

AMERICAN MISSIONARY DIPLOMACY AND THE
YOUNG TURKS AT THE TURN OF THE
TWENTIETH CENTURY

A Master's Thesis

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May 2024

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Bilkent University 2024

To the memory of Yıldız Akyüz



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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

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By Ahmet Kaan Akyüz

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in
quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of History

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ABSTRACT

AMERICAN MISSIONARY DIPLOMACY AND THE YOUNG TURKS AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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This thesis analyzes the diplomatic relations between the United States and the Ottoman Empire in 1908-1918. The central focus is on the role of missionaries in preventing potential conflict and maintaining peaceful relations between American and Ottoman officials. This thesis is mainly based on examining various primary sources and archival collections. The primary purpose of the thesis is to provide a new perspective on the relations between American missionaries and the Young Turks. The main argument is that missionary institutions were the primary reason that both states did not declare war on each other during World War I.

Keywords: Missionary, Young Turks, World War I, American schools

ÖZET

YİRMİNCİ YÜZYILIN BAŞLARINDA AMERİKAN MİSYONER DİPLOMASİSİ VE JÖN TÜRKLER

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Mayıs 2024

Bu tez, 1908-1918 yılları arasında Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu arasındaki diplomatik ilişkileri incelemektedir. Bu tezin odaklandığı temel konu, Amerikalı misyonerlerin ABD ve Osmanlı hükümeti arasındaki barışçıl ilişkileri sürdürmede, ve olası bir çatışmayı önlemedeki rolleridir. Bu tez temel olarak çeşitli birincil kaynakların ve arşiv koleksiyonlarının incelenmesine dayanmaktadır. Temel argüman, misyoner okullarının her iki devletinde barışçıl ilişkileri sürdürmesinde temel belirleyici olduğudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Misyoner, Jön Türkler, Birinci Dünya Savaşı, Amerikan Okulları

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Owen Miller, who has supported me throughout my MA degree. His guidance and encouragement have motivated me in this journey. I would also like to thank Dr. Kenneth Weisbrode, whom I admire for his classes and scholarly works. He has always inspired me since my first semester. I am equally thankful to Dr. Berke Torunoğlu for his valuable feedback on this thesis. He has always pushed me to write a better piece of work. I am also grateful for his endless effort to support my academic life and future career. Dr. Onur İşçi deserves special thanks here. He has been my mentor since my undergraduate years at Bilkent University. I will never forget his support and guidance.

I want to thank my parents, Taner Akyüz and Handan Akyüz. They had supported me during my entire life. I am very grateful for them. I wish my little sister, İrem Nehir Akyüz, a much better future than I have. Enjoy your beautiful years at Bilkent. I also owe my grandparents a debt of gratitude.

Lastly, I thank my beloved Süreyya for her patience and unconditional support. I am fortunate to have her in my life. I will forever be grateful.

AHMET KAAN AKYÜZ

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABCFM – American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions

ACG – American College for Girls

CUP – Committee of Union and Progress

CWBM – Christian Woman's Board of Missions

FRUS – Foreign Relations of the United States

NEF – Near East Foundation

RC – Robert College

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In May 1931, the members of the Near East Mission of the American Board gathered in Istanbul to celebrate the centennial of the founding of the “American Mission at Constantinople.” This gathering was not their first event to proclaim the establishment of the American Mission in the Ottoman Empire. Twenty-five years before this gathering, in May 1906, a prominent representative body of missionaries held the exercises commemorating the 75th Anniversary; they gave addresses, read letters, and prayed together.¹ Not one who had given addresses in 1906 was alive in 1931’s centennial. A new generation of American missionaries has raised and gathered to honor their predecessors for what they thought they accomplished in the Ottoman Empire. There were prominent missionaries among this generation, such as William Wheelock Peet², Henry Huntington Barnum³, and Mary Mills Patrick.⁴ They all expressed the legacy of American educational institutions from the imperial period to early republican Turkey. Henry Barnum, for example, emphasized the significance of Robert College in the American mission and described the college as “a gift from great leaders.”⁵

More importantly, the Great War and its memories were still fresh in missionaries’ minds. For Barnum, one of those great leaders was Dr. Caleb Frank Gates, the President

¹ *Centennial of Constantinople Station* (Istanbul: Near East Mission of American Board, 1931), 3.

² Peet was the Treasurer of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Istanbul.

³ Barnum was the son of two former American missionaries.

⁴ Patrick was the President of the American College for Girls in Istanbul.

⁵ *Centennial of Constantinople Station*, 72.

of Robert College in “the period of strain and stress,” and the college was a gift from his leadership during the Great War.”⁶ Dr. William Wheelock Peet, who first came to Istanbul in 1881, also signified the memories of World War I. Dr. Peet said, “The golden period of the century for American missionary works was in full swing at the outbreak of the Great War.”⁷

Indeed, American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire faced tremendous changes and challenges between 1908-18. The period started with the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and continued with missionaries witnessing the devastating effects of the Balkan Wars (1912-13). However, the Great War was the last catastrophic event for Americans living in the Ottoman Empire (1914-18). Ottoman participation in the Great War as an ally of Germany threatened the security of American institutions and citizens in the Ottoman Empire. Besides, the United States’ entrance into the war in April 1917 increased the concerns among American missionaries over a possible declaration of war between the United States and the Ottoman Empire. American missionaries, wedged between two opposing belligerent powers, made an incredible effort to avoid a possible conflict. To maintain their existence, missionaries heavily attempted to convince the President of the United States and the American Congress not to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. Ultimately, Americans and Ottomans managed to avoid a possible conflict between them, and even beyond that, they could keep their relations friendly despite their belligerency on opposing sides. Thus, American missionaries were responsible for the United States not declaring war on the Ottoman Empire.

Previous historical scholarship pictures the Great War as a hostile and unfriendly period in Turkish-American relations. The current literature concentrated on three main

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 48.

themes: the role of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, the negative perception of Turks within the American bureaucracy, and the Armenian question.

Several works put the role of Henry Morgenthau at the center of the literature on Ottoman-American relations during the Great War. The first notable work is William Yale's *Ambassador Henry Morgenthau's Special Mission of 1917*, published in 1949.⁸ In covering the negotiation process for future peace between the United States and the Ottoman Empire, William Yale points out that the pressure groups within the United States were the main determinants in shaping American foreign policy. According to Yale, charging Henry Morgenthau to lead the future peace talks with the Ottomans, while the United States already had an ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, demonstrated that Wilson trusted Morgenthau because of his Jewish identity and friendly relations with the CUP. Although Yale's article is outdated and lacks Ottoman sources, his work is significant as it is one of the first comprehensive historical articles in the field.

In 2015, the study of Pamela Steiner's "*Henry Morgenthau's Voice in History*" offered a psychological interpretation of Morgenthau's role.⁹ In connecting History with Psychology, Steiner argues that Morgenthau's personality made him a prominent character in the Ottoman Empire. The main problem of this article is the lack of various sources. Steiner uses only the writings of Henry Morgenthau, including his diaries and letters. However, Steiner's work contributes explicitly to the literature from a unique perspective of History writing.

⁸ William Yale, "Ambassador Henry Morgenthau's Special Mission of 1917", *World Politics*, 1, no. 3 (April 1949) 308-320. Published by: Cambridge University Press.

⁹ Pamela Steiner, "Henry Morgenthau's Voice in History," *The Journal of Psychohistory*, 42, no. 3 (2015).

What article remains the only historical account in Turkish scholarship emphasizing the role of Henry Morgenthau is İsmail Köse's work published in 2021.¹⁰ Köse advocates that Morgenthau arranged close relations with the CUP leaders and intervened in several activities exceeding an ambassador's duties and privileges during his duty. The main problem with Köse's article is that while secondary sources constitute most of his work, his interpretation of primary sources is also misleading since he approaches with biases toward American foreign policy aims. Köse's central argument is that Henry Morgenthau was the reason for the deterioration of bilateral relations due to his hatred of Turks. This argument is correlated with the second theme of the literature: American hatred of Turks within the bureaucracy.

Kadir Kasalak published "*Birinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında Osmanlı-ABD İlişkileri*" in 2014.¹¹ According to Kasalak, Woodrow Wilson's policy was Islamophobic and anti-Turkish. The main problem of Kasalak's article is that he only used Turkish secondary sources. Hence, this lack of sources led him to misinterpret the subject, and his work is far from providing a historical analysis of the bilateral relations. Moreover, there was a tendency, especially in Turkish scholarship, to see Henry Morgenthau and Woodrow Wilson as Islamophobic and anti-Turk because of the Armenian question. Şuhnaz Yılmaz is the one who connected these two subjects and read the Ottoman-American relations in 2015.¹² Since Yılmaz broadly pictures the Turkish-American relations from 1800 to 1952, only the book's first chapter deals with the wartime years. The central

¹⁰ İsmail Köse, "Amerika'nın İstanbul Büyükelçisi H. Morgenthau'nun Türk Algısı", *Tarih Dergisi*, 56, no. 2 (2012), 55-85, İstanbul.

¹¹ Kadir Kasalak, "Birinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında Osmanlı-ABD İlişkileri," *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, Güz 55 (2014): 108-124.

¹² Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Turkish-American Relations, 1800-1952: Between the Stars, Stripes, and the Crescent," (Routledge, 2015).

argument is that the 1894–1896 massacres contributed to the formation of a “terrible Turk” image in the United States.

Regarding the third central theme of the literature, although the Armenian question has been controversial and out of the scope of this paper, it is still worth mentioning. Despite the popularity of the subject of the Armenian Genocide, especially in American scholarship, there are a limited number of studies regarding Ottoman-American relations during the Great War. The most notable work is Charlie Laderman’s “Sharing the Burden: The American Solution to the Armenian Question, 1918-1920,” published in *Diplomatic History* in 2019.¹³ It provides the importance of Armenians to the American Government during the Great War and its aftermath. Laderman’s article demonstrates how Turkish and Armenian officials influenced the argument over the mandate, causing Americans to consider the difficulties of neutralizing the post-Ottoman Middle East. Since Laderman draws American and Armenian archival documents, his work contributes to the literature on the US-Ottoman relations between 1914 and 1920.

Furthermore, the scope of research on bilateral relations in the Great War is limited except for two works published in 2018 and 2019. In 2018, Andrew Patrick published “Woodrow Wilson, the Ottomans, and World War I” in *Diplomatic History*.¹⁴ This article is one of the most comprehensive studies discussing how diplomacy went during the Great War. Patrick draws primarily American archival documents. The central argument is that there were three main motivations behind American decision-makers not declaring war on the Ottoman Empire: Americans were not threatened by the

¹³ Charlie Laderman, “Sharing the Burden: The Armenian Question, Humanitarian Intervention and Anglo-American Visions of Global Order.” (Oxford University Press, 2019).

¹⁴ Andrew Patrick, “Woodrow Wilson, the Ottomans, and World War I,” *Diplomatic History* 42, no. 5 (Nov. 2018): 886-910.

Ottoman military, the geopolitical distance between the two states, and American missionary existence. Although Patrick's work is significant in understanding the diplomacy between the United States and the Ottoman Empire in the Great War, it still needs more profound research since only one chapter deals with American missionaries' role in not declaring war on the Ottoman Empire.

In 2019, Tuğçe Kaya investigated why the US did not declare war on the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵ However, Kaya's work does not provide beyond the summary of the US National Archives. The absence of a problematic and a theory makes the article insufficient to contribute to the field. However, despite the deficiencies, both the studies of Andrew Patrick and Tuğçe Kaya are significant since they offer a new focus on Ottoman-American relations during the Great War.

Therefore, a correlation between the American undeclared war on the Ottoman Empire and missionary existence is at least one thing that has a small place in historiography. The main reason for the limited number of works is that a closer examination of the ABCFM Papers, the memoirs of American missionaries, and the records of American institutions have been ignored. One exception that should be worth mentioning is Joseph Grabill's book *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Foreign Policy, 1810-1927*.¹⁶ Grabill pictures the missionary lobby that shaped the American foreign policy to the Near East. His main argument is that despite American missionaries' political failure, they were the most influential force in the United States-Near Eastern relations. The lack of an Ottoman perspective, however, was the main problem of his work. In addition to looking from

¹⁵ Tuğçe Kaya, "ABD Birinci Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Neden Osmanlı Devleti'ne Savaş İlan Etmedi? Amerikan Gizli Belgeleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme," *Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies* (2019): 533-562.

¹⁶ Joseph Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy, and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927* (University of Minnesota Press, 1971).

the perspective of missionaries, how the Ottomans approached the missionaries and the United States is equally important.

This thesis, then, investigates the diplomacy between the United States and the Ottoman Empire in World War I. It is the story of American missionaries' efforts to maintain peace and serenity between two belligerent states. The central argument is that missionary existence in the Ottoman Empire was the main reason both states avoided potential conflicts. With their schools and institutions, missionaries were the leading factors in shaping mutual perspectives and prevented a declaration of war between the United States and the Ottoman Empire.

This thesis is mainly based on Columbia University Libraries Archival Collections, Robert College Records at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, the ABCFM Microfilm Collections at Bilkent University in Ankara, and the online papers of Foreign Relations of the US (FRUS). Along with drawing on the archives, many published memoirs of American missionaries and newspaper collections are significant in constructing the thesis narrative. Thus, the essential purpose is to contribute to the literature and to analyze the subject deeper by utilizing these archives and primary sources.

The chapters align with the chronology, even though each has a thematic focus. Chapter II comprehensively discusses why Young Turks and American missionaries trusted each other. Demonstrating the transformation of mutual perception between Americans and Ottomans and the significance of missionaries and their institutions from the perspective of Young Turks are two main focuses of the chapter. Here, the argument is that after the CUP took power, Ottoman-American relations, which had deteriorated during the reign of Abdülhamid II, began to improve. The main reason was

that while the intellectual background of the Young Turks was aligned with the interests of American missionaries, the Young Turks saw missionary schools as Western institutions essential to modernizing education in the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter III focuses explicitly on the period between 1908-14. This chapter illustrates how relations transformed after the 1908 Revolution. It covers the reaction of American officials to the revolution and the CUP Government and the American policy change toward the Ottoman Empire. Another significant claim of this chapter is the Ottoman's turn toward the United States. Further, it preludes the challenging period for American missionaries with the outbreak of the Balkan Wars. Hence, the chapter argues that the 1908 Revolution was a turning point in building closer ties and improving relations between the US and the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter IV, the last chapter, draws on the most troubled times of the relations and discusses the diplomacy of wartime years. This main chapter explains that along with Ottoman belligerency, American officials faced several challenges to protect their nation's interests in the Ottoman lands. However, American officials and missionaries successfully managed these difficult times. With the rumors that the United States would enter the war against the Central Powers, American missionaries led by Caleb Frank Gates and Cleveland Hoadley Dodge made a great effort to convince Washington not to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. In 1917, which was spent with persuasion efforts and trying to maintain peaceful attitudes, Woodrow Wilson was eventually convinced not to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. Lastly, it also proposes the account of historical events from the United States declaration of war to the end of the Great War. After the Americans joined the war, the Ottomans broke their diplomatic relations with the US due to German pressure. However, despite this, both could avoid conflict and end the war without any tensions and disputes.

CHAPTER II

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION: YOUNG TURK INTELLECTUALISM AND AMERICAN MISSIONARIES

Turkish historians often portrayed the relations between the Americans and the Ottomans unfavorably from when the American missionaries first landed in Ottoman territories. Selim Deringil, for example, argues that none of the challenges to the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire was more dangerous in the long term than missionary activity.¹⁷ According to Deringil, the United States, with its troops, diplomats, and merchants, all represented imminent threats to the existence of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the United States, with its missionaries, represented a potential threat to future generations through its educational institutions.¹⁸ However, this argument portraying missionaries as a threat has many shortcomings and needs to be examined more deeply. The main reason is that most accusations and negative perceptions should be attributed to the period before the Young Turks took control of the Ottoman administration. The Young Turk Revolution in July 1908 began a new chapter for the Turks and Americans living in the Ottoman lands. Therefore, this chapter of the thesis will examine the background of the relations between American missionaries and the Young Turks until the 1908 Revolution, which Americans welcomed with great hope.

¹⁷ Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (I.B. Tauris, 2011).

¹⁸ Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 112.

The main question is why unfavorable concerns and perceptions before the 1908 Revolution have transformed in favor of American missionaries. Only four years after the Young Turks took power, they significantly tried to protect American institutions from the damage of the Balkan Wars and the Great War. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the significance of American missionaries and their institutions in the eyes of Young Turks.

The answer lies in the social and intellectual backgrounds of the Young Turks. How they perceived educational institutions and their significance for the Ottoman Empire shaped Young Turks' ideas and policies regarding American missionaries. The claim is that the Young Turks saw missionary schools as Western institutions essential to modernizing education. American schools could serve as a model for the modernization of education in the eyes of the Young Turks, which was necessary for the state's survival.

2.1. The Young Turks and Liberal Thought

The 1908 Revolution was a political movement whose task was to save the Empire from terminal decline.¹⁹ Moreover, it was also a liberal revolution in its origins. The Young Turks were intellectually inspired by the ideas of French thinkers such as Montesquieu and Rousseau and the French Revolution, which promoted the ideas of constitutional and parliamentary government.²⁰ The impact of the French Revolution of 1789 was so significant that the slogans in 1908 were the same as those of 1789:

¹⁹ Necmettin Doğan, *Liberalism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire (1908-1914): A Sociological Perspective* (VDM Verlag, September 2008), 162.

²⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: Struggle for the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918*. (İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi, 2019).

“Hürriyet, Musavat, Uhuvvet”– or “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité” in the French original.²¹ This was a product of Westernization movements starting as early as the late 18th century in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman administration sent students to European capitals, primarily to Paris, to study the most recent scientific advancements, shaping the Young Turk *Weltanschauung* soon.²²

One of the movement’s leaders, Ahmed Rıza, later called the “father of liberals” (*ebu-l Ahrar*), had published underground papers for years to enlighten the Ottomans about the despotic nature of the Hamidian regime.²³ Ahmed Rıza moved to Paris in 1889 and struggled against the government because he insisted the social and political trajectory of the Ottoman Empire was miserable and suggested that reform and revolution were necessary.²⁴ The initial writings Ahmed Rıza published in the positivist journal *Revue Occidentale* in Paris address the necessity of improving the standard of education for the sake of the Ottoman Empire.²⁵ He was the one who offered the name ‘*Nizam ve Terakki*’ – a translation of August Comte’s motto *Ordre et Progrès*, when another important figure of the movement, Dr. Nazım, was sent to Paris to invite Ahmet Rıza to join the organization.²⁶ This reflects Ahmed Rıza and other founders of the Committee, such as Dr. Nazım, allegiance to positivism. They claimed that an extensive moral and mental transformation would be the fundamental principle of Westernization.

²¹ Mehmet Ö. Alkan, *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce 1, Cumhuriyet’e Devreden Düşünce Mirası: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi* (İletişim Yayıncılık A.Ş., İstanbul, 2021), 277.

²² Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1995), 7-8.

²³ Erdal Kaynar, The Logic of Enlightenment and the Realities of Revolution: Young Turks after the Young Turk Revolution, in *The Young Turk Revolution and the Ottoman Empire: The Aftermath of 1908*. ed. by Noemi-Levy Aksu and François Goergeon (I.B. Tauris, March 2017), 43.

²⁴ Ahmed Rıza, *Anılar* (Yeni Gün Haber Ajansı Basın ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., Haziran 2001).

²⁵ Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri 1895-1908* (İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları , Ankara, 1964), 129.

²⁶ Stefano Taglia, *Intellectuals, and Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Young Turks on the challenges of modernity* (Soas/Routledge Studies on The Middle East, 2017), 30.

Positivism had a significant effect on Abdullah Cevdet as well.²⁷ He saw religion as one of the main barriers to social progress, indicating that science should be in Ottoman society.²⁸ Like Ahmet Rıza, Abdullah Cevdet sought a solution in European civilizations. However, it is necessary to emphasize what those Young Turks mean by suggesting European nations. They saw European cultures as synonymous with contemporary science that the Ottoman Empire should embrace.²⁹ In 1914, Abdullah Cevdet asserted in *İctihad*, “There is only one civilization: European civilization. Therefore, we must borrow Western civilization with its rose and thorn.”³⁰ Abdullah Cevdet often pondered how Muslims could not benefit from Western civilization. He claimed that Muslims were attacked and humiliated because they lacked education and were lazy.³¹ Abdullah Cevdet argued that all reforms should help improve people’s intellectual level in Ottoman society.³²

Prince Sabahaddin is another figure shaping the intellect of the early Young Turks. Abdullah Cevdet, for instance, admired Prince Sabahaddin as much as he parallels in some respects due to his harsh criticism.³³ Sabahaddin aimed to switch from a communitarian to an individualist society in the Ottoman Empire and embraced the idea of liberty.³⁴ As Ahmed Rıza and Abdullah Cevdet, Sabahaddin offered that the Western world represents a technological civilization.³⁵ He articulated his views in the newspaper *Terakki*, which the Young Turks began to publish in 1906. He stated, “Since

²⁷ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasi Düşünür Olarak Doktor Abdullah Cevdet ve Dönemi* (Üçdal Neşriyat, İstanbul, 1981).

²⁸ Necmettin Doğan, *Liberalism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire*, 67.

²⁹ Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 18.

³⁰ Abdullah Cevdet, “Şime-i Muhabbet,” *İctihad*, January 29, 1914.

³¹ Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri*, 172.

³² See Mümtaz Turhan, *Garplılaşmanın Neresindeyiz* (Altınordu, 2015).

³³ Cavit Orhan Tütengil, *Prens Sabahattin*, (Geçit Yayınları, 1953), 222.

³⁴ Stefano Taglia, *Intellectuals and Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 89. See Prens Sabahattin, “*Türkiye Nasıl Kurtulabilir*” (Bilgesu Yayıncılık, 2021).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

we established relations with Western civilization, an intellectual renaissance has occurred; before this relationship, our society lacked any intellectual life.”³⁶ Hence, like many other members of the Young Turks, Prince Sabahaddin also associated the progress of the Ottoman Empire with establishing closer relations with Western civilizations and adopting their developments and ideas.

Accordingly, all these shared positivism and liberal thought illustrate the Young Turks’ adherence to modernist and Western principles. They claimed that positivism had prepared the ground for Ottomans to be a component of Western progress.³⁷ Hence, Young Turks considered themselves the heirs of the Enlightenment project and partners of liberal Europe.³⁸ They pushed the Ottoman Government to carry out Western institutions.³⁹ Consequently, they soon prioritized establishing modern educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire.

2.2. The Young Turk Approach to Western Education

Because the Ottoman Empire considered education a key to transforming people's state of mind, education became not only a political and religious concern but also a matter of philosophy and mentality. A significant struggle on the education issue occurred over the necessity of altering the old worldview and replacing it with a new mindset and its institutions.⁴⁰ It would be valid to say that education has been integral to the Ottoman statesman’s mission since the *Tanzimat* reforms.⁴¹ The liberal and

³⁶ Mehmed Sabahaddin, “Gençlerimize Mektublar: İntibah-I Fikrimiz,” *Terakki*, no. 1, April 1906, 1.

³⁷ Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri*, 160.

³⁸ Kaynar, *The Logic of Enlightenment and the Realities of Revolution*, 44.

³⁹ Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition*, 17.

⁴⁰ Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi*, Atatürk Kültür, Dil Ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayinlari, VII.Dizi- Sa.94, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, Ankara, 1991, IV

⁴¹ Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains*, 94.

secular European ideals influenced reformers' vision during the Tanzimat era (1839-1876). During this period, the most crucial instrument for Westernization and preserving the territorial and political unity of the Ottoman Empire was a secular, liberal, and modern educational system.⁴²

However, the Hamidian era in the Ottoman Empire (1876-1909) represented the contradictions of this notion of education. While the educational policies of Sultan Abdülhamid demonstrated an increase in the quantity of public and foreign schools, he implemented sanctions on those educational institutions. The Sultan attempted to control and pressurize teachers, books, and curricula and tried restricting the new ideas shaping students' minds.⁴³ While the number of schools increased and newly established, such as *Asker-i Tibbiye* or *Mekteb-i Hukuk-i Şahane*, there has also been an increase in the number of religious courses in schools.⁴⁴ Hence, despite a degree of continuity in the educational policies, the ideals of *Tanzimat* were moved away and ignored during the Hamidian regime.⁴⁵

Besides, the first fifteen years of the 20th century were when education was transformed, the old school system was discussed among the authorities, and the governments built contemporary educational methods.⁴⁶ This notion, once again, came to the agenda of Ottoman officials during the Second Constitutional Period. Young Turks rejected Hamidian notions and embraced only the Western and modern education system in the Ottoman Empire. Positivist ideas had already shaped the Young Turks'

⁴² Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi*, VIII.

⁴³ Yahya Akyüz, *Türk Eğitim Tarihi (Başlangıçtan 1982'ye)*, Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Yayınları, No:114, Ankara, 1982, 151.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Betül Başaran, *American Schools and the Development of Ottoman Educational Policies During the Hamidian Period: A Reinterpretation*, 205.

⁴⁶ See: Mustafa Ergün, *İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Eğitim Hareketleri (1908-1914)* (Ocak Yayınları: Ankara, 1996).

mentality, and they approached modern education in the Ottoman Empire with the influence of Western values.

During the last days of the Second Constitutional Period, Muallim Cevdet, an Ottoman pedagogue, harshly condemned the Young Turks' educational system for ignoring and abandoning customs and "oriental" (*şarki*) values.⁴⁷ Young Turks refer to this new mentality as "*Garbi*," which is "Western" or "occidental," in contrast to "*şarki*," which is "Eastern" or "oriental."⁴⁸ A Scottish Orientalist, Elias John Wilkinson Gibb, asserted that the principles they represent are at the core of the true and living faith of the regenerated people.⁴⁹ According to Gibb, in Western Europe, the old dogmatic Christianity was profoundly shocked by the popularization of science and the broad spread of knowledge. Islam has driven the old dogmatic Mohammedanism to the background with the universal distribution of education among all classes and genders.⁵⁰ A large group of Young Turks underwent Hamidian education during their childhood and embraced European principles of positivism while treating Eastern Islamic culture with mere contempt.⁵¹

The concept of "education of the elite" was dominant among Young Turks. There was a famous slogan: "Science is the religion of elites, whereas religion is the science of the masses."⁵² This catchphrase was a symbol that reflected the Young Turks' approach to education. Emrullah Efendi (1859-1914) was the most important representative of this trend. As a graduate of *Mülkiye*, Emrullah Efendi worked in different directorates of education under Hamidian rule for twenty years.⁵³ The CUP

⁴⁷ Somel, 186.

⁴⁸ Hanioglu, 10.

⁴⁹ E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry* (London, 1907), 19.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 20.

⁵¹ Somel, 187.

⁵² Hanioglu, 201.

⁵³ He was also the president of Mektebi Sultani (Galatasaray High School) for a very short time.

government appointed Emrullah Efendi twice as the Director of Education in 1910 and 1911, respectively. As a prominent member of the CUP, Emrullah Efendi shaped education policies and introduced the concept of education of the elite under his theory of “*Tuba Ağacı Nazariyesi*.”⁵⁴ According to his theory, educational reform should have started from higher education. Considering the country's needs, Emrullah Efendi believed that higher education institutions should have been opened first and reached an advanced level of education. Thus, as the number of educated people increased, it would become more accessible for the public to benefit from education.⁵⁵

There was also a group of people among Young Turks who saw the reason for Ottoman backwardness as to the structure of the society. The most prominent supporter of this movement, in Turkish called *Meslek-i İctimai Akımı*, was Prince Sabahaddin. He pointed to American society as ideal, and the Ottoman Empire should have taken the Americans as a role model in educating people.⁵⁶ He argued that education in American schools would improve students’ personal development.⁵⁷ Sabahaddin was not the only person supporting the American model of education. Ethem Nejad, who had to escape to Europe while working as a journalist and later found himself in the United States, was also impressed by American schools and education.⁵⁸ During the Great War, Ethem Nejad worked in different directorates of education throughout the Ottoman Empire, such as in Adana, İzmir, and Eskişehir, and observed that the Ottomans needed assistance from the United States to build a Western education.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Ergün, *İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Eğitim Hareketleri*, 42.

⁵⁵ To see more on this: Ebubekir Keklik, “Maarif Nazırı Emrullah Efendi ve Tuba Ağacı Nazariyesi: Eğitim Reformuna Nereden Başlamalı?” *Journal of Institute of Social Sciences*, Volume 11, Issue 2, November 2020: 79-96.

⁵⁶ Ergün, *İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Eğitim Hareketleri*, 53.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 165.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 140.

A more popular actor among Young Turks who shaped the attitude toward education was Tevfik Fikret. Fikret was a graduate of the Galatasaray Lycée, where he could embrace all aspects of the mentality of the Young Turks. He was one of the founders of the daily *Tanin*, the organ of the CUP. Fikret believed that the task of his generation was to replace the Muslim outlook in favor of the Western through a secular system of education.⁶⁰ Fikret also had direct contact with American missionary educators, making him a great example of understanding the Young Turks' attitude towards Americans and their educational institutions. He worked as a Professor at Robert College for almost twenty years (1896-1915). Therefore, it was inevitable that Americans would influence Tevfik Fikret's perspective on schooling and education. Fikret provided essential provisions for Ottoman national education and training needs throughout his observations and experiences at Robert College.⁶¹ He intended to open a private school named "New School" based on the American education model, and it would be constructed on one of the Bosphorus hills in a wooded region. Even though his project could not be implemented because the money could not be collected, it was a clear indicator of the transformation of perspective to education.⁶²

Thus, Young Turks hardly implemented their educational policies, but they still aimed to improve the education system, which aligned with their mentality. During a meeting of Young Turks in Paris, one of the founders, Ibrahim Temo, proposed his suggestions for changing primary education curricula. However, a surprising response came from Ahmed Rıza to Temo at the same meeting. Ahmed Rıza replied that Temo's proposal was not different from Abdulhamid's policy on educational reforms.⁶³ The

⁶⁰ John Freely, *A History of Robert College, Volume I* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000), 157.

⁶¹ Ibid., 171.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ İbrahim Temo, *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyetinin Teşekkülü ve Hidemat-I Vataniye ve İnkılab-I Milliye Hatıralarım* (Mecidiye, 193), 165.

Young Turks needed to follow a more radical and different path from what the Sultan had already suggested. What Young Turks followed differently became their attitude toward non-Muslim institutions, mainly missionary schools.

2.3 Missionary Existence in the Ottoman Lands

You will survey with earnest attention the various tribes and classes which dwell in that land and the surrounding countries.... What can be done for the Jews? What for the pagans? What for the Mohammedans? What for Christians? What for the people in Palestine? What for those in Egypt, in Syria, in Armenia, in other countries to which your inquiry may be extended?⁶⁴

In 1819, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) instructed two missionaries, Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons, to establish the first Protestant missions in the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁵ This instruction illustrates the missionaries' principle and reflects the ABCFM's careful and strategic approach when initiating its operations in Ottoman lands.⁶⁶ The missionaries asserted that Palestine and Syria were first recognized as lands with peculiar claims upon Christians, and the Jews were about to return to their ancestral home if Ottomans had not put obstructions in their way.⁶⁷ In other words, the Ottomans' control of Christian holy lands served as the missionaries' central source of motivation. According to missionaries, the Ottomans embraced the grounds of the Bible.⁶⁸ Concerning these facts, Istanbul was one of the

⁶⁴ James Levi Barton, *Daybreak in Turkey* (The Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1908), 119-120.

⁶⁵ See Ayşe Aksu, *Osmanlı'da İki Amerikalı Misyone: Levi Parsons ve Pliny Fisk'in Anadolu ve Kudüs Seyahat Raporları (1819-1825)* (Dergah Yayınları, 2015).

⁶⁶ Barton, 120.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁶⁸ Christian missionaries referred to Anatolia as "Bible Land". Therefore, it was important for Christians to reclaim the land via missionary work. See Hacer Bahar, *From Empire to Republic: The Role of American Missionaries in US-Ottoman Empire Relations and Their Educational Legacy* (Peter Lang, 2019).

ideal locations to start a mission since it occupies the most strategic position of any city in Europe and dominates both the European and Asiatic sides of the Bosphorus.⁶⁹ More importantly, the Ottoman Empire and its capital were Islam's political and religious heartland. All Christians of different races could live in the Turkish Empire. Starting a mission work here meant American missionaries would begin their work at the fountainhead.⁷⁰

Accordingly, in 1831, William Goodall went to Istanbul as the first American missionary at the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The most remarkable aspect of the *Tanzimat* for the Ottomans was that it prepared a mentality to implement American institutions and embrace their ideas.⁷¹ When American missionaries arrived in Ottoman territories, there was practically no modern education throughout the empire. Real reform could have only been introduced into the country by inaugurating various education systems.⁷² Hence, William Goodall initiated the idea of American schooling, which became so popular that Sultan Mahmud II asked him to organize some government schools with the help of the newly established American Legation.⁷³ However, Ottoman Sultans' positive attitude toward establishing missionary schools did not last long. In the nineteenth century, Ottoman Sultans prohibited foreign missionaries from proselytizing Muslims, and consequently, the missionaries realized that they could only serve Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Barton, 87.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 96-97.

⁷¹ Halide Edib Adivar, *Türkiye 'de Şark-Garp ve Amerikan Tesiri* (Can Yayınları, 2009), 115.

⁷² Barton, 181.

⁷³ Bayard Dodge, "American Educational and Missionary Efforts in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 401, America and the Middle East, May 1972, 16.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

The main problem was that Americans knew little about the Middle East at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Ottoman Empire citizens knew even less about the United States and missionary work. The missions gave Americans an international mindset and a curiosity about the Ottoman Empire. American missionaries started to learn about the Ottomans' modernization attempts and the progress of the reform movement. Indeed, intellectual and social developments in the Ottoman Empire encouraged American missionaries to implement the idea of establishing schools and colleges.⁷⁵ As educational institutions opened, the scope of American activities in the Ottoman land expanded. The Ottoman government started to contribute to establishing American schools by allowing them throughout its territories starting in the 1830s.⁷⁶ Thus, at the beginning of missions in Ottoman Turkey, all classes were suspicious of the missionaries and opposed all school buildings; however, ultimately, many prominent Turkish officials turned to missionaries for assistance, who had resided in the country for many years and were often considered to have a solid knowledge of local politics.⁷⁷

However, the period from the accession of Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1876 witnessed turbulent times for missionary existence.⁷⁸ Since Ottoman officials considered, for example, Robert College to be an openly Protestant school, they were concerned that those schools and institutions might eventually harm Muslim students.⁷⁹ Therefore, the Sultan put missionary schools under close government surveillance.⁸⁰ The 1869 Regulation on Public Education had already constituted the principal legal

⁷⁵ Frances Kazan, *Halide Edib ve Amerika*, 17.

⁷⁶ Hacer Bahar, *From Empire to Republic*, 38.

⁷⁷ Barton, 213-17.

⁷⁸ Andreas M. Kazamias, *Education and the Quest for Modernity in Turkey* (The University of Chicago Press), 79.

⁷⁹ Orlin Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti. Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society (1863-1923)* (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayinevi, İstanbul, 2014), 101.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 103.

basis for the government's treatment of American schools in the Ottoman Empire.⁸¹ Moreover, the 1876 Constitution declared that the Ottoman government would regulate all educational institutions within the Empire.⁸² Therefore, by employing his legislative authority, Sultan Abdülhamid attempted to approach the existence of missionaries within the boundaries of the law.⁸³

Besides, the Sultan's attitude towards the American schools was highly suspicious and gloomy. In 1893, Sultan Abdülhamid requested information regarding the current situation with the American schools within the Ottoman Empire. Then, the Ministry of Education collected the information from all provinces and presented a report to the Sultan.⁸⁴ Since the first report mainly provided the number of schools and students attending American schools, Zühdü Paşa's second report, which was more comprehensive, was issued about a year later.⁸⁵ The report noted that American schools spread throughout the Ottoman Empire like "an epidemic" (*illet-i sariye*).⁸⁶ According to the Minister of Education, the primary aims of those schools were not only spreading Protestantism but also confusing the minds of Muslim children by imposing their intellectual influences.⁸⁷ Accordingly, Zühtü Paşa suggested immediate action to prevent the employment of non-Ottoman citizens in those schools and to allow the establishment of new ones only in areas in need of education.⁸⁸ Consequently, two years later, The 1896 Instructions Concerning the Duties of Directors of Education in the Imperial Provinces justified the Minister's suggestions and observations. The primary goal was to discourage American missionaries from building new institutions and

⁸¹ Başaran, 205.

⁸² Kazamias., 80.

⁸³ Başaran., 205.

⁸⁴ Yahya Akyüz, *Türk Eğitim Tarihi*, 155.

⁸⁵ Başaran, 186-190.

⁸⁶ Başaran, 190.

⁸⁷ Akyüz, 156.

⁸⁸ Başaran, 191.

schools.⁸⁹ The Ottoman administration created a tremendous obstacle for American missionaries in spreading their works throughout the Empire. As George Washburn pointed out: “If there were no such opposition on the part of the Government, we should have a large number of Turkish students, and no doubt the time will soon come when this policy will be abandoned.”⁹⁰ According to George Washburn, Ottomans eventually understood the deficiency in their education and schooling system and established many Western, modern schools within the Empire.⁹¹

Ultimately, the Young Turks, as heirs of Enlightenment and liberal education, also considered themselves the successors of the *Tanzimat*.⁹² Therefore, between 1909 and 1918, the Ottoman Empire encountered a dramatic resurgence of intellectual and political activity and the achievement of freedom.⁹³ This freedom was mainly felt among American missionaries. When the Young Turks realized the need for Western education, they continued to seek help and guidance from American missionaries.⁹⁴ Some missionaries reported that after the 1908 Revolution, the Ottoman Government changed its attitude positively toward them.⁹⁵ John Leishman, an American Ambassador to Istanbul from 1901 to 1909, advocated that the new government not only caused the development of Ottoman society but also brought about relief for American citizens and missionaries.⁹⁶ Furthermore, Charles Roden Buxton, a British philanthropist, visited the Empire twice before and after the 1908 Revolution. He was one of the observing the transformation of attitudes in the Ottoman government. He reported that many students have applied to study at Robert College since the Young

⁸⁹ Başaran, 205.

⁹⁰ Sabev, 106.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Adıvar, *Türkiye’de Şark-Garp ve Amerikan Tesiri*, 120.

⁹³ Akyüz, 172.

⁹⁴ George Washburn, *Fifty Years in Constantinople and Recollections of Robert College*, 1909, 17-18.

⁹⁵ Bahar, 51.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Turk Revolution.⁹⁷ Indeed, the number of students attending those institutions increased under the Young Turks' rule. It ranged from 13,095 in 1880 to 25,992 in 1913.⁹⁸ This increase was because of the education that American missionaries provided. As American schools expanded, the Young Turks observed that non-Muslim children could get a better education than those attending traditional schools in the Empire. The Ottomans were convinced of the success of American schools and appreciated the education they provided for children.⁹⁹ They praised American institutions and prepared the masses for the proper use and appreciation of more considerable liberty.¹⁰⁰

A significant reflection of this freedom was the American College for Girls, founded in 1871 by the Christian Women's Board of Missions. While few people in the Ottoman Empire were familiar with the United States' history, structure, and mindset, the Girls' College students directly interacted through a few missionary institutions up to the end of the Great War.¹⁰¹ Halide Edib belonged to this minority group of people. She was the first Muslim student to graduate from this College for Girls. This opportunity appeared for Halide Edib because her father, Edib Bey, had a liberal mindset and was in an elite circle of rulers of the Empire.¹⁰² Thus, the Edib family was one of the groups within society that first experienced intellectual transformation in the Ottoman Empire. Halide Edib had an opportunity to read the history of different religions, primarily Christianity, because of the influence of American College.¹⁰³ The library at the College was very convenient for learning about Christianity and Americans. Moreover, the school professors were influential in Edib's intellectual life.

⁹⁷ Charles Roden Buxton, *Turkey in Revolution* (Fisher Unwin, 1909), 184.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Caleb Frank Gates, *Not to Me Only* (Princeton University Press), 237.

¹⁰⁰ Barton, 298.

¹⁰¹ Adivar, *Türkiye'de Şark-Garp ve Amerikan Tesiri*, 161.

¹⁰² See Halide Edib Adivar, *Mor Salkımlı Ev* (Can Yayınları, 2022).

¹⁰³ Adivar, *Mor Salkımlı Ev*, 135-36.

Dr. Mary Mills Patrick was one of them. She was the founder and the president of the Girls' College. She influenced not only Edib's vision but also played a role in Edib's formulation of a particular view of the United States.¹⁰⁴ Edib saw American missionaries as people who sought to uphold and disseminate a morality emphasizing simplicity, discipline, and work.¹⁰⁵ Following these values that she embraced, Edib changed her attention to education reform and lived in Syria and Lebanon after 1910. She journeyed with her friends who had graduated from American schools in Anatolia and Istanbul and built relationships with missionaries serving in Lebanon.¹⁰⁶ She admired that Americans made outstanding progress in Beirut and had a self-sacrificing lifestyle there.¹⁰⁷ Halide Edib's past leads her to get closer relations with American missionaries and the Young Turks. She married Salih Zeki, a Mathematician who supported the positivist ideals of other intellectuals of the Young Turks. Her marriage was instrumental in building relations with the intellectual wing of the Young Turks movement.¹⁰⁸ Halide Edib mentions that the Young Turks' cooperation with the Christians was due to the importance they gave to the field of education.¹⁰⁹ Edib said the only main difference between the Young Turks and *Tanzimat* intellectuals was that the Young Turks wanted more radical and faster results.¹¹⁰ Following this, they acted highly pragmatically regarding the missionaries and their institutions. The Young Turks embraced various modern educational ideals of missionaries, such as a mixed-sex education system, and supported non-Muslim foreign professors.¹¹¹ For example, during the Great War, Talat Pasha visited Halide Edib and asked her to convince

¹⁰⁴ Kazan, 28.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰⁶ Edib lived in Beirut from 1910 to 1918. Ibid., 32.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁹ Adivar, *Amerikan Tesiri*, 119.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Adivar, *Amerikan Tesiri*, 139.

Elizabeth Fry, a British educator, to establish schools for girls in the Empire.¹¹² This example clearly shows that the Young Turks saw missionary schools as models to modernize education in the Ottoman Empire. They tried to take advantage of former non-Muslim educators and alums of these schools to establish similar institutions in the Ottoman lands.

As a result, the Young Turk Revolution was more than a political event; it was a social, cultural, and intellectual revolution for the Ottoman Empire.¹¹³ The revolution caused the elimination of a political system and aimed to transform Ottoman society to fit Western values. The popular view among Young Turks was that education along modern lines was essential to save the Ottoman Empire from a terminal decline. They emphasized reforming education, which they often considered the greatest weakness of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁴ American missionaries emerged as a model for Ottoman officials to modernize the education and schooling system within the Empire. Thus, the Ottoman Empire reconstructed its attitudes and policies toward the American missionaries and their schools between 1908-18.

¹¹² Adivar, *Mor Salkımlı Ev*, 218.

¹¹³ Kazamias, 17.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 101.

CHAPTER III

BUILDING TRUST: AMERICAN MISSIONARIES AND THE YOUNG TURKS (1908-1914)

3.1. The Revolution

If I had boarded a comet and were riding on the cowcatcher around the periphery of the solar system, I could hardly be in more of a whirl than I am with the rush of events.¹¹⁵

These lines belong to an American missionary who witnessed people stunning and shouting the new words of liberty in celebrations in streets, mosques, and churches after declaring the Second Constitution in the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁶ Americans interpreted the restoration of the Constitution of 1876 to mean full civil and religious liberty. Missionaries claimed that the awful sense of repression and fear was gone.¹¹⁷ They asserted that censorship was removed from the Ottoman press, and barriers between races and religions were entirely broken.¹¹⁸ Hence, American missionaries, who had been actively operating in Ottoman lands for almost ninety years, now witnessed radical changes awaiting them.

The lives of American Christians in the Ottoman Empire and their relationships with the Ottomans deteriorated with the policies of Sultan Abdülhamid. According to Caleb Frank Gates, the President of Robert College, the Sultan restricted Turkish

¹¹⁵ William Ellsworth Strong, *The Story of the American Board: An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (The Pilgrim Press, 1910), 407.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

students from attending American institutions, primarily Robert College, because of his fear that students would be drawn away from their national and religious affiliations by their education.¹¹⁹ Therefore, when Americans and Ottomans realized after 1908 that the thirty-two-year-long reign of repression was ending, they shouted together, sang together, and embraced one another to celebrate the freedom ahead around Istanbul.¹²⁰ Therefore, American missionaries proclaimed a liberal future with the participation of all parts of the Ottoman society who were against the despotic regime of Abdülhamid II.

As the revolution greatly influenced missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, transforming Ottoman political and social life also made an impression in the United States. On a Saturday morning in August 1908, the *Boston Evening Transcript* gave the headline “The Freeing of Turkey,” which referred to a recent revolution in the Ottoman Empire.¹²¹ The news mentioned a revolt that astonished old American residents of the empire. As a former President of the American missionary institution Robert College in Istanbul, George Washburn perfectly fits the description of “an old resident.”

From 1878 to 1903, as a President of Robert College, Washburn was in close contact with the local population and the Ottoman ruling class: sultans, the Grand Viziers, and bureaucrats. Despite the unstable political environment and pressure on missionary existence in the Ottoman Empire, Washburn maintained peaceful relations with the Ottoman officials. In the *Boston Evening Transcript*, he conveyed his observations concerning the CUP, which would eventually take the Ottoman Empire's absolute rule after dethroning Sultan Abdülhamid II on 27 April 1909. It was not the first change that

¹¹⁹ Caleb Frank Gates, *Not to Me Only*, 182.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹²¹ “The Freeing of Turkey- A Revolt That Most Astonished Old Residents,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, Boston Mass. 1870-1941, Library of Congress Online Catalog, August 13, 1908.

Washburn had experienced. He had witnessed two sultans deposed before. Now, the Young Turks had taken control of the Empire from Abdülhamid, who had come to be regarded by Turks and Christians with intense hatred, by opening up the Second Constitutional Period.¹²²

The American people, diplomats, and officials of the United States praised this transformation occurring in the Ottoman Empire. On August 3, 1908, the Secretary of State of the United States expressed “the sympathetic interest of President Theodore Roosevelt toward the representative government of the Ottoman Empire and the President’s cordial hope that this vital step would aid in enhancing the prosperity of the great Ottoman nation.”¹²³ After Mehmed Reşad acceded to the throne, President Roosevelt also assured him of “the friendship of the government and the people of the United States.”¹²⁴

Although all these actions may seem just as diplomatic niceties from the United States to the Ottoman Government, Americans had shown a practical interest in the Ottoman transformation to improve bilateral relations after 1908. The reports and diplomatic correspondences among United States officials demonstrate American interest in changing foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. In January 1910, the American Consulate General in Beirut noted to Washington that July 23, 1908, gave Turkey its constitution, guaranteeing a “freer and fuller development of the country’s

¹²² Historical Writings: Washburn’s Article on the Revolt of 1908, MS#1454, Box 51, Folder 7, Columbia University Libraries Archival Collections, Robert College records, 1858-2018, Boğaziçi University, İstanbul

¹²³ The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman. Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 8, 1908.

¹²⁴ The President of the United States to the Sultan of Turkey. Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 7, 1909.

resources along modern lines.”¹²⁵ The official report continued by touching upon the significant changes in intellectual conditions of the Ottoman Empire and calling the attention of Americans to “the wonderful revival in the Near East.”¹²⁶ Americans organized seminars and events in the United States regarding recent developments in the Ottoman Empire. George Edward White, as one of the members of the ABCFM, was invited several times to speak about the progress of the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁷ According to White, “the new era in Turkey has come” was the first sentence articulated and the keynote of the whole address.¹²⁸

Americans insisted that establishing a constitutional regime in the Ottoman Empire opened the door to great commercial and cultural opportunities that the United States must enjoy.¹²⁹ These opportunities mainly included American missionary institutions, primarily schools and colleges. Accordingly, it was in 1909 that Robert College received one and three-quarter million dollars at the bequest of John Stewart Kennedy, President of the Board of Trustees, for the past fourteen years. The trustees decided to utilize this large sum of money for the growth and development of Robert College.¹³⁰ This capital increase for schools was a clear sign of the eagerness of the US to spread its sphere of influence by enlarging missionary activities.

The willingness to increase economic investment in the Ottoman Empire continued in the early 1910s. The Taft administration focused on relations with the Ottoman Empire as one of the American foreign policy objectives. The President of the United

¹²⁵ From the American Consulate General in Bierut, Syria. January 24th. 1910. National Archives Microfilm Publications. Microcopy No. 353. Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-29. Roll 4, 867. 00 Political Affairs. Washington 1961.

¹²⁶ From the American Consulate General in Bierut, Syria. January 24th. 1910

¹²⁷ George Edward White, *Adventuring with Anatolia* (Herald-Register Publishing Company, Iowa, 1940), 69.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Memorandum: Division of Near Eastern Affairs, April 28, 1910.

¹³⁰ John Cecil Guckert, *The Adaptation of Robert College to Its Turkish Environment, 1900-1927* (The Ohio State University, 1968), 73.

States, William Howard Taft, directly emphasized several times in his annual messages the importance of the transformation of the Ottoman Empire for the United States. In December 1910, President Taft expressed his desire to improve bilateral relations and contribute to the Empire's more extensive economic and commercial development due to its new regime.¹³¹ The President continued his speech by stressing the rapid development and progress of the Ottoman Empire, which would make the relations even more significant.¹³² Thus, government officials and missionaries closely observed developments and progress in the Ottoman Empire.

One of the examples of closer observations of Americans occurred in 1910. On October 18, the CUP opened the Congress for its third year of political life under the presidency of Halil Bey, the chief of its political party at the Chamber of Deputies. A month later, the US officials reported to Washington that in this Congress, Halil Bey confirmed the preparation of future Ottoman education concerning science and arts and gave a broader scope of activity to workers of civilization and progress.¹³³ According to American officials, the Turkish Government might be glad to avail itself of the services of a competent American educational authority as an advisor to the Ministry of Public Education.¹³⁴ American advisory to the Turkish Government would be significant in reorganizing the public schools and the general education system in the Ottoman Empire. According to Americans, the Ottoman Empire needed modern schools and people who should have graduated from those modern institutions that Americans would establish. The members of the ABCFM, which had hitherto dealt almost only with minority groups in the Ottoman lands, considered themselves tasked

¹³¹ William Howard Taft, *The Collected Works of William Howard Taft*. Volume IV: *Presidential Messages to Congress*, ed. by David H. Burton (Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 2002), 9.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³³ Translation from the "La Turquie," Proclamation of the Committee of Union and Progress. November 19, 1910, Constantinople.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

with the construction of a democratic civil society and the education of their elites.¹³⁵

As William Strong, one of the missionaries at the time, asserted while referring to the Ottomans: “The wondering nation looked on with new eyes of hope.”¹³⁶ Indeed, one of the main agendas of the Ottoman officials was the educational development and intellectual progress in the direction of Western civilizations. With the education and schooling that they provided, Americans served as a model for Ottomans towards this end.

In light of these developments, American missionaries began to bring new opportunities for their institutions and the public. Reaching and addressing the Muslim population appeared to be a burning question discussed among the ABCFM members.¹³⁷ Indeed, after 1908, American missionaries sought to educate young people from all social and ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire and aimed to increase educational investments.¹³⁸ At a meeting of the American Board, Caleb Gates proposed that Robert College should open an engineering school since the Ottoman Empire’s resources were underdeveloped and needed qualified engineers to build railroads, bridges, and highways.¹³⁹ Caleb Gates later interpreted his accepted proposal as a natural outcome of the free and prosperous environment that the Young Turks had initiated.¹⁴⁰ Consistently, George Washburn states, “The revolution of July 1908 was the triumphant of a process of enlightenment which has been going on for many years among the Turks.”¹⁴¹ Hence, missionaries correlated the spread of their activities with

¹³⁵ Hans Lukas Kieser, *Iskalanmış Barış: Doğu Vilayetleri’nde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet, 1839-1938* (İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 384.

¹³⁶ Strong, *The Story of the American Board*, 408.

¹³⁷ Kieser, 430.

¹³⁸ Kieser, 431.

¹³⁹ Gates, 198.

¹⁴⁰ Arzu Nurdoğan, Robert Koleji Mühendislik Okulu (1912), *Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 26, no.1 (2009): 209.

¹⁴¹ Orlin Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti. Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society (1863-1923)* (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2014), 240.

the progress of the Ottoman intellectual environment after the revolution. As Lynn Adolphus Scipio, who also served Robert College for over thirty years, indicated, the Turks asserted the need for technically educated people, and missionary schools offered a great opportunity they did not want to miss.¹⁴² Hence, the change in attitude toward education among Ottoman officials would also influence American interests by increasing the prestige of the American model of education and schooling.¹⁴³ In another saying, American missionary presence in the Ottoman Empire and the transformation in the Ottoman sense of education would serve a mutual interest from different senses for both states. For the CUP, the existence of American missionaries could present a modern system of education that served as a model in harmony with what they desired to establish. Besides, for Americans, this intellectual and political transformation of the Empire provided an excellent opportunity to prejudice the Ottoman public in favor of American missionaries and to protect and expand their work throughout the empire.

3.2. The Ottoman's Turn Toward the United States

American missionary institutions were under political pressure when the Young Turks took control of the Ottoman government. Sultan Abdülhamid insisted on trying to prevent the establishment of new missionary schools and strictly inspected the existing ones. On the other hand, the United States government was anxious about the inspections and the restrictions. In 1902, American Ambassador John Leishman stated that the President's wish was that the same tolerance the Ottomans gave French Medical Schools should also be shown to American missionary schools.¹⁴⁴ Americans demanded

¹⁴² Lynn A., Scipio, *My Thirty Years in Turkey* (New Hampshire: Richard E. Smith Publisher, Inc., 1995), 90.

¹⁴³ Translation from the "La Turquie".

¹⁴⁴ Şamil Mutlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Misyoner Okulları* (İstanbul: Gökkuşbu, 2005), 320.

tolerance and privilege; however, the Sublime Porte continued to pressure American missionaries' work until the CUP took control of the government.

Diplomatic correspondence between the US and the Ottoman Empire continued increasing during the CUP era. In December 1911, William Howard Taft declared that the Ottoman Empire came closer to increasing its relations with the United States.¹⁴⁵ This closeness was mainly grounded in the existence of American missionaries. After the declaration of the Second Constitution, the Young Turks announced that they would conduct education jointly between all Christian and Muslim students.¹⁴⁶ Although Young Turks did not wholly abandon inspecting the school programs, trust and tolerance gradually replaced the sanctions and restrictions on missionary institutions. Caleb Gates states, “The direction of educational affairs now centered on the Ministry of Education and was less subject to the whims of the sultan.”¹⁴⁷ The Porte decided to free all officially recognized missionary institutions from the restricted law governing associations. Additionally, the US Ambassador Oscar Straus succeeded in getting the CUP to act on a *ferman* for Beirut College and *irade* for constructing Robert College buildings.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, the change in the faith of American schools was dramatic. Americans interpreted these actions as the Ottoman government removing most of the barriers overnight and calling to congratulate missionaries on their progressive educational work.¹⁴⁹ This change in policy and attitude towards missionary institutions caused an increase in demand for American schools among the Ottoman public in a very short time.

¹⁴⁵ The Collected Works of William Howard Taft, December 6, 1910, 187.

¹⁴⁶ Mustafa Ergün, İkinci Meşrutiyet Devrinde Eğitim Hareketleri (1908-1914). Ocak Yayınları, Ankara, 1996, 355.

¹⁴⁷ Gates, 194.

¹⁴⁸ Ambassador Straus to the Secretary of State. September 1, 1910.

¹⁴⁹ Mary Mills Patrick, *A Bosphorus Adventure* (Stanford University Press: Stanford University, California, 1934), 135.

Although most foreign schools in the Ottoman Empire were French then, Americans indicated that the most demanded educational institutions belonged to missionaries.¹⁵⁰ Despite Christian domination, Muslim families sent their children to American schools. For instance, in the 1914-15 school year of Tarsus American School, 35 Muslim students enrolled.¹⁵¹ Starting from 1908, American schools were flooded with educational demands from Turkish students; as Mary Mills Patrick, the President of the Girls' College, pointed out, the government required twelve thousand educators to meet the demands of students.¹⁵² At once, all schools became crowded. Turkish applicants besieged the Girls' College, and the College had to reject many of the applications because of the lack of space.¹⁵³ A high Turkish official, speaking to a crowd of Armenians on the steps of Euphrates College, once said to William Strong:

Hitherto, only the Armenians have been able to avail themselves of the privileges of this college. We Turks have been forbidden to send our children here. That is all changed now, and we will share with you the enjoyment of what this institution offers to all who come within its doors." This was a critical sign of how the Young Turk's revolution affected public sentiment and substituted freedom for American missionaries.¹⁵⁴

The revolution and its outcomes also put new responsibilities on the American Board.¹⁵⁵ One of the most important goals was to solve girls' education problems in the Near East. Starting from the 1830s, the ABCFM opened new schools for girls in Bursa and İstanbul. At the end of the 19th century, the number of schools reached almost 20 all across Anatolia. However, mission schools for girls' education experienced an increased trend, especially after 1908.¹⁵⁶ On September 18, 1908, Prince Sabahaddin

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Allen Austin Bartholomew, *A History of Tarsus American School: 1888-1988* (Redhouse Press, İstanbul), 22.

¹⁵² Patrick, *A Bosphorus Adventure*, 136.

¹⁵³ Sabev, 240.

¹⁵⁴ Strong, 409.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Kieser, *İskalanmış Barış*, 457.

gave a speech to a crowd gathered on the Bosphorus in Bebek Park about the importance of girls' attendance at school, and many women enthusiastically welcomed this speech.¹⁵⁷ Three years later, Mary Mills Patrick interpreted this gathering as "Turkish patriots defend with great passion the necessity of Turkish women receiving higher education" and declared the increase in the number of Muslim girls attending American schools.¹⁵⁸ The American schools represented the fundamentals of Western education for the Ottoman public, and missionaries saw that the Muslim population rewarded their work.

The popularity of American schools arose immediately. There has been a significant increase in the number of students enrolled in American schools in Istanbul and Anatolia. Between 1908 and 1914, Americans could obtain licenses for opening new schools and spread their missions throughout the Empire.¹⁵⁹ Although missionaries could establish numerous schools under the Hamidian government, most were unlicensed and operated without being subject to inspection.¹⁶⁰ The estimated number of American schools was more than 250,¹⁶¹ while the estimated number of students within the Empire amounted to about 17,500 in 1900.¹⁶² Within a decade, this number increased to about 25,000.¹⁶³ In the 1914-15 school year, 260 students were enrolled in

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Mustafa Ergün, *İkinci Meşrutiyet Devrinde Eğitim Hareketleri*, 393.

¹⁶⁰ Since there were many unlicensed missionary institutions, it is difficult to indicate the exact number of American schools within Ottoman lands. A claim is that there were more than 400; see Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Anadolu'daki Amerika; Kendi Belgeleriyle 19.yy'da Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları* (İmge Yayınları, 2000). Another claim is that there were 266 American schools total; see Adnan Şişman, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde 20.yy Başlarında Amerikan Kültürel ve Sosyal Müesseseleri* (Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2015).

¹⁶¹ Şamil Mutlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Misyoner Okulları*, 221.

¹⁶² Betül Başaran, "American Schools and the Development of Ottoman Educational Policies During the Hamidian Period: A Reinterpretation," in *International Congress on Learning and Education in the Ottoman World. Proceedings*, ed. Ali Caksu (Istanbul, 12-15 April 1999).

¹⁶³ Ayşe Cebesoy Sarıalp, *A Panoramic View on the History of Turkish-American Relations 19th to 20th centuries* (Turkish-American University Association & Universities Cultural and Educational Foundation, January 2015), 45.

Tarsus American School despite the Great War.¹⁶⁴ A similar situation appeared in the American College of Beirut. In 1909-1910, there were 853 students, while the year before the First World War, the total enrolment increased to over 970.¹⁶⁵ Hence, American missionaries interpreted an increase in demand for American missionary schools, even among the Muslim population in the Empire, as astonishing.¹⁶⁶

Moreover, Ottomans and Americans could observe the most remarkable change in the number of students at Robert College. The 1908 Revolution directly impacted the enrollment process at Robert College, especially the following year of 1909-1910.¹⁶⁷ The number of Turkish students enrolled in Robert College doubled compared to the previous years.¹⁶⁸ Between 1866 and 1908, only 136 Turkish students enrolled in Robert College, and from 1908 to 1922, the number increased to 376.¹⁶⁹

In addition to the increase in enrolled students, there is a notable change in the occupation of fathers of Turkish students. This shows a transformation in the social structure of people attending American schools and provides a hint to understanding the state's influence on encouraging American education in the Ottoman Empire. Until 1908, only twenty percent of students came from the bureaucratic elites.¹⁷⁰ However, after 1908, almost half of Turkish students came from bureaucratic families, including Sublime Porte members, Deputies, Senators, and Imperial Court members.¹⁷¹ The CUP and its supporters' orientation toward Western education was the leading cause for this significant change and increase. As Keith Greenwood points out:

¹⁶⁴ Allen Austin Bartholomew, *A History of Tarsus American School*, 22.

¹⁶⁵ Bayard Dodge, *The American University of Beirut: A Brief History of the University and the lands it serves* (Khayat's: Beirut, 1958), 36.

¹⁶⁶ Bartholomew, 22.

¹⁶⁷ Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti*, 240.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ 32 Government Official, 10 Governor, 6 Sublime Porte, and 18 Officers. To see more: Sabev, 321.

¹⁷¹ 134 of 376. See Sabev, 321.

The success of the Young Turk movement led to an unprecedented demand for education along Western lines, and the relaxation of the taboos against attending foreign institutions made it natural for the parents of young Turkish children to utilize the several already existing schools in the country.¹⁷²

3.3. The Road to Turmoil: 1912-1914

Nonetheless, the lives of American missionaries under Constitutional rule have not always been without problems, and the period from the triumph of the CUP to the beginning of World War I also witnessed challenging times. However, Americans and Ottomans could manage bilateral relations despite turmoil and turbulence. The outbreak of the Balkan Wars significantly threatened American missionary existence in the Ottoman Empire. While the Ottoman government was striving for the state's survival, the primary concern of Americans was their missionary schools and colleges. President Taft has already declared political disinterestedness and neutrality concerning the Balkan Wars by emphasizing that this conflict is without direct political concern to the United States.¹⁷³ The President also mentioned that the central role of the United States would only be to take all necessary actions to safeguard American citizens and institutions.¹⁷⁴

The breakout of the First Balkan Wars coincided with the 50th Anniversary of Robert College's founding. There had been a plan to celebrate this jubilee by assembling alums and friends from different countries on Founder's Day, March 23. However, the outbreak of the war caused the college president, Caleb Frank Gates, to mark the occasion more modestly by simply presenting exercises on campus.¹⁷⁵ Gates'

¹⁷² Sabev, 241.

¹⁷³ The Collected Works of William Howard Taft, December 7, 1911, 186.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Gates, 205.

main concern was the possible conflict between the college students.¹⁷⁶ He asserted: “Their respective nations were at war. Students and teachers were being called for military service, and many were anxious to know the fate of their families.”¹⁷⁷ Students and teachers of American schools came from different religious backgrounds, ethnicities, and cultures. At Robert College in Istanbul, only 65 of 413 students were Turkish.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, it took much work for the schools and colleges to maintain their functions during the years of conflict in the Balkans.

The US Department of State immediately attempted to protect American schools in Üsküdar and Istanbul by sending a vessel to the shores of Bosphorus near the Robert College. Ambassador William Rockhill informed the State Department that Russia and France protected the Greek and Bulgarian pupils. Still, Americans were able to take refugees of any nationality if needed.¹⁷⁹ On November 8, 1912, the US State Department sent a telegram to the American Ambassador to France about the concerns over the possibility of chaotic conditions and the safety of Americans, many of whom were engaged in educational and missionary work.¹⁸⁰

While the US Government continued to increase the protection by supplying vessels on the Bosphorus in case of hostility, American missionaries were busy obtaining information about the current situation from Turkish authorities and maintaining peaceful relations with them. The most considerable responsibility

¹⁷⁶ Gates, 203.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ See the enrollment in Robert College by nationality (Table 2) in Orlin Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti: Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society (1863-1923)* (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayinevi 2014), 289.

¹⁷⁹ The American Ambassador to the Secretary of State. November 7, 1912.

¹⁸⁰ The Acting Secretary of State to the American Ambassador to France. November 8, 1912.

belonged to the President of Robert College, Caleb Frank Gates. He was the one who built relationships with the leading figures of the CUP.

The CUP administration again seized power with the *coup d'état* in January 1913 after the cabinet resigned in July 1912. Since then, the triumvirate of Talat, Enver, and Cemal Pashas treated Caleb Gates in a friendly and competent way. Enver Pasha and Caleb Gates frequently came together to discuss the problems connected with Robert College. Moreover, President Gates mentions that Enver Pasha has always treated him with exceptional kindness.¹⁸¹ During the Balkan Wars, Caleb Gates frequently sought assurance from Enver Pasha that it was for the well-being of American schools and pupils. Thus, the leaders of the CUP guaranteed that they would protect the College's interests by Enver saying to Gates that whatever they needed, he would be there for them.¹⁸²

The attitude of Enver Pasha indicates that as well as Americans appreciated the new Government of the Ottoman Empire, the CUP also praised the missionary existence. During a conversation with Mr. Herbert MacLachlan at İzmir, Enver Pasha warmly commended the service of American people and institutions to Turkey and declared that they had encouraged and inspired his associates and himself in undertaking the reform movement.¹⁸³ In this manner, while it would be unreasonable to assume that missionary work was one of the causes of this reform movement, it is impossible to disregard the mission's influence on intellectual and social development after 1908. This mutual influence and connections were essential in shaping the diplomacy between the US and the Ottoman Empire, starting from the Balkan Wars to

¹⁸¹ Gates, 190.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Strong, 408.

the end of World War I. These missionary connections, therefore, provided the possibility of peaceful policies between the two states.

3.4. A Newly Appointed Ambassador: Henry Morgenthau

This friendly approach of the CUP to Robert College and Caleb Gates continued with the newly appointed American Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau, in 1913. Following his involvement in President Woodrow Wilson's presidential campaign in 1912, the President assigned him as Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. At first, Wilson did not see Morgenthau's need to be assigned to the Ottoman Empire. However, Wilson's advisor, Colonel House, insisted that Morgenthau should be appointed as an Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire by emphasizing the need to observe the situation in the Empire.¹⁸⁴ Despite Wilson's reluctance, Colonel House convinced him to appoint Henry Morgenthau as the new Ambassador to Istanbul.

The morning after Morgenthau arrived in Istanbul, his first visitor was Dr. Caleb Gates.¹⁸⁵ Morgenthau continued visiting professors and college students during the following weeks. He talked long, for instance, with George Herbert Huntington's son-in-law, who was also one of the College's professors.¹⁸⁶ Morgenthau frequently called and participated in school activities at Robert College and the American College for Girls. He immediately built friendly relations with American missionaries, especially Prof. Gates and Dr. William Wheelock Peet.¹⁸⁷ He demonstrated his strong interest in

¹⁸⁴ Erol, 9.

¹⁸⁵ Henry Morgenthau, *The United States Diplomacy on the Bosphorus: The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau, 1913-1916* (London, Taderon Press, 2004), 4.

¹⁸⁶ George H. Huntington was a former missionary and educator at Robert College. See Morgenthau, *The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau*, 5.

¹⁸⁷ Dr. William W. Peet was the Treasurer of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).

the American missionary community in Istanbul in a very short time. Morgenthau's network, however, was not only with American missionaries. He built a network of relationships and became prominent in the Ottoman bureaucratic community, especially among the triumvirate of the CUP.

Morgenthau's colleagues settled his first meeting with the CUP leaders on December 22 at the British Embassy. The Grand Vizier and Talat Pasha were also there. Morgenthau prepared himself late for his first interview with Talat Pasha.¹⁸⁸ Some of Morgenthau's colleagues in the diplomatic corps assured him that although Enver Pasha was in control of the Turkish army, Talat Pasha oversaw maintaining the Young Turks in power.¹⁸⁹ Talat Pasha attended the diplomatic dinners and receptions, unlike Enver and Cemal. While Morgenthau described Talat as a gentle, honest patriot, Pasha took a step further and defined Morgenthau as pro-Turkish.¹⁹⁰ At the inauguration of Constantinople Woman's College, Morgenthau was there to represent the United States with the officials of the Young Turks. Furthermore, according to the President of Women's College, Mary Mills Patrick, the American Ambassador had won the Turkish Government's loyalty.¹⁹¹ Thus, Morgenthau established his network in the Capital and instituted diplomatic circles, primarily incorporated with Prof. Gates and Talat Pasha. Building these relations and connections on the eve of the Great War would enable them to work together to prevent potential conflict and eventually contribute to maintaining friendly relations between the United States and the Empire.

¹⁸⁸ Morgenthau, 11.

¹⁸⁹ Henry Morgenthau and French Strother, *All in A Lifetime* (Garden City New York, Doubleday Page & Company, 1922), 147.

¹⁹⁰ Morgenthau, 20.

¹⁹¹ Mary Mills Patrick, *Under Five Sultans* (New York & London, The Century Co., 1929), 252.

CHAPTER IV

MISSIONARY DIPLOMACY DURING WORLD WAR I

4.1. Navigating Challenges

On the eve of the Great War, there were new appointments in the Ottoman Cabinet. While Enver became the Minister of War, Cemal was in charge of public works, which, according to American officials, made the CUP Cabinet stronger than ever before.¹⁹² By referring to Enver and Cemal, the US Embassy in Istanbul reported to the Secretary of State in Washington DC, "They are both extreme radicals and pro-German in tendency."¹⁹³ Besides, on 27 March 1914, American officials interpreted the current political situation in the Ottoman Empire as acceptable. They reported that "the strongest and most prominent adherents of the CUP seem seriously intent upon the bringing about of much-discussed reforms at home, and to have temporarily put aside the intention of pursuing an adventurous foreign policy."¹⁹⁴

The United States continued to observe the situation more closely, as well as the growing concerns of Americans in the Ottoman Empire. On August 26, 1914, the *Evening Star* gave the headline "U.S. Is Watching Turkey."¹⁹⁵ The news mentioned the concern over the presence of American missionaries in case of a conflict between the British and the Ottomans; however, the American officials declared that there was no

¹⁹² From the American Embassy, Constantinople, to the Secretary of State Washington, January 17, 1914.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ From the American Embassy, Constantinople, to the Secretary of State Washington, March 27, 1914.

¹⁹⁵ "Turkey Outraged by Britain's Act," *The Evening Star*, August 26, 1914.

practical cause for alarm for missionaries.¹⁹⁶ The news emphasized that Ambassador Morgenthau closely observed the developments and would continue to follow if there were any threats to Americans.¹⁹⁷

However, Morgenthau's first significant problem in charge was the Ottoman government's unilateral abrogation of the capitulations when the Great War broke out.¹⁹⁸ The capitulations allowed United States residents extraterritorial privileges. After abrogating the capitulations, which occurred almost a month before the Ottomans' official entrance to the war, institutions belonging to foreign countries began to be seized following the current law. Thus, missionary institutions would be significantly affected by the unilateral abrogation of the capitulations. Americans saw this action as the most remarkable event in recent times.¹⁹⁹ When this news first became public, Americans sitting in the cafes of the Bosphorus were replaced with Turkish people shouting and singing to celebrate the abrogation of capitulations.²⁰⁰

On 22 October 1914, Morgenthau immediately discussed the problem with Caleb Gates and agreed to stay firm against the capitulations. Morgenthau's second visit was to Enver to understand the potential threat to American missionaries. Enver assured Morgenthau that the American educational institutions would not be harmed.²⁰¹ At Morgenthau's suggestion, Enver even visited Robert College and was immensely impressed with "...everything he saw, and he even suggested that he would like to send

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ It referred to the treaty commitments governing the legal status of Americans and their institutions in the Ottoman Empire. Morgenthau, *The Diaries of Ambassador Morgenthau*, vii

¹⁹⁹ From American Consulate General in Smyrna to American Ambassador, September 15, 1914

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Morgenthau, 119.

his brother there.”²⁰² Respectively, the Ottoman government did not touch upon American institutions except by confiscating radios and telegraphs in the Beirut School.

However, when Morgenthau contacted the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Sir Louis du Pan Mallet, he saw that Mallet was alarmed that the future war was imminent.²⁰³ Mallet informed Morgenthau that Germans were putting tremendous pressure on Ottomans to enter the war. Prof. Caleb Gates and Ambassador Morgenthau started contacting Ottoman officers and asking them about the situation and scenarios. Enver continued to express his friendly approach to both Gates and Morgenthau, saying that there would be no attack and that education would continue at American schools.²⁰⁴ At this point, President Gates also mentions in his memoirs the importance of his friendly relationships with Turkish officials and Henry Morgenthau. He indicates they were most fortunate in their ambassador and the CUP for their efforts to protect the nation’s interests and Robert College itself.²⁰⁵

While managing the situation in Istanbul, Morgenthau contacted the American officials in Washington, D.C. The last Ottoman Ambassador to the US, Ahmet Rustem Bey, called and told Morgenthau that he did not quarrel with the American people and liked his ambassadorship.²⁰⁶ Morgenthau’s diplomatic correspondence increased significantly, especially with the US State Department. Robert Lansing was Secretary of State and continued communicating with the Ottoman Capital throughout the Great War. On November 4 and 18, Morgenthau wrote Lansing that the Ottoman Empire was

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Morgenthau, 112.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 113.

²⁰⁵ Gates, 222.

²⁰⁶ Morgenthau, 128.

unprepared to go to war, and most of the CUP did not want to join the fight.²⁰⁷ The reason behind Morgenthau's emphasis on Ottoman reluctance appeared on December 1. In another report from Morgenthau to Lansing, he mentioned his conversation with Enver Pasha. According to the report, Enver Pasha had asked the Ambassador to communicate with President Wilson through Lansing to arrange better peace terms.²⁰⁸ In the rest of the letter, Morgenthau wrote that the CUP aimed for peace with the intervention of the US. Although Morgenthau could not take Washington's attention at first with his message, Morgenthau and Enver demonstrated to the US the willingness of the Empire to end the war and the peaceful relationship with the US.

However, in January 1916, Woodrow Wilson recalled Ambassador Morgenthau for returning to the US to help him in his 1916 Presidential Campaign. Before leaving, the Ambassador called Talat and Enver Pasha. Morgenthau told them he was satisfied with their friendly attitude in Istanbul.²⁰⁹ This demonstrates that Morgenthau built a "working trust" with the large community in Istanbul and among the high-ranking Ottoman officials.²¹⁰ Even when Captain Williams, the military attaché in Istanbul, sent Enver Pasha's friendly message to Morgenthau, he shared it with President Woodrow Wilson and indicated it as significant. Enver said that Turkey would always welcome Morgenthau, and the Turkish people would praise him.²¹¹ Morgenthau also collaborated closely with the President of Robert College and protected the interests of the College. When Morgenthau told President Caleb Gates that he had to resign from his mission

²⁰⁷ Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume I: *The Ambassador in Turkey (Morgenthau) to the Secretary of State*, Constantinople, November 4-18, 1915.

²⁰⁸ Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915, Supplement, The World War: *The Ambassador in Turkey (Morgenthau) to the Secretary of State*, Constantinople, December 1, 1915.

²⁰⁹ Morgenthau, 170.

²¹⁰ Steiner, 206.

²¹¹ Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume I: *The Ambassador in Turkey (Morgenthau) to the Secretary of State*, Constantinople, June 7.

because of the political campaign, Prof. Gates responded by emphasizing the potential danger for the College in leaving his post at such a crucial time.²¹² Thus, both the Ottoman and the US sides illustrate how diplomats, government representatives, and institutions engaged and shaped foreign relations during times of turmoil and significant events. However, the possibility of the US entering the Great War would produce a crisis in bilateral relations and increased concerns over the missionary existence in the Ottoman Empire.

4.2. US Declaration of War and Peace Efforts

We are fully persuaded that our progress this year is due to "the good hand of our God upon us," and it strongly re-enforces our conviction that Robert College has a God-given mission in these lands. If we needed proof that this College is under God's protection and care, we have received it, and we look forward to the unknown future with increased confidence that He will still lead us on.²¹³

(Signed), C. F. Gates, President. Robert College, Constantinople, July 31, 1916.

Toward the end of the Great War, in April 1917, when the United States became associated with the Entente fighting against the Ottoman Empire, the American missionary educators in the Empire were left in a challenging position.²¹⁴ By 1916, Henry Morgenthau had left his post, and Abram Isaac Elkus became the new American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. According to John Cecil Guckert, Ambassador Elkus was knowledgeable in Turkish history and possessed a personality that quickly won the respect and friendship of the Ottomans.²¹⁵

²¹² Gates, 224.

²¹³ Records of the Presidents, Annual Reports, 1911-1940, Box 27, Folder 34, Columbia University Libraries Archival Collections, Robert College records, 1858-2018, Boğaziçi University, İstanbul.

²¹⁴ Sarialp, 45.

²¹⁵ Guckert, 105.

When Elkus was assigned to Istanbul, the growing Americans' concerns over the abrogation of capitulations and their missionaries were still relevant. To relieve the concerns over the American schools, in the editorial "*Hilal*," an extended analysis of the current situation regarding the missionaries was published. The central theme was that "Foreigners have always considered Turkey a country where one could and should enrich himself by every possible means and without any charge or risk."²¹⁶ Following this statement, the news praised foreign schools in the Ottoman Empire and emphasized the importance of exercising moral influence over children.²¹⁷ By referring to foreign schools, the editorial *Hilal* indicated that "they were virtually in charge of spiritual and intellectual guidance in our country."²¹⁸ Thus, the Ottomans took action by emphasizing the importance of foreign schools to provide relief for the growing concerns of American missionaries regarding their faith and operations during the Great War.

The newly appointed Ambassador Elkus reported a detailed analysis of the situation in Istanbul to Washington. In November 1916, Abram Elkus wrote that the Turkish officials were heavily under German influence. However, Elkus also pointed out that "they desired to be very friendly with the American Embassy."²¹⁹ According to Elkus, the Grand Vizier, Talat, told him that the Ottoman Sultan had personally expressed his friendship for the United States and "his desire to preserve friendly relations with it."²²⁰

However, this peaceful atmosphere between the US and the Ottoman Empire was rechallenged by the growing rumors that the United States was joining the war

²¹⁶ Translation of an editorial in *Hilal* of April 4, 1916.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume I: *The Ambassador in Turkey (Elkus) to the Secretary of State*, Constantinople, November 17, 1916.

²²⁰ From Elkus to the Secretary of State, Feb. 16, 1917.

against the Central Powers. In February and March of 1917, Wilson's growing desire to play a significant part at a post-war peace conference, the "Zimmerman Telegram," and the uptick in German submarine warfare all pushed the United States into war.²²¹ Washington was preoccupied with Germany. On the other hand, in Istanbul, Abram Elkus was not as active as his predecessor, Morgenthau. During his term, Abram Elkus did not have much personal contact with American missionaries and Ottoman officials. Therefore, the responsibility of preserving peace mainly depended on missionaries. Missionaries were the ones who had the most contact with Ottoman officials. Missionaries, in particular, became the diplomats of the United States during the Ottoman Empire during the Great War.

Prof. Gates' main companion became Cleveland Hoadley Dodge. Unlike Ambassador Elkus, Dodge had closer relations with Caleb Gates and Woodrow Wilson. He was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Robert College. His son Bayard Dodge was associated with the American University of Beirut and still lived in the Ottoman lands with his wife. Therefore, on February 5, Dodge tried to contact President Wilson and share his concerns regarding his loved ones in the Empire.²²² Although the President had hardly any reaction to his problems, he called Dodge his real friend.²²³ He told him to wait patiently to preserve the American people living in the Ottoman Empire.²²⁴ From February 1917 to the end of the Great War, Cleveland Hoadley Dodge and Caleb Gates worked together to protect the peaceful relations between the states and convince President Wilson not to declare war on the Ottomans. Prof. Gates

²²¹ Andrew Patrick, "Woodrow Wilson, the Ottomans, and World War I," *Diplomatic History* 42, no. 5 (Nov. 2018): 892.

²²² *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Volume 41*, January 24- April 6, 1917 (Princeton University Press Princeton, New Jersey 1983), 128.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson Volume 41*, 133.

frequently warned Dodge about the potential dangers missionary schools would encounter if the United States entered the war. According to Gates, the attitude of Young Turks toward the United States and its institutions was still friendly. Ottoman officials had shown significant consideration for Robert College. However, Americans still doubted that the Ottomans would close the missionary schools.²²⁵ The main concern of Dodge and Gates was the faith of Robert College. On March 23, Gates reported that the Turkish Cabinet was not in favor of breaking off relations with America or seizing American schools unless forced by Germans to do that.²²⁶ A week before the declaration of War, Gates told Dodge they would pass safely through this crisis because of a “friendliness” with Turks.²²⁷

Before the Declaration of War of the United States, Cleveland Hoadley Dodge visited the White House to warn Woodrow Wilson again not to include the Ottoman in his speech.²²⁸ Dodge visited Wilson in April to obtain a further promise from Wilson that he would do his best to prevent a declaration of war on both Bulgaria and the Ottomans.²²⁹ According to James L. Barton, one of the missionaries, the President already had sympathy and interest in American institutions in the Ottoman Empire, seeing them as the symbols of American interests in the Middle East. Cleveland Dodge helped to convince Woodrow Wilson to prevent the potential loss of American influence

²²⁵ Records of the Trustees, General Correspondence Between Dodge/Gates, 1914-1919, Box 10, Folder 7, Columbia University Libraries Archival Collections, Robert College records, 1858-2018, Boğaziçi University, İstanbul.

²²⁶ General Correspondence Between Dodge/Gates, 1914-1919, Box 10, Folder 7,

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Laderman, 115.

²²⁹ Patrick, 895.

in the Ottoman Empire.²³⁰ Dodge eventually confessed to his son that this was one of the few moments he had asked Wilson for a favor.²³¹

On April 4, 1917, although the United States officially entered the Great War on the side of the Entente, Wilson did not mention the Ottoman Empire in his declaration of war. In return, however, the Ottoman Empire broke diplomatic relations with the United States on April 20. However, despite severing official ties, the Turkish Cabinet peacefully approached Americans and their institutions. The following day, Prof. Gates wrote Dodge that American citizens and American Institutions were to be treated 'just as they were treated before the severing of relations. Therefore, he expressed that his friends need no anxiety concerning Americans in the Ottoman lands.²³² The Robert College continued its education. Despite all wartime developments, the relationship between Gates and the Young Turks remained peaceful. Thus, with the enormous contribution of Caleb Gates and Cleveland Dodge to convince Wilson, the friendly atmosphere continued to be preserved.

4.3. Averting Conflict and Preserving Peace

However, the United States' entrance to the Great War against Germany also caused challenging times for the Ottoman and American sides to preserve peace until the war's end. The Ottomans were technically the belligerent nation for the United States since they fought for the Central Powers. However, American missionaries

²³⁰ Tuğçe Kaya, "ABD Birinci Dünya Savaşı Sırasında Neden Osmanlı Devleti'ne Doğrudan Savaş İlan Etmedi? Amerikan Gizli Belgeleri Üzerine Bir İnceleme," *Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies*, 2019, 553-562.

²³¹ Patrick, 895

²³² General Correspondence Between Dodge/Gates, 1914-1919, Box 10, Folder 7.

indicated that they never excluded those who belonged to the nations against their country and were fighting from their social circles and networks.²³³

The main concern on the American side was again the situation of missionaries in Istanbul. In September, Prof. Gates informed Dodge about the potential problems that they might encounter. He notified that the Turkish Government has yet to be able to furnish food to the Turkish schools, and it is hardly expected that they will grant more fabulous facilities to American schools.²³⁴ At the same time, Gates indicated that as America plays a large part in the war, this will affect the sentiment toward Americans here unfavorably.²³⁵

Missionaries had to have a good relationship with Ottoman officials to protect their students, institutions, and investments. After the American declaration of war, the German pressure on the Ottoman Empire increased. Only a month before the war declaration, Ambassador Abram I. Elkus reported to Washington that Turks would not break diplomatic relations with the United States even if the US joined the war against Germany.²³⁶ According to Elkus, Talat Pasha saw no reason why the friendly relations between Turkey and America should not continue, even if there were a rupture between America and Germany.²³⁷ Moreover, Talat Pasha told Elkus:

“What can we expect to gain if we take part in a war against the United States? Absolutely nothing! I, therefore, guarantee 90% that if there is a war between Germany and the United States, Turkey will stay out of it. At least that is our feeling and our intention today.”²³⁸

²³³ Dodge, 174.

²³⁴ General Correspondence Between Dodge/Gates, 1914-1919, Box 10, Folder 7, September 3, 1917.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume I: *The Ambassador in Turkey (Elkus) to the Secretary of State*, Constantinople, March 2, 1917.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

When Ambassador Elkus asked Talat Pasha what the Turks would do if the Germans insisted on Turkey performing her duty as an ally to declare war against America, Talat responded that the Ottoman Empire would refuse it and not declare war on the United States.²³⁹ Although Talat Pasha wrote a memoir about the Great War, he did not mention his talk with the American Ambassador.²⁴⁰ Therefore, it is difficult to confirm their conversation by looking at Turkish sources. However, official American documents demonstrate that the Ottoman Empire was also unwilling to declare war on the United States even if the US entered the war. On April 20, the Empire did not declare war on the US but cut off their diplomatic relations due to the pressures from Germany.²⁴¹ On June 10, 1917, the correspondence between Istanbul and Washington stated, "No significant effect seems to have been created on the Turks generally by the American participation in War."²⁴²

Ambassador Elkus had to leave the country immediately after the broken relations. Before leaving, the Ambassador sent one last report assuring no disputes between the two nations; therefore, diplomatic relations might resume anytime.²⁴³ Elkus pointed out the willingness of Turkish authorities to missionaries to stay in the Ottoman Empire if they wished to do so.²⁴⁴ According to Elkus, even Ahmed Izzet Pasha, Commander of the Army of the Caucasus, and Vali Midhat Bey offered to assist the American missionaries.²⁴⁵ Thus, Elkus assured Washington that American citizens would be well-treated after his departure in July 1917.²⁴⁶ Indeed, after the

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ See Talat Paşa, *Talat Paşa'nın Anıları*, ed. Alpay Kabacalı (İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2000)

²⁴¹ John A. DeNovo, *American Interests, and Policies in the Middle East 1900–1939* (The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1963), 106.

²⁴² From Elkus to the Secretary of State, June 10, 1917.

²⁴³ From Elkus to the Secretary of State, October 19, 1917.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

Ambassador's resignation, missionary institutions did not end their operations and maintained their functions in the Ottoman Empire.

Since American schools continued the education process and did not close, the responsibility of Prof. Gates of Robert College became more critical than at any other time. He already had friendly relations with the triumvirate of the CUP and managed to preserve it. The United States was at war with the ally of the Ottoman Empire, and the Ottomans had to cut off their ties. Turkish officials peacefully approached American missionaries even under these circumstances. Talat was promoted in the Turkish cabinet as Grand Vizier, and Cavid Bey, the Minister of Finance, became prominent. Gates' relationship with them remained friendly. The Ottoman Cabinet supported the schools and American citizens in the country. Cavid Bey once told Gates that as long as he was in the cabinet, Ottomans would not take these schools.²⁴⁷ On the same day, Ahmed Nesim, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, also indicated to the Swedish minister who acted for Americans after the broken relations that "Turkey had the friendliest feelings for Americans."²⁴⁸ American officials in Athens assured that since the rupture of diplomatic relations, there has been no restriction on the movement of Americans: American citizens were allowed to remain out of doors after 10 pm.; in contrast, those of States at war with Germany must be indoors at 10 pm.²⁴⁹ According to American officials, the primary reason for this freedom was the progress of the Ottoman Empire with the Young Turks movement.²⁵⁰ Americans reported that Talat and Cavid, for example, wanted to help the US schools in whatever they could.²⁵¹

²⁴⁷ Gates, 235.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ From the American Embassy to the Secretary of State December 29, 1917.

²⁵⁰ From the American Consulate-General in Athens, Greece, to the Secretary of State, October 27, 1917

²⁵¹ From the American Embassy to the Secretary of State December 29, 1917

According to Americans, the Young Turk movement marked significant progress in the freedom of the Ottoman Empire and the large number of higher education schools operated under the CUP rule.²⁵² The three most prominent American schools in the Ottoman Empire were not subjected to any hostility during their activities, and they continued education in the fall of 1917, with whole classes and enrollment.²⁵³ American officials interpreted this situation as Ottomans credited the missionaries' existence and the education they provided Turkish students.²⁵⁴ The American Consulate General in Athens reported to the Secretary of State, "Owing to large American interests within the Empire, enormous charitable institutions, colleges, schools, etc., the average Turk before the war even, a wholesome sensibility of the power of the US."²⁵⁵ American colleges had more than four thousand young men and women, some Turkish officials' children.²⁵⁶ Therefore, the institutions were as crucial for Ottomans as for Americans.

December 1917, however, was the most challenging and fluctuating time for both sides. Although Ottoman policies and attitudes were in line with the idea of staying out of the war with the United States, members of the US Congress who wanted to declare war on the Ottoman Empire started to raise their voices. Democratic Senator William King from Utah was one of them. He even introduced a resolution proposing hostilities against Istanbul.²⁵⁷ However, Cleveland Hoadley Dodge continuously insisted that Ottoman-American relations should remain peaceful. He said that war with Turkey would be a severe blow since a heavy mission investment existed.²⁵⁸ He was

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ From the American Embassy to the Secretary of State December 29, 1917.

²⁵⁴ Gates, 237.

²⁵⁵ From the American Consulate-General in Athens, Greece, to the Secretary of State, October 27, 1917.

²⁵⁶ Gates, 237.

²⁵⁷ Joseph Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy, and the Near East: Missionary Influence on American Policy, 1810-1927* (University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 92.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

still in contact with missionaries living in Ottoman lands, such as Prof. Caleb Gates and William Wheelock Peet. They constantly informed Dodge and Washington regarding the CUP's treatment of Americans and the importance of the schools in the Ottoman Empire.²⁵⁹ Therefore, all the reports from the Ottoman Empire to the United States were against the potential declaration of war and conflict. According to missionaries, the Ottoman Empire treated the United States peacefully, even in times of crisis, and now, it was time for the United States to take that into account.²⁶⁰

On December 4, President Wilson gave his 5th Annual Message to the US Congress. Although the central theme of the message was regarding Germany, he also made remarkable statements regarding the future of relations with the Ottoman Empire. He defined the Ottoman Empire as “the tool of Germany.”²⁶¹ However, Wilson also emphasized that the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria were mere tools and did not yet stand in the direct path of Americans' necessary action.²⁶² He asserted that the war with the Ottomans was undesirable and impractical for specific controlling reasons.²⁶³ In the same week as the annual message, Woodrow Wilson told Cleveland Hoadley Dodge at Riverdale that he had sympathy for the letters Dodge sent him about a potential war with the Ottomans. He continued, “I am trying to hold the Congress back from the following inclination to include all the allies of Germany in a declaration of war. I hope with all my heart that I can succeed.”²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹ Kaya, 545.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 544.

²⁶¹ Woodrow Wilson, “Fifth Annual Message,” December 4, 1917, Miller Center, accessed April 20, 2024, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-4-1917-fifth-annual-message>

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Grabill, 92.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 93.

After Wilson's speech to the members of Congress, most American officials, including Robert Lansing, were convinced not to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. The Secretary of State informed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the government would not take any aggressive action toward the Ottoman Empire because it would result in the confiscation of churches, schools, and institutions built by Americans in the Near East.²⁶⁵ Only two days after Wilson's speech, Lansing reported the "inadvisability" of a declaration of war by the United States to the Ottoman Empire.²⁶⁶

On February 7, 1918, US officials in Greece sent a report to the State Department emphasizing the appropriation of Washington's decision not to declare war on the Ottoman Empire. The report pointed out that "...it can be said without exaggeration that all the leading Americans in Istanbul and elsewhere in Turkey strongly hope that it will not be found necessary to declare war upon Turkey."²⁶⁷ The report stressed the fear of the future of American schools if the United States made a different decision rather than not declaring war by indicating that "There would also be such a change in the attitude of the Ottoman government toward our future position."²⁶⁸ Thus, Woodrow Wilson considered the arguments over a potential war with the Ottoman Empire and the outstanding efforts of missionaries in Istanbul and around him in the United States, which claimed that for three years, war with the Ottoman Empire would end all relief efforts and cause the closing of missionary institutions.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 92.

²⁶⁶ Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917, Supplement 2, The World War, Volume I: *The Secretary of State to the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate (Stone)*, Washington, December 6, 1917.

²⁶⁷ From the American Embassy to the Secretary of State, February 7, 1918.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Thomas Bryson, *American Diplomatic Relations with the Middle East, 1784-1975* (The Scarecrow Press, 1977), 63.

By February 1918, American schools continued their work with “satisfactory attendance,” even when Mary Mills Patrick arrived in Istanbul and found her institution in “a much better condition than she had anticipated.”²⁷⁰ Even though communication with the Ottoman Empire's interior was slow and uncertain, various American institutions sent reports to the United States, revealing that schools and institutions continued to do their usual work.²⁷¹ American missionaries eventually survived the Great War with a huge endeavor and played a decisive role in preserving peace between the United States and the Ottoman Empire.

²⁷⁰ From the American Embassy to the Secretary of State, February 7, 1918.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The history of American missionaries and their role in preventing a potential conflict between the United States and the Ottoman Empire portrays the story of the challenging times in maintaining peace in World War I. The period between 1908-18 was a significant episode demonstrating the determination and adaptability of American missionaries in the face of shifting Ottoman political and global transformations. This episode demonstrates that Americans could survive with missionary diplomacy from imminent conflicts throughout the decade. Although the story of American missionaries in World War I has been the subject of several studies, the main focus of those studies revolves around a few characters, such as Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, and contains many prejudices. Therefore, academic studies that see American missionaries as a threat to the survival of the Ottoman Empire dominate the current literature. However, portraying missionaries as a matter of state survival, as Selim Deringil depicted in his book, is very ambitious.²⁷² The main reason behind this interpretation is the limited use of primary sources.

Hence, this thesis aimed to provide a new perspective on the relations between American missionaries and the Young Turks. The primary purpose is to contribute to the literature on different areas of research: The history of the Great War, American foreign relations, the history of missionaries, and late Ottoman diplomacy. Hence, various primary sources and archival materials constituted the narrative of this thesis.

²⁷² Selim Deringil, *The Well Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909* (I.B. Tauris, 2011).

Although the memoirs and the diaries of former American missionaries are the core of the bibliography, I shaped the central argument primarily based on archives of little use, such as the ABFCM Papers at Bilkent University, Robert College Records at Boğaziçi University, and the Columbia University Archival Collections. They offered the correspondence between the United States and the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, those archives provided extensive quantitative data regarding schools and missionaries. In addition to those archives, the FRUS online collection still provides valuable sources for historians working on US foreign relations and the Middle East. Thus, I aimed to approach the subject from various angles to build a historical analysis.

After a closer examination of primary sources, this thesis argues that the missionary existence in the Ottoman Empire emerged as the primary factor in keeping peaceful relations between the United States and the Ottoman Empire in World War I. American missionaries were pivotal in convincing the United States government not to declare war on the Ottomans to safeguard their survival in Ottoman lands. For the Ottomans, American missionaries, with their schools and colleges, represented a model for adopting Western education in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the Ottoman attitudes towards the missionaries radically transformed after the 1908 Revolution. The CUP began to pursue policies that would make missionary activities more accessible. Moreover, the triumvirate Cemal, Talat, and Enver became much more tolerant of missionary institutions. Accordingly, missionaries and the Ottomans put in a great effort not to get harmed by the possible consequences of World War I.

Although this master's thesis examined several archival materials to focus on the CUP rule in the Ottoman Empire, materials and different focus subjects still needed to be explored for future studies. In addition to the diplomacy between the United States and the Ottoman Empire, the memoirs and the missionary papers also offer many

sources for historians working on American missionaries' social and economic history in the Ottoman Empire. For example, the Robert College Records at Boğaziçi University provides excellent materials to understand the American investment in the Ottoman Empire. This qualitative data would clarify why American missionaries put their best effort into protecting their investment in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, the memoirs of American missionaries and the correspondence between Washington and Istanbul in the online Columbia University Archival Collections are still valuable sources to work on students' daily lives at American colleges during the Balkan Wars and the Great War. These materials open new perspectives and introduce new subjects regarding, for instance, how American missionaries had to cope with the challenges their schools and students faced in the years of global conflicts. Hence, future historians still need to explore the existence of missionaries and their legacy in the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, future research should also explore the transformation of missionary activities in early Republican Turkey. Investigating the changes in Turkish intellectual life, the attitude of Turkish decision-makers towards the American model of education may constitute the object of future studies. From 1915 to 1930, the Near East Relief was central to missionary activities in the Middle East. The records and archives of this organization still need to be studied, especially in Turkish academia. The SALT research, the Near East Relief Museum, and the Near East Foundation Records in Rockefeller Archive Center may provide many archival materials for future researchers. The most important advantage of these materials is that most documents can be found in online archives. Hence, most primary sources are readily accessible in Turkey, providing convenience for future research.

As Henry Barnum emphasized in 1931's commemorating, wartime diplomacy became a remarkable legacy of American missionaries that future generations of

American diplomats and missionaries should remember.²⁷³ However, along with the legacy of missionary diplomacy, the Great War brought several disruptive outcomes to the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. The consequences of the defeat in World War I were as destructive for the Ottoman Empire as they were for missionary activities. Thus, the Eastern mission was entirely abandoned at the end of the Great War, while the Western and Central missions became weak compared to the pre-war years.²⁷⁴ The educational work in Tarsus and Maraş ended while the missionaries withdrew from the Sivas, Harput, Van, Bitlis, and Erzurum missions.²⁷⁵

Accordingly, American missionaries had to change how they operated to survive in the region significantly. According to İdris Yücel, the most significant barriers to missionary activities were the newly-founded secular state and the negative attitudes of its leaders.²⁷⁶ In 1924, with the adopted law, *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* prohibited religious propaganda at schools. This new law furthered the deterioration of missionary activities since even Biblical studies were prohibited.²⁷⁷ Restrictions of the Turkish government directly impacted missionary enterprises; therefore, the American Board decided to restructure its work among the Muslim population.²⁷⁸ For the Muslim students, American schools were required to construct a mosque where Muslims could practice Friday praying in those schools.²⁷⁹ In this regard, the purpose of American missionaries was to convince Muslim populations to send their children to their schools and break the prejudices among the Turkish population against government restrictions.

²⁷³ *Centennial of Constantinople Station* (Istanbul: Near East Mission of American Board), 1931

²⁷⁴ İdris Yücel, "A Missionary Society at the Crossroads: American Missionaries on the Eve of the Turkish Republic," *CTAD* (2012), 63.

²⁷⁵ James L. Barton, *Status and Outlook of Missionary Work in Turkey* (ABCFM, Boston 1924), 2.

²⁷⁶ Yücel, 64.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ Yücel, 51-68.

²⁷⁹ Yücel, 60.

In the end, however, American missionaries were unsuccessful in reopening most institutions and operating within republican Turkey. The rulers of the new republic approached missionaries and their institutions suspiciously and took necessary steps following this attitude. The new medical and educational initiatives of the Turkish Republic would also harm the missionary schools. At last, Turkish decision-makers led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk would adopt the national education for the sake of the Republic. Although James Barton emphasized that the Near East Mission continued and asserted that a new era began for American missions in Turkey, they would never again be as effective in Turkish lands as in the Imperial times.²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ Barton, 5.

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