During the First World War, there were Tatar soldiers recruited to the Russian army from Crimea, Kazan and Siberia. Tens of thousands of these Tatar soldiers, who were sent by Russian commanders to the fronts opened against German and Austria-Hungarian forces, were taken captive. There were a lot of efforts to save these Tatar captives, who were mostly held in prisoner camps in Wünsdorf and Eger. Most of these efforts concentrated on bringing these captives to the Ottoman Empire.1 However, though Turkish efforts, which were aimed at employing voluntary Tatars in the Turkish army and giving them lands in Anatolia to settle down as immigrants, were significant from a viewpoint of international politics, things did not truly turn out at the end the way they were expected to.

While the above-stated thesis is the main issue to be handled in this article, I will also touch on important developments going on inside the prisoner of war camps to the extent they are fit in this general framework.

It is possible to trace the origins of inquiries into Tatar captives to the spring of 1915. A report prepared by Halim Sabit Bey2 on the activities of the Ottoman Empire and its allies was presented to Enver Pasha on May 21, 1331 (June 3, 1915).3 The report sheds light on activities that had been carried out until then and that were planned to be carried out in prisoner of war camps, as well as difficulties that had been faced and were likely to be faced in the future. German interest in political Islamism and their secret intentions in supporting the Islamist movement are also dealt with in the report.

It is understood from Halim Sabit’s personally getting in touch once again with Tatar captives after his return to Germany that a quarantine, which was implemented in Tatar camps at the time Halim Sabit prepared his report, was lifted. During the quarantine, Halim Sabit could not meet the Tatar captives during the time he prepared the report. After Halim Sabit, Abdulrashid Ibrahim4 emerges as the most important person to deal with Tatars. In a letter to Istanbul dated July 10, 1331 (July 23, 1915), he said:

"Your Excellency Enver Pasha,

Sir, I was in touch with some leading personalities from official and non-official circles of Germany. Though I have a degree of trust in good will of Germans, I feel sometimes that the political presence of Ottoman Empire is ignored in newspaper columns, as compared to political presence of other countries. And sometimes, even the victory in Dardanelles is attributed to someone else. I feel obligated to bring all this into Your Excellency's attention.

...If my being here is deemed to be proper, I need your financial assistance. I have been living out of my own wallet for the last two months. My monthly expenses here exceed twenty liras."

With this message, he stated he had a degree of trust in the Germans but complained about an attitude on the part of German press to ignore the Turks and attribute the honor of victory in the Dardanelles to the Germans. Abdulrashid Ibrahim’s letter, which also expressed the author’s request for payment, was forwarded to the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, the Ottoman secret service.

According to a letter dated July 18, 1331 (July 31, 1915), there were more than 60,000 Muslim captives in Germany at this time. As understood from correspondence, there were attempts on the part of the Ottoman Empire to send religious officials, such as imams and muezzins.5 The letter was sent to Enver Pasha and was later passed onto Ali Bey Bashamba, who was then the head of the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, after the Sheikh al-Islam, the top cleric in the Ottoman Empire, was also informed about the content of the letter.7
Another letter sent by Abdulrashid Ibrahim to Enver Pasha on August 10, 1915 and again forwarded to Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, clearly reveals that the efforts were starting to bear fruit:

"This time I am introducing five Russian Muslim prisoners of war to my sublime majesty. Now, thousands of men are ready to fulfill your higher orders. They are awaiting a clear answer. Please issue an order, your majesty."  

Requests for religious officials were also met probably after consultation with the sheikh al-Islam, by the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa. Kazanlı Osman, one of the agents sent to Germany, said in a letter dated September 12, 1915: "On September 5, we arrived in Berlin. We are now staying at the hotel. Tomorrow, we will head for our duty areas."  

This letter showed that the agents that were sent to Germany were ready to start their duty. "Kazanlı Osman Kadi" fulfilled his duty as he pledged. In a letter dated October 2, 1915, he said the following: "We started our duty. There are 12,000 Russian Muslims here. So far, three Friday prayers have been performed."  

In the same days, one of those who were sent to Austria, namely Alimcan Idris, made it clear prisoners of war in this country were not turned a blind eye by the Ottoman Empire by saying: "After staying a week in Vienna, we arrived in Eger, an area where captives are kept, and started our duty."  

A letter by Kazanlı Osman Kadi, dated October 14, 1915, in which he said "we sent letters from Berlin several times. Did you receive them? We have not received any response" shows there could have been some communication problems between Germany-Austria and Istanbul in the conveyance of information regarding the agents' duties.  

As the agents in Austria and Germany, such as Kazanlı Osman and Alimcan Idris, were working to fulfill their assigned duties, Abdulrashid Ibrahim, probably because the payment he had requested was not made, must have returned to Istanbul because a coded message sent to War Ministry in 1915 by Sekir Hakki shows both that Abdulrashid Ibrahim was in Istanbul at that time and that he was a valuable employee that should not be given up: "As the date for the transfer of Muslim prisoners of war to Istanbul is approaching, we urgently need Sheikh Abdulrashid Ibrahim's being sent here so that he can continue with the useful propaganda he has so far carried out among the prisoners."  

It is understood that it was not only Abdulrashid Ibrahim who was suffering from financial problems. Some other officials, who were working among the Muslim prisoners of war for a few months, were also facing similar problems: "Your Excellency

"We kiss your hand in respect. Though we have been carrying out our training and other propaganda duties...in regard to Muslim prisoners of war here for a few months, we have been unable to send any money to our families in the homeland because this place is not like what we expected to be. With three hundred Deutsche marks, we can only meet our basic needs. If your Excellency could show kindness to our families, we will strengthen our efforts for the religion and the country..."  

Osman Kadi, who said in one of his previous letters that he was unable to receive an answer to his letters, says in correspondence dated November 16, 1915: "We are continuing with our special duty. I have sent three letters since I came to Berlin. I haven't received a response. We are going to send many guests, but we have to delay it frequently as the way of sending them is not totally cleared up."  

With this message, he both stated he was still waiting for a response and there were difficulties in sending Tatars to the Ottoman Empire.  

The Ottoman Empire's military attaché gave valuable information on the activities that were carried out and his personal impressions in a letter dated December 10, 1915:

"Today I visited the prisoner of war camp together with Müşir Fuad Pasha and his aides. The camp consists of two parts: One belongs to Tatars and Georgians. There are some 12,000 prisoners of war in this section."

"In the second section, there are 4,500 prisoners of war comprising Indians, Moroccans, Tunisians and Algerians. A regiment commander heads each part of the camp."

"All the prisoners of war are living in barracks in groups. Tatar and Georgian captives are from Russia and their clothes look tidy. Arab and Indian prisoners of war, who were fighting in the French and British armies, do not have neat uniforms and most of them are in traditional, national clothes."

"In the beginning, we went to the part where the Tatar and Georgian prisoners of war were kept. We saluted them on behalf of the Sultan. They were chanting the slogan "Live long, my Sultan!" in a distinct accent. We performed the Friday prayer in the Tatar mosque. The imam delivered a sermon after the prayer. The Dardanelles battles were briefly recalled. Müşir Fuad Pasha explained how sacred the war against the enemy is and told them that those who wanted to go to the Ottoman Empire were welcomed and that those who would like to join the holy war there could do so. He also said those who would like to..."
stay in the Ottoman Empire will be provided land and other things they needed. During these speeches and explanations, all of the prisoners of war seemed to have been deeply touched. There were many who were crying... Then, the ateliers in the camp were visited.

"Following this, we headed to the second part of the camp. The Indians were addressed on the same issue in English through a German translator, while the Arabs were told in Arabic by Muṣir Fuad Pasha. Eight hundred of these Arabs, called Turku, are ready to fight on the Ottoman side... A Tatar called Ramazanof drew my attention. He was very willing to go to war. Four Georgians are also ready to fight. It is understood that there will be many among the prisoners of war who are willing to go to Ottoman lands. I will visit the camp as soon as I have time. The camp is half an hour away from Berlin."17

On December 18, 1915, Alimcan İdris presented to Istanbul a report on "observations, activities and evaluations concerning the Muslim prisoners of war in the Eger region of Austria." According to the report, Alimcan İdris and other officials reached the camp on September 16, after departing from Istanbul on September 2. But they found only 3,500 prisoners of war in the camp, where there were supposed to be 10,000 Tatars and 23 Caucasians, as the majority of them had already been sent to factories to work before the arrival of the Ottoman delegation. Alimcan İdris also complained of the difficulties he faced while fulfilling his mission. According to his correspondence, the official accompanying him was a Caucasian who couldn’t speak a word of the Tatar language. "His work comprised of leading prayers," he complained about his colleague and made the following requests:

1. "Two more people who are Tatars or who can speak the Tatar language. It would be very useful if one of them also has good command of German. Both should be virtuous and pious, but they should also be enlightened intellectuals because bigotry largely creates a negative impression of the Caliphate among the prisoners of war.

2. "An authorization for the Muslim captives' transfer as a group."18

In a letter to Pasha Efendi, dated December 20, 1915, Alimcan İdris says he is originally from Siberia, completed his education in Bukhara and then graduated from the Theology Faculty in Istanbul. He went on as follows:

"... Four months ago, when I was about to head to Europe together with my friends in order to pursue my academic career, I left my friends upon receiving instructions from the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa and headed for Muslim prisoner of war camps in Austria. And I fulfilled my duties there by working for two-and-a-half months. I faced great difficulties because I was alone. Though I have a friend here called Hodja Ali Riza Efendi, I still have to do everything on my own because he cannot speak the Tatar language. His job is limited to leading prayers. Therefore, if I am not to be sent to captive camps once again, I would ask your higher permission for me to go to Switzerland and continue with my education.

"I will study in the Philosophy Department of Lausanne University. I am ready for your service whenever my knowledge on the issue of prisoners of war in Austria is required."19

A statement sent by the ambassador in Vienna to the War Ministry clearly indicates what the sources of problems were:

"As it seems difficult for Ali Riza Efendi and İdris Alimcan Efendi to work together from now on due to an intellectual disagreement between the two and as Ali Riza Efendi's staying here has been deemed proper by Muṣir Fuad Pasha because of his higher qualifications, we request ten liras as the third salary of İdris Efendi and an additional ten liras for his return expenses. I would ask İdris Efendi continue to be esteemed as his return is the result of nothing but a purely personal and intellectual dispute."20

While the major ideological and intellectual contention, which surfaced in the Hodja Ali Riza Efendi-Alimcan İdris Efendi dispute, was going on, contacts with German and Austrian authorities on the situation of Muslim prisoners of war were also still underway.

According to a cabled telegram that was sent by Muṣir Fuad Pasha and delivered to the War Ministry on December 23, 1915, "a battalion of 1,000 Muslim prisoners of war would depart for Turkey in four or five days and remaining 14,000 captives will be sent in separate groups to Ottoman territories."21 But the arrival of this battalion, which was due to depart in a few days, either never happened or happened much later than expected, as subsequent documents show. In addition, as Fuad Pasha mentions that the group has to stay for 15 more days in Vienna and Berlin and ask for more money for travel expenses.

A telegram from the ambassador in Berlin (Hakki Pasha) said that Muṣir Fuad Pasha and the delegation accompanying him seriously and effectively handled the issue of prisoners of war, though this was not their essential duty, emphasizing that interesting and important ideas emerged out of their efforts:

"The delegation fulfills the duty of indoctrinating the war captives as well. I have been spending personal effort to make sure that scientists and artists among the captives will settle down in the Ottoman Empire because I deem improvements in the field of arts and sciences to be more important than participation in war. We have signed a document with the German War Ministry concerning the departure of prisoners of war for the purpose of both
joining the Ottoman army and settling down in Ottoman territory to contribute to artistic and scientific improvements. A copy of the document is to be sent soon. In addition to what I was told, I also added a few paragraphs to the document, stipulating that those whose real job is not military will not be recruited as soldiers in the Ottoman Empire and that those who want to stay here will be welcomed.²²

A telegram written in response to the Ambassador in Berlin Hakkı Pasha says he is asked to "work to help the transfer of Muslim prisoners of war to the Ottoman territories"²³ and emphasizes that Istanbul warmly welcomes this attitude on the part of the ambassador.

A response letter dated January 4, 1915, which was sent from the Austrian military attaché in Istanbul to the Acting Chief Commander and War Minister Enver Pasha, shows that the Ottoman Empire initiated efforts at the level of Austrian military attaché in July, 1915, to get authorization for sending imams to the Muslim prisoners of war. According to Military Attaché Pomiankowski, "...Russian Muslim captives are mostly separated from other Russian captives. There are 9,882 such captives and even Tatars and Circassians are provided accommodation in different barracks."²⁴

Pomiankowski²⁵ also said his government was sensitive on religious issues that concern the prisoners of war and mentioned that Abdullah Efendi, an official of the Cemiyet-i İslami (Islamic Association) in Budapest and an executive of the Academy of Sciences there, was taking care of these matters.

But could the late delivery of the response letter be evaluated as a sign of indifference or intolerance on the part of Austrian authorities towards such a strategically-important activity of Turks? This is a question that should be carefully examined. Some documents that will be touched on in the next pages also show that Turkish demands concerning Tatar captives are not easily and quickly met.

Abdulrashid İbrahim said in a correspondence dated January 15, 1916, the following:

"My dear Ali Bey,

"As previously stated, a battalion (1,002 soldiers) have been readied and they are waiting anxiously to being transferred to Ottoman territory. We have been constantly told about postponements. The road is cleared now. The soldiers must definitely be accommodated in barracks in Turkey."²⁶

The new letter of Alimcan Idris was sent from Berlin this time. He said in this correspondence dated January 22, 1916 says that he went to Berlin and coincidentally met there Abdulrashid Ibrahim, after which he stayed in this city upon Ibrahim's request. He also says that he was ready to return to Eger if it was needed.²⁷

A letter by February 2, 1916 by Abdulrashid Ibrahim requests that Tatar soldiers to be sent to the Ottoman Empire be given a warm welcome and that a six-lira payment he previously demanded for himself and his family be sent on time. The following sentences show that difficulties were still continuing.

"I ask you to provide the necessary provisions for the men who are carrying this letter. They have fulfilled their duties. What you heard about them is nothing but mere allegations."²⁸

What Abdulrashid Ibrahim had in mind was to send a few thousands of Tatars in a short period of time. The first group, consisting of 1,002 soldiers, "is arranged in military order." Abdulrashid Ibrahim also asked Enver Pasha give necessary orders to make sure that arrangements concerning the employment and salaries and officers and sergeants of the group be made beforehand.²⁹

Abdulrashid Ibrahim said the members of the group to be sent to Istanbul were "sacrificing even their hope to return to their families and were heading for Istanbul with the clear intention of taking part in the holy war" and requested the authorities in Istanbul to treat them as brothers, not as captives.³⁰

As all these developments were taking place, it is understood that Kazanlı Osman Kadi was not in touch with Istanbul, as one of his letters dated March 5, 1916 shows. According to this letter, after he headed for Berlin from Istanbul on August 20, he reached Susan town where some 12,000 Tatar captives were kept.

He did all he could to encourage the captives to go to Ottoman territory "in line with the verbal order" from Istanbul. Though his efforts yielded fruit and some 3,000 captives were convinced to go to Istanbul, their transport to Istanbul was delayed repeatedly. According to Kazanlı Osman, "the military captives were told at every opportunity that they would not be provided additional clothes and equipment during the trip to Istanbul, that those who are willing to take part in the war would be accepted into army, while those who do not want to do so would be given lands in villages and towns..." Following this sentence, he says that "I had to go to a hot spring and stay there for two months for treatment purposes after the arrival of Muṣir Fuad Pasha here, as I fell ill. At the end of these two months, I returned to Istanbul...", explaining his situation. He also added in this letter that the Muslim captives to be sent from Berlin should be treated well.³¹

As the letter reveals, even before Kazanlı Osman went to the hot spring for treatment, there had been delays in the transfer of the captives to Istanbul, despite the fact that the 1,000-soldier group was all ready to depart for Istanbul. It is understood that the same group had not yet been sent to Istanbul even after Kazanlı Osman arrived in Istanbul after his two-month treatment was over.
Delays in the arrival of Tatar captives to Istanbul were stemming from barriers imposed by German authorities. A document contains an order, marked by a colored pen: "Classify those of the Muslim captives who want to come here to settle down into a different group and send them here." Probably, the following message was sent to the Berlin Embassy in parallel with this command:

"Since it would not be proper to send those captives who want to fight into war now, as they have only recently gotten out of the war, their transport here should be delayed and efforts should be made first to send other captives who want to come here to settle down."

But it is possible that this document was not sent to the Berlin Embassy in the way it is written above because of some signs on the paper indicating a subsequent change in the text. But as documents that we will turn later on show, most of the doubts about the transfer of the captives stems from a negative attitude on the part of Germans.

A letter by Abdulrashid Ibrahim, dated April 11, 1916, also contains important information that should be taken into consideration:

"Given that we are in the European scene, we have the necessity to give serious consideration to every task we undertake. Though our friends are loyal to us, they will not sacrifice their political interests because loyalty is not an obstacle for conflicting interests. Nations' thoughts are not confined to the affairs of today. The current day is a means to achieve goals of five decades or a century. And this is where the essence of politics is. The transportation of Tatar captives to Istanbul becomes a serious matter here under the current circumstances. On the one hand, the promise of the Kaiser has not been kept, but on the other hand we are still a friend and ally of Germany. The Muslim captives here are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of religion, despite the fact that they have only recently gotten out of another war. There are men here that are ready to die several times in a minute. They are urging you to help in the name of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad. Please take at least these two thousand men. They are ready to be either soldiers or workers. Once they arrive in Istanbul, they will do what you want them to do."

It is clear that Abdulrashid Ibrahim wants the transfer of those captives who were already ready to head for Istanbul. A message sent to the Berlin Embassy on April 24, 1916 indicates that efforts to make their arrival in Istanbul possible were still continuing:

"Since it was decided that the transfer of those captives who want to take part in war would be delayed, it is necessary that efforts concentrate to first send those who want to come here for settlement purposes. The transfer of this group has been agreed upon by German War Ministry's Political Department."

As a result of all these initiatives, a group of Tatars was brought to Anatolia in May 1916 and it is known that they were employed in the so-called Asian Battalion, bravely fighting on the side of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. This Asian Battalion must be the same group that was said to be ready to go to Istanbul but whose transfer to Ottoman territory was delayed several times due to technical reasons.

As of May, 1916, some 1,000 other Tatars were brought to Anatolia and settled down in different parts of the country. A report presented to the Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa on May 29, 1916 after an inspection on the situation of Muslim captives that were brought to Anatolia from Germany and Austria contains the following information:

The Muslim captives sent to Kayseri province were first accommodated in a guesthouse upon their arrival and they were provided with the necessary assistance. Some of the captives that were sent to Niğde province had to be sent to Kayseri because of some problems faced there. Konya province, Nêfs-i Karahisâr-i Sahib and neighboring villages, Eskişehir province, Mahmudiye district, Sârılıhisar district, Haymana district in Ankara province, Akmagdeni, Bilecik, İzmit, Bursa, Orhangazi district, Nêfs-i Adana, Nêfs-i Kazan, Dört yol... were among the places where Tatars were settled down.

According to the investigation, "it has been seen that the settlement of those Muslim captives who were of Crimean origin would be beneficial for the country." But other war captives having been brought from Austria and Germany, who were from northern Russia, that is Siberia, Kazan, Samara and Urfa, were not deemed to be in the same position as Crimean captives: "Muslim captives from northern Russia have no feelings of loyalty to the Caliphate and have been committing all kinds of crimes and sinful deeds..."

The major who prepared and presented to Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa this report that he was of the view that "those captives whose integration with Ottoman society would not be problematic" should be brought to Anatolia.

In a report on Muslim prisoners of war in Germany, which was presented to government authorities on July 4, 1916, Aliçanc İdris described 2,000 of them as devoted Muslims. But in the next part of his report, he implies that there could be some problems in the course of settlement of the rest of these prisoners of war and their adaptation to Ottoman society.

Efforts to bring more prisoners to the Ottoman Empire were not very successful, again as a result of obstacles imposed by German and Austrian authorities.
There are documents confirming that the War Ministry applied to the German authorities demanding cooperation in the transfer of Muslim prisoners of war to Ottoman territory.\(^40\)

Though a few more small Tatar groups were brought to the Ottoman country later on, Interior Minister Ismail (Canbulat) made the following request: "In the face of the huge number of refugees coming into the Ottoman Empire, we have been having difficulties concerning the settlement and feeding needs. Therefore, it is asked that people whose being useful for the country is questionable not be brought here."\(^41\) But despite this request and obstacles imposed by Germans and Austrians, efforts to bring more Tatars to Turkey continued for a while, as official documents indicate. A telegram sent from the military attaché in Berlin shows that Germans were trying to prevent transfer of Tatar prisoners of war, saying that their being used in a war was "against the international law."\(^42\) Yet, it is clear from the general course of the war and the treatment of Arab and Indian prisoners of war that this attitude on the part of Germans was far from being honest. It is understood that the Germans were uneasy over the Ottoman Empire's attempts to take the initiative in matters concerning Tatars and Caucasians, but they were also careful not to offend the Ottoman Empire. Hence, they produced different obstacles at different times to prevent the Ottoman Empire dealing with the prisoners of war. A letter sent by Enver Pasha to Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa is clear evidence for Germany's preventing attitude:

"We unconditionally hand over the prisoners of war we capture to Germany and we never ask for what purpose they will use these prisoners. In the same way, Germans must send the Muslim prisoners to us and not ask any questions about what we will do to them. I ask you to reply to General Losov in this way. I do not think there is any legal problem concerning the employment of Tatar prisoners of war in the Ottoman army."\(^43\)

In addition to being proof of the obstacles imposed by Germany, this letter of Enver Pasha is also an expression of discontent with the Germans' uncooperative attitude, mixed with a feeling of helplessness to change this attitude. Since his plans and expectations went far beyond his capacities, Enver Pasha found himself suffering from the pain of helplessness.

**CONCLUSION**

During the First World War, Tatars from Crimea, Kazan and Siberia were employed as soldiers in the Russian army and they were often sent to fight on the German and Austrian front. Those Tatars who were taken captive were held in prisoner of war camps in these two countries. While in these camps, these prisoners of war were presented an offer by the Ottoman Empire to come to Anatolia. Most of the prisoners of war welcomed the offer. However, Enver Pasha's efforts to bring the Tatars to Anatolia, which were carried out in cooperation with Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa, was not given sincere support by the Ottoman Empire's war-time allies Germany and Austria. The authorities of these two countries maintained contact with the Ottoman Empire by virtue of being allies, but they also hampered Ottoman efforts to transfer Muslim prisoners of war on the basis of several pretexts. Enver Pasha's warnings to the effect that "we hand over prisoners of war that we capture to Germans unconditionally, they should do the same and never ask what we are going to do with them" were not fully taken into consideration by the Germans and Austrians, who used the Ottoman Turks as a means to further their imperialistic ambitions. This is because they pursued a policy solely based on the achievement of their national interests.

The remarks of Abdulraşhid İbrahim, emphasizing that every task should be given serious consideration in the European political scene, and that though Germany and Austria were still loyal to the Ottoman Empire, they will not sacrifice their political interests. "Because loyalty is not an obstacle for conflicting interests. Nations' thoughts are not confined to the affairs of today. The current day is a means to achieve the goals of five decades or a century", he said, making it clear that the Ottoman side was soberly aware of its allies' intentions.

There is another conclusion that could definitely be derived from the documents, which is the fact that Turks honestly thought about giving permanent accommodation to Tatar prisoners of war, whom they see as brothers in race and religion. Hakkı Pasha's following remarks are an indicative of the fact that there were serious plans for the permanent settlement of Tatars in the Ottoman country: "I have been spending personal effort to make sure that scientists and artists among the captives will settle down in the Ottoman Empire because I deem improvements in the field of arts and sciences to be more important than participation in war." These remarks also show that the Ottoman Empire had plans to use the Tatars for purposes other than fighting in the First World War.

However, financial difficulties that were growing worse each day in the Empire negatively affected efforts to transfer the Tatars to Anatolia and provide accommodation there for them. What is more, some of the Tatars had difficulties in adapting to Ottoman society after they were brought to Anatolia. This is because the social and geographical environment where people are brought up in is as important as racial and religious affinities. In this sense, there was no problem in the adaptation of the Tatars who were from the Crimea, which was a part of the Ottoman Empire for a long time.
Problems faced in the adaptation process of other prisoners of war who were coming from more remote geographies should be seen as a natural outcome of differences in cultural and social environment.

As for the intellectual dispute that broke out between Alimcan İdris and his colleague, it is a reflection of an ongoing conflict between the reformists and conservatives in the Ottoman Empire in a different geographical and political setting. The fact that Alimcan İdris requested two people to help him in Tatar camps in Germany and insisted that these people must be enlightened intellectuals, in addition to having a good command of Tatar the language, because bigotry and fanaticism negatively affect the image of Ottoman Empire in the eyes of Tatar captives, is a clear evidence that the dispute was stemming from an intellectual conflict.

Notes

(*) Translated by Fatma Demirelli-Assoc. Prof. Dr. Naşuf Uslu.

1 Intellectuals of the Turkic world, alongside with other domestic and foreign dynamics, played an important role in the formation of the intellectual infrastructure of the "secolar nation-state" that was created in Anatolia at the end of the First World War. Keeping this in mind, the author of this article believes that uncovering details of the events of this era would make valuable contributions to the macro-history studies and that the results to be derived from macro-history studies would be more reliable with the help of such detailed works. Therefore, he is determined to go on with his micro-empic works that are of crucial importance for the history of the Turkish Republic and international relations.


3 There are several guides to be used while determining Gregorian calendar dates corresponding lunar calendar dates mentioned in this article. One of them is a book published by the General Staff's ATASE Department, called Takvim-i-Sinin of Gazi Ahmet Muhtar Pasha (revised by Yücel Dağlı-Hamit Pehlivanlı)

4 Works containing contributions to the biography of Abdulrahid İbrahim has increased over the recent years. The first 28-year part of his life is the subject of a book Abdulrahid İbrahim wrote. The book, called "Terceme-i Halim ya ki Başına Gelenler" and was published in Petersburg. [Nesimi YAZICI, "Abdulreşit İbrahim Üzerine Bir İşare " , Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devletinin Kuruluş ve Gelişmesinde Hizmeti Geçen Türk Dünyası'nın Aydınlanma (22-26 Mayıs 1996) Bildirileri, Kayseri, pp. 581-591]. In the same symposium, Mustafa BALÇIOĞLU presented a paper called "Hoca Abdurrahid İbrahim Efendi (1857-1944)". Another book notes that Abdulrahid İbrahim's autobiography was published in 1905-1907. [Hes-Soo LEE, İslam ve Türk Kültürü'nün Uzak Doğu'ya Yayınlaması, Ankara, 1988, s. 235]. In addition, there are two master theses written on the life story of Abdulrahid İbrahim: One of them is "The Life and Thought of a Muslim Activist", written by Nadir Özbek of Bogazici University. The other one, called Rusya Türklərindən Abdurrahid İbrahim (1857-1944) was presented in the Marmara University. This second thesis, written by İsmail Türkoglu, was later revised and published with the name of Sibiryahlı Meşrut Səyah Abdurrahid İbrahim (Ankara, 1997). Both Özbek's work and this latter work of Türkoglu, alongside with other articles on Abdulrahıd İbrahim, were published in 1995 issues of Toplumsal Tarh Journal. In a series of other works, there were references to Abdulrahid İbrahim. We are not going into further details since the main focus of this article is not Abdulrahid İbrahim. But there is one point that has not been covered by works on his biography: It is not reasonable to think that Abdulrahid İbrahim, a true idealist, did not take part in intelligence missions during the Second World War, though he was older then. For this reason, an examination of Turkish archive documents, as well as German and Japan sources may provide valuable information on the last years of Abdulrahid İbrahim’s life.


11 K: 1846, D: 83, F: 1/21, 1/23-25. (The address given by Alimcan İdris is as follows: Krigs Gefangenens Lagersgger Böhmen.).


13 K: 1846, D: 83, F: 1/27. (There is a marginal note on the letter, written with a red pen and saying that the letter was addressed Ali Bey Bhahamba. But there is no date in this note and as such there is a confusion regarding the date of the letter. There are two possibilities here: the letter could be either dated October 1, 1915 or October 14, 1915.).

14 K: 1846, D: 83, F: 1/28. (At the bottom of this letter sent in October 1915 to Bhahamba Ali of War Ministry are three addresses, probably the addresses where the families of those sending the letter were living. One of the addresses is in Ibrahim Çavuş quarter, Kağıtaki Mektebi Street, number 5. Another address is Çafaraga Quarter, Saray Street, number 110.


16 Since the Ottoman Empire was short of reliable translators during the First World War (see Vahdet KELEŞYILMAZ, "I. Dünya Savaşı'nda Ulusal Gıviemlik ve Dil-Bilgi Elemanı"

17 K: 1846, D: 83, F: 1/31-33. (A marginal note on the letter clearly shows that the date is Gregorian.)


19 K: 1846, D: 83, F: 1/48. (The address Alimcan İdris gave in this letter is Sıres Megrutyet Hotel in İstanbul.)

20 K: 1846, D: 83, F: 1/50. Though it is true that Ali Riza Efendi was not a Tatar, we are of the view that the intellectual dispute is in question here, stems from a conflict between the reformists and conservatives. (For more information on this dispute, see Ahmet KANLIDERE, Reform Within Islam, The Tajdid and Jadid Movement Among the Kazan Tatars (1809-1917) Conflation or Conflict? İstanbul, 1997). It is highly probable that Ali Riza's not speaking Tatar language was not the real issue. Because this could not have formed a lasting obstacle for their working together peacefully. What is more, there are Caucasian prisoners of war as well among the prisoner of wars to be dealt with. Therefore, one should link the decision of Müftü Fuad Pasha, a highly respected figure of his time, to prefer Ali Riza to Alimcan İdris with the way of thinking of Alimcan İdris, not with personal ties between himself and Ali Riza. It is hard to say that religion had a role to play in personality of Alimcan İdris, who acted in cooperation with Germans during the Second World War in their assaults against Muslim population of the Caucasus and Chechnya as part of efforts to invade western Russia. (For Alimcan İdris' Second World War-time activities, see Mustepic ÜLKÜSAL, Kırım Yolunda Bir Ömür, Ankara, 1999).
As Ortaylı explains, Crimea, with its privileged position in the Ottoman Empire, presents a different case from the rest of the Turkish world that today falls outside the boundaries of Anatolia: Crimea was an integral part of the Ottoman Empire and it was not perceived different from Rumelia or Anatolia provinces. Not only in the administration, Crimea was an integral part of the Ottoman Empire in terms of culture and life style, traditions as well. Crimea, which was separated from the Ottoman Empire by the Kudjuk Kaynarji Agreement of 1768 and subsequently annexed by Russia, was sometimes ranked higher than other provinces in the Ottoman administration system. What is more, economic and cultural ties between Crimea and the Ottoman Empire did not terminate even after the Russian annexation in 1783 and travels to Istanbul from Crimea for education purposes continued. Within this framework, Gaspra hátsmail Bey's publishing Terciiman newspaper in Turkish spoken in Istanbul is neither a coincidence nor a genius innovation. It is just a clever intellectual's acting in line with changing conditions. (İlber ORTAYLI, "Türkiye'de Kırmlı Aydınlar", the same symposium, p. 453-457.) Since the cultural integration with Crimea was a comprehensive and lasting one, one should not be surprised at seeing that there was no adaptation problem on the part of Crimeans to the Ottoman society.