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Krimtataren. Special issue of *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften/Austrian Journal of Historical Studies* (28.1, 2017), 244 pp.,

ISBN 978-3-7065-5612-5.

This special issue on the history of the Crimean Tatars is very timely, especially in the light of Russia's 2014 annexation of the Crimea. However, this publication is not a quick shot to provide popular information about a small and obscure nation that has so far escaped scholarly attention; rather, it summarizes the results of long-standing research projects. The contributors – most of whom are from Austria and Germany – pay close attention to first-hand sources, while also linking back to Anglo-Saxon, Russian, Turkish, Polish and Ukrainian scholarship.

Four case studies deal with the Crimean Tatars as a serious military power that provoked both fear and awe. Clemens Pausz analyzes the relations between the Cossacks and the Crimean Tatars in the sixteenth century, with as his primary source the diary of Erich Lassota, who as an envoy of Habsburg Emperor Rudolph II visited what is today Ukraine in 1594. Caspar Hillebrand takes us to the Crimea by following the Ottoman travel account of Evliya Chelebi, who traveled to the Crimea twice, in 1641 and in 1665-66. As Hillebrand demonstrates, Evliya used various literary devices and historical narratives to present the Giray Khan family as closely linked to the Ottoman dynasty. Iskra Schwarcz discusses a little-known letter (most probably originally composed in Ottoman or Tatar 1687) in which an unknown informant discusses ongoing Crimean Tatar military preparations; Schwarcz edited the letter in the surviving Italian translation that had been made for Viennese officials, and provides a German translation. Mieste Hotopp-Riecke studied German archives to reconstruct the integration of small groups of Crimean Tatar soldiers into the armies of Brandenburg, to be deployed mainly in the context of the German colonization of Polish territories in the eighteenth century.

After the 'first' Russian annexation of the Crimea in 1783, the Tatars saw their status reduced to that of a subjugated nationality and quickly became a minority on the Peninsula; many Tatars emigrated, or were expelled, to the Ottoman lands (including the Dobruja). In the nineteenth century, a new native intelligentsia emerged that was both Russified and Ottomanized, and which struggled with the position of the Crimean Muslims between Istanbul and St. Petersburg. Ulrich Hofmeister presents the case of Ismail Gasprinskii (1851-1914), whose Russian-language publications display European/Russian attitudes of Orientalism towards the (in Gasprinskii's own words) 'backwards'

Muslims of Crimea and Russia, and even more so towards the Muslims of Russian Central Asia; Gasprinskii's project was *sblizhenie*, the 'coming closer' of Russians and Tatars/Muslims, by means of Muslim educational reform and Russian-Tatar journalism. Kerstin Jobst, in her contribution to the special issue, then discusses whether after the grim nineteenth century, the 1920s can be seen as a 'Golden Age' of the Crimean Tatars, as the latter benefitted from early Soviet Russia's proclaimed support of national minorities against Russian nationalist chauvinism; yet there is little factual evidence of a palpable respite in repression and marginalization. Things soon got much worse, with forced collectivization, the Red Terror of 1936-38, World War II and German occupation, and Stalin's infamous order to remove the Tatars from the Peninsula. The horrors of the 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars to Central Asia are made graphical by Swetlana Czerwonnaja and Martin Malek, who offer excerpts from literary works in the Russian language through which Crimean Tatar authors expressed their memories of deceit, violence, starvation and harassment, at the hands both of Soviet soldiers and of the 'receiving' communities in Uzbekistan. Beyond the USSR, however, Crimean Tatars were less hopeless. The contribution by Zaur Gasimov, for me a highlight of this volume, is based on the archive of Ismail Otar (1911-2005), a Crimean Tatar activist in Turkey and disciple of Cafer Seydahmet Kırimer (d. 1960). Their networks of friendship, publishing, lobbying and mutual support comprised not only fellow Crimean Tatar exiles but also Turkish, Polish, German and other academic scholars, some of whom – including in Nazi and post-Nazi Germany – were sympathetic to the Crimean Tatar cause in the hope that small national movements would eventually help bringing down the USSR. Characteristically, these Crimean Tatar activists were thoroughly secular in character. Finally, Martin Malek discusses the legal, social and political situation of the Crimean Tatars who, starting in the late 1980s, returned to the Crimea and established the *Kurultai* and *Mejlis* national organizations to fight for national self-determination, and in practice for access to housing, electricity, schooling, political representation, and Ukrainian citizenship. Discrimination continued in post-Soviet Ukraine (where the Crimea was already largely run by Russian nationalist gangs and business elites); only after the events of 2014, with the Crimea under Moscow's control, did Kiev finally declare its full recognition of the Crimean Tatars' quest for cultural autonomy as the Peninsula's autochthonous population. In our days, the Crimean Tatar peaceful resistance against Moscow's barely camouflaged military takeover of the Crimea has resulted in a Russian legal ban on the *Mejlis*, which the Russian organs portray as an extremist organization linked to Islamic State; many Tatar activists have been forced once again to leave the Crimea, this time mostly to mainland Ukraine, Turkey or the West.

The volume is a welcome contribution to the field, providing a coherent picture of the international ramifications of Crimean Tatar history in its many facets, and is thoroughly grounded in first-hand sources.

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