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Konkin, Denis V.

Institute of Archaeology of the Crimea of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Simferopol,  
Russian Federation

From the History of the Crimean Muslims Taxation in the 19th Century: The “Tatar Levy,”  
Details of Preparation, Collection, and Distribution: Materials from the Russian State Historical  
Archive

Abstract

The article draws on documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (fond 1152

“Department of State Economy of the State Council”, series 1-5), to examine the process of preparing, collecting, and distributing the tax for Crimean Tatars (the so-called “Tatar Levy,” tatarsky sbor). The problem of the Crimean Tatars taxation arose immediately after the annexation of the Crimea. Fiscal system of the Crimean Khanate differed from that of the Russian Empire. Poll tax used in the Russian Empire was unacceptable for the Muslim. Amount and parameters of the tax adapted to the Crimean Tatars’ religion caused long discussions in the Russian authorities. Only in 1829, at the insistence of M.S. Vorontsov, a poll tax was introduced for the Crimean Tatars, the Tatar Levy. It amounted to 1 ruble 50 kopecks or 43 kopecks in silver and was to be directed to the priority needs of the Crimea. The draft budget was compiled by the Novorossiysk Governor-General, cleared with the Ministry of Finance and the State Council of the Russian Empire, and approved by the Emperor. The Tatar Levy funds were distributed in several target areas: infrastructure projects (construction of the road on the Southern coast of Crimea, construction of stone bridges, renovation of administrative buildings, creation of port infrastructure, providing water supply to the peninsula); support for agricultural projects (creation of new vineyards in Magarach); recreation (construction of mud baths near Yevpatoria and in Saki, financing of the Nikitsky Botanical Garden); restoration and construction of cultural and historical objects (restoration of the Khan's palace in Bakhchisarai, Juma-Jami in Yevpatoria, replenishment of museum collections, building of new mosques and churches). The revenues were significantly reduced after mass emigration of the Crimean Tatar population in 1860. The tax was finally abolished in 1874, when the taxation of the Crimean Tatars was unified with that of other taxable estates of the Tauride gubernia.

## Keywords

Historical sources, Russian Empire, taxation, Tatar Levy, development of Crimea, M. S. Vorontsov, archival documents.

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## About the authors

Konkin Denis Valerievich, PhD in History, Institute of Archaeology of the Crimea of the Russian Academy of Sciences, senior researcher, Simferopol, Russian Federation, +7-978-828-61-56, denis\_konkin@mail.ru

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