



# Ukrainian Genealogy Group

## National Capital Region

The Ukrainian Genealogist

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### January UGG-NCR Webinar

*Crimea: the most distinctive region of Ukraine*

On January 23, 2024, Dr. John (Ivan) Jaworsky made a presentation on 'Crimea: the most distinctive region of Ukraine'. Ivan provided a brief introduction to Crimea that included historical background, demographic changes and the situation of Crimea's diverse populations from the 19th century to the present day.



*John Jaworsky - our January Speaker*

He began by describing his early interest in Crimea and his research on collaboration between Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian dissidents. During his research, Ivan visited Crimea several times after 1991. He became interested because Crimea is not well known among Ukrainians including those from North America. Also, Crimea has been in the news since 2014 with the Russian military occupation. Ivan explained that the distinctiveness of Crimea is due to its strategic location in the Black Sea, its geography, the various ethnic groups and also its history.

From ancient times, Crimea was at the crossroads of trade and military activities that shaped its economy and society. Ivan also spoke about the various myths that have surrounded this history including that Crimea was always an integral part of Russia and that in 1954, Crimea was a 'gift' from Russia to Ukraine. Also, the various wars fought in Crimea especially during the Second World War resulted in large casualties but non-Russians were also casualties and this is rarely mentioned. These myths were used to justify the Russian military occupation in 2014 and turning Crimea into a Russian military base.

Ivan spoke about the demographic history of Crimea and how the census statistics changed with the deportation of Crimean Tatars after 1944 to Central Asia. The Russian adopted a 'settler-colonialist' policy in Crimea and replaced Crimean Tatar place names with Russian names. After the independence of Ukraine in 1991, several thousand Crimean Tatars from Central Asia arrived in Crimea and attempted to renew their community life. They were declared an 'indigenous population' by the Ukrainian Government.

Ivan spoke about the political errors made in Kyiv relating to the status of Crimea. During the early years, Kyiv did not pay much attention to Crimea with a majority Russian-speaking population and the pro-Russian sentiment grew. More recently, attempts at de-centralization were made by Kyiv to improve the situation in the regions but in Crimea, it was too late. One big mistake was allowing the Russian Navy to keep its naval base in Sevastopol after 1991. Russian officers and sailors were active in the occupation of Crimea in 2014.

Ivan concluded by mentioning that once Crimea is restored to Ukraine, the process to re-integrate the population will be a complicated task.

A question-and-answer session concluded this presentation.

The following sources are recommended for further reading:

Paul Robert Magocsi, *This Blessed Land, Crimea and the Crimean Tatars*, Distributed by University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2022, 153 p. (Available at the Ottawa Public Library).

Crimea, Internet Encyclopedia of Ukraine, <https://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5Cc%5Cr%5Ccrimea.htm>

### **Community Events**

*Courtesy of UCC (Ottawa) Events Calendar*

*Saturday, March 2 @ 6pm*

#### **Solidarity Through Song and Dance**

Performances include Ottawa Latvian dance group Rotala, Ukrainian dance group Svitanok, members of the Montreal Ottawa Latvian choir Atbalss, Ottawa Ukrainian choir, singer Oleksii Fishchuk, DJ Moose.

Where: Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral, 1000 Byron Ave

Tickets/Info: <https://fb.me/e/1tXNcSTGf>

*Saturday, March 16 and 23.*

#### **Pysanka-writing and paska-baking workshops**

Simultaneous pysanka-writing and paska-baking workshops, by advance registration with limited spots.

Stay tuned to our social media properties (Twitter: @Slava\_Kava; FB & Insta: Café\_Ukraine\_Ottawa) for details soon!

Where: Café Ukraine, 911 Carling Ave.

*Sunday, March 17 @ 4pm.*

#### **The Canadian Bandurist Capella/Капеля бандуристів Канади presents Word of Taras - The Poetry of Taras Shevchenko**

A concert dedicated to celebrating 210 years of Ukraine's greatest poet, writer, artist and kobzar – Taras Shevchenko. <https://www.banduristy.com/2024/01/march-17-2024-word-of-taras-ottawa-on/>

Where: Carleton Dominion Chalmers Centre, 355 Cooper Street.

*Saturday, March 23 @ 10:30am – 1:30pm.*

#### **Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada Easter Bazaar.**

Where: St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Shrine, 952 Green Valley Cres.