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## **CRIMEAN TATARS AMONG THE OTTOMAN COSSACKS DURING THE EASTERN WAR**

The Eastern War (1853-1856) became an important watershed in the history of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar peoples, demonstrating new opportunities for their cooperation in the fight against Russian imperialism. One of the most striking examples of such cooperation was the military journey of the Crimean Tatars as part of the 1st Regiment of the Ottoman Cossacks. The Ottoman Cossacks were a military unit that united representatives of many enslaved peoples in the struggle for liberation in alliance with European powers and as part of the reformed Ottoman army.

The Ottoman Cossacks were led by a group of emigrants who considered the possibility of fighting against Russian imperialism and liberating individual Slavic peoples in alliance with the Ottoman Empire, a total of more than 200 officers, including well-known Ottoman-Turkish, Polish, Russian-Old Believer, Jewish, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar, and Romanian figures. This group had a broad intellectual influence, which is somewhat overshadowed by the importance of their leader, Michal Czajkowski (Mehmed Sadyk Pasha) [8].

Great diplomatic dexterity, flexibility, and political acumen enabled Mikhail Tchaikovsky, Adam Czartoryski's chief agent in the Balkans, to live and work in the Ottoman Empire for thirty years. He entered the Ottoman service when the Russian government demanded his expulsion from Turkey (1850). Having reached the rank of general and sergeant major of a Cossack regiment, M.Czajkowski, as an Ottoman pasha, repeatedly used his close ties with the ruling circles to help the multiethnic population in Dobruja [7]. For several decades, Ivan Stoichev has been researching materials on Ottoman Cossack regiments [10], including the participation of Crimean Tatar cavalry in their organisation.

Quite unexpectedly, deep ties between the Ottoman Cossacks and the struggle for independence of the Caucasian peoples were revealed, which was reflected in ideological contacts, as well as in armed and material assistance [1]. M.Czajkowski and his associates considered one of the

important tasks of Cossack-philosophical propaganda to be the intensification of separatist movements among the Cossack population of the Russian Empire [5].

In addition, the special services of the Russian Empire revealed Sadiq Pasha's (M. Tchaikovsky) ties to the Ukrainophile movement in Dnieper (Eastern) Ukraine [8]. In particular, in the 1850s and 1860s, reports of Russian border and gendarmerie officers repeatedly testified to fears of agitation and other activities by Ottoman Cossacks. This was especially evident during the Eastern War of 1853–1856, when several squadrons of Ottoman Cossacks were recruited from prisoners of war of the Russian army, including Ukrainians, Poles, and Tatars [7]. The intellectual influence of the Ottoman Cossacks was felt not only in Ottoman society [9], which was manifested, in particular, in active publishing, educational, cultural and political activities.

It is important that the theme of reconciliation between Tatars, Ukrainians and Poles was a cross-cutting theme in the literary work of Mikhail Tchaikovsky as early as 1837: in Vernyhor he emphasises the need for an alliance with the Tatars, and in his *Cossack Tales* he romantically depicts the tragic fate of three friends – a Tatar, a Ukrainian Cossack and a Pole ('The Grave' – 'Mohyla'), again emphasising the need for their understanding. Therefore, the participation of Tatars in Mehmed Sadyk's Cossack units was the embodiment of his already established concept.

M.Czajkowski put forward the idea of 'restoring' the Ottoman Cossacks, not creating them. This happened on 20 October 1853, when Sultan Abdul Majid issued a decree to Mehmed Sadyk Bey (M.Czajkowski was given this name after his conversion to Islam) to form an 'Ottoman Cossack regiment'. Polish historiography notes the Polish affiliation of the majority of these units [6, 19–20], but the discovery of new sources (or simply a consistent reading of old ones) makes it clear that the multinational nature of the Cossack regiments created in the Balkans is evident.

Even before leaving Istanbul, in early 1854, Mehmed Sadiq Pasha sent one staff officer and two junior officers to the lower Danube and Dobruzha to recruit volunteers for the Cossack regiment. These officers proved to be impractical in their zeal, failing to do anything more than 'a frivolous report to the commander-in-chief that they had already gathered up to three hundred volunteers'. These were hundreds of Dobruja Cossacks already called up for military service, joined by irregular Tatar cavalry and under the command of Gun-Mirza – Commander-in-Chief Omer Pasha, on the basis of these reports, summoned Mehmed Sadyk Pasha and the Cossacks to his headquarters in Shumla as soon as possible [4, 110]. The Cossack regiment joined the Rumelian army led by Omer Pasha and was used to counteract other Cossacks from Field Marshal Paskevich's army, which laid siege to

Silistra [2, 185]. When the Russian army crossed the Danube and entered Dobruja, irregular Dobruja Cossacks and Tatar cavalry, scattered and dispersed, found refuge in Shumla – then Omer Pasha transferred these Cossacks to the command of Mehmed Sadiq Pasha. Two hundred of the scattered Cossacks were organised: Zhurylov and Sariky [4, 111]. Here, the Cossacks distinguished themselves with several successful operations, and later were the first to enter Bucharest, abandoned by the Russians [2, 243].

Subsequently, the Tatar cavalry from Dobruja were joined by immigrants from the Crimea – it is known from the documents about the chiflik of Sadyk Pasha Szaly-Bosna in the suburbs of Istanbul that a group of Tatars with their families arrived there from Gozleve (Yevpatoriia), who were accommodated and granted land.

This rank chiflik belonged to Sadiq Pasha until 1862, and he appointed a Tatar, Mahmud-aga (Mukha), ‘from the Augustow Tatars’, as its manager. The life in this Ottoman ‘manor’ is characteristically depicted: *‘The manager of my farmstead was Mahmud-aga (Mukha), a cavalry lieutenant, a Tatar from the Augustów rebel group, who was sent to my disposal; his assistant was Murad-aga (Treskin), sent to me by General Bem, a Ukrainian who had previously served in a Russian Ulan regiment. It was their duty to maintain good neighbourly relations with the janissaries, and they did this in the best possible way... I built a very elegant and comfortable mosque in the garden, and as Mahmud-aga was an excellent imam and could sing «Allah ekber» as well as «Veni Creator», I appointed him imam and began to receive my guests in prayer; I especially invited them to the evening prayer, during which one has to kneel up to seventy times. My guests began to leave one by one, telling each and every one of them that it was the time of Tanzimat and that I was a fanatic, a true dervish, and they were afraid of incurring the suspicion of the government authorities who were leading the reforms, because if they came under suspicion, it could come to the point of revealing their real sins. The number of guests in my house decreased, but the good neighbourly relations between us did not stop’* [3, 677–678].

It is noteworthy that the descendants of these Crimean refugees still live as a strong national community in Szaly-Bosna, emphasising their belonging to the Crimean Tatar people in every way. Memories of Crimea are preserved here, and traditions are carefully passed on. The documents of the Ottoman Empire's archives describe in detail Sadiq Pasha's participation in the development of the community and provide detailed information about the participation of Tatar ‘muhajirs’ in the service of the sultan in the ranks of the Ottoman Cossacks.

In the 1855 campaign, Tatar and Cossack units again distinguished themselves in Dobruja. On the third day of Christmas, Russians, in the number of four battalions and ten squadrons with artillery and rocket

launchers, under the command of General Ushakov and Colonel Sazanov, attacked Tulcha. According to Sadiq Pasha's report: 'The unprepared army, under the leadership of the weak and constantly drunken Haji Ali Pasha the Tatar, would have been completely defeated if not for the bravery and organisation of the Cossacks.' For example, one squadron of 63 Cossack cavalry did not allow the enemy infantry to cross the bridge from Chatal Island to the Tulcha bank for three hours, and did not leave until the soldiers had fired all their charges. By that time, Haji Ali Pasha and his command fled the city. The Cossacks lost a valiant centurion, Garchynsky, who was seriously wounded in the city and then taken away by the Russian troops; eight killed from regular troops and from the Mikbalists, and ten seriously wounded left in the city, who were later taken away by the Russians.

Thus, the Cossacks were a unique unit for the Ottoman army, which included representatives of the Slavic and Crimean Tatar populations of the empire. The Cossacks strengthened the European cultural influence on the peoples of the Ottoman Empire, and Czajkowski's literary works prepared the Ukrainian-Tatar historical reconciliation and substantiated the aspirations of the nations for statehood in the context of the 'Spring of Nations'.

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