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Meskhetian Turks: Displacement, Self-Perception, and the Future

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Two days after arriving in Oktiabr'skii, I went with my host to visit relatives in a nearby village. Following supper and the evening prayer, seventy-year-old Hasim and his son sat down with me in the back room, where we were joined by some of the children who were quiet for the first time all evening.

 ASIM speaks little Russian, so told his son to translate while he told me the history of the Meskhetian Turks. He said that during the time of Stalin, during the war, in 1944 all the Meskhetian Turks were taken in wagons to central Asia – to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Siberia. There they lived, but in a very different climate, until the Fergana events of 1989. Telling me that most Meskhetian Turks then left, many to Russia, Hasim's son described their contemporary problems of life without propiska (residence permits), adding that they do not have 'human rights.' This, he insisted, would not happen in the USA, or in England, or even in Brazil. He was insistent that I should write a book, so that all the world knows this story. He then stood up, said good night, and left.

On our first meeting, most Meskhetian Turks told a shortened version of Hasim's story, often only a few words, ensuring that I knew of their former residence in, and forced migration from, Georgia and Uzbekistan; and that, 'We have no homeland.' Usually the conversation swiftly moved on to discuss the potato harvest, or the amount of money spent by a bride's father. Thereafter the events of 1944 or 1989 were rarely discussed, neither among themselves in Meskhetian Turkish nor with me or others in Russian.¹ The extent to which these events are not fore-grounded in everyday life was illustrated when sixteen-year old Güzel told of a recent history lesson, in which her Russian teacher talked about the Meskhetian Turks:

Only when the teacher mentioned Fergana did Güzel realise that she was talking about them. At home she asked her mother whether they were Meskhetian Turks, as she had not known that this was their name. Relating the teacher's words, Güzel still talked about the Meskhetian Turks in the third person. She said that Stalin, in some year, had had all the Meskhetian Turks loaded into train wagons, 'but not the passenger wagons; the ones without seats, for goods; the narrow ones.' Several families were in each one, and the doors were locked. When the train stopped 'the guards did not even open the doors to let in fresh air. Lots of people died, and they threw the bodies out of the train, not knowing where to bury their relatives.' Then when they got to Central Asia 'life was very bad.' And then in 1989 the Uzbeks 'started throwing them out.'² Güzel said she almost cried when the teacher was telling the story.

In this article I expand on these stories, and contextualise them, in relation to the wider history of the region of the Caucasus known as Meskhetia, the Soviet definition and movement of peoples, and other peoples' experience of collective violence. I begin to examine how the Meskhetian Turks perceive and represent themselves and their experiences of the past century, and how Güzel's lack of communal historical knowledge relates to these self-perceptions.

Origins

Meskhetia is a region of mountainous southwestern Georgia, bordering Turkey and Armenia, and separated from the Black Sea by the Republic

*Excerpts from "Coping as Kin: Responses to Suffering amongst Displaced Meskhetian Turks in post-Soviet Krasnodar, Russian Federation" by Kathryn Tomlinson, thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University College London, Department of Anthropology, May 2002. This is exclusive publication of the 1st chapter "Displacement and Self-Perception" (originally, pp. 33-63) and "Conclusion" (pp. 224-234).

of Adzharia. 'Meskhetia,' as my informants use the term, refers to the regions of Meskheti and Dzhavakheti, also known as the Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki districts after the area's major towns. The term 'Meskhetia' derives from 'Meskhs,' the name of a people resident in what is now Georgia in first century AD, and probably long before then. Rosen, who refers to them as the Mushki tribe, asserts that one of their kings, called Mita, was 'none other than the famous King Midas of the golden touch,' whose empire was destroyed by invading Cimmerians in 696-5 BC (Rosen 1991:16-17). The Meskhs/Mushki are also referred to in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 38:1-4), as the Meshech or Mosokh (op cit; Aslan 1996:5). Some writers describe the Meskhs as a Georgian tribe, and hence assert that they formed the (Georgian) basis of the present day Meskhetians (Chavchavadze in Aslan 1996, Gachechiladze 1995, Rosen 1991). However, the area known in the first century AD as Samtskhe (from *Sa-meskhe*, 'country of Meskhs') (Yunusov 2000:10), and later as Meskhetia, has, in the intervening two millennia, been the place of settlement (by invitation and invasion) of multiple others, many of them Turkic peoples from Central Asia.³

The interaction between Georgian and Turkic peoples, and the contrast between representations of Georgian history, is demonstrated by descriptions of the reign of the Georgian king David the Builder in the twelfth century. From a Georgian perspective, during this period Meskhetia 'became the centre of Georgian culture and power,' as David '[drove] the Turks... out of Kvemo Kartli, Tbilisi, and Tao' (Rosen 1991:201). This picture is clarified, or confused, by Yunusov's pro-Turkic explanation that the Turks in question, the Muslim Oguz, were only driven out with the considerable assistance of the Qipchaks, who made up 50,000 of David's 60,000-strong army. The Qipchaks were also Turkic, although Christian. In order to defeat the Oguz, David invited them to live in Georgia, and married the daughter of their leader (Yunusov 2000:14-15). Thus hundreds of thousands of Oguz and Qipchaks, and other Mongol and Turkic invaders, had settled in Meskhetia by the thirteenth century, from which time its main town, Akhaltsikh, is mentioned in sources by the Turkish name Ak-sika, or 'White Fortress,' a literal translation of the Georgian name⁴. This accounts for the present day Turkish designation of the region as Ahıska, and of my informants as Ahıska Türkleri. At this time even in Georgian texts the local leaders were given the Turkish title *Atabek*, from which came the fifteenth century name of one of the four kingdoms of what had been Georgia,

Samtskhe Saatabago, 'the land of the Atabek called Samtskhe [Meskhetia]' (Yunusov 2000:15).

The most recent Turkic invasion was that of the Ottomans, who conquered Meskhetia in 1578, although it was not secure as part of the Ottoman empire until 1639, when a treaty signed with Iran brought an end to Iranian attempts to take the region. Yunusov asserts that the period of relative stability provided by Ottoman rule was central in 'unifying all generations of Turks' settled in what is now Meskheti-Dzhavakheti (Meskhetia) into a 'new type of Turkic race with its own particular culture' (Yunusov 2000:17,19). According to this (Azeri, pro-Turkic) position therefore, the Meskhetian Turks are descended from Turkic peoples who moved into Meskhetia. In opposition stand those who assert that the Meskhetian Turks are rather Georgians converted (forcibly or otherwise) to Islam during Ottoman rule,⁵ and that perhaps these Georgians were indeed descended from the Meskhs, resident in the area over two millennia ago (Gachechiladze 1995:25). Between these lie those who see the Meskhetian Turks as a population of mixed descent: some descended from Turks, others Turkicized Georgians (Akiner 1986).

The dispute is far from purely academic. In line with the experience of other Soviet nationalities,⁶ the debate over the origins of the Meskhetian Turks has serious political consequences for all concerned, not least for my informants. As noted in the introduction, the Georgian government has long been reluctant to allow the Meskhetian Turks to return to Georgia, let alone to Meskhetia, and debates concerning such political issues have concentrated largely (to the detriment of pressing humanitarian issues) on the group's name (Meskhetian Turks, Ahıska Turks, Georgian Muslims, Meskhetians), and hence on their origins.⁷

However, when the discussion is framed in historical terms, most of my informants show little interest in ascertaining their origins. Occasionally I was asked, 'Do you know where we came from?'; other non-Meskhetian Turkish acquaintances, frustrated by their neighbours' lack of knowledge on this topic, also asked me this.⁸ Some Meskhetian Turks have a little knowledge of their past. One of three sisters, chopping beetroot together for a wedding salad, said, 'There are lots of versions of 'who we are,' who we come from. Some say that we're not really Turks, but Georgians, and others say that we are really Turks.' Her sister reported that the Georgians asked Turkey for people to come and live in Georgia, to which Turkey agreed, but only if these people were given land in Georgia. Georgia agreed, and this is how they came to be there in Georgia. On another occasion, a man said,

'I read somewhere that when the Turks came and fought in Georgia they brought their people and left them there.' Such discussions were usually held in matter-of-fact, if not disinterested, tones of voice. One unusual report was that of Müratdin, a fifty-year old man, who declared, 'I know lots about nationalities problems,' and explained that he had read a book written in 1601, held in a library in Istanbul.⁹ He said, 'We have been called many things. We have been called Azerbaijani. We are not Azerbaijani, and never have been. But we are also not Turks. We are Meskhetians. We are descended from two brothers.' He said that he learnt this latter 'fact' from the book written in 1601. He asserted that he had read another book, published in 1671, in which it was recorded that there were then thirteen families of Meskhetians. Müratdin's insistence that they are 'Meskhetians' irritated his (younger) cousin, although out of respect the latter kept his comments until after the former had left. 'He always talks a lot. And he say's we're not Turks but Georgians. Get lost, Georgian!'¹⁰

Müratdin's intellectual curiosity is unusual.¹¹ Also exceptional is his assertion that they are not Turks. For most, being a Turk is unquestionable. It is a term used to define those who are *bizim şennik*, 'our people.' A woman explained that when they say of others that they are *bizim şennik*, it means that 'they're also Turks.' *Şennik* also translates as 'people' in other contexts: *çok şennik*, 'many people,' and *Ne diyacah şennik?*, 'What will people say?' Like 'people,' the word refers not only to groups of human beings, but to a specific group, the Meskhetian Turkish people. My hostess slated, 'It's *natsia*,' using the Russian term which, approximately, translates as 'nation'.¹² In some respects, self-perception as Turks relates to their perception of the past. Several people mentioned that they called themselves *Osmani Türkleri*, Ottoman Turks.¹³ 'We are what is left of the Ottoman Empire. In Turkey forty per cent are Kurds, not Turks. We are the only pure-blooded Turks.'¹⁴

However, they describe themselves as Ottoman Turks in the present, rather than descendants of past Ottoman Turks. In this sense, their disposition towards the past compares with that of the Jaffna Tamils as discussed in Daniel's analysis of that of Sri Lanka's Jaffna Tamils and Sinhalese. In defining 'heritage/myth' and 'history,' Daniel states that the former 'provides a people with a way of *being in the world*' while history 'provides a way of *seeing the world*' (Daniel 1996:50). My informants seem to share with Jaffna Tamils 'a consciousness of the present, one's present heritage of the past, [rather] than of the past as past' (ibid:27).

The contrasting approach to the past, history as a way of seeing the world, can also be illustrated in reference to their Ottoman nature. When I reported to a colleague at Krasnodar's Kuban State University that my informants say that they speak Ottoman Turkish, he insisted that they are mistaken, since Ottoman Turkish is the Arabic literary language; that is, that it is an aspect of the historical past, and cannot be a living heritage. The Georgian insistence that my informants are not Turks may also be understood in this manner: they maintain a disposition towards the past that insists that what is 'history' is the only appropriate way to evaluate one's position in the present. Analysis in Daniel's terms also makes it possible to explain the significant error in the analysis of the first international humanitarian organisation to be interested in the plight of the Meskhetian Turks, in whose publication it is stated that 'The majority of Meskhetians appear to have experienced difficulty deciding whether they are Georgians or Turks' (Sheehy & Nahaylo 1980:26). I argue that the Meskhetian Turks usually do not feel the need to make such a decision. To be a Turk is to live the past, as inherited practice, in the present; while deciding whether or not one is Georgian requires one to see epistemic 'history' as relevant to one's present, which, I argue, the majority of my informants do not.

Daniel states that what is at stake in the ethnic conflict that has wracked Sri Lanka for the past two decades, is 'more than the mortality of bodies, more than the destruction of life and the demise of security. Rather, what is at stake, especially for those whose bodies have been spared the destruction of death, is the death of a way of being-in-the-world, the death of that which constitutes their identity, honour, and dignity' (Daniel 1996:67-68). A direct physical conflict over a way of 'being in the world' has not (yet) occurred between Georgian (and Russian) scholars and Meskhetian Turks. But contrasting approaches to history have led to a conflict of words on an international plane, which has serious consequences for all concerned. As noted above, the conflict has focussed upon the name used to refer to the group in question (see Ossipov 2000:161-2).

In Soviet documents concerning the deportation they are referred to simply as Turks, as distinct from the Kurds and Khemshins deported with them (Bugai 1994). According to Wixman, the term 'Meskhetian' only came into use in the late 1950s,¹⁵ and then 'as a colloquial designation for the Turkified peoples (Meskhi (Georgians), Khemshil (Armenians), Kurds and Karapapakhs) who formerly lived in the Meskhi region' (Wixman

1984:134).¹⁶ However, it does not seem to have been in such 'colloquial' use in Uzbekistan. Rather, the Uzbeks called them Caucasians, *Kavkaztsy (R)* or *Кепкезлер (U)*.¹⁷ Indeed, my informants saw 'Meskhetian Turks' as an invention of their second displacement, rather than their first. One man explained, 'When we were thrown out of Uzbekistan, the President of the USSR gave us a new name: Meskhetian Turks. Meskhetia is a mountain - as if we had just come out of a mountain!' Others agreed, 'Only when all that started did I hear the name Meskhetian Turks; I didn't know before that we were Meskhetian.' However, when it is necessary to do so, they now often use 'Meskhetian' to distinguish themselves from other Turks.¹⁸

Khazanov states that, 'in the late 1930s, the Meskhetian Turks did not pay much attention to their official name and ethnic affiliation. Remarkably enough, they continued to call themselves *ierli* (the locals, the natives), which did not have explicit ethnic connotations' (Khazanov 1995:197). I argue that this lack of concern with their official name is not restricted to the 1930s, but is as prevalent now as it has been throughout the last two centuries. Although recorded in censuses, passports and other official documents as Georgian-Sunnis, Tarakamans, Muslims, Azeris and sometimes Turks in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and as Azeris, Uzbeks and Turks while in Uzbekistan, I suggest that what others have labelled *bizim şennik* does not reflect the manner in which they perceive(ed) themselves. In the recent past they have, for the most part, insisted on 'Turk' as that what Khazanov calls their 'ethnic affiliation,' more appropriately describable as 'commonality' (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:19-21). What they, as opposed to others, called this in the distant past is very difficult to say.

Awareness of Meskhetian Turks' relative lack of interest in their history, as opposed to their heritage, and the extent to which this contrasts with the positions of other parties which impact on their present, is important since it helps to explain their responses to events both banal and catastrophic. In Bloch's terms, 'No human scientist can... ignore how people represent themselves to themselves in history because it is, to a certain extent, in terms of these representations that they will react to revolutions, migration, or colonial conquest' (Bloch 1996:280). In the remainder of this article I examine the events of this nature that have directly affected the Meskhetian Turks in the last century.

Shifting Empires

Meskhetia's period of 'relative stability' came to an end in 1828 when the Russian Empire invaded. By September 1829 the city of Akhaltsikhe

had fallen, and the Adrianopol Treaty had been signed, giving nearly half of the Ottoman region of Ahıska (Samtskhe and Dzhavakheti) to Russia. As following other successful invasions of the area, local inhabitants dispersed; probably fifty per cent of Meskhetia's Muslims fled into what remained of the Ottoman Empire, leaving approximately 45,000 in Meskhetia. In addition, the new authorities deported Muslims from the region, and resettled (mostly Armenian) Christians in their place. Following further immigration of Armenians, Greeks and Kurds, and out-migration and deportation of Turks after the Russo-Turkish wars of 1853-6 and 1877-8, prior to the Revolution the population of Meskhetia (Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki regions) was approximately 195,500. Of these, just over half were Armenian, eight per cent were Georgian, and Turks numbered 56,200, twenty-nine per cent (Yunusov 2000:20-22). These details are important in contextualising the events of the twentieth century, as they indicate that the Soviet practice of resettling people (and in particular Meskhetian Turks) was far from unprecedented. In addition, one of Georgia's most common arguments against the return of the Meskhetian Turks to Meskhetia is that their presence will prompt ethnic conflict with the large number of Armenians in the region (see, for example, Gachechiladze 1995:183). The census data from 1913 indicates that such a population balance would not be a new phenomenon in the region, and it is their absence since 1944 that is historically unusual. After the collapse of the Russian Empire, in 1917 Georgia and Armenia both invaded Meskhetia to prevent the creation, by Meskhetia's Muslims, of a separate republic. Conflicting treaties signed in 1918 first gave the Muslims of Meskhetia the right to self-determination - they voted to join Turkey - and then required Turkey to withdraw all forces from the south Caucasus. Local Muslims formed first the short-lived Republic of Ahıska; then, with Azeris of Armenia, the South Western Caucasus republic, or Kars Republic, which was dissolved in April 1919 by British forces acting to assist the Georgian government. After the Georgian army took over, the Muslims of Meskhetia were granted legislative autonomy, until the Soviet Russian army occupied Georgia in February 1921. For the first twenty years or so of Soviet rule, the experience of the Meskhetian Turks mirrors that of other Soviet peoples, particularly that of 'national minorities' and other small groups (see Eidlitz Kuoljok (1985), Grant (1995), for example). Collectivisation began in Meskhetia in 1929, when the poor began working on the *kolkhozy* (collective farms); the rest of the population were obliged to do so by 1935 (Lur'e & Studenikin 1999:35). The

purges of the 1930s are also said to have affected the Meskhetian Turkish intelligentsia (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990; Yunusov 2000:28).¹⁹ In 'national' terms, unlike some other non-Georgian peoples resident in Soviet Georgia, the Meskhetian Turks did not attain national minority status,²⁰ which would have endowed them with political status, increased cultural and economic opportunities and their own territory.²¹ One result was that the Meskhetian Turks were, and to some extent remain, caught between a Georgian determination to integrate them into Georgian culture, and Soviet Union-wide policies on the development of minority peoples.

Until 1926 teaching in schools in Meskhetia was provided in Turkish, in line with early Soviet moves to provide every nationality with its own written language (Eidlitz Kuoljok 1985:59-69). But in 1926 the language of instruction switched to Azeri, on the basis that there were insufficient Turkish-speaking teachers. In the mid-1930s, all Transcaucasus Turkic peoples were officially designated 'Azerbaijanis' by the central Soviet authorities; this accounts for the lack of a separate entry for 'Turks' in Georgia in the 1939 census (Gachechiladze 1995:92, Yunusov 2000:28). At the same time, the Georgian authorities returned to a policy that they had sought to implement during the first five years of Soviet rule, to "ensure the return of Muslim-Meskhs to Georgian culture" (in Yunusov 2000:27). Along with other peoples in Georgia, Meskhetian Turks were required to change their surname to a Georgian one, to attend Georgian schools, and to alter their nationality (in official documents) to Georgian. Although the policy was abandoned after Meskhetian Turks failed to attend the schools (op cit), it demonstrates that the present Georgian approach to the Meskhetian Turks (that they must accept that they 'are' Georgians in order to return to residence in Georgia) is a continuation of that of the authorities at the time of their deportation.

Deportation

The deportation of the Meskhetian Turks from Georgia to Central Asia in November 1944 is usually discussed in association with the other deportations of the war years, of the Volga Germans, Crimean Tatars, Kalmyks, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, and Karachais. While Germany's invasion in 1941 did lead to an escalation in Soviet forcible removal of populations, as noted above the practice had earlier Russian precedents. Moreover, it was a practice used elsewhere in Europe. Prior to World War I Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire organised massive resettlement of Turks, Bulgarians and Armenians, and the practice was repeated following

the war with the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1922. Following World War II the victorious Allied powers assisted in the massive eviction of Germans from central and eastern Europe (Zolberg, Suhrke & Aguayo 1989:22). Within the Soviet Union, 'popular ethnic cleansing' (Martin 1998:827) began as early as 1921, with mass expulsions of Russian settlers from the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republics. But the state-organised forced resettlement from and to the 'border regions' of the Soviet Union sheds most light on the events of 1944. These regions were designated a special administrative territory in 1923 and, at least in some places, populations here were given *more* national rights than other Soviet peoples, in the hope of attracting their 'ethnic brethren' across the border (ibid:831). But a further result of the Soviet belief in cross-border ethnic ties was the government's fear of collusion of Soviet citizens with their non-Soviet brethren. Such a fear resulted in plans for the first organised resettlement - of Koreans - in 1928. Although this plan was not then activated, forced resettlements which were at least partially ethnic in character (such as those of Ukrainian 'nationalists,' Polish 'kulaks' and Kuban Cossacks) occurred during the grain crisis of the early 1930s. Most significantly, from 1935 to 1938, Poles, Germans, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, Koreans, Chinese, Kurds, and Iranians were resettled from the border regions: that is, 'national minorities... with cross-border ties to a foreign nation state.' The same occurred between 1944 and 1953, when Kurds, Khemshils, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians and Iranians were moved from their homes in the border areas of the Crimea and Caucasus (Martin 1998).²²

It is in this context that the resettlement of the Meskhetian Turks from Georgia to Central Asia must be understood. While the Soviet Nationalities Policy sought to develop nationalities culturally and economically, it allowed for exceptions when the security of the socialist state as a whole was threatened (Guy 1978:722; Lenin in Guy 1978:711; Stalin in Conquest 1970:116,117). And in 1944 the Soviet authorities felt that the Meskhetian Turks posed a security threat. Turkey had been negotiating the 'fate of the Turkic peoples' of the Caucasus with Germany, (in particular that of the Crimean Tatars, Balkars and Karachais, all of whom were deported to Central Asia when the Soviet forces regained control of the regions in question), with a view to establishing closer relations between the region's Turkic people. It seems probable that the Soviets knew something of these negotiations, and were concerned for the security of their border with Turkey (Hostler 1957,

Nekrich 1978:18-19).²³ Additionally, letters to and from Beria, People's Commissar for Internal Affairs (NKVD), demonstrate the authorities' concern that for several years 'a considerable part of this population [of Turks, Khemshils and Kurds living on the border with Georgia], connected with the residents of Turkey's border regions through kinship ties, has been involved in smuggling, shown emigration intentions, and is serving Turkish intelligence as a source for recruiting espionage elements and propagating bandit groups' (original in Bugai 1994: 44, my translation).

The Meskhetian Turks were told that the region was to become a 'closed zone,' as it indeed became; the eighty-five kilometre border region was compulsorily settled by 30,000 Georgians from west Georgia, and closed to the Meskhetian Turks. Many of my informants explain the deportations in terms of the risk they were seen to pose to the security of the Soviet Union, and the 'clearing' of the border zone. One said that where they used to live there was a narrow river, and the border between Turkey and Georgia was in the middle of this river. Turks lived on either side of the river, and the authorities thought that they would betray the USSR if there was a war with Turkey. Another man stated that, 'In 1914 [sic] Atatürk and Lenin drew a line, and said Batumu to there, this to there, and made Turkey and Georgia. Whoever ended up where... who didn't like it, ran away. And then in 1943 [sic] Stalin cleaned this up.[motioning to part of tablecloth that was standing for the Georgian side of the border].' A third man said that they were deported 'because the Germans were coming closer. We had relatives on the other side of the border, and Stalin was afraid that we would help the Germans.' He added that he had read this in a book, and that Stalin had then filled the space with 'his own people.' Another said that Stalin wanted to enlarge his empire, so moved the Turks out and settled his own people where they had lived. Notably, nobody mentioned whether or not they or their parents had shown any interest in helping or joining the Turkish state.

In the summer of 1944 NKVD (internal police) officers arrived in each of the 220 villages in which Meskhetian Turks resided, and troops arrived at the end of October. From 11th November no-one was allowed in or out of the villages. On 15th November, having been told that they were to be moved temporarily, they were given, according to some, two hours to collect their luggage. The Meskhetian Turks were then driven, in American Studebaker trucks, to the railway which many of them had recently helped to build. There they were loaded into goods wagons, in which they were to stay for the following twenty-five days, as they travelled

to the Uzbek, Kazakh and Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republics (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:37-41). Official records show that 92,307 persons were deported from Meskhetia, of whom 18,923 were men, 27,399 women, and 45,985 children under sixteen years old.²⁴ Of these, the majority, 53,133 people, were resettled in the Uzbek SSR; 28,598 in the Kazakh SSR, and 10,546 in the Kyrgyz SSR (Bugai 1994:18-19). Approximately 40,000 Meskhetian Turkish men fought in the Red Army during World War II, and many of the 19,000 who survived only discovered that their families had been moved on return to Meskhetia in 1945. According to NKVD documents concerning the deportation, 14,895 Meskhetian Turks, Kurds and Khemshils died between the date of the resettlement and June 1948 (Bugai 1994:19).

Unlike the Crimean Tatars, who annually commemorate their own deportation on its anniversary, the *kara gün*, 'black day'; have monuments to the deportation in the Crimea and diaspora; and all cite the (inflated) mortality statistic of forty-six per cent (Brian Williams, personal communication), few of my informants remember the year of the deportation and none mentioned the exact date. Additionally, few people told detailed stories of the journey to Uzbekistan,²⁵ and those details which were revealed were usually discussed in some context other than a conversation specifically concerning the deportation. A few men related their mother's or father's experiences; the following description of the narrator's father's journey is typical:

When they came to tell the people that they were going, they were given two hours. Those who thought about it slaughtered two or three sheep to take; others took a suitcase of clothes. Then they had to walk about four kilometres, and there were loaded into train wagons 'not the sleeping wagons, but those for goods,' seven or ten families to a wagon. They travelled for fifteen days, and the doors were not once opened; the only air they got was through the windows, and all they were given was water to drink. And people died, and they had to just throw them out; the train did not stop long enough for them to bury them.

Although the deportees were given some food, the poor sanitation (a bucket in the corner), cramped conditions and the lack of heating meant that many of the 're-settlers' died on the journey, and most reports agree that the bodies were not buried.²⁶ Officially 457 people died, although this number is contested, particularly since there is a discrepancy of 2,648 between the number who left Georgia and those who arrived in Central Asia (Bugai 1994:45; Pohl n.d.). Escapees,

perhaps shot, may account for some of these. A young woman talking of her paternal grandfather mentioned that he had a brother of about eighteen years when they were deported from Georgia. One day, when the doors were opened on the train, he got off, 'to get water or something,' and the train left without him. 'Because of the war they never found him again,' she said.

The scarcity of these stories is notable. Research has shown that the children of Holocaust survivors have difficulty retaining detailed memories of their parents' experiences (Karpf 1996:241). This suggests that my informants' limited knowledge of the events of 1944, and the contrasts between stories about the journey (such as that the train doors were never opened yet they threw out bodies, and one man disappeared to fetch water when the doors were opened), are not unusual for such a population, if the events were discussed within the household and between relatives. However, it is notable that these narratives are infrequently shared or debated between the Meskhetian Turks themselves, whereas other victims are known to frequently recall events they have communally suffered (ibid:149).

Life with the Uzbeks

On arrival in Central Asia, the trains were dispersed to *sovkhozy* and *kolkhozy* (state and collective farms) across the region, where the arrival of the Meskhetian Turks was expected. Some sources tell of considerable generosity on the part of the local Uzbeks (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:42-45); others write of unmitigated hardship, including lack of adequate housing, clothing, and medical care (Conquest 1970, Nekrich 1978, Pohl n.d.). The authorities did make special provisions for the Meskhetian Turks for 1945, including distributing 17.5kg wheat, 40.5kg barley, 37.5kg potatoes, and 3kg fruit to each person, a calf to each household, and clothes and shoes to those in need. This was in part compensation for the possessions left behind in Georgia, which were recorded and distributed to the three receiving Republics. Additionally, the settlers were not obliged to pay taxes nor supply foodstuffs to the state for 1945 and 1946 (Bugai 1994:51-56). Nevertheless, official documents record deaths of 19,047 persons deported from Georgia between 1945 and 1950, while births totalled only 7,383 (ibid:80-81). While these figures would benefit from comparison with Uzbek mortality rates for this difficult post-war period, and birth rates were undoubtedly affected by the loss of young men in combat, the settlers' conditions were obviously detrimental to their health.

The Meskhetian Turks were placed under the 'special settlers' regime, which required them to register monthly at the special commandants' offices, and within three days of births, deaths and any family member's escape; restricted their movement to within a three kilometre radius of their homes, unless given special permission;²⁷ and banned marriages between members of different settlements (Khazanov 1995; Nekrich 1978; Pohl n.d.). In his 'Secret Speech' to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956, Khrushchev declared that the deportations were 'monstrous' acts, 'not dictated by any military considerations,' and 'crude violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationality policy of the Soviet state' (Khrushchev 1956:23).²⁸ In so doing, he placed the blame firmly on Stalin's shoulders, and away from the Soviet project as a whole: a placement which, for the most part, my informants seem to follow. Following this Congress, 'special settler' status was rescinded, but a decree of 1957 reported that the Georgian government felt it lacked the capacity to resettle the Meskhetian Turks (notably referred to as Azerbaijanis), and hence could not allow them to return (Khazanov 1995:199).

My informants often frame their experience of arrival and early experience of life in Uzbekistan within their conception of themselves as a 'people that likes to work, that does not leave work undone,' a *trudolubivyyi narod* (R), industrious or 'labour-loving' people. Talking of their expulsion from Georgia, several told a similar story:

'When the wagons got to Azerbaijan, they wanted to throw all the Turks into the sea, to kill them completely. But then the President of Central Asia phoned up and said, 'I'll take them, they can work for me.' So they sent us to Uzbekistan, the hungry steppe; people died of hunger there. After fifty years, when we had made the place liveable in, we were no longer necessary, and they threw us out. We were given refugee status in middle Russia, where there is no electricity, no water, nothing.'

A woman who was fifteen when she left Georgia reported that when they arrived in the Uzbek SSR, the Uzbeks were very poor. She had taken with her dried sweetcorn, and made bread with it, which her new neighbours had never seen before. They taught the Uzbeks how to grow sweetcorn and other things, since 'when we arrived they ate grass.' One woman explained, 'Ours came and built houses; there was nothing there when they arrived after the war. We built, and now it is for the Uzbeks. Probably nothing works there now. It was Turks alone; probably nothing works now.' Others agreed, declaring, 'We built everything!' Notably within a few years of resettlement, several

Meskhetian Turks were reported to have fulfilled their production norms by two hundred percent, and others had worked 1005 and 2000 'labour days' (Bugai 1994:24-25). Many people felt that Uzbeks became jealous of their hard-work, and hence threw them out of the country, only for the process of reclaiming the barren land to be repeated in Russia.²⁹

The majority of research into the experience of the Meskhetian Turks in the Uzbek SSR after 1956 has focussed on their campaign to return to Georgia. According to Yunusov, by 1959 this embryonic movement was already 'beset by internal conflict' (2000:31), namely concerning whether or not they were 'Meskhs,' or Georgian Muslims, and should return to Georgia and become Georgians, or whether they were Turks and should therefore move to Azerbaijan (see Bugai 1994, Yunusov 2000 for detailed accounts). It is unclear the extent to which this debate was of popular concern, or whether, as now, it was largely a political debate of minor interest to most. Either way, this focus of interest yields little understanding of the relations between Meskhetian Turks and those already living in the regions in which they were resettled. My informants' passing comments about Uzbeks refer to the way they drink tea, the friends with whom they picked cotton with school, or the way they dressed. Occasionally, a story was told of a successful Meskhetian Turkish kolkhoz president who was refused a prize until he changed his passport nationality to Uzbek, or a man refused entry to university because he wouldn't 'become' the titular nationality. But such comments are relatively rare,³⁰ and little in my informants' narratives or the existent literature prepares one for the seemingly sudden and murderous events of 1989, in which tens of thousands of Uzbeks attacked their Meskhetian Turkish neighbours.

Events of 1989

In the summer of 1989, 109,000 Meskhetian Turks lived in the Uzbek SSR,³¹ of whom about 16,000 lived in Fergana oblast', in the east of Uzbekistan, bordering Kyrgyzstan and Tadjikistan. The total population of the Fergana region was 2.1 million; Uzbeks constituted 81 per cent. Many other minority groups (Russians, Tadjiks, Kyrgyz, Crimean Tatars, Armenians, Koreans) were resident in the area in greater numbers than the Meskhetian Turks. The events which led to the migration of most of Uzbekistan's Meskhetian Turks began in May 1989, in Kuvasai, a town in the Fergana region. On 15th - 16th May Uzbek and Tadjik youths fought with Meskhetian Turks and Tatar youths. Over 23rd and 24th May, a crowd of Uzbeks gathered in an

area of Kuvasai occupied primarily by Meskhetian Turks, and the police could not prevent several injuries and the death of one Meskhetian Turkish man. These events, however, were minor in comparison to those occurring between 3rd and 6th June. Crowds of several thousands, most of whom were Uzbeks, gathered in towns of the region: Margelan, Taskhlik, and Fergana.³² Meskhetian Turkish houses were sought out, looted and set on fire; if their occupants had not escaped, they were frequently trapped inside and burnt to death. Other Meskhetian Turks were attacked with knives or burnt in cars as they were trying to escape. According to the Deputy General Prosecutor of the USSR, 'The murders were mostly of a brutal, mutilatory character' (quoted in Bugai 1994:134, my translation). It was only on 6th June, by which time their numbers had been increased by 13,000, that the military were able to adequately control the crowds. Although disturbances continued until 11th June, they were largely against police and administrative buildings; most Meskhetian Turks had by then been gathered at the military range in Fergana ready for evacuation.

Many of my informants knew of people who had been killed in Fergana, and most themselves left either Fergana or Tashkent shortly after the riots. Some told of the atrocities, usually those seen by others.³³ One woman reported that neighbours in Baku told her, "They threw stones at us, as we ran, and anyone who was hit and slowed down they cut up." She added, "They killed pregnant women. Do you know how they killed them? They cut them right in the stomach. They slit open the stomach, through the baby, alive. The fathers, husbands were there, and they made the women give birth in front of them, saying "He ought to see, he's your father".' Another woman said that her cousin's husband was killed with four other members of his family. As they were escaping in a car, Uzbeks stopped them, poured petrol over the car and set it alight. A friend of her husband's was also killed with four members of his family. Another woman said, 'They burnt old people; stuck poles through children; cut up with knives the stomach of pregnant women. On the plane when they were leaving, a child was left below. A woman cried out 'I've left my child off the plane.' An Uzbek stuck a spear through the child and held it up in the air: 'Here you are, woman. Here's your child!'"³⁴

I was told only one detailed story of the events, notably by Habila, a woman who knew me well. Having moved to Krasnodar in 1986, she had not been in Fergana in June 1989, although she had visited relatives in the region only a month previously. The story concerns the death

of Süleman, her husband's sister's husband. (Her husband's sister, Farida, later told me briefly of her son's relatively recent death by drowning, but never mentioned her husband's murder).

The women had been cleaning silk cocoons outside the house of Farida's three brothers and their mother. On one side of the house was a big main road, on the other a village road. The children, except one baby, had all been sent to stay with the youngest brother's Russian fiancée. The oldest brother's wife, Sadat, had recently made several mattresses; material was cheap then, and the stuffing came free from her workplace. She had kept these in the cellar, thinking that if the house burns, these will not. Also in the cellar was a suitcase of valuables, including the mother's earrings, kept for her youngest son's bride. But they had no time to take anything from the house, not even a suitcase, although they managed to take their documents. They were sitting outside, when a crowd (tolpa (R)) came towards them along the road. (Habla reported, twice, that the attackers had been smoking drugs and were drunk, and that they were paid). Sadat, a large woman, had said that her legs froze, she was so frightened, and could not move, but one of the men picked her up and put her in the neighbour's car. They squashed lots of people into the car and escaped to where the police were keeping all the Meskhetian Turks.

Süleman's father worked as a security guard, and had a building with big iron doors. He and Süleman hid in there, the father saying, 'The Uzbeks will not touch me.' But the crowd got onto the roof, and threw a lighted bottle into the building, filling it with smoke. The two men escaped through the garden; the father went one way, Süleman another. But some children [presumably Uzbek] saw Süleman, and told the Uzbek crowd, who caught and killed him. They cut his body into pieces and threw them into the river. (The river was not like the one in Oktiabr'skii, Habla noted, but had cemented sides. She said it was beautiful). Süleman's father's brother was hiding, but he saw these events. He could not come out or he too would be killed.

The description ended as Habla's son entered the house. Notably I heard no tales of the killings from men, although a few did describe their journeys away from Uzbekistan, usually when no-one else was present.

Between 11th and 17th June more than 16,000 Meskhetian Turks were evacuated from Fergana *oblast'* to Belgorod, Voronezh, Kalinin, Kursk, Orlov and Smolensk *oblast'*s in Russia. Here some were allocated new or empty houses, but many stayed in schools, hostels, and clubs until they could be

housed. In addition, by 5th July more than 4,000 people had already left other regions of Uzbekistan of their own accord, arriving in Krasnodar and Stavropol *krais* and the Kabardino-Balkar Republic in Russia (Bugai 1994:110-112). Within a year, 74,000³⁵ Meskhetian Turks had left Uzbekistan; the majority moved to Azerbaijan (40,000), Kazakhstan and Russia. Meskhetian Turks also moved from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and moved on from their place of arrival within Russia, to Azerbaijan, and in some cases to Turkey. Other nationalities, including Crimean Tatars and Russians, also left Fergana (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:100; cf. Pilkington 1998).

During the riots of June 1989, between 112 and 117 people were killed. Of these, it is thought 63 were Meskhetian Turks. Some others were policemen, and some were Uzbek civilians, killed in the last days of the riots when the troops began to use firearms. But the remainder, including Crimean Tatars and Russians, were 'people killed as Meskhetian Turks 'by mistake' (Aleksandr Ossipov, personal communication).³⁶ In addition, over a thousand people were injured, and 856 homes and administrative buildings were burnt (Bugai 1994:131). It is estimated that up to seventy thousand people were involved in the riots. Of these, over 800 were arrested, and 420 were found guilty in the 250 cases taken to the courts, almost all of whom were Uzbeks from Fergana *oblast'*.

Many of my informants asserted that their Uzbek neighbours were not responsible for what happened. Several, like Habla, insisted that those who killed were drunks and drug-addicts. One woman said the local Uzbeks stole from the houses, but only the drug-addicts burnt them. It was frequently asserted that the rioters were paid, or at least organised, by outside forces. One man said, 'In Uzbekistan, Russians did that. They got people from one village to go to another [demonstrating with his fingers, one group going away, another coming towards us], from another region, so that they wouldn't meet an acquaintance.' He added, 'The Uzbeks cried when we left; our Uzbek neighbours cried, they did not want us to go.' But when asked why the Russians wanted a conflict, he shrugged. Another woman similarly asserted the responsibility of Russians: 'They cannot have been normal. But they say that there were Russians too. Russia, that is. Russians organised it, people say. Who was president? Gorbachev? No. Yes, it was Gorbachev. The second minister, he was also guilty. Afterwards he left, he was embarrassed.' Some felt the riots were part of an Uzbek plot to rid Uzbekistan of others, since 'after that, nationalism started.' The Uzbeks could not throw the Russians

out 'because earlier Uzbekistan was part of Russia [sic].' Instead, the Uzbeks started to forbid the Russian language, and schools were instructed to teach only in Uzbek. The violence against the Turks was to set an example that would frighten the Russians into leaving. One woman declared, 'They did it so that the Russians would leave on their own. They did, you see. After they saw what happened to us, the Russians left too.'

Hirschon admires the manner in which her informants, Asia Minor Greeks descended from refugees from Turkey, similarly attribute blame to politicians, and away from their acquaintances. 'Older people were quite categorical that the disturbances and military confrontation which finally resulted in their flight were not the responsibility of the ordinary Turk. They attributed the hostilities between their communities to interference by 'the Great Powers.' Again and again the conclusion was, 'The politicians made us hate each other' (Hirschon 1989:30). I suggest that, at least in the case of the Meskhetian Turks, such attribution of responsibility is not necessarily astute, but should be examined for the refusal to believe that common people could do such a thing. A similar approach has marred assessments of the 1930s Soviet purges, since focusing on the role of Stalin and his immediate associates fails to illuminate the relationship between leaders and others, and the mechanisms of the Soviet system which gave the Terror a 'certain rationality' (Davies 2000, Harris 2000, Kotkin 1995:283-353).

Yet the perception that the riots were (externally) organised is common to most observers of the 1989 conflict; for the most part the debate concerns only who was responsible. Yunusov, for example, states that, 'Today we know that the Uzbeks planned the attacks and their actions followed an organised pattern... The real organisers of the massacre in Uzbekistan will not be known until the relevant documents are released from KGB archives' (Yunusov 2000:36). Many Georgians believe that the "operation" was directed at them; 'It was probably assumed in Moscow that the fear of one more potential ethnic conflict in the republic would have sobered the "stubborn Georgian nationalists"' (Gachechiladze 1995:183). In Azerbaijan, Meskhetian Turks stated that the rioters were Armenians disguised as Uzbeks (Ray 2000:394)³⁷. Others have suggested that anti-perestroika forces inside the Uzbek Communist Party were responsible; that the Soviet KGB wanted to drive labour-power to central Russia; or that pan-Islamists or competing ethnic mafia were responsible. If it is not thought that the events were centrally organised, then it is usually assumed that

the riots resulted from liberalisation policies which 'lifted the lid on simmering nationalist sentiment among Uzbeks,' fuelled by overcrowding and widespread poverty (Forced Migration Projects 1998:6). Ossipov rejects these theories, stating that there is no evidence of government plots, significant prior nationalist or Islamist sentiment, nor of the Meskhetian Turks' significant economic advantage. He suggests rather that the riots were "irrational", resulting from an escalation of spontaneous mob violence: a suggestion made publicly only by the Uzbek Communist Party leader Rafik Nishanov (Ossipov n.d.).

It seems that many observers have attempted to answer the difficult question of 'why' before fully comprehending 'what happened' (Stewart, M 2001). Lur'e and Studenikin's thorough (if pro-military) account provides clues which suggest both a less coherent but also a simpler explanation for the events. Leskov, Fergana's KGB chief, asserted that the early disturbances in Kuvasai in May 1989 were primarily the result of the fact that a (predominantly Uzbek) gang of youths was eager to take local 'power,' since the 'boss' of the previously strong (and predominantly Meskhetian Turkish) gang had recently been killed in an accident (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:55-56).³⁸ The riots spread to other towns in part through rumours that Meskhetian Turks 'were talking of a bloody night in revenge for the Kuvasai carnage.' As a result, 'panic started. People were very scared,' and began to construct barricades and talk of self-defence. On *Kolkhoz Imeni Lenina* (Collective farm in the name of Lenin), for example, crowds gathered as they heard that 'the Turks are coming.' Despite attempts by the kolkhoz president, who had witnessed events elsewhere, to convince the crowd that that the atrocities were being committed against rather than by the Turks, the masses attacked Meskhetian Turkish homes, looting and burning thirty-two in the village (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:70-72). Matters were undoubtedly not helped by the authorities' refusal to allow newspapers to print the nationalities of those killing and those being killed.

The collective violence of June, therefore, was of a different nature from the precipitating events of May, in that the actors were the rumour-panicked crowds of ordinary Uzbeks, as opposed to the deliberately violent clashes between rival (and incidentally predominantly Meskhetian Turkish and Uzbek) gangs of youths. As Kakar notes, often the 'precipitating incident' of a riot is of a very different character from the 'ultimate causes' of the conflict (Kakar 1996, cf. Merridale 2000:89-90). Others have demonstrated the frequency with which riots have been sparked by minor insults

or misinterpreted behaviour at markets (Engel 1997, Kakar 1996:44, Thompson 1971), and it is notable that beyond Fergana the riots of 1989 are known, by Soviet and American authorities, as 'the strawberry wars,' said to have begun in a market conflict over the price of strawberries (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:26,56; Wynne Russell, personal communication).

One does not need to identify considerable Uzbek nationalist sentiment prior to June 1989, as Ossipov requires, in order to explain how, from a fight between youths, the Meskhetian Turks came to be identified as a group which presented a threat to ordinary Uzbek people. In part, decades of Soviet Nationalities Policy, which classified and allocated rights to people according to their ascribed 'nationality,' encouraged the perception that people acted as representatives of their 'national' group. But the circumstances of riots themselves can encourage people to 'totalise' others, perceiving them as representatives of a group with common, and often threatening, characteristics (Kanapathipillai 1990:332, Das 1998). As illustrated by the actions of the people of *Kolkhoz Imeni Lenina* an otherwise inconsequential event which affected a small number of people may be distorted into horrifying collective violence through the efficacy of rumour.³⁹

As Kakar states, 'At the high point of a riot, the content of the rumours is at its most threatening and the speed at which they circulate at its highest. For it is at this particular time when three of the four conditions for the generation and transmission of rumours - personal anxiety, general uncertainty, and topical importance - are at their highest level. The fourth condition, credulity, is no longer in operation since, at high levels of anxiety, disbelief in rumour is suspended, that is rumours will be believed regardless of how farfetched' (Kakar 1996:35).

It is under these circumstances that those who, in hindsight, can be seen as most vulnerable, become perceived by others as a dangerous threat.⁴⁰ As Stewart notes, political violence is often presented by its perpetrators as justifiable self-defence against those attacking, or about to attack (Stewart, M 2001, see also Das 1998, Sorabji 1994, Spencer 2000). This, I suggest, is what occurred in at least some of the Fergana towns in June 1989.⁴¹

But rumour and the resulting riot and loss often have the same totalising affect on the real victim population (as opposed to those who perceive themselves as (potential) victims, and thus inflict violence), in that they begin to perceive themselves as a group, as their attackers do. Das notes that, 'Earlier, the victims had wondered how

Hindus could have killed Hindus, for they had always assumed Sikhism to be related to Hinduism, as had many Hindus. The riots forced them into a separate identity of Sikhs, for they had been compelled to die as Sikhs. Now many wondered if anyone was interested in them as persons or if they were to be forever pawns in the games of others' (Das 1990b:388). In many cases, 'rumours are the fuel and riots the fire in which a heightened sense of community is also forged' (Kakar 1996:35).

But while the 1989 riots 'totalised' the Meskhetian Turks in the eyes of (at least some of) their Uzbek neighbours, and (as in 1944) in the eyes of the central Soviet authorities, who evacuated them *en masse* to Russia,⁴² it is notable that the reverse is not true. As Kanapathipillai notes with regard to Sinhala-Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka, 'There is a strong tendency on the part of victims of violence to totalize the characteristics of a group. However, the notion that groups have characteristics comes in conflict with one's experiences of the particular individuals of a community, which is varied and rooted in concrete events' (Kanapathipillai 1990: 332; see also Das 1998:124, Spencer 2000). My informants have *not* totalised the Uzbeks in this sense, but rather go to some length to insist that those who committed violence were drugged, drunk, paid or directed by others, if not actually (Armenian, Russian) others; that is, that they were not ordinary Uzbeks. In addition, the Meskhetian Turks do not seem to have 'totalised' themselves in response to the violence. While most describe those attacked as 'us,' in practice these narratives are not openly shared, and nor, significantly, have they been used to consolidate a successful communal political movement demanding retribution or political recognition.⁴³

Krasnodar

Between fifty and seventy thousand Meskhetian Turks presently reside in the Russian Federation,⁴⁴ of whom up to seventeen thousand live in Krasnodar *krai*, forming approximately 0.3 per cent of the *krai's* total population. Krasnodar lies on the north coast of the Black sea and has a small border with Georgia in the south east. It is well-known as the Kuban grain-growing region, part of southern Russia's 'bread-basket,' taking this name from the Kuban river that flows through Krasnodar *krai*. Meskhetian Turks live predominantly in four districts: approximately 9,000 live in Krymsk and 2,000 in Abinsk, to the west of the *krai*; in the east, 1,500 live in Apsheronsk and 2,500 in Belorechensk. At most, they form 6.4 per cent of the region's population (in Krymsk), and their highest concentration is in two towns of this

region, in which they account for 12.5 per cent of the inhabitants. Note that according to the 1997 census, Russians formed over 85 per cent of Krasnodar's inhabitants, and that Meskhetian Turks represent a very small proportion of the remainder, even in comparison with other minorities (Armenians (4.5%), Ukrainians (4%), Belorussians (0.8%), Greeks (0.6%), Adygeans (0.4%), Germans (0.4%)) (Ossipov 2000:13, 24-25).

Over two thousand Meskhetian Turks already lived in Krasnodar prior to 1989, having been invited by the authorities to work in the tobacco and dairy *sovkhozy* (state farms) and wood mills in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Ossipov & Cherepova 1996:5). As a result, many of those who moved there after 1989 (all of whom came of their own accord; Krasnodar was not an evacuation destination) came to join relatives. Others took advantage of the fact that a large number of Crimean Tatars were leaving Krasnodar for the Crimea, and thus houses were empty or could be purchased cheaply. According to Ossipov and Cherepova, many were also attracted by the fact that the *krai* borders Georgia, and intended to return there soon (1996). My informants mostly said they came to join relatives, or came to see and 'liked it here.' One man, whose story is not atypical, when asked why he came to Krasnodar in particular, declared 'How do I know? God knows!⁴⁵ I don't know.' Then he thought and added, 'All mother's brothers and sister had gone to Krasnodar. I thought 'Let mother be with her brothers.' It was said that Krasnodar was a good place. Warm. We're from Asia, where it's warm. A friend in Uzbekistan had lived here, and said it was a good place.'

In Russia, all (legal) residents must have a *propiska*, or 'residence permit,' a stamp in their internal passport⁴⁶ officially recording their address, and hence enabling access to other entitlements including pensions and healthcare. *Propiska* and internal passports, were first issued in the Soviet Union in 1932 to urban dwellers, in part to control migration to the city, although internal passports were in use prior to the Revolution when they were required by (and sometimes refused to) peasants who wished to travel for work outside their district (Fitzpatrick 2000b:34, Kotkin 1995:166). Only in 1974 did passports become obligatory for all Soviet citizens; until that time rural dwellers had not been issued with passports, significantly restricting their rights to move to urban areas (Matthews 1993:25-35). Local authorities were and remain entitled to refuse to grant *propiska*. While Meskhetian Turks were registered without problems in almost all other post-Fergana destinations, the Krasnodar authorities refused, and continue to refuse, to

register most of them, and more than ten thousand of Krasnodar's Meskhetian Turks today remain without *propiska*.

These problems were exacerbated with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. When the Russian Federation's law 'On Citizenship of the Russian Federation' came into force in February 1992, all citizens of the former Soviet Union permanently residing (not, note, in possession of a residence permit) on the territory became Russian Federation citizens, unless they requested not to become citizens. Thus, since almost all Krasnodar's Meskhetian Turks arrived prior to 1992, they are, by law, Russian Federation citizens. However, the authorities insist that they are not, sometimes asserting that 'permanent residence' means 'registered residence'; at other times, that the Meskhetian Turks are (and were) 'temporarily resident,' in transit to Georgia. Federal authorities, for the most part, do not challenge Krasnodar's interpretation of the law in this regard⁴⁷ (Ossipov & Cherepova 1996, Ossipov 2000).

In what has been described as the first occasion since Stalin's rule of the open violation of 'the rights of a whole category of the population... on the basis of their ethnicity' (Ossipov 2000:7,17), the denial of citizenship and *propiska* further deny Meskhetian Turks access to pensions, social benefits and free health care; severely restricts their ability to buy and sell land, houses and cars; restricts access to employment; prevents registration of marriage, and hence of children in their father's name; prevents travel abroad;⁴⁸ and denies them a vote.⁴⁹ In addition to these restrictions, Meskhetian Turks have been required to pay considerable sums for 'temporary registrations' of between three months and a year, and are also fined if the police find their documents not to be 'in order.'⁵⁰ Also pernicious are the authorities' continued unsubstantiated allegations, in local newspapers, on the television, and in public meetings, of the Meskhetian Turks' illegal acts (including theft, rape, murder and drug-dealing); unsanitary habits; monopolisation of markets; refusal to learn Russian; deliberately increasing the size of their families; and even refusal to register in order to avoid conscription⁵¹ (Gusev 2000; Ossipov 2000).

Further, the Krasnodar authorities politically and financially support 'Cossack' organisations, which take it upon themselves to remove passports and threaten Meskhetian Turks if they do not leave the *krai*. In the early 1990s, the intimidation included the flogging of several men by groups of Cossacks. Although these incidents were concentrated in the west of Krasnodar, fear of Cossacks was also felt in Apsheronk and Belorechensk. One woman

said that that her sons used to hide beneath the bed when they saw a Cossack in uniform in the streets. She said there used to be lots of Cossacks in uniform about; they used to come into the house and frighten the children. Another explained, 'They used to be allowed to walk round the village with clubs. They would come right into the house; we were afraid. But then the Administration stopped it, did not allow them any more. And now they are not important. There are three, four Cossacks here, all drunks.'

Although Cossacks activities have quietened somewhat, the 'problem' of the Meskhetian Turks remains, in the eyes of the authorities, one of how to remove them from the *krai* as soon as possible. They assert that Turks and Slavs cannot live together, and that their presence exacerbates ethnic tensions in the *krai*. As Ossipov and others have demonstrated, much of the 'tension' is constructed and encouraged by the Administration's own pronouncements and support for Cossack activities; even the *krai*'s inflammatory Governor does not suggest that the Meskhetian Turks are themselves instigating fights. But the 'solution,' covertly supported by Federal authorities, and not overtly criticised by UNHCR is to encourage the Georgian government to arrange for their 'return' (Li Rosi et al 1997, Ossipov 2000).

In the meantime, the Meskhetian Turks continue to be denied *propiska*, since their stay is still, after ten years, considered to be 'temporary.' But as one man noted, 'They don't give us citizenship and passports because they don't want people to stay here. They think that once we have passports we will want to stay. The majority of people here would leave if they were given passports.' But without *propiska*, they cannot leave, because they cannot obtain external passports. Discussing obtaining the furniture of relatives from Krymsk who were planning to move to Turkey, one woman scoffed, *Ondan propiska yohtu; kim gidiyir Türkiyi?* 'There they don't have *propiska*; who's going to Turkey?' Thus in refusing to register their 'temporary' residents, the Krasnodar authorities may be prolonging the stay of some Meskhetian Turks.

The *krai*'s authorities have recently stepped up their attempts to evict the Meskhetian Turks. On 20th February 2002 the regional legislature adopted a decree 'On the Additional Measures to Decrease Tensions in Inter-ethnic Relations in the Areas of Compact Settlement of Meskhetian Turks Temporarily Residing on the Territory of Krasnodar Krai,' which not only appealed to the federal government to speed up the 'repatriation' of the Meskhetian Turks to Georgia, but also

proscribed any registration of 'stateless persons.' A month later at a meeting about migration issues, held in Abinsk and attended by 400 district and regional officials, the *krai*'s Governor announced that fines for residence without registration would be raised to 6,000r (approximately US\$200). It was further proposed that 'detention and filtration' be established in order to facilitate the deportation of 'illegal migrants,' and that monthly charter flights should commence to evict Meskhetian Turks to Tashkent, Uzbekistan (MINELRES 10 April 2002, RFE/RL 20 March 2002). Although the latter involves forced movement across international borders, to a country which is unlikely to welcome their return, that the authorities are serious about their intentions was illustrated in April when families of Kurds resident in the *krai* for several years were expelled to neighbouring Rostov *oblast'* (RFE/RL 17 April 2002). Alongside these official encouragements to migrants to leave the region, recent reports suggest that the Cossacks have increased their harassment of Meskhetian Turks, and gravestones in the Armenian cemetery in Krasnodar city were destroyed in April (RFE/RL 24 April 2002).

The Meskhetian Turks' options regarding their future residence, either in Krasnodar *krai* or elsewhere, are thus severely restricted, if not endangered, by the political activities of other more influential or vocal groups both locally and internationally. Other anthropological work on forced migrants has highlighted the geo-political aspects of refugee-hood, and demonstrated that refugees are sometimes used as pawns in international squabbles, to the extent that a resolution of their situation is not seen by all as politically expedient (Allen & Morsink 1994:11, Reynell 1989:175, contra Malkki 1995b). There can be no doubt that the Meskhetian Turks are similarly weak players in an international dispute involving the governments of the Russian, Turkish and Georgian states, and international bodies of such standing as the OSCE, UNHCR and the European Parliament.

Beyond Public Spaces

In her work on Armenians forcibly displaced from Turkey in the 1920s, Pattie describes memories of the massacres and deportations as 'the most striking part of the Armenian shared background,' one which is 'internalised, absorbed from family attitudes and schooling' (Pattie 1997:23). She notes that while 'some parents felt their children and grandchildren had not really wanted to hear about it or said they couldn't bring themselves to tell of such horrific experiences,' others had made a point of passing on their stories to their descendants, and

encouraged each other to do the same (ibid: 16). While Armenians 'speak of feeling both a collective debt to the past and an individual one' (ibid:23), it is notable that on the few occasions when Meskhetian Turks do speak of these events, they rarely speak of their *feelings* about the past at all.

In present-day Krasnodar, Armenians (recently displaced by the conflict in Abkhazia) are building a church above Apsheronsk town, and annually commemorate the Ottoman genocide of 1915. It is striking in comparison that their Meskhetian Turkish neighbours' children are sometimes unaware that their grandparents were forcibly resettled less than sixty years ago, and that their parents do not easily recall the date when this occurred. The summary given above of Krasnodar authorities' antagonistic attitude to the presence of the Meskhetian Turks in the *krai*, indicates that my informants are not encouraged to feel secure in their present residence, nor to complain about their treatment by official and unofficial groups. It suggests that they are not offered a public space for talking of even their most recent tragedy, let alone the events of 1944 (Kirmayer 1996, Stewart n.d.). The same is undoubtedly true of the period 1944 to 1956, until their rehabilitation following Stalin's death. Further research would be necessary in order to ascertain what, if any, public space was available, if not explicitly provided, for commemoration, in the remaining years of the Soviet regime. While the existence of a small but active rehabilitation movement indicates that open discussion was possible, considerable ethnographic research elsewhere demonstrates that a public space does not equate with political recognition, and nor are individuals' or even communities' narratives of pain necessarily coterminous with the stories told by those who seek to represent them (Karakasidou 1997; Verdery 1992; Watson 1994).

But an absence of public space is not enough to explain the Meskhetian Turks' approach to their past.⁵² The events of 1989 and 1944 remain part of the Meskhetian Turks' history, as related to and by observers who come briefly into contact with these people. Yet I have suggested that my informants are more concerned with the past as intra-communal practices of 'heritage' rather than as publicly debated narratives of 'history.' To better understand their response to 1944 and 1989, therefore, we must look beyond their public 'history.' An absence of public space for commemoration goes some way towards explaining this relative silence, but is far from sufficient for an understanding of how events of the past are in fact integrated into present.

As demonstrated in this article, in others' narratives of, and actions during, the past two

centuries, the Meskhetian Turks have been unified or totalised, into a bounded 'group' (Brubaker forthcoming), often perceived as threatening. I argue that the Meskhetian Turks themselves largely do not, and probably have not, shared this totalised view of themselves. While most talk of 'us' as having been driven out of Georgia and Uzbekistan, it is not an experience that many share, either literally or in narrative. This is not to say that there are not characteristics that my informants see as unifying them with all other 'Meskhetian Turks.' Rather, their unifying acts are acts of heritage rather than reiterations of history. I suggest that it is in the everyday practices of being Meskhetian Turks that we find more comprehensive answers as to how they have reacted to, dealt with, or 'survived,' displacement; and why they have done so as they have. It is to examining those everyday practices that I now turn.

Discussion

Lur'e and Studenikin's work contains several photographs of the events which occurred in Fergana in June 1989 (1990). These include pictures of murdered men's bodies lying in the street and corpses of those burnt alive in their homes; and several of men, women and children awaiting evacuation and walking to aeroplanes. Of the latter, one shows a small child sat by a suitcase onto which are tied two shiny metal teapots. The picture of teapots, like Gulpaşa's narrative image of carrying dough to bake at her father-in-law's house, neatly represents the Meskhetian Turks' life in Russia following their displacement. Such shiny teapots, and such suitcases, are brought out at weddings: the former to provide sustenance to the hundreds of guests; the latter to carry gifts to display to the bride before taking her to her new home. They are basic items of pragmatic use, but also valued symbols of celebratory construction and maintenance of the only people who really matter, one's kin. They are also easy to carry, should one need to move quickly.

The experience of the Meskhetian Turks bears out the belief that forced migrants (like others who, following traumatic events, do not move elsewhere) 'continue to live, to survive, and to cope' (Das & Kleinman 2001:1). Moreover, while economic maintenance is obviously a concern for refugees, the foregrounding of economic survival in the literature on refugees does not accurately reflect the primary interests of the Meskhetian Turks and probably those of other forced migrants. My informants are generally more concerned with other forms of continuity, primarily those of relatedness, which play little role in daily economic activities.

Displaced persons do not necessarily 'lose their identity,' if by 'identity' we understand a self-understanding and connectedness with others, and cultural practices of the everyday and celebratory events. But while it is possible to rebuild or continue with 'normal' mundane life, traces of the events following which the mundane has been retrieved are scattered throughout social life (Das & Kleinman 2001:4). Such traces need not be narratives for us to recognise that a people has suffered, and remembers, trauma.

Continuity

When it occurred, forced migration was integrated into existing practices of household management and hospitality. Those who had to flee were hosted by relatives as guests, unless they stayed a considerable length of time, in which case they were integrated as household members. The hospitality of one household, then in Kazakhstan, which hosted people fleeing from Uzbekistan in the early nineties, was remarked upon several times. Discussing the present difficult circumstances of the now widowed mother, another woman declared, 'All of the village lived at their house. And she never says a word. She never said a word. One woman washed her clothes and left the soap here; another took the powder and washed her own; another hers. Her bathroom was such chaos (*takoi bardak (R)*). She never says anything.' Regarding her husband, another said, 'Every day he would bring home a sheep and fifty loaves of bread in the back of his car, and every day she would cook at a *kazan* (huge pan) like the one we used at the wedding. And they usually ate vegetables. He never asked us to buy bread or meat or anything. Every day he bought a ticket to Krasnodar, and drove people to the airport, and phoned through to a man in Krasnodar so that someone met them here. This must have gone on for two months. And you never hear her say anything about it.'

This case is unusual in the expenditure incurred and the number of people hosted, but many other households in Krasnodar similarly integrated new arrivals while the latter established themselves and found houses. This pattern of residence, often of eight or ten people sharing a small two-roomed house, continued for several months, and the arrivals assumed temporary household membership through labour. As such, temporary residence following forced migration was a continuation of normal household labouring and kinship visiting practices, as discussed in chapters two and three. I suggest that the existence of these principles, that guests are always welcome and that those who share a household share the

labour required to maintain it, provided a model of everyday social relations that the Meskhetian Turks adapted when tragedy struck.

Continuity is also maintained through the maintenance and creation of new kin through marriage, birth and visiting. In part this is achieved through the community of relatives temporarily acting as a household. I recently received a letter from Ayyün, in which she worries about the fact that after a year and a half of marriage she has not become pregnant. She also expresses concern that her cousin, aged twenty, is not yet married, and suggested that a cousin on her mother's side should take her as his wife. The transformation, from embarrassed girl who refused to wear a headscarf into a woman integrated not only into her husband's household but also having into the adult perception of the necessity of marriage and childbirth, illustrates that Meskhetian Turkish structures continue to enable the construction of new kin in the still uncertain circumstances of diaspora.

The same is true of events that occur when the norm of marital life is disturbed, through early widow-hood or divorce. Meskhetian Turkish widows are unlikely to remarry quickly, if at all (cf. Das 1990b: 369).⁵³ As one such woman explained, 'You may be asked for again, but we have loads of girls; only old men take us. I have been sitting for nine years.' But in this, those widowed by the events of 1989 are no different from those whose husbands died before or after displacement. Farida, whose husband Süleman died in Fergana, has to work to support her sons and parents-in-law, both by undertaking *sovkhov* labour for cash and in all the practicalities of keeping a home. Her experience and stoicism is very similar to that of Kibria, who lost her husband to lightning in 1998, leaving her widowed before the age of thirty, with three daughters to support. She returned from Moscow to Krasnodar to join her mother, also widow before reaching fifty years of age, who works for the local *sovkhov* despite absence of a *propiska*.

Aware of such continuities of response to traumatic life experience, Davis has argued for an anthropology of suffering which sees the trauma of deportation and displacement, or rape and loss of relatives through murder, as the extremes of a continuum of pain. Such a continuum also encompasses the absence of employment and trials of love, and socially instigated environmental disasters (Davis 1992). James notes a similar connectedness with regard to fear among Uduk refugees in Ethiopia, among whom 'the specific fears of war are merged with everyday malnutrition, illness, rain and cold, the constant hectoring of

soldiers or officials, and almost regular lack of sleep and other sources of pain and stress' (James 1997:121).

Scheper-Hughes also insists on the related nature of the cruelties of everyday life with the crimes of war. She introduces the concept of 'peace-time crimes' in order to suggest that 'war-crimes are merely ordinary, everyday, crimes of public consent applied systematically and dramatically in times of war' (Scheper-Hughes 1997:473). More critical of her Brazilian informants than in her earlier work (1992), she does not blame the mothers for their acts, but is disturbed by their refusal to accept any responsibility for their babies' deaths. She notes that seeing the dead as angels whose deaths were meaningful closely resembles military thinking, but also that it is such ideas of un-grieved 'acceptable death' which enable the recruitment of new fighters in war, and new births in Brazilian shanty towns (Scheper-Hughes 1997:475). Similarly, Spencer analyses everyday violence and aggression (homicide, sorcery and suicide) in Sinhala Sri Lanka, in order to better understand collective violence in the same society. He notes that,

'Like murder in everyday life, collective murder was a product of loss of control, of a breakdown in everyday restraint. The patterns to be discerned in it are not quite the pattern of everyday life, but the patterns which lie behind everyday repression' (Spencer 1990:616).

Others scholars refute the suggestion of such a continuum of suffering: most notably some of those writing about the Jewish Holocaust. Langer, for example, argues that the murder of the European Jewry was and remains unique, and that those who tried to warn the Allies of its occurrence failed in part because 'they addressed an audience unable to hear because their mind-set was not tuned, and had never been tuned, to the kind of crisis that was unfolding in Europe' (Langer 1997:47). Further, he asserts that its description as 'an example of mass suffering' is inadequate, since it risks 'limiting its scope by merging it with prior models that are meagre measures of the event.' However, others have shown that disbelief is characteristic of reactions to news of mass suffering, and thus it is dangerous to highlight one such event as unique. Sorabji argues that international observers failed to act to prevent further atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina precisely because they were 'tuned' to Nazi genocide and therefore refused to believe that anything which did not have the orderly and total nature of the Holocaust could be genocide (Sorabji 1994, see also Sereny 2000:xvii).

But irrespective of whether the Holocaust or any other event is unique, for some the experience of

displacement, while similar to that of bereavement, remains 'outside the provisions of conventional social structure and social organisation,' such that refugees lack crucial supports available to those in normal situations of grief (Loizos 1981:131). That is, whether or not one may construct such a continuum of suffering, sometimes events occur which are so uniquely traumatic as to require considerable adaptation or development of existing practices in order to return people to some kind of normality.

However, I have argued that the Meskhetian Turks' representation of their forced migration suggests both that they have a model for responding to displacement, and that this model is part of a continuum of general techniques for dealing with personal suffering. They have responded to displacement through a pragmatic insistence on continuity, of domestic, economic, religious and kinship practices, and a lament that the state has not done the same. Such continuity is in part possible because of the existence of a restriction on the expression of personal suffering, which is applicable to all: from a small child who falls off a platform; through a frightened young bride; to the parents and wives of those brutally murdered by Uzbeks or killed by lightning. This restriction is itself allied to the limited space available for individual choices and desires, since precedence is given to acting as a related person, according to gender, age and marital status.

Breaking the silence?

Among the Meskhetian Turks personal emotional, and to some extent physical, pain is dealt with through keeping it to oneself. In describing this as silence I do not mean to imply that such events are never discussed; rather that talking about them is seen as neither appropriate nor a useful way of reducing the pain. Relative silence about one's personal feelings is the cultural appropriate response in many societies. Knudsen similarly notes of Vietnamese refugees that 'talk is not expected to relieve pain. Rather, silence continues to be held as the basic way of handling deeper feelings of bereavement and loss' (Knudsen 1995:25). The reasons for such silences vary both between and within societies. For example, during twenty years of Brazilian dictatorship the affluent classes kept silent about abductions, illegal arrests and deaths of intellectuals and journalists as they felt that authoritarian rule was necessary for the 'development' of Brazil; while poorer Brazilians were terrorised into silence and compliance by the actions and rumours of actions of the 'death squads' linked to the military police (Scheper-Hughes 1997:479). Similarly, the reasons why so many

survivors of trauma (including Meskhetian Turks) relate their stories in neutral, unemotional terms also varies (Daniel 1996:143, Knudsen 1995:25, Loizos 1981:99, Merridale 2000:22, Reynolds 2000:143, Sorabji 1994:91, Stewart, M 2001). While researchers of those who are known to have suffered must be aware that silence has its own meaning we must also be wary of assuming that the meaning of silence is identical in all cases.

There are of course those who want to talk about their experiences, for whom expression of feelings and narration of events is therapeutic; who 'wanted their suffering to become known as if the reality of it could only be reclaimed after it had become part of a public discourse' (Das 1985:5, see also Das 1990b; Declich 2001:265).⁵⁴ Schwarz, writing on suffering in China, states that,

'To suffer is to be shut in, to be locked up by grief in a world without light. A pane opens when sorrow is shared, spewn out of the closed world of the individual in pain. When others respond to the voice of the sufferer... the window of insight becomes broader still' (Schwarz 1997:128).

But I have demonstrated that Meskhetian Turks would not agree that suffering shared is suffering eased. I suggest that the assumption that talking is always desirable is misplaced, and can distort research into such peoples' experiences and self-perception. For example, Merridale notes her frustration with a dekulakised informant who (knowing of her interest in suffering) invited her to visit, but rather than discussing her trauma she spoke without bitterness of her successful careers as a musician. Another survivor from Kiev declared that 'the famine does not interest me very much,' and preferred to talk of Churchill and his father's horse (Merridale 2000:202,23-228). In claiming that 'these people have a fog of confusion to clear away, a web of lost identity, acceptance, grateful membership,' Merridale refuses to accept the evidence of her own data that narrative memorialisation, in addition to being undesirable, may not always be beneficial (ibid:242,293). Similarly Langer states, without evidence, that 'memory functions with or without speech'⁵⁵ and 'cannot be silenced,' and will not countenance the possibility that encouragement to testify may not be beneficial to Holocaust victims (Langer 1991:50, see also Herman 1992:1).⁵⁶

The example of the Meskhetian Turks indicates that we would be wise not to presume universality of the value of 'breaking the silence' of or for those who have suffered, if local circumstances do not provide a supportive 'landscape of memory,' within which suffering may be witnessed (Kirmayer 1996). Das, whose commitment to understanding the

forms and consequences of suffering has been considerable, notes that,

'It is often considered the task of historiography to break the silences that announce the zones of taboo. There is even something heroic in the image of empowering women to speak and to give voice to the voiceless. I have myself found this a very complicated task, for when we use such imagery as breaking the silence, we may end by using our capacity to "unearth" hidden facts as a weapon' (Das 1997:88, cf. Leydesdorff et al 1999:6).

It is a salutary warning, as the verbal expression of trauma may exacerbate the sufferer's troubles.⁵⁷ Probing for evidence of trauma can itself inflict further suffering. Merridale notes that the elderly Jewish people interviewed since Schindler's List by the Spielberg Shoah Foundation have suffered with the breaking of the silence.

'They had to force their memories to live again, find words to meet the expectations of interviewers from abroad. Some could talk of nothing but the death camps after their interviews, I was told, and others suffered palpitations, heart attacks, nights of anxious sleeplessness or bouts of depression' (Merridale 2000:293).

Similarly, in the specific context of refugees, Knudsen notes that therapeutic interviews can be threatening, since they both threaten the representation of oneself as able to cope and thus suitable for resettlement in a safer setting; and are contrary to the Vietnamese practice that one discusses one's problems only with close kin and friends and certainly not with strangers (Knudsen 1991,1995, cf. Fonseca 1996:12,259).

In this context, it is particularly important that anthropologists do not cause further hurt. In his analysis of post-war Nigeria, Last examines the government policy of reconciliation. He notes that it did not demand that people forget or forgive, only that hurts were not allowed to stand in the way of everyday life. 'It was simply about being able to work together, to live as neighbours as and when necessary' (Last 2000:316). Experience of war and flight are aired within the local communities of church, family network and town union, and thus kept from the more public sphere where they may prevent reconstruction. Although Last notes an ambivalence as to whether this form of reconciliation has been a success, he is clearly aware that the 'watchers' (those outside the reconciling community including international journalists, historians, other governments and anthropologists) are more inflexible than those who face the reality of continuing to live after conflict, and that their judgments may be misplaced, unrealistic, and, if acted upon, damaging. Where

a lasting supportive context for the expression and negotiation of personal trauma is lacking, as it is culturally among Meskhetian Turks and politically in Krasnodar, we must be very careful when asking, through our questioning, that people break their silences.

This is not to say that we should not write, nor make others aware that injustices are occurring or have done so in the past. On the contrary, anthropologists' ability to act as 'cultural brokers' between populations and other watchers may make our contribution more important in such circumstances. But we must be aware that in writing and acting we make our informants more 'visible,' and that such visibility may well have unintended, and not necessarily positive, consequences (James 2000).

Our work is also needed in order to examine why horrific events occur. Scheper-Hughes' application of the concept of 'peace-time crimes' stems from her desire to understand 'what makes genocide possible?' (Scheper-Hughes 1997). A similar question is asked by Sereny in her examinations of the humanity of Nazi officials, which leads her to begin to 'understand both the idealism and the capacity of a tyranny to pervert human instincts from good to bad' (Sereny 2000: xii). Other anthropologists have demonstrated that there is a 'certain logic' to violence, in the sense that it is possible to view the violence as an invocation of (or assault upon) important contemporary social concepts (Loizos 1988:639; Sorabji 1994; Spencer 1990:621), or as a result of a history of examples set by states and leaders (Loizos 1981:91; 1988:649).

To understand why people can commit such atrocities is neither to condone them, nor to perceive communal violence as inevitable. Anthropological work has shown that in most, if not all, such situations there are some who refuse to make the connection between everyday norms and the grand narratives of communal violence. Kanapathipillai records the deteriorating relationship between one Tamil woman and her Sinhala landlord, but commends the former for defining the conflict 'as one over local issues rather than national ones,' while recognising that the landlord used national issues as an excuse to enflame local ones (Kanapathipillai 1990:324-328). Also in Sri Lanka, Spencer analyses the non-participation of his Sinhala friend who refused to accept the moral arguments that, for others, allowed the violence to 'make sense,' and thus avoided dragging himself and his village into the conflict. Spencer concludes that while social scientists are trained to provide explanations, his informant's refusal to understand may teach us to examine the spaces made for intentional inaction by intentional incomprehension.

Thus, 'rather than arguing too hastily across our moments of misrecognition or incomprehension in our encounters with violence, we may instead choose to reflect on them and learn from what they can teach us' (Spencer 2000:137).

In the same manner, we may learn from the Meskhetian Turks' refusal to totalize themselves or the Uzbeks (cf. Das 1998, Kanapathipillai 1990:332, Kakar 1996:35,104; Spencer 2000), and their refusal to renounce their identification with a state that has disappeared (cf. Ugrešić 1998). They demonstrate that creation or maintenance of a nationalistic community is not a pre-requisite for coping with suffering, and that therefore research into the experience of displacement may be more fruitful if it examines other themes than that of the construction or reconstruction of 'national' and 'ethnic' affiliations and communities.

The Future

Part of the reason that Last identifies as to why watchers are prone to make 'unattainable demands' of reconciliation following conflict is that they are obsessed with the past and insist on the value of history. But he notes that for his Hausa colleagues, the past is of little political relevance.

'Indeed "peoples without history" may not want to have a history (but European scholars will give them one anyway); it is those with a history who suffer... Indeed, history is only the "outer layer" both of society and of the individual; the inner core has a different truth to it ("myth"?), with other, larger forces at work shaping its destiny' (Last 2000:325).

Watchers of violence who insist on remembering history fail to accept that victims as well as perpetrators may feel that a line can and should be drawn under the past, and are thus 'trespassing into territory that is either past or private (or both)' (op cit). In the Meskhetian Turkish context, such trespassing involves both demanding that victims tell their stories, and that they agree to a territorialised history of themselves.

In relation to this first kind of trespass, demands for testimony, the lack of expression of suffering on the part of the immediate survivors means that the events experienced by one Meskhetian Turkish generation do not become enacted as 'autobiographical memories' by their children (Bloch 1998b). This may mean that these events are ultimately forgotten, or at least become no more than narratives that one may hear from one's history teacher. On the other hand, with the passing of those who directly suffered, discourse about 1989 (and 1944) will cease to be an expression of personal suffering. As such, in depersonalised form it may become an acceptable lament, similar to that of the loss of the Soviet Union. Time will tell. Yet the power of the 'earlier it was better' litany stems from the Meskhetian Turks continued perception

of themselves as Soviets, rather than a reflection on events in the past. As Bloch notes, how people represent themselves to themselves in history has a bearing on how they react to traumatic events in the present (Bloch 1996:280). Given the Meskhetian Turks' a-historical perception of their collectivity, political mobilisation around even depersonalised suffering seems unlikely.

Related to the second form of trespass, insisting on a territorialised history, there is also a danger that my informants' children will have their own personal narratives of forced displacement, if political circumstances mean that they are forced to leave Russia for Georgia, which others define as their (territorial) homeland. Although the Georgian government is stalling on their obligations to the Council of Europe to enable the 'repatriation' of the Meskhetian Turks by 2012, it has not reneged on them completely (Adam n.d., MINELRES 19 Dec 2001). At the same time, Krasnodar's new Governor Tkachev is developing further measures to encourage migrants to leave the *krai*. Ray argues that while Meskhetian Turks do not have a sentimental attachment to Georgia, they do feel that they have a right to a place for communal settlement, and that 'repatriation signifies security from a possible third forced migration' (Ray 2000:406). While I agree with most of Ray's interpretations, I fear that the possibility of repatriation, rather than securing against further displacement, would rather instigate it, as it would legitimatise the Krasnodar authorities' pressure on the Meskhetian Turks to leave the *krai*.

Therefore scholars who insist on the Meskhetian Turks' right to reparations and to repatriation not only trespass on the manner in which my informants represent themselves to themselves in history - which has been shown in this thesis to have a bearing on how they cope with their experiences of the past - but also tell them stories about themselves which may raise

unrealistic hopes if not actually force them to move. As noted with regard to other refugees, their future is frequently decided upon by others. Caught up in the political process, their hopes or desires for 'return' are encouraged by those for whom it would be political suicide to admit that the chances are slim, at the same time as the realism of choices is diminished by other political events (Loizos 1981:189). In this sense, Reynell's designation of her Khmer informants as 'political pawns' (Reynell 1989) may be applied to many other refugee populations, including the Greek (and Turkish, and Armenian) Cypriots, and the Meskhetian Turks.

However, there is a danger that such a representation denies or ignores the agency of the populations concerned. While Reynell's informants were indeed trapped within the confines of camps, most forced migrants are not administratively supported and make their own arrangements. And with or without detailed knowledge of the options available to them, refugees re-examine the frameworks presented to them by their or others' 'leaders.'⁵⁸ The Meskhetian Turks accept the framework which insists that groups are associated with territories, and within that their own place as a non-nationality. In so doing, they refute Kibreab's insistence that 'there can be no deterritorialised identity in a territorialized space' (1999:387).

The Meskhetian Turks examine their options for the future in pragmatic terms, aware of their past residence in Georgia but primarily concerned for the safety and livelihood of their households and relatives, and only secondarily for the cohesion of their community. We would be wise to learn from this 'tired people' if we wish to understand how people live after forced migration. Rather than seeking out grand narratives of group cohesion and self-understanding, we should look first for the ways in which those who have suffered utilise existing practical strategies for living and coping.

Notes

¹ Kilis reports that, although they remember them, Latvians in Siberia similarly do not talk about the Repressions of the 1930s (Kilis 1999: 13).

² The teacher also said that most of the Meskhetian Turks now live in Belgorod (a region of Russia close to the Ukraine), many with *propiska* and 'human rights.' The teacher had asked Jakob, Güzeli's cousin, to talk about rights, mentioning respect for one's elders. Jakob did not initially understand why she had called on him: he also did not know that he was a 'Meskhetian Turk.'

³ For a detailed summary of these migrations written from a Turkic (Azerbaijani) perspective, see Yunusov

(2000:10-19); Gachechiladze (1995) and Rosen (1991) provide the Georgian perspective.

⁴ A literal translation of the Georgian name *Akhaltzikhe* should be 'New fortress', not 'White fortress' as in Turkish (*I. K.*).

⁵ Yunusov rejects the argument that the ancestors of the Meskhetian Turks were Georgians who were forcibly converted to Islam by the Ottomans. He shows that the Ottomans made military service and conversion to Islam mandatory only for the aristocracy, and the peasants for the most part remained Christian (Yunusov 2000:17).

⁶ For an account of a similar conflict between the Chuvash and Tatar intellectuals, see Shnirelman (1996).

⁷To some extent, this represents a continuation of Soviet policies regarding administration of nationalities, which relied heavily on academic ideas of what are nations, nationalities and national minorities, in allocating social, economic, political, and territorial rights and opportunities to any particular group. See, for example, Eidlitz Kuoljok (1985), Guy (1978), Slezkine (1994) and Smith (1996).

⁸A Hamshen Armenian woman, herself displaced during the war in Abkhazia, chastised the two Meskhetian Turkish women with her, declaring that they should know where they came from, so that they could tell their children, and they would pass it on to their grandchildren. The Meskhetian Turkish women said nothing.

⁹He went into considerable detail as to how the book could be obtained, through a request signed by ten people, and on payment of (during the Soviet period) 110r. There followed a debate between Müratdin and his cousin as to the value of the rouble at that time. Müratdin declared that the a dollar cost 57 kopecks, (0.57r), while his cousin insisted it cost 83 kopecks. Either way, 110r was a considerable sum of money Müratdin declared, 'I read that book completely,' and that it was written in Russian and Turkish, in Arabic script.

¹⁰*Poshel von, Gruzini!* Note that Müratdin did not actually say that they are Georgians, but Meskhetians, descendants of brothers of unexplained parentage.

¹¹This absence of intellectual historical curiosity is possibly related to the limited numbers of well-educated Meskhetian Turks. At the turn of the century, educated Meskhetian Turks were mostly from *bey* (aristocratic) families, many of whom fled to Turkey at the time of the Revolution. Many of those who remained, and other educated people, were arrested and many killed in 1928-37 (Aydingün 2000:131, 158; Yunusov 2000:28). In Uzbekistan, initial restrictions on movement limited opportunities for study until 1956. Thereafter it is possible that discrimination against Meskhetian Turks continued. One man reported that unless one had 'Uzbek' written in one's passport, one could not enter university. However, others denied that there was significant discrimination in Uzbekistan, and most adult men, and some women, attended at least a vocational college. But at the time of the Fergana riots Lur'e and Studenikin note that of the 2,350 Meskhetian Turks in Tashlak, only eight had finished medical or pedagogical institute, and eighteen had completed technical college (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:48). And in Krasnodar in the years following 1989, access to further and higher education has been minimal, both as a result of a lack of the neces-

sary citizenship documents, and the prohibitively high cost. In 1999-2000, the fees alone for a year's post-graduate study at Kuban State University in Krasnodar amounted to 10,000r (approximately £250). However, other factors also affect the average level of education. (For example, when one my informant's (Aygün's) relatives insist that she should marry rather than continue her education.)

¹²*Şennik* probably translates into Russian better as *narod*, 'people,' than as *natsia* 'nation,' since the latter now has political connotations that *şennik* does not share. *Şennik* rather refers to a group that shares a language and cultural practices.

¹³Although some had heard of the name *Ahiska Türkleri*, *Osmani Türkleri* was mentioned more frequently, and the former is not used in daily Meskhetian Turkish conversation. This contrasts with Aydingün's work with this group in Kazakhstan and Turkey. However, it should be noted that Aydingün herself is Turkish, and that her informants were on average far better educated and better employed than mine, and had access to institutions connected with Turkey.

¹⁴As these comments suggest, Meskhetian Turks have an ambivalent relationship with Turks from Turkey. In some contexts, such as the shared language which is appreciated (by some) through their satellite television from Turkey, Turkey's Turks are *svoi* (*R*), 'our own.' But most are aware of differences, in, for example, work practice and hospitality expectations. Even for those considering emigration to Turkey, the country is not seen as their homeland, as a place where they belong (cf. Aydingün 2000).

¹⁵Nekrich, whose work on the deported peoples was published in New York in 1978, does not use the term 'Meskhetian' at all, despite referring to Conquest (1970), in which the term is used. This suggests that the term was not in common use in the Soviet Union when Nekrich left in 1976.

¹⁶I shall not here be concerned with the debate as to whom the terms 'Meskhetians' or 'Meskhetian Turks' include, as discussed by Aydingün (2000), Bennigsen & Wimbush (1985:216-219), and Conquest (1970), among others. Suffice to note here that my informants considered themselves different from Kurds and Hemshils - two of the groups that are sometimes included with Turks in the designation 'Meskhetians' - and I neither met Karapapakhs nor heard them spoken of.

¹⁷One woman explained, 'They lived in the country, they didn't know anything!' She laughed that her Uzbek

friend, working with her at the *sovkhos*, used to say 'When are you going to your homeland, *Kepkezler?*'

¹⁸ It is for this reason that I also refer to my informants as Meskhetian Turks. Simply 'Turks' would better reflect daily naming practice, but given the risk of confusion with other Turks, I use the longer term.

¹⁹ It should be noted that in the 1920s the Meskhetian Turks were a predominantly rural, labouring population, and may have been less affected by the purges of the late 1930s than the urban intelligentsia. Additionally, many ordinary people used, and therefore contributed to the intensification of, the Terror as an opportunity to 'sate their appetite for revenge against at least some of those in power' (Davies 2000:67).

²⁰ In the 1920s, in order to administer the multiple peoples of the territory, the Soviet authorities sought to define all national groups, on the basis of Stalin's 1913 definition of a nation as 'an historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up, manifested in a common culture' (Stalin 1953[1913]:307). All peoples were allocated group cultural, economic and political rights in accordance with their stage of development towards nation status. Those peoples who were not deemed to have reached the 'national' stage of development had group rights within the republic in which they resided. Similar 'coercive nation building' (Tishkov 1992:381) had occurred during the Imperial Russian Empire (Fitzpatrick 2000b:39-40). See Eidlitz Kuoljok (1985), Guy (1978), Martin (1998, 2000), Slezkine (1994), and Smith (1996) for discussion of the theory and practice of Soviet Nationalities Policy.

²¹ Notable in comparison are the neighbouring Georgian-speaking Muslims, the Adzhars, who were thus recognised, and were allocated their own republic (Aslan 1996:7, Slezkine 1994:429).

²² See Gelb (1996) on Finnish forced migration; Skultans (1998) and Kilis (1999) on Latvian forced and voluntary migration, and Voutira (1991) on Pontic Greek migration in the twentieth century.

²³ Some maintain that the Soviet intention was to invade Turkey. Khazanov claims that 'there are many evidences [sic] that at that time Stalin planned to invade Turkey and wished to clear the Transcaucasia of those ethnic elements who did not enjoy his confidence' (1995:197). I have not seen details of such evidence.

²⁴ These numbers are still debated. For details, see Bugai (1994), Khazanov (1995:198), Pohl (n.d.).

²⁵ This is in part because I was unable to speak directly with many older people in the early stages of my field-

work, as they spoke little Russian and I little Meskhetian Turkish. However, the fact that there seems to be little tradition of passing on detailed stories of displacement to younger generations and visiting anthropologists fits with the rest of my data concerning the lack of public discussion of personal suffering. Additionally, comparison with other researchers' collected stories suggest that those anecdotes I was told are fairly typical of those of other Meskhetian Turks (for example, Aydingün 2000, Bugai 1994:154-158, Forced Migration Projects 1998, Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:37-42, Ray 2000). I did not explicitly set out to collect stories of deportation. Other researchers have sought out tales of suffering and I suspect(ed) that this distorts the picture of the role such stories play in daily life.

²⁶ Merridale notes that during this period, due to lack of time and resources, many Soviet soldiers were also not buried when they died at the front (Merridale 2000:269-305).

²⁷ Note that travel, work and residence in towns was restricted for anyone (not just special settlers) without a passport; that is, for most of the rural population. Only in 1953 did a statute allow rural people to visit passporised (urban) areas for up to thirty days, and then only on the basis of a permit issued by the rural authorities. Although conditions for special settlers were undoubtedly particularly restrictive, it should not be thought that other rural dwellers were free to do as they pleased (Matthews 1993:25,31).

²⁸ It has been frequently noted that the Meskhetian Turks, along with the Volga Germans and the Crimean Tatars were not mentioned in this speech, nor in the first public statement concerning the deportations made by Gorkin in February 1957, in which the Balkars, Chechens, Ingush, Kalmyks and Karachai were rehabilitated (Conquest 1970:145-147). It may be significant that the latter five groups were able to return to their previous places of residence shortly after rehabilitation, whereas the former three groups were not permitted to do so until considerably later, if at all.

²⁹ Uzbek envy of Meskhetian Turkish agricultural success was also seen by many outside observers to be a central factor in the Fergana conflict (Forced Migration Projects (1998), Wynne Russell, personal communication).

³⁰ This is not to say that such occurrences were, or were not, rare. Ray asserts that in order to satisfy statistical reports to Moscow, Meskhetian Turks were instructed to report their nationality as Uzbek after they finished school, and those who refused were denied school-leaving certificates and entrance to university (Ray

2000:393). Her source for this data was presumably her informants. In other circumstances, observers have demonstrated that issues which murderously divided communities were of no consequence a few years previously. It has been asserted that in Yugoslavia, at least in towns and in the army, friends did not know each others' ethnicities prior to the war; in Ottoman Turkey, that Greeks and Turks lived as peaceful neighbours (Draculić 1999, Hirschon 1989:29, Panov 2001). Others argue that this was not the case in, for example, rural Yugoslavia (Cornelia Sorabji, personal communication). With regard to Fergana, in the effective absence of historical research and my own informants' comments on such matters, I will not explore the issue further here.

- ³¹ This represents approximately half of their total population; the remainder were living mostly Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, with a small number resident in Russia.
- ³² Lur'e & Studenikin (1990) is the most detailed published account of the events; Bugai (1994) includes several pertinent official documents. In English, Ossipov (n.d.) and Yunusov (2000) include summaries of the events, as do various NGO publications, including Forced Migration Projects 1998, Human Rights Watch (1998), Laczko (1998), Li Rosa et al (1997). Ossipov & Cherepova (1996), and UNHCR (1999).
- ³³ Notably no-one spoke of rape, although it did occur (Lur'e & Studenikin 1990:16,26; Aleksandr Ossipov, personal communication). This may be because my informants did not know any women who had suffered thus. However, I would expect the silence surrounding the abuse of women to be deeper than that concerning other atrocities. See chapter five and conclusion on silence, and Das (1990b), Draculić (1999), Declich (2001), and Littlewood (1997) on silence following rape during collective violence.
- ³⁴ Some of these women had read a book published in 1990 by two journalists who arrived in Fergana on 7th June. Independently they reported that thirty thousand copies were printed, but 'only six or seven were sold, before they collected all the copies of the book back in. On a raised platform the old [Uzbek] men burnt all the books.' Aleksandr Ossipov, a Moscow based scholar and human rights activist, whose doctoral thesis is based on (pre-1989) research with Meskhetian Turks (Ossipov 1993), notes that this may have occurred, although the book was published in Moscow so only a small number could have been collected (personal communication). The book, lent to me by my informants, is

Lur'e and Studenikin's *The Smell of Burning and Sorrow*, the most comprehensive account of the events of 1989, notably based mostly on interviews with military personnel rather than Meskhetian Turks. While heaping praise on the police and military's work and concern for their suffering (to the extent that the suffering of the Meskhetian Turks occasionally seems secondary), the book makes clear that Uzbeks rather than Meskhetian Turks were responsible for the events, and criticises politicians for failing to prevent such occurrences, or prosecute all those responsible.

- ³⁵ Some writers state the figure was 90,000. Yunusov, for example, gives both figures at different points in the same work (2000:37,46).
- ³⁶ A complete break-down of those killed has never been released. Lur'e and Studenikin note that at the time of writing, it was thought 106 had been killed, of whom four were women. By nationality, they included 45 Meskhetian Turks; 12 Azerbaijanis (note that they may have been Meskhetian Turks, recorded as Azerbaijanis in their passports); 35 Uzbeks (probably this includes the majority of police casualties, as well as rioters shot by the military); 5 Russians, and one Tadjik, Tatar, Bashkir, Armenian, and Greek. The nationality of the remainder was unknown (1990:84).
- ³⁷ Note that since 1988 Armenia and Azerbaijan had been involved in violent conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, and that Meskhetian Turks in Azerbaijan have probably imbued anti-Armenian propaganda, just as my informants have recently imbued war-driven anti-Chechen attitudes from Russian media.
- ³⁸ See Humphrey (1991, 1996/7) and Pilkington (1994) for the prevalence of youth gangs in late 1980s and early 1990s Soviet towns.
- ³⁹ It seems probable that the riots were also encouraged by individuals, who, like Kakar's 'strong men,' or Brass' 'fire-tenders,' encouraged the spread of rumours for their own ends (Kakar 1996; Brass 1997:16). 'Unknown outsiders' are mentioned in both Meskhetian Turks' accounts of the events and in the testimony of others (military, taxi drivers, neighbouring Uzbeks) heard spreading word of the coming of the Turks, or shouting down figures of authority who disputed the rumours. These men were perhaps members of the Kuvasai gangs, perhaps others accused in the many conspiracy theories mentioned above. Yet one does not need to know who they were in order to understand how the riots spread to involve so many ordinary Uzbeks.
- ⁴⁰ It is notable that being the victims of such rumours does not prevent a population from imbibing state pro-

paganda against similar persons. This was illustrated by an incident related by all local residents, including the Meskhetian Turks, concerning the murder of a small boy in a town close to Apsheronsk in May 2000. A man came to a house and asked for a piece of bread, but while the child's mother went to fetch him some food, the three year old ran out and the man slit his throat from ear to ear. The mother, discovering this, screamed, whereupon neighbours ran to the house and killed the man. All who discussed the story commented that the neighbours would not be charged for killing the man, since he had killed the child for no reason. The story was in circulation thirty miles away, the day after the murder. All local residents, including Russians, Armenians and Meskhetian Turks, had heard and were convinced that the murderer had papers on him proving that he was a Chechen. A week later, when it was reported that the murderer was not a Chechen but a homeless Russian, no-one was particularly interested. Many Meskhetian Turks were initially sympathetic to the plight of the Chechens, not as fellow Muslims or Stalin's deportees, but because so many people became refugees. But by May 2000 the consistent media propaganda had turned all the rural population against Chechens.

⁴¹ It has not been possible to develop this argument further as I have not undertaken research in Uzbekistan and do not have access to Uzbek and other Soviet official records.

⁴² It could be argued that the Soviet authorities' mass evacuation of the Meskhetian Turks hints at their involvement in precipitating the riots. However, as discussed in this chapter, there exists considerable Tsarist Russian and Soviet precedent for large-scale removal of peoples in general (and the Meskhetian Turks in particular) in order to resolve potential or actual conflicts. I suggest that the authorities' decision to organise evacuation reflects a continuation of this practice, and it is not necessary to argue that it was a pre-arranged aspect of a planned conflict.

⁴³ The unrepresentative and ineffective nature of the two most significant Meskhetian Turkish campaigning organisations, Vatan and Hsna, have been previously discussed by myself and others (Adam n.d., Tomlinson n.d.).

⁴⁴ Of a total population of approximately 300,000: Most live in the former Soviet Union, in Kazakhstan (80-100,000), Azerbaijan (40-60,000), Kyrgyzstan (25-30,000), Uzbekistan (15-20,000), Ukraine (5-10,000) and Georgia (only 643). About 15,000 live in Turkey, mostly around

Bursa (Aydingün 2000:79; Ossipov 2000:10; Yunusov 2000:50).

⁴⁵ *Chët ego znaet!*, literally, 'The Horseman knows!', a colloquial, slightly despairing, comment made when the reasons for something are unclear. (Correctly, *Chort ego znaet!* means 'The devil knows!' – I. K.)

⁴⁶ Internal passports serve as identity cards. If one wishes to travel abroad one must have citizenship (see below) in order to apply for an external, *zagranichnyi* (R), passport.

⁴⁷ The Russian Federation government figures responsible for resolution of the 'problem' include several prominent academics, including Valeri Tishkov and Nikolai Bugai, both of whom have written critically of the earlier attitude and acts of the Soviet regime towards the Meskhetian Turks (see, for example, Bugai 1994, 1996; Tishkov 1992:374, 1997). However, their approach to the present discrimination is notably supportive of the Krasnodar authorities. Speaking at a public meeting in Krymsk in September 1997, Bugai stated, 'You've already had a sad experience of events in Uzbekistan, you need to learn the lessons and solve a ripening conflict peacefully. Nobody invited you to the Kuban, nobody promised you anything here' (quoted in Ossipov 2000:49).

⁴⁸ Unless moving to permanently reside in another country. In a few instances, the authorities have issued one-year non-citizenship external passports for persons moving to Turkey. These do not entitle the bearer to return to Russia. Turkey had also not granted citizenship to the vast majority of its Meskhetian Turkish immigrants, but the identity cards issued by the Meskhetian Turkish association in Bursa have a certain "illegal validity" in the eyes of the local police (Aydingün 2000:175). This does not, however, give them the same rights as citizens.

⁴⁹ Note that some Meskhetian Turks do have both *propiska*, and hence are entitled to vote.

⁵⁰ Note that such police attention is not limited to Meskhetian Turks; all residents are liable to fines if their documents are not in order. However, as elsewhere in Russia, 'peoples of Caucasian nationality', also known as 'blacks,' are targeted for discrimination (cf. Lemon 1998:46-47). Outside a train station in Rostov my hostess and I, alone of all the passengers leaving the train, had our documents demanded by the police. They threatened to detain my companion on the basis that she has *propiska* for three houses in the same village in her passport (because an official forgot to include an 'annulled' stamp). They released us without fines only after entertaining themselves over the presence in Rostov of an 'English *kolkhoznik* (collective farm worker),' and stealing a stick of sausage. I have little doubt that we were selected for questioning because we were the only passengers wearing headscarves, a

marker of Muslim 'Caucasian nationality.' (Old Russian women also wear headscarves, but tie them in front of the neck rather than behind).

⁵¹ This was asserted in a newspaper article very shortly after my hosts' son, who does have a *propiska*, had been conscripted into the army. Unusually (normally only the mother reads) both his parents and his sister looked at the article; his sister retorted, 'And my brother is doing what now, in the army?', while his parents said little.

⁵² To use a local comparison, Armenians in Krasnodar are a focus of the authorities' unwanted attentions to almost the same extent as the Meskhetian Turks; most newspaper articles criticising one also criticise the other. Many of the Armenians in the *krai* moved here within the last decade, also escaping violent conflict. Yet the Armenian community commemorates its past sufferings and builds churches for the future, as well as countering the Governor's attacks with articles in their own newspapers (Ardavast Tulumdzhian, personal communication). In addition, such attacks seem to unify the Armenian community to a greater extent than they do the Meskhetian Turks.

⁵³ Men, on the other hand, usually remarry within a year of their wife's death.

⁵⁴ One of my least politicised informants told me that I must write, so that they would be given their homeland, since, 'If you shoot someone with a bullet, he dies, doesn't feel anything. But if you hit him with a pen, he suffers.' But such demands that I write are not part of a strategy for dealing with trauma, and nor do they really entail an expectation that my words will bring about an alleviation of their conditions, let alone a 'homeland.' Notably this man usually shows far more faith in violence than words for solving conflicts or expressing his point of view, and he has shown no interest in going to Georgia. I therefore treat this comment with caution.

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⁵⁵ As anthropologists and psychologists have shown, memory is not a singular process, and is not limited to what is recalled (Bloch 1998a), but involves other processes including recording, retention, and prompting. The relationship between speech and these varying aspects of memory and remembering is a complicated matter for further research, and one which will continue to benefit from interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropology and psychology (Bloch 1998b, Kirmayer 1996).

⁵⁶ In asking, 'would silence be better?', Langer rightly notes that we, as audience, must not encourage the silence of victims on the basis that 'it would spare us much pain' (Langer 1991:50). Yet his argument that memory cannot be silenced is based on videotaped oral testimonies by volunteers. These moments of testimony are out of the ordinary. Other (written) accounts of lives following the Holocaust demonstrate that some former victims choose to emphasise survival rather than victimhood in their daily lives, and thus do, to some extent, silence their memories (Karpf 1996:95). This suggests that conclusions about the functioning of memory with or without speech, made on the basis of evidence of people who have volunteered to speak (cf. Kirmayer 1996), are questionable.

⁵⁷ Not talking may be a strategy for maintaining one's dignity, as has been noted in reference to Khmer refugees and Holocaust victims (Reynell 1989:153, Karpf 1996).

⁵⁸ Significant in this context is the 'myth of return,' which, although it may be communally maintained, does not imply that that individuals will act upon the myth (Al-Rasheed 1994). Zetter notes with reference to Greek Cypriot refugees that while 'the right to return remains an unequivocal demand, the exercise of that right may not be so clear cut' (Zetter 1994:316).

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