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My Radio Talk
on the Crimea
May 1st, 1942
Before this war the peninsula of Crimea in South Russia has been very little known outside Russia, especially in this country. Crimea has been involved in this war, and at this moment the major part of the peninsula is still in German hands.

The ancient name of the peninsula, going back to times immemorial, was Tauris; after its annexation the Russians call it by the Tatar name Krym, in English Crimea. The peninsula lies on the north side of the Black sea, with the mainland of which is connected by the narrow Isthmus of Pere- kop (3-4 m. across). The range of the mountains which occupies a certain territory in the peninsula has numerous peaks; the most widely known peak is Chatyr-dagh, the Tauric-Tatar name meaning Tent-Mountain (5000 ft.). On the higher parts of the range are numerous flat mountain pastures (Turk. yailas). Myself, many, many years I spent overnight on Chatyr-dagh in a primitive hut (shack).

It is impossible to say definitely who were the original inhabitants of the Crimea. According to our half historical, half legendary tradition the Celtic Cimmerians were expelled from the Peninsula by the Scythians in the VII c. B.C. But the Scythians themselves were never able to conquer the whole peninsula. A remnant of Cimmerians who took refuge in the Crimean mountains are known in our tradition as the Tauri; from this people derives the ancient name of the Peninsula Tauri, which has been by best Russian poets in the XIX c. to
designate the Crimea (for instance Pushkin). At a new light was cast on the Crimea when, in the same 7 c., the Greeks began to colonize the Crimea, because they knew, no doubt, how rich the Crimea was in fish and corn. The south shore of the Peninsula was dotted with Greek colonies. The most important were Chersonesus; its majestic ruins lie still now near the military post of Sebastopol very often mentioned in this war's history. Theodosia, also, which still now preserves its ancient name in our days and has been also often mentioned during this war. Finally, in the east of the Peninsula, at the spot which commanded the straits of Azov, leading into the Sea of Azov, was founded Panticapaeum, now Kerch, also a very well-known name now in connection with military activities of this war. All these Greek colonies in the Crimea had continuous connections with other Greek colonies in Asia Minor and with Athens, in Greece proper. At Panticapaeum, which had another name of Bosporus, in the 5 c. B.C., was, with its neighbouring country, founded the Bosporan Kingdom. For several centuries the Bosporan Kingdom was a very prosperous country state. The main concern of the Bosporan rulers was to increase and stabilize their corn trade and they succeeded in their task, even supplying Athens with corn. In the 3 c. B.C. the Bosporan Kingdom continued to flourish. It became one of the hotbeds of Greek civilization and played an important part in the life of the ancient world in general. The time is past when
in the imagination of cultivated persons, the Greek world is bound by the shores of Greece proper. Bosporus is one of the earliest examples of the wonderfully stimulating power of Greece.

In the second century B.C., the Bosporan Kingdom and Chersonesus faced a new danger from the Scythians. The war with the latter was unsuccessful. The resources of the Greek cities in the Crimea were exhausted. Bosporus and Chersonesus were faced by the choice either to submit to the slightly Hellenized Scythian kings, or to find help from outside. They decided to appeal to Mithridates VI, king of Pontus, in Asia Minor, for protection. Do not forget that Mithridates VI was a sworn enemy of Rome. The Crimea was occupied by the troops of Mithridates. But after a long war with Rome, Mithridates was defeated and in 63 B.C. committed suicide. His catastrophe was of great importance. The powerful Roman state became very much interested in the destinies of the Crimea, which, as you remember, had appealed to Mithridates for protection. The Bosporan Kingdom, which included now Chersonesus, continued to exist, but as "a friend of Romans," in other words as a vassal state of Rome, the Roman Empire. In spite of this dependence.

In the 13th A.D., a new force appeared in the Crimea—the Germans. On Rome, the commerce continued to flourish, and the Bosporan Kingdom created a good commercial fleet, an important economic achievement.
In the 3rd A.D., a new face appeared in the Crimea - Germans. By the middle of this century one of the most important German tribes, the Goths, had migrated from the shores of the Baltic Sea and settled in the territory known today as Southern Russia, particularly along the northern and western shores of the Black Sea. As a natural result, they penetrated into the Tauric peninsula, established their sovereignty over the greater part of the Bosporan Kingdom and took possession of its fleet. With this fleet the Goths carried out from the peninsula several bold and far-reaching sea raids; they terrorized not only the shores of the Black Sea but also the islands and the coasts of the Aegean Sea and Mediterranean.

Even such distant islands as Crete, Rhodes and Cyprus failed to escape Gothic devastative raids. From the end of the III c. Christianity made its appearance in the peninsula in general and among the Goths in particular. At the end of the IV c. Bosporus finally passed into the hands of the Goths, and the Bosporan Kingdom ceased to exist.

About 370.

The barbarian people of the Huns from the depths of Central Asia about 370 invaded the territory of present-day Southern Russia and passed across the Crimea. The Huns subjugated and removed the Goths.
from the Russian steppes to Western Europe. But a rather small group of the Goths remained in the Crimea and during many centuries of the Middle Ages took an important part in the history of the Peninsula. Gradually, being a minority, they lost their nationality, became Hellenized and later Tartarized. But in the earlier Middle Ages, the Goths established themselves in the Crimean mountains and organized a small principality. As a whole, the Peninsula belonged to the later Roman Empire or Byzantine Empire, which inherited it from the earlier pagan Roman Empire. In several places of the Peninsula were built Roman garrisons were set up. In other words, from the 1st century on the Peninsula depended not on Rome but on the new Christian capital Constantinople. The Goths became vassal allies of the Byzantine Empire, under obligation to furnish auxiliaries. To protect the Peninsula, the Emperor Justinian erected the line of forts and long walls, the remains of which can still be seen today. The system of Crimean fortifications created by Justinian was destined to serve as a defense against various barbarian peoples who, one after another, menaced the Crimea for many generations.
[From the close of the 7th c. to the beginning of the 8th, the Khazars, a people of Turkic origin, had a predominant influence in the Crimea. They regarded the Crimea as a certain Siberia of the imperial regime in Russia, so that under undesirable or politically dangerous elements went into exile from C-lad to the Crimea, in the middle of the 7th c. even Pope Martin I was exiled to the Crimea. In his two letters which have survived the exiled Pope describes the desperate economic conditions on this Byzantine frontier. According to the Pope, "there was not even bread". "Bread", he writes, "is talked of, but never seen." Utterly worn out by his privations and sufferings, the Pope died in his place of exile. At the close of the 7th c. the Byzantine Emperor Justinian II was dethroned, mutilated, and exiled to the Crimea.

During the so-called iconoclastic period in the B.E. in the VIII c., when icons (holy images) were persecuted and destroyed, many Greek monks emigrated to the Crimea. This is doubtless a very important cultural phenomenon in the history of the medieval Crimea, for it indicates the increase of the Greek element in the Peninsula. The origin of churches and monasteries in the Crimean mountains, the remains of which have survived down to the present day, is in all likelihood to be referred to the epoch of the emigration of the monks in the VIII c.
In the X c. the Crimea was under the Russian protectorate, from the Russian prince, who resided in Kiev. At the end of the X c. the Russian prince Vladimir married the Byzantine princess, and under him Russia was converted to Christianity. The friendly relations between this Empire and the Byzantine principality led to the fact that Byzantine authority was re-established in the Crimea.

The most important factor in the following history of the Crimea is the penetration into the peninsula of the Italians, Venetians and Genoese, in the XI or XII c. They received from the Byzantine Emperor exceptionally favorable commercial privileges. With the year 1261 begins a new era in the history of the Crimea: the activities and rivalry of the two It. republics, Venice and Genoa, and especially the powerful growth, prosperity, and political and economic significance of Genoa. It is not to be forgotten that in the first half of the same XII c. a new foe appeared in the Crimea: from the north, the Mongols or Tartars, who firmly established themselves in the eastern part of the Crimea. Other regions of the Crimea were obliged to pay tribute to the Tartars. Thus, in the XIII c., the three new nations made their appearance in the Crimea: Mongols, Tartars, Venetians and Genoese.
About 1266 the Genoese founded their famous
prosperous colony in the Crimea, Caffa, now Theodosi-
opolis, the name which has been many times mentioned
during this war. The powerful Genoese walls of
Caffa with many Genoese inscriptions have
survived down to our own days. On the other
hand, in connection with the overwhelming
Tartar influence in the Crimea we may observe
the very interesting process of the assimilation
of the local population with the Tartars in
language, customs and manners. It is not to
be forgotten that in the mountains, in the
west of the Peninsula still existed the prin-
cipality, under a Greek dynasty. The Toward
that time the Goths already lost their German
nationality and were Hellenized or Tartarized.

As you know in 1453 Caffa was taken by the
Turks. A new page opened in the history of the
world. This event had a striking repercussion
in the Crimea and decided the future destinies
of the Peninsula. In rapid succession the Sultan
Muhammad II, who had captured Caffa, conquered
Greece and Trebizond in Asia Minor. Then, it was
the turn of the Crimea. In 1475 a strong Turkish
fleet appeared before Caffa, after five days
of siege it surrendered to the Turks. In the
same year fell also the Gothic principality.
The Crimea became a Turkish province.
The Turks preserved the religion and religious institutions of the Crimean Greeks, as well as the Greek ecclesiastical organization.

Under the Russian Empress Catherine the Great after a successful war with Turkey, in 1783, Russia formally annexed the Crimea under the name of Taurida. Since the Crimea has belonged to Russia and is always known under its Tartar name of Krin.

You see that the from a general historical point of view, the Crimea presents an extremely interesting and complicated phenomenon. Ancient Greek colonies and Greek civilization, economic significance for Greece proper, later for the Roman Republic and Empire, then for the Byz. Empire; on its small territory, the Crimea has seen many various nations, which have left traces of their influence. The Crimea is a real treasure for ethnological and archaeological work. The former Imperial government of Russia and the actual Soviet Russia have done a great work towards the investigation of various Crimea problems. But the field is so vast and so many-sided that very much still remains to be done. From the standpoint of the general background of political, social, and economic relations in the basin of the Black Sea, the Crimea may be regarded and studied as one of the essential elements in the process of the development of European civilization in the Near East.