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The Tatar National Movement in the Interwar Romania

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Abbreviations List	14
Chapter I.	
The National Movement of the Tatars from Crimea	
I.1. The Tatars from Crimea – main identity coordinates	16
I.a. Home of the ancestors – Crimeea	16
I.1.b. The Tatar ethnonym	18
I.1.c. The Golden Horde	19
I.2. The ideal Tatar state – The Crimean Khanate	24
I.3. The dissolution of the Crimean Khanate	30
I.4. The Crimean rebirth-Ismail Bey Gaspıralı	42
I.5. The Young Tatars movement – radicalization of the identity speech	50
I.6. The climax of the Crimea Tatars' national movement	58
Chapter II	

The Tatars from Romania in the Interwar Period

II.1 The Tatars from Romania – identity coordinates	.67
II.a. Space as an identity landmark –Dobruja	.67
II.1.b. Nation, nationalism, national identity – conceptual demarcations	73
II.1.c. Ottoman identity	.79
II.1.d. From Ottoman identity to Romanian citizenship	. 83
II.2. Religious belief and political organisation	. 89
II.3. Tradition and modernity – school and education	94

II.4. Mothertongue mass media	109
II.5. Demographic flux and reflux	119
Chapter III	
The Contribution of the Tatars from Romania to the National Tatar Movemen	nt
III.1. The international political context	.130
III.1.a. Geafer Seidamet personality (1889-1960)	
III.2. The Pro-Crimea Committee – the Romanian organization	150
III.3. Mustegep Hagi Fazâl and Emel Mecmuasi	158
III.3.a. The national movement of the Tatars from Romania – ecoes of diplomacy	176
III.3.b.The national movement of the Tatars from Romania – internal dissension	177
III.3.c. Mass media propaganda - <i>Halk</i> and <i>Bora</i> publications	177
III.4. Tatars cultural societies and organizations	188
III.5. Conferences, scientific gatherings	200
Chapter IV	
Tatar Literature Sustaining the Identity Speech	
IV.1. Tatar folk literature – demarcations	215
IV.2. Crimean Tatar literature	. 218
IV.3. Tatar literature from Dobruja in the interwar period	. 226
IV.4. Tatar folk literature from Dobruja	227
IV.5. Dobrujan literature	232
CONCLUSIONS	256
Selective Bibliography	264
ANNEXES	
a) N.C.S.S.A. Documents	281
b) Various sources	344
1. Conference extract by Omer Fahredin	346
2. Extract from "Neamul Românesc" – conference presentation by F.Omer	352

3. La Crimée -Djafer Seidamet's dedication	353
4. <i>Prométhée</i> publication	355
5. <i>Emel Mecmuasi</i> publication	356
6. <i>Halk</i> publication	359
7. <i>Bora</i> publication	363
8. First edition of volume Sagiş by Mehmet Niyazi	366

THE TATAR NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN THE INTERWAR ROMANIA

PhD Thesis Abstract

Key words: education, mass media, literature, national ideal, national conscience, collective solidarity, identity affirmation

The theme of our research, "The Tatar National Movement in the Interwar Romania" is an entirely original subject. In fact it had never been tackled with not even in the form of a news paper article. This theme has never been touched neither in its own period and least in the communist period when no interest in the subject could have ever been possible. That is why the main documentation source has been the fund of the National Council for the Study of the Security Archives which includes also the archives of the Ministry of Interns (of State Security). Following the fall of the U.S.S. R. and of the return of the Tatars to their homeland, Crimeea, the issue started to be of interest for the international public opinion. It is worth mentioning that Romania was among the first countries in which this issue was discussed during international scientific events, echoing in the internal and external mass media.

The subject of our PhD thesis, "The Tatar National Movement in the Interwar Romania" cannot be approached without understanding the history of the Tatar nation, as Geafer Seidamet, one of the most notable Tatar personalities of the age noted. In his vision, history, alongwith its profound investigation, represented a fundamental weapon for the affirmation of the Crimean Tatars issue in the European interwar diplomacy political debates. Thus, we shall perform the analysis of this extended phenomenon, unknown so far, the national movement of the Tatars from Romania, by following the stages of this nation's historical becomming.

As it is well known, the Tatars have a millenium of years of presence in Eastern Europe, especially in Crimea and in the Volga basin. They had the fate of many other nations, which lost the right to live in their ancient homeland, being always forced to adapt to foreign places, but without ever loosing the knowlege of their ethnic and relegious belonging.

We have tried to identify in our research those coordinates of Tatar identity which have been preserved and which gave coherence to the identity speech. In this purpose we have reviewed the historical stages of the formation of the Tatar nation: the space and ethnical denomination being the most important markers of identity, then following in the configuration of the ethnic identity, the language, the history, the islamic religion and, of course, the culture which indeed brings consistency to a nations' profile.

Having determined the objectives, we have structured the theses in four chapters. The first chapter entitled "The National Movement of the Tatars from Crimea", the second chapter bears the title "The Tatars from Romania in the Intwewar Period", the third chapter presents "The Contribution of the Tatars from Romania to the National Tatar Movement" whileas the last and fourth chapter studies the literary productions whith a national theme, being entitled "Tatar Literature Sustaining the Identity Speech". Each chapter is devided into more subchapters, meant to gradually configure the scientific speech.

As it can easily be noticed, the national Tatar movement from Romania has been studied in correlation with the events of Crimea, the Tatars' motherland. The whole attempt of the ancesters was meant to sustain the cause of the Tatars from Crimea, who, after the proclamation of the first Republic from the Turkish – Muslim space at 13th /26th December 1917, did not cease to hope the ideal of state unity will be accomplished. The Tatars from Romania kept permenently in touch with the ones from Crimea, thanks to the contribution of the notable politician and ex minister in 1917 Geafer Seidamet, leader of the national Tatar movement, who sustained their cause and, in this purpose, kept direcly in touch not only with chiefs of states and wellknown diplomats, but also with universally recognized scientists from the domains of history, linguistics, ethnography and anthropology. Among them we can enumerate: Nicolae Iorga, Eugène Pittard and Tadeusz Kowalski. As testimony of the dimention of his relationships with the Romanian historian we can mention the dedications written on the title pages of his two books which he received in December 1928 and August 1933, both works having the foreward signed by EugènePittard.

The first chapter "The National Movement of the Tatars from Crimea" is structured on six subchapters, each following a different stage of the historical becomming of this nation. In reconstructing the Tatars' past we considered the main coordinates which allowed the fixation of identity speech so that the first subchapters establish the territory of formation of the Tatar nation, the Crimean peninsula, then the Tatar ethnonym and the first statal formation, the Golden Horde (1242-1502), and then we will identify the statal structure of the Crimean Khanate (1440-1783), the ideal Tatar state, in order to get to the innovatory efforts of Ismail

Gaspirali, which allowed the foundations of a modern identity speech in the last decades of the XIXth centuty and the beginning of the XXth century, ending in the foundations of the first Republic of the Islamic space at $13^{th}/26^{th}$ December 1917.

In the identity configuration of Tatars we established the three elements which gave consistency to the identity speech, respectively the religious one (Muslim identity), the Turkish one (belonging to the great family of Turkish nations) and the specific element, the Tatar element, which coagulated mainly in the space reminded with such nostalgia, the Crimean Khanate.

We structured our research by taking into accont thise identity coordinates: the formation territory, the role of the religios element in the vision upon the world: the Tatars modelled school, education, the right to property according to the Islam religion, thus from here derive the peculiarities of the identity speech. The confrontation with the alterity always generated the impulse of conservation, of strongly self affirming identity.

In the first chapter of the thesis we have reconstituted the most important stages of the Crimean Tatars' history, by following one of its major issues, the national Tatar movement; in our opinion there are three essential subjects of the Crimean past: emigration, the May 18th 1944 exile and the national movement itself. We took into consideration the opinion of the contemporary Tatar leader Mustafa Abdulgemil Kırımoğlu who considers that "the national movement of the Tatars can be dated back to Appril 1783, when the Crimean Khanate lost its sovreignty and its territories have been annexed to the Russian Empire; so it has an over two centuries old history". We noted too this moment of the dissolution of the Crimean Khanate and the aggressive politics of russification, in order to be able to affirm the efforts of modernizaton and cultural renaissance of the educator, publicist and reformer Ismail Bey Gasprinski (Gaspıralı) to mark an essential step in the affirmation of the Tatar identity in the Great Russian Empire. Thanks to the new schools, *usul-u-cedid* (new way in education), the education of the Tatars has been gradually made easyer, overcoming the religios barriers, by syncronization to the modern Western principles of study. This is how the new generation of intellectuals have been educated in 1917. The contribution of the mass media in sustaining the ideals of the Crimeans is of extreme importance: in 1883, Ismail Bey Gasprinski (Gaspirali) founded the bilingual publication Tercüman/Perevotcik (The Interpreter), and the Young Tatars group initiated the periodical Vatan Hadimi (The Homeland Officer), in 1906. Through these main two publications the aspirations of unity and modernization of the Turkish world in the Czarist Empire have been sustained. Among the remarkable cultural activities of the Young Tatars movement we can mention the foundation of the Tatar

mothertongue theatre and the applicated study upon the history of the Crimean Tatars. Being a movement initiated by young idealists, enthusiasts, most of them educated in the big Russian cities, many of their actions stimulated the national culture, by promoting the language of the ancestors, the authentic literature and the theatre play in mothertongue, a free mass media and, maybe the most important attribute, freedom of expressing opinions. The young nationalists built the image of the Tatar self (self-identification), valorizing national symbols found in the history of the Crimean Khanate, respectively the flag in the colour of the unbounded sky with the tamga symbol (the stem of the great Tatar state of the Golden Horde) and the Kurultay (the Congres). In their vision the Crimean Khanate was not only important as a political statal entity for the Tatars but mostly because it represented a set of values and symbols meant to prove and confirm their identity. These symbols mark the unicity of Crimean identity, legitimizing the historical rights of the Tatars upon the Crimean lands. In the fervide months of the Russian Revolution, the national Tatar movement from Crimea evolved through several stages, the first stage (March-May 1917) is characterized as a cultural movement (aiming at cultural authonomy), the second stage (May-November) pointing to territorial authonomy and the last one (November 1917) claims statal independence. The Congress gathering occurred on November 26th / December 9th December 1917 and once with the inforcement of the Constitution Debember 13th / 26th 1917, the *Kurultay* became the Parliament of the Republic of Crimea. Prime minister of the democratic Tatar government was declared Numan Çelebi Cihan, minister of External Affairs, Geafer Seidamet, minister of Cults, Seidahmet Şukru, minister of Education, Ibrahim Özenbaşlı and Seidcelil Hatat, minister of Finances. This structure which accomplished the Tatar ideal of state authonomy, desidered ever since 1783, unfortunately did not last long. On January 25th 1918, the Bolshevik troups entered Crimea and attacked the Tatar units, which ceded under the numerical pressure. Under the pretext of armistice talks, the prime minister who was also the chief of state, Numan Celebi Cihan was drawn into a trap and was arrested, on January 27th 1918. Imprisoned in the Sevastopol jail, on February 23rd 1918 at dawn, he was shot and his body shredded by bullets was thrown into the waters of the Black Sea, in the Sevastopol Gulf, in order to remove any trace of his existence. For three years the Crimean Tatars were in conflict with the Bolshevik forces and in 1921, after the victory of the communist forces, Crimeea was transformed into the Authonomous Socialist Soviet Republic, with the Tatar Veli Ibrahimov as leader. Then, Veli Ibrahimov was accused of being a Tatar nationalist and executed.

The second chapter, entitled "The Tatars from Romania in the Interwar Period" is organized in five subchapters and follows, similarly to the first chapter, the identity coordinates of the Romanian Tatars, starting from the role of the space, of the territory they occupied, then their statude inside the Ottoman Empire, then the acquisition of the Romanian citizenship and the way they adapted to the new conditions. We analyzed the way in which the Tatars from Romania succeeded in keeping the most important elements of identity: religion, language, specific culture; each subchapter tackles one of these aspects. We found proper to also introduce in this chapter a theoretical support on nationalism and the national movement, in order to be able to better understand the specificity of the phenomenon in the case of Tatar minorities from Romania.

After the Russian annexation of 1783, successive waves of Tatars chose to emigrate, fearing the aggressive assimilation and wishing to keep intact their religion and language. There were three routes the Tatar emigrants oriented towards, each having their own historical, geographical and cultural peculiarities: the Caucasian vecinity (Circassia and the Taman Peninsula), Dobruja, Rumelia and the third, found in the heart of the Ottoman Empire, Anatolia, known being the fact that the Turkish-Ottoman lands were also known as *Aktoprak* (the white blessed land).

Many Crimeans chose to settle near Causasia, Circassia being one of the provinces which for long time have benn under the Crimean Khanate sovereignty, and many Tatar missionaries had converted the Circassians to Islamism. Another favourite destination for the Tatar emigrants was Dobruja, at that time a province of the Ottoman Empire, known in the Balcans as the Little Tatarstan (Küçük Tatarstan). The regions neighbour to Crimea, were preferred by those who nurtured the dream of returning to their homes, which for many signified living a provisorious life up until World War I. The Tatars settled in Dobruja continued their traditions and remained in the service of the Ottoman Sultan, receiving a sort of authonomy, since the governer of the province, the kaymakam was Mârza Han, who had origins in the Ghiraid family. Much more, many members of this notable Crimean family settled in Dobruja, conserving their statute, since they knew that ,,they were nothing less than their ancestors." Dobruja was a border imperial province, (Roman-Byzantine and Ottoman), fact which always granted it a cosmopolitan and tolerant character. Conquested by the Ottoman Empire in the XVth century, Dobruja was to remain under Ottoman rule for almost half of a millennium (that is up until the War of Independence). In this context, the dominant culture was the Turkish Muslim one. The Settlement of the Tatars in Dobruja meant a long lasting process, which has been reconstructed on bases of the numismatic archeological vestiges: the most important landmark being represented by the Mongolian invasion of 1241, which brought them up to the mouths of the Danube, the river being initially the South border of the Golden Horde Empire. For more than one hundred years, at least the north part of Dobruja was under the rule of the great Tatar state the Golden Horde. The refugees from the North Pontic space, fleeying from the expansion of rhe Christian powers from the XIVth-XVIth centuries reunited with the Tatar community which settled here in the Golden Horde period. Up until 1878, Dobruja was part of the Ottoman Empire. During all this period, the Tatars were the majority in Dobruja, as it is also proven by the names it was given in the European sources of the XVIth-XVIIIth centuries: "The Tatar Plain", "Tartaria" "Terra Tartarorum". Successive waves of Tatars from the Crimean Volgasi region of the Kuban-Don zone settled then in Dobruja, the oldest references known so far from the archives dating from 1514. Being under Ottoman authority, the Muslim population was able to preserve its regligion and specific culture, Dobruja being a real ethnic mosaic. The integration of Dobruja in the Romanian state in 1878, represented a decisive moment in the modern history of the province, with deep implications upon the evolution of the Tatar community settled here. The authorities were always careful to treat equally and without discrimination the inhabitants of the two counties, Constanța and Tulcea, as it can clearly be seen from the proclamation of King Charles I of Romania from November 14th 1878, which was pronounces in Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish. The Romanian authorities granted rights to the Tatar and Turkish minorities, but unfortunately this did not exclude some local abuses. All the actions of the Romanian state were of proximity to the Muslim population. In this spirit is enscribed the modernization of the Muslim Seminar from Babadag (founded by Royal decree of November 9th 1891) and the foundation of Charles I Mosque at June 24th 1910.

In the interwar period, the Tatar minority was known rather by the term Turkish than by the term Tatar, most of the publications of the community being edited in Turkish, whileas the pupils were studying in Turkish language in school. Despite this, notable intellectuals such as the poet Mehmet Niyazi, as well as the leaders of the national movement, continued to affirm the essence of the Tatar identity: they having a homeland of their own, Crimea (that Mehmet Niyazi named in his verses the *Yeşil Ada*-the Green Island), their ancesters came from Crimea and settled in Dobruja and the duty if the Tatars from Romania is to soliderize with the Crimean brothers to sustain state independence. This is basically the essence of the national Tatar movement from Romania, a large socio-political movement that we have described in detail in the third chapter of the thesis.

The main documentation source was the N.C.S.S.A. fund and we alternated these sources with what we could find in the publications of the age, in order to have a better picture of the Tatar community from the interwar period. The religious element modelled in this space the education system, the juridical system as well as the vision upon the world. For instance, the most important education institution was the Muslim Seminary from Babadag (which was moved in 1901 to the emblematic town Medgidia, conceived and rebuilt after modern urban plans, on the basis of Sultan Abdul Medjid's Firman of September 2nd 1856, with the expressed purpose of sheltering the Tatar immigrants and refgees from Crimea. The Muslim Seminary, religious gymnasium and superior education institution were initially organized on the model of the Ottoman Empire Madrassi. The Muslim Seminary from Medgidia was the most prestigious education institution in the Tatar community from Dobruja. Entire generations of intellectuals were formed here to be the leaders of the community (hogi/priests and educators of the Turkish language) and the education institution became the cultural symbol of the Dobruja Muslims. In which regards the Muslim cult, it counted, in 1909, 300 mosques in the counties of Constanta and Tulcea, in which were serving 107 hogi/priests, 100 imams/spiritual or moral guides, 81 muezzins/call to prayer guides and 30 kaims. The Dobruja Muslims were under the religious jurisdiction of the Istanbul Seyhül-Islam up until 1924, when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk abolished the Caliphate. The superior leadership of Dobrujan Muslims were the two Muftiates of the two counties Constanța and Tulcea. Ulteriorly, after the incorporation of Southern Dobruja, two more Muftiates were added, those from the cities of Silistra and Caliacra. For handling the problems of the Muslim cult, the Baş Mufti institution was founded in 1920 (the chief Mufti, of the Grand Mufti, being the equivelent of the Bishop), and as first baş mufti was named the Medgidia Hoge, Etem Curt Mola, graduate of the Muslim Seminary, from the graduates of 1906. The purpose for creating the Baş Muftiat by the Romanian state was that of coordinating the activity of all the Muslims clerics.

The Cadiates, that is the Islamic courts and notaries, existed in Dobruja ever since the Ottoman Empire period, and were meant to regulate the juridical problems of the Muslim subjects. After 1878, the Romanian administration from Dobruja kept this institution, limiting its attributes to strictly civil and religious intracommunitarian problems. In article 39 of the Law regarding the juridical rights of March 30th 1886, it is provided that in the cities of Constanța and Tulcea be founded two territorial Cadiates. After the annexation of Southern Dobruja Cadiates were founded also in the following localities: Silistra, Turtucaia, Bazargic and Balcic, as regulated by the juridical act of July 26th 1921, article 95. Each Muphiate had a Cadiate, the Muslim judicial institution competent in solving the misunderstandings between the Muslims from the province. The Cadiates functioned up to April 1st 1935, in confirmity to the Law regulatig the judicial organization of Dobruja, of 1886.

In comparison whith other minorities, such as Hungarian, Jewish and German ethnics, who founded minorities parties, the Tatar community did not have a political representative who could have participate to Parliament elections or establish aliences with other political entities. From this perspective we can define the Tatar ethnicity as "passive", with a "typical apolitical attitude in the absence of informed leaders" compared to the activism and organization spirit of all other minorities, such as the Germans, the Jews or the Hungarians.

After the end of World War I, the Tatars were not preoccupied with forming a political organism, although, together with the Turkish brothers were holding a relative majority in the two counties of South Dobruja, Durostor and Caliacra. The Tatar and Turkish concearn was mostly related to the cult element, the Muslim religion, which was in fact the main identity component of this ethnic group: this is how we can explain the attention granted to the entire community.

School constituted for the Tatars not only a learning and education place but also a melting pot in which an entire generation of active intellectuals was conceived and formed, active intellectuals who became directly and firmly involved in promoting the national Tatar movement. In the Muslims schools, frequented by Tatar students functioning on the basis of the Laws regarding education adopted July 26th 1924 and December 19th 1925, and the Law for the general regime of cults, which was enforced April 22nd 1928 – even if they were a majority, the teaching language was not the Tatar language (the Crimean dialect), but the Turkish language. Next to public schools, benefitting from full statal subventions, there were also schools governed by *vakifs* (pious foundations), as well as private school units. A private Seminary, similar to the one from Medgidia, that is a Madrassi, functioned at Silistra, and its management was supported by the local Muslim community. Schematically speaking, the schools frequented by the Dobrojan Tatars in between 1920-1940 can be classified in three distinct categories: primary schools - mekteb-i-subyan (with teachers payed by the state), gymnasiums (Rüştiye - private or semiprivate) and colledges or seminaries - Madrasses. Access to education was limited for the Tatar ethnics of low economic status, because of high scholl taxes. In this context we must note the altruistic preoccupations of advocate Selim Abdulachim (1886-1943), deputy of the Romanian legislative, under three legislations, to find financial resources or solutions for educating poor young Muslims.

In which regards the publication in Turkish, it appeared late in Dobruja, until 1878 there are no documents attesting here earlier publishing activities. Once with the activity of the *Young Turks* the cultural life of the Turkish Tatar community intensified by the appearance of newspapers, and gazettes which stimulated the intetest of the Muslims for

school and education. The national Tatar poet Mehmet Niyazi founded many publications such as (*Işık*/Light, *Mektep ve Aile*/School and Family and so on) and opened the way to the cultural life, sustained with fervour by the leaders of the national Tatar movement.

The third chapter of the thesis, entitled "The Contribution of the Tatars from Romania to the National Tatar Movement", is structured in six subchapters, each of them following aspects of this phenomenon: favourable international political context, the organization from Romania, echos of diplomacy, internal dissensions, and the most consistent part, the mass media propaganda, respectively the publications which served the nationalist ideology, such as: *Emel Mecmuasi* (The Aspiration Review), *Halk* (The Nation), *Bora* (The Gale). In the same purpose of promoting an intense cultural life, many Tatar cultural organizations and cultural associations were founded and conferences began to be organized.

The germination and the evolution of the national Tatar movement from Romania, among internal factors, was directly and profoundly influenced by the way in which the bilateral insterstate relationships fluctuated after World War I in the quadrilateral Turkey, Romania, Poland and U.S.S.R. Since numerous Tatars, of various locations occupied by the Soviet Russia, found refuge in Turkey and in such hospitable environment they constituted early centers of coordination and sustainment of national movements, we analysed mainly the nische of the relationships established between Turkey and the U.S.S.R., with Poland and with Romania.

Beside the natural relationships with their brothers settled in Turkey, the leaders of the Romanian Tatars kept in touch with similar movements of anti-Soviet orientation active in Poland, France, Germany and Finland. We extended our research to those areas too, in order to determine in a more clear way the content and the coordinates of such collaborations.

The drive and the ascension of the national Tatar movement from Romania, whose fundamental objective was freeing Crimea and constituting a free and independent state in the Green Peninsula, scope which could be accomplished only by the fall of the Soviet Union, was decisively touched by the politics promoted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk towards Bolshevik Russia.

As we have mentioned before, the instauration of the Republic of Crimea in 1917, with a modern Constitution, represented the culminant point of the National Tatar Movement. The Crimean state entity did not last long, being buried in blood as well as the president of the Republic, Numan Çelebi Cihan, who was executed by the Bolsheviks, in February 1918. the minister of externs and the minister of war of this government, Geafer Seidamet, flee in exile to Istambul along with all the other leaders of the republics of the ex Czarist Empire, such as

Mehmed Emin Resulzade, for example, one of the founders of the Republic of Azerbaidjan (he also lived in Romania for a few years) and many others. In Istanbul was formed a strong Tatar circle, which initiated the Panturkish movement, under the leadership of prof. Yusuf Akçura, from the University of Istanbul. This information comes from the N.C.S.S.A. archives being extracted from the documents elaborated during different years, for example, one is dated November 16th 1943, being a report elaborated by the Constanța Poliece Station, regarding "The Situation of the Muslims on the array of this poliece station", the other one is a report of the General Directorate of the State Security, of Constanța region, of March 20th 1952 and the last one is a synthesis note dated February 19th 1962, taken from the dossier entitled "Materials regarding the parties and the political burgeois-landlord organizations from the Dobruja region".

In all the three inedited documents we find configrated the context and the causes of what the organs name "the nationalist Tatar trend": the Tatar organisation from Turkey followed a cultural nationalist purpose in different reviews and newspapers and a political scope, that of rebuilding an independent Tatar state in Crimea, by fighting against Bolshevism. The Panturkish movement from Istanbul had as scope instigating the Turkish-Tatar poplation of the U.S.S.R. for the formation of nationalist burgois states. This action was to be spreaded among the populations of Crimea, Azerbaidjan, Tatarstan, Kazahstan, Uzbekistan, Turkestan, the Far East and the Urals. The states which were to be created by these nations were meant to remain under the organisational, political, financial, economical and cultural tutelage of the Turkish state, lead by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

In the context in which Tukey and the U.S.S.R. signed a treaty of friendship and mutual assistance at December 17th 1925, in order not to alter the diplomatic relationships, the activity of the Panturkish Commeettee was secretly sustained, having mainly a cultural dimension. This is the reason for which they preferred to have the headquarters in Istanbulul and no in Ankara. The leadership Commeettee of the Panturkish movement had as a mission to coordinate the activity in the Soviet republics we mentioned above and to keep strong relationships with the governmet and the Turkish State Major. For accomplishing the mission, in between 1924-1925 were founded the following five commeettees: the Commeettee for Crimea (with headquarters in Istanbul), the Commeettee for the Urals (with headquarters in Berlin, and active in Kazahstan, Tatarstan and the Urals), the Commeettee for the Far East. The tasks of these Commeettees were well established, to organize and lead the local commeettees in the countries with Turksh Tatar population and editing publications whith

political ideological and literary character. Thus, the five Commeettees founded the following publications: *Emel Mecmuasi* (1930) edited at Bazargic by the Commeettee for Crimea, *Milli Yol* (The National Way) appeared in Berlin under the care of a commeettee lead by Mustegep Hagi Fazâl, at the initiative of the Commeettee for the Urals, under the care of a commeettee lead by Ayaz Ishaki, *Kafkas Dağları* (Caucasus Mountains) edited by the Commeettee for Caucasus, whileas *Yaş Turkestan* (Young Turkestan) appeared in Paris, as publication of the Commeettee for Turkestan, and the Review *Yani Yol* (New Road), edited by Mukden from the Commeettee for the Far East.

An interesting point of view is that of G. Mamoulia, saying that the European support of the national movements from the Republics created inside the U.S.S.R, was initiated by the project of the French Minister of Externals, Aristide Briand, at the end of World War I, respectively an attempt to create some buffer states between the Kemalist Turkey and the U.S.S.R. More precisely, the author brings arguments related to the politics of France in the Middle East, with high interest for the Caucasus region, rich in natural resources and, of corse, numerous geopolitical perspectives. This is the project of the "sanitary corridor" between Bolshevik Russia and Kermalist Turkey initiated in 1921 by Aristide Briand and sustained also by Field Marshal Pilsudski, who understoond completely the imperialist tendencies of the U.S.S.R. This is largely the programm of the *Prométhée* movement, the U.S.S.R. refugees group, which found support in the Western countries for setteling in exile an anti-Bolshevik front.

Aristide Briand's 1921 project was resumed in the fall of 1924, when high Polish officials from the Ministry of Externals initiated actions for the revival of the Caucasian confederation. After all it was Poland to financially sustain the Caucasus emmigration, center of these actions being Paris, whileas for the operations, at the initiative of Roman Knoll, the Polish ambassador in Turkey, in Istanbul was created, in 1924, a Commeettee of the Caucasian confederations, which had the purpose to unite all their interests. This was the birth of the publication *Prométhée* which occurred in November 1926, appearing in French language in 1.000 coppies. Chief Editor of the publication was for 12 years, the Georgian Gvazava, and *Prométhée* was declared to be the press organ sustaining the independence of Caucasus, Ukraine and Turkestan, as its own title professes. The apparition od such publication marks in fact the birth of the *Prométhée* movement, defined as "a movement of the U.S.S.R. refugees, which appeared from the failure of the independent republics which were formed inside the Russian Empire in the context of the 1917 Revolution, an Anti-Bolshevik front in exile." The *Prométhée* movement had as a main objective to block the

Bolshevik expansion by reuniting all non Russian nations of the U.S.S.R. by a huge project which extended from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. In this way they might have succeeded in assuring independence of such nations and equilibrium could have been established in this part of the world. Much more, *prometheism* can be defined as "the movement of all the oppressed nations from Russia, without exception."

The leader of the national Tatar movement from Crimea, Geafer Seidamet, was one of the founders of the *Prométhée* movement and his activity was eulogized in number 107/1935 of the publication, following the festivities occurring October 24th 1935, at Constanța. At that date the Tatars from Romania were celebrating Geafer Seidamet's jubilee of 25 years of activity and the news appeared in the *Emel Mecmuasi* Review no. 11-12/1935, being later elaborated in the redaction of the *Prométhée*.

The documents preserved in the N.C.S.S.A archives clearly show how was created the Romanian organization of the Commeettee for Crimea from Istambul, organism which controlled, practically, the course of the events in the interwar period. As we have mentioned before, the international favourable context together with an internal permissive climat, lead to the formation of this organism which was meant to valorize the identity of Tatars from Romania by promoting intense cultural activities (publications of the Tatar community, societies and cultural associations, sustaining conferences, cultivating Tatar language literature).

In Romania this Commeettee started its activity somewhere in between 1926-1927, when Geafer Seidamet came to Constanța as it was written in the 1952 report of the Security and according to the declarations of the representatives of the national Tatar movement from Romania such as: Memet Halim Vani, Feuzi Ibraim, Musa Eyub and so on. The most important presence in sustaining the national Tatar movement was undoubtedly Geafer Seidamet's, who was sustained by Mustegep Hagi Fazâl, the head of the Tatar leaders. The complex personality of the Crimean leader was made known to the Romanian Tatar community in 1933, with the occation of a Conference dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the publication *Tercüman*, under the guidance the scholar Ismail Bey Gaspıralı. Much more, the Security archives state that Geafer Seidamet was often present in Romania, where he sustained more Conferences.

Thus, the Commeettee for Crimea from Istanbul started in Romania the organization named "The Commeettee for the Liberation of Crimea" and its media organ, the publication *Emel Mecmuasi* (the Aspiration Review). From the founding group of The Commeettee for the Liberation of Crimea we can mention the following Tatar leaders from Romania:

Mustegep Hagi Fazâl, Negip Hagi Fazâl, Mustafa Ahmet, Rifat Mithat, Tasin Ibraim, Rașit Ali Osman, Musa Veli and Husein Zecheria.

Later, this commeettee was enlarged after Mustegep Hagi Fazâl moved from Bazargic to Constanța. From the first moment, the Commeettee had precise tasks, especially in which regarded the preparation and the sustainment of propaganda activities meant to convince the Tatar population of the possibility and at the same time of the necessity of the creation of an independent state in Crimea. In order to accomplish this scope an intense cultural activity was needed, thus cultural and artistical organizations appeared, meant to back-up the revival of the national spirit among the Tatar population. A similar role was played by the youth organizations; these objectives were divided among the members of the Commeettee, each one answering for and coordinating the activity in a certain direction.

The Commeettee started its activity by founding several youth organizations, such as the Association of the Students of the Muslim Seminar from Medgidia and the Asociation of the Turkish Students from Romania and the cultural and artistical organizations in most of the localities with Tatar population of wich we mention: "The cultural and artistic organization Mehmet Niyazi" of Constanța - 1935, the Cultural and artistic organization of Bazargic and many others.

The activity of the members of the "Commeettee for the Liberation of Crimea" resides in coordinating the activity of the above mentioned associations and organizations and in assuring the materials for the Review *Emel Mecmuasi*, the central organ of the "Commeettee for Crimea", as well as for other publications edited by some members of the Commeettee or adherents, such as *Halk* Review, edited at Constanța by Hamdi Nusret, *Bora* Review, edited at Silistra by IrfanFeuzi, adherent to the national movement, *Duman* Review, edited by the Commeettee of the Association of the Students of the Muslim Seminar from Medgidia, more brochures gathering courses with a nationalist character, written by Mehmet Niyazi, professor at the Muslim Seminar from Medgidia.

The various visits of the Romanian Tatar students in Turkey and Poland, as well as the fac that they received various delegations of Tatar students from Poland in their way to Turkey, as well as Turkish delegates in their way to Poland, can also be considered actions of the "Commeettee for the Liberation of Crimea". Such actions did not pass unobserved by the vigilance of the competent observation organs, according to the above quoted informative document, it was established that the above mentioned associations and cultural societies activated in the purpose of developing the nationalist spirit among the Tatar population, as well as the creation of a belief in which regards the necessity and the possibility of realizing

the independent Tatar state in Crimea. In this action, as we can note from the information we gathered, the most important influence was that of two youth associations, respectively Association of the Students of the Muslim Seminar from Medgidia and the Asociation of the Turkish Students from Romania.

Former student and continuator of the ideas of the professor Mehmet Niyazi from the Muslim Seminar from Medgidia, Mustegep Hagi Fazâl is one of the overwhelming personalities of the Dobrujan Tatars: juristconsult by intellectual formation, notable publicist and devoted to the Crimean cause political figure, restless fighter, he was the real leader of the national movement of the Tatars from Romania.

In the spirit of the age, Mustegep Hagi Fazâl willed the elaboration of a modern identity speech, by defining the nation and the national ideal for the Dobrujan Tatars, as we can note in the materials publicated in the review he devotedly coordinated, *Emel Mecmuasi* (1930-1940). The intention of the advocate Mustegep Hagi Fazâl was to modernize the mentality of the Tatar community to create the National Tatar ideal, in the sense of constituting a solid national identity. Such perspective could have been accomplished, in the opinion of Hagi Fazâl, in three steps: naration, awareness, assumption and action. These three steps have been the forge in which the actions of the Tatar national movement leaders' actions were forged: publications, conferences, cultural organizations. From its first number, *Emel Mecmuasi* assumed the slogan *Türkçülük* that is "Unity of the Turkish world" and to it remained faithful up to the end. The publication valorized the glorious past of the Turkish world, contributing fully to its progress. *Emel Mecmuasi* was too on the road of sustaining the unity of the Turkish world and was dedicated to the national cause of the Crimean nation.

Director and owner of the publication *Emel Mecmuasi*, Mustegep Hagi Fazâl stressed on the importance of history and on the values of the Turkish world for connecting the Dobruja Tatars to the desiderates of the other Turkish nations, with the scope of raising the level of education of his conationals. An extremely important objective for the director of *Emel Mecmuasi* was the configuration of the collective conscience and of the common ideal *mefküre*. The editor considered that the national conscience and the nationalist ideal meant mainly to love the nation you are part of, the whish to do good to your conationals, defending the national history and the cultural heritage. Mustegep Hagi Fazâl analyses also the modality in which national consciousness can be reinforced, more precisely through scientific writings which eulogize national history, culture and literature. An important role is played by the conferences, the scientific manifestations but also by the cultural organizations in which folk creativity is represented. All these manifestations bring the members of a community closer to authochtonous values. Culture represents an extremly important factor in building national identity; Mustegep Hagi Fazâl founded many organizations and cultural associations which had as main purpose to promote the identity values of the Dobruja Tatars.

The content of the publication *Emel Mecmuasi* included ideological material, historical articles, folk literary creations as well as literary creations, external and internal news, all having a great impact upon the community. Much more, *Emel Mecmuasi* kept vivid the relationships with the publications: *Milli Yol/* The National Way (the press organ of the Tatars from the Volga—Ural area), *Kurtuluş / Liberation* (the emblematic publication for the national movement of Azerbaidjan), *Yaş Turkestan /* Young Turkestan (the newspaper of the populations from Turkestan), *Şimali Kafkasya /* North Caucasus (the newspaper of North Caucasus), *Milli Bayrak /* The national Flag (weekly publication from the Far East).

One of the objectives of *Emel Mecmuasi* was the publication of reference volumes for the Tatar community from Romania, objective which was accomplished in the editorial apparitions: Mehmet Niyazi poetry volume entitled *Saguş* (Longing), in 1931, *Tevarih-i Tatarhan* (Histories of Tatar Khans), in 1932, Negip Hagi Fazâl's theatrical play *Caş fidanlar* (Young sprouts), in 1933, Mehmet Vani –Yurtsever's theatrical plays, such as: *Kartman Caş arasında* (Between the old and the young), *Toy* (The Wedding), *Ödelek* (The coward), in 1934.

We also followed the objectives of all the other publications sustaining the cause of the Crimean Tatars, respectively *Halk* (The Nation) and *Bora* (The Gale) with generous extracts and in the subchapter dedicated to the societies and cultural organizations we stressed upon the role of the elites, intellectuals formed at the Muslim Seminar from Medgidia, teachers or hogi/priests in the towns and villages with Muslim population. They had the mission of building solidarity among Tatar ethnics and of keeping alive the conscience of the ethnic belonging through cultural associations promoting history, local folklore and the literary creations of the community.

In which regards the scientific activity we identified inedited documents in personal archives, which stand testimony of the activity of the community intellectuals: we refer to the first conference of a Tatar intellectual at the South Eastern European Institute, found under the leadership of Nicolae Iorga, wich had as theme "The folk literature of Tatars" and which was sustained by the advocate Omer Fahredin, February 8th 1929 (inedited manuscript), event which was also reflected in the Romanian press. From the very beginning the speaker stressed upon the inedited character of these speeches and upon the valorification of Tatar identity

through oral creations. It was for the first time that somebody spoke about Tatar folk literature in an academic environment.

Other conferences were sustained by Negip Hagi Fazâl (brother of the Tatar leader, Mustegep Hagi Fazâl), by Geafer Seidamet himself and by Mustegep Hagi Fazâl as well. These conferences constituted events which profoundly marked the community, as it can be noticed from the impressive number of participants to each of these manifestations, and from here we can only deduce the amplitude taken by the national Tatar movement.

The last chapter of the thesis "Tatar Literature Sustaining the Identity Speech" is structured on four chapters, as follows: Crimean folk literature and regular literature and, by correlation, folk literature and regular literature of the Dobrujan Tatars. In presenting Crimean folk literature we also mentioned Omer Fahredin's Conference.

In our thesis we found it proper to dedicate large spaces to the presentation of the Crimean scholar Ismail Gaspirali, of the politician and Tatar leader Geafer Seidamet, of the poet and Tatar scientist Bekir Sıtkı Çobanzade, of the poet Hamdi Ghiraybay, of the national poet of the Tatars from Romania, Mehmet Niyazi, of the lawyer and leader of the national Tatar movement from Romania, Mustegep Hagi Fazâl, of the national Tatar hero, Negip Hagi Fazâl, of the teacher and man of culture, Mehmet Alim Vani.

Our research was focused on the period in between the two world conflagrations, having as final demarcation the month of September of year 1940, when Mustegep Hagi Fazâl, the historical leader of the Tatars from Romania published the last number, of *Emel Mecmuasi*, nr. 154. After that last number of the publication he moved to Turkey, thus ending a rich publishing activity which lasted for 11 years. During all this period the publication was the standard-bearer of the National Tatar movement: in the pages of the Review both international and internal events found their right places. The Review especially focused on international events related to the Tatar diaspora, as well as on the internal news related to the promotion of Tatar identity values. Pages of Tatar folk literature and regular literature, ideological essays historical material, news about cultural events (numerous in the age the conferences and the celebrations), news about schools and education, generally speaking, shaped the profile of this valuable publication.

Since the common enemy was the Soviet Union, the involvement of Romania in the anti-Soviet war determined the leaders of the national Tatar movement, who were vividly sustaining the creation of an independent Tatar state in Crimea, to pass to concrete actions. More specifically, the Muslim clergy from Romania sustained the anti-Soviet war by inflaming the Turkish Tatar ethnics to go to the front and fight, as well as through fund raising

and clothig sending for the soldiers. Besides the actions of the Muslim clergy, we can mention that the well known organ of coordination of the interwar events, the National Commeettee for the Liberation of Crimea transformed at the beginning of the war into a Commeettee of sustainment for the Tatars from Crimea. Amdi Nusuret, the editor of the publication *Halk* (The Nation) became president of this Commeettee while the vice-president role was given to Sadâc Ibraim, all other members being leaders of the national Tatar movement. Amoong those we mention: Memet Vani, Ibraim Feuzi Irfan, Ibadula Abdula, Negip Hagi Fazâl, Nazif Abduraim, Abdula Mustafa and Şefchi Memet.

The monitorization of the Tatar Community activities is sustained by the documentary fund of the National Council for the Study of the Security Archives; based on these informations, we succeeded in identifying and reconstructing a quite incomplete picture of the Tatar national movement in the interwar period. The course of the events demonstrated that the supreme ideal, the realization of an independent state in Crimea, was just the illusion of some idealist Tatar intellectuals, illusion which was scattered after August 23rd 1944. All their actions were considered illegal and the Tatar leaders were chased and penal dossiers were opened; gradually the authorities' actions transformed in between 1949-1952 in concrete investigations of the Tatar leaders, accused of espionaj against the Romanian state. This is also the case of the so called 1953 lot, composed of 16 culprits, who received the penalty of hard years of imprisonment.

The present PhD thesis is composed of 369 pages. Besides the four above presented chapters, the thesis also has: an *Introduction, Conclusions, Selective Bibliography Abbreviations list* and consistent *Annexes*, composed of documents and photos.

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