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**FILIZ TUTKU AYDIN, *ÈMIGRÈ, EXILE, DIASPORA,*  
*AND TRANSNATIONAL MOVEMENTS*  
*OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS.*  
*PRESERVING THE ETERNAL FLAME OF CRIMEA*  
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The illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the war launched against Ukraine in 2022 by the Russian Federation brought back to the attention of the international public opinion the situation of the Crimean Tatar community, which was at that time an issue rather overlooked, debated at a local, at most regional level. However, the interest in the history of the Crimean Tatars has often experienced revivals in moments of crisis. Thus, in the contemporary period, we can identify three such instances. The first is the Cold War period. Historians such as Alan Fisher or Edward A. Allworth, having taken an interest in the history of the peoples of the Soviet Union, published works on the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 or on the reform movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fisher is also the author of a monograph on the history of the Crimean Tatars. The second moment is the one following the collapse of the Soviet Union and is marked by the efforts of the Crimean Tatars to return from their places of exile. The authors who wrote about the Crimean Tatars after 1991 focused on this very problem: the relations of the Crimean Tatars with the authorities and the population of the peninsula (Andrew Wilson), the reasons that led the Crimean Tatars to return to their homeland after almost fifty years (Greta Lynn Uehling), or identity issues that marked the Crimean Tatar community in its modern and contemporary history (Brian Glynn Williams).

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Finally, we could argue that the third period in which more studies about the Crimean Tatars were published started with the 2014 annexation.

There are three main reasons why this community has a special role in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and especially regarding the future of the peninsula. First, it is about its history. The Crimean Tatars have a history in which Crimea occupies a central role, being its native population. Around the peninsula, the Crimean Tatars formed the two medieval states which they trace back to: the Golden Horde and the Crimean Khanate. Secondly, there are important Crimean Tatar communities in states bordering the Black Sea (Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria), but also in other regions such as the Central Asian countries, Canada or the US. An important aspect is that they were formed as a result of the repressions that the Crimean Tatars were subjected to by the Russian state (under its various iterations: Tsarist, Soviet). Thus, we arrive at the third reason. Because of this traumatic experience in the relationship with the Russian authorities, the Crimean Tatars never supported the policies of Moscow and defended the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The same happened in 2014 when Crimean Tatar leaders categorically rejected Vladimir Putin's generous offers, and the diaspora became active in rejecting Moscow's claims.

In this context, Filiz Tutku Aydın's volume, *Èmigrè, Exile, Diaspora, and Transnational Movements of the Crimean Tatars. Preserving the Eternal Flame of Crimea* is a useful tool for understanding how the Crimean Tatars came to consider the Crimean peninsula their homeland, why they support the territorial integrity of Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression, and how they managed to preserve their identity unity despite being scattered in so many geographical spaces and having their history marked by tragic events such as forced emigration or even deportation. The book is not only an important contribution to the history of the Crimean Tatars, but also to the understanding and definition of concepts such as *èmigrè, exile, nationalism*, and especially *diaspora*.

The volume has a balanced structure, the author being very skilled in gradually introducing the reader to the issue and developing her arguments step by step so that even a reader without knowledge of the analysed topic can easily follow the information. The list of figures and exhibits that Aydın inserted in the pages of the book also contributes to this.

The first chapter, *Introduction*, is dedicated to explanations about the sources, methods, and purpose of the work, but it also has a chapter in which it makes a very good synthesis of the modern history of the Crimean Tatars and the formation of the Crimean Tatar diaspora. Aydın takes up the idea of

historians Kemal H. Karpat and Hakan Kırımlı that the Crimean Tatar diaspora was formed starting with the annexation of the Khanate of Crimea by the Russian Empire in 1783, and rightly shows that Ismail Gaspiralı's reforming work in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century made it possible the emergence of a “*nationalist-minded generation*”. In this first chapter, Aydın further proves her impartiality when she assesses the policy of the Ukrainian state towards the Crimean Tatars in the first years after 1991. She explains the hostile attitude towards the return of the Crimean Tatars to the peninsula through the role played by the oligarchs and the influence exhibited by Moscow in Ukraine and stays away from sentimental arguments.

The second chapter, *Explaining Long-Distance Nationalism*, is devoted to theoretical discussions. In this part, the author reviews the classic theories regarding *ethnicity* and *nationalism*, and then proposes a method by which the emergence, the development, and the consequence of *diaspora mobilization* can be analysed. Aydın demonstrates that the analysis of the diaspora mobilization must be divided into layers. She exemplifies this idea by appealing to the case of the Crimean Tatars. Thus, Aydın proposes a “*pyramid of frame resonance*” for the Crimean Tatar diaspora, consisting of three layers. The top is divided into two: the movement leaders and the intellectual or bureaucratic elite who are well integrated into the host states. They have the role of mediators between the community and the host state or its institutions. In the middle of the pyramid are representatives of the well-educated middle class. They have contact with the elites and can participate in organizing the less educated groups. Finally, the base of the pyramid is formed by the mass that ensures the funding for the organizations and the activities of the movement.

The third chapter, *Crimean Tatar Community in the Former Soviet Union (1944-1991): Cases in Exile Nationalism*, is an exception to the subsequent chapters that follow a chronological line. Aydın's preference to prioritize this period in the history of the Crimean Tatars can be explained by the fact that the deportation (genocide) of 1944 and then the struggle to win the right to return to the peninsula represents the most dramatic period in the history of the Crimean Tatars. In this chapter, explanations for the emergence, development, and outcomes of the Crimean Tatar diaspora mobilization are developed around the concept of *exile nationalism*. Aydın astutely notes that the movement to return Crimean Tatars from places of exile to the peninsula was not a linear one, with constant methods, leaders, and mass involvement. On the contrary, it evolved from what the author calls the “*Leninist collective return frame*”, i.e. the

period when the Marxist-Leninist doctrine was invoked to convince the authorities in Moscow of the innocence of the Crimean Tatars, followed by the “*Crimean Tatar Democratic Collective Return Frame*”, the period in which protests were organized, followed by the establishment of links with the democracy and human rights movements in the USSR, and finally an open opposition to the regime. Aydın also makes a comparison between the Crimean Tatar diasporas and the process of returning to their homeland after the deportation in 1944. In her opinion, to understand the differences, the historical process is important. The Crimean Tatars did not return because the Soviet Union collapsed, but because there was a strong collective memory of deportation that made possible the development of an *exile nationalism*. As Aydın rightly observes, only one Crimean Tatar diaspora, the one in Romania, has developed a return program to the peninsula.

This is the subject of chapter four, *Crimean Tatar Community in Romania (1900-): From Exile to Diaspora Nationalism*. Aydın identifies four major periods in the history of the Crimean Tatar community in Romania and its relationship with its homeland, Crimea. The first is that of exile which is characterized by the formation of the Tatar community in Dobruja following the waves of emigration after the annexation of the Crimean Khanate by the Russian Empire in 1783. In this period that ends at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Crimean Tatars in Dobruja maintained ties with Crimean Tatar communities from other countries, but did not engage in political activities related to Crimea. The second period is marked by the activities of the intellectuals who published the *Emel* magazine. This period is characterized by the existence of a return program to Crimea. In the beginning, the activities had a cultural character, the intentions of returning to the native territory being expressed through cultural activities or publications. Later, during the Second World War, it acquired a political character, as the leaders of the movement tried to convince the Romanian or German officials to allow the creation of a Crimean Tatar state in the peninsula. For Aydın, this is the period of “*exile nationalism*”. It ends with the establishment of the communist regime in Romania when the leaders of the movement were arrested. At this moment, the third period begins, that of “*territorial nationalism*”. Here, Aydın distances herself from the authors who mistakenly believe that during the communist regime, the Tatar minority was not subjected to repression. She highlights the attempts to alter the identity of Crimean Tatars in Dobruja by introducing the study of the Kazan Tatar language. However, she opposes the idea that with the establishment of the

communist regime, all ties to Crimea were severed. On the contrary, Aydın speaks of “*territorial nationalism*” when she refers to the way in which the Tatars in Romania chose to promote the idea of having a presence in Dobruja without ties to Crimea. For Aydın, this was way through which the Tatar identity could be preserved, and it enabled the development of a “*diaspora nationalism*” immediately after the collapse of the communist regime. This also coincides with the fourth period characterized by the resumption of ties with Crimea.

Chapter five, *Crimean Tatar Community in Turkey (1908-): From Émigré to Diaspora Nationalism*, presents what the author calls “*a unique case of long-distance nationalism*”. The uniqueness is due to the special ties that the Crimean Tatars have had throughout history with the Ottoman Empire / Republic of Turkey and their contribution to the formation of the Turkish identity. Thus, Aydın points out that for many Crimean Tatars it was problematic to call themselves a “*diaspora*” in Turkey. According to Aydın, in the case of the Crimean Tatar community in Turkey the evolution was one of a movement of *émigré*, that is, of Crimean Tatar political leaders who had previously been active in the peninsula or their descendants, to *diaspora nationalism*. The first stage of this evolution ended in the 1980s and it was characterized by the creation of organizations such as *Vatan Cemiyeti* [Eng: Fatherland Society] and the establishment of links with movements directed against the Soviet Union, particularly the Promethean League. The second stage started after the change of cadres at the leadership level, with younger activists replacing the older ones. The moment also led to a rift caused by differences in vision, especially of relations with Crimea and the host state, i.e. Turkey. For the new generation, connecting to the developments in the Soviet Union and supporting the activity of the Crimean Tatars there became paramount. Likewise, if previous generations viewed the Crimean Tatar identity as a subset of Turkish national identity, the younger generation emphasized the Crimean Tatar as a distinct political identity. In Aydın’s opinion, the most important consequence of this development was the recognition of the role of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey, and to a lesser extent that of Romania and the US (and Canada) in determining the policies regarding Crimea and the Crimean Tatars. For the author the best example in this sense is the creation of the World Congress of the Crimean Tatars.

Chapter six, *Crimean Tatar Community in the United States (1960-\_: From Émigré to Diaspora Nationalism)*, follows a similar development but at a smaller-scale case than that in Turkey. The Crimean Tatar community was formed as a result of the arrival of refugees from the Second World War. Many of them had

initially settled in Turkey, but because of limited political opportunities, decided to emigrate. Aydın calls the community in the USA “*the hybrid child of the parent community in Crimea and Turkey’s community*”. In the author’s opinion, initially, in the case of the Crimean Tatar community in the US, there was a division between those who advocated for the contemporary Crimean Tatar collective return movement in the Soviet Union and the great majority who preferred to preserve only a closely related cultural identity. This period ended in 1990 when, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, like with the transformations that occurred in Turkey and Romania, the two movements converged to form *diaspora nationalism*.

Chapter seven, *Comparison of Cases and Conclusion: Toward a Crimean Tatar Transnational Nation?*, is a conclusion to the volume and is built around the question posed in the title. The author’s answer is clearly stated. A transnational Crimean Tatar nation is in the making and it must be thought of in multiculturalist terms rather than essentialist ones. Moreover, this development has the potential to empower the Crimean Tatars to fight against the Russian occupation.

All the ideas presented in the book are argued based on various comprehensive sources. In addition to specialized literature in Turkish, Tatar, English, or Russian, the author also uses a multitude of interviews with leaders and members of the Crimean Tatar communities. Furthermore, herself a member of the Crimean Tatar community in Turkey, she manages to present both an insider and an outsider perspective, managing to maintain the rigor and equanimity of the specialist. The approach, the sources used in a balanced way, and the topic make Filiz Tutku Aydın’s book, *Èmigrè, Exile, Diaspora, and Transnational Movements of the Crimean Tatars. Preserving The Eternal Flame of Crimea*, a must-read for specialists focusing on the contemporary history of the Crimean Tatars, the Black Sea minorities, or the concept of *diaspora*, but also for those who want to understand the attitude that the Crimean Tatars have towards the annexation of the peninsula by Moscow.