

**Fitnenin ve Terakkinin Merkezleri: Osmanlı Devletinde
Apostolik Ermeniler Arasında Anadolu Misyoner
İstasyonları, 1878-1896**

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İSTANBUL BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
TARİH YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

Tez Danışmanı Prof. Dr. Christoph K. Neumann

2009

“Centers of Provocation and Progress: Anatolian Missionary Stations Within the Ottoman State and Among Apostolic Armenians, 1878-1896.”

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Jüri Üyesi Yrd. Doç. Dr. Bülent Bilmez:

Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih:

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 138

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)

- 1) Misyonerlik faaliyetleri
- 2) 19. yüzyılı
- 3) Eğitim
- 4) Yabancı okulları
- 5) Apostolik Ermeniler

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- 1) Missionary activity
- 2) 19th century
- 3) Education
- 4) Foreign schools
- 5) Apostolic Armenians

An abstract of the Thesis of Scott Michael Rank, for the degree of Master of Arts in History

from the Institute of Social Sciences to be taken June 2009.

Title: "Centers of Provocation and Progress: Anatolian Missionary Stations Within the Ottoman State and Among Apostolic Armenians, 1878-1896."

This thesis examines American missionaries in the north central Anatolian city of Marsovan, their attempts to convert Apostolic Armenians to Protestantism, the nature of their relations to the Ottoman Empire, and how the sides narrated their encounters between 1878 and 1896. The subject of missionaries in the Near and Middle East has become quite popular in recent years, as interactions between Muslims and Protestant missionaries are a useful prism for research in postcolonial studies. Nineteenth-century American missionaries have also come under closer inspection for their role in the political collapse of the Ottoman Empire and rising nationalism of its non-Muslim groups. I explore these topics by using missionary reports and correspondence, British and American consular reports, contemporary newspapers, and accounts by converts to Protestantism.

This research project accomplishes two goals. First, it explores the neglected relations between American missionaries under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), Armenian Protestants, and Apostolic Armenians; namely, their cooperation in education and religion. The nature of these relations is useful in determining new social orientations that were created in Anatolia as a result of the American-Ottoman interaction. Second, it re-examines the clashes between the Ottoman state and the Marsovan missionaries that resulted in the 1893 arrest of two Armenian

teachers suspected of revolutionary activity and the burning of a girls' school. I explore whether these events were the inevitable collision of two groups whose ideologies were diametrically opposed (as both sides' rhetoric and saber rattling in the 1890s would suggest) or the inability for both the growing ABCFM network and the expanding Ottoman bureaucracy to co-exist within Anatolia as their operations overlapped and ultimately clashed with each other.

Scholarly literature portrays the relationship between foreign missionaries, the Ottoman state and Apostolic Armenians as static acrimony, but as this thesis will show the relationship was far more complex. Co-existence and cooperation are a part of their story equally as much as anathemas against Protestant converts, Ottoman police burning ABCFM schools, and American missionaries filling the Western press with inflammatory attacks against Sultan Abdülhamid II. This study highlights the dynamic nature of the environment in which these encounters took place.

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü'nde Tarih Yüksek Lisans derecesi için Scott Michael Rank tarafından Haziran 2009'de teslim edilen tezin özeti

Başlık: "Fitnenin ve Terakkinin Merkezleri: Osmanlı Devletinde Apostolik Ermeniler Arasında Anadolu Misyoner İstasyonları, 1878-1896."

Bu tez, orta Karadeniz bölgesinde bir kasaba olan Merzifon'daki Amerikan misyonerlerini, onların Apostolik Ermeniler Protestanlığa döndürme girişimlerini, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile kurdukları ilişkinin doğasını ve her iki tarafın da 1878 – 1896 yılları arasında bu karşılaşmayı anlatış biçimlerini ele alır. Son yıllarda, Yakın ve Ortadoğuda misyonerlik konusu, oldukça popüler olmuştur. Zira Protestan misyonerlerin İslam dünyasıyla karşılaşması, postkolonyal çalışmalar açısından faydalı olabilecek bir bakış açısı sunar. 19. yüzyıl Amerikan misyonerleri, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun siyasi çöküşünde ve gayrimüslimlerin yükselen milliyetçiliğinde oynadıkları rol açısından da yakından inceleme altına alınmıştır. Bu tezde, bu konular, misyoner raporları ve yazışmaları, İngiliz ve Amerikan konsolosluk raporları, dönemin gazeteleri ve Protestanlığa geçenlerin anlattıkları kullanılarak incelenir.

Bu araştırma projesinin iki hedefi vardır. İlki, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) altında çalışan Amerikan misyonerleri ve Protestan Ermeniler ve Apostolik Ermeniler arasındaki gözardı edilmiş ilişkileri, özellikle din ve eğitim konularındaki işbirliğini incelemektir. Bu ilişkilerin yapısı Amerikan-Osmanlı etkileşiminin sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan yeni toplumsal yönelimleri belirlemekte işimize yarar. İkincisi, Osmanlı Devleti ve Merzifon'daki misyonerler arasında, 1893'de iki Ermeni öğretmenin devrimci faaliyetlere katıldıkları şüphesiyle tutuklanması ve bir kız okulunun yakılmasıyla sonuçlanan çatışmaları yeniden değerlendirmektir. Bu olaylar, –

her iki tarafın da söylemlerinin ve 1890'lardaki iddialarının öne sürdüğü gibi- birbirine tamamen zıt iki grubun kaçınılmaz çatışması mı yoksa hem gittikçe büyüyen ABCFM ağının hem de Osmanlı bürokrasisinin, Anadolu'da birbiriyle örtüşen faaliyet alanlarının, önünde sonunda çatışmaya yol açmış olması mıdır?

Akademik yazında, yabancı misyonerler, Osmanlı devleti ve Apostolik Ermeniler arasındaki ilişkiler durağan bir karşılıklıla tarif edilir ancak bu tez, bu ilişkinin çok daha karmaşık olduğunu göstermeyi amaçlar. Esasında, Patrikhane'nin Protestanlığa geçenleri aforoz etmesi, Osmanlı polisinin ABCFM okullarını yakması ve Amerikan misyonerlerinin Batı basınına II. Abdülhamid'e karşı tahrik edici saldırılarla doldurması kadar birlikte yaşamak ve işbirliği de bu hikayenin bir parçasıdır. Bu çalışma, bu karşılaşmaların meydana geldiği ortamın dinamik yapısının önemini vurgular.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor Christoph Neumann for his help in preparing this thesis through his encyclopedic knowledge of Ottoman institutions and pointing me away from paradigms that would have handicapped the research before it began. Thanks also to Mustafa Kabadayı for directing me toward sources that sharpened my knowledge of the content matter.

I am grateful for the research assistance provided by Brian Johnson and Janet Durna at the Archives of the American Board in Istanbul for tracking down hard-to-find and out-of-print materials for my thesis research. Mr. Johnson's recommendation to explore the neglected voice of the Armenian Protestants themselves proved invaluable to my research. Commendations are also in order for Faruk Taşkın, who provided help at Bilkent University in digging through miles of microfilm of missionary correspondence and finding unexpected treasures.

For Thomas Berchtold for providing quite possibly the world's most interesting Ottoman Turkish class (and showing the joy in studying *fatwas* as language practice) and Djene Bajalan for laboring with me as a fellow foreigner in gaining the hope that the language is comprehensible by a non-Turk. And special thanks to Pelin Unsal and her translation assistance.

I would also like to thank Professors Suraiya Faroqhi, Sara Nur Yildiz, and Bülent Bilmez, who provided me direction for research when I initially began investigating inter-religious relations in the Ottoman Empire. And specifically for Prof. Faroqhi and

her boundless energy and enthusiasm in showing our class historical sights in and around Istanbul.

Special thanks to my parents, Michael and Maureen Rank, for providing frequent moral support to finish the project, along with Melissa Chapman for providing her copy editing expertise on the final draft and her love. I dedicate this project to them.

Lastly, I would like to thank the History Department at Istanbul Bilgi University, whose academic scholarship made this research project possible, and the thirteen other students who along with me formed Bilgi University's inaugural class in the History Department's M.A. program. Each of you and your specific areas of expertise deepened my understanding in topics of interest, and broadened my knowledge in topics unexplored. Our experiences together have, at the very least, given us insight into the experiences of the first group of Serbian boys taken into the *devşirme* in the fourteenth century.

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Notes on Spelling and Transliteration

The combination of Turkish and English sources used in this thesis and the inconsistent transcription of Turkish places and names employed by missionaries and other English speakers make a standard orthography and transliteration method difficult. I will use Turkish orthography for Turkish names (Hüsrev Pasha instead of Hushref Pasha) and villages surrounding Marsovan, except in direct quotes from sources, who often attempted to transcribe their names. This is for the purposes of simplification, as the Marsovan missionaries did not employ consistent spelling of Turkish cities and villages (Vezirköprü could be spelled as Vezir Keopru, Vizier Kopru, or Vizier Keoproo). However, the city of Marsovan is named in this thesis by its English designation instead of its official name of Merzifon; it was known as Marsovan by American and British press, and its spelling is consistent in these sources. I will also use the Anglicized spelling for widely known Ottoman titles (pasha, vizier), but retain Turkish spelling for more specific titles (*kaymakam*, *vali*) and land administrative units (*vilayet*, *kaza*).

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about the interactions between the major players at the end of the Ottoman Empire: Sultan Abdülhamid II, the Ottoman administration, American missionaries, foreign diplomats and consulate workers, Armenian revolutionaries, and native Ottoman Christians. Between 1878-1896 the interactions between these actors would put political trends in motion that had significant impact on international relations up to World War I. And the fallout of these relations created mistrust between America and the Ottoman Empire, which continues today in modern Turkey. However, it will not attempt to disentangle the web of connections that linked all these elements, nor will it produce a seamless description of the complex interactions of all these moving parts. To borrow the parlance of my advisor, this thesis does not seek to create a grand unified theory of East-West interactions in the age of imperialism.

What it does seek is to flesh out the nature of relations between the American missionaries, the Ottoman state and native Christians in the late Ottoman era, a subject area that is not overlooked by authors on the subject but often oversimplified. Foreign missionary activity in the nineteenth-century Middle East is a subfield that has become en vogue in recent years: Its popularity comes from historians treating Western missionaries in the Ottoman Empire as a microcosm of the struggles between a Muslim Empire and Christian American. Turkish and Western historians both carry their biases regarding these interactions, but both sides essentially contend that destructive actions and incorrect perceptions by the parties left behind little but a negative legacy that continues between the Middle East and the West today.

Initial research into this thesis project confirmed these assertions, but to my surprise I found stories from the missionary and consular accounts that ran far outside the established narrative. Examples include the American missionaries winning tens of thousands of converts in the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman bureaucracy complimenting the American missionaries on their excellent schools they had built in the Sultan's domains, and a lack of antipathy between Armenian converts to Protestantism and those who stayed in the Apostolic Armenian Church. With the last point, the two groups would even come to work together in the educational and religious arena at the end of the nineteenth century, a far cry from a simple narrative in which the foreign missionaries had brought schools and social disruption to the Ottoman Empire but little else.

My thesis contends that the dominant narrative of late nineteenth-century Anatolian missionary activity paints the relationship between foreign missionaries, the Ottoman state, and native Christians as one of static acrimony, but primary sources indicate the relationship was far more complex. Tensions undoubtedly ran high, but part of their relations was also co-existence and even cooperation. This thesis will trace these relations on the microscopic scale to demonstrate the dynamism and flexibility of social orientations that took place in Anatolia, which was not only the battlefield of inflexible ideologies between East and West.

I believe historians obfuscate these instances of good relations between missionaries and Ottoman groups because they assume the foreign missionaries failed in their goal to convert Eastern Orthodox Christians to Protestantism due to structural flaws with their methods of missionary outreach. Based on my research, I argue that historians exaggerate these flaws, and that the failure of missionaries may have had more to do with

extrinsic than intrinsic reasons. Therefore, this thesis will examine this relational complexity between the different actors in late-Ottoman Anatolia following the 1878 Treaty of Berlin until the Armenian massacres of 1895-1896, a time when many of these issues took on international significance.

This thesis is particularly relevant in light of new research in Western missionary activity that makes use of Ottoman-missionary encounters to make new ideologies possible due to East-West cultural interaction, such as liberal ecumenism and modernism (although not defined according to strictly Western lines). Ussama Makdisi's monograph *The Artillery of Heaven* is a significant contribution to understanding Ottoman society through this paradigm, but he focuses on Lebanon in the 1820-1860s in the early decades of the American missionary enterprise long before it would create a network of hundreds of schools, thousands of Protestant converts, and tens of thousands of students as it did by the end of the nineteenth century. The American missionary effort in Lebanon produced few converts and had almost totally negative relations with the indigenous Maronite Catholic church and the Ottoman state. These conditions were largely atypical to the relations among these actors in later decades.

I will instead focus on inter-Christian conversion in Anatolia, where much of the aforementioned growth in the Protestant missionary enterprise occurred. It is important to move to a wider geography than Lebanon, which has been studied by Makdisi and others, since these historians portray an overwhelmingly negative portrait of the interactions between the foreign missionaries and the indigenous elements of the Ottoman Empire. In contrast the American missionary efforts in late nineteenth-century Anatolia were more successful, widespread, and well-received.

This thesis will trace the development and expansion their missionary station in Marsovan.¹ An exemplary product of American missionary activity, this station supported excellent foreign schools and became the education hub of the Sivas *vilayet* (province) for Ottoman Christians, whom the missionaries attempted to convert to Protestantism, and some Muslim-Turkish students as well. In addition, its seminary trained young Greek and Armenians to be pastors for the small Protestant congregations cropping up throughout the province that had been planted by the evangelistic efforts of the Marsovan missionaries. These pastors would have significant impact in their communities, as their secular knowledge obtained at the missionary schools usually made them the most educated person in the town or city. Through these factors, Marsovan station held significant influence in its province and serve as an excellent test case to explore the question and nature of missionary influence in the late nineteenth century.

The Sources

As a primary source, missionary sources are crucial for studying early and mid-nineteenth century Anatolia, particularly in peripheral areas where few other sources exist concerning Alevis, heterodox Muslims, and religious minorities.² Missionary stations were established in the Anatolian peripheries decades before the Ottoman bureaucracy and foreign consulates increased their presences in these areas, making these reports excellent vignettes into the parts of the empire that had not yet grafted into Abdülhamid's centralization project of the late nineteenth century. Indeed, this is a significant reason

¹ The city had gone under numerous name changes in its history that extends back at least to the Roman era. It was officially called Merzifon (as it is today under the Turkish designation), but known by Armenians, American missionaries, British consuls, and everyone else in the English-speaking world as Marsovan.

² H.L. Kieser, "Muslim Heterodoxy and Protestant Utopia: The Interactions Between Alevis and Missionaries in Ottoman Anatolia." *Die Welt des Islams*, 41, no. 1 (2001), 90.

why he considered the foreign missionaries such a threat for access to these peripheral elements of the state.³

While missionary sources reflect the biases of their writers and often grasp onto any instance of interest in Protestantism as proof of an imminent evangelical revival, these sources should still be heeded. First, internal correspondence between central and provincial stations did not hesitate to describe hardships in the provinces or lack of effectiveness in their missionary endeavors. The purpose of this correspondence was to portray their situation accurately so missionary leadership in America could make well-informed decisions (although requests for additional funds from Constantinople peppered their letters, suggesting they would be hesitant to reveal information that would interrupt the revenue stream from the ABCFM headquarters). Second, missionary correspondence is useful as a primary source in ways that foreign consular and Ottoman state reports are not: While the British consulate would be concerned with violence between the Turks and Armenians, they would not typically report on co-existence and cooperating between Apostolic Armenians and the American missionaries, except as an aside when reporting on the general conditions of the provinces, as the consular reports sometimes did.⁴

The missionary sources used in this study came from two research libraries: The Archives of the American Board in Istanbul and the ABCFM microfilm collection at Bilkent University. The former has a rich holding of nineteenth-century travel accounts, Christian aid agency annual bulletins, missionary autobiographies, and Armenian

³ Ibid, 98. Kieser says Alevis had been historically close to Orthodox Christians in Eastern Anatolia (much more so than Alevis and Sunnis) and a Protestant-educated Alevi and Armenian class would have naturally stood side-by-side, promoting political ideas such as regional autonomy and social equity, which could have gravely challenged the dominance of the established system in Central and Eastern Anatolia.

⁴ Some reports focused exclusively on this question. In 1860 Sir H. Bulwer commissioned a nineteen-question survey to the consuls in the Ottoman dominions regarding the state of its Christians. The replies from the consuls formed the report entitled, "Papers Relating to the Condition of Christians in Turkey," (British Foreign Office: 1860).

Protestant accounts. The latter includes hundreds of thousands of pages of internal correspondence of the American Board, including station reports, school curricula, and tabular views of the field. I found over two thousand pages of letters that corresponded to the eighteen-year period at Marsovan missionary station in 1878-1896 alone.

In the religious and political area of Anatolia, British consular reports offer a wealth of information. The British government took an active role in the Armenian Question after 1878 and expected its consulates to track the Ottoman Empire's progress in following the conditions of the Berlin Treaty concerning the overall safety of Armenians. British penetration into Anatolia occurred long before the Russo-Turkish War; since the eighteenth century Great Britain dominated international trade, industry and colonialism. Following the 1830s it competed with other European powers in economic and political dominion over the Ottoman Empire and enjoyed free trade and customs-free maritime navigation in Turkish waters after 1838. By the mid nineteenth century the role of non-Muslim traders rose in the Ottoman Empire, bringing them in increasing contact with the British. Thus, they had an economic as well as political interest in the well being of Ottoman Christians.⁵ This study will use the published consular accounts in Bilal N. Şimşir's four-volume series "British Documents on Ottoman Armenians," which spans the period from 1860 to 1895. I have made less use of consular sources than missionary accounts for two reasons. First, they have been analyzed in the secondary literature far more comprehensively than missionary

⁵ *The Armenian Massacres, 1894-1896: British Media Testimony*, ed. Arman Kirakossian (Dearborn: Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan-Dearborn, 2008), 16.

correspondence, and authors have made a fairly thorough analysis of consular reports concerning the 1893 Marsovan political topics I dissect in the third chapter; second, the limited access of foreign consular reports in Istanbul would have meant traveling abroad, an imprudent use of time, as the purpose of this study concerns more cultural than political history.

American consular reports are less developed than those of the British, but as the US increasingly asserted itself as a player in international affairs in the late nineteenth century (and became an imperial power following the 1898 Spanish-American War), correspondence deepened between ambassadors, missionaries, and the Department of State in Washington, DC. The US Foreign Legation in Constantinople increasingly jockeyed with the Ottoman state over the rights of its missionaries to operate foreign schools within the empire's domains, and would also tussle with the ABCFM to direct its missionary activities away from actions that could be perceived as antagonistic toward the state, thereby endangering other Americans in the Empire and the credibility of the United States on an international stage.

In addition, British and American newspapers were filled with the accounts of the 1894-1896 Armenian massacres and carried reports written by missionaries themselves. They shifted European and American public opinion against Sultan Abdülhamid, playing a crucial role in the transmission of information at this time (and the missionaries at Marsovan station would play a crucial role in shaping opinion in the massacres). Ottoman representatives in the United States meticulously followed the American media and the *Missionary Herald* and would translate news stories into Turkish for the Ottoman records. These representatives would also assiduously send back an American newspaper

reports criticizing the missionaries, showing their obsession with Ottoman self-image as reflected in the American and European media.⁶

The Ottoman Archives are rich with documentation following missionary activity, particularly in the 1890s, when suspicions had raised that native Protestants and the foreign missionaries were complicit in revolutionary activity. The American missionaries occupied a high position on the agenda in the Ottoman bureaucracy in domestic and foreign affairs, and these documents provide a sketch on official attitudes toward missionary activity in the Empire's peripheries. In recent years Turkish historians have produced a bumper crop of monographs and doctoral dissertations on the state's relations with specific missionary stations through these sources. These studies describe suspicions between the state bureaucracy and missionaries as both grew and eventually collided with each other at the end of the century.⁷ This thesis will make use of Gülbadi Alan's recent monograph on the Marsovan station, which recounts most Ottoman documents concerning the city's missionary activity from the station's opening in 1852 until its closing in 1921. Ottoman documentation on Marsovan station is well represented in the national archive, with roughly ninety pages corresponding to the three-year period between 1893 and 1896, with reports coming from *mutasarrıfs* (district governors), *valis* (provincial governors) to the ministry of education, council of education and the Central bureaucracy in Istanbul. Unfortunately, all these documents could not be fully utilized due to my growing but still limited command of Ottoman Turkish.

⁶ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), 125-127.

⁷ Notable examples are the stations in Harput, Kayseri, Bursa, and Marsovan. See Erdal Açıkşes, *Amerikaluların Harput'taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003); Hasan Özsoy "Kayseri'de Amerikan Misyoner Faaliyetleri ve Talas Amerikan Koleji" (YÖK Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 1995); and Mehmet Altun, "Bursa Amerikan Kız Koleji," *Toplumsal Tarih* 113 (May 2003).

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1, “Missionary Growth in a Centralizing State and a Volatile Millet,” will describe the political and social background of the late nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, the history and nature of the American Board in Anatolia, and the result of these two elements cross-pollinating in 1878-1896, a time when the Armenian Question had become internationalized. This chapter will trace the developments in the Ottoman Empire that pushed it to reform its institutions in 1839 and 1856 and describe the effect that these changes had on Ottoman official attitudes toward foreign powers, and the American missionaries, by extension. It will also analyze the development of the American Board within the Ottoman Empire, with particularly attention to the violent early 1820-30s encounters with the Lebanese Maronites, which remained in the collective imagination of Ottoman Christian church leaders in forthcoming decades and are frequently cited by contemporary scholars writing on American-Ottoman Christian relations. The focus of the chapter will shift to Marsovan station in later decades to emphasize variety and change over time in these relations. In doing so, it will describe the nature of Marsovan station and the background of the missionaries that inhabited it for decades.

Chapter 2, “Missionaries, Ottoman Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in Marsovan Field,” focuses on relations between the ABCFM, its converts, and those who chose to remain in their native churches. This chapter describes the surprisingly amicable relations between all three groups; particularly surprising to the missionaries, who never

set out to reform the native Christian churches as part of their evangelistic endeavors. As such, this chapter seeks to find the reasons these three groups more or less co-existed when the same co-mingling of elements produced violence, anathemas and mutual enmity in earlier decades. To do so it describes the manner in which Marsovan station developed and extended its influence to nearby Armenian villages through schools, vocational training centers, civil organizations, and chapels. This chapter attempts to map Armenian trans-confessional ideology through the autobiography of Harutune Jenanyan, one of the most prolific Armenian Protestants in late nineteenth-century Anatolia.

Chapter 3, “American Board and Ottoman Officialdom Relations,” will chart the course of events that transformed Marsovan station from a minor ABCFM outpost in the 1860s into an international political arena of the 1890s between Britain, American, and the Ottoman Empire; and played a major role in the vilification of Abdülhamid II in European and American public opinion. By tracking the growth of the Ottoman bureaucracy in the peripheries and the influence of Marsovan station, this chapter will trace the increasing amount of friction building between the two groups until it exploded in the 1893 arrest of two Armenian teachers at an American Board school and the burning of the unfinished Girls’ School at Marsovan compound. This chapter will suggest that the source of this friction resulted less from these groups’ ideologies becoming more antagonistic toward one another and more from the inability for both the growing ABCFM and Ottoman bureaucracy to co-exist within Anatolia without overlapping and ultimately crashing into each other.

Central to these tensions was Armenian revolutionary activity in Sivas province, which the state suspected to be based at the missionary school in Marsovan. This chapter

will trace the level of involvement between the American missionaries and the Armenian revolutionaries, and the manner in which the insufficient response of the Marsovan missionaries to the revolutionary threat convinced the Ottoman state they were complicit in these activities. It will also demonstrate that the American missionaries' ostensible connection to the revolutionary groups led to a distancing between the missionaries and the US Foreign Legation in Constantinople. The former believed their ambassador to be siding with Abdülhamid II over them; the latter thought the missionaries were damaging America's reputation.

This thesis ends in 1896 following the first massacres against the Anatolian Armenians, and it is beyond the scope of it to track the course of these relations to the end of the Empire. Yet it is important to note that the negative fallout of these relations still exists in the collective imagination of Turkey and to a lesser degree in America. This negative memory, however, betrays the complexity of the time period and dilutes both nations' histories. We will now examine the beginning of those relations.

CHAPTER 1: THAT THE MILLENIUM NOT BE FAR OFF:
MISSIONARY GROWTH IN A CENTRALIZING STATE AND A
VOLATILE MILLET

In the spring of 1882 American missionary Charles Tracy wrote to his superior in Constantinople describing the remarkable growth at Marsovan station. After three decades of evangelism, school construction, and vocational training among the Apostolic Armenians the missionaries were beginning to win their trust and admiration. Over six hundred local Armenians were coming to their Sunday services, with an additional 450 at their Sunday schools. Dozens of local women had requested that female personnel at their station offer them literacy instruction using Turkish bibles printed in Armenian letters as the reading text. And even Armenians who had not left their native churches believed in the faith of the foreign Protestants: Earlier in the year a Apostolic Armenian man had two missionaries pray for his brother who was “struck dumb”; following their intercession he was supposedly healed, causing a flood of prayer requests from locals that resulted in three or four dozen conversions to Protestantism (and even a few converts from Islam).⁸

Tracy described other aspects of the station work, particularly their successes in building schools in cities and towns where there had been few or none before. Their newly completely four-year high school was already an exemplary case of the American missionary educational institutions springing up throughout Anatolia. Their schools offered a modern Western curriculum of English, geography, history, mathematics and physiology, enabling some graduates to find vocational work in Europe or America. The

⁸ C.C. Tracy, Report of Marsovan Station, 1882-1883, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

foreign schools stood in stark contrast to the Ottoman state schools, which produced graduates that were barely literate and unfit for the civil service.⁹ This trend was widespread and noted by Ali Pasha, the governor of Beirut. He warned if it persisted then Muslim children would increasingly attend these well-funded foreign institutions, and Christians would acquire science and education while Muslims fall into “darkness of ignorance.”¹⁰

The missionary schools were so renowned for their standard of quality that Apostolic Armenian and Greek Orthodox Christians were not hesitant to send their children in droves, despite their clergies’ ambivalent history with the American missionaries. Even some clergymen supported these schools and condoned sending the girls and boys of their churches to attend the schools if their own Greek or Apostolic Armenian educational facilities were found lacking.¹¹ Confirming Ali Pasha’s fears, a few Muslim notables sent their children here, a fact that did not escape the attention of the state.¹²

A more significant reason for Tracy’s optimism, however, was the growing momentum of the Armenian Protestant Church. Despite competition in their mission field from French Jesuits and American Campbellites (a religious group descended from

⁹ Mr. Assistant Cameron to Lt. Col. C. Wilson on Nov. 5 1881. *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Vol. 2, ed. Bilal N. Şimşir (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1982) 380-382. Cameron noted that most Turkish primary schools in Sivas lacked such teaching aids as maps and taught little beyond Koran memorization and basic reading and writing, in stark contrast to the missionary schools.

¹⁰ Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, The State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 56.

¹¹ G.E. White notes in 1897 of a Greek Orthodox priest who encouraged his students to attend an American Board college after their school had been temporarily suspended: “The Greek Orthodox School in the city was temporarily suspended. Many boys were urged upon our tuition who were below the grade of our classes, and without a school in which to prepare for them. So a room was set apart in the college, a Sophomore was asked to become teacher, and a new department was opened, the most interested patron of which is the Greek priest of the city.” Report of Marsovan Station, 1897, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹² Selçuk Aksin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908. Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 202.

America's early nineteenth-century Restoration Movement), Armenian Protestants were showing signs of establishing their own self-perpetuating church in the Ottoman Empire, free of foreign missionary assistance. The church growth within the Marsovan missionary field reflected trends across Anatolia; Tracy's co-laborers noted that native agencies had multiplied and spread to take provision of the remaining land without a further increase in the number of foreign missionaries. Indeed, they believed the American Board was approaching a time when the number of remaining missionaries could be diminished until none remained, and the only connection between native and American Protestants would be the exchange of letters of Christian sympathy and furnishing aid to supplement the resources of native agencies.¹³ In 1867, Marsovan's Ottoman Protestants provided only 8 percent of the costs for their schools, but this number soared to 36 percent in 1881. Tracy hoped they would provide 75 percent by 1890 and be completely self-supporting by the turn of the century, not including Anatolia College, their flagship school.¹⁴

He based his optimism on their missionary schools successfully evangelizing native Christians and prompting conversions. Of the forty students at their girl's school, at least one-half of the boarding students had become "newborn souls," showing the fruition of their efforts to educate the girls while also teaching them the tenets of Protestant Christianity. To the Marsovan missionaries, however, this nascent spiritual revival meant more than individual faith decisions; it could very well be the catalyst of a worldwide spiritual revival that would culminate in Christ's return to earth. Describing the station's sentiments, Tracy said: "The millennium would not be far off if the serious

¹³ Edwin Bliss, "Has the Time Come for Missionaries to Withdrawal from Turkey?" 1883, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁴ Report of Marsovan Station, 1882-1883.



Figure 1: Students and faculty pose in front of Anatolia College in late nineteenth century. Courtesy of the Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

spirit and Christian conscientiousness which reign in this school were to reign in all schools on earth.”¹⁵

Marsovan Station within the ABCFM Turkish Mission

Tracy and his wife Myra were one of five Marsovan-based couples that would spend decades laboring for the American Board for the Commissioning of Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and formed the core of the station personnel in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. They arrived in 1867 and remained until 1916. The other couples included Edward and Sarah Riggs, the former born in the Ottoman Empire to missionary parents and the father of six children that would become missionaries in the Near East themselves; George and Helen Herrick, who remained until they were transferred to the

¹⁵ Ibid.

ABCFM Constantinople station in 1893; George and Esther White, who arrived in 1890 and stayed until the station's closing; and John and Jane Smith, joining in 1863 and remaining until his death in 1896. The five couples pooled station responsibilities as instructors, preachers, traveling missionaries, college presidents, vocational trainers and literacy instructors. And each of the men focused on different languages to accommodate the polyglot students and community members. Riggs knew Greek and Turkish, Herrick and White knew Turkish; and Smith and Tracy knew Armenian. They also had instructional knowledge of French, Biblical Greek and ancient Hebrew.¹⁶

Their missionary organization, the ABCFM, was a Congregationalist-rooted organization formed in America's Second Great Awakening in 1810 that began sending missionaries throughout the world in 1813. Fueled by millennialist eschatology, its missionaries believed in the eminence of the global spread of the gospel, the fall of the pope and the end of Islam. The first representatives of this organization in the Ottoman Empire were Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk, arriving in Izmir in 1820. Parsons died a year later and was replaced by Jonas King, who along with Isaac Bird and William Goodell founded the Beirut station in 1823.

Troubles would start shortly after with the Maronite Church, the indigenous Christians of Lebanon and members of the Syrian Eastern Catholic Church. Initially well-received by Maronite Patriarch Yusuf Hubaysh, whom they gave a Syriac New Testament and a printed Arabic Bible (minus the apocrypha), he would later issue an anathema against the missionaries in the same year for the Americans' aggressive

¹⁶ Report of Marsovan Boarding School, 1880, PABCFM.



Figure 2: Graduates and professors from the Theological Seminary, 1894. Front Row L to R: Edward Riggs, Charles Tracy, John Smith, and George White. Students unnamed in original photo caption. Courtesy of the Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

challenging of Catholic doctrine.¹⁷ The tensions between the missionaries and the Maronite church would culminate in the 1830 with the death of As'ad Shidyaq, the first Arab convert to Protestantism. The patriarch would later depict these events to the Propaganda Fide as yet another heresy conquered by the resilient Maronite Church, but his description betrayed the early amicable relationship with the missionaries and As'ad Shidyaq's desire for a freedom of conscience independent of Maronite ecclesial authority.¹⁸ Goodell would then go on to establish the Constantinople station in 1831 and

¹⁷ Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 94.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 136-137.

work under the protection of the British government prior to the formal opening of diplomatic relationships between the United States and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹

In a similar vein, the ABCFM held quite amicable relations with the Apostolic Armenian Church in their initial encounters, but bolder evangelistic initiatives by the missionaries led to a series of anathemas in the 1840s issued by the patriarch against anyone who attended their schools or purchased their literature. For the next century the American Board's missionary work would continue in Constantinople, but its center of gravity would move away from the capital and into Anatolia through the opening of several new stations and dozens of satellite stations. From the 1850s onward the ABCFM poured millions of dollars into the Anatolian missionary effort, printing four million bibles, and commissioning hundreds of missionaries to the Ottoman Empire.²⁰ Its renowned elementary grade schools, high schools and colleges, some of which had charters and incorporations in America, would be the lynchpin of their operation.²¹

A Faltering State

Tracy's optimism in the early 1880s came at a precarious time for the Ottoman state, which was not nearly so hopeful about the future. The Porte fought to reform its

¹⁹ David Finnie. *Pioneers East: The Early American Experience in the Middle East* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press: 1967), 104. Finnie notes the high levels of biblical literacy and education among the first ABCFM missionaries; most had seven years of university education, including three years of seminary education.

²⁰ There were ABCFM members who exemplified dedication to the Anatolian missionary enterprise. A renowned example was Elias Riggs, who spent 68 years in Turkey and mastered 12 languages. Many of his children and grandchildren directed ABCFM stations in Anatolia in subsequent decades. See Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant diplomacy and the Near East: Missionary influence on American policy, 1810-1927*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), 21.

²¹ By the end of the nineteenth century there were 465 of the ABCFM schools within Ottoman domains, adding further pressure on Abdülhamid to reform the state education system. See Betül Başaran's "Reinterpreting American Missionary Presence in the Ottoman Empire: American Schools and the Evolution of Ottoman Educational Policies," (YÖK Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 1997), 87.

stagnant economy, which lost ground considerable in proportion to the European powers in the last hundred years. In the latter eighteenth and early nineteenth century Selim III attempted to reform the fiscal system in response to changing international conditions, namely that from the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774 onwards the military faced bankruptcy and Ottoman land conquests had essentially come to a halt. A lack of land conquests crippled the *timar* system (units of fiscal administration that produced a level of tax revenue collected by the *timar* holder), highlighting the need for a new monetary policy.

In Selim III's reign (1789-1807) he opened the door to economic reform, an action precipitated by increasing influence of laissez-faire ideas that were trickling into the empire through European intermediaries such as merchants and foreign embassies.²² However, there was no consensus on economic reform among intellectuals and bureaucrats at this time, nor did they institute a successful policy at this time to halt the economic downward spiral.²³ After decades of financial decline, disastrous wars, and shrinking power vis-à-vis Europe, the Ottoman Empire lost significant control of state revenue to foreign creditors through the creation of the Public Debt Administration in 1881. This government body allowed foreign creditors tremendous power to control some of the main sources of revenue of the Ottoman state. The creditors' control over state revenue was so expansive that their control over the economy mirrored the relationship of an imperial power and its colony.²⁴ The Ottoman Empire's financial retraction followed a major geographical retraction four years earlier with Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.

²² Ahmed Güner Sayar, *Osmanlı İktisat Düşüncesinin Çağdaşlaşması: Klasik Dönem'den II. Abdülhamid'e* (Istanbul: Der Yayınları, 1986), 169.

²³ *Ibid.*, 186.

²⁴ Charles Issawi. *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 103.

With the Treaty of Berlin signed between European Powers, the Ottoman Empire lost 20 percent of its population (roughly five-and-a-half million people) and 40 percent of its territory as Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria all became autonomous regions or independent states.²⁵

The domestic crises of the nineteenth century coupled with outside foreign pressure on the Porte to increase the rights of Ottoman Christians prompted the state to issue fundamental reforms to its government in its 1839 and 1856 reform edicts. The 1839 Gülhane edict promised universal equality in fiscal matters and jurisprudence and to secure personal rights for all Ottoman subjects. The edict was issued by the prompting of grand-vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha in order to reform the Ottoman Empire to compete with European Powers. Among other reforms was the abolition of tax farming in order to create a modern tax structure and reform of conscription. Some scholars have considered this edict as a Western-inspired shift away from centuries of a *şeriat*-based legal status quo in which one's religion determined his or her legal rights, but others argue the Gülhane edict emphasized the state and community instead of rights and liberties by calling for a return to just government rooted in *şeriat*.²⁶ Whatever its origins, the edict made no specific reference to securing religious equality (although the terminology was loose enough that missionaries launched more proactive evangelism efforts among

²⁵ Martin Sicker, *The Islamic World in Decline: From the Treaty of Karlowitz to the Disintegration of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Greenwood, 2001), 169.

²⁶ The former position is upheld by Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), and Stanford & Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Vol.2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). The latter position is upheld by Butrus Abu-Manneh who argues the point in "The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript," *Die Welt des Islams*, 34, no. 2 (1994). He says that non-Muslims only had equality with Muslims in the sense that they received equal protection from the Sultan, but they were still considered *dhimmi* in legal status. For other analyses, see Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 1964), 144-147; Martha Mundy and Richard Saumarez Smith, *Governing property, Making the Modern State: Law Administration and Production in Ottoman Syria*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 40-44; and Avi Rubin, "Ottoman Judicial Change in the Age of Modernity: A Reappraisal," *History Compass* 7, no. 1 (2009): 119-140.

Muslims in Constantinople and distributed religious literature throughout Anatolia after 1839 and especially after 1856).²⁷ The Gülhane edict's new form of legal procedure was based on public legal judgment "as the divine law requires" (*kavanin-i şer'iyeye iktizasinca*), the "divine law" meaning *Hanefi fikh*.²⁸

As the above phrase is an oxymoron, it was no surprise there were inconsistencies in the Tanzimat promising equal public legal treatment according to *şeriat*. While this would present no contradiction for Ottoman Muslims who considered *şeriat* the standard of justice, non-Muslims would be less convinced as they would likely consider Islamic law the separation of legal rights between Muslims and non-Muslims.²⁹ This confusion would have also left non-Muslims in a twilight area regarding their religious freedoms, which may be partly responsible for the instances of violence and coercion on non-Muslims in the provinces to convert and the need for the 1856 edict to clarify religious freedoms.³⁰

Regardless of the ambiguity in the law, conditions on the ground did indicate that the reform edicts were partially, if not completely, successful. An 1860 survey commissioned by the British Foreign Office regarding the conditions of Christians in

²⁷ Jeremy Salt, "A Precarious Symbiosis: Ottoman Christians and Foreign Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century," *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 3, no. 3 (1985-86), 55-56.

²⁸ The part of the Gülhane edict in question reads, "It is therefore necessary that henceforth each member of Ottoman society should be taxed for a quota of a fixed tax according to his fortune and means, and that it should be impossible that anything more could be exacted from him [...] From henceforth, therefore, the cause of every accused person shall be publicly judged, *as the divine law requires*, after inquiry and examination, and so long as a regular judgment shall not have been pronounced, no one can secretly or publicly put another to death by poison or in any other manner." Quoted in J.C. Hurewitz's *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1956), 114-115. Emphasis mine.

²⁹ Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 292.

³⁰ Deringil argues that the 1856 Hatt-ı Humayun serves, among others, as a commentary on violence against non-Muslims in the nineteen-year period after the Gülhane edict because it fleshes out the rights of Ottoman non-Muslims and denounces forced conversions to Islam. See "There is No Compulsion in Religion: On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire: 1839-1856." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42, no. 3 (July 2000), 565.

Turkey asked its consular officials if the lives and security of Ottoman Christians had improved in the last twenty years. With near unanimity they replied that it had, as few Christians had been under formal compulsion to convert to Islam. The most likely case of conversion was a Christian woman choosing to marry a Muslim man, or a Christian female servant in a Muslim household choosing the religion of her employers, often with the assurance that her workload would be lighter pending her conversion.³¹ Some Christians were even in an advantageous economic situation over Muslims owing to their exemption from conscription in return for paying a small tax. Christian merchants could continue to accumulate wealth and property while a Muslim's trade would be disrupted through months or years spent serving in the military. The economic balance tilted in favor to Christians so much that some Muslims were forced to give land as collateral on their debts to money lenders (*sarafs*), particularly Armenians.³²

The station of Ottoman Christians improved even in areas that seemed intractable to reform, such as Islamic jurisprudence. In the *şeriat* courts a Christian's testimony would still not be accepted on equal terms, but with the growth of consulates in Anatolia they had increased access to a foreign officer who would take the matter to a vizier or pasha of the district to have the matter rectified.³³

Coupled with these domestic reforms, the re-alignment of international political and economic power in the late nineteenth century increased the incursion of European influence within Ottoman internal matters, and their support of religious freedoms for local Christians created political friction between the state and non-Muslims. The most

³¹ *Papers Relating to the Condition of Christians in Turkey* (British Foreign Office: 1860), 43.

³² Charles Issawi, "The Transformation of the Economic Position of the Millets in the Nineteenth Century," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, eds. Benjamin Braud & Bernard Lewis (London: Homes & Meier Publisher, 1982), 276.

³³ *Papers Relating to the Condition of Christians in Turkey* (British Foreign Office: 1860), 37.

notorious example of this trend was the European powers issuing *berats* (a document issued in order to grant a privilege) to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, which allowed them to come under foreign protection and enjoy all the capitulation rights held by foreign residents in the Ottoman domains. The Ottoman Empire allowed foreign embassies to issue a reasonable number of these *berats* to Ottoman subjects who would help the foreign officials in matters of translation, trade, and other activities. However, the officials slowly began to sell them to whomever could afford them. These Christians and Jews enjoined extraterritoriality within the Ottoman domains, and their numbers would swell from a few hundred in the late eighteenth century to tens of thousands by the mid nineteenth century. They were viewed by the government as a fifth column to wrestle control of the Empire into the hands of European powers.³⁴

The foreign powers that supported the Ottoman Empire against Russia during the Crimean War pushed the implementation of the 1856 Hatt-ı Humayun and made sure to accommodate foreign missionaries. Due to post-Crimean War diplomatic pressure the Ottoman Empire was obligated to allow an unlimited number of foreign schools to open in its domains.³⁵ And following the 1878 Congress of Berlin, foreign powers required the Hatt-ı Humayun's full implementation, further complicating the relationship between the

³⁴ Toward the middle of the nineteenth century the Great Powers were engaged in a power struggle to safeguard their commercial and political interests within the Ottoman Empire, and one of the clearest examples of this was the protégé system. It started as a small-scale system in the eighteenth century with only a few hundred Ottomans receiving extraterritorial status by ambassador who would sell foreign protection at the rate of a few *berats* a year, but the system expanded as foreign embassies and consulates began selling them to whomever could afford it. By 1858 there were an estimated 50,000 people in Istanbul living under foreign protection. See Salahi R. Sonyel, "The Protégé System in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, (1991); Ali İhsan Bağış, *Osmanlı ticaretinde gayri Müslimler: kapitülasyonlar, Avrupa tüccarları, beratlı tüccarlar, hayriye tüccarları, 1750-1839* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1983); and Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Levantiner: Lebenswelten und Identitäten einer ethnokonfessionellen Gruppe im osmanischen Reich im "langen 19. Jahrhundert"* (Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005).

³⁵ Selçuk Akşin Somel, "The Religious Community Schools and Foreign Missionary Schools," In *Ottoman Civilization*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Günsel Renda (Istanbul: Ministry of Culture of the Turkish Republic: 2003), 388.

state and its Christian subjects. This friction was thrown into sharpest relief in central and eastern Anatolia, where Christians made up a plurality of the population in several *vilayets* (provinces) but did not benefit from foreign protection to the same degree as their urban brethren.

The 1878 Treaty of Berlin called for the British take the lead among the six European signatories of the treaty, who would superintend the application of the Ottoman improvements and reforms in provinces inhabited by Armenians.³⁶ The British saw their responsibility in the treaty to uplift the situation of Armenians, but the Ottoman Empire regarded British actions as Christian favoritism by defining the Ottoman reform program strictly in terms of redressing the grievances of Armenians.³⁷ While the political results of the Treaty of Berlin created stability among the European Great Powers throughout the rest of the nineteenth century by averting a large-scale war, it also made Turkey the clear political loser through the creation of Bulgaria, the redrawing of borders in the Balkans, and renewed European support for Ottoman non-Muslims through the internationalization of the Armenian question.³⁸

Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin required the Ottoman Empire to protect Armenians against Kurds and Circassians as demanded by local requirements and make administrative improvements known to the treaty signatories, who would oversee its application.³⁹ Life had been stable for the upper strata of Armenians before the

³⁶ Arman Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question: From the 1830s to 1914* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute Books, 2003), 79.

³⁷ Jeremy Salt, "Trouble Wherever They Went: American Missionaries in Anatolia and Ottoman Syria in the Nineteenth Century." *Muslim World*, 92, nos. 3-4 (Fall 2002), 294.

³⁸ Mai'a Davis, "The European corps: Diplomats and International Cooperation in Western Europe," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton, 2005), 155.

³⁹ Hurewitz, 190.

1877-1878 war, particularly for those who enjoyed prosperity as merchants and bankers. Following the Russo-Turkish war, however, stability collapsed in the eastern *vilayets*. In the face of the oncoming Russian army, fleeing Muslim Circassian and armed Kurdish nomadic tribesmen pastured their flocks in the pastures of sedentary Armenian farmers and tradesmen, ruining their livelihood. As authority collapsed, murder, robbery, and rape became common in Armenian towns and villages.⁴⁰ Melson notes that the vacuum of state control resulted in constant cross-border flow of Muslims fleeing Russia and Armenians leaving the Ottoman Empire from 1877-1917.⁴¹

British involvement stepped up heavily in Ottoman-Armenian affairs, but there was not a supervision mechanism or administrative machinery established to make sure the Ottoman state followed Article 61. Although the 1878 Cyprus Convention between the Ottoman Empire and Britain gave the latter a loose stewardship over eastern Anatolia in exchange for defending Turkey against an attack from Russia, it was soon evident that the implementation of the article would not be carried out by the British and the other five treaty signatories as envisioned. Although British consuls were charged with touring provinces, hearing the complaints of Christian subjects, observing Ottoman governors and Kurdish tribes, and report all these to the British ambassador, who would apply pressure to the Porte to fully implement Article 61, the other European Powers remained mostly

⁴⁰ Robert Zeidner, "Britain and the Launching of the Armenian Question," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, no. 4 (October 1976), 470-471.

⁴¹ Robert Melson, "A Theoretical Inquiry into the Armenian Massacres of 1894-1896," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 24, no. 3 (July 1982), 501. Melson frames the instability and chaos of the eastern *vilayets* of Anatolia up to the 1895 massacres in the context of Russian expansion and Ottoman withdrawal. But these factors were not as significant, Melson contends, as the Armenians' upward cultural trajectory, supported by foreign diplomatic support and missionary schools, which aroused Abdülhamid's fear that the millet system was under threat.

indifferent to the fate of the Armenians.⁴² The language within the treaty was unclear, ineffective, and would be mostly ignored by the Porte.

In 1880 British Ambassador to Constantinople George Goschen complained to Abidin Pasha, a reformer himself who served numerous *valis* throughout Central Anatolia, in addition to serving as the first reform commissioner in the Sivas, Ma'muret ül-Aziz (today's Elazığ), and Diyarbekir provinces in 1878, that nothing had been done by Ottoman Empire to make its steps known regarding the administrative machinery to carry out Article 61. Goschen described the state of the provinces as “deplorable” and called for the British government to put more diplomatic pressure on the Sublime Porte.⁴³ His call would be answered by Foreign Secretary Lord George Granville who sent out a circular to British Ambassadors in 1881 calling on the Great Powers to protest the lack of execution of the Berlin Treaty articles and treatment of Armenians. The French and German governments responded with little enthusiasm. They noted that discussing such an issue was not appropriate at a time when the Turkish-Greek boundary issue remained unresolved. Granville believed that the Sultan was unaware of the real situation of the Christian population, mistaking inaction with lack of awareness. He would remove Goschen from his post in April 1881 for ineffective leadership in drawing the Sultan's attention to the Armenian Question.⁴⁴ Such “inaction” would remain the status quo until regional stability spiraled out of control in the 1890s.

The most volatile element in this combustible political environment was the rise of Armenian revolutionary groups, particularly the Hunchak Armenian revolutionary party. One of three revolutionary parties active in the Ottoman and Russian Empire, the

⁴² Zeidner, 474.

⁴³ Şimşir, *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Vol. 2, 42.

⁴⁴ Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question*, 125-127.

Hunchaks were the most widespread and closely watched by the Ottoman state for their ties to Russia.⁴⁵ Their goal was to provoke the Ottoman state with violent revolutionary activity so that it would crush any signs of a nascent independence movement with such a heavy hand that the Great Powers would intervene and allow for the creation of an Armenian state, as had happened with Bulgaria as a result of the 1878 Congress of Berlin. However, as Melson claims, the Hunchaks did not have widespread support of the Ottoman Armenians, who preferred not to see their homeland destroyed for the sake of allowing the utopian revolutionaries to obtain a dubious political goal, but instead preferred a regenerated, orderly Ottoman Empire.⁴⁶

Foreign Missionaries: Perpetrators or Victims of Civil Discord?

This was the political power keg in which American missionaries had involved themselves during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and it is clear that their actions contributed to acrimony between themselves and the Ottoman state. Few historians charge missionaries with active involvement in Armenian revolutionary activity, but they are portrayed as dabbling in political affairs by keeping individual contacts with foreign diplomats, political figures and the press. They were the largest source of first-hand information to the Western world concerning the massacres of the 1890s, vilifying the Ottoman state to the Western world through their ABCFM publication *The Missionary Herald*. Rather than explain the complex political realities of the multi-confessional Anatolia, they framed Armenian sufferings as simple Muslim

⁴⁵ Janet Klein, "Power in the Periphery: The Hamidiye Light Cavalry and the Struggle over Ottoman Kurdistan, 1890-1914" (Princeton: Ph.D. diss., 2002), 45.

⁴⁶ Melson, 493.

persecution of Christians and adopted such pejorative descriptions of Abdülhamid as “The Red Sultan” at a time when he was gravely concerned about his domestic and international image.⁴⁷

No historical consensus exists on the degree that missionaries engaged directly or indirectly in destructive revolutionary activities, but there are generally three themes employed by historians to describe the failure of the missionaries to propagate their Protestant faith. First, they despised Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy and their tactless proselytism earned scorn from priests, patriarchs, and laymen whom they tried to convert. Second, the Ottoman state opposed them for their abuse of religious freedoms granted in 1839 and 1856 edicts by directly evangelizing Muslims. Third, their missionary efforts contributed to domestic chaos and acted as an indirect catalyst to Armenian nationalism, antagonizing the Ottoman state bureaucracy by ruining its attempts at centralizing authority. By providing educational facilities that were far superior to the state schools almost exclusively to the Armenians, the missionaries were a bit naïve to not realize they were negating trust in the government, although some missionaries began to realize their overreach only after violence exploded in Anatolia. Herrick commented after the 1893 attacks against Anatolian College that they had been connected to the Armenians the last sixty years, to a degree that had become quite embarrassing.⁴⁸ The secondary literature suggests that all of these missteps added up to a failure of the missionaries to create a lasting Protestant presence in Anatolia. Their dwindling efforts after World War I left

⁴⁷ Salt, “A Precarious Symbiosis,” 60-62.

⁴⁸ Herrick, Oxford, August 1, 1893, PABCFM.

little legacy in Anatolia except a secular Enlightenment-style education that emphasized ethnic identity over their religious communal cultures.⁴⁹

Concerning the first point, there are well-documented cases of Catholic and Eastern Orthodox clergy condemning the actions of the foreign missionaries. As discussed earlier, in 1823 the Lebanese Maronite patriarch called for all books sent out by the newly arrived bible society to be burnt. He issued an anathema against associating with missionaries and attending their schools. Punishments for intransigence included beatings, ostracism, or excommunications.⁵⁰ An 1847 bull from the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Matteos II forbade his flock contact with the missionaries on the threat of excommunication. The Greek Orthodox and Apostolic Armenian patriarchs would continue to issue pamphlets attacking evangelical Christianity in the coming decades, but enmity between foreign missionaries and the native Christians who believed that the Protestants had come to poach their flock clearly reached its nadir in the opening decades of Protestant missionary activity.

The second point explaining the ABCFM's long-term ineffectiveness comes from Ottoman opposition to their abuse of freedoms granted in the 1839 and 1856 reform edicts. Missionaries would directly evangelize Muslims, thereby contributing to domestic chaos by creating rancor between Islam and Christians. The missionaries misrepresented their religious rights under the Ottoman state and evangelizing in such a way that they left behind an ideological "Cold War" between Christians and Muslims, despite their repeated claims that they came to Anatolia not to convert Muslims, but only to offer an

⁴⁹ Somel, "Religious Community Schools," 401.

⁵⁰ Salt, "Trouble Wherever They Went," 295.

improved education system.⁵¹ To be sure, the American Board missionaries did engage in provocative activities. In the 1860s British and American missionaries distributed polemical tracts in Constantinople such as *Proofs of the Falsehood of the Mahometan Religion* and *The Balance of Truth*, a monograph that quoted the Koran and hadiths to prove that Islamic sources couldn't substantiate their own religion. ABCFM missionaries even baptized Muslim converts in the Christian quarters of the city, prompting the government to shut down their meeting rooms and rented halls for fear of public retaliation.⁵²

The third reason cited for the ABCFM's failure to leave a lasting Protestant presence in Anatolia is the most notorious aspect of their legacy: contributing to domestic chaos in the eastern *vilayets* through catalyzing Armenian nationalism, ruining the Ottoman state bureaucracy's attempts at centralizing authority. They raised the ire of the state because the ABCFM schools stressed minority national identity and fueled nationalism at a delicate time for the Empire, leading to estrangement of Armenians from the Ottoman cultural environment.⁵³ In these decades the shifting international balance of power had pushed the Ottoman state bureaucracy toward attempts at centralizing its empire to consolidate rule and access untapped manpower in its peripheries. It sought to do this by promoting a collective identity that would unite the state, which lacked a

⁵¹ Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 133.

⁵² Salt, "Trouble Wherever They Went," 304. *The Balance of Truth*, written by German missionary and Oriental scholar Karl Gottlieb Pfander in 1829, saw its distribution pick up in the coming decades, and this book represented the beginning of a large polemical print war between Christianity and Islam in nineteenth-century Anatolia. See Peter Pikkert, "Protestant Missionaries to the Middle East: Ambassadors of Christ or Culture?" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Africa, 2006), 96-97.

⁵³ Hans-Lukas Kieser. *İskalanmış Barış: Doğu Vilayetlerinde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet: 1839-1938* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 239. Kieser argues that despite the missionary teachers' best efforts to instill utopian ideas of the coming of God's kingdom among their pupils, the young Armenian men in their schools merely acquired an Enlightenment education and a national consciousness. Also see Somel, "Religious Community Schools," 397.

supra-religious unifying concept. Known as Ottomanism, this collective ideology was a pragmatic means to create an identity in the face of competing ideologies that threatened the authoritarian, semi-religious regime. The inclusive identity of Ottomanism meant that all people, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, were equally subjects of the sultan. This ideology came about in the process of the Ottoman Empire's attempts to unify its state structure and create well-defined borders after the Tanzimat.⁵⁴

It is within this context of growing nationalist sentiment that foreign missionaries aggressively courted Armenians and offered them their undivided attention instead of the Turks (also due to the real-world dangers of direct evangelism to Muslims in the nineteenth century).⁵⁵ These schools had a significant impact on Ottoman Armenians, particularly with their emphasis on female education and female literacy development, scarcely available before the American Board. However, the most significant effect of Armenians by the ABCFM schools was nourishing a more critical perspective of the Ottoman administration and estranging them from the culture by imbuing them with Western Enlightenment values, leading them to assert their own ethnic identity as Armenians.⁵⁶ Zeidner says the buildup of missionary hospitals, schools and seminaries that offered an Enlightenment education in the remote provinces meant the missions “provided a setting, in the forms of both intellectual atmosphere and physical facilities,

⁵⁴ Selçuk Aksin Somel. “Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913),” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Cumhuriyet’e Devreden Düşünce Mirası: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*, Cilt 1, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 93.

⁵⁵ See Selim Deringil’s “Redefining Identities in the Late Ottoman Empire: Policies of Conversion and Apostasy” in *Imperial Rule*, eds. Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (Budapest: Central European Press, 2005).

⁵⁶ Somel, “Religious Community Schools,” 397.

for the incubation of daring and ambitious ideas and for the hatching of dangerous plots within their flocks.”⁵⁷

Recent scholarship has moved away from viewing the Ottoman-American encounter purely from the standpoint of American or Islamic exceptionalism. Ussama Makdisi’s groundbreaking monograph *Artillery of Heaven* parses the American Board experience in Lebanon to explain early encounters with America and the Middle East. His study rejects the essentialist propositions of liberalism as an evolutionary line on which America stood further along the continuum than Arab cultures, but it also rejects the portrayal of American missionaries as recalcitrant millennialists unable to accommodate themselves to complex foreign realities.⁵⁸ Rather, he contends that interactions between the missionaries and the Maronite Christians created new social orientations on both sides that allowed for more ecumenical visions of the future. The original ABCFM missionaries who landed in Lebanon in 1823 considered evangelism of the native Christians and Muslims in Lebanon as a means to a predetermined end in the same manifest destiny framework as their evangelism of the American Indians; however, by the 1860s the next generation of American Board missionaries would change Syrian Protestant College’s evangelical focus to a purely secular curriculum as an admission to the futility of direct evangelism among these groups. And Butrus al-Bustani, a Maronite convert to Protestantism in the 1840s, believed in the political equality of Muslims and Christians in the East and West. As a result he would break ranks with the American Board for his liberal views of an ecumenical humanism. In the aftermath of the 1860 massacre he founded a “national school” to inculcate these values in students of different

⁵⁷ Zeidner, 472.

⁵⁸ Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 216-217.

ethnic and faith backgrounds through rigorous education. An American Board missionary would refer to him as a “stumbling block” to their missionary work, even though his ideology was only made possible due to East-West cultural interaction (although these interactions also produced negative attitudes, such as the increasing racism among some missionaries, who distinguished themselves from their native students and co-religionists).⁵⁹

This thesis will take Makdisi’s work as a point of departure. Makdisi uses American-Ottoman Christian interaction as a prism to understand new social orientations, and this thesis will use that prism and apply it to a wider geography. His study is a significant contribution to understanding Ottoman society through religious conversion, but he only focuses on a small corner of the ABCFM enterprise in its opening decades, long before it would create a network of hundreds of schools, thousands of Protestant converts, and tens of thousands of students, as it did in late nineteenth-century Anatolia. In contrast, the American missionary effort in Lebanon produced few converts and had almost totally negative relations with the native church and the Ottoman state. These conditions were largely atypical to the relations among these actors in late nineteenth century Anatolia. Even the rancorous relations with the Ottoman administration and the American Board in 1878-1896 had more complicated undercurrents than merely the volatile mixture of two dissenting ideologies.

Re-examining Missionary, State, and Ottoman Christian Relations

⁵⁹ Ibid., 205-207, 217.

Makdisi aside, the dominant historical paradigm of American Board activity asserts that despite their best attempts to come to the Ottoman Empire bearing the gospel of love, the foreign missionaries managed little else except tangling themselves up in the political matters of the Armenian question and provoke everyone within Ottoman state, including their own ambassadors.⁶⁰ Even Makdisi contends that the ABCFM in Beirut had largely abandoned its evangelical mission by 1920 when Syrian Protestant College formally changed to the American University of Beirut, as many of its members no longer believed Christianity to be the exclusive path to divine truth.⁶¹ Yet this paradigm does not take into account that to some extent the foreign missionaries were successful in propagating their Protestant faith, at least among Ottoman Christians, and made a noticeable impact in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1914 an estimated 42,000 Ottoman Christians had accepted Protestantism and were attending 148 churches – the fruit of four generations of American evangelistic efforts.⁶² Four hundred sixty-five American schools were educating over thirty thousand students from the elementary to the seminary level. Apostolic Armenians would also begin incorporating Protestant religious themes into their worship, such as preaching in vernacular Armenian and Turkish, and utilizing modern hymns instead of the church liturgy. This widespread influence does not fit neatly into narratives of acrimony with Apostolic Armenian priests and Ottoman officials, yet examples of it are sprinkled throughout the primary sources. A more significant discrepancy emerges with a closer look at relations between the Ottoman state, native Christians and Protestant missionaries. Tracy's enthusiasm in 1882 of

⁶⁰ Jeremy Salt. *Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians, 1878-1896* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 30.

⁶¹ Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 214.

⁶² *Türkiye'de misyonerlik faaliyetleri*, ed. Ömer Faruk (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2004), 172.

Apostolic Armenians participating in their church activities was not an isolated event, but part of a larger trend of Protestant-Apostolic Armenian religious partnership that had emerged in the 1880s. And even acrimony between the groups was not a simple matter. Clashes between the state and the American Board could have resulted as much from their enterprises growing and crashing into each other within Anatolia as their disparate ideologies.

Foreign consular and missionary station reports tell of many incidents that deviate from the narrative of nineteenth-century missionary activity. Among the most interesting features is the interactions and cross-pollination of Protestant and Apostolic Armenian religious activity. Far from actively disliking each other, missionary accounts reveal many cases of the two confessional groups attending the same prayer meetings, Sunday schools and church services. And some clergy were involved in this ecumenical Christian interaction as well. In certain occasions Greek Orthodox and Apostolic Armenian clergy not only complied with the missionaries, but even showed their approval to one of their flock becoming a Protestant. An 1886 ABCFM Marsovan station report recounts Greek Orthodox priests allowing the baptism of a Greek Protestant's child at a Marsovan outstation to take place in his own church, and he approved of the child's testimony: Smith noted that the Greek priests cordially invited him to perform the service in their church, at the close of their own service; they themselves and the whole congregation remaining; one of the priests holding the candle for him to ready and nodding approval to the words which he spoke."⁶³

Relations with the Ottoman state and missionaries were far less cordial, but prior to the crackdown on Armenian revolutionary movements in the late nineteenth century

⁶³ J.L. Smith, Report of Marsovan Station, 1886, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

the state's main interest in the Marsovan missionaries were their excellent schools and new technology they introduced to Anatolia. Sırrî Pasha, the *vali* of the Sivas *vilayet*, noted that the Turkish instruction offered at Anatolia College was superior to the Turkish lessons in their provincial schools. In 1877 in the midst of Marsovan station's construction plans they introduced such innovations as a modern water system and a water depot for the gardens on their school grounds. These innovations were a small part of other innovations ABCFM missionaries introduced across Turkey; they introduced the first telephone, sewing machine, heating system, and modern agricultural equipment. Although this technology was typically transmitted through Christian minorities before going out to the wider population, the missionaries' modern technology had an impact on Muslim-Turks in and around Marsovan.⁶⁴

The Role of Schools

The largest impact the ABCFM would have on its Turkish population, however, would be its modern school system, and Anatolia College would be the most important transmitter of modern educational methods in the Sivas *vilayet*. While the disparity between their schools and the Ottoman provincial schools would lead to contention in the 1880s, the state schools largely owe their improvement to the missionary school presence as the form and structure of these schools would come to closely resemble those of the American Board. They adopted the American Board's use of peer tutoring, a pedagogical method in which a student who learned the material would be rewarded for successfully

⁶⁴ Gülbadi Alan, "Amerikan Board'in Merzifon'daki Faaliyetleri ve Anadolu Koleji" (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 2008), 386-387.

passing on that information to the next pupil, thereby stretching out the influence of a qualified teacher far beyond what a traditional classroom instruction would allow. The network of Turkish schools around Marsovan even mirrored that of the ABCFM's regional network. The government opened schools in the villages surrounding Marsovan where the ABCFM had already established outstations, such as Bafra, Zile, Herek, Ordu, and Tokat. These schools would lead to increased American-Ottoman friendship, at least until the 1880s when the state realized that their plans for centralization were hindered by the dearth of foreign schools in its Empire.⁶⁵

One possible reason authors rarely mention such positive interactions is their focus on missionary exploits that took place in Constantinople or other urban areas. While authors are correct to point out that the belligerent behavior of foreign missionaries sometimes led to violence, these missionaries were often based in urban areas and therefore near Ottoman central authority, enjoying full protection with foreign consulates at hand, ready to pressure the Ottoman state to live up to the promises of its reform edicts. But in the provinces the ABCFM workers were often not as bold. State security and consular protection were less concentrated, and when they did act too boldly in their missionary activities in the provinces, the retaliation could be severe. The secondary literature on Ottoman Empire-based missionary activity is typically built on patriarchal bulls, *firman*s, Sultanic edicts, embassy correspondence and other content originating from Constantinople and urban areas. While relevant in urban areas, this content did not

⁶⁵ Alan, 388-389.

necessarily represent the relationships between missionaries, the state and local Armenians in the provinces.⁶⁶

A Closer Look at Marsovan Station

This thesis proposes a research model that takes these center-periphery relationships into account. In order to account for the influence that proximity to consular power and Armenian revolutionary activity had on Anatolian missionary activity, this thesis will focus on the missionary station in Marsovan. The city had important commercial, political, and geographic significance, acting as a gateway to central and southern Anatolia. Marsovan was located in the *vilayet* of Sivas, the *sancak* (county) of Amasya and capital of the *kaza* (district) of Marsovan. The other *sancak* within the Marsovan stations' missionary field was Tokat, and both were the seats of Apostolic Armenian bishops; the latter was also the seat of an Armenian Catholic bishop.⁶⁷ Religious jurisdiction of the Apostolic Armenian Church in the Marsovan field fell within the diocese located at the Monastery of Charhapan Sourp Asdvadzadzin in the village of

⁶⁶ The lack of Ottoman state centralization prior to the creation of an extensive railway or telegraph system during Abdülhamid II's reign (1876-1908) meant Sultan edicts weren't always followed in the peripheries nor was the state effective in projecting its power to all parts of the provinces. Abdülhamid was a major contributor to the centralization of Ottoman state control at the end of the nineteenth century; his reign saw the construction of more than 30,000 kilometers of telegraph line. In 1874 one missionary in Beirut commented on the postal telegraph system as "enabling the central power in Constantinople to move the whole Empire like a machine." Quoted in "The Sultan's Messenger: Cultural Construction of Ottoman Telegraphy, 1847-1880," *Technology and Culture*, 41, no. 4 (October 2000), 694.

⁶⁷ Robert H. Hews, *Armenia: A Historical Atlas*, 1st ed. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2000), 191.

Körköy near Marsovan. Final religious authority rested in the hands of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople.⁶⁸

Marsovan is a useful case study to examine these issues and is emblematic of larger trends occurring within Anatolia for its far-reaching religious and educational influence and its role in Ottoman-Armenian tensions of the 1890s. The station, established in 1852 and located in north-central Anatolia, was a central hub in one of the three administrative branches of ABCFM activity in Anatolia. The area under the jurisdiction of the Marsovan station extended from the Black Sea to 150 miles into the Anatolian interior. The station supported Anatolia College, an exemplary case of American Board schools that had a strong theology faculty, taught hundreds of students, and was granted a charter by the state of Massachusetts in 1894; a thriving Armenian church with hundred of attendees on Sunday; and numerous outstations, often staffed by theology students during their winter holiday.

Conclusion

The American Board ran a troubled but vibrant station in Marsovan in the late nineteenth century. The Ottoman bureaucracy, foreign consular officials, and missionaries each had different opinions about the ABCFM presence in Anatolia, but none of those groups doubted that the American Board had established an operation that would greatly impact the future. Each would have been surprised to find their work almost completely destroyed in the aftermath of World War I.

⁶⁸ Hewsen, 191. In addition, see *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 1st ed., s.v. “Merzifon”; and *Salnameler (Vilayet Salnameleri)*, “Sivas Vilayet Salnameleri; 1308, 1317, 1321, 1325.”

The eighteen years between 1878-1896 at Marsovan station mirrored larger Ottoman trends. The growing friendship between Apostolic Armenians and Protestant Christians in matters of education, civil society, and religious practice signified an ascendant Armenian ethnic identity that had challenged religious beliefs as means of self-identity. As a result, American Board schools would no longer divide Armenians by provoking anathemas from patriarchs as they had done earlier in the century, but would unite Apostolic Armenian, Catholic, and Protestant Armenians under the banners of education and progress (although ethnic awareness would not ultimately mitigate religion, but create a framework for it to operate in a secularizing world). Furthermore, tensions between the Marsovan missionary schools and the Ottoman bureaucracy reflected Abdülhamid II's efforts to absorb central and eastern Anatolia into his version of a modern, centralized state. Foreign schools and their instruction in Armenian and Greek, however, ran contrary to this plan, and the difficulties Anatolia College would face in the 1880-90s reflected their opposing visions of the future. The difficulties also represented the tectonic collision between the ABCFM and the Ottoman bureaucracy in the 1880s as they had both grown too large to both comfortably co-exist in Anatolia. In the next chapter relations between the missionaries and Apostolic Armenians will be more closely examined.

CHAPTER 2: AN INTRANSIGENT INTERDEPENDENCE:
MISSIONARIES, OTTOMAN PROTESTANTS, AND APOSTOLIC
ARMENIANS IN MARSOVAN FIELD

In June 1887 a report issued in London at the annual meeting of the Turkish Missions' Aid Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Missions in Bible Lands described an interesting religious phenomenon in southern Anatolia. An Apostolic Armenian village priest had launched what appeared to be a religious revival among his congregation, who had come under Western evangelical religious influence yet chose to stay in their native church. The movement had started six years earlier in Yarpooz (Yarpuz), located 40 miles north of Zeitoon (Süleymanlı, in the modern-day Kahramanmaraş Province), when this unnamed priest proclaimed the essence of Christianity was love and began composing hymns in Turkish – the vernacular language of his congregation. What followed after was the classic formulation of a Christian religious revival (and even echoed mystical experiences found among Sufis): Other priests and brethren joined him, meeting night after night chanting their songs till morning and sometimes fainting in the process while seeing strange visions. Forming a cadre who called themselves “lovists,” they soon did away with liturgical worship. The movement gained momentum and these priests began to travel from village to village until there were “converts” in a dozen locations. Apostolic Armenian ecclesial authorities

soon took notice, so in order to avoid the wrath of their bishops the lovist priests agreed to preserve the other rites of the church while maintaining their new worship style.⁶⁹

The report continued that the “lovist” societies were being formed in every Apostolic Armenian Church in the Marash periphery. These churches emphasized coherent religious instruction, using the Turkish bibles written in the Armenian script published by the American Board’s Bible Society. They took other forms of worship mirroring that of Western Protestants, such as singing hymns, and even called upon American and Armenian Protestant preachers to speak at their churches. Priests associated with this movement expressed approval of the “Enlightened Protestants” for their knowledge of religious truths and the propagation of education. As they looked at the state of their own church and its supposed failings in these areas they held their ecclesial authorities responsible for the prevailing ignorance of religious truth in most of their congregations. Its leader even confessed that the movement had grown as a result of Protestant seed sowing. His statement was echoed by the hundreds of Armenians in peripheral villages who had intellectually accepted the Protestant version of the truth, but preferred to remain in their native churches in hopes of reforming them.⁷⁰

While the Turkish Missions’ Aid Society report likely painted the lovists idealistically, the religious movement mirrored a religious trend that had been spreading in Anatolia throughout the 1880s: Growing relations among the Apostolic Armenian Church, the American missionaries and Protestant Armenians. To be sure, these groups never resolved all their differences nor live in a Christian ecumenical utopia (and Protestant Armenians would to have growing differences of opinion with their foreign

⁶⁹ Turkish Missions’ Aid Society For the Promotion of Evangelical Missions in Foreign Lands, 31st Annual Report, June 1887, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

patrons as the century came to a close), but neither were differences between Protestants and Apostolic Armenians irreconcilable. Late nineteenth-century relations were characterized by increased fluidity of boundaries between the Apostolic Armenian and Protestant churches, and rising voices of influential Armenians who stressed ethnic identity more than theological differences.

Ussama Makdisi's analysis of American Board activity in Syria prior to 1860 touches on the struggles of foreign missionaries to orient themselves among the native churches.⁷¹ He says this relationship was complicated with native interest in the missionaries' nineteenth-century secular technology in the age of increasing European hegemony. The natives were more interested in their modern medicine, printing presses, and education than their evangelical message, so in order to prevent themselves from becoming mere transmitters of secular knowledge, the American Board undertook such actions as limiting their printing presses to the publication religious tracts and polemical disputations. According to Makdisi's formulation, the missionaries reconciled these elements through "evangelical modernity," a process by which the American Board engaged native Christians on a modern, scientific level as well as a common religious and historical level. To prevent their mission from being overrun by secular politics, they held the European powers at arms length and attempted not to align themselves with a specific nation, although they still relied on consular protection.⁷²

This all changed after the 1860 massacres on Mt. Lebanon between Maronites and Druzes when the American Board completely embraced European power. They were so shocked by the violence that they decided evangelical modernity alone could not bridge

⁷¹ Ussama Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 3 (June 1997), 680-713.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 695.

the gap between themselves and the native Christians. Reflected in this ideological shift was the secularization of Syrian Protestant College, which had formerly been their center of evangelical outreach, remaking itself as an enterprise open to all creeds and races without an implicit pressure for their students to convert.⁷³ The American Board changed its ideology from evangelical modernity to secular modernity as they threw in their lot with temporal European power. This reflected a failure to evangelize Arabs and a lack of a common culture between the Protestant missionaries and Maronite Christians.⁷⁴

Conditions fared far better for the American Board mission in late nineteenth-century Anatolia but they still had their own problems considering Armenian Protestants were still be persecuted by their co-nationalists for leaving the Apostolic Armenian Church.⁷⁵ Writing in 1891, Henry Barkley and John Murray recorded in a Turkish travelogue that the real enemies to the mission work were the native Christians, and they carried their enmity so far that the missionaries and their wives could not go out into the streets without being abused in the vilest language, mobbed or stoned.⁷⁶ When the two men met the Armenian Protestant pastor of Talas church, the preacher scorned Catholic and Apostolic Armenians and noted the situation was so volatile between the three camps that only Ottoman suzerainty prevented combustion: “If Turks were removed out of the way for a short time, the three denominations of Christians would cut each others’ throats.”⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid., 707.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 711.

⁷⁵ The Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch had also not warmed up to the American missionaries: In 1882 the ecumenical patriarchate issued a pamphlet in Constantinople that attacked evangelical Christianity. See Report of Marsovan Station, 1882.

⁷⁶ Henry C. Barkley, *A Ride through Asia Minor and Armenia: Giving a Sketch of the Characters, Manners, and Customs of Both the Mussulman and Christian Inhabitants* (London: Albemarle Street, 1891), 152.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 154.

However, this discord did not define the relations between the two sides in Marsovan field; it did not even typify them. A normal encounter between an American missionary and an Apostolic Armenian following the 1878 Ottoman-Russian War would more often involve the former preaching in the latter's church, or the latter graduating from an ABCFM school and taking his Enlightenment education back to an Armenian school as a teacher rather than violence or excommunication between the groups.⁷⁸ While the memory of unfriendly relations between these two branches of Christianity always lurked in the background of an ecumenical encounter such as these (particularly from pronouncements flowing out of the Apostolic Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople and the Apostolic Armenian bishops spread throughout Anatolia), more amicable relations were to be found between local American missionaries, their Protestant flock, village priests, and their Apostolic Armenian parishioners.

In light of the rocky history between American Board missionaries and their initial encounter with Ottoman Christians as mentioned in Chapter 1, the previous description appears counter-intuitive, or existing in the imagination of the missionaries. Even up to 1878 some Armenians were afraid to engage the Protestants in a public manner for fear of retaliation from their spiritual leaders. Baron Magasian, the new preacher of the Marsovan protestant church, held a series of meetings to discuss the points of dispute between the Protestants and Apostolic Armenians. While there were a number who attended the meetings, the immediate effect of these discussions was

⁷⁸ Jane Smith, wife of Marsovan missionary JF Smith, noted in 1889 that of the fifteen girls who had graduated from the Girls' School in the previous year, eight were teachers in nearby Protestant schools while the rest taught in Apostolic Armenian schools. Jane Smith, Marsovan, May 28, 1889, PABCFM.

provoking hostility and driving away those in the church still afraid of being declared anathema.⁷⁹

Yet the thought of amiable relations between Apostolic Armenians and American Protestants is only surprising if variety and variation are not taken into account. Tension between the two camps was highest prior to 1850 before the Protestant millet formed in the Ottoman Empire but softened in later decades. And even in the volatile early decades of early missionary activity relations were not completely sour, particularly in the early 1830s when the American Board's operation in Constantinople restricted itself mostly to administering schools and personal interviews.⁸⁰

The Consolidation of Ottoman Protestantism

Among the biggest problems that plagued early Protestant missionaries was their ambiguous legal standing in the Empire, as Protestants were not recognized by the state as a religious millet, and thereby a foreign element.⁸¹ This would change in following the formation of the Protestant millet in 1847 and its official state sanction in 1850 with an imperial *firman*, following in the footsteps of the state's decision to recognize Jesuit

⁷⁹ JF Smith, Report of Marsovan Station, 1878, PABCFM.

⁸⁰ Giragos H. Chopourian, *The Armenian Evangelical Reformation* (New York: Armenian Missionary Association of America, 1972), 63. The Apostolic Armenian Church did not launch heavy persecution against the missionaries until 1838 when conversions began to trickle in and theological differences between the groups sharpened. A patriarchal bull called Apostolic Armenians to surrender all their literature printed by the missionaries and all contact with the missionaries themselves was forbidden in 1839. And there was a respite of persecution until 1847 due to the Armenian Patriarch's attention being diverted by the accession of a new sultan.

⁸¹ Makdisi points out that the incorporation of Protestants into the millet structure nullified the argument used by the Maronites to persecute As'ad Shidyah based on the Protestant missionaries' "foreignness." See *Artillery of Heaven*, 184.

missionary activity among Orthodox Christians a century earlier.⁸² In the eighteenth century the Porte was initially alarmed at the possible spread of Catholicism among its subjects, not due to an interest in the confessional tug-of-war among its Christian subjects, but the fear that European Catholic powers could set up a fifth column of power and meddle in the religious affairs of the Porte's millet system. However, the state gave a strong boost to its Catholics in the middle of the century when Catholics of Aleppo received a *fatwa* in 1761-2 that affirmed they could embrace the religion of a Jew or a "Frank" and still enjoy the state covenant of protection as long as they paid their taxes and were content to remain a *dhimmi*. American missionaries used this ruling as a legal precedent in 1841 at the US Consul in Beirut to justify their own mission. The *fatwa* merely followed Islamic legal tradition that "unbelief constitutes one nation."⁸³

With legal validation in 1850, the secured rights of Protestants gave them growing freedom to engage their Apostolic Armenian brethren in the oncoming decades, so much so that by the end of the 1878 Turco-Russian War missionaries spoke of major persecution from Apostolic Armenian church as a thing of the past (even though these comments occurred concomitantly with complaints of continued harassment). Pastors frequently spoke of hundreds of Apostolic Armenians attending Protestant church services and weekly prayer meetings. While traveling in Van, Tracy quoted from an American pastor he referred to as Mr. Filliam, who "seemed heartily to deprecate any further disagreement between missionary and native brethren. Every vestige of past misunderstandings seems to have vanished."⁸⁴

⁸² Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 98.

⁸³ Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 103-111.

⁸⁴ CC Tracy, Marsovan, Jan. 14, 1887, PABCFM.

However, renewed cooperation between Protestants and Apostolic Armenians did not result merely from the 1850 *firman* and a few decades of incubation, but from the multiple ways in which Protestants would find inroads into Apostolic Armenian communities, particularly the spectacular growth of ABCFM schools into Anatolia that would bring Apostolic Armenian and Protestant Armenians under the same roof. The growth of this school system enabled other forms of social and religious cooperation in the community. But the educational component always remained crucial to this cooperation. And in this capacity Marsovan station played a crucial role.

The Role of Marsovan Station Within Emerging Armenian Social Orientations

The ABCFM established Marsovan station in 1852 as part of its efforts to branch out into central and eastern Anatolia following the establishment of the Protestant millet. Other stations were established in this decade, such as Sivas (1851); Adana (1852); Diyarbakir (1853); Harput (1855); and Tarsus (1859). The following year a ten-person church began in Marsovan at a time when the American missionaries allowed the native Protestant converts to have more control in guiding their religious affairs.⁸⁵ They began to take administrative and financial positions of leadership within the Anatolian field, starting their own congregations and evangelistic societies (although still only possible

⁸⁵ In the 1860s nearly all native pastors, teachers and helpers were partially paid by the ABCFM missionaries, who controlled the funds of the American Board. In an 1866 report Joseph K. Greene and George Washburn said they were mostly dependent on foreign aid so they would sometimes uncritically follow foreign missionary advice. The solution, they said, was for these churches to pursue financial and ecclesiastical independence – a system foreign to the traditional Apostolic Armenian church structure. Joseph K. Green, George Washburn and T. Trowbridge, “On the Relations Between the Missionaries and the Native Pastors and Churches, 1866. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

through the generous funding of the American Board).⁸⁶ As Armenians increasingly asserted themselves, permanent missionaries began trickling into the station throughout the next decade. Those who joined the station in the 1860s and 1870s became the backbone of the station, expanding the scope of the station's influence by building up its education standard and creating satellite stations in the years to come.⁸⁷

The nature of the station took a defining turn in 1864 when the American Board chose to relocate its flagship theology school Bebek Seminary from Constantinople to Marsovan in order to protect its students from the cosmopolitan allures of the capital and bring the school closer to the geographic heart of the Anatolia mission field.⁸⁸ Preparatory studies for the seminary were then organized into a high school in 1881, comprising the first year of the seminary's scientific courses until it evolved into Anatolia College in 1886 as the theological coursework was extended to three years. In the mid-1890s an elementary school opened to offer instruction to boys ages 8-12. The development of Marsovan station ran contrary to the usual rule of American Board stations, which first established elementary schools and then grew upward to high schools, colleges and possibly seminaries.

From the 1860s to 1886 Marsovan station shot out roots and leaves, spreading its influence to nearby cities and villages via the construction of satellite stations, or outstations, which consisted of a small congregation, a school, and possibly a chapel, full-time pastor, and their accompanying civil organizations. If there were a pocket of Armenian Protestants located in another city, or a graduate of an American Board school willing to work as a teacher, then the ABCFM would attempt to establish an outstation

⁸⁶ Grabill, 15.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁸⁸ George Edward White, *Adventuring with Anatolia College* (Grinnell, IA: Herald-Register, 1940), 10.

there. Through this expansion method the American Board established Amasya outstation in 1862, followed by Samsun, Avkat, and Çarşamba in the same year; Hacıköy and Vezirköprü (1863); Ünye (1866); Çorum (1867); Kapıkaya (1869); Herek (1873); Zile (1876); Gümüş and Azaboğlu (1878); Bafra (1880); Dereköy (1884); Kastamonu and Ulu Pınar (1885); and Fatsa and Alaçam (1886).⁸⁹ Marsovan supported nineteen outstations by 1886, providing them seminary students during their winter vacation to act as teachers and preachers, financial support for their schools and churches, and annual visits by the missionaries themselves.

Corresponding to the growth of Marsovan field, the nature of the missionaries' role within the mission also transformed at this time. Prior to the 1886 establishment of Anatolia College and the build-up of the educational facilities in the station, missionaries divided their time between teaching, preaching, and assisting outstations with their congregations and nascent schools. This changed in 1880 as delegates at the annual American Board meeting in Constantinople voted to shift the focus of foreign missionaries away from these responsibilities and toward education to allow congregations to develop their own national character. They decided that as missionaries they would always be foreigners and didn't want to inject too strong a foreign element into the native congregations.⁹⁰

The Marsovan missionary compound became a hive of educational and civil activity by the end of the nineteenth century. When missionary George White arrived in Anatolia on November 15, 1890 he described the scene of the Marsovan missionary station, its schools, workshops, houses, and other facilities used to fulfill its mandate:

⁸⁹ Alan, 41.

⁹⁰ White, 11.

Built on eight acres of land tucked in the northern border of the city, with houses crowding up to the sheltering walls half way around, and fertile fields on its northern side. The enclosure included the theological seminary, Anatolia College, the Girls' School, and shops for vocational studies program. He goes into greater detail to describe the scene:

“There were three American houses, part of one of which was assigned to us; a bakery already famous for its good bread; and a small self-help shop, where students could earn manhood and money [...] There were about 2,000 books in the Library, chiefly on theological and directly religious subjects. One of the prizes offered annually at commencement by a native pastor was a volume of printed sermons. There were some homemade instruments and apparatus for use in the study of Physics. We were told that funds for endowment amounted to \$13,433, not wholly bad for [the] four-year-old [Anatolia College].”⁹¹

The Nature of Protestant Influence within Marsovan Field

A clearer picture of the new Anatolian social orientations created by missionary-Ottoman interactions shows itself more clearly if one looks outside the walls of the Marsovan compound and into ABCFM initiatives and interactions within Apostolic Armenian communities. A good first step to determine the nature of these interactions is ascertaining the scope of Protestant influence within Marsovan field. While it is not a clear matter to firmly establish the scope of Protestant influence, a reasonable place to start would be tallying the number of Protestants as a percentage of all Armenians and Greeks to obtain a rough look at their dispersion. Indeed, if there were an inconsequential number of native Protestants in the field, they would have had little impact on the native church or gained the attention of their congregation.⁹²

⁹¹ Ibid., 16-17.

⁹² This was the situation in the 1840s Evangelical Church of Beirut, where the American Board directly employed eleven of the fifteen male members of the church. Missionaries in this station were loath to give responsibilities to the native Christians. In this church there would not be a native pastor until 1873. See Grabill, 18.

Estimates vary at the number of Armenians who had accepted Protestantism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but according to the 1882/3 to 1893 Ottoman census the number of Protestants in the Amasya *sancak* (which encompassed most of Marsovan's outstations) were 562 females and 596 males (out of a total of 3,834 Greek Orthodox and 64,837 Apostolic Armenians).⁹³ The number of Protestants in Sivas province was 963 females and 1031 males. White corroborates these numbers in his autobiography, noting that in his arrival to Marsovan station in 1890 there were a thousand Protestants at Marsovan station and another thousand scattered throughout the outstations.⁹⁴

However, these numbers do not reflect the full scope of Protestant influence within the *sancak*. To imagine that the American Board only affected two thousand self-declared Protestants is to misunderstand the porous boundaries lines between the American missionaries and Apostolic Armenians. ABCFM schools and social initiatives had much to offer to the increasingly educated, mobile Armenian millet against the backdrop of an awakening Armenian national identity in which one's ethnic self-awareness would influence their perception of confessional identity.

Protestantism took root in Apostolic Armenian villages in different ways. In the case of Marsovan or Constantinople it resulted from foreign missionaries themselves inhabiting the city and establishing educational enterprises and churches, although there were only a few hundred missionaries in the entire field at any given time so this option would be restricted to the central stations and large outstations. In the case of Kastamonu outstation, it resulted from Protestants moving out of a city center into a village whether

⁹³ Kemal H. Karpat, "Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82-1893," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 9, no. 3 (October 1978): 267.

⁹⁴ White, 22.

for religious or vocational reasons: A contingent of Armenian Protestants emigrated to the outstation in 1890 from the Protestant-rich city of Aintab (modern-day Gaziantep), an estimated five thousand Protestants out of fifteen thousand Ottoman Christians.⁹⁵

The most common way that Protestantism took root among Apostolic Armenian inhabitants of a village in the Marsovan field, however, occurred as organic growth. First, a missionary or colporteur (peddler of devotional literature) would visit the village and present Protestant Christianity. If hostility were not too great, a few locals might be covert and form the nucleus of a Protestant congregation. Armenian Protestants would then establish a school through American Board funds (although locals would sometimes front the money for this activity⁹⁶) and then construct a chapel if sufficient finances were present. Both school and church would then create civil and religious ties to the community often in the form of vocational education. The process of outstation growth in this field was by no means uniform, but in all cases it roughly echoes the steps for expanding missionary work articulated by David Brewer Eddy, an American Board representative who surveyed the entire Anatolia operation in 1913: the distributing of tracts; opening elementary schools, then colleges; and creating industrial training centers to teach the new converts and students a trade.⁹⁷

The work of tract distribution was done by colporteurs, responsible for traveling throughout the field to outstations and small villages, selling bibles, books, and Christian tracts for a few *piasters* each. As these laborers could often be an Apostolic Armenian or Muslim's first encounter with a representative of foreign missionary efforts, the results of

⁹⁵ Edward Riggs, Report of Marsovan Station, 1890-1891, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

⁹⁷ 1. David Eddy, *What Next in Turkey: Glimpses of the American Board's Work in the Near East* (Boston: American Board, 1913), 72.

the meetings could vary from a friendly interaction to outright violence. A.W. Hubbard at the Sivas station noted that their colporteurs had sold two thousand *piasters* worth of books in the last year to villagers and were even able to sell their literature to Turkish residents, while another had been assaulted by an Armenian priest.⁹⁸

With enough interest stirred up in a village in Protestantism (or their education system) and the possible but non-contingent creation of a small congregation, the American Board's next step would be to establish a school, although it was not always them who initiated this step, as the call for a school often took very little prompting from the Apostolic Armenian community. In 1890 residents of Herek, a four-thousand-person village with only fifty Protestants (of those only eleven church-goers, none of which were Herek natives) where there was "more tobacco than religion," a contingent of older Armenians united with the Protestants to call for a graduate of Anatolia College to establish a school in their town, agreeing to pay nearly all his salary.⁹⁹

During the formation of a nascent Protestant community the teacher of the school or a seminary student would often act as a preacher if there were not enough resources on hand to fund both. If a full-time pastor were not available (and they typically were not, as the tenure of a pastor at a station was usually short) most Marsovan Theological Seminary students would spend their winters filling the pulpit of an outstation's church.¹⁰⁰ Riggs mentioned that one teacher in the small village of Azaboğlu had to fill preacher duties as well, all before finishing his schooling in the theological seminary.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ A.W. Hubbard, Report of Sivas Station, 1886-1887, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

⁹⁹ J.F. Smith, Report of Marsovan Station, 1890, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁰⁰ The rate of graduates from the Marsovan Theological Seminary often could not keep up with the construction of new churches. In 1890 the seminary had been open for 25 years, yet had produced 78 graduates, with two-thirds in Christian work and not all those pastors. There were 118 students in Anatolia College enrolled in that year alone, according to the 1890 station report.

¹⁰¹ Report of Marsovan Station, 1885, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

In 1882 the evangelical work among seven of the nineteen outstations in Marsovan field did not have enough preachers so teachers in the schools frequently had to preach on Sundays, according to their ability.¹⁰²

If the American Board could provide sufficient funds to match those raised by a local congregation then it would receive a full-time pastor. His arrival would mark an important step forward for a village congregation, for he acted as an anchor to prevent its collapse in the face of disaster or famine.¹⁰³ Additionally, local Protestants would receive biblical instruction from a man whose four year of collegiate and three years of seminary education would put him among the highest strata of educated subjects in the *sancak*, or even the *vilayet*. Precisely because of a pastor's level of education, Protestant influence on a community extended far beyond his congregation. While a pastor would be essential for the growth of a congregation, he would be useful to the whole community in more ways than as a spiritual leader.¹⁰⁴ In the village of Hacıköy a preacher who nearly lost his position because his congregation thought he had ceased to be useful still managed to retain his post after a call went out from Apostolic Armenians and the local government for his secular skills, particularly as a physician and educator. Acknowledging his skills as an instructor, the *kaymakam* of the village reportedly said, "This man is useful in our town; if the Protestants do not care for his services, let him teach our schools." White noted that as this man was the only preacher, priest, and teacher among all the

¹⁰² Report of Marsovan Station, 1882.

¹⁰³ During the Armenian massacres of 1894-1896 Marsovan field labored under serious restrictions and the American Board had to consider which outstations to close in times of budget tightening. Riggs said they would close a station if its financial needs were crushing, they did not have a pastor, or the previous death or removal of a pastor had kept the post vacant for a significant length of time. See Report of Marsovan Station, 1895.

¹⁰⁴ Besides attaining relative proficiency in English, Turkish and Armenian, the secular education of an Anatolia College and theological seminary graduate would include algebra, geography, trigonometry, astronomy, botany, history, physiology, chemistry, logic, philosophy, and physics. See "Anatolia College and Seminary Curriculum, 1883," PABCFM .

Armenians, and the only physician among all races, his withdrawal would have been severely felt by the Apostolic Armenians and Turks.”¹⁰⁵

Following the schools, Protestants would make deeper inroads into a community by offering vocational training, as developing a spirit of industry among native students and Christians as a means to allow God’s kingdom to unfold on earth was another column of the American missionaries’ millennialist eschatology.¹⁰⁶ Guided by the religious themes of the late nineteenth century, most American Board personnel believed that the Kingdom of Heaven would gradually but irreversibly spread over the earth. Therefore, the missionaries put great hope in vocational development, believing that spreading education and a work ethic attained through labor would spur on the spread of the social gospel and wipe out injustice, strife, famine and poverty, and replace them with intellectual enlightenment and a return to a pristine human condition. Missionaries saw themselves as ushers of this new order through the technical advances they brought to the more primitive mission field.¹⁰⁷

Theology aside, providing vocational training to poorer students gave them a means to pay their way through school and created modest affluence among the young men suffering from crushing poverty. Tracy spoke with pride at their self-help shops for eliminating the condition of poverty that made liberal education impossible. He pointed to the American Protestant work ethic as being born out of such work and says that the

¹⁰⁵ GE White, Report of Marsovan Station, 1891-1892, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁰⁶ Kieser notes that the eschatology of the American missionaries predicted four events in the middle east: The global spread of the gospel, the return of Jews to Palestine and their subsequent salvation, the fall of the pope, and the end of Islam. All four of these themes occur frequently in American Board documentation, particularly the first theme. See “Muslim Heterodoxy and Protestant Utopia,” 92.

¹⁰⁷ Pikkert, 48.

education of a couple of well-to-do students in new England could fund a self-help enterprise in Anatolia for thirty young men.¹⁰⁸

Among their most prolific vocations centers was a furniture shop established in Marsovan in the early 1890s that provided employment for roughly forty students, working ten hours per week at two *paras* per hour. By 1895 the shop had paid off its investment and had become self-supporting.¹⁰⁹ Other skills taught at Marsovan station were bookbinding, gardening, and silk culture. Nearly one hundred students annually would take part in some sort of vocational work during the school year.¹¹⁰ The purpose of vocational training was to alleviate poverty, but sometimes it could literally save lives: During the turmoil in Marsovan following the November 1895 riots against Armenians the American Board offered employment as a form of humanitarian relief. For their silk production, they had fifty looms and sixty hands involved in weaving, producing a total of 100,000 yards of cloth in 1896 and making each weaver a breadwinner at a time of rampant unemployment and famine.¹¹¹

Women played a vital role in the American Board missionary enterprise as well and often labored as “bible women”: female educators who taught literacy to other women using the bible as their text. American women attached to the missionary station had done this work for decades, but native Christians increasingly undertook it in the 1880-90s. One of the few vocation ministry positions offered to women (other than school instructors or nurses), bible women were nearly as popular as teachers in the outstations for their contribution to educational development. Teachers instructed

¹⁰⁸ Report of Marsovan Station, 1887, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁰⁹ Report of Marsovan Station, 1894-1895.

¹¹⁰ White, 21.

¹¹¹ White, Marsovan, Aug. 10, 1896, PABCFM

children, but bible women instructed female adults in areas with widespread illiteracy. They took on considerable responsibility in towns, sometimes managing an isolated outstation if a male teacher or pastor were not present.¹¹² One bible woman could have significant impact on the educational development of females in a village or small town: In Hacıköy one such woman had fifty women under her instruction.¹¹³ Leonard noted in 1878 that Marsovan station had only eight Americans and five bible women yet there were 164 females under their instruction.¹¹⁴

As Marsovan's native Protestant population grew, the Marsovan missionaries realized the proportion of foreign missionaries to native Christians had shrunk to the point that the most effective way to make use of female Armenian and Greek Girls' School graduates would be to train them as instructors and send them to their native villages as bible women rather than use salaried workers. Smith worried that too many women might feel the right to receive financial compensation. He suggested that a missionary woman take a native female with her in order to distribute the large amount of work between the two that awaited them in the villages, as such an arrangement would give the appearance of having a large force engaged in the care of the school. But he assuredly did not want the work of a bible woman to usurp that of a teacher: "It should be distinctly understood that the school is but the center of women's work for women, both in the school and throughout the field."¹¹⁵

Female students and recent graduates augmented the work of the bible women via a civil network connected to the school known as the King's Daughters. Formed in

¹¹² Eddy, 160.

¹¹³ Report of Marsovan Station 1891-1892.

¹¹⁴ JF Leonard, Marsovan, Aug. 20, 1878, PABCFM.

¹¹⁵ Smith, Marsovan, Feb. 18, 1890, PABCFM.

Marsovan in 1889, it was essentially a younger version of the bible women that offered literacy instruction to women in Marsovan but also remedial lessons in spelling, writing, and singing. A few dozen females joined this organization each year (twenty-seven in 1891), and by 1893 there were 116 members, fifty-six of them students, sixty former pupils. By 1895 there were thirty-one of them teaching Sunday school lessons on the Sabbath, and reading lessons to local women at their places of work during the week.¹¹⁶

These various social initiatives changed and modified to reflect the unique conditions of Marsovan field, but at their heart they represented the brand of American Christianity held by the missionaries. As described by David Finnie, to these missionaries their Calvinist-rooted beliefs were not only a theology, but a social system that they brought to the mission field and used to inculcate their virtues to the native Christians.¹¹⁷ Among organizations imported directly from American to Anatolia were the temperance movements, ubiquitous in America by the 1880s. The missionaries created similar organizations to combat what they perceived widespread use of alcohol and tobacco in Marsovan and other outstations, although their brand of Puritanism already put forth the implicit demand that anyone who joined the Protestant ranks to forsake tobacco, alcohol “and all similar vices.”¹¹⁸ Tracy noted that among the graduates of Anatolia College who lectured in Apostolic Armenian schools and churches, some labored successfully to break up drinking and smoking habits among their friends and neighbors, who “think it remarkable that they have 130 men who don’t drink or smoke when these habits are so prevalent in other scenarios.” Yet in Tracy’s mind the spread of upright living according to their Puritan virtues was concomitant with the spread of education, increasing in power

¹¹⁶ Report of Marsovan Station, 1894-1895.

¹¹⁷ Finnie, 114, 116.

¹¹⁸ Report of Marsovan Station, 1888, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

with the progress of the college.¹¹⁹ Even those not affected by their educational system were drawn to their social activism. At Sivas station 150 former alcoholics had joined that station's temperance movement, with Turkish residents even requesting a translation of the pledge into Turkish so they could sign it as well.¹²⁰

The Centerpiece of Protestant-Apostolic Armenian Relations

Despite their importance in forming ties with Apostolic Armenian communities, all of these factors — bible women, vocational development, temperance associations, colporteurs — owed their success to the fulcrum of successful Protestant-Apostolic Armenian relations: schools. This phenomenon was not specific to Marsovan field, nor had it begun only in 1878 (Indeed, in 1832 the missionaries visited Armenian Patriarch Stephen, who received them warmly and agreed to provide priests and school masters to learn the Americans' new education methods so the Armenians could open their own schools).¹²¹ Yet the scale of Apostolic Armenian students attending ABCFM schools is noteworthy in the 1880s, as the increased construction of elementary and high schools meant tens of thousands of students attended these institutions across Anatolia. In Marsovan alone over three-fourths of the 130 students at Anatolia College were Armenians (101 versus twenty-nine Greeks) in 1888.¹²² Although the missionaries did not break down the numbers in their reports between Apostolic Armenians and Protestant Armenians at their school — as they most likely didn't know the total number themselves

¹¹⁹ CC Tracy, Marsovan, Oct. 13, 1888, PABCFM.

¹²⁰ Report of Sivas Station, 1892-1893, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹²¹ Chopourian, 63

¹²² Report of Marsovan Station, 1888. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

– ad hoc information suggests that most of the students were Apostolic Armenian, as there were 45,000 in the Marsovan field in the early 1890s compared to a couple of thousand Protestants.¹²³

The ratio of Apostolic Armenians to Protestants enrolled in Anatolia College was so high in this decade that among the eighty-one Armenian students attending the college in 1888, a heated argument broke out between the two denominational groups, resulting in “hard names, threats, and blasphemous talk” coming from the Apostolic Armenians. As a result one student was expelled. He claimed persecution for his non-Protestant beliefs, but Smith noted the irony that the students suffering actual persecution were Protestant students attending a Protestant school.¹²⁴

The importance of education as a lynchpin for American missionary activity to take root in an Apostolic Armenian community became so clear at the end of the nineteenth century that in 1896 there were attempts in Sivas to unite the American Board school with an Apostolic Armenian school. This motion complemented a sense of unity among Americans that prevailed in the city and their outstations against the backdrop of violence raging across the countryside. Two of Sivas’ outstations even invited a Protestant pastor to hold regular services in Apostolic Armenian churches whose congregations had lost their religious leaders, and he did so until they received new priests; even then he was allowed to give a brief gospel sermon after the priests concluded their part of the sermon to the same audience. Ultimately the proposal to combine the schools was abandoned; not due to differences between the groups but the

¹²³ Report of Marsovan Station, 1891-1892. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹²⁴ Report of Marsovan Station, 1890. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

massacres made such an action untenable at the moment.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, that such a compromise seemed feasible from both parties (and actually initiated by the Apostolic Armenians) shows the degree that relations had evolved since the patriarchal bulls and anathemas of the 1840s.

Because schools were central to the growth of the American Board work the missionaries closely watched other missionaries who attempted to establish themselves in their fields, particularly Jesuits, whose educational facilities were well attended due to their French curriculum. Missionaries would often write back to the ABCFM home office in Constantinople to request funds to build or expand a school in an outstation where Jesuits had established themselves for fear that their work could be undone. They were particularly worried about the Jesuit incursion into Amasya, the capital of the *sancak*, and in Marsovan where the Jesuits and the Armenian Catholic sisters of the Immaculate Conception were active, not to mention the three schools of the Apostolic Armenian community.¹²⁶ In fact, part of the *raison d'être* for creating Anatolia College came from the ABCFM push to solidify their dominance in Marsovan foreign education. In an 1880 letter Tracy vouched for a high school in the city to offer an enlightening education and stave off the efforts of the Jesuits:

“And a high school will forestall efforts of the Jesuits whose eyes are upon the promising Protestant work in Turkey. They are expelled from France, and we understand have already come to Constantinople to the number of a hundred or more, whence they are being distributed over the country. There are some of them in Amasia; They are trying to get a school started nearby under our windows.”¹²⁷

The scope of the Jesuit operation and their Roman Catholic College threatened the American Board missionaries to the point they considering removing the already

¹²⁵ E.H. Perry, Report of Sivas Station, 1896, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹²⁶ Hewsen, 191.

¹²⁷ CC Tracy, Amasia, Dec. 31, 1880, PABCFM.

insubstantial charge for room and board at the seminary. Tracy had many reasons to dislike the activities of the Jesuits and their propagation of a competing theology, but as far as he was concerned, their worst action was not their role as “teachers of error,” but that their teaching free of charge made it more difficult for them to demand tuition and therefore “stood in the way of self-supporting institutions.”¹²⁸

Many historians have noted the degree the American Board relied on its schools to make inroads into Ottoman Christian communities and concur their effectiveness in this regard. They underscore that non-Protestant students were primarily interested in obtaining a top-rate secular education that used the Armenian language, which undid the ABCFM work of evangelizing these students because they focused less on their Christianity and more on their nationality as the source of identity.¹²⁹ But this analysis would only be true if Apostolic Armenian-Protestant interactions were restricted to the walls of the ABCFM school buildings and the missionaries had communicated no information to the non-Protestant students beyond the contents of the school curriculum. As shown before, schools were merely the first piece of a complex web of interactions between the two groups. White summed up the influence of Christian schools when he visited the outstation of Hacıköy in 1894. Although there were only sixteen Protestant families in the town of ten thousand (one-quarter of them Armenian), Protestants taught one hundred children in the school, and the bible woman taught fifty women. Despite persecution against them, their influence had been widespread:

“The number of those who have been powerfully affected by Protestantism, who have learned to know the truth of evangelical Christianity, who see and confess what Christian life ought to be, and to a greater or less degree strive so to live, especially the number of those who have been led

¹²⁸ Report of Marsovan Station, 1882. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹²⁹ See Salt, “Trouble Wherever They Went,” 309; and Somel, “Religious Community Schools,” 401.

profoundly to respect Christian education and covet it for their children, must include almost all the Armenians of the place.”¹³⁰

Moreover, students whose seminary school and secular education enabled them to secure a lucrative career position in Europe or America often chose to remain in Anatolia and participate in the full-time ministry, contrary to the worries of Marsovan missionaries that their seminary graduates would use their Western religious education to escape the Ottoman Empire. Prior to the establishment of Anatolia College, the fear of an exodus of their talented, ambitious students to America or Europe convinced the Marsovan missionaries to concentrate the secular curriculum of the seminary in a separate institution from the theological seminary. If they did not do this, the missionaries worried they would never know if students were drawn to their schools by the desire to preach the gospel, or the love of education.¹³¹

This assumption was put to the test in an 1892 compilation of the whereabouts of the seminary’s ninety-two graduates over the last twenty-eight years. The results were positive for the American Board: Among the graduates, only sixteen had permanently relocated to America (about 20 percent). Smith noted that among those who had left their ministerial work many were better adapted to another type of profession anyway. And those who had gone abroad on less than amiable terms with the missionaries left the denomination prior to their departure. Among those who stayed, many of their graduates had entered the ministry, including pastors at outstations within the Marsovan field. This information assuaged their fears that the only lasting impact they would have on students would be an educational one.¹³²

¹³⁰ White, Marsovan, Feb. 3, 1894, PABCFM.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² J.F. Smith, Marsovan, Jan. 19 1892, PABCFM.

A New Protestant-Apostolic Armenian Confessional Symbiosis

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Protestant religious styles had begun to affect the Apostolic Armenian Church and their manner of worship in ways that surprised even the American missionaries, thereby increasing co-operation between the two churches. Station reports and private letters frequently noted that hundreds of Apostolic Armenians attended at Marsovan church's Sunday services, including the hundreds more at their weekly prayer meetings and Sunday school classes. And within the Apostolic Armenian churches they held private prayer meetings, evangelical preaching, and what Westerners described as "something like a true reformation going on among the adherents of the Old Church."¹³³

Armenian Protestants agreed with this summation, including Anatolia College professor Garabet Tomayan, who started meetings for Apostolic Armenians using common musical instruments and "unobjectionable portions of the Apostolic Armenian liturgy." Soon over a thousand came to that meeting, fueled by what an American missionary described as "the undue longing for Armenian unification, leading to temptation to compromise with national prejudice, and tolerate errors, for the sake of extenuation." In the area of reunification, Tomayan said this consummation may not happen for generations, but at least it was good in the time being for Apostolic Armenians and Protestants to cooperate in such matters as education.¹³⁴

¹³³ Rev. S.C. Bartlett, "A Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board in Turkey," 1896, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹³⁴ Report of Marsovan Station, 1888, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

The softening in attitudes toward Apostolic Armenian-Protestant religious interactions occurred on the part of the American missionaries as well. The fiery rhetoric against the ancient churches employed in earlier decades had been replaced by a more ecumenical approach. Some even went so far as to say that one did not have to become Protestant in order to receive salvation and could find it in their native churches. In the 1887 Marsovan station report the writer said that while Anatolia College isn't overtly evangelical, most men "decide for Christ" and those at the school labored just as successfully for the conversion of their Apostolic Armenian and Greek pupils as their Protestant pupils: "Indeed no one of us knows just how many are Protestants and how many are Greeks and Armenians." The writer noted that the effects on the students had not gone unnoticed by their parents, who often brought other youths from their families to the schools with the special request that they are carefully taught Christianity.¹³⁵

Why did Apostolic Armenians show signs of incorporating evangelical Protestantism into their religious expression? It could not have been the result of an intentional plan by the American missionaries. They worked to convert native Christians to Protestantism but never made mention of working actively to reform ancient churches, although they noted these developments with pleasure in their station reports and correspondence with their superiors in the ABCFM. If the American missionaries did in fact have an ambition to reform the Apostolic Armenian or Greek Orthodox church from within, this plan would have hardly been possible if relationships were not amicable between them, native Christian congregations, and their priests and bishops. Even in the

¹³⁵ Report of Marsovan Station, 1887.

best of times it was not always a simple matter for these groups to interact *outside* the walls of the church.¹³⁶

One possibility is the Apostolic Armenians who attended an American Board school without becoming Protestants brought their experiences and religious lessons back to their native churches. Thousands of students had graduated from their schools by the 1890s and a sizeable portion would have been Apostolic Armenians who did not become Protestants. This answer is still unsatisfactory, however. A large number of Apostolic Armenians did attend these schools, but if the influence of evangelical Protestantism only affected those who attended American Board schools, they would still have been dwarfed in number and likely alienated by their co-religionists who preferred the use of liturgical Armenian in their church.

Harutune Jenanyan: An Armenian Protestant Exemplar

Perhaps an answer can be found in the life of Armenian Protestant Harutune Jenanyan, a pastor, author, and school administrator. Born in Marash into a Protestant family and educated at Union Theological Seminary in New York, he would become an exemplary figure among Armenians attempting to bridge confessional divides by looking through the secular prism of ethnic unification. Jenanyan was a major actor in the Armenian Protestant church and rose to the education and leadership levels of the American Board missionaries. Yet he was still a product of his time, plainly spoke the

¹³⁶ Even up to 1897, the widely successful Sunday school ministry at Marsovan station had 50 people go out from their premises to teach Sunday school to 1200 students, but their problem was not a lack of staff, but opposition from Catholic and Apostolic Armenian leaders. Report of Marsovan Station, 1897.

language of nationalism, and called for an ecumenical unity among all the three confessional Christian communities within the Armenian race.

While he did speak ill of the Apostolic Armenian Church in his autobiography, Jenanyan never used the vitriolic polemics sometimes employed by American missionaries in their early encounters with the native church. Although a firm Protestant by theology and family background, he did not attack the Apostolic Armenian Church for their theological differences and even commended the clergy for originating ideas to convey the truth of their beliefs, despite most of them lacking much of an education. Speaking somewhat humorously, he quotes a village priests who expounded on God's goodness in establishing an orderly creation in a sermon illustration: "How grateful we should be that God has not given wings to the ox, the horse, or the camel, for, while flying, they might have lighted upon our dwellings and broken them in."¹³⁷

Yet at the heart of this episode was his main critique of the current state of the Apostolic Armenian Church: The priests were little more than members of the laboring class who had learned scattered bits of ancient Armenian for liturgical purposes and were not qualified to lead their congregation. At a time when education had begun a flowering in the Armenian millet, Apostolic Armenian congregations required a more substantial explanation of their faith than vague answers or an appeal to tradition. The priests' lack of knowledge and inability to answer the questions of their congregations were not only a shame for them, but also a cause for derision from outsiders and "mocking and laughter."¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Harutune S. Jenanyan, "Harutune, or Lights and Shadows in the Orient" (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 32.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 34.

Jenanyan's solution to this malady was not a mass conversion out of the Apostolic Armenian Church to Protestantism. He did not trail off into millennialist prose in his writings, imagining the victory of Protestantism covering the whole globe, as Marsovan missionaries often did in their letters and reports. Rather, he called on the Enlightenment to redeem the Armenian race and offer its fruit of religious and educational progress. And he did not fault the theology of the Apostolic Armenian Church for this predicament; rather, he faulted the incomparable persecution the church had faced in its 1500-year history, seeing its bishops and priests led away in chains by their pagan or Muslim captors. He boasted proudly of the Armenian race, calling it greater than the Roman Empire and especially loyal to God, for it had endured long after more powerful civilizations disappeared.¹³⁹

He also boasted of Armenia's rich cultural heritage. While medieval Europe lived in darkness and ignorance, he claimed, Armenian literature flourished from the fourth to fourteenth century with its beautiful prose and rich theological content. And noting that the Armenians were considered the first race to completely Christianize, he even credited them with the evangelization of the Anglo-Saxons. It was the Armenians who held the Christian light as the masses in Europe dwelt in heathendom and helped to re-convert the continent as it had fallen into the Dark Ages, Jenanyan claimed. And were it not for their past persecution they could still have held this pre-eminent position.¹⁴⁰ To remedy the educational shortage among his kinsmen he founded St. Paul's institute in Tarsus in November 1888 with seventeen students. Starting as an elementary school, it was raised to a collegiate program under Jenanyan's tutelage until he resigned in 1893.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 241.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 242.



Figure 3: Harutune and Helene Jenanyan. From his 1898 autobiography "Harutune, or Lights and Shadows in the Orient." Courtesy of the Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

While his institute did have an evangelical emphasis (where he claims that of the ninety-four students in the school, “three-fourths of whom were converted to Christ, and forty-two received into the churches on confession of faith”), Jenanyan used secular terminology to describe his intention of starting the school as place where the orphan and poor could be gathered and trained for useful lives. Most importantly, in his summation of the school’s usefulness to his nation was that a native Christian, not a foreign missionary, would lead it. While some ABCFM workers feared this could cause conflict as an independent work with existing missionary forces, Jenanyan maintained that his institution defied the long-held notion that natives were incapable of running such an operation.¹⁴¹ His nationalistic rhetoric combined with Christian spirituality offer insight into the nature of the meeting ground between evangelical and Apostolic Armenian spirituality that occurred throughout the Marsovan field

Just as Jenanyan stressed education as the meeting point between Armenians of different theological stripes, it was the American Board schools that allowed Protestants and Apostolic Armenians to meet on the same civil and religious grounds in Marsovan field. Their schools, an increase in education in general, and a rising nationalist sentiment among Armenians created the need for a religious expression that suited a flowering millet. This fit within the rising self-awareness of their ethnic identity in the latter part of the nineteenth century as Armenian nationalism developed.

Other Armenian intellectuals raised the same point that distinctions in their race were not between Catholics, Apostolic Armenians and Protestants, but between the educated and uneducated. An anonymous writer for *Arvelik*, a Constantinople-based Armenian newspaper, said the goal for all Armenians should not be theological unity, but

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 115.

the end of ignorance. To make his point he referred to a visiting Scottish preacher to Constantinople named Dr. Somerville, whose simple sermons showed that points of agreement between the different Christian sects were more numerous than the points of disagreement. The writer used this analysis as a launching point to criticize the clerical class of the Apostolic Armenian Church with the same crimes that Jenanyan had indicted them: ignorance.

“Their sermons are always the same. No wonder church attendance decreases each year. The people are becoming educated, the rising generation is growing, and cannot be contented in the simple words which satisfied our fathers [...] It is a national necessity therefore to pay attention to the production among our Vantabends and Bishops of learned and elegant preachers, in order to give a healthy moral and religious education to the people, and in order to drive out religious indifference from the rising generation.”¹⁴²

Some missionaries understood the power of education to unite confessional groups, but also realized it was a double-edged sword. If Enlightenment schools truly were the fulcrum of different denominations working together, then the Protestant brand would only be popular as long as it was linked with progress. And with rising education levels among Apostolic Armenians at the end of the nineteenth century some feared that the Protestant brand had lost its reputation as the denominational choice of the educated. The Americans noticed that when the level of “Enlightenment” had increased among the Apostolic Armenians they were no longer converting to Protestantism in such substantial numbers as past decades. In 1886 Sivas a station report writer noted that Armenians and Greeks that had experienced a salvation experience in the last ten years no longer recognize the obligation to change church and political relations by becoming Protestant. The report writer noted that, “When the line between Protestant and Apostolic Armenian

¹⁴² Anonymous, “The Priesthood and the Spiritual and Moral State of the Nation,” from *Arvelik* Armenian newspaper, undated, PABCFM.

ceased to be the mark of Christian progress, the power to secure substantial Protestant gains was gone.”¹⁴³

In the context of this ecumenical focus on attaining “progress,” the residents of a city or village put a premium on education; whether it was Protestant, Catholic or an Armenian national school often made little difference. And if circumstances forced the closure of one school, residents would merely send their children to another. White noted in a tour of their field along the Black Sea coast that their outstation in Samsun could no longer support both a preacher and teacher so parents merely dismissed the latter and sent their children to the city’s Catholic school.¹⁴⁴

Indeed, it was this view of Protestantism as being equal with progress that likely spurred on their growth. In a travelogue, William Ramsey noted that a Protestant pastor had admitted several Protestants he saw were only converts in sense that they saw Protestants were on a higher level of civilization and society than Apostolic Armenian Church and wanted to join them: “Therein lies the real strength of the missionary movement: They did not only work for individual conversions but to improve education. They did not proselytize in their education.”¹⁴⁵

The Role of ‘Evangelical Modernity’ Within Anatolia’s New Religious Orientations

The interactions between Protestants and Apostolic Armenians in the wake of the Tanzimat produced new social orientations that were grounded in secular learning that

¹⁴³ Report of Sivas Station, 1885-1886, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁴⁴ White, Marsovan, Dec. 9, 1896, PABCFM.

¹⁴⁵ William Ramsey, *Impressions of Turkey During 12 Years’ Wandering* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1897), 220.

accommodated the rise of Armenian nationalism. Yet these orientations did not marginalize the role of religion among native Christians in Marsovan province. On the contrary, among many they produced a growing desire for a religious expression that reflected rising levels of education and prosperity among late nineteenth century Armenians. In the Marsovan field, differences between the Protestant and Apostolic Armenian churches slowly broke down in response to increasing interactions in the daily lives of the two congregations. Both of their children went to similar schools, both females could be instructed by the same bible woman, and they would occasionally share clergy members. And their churches did not fade into irrelevancy with the rise of secular education, but rather mirrored the new levels of co-cooperation taking place between the different confessional communities of Armenian Christianity.

Finally, the nature of these interactions has important implications regarding concepts of evangelical and secular modernity. Makdisi describes the secular American Board mission in Syria following the 1860 massacres as a failure to mediate between evangelical and secular modernity and evangelize independently of a secular power. So shocked by the violence of 1860, the foreign missionaries no longer felt a sense of common cultural belonging with the native Christians and began employing the tools of modernity by reinventing Syrian Protestant College as a secular enterprise, reflecting a culmination of a series of evangelical disappointments.¹⁴⁶ However, as shown in the case of Anatolia College and the Marsovan seminary, a focus on secular education did not necessarily mitigate the possibility of Protestant growth. In the Marsovan mission field conditions were far more hospitable to church growth than early nineteenth-century Syria, and converts were measured in the thousands instead of the dozens. In this setting

¹⁴⁶ Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible," 709-711.

a secular school could serve as foundation of a religious and social enterprise with several institutions that each interacted with a community their own way.

In the context of evangelical modernity as described by Makdisi, it succeeded to a fair degree in Marsovan station. The foreign missionaries did connect to native Christians on a common religious level, particularly the Apostolic Armenians who worked to reform their church along the lines of evangelical Christianity. Jenanyan in particular explored the themes of a common religious heritage of all Armenians, who were part of a race with a predilection toward the things of God. And the tools of modernity — a secular education, vocational training, and emphasis on national character — were employed in a way that attracted Armenians to Protestantism, or at least had an effect on the Apostolic Armenian Church, rather than the natives showing an exclusive interest in the missionaries' secular technology but not their religion. In these regards, the religious movement of the American Board in the late nineteenth century Marsovan station was characterized by a complementation of religion and modernity, not a contestation.

CHAPTER 3: OPPOSING FUTURES COLLIDE: AMERICAN BOARD AND OTTOMAN OFFICIALDOM RELATIONS

“He is jealous of England, jealous of Christian education, jealous of all ideas and aspirations toward liberty, jealous of every form of organized effort,” said Marsovan missionary George F. Herrick about Sultan Abdülhamid in 1893.¹⁴⁷ Two years later his words were to be even more direct: “The only hope I see is the success of a plan too much talked about to dethrone the Sultan by his own people. Europe ought to do it [and] ought to have done it long ago.”¹⁴⁸ So it was that the feelings of American missionaries toward the Ottoman government had turned from decades of ambivalence to a full rolling boil. Although his co-laborers at Marsovan station did not echo Herrick’s feelings as strongly, they all harbored growing pessimism with the Ottoman government for the horrors witnessed in the decade. From 1893 to 1896 the missionaries at Marsovan station had faced a series of disasters that had threatened to undo years of their efforts: The arrest of two Armenian teachers at Anatolia College under suspicion of revolutionary activity, the destruction of their unfinished Girls’ School by an unknown arsonist, the foot dragging of the state to pay for an indemnity for their schools, and the deaths of hundreds of Armenians in the Marsovan massacre of 1895. Although the station had faced its share of droughts, famines, and general lawlessness in the countryside in previous decades, the missionaries believed for the first time the government wanted to extinguish their work.

At this time Sultan Abdülhamid had reason to be equally uncertain of the future. The Ottoman state feared missionary infiltration of Christian minorities and marginal

¹⁴⁷ Herrick, Wales, July 6, 1893, PABCFM.

¹⁴⁸ Herrick, Bible House, Constantinople, November 12, 1895, PABCFM.

groups such as the Yezidi Kurds, whom it needed to squeeze for untapped manpower as it fought against internal threats and foreign imperialism, to which the Sultan thought the missionaries were linked.¹⁴⁹ Abdülhamid noted that some missionaries were praying for the extinction of the empire and its absorption into a European colony, and as they increased their numbers and political leverage, the state believed it could only combat them by increasing the number of Muslims.¹⁵⁰

Such levels of mutual acrimony were unprecedented and largely unforeseen. While the American Board never enjoyed good relations with the Ottoman state, the sides took little notice of each other when the missionaries first arrived. To be sure, there were confrontational clashes in the beginning, starting with the ABCFM arrival in the 1820s where the ABCFM raised the ire of the Maronite patriarch, a millet leader that naturally had the favor of Sultan Mahmut II. He viewed the missionaries as foreigners disturbing the faith of those under his protection.¹⁵¹ Yet for the next few decades the religious tug-of-war in the periphery of the empire remained trivial in the scope of the state's political ambitions. The missionaries enjoyed seasons of growth in their churches, schools, and prayer meetings, so much so that the British Foreign office noted in 1860 that any oppression experienced by Christians on account of their religion largely existed in their imagination.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition," 13.

¹⁵⁰ Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 114.

¹⁵¹ Salt, "Trouble Wherever They Went," 295.

¹⁵² A British consular officer stationed in Albania made the following observations on religious freedoms for Christians: "That the edict of Gulhane and the Hatti-Humayun have gradually improved the whole state of the province requires no demonstration. They have given the Christians their present position, who, instead of being trodden down as they were twenty years (or less) ago, now are almost secure from molestation and loudly assert their rights; but, not having abated a particle of their old antipathy to the Ottoman Government, they magnify everything in the shape of restraint, and any quarrel or disputed question with a Turk (if decided against them) is termed an "oppression"; while their own conduct, as far as my experience goes, shows them to be often capable of the very crimes that impute to the Turks, who I

Harder times fell on Ottoman Christian subjects following the 1878 Russo-Turkish war in the form of heavy taxes in lieu of their military conscription, but afterwards the missionaries speak of a pacific time in which neither the government nor their ancient churches bothered their missionary enterprise. The only difficulties missionaries spoke of in their field were the dire economic condition of their mission field. In the 1886 famine many farmers in the Sivas *vilayet* were on the verge of financial ruin and sometimes hid their capital for fear of forced loans.¹⁵³ In the religious sphere, however, the early years of the 1880s the missionaries' optimism showed through in their correspondence. Numbers swelled at their church services, new schools opened frequently, and even bourgeois Turks wanted to buy their Christian literature.¹⁵⁴ In 1883 Missionary Edwin Bliss even posed the question if missionaries were to leave Turkey and let the native church guide its own destiny. He admitted that withdrawal was not currently possible on an extensive scale, but even to entertain such a question suggested growing confidence among the American Board.¹⁵⁵

Those days were numbered. The government, for decades mostly disinterested in the ABCFM's work in the Ottoman Empire, began to formally intervene in their efforts in the 1880s. The state was still not interested in the religious impact of the missionaries on native Christians, but they were highly interested the institution at the heart of the American Board's enterprise: its school system. In 1881 the Ministry of Public Education (MPE) argued that the neglect of state provincial education had promoted foreign

think , stand far higher in honesty and general morality than the majority of the accusers." Quoted in Papers Relating to the Condition of Christians in Turkey (British Foreign Office: 1860), 43.

¹⁵³ L.B. Chamberlain, Report of Sivas Station, 1885-1886, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁵⁴ A.W. Hubbard recounts in the 1886-1887 Sivas Station Report that oftentimes an "intelligent" Turk would show interest in their colporteur, listen to his message and buy his books.

¹⁵⁵ Edwin Bliss, "Has the Time Come for Missionaries to Withdrawal from Turkey?" 1883. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

educational institutions that “instructed and raised young Ottoman subjects in accordance with their interests and designs.”¹⁵⁶ As the state attempted to build a modern education infrastructure in its peripheries, it realized that foreign schools had been doing just that for decades. That the missionaries had been building new schools came as no surprise to the government, but it is plausible to imagine state officials become worried when they realized that their vision of a centralized school network looked uncannily similar to the network that foreigners had already constructed.

Reforms to the Ottoman education system began in the late eighteenth century but accelerated during the Tanzimat in order to create an educated bureaucratic apparatus that could create a tax system to fund a modern military. This began with reform of the *Quranic* schools, then the establishment of Istanbul’s first public schools in 1839 (essentially an advanced elementary school), followed by training schools for uneducated officers, *rüşdiye* (secondary) schools that came to absorb primary school functions, and then proper secondary education with the establishment of Galatasaray *Lisesi* in 1868. *Medreses* (higher-level Islamic schools) were reformed and integrated into this system as well, becoming a parallel component to the state’s new school system. This has been viewed as an attempt to marginalize these Islamic schools, but this view is not correct as the ulama was involved in multiple ways with the new schools system.¹⁵⁷ And despite the rise of secularism, no reformer would have considered a new framework without the inclusion of Islam prior to the 1870s.¹⁵⁸ Education reform hit many snags along the way: In 1863 a correspondence from the Grand Vizierate revealed that many *rüşdiye* graduates could not write or prepare a composition in a way to serve the Ottoman civil service, a

¹⁵⁶ Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education*, 202.

¹⁵⁷ Fortna, 72-73.

¹⁵⁸ Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education*, 2.

deficiency exacerbated when compared to American Board graduates whose education mirrored that of Western European and American schools.¹⁵⁹ In the 1880s the *rüşdiyye* schools would overlap with foreign schools when Hamidian policy required the increase of local Ottoman education councils for the goal of pushing an Ottoman, primary school into every village.¹⁶⁰

The Hamidian government feared the influence of the foreign schools at a time when separatist and independence movements, combined with the disastrous 1878 war, had carved out large portions of the Empire's West, the main reasons the Ottoman government hurried to establish education administrations at the provincial level.¹⁶¹ In the early 1880s the government increased its inspection of foreign schools for fear that they had become sites of separatist activity and indoctrination. It believed that some foreigners had exploited the lack of government support for provincial education to inculcate students with their revolutionary views under the guise of "the deceptive appearance of serving for the respectable duty of disseminating knowledge and skill."¹⁶²

The state expanded its schools into the provinces as a means to ward off a second perceived threat: the "various inconveniences" Muslim students who studied at foreign schools had been exposed, argued by the MPE as another reason for the need of a consistent educational policy.¹⁶³ The reaction came in response to a small but steady trickle of Muslims students that for decades had attended American Board schools. Marsovan missionaries often mentioned Turkish students attending their schools, typically described as the son or daughter of a prominent Turkish subject who

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 49.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 109.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 202.

¹⁶² Ibid., 98-99.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 203.

appreciated the excellent education brought by the missionaries, but showed no interest in joining their religion. In 1888 the Marsovan station report writer described a female Turkish student whose father had come under pressure from the community to remove her from the Girls' School, but maintained her enrollment due to his social standing: "The father of the other Turkish pupil, being a scribe of the city council, is, financially, above intimidation by the assessor, and his daughter seems very happy in her lessons."¹⁶⁴

Anatolia College instructors noticed the increased government involvement in their schools in the 1880s. State officials required them to procure an official school permit in 1886 proving imperial sanction for their school, which they found to be a strange request as their compound had operated these educational facilities without a permit for the last quarter century. A compromise was reached between their legation and minister of public instruction in which no new permission would be required provided they submit the teachers' diplomas and textbooks to the government for inspection, along with opening their school to an occasional inspector, which they received shortly after. The 1887 station report noted that the inspection went particularly well (the *vali* inspected the school for two hours and even found a book written by him in the library), but he stated that the school would need formal permission to operate in the future.¹⁶⁵

In the following years the state found small ways to let the Marsovan compound know that it alone held authority for their continued existence. In the 1890s a trend had begun in which Ottoman government officials would involve themselves in of the most symbolic events of the missionary station: commencement ceremony at Anatolia College. It became quite common for the *vali* to attend Anatolia College's commencement

¹⁶⁴ Marsovan Station Report, 1888, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁶⁵ Marsovan Station Report, 1887. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

ceremony in this time period with his retinue and personally hand diplomas to the new graduates. And at the ceremony, he would express his interest in the college and let it be known that Abdülhamid had approved the school.¹⁶⁶ The missionaries received his presence with gratitude at the commencement ceremony but would come to receive him with less enthusiasm in future appearances. The action lost its luster, and to the Anatolia College faculty became little more than political grandstanding while secretly attempting to dismantle the missionary station. In 1893 Herrick wrote a confidential letter to the Constantinople station describing the wrongful arrest of their female students (most likely authorized by the *vali*) while en route to an outstation, despite his appearance at their commencement celebration one month earlier:

“A wagon full of only girls, among them Miss Priscilla and Miss Aspasia, were arrested upon its arrival in Vezir Keopru and all the girls taken into a Turkish house and their persons searched by a Turkish woman; all our students for Caesarea were arrested upon their arrival in Chorum, notwithstanding that they all had *tezkeres* and were still in prison at last accounts. The treatment of our pupils is just after the *Vali*'s visit at our college commencement, where he appeared most friendly, himself distributing the diplomas. Is it possible to interpret this as anything other than a deliberate purpose to break up our schools?”¹⁶⁷

By 1895, when Herrick had been in Constantinople at the Bible House for two years, he talked of his appreciation for commencement ceremonies at Robert College, where he applauds “the elimination of those useless and oftentimes infelicitous speeches by ‘distinguished’ guests, which have been a thorn to the judicious in past years.”¹⁶⁸

Suspicious of Rebellion

¹⁶⁶ Report of Marsovan Station, 1891-1892.

¹⁶⁷ Herrick, Bible House, Constantinople, July 15, 1893, PABCFM.

¹⁶⁸ Herrick, Bible House, Constantinople, June 28, 1895, PABCFM.

In addition to education, the second flashpoint between the Ottoman state and the ABCFM was Armenian revolutionary activity. Hunchak committees had been spreading throughout the Sivas *vilayet* shortly after the group's 1887 formation in Switzerland by Russian Armenian Marxists. In September 1892 a committee was formed in Marsovan. Ottoman documentation notes that Anatolia College played a principle role in the development of the Hunchak Committee within the Sivas *vilayet*. It singles out Armenian instructors influencing Armenian youths and purports that two local Hunchak leaders were Anatolia College instructors who in the coming year would become synonymous with revolutionary activity: Garabet Tomayan and Ohannes Kayayan.¹⁶⁹ Upon formation, the Sivas chapter of the Hunchak committee stated its objectives as acquiring armaments, creating the means for its members to fund the organization for the purchase of more weapons, and distributing Hunchak material.

The government believed that Lucy Tomayan, the Swiss wife of Garabet Tomayan, acted as a go-between among Anatolian and European Armenians to transport coded letters and raise funds in the continent under the guise of collecting revenue for the foundation of a hospital. Reports in the Başbakanlık Archives also contend she transported coded letters to British and Swiss Hunchaks. Within a five-year time period in Europe she managed to raise three thousand sterling.¹⁷⁰

That the local Armenians in the Sivas *vilayet* were the target group of both the Hunchak party and the American Board was a fact that did not escape the notice of the Ottoman state. Much of the friction that occurred between the state and the ABCFM in the 1890s occurred as a result of the purported links between Armenian revolutionaries

¹⁶⁹ Alan, 404.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 406.

and the missionaries. Many of the Armenians drawn into the revolutionary group had some education, which confirmed the belief in Turkish circles that the American missionaries were responsible for the movement, or at least indirectly for their diffusion of Western education.¹⁷¹

The Catalyst

Friction grew between the American Board and the state as their expanding networks grated on one other. The latter believed the missionaries to be supporting revolutionary activity beneath the thin veneer of their schools and waited for an opportunity to validate this theory. And the missionaries feared a calamitous event was coming that would unleash all these built-up stresses.¹⁷² These forces would be unleashed in 1893, setting off a series of events in Marsovan that took the conflict between the American Board and the Ottoman state from the local to the international level. In the course of these events approximately seven hundred Armenians would be arrested for suspected revolutionary activity (although between five and six hundred were released shortly after), two of which were the aforementioned Anatolia College instructors, whom missionaries would use to embody the perceived suffering they had experienced from the Ottoman state.

On the evening of January 5, 1893, two Anatolia College students returning from the city found provocative placards placed on the street door of the Marsovan missionary compound. The placards — printed in Turkish, not handwritten as to deny ownership —

¹⁷¹ Şimşir, *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Vol. 3, 321-322.

¹⁷² F. English noted in the 1890 Sivas Station Report, “We have heard rumors of impending persecution from some of our outstations, but so far our work has gone on in comparative freedom from persecution.”

called for the British to assume control of the country as they had done in India. The next morning, many such placards had been posted on public buildings throughout the city. Herrick sent the placards to the *kaymakam*, believing that the government would consider them innocent of the act and apprehend the true authors. Instead, the *kaymakam* broke out in a “paroxysm of rage” upon seeing the placards and declared that the College itself had prepared and put up the placards. In neighboring areas similar placards had also been posted.¹⁷³ A.M. Jewett, the American Consul of Sivas, noted the event as part of a larger trend in which many inflammatory placards had been posted throughout the region in the same month, which also threatened the imperial government. Jewett mentioned a rumor that the trouble was instigated by Russia or England, with an emphasis on the latter.¹⁷⁴

In the following weeks Hüsrev Pasha, the gendarmerie commander of the province, was sent from Sivas to investigate the matter. While en route to Marsovan he arrested dozens — then hundreds — of suspects. On January 28 police arrested Tomayan, followed by Kayayan on January 30. The two instructors were important members of the faculty: Kayayan had graduated from the theological seminary in 1884 and then begun working at the school as an Armenian instructor. Professor Tomayan taught Armenian language lessons at Anatolia College after advanced studies in Switzerland.¹⁷⁵ The two teachers were charged with treason for producing the placards; they later confessed guilt to the police while in custody. Their arrest became official on February 3 for reason of attempting to instigate social unrest among Armenians in and around Marsovan.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ J.F. Smith, Report of Marsovan Station, 1893, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁷⁴ Şimşir, *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Vol. 3., 150.

¹⁷⁵ White, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Alan, 412.

The missionaries disagreed among themselves over the innocence of Tomayan and Kayayan. Riggs was rather suspicious of the two teachers, but J.F. Smith believed that their confessions of guilt to the police were brought about only by “threats and brow-beatings.”¹⁷⁷ Their strongest advocate was Herrick, who, writing from England, noted that he had previously lacked information to plea on behalf of the Armenians who would soon be put on trial in Angora but asserted the court should pardon them of connection to seditious society since the evidence was insubstantial. He said the two men had insisted that their interest in Armenian matters laid strictly in reform, not revolution or rebellion. Through his own investigations Herrick’s correspondence with three independent witnesses with knowledge of the men’s condition during their detainment provided him the following information: The Christians were not accused of anything but their religion had been vilified, they had endured terrible torture, and they many have almost been beaten to death.¹⁷⁸

Despite their differences of opinion, the Marsovan missionaries believed the event was an indicator of the state’s paranoia to arrest anyone under the slightest pretense of revolutionary activity. Herrick conjectured that any damning evidence produced against Tomayan and Kayayan had likely resulted from a jocular reference to revolutionary activity, which was not uncommon and even made by Turks regarding a government indifference to a lack of security. He added that there was little reason to believe the two men were guilty, since he had warned them in that past not to display even a hint of seditious activity upon threat of kicking them out of the school. He didn’t believe they

¹⁷⁷ 1893 Marsovan Station Report. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

¹⁷⁸ Herrick, Oxford, July 31, 1893, PABCFM.

had ever been involved in any seditious activity and claimed if they had the American Board would be obligated to disown them.¹⁷⁹

The matter would only be cleared up years after the dust had settled from these events when an Anatolia College student and Hunchak member named Max Baliyan confessed to hanging the provocative signs.¹⁸⁰ In a sense his testimony had exonerated both sides in the dispute. Tomayan and Kayayan themselves were not guilty of hanging the placards, which proved the somewhat dubious nature of their arrest (although such exonerating evidence would never surface that completely exculpated them from Hunchak involvement). In addition, the gendarmerie, *kaymakam*, and other government administrators who believed that Anatolia College harbored Armenian revolutionaries were also proved to be correct.

The 1893 Destruction of the Girls' School

The investigation of the placards and the identity of their perpetrators were soon overshadowed by a far more controversial event in Marsovan. On the night of February 2 missionaries on the station were awakened at midnight when they discovered the frames of their new Girls' School in flames. The perpetrators had apparently carried tins of kerosene to its top, pouring it all along the way and carrying the stream down the central ladders before lighting the match and fleeing the scene. No accounts, whether missionary, consular, or Ottoman, claims first-hand knowledge of the arsonist. Nevertheless, it did not take long for the missionaries to assign blame to the mastermind of the attack:

“Khusref Pasha and the head of the police were on hand altogether too quickly for men called from their beds. And thirty or more armed men posted around our outer wall, showed that

¹⁷⁹ Herrick, Samsun, March 24, 1893, PABCFM.

¹⁸⁰ Alan, 440.

something had been anticipated; and after a few days the circumstantial proof against him, and other officers was enough to amount to a moral certainty.”¹⁸¹

Suspicious rose higher when missionaries claimed Ottoman authorities tried to use local Armenians to kick them out of Marsovan. After the destruction of the Girls’ School Hüsrev Pasha had apparently urged an Armenian and one or two other members of the church committee to collect one thousand signatures stating the negative influence of Anatolia College in the community had fostered the Armenian insurrection movement. However, when a committee of investigation came from Constantinople, local Muslims testified to the missionaries’ good character and they were left alone.¹⁸²

The effects of the placards and the school burning sent waves of repercussion around the *sancak* at a time when the area was a political tinderbox of Armenian revolutionary activity. Many revolutionaries who were working to bait the Ottoman Empire into crushing a nascent insurrection and involving the Great Powers in the conflict in hopes of an independent state. British Consul Sparado, the agent at Samsun, said Armenians in central Anatolia said Ottoman security forces were aware of their strategy and staged the events in Marsovan in order to provoke revolutionary Armenians, force them out of hiding and stage a mass arrest. These severe measures of burning the school in Marsovan were calculated to stir up excitement and lead to violence. At the moment there were about 1800 Armenians under arrest, with three hundred arrested in Sivas.¹⁸³

To investigate the attacks and ensure the protection of Americans at the Marsovan mission, the American Consul Jewett of Sivas traveled to Marsovan on February 12 and

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Report of Marsovan Station, 1893.

¹⁸³ Şimşir, *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians*, Vol. 3, 181.

the surrounding cities to determine the guilty parties in the school burning and interview government official. Upon arriving in Marsovan he found that the conventional wisdom among the national police held that all provincial revolutionary activity was rooted in Anatolia College, the placards had been printed at the school, the leaders of the local movement were college professors, and those revolutionaries had threatened local Armenians.¹⁸⁴

On May 6 he presented his findings to the US Legation. According to his research the attack against the Girls' School was likely pre-meditated. Among his claims were that the police were to have been in the periphery of the missionary compound, overheard asking "Hasn't this school been burnt yet?" three days before the fire took place. J.F. Smith himself had apparently received a warning from a local Armenian Kayayan Souior that he had heard from Turkish security forces themselves they were planning the attack. This theory corresponded with another claim from an individual named only as Pascal, who overheard Hüsrev Pasha claim that all mutinous activity within Marsovan had its origin in Anatolia College. The report is rounded out by multiple claims by locals of his general dislike of the missionary operation, rumors of his pre-meditated plans to attack the building, and using the attack as a ruse to eventually close the school under the pretense of eliminating a breeding ground for Armenian revolutionary activity. Missionaries seconded this theory, responding that the police were at the scene of the fire so quickly that only a foreknowledge of the event would have allowed them to arrive mere minutes after the fire had begun.¹⁸⁵ The report closely mirrored the rhetoric that missionaries would employ against the central and local Ottoman authorities in the

¹⁸⁴ Alan, 429.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 430-431.

coming years, that every action of theirs regarding the ABCFM was guided by a desire to rid the empire of their organization to insulate their subjects against such ideas as progress, reform, and equality.

During Jewett's inquiry, Harrie B. Newberry, the first secretary of the US Legation, traveled to Marsovan on February 20 following the destruction of the Girls' School to investigate the matter for the embassy. He investigated both the burning of the school and the provocative placards that led to the arrest of the two Armenian teachers before sending his report to the American embassy in Constantinople on May 15. Newberry's findings would be far more inimical to the views of the missionaries than Jewett's.

In his report Newberry contended that Tomayan had been involved in anarchist activity within the province, and both teachers were leaders of revolutionary Armenian groups. Additionally, the provocative placards that had appeared on January 5 were the result of a unique printing machine that corresponded exactly to the cyclostyle located at Anatolia College. He backed up the Ottoman government's right to arrest these two suspected revolutionaries, arguing that any nation would have done the same in similar circumstances. Newberry concluded the events in 1893 were ultimately the result of Turkish or Armenian conspirators and on account of these conspiracies, the mass arrests of the government had been justified, although he called on the grand-vizier to release many of the hundreds arrested, as there was no doubt many innocent people among them.¹⁸⁶ He recognized that Marsovan had become a hotbed for revolutionary activity along with other city centers such as Harput, Trabzon, Erzurum, Sivas, and Tokat. Following his trip he told his superiors:

¹⁸⁶ *New York Times*, April 17, 1893.

I found that there existed and still exists the headquarters of a committee, revolutionary and anarchistic in its tendencies. They are manufacturing dynamite bombs of which I brought two away as specimens; they have a storage of rifles and ammunition and branch committees at Amasia, Cesarea, Tokat, Chorum and Agora. That all this exists I have indisputable proof.¹⁸⁷

Yet Newberry did not exculpate Hüsrev Pasha from his role in the destruction of the Girls' School. When Turkish authorities had come to the school premises to investigate a fight between students and local youths, they discovered evidence that there were approximately sixty weapons on the premises, enough arms to attack the compound. In order to investigate the matter Hüsrev Pasha and thirty police were contacted to come to Marsovan and investigate the matter. While en route to Marsovan they stayed in Amasya and did not attempt to conceal their intentions that they were going to burn down a building on the American Board premises.¹⁸⁸

The Fallout of the Teachers' Arrest

The two teachers were taken to Angora to be put on trial for treasonous activities along with three Armenians from Çorum, thirteen from Marsovan, and others from within the province. The trial began on May 20, attended by religious leaders, lawyers, Ottoman state officials and foreign consulate staff. A British embassy official observed the trial from its beginning, reflecting the interest of its home government in the proceedings of the case and the treatment of Ottoman Christians. The British Foreign Office would request a detailed report from the consulate in Angora of the case proceedings.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ USNA, Constantinople Legation, enc. 1/77, Newberry to Hampson, April 12 1893. Quoted in Salt's *Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians*, 72.

¹⁸⁸ Alan, 434-435.

¹⁸⁹ Alan, 446.

In June the judge handed down their sentences. Eleven men were acquitted, fifteen received the death penalty (including Kayayan and Tomayan), and twenty-nine received prison sentences ranging from two to fifteen years. In the course of the hearing Newberry said that the American Board had quietly recognized their guilt by crossing off their names from the Anatolia College faculty list, effectively disowning them.¹⁹⁰

The trial represented not only a rupture between the American Board and the Ottoman state, but also between the American Board and the US government. Herrick believed the US Legation was working to condemn these two men in order to assure the Porte that the American government had no connection to Armenian revolutionary activity. He said they were only interested in securing the rights of America to maintain its presence in the Ottoman state and avoid an international row, a development Herrick found ironic, as he frequently mentioned in his correspondence with the American Board leadership that Alexander Terrell, the US minister to the Ottoman Empire in the 1890s, was frequently unsuccessful in obtaining an imperial *firman* for Anatolian College and indemnity for the destruction of the Girls' school. He added, "Mr. Newberry told me at Samsoun that he will sacrifice the teachers if necessary to maintain the rights of American and the existence of Anatolia College," which he responded that to sacrifice teachers of the college to clamor and injustice would be to sacrifice the college.¹⁹¹

The verdict would prove to be temporary as supporters of the teachers lobbied for their release in Europe, setting in motion a course of events that would further erode relations with the American Board and Ottoman government on the national level. Missionaries and family members connected to the Marsovan missionary station framed

¹⁹⁰ Alan, 441.

¹⁹¹ Samsun, Herrick, March 24, 1893, PABCFM.

the trial as religious persecution of Ottoman Christians in the European press, turning international public opinion against Abdülhamid. This event contributed to the defamation of the Ottoman Empire during the late nineteenth century at a time when the government was battling a war of public image and desperately trying to improve its image both in domestic and foreign public opinion. At the same time other missionaries on the field filled the Western press with anti-Turkish sentiment.¹⁹²

The most active individual in notifying the European public of the trial of the two Armenian teachers was Lucy Tomayan, a Swiss citizen and the wife of Garabet Tomayan. Educated and well connected throughout Europe, Lucy was the daughter of a Protestant pastor and sister of German Emperor William II's pastor. Through these connections she had recourse to the German and British embassies and press organs throughout the continent. Her activism to move European public opinion against the Ottoman state and in support of her husband would turn Marsovan into the stage of an international political theatre between American missionary ideals and the Porte's desire to guide its own destiny and eliminate threats to state security.¹⁹³

Lucy Tomayan wrote detailed reports of the trial and translated documents from Turkish to English for the European press. Her reports centered on the Ottoman government's wrongfully imprisonment of her husband Garabet Tomayan by confusing him with the revolutionary Artin Tomayan, which she said served as an example of the frequent injustices suffered by Ottoman Christians. As a pastor's daughter she met with religious women in Bristol, England and spoke at organized house meetings about the plight of her husband and Armenian Christians. While speaking at these conferences she

¹⁹² Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 113.

¹⁹³ Alan, 447.

would raise money for her family expenses and funds to construct a hospital in Marsovan, although the Porte believed she was raising money for revolutionary activities.¹⁹⁴

As a result of her activism, meetings formed in Europe to protest the Angora trial and call for the release of Tomayan, Kayayan, and the other Armenians. The first meeting of this kind in England began on June 22, attended by some members of the British Parliament. The Committee to Protect Armenian Christians, which had similar objectives, formed on June 27, albeit from a more religious direction. Among those who spoke at those meetings were Herrick, in London at the time, and American Board missionary Henry O. Dwight. These meetings were designed to mobilize the British public to protest the “atrocities” poured down upon Anatolian Christians.¹⁹⁵

The European press took notice of the trial and blasted the Ottoman government for their injustice, whether in their own articles or reprints of letters from Lucy Tomayan. Among them was London’s *Daily News*, which reported on June 29 that in the midst of the state’s crackdown on revolutionary activity, many Anatolian Armenians were being tortured and had petitioned European embassies for redress. The Ottoman state followed the statements of the foreign press very closely, and even banned the reprint of the *Daily News* in the Ottoman Empire on July 8. Other news organs carried similar stories lambasting the lack of rights of religious minorities in the Muslim state, including the *Tribune* and *The Standard*. The only publication that took the side of the Porte was the Parisian *Pres* newspaper. It argued that Armenian claims of Turkish atrocities occurred

¹⁹⁴ Alan, 451.

¹⁹⁵ Alan, 458.

on a regular interval with little evidence to substantiate them, and this episode was no different.¹⁹⁶

Abdülhamid ordered the two teachers into exile on July 4, submitting to the international outcry and the growing pressure of foreign embassies. The decision came as the British government ratcheted up pressure on the Porte with carrots and sticks. Lord Rosebury, a future prime minister known for his imperialist designs and support of colonialism,¹⁹⁷ announced through their consulate located in Angora that they would be favorably disposed toward the Ottoman state if the two men were forgiven. In the event this goodwill offer was insufficient, British state officials used the specter of an Egypt occupation in order to secure their release. Tomayan and Garabet left Angora and arrived in Constantinople shortly afterwards. On July 10 they departed from Haydarpasha station to London, where they would live in exile.¹⁹⁸

Herrick maintained the innocence of the two men until the very end, even visiting with the two men while he was in England and lobbying on their behalf to his superiors in the American Board. He pointed out that despite Jewett's claims that Anatolia College had crossed the two teachers' names off their register this event had never occurred because the evidence did not implicate them. They did not remove the names of these men from their list of instructors, and he believed the false rumor originated with the American and Ottoman governments to turn Armenian public opinion against the missionaries by making them believe they had abandoned the instructors. He conjectured that before Newberry had left from Constantinople to conduct his investigation in Marsovan there existed a clear understanding between him and Turkish authorities in

¹⁹⁶ Alan, 464.

¹⁹⁷ Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy*, 187.

¹⁹⁸ Alan, 470.

which he was to hand over the teachers to them. He would even facilitate judgment against the teachers in order to obtain an indemnity from the government for the burned Girls' School: "I believe Newberry's statement presented in court at Angora was rather the pretense that the reason of the condemnation, which was, I feel sure, ordered from Constantinople."¹⁹⁹

Herrick's distrust of the US Legation rose so high that he circumvented normal diplomatic channels and issued complaints of his government's handlings of the Marsovan investigation directly to President Grover Cleveland. He stated the unjust death penalty handed to the teachers was built on the same faulty foundations as "evidence" for the men's guilt of engaging in revolutionary activity:

"... All the evidence which we have been enabled to examine has tended to convince us that the charges against these two gentlemen are unsupported by evidence and originate with the very men proved guilty of calamitous charges against Anatolian college and conspiracy to destroy its buildings. We are now informed from Constantinople and from Angora that the consideration which finally led the judges to pass sentence of death upon Mssrs. Thoumaian and Kayayan was the same false statement that the missionaries had evidence of their guilt and had stricken their names from the roll of instructors at the college. A further result of the circulation of the false report at Constantinople has been to produce among Armenians in Turkey intense and justified exasperation against the American missionaries for their alleged desertation of these men."²⁰⁰

Whatever the results of Herrick's activism, Cleveland held a more sympathetic view toward the Marsovan missionaries than the US Legation in Constantinople. In his 1894 State of the Union Address he made special mention of their plight and called for the Ottoman government to address their grievances:

"Important matters have demanded attention in our relations with the Ottoman Porte. The firing and partial destruction by an unrestrained mob of one of the school buildings of Anatolia College, established by citizens of the United States at Marsovan, and the apparent indifference of the Turkish Government to the outrage, notwithstanding the complicity of some of its officials, called for earnest remonstrance, which was followed by promise of reparation and punishment of the offenders. Indemnity for the injury to the buildings has already been paid, permission to rebuild given, registration of the school property in the name of the American owners secured, and

¹⁹⁹ Herrick, Wales, July 6, 1893, PABCFM.

²⁰⁰ Herrick & Henry O. Dwight, London, June 27, 1893, PABCFM.

efficient protection guaranteed.”²⁰¹

The Aftermath

In the aftermath of the arrests, school burning, and trial, the missionaries worked to put their station back together. There were three points of agreement between the missionaries and the Ottoman state (who implicitly assumed responsibility for the attack by not preventing its destruction): an indemnity for the Girls’ School, a permit to rebuild and the issuing of a *firman* for all their educational activities. They expected an instant turnaround from the state; as early as August 1893 Tracy said that he had not been informed of an agreement and no answer had come from Constantinople in response to his inquiries of the *firman*’s arrival, although he had only worked on the matter for a week. Despite the American Board’s exoneration by the government of staging the fire, he said the missionaries still felt classified as enemies as many obstructions had been put in their way to claim the financial compensation promised to them. Without the transfer agreements or school *firman* they could not establish the Marsovan compound property as theirs.²⁰² Tracy complained that American missionaries had been best subjects of the empire but because they have now stood up for their rights as American citizens and defended their college and instructors they were regarded with constant suspicion.

The indemnity would be paid for within the year, but neither the *firman* nor the permit to rebuild were granted. It would be until 1897 when the *vali* finally granted Anatolia College the *firman*, although it was introduced with a great amount of pomp and

²⁰¹ Grover Cleveland, 1893, *State of the Union Address*, <http://www.usa-presidents.info/union/cleveland-5.html> [May 1, 2009].

²⁰² Tracy, Marsovan, Aug 7, 1893, PABCFM.

circumstance, not unlike the arrival of the *vali* and his retinue at an Anatolia College commencement ceremony.²⁰³ And the rebuilding permit originally granted by the state put considerable constraints on the scope of the new school, which if followed would have narrowed its influence on the city and outstations. An Ottoman official informed Tracy that the present law required a pledge he would not build a church or a school on such a lot. And the local government told him they would not transfer property unless they promised not to rebuild the Girls' School. Tracy responded that the central government had already authorized the reconstruction of the school and the payment of a 500 Turkish lira indemnity with promise of permission to rebuild and promise of a *firman*. He asked J.F. Clark at the American Board compound in Constantinople to talk with the American minister about the matter,²⁰⁴ adding that the indemnity barely covered the cost of the building and if they had asked a hundred times the cost of the building they would have been justified.²⁰⁵

These dealings further diminished relations between the Marsovan missionaries and the Ottoman government that had already sunk to new lows. The missionaries began to use harsher rhetoric against the Ottoman leadership and employing *ad hominem* comments against Abdülhamid, casting suspicion on every promise that came from the state. Herrick plainly said that the promise of the grant to rebuild meant nothing from the sultan, since the government had not issued *firman* or the order to rebuild. US Secretary

²⁰³ Describing the scene in the 1898-1899, the Marsovan station report writer noted, "The Firman, so long delayed, has come into our hands. The way in which it came was unexpectedly imposing. The whole body of officials appeared, with all the great men of the town, at the appointed hour for the reading they were accompanied by the whole regiment of soldiers in parade dress, forming in a hollow square, about the front of the College, officers occupying the porticos and balconies above. The document was read aloud by a scribe, the bugles played, the soldiers gave the triple shout: "Long Live the King!" After these addresses were read to and by the representatives of the government, then there was silent prayer for a moment or two, when Mr. Riggs offered audible prayer in Turkish, which was listened to by all, with great respect."

²⁰⁴ Riggs, Marsovan, July 31, 1893, PABCFM.

²⁰⁵ Tracy, Marsovan, Aug. 1, 1893, PABCFM.

of State Walter Greshman replied that the *firman* had already been secured, to which Herrick answered that a promise from the Porte was “waste-paper” and “empty air.”²⁰⁶

Missionaries Suspected of Treason

In this volatile environment the Marsovan missionaries did not pacify the situation by their dabbling in political matters. They did not understand that symbolic gestures such as announcing that they had struck the Armenian teachers’ names from school registers (regardless of whether it actually happened) did little to ease Ottoman state concerns about missionary support of Armenian nationalism.²⁰⁷ And there were other matters that occurred in which they assumed that less than full compliance with the state was the best course of action. White relates an episode following the 1893 burning of the Girls’ School in which they found a Russian Armenian revolutionary within Anatolia College hiding in a closet with a group of students keeping watch to protect him from capture. They chose to quietly release him rather than submit him to Turkish authorities, an act which they considered an injustice in itself. “Our difficult and dangerous conduct in this and similar cases was guided by the authority of our American officials that American citizens were not required to do police duty for the Turkish Government [...] It would be indeed a solemn responsibility to commit students or others to the experiences of a Turkish prison in the days of Abdülhamid.”²⁰⁸ They were not inclined to report revolutionary activity to the state (although the governor of the province informed them that he knew of the incident, but did not consider the

²⁰⁶ Herrick, Wales, July 6, 1893, PABCFM.

²⁰⁷ Grabill, 47.

²⁰⁸ White, 29.

missionaries his accomplices), quite an irony as they complained bitterly against the US Legation's failure to protect their life and property.

Troubles with US Legation, Terrell

The crises that struck Marsovan station in this period also widened fault lines between the ABCFM and the US Legation, particularly with Minister Terrell. When the tragedies of 1893 first struck, the Marsovan missionaries sought the American consulate to pressure the Ottoman state and rectify their troubles by securing the release of their two teachers and obtaining a *firman* for their school. The US consulate was reluctant to undertake these actions on behalf of the missionaries, who had become deeply unpopular in the rise of Armenian revolutionary activity.

The American Board arrived in the Ottoman Empire ten years before the United States had established formal diplomatic relations with the Porte in 1830 and had a far wider network of influence than the US government through its network of schools and outstations in the first half of the nineteenth century. In some aspects the ABCFM maintained stronger relations with the British Government, which assisted the development of their nascent missionary enterprise at a time when America had not become an imperial power (American foreign policy would not become expansive until after the 1898 Spanish-American War and especially the post-World War I initiatives of Woodrow Wilson).²⁰⁹ At a time when the United States did not have a significant international presence, the British had assumed the protection of Protestants in the Ottoman domains in 1840s (in the tradition of the French assuming protection of

²⁰⁹ Finnie, 129.

Catholics in 1740 and Russia with Eastern Orthodox Christians in 1774), along with the lobbying of Ambassador Stratford Canning for the Protestants to obtain millet status in 1847.²¹⁰

When the United States did become more involved in international diplomacy, the Marsovan missionaries found the legation ineffective in obtaining proper concessions from the Porte in the 1890s. Herrick spoke of Terrell as intentionally abrogating his duty to protect safety of Americans within the Ottoman domains. In a confidential letter written in 1896, Herrick lambasted Terrell for what he perceived to be incompetence and inability to secure a *firman* for Anatolia College and the public opinion of England and the United States had been aroused by recent events to the point that the retention of Terrell as their national representative imperiled the safety and lives of American missionaries in Central Anatolia.”²¹¹ And the missionaries even worked to secure the firing and forced retirement of Terrell to force the American government to engage Abdülhamid on their behalf: “Our latest telegraphs have been designed to assist Mr. Dwight to secure Mr. Terrell’s retirement; he is an incompetent man at a time so critical.”²¹²

Terrell harbored similar sentiments of the foreign missionaries. He mentioned in his diplomatic correspondence with the American Board that they were also endangering his mission to protect the life, liberty, and property of American citizens in the Ottoman Empire. Terrell observed the missionaries to be supporting Anatolian Armenians in such a way as to be ostensible revolutionaries, or at least their accomplices, whom he worried would sully the reputation of all Americans within the Ottoman domains. He reminded

²¹⁰ Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy*, 10-11.

²¹¹ Herrick, Constantinople, Jan. 3, 1895, PABCFM.

²¹² Herrick, Bible House, Constantinople, May 4, 1896, PABCFM.

them that even if the American Board felt that saving souls was a worthy enough endeavor to use methods that could raise eyebrows among the Ottoman government, they were still duty-bound to not cause trouble for their home country. Terrell hinted that they had already done so: “The opinion amongst the Turks, now well nigh universal, from the palace to the most ignorant fanatical, that American missionaries have encouraged sedition, and were in sympathy with its designs, has ficed into a conviction openly expressed by the Turkish minister in Washington.”²¹³

Black Friday

Marsovan was scene to the wave of violence that swept across Eastern and Central Anatolia in 1894-1896. The calamities devastated the missionary work of the station, with marauders killing four hundred individuals (10 percent of them Protestant), and looting houses and churches. This destruction of property halted the plans of the American Board to push the native Protestant congregations in the outstations toward financial independence, as after the massacres the work was only half of its former scale, measured in volunteers and monetary value.²¹⁴ Yet the massacre would serve to reveal truths about the place of the American Board within the Ottoman Empire. First, the missionaries’ self-perceived notion that they were above the political fray and disconnected with Armenian nationalist movements had finally been shattered when their schools were attacked along with Armenian churches, shops, and houses. Second, the American Board realized the dangers of their almost exclusive relationship with

²¹³ Terrell, Constantinople to HO Dwight, June 23, 1895, PABCFM.

²¹⁴ Report of Marsovan Station, 1897.

Armenian Christians, particularly with the native Christians expecting to be protected in a time of crisis. These realities had been in development for decades, but they were fully exposed in the massacres.

The catalyst for the 1894-96 massacres started with Ottoman military attacks against Armenian villagers forming a nascent uprising in the mountainous district of Sassun, in the eastern Bitlis *vilayet*. Sources differ on the origins of the violence. Pro-Armenian sources contend that indiscriminate arrests, close supervision of internal politics, and attacks by Kurdish detachments against Armenians all preceded the 1894 uprising when Sassunian Armenians refused to pay an additional levied tax in light of frequent attacks by Kurdish irregulars. Authorities considered this an insurgency and besieged Sassun. When an Armenian uprising repelled these forces, Abdülhamid ordered the military to brutally suppress them. Pro-Turkish sources contend that prior to the 1894-96 events the Sassunian Armenians, instigated by Russian revolutionaries, had killed and tortured Muslim villagers and attacked Kurdish tribes in hopes that the European powers would intervene.²¹⁵ Reports on the numbers of dead in the Sassun assault vary wildly from a few hundred to fifteen thousand, but they undoubtedly opened the floodgates of anti-Turkish sentiment in the Western press. The British public in particular pressed its government to act upon the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, as it was the power that had pressed hardest for minority concessions from the Porte.²¹⁶

Yet these attacks were only the precursor to a second, more deadly wave of violence that would begin in 1895 in Zeitun, in the Taurus Mountains. In October of the same year Armenians under Hunchak leadership reportedly attacked Turkish villages and

²¹⁵ For the former view, see Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy*, 187-191. For the latter view, see Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism, and the Ottoman Armenians*, 73-74.

²¹⁶ Kirakossian, *Ibid.*, 194.

wounded thirty-two Muslims, fueled by grievances over land and taxes. Following this attack, grand-vizier Said Pasha claimed an Armenian paramilitary unit of two thousand killed five gendarmerie officers and their commander.²¹⁷ Revolt spread throughout the region, and the conflicts required the attention of twenty thousand Ottoman soldiers for several months. From October to December the violence swept across the eastern *vilayets* and would also impact central Anatolia. Terrell noted that Muslims in eastern provinces attacked suspected Armenian revolutionaries, sometimes with the support of the Ottoman military.²¹⁸

Reports vary widely of the numbers killed, from fifty thousand to 300,000, not to mention the considerable loss of property, and thousands left destitute, homeless, or orphaned. ABCFM schools were not spared in the attacks. In the three-year period of the massacres, Muslim groups destroyed schools in such cities as Harput, Palu, Bitlis, and Aintab. Marsovan missionaries feared their schools would also be swallowed in the chaos as the state didn't intervene in these assaults against missionary schools in other cities.²¹⁹ And if a government-instigated mob did not attack them first, the missionaries were afraid that Armenian revolutionaries would. Edward Riggs reported that in early October of 1895 a mysterious fire had broken out at the Girls' School, most likely instigated by Armenian revolutionaries.²²⁰

The attacks in other provinces and cities had already affected the Marsovan missionary field, linking the enterprise more and more with foreign powers in the minds of native Christians. Revolutionaries had terrorized many Armenian missionaries in the

²¹⁷ Ibid., 237.

²¹⁸ Salt, *Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians*, 103.

²¹⁹ Somel, "Religious Community Schools," 398.

²²⁰ Riggs, Marsovan, Oct. 16, 1895, PABCFM.

city to close down their business. And the enrollment at Anatolia College that year numbered 180, twice as many as last year, due to the desire to be under the sphere of English protection, as the close relationship between American missionaries and the British government had not escaped the attention of native Armenians.²²¹ Looters in Marsovan's peripheries had the same notion: When George White traveled to Zile outstation in 1896 he found that although three hundred of the four hundred houses in the city had been stripped bare and 150 people killed, their Protestant church had been spared partly because there was a vague idea that it was "English" property.²²²

The feared attack would come to Marsovan at the end of 1895, as much of the region had been thrown into turmoil in the midst of massacres against Anatolian Armenians. In its aftermath, dozens of Armenians would be killed and multiple shops looted. On November 15, dubbed by the Marsovan missionaries as "Black Friday," nearly four hundred Muslims gathered for Friday prayers. According to an account by Riggs, two men pretended to have been shot upon in order to instigate an attack. Rioting soon began and within a few minutes one hundred Armenians were slain by the armed mob. In the course of the violence Armenian shops were looted and totally emptied. Rioting in the city lasted four hours as the city officials did not intervene. Many Armenians teachers and students crowded into the American Board compound, believing the area to be the most secure in the city due to its foreign consular protection. Riggs describes the scene as they took refuge in the missionary compound:

"On our own premises all was silent, but a deathly horror pervaded all. We allowed the pupils from the two schools to leave the school buildings and huddle together in our houses. No pen can describe the feelings which we waited during the terrible minutes of that first hour, amid the sounds of yells and screams, and shots and crashing doors."²²³

²²¹ Herrick, Bible House, Constantinople, Oct. 8, 1895, PABCFM.

²²² Smith, Marsovan, Oct. 31, 1896, PABCFM.

²²³ Riggs, Marsovan, Nov. 23, 1895, PABCFM.

Their Circassian guards asked the government for protection following the massacres, so soldiers surrounded their premises. In the following days approximately thirty soldiers were protecting their building night and day. Riggs admitted revolutionaries had fomented the unease, as Armenians still did not dare to show themselves in public. The missionaries had received a warning that another onslaught would be coming to their premises, but government guaranteed them security. Among those slain in the November 15 massacre, according to Riggs, were many “personal acquaintances and friends.”²²⁴ In the aftermath of the violence the missionaries established two orphanages for boys and girls, which cared for the needs of 150 children.

Conclusion

Abdülhamid’s policy of Islamizing and centralizing the peripheries of his crumbling Empire expanded in scope at the end of the nineteenth century through the tools of modernity. Newspapers, railroads, clocks, telegraphs, steam ships, postal services, and a growing bureaucracy enabled him to push his ideology into provinces not possible to earlier Sultans. He could propagate a uniform policy among his population and political opponents. Sultans of earlier centuries had to rely on public ceremonies to project their manufactured public image, while Abdülhamid could take his message directly to the provinces.²²⁵

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 2008), 250. Baer notes the similarities in the reigns of Abdülhamid II and Mehmed IV, both of which focused on a policy of reviving Islamic piety in periods of political crisis in order to strengthen their pious reputation.

Ottoman civil officialdom grew as a reflection of the growing impact of the government on its subjects' lives: The scribal service had grown from roughly two thousand men in 1790 with little scope beyond Istanbul to approximately seventy-thousand during Abdülhamid's time. They encountered the Ottoman populace through new innovations such as censuses, identity papers and passports. He pressured huge numbers of men to work in the Interior Ministry during the government's continual growth in the post-Tanzimat era through new responsibilities for local administration and the creation of secular judicial and legal systems. And Ottoman schools expanded concomitantly with the bureaucracy, as teachers were essentially civil bureaucrats.²²⁶

The growth of Ottoman presence into the provinces came at a time with the American missionary effort had seen Protestantism grow from a handful of converts in the opening decades of their missionary enterprise in the 1820s to several thousand church members and tens of thousands of students by the end of the nineteenth century. Networks of churches, hospitals, and seminaries, all well funded by the American Board, complemented them. Political protection for these stations was provided by Western consular support, whose penetration into Anatolia also expanded in the late nineteenth century.

With their divergent views of the future, both the American Board schools and Abdülhamid's expanding bureaucracy could not grow forever without a clash. And the Sultan's attempts to create a Sunni Hanefi Islamic cultural consensus among the Muslim elements of his Empire and compliance among his non-Muslims would not tolerate nationalistic movements, particularly revolutionary Armenian groups with which,

²²⁶ See Carter V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom: A Social History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), esp. 23-25.

whether justly or unjustly, the American missionaries had come to be seen as closely allied. These forces set out on a collision course until they crashed in 1893 at the burning of the Girls' School in Marsovan, followed by violence aftershocks in 1894-96.

The burning of the school was not an inevitable event; testimonies differ sharply among missionaries, Ottoman authorities and consular officials whether the perpetrators were the police or Armenian revolutionaries. The violence could have been circumvented, as there were other missionary stations in central and eastern Anatolia that had seen little or no violence on their properties. However, the two groups did not work to diffuse the building tension prior to the outbreak of hostilities in 1893. Instead, they ratcheted up pressure on the other side. The American Board vilified the Ottoman Empire in the foreign press as the Empire abdicated its responsibility to protect American Board schools when violence broke out in Anatolia. And the government did not its subjects to express their popular interest in ABCFM schools, but instead deployed government inspectors and imposed regulations on foreign schools to hamper their efforts and reduce their appeal while it pushed Ottoman schools as a viable alternative.²²⁷

In conclusion, in the late nineteenth century the Marsovan missionaries and the Ottoman state defined their relationship by refusing to compromise their opposing narratives for the future. The American Board held to their millennialist views of an expanding network of education facilities and churches to spread the gospel around the world. Abdülhamid envisioned a centralized Ottoman state to integrate all its disparate elements, and he would not allow nationalist Armenians or foreign schools to compromise this vision. Neither group would alter their strategies for the future in light of the other group's expansion, even though they both were headed for impact. It serves

²²⁷ Fortna, 52.

as an apt symbol of the encounter between the American Board and the Ottoman state that the ABCFM Girls' School, a building created to spur the growth of Protestant Christianity in Anatolia, went up in flames.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

Marsovan station recuperated from its losses after 1896 and resumed its work of education, evangelism, and preaching. The enthusiasm of the missionaries did not wane, and the first decade of the twentieth century saw similar growth as previous decades. Marsovan schools were educating over five-hundred students in 1908, and by 1909 the station supported twenty outstations and eight churches.²²⁸

And yet there were warning signs that the American Board work in Marsovan would soon face problems it could not overcome, evidenced by their congregation slowly leaving the province. There had always been a slow exodus of educated Armenians out of the Ottoman Empire since education had become more widely available, and even more Armenians who lived semi-permanently in Europe for the purposes of trade. However, working class Armenians began to leave as well, whether to seek new opportunities in wealthier nations or the fear of an oncoming massacre in the collapsing Empire. In the early 1880s Armenians started to emigrate in larger numbers, and many from Marsovan were leaving for the silk and grape production culture in California. The emigration rate would rise to one thousand per year leaving Sivas by 1913.²²⁹

The end of their work among Armenians came with the mass deportations in the spring of 1915. George White, who by this time had been in Marsovan for twenty-five years and was by then president of Anatolia College, tearfully recalled the scene at the missionary compound in his autobiography.

“Officials forced an entrance at our gates and on different patrols, drew up sixty-one ox-carts in a ring in the open campus, and demanded the surrender of all Armenians. For two hours we

²²⁸ Report of Marsovan Station 1908-1909, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

²²⁹ Eddy, 96.

parleyed, but the armed guards were increased to about thirty men, and a search was made by the breaking down of doors, and the forcing of entrance everywhere. Finally, our Armenian friends, feeling that further opposition was worse than useless, voluntarily appeared and gave themselves up. An ox-cart was assigned to each family. A meager stock of food, bedding, and personal effects was piled up on it. The wife and mother sat with her children on the load. The husband and father walked beside the card. As the procession was forming in the street, a pilgrim group gathered around me and I offered prayer. Soon after noon the procession, with seventy-two person from the College and Hospital, moved away.”²³⁰

None of the seventy-two Armenian students and faculty members deported from the school ever came back. In the course of the Armenian massacres of 1915 the church-going Protestant population of Marsovan fell from over nine hundred to fifty.²³¹ He noted city officials did not even expect the need for an Armenian burial ground in the city, even though fourteen thousand of them had lived in Marsovan the year before. The Protestant church in Marsovan continued with its Sunday service and prayer meeting despite operating on a skeleton crew. In response to the massive demographic shift of the city, the spiritual activities of the church were merged with those of Anatolia College, and four of the six Greek Protestant pastors in Marsovan field came to visit the now Greek dominated congregation.²³²

At the managers meeting of Anatolia College in the autumn they debated whether or not the school should open. Many of their faculty had been deported, except for a few staff and two families who had been left as a special favor by the state. Nevertheless, Anatolia College decided to continue its operations. Although they had no regular mathematics or science instructor, and three of the five men working as instructors were drafted during the school year, they still managed to teach the sixty-five students registered. The deportation irreversibly changed the make-up of the student body. There

²³⁰ White, 83.

²³¹ Grabill, 62.

²³² White, 84.

were seven Russian students, eight Turks and fifty Greeks, and thirteen students were called to active duty during the year.²³³

In May 1916 city officials told the college administrators that in view of Russia's invasion of Erzurum and Trabzon their school lay in a potential war zone. They were ordered to evacuate to Constantinople and their grounds would be used as a military hospital, which at one point housed four-thousand soldiers. At the end of World War I the missionaries were allowed to return to Marsovan. White hoped the school and station could rise again as it had in the face of previous disasters, but the deathblow would come in 1921 with new charges of aiding a revolutionary group from the government. On February 12 Anatolia College's head Turkish teacher was assassinated on the street after presiding over a meeting of the Turkish student's literary society. When officials representing the government in Ankara came to investigate the school premises, certain officials made comments to White that their school was involved with revolutionary Greeks to secure the Pontus region along the Black Sea and annex it for the nation of Greece.²³⁴

On March 14, 1921, the Foreign Ministry issued an order that was delivered by the Amasya district governor. Anatolia College would be closed. Six days later the remaining members of Marsovan station left the premises in six small spring wagons under the escorted of police. They arrived in Samsun the next day and boarded the American destroyer *Old Glory* to arrive in Constantinople.²³⁵

That was the end of Marsovan station, but it was not the end of Anatolia College. Recognizing their educational contribution to the Ottoman Greeks, the nation of Greece

²³³ Ibid., 85.

²³⁴ Ibid., 108.

²³⁵ White, 110.

offered an invitation to relocate their school in Salonica (Selanik). White agreed, arguing that “the conviction of some of us from the first, that a college belongs with its human constituency rather than with the location of its campus and material plan,”²³⁶ as the bulk of their Anatolian Christian constituency were exiles following the Turkish-Greek population exchange in 1922. Anatolia College reopened in 1924 with thirteen students, although this number would climb quickly in the war-torn city. White remained as president of the college until his retirement in 1933, and through the decades of the twentieth century the school expanded its educational faculties and added students, much as it had done in Marsovan in the nineteenth century. In 1995 the school founded a university section to provide post-secondary instruction in business and the liberal arts, named as The American College of Thessaloniki.²³⁷

This thesis has traced these relations between the American missionaries, the Ottoman state and native Christians in the late nineteenth century to demonstrate the dynamism and flexibility of new social orientations taking place in Anatolia. Marsovan station established itself in the city and other villages through schools, vocational training centers, civil organizations, and chapels. Its interactions with the Apostolic Armenian Church influenced them and among many things provided a template for modern religious expression by using modern hymns and Bibles produced in the vernacular languages, and the Apostolic Armenians adopted this for their own use to create a religious expression fit for an increasingly affluent, educated millet. Regarding the Marsovan missionaries’ relations with the state, this thesis established the level of involvement between the American missionaries and the Armenian revolutionaries and

²³⁶ Ibid., 112.

²³⁷ Eleni Markoudi, n.d., *A History of Anatolia College*, <http://www.anatolia.edu.gr/> [May 10, 2009].

the manner in which the insufficient response of the Marsovan missionaries to the revolutionary threat convinced the Ottoman state they were complicit in these activities. It also examined the complex anatomy of violent clashes between the two groups.

The interactions between the American missionaries and Apostolic Armenians in the wake of the Tanzimat produced new social orientations that were grounded in secular learning that accommodated the rise of Armenian nationalism. The ranks of the Protestant churches swelled in the 1880s at a time when the Apostolic Armenians equated the denomination with progress, but missionary conjecture suggests they won fewer converts in the coming decades as Apostolic Armenian schools improved along with the Armenian millet's rising standards of living. Awareness of Armenian ethnic identity also became grounds for co-operation among the different confessional groups. Yet the common ground of secular education did not marginalize the role of religion among Christians in Marsovan and its peripheries, nor did ethnic thinking marginalize the role of religion. Instead, ethnic thinking accommodated religious thinking. It produced a growing desire for a religious expression that reflected rising levels of education and prosperity among late nineteenth century Armenians in both confessional groups. In the Marsovan field, differences between the Protestant and Apostolic Armenian churches broke down in response to increasing interactions in their daily lives as both churches increasingly featured similar preaching styles, used vernacular languages, and sometimes even shared pastors. Their schools also grew increasingly similar, and the opening of Apostolic Armenian girls' schools meant Armenian females could find education in other places than the ABCFM Girls' School or from a Bible woman. Their churches did not

fade into irrelevancy with the rise of secular education, but mirrored the new levels of co-operation taking place between the different branches of Armenian Christianity.

Interactions between the state and missionaries were acrimonious, but contingently so. The school burning and arrests of 1893 could have been circumvented, as there were other missionary stations in central and eastern Anatolia that saw little or no violence on their properties. However, the two groups did not work to diffuse the building tension prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Instead, they both increased pressure on the other side. The American Board vilified the Ottoman Empire in the foreign press and framed their grievances to the Sultan in purely religious terms, even though they had operated freely in Marsovan for nearly four decades. And after the destruction of the Girls' school the Ottoman bureaucracy shuffled their feet on paying the promised indemnity or providing official recognition to the school, subtly pressuring the missionaries to leave. In 1895-1896 they abdicated their responsibility to protect American Board schools when violence broke out in Anatolia (although the Marsovan school managed to remain unharmed).

In the late nineteenth century the Marsovan missionaries and the Ottoman state stuck to their visions of the future that had put them on a collision course. The American Board imagined enlarging its network of schools and social services while the bureaucracy continued to incorporate the peripheries into its centralizing state, and attempted to nullify the threat of foreign schools or nationalist Armenians. However, the Marsovan missionaries would not give up their nearly exclusive relationship with the Armenians (despite the danger that they were indirectly supporting revolutionary activity) nor would the state allow its subjects to express their preference for foreign schools over

Ottoman state schools. Neither group would alter their growth strategies in light of the other group's expansion.

The hostilities against the missionaries and Armenians connected to their work in Marsovan can be seen in the larger trend of the Ottoman Empire dealing with foreign threats in the nineteenth century. Foreign consuls had sold extraterritoriality privileges to thousands of Ottoman Christians and Jews since the eighteenth century, and the state attempted to end this practice for fear of fifth columns of power being constructed in their own domains. In European political circles, diplomats openly spoke of the "Eastern Question" and the most efficient means to deal with the inevitable fall of the Ottoman Empire. These developments provoked a reactionary move against foreign schools in Anatolia.

And yet the role of the American missionaries is distinguished from other foreign elements. Through their millennial eschatology, the American Board's goal was to create a network of schools in the peripheries and offer education to those elements neglected by the central administration. They provided vocational instruction to alleviate poverty in the underdeveloped parts of the empire. Abdülhamid II's goals were identical, which made them all the more threatening and their relationship all the more contentious.

The Marsovan missionaries' connection to the US government also grew more complicated at this time. While they relied on the American embassy to secure their rights as American citizens in the Ottoman Empire, it became clear that the missionaries had diverging goals. As America increasingly asserted itself on the world stage and cared more about its international image, the ABCFM were more interested in maintaining their activities regardless of Abdülhamid's impression of them or their countrymen.

It is important to note that while the presence of the American Board created new social orientations within Anatolia, they were not masters of their own destiny. Larger political and social trends would affect the outcomes of their missionary work in ways markedly different than the American Board had experienced in past decades, even though the Marsovan missionaries were operating with a more or less similar procedure. They succeeded in building schools and planting Protestant congregations in the Marsovan field although missionaries from an earlier generation had failed at this task in Lebanon. The reasons for these different outcomes are multi-faceted, but one possibility is the rising Armenian nationalism that accompanied the Marsovan station work in 1878-1896, creating a thirst for education in the flowering millet eager to improve their status in a way that the Maronites in the 1820s did not need.

Extrinsic events would also prove dangerous for the missionaries' encounters with the expanding Ottoman state. The two clashed severely, even though their policy was not remarkably different than in decades past. Gone were the days when the American Board could operate with relative freedom in the Empire's peripheries, which before the reforms of the Tanzimat accelerated were loosely (and sometimes nominally) connected to the center.

Much work remains to be done in uncovering the nature of the relations discussed by this thesis. A neglected area that could yield significant insight is the testimonies of the Ottoman Protestants and their self-assessment within these changing social orientations. While Harutune Jenanyan was a man of his time and a product of his environment (indeed, to say that he was extraordinary would be to misunderstand the dynamic trans-Armenian confessional environment that could produce a religious figure

such as him), he is still a rather exemplary figure, and it would do well to juxtapose his voice with the lives of Anatolian Protestants whose lives were more similar to the general populace. Sources that could yield this information are the Armenian publications and newspapers produced in Constantinople since the nineteenth century and throughout Anatolia in the early twentieth.

Other work that remains to examine are documents in the Başbakanlık Archives that describe suspected Armenian revolutionary activity among the converts. More importantly, these documents display the anatomy of official attitudes toward them, and the nature of their desire to implicate foreign missionaries.

Examining French Jesuit missionary activity and the interactions between Apostolic Armenian and Catholic Armenians would provide another viewpoint on the increasing importance of ethnic identity over confessional differences as religious understanding changed to accommodate the rise of secularism. Documentation in the Vatican Archives, particularly the *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, may provide insight into the inter-confessional relationships, and if so, would provide an interesting comparative analysis with Apostolic Armenian-Protestant relations. Jesuits were active in the Ottoman Empire since the eighteenth century and are mentioned by the missionaries in this thesis, but they are not a reoccurring theme in the Marsovan station letters and station reports, suggesting that Jesuits were not as prevalent in the Marsovan field as in other provinces. However, this does not suggest that inter-missionary tensions were not stronger in areas with greater Jesuit and Protestant presence. Examining these tensions would be a fascinating project for research that concerns a wider geographical survey than this thesis.

As stated in the preface, it is important to note that the negative fallout of these relations still exists in the collective imagination of Turkey. The topic of missionary activity in nationalist discourse is viewed within an imperialist framework; part of a multi-faceted foreign effort to dismantle the Ottoman Empire by converting those of weak character to act as fifth column. This negative memory, however, betrays the complexity of the time period and negates the manner in which all sides were influenced by the encounter. It negates the dynamism of late nineteenth-century Anatolia by portraying it as a static environment where intractable ideologies inevitably clash. These encounters may have left behind a negative legacy, but it hardly befits their fascinating history.

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