and took the bold step of contesting the government's decision. Up until this time, the druzhina had engaged in the normal, accepted campaigns of all official druzhina of the USSR: primarily, the crusades against poaching and illegal Christmas tree acquisitions. Now, the druzhina decided to take on the authorities.

Interest in the issue grew and soon much of the university community was involved along with residents of the region slated for development. Kazan's first popular protest, a picketing action held near the university, was unexpectedly successful. Attendance was substantial and the city's most progressive newspaper Vechernaya Kazan provided extensive, positive coverage of the
event. In this first demonstration of the power of the people, the government was quick to back down and agree to relocate their planned construction project.

Building on this early success, the next campaign undertaken by Kazan's budding environmental activists was more ambitious. Moscow planners had targeted Kazan for the construction of a new biochemical factory which was to produce the controversial livestock supplement BVK. During 1987 and 1988, BVK factories across the USSR became central targets for environmental protest due to the dangerous air pollution associated with the production of BVKs as well as the fact that BVKs were banned in much of the developed world. Plans to build a BVK factory in Peschaniye Kovaly, a recreational area on the outskirts of Kazan, angered many sectors of Kazan's population and brought about environmental mobilization on a much broader scale than the earlier crusade to prevent construction near the university.

During the spring of 1987, the planned BVK factory became a hot topic of discussion among Kazan's population. Vechernaya Kazan provided a forum for the debate which occurred frequently in the pages of this newspaper during January through June of 1987. Once again, the faculty of Kazan State University took a leading role in the campaign, publishing frequent attacks on the factory plans and holding open fora to acquaint the population with the perceived dangers of such a facility. Petition drives were undertaken and the newspaper Vechernaya Kazan reported having received over 50,000 letters opposing the factory by mid-1987.

With the campaign against the BVK factory, participation in the environmental movement began to broaden. Concerned citizens outside the university community began to take active roles in organizing mass actions, and a broader environmental network began to coalesce. The first independent environmental club in the city, Ekologicheskii Klub, emerged at this time. While lacking a tight organizational structure, regular meetings and facilities and other attributes of an established environmental association, this club represented an important step in the future organization of environmental activism in Kazan. Other small, local groups also emerged at this time to assist in the crusade against the factory. The fledgling movement held several mass protests in Kazan and is attributed with bringing about the first genuine mass mobilization in the city, with participation in protest rallies often numbering in the thousands - a milestone for Kazan.

In response to this unexpected outburst of popular opposition, local authorities were quick to join the protestors and demand the cancellation of the project. The Tatar Council of Ministers officially requested that USSR authorities reconsider the siting of the factory, and in July of 1988, USSR Gosplan acceded to local demands -- once again reinforcing the peoples' sense of efficacy in their actions.

While other environmental actions against planned industrial facilities followed in 1988 and later, none were as ambitious as the battle against the Tatar Atomic Energy Station. While most of these early environmental campaigns targeted facilities yet to be constructed (thus lowering
the cost of cancellation), the anti-TAES campaign focused on an immense construction project into which millions of rubles had already been sunk. With construction having begun in 1983, the station was well on the way to being operational by the time opposition to the AES was first voiced by Kazan activists in 1988. Over half a billion rubles had already been spent and the first reactor was scheduled to come on line in 1990, just two short years away. While the station was located over 100 km from Kazan in the town of Kamskaya Polyana, environmental activists in the capital city were the first to raise the cry against the republic's first and only nuclear power station.

Anti-nuclear activists in Kazan can be separated into several distinct strands: specialists, students, and broader populace. Among scientific specialists, the issue of the Tatar AES became a matter of concern in early 1988. Once again, academics at Kazan State University provided the most active core of specialist opposition and the city’s progressive newspaper, Vechernaya Kazan, provided the forum for discussion. Focusing mainly on technical deficiencies, such as the siting of the station in a seismic zone and inadequate water sources for cooling, numerous well-respected specialists publicized their concerns through both the press and open discussion sessions. While these specialists never organized their opposition into a formal club or association nor joined the mass movement which was emerging at this time, they nonetheless played a critical role in the anti-nuclear campaign. Scientists of significant stature, including Yuri Kotov, Chairman of the Ecology Department and Dean at Kazan State University, Boris Burov, Chairman of the Geology Department, and A. Konovalev, a prominent biologist at the university, provided the emerging movement with the technical arguments to wage a successful campaign and thus indirectly lent the emerging movement scientific legitimacy and credibility.

The Kazan State University student druzhina, which had begun to reject its role as a docile and obedient official club with its participation in the environmental campaigns of 1987-88, was also quick to join in the anti-TAES crusade. With the stakes being so high, the anti-TAES campaign was viewed as highly political and controversial from the start, and the participation of the druzhina in such a confrontational action was viewed by many as a radical departure from the accepted mission of these officially sponsored organizations. While the druzhina at Kazan State University and the other many druzhinas at institutes around Kazan had long been considered in decline, suffering from overwhelming student apathy and indifference, the campaign against the Tatar AES injected these student organizations with a new dynamism and sense of mission. Many student participants, however, hasten to add that although the anti-TAES battle reinvigorated a dying movement, student participation in environmental activities never became the leading or dominant force in the anti-nuclear power movement in Kazan.

Interestingly enough, the dominant force in the mass mobilization of the anti-TAES movement was neither scientists nor students, but rather a single extremely committed individual
named Albert Garapov. Garapov was an engineer with no professional linkage to the nuclear power question who almost single-handedly organized the anti-nuclear activities which gave this movement its mass character. Throughout the anti-nuclear struggle, which lasted from 1988 through 1990, Garapov could continuously be found at the center of all mass activities. Garapov, however, worked poorly in groups and thus his leadership of the movement was only marginally connected with any organized associations. While he often mentioned his leadership of the Anti-Nuclear Society, this supposed association had no regular meetings, meeting space, nor organizational structure. When an informal environmental newsletter began to be published in the fall of 1989, the name of the editor (and probable writer) was never included, but the phone number of the editorial office was (not surprisingly) Garapov's home telephone number!

Garapov's energy and dedication to the task were prodigious, with his constant publication of anti-TAES articles in the press, publication of his own newsletter, circulation of petitions, and organization of mass actions. It is probably most accurate to characterize this dominant force in the anti-TAES movement as a small and constantly changing group of friends and acquaintances which revolved around a single committed individual, Albert Garapov.15

The actual crusade against the Tatar AES began in earnest in 1988. During the spring of 1988, articles by specialists and a very active journalist at Vechernaya Kazan, Gennadi Naumov, began to introduce the public to the potential dangers of the almost completed nuclear power station to the north of Kazan. During the summer of 1988, the first mass protest rally against the station was held in Kazan. Outside the capital city, however, society remained largely quiet, with little sign of either ecological or political awakening.

It was not until 1989 that the movement began to spread across the Tatar ASSR. The elections to the USSR Congress of People's Deputies provided an opportunity for the anti-nuclear issue to receive widespread attention and as in other regions of the USSR, opposition to the local nuclear power station was adopted as a key component in almost all electoral platforms. Demonstrating the widespread popularity of this issue, leading opponents of the Tatar AES proved highly successful in the elections. Prominent anti-nuclear scientist, A. Konovalev, as well as the dean and chairman of the ecology department of Kazan State University, Yu. Kotov, were both elected to the Congress of People's Deputies. Another long-time activist often associated with Garapov's activities, A. Gavrilov, also won a seat in the Congress. Unlike many others across the USSR who were elected on anti-nuclear platforms, all three continued to promote their anti-nuclear views from their new positions in Moscow.17

Soon thereafter, mass anti-nuclear activities began to be observed and promoted outside the city of Kazan. In April of 1989, a small anti-TAES rally was reported in Nizhnykamsk, an industrial center approximately 50 kilometers from the nuclear station.18 Two weeks later, a march was conducted from Kazan to the station.19 Activists met at Kazan State University and
were shuttled by bus across the countryside toward the AES site in Kamskaya Polyana. In each
town, the activists disembarked and attempted to hold local rallies to publicize their concerns about
the growing Tatar station. While certainly generating a great deal of publicity for the anti-TAES
campaign, it is clear that the Kazan activists were not entirely successful in mobilizing the rural
countryside. In many towns, local authorities opposed the rallies and went as far as preventing the
activists from disembarking within town limits. Furthermore, local turnout at the rallies was often
smaller than expected by the activists. Nonetheless, the action was the first of its kind to be
held in the USSR and was clearly important in the early activation of the Tatar countryside.

During the remainder of 1989, the Tatar AES continued to be a hot issue in the Tatar ASSR.
The conclusions of a scientific commission established by the USSR Academy of Sciences
confirming the central government’s claims to the safety of the Tatar AES only seemed to fuel
anti-nuclear and growing anti-Moscow sentiment in the autonomous republic. During the
summer of 1989, attempts were made to resolve the differences between Kazan’s scientific
community and the Moscow specialists, but with little success. Reports of these scientific round
tables indicate that the discussions were emotionally charged and largely unproductive.

By late summer, however, a dramatic change in the attitude of the Tatar authorities began to
become evident. Whereas anti-nuclear activists complained of government obstruction and official
opposition to their activities during 1988 and early 1989, authorities began to take a new view of
the issue in mid-1989. Recognizing the popularity of the anti-nuclear platform (as well as the
need to woo the electorate for the impending 1990 local elections), Tatar republic authorities
dropped their opposition to the movement and began to take steps to actively demonstrate their
support for the anti-TAES demands. After attending a round table of Moscow and Tatar
specialists during the summer of 1989, Yuri Voronin, Chairman of the Tatar ASSR Gosplan and
Deputy-Chairman of the Tatar ASSR Council of Ministers, announced that the Tatar government’s
position was in concordance with its scientists; since the Tatar scientific community recommended
halting construction on the new nuclear station, the Tatar government would henceforth take steps
to encourage Moscow decision-makers to halt the project.

During the fall of 1989, anti-nuclear activists continued to pressure Moscow to halt
construction of the station. Activists staged a second march to the Tatar AES which set out from
Kazan on Sept. 30, 1989. In a controversial step, march organizers included a threat of a
preliminary regional strike in the march resolutions. Interestingly enough, the Kazan specialist
community viewed the strike threat as overly antagonistic and counterproductive and both
Konovalev and Burov joined republic authorities in a televised appeal to cancel the strike. In
hopes of resolving the growing conflict between Moscow and the Tatar republic, a committee of
specialists, including Konovalev and Burov, were immediately dispatched to Moscow to lobby the
USSR Council of Ministers to accede to the demands of the Tatar authorities.
Moscow authorities, however, showed little willingness to accede to local demands to cancel the almost completed station. In October, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, L.D. Ryabev, publicly reaffirmed the government's commitment to open the new AES.27 The appeals of the Tatar specialist committee which visited Moscow in October also fell on deaf ears: in a telegram to the republic's green activists, USSR Deputy Minister of Atomic Power, Lapshin, stated that additional research had found no serious geological problems associated with the Tatar AES and reaffirmed that the station would open as planned.28

The struggle between the two levels of authority -- Moscow and Kazan -- continued unabated through 1989 and early 1990. On Nov. 4, 1989, the Tatar Supreme Soviet issued a decree calling on the USSR Council of Ministers and USSR Supreme Soviet to cancel the Tatar AES on the grounds of poor technological planning. The decree further called on the Tatar Council of Ministers to begin to lay the groundwork for converting the station to a conventional power facility or other industrial function.29 In voting for the cancellation of the station, Supreme Soviet deputies were no doubt considering their electoral prospects in the upcoming March elections. By this time, opposition to the Tatar AES was overwhelming, with petitions demonstrating widespread support for cancellation and surveys indicating that as much as 90% of the population of Tatar ASSR favored halting construction of the AES.30

As expected, opposition to the Tatar AES was a prominent component of almost all successful electoral platforms in March of 1990. The new Supreme Soviet thus came to office with a clear mandate to block further work on the Tatar AES. Thus, during the first session of the new parliament, deputies voted unanimously to halt construction and funding of the station.31

The cancellation of funding for the station, however, was largely symbolic since construction was ultimately financed by USSR organs and construction on the station continued unabated during the spring and summer of 1990. In frustration, Tatarstan's greens held yet another march from Kazan, this time crossing over into Bashkir ASSR to protest the Bashkir AES as well.32

Interestingly enough, it was not Tatarstan's demand for cancellation of the station that ultimately forced the USSR ministries to accede popular demands. The resolution of the issue came only with the growing power struggle between Moscow's two levels of authority: USSR and Russia. As Boris Yeltsin began to assert Russia's authority against that of the USSR, cancellation of unwanted nuclear facilities became a symbol of Russian as well as Tatar sovereignty. Thus, following Russia's declaration of sovereignty, the Russian Supreme Soviet moved quickly to pass a moratorium on the construction of new nuclear facilities in the Russian Federation.

Since the Tatar AES was more than half completed, the moratorium left its fate somewhat ambiguous. During the fall of 1990, however, USSR authorities agreed to give broad interpretation to the Russian moratorium and halt construction on most nuclear facilities in the Russian Federation, whether in the early or late stages of construction. In an October meeting
attended by L.D. Ryabev, Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, Yu.K. Semenov, USSR Minister of Power and Electrification, Reshetnikov, USSR Deputy Minister of Atomic Energy and Industry, and Yu. Voronin, Deputy Chairman of the Tatar Council of Ministers, USSR authorities finally agreed to cancel the Tatar AES and convert the facility to a conventional heating station.

With the Russian moratorium and its confirmation by USSR authorities, the anti-nuclear power movement in the Tatar ASSR quickly withered away. In fact, environmental activism of all kinds virtually disappeared from the scene in late 1990. What few remaining environmental activists who could be found by 1991 all reported dismay and disillusionment with the rapid unravelling of the environmental movement in Tatarstan. As the Chairman of the Ecology Committee of the Tatar Supreme Soviet, Aleksei Kolesnik, noted, people were beginning to expect the new official environmental organs to take care of such issues and attention was quickly turning to the now overriding concern for Tatar sovereignty and independence.33

Nationalism and the Anti-Nuclear Crusade

As might be expected, the environmental movement did not emerge in isolation in the Tatar ASSR. As elsewhere, mobilization on environmental, cultural, and other seemingly apolitical issues, led quickly to political mobilization. By 1988, a myriad of informal groups were beginning to proliferate across the republic, particularly in the capital city of Kazan.34 In June of 1988, the budding political activists of Kazan came together to form the Tatar People’s Front,35 an umbrella group dedicated to furthering the reform goals of perestroika.36 The initiative group was composed of approximately 50 activists and represented the coalescence of virtually all active forces in Kazan. As expected, leading environmental activists such as Albert Garapov, played a key role in the creation of the Tatar People’s Front and the campaign against the Tatar AES was one of the first activities of the newly formed movement.

Initially, the Tatar People’s Front (TPF) was not affiliated with any particular ethnic group. It was an umbrella that brought together both Russians and Tatars demanding political and economic reform. In addition to supporting perestroika, however, Tatarstan’s new political activists also had their own agenda -- promoting the sovereignty of the Tatar ASSR and upgrading its status to that of a union republic, on a par with Russia, Ukraine, and other union republics. Thus the new movement initially blended popular demands to cancel the Tatar AES with new demands for the greater self-determination of the autonomous republic.

During 1988 and 1989, the Tatar People’s Front was actively involved in organizing anti-nuclear activities in the republic. Upon its formation, a special committee was established to direct anti-nuclear activities. In reports of the marches and demonstrations that were held in late 1988 and 1989, the Tatar People’s Front is consistently mentioned as a key action organizer.37 In
addition, the newsletter of the TPF, Atmoda, frequently included discussion of the Tatar AES issue and plans for upcoming anti-TAES activities. 38

While the Tatar People’s Front was created to unify all active reform forces in the Tatar ASSR, the union between Russians and Tatars proved short-lived. During 1988, steps were taken toward the creation of a new political organization, the Tatar Public Center (TOTs). 39 With the creation of TOTs, Tatar participation within the Tatar People’s Front began to decline as Tatars shifted their membership from the broader TPF umbrella to a more ethnically based organization. While the TPF was dedicated to further the goals of political and economic reform and work to enhance the status of Tatarstan within the USSR, TOTs focused more attention on the revival of Tatar language and culture and the eventual achievement of a sovereign Tatar nation.

Like the Tatar People’s Front, TOTs also moved quickly to establish a committee on the Tatar AES question. Thus, during 1988, Kazan’s most active opponent of nuclear power, Albert Garapov, found his organizational affiliation constantly changing. While he initially claimed affiliation with the somewhat nebulous Ekologicheskii Klub, in June of 1988 Garapov participated in the founding of the Tatar People’s Front and became a leading player in the TPF anti-nuclear committee. With the formation of the Tatar Public Center, however, Garapov once again shifted his organizational ties and joined the TOTs committee on the TAES. Finally, however, both the TOTs leadership and Garapov himself acknowledged that Garapov’s single-minded dedication to halting the construction of the Tatar AES and his inability to work with others in planning anti-nuclear activities made him a poor committee member. By the end of 1988, Garapov had quit the TOTs committee on the TAES and established his own organization, the Anti-Nuclear Society. With no formal organizational structure, regular meetings, or established membership, the Anti-Nuclear Society was unabashedly a front for Garapov’s personal anti-nuclear activities.

In breaking away from the TOTs committee on the TAES, however, Garapov did not relinquish his secondary goal of rebuilding the Tatar nation. As a vehement Tatar nationalist, Garapov consistently viewed anti-nuclear activities in the ASSR as a symbol of the struggle for Tatar sovereignty and independence. His discussions on the evils of nuclear power frequently included warnings of the threat to the Tatar nation. Rebuilding a sense of Tatar identity and protecting the Tatar people from the dangerous nuclear policies of Moscow went hand-in-hand for Albert Garapov.

It is clear that the anti-nuclear movement in Tatarstan played an important role in the political mobilization of society. As the first focus for mass mobilization in the Tatar ASSR, the issue represented a key with which to unlock the pent-up political aspirations of the population. Marches through the countryside in 1988 and 1989 were an effective tool for activating the passive rural population of the republic. Initially, however, the movement was not focused on ethnic mobilization. Russians and Tatars alike were encouraged to fight against Moscow’s arrogant
treatment of the Tatar ASSR, and to support the growing drive for increased sovereignty and status for the region. Initially, all ethnic groups were called upon to join the struggle to provide the Tatar ASSR with its rightful status as a full union republic.

It was not until 1989 that the anti-nuclear movement underwent a subtle transformation, with the split between ethnic Russians and Tatars beginning to emerge. As the year progressed, the long-suppressed distinctions between the two ethnic groups began to become more apparent. Dedicated to reversing the russification of the Tatar population, the Tatar Public Center grew quickly in popularity and membership. While the Tatar People's Front seemed to be struggling to identify its mission and constituency during this period, TOTs was growing into a vibrant organization with a deep sense of its popular charge.

By 1990, the potential for a dangerous ethnic cleavage in Tatarstan's population began to become apparent. As political mobilization began to split along ethnic lines, with Tatars favoring the Tatar Public Center and Russians drawn to the Tatar Peoples' Front, many feared that the autonomous republic was on the road toward violent ethnic conflict. During this time, radical Tatar nationalist organizations began to emerge calling for the creation of an ethnic Tatar nation-state. Groups such as Ittifak were determined to reverse the centuries of russification inflicted on their people and to create an exclusive nation-state open only to ethnic Tatars.

This radicalization of the Tatar national movement, however, did not represent a dominant trend. In fact, both of the leading political organizations -- the Tatar Public Center and the Tatar People's Front -- strongly opposed ethnic exclusivity and supported a civic definition of the emerging nation. Both groups went to great lengths to ensure that their organizational programs permitted membership for all ethnic groups and explicitly favored equal treatment for Tatars and Russians alike. The Tatar Public Center's civic orientation was particularly important in avoiding the erosion of ethnic relations in Tatarstan. Because Tatars had a stronger history of resistance to Moscow's domination and were able to appeal to the population on the basis of both ethnic identity and instrumentality, the TOTs quickly grew into the most popular and influential political organization in the autonomous republic, rapidly dwarfing the Tatar Peoples' Front. Thus, it was particularly important that the Tatar Public Center adopt an inclusive approach toward the ethnic Russian population of the autonomous republic.

The dominance of a civic over an ethnic definition of the Tatar nation may be explained by several factors. First, history and the character of national identity both played key roles in shaping the Tatar national movement. Due to Tatarstan's centuries of affiliation with Russia, the Tatars' sense of a distinctive national identity had been significantly eroded. Russification of language and culture as well as high levels of intermarriage between the two ethnic groups tended to ameliorate the potential for violent confrontation between Tatars and Russians. The Tatar
population lacked a strong sense of their distinctive national identity and thus were slow to mobilize on the basis of ethnic exclusiveness.

In addition to the obstacles to rapid Tatar nationalist mobilization, a shift toward an inclusive definition of the nation was also favored by the attitudes of Tatarstan's Russian population on the questions of sovereignty and independence. Due to Tatarstan's well-known success as an industrial center of the Soviet Union, calls for greater republic autonomy were strongly supported by the Russian as well as the Tatar population. In fact, both groups were united in their perception that both Russia and the USSR were draining Tatarstan of its wealth and resources and that sovereignty or independence would be economically advantageous to the republic. Thus, surveys taken in the early 1990s and a referendum on Tatar sovereignty show a strong degree of unity between the two ethnic groups on the question of autonomy.  

This fact was not overlooked by Tatarstan's budding political entrepreneurs. During the 1990 elections, candidates often played on growing resentment of Moscow's extraction of Tatarstan's riches (both by Russia and the USSR), and appealed to all ethnic groups to support the sovereignty of Tatarstan. Following the republic elections, the new leaders of Tatarstan tended to follow a civic political strategy which focused on achieving the benefits of sovereignty for the entire population of Tatarstan. While exclusive ethnic nationalists were represented in the new government bodies, their appeal remained restricted to a small sector of society.

Since the early 1990s, there have been strong indications that the dominant definition of the nation in Tatarstan remains a civic one. While the authorities of Tatarstan and Russia have been in almost continuous confrontation over the question of Tatarstan's relationship to Russia, the most recent set of agreements regulating Tatar-Russian relations appears to reflect the continued dominance of an inclusive national identity in Tatarstan. While the new agreements support the demands of Tatarstan's population for greater control over their own economic affairs and wealth, they fall far short of the demands made by the radical ethnic nationalist fringe in Tatarstan. Although it remains to be seen whether these agreements will withstand opposition from Tatar radicals, evidence to date would seem to indicate that civic nationalism remains ascendant in Tatarstan today.

Crimea: The Russian-Ukrainian-Tatar Knot

As with Tatarstan and Russia, the enclave of Crimea represented a potential focal point for separatist mobilization within Ukraine. Once again, however, the strength and character of the national identities of the dominant ethnic groups in the region played a central role in shaping the direction of social mobilization in Crimea. Furthermore, as in Tatarstan, instrumental considerations of wealth and economic growth became key factors in determining the extent to which ethnic groups might unify around a common political objective.
The Crimean peninsula represented an exotic and unique region within the former Soviet Union. A visit to Crimea meant leaving behind many of the grim realities of Soviet daily existence. Known to most Soviet citizens as a center for tourism, recreation, and relaxation, the peninsula's rugged mountains, lush tropical flora, and spectacular beaches and coastline attracted vacationers from across the former USSR. Outside Yalta, an immense pillared monument proclaimed, "Every Soviet citizen has a right to a vacation." The peninsula was dotted with hotels, spas, sanatoria, and the vacation dachas of communist elites and military retirees.

The history of Crimea was an unusual one. While at the time of the breakup of the USSR the peninsula was considered an oblast of Ukraine, this status had been acquired only recently. From the late eighteenth century until 1954, the Crimea had in fact been under Russian jurisdiction. Following Catherine the Great's victory over the Ottomans in 1775, Russia had claimed control over Crimea and consistently asserted its dominance up until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. After a period of turmoil, the creation of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was declared in 1921; the Crimean ASSR was once again designated as a component of Russia. In 1945, following the deportation of the Crimean Tatars the previous year on allegations of collaboration with the Germans, Crimea lost its status as an autonomous republic and was relegated to the relatively low status of oblast. Finally, to mark Russia and Ukraine's 300 year old history of friendship, Khrushchev transferred the peninsula from Russian to Ukrainian jurisdiction in 1954.

Thus, as nationalism began to flower across the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, the Crimean population found itself in a confusing situation. What was the national identity of this region? History, language, and ethnic composition might indicate a Russian national identity, and yet for the past three and a half decades the peninsula had been completely integrated into Ukrainian political structures and considered a constituent component of Ukraine. As elsewhere in Ukraine, intermarriage between Russians and Ukrainians was high, and due to russification of the Ukrainian population, distinct ethnic lines between Ukrainians and Russians were difficult to draw. Complicating this situation was the transient nature of much of the Crimea's population. Because of its status as a premier resort and retirement area, many people did not live in Crimea on a permanent basis or were relative newcomers to the region. Despite Russia's long term association with Crimea, most Russians could not claim deep historical and ethnic roots to the land.

A third group could, however, claim a centuries old attachment to the Crimean peninsula. The Crimean Tatars could trace their roots in the region back to the early 13th century, and thus had perhaps the most legitimate historical and ethnic claim to the region. Since they had been deported from Crimea in 1944, however, few were left on the peninsula to claim their heritage. It was only with the introduction of perestroika, that the Crimean Tatars were able to finally openly protest their deportation and begin returning to Crimea. By the late 1980s, several hundred
thousand had returned to Crimea and were demanding land, restitution, and greater political rights in the region.

This complex ethnic history of the region shaped the types of nationalist mobilization that occurred both during the perestroika years and following the breakup of the Soviet Union. This in turn significantly affected the character and development of the region’s anti-nuclear power movement.

Anti-Nuclear Mobilization on the Crimean Peninsula

Plans to construct a nuclear power station on the Crimean peninsula were already well underway by the time of the Chernobyl disaster. The project was a relatively modest one, with a single VVER reactor planned to go on line in 1987-90 and a second several years later. The station was located in the town of Sholkina at the eastern most point of the peninsula, (though often referred to as the Kerch AES due to its proximity to the larger city of Kerch). It was hoped that the station would alleviate an energy shortage on the peninsula. In fact, the region produced very little of its own energy and was forced to rely largely on transfers from outside. As of 1991, over a quarter of the Crimea’s energy was supplied by nuclear power sent down from Ukraine and Russia. The KAES was designed to enhance the region’s energy self-sufficiency.

As in the republic capitals of Lithuania and Ukraine, mobilization in the capital city of Crimea began within the intellectual stratum of society. As in Kiev, parallel mobilizations began to take place amongst two sectors of the intelligentsia: writers and scientific specialists. Within the writers’ community, V.P. Terekhov, a well-known local writer, began to raise the subject of the Crimean AES at Writers’ Union meetings in 1987. The discussions on this topic became quite emotional, with a number of writers arguing that Crimea’s special identity as a pristine and unique resort area must be protected against the irresponsible policies of Moscow. Interestingly enough, the writers did not argue for the protection of a people or a nation, but rather for protection of their identity as prime vacation territory. Over time, a small core of concerned writers formed their own discussion circle to further discuss the KAES problem.

Simultaneously, a number of scientific specialists began to take interest in the issue. One of the first was solid state physicist, A.V. Svidzinsky. Svidzinsky had long been interested in environmental issues and had even had the opportunity to become involved in the work of the Club of Rome in the late 1970s. In 1978, he had presented a paper on global environmental concerns at Simferopol State University which even mentioned the problem of nuclear power and waste disposal. Svidzinsky recalls that at the time he had doubts concerning the prevailing doctrine of the "absolute safety" of nuclear power, but the topic was too politically sensitive to refer to in any but the most oblique terms. While he recalls having searched for data on reactor safety in the late 1970s, he was unable to find any and had consequently dropped his pursuit of this question,
All this changed in 1986, however, with the Chernobyl disaster. In a misguided attempt to prove to the Soviet population that the USSR’s nuclear power stations were no worse than those in the West, the Soviet high circulation press had been flooded with information about nuclear accidents outside the USSR during the months following the Chernobyl accident. Svidzinsky found the information alarming and began to compile this published data and compute statistics on accident rates and probabilities.

In 1987, Svidzinsky began to share his findings with other physicists and mathematicians at Simferopol State University. Soon a discussion group was formed which gradually expanded to include scientists from outside the university and outside Simferopol. As the group expanded, geologists, biologists, and a variety of other scientists became involved. Interestingly enough, however, no nuclear physicists ever joined this circle.

By early 1988, discontent with the plans to open a nuclear power station in Crimea began to overflow into the public arena. As elsewhere, diminishing censorship provided the opportunity for anti-nuclear viewpoints to finally start appearing in the local press. Both writers and scientists began to submit their views to the media and several of the more progressive local papers, including Slava Sevastopola and Krymski Komsomolets, seemed quite receptive to the opposition platform.

In April, the public was invited to attend an open forum at Simferopol State University at which the KAES issue was to be openly discussed. The forum was academic in nature, with members of Svidzinsky’s discussion group all presenting papers on the KAES question. An audience of approximately 300 turned up for this novel event; several speakers from the forum have categorized the group as primarily fellow academics and intellectuals.

While all of the papers presented questioned the wisdom of building a nuclear power station on the Crimean peninsula, few speakers went so far as to suggest a solution to the problem that was growing rapidly in Kerch. Most acknowledged the huge government investment in the station and were reluctant to call for its cancellation this late in the game. Despite the lack of concrete proposals, the forum revealed the strong opposition to the station that had been lurking beneath the surface. Speakers later expressed surprise at the degree of anti-nuclear unanimity in their audience. Unlike in the Lithuanian case, however, this early forum did not represent an opportunity to voice hidden nationalist sentiments. Most speakers and members of the audience stressed the need to preserve Crimea’s identity as a vacation mecca, and many referred explicitly to Lenin’s famous contention that the Crimea should be preserved as a unique recreational zone.

Following the session, a number of speakers and a handful of members of the audience stayed on to continue the discussions on a less formal basis. With about 25 people still present, it was decided to create a committee to fight for environmental protection of Crimea and particularly to oppose the ever growing KAES. A committee of eight scientists was selected to lead the new
movement, including physicists A.V. Svidzinsky, Pivovarov, and A.V. Bruns, geologist E.P. Tikhonenkov, and biologist A.S. Komarov. Pivovarov was elected president of the committee and Svidzinsky's paper laying out the key problems of the KAES was chosen as the preliminary platform for the organization. Identifying themselves as part of an all-union organization, the movement founders chose to consider themselves a branch of the all-USSR organization, Ekologiya i mir.

Interestingly enough, during 1988-89 the question of whether the new organization should be affiliated with Ukrainian or Russian activist networks did not emerge. While activists initially linked their organization to a primarily Russian organization, they were not hesitant to affiliate themselves to a Ukrainian network when the opportunity emerged; when the all-Ukraine organization Zeleni svit was established in Kiev, the Crimean activists also registered their association under the Zeleni svit umbrella. Any connections to the larger world were thought to be of assistance and during this early period of mobilization, ethnic issues did not appear to play a role.

Following the April forum, anti-nuclear mobilization in Crimea began to pick up in pace. Oppositional letters from both writers and scientists began to appear with some regularity in the press. Joint letters from members of the Writers' Union and physical scientists also began to appear, indicating that the two sectors of the intelligentsia were beginning to join forces on this issue. An all-union conference on the economy and tourism held in Yalta, which featured leading Moscow anti-nuclear activist M.Ya. Lemeshev, also provided an opportunity for local writers and scientists to become acquainted with each other while simultaneously introducing the new activists to anti-nuclear crusaders from outside the region. This conference was once again given wide publicity in the local media, though reports indicate that the tone of the conference was not as stridently anti-nuclear as the April forum had been.

On May 20, 1988, a second session was held at Simferopol State University to discuss the KAES issue. This time a broader audience responded to the invitation and the main hall of the university was reportedly packed to capacity with people from all walks of life. Again, local scientists presented serious papers on the hazards of the KAES. This time, however, they also invited the director of the KAES, Tansky, along with nuclear specialists from Moscow to respond to their complaints. Unlike the earlier session, discussions at this public forum became quite heated as members of the audience began to challenge the power industry's representatives.

Following the May forum, the ranks of the Crimean branch of Ekologiya i Mir began to expand rapidly. The core of anti-nuclear writers from the Writers' Union quickly joined the growing movement, and scores of concerned citizens from outside the intelligentsia began to set up local chapters of Ekologiya i mir. An article published in Krymski Komsomolets (May 28, 1988) noted the explosion of public opposition to the KAES which had occurred in the aftermath of the
two fora held at Simferopol State University. The paper claimed that it was being flooded by letters, telegrams, and phone calls and mentioned one letter which came accompanied by over 2000 signatures. It was also reported that the budding anti-nuclear activists had begun a door-to-door campaign to collect signatures against the station, and it was estimated that over 20,000 people had already signed such petitions. The reporter expressed surprise at this unexpected outburst and its contrast with the previous passivity of Crimean society.

Throughout this entire process of mobilization, the Communist Party played an ambiguous role. The Crimea was known as a conservative communist stronghold. Throughout the perestroika period, regional party leaders strongly resisted Gorbachev's calls to restructure their political, economic, and social realms. Thus, the budding anti-nuclear activists recognized early on that their success would be dependent on winning the party organization over to their side. Activists from both the Writers' Union and the scientific community contend that their strategy from the start was a two-pronged one: mobilizing the masses and winning over the obkom of the Communist Party. 51

Beginning in 1987, both writers and scientists appealed to Communist Party obkom to assist them in challenging the Crimean AES. Members of the obkom also confirm that the topic of the KAES and its suitability to the Crimean conditions was raised at a number of obkom meetings in 1987-88. While the obkom did not take a stand on this issue until late in the game, many members of the party apparently recognized the growing importance of the nuclear power question and the benefits of the Communist Party playing a leading role on this potentially popular issue. The two open fora held at Simferopol State University in April and May of 1988 were in fact sponsored by the Communist Party. The Party, however, did not take sides at this point and the title for both fora was: "The Crimean AES: Pros and Cons."

In an effort to resolve the growing tensions surrounding the Crimean AES, V. Kazarin of the party obkom organized a meeting between leading anti-KAES activists and the administration of the nuclear power station on May 26. Even A.L. Lapshin, the USSR Deputy Minister of Power, made the trip down to Kerch to help win over these troublesome intellectuals. Unfortunately, however, the session was described by many who attended as an old-fashion propaganda meeting and activists complained that their views were not heard and their concerns not addressed. Rather than resolving the issue, this session seems to have convinced many of the activists of the futility of attempting to reason with the USSR military-industrial bureaucracy.

Throughout the remainder of 1988, the patterns of mobilization established earlier in the year continued. Intellectuals continued their anti-KAES crusade, awareness and mobilization amongst the mass public expanded, and the party obkom remained on the fence - a mediator, but not yet a player. By the autumn of 1988, however, mobilization in Crimea was beginning to catch the attention of the political elite in Moscow.
News of the growing opposition to the Crimean AES travelled to Moscow by several routes. First, the numerous letters and appeals composed by the scientists and writers to win the party obkom over to their side were usually sent to Moscow as well. Furthermore, many of the petitions that were circulated during the summer and fall of 1988 were sent directly to Gorbachev. Second, word of local opposition to the nuclear power station began to travel upward through existing CPSU structures. In particular, the Extraordinary 19th CPSU Conference which brought delegates from across the entire USSR to Moscow during the summer of 1988 offered an outstanding opportunity for party members to voice local concerns. While little unanimity existed among the Crimean delegation on the KAES issue, at least one delegate, M. Melnikov of the Crimean Agricultural Institute, spoke out against continued construction of the station. In addition, members of the larger Ukrainian delegation appealed to the Conference to consider a brief one-year moratorium on all nuclear power stations in Ukraine, including the KAES.

Finally, while the anti-nuclear movement on the Crimean peninsula was in fact quite self-contained, this did not prevent it from benefiting from the lobbying and campaigning efforts of the all-Ukraine movement, Zeleni svit. The Crimean AES was officially located within the republic of Ukraine and thus Kiev activists consistently included the station in their list of demands.

When Moscow reacted to this surge of anti-nuclear sentiment in Crimea, it was only slowly and incrementally. As was generally the case, Moscow’s preferred first step was the formation of an expert commission to evaluate the design and safety of the station. Thus, late in the summer of 1988, First Secretary, Gorbachev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Ryzhkov, and Minister of Power, Shepherina, appointed Director of the Kurchatov Institute, Velikhov, to head such an investigation. While the commission included numerous Moscow experts and representatives of the power industry, it also brought in a number of local specialists to participate.

Several months later, the commission issued its official report. Its findings largely supported the concerns of local anti-nuclear activists. While a number of shortcomings of the station were noted by the commission, its most serious concern was with the possibility of seismic activity in the region at a much higher level than the design could withstand. According to a report in Rabochaya hazeta (Dec. 23, 1988), 15 members of the commission voted in favor of cancellation, with 4 members for continuation, and 2 undecided. Reportedly, the four proponents of continued construction were all affiliated with the Ministry of Atomic Power.

Despite the commission’s findings, however, the USSR Council of Ministers remained reluctant to halt a project so near completion. Despite scientific objections, construction continued. Local scientists complained bitterly that the Ministry of Atomic Power was indifferent to specialist input, and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences publicly threw their support in with scientists calling for a cancellation of the project. Moscow, however, seemed impervious to scientific objections.
While Moscow seemed prepared to ignore the advice of specialists, however, they found it less easy to overlook the explosion of anti-nuclear public opinion that seemed ready to engulf them. In Crimea, the movement against the KAES began to take on a mass character during the winter of 1988-89. Chapters of Ekologiya i mir sprang up in towns and villages across Crimea, and petitions were circulated at an unprecedented rate. Estimates of the number of signatures collected during this period varies according to the source, but the figure of 300,000 signatures is often cited. Even discounting for some exaggeration, it seems apparent that mobilization on this issue was occurring at an unprecedented level in Crimea.

During the winter of 1988-89, however, the character of the anti-nuclear movement in Crimea also underwent a dramatic transformation. During most of 1988, opposition to the Crimean AES was led by members of the intelligentsia. Scientists and writers worked together to publicize their technical and scientific concerns about the wisdom of continuing construction on this nuclear power station. The founders of Ekologiya i mir came entirely from the scholarly community, and while they hoped to win the masses over to their cause, their real goal was to use sound scientific arguments to win their case.

By the winter of 1988-89, however, droves of non-intellectuals were joining the movement and the scientists quickly became outnumbered. All of the scientists and writers who were interviewed describe what happened during this winter in terms of "infiltration" by pensioners. The scientists expressed dismay at the changing character of discussions within the organization. Meetings became dominated by pensioners who had little knowledge or interest in the technical issues. For a short while, the elected leader of the group, Pivovarov managed to keep control over this new fringe membership. By early 1989, however, he was fed up and quit. Within months, every scientist and writer who had been amongst the founders of the organization walked away from it in apparent disgust. many claiming that "populism" had replaced reasoned debate.

Interestingly enough, however, with the changing membership of the movement also came a change in tactics. While intellectuals dominated the movement, a variety of tactics were debated and tried. As a rule, the intellectuals were not hesitant to challenge the political authorities. The pensioners, however, were adamantly opposed to any activities which might be viewed as politically challenging. This change from an independent intellectual organization that was willing to challenge the region's political elite to a relatively docile and apolitical organization led to widespread accusations of Party infiltration of the movement. Such accusations are difficult to substantiate, but it is clear that the movement was channeled in a relatively safe apolitical and unchallenging direction from 1989 on. Certainly such an infiltration and redirection of the movement would have been in the party's best interest at this time, and thus the accusations seem plausible. During the spring of 1989, the party also became more supportive of the anti-nuclear cause and the environment became more hospitable to the new popular movement. Ekologiya i
mir’s application to register as an informal organization was quickly accepted in early 1989 without any of the red tape that usually accompanies the registration process.

The popular appeal of this issue was once again confirmed during the spring of 1989 with the elections to the USSR Congress of Peoples’ Deputies. Because Ekologiya i mir had officially registered, it was permitted the unusual privilege of nominating candidates to the new Congress and selected six candidates to run in Crimea. The importance of the anti-KAES issue, however, was most vividly demonstrated by the almost complete unanimity in campaign platforms of all candidates to the USSR Congress of Peoples’ Deputies. Most astute budding politicians recognized the popularity of the anti-KAES platform; few were foolish enough to neglect to include opposition to the station in their electoral platform.

Following the elections to the CPD, party and other official organizations that had been sitting on the fence suddenly swung over to the anti-KAES side. First Secretary of the Crimean obkom, Girenko, who had earlier expressed doubts about the feasibility of cancelling the KAES suddenly became a leading anti-nuclear spokesperson. Likewise, the newly formed Crimean branch of the State Committee for Environmental Protection also came out in favor of cancelling the project.

The growing support by the obkom of the Communist Party had a dramatic effect on the battle against the Crimean nuclear power station. During the spring of 1989, the local party organization finally threw its full weight behind the anti-nuclear crusaders and their influence proved substantial. On April 19, 1989, the Crimean oblast soviet, under significant pressure from the party obkom, voted to cancel construction of the KAES and called for its conversion to some other type of industrial facility. In addition to responding to strong party pressure, members of the oblast soviet were undoubtedly also concerned about their reelection prospects for 1990 and responding to the overwhelming popularity of the issue.

Of course, the concrete implications of the oblast soviet’s decision were almost nonexistent. Nuclear power decision making was still considered the domain of Moscow, particularly the USSR Council of Ministers, and the local cancellation decision had no impact on the ongoing construction in Kerch. The decision, however, was significant because it demonstrated the strong support of local party and government authorities for the popular anti-KAES cause and forced Moscow decision-makers to acknowledge the strength of local opposition to this project. In addition, while a number of local soviets voted to cancel projects in their region in the aftermath of the 1990 local elections, this case was trend setting in that the oblast soviet took this step a full year before the others in anticipation of elections.

As the first such local decision in the USSR, the decision by the Crimean oblast soviet to cancel the station undoubtedly took Moscow by surprise. During the summer and fall of 1989, however, the fate of the KAES was clearly under discussion in Moscow. In late May, it was
rumored that a decision had been taken to halt construction of the station. V. Fokin, Deputy Chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers, noted in an interview that such a decision had been taken. Moscow, however, refused to confirm Fokin’s claim and the question remained unresolved. Several months later, the USSR Minister of Atomic Power was asked directly about the fate of the KAES in an interview for Rad. Ukr. (Aug. 9, 1989) and refused to answer, saying only that the station would not be opened until an international team of experts had deemed it satisfactory.

With construction of the station continuing despite scientific recommendations and local opposition, members of Ekologiya i mir decided to pursue more aggressive tactics. Throughout the summer and well into the fall of 1989, Ekologiya i mir organized picketing of the station. On almost any day for a several month period, a handful of picketers could be found outside the KAES. In addition, several larger protests were held near the station, the most memorable being a mock funeral for the Crimea as a vacation mecca.

In September, the first secretary of the Crimean party obkom, A. Girenko, sent a formal letter of protest to deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, Lev Ryabev, demanding to know why construction was continuing in the face of negative scientific evidence. By this time, the party had clearly established itself as a major player in the anti-nuclear campaign. Girenko’s public complaint was quickly followed by a second decision of the oblast soviet - this time to halt financing of construction of the KAES. While the decision was primarily symbolic (since most funding flowed from Moscow), it once again passed the message on to Moscow that the local population was strongly committed to preventing the opening of the KAES.

Finally, on Oct. 25, 1989, the USSR Council of Ministers acceded to Crimean demands to cancel the Crimean AES. Pravda’s report of the cancellation decision stressed the importance of negative scientific findings combined with strong pressures from Crimean Communist Party Secretary A. Girenko. Due to the fact that the station was nearly complete, the Council of Ministers decreed that it would be converted into a nuclear power training facility and promised that no nuclear fuel would be delivered to the station. The crusade begun by a small core of writers and scientists in Crimea had finally been won.

The National Factor

The anti-nuclear power movement in the Crimea was very short-lived, appearing in 1987 and disappearing by the beginning of 1990. Following the decision of the USSR Council of Ministers in the fall of 1989, popular interest in the nuclear power issue fell dramatically. While this is understandable given the apparent resolution of the issue, it is interesting to note that the environmental movement as a whole also withered into irrelevancy at this time. By 1991, only a handful of environmental activists could be found in Crimea and the once vibrant chapters of
Ekologiya i mir had all but disappeared. No mass environmental actions were observed in the Crimea after 1989.

The fleeting nature of the anti-nuclear and environmental movements in the Crimea would support the hypothesis that these movements were associated with objectives that went beyond pure environmental concerns. The need for environmental activism did not disappear in 1990, but the movements did. It appears clear that these movements offered a safe outlet for the expression of popular dissatisfaction with government policy. As such, these movements represented the first step along the path to political mobilization. Once society began to participate politically, however, there was no need to focus on "safe" issues; by 1990, it was possible for budding political activists to state their political demands openly and appeal to the population for support of their political platforms.

As was observed in the preceding studies of Lithuania, Armenia, and Ukraine, the tendency to use anti-nuclear and environmental protest as a surrogate for other forbidden demands was often associated with the emergence of nationalism in the non-Russian regions of the USSR. The question thus arises, in this predominantly Russian region of Ukraine, was anti-nuclear and environmental activism also a front for hidden nationalist aspirations? Interestingly enough, there is very little evidence to support claims linking anti-nuclear activism and nationalism in the Crimea. In fact, the anti-nuclear movement in the Crimea appears to have been remarkable free of ethnic nationalist orientation.

Throughout the three year struggle against the Crimean AES, ethnic Russians and Ukrainians fought side-by-side to eliminate the perceived threat to the peninsula's identity as a premier resort and recreation area. As was noted earlier, environmental activists showed little concern for the question of ethnic affiliation, formally linking their organizations to both the predominantly Russian association, Ekologiya i mir, and the all-Ukraine group, Zeleni svit. Only in 1990 did the environmental movement split into two separate groups, Ekologiya i mir and Zeleni svit. This decision to split, however, seems to have had far less to do with ethnic identities and was more associated with a simple personality clash among the leadership. Sergei Shuvainikov, one of the most active opponents of the Crimean AES, decided to break away from the mainstream of the movement after a falling out with other leaders. He thus declared himself the leader of Zeleni svit and proclaimed the separation of Zeleni svit from Ekologiya i mir. Apparently, however, no other members followed Shuvainikov thus leading to a situation in which the entire membership retained its original organizational structure while a single individual suddenly claimed leadership of a separate Zeleni svit organization. Thus, while on the surface it might appear that the Crimean environmental movement split into Russian and Ukrainian factions in 1990, the reality does not support this hypothesis. It is also interesting to note that while Shuvainikov attributed the split to ethnic causes during a 1991 interview, noting that his preference for affiliation to Zeleni svit was
linked to the fact that this was an all-Ukraine organization rather than a predominantly Russian association emanating from Moscow, this explanation holds little credibility when judged by later events. During the spring of 1994, Sergei Shuvainikov ran for president of Crimea on a rabid Russian nationalist platform, earning him the nickname of the "Crimean Zhirinovsky!" Thus his 1991 claim that his departure from the mainstream of the environment movement was linked to his preference for a Ukrainian affiliation holds little water!

The only ethnic distinction visible in the anti-nuclear and environment movements in Crimea was the division between the dominant Slavs (Russians and Ukrainians) and the minority of Crimean Tatars. The Crimean Tatars, who began to return to the region from their Central Asian exile as early as 1986, had a completely different political agenda than the Russians and Ukrainians. The Crimean Tatars were concerned with resettlement issues -- housing, land, government subsidies -- and had little interest in peripheral questions such as nuclear power and environmentalism. While Crimean Tatar organizations were repeatedly invited to participate in anti-nuclear activities, they consistently declined this invitation.

The Crimean Tatars' refusal to hide behind a surrogate issue and commitment to pursue their goals openly and forcefully was linked to several factors. The Crimean Tatars, in fact, had a long history of open confrontation with the Moscow authorities. While in exile in Central Asia, the Crimean Tatars had continuously worked to maintain their separate ethnic identity and openly pursue their goal of returning to their homeland in Crimea. During the 1960s and 1970s, despite adverse political conditions, a strong association of Crimean Tatars emerged to fight for protection of the Tatars. Leading members of the organization were viewed as dangerous dissidents by Moscow and frequently imprisoned. This tradition of direct confrontation and dissidence carried on into the perestroika period. The Crimean Tatars were in fact one of the first groups to openly demonstrate outside the Kremlin walls during the first years of perestroika. As they returned to Crimea, they saw no need for a change to the safer tactics of surrogacy and instead continued their policy of openly campaigning for greater rights for their people.

Within the Crimean population, a wide gulf separated the dominant Slavs from the Crimean Tatars. This gulf was fed by the Tatars' own insistence on maintaining their separate cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identity. Since the beginning of the return of the Crimean Tatars during the early perestroika period, Tatar organizations had continuously maintained their commitment to supporting the Tatars' distinct ethnic identity, fighting for the assistance in resettlement that they believe is owed to them, and ultimately, creating a "Tatar state" in Crimea. The Crimean Tatars view the Russians and Ukrainians in the region as recent emigres into their territory and demand that the region eventually be returned to Tatar control.63

Although the sharp ethnic split between the Crimean Tatars and the Slavic population of Crimea is cause for concern, it must be noted that the Tatars constitute only a small percentage of
the peninsula’s population.” The real cause for concern lies with the potential for a growing schism within the Slavic population itself -- that is, the possibility of growing antagonisms between the ethnic Russians and Ukrainians. This study, however, showed little sign of a deep Russian-Ukrainian ethnic divide during the perestroika period. As noted above, the environmental movement was not divided along ethnic lines, (as opposed to what was observed in Lithuania and Armenia). Furthermore, the anti-nuclear debate contained none of the ethnic rhetoric observed elsewhere. Moscow’s decision to build a nuclear power station in Crimea was never referred to as a policy of "genocide," and neither Russians nor Ukrainians were particularly targeted as the perpetrators of this evil act. Throughout the debate on the Crimean AES, activists continuously stressed the need to protect the region as a pristine, recreational zone, and resisted any tendency to link anti-nuclear demands with Russian or Ukrainian ethnic identities. In addition, outside the anti-nuclear movement, very little ethnic mobilization of Russians or Ukrainians was observed during the perestroika period. While the Crimean Communist Party set up a series of cultural "clubs." (Russian, Ukrainian, Tatar, and others) in 1991 in order to coopt any nationalist strivings that might emerge, there was little public response to this initiative and with the exception of the region’s Crimean Tatars, ethnic mobilization on the peninsula remained a tiny, fringe phenomenon.

Rather than acting as a surrogate for nationalism, the anti-nuclear movement in Crimea represented the first step toward political mobilization of the population. While reflecting the goals of greater self-determination and decision making rights for the region, the anti-nuclear movement exhibited no ethnic nationalist orientation. Following the mass mobilizations against nuclear power in Crimea, however, the population was quick to move on to more political objectives. Because the region was viewed as a magnet for both Soviet and foreign tourists, early political goals in the region focused on giving the peninsula more control over its own affairs and particularly, the right to reap the profits of a potentially immense tourist industry. The first step along this path was to regain the region’s status as a autonomous republic rather than an oblast of Ukraine. This status had been taken away in 1944-45 with the deportation of the Crimean Tatars from the region.

In January of 1991, a referendum was held in Crimea asking whether the population supported renewing the region’s status as an "autonomous soviet socialist republic" of the USSR. Interestingly enough, this referendum reflected not only demands for enhanced status and decision making in the region, but also fears of the growing independence movement in Ukraine. By early 1991, it was becoming obvious that aspirations for independent statehood in Ukraine were on the rise and might eventually lead Ukraine to break away from the USSR. In Crimea, however, the prospect of being forced to join Ukraine in leaving the USSR was one which filled the population with great trepidation. First, only a minority of the population was ethnic Ukrainian and an even smaller minority described themselves as Ukrainian speakers. As Ukrainian nationalism grew in Ukraine, the population of Crimea began to fear the imposition of an alien culture and language in
the region. The passage of the Ukrainian language law in 1989 did little to calm fears of Ukrainian national imperialism in the region.

A second factor which is thought to have attributed to the growth of resistance to membership in an independent Ukraine was the conservative character of Crimea’s communist leadership. Seeing the reform movement arising all around them, the communist leadership of Crimea hoped to shelter themselves from its onslaught by maintaining the political autonomy of the region. Thus, the Crimean Communist Party leadership strongly supported and lobbied for a referendum which would insulate the region from the forces of perestroika and allow the Crimea to participate as an equal in the Union Treaty that was then under debate. The referendum was highly successful, with 93% of those participating voting to upgrade the Crimea’s status to that of an ASSR within the USSR and to support Crimea’s inclusion as an equal member in the Union Treaty.

Following the referendum on Crimea’s status, apprehension about fate of the region in the event of Ukraine’s secession from the USSR grew rapidly. It was only at this time that ethnic factors began to intrude on Crimean politics. Suddenly, the distinction between ethnic Russians and Ukrainians began to receive attention. It was not so much ethnicity that divided the population, however, as language. Only a small percentage of Crimea’s population considered themselves to be Ukrainian speakers, and the institution of Ukrainian as the republic’s official language seemed to demonstrate that the Crimean population, as a small percentage of the total population of Ukraine, was likely to find itself a helpless victim of the growing Ukrainian nationalist sentiment in Kiev.

Despite the growing hostility to affiliation with an independent Ukraine, however, ethnic nationalism was slow to emerge in the region. Contrary to trends observed elsewhere in the USSR, neither a strong Russian nor Ukrainian nationalist movement emerged in Crimea during the perestroika period. There was no spontaneous explosion of nationalist sentiment as observed in the Baltics and much of the Transcaucasus. Instead, nationalist sentiment in Crimea grew only slowly in response to the growing assertiveness of Ukrainian nationalists outside Crimea.

Following the breakup of the USSR in late 1991, resistance to inclusion in Ukraine has grown on the Crimea peninsula. The absence of a strong ethnic movement during the perestroika period, however, would support the hypothesis that anti-Ukrainian sentiment in Crimea is based not on a deep ethnic divide within Crimean society, but rather a pragmatic assessment of the pros and cons of affiliation with the newly independent Ukraine. On a purely practical level, much of the Crimean population can see little benefit of incorporation within Ukraine. Their language and culture may be under threat from Ukrainian nationalists outside Crimea, their region has little political voice in Ukrainian politics, and the Crimean peninsula lacks total control over its economic resources. Furthermore, with most of the Crimean population having emigrated from
Russia, the new trade and travel barriers between Russia and Ukraine have made the simple tasks of telephoning family, mailing gifts, and visiting friends and relatives in the now foreign country of Russia both difficult and expensive. Finally, Ukraine’s deteriorating economy and failure to take any steps that might put the country on the road to economic recovery and prosperity have greatly increased Crimean opposition to affiliation with Ukraine. On a purely practical level, many in Crimea argue that economic hardships in the region would be greatly alleviated through either independence or affiliation with Russia.

While opposition to inclusion within Ukraine has clearly grown in the several years since the dissolution of the USSR, this resistance should not be taken as a sign of growing ethnic split between Crimea’s Russian and Ukrainian population. Interestingly enough, both ethnic Russians and Ukrainians support seceding from Ukraine and recent election results demonstrated no ethnic orientation in the voting patterns of the Russian and Ukrainian populations. Thus, the absence of Russian and Ukrainian ethnic mobilization in the struggle against the Crimean AES has proven a solid indicator of the depth of ethnic division within Crimean society.

Conclusions: Anti-Nuclear Mobilization in the National Enclaves

In comparing the mobilizational experiences of Tatarstan and Crimea, only minor differences in the patterns of social activation were observed. The primary distinction between the paths followed in these two enclaves lay in the differing linkage between nationalist mobilization and the anti-nuclear movement. In Tatarstan, a weak but observable linkage was observed between the growth of a sense of Tatar national identity and anti-nuclear mobilization. The anti-nuclear movement appeared to play a significant role in the revival of a distinctive sense of Tatar culture and identity. In contrast, the anti-nuclear movement in Crimea displayed no linkage to the growth of any national movement in the region, whether Ukrainian, Russian, or Crimean Tatar.

Despite this variation in the linkage between nationalism and anti-nuclear mobilization in the two enclaves, however, the mobilizational patterns displayed in the two enclaves were remarkably similar. While the rebirth of a distinctive sense of the Tatar national identity was observed in Tatarstan, the anti-nuclear movement was only weakly divided along ethnic lines. In fact, both Russians and Tatars participated side-by-side in the crusade against the Tatar AES and the dominant trend in the Tatar national movement was based on a civic, inclusive definition of the national group. Russians were neither treated as the perpetrators of nuclear genocide nor excluded from the mobilizational process (in contrast to the patterns observed in Lithuania). Likewise, in Crimea, the anti-nuclear movement was not cleaved along ethnic lines and both Ukrainians and Russians joined forces to fight Moscow’s dominance over the Crimean peninsula.

In both Tatarstan and Crimea, instrumental calculations clearly took precedence over ethnic exclusivity. The drive for autonomy and independence was based not on the desire for the creation
of an ethnically based nation-state, but rather on perceptions of the economic benefits of independence. In both enclaves, the dominant national groups were unified in their goal to break free of Moscow's domination and claim control of local economic resources for the republic's population. In Tatarstan, Tatars and Russians alike dreamed of an independent Tatarstan in which they controlled and reaped the profits of the region's vast oil resources and extensive industrial capacity. Likewise, on the Crimean peninsula, Russians and Ukrainians were united in their goal of controlling the immense tourist potential of this vacation mecca. Only the minority Crimean Tatars were committed to the creation of an ethnically based independent nation-state on the peninsula.

The tendency to define the nation in civic rather than ethnic terms that was observed in these two enclaves may be traced to several factors. In Crimea, the lack of clear and widely accepted boundaries between Ukrainian and Russian national identities, observed elsewhere in Ukraine, played a key role in preventing the cleavage of Crimean society along ethnic lines. Thus, as was the case on the Ukrainian mainland, ethnic identities provided only a weak basis for mobilization. While the Tatars of Tatarstan did not suffer from the ethnic blurring observed in Ukraine, they nonetheless found themselves poorly prepared to mobilize along ethnic lines in the 1980s. Although Tatar language, culture, religion, and history were certainly distinguishable from their Russian counterparts, the Tatar identity had been buried under so many centuries of Russification that it was difficult to unearth and revive. The younger generation knew very little of their Tatar heritage and high levels of intermarriage prevented ethnic exclusivity from dominating social interactions. Tatarstan's status as an autonomous soviet socialist republic rather than a full union republic had ensured that the indigenous national group would receive fewer privileges and entitlements than indigenous nationalities of union republics. Less opportunity was made available during the preceding several decades for maintaining the national language and culture, and promoting the growth of a powerful and privileged national elite. Thus, the Tatars found themselves less prepared to mobilize on the basis of a unified sense of ethnic national identity than many of their counterparts in the union republics.

Since this study includes only two of the numerous national enclaves of the former USSR, caution must be used in extrapolating to the dozens of minority nationality groups across the fifteen Soviet successor states. I would suggest, however, that the absence of opportunities for the creation of a privileged national elite and maintenance of local language and culture in these enclaves lacking union republic status would imply less preparedness to mobilize rapidly along ethnic lines. In some cases this may simply mean a delay in ethnic nationalist mobilization, while in others there may be significant hope for the victory of a civic sense of national identity and mobilizational patterns based on instrumental calculations of benefit rather than ethnic exclusivity.

For more on this historical debate, see: Azade-Ayse Rorlich, The Volga Tatars (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986): chapter one.

For example, see: Appeal to the Muslim Workers of Russia and the Soviet Far East, issued by the Soviet People's Commissar (Nov. 20, 1917).


See for example the forum held at Dom Uchenyk in May 1987. Reported in Vechernaya Kazan (May 29, 1987).

Vechernaya Kazan (Oct. 6, 1987).

Longstanding support of local authorities noted in Vechernaya Kazan, (Oct. 6, 1987).

Gosplan decision noted in Vechernaya Kazan (July 8, 1988).

For example, the campaign against a planned vinyl chloride factory in Kazan in 1988. Activists mobilized quickly on this issue and the government backed away from its construction plans almost immediately.

Plans for the Tatar AES were developed and approved in the 1970s. The station was planned to remedy the shortfall in energy in the Tatar ASSR caused by the heavy and continuing industrialization of the republic. Moscow's decision to build the station was welcomed and approved by the Tatar Communist Party leadership as well as the Tatar Council of Ministers. Kommunist Tatarii no. 9 (1988).

Sovetskaya Tatariya (April 8, 1989).

Activities of Kazan State University specialists are discussed in Komsomolskaya Pravda (August 18, 1989). Scientists from other institutions, including the Central Scientific-Research and Design Institute of Construction, the All-Union Scientific-Research Institute of the Geology of Non-Metallic Useful Metals, and the USSR Academy of Sciences, are also noted as important participants in this scientific debate: Pravda (May 10, 1989).

This perception of continued student apathy is supported by a group interview with members of the Kazan State University druzhina, as well as interviews with environmental staff of the press office of Kazan State University and with the dean and chairman of the ecology department. Yuri Kotov. (Interviews conducted March 1991).

The environmental newsletter, alternately called "Greens of Tatariya" or "Magdi" first began to appear in September of 1989. It was published on a monthly basis (rather sporadically) for approximately one year.

Note that this circle of activists that surrounded Garapov began to form in 1987 with the campaign against the biochemical BVK factory. At this time a small network of non-academic activists was created which formed the basis for the ensuing anti-TAES crusade.

For example, see the appeal against the Tatar AES published by Kotov and Konovalev in Komsomolskaya Pravda (Aug. 18, 1989).

Sovetskaya Rossiya (April 26, 1989).

March reported in Pravda (May 10, 1989) and Moscow News no. 30 (July 23, 1989).

Such problems are discussed in an article by Albert Garapov, Komsomolets Tatarri (July 23, 1989).

Reported in Komsomolskaya Pravda (Aug. 18, 1989).
22. Among the participants in these round tables were Albert Garapov and Yuri Kotov, as well as the Chairman of the Tatar Gosplan and Deputy Chairman of the Tatar Council of Ministers, Yuri Voronin. Reported in Komsomolskaya Pravda (Aug. 18, 1989).

23. Komsomolskaya Pravda notes that over 200,000 people had signed petitions opposing the Tatar AES by the summer of 1989 (Aug. 18, 1989).


25. March reported in Atmoda, the newsletter of the Tatar People’s Front, (Nov. 20, 1989) and Pravda (Oct. 5, 1989).


27. Reported in Magdi no. 4 (Nov. 1989).


30. See for example survey conducted by the Tatar People’s Front. Atmoda (Nov. 20, 1989).

31. This decision was taken on April 17, 1990. Resolution no. 51-XII “On halting construction on the productive facility, Tatar AES.” Unanimity of decision reported by Kolesnik, Chairman of the Ecology Committee of the Tatar Supreme Soviet, interview. (March 1991).


33. Interview with Aleksei Kolesnik (March 1991).

34. A detailed report on these new informal groups is provided in Kommunist Tatarii no. 11 (1988).

35. Note that this group is alternately referred to in the media as the Tatar People’s Front and the People’s Front of Kazan.


37. See for example Moscow News no. 30 (July 23, 1989) and Komsomolskaya Pravda (Aug. 18, 1989).

38. A particularly detailed discussion of anti-TAES activities is included in Atmoda (Nov. 20, 1989).

39. Because the Tatar Public Center is so often referred to by its Russian abbreviation (TOTs), I will use the Russian rather than the anglicized abbreviation in this discussion. TOTs = Tatarskii Obshchestvenny Tsentr.

40. Tatarstan adopted a declaration of sovereignty on Aug. 30, 1990, which was confirmed and clarified in a national referendum held on March 22, 1992. The referendum was passed by 61% of participating voters. See Postfactum (March 22, 1992).


42. Note that while the Volga Tatars and Crimean Tatars can trace their heritage back to a common source centuries ago, these two groups have evolved along different paths and now consider themselves to be entirely distinct ethnic groups. In this chapter, the term “Tatars” refers to the Volga Tatars and the Tatars in Crimea will always be referred to as the “Crimean Tatars.”


44. KAES stands for Krymskaya Atomnaya Energichnaya Stantsia (or Crimean Atomic Power Station).

45. The group called itself “Problems of Natural Science”.

31
46. The forum was advertised in the progressive paper, Krymski Komsomolets.
47. Interview with leading speakers from the April forum published in Krymski Komsomolets (June 18, 1988).
48. See discussion of this forum in Krymski Komsomolets (May 14, 1988).
49. See for example the letter published in Krymskaya pravda (May 29, 1988), signed by writer Terekhov and scientist Svidzinsky, along with 17 other writers and scientists.
50. Reported in Krymskaya Pravda (May 21, 1988).
51. Obkom refers to the oblast committee of the Communist Party, the top party body in the oblast of Crimea.
52. This meeting was reported in Krymski komsomolets (May 28, 1988) and Krymskaya pravda (June 18, 1988).
53. An interview with Melnikov revealed that his opposition to the station was based on the strength of public opinion on this issue. Two other delegates from Crimea, O. Mikhailets and V. Izmailov, were reportedly also in favor of cancellation, while a third, Crimean First Secretary A. Girenko, expressed sympathy with the opposition but doubts whether the region's energy needs could be met without the station. Interview reported in Christian Science Monitor (June 24, 1988).
54. See Boris Olevnik's speech to the Conference, published in V Sudbe Prirody - Nasha Sudba (In the Fate of Nature Lies Our Fate) (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1990).
55. According to Pravda (Jan. 11, 1989) the official reported was issued on Nov. 28, 1988.
56. A letter signed by ten scientists was published in Pravda (Jan. 11, 1989). The scientists supported the commission's findings and called for a halt in construction of KAES. They also explicitly accused the Ministry of Atomic Power of excluding specialist opinion.
57. In a letter published in Robitnycha hazeta (Jan. 8, 1989), Vice President of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Lukinov, claims to be speaking on behalf of the Academy and notes that the Academy believes that the commission’s findings indicate that construction on the KAES should be halted.
59. This letter was published in Pravda Ukrainy (Sept. 15, 1989).
60. Note that the Crimean party organization was supported by the Ukrainian Communist Party. The Central Committee of the UCP publicly voiced its support for cancelling the KAES in an interview published in Pravda Ukrainy (May 24, 1989).
61. The decision was reported in Izvestiya (Oct. 2, 1989).
63. The definition of a "Tatar state" is not always clear. For the most popular moderate organizations, such as the Organization of the Crimean Tatar National Movement, this term does not imply a monopoly on political rights by the Tatars. Rather, moderates call for a political system in which Tatars have the dominant political voice and the ability to veto any decisions taken by the Slavic population — despite the fact that the Crimean Tatars constitute only a small percentage of Crimea's population.
64. Crimean Tatars were estimated to make up 9.6% of Crimea's population in 1993. Andrew Wilson, The Crimean Tatars (London: International Alert, 1994).