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TOTAL RECALL: SH. MARJANI INSTITUTE OF HISTORY STARTED TO STUDY THE MEMORIAL HERITAGE OF TATAR SOLDIERS IN EUROPE

L.R. Gabdrafikova

*Sh. Marjani Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences
Kazan, Russian Federation
bahetem@mail.ru*

The article reports the results of the expedition of the Sh. Marjani Institute of History researchers to Germany. This research project was launched in 2017. Its subject is to study the memorial heritage of Tatar soldiers in Europe. The central catalogue of cemeteries and graves of warriors called up from the Kazan Governorate and TASSR is to be prepared and published as a result of this work. Scientific staff of the Institute conducted two expeditions – in April and June. The article comments about the Muslim cemetery of a Wünsdorf camp (Zossen), the Russian cemetery of the in Puchheim, the Tatar graves in Dippoldiswalde and Kleinbosch near Leipzig, the Memory sites of Musa Jalil, the Military necropolises of Emsland, and the museum in Esterwegen.

Keywords: Germany, historical memory, Kazan Governorate, memorial heritage, military graves, military cemeteries, Musa Jalil, prisoners of war, TASSR, Tatar soldiers, Soviet soldiers, WWI, WWII

In 2017 Sh. Marjani Institute of History started to study the memorial heritage of Tatar soldiers in Europe. This important project is organized as directed by Rustam Minnikhanov, the President of Tatarstan. The main mission of the historians' visit is to found and study graves of Tatars in Europe. Scientific staff of the Institute conducted two expeditions – in April and June.

The first expedition

April 21, 2017, a modest hall of a small German town Gardelegen's administration. The administration staff Rupert Kaiser and Gabriela Winkelman, surrounded by local journalists, are waiting for guests from Tatarstan. Many of them have heard about Tatars for the first time and have been writing down Tatar words with difficulty. Meanwhile, Gardelegen's land as well as many other

parts of Germany, keeps memories of Tatar soldiers of different wars. 12 wooden chandeliers hung in the hall of Gardelegen's city administration in the past. A prisoner of war – some Kazan Tatar named Nasibulla – made them in 1916. His name was carved in the chandeliers either of his own volition or by the client's order. The acute homesickness is erupting from these wooden patterns even after over 100 years have passed. We can presuppose that it can be Gamaetullin Nasibulla, an enlisted man of the 14th Company of the Bolkhovsky Infantry Regiment No. 138, who went missing in June 1915. The full list of losses of this regiment was published in the joint monography written with Khalim Abdullin *Tatars During the First World War (1914–1918)*. Master Nasibulla's fate was unknown, whether he returned to his homeland after repatriation in the 1920's or the German land was his last abode. However, no Nasibulla has been found among the graves of the Wünsdorf camp not far from Zossen, where he was confined.

Over 500,000 Tatar soldiers died in two world wars of the 20th century. Many of them were buried on the territory of European countries. Unfortunately, there has not been any special-purpose research on registration of such graves until today. In Russia, mass graves and military cemeteries are under special protection of the society and the country, while scarce and sketchy information is available about memorial places of soldiers, including Tatars outside Russia. Therefore, in 2017, Sh. Marjani Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences headed by academician Rafael Khakimov launched a large-scale project aimed to find and study the memorial heritage in Europe. As a result of this work, a central catalogue of cemeteries and graves of warriors called up from the Kazan Governorate and TASSR is to be prepared and published.

The field research within the framework of this programme started in April of the current year. The real scale of the planned work was clear on the spot. Districts of Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg were chosen for the first stage of the work. Military necropolises (Kriegsgräberstätte) are located in almost every district there. Sometimes graves of soldiers could be found in public cemeteries. We encountered Tatar names in almost every cemetery. Local people take care of these graves as much as they can. Commemoration of the war victims is an indispensable part of the national ideology of Germany. Schoolchildren are involved in these events for a reason: it is both an act of repentance and investment in the country's humanistic future where formation of respect for identity is one of the goals of the younger generation's education. There is no buck passing for terrors of history to the mythic power there – it was done by a specific person, the same kind of people supported him. This is why numerous museums and memories in former camps are looking for answers to the awkward questions of the past.

Local researchers also actively joined the project of Sh. Marjani Institute of History: staff of research centres, museums and archives, as well as non-indifferent people. We thank Dutch historian Cornelius Admiral, who accompa-

nied us in Emsland. 15 camps existed here during World War II, where both Germans (opponents of the regime) and prisoners of the war were confined. According to Cornelius Admiral, the past of the camp has been notably studied in this district in the recent years, considerable work is done to preserve the historical memory for all eternity. Indeed, one can see different information stands, statues not only in cemeteries or the locations of the camps, but also on the sites where prisoners of the war used to work. For instance, in the former peat bogs along the southwest highway of Germany.

The museum in Esterwegen is one of the key memorial sites in the southwest of Germany. We were amazed by the museum director Kurt Buck's enthusiasm. He is not only the administrator and keeper of the museum fund, but also a passionate researcher. This is why, he reacted to the visit of the Tatar scholars, keen on the analogous idea of search, with great enthusiasm. Even a superficial skimming of the documents of Esterwegen's museum fund immediately detected several people from Tatarstan. For instance, Motyg Kafiatullin (Kazan), Yepifan Kontrabaev (Kazan), Safa Valiullof, and Khady Sitdikov (Pestrechinsky District). Undoubtedly, this information will be published in detail in the final registry.

Musa Jalil seems to be the most famous Tatar prisoner during World War II. We could not help but visit the sites of memory related to him. It is a special place with theatrical curtains in Plötzensee Prison in Berlin (one part of which became a museum, the other part of the prison is still in operation). Another Tatar writer Abdulla Alish was sentenced there (Tatar cartoons have been created based on his tales nowadays). These miserable young men, who were born in the countryside, followed the echo of pre-revolutionary Jadidism, studied and wrote Tatar verses and tales for kids. However, they were sentenced in public as terrible state criminals (announcements about plotting sentences were published in the newspapers). This bitterness of history is especially perceptible in the cold room with pegs sticking out on the ceiling.

The last months of Jalil and his mates' life passed in the small town of Wustrau. The director of the local historical museum of Brandenburg-Prussia Stephan Theilig showed us the hall in a private building where Jalil's supporters held their meetings.

The propagandist camp was located on the bank of a small river. There is memorial lettering neither in this place, nor in that hall. Stephan defines the site of the camp comparing it with the old photos. High trees are like 73 years ago, a red tulip emerged among the wild green on the bank of that river, almost like the red chamomile from Musa Jalil's well-known verse...

Stephan Theilig, as well as his colleague Mieste Hotopp-Riecke, are not just historians, they are also experts in Tatar studies. Unlike the German journalists, they know the history of the Tatars: from the Golden Horde down to Tatar prisoners of war during the two world wars. They united their research interests around Institute for Caucasica-, Tatarica- and Turkestan Studies in Magdeburg. Upon their initiative, an exhibition dedicated to the Muslim herit-

age in Brandenburg is going to take place at the Islamic Culture Museum in the Qul Sharif mosque at the end of May this year. That Nasibulla's chandelier from Gardelegen's city administration will also be exhibited there.

If camps of World War II were concentrated in the northwest of Germany to a great degree, Brandenburg has many places linked with World War I. A landmark was installed by the Tatar prisoners of war in 1916 in honour of their dead fellows who had survived here in the cemetery of the Wünsdorf propagandist camp (Zossen). The first death among prisoners of war of this camp dates back to April 1915 (Akhmetkatif Akhmetzyanov, Khabibulla Faizullin). People died in the camp after the war without having received repatriation – a permission to return. Khaliulla Saifullin died here on December 19, 1920.

Certainly, the graves of the Wünsdorf camp does not constitute the full list of losses of the Tatars in the war capture. Not only Muslim Russians were buried in this cemetery. Well-groomed rows of Muslim Indians draw attention. The memorial was installed by the British government. Names of Tatar soldiers were made eternal on a general memorial post. The very graves have just letters, no names are written, but one can compare with that list on the post and install separate monuments. This kind of restoration is quite popular in Germany: we saw separate graves or memorials installed by both different governments (for instance, Poland, Holland) and individuals – descendants of prisoners of war. By the way, some countries (for instance, France) transported the remains of their soldiers to the homeland and left only memorial signs on the place where they died.

It should be noted that not only the wars of the early 20th century took Tatar soldiers to Europe. More ancient war graves of Tatars has been preserved in Germany. Therefore, the researchers will have to discover those layers of history in the country. The preserved part of Magdeburg's city wall bears the name *Tatar tower* (Tataren turm) for a reason. It was erected in as early as 1241. Local people waited for an invasion of martial nomads from the other bank of the Elbe in dread. Descendants of those who stood on both sides of the wall will have to study our common history hundreds of years later. That is why the appearance of the monograph *The Golden Horde in World History* in English (printed with support of TAIF Group of Companies) caused great interest among the scientific community of Germany. A presentation of the book was held in Magdeburg (ITACAT) and Berlin (the National Library) as part of the trip.

The second expedition

The next expedition to Poland and Germany took place on June 7–14, 2017. The main work was conducted on the territory of Germany. Sometimes here one can see arrows zum Tatarengrab and almost any local citizen will say how to get to these places, for example, the grave of the Tatar lieutenant, uhlan of the Kingdom of Poland and Duchy of Saxony Mustafa Sulkevich who lived during the Seven Years War in Dippoldiswalde.

The Sulkevichs are a famous dynasty who provided many brave militaries. For example, Matvey (Suleyman) Sulkevich, who became a lieutenant general for his merits during the First World War, was one of them. The Interim Government was going to entrust with heading the 1st Muslim Corps. However, the events of October 1917 ruined all the plans and Suleyman Sulkevich headed the Crimean Regional Government in 1918 and chaired the General Staff of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic's army.

The tomb of his predecessor Mustafa Sulkevich is one of the sightseeing points for Dippoldiswalde (not far from Leipzig). The grave of 1762 was restored many times including by one of the Sulkevichs during World War II. Being a captive, an officer of the Polish army managed to come to an agreement with the watchdogs and arranged restoration of Mustafa's gravestone.

However, not all the memorials had the same fate. The burial story of another Tatar uhlán in this region is unfortunate. A copper mine was dug not far from the grave. It fell to the mine in the late 19th century. Now a memorial sign Knochen schacht of 1883 is there to remind about that event. At present it is a territory of a farm and the stone is located on the hill in the centre of a rapeseed field.

The story of the next Tatarengrab (Tatar grave) in Kleinbosch near Leipzig is different. Tatar officer Mustafa's son Yusuf was sent there during the Napoleon wars for quarantine. A Muslim batman took care of him. Yusuf died from typhus and was buried on the outskirts of the village according to the Muslim custom. The same loyal batman cared about the Tatar grave during the first years. He was the person who placed a gravestone with the Arabic script inscribed on it.

The time passed. The officer's grave was gradually forgotten. Only in the 1880s, one of the history fans restored the memorial, mounted a new stone with a Latin lettering. It was Yusuf's second birthday – in the memory of the village residents. The Tatar grave became a kind of a place of power. Thanks to educational work of teacher Christian Gottlieb Winkler, pupils started to treat the memorial with respect. All the local community cared about the grave, an expression "bei Jussuf" (near Yusuf) became fixed in the local vocabulary. Picnics took place in the nearby area and pupils wrote essays about this grave during World War II. In the new political situation, the grave of the Tatar man from Poland was inimical, but the pupils of the Kleinbosch School were not going to leave the grave because the memorial has become a part of the village history. Today this tradition continues. There are natural flowers on Yusuf's grave, a wooden arbour with a separate lettering with Tatarengrab's brief history was built next to it. The very village has several arrows. The locals are going to issue an advertising brochure and include their sightseeing point as one of the local tourist routes.

Headed by a local ethnographer, Helmut Hentschel, our group was warmly welcomed with flowers. It seems that the visit of Tatar scientists was a big event for them. Helmut told us about the unpleasant incident that happened to this

grave. Several 12–13-year-old teenagers left rubbish shortly before our visit. The old generation is concerned about the action of the kids calling it an act of vandalism. Probably the development of historical and cultural tourism in this place will affect the attitude of schoolchildren to the Tatar officer's grave to a certain extent.

If Tatarengrabs found in Saxony are related primarily to the Tatar uhlans from Poland, soldiers of World War I and the Great Patriotic War rest in war cemeteries. There is a great number of them there. However, Muslim names can not be found everywhere. For example, after seeing 3,000 graves of the United War Cemetery of World War I soldiers in Munich, we found only one Turkic surname, while neighbouring Puchheim city has another memorial with World War I captives where tens of Muslim soldiers rest. Over 15,000 prisoners from different countries were in Puchheim. The remains of German, French and English soldiers were reburied in the homeland, but the so-called Russian cemetery remained. German authorities raised a separate monument to Russian Muslims as early as 1919.

Not all the war cemeteries of Germany have preserved their original appearance. Nowadays, new memorial and park complexes are being created in the place of former camps. Memorial signs with surnames designed in one style are put instead of the old gravestones. In some of the cemeteries of the former GDR, one can see Soviet soldiers' photos, which had been brought at the time and placed on the graves by relatives, now being collected in one place like a stand.

When it comes to World War II, unfortunately, there are so many graves of unnamed soldiers. Surprisingly, such graves are found in the war cemeteries even after the war. For instance, the Dresden Post Cemetery has several graves of unknown Soviet enlisted men and officers of the 1950s and even 1960s. Some gravestones have a lettering saying "died for liberation of Hurt" (Hurt is a town in Saxony) inscribed on them. Currently we know little about these episodes of history with entire human tragedies standing behind. Therefore, the work of the researchers of Sh. Marjani Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences will continue further on.

About the author: Liliya R. Gabdrāfikova is a Doctor of Science (History), Chief Research Fellow in the Department of Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of Tatarstan, Sh. Marjani Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences (7, Baturin Str., Kazan 420111, Russian Federation); bahetem@mail.ru

**ВОЗВРАЩЕНИЕ ПАМЯТИ: ИНСТИТУТ ИСТОРИИ ИМ. Ш.МАРДЖАНИ
НАЧАЛ ИЗУЧЕНИЕ МЕМОРИАЛЬНОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ
ТАТАРСКИХ СОЛДАТ В ЕВРОПЕ**

Л.Р. Габдрафикова

*Институт истории им. Ш. Марджани
Академии наук Республики Татарстан
Казань, Российская Федерация
bahetem@mail.ru*

В статье представлен обзор результатов экспедиции ученых Института истории им. Ш.Марджани в Германию. Реализация данного проекта, цель которого – выявление и изучение мемориального наследия татарских солдат в Европе, началась в 2017 г. По итогам работы планируется подготовка и издание Сводного каталога кладбищ и захоронений воинов, призванных из Казанской губернии и ТАССР. Научные сотрудники Института провели две полевые экспедиции – в апреле и июне 2017 г. Основная работа проводилась на территории Германии. В статье упоминается о мусульманском кладбище Вюнсдорфского лагеря (Цоссен), русском кладбище в Пуххайме, татарских могилах в Диппольдисвальде и Кляйнебойхе под Лейпцигом, местах памяти Мусы Джалиля, военных некрополях Эмсланда, музея в Эстервегене.

Ключевые слова: историческая память, военные могилы, военные кладбища, татарские солдаты, советские солдаты, военнопленные, мемориальное наследие, Казанская губерния, ТАССР, Германия, Первая мировая война, Вторая мировая война, Муса Джалиль

Сведения об авторе: Габдрафикова Лилия Рамилевна – доктор исторических наук, главный научный сотрудник отдела историко-культурного наследия народов РТ Института истории им. Ш. Марджани Академии наук Республики Татарстан (420111, ул. Батурина, 7, Казань, Российская Федерация); bahetem@mail.ru