

**MISSIONARIES AND NEAR EAST RELIEF SOCIETY IN THE U.S.  
FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE ARMENIAN QUESTION, 1915-1923**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **MISSIONARIES AND NEAR EAST RELIEF SOCIETY IN THE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE ARMENIAN QUESTION, 1915-1923**

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This study will attempt to analyze the American Foreign Policy towards Turkey around three basic issues, namely the missionary activities, the Armenian question and the Near East Relief Society (NERS). Therefore, the focus of the study is the interaction of the politics and the religion in the United States case and the influence of this interaction on the American policy towards the Near East before and after the First World War.

Keywords: USA, Armenians, Missionaries, Near East Relief Society.

## ÖZ

### ERMENİ SORUNUNA İLİŞKİN OLARAK AMERİKAN DIŞ POLİTİKASINDA MİSYONERLER VE YAKIN DOĞU YARDIM KOMİTESİ 1915-1923

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Bu çalışma Amerika'nın Türkiye'ye karşı olan dış politikasını misyonerlik aktiviteleri, Ermeni Sorunu ve Yakın Doğu Yardım Komitesi (YDYK) başlıklarından yola çıkarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın temel amacı, din ve politikanın Amerika örneğindeki etkileşimini göstermek ve bu etkileşimin Birleşik Devletlerin Birinci Dünya Savaşı öncesi ve sonrası dönemde Yakın Doğu politikası üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ABD, Ermeniler, Misyonerler, Yakın Doğu Yardım Komitesi.

To My Lovely Parents and Sister

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The American people, after long years of British supremacy, gained their independence in 1783. Although, the United States declared its independence in 1776, the British Parliament ratified the independence with the 1783 Paris Treaty after the American Independence War. In the next century, the United States needed to create its nation, a political organization and the elements of nationalism in order to create the American people and organize them under the same flag. The American Constitution was the political aspect of the unification plan. The open door policy and the free trade as the basic tenants of economic liberalism formed the economic dimension of the American unification. Apart from the common language as English, religion, most notably the spread of the Protestantism was the major backbone of the social unity in the United States.

American religious leaders believed that the territory of the United States was the chosen place for the spread of Protestantism, and their mission was to spread their religion within the borders during the First Awakening Period<sup>1</sup>. After the Second Awakening, the non-Christian people all around the world became the major target for Protestantism and the American influence through religion<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The prospect of war, the threat of epidemics and the beginning of economic difficulties created fear and caused a religious reaction in the 1730s, which is called as the Great Awakening. George Whitefield, a Wesleyan revivalist who arrived from England in 1739 and Jonathan Edwards, who originally served in the Congregational Church in Northampton, Massachusetts was the inspiration sources of the idea. Native Americans were the target of the First Great Awakening's missionary activities. (Arthur S. Link, Stanley Coben, *The Democratic Heritage: A History of the United States*, (Massachusetts: Ginn and Company, 1971), p.39.

<sup>2</sup> Link, Coben, p.123.

At the personal level, the Protestants should work for their lives and they should gain money for their needs. The Protestant belief required that their work was appreciated by God. Commerce for the American people was one of the best ways for accumulating the capital. The coexistence of the spread of the religion and the commercial expansion of the United States oriented the missionaries and the merchants to work at the same regions. In the Near East region, the Mediterranean trade was vitally important for the interests of the United States because the Middle Eastern trade was very beneficial for the American merchants and it was easier to have contacts with the region around. For this reason, the Americans turned their eyes to the Near East and the lands of the Ottoman Empire which had priority for them.

At the very beginning, of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the United States the commercial activities occupied the first place. With the integration of the American missionaries into the circle, the American policy towards the Ottoman Empire started to change. As the commerce was at the core of the relations, there were naturally some political contacts regulated by treaties and agreements between these two countries, and some diplomatic problems occurred because of commercial issues.

However, when the missionaries started to arrive, commerce moved to secondary importance. The spread of “Protestantism, education, American culture, welfare and philanthropic activities”<sup>3</sup> became the major concern of the missionaries and needless to say of the United States. The problematic aspect of the issue appeared at this point: the missionaries were not only aiming to spread their beliefs but they also brought the American way of life to the Ottoman territories via the schools, hospitals, dispensers and orphanages that they established. Moreover, they did not limit themselves only with religious activities; they were also involved in

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<sup>3</sup> Himmet Umunç, “On the Edge of the Civilized World: Cyrus Hamlin and the American Missionary Work in Turkey”, *Bellekten*, V.68, No: 253, (December 2004), p.675.

commercial activities at the very beginning but most importantly they played an active role in political and diplomatic arena.

The interaction of the American missionaries and the American foreign policy immediately before and after the First World War can be observed in the Near East case. The United States benefited from American missionary organizations as the protector of its national interests in the mentioned region. The missionaries were highly supported by the very powerful American governmental and religious institutions. The main aim of the American missionaries was to provide the spread of Protestantism but on the other hand they were acting as the protector of the Ottoman minorities, among them mostly the Armenians. Due to the activities led by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) and later by the Near East Relief Society (NERS), the American diplomacy had a more active role at the Armenian question and at the Armenian uprisings.

There are very few studies written about the NERS.<sup>4</sup> They were generally first hand sources written by the committee members or the missionaries. As they were written within the discussed period, they were not tended to make an analysis of the whole picture of the events. Moreover, as these works were written with the intention of displaying the positive effects of the missionaries, they were mostly focusing on the humanitarian aspect of missionary activities. However, the missionaries were used as the protector of the American national interests by the United States and as they were acting the protector of the minorities in the Ottoman Empire, their activities had also commercial, political and diplomatic aspects.

At most of the second hand sources, the NERS was mostly neglected. Even if it was mentioned, it was evaluated only as a subtitle under the topics analyzing the ABCFM. The crucial role of the missionaries was only displayed as providing the necessary conditions for the spread of Protestantism. The relation between the American foreign policy and the missionaries was not emphasized. Although, there

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<sup>4</sup> Some of those works are as follows: James Levi Barton, *Story of Near East Relief* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930); George E. White, *Bir Amerikan Misyonerinin Merzifon Amerikan Koleji Hatıraları*, (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1995); Robert L. Daniel, *American Philanthropy in the Near East 1820-1960*, (Washington D.C.: Ohio University Press, 1970); Stanley E. Kerr, *The Lions of Marash, Personal Experiences With Near East Relief 1919-1922*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973).

were too much works about the American foreign policy and the Armenian question, the role of the NERS for both these two subject were neglected. For that reason, this study aims to investigate the correlations between those three.

This study intends to analyze the American foreign policy towards the Near East around the issues of missionary and philanthropic activities, and the Near East Relief Society's policies, which were as important as the protection of American commercial interests and the economic rights of the American citizens in the region. The NERS and the missionaries acted as the civil elements of the American foreign policy.

In order to analyze the topic, the study will also try to answer the following questions: how did the missionaries start to deal with the Ottoman minorities? How did the missionaries involve to the Armenian question? Why the NERS was established? Finally, how this institution interacted with the foreign policy of the United States during the First World War and in the post-war era.

The first part will cover the Ottoman-United States relations in the pre-war period. The examination of the activities of American merchants and the beginning of the commercial relations is important in order to understand the formation of the American and Ottoman relations and the beginning of the change at the American foreign policy. Apart from the emergence of the American merchants, the emergence of the American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire will also be evaluated in this chapter. The Ottoman Empire; from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards became one of the target points of the missionaries as the Catholic and the Jesuit missionaries visited the Ottoman lands. However, the emergence of the American missionaries realized at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. How the Ottoman communities had an important place for them and how they expanded their area of activities will be analyzed in this chapter.

Then, the thesis will focus on the Armenian question and the role of the American missionaries at the emergence and the continuation of this question. The evolution of the problem and the interference of the United States to the developments are important in order to observe the role of the missionaries as the protector of the minorities in the Ottoman Empire.

The evaluation of the attitudes of American missionaries and diplomats regarding the Armenian question is the next subject of analysis in order to display the formation of the way to the establishment of the NERS which is a branch of the ABCFM. This part is focusing on how the NERS organized its network in the Near East and what they did for the Armenians. The interaction of the NERS and the American foreign policy is very crucial in order to show the characteristic features of the American political attitude towards the Ottoman Empire.

The last part of the thesis focuses on the Paris Peace Conference and the Lausanne Treaty. The interaction of the missionaries with the international political atmosphere and the change in the American foreign policy are the last issues to be emphasized in this part. How religion and politics interacted in the United States' foreign policy against the Ottoman Empire in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and to what extent this policies were influenced by the activities of the missionary institution, primarily those of the Near East Relief Society is intended to be clarified in the last chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE OTTOMAN - USA RELATIONS

#### 2.1. Emergence of the American merchants in the Near East

The commercial relations between the American merchants and the Ottoman Empire started before the American War of Independence. However, this relation was under the control of the Great Britain. The American ships were using the British flag to get the security advantages provided by this country. At the course of time, especially the British fully colonized American territories following the Seven-Years War, the amount of taxes demanded by the Great Britain forced the Americans to rebel against Britain and as a result of this, the American War of Independence started. The United States, after getting its independence started to conduct commercial activities with various regions around the world. The Mediterranean trade was one of the trade routes used by the Americans and it was important for the financial circles in the United States. In order to be a part of the Mediterranean trade route, they made contacts with the Near Eastern regions. The Ottoman Empire became one of the American trade partners in the era due to the facilities that they provided in terms of taxation, exportation and importation<sup>5</sup>.

The first target of the Americans in the Near East was the southwest Mediterranean. Although, this region was administratively a part of the Ottoman Empire, it was actually governed by the *Dayıs*<sup>6</sup>. Between 1786 and 1797, the government of the United States signed four commercial treaties with Morocco,

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<sup>5</sup> The total volume of trade was 560.000\$ dollars in 1831, 7 Million dollars in 1897 and 25 million dollars in 1913. The United States merchants imported mainly tobacco, raw wool, Oriental rugs and chemicals, including drugs and dyes. (J. C. Hurewitz, *Middle East Dilemmas The Background of the United States Policy*, (New York: Russell&Russell, 1973), p. 165).

<sup>6</sup> *Dayı* is the term that was used for the local governors mainly in Algeria. (Çağrı Erhan, *Türk-Amerikan İlişkilerinin Tarihsel Kökenleri*, (Ankara: Imge Kitabevi, 2001), p.35)

Algeria, Trablusgarb and Tunisia. Hence, due to the attacks of the pirates<sup>7</sup> on American trade ships, the United States did not achieve to get the benefit that they expected. As the government of the United States was against to give an annual tribute to the pirates, they have finally decided to use military force against the pirates and they send the United States' navy to the region. As a result, the Berberi Wars started between the *Dayis* and the Americans<sup>8</sup>. At the end of the war, United States achieved to sign a treaty with the *Dayis*, in order to protect the national interests of the United States<sup>9</sup>. The United States success in the Berberi Wars was very important for the country in terms of both economy and military. Apart from getting capitulatory rights, the United States also achieved to prove the performance of its navy. Moreover, such a series of war, out of the United States border displayed that the United States had the necessary base for becoming one of the great powers of the world.

Regular commercial activities between the Ottoman Empire and the United States started with the export of Izmir's grapes to Boston. This trade route was also used during the American War of Independence and was vitally important in terms of acquiring the money needed for the continuation of the war and to provide the necessary goods that the Americans could not get due to the embargo exercised by the Great Britain.<sup>10</sup>

In the initial phase, British ambassadors had a decisive role on the Ottoman-American relations but as the American interests developed, the United States government decided to establish direct relations with the Ottoman Empire in order to protect their interests in the Ottoman territories. The United States made its first step

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<sup>7</sup> In order to establish secure trade relations with those countries, every European power paid tribute to the pirates. Great Britain and France were the strongest naval powers of the era but they were also making an annual payment to them. However, the aim of the stronger power when making payments was to establish good relationships with these countries and use them against their rivals in necessary cases. The rise at the number of pirates' attacks at US trade ships was the reaction of Great Britain to USA by using the pirates. (Erhan, pp. 37-44).

<sup>8</sup> The Berberi Wars took place between 1801 and 1824. (Erhan, p.55)

<sup>9</sup> The American fleet that was established during this war, gained a permanent statue and used when it was necessary, in order to protect the US national benefits. (Erhan, p.68)

<sup>10</sup> Erhan, p.73.



in 1802 by sending William Steward to Izmir as consul<sup>11</sup>. However, Steward was not recognized by the Ottoman Empire and he turned back to the United States.

The government of the United States continued on spending efforts on this issue due to the rising volume of commerce. However, until 1811, the United States could not meet its expectations. In 1811, the government of the United States sent David Offley with the same mission but the expectations were not fulfilled. Different from Steward, Offley stayed for a while in the Ottoman territories and achieved to establish the first American Chamber of Commerce in Izmir in 1811. In order to solve the problem, the chamber used diplomatic maneuvers like official ambassadors. That is why this chamber can be perceived as an embassy.<sup>12</sup>

The most important problem solved by this chamber happened in 1811 about the custom levies that the American trade ships should pay. When the Great Britain decided to remove its protection from the American trade ships, the British Ambassador of Istanbul convinced the Sultan for taking 6% of custom levies from the Americans. This amount was very high in comparison with the former rates. Offley went to Istanbul and he could be able to persuade the Ottoman Palace for a very low tax rate, even lower than the former one. The solution to the crisis was in fact found by the role of the ambassadors; that is why we can look this chamber as an embassy.

However, the United States intended to have official embassies in the Ottoman territories. Apart from protecting the American commercial interests, they were also dealing with the status of the American citizens living in the Ottoman territories. But, there were some handicaps from the American side. First of all, the two countries were too far from each other and this was a great problem for the communication. The letters arrive in two months from America to Istanbul. There was also a language problem. The Americans were not familiar with Turkish and the use of translators in every issue caused problems within the two countries in terms of

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<sup>11</sup> Roger R. Trask, *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform 1914-1939* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1971), p.4.

<sup>12</sup> The official American Chamber of Commerce for Turkey established a century later, in 1911. (Trask, pp. 4-9).

different comments added by those people. The cultural and religious differences were other negative factors for the establishment of the mutual diplomatic relations. Moreover, it was not very easy to change the isolationist policy of the country which was determined at the establishment. However, the need for new markets for the sake of the capitalist economy and the rising demand of raw material covered the aforementioned negative sides.

Although the Ottoman Empire was not willing to establish direct relations with the United States at the beginning, they changed their policy towards 1820s. The Greek uprising and the Navarino event of 1827<sup>13</sup> showed the Ottoman government that they should find a new ally against the European powers. The United States seems to be the best alternative for the Ottoman Empire and they decided to establish diplomatic relationships with this country. The United States' merchants were also demanding the establishment of the official relations between the two countries since 1811 in order to guarantee their positions within the Ottoman territories.

The government of the United States was willing to establish official relations for both preserving the national interests of the country and protecting the rights of its citizens located in the Ottoman territories. However, during the preparation phase of the treaty, there emerged a crisis of the sale of warships between the two states. The Ottoman government insisted on its demands of buying warships from the United States. They claimed that if the United States did not accept to sale warships to the Ottoman Empire, the commercial treaty would not provide any benefits for the Empire. Because, the Ottomans did not conduct trade in the territories of the United States, the tax rate did not provide any benefits to them. Moreover, the destruction of the Ottoman Navy at Navarino was one of the major reasons behind the Ottoman approach to the United States.

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<sup>13</sup> When the Ottoman fleet burned by the Anglo-French mixed fleet at Navarino, the Ottoman Empire had to find a new ally in order to help the re-construction of its navy. The aim of the empire was to construct a more modernized and powerful navy. The strongest naval forces of the era were Great Britain and France but as they were the ones who burned the Ottoman fleet, they were not suitable for demanding aid. In this condition, the Ottoman Empire converted to the United States' side because the United States proved its naval capability at Berberi Wars. (Erhan, p.113).

The Senate of the United States was against the Ottoman demands because they believed that such type of sale could cause problems with the Great Britain and the idea was against to the principles of the Monroe Doctrine. The problem was solved by an American merchant called Henry Eckford; who accepted to sale one of his warships to the Ottoman Empire, and then he went to the Ottoman lands in order to continue to build warships. Thus, the Ottomans had the warships they wanted and the United States government was not really interfering to the sale of the warships.<sup>14</sup>

In 1829, President Andrew Jackson designated Charles Rhind, David Offley and Commodore James Biddle to try again for the realization for an official agreement with the Ottoman Empire<sup>15</sup>. Their efforts had a positive result and in 1830, the treaty of commerce and navigation was signed between the United States and the Ottoman Empire. Charles Rhind, a trader and Reis-ul Kuttab Mehmed Hamid Efendi were the representatives of the two states. The United States gained the status of “the most preferred state”<sup>16</sup> which facilitated its diplomatic and economic initiatives within the Ottoman Empire. The treaty also provided the mutual recognition of consular representatives<sup>17</sup>. The inauguration of the missionary activities at the same time was an indicator of the agreement’s impact on the prospect of the Ottoman Empire.

This agreement initiated diplomatic relations by the opening of a new United States diplomatic representative office in Istanbul. The rising diplomatic importance of Istanbul, was not negatively affected the economic importance of Izmir. The American Consul of Istanbul, David Porter Heap, in a report to the Secretary of State Alvey A. Adee, wrote that “the consulate at Smyrna is the most important in Turkey.

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<sup>14</sup> Trask, p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Trask, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> The state that gets this status in the Ottoman Lands had all the privileges that all the other countries had already obtain from the Ottoman government. They continue to their commercial activities with the lowest rate of custom levies. Moreover, both the citizens of the country and their workers had the right for traveling, as they want within the Ottoman borders. (Erhan, p.124).

<sup>17</sup> Leland James Gordon, *American Relations With Turkey, 1830-1930: An Economic Interpretation*, (Philedelphia,1932), p.11.

There are few missionaries and mission schools in the distinct. But the principal duties of the consuls are connected with our commerce”<sup>18</sup>.

David Porter Heap became the first “Chargé d’Affaires”<sup>19</sup> of the United States in the Ottoman Empire and consequently the status of the Americans within the country changed. Their dependence on the British consulate came to an end but by the way the British protection over the American merchants also ended. Within a year, David Porter Heap established various embassy offices in different cities of the empire. The Ottomans also sent their ambassador to the United States and the mutual diplomatic relations started among the two countries<sup>20</sup>.

However, after the commerce and navigation treaty of 1830, the United States-Ottoman relations started to be very problematic in many areas, from trade to missionary activities, from diplomatic relations to arm trade. Although, the agreement’s articles were overwhelmingly economic, the third and the fourth articles carried important conditions for the future relations. The third article had an impact on the facilitation of the United States’ commercial activities within the Ottoman boundaries. It required, “American merchants established in the well defended States of the Sublime Port, for the purpose of commerce, shall have liberty to employ *Semsars* [moneylenders] of any nation or religion in like manner as merchants of other friendly Powers<sup>21</sup>”.

Furthermore, the fourth article carried capitulatory conditions which gave the diplomatic representatives of the United States the right of jurisdiction or “extraterritorial rights” within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire in some criminal cases related to their citizens. The article stated the condition that, “if litigations and disputes should arise between subjects of the Sublime Port and the United States, the parties shall not be heard, nor shall judgment be pronounced unless

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<sup>18</sup> John Hammond Moore, *America Looks at Turkey*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1961, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadoludaki Amerika*, (Istanbul: AR-BA, 1989), p.50.

<sup>20</sup> The first Ottoman envoy was the French origin Edward Edme Blacque (later Bulak Bey) sent to the USA in 1867. Although, he was appointed in 1856, the Ottoman Government waited until 1867 to send him to the USA as the envoy extraordinary and the minister plenipotentiary (Trask, p.13).

<sup>21</sup> Hasan Tahsin Fendoğlu, *Modernleşme Bağlamında Osmanlı-Amerika İlişkileri (1786-1929)*, (Istanbul: Beyan, 2002), p. 319 and 315.

the American dragoman be present”. The conditions ended with the provision of juridical right to the diplomatic representatives of the United States by requiring that “they shall be tried by their Minister of Consul and punished according their offence”.<sup>22</sup>

This article created some problems between the two states that lasted until the end of the nineteenth century. Although, the agreement granted extraterritorial rights to the American citizens, the Ottoman Empire in practice, denied the implementation by asserting translation mistakes. The United States’ representative in Istanbul, Oscar Straus, described the situation as follows:

On these later European capitulations was based our own first treaty with the Sublime Porte in 1830. Practically speaking consular jurisdiction in Turkey was then not very different from what it was in the fifteenth century. When I took office one of the questions to be settled was the interpretation of Clause 4 of the treaty of 1830. ...French version of the treaty was not exactly in agreement with the Turkish. ...Indeed, the treaty rested in peace until 1868, when the American Minister, acting according to the English version clashed, with the Turkish authorities in the interpretation of Clause 4, regarding jurisdiction over American Citizens – in the case two had been arrested and imprisoned for alleged offenses against the Turkish government.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, the problem this clause created continued to constitute an obstacle in the development of relations until the Young Turks government abrogated all capitulations in 1914.

Another unmentioned part of this agreement included some secret terms with regard to expected American assistance for the restoration of the Ottoman navy, which had been destroyed at Navarino. According to the secret article:

“Whenever the Sublime government shall order the building and the construction in the dominion of America of whatever quantity of war vessels, such as two deckers, frigates, corvettes and brigs, this shall be communicated and notified by the office of the Chief of the Secretaries.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Fendoğlu, p.316-319.

<sup>23</sup> Oscar S. Straus, *Under Four Administrations: From Cleveland to Taft* (Cambridge: Riberside Press, 1922), pp. 87-88.

<sup>24</sup> Fendoğlu, p.321.

This secret clause also demonstrates the background of the agreement. It was rejected by the congress of the United States but in 1831, a dozen workmen arrived in Turkey<sup>25</sup>.

Another treaty signed between the United States and the Ottoman Empire in 1862: the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. The status of the “most preferred state” of the United States was preserved and moreover, the tax rates were decreased. The articles of the 1862 treaty, in comparison to the treaty of 1830 were more clear and they applied from the beginning as it has to do. The treaty of 1830 could not apply to the real life as it was written in the document itself. Moreover, the United States interests were highly considered, and the American merchants gained additional rights. At the same time, the Ottoman Empire added some additional rights for itself. According to the treaty the Ottoman merchants, if they established commercial relations with the United States would have got the same rights that the United States merchants had in the Ottoman territories.<sup>26</sup>

There were two additional treaties in 1874. One is about the exchange of the criminals and the other one was the naturalization and extradition treaty. These were actually signed because of the criminals’ problem, as the 1830 and 1862 treaties were not clear enough about the issues of the criminals. The problem emerged from the question of which countries’ law will be applied to the United States citizens in the Ottoman Empire in the case of crime. Moreover, the most complicated issue was about the ones who changed their nationality: ex-Ottoman but new American citizens. These people were mostly Armenians. The treaties were mostly concerned with this group because these people used their American nationality in order to get commercial privileges from the Ottoman Empire.

Both the problems about the criminal issue and the commercial privileges led the United States and the Ottoman Empire to make an agreement on these issues. In 1874, a treaty was signed between the Ottoman officials and American minister

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<sup>25</sup> Moore, p.11.

<sup>26</sup> Leland James Gordon, “Turkish-American Treaty Relations”, *The American Political Science Review*, 22, no.3(August 1928), pp.711-716.

George H. Boker<sup>27</sup>. According to this treaty, if an Ottoman subject became naturalized which means became an American citizen; he would be officially accepted as an American citizen. On the other hand, those who became naturalized as American citizens, but continued to remain within the borders of the Ottoman Empire were accepted as Ottoman subjects<sup>28</sup>. Those who were accepted as Armenians could not benefit from the right of jurisdiction or extraterritorial rights of American diplomats according to the treaty of 1830. At least, American diplomats could not assert such a right and could not participate into the court trial. Although it was well prepared in comparison to the former treaties, due to differences of the opinions between the United States and the Ottoman Empire about the articles of the naturalization and extradition treaty, the ratification process could not be successful<sup>29</sup>.

The attitude of the United States towards the Ottoman Empire changed after the American Civil War. The United States foreign policy was actually shaped by the Monroe Doctrine declared in 1823.<sup>30</sup> According to the doctrine, “the United States would refrain from intervening in European affairs at the same time that it insisted that Europe refrain from intervening from American affairs”<sup>31</sup>. Moreover, the United States could continue its relations and protect its economic interests with each country that it wants. As this policy shaped the American policy towards the Ottoman Empire, the United States was not really integrated into the Eastern Question until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>27</sup> Straus, p.90.

<sup>28</sup> Nurdan Şafak, *Osmanlı Amerikan İlişkileri*, (Istanbul: OSAV, 2003), p.88.

<sup>29</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu, *Belgelerle Türk-Amerikan Münasebetleri*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), p.17.

<sup>30</sup> In the pre-war period relations, only the Chester Project remained out of the boundaries of the Monroe Doctrine. The project was about an establishment of a railway system in Ottoman territories, which would take place between Sivas and Van. Moreover, the system would reach to Musul and Kerkük to the Yumurtalık Port. However, the project rejected by “Meclis-i Mebusan”. The second try of the USA was firstly accepted by the Ottoman Empire but the project was never come into life due to the alterations at borders emerged after the Lausanne Treaty<sup>30</sup>. With the death of the project, the US turned to its former policy shaped by the Monroe Doctrine and concentrated to the missionary activities. ( Baskın Oran, “Chester Projesi” *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar 1919-1980*, Volume 1. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), p.109.

<sup>31</sup>Link, Coben, p.170.

The diplomatic relations in real term just started after the arrival of the missionaries into the Ottoman territories. If the Eastern Question was defined as the issues related with the future and the partition of the Ottoman Empire<sup>32</sup>, it would not be wrong to assert that the United States was only integrated into the Eastern Question as the issue concerned its missionaries<sup>33</sup>. In other words we can say that the United States when compared with the European States had a very passive role in the Eastern Question<sup>34</sup>. However, after the American Civil War, when the integrity of the States was realized; the United States foreign policy started to aim at expanding the American influence like the European powers. The United States political leaders believed that, in order to provide the economic growth for the country, the expansion was the most important pre-requisite. As a result, the United States started to integrate into the Eastern Question however; this new policy was not so visible in the pre-war period. However, due to the activities of the ABCFM, the American diplomacy played a more active role at the Armenian question<sup>35</sup>. On the other hand the national interests of the United States in the Near East mostly protected by this organization<sup>36</sup>.

The Civil War affected the relations in both positive and negative ways. Positively, the emerging reciprocal trust between the two states constituted an impulse to develop diplomatic relations which had begun in the 1830s, but could not find correspondence on the Ottoman side. Even though the United States has opened its diplomatic legation in Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire could not find any chance to

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<sup>32</sup> Hans-Lukas Kieser, *İskalanmış Barış Doğu Vilayetleri'nde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet 1839-1938*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), p.119.

<sup>33</sup> The American minister of foreign affairs of the era, John Foster, in one his report says that the most important issue concerning the US-Ottoman relationship was the situation of the American missionaries for USA. (Şafak, p. 19).

<sup>34</sup> Gülbadi Alan, "Osmanlı Belgelerine Göre Ermeni İsyanları ve American Board Misyonerleri (1875-1918)", *Ermeni Araştırmaları 2. Türkiye Kongresi Bildirileri*, V. 1, (Ankara: ASAM, 2007), p.506.

<sup>35</sup> Alan, p.506.

<sup>36</sup> Alan, p.506.



give a response. However, immediately after the war, the first Ottoman diplomatic legation in Washington opened at the rank of ministry.<sup>37</sup>

The second positive effect was that the United States began to seek new areas for marketing its weapons with the aim of disposing its arm stocks. According to 1830 treaty, the United States was forbidden to sell arms to the Ottomans. However, this condition would be abrogated with the 15<sup>th</sup> condition of the treaty of 1862.<sup>38</sup>

The last positive effect could be seen at the Ottoman agricultural production after the Civil War began. Cotton production was seriously damaged in the Southern states, which allow the Ottomans to fill the vacuum at the agricultural market. The Empire benefited from this vacuum by encouraging producers in the lands suitable to production. In October 1861, a circular dispatched to all provinces ordered focus on the further production of cotton.<sup>39</sup>

On the negative side, the end of the Civil War initiated a discussion on slavery<sup>40</sup>. Another dimension came with the consolidation of the United States domestic security and peace: the transformation of the United States foreign policy into a more interventionist approach. Especially after the 1870s, the United States began to have more problematic relations with the Ottoman Empire that were complicated not only with the Armenian question and the missionary activities, but also with the struggle for economic and political advantages.

In this regard, the first problem emerged on Crete in the mid-1860s, where the United States sought to have a base in the Mediterranean Sea. Secretary of State Seward, who was the initiator of the interventionist policy, wanted this base in order to protect the economic and commercial interest of the American citizens.<sup>41</sup>

Seward opened the discussion of dispatching a big navy throughout the Mediterranean. This interventionist attempt was sensed by other states diplomats and created problems. According to a dispatch sent to London in May 1866 by the British

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<sup>37</sup> Erhan, p.251.

<sup>38</sup> Armaoğlu, pp. 11-12.

<sup>39</sup> Erhan, pp. 251-252.

<sup>40</sup> Erhan, p.257.

<sup>41</sup> Erhan, p.269.

Ambassador in Istanbul, Sir Henry Eliot, the Americans might accept calls of the annexation of the Cretans under the shadow of their interests which meant the involvement of a new power in the problem. This would immediately have a negative impact on the British interests in the region.<sup>42</sup>

The Crete question, which resulted in a confrontation between the two states, forced the Ottoman elites to reshape their position with regard to the United States. They began to think after the crisis that the United States sought a base in the Mediterranean Sea as a part of its interventionist policy. Furthermore, they recognized that the United States was moving away to deal with the questions of purchasing Alaska and the Caribbean Islands, but if it would find a chance, they might also seek to penetrate Ottoman affairs directly or indirectly.<sup>43</sup>

In order to prevent the American intervention into the Ottoman sphere of influence, the Ottoman elites decided to publish articles in American magazines which opposed to the actions of the United States in the region<sup>44</sup>. The Crete question was instructive for Ottoman political elite to overview the relations with the United States. However, the Bulgarian uprising and missionary activities inside the Empire made a dramatic change on the Ottoman policy towards the United States.

The Bulgarian question was another important reason for the crisis between the United States and the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman political elite already had begun to lose its trust to the United States at the Crete problem. The growth of the Bulgarian nationalism and the interest of the United States on this issue made the situation worst.

The Bulgarian uprising begun in April 1876 and it was quickly suppressed by the Ottoman army. The Bulgarian nationalists informed the world about their action, but they done this by accusing the Ottoman government and the Ottoman army for being cruel against the Bulgarians. They benefited from the missionaries in order to contact with the great newspapers of the United States and the Great Britain.

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<sup>42</sup> Erhan, p.270.

<sup>43</sup> Erhan, pp. 270-271.

<sup>44</sup> Erhan, p.280.

Minister Maynard, charged Schuyler, the first secretary of ministry, with the duty of focusing on the problem. While Great Powers made pressure to the Ottoman Empire to convene a conference in Istanbul, in order to have a solution with regard to Bulgarian crisis, Schuyler spent efforts, including sending letters to American newspapers and preparing a constitution for Bulgaria, to maintain the case in the agenda of the American society. Ottoman officials tried to persuade Americans to remove Schuyler from his office, but the outbreak of the Russian-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 interrupted this demand because the Ottomans were deeply in need for foreign support<sup>45</sup>.

At that point, it has to be asserted that the Ottoman-Russian war of 1877-1878, which lasted nine months, had little positive effect on the United States public opinion towards the Ottoman Empire. The Americans, especially during the Balkan hostilities accepted the Ottoman Turks as a cruel power over their fellow Christians, however, when the Ottoman Empire compared with the Russians, they preferred the lesser of the two “evils”, which is the Ottomans. Within this regard, New York ladies established the Society of the Cross and Crescent to aid wounded Turkish soldiers.

Washington, furthermore, observed closely the Russian-Ottoman War with the reports dispatched from its Ministry in Istanbul. But the United States decided that they had no political interest in this struggle. Therefore, the United States preferred to keep away from this clash.

By 1893, the total number of the American consular offices in the Ottoman territories reached to 34. In 1914, this number reached to 48. Six consular offices were in Istanbul, two in Harput, two in Mersin, one in Sivas, four in Izmir, three in Trabzon and one in Samsun. The main task of the consulates was to deal with the missionary and the commercial interests.<sup>46</sup>

In 1897, the United States government wanted to raise the status of its embassy. Although this proposal rejected by Abdülhamid II, the United States proposed the same demand in 1906. However, the second attempt was positively

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<sup>45</sup> Erhan, p.294.

<sup>46</sup> Trask, p.13.

resulted and both Istanbul and Washington embassies were promoted. The United States ambassadors, apart from dealing with the diplomatic activities, they also dealt with the Christian minorities living in their working place. They prepared reports about the minorities that explain the living conditions of the minorities and the economic and political events regarding the Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. The reports were first sent to the United States embassy in Istanbul and then they were classified according to their importance. The ones, which were valuable for the United States policies, were sent to the Washington.

## **2.2. Emergence of the American Missionaries in the Near East**

The Catholic missionaries, the Jesuits and the Franciscans were active starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century especially in the Levant until 1773 when the Jesuit order dissolved<sup>47</sup>. The American missionary activities started to be active after the establishment of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM). In 1810, the ABCFM was established by the members of the Congregational, Presbyterian and Reformed Churches. The Board, funded by the government of the United States' "Civilization Fund", worked not only to evangelize Native Americans but also organized missions to India, China, Ceylon, and the Middle East to expand Protestantism as well as American commercial activities<sup>48</sup>.

The first two protestant missionaries attached to the ABCFM who came to the Near East were Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons. In 1820, they arrived to Izmir. They started to learn Greek in order to have good relations with the minorities residing in this region. Parsons died in Jerusalem where he had gone in 1821. Fisk continued to make researches over both the Muslims and the minorities. During his trip, three

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<sup>47</sup> Recep Boztemur, "Religion and Politics in the Making of American Near East Policy, 1918-1922", *JSRI*, No.11 (Summer 2005), p.46.

<sup>48</sup> Boztemur, p.45.

Armenian priests converted to Protestantism. This act led Fisk to inform the ABCFM headquarter in Boston in order to establish a missionary center in the area.

The first organized American mission attached to the ABCFM established in Beirut because the climate, the strategic position and the population structure of the city were suitable for the missionaries to start. The main target groups of the Protestant missionaries were the Muslims and the Jews at the beginning. However, according to their investigation, the Protestants understood that it is very difficult to convert the Muslim population to Christianity. The death penalty against converted people was very effective over the Muslims and they had no orientation for such an act. Moreover, the Jews were not tended to alter their religions. The missionaries then, turned their eyes towards the Armenian population in the Empire. The change of their target group forced them to change their mission center.

Istanbul was chosen as the second center of the ABCFM at 1831. This center was the first Protestant station established in Anatolia, by an American missionary William Godell<sup>49</sup>. This mission had four main tasks to do: language works, preparation of new books, educational works and interaction with the people. However, by doing these, the American missionaries were willing to take the attention of neither the Ottoman government nor the Armenian patriarchate. Their initial act was to visit the Armenian patriarch in order to assert him their good intentions. Another important act of this center was the translation of the “Holy Bible” into Turkish by Armenian letters.

It is obvious that from the beginning, the Armenians were very important for the missionaries. Moreover, with their orientation, the United States government opened their Embassy Offices in the Ottoman territories which were highly Armenian-populated areas such as Sivas, Erzurum and Harput<sup>50</sup>. Just from the beginning, the effects of the American missionaries on the United States foreign policy were very clear from this example.

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<sup>49</sup> Bilal Şimşir, *Ermeni Meselesi 1774-2005* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 2005), p.17.

<sup>50</sup> Kocabaşoğlu, p.19.

The missionaries, apart from making the organization in the Near East, they also organized the migrations of the Armenians from the region to the United States. At the initial years of the Armenian question, the American missionaries were highly effective for organizing the migrations of the Anatolian Armenians to the United States. The first immigrants were located at the Worcester city of the Massachusetts and in 1891 they were established the first Armenian church in those lands. This city was also known as the center of the ABCFM which was established in 1810. ABCFM was the head of all the American missionaries in the Ottoman land and not surprisingly the first Armenian presence realized at the same place with the headquarter and under its protection.<sup>51</sup>

Until to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, we could not talk about a real Armenian presence in the United States, however, in 1892 there were 10.000 Armenian immigrants in the country<sup>52</sup> and this number sharply rose within the time. Between 1890 and 1900, 12.000 more Armenians migrated to the United States<sup>53</sup>. Some of those Armenians came to the United States for getting education<sup>54</sup>. These people returned to Anatolia after finishing their education for making collaboration with the American missionaries living in Anatolia. An estimated 14% of the immigrants returned to the Ottoman territories, where many who had acquired naturalization papers claimed as American citizens the privileges of extraterritoriality<sup>55</sup>. Those who stayed in the United States were the nucleus of the American Armenian community.

This newly emerging population<sup>56</sup> continued to collaborate with the missionary institutions and they worked for creating a negative public opinion against the Turks and the Turkish government. Those immigrants became the

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<sup>51</sup> Şimşir, p.101.

<sup>52</sup> Şimşir, p.100.

<sup>53</sup> Şenol Kantarcı, "ABD ve Kanada'da Ermeni Diasporası: Kuruluşlar ve Faaliyetleri", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 3, (Eylül-Ekim-Kasım 2001), p.73.

<sup>54</sup> Kantarcı, p.73.

<sup>55</sup> J. C. Hurewitz, *Middle East Dilemmas The Background of the United States Foreign Policy*, (New York: Russell&Russell, 1973), p. 167.

<sup>56</sup> The Armenian Population in the United States reached 50.000 in 1914. (Kantarcı, p.74).

members of the Armenian political organizations in the United States and in other countries like Switzerland<sup>57</sup>. The migrated Armenians were also took their place at the anti-Turkish acts and propagandas<sup>58</sup>. Apart from those immigrants, the Hinchak Committee started to establish its branches in the United States. They also intended to get the support of the Americans against the Turks.<sup>59</sup>

Bringing the secular way of life into the Near Eastern regions and by the way to the Ottoman Empire, was the hidden goal of the missionaries. The missionaries were firstly concentrated on educational activities. Secondly, they improved health facilities in the areas that they were established their network. Their final way of attraction was the economic opportunities that they provided for the minorities in the Ottoman lands mostly to the Armenians.

Due to the educational activities, the literacy rate among the minorities but especially among the Armenians increased. The printing press in this aspect was one of the most important instruments used by the missionaries. The first missionary printing office had been established in Malta. After the treaty of 1830, the office moved to Izmir and after the declaration of the Imperial Gülhane Decree, the missionaries tended to relocate it in Istanbul. However, this realized in 1853 and then the office stayed there. The second printing office established in Ayintab in 1880 due to the pressures originated from the Ottoman government. Although, this second office did not become as important as the first one, the works done by it was nearly 500.000 pages for the first year and nearly one million pages in its second year<sup>60</sup>.

In this aspect, the establishment of the missionary schools gained importance in order to increase the literacy rate among the minorities because they could not read the publications if they stayed illiterate. The first missionary school opened in the Ottoman territories was the Beirut School that opened in 1824. The Ottoman government was not able to know the exact number of the education centers of the

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<sup>57</sup> Kemal Çiçek, “Amerikada Türk-Ermeni Çatışması ve Harry the Turk Cinayeti”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Cilt 5-6, Sayı 20-21, (Kış 2005-İlkbahar 2006), p.69.

<sup>58</sup> Çiçek, p.70.

<sup>59</sup> Şimşir, p. 99.

<sup>60</sup> Kocabaşoğlu, p.149.

missionaries because apart from the legal schools, the missionaries were also opened secret schools within the churches and even in their residences<sup>61</sup>.

The Robert College was the second college opened by the Protestant missionaries in 1868. It was established by Cyrus Hamlin. The financial aid for the establishment came from an American merchant Christopher Robert and the president of the United States Hamlin<sup>62</sup>. The target population of this college was the minorities too<sup>63</sup>. Although this college was in close contacts with the ABCFM, it was an independent institutions but it was also famous for training missionaries<sup>64</sup>.

After the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut and the Robert College in Istanbul, the Antep Protestant College was the third big Protestant school established in the Ottoman Empire<sup>65</sup>. This College started to its education in 1876. In 1879, 63 of its 84 students were Protestant Armenians and in 1894 this number raised to 71 over 94<sup>66</sup>. This college, like the other Protestant Colleges in the Empire, apart from educating its students was intended to give them the consciousness of their rights and freedom notion<sup>67</sup>.

The Protestant Schools have deep cultural and political effects over the Armenians<sup>68</sup>. One of the reasons behind this fact was of course the problem of the Armenians with the central government<sup>69</sup>. Moreover, the denial of traditionalism by the young Armenian population and the inner problem of the Armenian millet in

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<sup>61</sup> Mithat Aydın, *Bulgarlar ve Ermeniler Arasında Amerikan Misyonerleri*, (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi, 2008), pp.144-145.

<sup>62</sup> Tahsin Fendoğlu, “Ermeni Probleminin Doğuşunda Amerikan Protestan Misyonerlerinin Rolü (XIX. YY.)”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları 1. Türkiye Kongresi Bildirileri*, Cilt1, Ankara: ASAM, 2003, p.461.

<sup>63</sup> Gordon, *American Relations With Turkey 1830-1930*, p.226.

<sup>64</sup> Gordon, *American Relations With Turkey 1830-1930*, p.225.

<sup>65</sup> Bayram Akça, “Antep (Ayıntap) Protestan Okulu ve Ermeni Meselesi”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, V. 4, Sayı 14-15, (Yaz-Sonbahar 2004), p.43.

<sup>66</sup> Kocabaşoğlu, p.183.

<sup>67</sup> Kieser, p.118.

<sup>68</sup> Kocabaşoğlu, p.278.

<sup>69</sup> Selçuk Akşin Somel, “Osmanlı Ermenilerinde Kültür Modernleşmesi, Cemaat Okulları ve Abdülhamit Rejimi”, *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, Sayı 5, (Bahar 2007), p.76.



terms of modernity and conservatism were other important reasons behind this impact<sup>70</sup>.

The improvement of the health facilities by the American missionaries was the easiest activity realized by them and one of the most popular ways of attraction. As the institutions like hospitals and dispensers were not in a good level and even do not exist in the Ottoman Empire, the government led the missionaries to open such institutions. Apart from having no trouble at the stage of establishment, these institutions were very beneficial investments in terms of attracting both the Muslim and the non-Muslim population without making any efforts.

The relations between the Ottoman Empire and the missionaries began peacefully because of the small numbers of the missionaries and the Ottoman relations with the Great Britain. Since the inaugural treaty of 1830 between the Ottoman Empire and the United States was signed, the missionaries were under the protection of the British Embassy and consulates throughout the country. Moreover, at the beginning of the relations the Ottoman government did not think to take legal measures against the missionaries in order to limit their activities.

For instance, the missionaries in Beirut received travel permits from the officials through the British consulate of that city. Furthermore, with this treaty, missionaries found the chance to come to Istanbul with chargé d'affaires David Porter Heap. They began to work in the capital and formed a plan to pursue. They engaged to learn local languages such as Turkish, Armenian and Greek in order to establish contact with the local communities. Moreover, they sought to publish religious books which addressed each different ethnic community and they planned to have contact with the public in both formal and informal ways.<sup>71</sup>

The missionaries were the citizens of the United States and came to Istanbul as the treaty of 1830 indicated. With this treaty, the missionaries also lost their British protection. However, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the provinces that the American consulates did not operate, the American missionaries continued to work under the British consulates. American diplomats forced Washington to open

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<sup>70</sup> Somel, p.77.

<sup>71</sup> Kocabaşoğlu, p.50.

new consulates in those provinces in order to prevent any misunderstandings with regard to the might and political esteem of their own state<sup>72</sup>.

Parallel to the increase in the missionary activities in the 1830s and 1840s, the problems between the United States and the Ottoman Empire started to be more obvious. Although, the American missionary activities were appreciated at the beginning by the Ottoman State, the political works of the missionaries led the Ottoman government to take some precautions against them. The first measure was the “publication law”. By this law, the Ottoman government aimed to control the publications done by the missionaries and even forbid them. However, the missionaries did not really obey to this law and by taking the support of the United States government; they continue to publish their works as they did before. Since the censorship was abolished by the Ottoman government, the Tanzimat Era was considered the most suitable period for all kind of publication.

The next step was the “Regulation of the General Education” which was prepared at 1869. According to this, the professors and the doctors working in the missionary institutions should be approved by the Ottoman officials. The government required a license for the continuation of the educative activities for missionaries<sup>73</sup>. Moreover, the curriculum of the schools should be in accordance with the Ottoman policies and the general ethics<sup>74</sup>.

In order to investigate the missionary institutions, the third precaution was the establishment of the inspectorate office for the foreigner’s schools and the non-Muslim citizens<sup>75</sup>. However, these precautions could not stop the negative effects of the missionary activities because, the missionaries in every problematic case, took the support of the Western States.

Oscar Straus, the Minister of the United States in Istanbul between 1887 and 1889, described how problematic situations emerged because of the missionary

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<sup>72</sup> Moore, p.78.

<sup>73</sup> İlknur Polat, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Açılan Amerikan Okulları Üzerine Bir İnceleme”, *Bellekten*, 52, no. 203, (August 1988), p.635.

<sup>74</sup> Somel, p.85.

<sup>75</sup> Somel, p.86.

activities after that time. One of his main duties at the legation was the protection of the interests of the American missionaries with regard to their schools and their printed matter. He emphasized that those problems formed the major portion of the affairs that he had to deal with.<sup>76</sup>

Straus said that about 400 schools had been established in Turkey by the Presbyterian and Congregational missionary boards. He criticized the Ottoman government for closing down of these 30 schools in Syria and for the arrests of many teachers. He also accused the Ottoman government of threatening the parents who send their children to the American schools with fines and imprisonment.<sup>77</sup> Although, he portrayed the arrest of the American citizens as the cautious and general act of the Ottoman government; Straus also pointed out that the Ottoman government was not always able to control the governor generals of the provinces<sup>78</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were approximately 50.000 Protestants in the Ottoman Empire according to the calculations made by the American Board. The European powers started to be disturbed by the rising number of the Protestant population. However, they could not put an end to this. Moreover, in 1850, the Ottoman government accepted the Protestant population as a community<sup>79</sup>. In 1890s, the main interest of the United States in the Ottoman territories was the missionaries<sup>80</sup>. Just before the First World War, there were 151 American missionaries and their 1200 local assistant working in the Ottoman territories for the American Board.

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<sup>76</sup> Straus, p.70.

<sup>77</sup> Straus, p.70.

<sup>78</sup> Straus, p.77.

<sup>79</sup> The Millet System in the Ottoman Empire was based on the religion rather than the nationality. In 1914, apart from the Muslim Community there were 13 different communities in the empire. According to this system, the communities were autonomous for their internal affairs but they should pay their taxes to the Ottoman Empire. In religious and economic field they were not restricted by the Ottoman law and the religious leader of the communities were the responsible people and the chair of the community. (Mim Kemal Öke, *Yüzyılın Kan Davası Ermeni Sorunu*, (Istanbul: İrfan Yayıncılık), pp. 71-79).

<sup>80</sup> Joseph L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East, Missionary Influence on American Policy 1810-1927*, (Minnesota: 1971), pp.35-40.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE ARMENIAN QUESTION

#### 3.1. Armenian National Awakening.

The relationship between the Armenian community and the Ottoman government was very good from its beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>81</sup> until to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Armenians were called as “millet-i sadıka” which means the most loyal community within the empire. The Armenian community was headed by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople and the Patriarch was a recognized official of the Ottoman government. This status of the Patriarch confronted with changes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the recognition of the Catholic community in 1831 and the Protestant community<sup>82</sup> in 1850 by the Ottoman government because the Armenians who converted to these religions became the subjects of these new communities<sup>83</sup>. Moreover, an imperial edict dated December 12, 1841 gave the right to control the affairs of the Armenian millet to an elected council of laymen<sup>84</sup>. Until 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Patriarch was the link between the Armenians in the Diaspora and the whole Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> M. Serdar Palabıyık, “Ermeni Sorununa Giriş: Başlangıçtan Lozan Antlaşmasına Kadar”, ed. by Ömer Engin Lütem, *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, (Ankara: ASAM, 2007), p.13.

<sup>82</sup> The Protestant Community law was formulated by the ABCFM in 1854 and adopted 1856. It was important in terms of bringing a new meaning to the understanding of the community concept in the Ottoman Empire. Although the community concept based on the religion, this new law differentiated the religion and civil based membership to the communities. (Kieser, p.121)

<sup>83</sup> Louise Nalbandian, *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement: The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*, (London: University of California Press, 1975), p.25.

<sup>84</sup> Salahi R. Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire*, (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 1993) p.203.

<sup>85</sup> Nalbandian, p, 31.

The national awakening for the Armenians was first started among the Armenians of Diaspora<sup>86</sup>. The printing press was also first used by the Diaspora Armenians and helped to disseminate the national culture and European thought among the Armenians. As the patriarch was the link between the Diaspora and the homeland Armenians, the contribution of the Armenian clergy to the Armenian National Awakening could not be ignored. The educational role of the monasteries was extremely significant for the new nationalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>87</sup>.

Another important class for the emergence of the nationalistic sentiments among the Armenians was the young Armenians who went to Europe for their education. These people became familiar with the European understanding of democracy, democratic representation and nationalism. They benefited from Western education not only in Europe but also in the Ottoman territories at the schools of the American Protestant missionaries<sup>88</sup>. In order to fight with the illiteracy, the new Armenian educated class emphasized the importance of the transformation at the Armenian language by insisting for the usage of the vernacular language instead of the classical language at the written documents<sup>89</sup>. The use of the modern language was facilitated in 1853, by the American missionaries who were under the direction of Dr. Elias Riggs with the translation of the Bible into modern Armenian language<sup>90</sup>.

The first Armenian community school established at 1790 and the first Armenian secondary school dated back to 19<sup>th</sup> century. These national schools were the centers for the production of the large portion of intellectuals who dominated the Armenian life in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Apart from the national schools in the Ottoman Empire, the educational institutions of the Mekhitharist Congregation in European countries and the schools and colleges opened by the

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<sup>86</sup> Nalbandian, p.34.

<sup>87</sup> Nalbandian, p.31.

<sup>88</sup> Ed. by Arman J. Kirakossian, *The Armenian Massacres 1894-1896 U.S. Media Testimony* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2004), p.20.

<sup>89</sup> Nalbandian, p.49.

<sup>90</sup> Nalbandian, p.49.

American Protestant missionaries in the Ottoman Empire were instrumental in elevating the educational standards of the Ottoman Armenians.<sup>91</sup>

The national awakening of the Armenians resulted with corruption in the relations between the Ottoman Armenians and the Ottoman government. The Ottoman government was not at the height of its power and could not fulfill the demands of reforms coming from both the Muslim and the non-Muslim population within the empire. Especially in the Eastern parts of Anatolia there was a total lack of authority which highly disturbed the Armenians due to the disputes between them and the Kurdish population.

The French Revolution of 1789 was to some degree affected the Armenian intellectuals in terms of nationalism. The inter-disputes between the Armenian community about the issue of democratic representation and the religious disputes were the major reason behind the limited effect of the French Revolution over the Armenians.<sup>92</sup>

On the other hand, the rebellions in the Balkans were very important in order to affect the Armenian nationalists. They believed that although the triumph of the Serbian Revolt and later the Bulgarian and the Greek uprisings were succeeded with the aid of the Great Powers, the initiative taken by the Balkan people and the revolts against the Ottoman rule was the major reason behind their success. By the way the Armenian revolutionists believed that they should follow the Balkan example.<sup>93</sup>

The Greek independence which was gained with the Adrianople Treaty was a decisive turning point. This chaotic situation of the Ottoman Empire in other words the Eastern Question forced the Great Powers to interfere to the situation. Their interest started to collide. Russia and the United Kingdom were the most important rivals of the era. Russia's aim was to control the minorities in the Ottoman Empire and by the way to take the control of Anatolia in order to reach the Mediterranean Sea. On the other side, the United Kingdom is trying to keep safe the Ottoman

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<sup>91</sup> Nalbandian, p.50.

<sup>92</sup> Nalbandian, p.41.

<sup>93</sup> Nalbandian, p.181.

territorial integrity because if Russia<sup>94</sup> takes the control of Anatolia, the access of the United Kingdom to its colonies would be in danger.<sup>95</sup>

In order to prevent a sudden collapse of the Ottoman Empire, all the Great Powers agreed that the Sultan must grant more rights to the non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. However, the reforms were mostly referring to the privileges, autonomy and even independence for the Ottoman Christian minorities. With the Tanzimat reforms, several rights were granted to the non-Muslim communities of the Ottoman Empire. However, neither the Great Powers nor the non-Muslim communities were satisfied with these new reforms.<sup>96</sup>

The year 1856 is a decisive turning point in the course of the Ottoman history. It was the end of the Crimean War, in which the Ottoman Empire, sided with Great Britain and France defeated Russia. This war was temporarily stopped the Russian expansionism. At the end of the war, the Treaty of Paris was signed. According to the Article 7 of this Treaty, the Concert of Europe became the guarantor of the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>97</sup>

The year 1856 is also very important for the declaration of an imperial edict just one week before the convention of the Congress of Paris. Sultan Abdülmecid granted very important rights to the non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire. According to the Imperial Edict of Reform; Muslims and non-Muslims were accepted as equal before the law; nobody would be forced to convert from his/her religion to another one; there would be no difference among the people on the basis of ethnicity, religion or religious sect; Muslims and non-Muslims would be admitted to public and military services equally.<sup>98</sup>

This edict aimed to establish full equality between the Muslim and the non-Muslim communities of the Ottoman Empire. However, the expected result could not

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<sup>94</sup> After the congress of Berlin, when the Russian military victories were effectively reversed by the European Powers, Russia had tried to avoid from confrontation in the Near East and in the 1890s Russia was shifting its expansion policy from the Near East to the Far East. (Kirakossian, pp.24-25).

<sup>95</sup> Palabıyık, "Ermeni Sorununa Giriş: Başlangıçtan Lozan Antlaşmasına Kadar", p.13.

<sup>96</sup> Palabıyık, "Ermeni Sorununa Giriş: Başlangıçtan Lozan Antlaşmasına Kadar", p.14.

<sup>97</sup> Palabıyık, "Ermeni Sorununa Giriş: Başlangıçtan Lozan Antlaşmasına Kadar" p.14.

<sup>98</sup> Palabıyık, "Ermeni Sorununa Giriş: Başlangıçtan Lozan Antlaşmasına Kadar"p.14.

be obtained. The equality of the Ottoman citizens was just stayed as an ideal. On the other hand, the non-Muslim communities generally abused these extensive rights, and due to the protection of the Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire could do nothing to prevent these abuses. As a result, from 1856 onwards, non-Christian communities gradually bettered their positions vis-à-vis the Muslim population and sometimes even at the expense of the Muslim communities.<sup>99</sup>

Equal rights were granted on paper to the Armenians within the framework of this Edict of Reform, as well as citizenship and political rights were soon provided in practice. In 1860, the missionary of the ABCFM, Henry O. Dwight wrote that there was deep and strong awakening at the Armenians minds about their rights of citizenship<sup>100</sup>. In 1862, the Armenians sent a draft law to the Ottoman government. This draft law was evaluated and later adopted as “Armenian Millet Law” (Ermeni Milleti Nizamnamesi – Nizamname-i Ermeniyan). According to this law an assembly of 140 representatives would be established in order to discuss the internal affairs of the Armenian community and only 20 of them would be elected from the Patriarchate, 40 members from the provinces and 80 members from Istanbul. As it can be seen, this law was significant in the sense that it revealed the disputes within the Armenian community. It was prepared by the leaders of the Armenian community against the suppressive administration of the Patriarchate and as one of the main steps towards the nation building process.<sup>101</sup>

The Armenian Millet Law was very important for giving a kind of autonomy to the Armenians in terms of educational, cultural, religious and public affairs. Nalbandian argues that:

“The Armenian Constitution laid the groundwork for the system of public education for the Armenians of Turkey and, in doing so, helped bring about a literary renaissance that disseminated liberal ideas and thus led to stiffer opposition to Ottoman rule”<sup>102</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> Palabıyık, “Ermeni Sorununa Giriş: Başlangıçtan Lozan Antlaşmasına Kadar”p.15.

<sup>100</sup> Kieser, p.123.

<sup>101</sup> Özgür Sarı, “The Nation Building Process of the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia and the Role of the Great Powers in This Process”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Volume 2, No. 6, 2004, pp. 85-86.

<sup>102</sup> Nalbandian, p.48.



The Ottoman government could not restrict the given rights as it abstains from the reaction of the Great Powers and by the way it could not control the Armenian activities and the relations of the Armenians with the Great Powers.<sup>103</sup>

Although Ottoman-Armenian relations were somehow strained in this period, there was no full-scale strife between the Armenians and the Muslims. Nationalist ideas were spread through the Armenian population and this resulted with the Armenian demands for reform. The Ottoman government tried to respond these demands. However, the relations between the Ottoman government and the Armenians would deteriorate more and more by the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The situation became worst for the Ottoman officials after the Ottoman defeat at 1877-1878 war against Russia. The Armenian Patriarch Nerses Varjabedian cooperated with Russia and asked for the continuation of the Russian occupation over Eastern Anatolia unless the Ottoman government accepts the Armenian community as the ruling class in the area. This demand added to the Saint Stephano Treaty as the 16<sup>th</sup> article by Grand Duke Nicholas. However, the Disraeli government in the United Kingdom was not tended to leave Anatolia to the governance of Russia. Moreover, The Ottoman government gave Cyprus to the United Kingdom in order to get diplomatic help and with the intervention of England a new treaty was signed. However, the reform issue for the Armenian Population stayed as a problem after the Berlin Treaty also.<sup>104</sup>

According to the 61<sup>st</sup> article of the Berlin Treaty, the Ottoman government would exercise a reform program in the regions which were highly Armenian populated according to the needs of the residents. The government was also responsible for providing the security of the Armenians against the Kurds and the Circassians. Moreover, the European countries and Russia would be the supervisor of

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<sup>103</sup> Mehmet Saray, *Ermenistan ve Türk Ermeni İlişkileri*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2005) p.25.

<sup>104</sup> Palabıyık, "Ermeni Sorununa Giriş: Başlangıçtan Lozan Antlaşmasına Kadar", p.16.

this reform program. By the way, the Armenian question became an international political issue with the Berlin Treaty.<sup>105</sup>

After the territorial losses especially in the Balkans, Sultan Abdülhamid II adopted a policy of Islamism to protect at least the Islamic unity of the Empire<sup>106</sup>. The Ottoman Sultan resisted to European forces and did not authorize the new reform program planned to be done in the highly Armenian populated areas. Moreover, he strengthened his relationship with the Kurdish Beys and provided the base for the establishment of the Hamidian Regiments<sup>107</sup>. The regiments were both used for suppressing the later revolts and to prevent the emergence of the new uprisings.<sup>108</sup> The pressure of the central government could only be present at the region in the case of the cooperation with the local powers<sup>109</sup>.

Kirakossian pointed out the measures of the Abdulhamid II regime against the Ottoman Armenians as inciting Muslim fundamentalism, spreading anti-Armenian propaganda, permission to robberies and murders against the Armenians, forced conversion of Armenians to Islam, stricter censorship, settling Muslim population from the Balkans in the Armenian populated areas, provoking the Kurdish tribes and creating irregular Kurdish cavalry, prohibition for the circulation of the Armenian newspapers, ban for the Armenian history and geography teaching.<sup>110</sup>

The congress of Berlin was also important for the diplomatic representation of the ABCFM. The American missionaries were intended to find a political solution for the crisis in the Eastern region of Anatolia. The representatives of the ABCFM made pressure to Bismarck with the help of a personal relation between an ABCFM member Dr. Joseph P. Thompson and Bismarck because the liberty of religion was crucially important for the missionaries. The Secretary of the Board Nathaniel G. Clark wrote in 1881 that the politicians were not able to find a solution to the crisis

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<sup>105</sup> Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi*, (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1987), p. 248.

<sup>106</sup> Kieser, p.159.

<sup>107</sup> Öke, p.171.

<sup>108</sup> Öke, pp.171-172.

<sup>109</sup> Kieser, p.177.

<sup>110</sup> Kirakossian, p.23.

and this problem could maybe only resolved by the integration of the American missionaries.<sup>111</sup>

### **3.2. The Armenian Revolutionary Movements and the American Missionaries**

After the Berlin Treaty, due to the negative attitudes of the Ottoman Sultan, the social and political anti-Ottoman organizations within the Armenian population started to be established. These organizations were the basic stones of the Armenian uprisings and the later terrorist activities. The first most known Armenian organization was the Black Cross. It was followed by the “Homeland Defenders” founded in Erzurum. In 1885, the Armenekan<sup>112</sup> Party was established in Van. The aims of all these organizations were to militarize the Armenian population and to put an end to their political ties with the Ottoman government. However, these three were not active as the “Hinchak Committee Party” and the “Armenian Revolutionary Federation” or in other words the “Dashnak Federation”. The former one was established in 1887 and the latter in 1890. These two groups were aiming to get the political and economic independence of the Armenians within Anatolia. The Hinchak Committee Party and the Dashnak Federation organized attacks and rebellions against the Ottoman subjects and the Ottoman government.<sup>113</sup>

The branches of these committees were also active in the United States, France and Russia. Their mutual aim was to provide the necessary base for the establishment of an independent Armenian state in the eastern part of Anatolia. The chosen area of action was both Istanbul and the Anatolian region. In order to reach

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<sup>111</sup> Kieser, pp. 160-166.

<sup>112</sup> The Armenekan Party was the first political organization established among the Armenians. The party aiming to spread the revolutionary ideas among the Armenian Population and try to orient the Armenians for the use of guns. Although, the member of this party took place in several attack against the Muslim Population, after the establishment of the Hinchak and the Dashnak Parties they joined to these committees. (Azmi Süslü, *Armenians and the 1915 Events of Displacement*, (Van: Yüzüncü Yıl University Rectorship Publication, 1994), pp. 51-52).

<sup>113</sup> Ömer Engin Lütem, *Armenian Terror*, (Ankara: ASAM, 2007), pp. 8-9.

their goal, all these committees and associations exploited the religious feelings of the Armenian population, they spread the nationalistic sentiment among this population, they armed the Armenians and they organized the revolts<sup>114</sup>. All of these were done in order to get the Western support for the foundation of an independent Armenian state<sup>115</sup>.

The reports based on the eyewitness accounts of the missionaries were also resulted with the establishment of various Phil-Armenian societies in European countries. The German Orient Mission was one these organizations which became active in Anatolia after the restrictions of the activities of the ABCFM by Abdulhamid II.<sup>116</sup>

The three Armenian educational institutions in the Armenian political movements must be emphasized in the development of the Armenian parties. The Nersesian Academy in Tbilisi, the Kevorkian Academy in Echmiadzin, and the Lazarian Academy in Moscow were the most important Armenian educational institutions that had the greatest effect in the formation of a young and dedicated Armenian intelligentsia. Most of the graduates of these schools were recruited in the Armenian schools in western and eastern Anatolia, and the Caucasus as teachers, and then played important roles in the formation and development of various political movements.<sup>117</sup>

The members of the Hinchak and the Dashnak Parties were quickly organized their networks in the Ottoman Empire. As they were aiming to establish an independent Armenia, their basic disadvantages was the low Armenian population in the region that they were aiming to establish the Armenian state<sup>118</sup>. For these reason, the unique solution for them was to raise the percentage of the Armenian population

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<sup>114</sup> Süslü, p.54.

<sup>115</sup> Süslü, p.54.

<sup>116</sup> Kieser, p.163.

<sup>117</sup> Murat Koptaş, *Armenian Political Thinking in the Second Constitutional Period: The Case of Krikor Zohrab*, Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History, Master of Arts Thesis, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2005), p.36.

<sup>118</sup> Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Sürgünden Soykırımı Ermeni İddiaları*, (Istanbul: Babıali Kültür Yayıncılığı, 2006), p.27.

in Vilayet-i Sitte<sup>119</sup> by diminishing the number of the Muslim population in the region<sup>120</sup>. In order to achieve their goal, the member of the Armenian organizations killed thousands of Muslim people in this area until 1915<sup>121</sup> as they were defending the idea of an armed revolution<sup>122</sup>.

The Hinchak Committee Party was firstly opened its branch offices at Istanbul, Izmir and Halep<sup>123</sup>. Their first serious activity of the Hinchaks was the rebellion of Kumkapı which happened in 1890<sup>124</sup>. In order to get the attention of the Great Powers, the capital city of the Ottoman Empire was chosen. The rebellion started at the Armenian Church and the aim of the crowd was to continue to their act at the Yıldız Palace. However, the revolt was suppressed by the Ottoman government before the Armenians reached to the palace. The Armenians who were arrested were released due to the amnesty law declared by Abdülhamid II<sup>125</sup>. Although, this event seemed to be a failure, it was important for the Hinchaks to arouse the European Powers with regard to the Armenian question<sup>126</sup>.

The Armenian uprisings and religion-based anti-Turkish Armenian propaganda continued together. Moreover, the organization process was fastened. The Armenian committees were collecting money from the rich Armenians without their consent. Some of the Armenians were trying to get the Russian protection. As a result, the Ottoman government started to arrest the suspected Armenians. However, the duration of the arrest was not long enough due to the pressure of the European forces over the Ottoman Empire. The Great Powers accusing the Ottoman

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<sup>119</sup> Van, Bitlis, Erzurum, Sivas, Elazığ, Diyarbakır. (Halaçoğlu, p.27).

<sup>120</sup> Halaçoğlu, pp.27-28.

<sup>121</sup> For detailed information: *Arşiv Belgeleriyle Ermeni Faaliyetleri, 1914-1918*, ATASE, Cilt I, Ankara 2005.

<sup>122</sup> Justin McCarthy, "The Armenian Uprising and the Ottomans", *Review of Armenian Studies*, Volume:2, No. 7-8, 2005, p.54.

<sup>123</sup> Saray, p.41.

<sup>124</sup> Kamuran Gürün, *Ermeni Dosyası*. (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2005), p.206.

<sup>125</sup> Gürün, p.209.

<sup>126</sup> Nalbandian, p.119.

government of being cruel against the Armenians because of the Armenian propaganda organized in their countries.<sup>127</sup>

In 1892, the Armenian terrorists organized an attack against the Governor of Van. At the same year, they were prepared written declarations against the Sultan and the Ottoman government. By criticizing the government, they tried to revolutionize the Armenian population within the Ottoman territories. Although, some of these provocateurs were arrested, they were released with the general amnesty law declared by Abdülhamid II. The ones who were arrested because of the murder were not under the content of the amnesty law.<sup>128</sup>

The Hinchaks, after the demonstration of Kumkapı continued to organize demonstrations and insurrections in the highly Armenian populated areas. They also prepared placards which criticizing the Ottoman government for its oppressive regime. These placards were also posted in the Anatolian College in Merzifon which administered by the ABCFM. Two professors of this school were arrested with the claim of their role related with the placards.<sup>129</sup>

The first great uprising took place at Sasun in 1894. It was organized by the Hinchak Revolutionary Party. Their aim was to provide the necessary base for the military intervention of the Ottoman Empire and by the way to make propaganda in the European countries that the Armenian population was under a great danger. This uprising took place at the European press as a massacre against the Armenian population.<sup>130</sup>

According to Nalbandian, the major reason behind the Sasun events was the tribute collected by the Kurdish tribes from the Armenian population. Although the tribute issue was not new, “the establishment of religious solidarity among the Kurdish tribes through religious propaganda of the sheiks and the agitation among the Armenians” prepared the way for the event of Sasun. Moreover, Nalbandian

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<sup>127</sup> Gürün, p.210.

<sup>128</sup> Gürün, pp.211-212.

<sup>129</sup> Nalbandian, p.120.

<sup>130</sup> Gürün, 212-215.

asserts that the rebellion started after the secret encouragement of the Kurds by the Ottoman government for attacking the Armenian village of Talori.<sup>131</sup>

Another important event organized by the Hinchaks was the march to the Sublime port. Although, it was forbidden to organize any marches in the capital city and the Armenians did not get permission from the government, they were firstly announced that this will be a peaceful act. However, they were armed and attacked to the security forces when they were not able to reach to the Sublime Port. The clash continued for few days between the Armenian and Muslim population.<sup>132</sup>

Nalbandian asserts that the major aim of the Hinchaks was to get the attention of both the Great Powers and the Ottoman government for the issue of reforms at the Armenian provinces. It should be argued that, they were to some degree successful due to the memorandum given by the Great Powers in 1895 to the Ottoman Empire about the realization of the reforms.<sup>133</sup>

Only in 1895, there were 24 Armenian uprising in Anatolia. At the Bitlis uprising, the Bitlis School of the ABCFM was used as the military base and the American missionaries helped to arm the Armenian rebels<sup>134</sup>. The president of this school George Knapped took place at the organization process<sup>135</sup> of the uprising and he also played an active role for provoking the Armenians<sup>136</sup>.

The Zeitoun uprising was also started with the attacks of the Armenians against the Muslim population. The organizer of this uprising were not arrested or judged. Although, too many people lost their lives during the event, they quit the country under the protection of the British consulate<sup>137</sup>. This uprising was the last event planned by the Hinchak Committee<sup>138</sup>.

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<sup>131</sup> Nalbandian, p.121.

<sup>132</sup> Gürün, pp. 219-222.

<sup>133</sup> Nalbandian, pp. 123-126.

<sup>134</sup> Alan, p.510.

<sup>135</sup> *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeni-Amerikan İlişkileri (1896-1919)*, V. 2, (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2007), p. 13.

<sup>136</sup> Alan, p.510.

<sup>137</sup> Gürün, p.231.

<sup>138</sup> Gürün, p.232.

Another important event took place at Van. At the 1896 Van uprising, the American missionaries were again taking part in the organization process and they supported the Armenian rebels. Dr. Grace Kimbell from the ABCFM helped to the Armenians for the secret correspondence between the Armenian revolutionaries.<sup>139</sup>

The next important event was the Ottoman Bank's raid. It was organized by the Dashnaks. They were attacked the bank with bombs. Their demands were the acceptance of the reform program for the Armenian population, liberty of education, religion and the press and the declaration of a general amnesty law for the Armenians who were under arrest<sup>140</sup>. The seventeen people who were actively took part in the organization get the British protection and they were sent to Marseille<sup>141</sup>. The other Muslims and non-Muslims people who interfere to the event were arrested and judges at a special court organized for this event<sup>142</sup>. Nalbandian argues that during the demonstration a bloody massacre against the Armenian population took place and more than 6.000 Armenians perished in the massacres<sup>143</sup>.

The second attempt of the Dashnaks was the second Sasun uprising. It started against the attempt of the Ottoman government for making administrative arrangements in the region. This event was also declared as a massacre against the Armenian population at the European and American press.<sup>144</sup>

The last important attempt of the Dashnaks was the assassination attempt organized against Abdülhamid II. The Dashnaks saw the Sultan as the sole enemy for the formation of an autonomous principality in the Eastern Anatolia<sup>145</sup>. They tried to

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<sup>139</sup> Alan, p.511.

<sup>140</sup> Gürün, p.238.

<sup>141</sup> Gürün, p.238.

<sup>142</sup> Gürün, p.239.

<sup>143</sup> Nalbandian, p.178.

<sup>144</sup> Gürün, pp. 240-241.

<sup>145</sup> Yılmaz Öztuna, "The Political Milieu of the Armenian Question", ed. by Türkkaya Ataöv, *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*, (Ankara: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Kültür, Sanat ve Yayın Kurulu Başkanlığı, 2001), p.58.



kill the Sultan at the end of the Friday prayer however, they could not be successful; but the sultan, once again forgave the persons who were responsible for the event<sup>146</sup>.

The last important events of the era were the two uprisings which took place in Adana. The buildings of the American mission were used as a military base by the Armenians during the uprisings<sup>147</sup>. According to a report dispatched from the Mersin Consul of the United States, Edward Nathan to American Foreign Ministry and the Ambassador of the United States in Istanbul, Nathan argues that:

“in order to provide the security of the American citizens in the Ottoman territories, the member of the ABCFM should not give permission to the Armenian rebels for using the American buildings as military base during the uprisings as it was used during the Armenian resistance at Adana in 1909”<sup>148</sup>.

The events could not get the expected interest from Europe as its timing was coincided with the counter revolution and because of the unrest at the Balkans<sup>149</sup>.

Both the “Young Ottomans” and in the later years the members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) were not sharing the idea of an Islamic state of Abdülhamid II. As they were supported the idea of “Ottomanism”, they were mostly tended to establish good relations with the minorities. The CUP, after coming to the power in 1908 established good relations with the members of the Dashnak Sutiun. For instance, after the events of Adana, the CUP sends a commission to the region for making investigations about the realization of the events. This commission was accusing many Muslim people of organizing a massacre against the Armenians and those Muslims were punished with death penalty. This act of the CUP was evaluated as a support for the Armenians and the Muslim population of the region became alienated from the party.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Gürün, p.241.

<sup>147</sup> Esat Arslan, “Amerikan Resmi Belgelerinde 1909 Adana Türk-Ermeni Olaylarıyla İlgili Bir İtiraf: Birinci Balkan Savaşı Sırasında Adana’da ABD-Alman Dayanışması”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları II. Türkiye Kongresi Bildirileri*, V. I, (ASAM: Ankara, 2007), p.459.

<sup>148</sup> Arslan, p.460.

<sup>149</sup> Gürün, p.255.

<sup>150</sup> Ahmet Rüstem Bey, *Cihan Harbi ve Türk Ermeni Meselesi*, (Istanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2001), pp. 43-44.

In 1909, after the counter revolution, Sultan Abdülhamid II was replaced with Mehmed Reşad V. Until the World War I, the policy of the CUP was mostly German sided and by the way, the Ottoman Empire entered to the war at the same side with Germany. Hence, even the members of the Dashnak Sutiun who were supporting the ideas of the CUP were interfering to the rebellious activities.

When the First World War started, the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire had two diverse ideas about how to act during the war. The supporters of the first idea, in the United National Armenian Congress of 1914<sup>151</sup>, claimed that the Armenians should be loyal to the Ottoman Empire in the wartime and they should make their military service in the Ottoman army<sup>152</sup>. However, the second group, the members of the 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of Dashnak Sutiun<sup>153</sup> tried to persuade the Armenians to fight against the CUP. The Armenians who lived in eastern Anatolia mostly supported the second idea. They started to join to the Russian army and fight against the Ottoman Empire. The major aim of the second group was to get their independence and they wanted to see the establishment of an independent Armenian state within the border of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>154</sup>

The revolutionary Armenian forces, apart from joining to the Russian military forces started to organize the Armenian population who lived in the Ottoman territories. In order to weaken the Ottoman state, the Armenian uprisings took place in various areas of Anatolia<sup>155</sup> mostly in the eastern regions.

These revolts happened in the wartime conditions, caused great problems for the Ottoman Empire. When the Ottoman military forces were dealing with these uprisings, the Russian army easily came to the border of Erzurum. Moreover, there

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<sup>151</sup> This congress happened in 1914 at Istanbul with the leadership of the Patriarchate officials. The participants of the Congress were the representatives of the Dashnak Sutiun, the Hinchak Committee and the other Armenian Committees. (Öke, p.162).

<sup>152</sup> Öke, p.162.

<sup>153</sup> This congress happened in 1914 at Erzurum . The difference of the decisions of these two Armenian Congress was challenging. It could be assumed that the decision of the Congress which was held in Istanbul was only aiming to not getting the suspects of the Ottoman Government over the Armenians. (Öke, p.162).

<sup>154</sup> Öke, p.162.

<sup>155</sup> Zeitoun, Kayseri, Bitlis, Van, Muş, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Erzurum, Sivas, Trabzon, Ankara, Adana, Urfa, Izmit-Adapazarı, Bursa and Musa Mountain. (Süslü, p.67).

was Muslim population killed by the Armenians within the borders. The majority of the Ottoman population was Muslim and the threat of a minority group over the majority had humiliating effects on the status of the Ottoman government.<sup>156</sup>

Russia was not the unique power that the Armenians wanted help from. Even before the First World War, the Armenians tried to establish contacts with the British authorities for getting support. However, the British government rejected the Armenian demands because such a support could cause problems between Britain and France. Moreover, the British diplomacy was not sure about what they want for the future of the Armenian community. Hence, Britain in some cases supported the Armenians and even dominated them against the Ottoman Empire. The uprisings, which took place around Maraş, Urfa and Adana dominated by the Great Britain and the British authorities even promised to give military support for these revolts<sup>157</sup>.

The attitudes of the Armenians after the Ottoman participation into the First World War forced the CUP to change its former policy towards the minorities. The alterations became obvious after the fall of Van because the Ottoman government understood that if they were not taking any precautions against the Armenians, the uprisings led by them could result with the fall of the other cities<sup>158</sup>. The first act of the CUP was the order given for the closure of the Armenian committee centers. Then, they tried to nationalize the Armenian Church but the effect of Russia over the church was a great obstacle for the Ottoman Empire. As a next step, the Ottoman authorities ordered the arrest of the Armenians who created problems and caused disorder. However, the precautions taken against the Armenian committee leaders were not enough because their network spread in every Armenian populated area.

In May 1915, the Ministry of the Supreme Command Headquarters made an application to the Ministry of Interior. They demanded the deportation of the rebellious Armenians to the Russian border or to the various places in Anatolia<sup>159</sup>.

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<sup>156</sup> Öke, pp.162-165.

<sup>157</sup> Öke, pp. 165-167.

<sup>158</sup> Öke, p.174.

<sup>159</sup> Document dated 2 May 1915- From the Ministry of the Supreme Command Headquarters to the Ministry of the Interior Regarding the Measures to be Taken Against the Uprising in Van and its

After the second application of the army for deportation, Talat Bey at May 27, 1915; declared a law which authorize the deportation of the rebellious people within the borders<sup>160</sup> which means to the southern provinces of the Ottoman territories<sup>161</sup>. In three days, the Ottoman cabinet gave its approval for the law and in mid-September 1915, the law was approved by the Ottoman parliament, “Meclis-i Mebusan”. There was also a charter prepared at that time in order to determine, how the mass deportation will exercise<sup>162</sup>.

Moreover, many regulations<sup>163</sup> were prepared in order to provide the security of the Armenians. There were also many regulations for resolving the problems related with the relocation, food supply and other issues like the management of properties, buildings and land of the Armenians who were relocated.

However, in wartime conditions, the precautions taken by the Ottoman government could not prevent the emergence of the deaths in the Armenian side. The bad climate conditions, lack of food, epidemics and attacks of the Kurdish tribes caused the death of many people.

To sum up, the contribution of the American missionaries to the Armenian national awakening and their support to the Armenian uprisings proved the role of the missionaries as the protector of the Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire especially the Armenians. From the beginning of the Armenian question, it was very

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Neighborhood. (Ed. by Hikmet Özdemir and Yusuf Sarıncay, *Türk-Ermeni İhtilafı Belgeler* (Ankara: TBMM Kültür, Sanat ve Yayın Kurulu Yayınları, 2007) p.37).

<sup>160</sup> The deportation of the Armenians in Zeitoun and Marash to Konya also created problems because the number of the Armenians in the region started to be very high and this region was very close to the battle fields . (Yusuf Sarıncay, “Sevk ve İskân” *Türk-Ermeni İhtilafı Makaleler*, ed. by Hikmet Özdemir (Ankara: TBMM Kültür, Sanat ve Yayın Kurulu Yayınları, 2007, pp.215-216).

<sup>161</sup> Document Dated 26 May 1915, From the Ministry of the Interior to the Prime Ministry, (Özdemir, Sarıncay, p.58).

<sup>162</sup> The articles of the charter: the Armenian population will not be higher than the 10% of the population in the areas that they were deported; the new villages which will establish by the deported Armenians will at maximum have 50 houses, the Armenians will not be deported to the areas closer to their former localities. (Öke, pp.179-180).

<sup>163</sup> Some of the documents are as follows: Document Dated 14 June 1915-To the Governorate of Erzurum on the necessity of protecting the Armenians sent from Erzurum on the roads and to punish those who are involved in inappropriate activities (ed. Özdemir, Sarıncay p.109), Document Dated 26 June 1915-To the Governorate of Erzurum about ensuring the safety of the Armenians during their transfer to other places (ed. Özdemir, Sarıncay, p.115).

obvious that the missionaries always tried to get the attention of the United States to this issue on behalf of the Armenians. As it was expected, the same intention would be present after the relocation law of 1915. The next chapter focuses to the NERS which was established as a result of the efforts of the American missionaries in response to the Armenian relocation law of 1915.

## CHAPTER 4

### NEAR EAST RELIEF SOCIETY

#### 4.1. Establishment of the NERS.

The United States, from the beginning of the “Armenian Question” tended to stay closer to the Armenian claims. The reason behind this was the national interests of the United States and their new policy of expansion<sup>164</sup> which became obvious after the American Civil War<sup>165</sup>. Moreover, sharing the same religion with the Armenian community and the Armenian Lobby emerged in the United States territories after the migrations<sup>166</sup> of Near Eastern Armenians to the country were other effective factors.

On the other hand, the problems originated in Anatolia, which took place between the Ottoman Empire and the United States, were mostly emerged from the positions of the missionaries. During the Armenian riots in Anatolia, some of the missionary buildings took damages. The Ottoman government did not accept the demand of the diplomats of the United States for compensation. The belief of the

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<sup>164</sup> The roots of the expansionist policy can be seen at the Manifest Destiny. The term Manifest Destiny was first used by John O’Sullivan at 1845. It was first related with the right of the American people to become the owner of the Continent of America. However, this was later adopted by the expansionist and it became related with the whole world and especially with the land held by Mexican, British and Indian tribes. (Link, Coben, p.191.) The expansionist policy took its later form after the start of the struggles for market and territories across the globe. (Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, (London: Vintage Books, 1988), p.195).

<sup>165</sup> Erhan, p.260.

<sup>166</sup> There were three waves of Armenian migrations to USA. The first one took place during 1830s. Migration was limited with students and the religious men. Second wave took place just after the first one and the immigrants were mostly the merchants. The third step happened at the end of 1870s and it was the migration of the ordinary people from the Eastern Anatolian villages. (Erhan, p.305).

Ottoman officials about the occupational deformation<sup>167</sup> of the American missionaries led the Ottoman Empire to reject the American demands because the missionaries acted as the enemies of the Ottoman State, they made provocations among the Armenians and even provide them military equipments.<sup>168</sup>

However, the situation represented quiet differently at the American press. In order to affect the American public opinion and the government of the United States, both the envoys and the missionaries of the United States in the Ottoman territories were accusing the Ottoman government in their report, for bad treatment against the Armenians and the damages given to the American citizens and buildings.<sup>169</sup> Due to the tension rose between the two states, the Ottoman government started to change its approach and accepted to pay some quantity of the demanded compensation<sup>170</sup>. This act has a positive effect on the relations, but the Armenian merchants who obtained the American citizenship and the legal procedure for the criminals created bases for new problems. However, the American idea of military intervention forced the Ottoman government to release all the Armenians accused for making illegal commercial activities within the Ottoman borders. Then, the relations between the two states were again calm down. The compensation and the Armenian origin American citizens' issues caused a high tension mostly between 1890 and 1904<sup>171</sup>; although, there were some other events took place after that period, it has never reach to such a serious stage<sup>172</sup>.

The Armenian mass deportation in 1915 took different comments from the foreign countries. The attitudes of the European powers and the United States were accusative. The first reaction came from the British politician and historian James Bryce; he accused the Ottoman government to organize a systematic massacre

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<sup>167</sup> Erhan, p. 307.

<sup>168</sup> Erhan, pp. 306-307.

<sup>169</sup> Özdemir, Çiçek, Turan, Çalık, Halaçoğlu, p.67.

<sup>170</sup> Trask, p.12.

<sup>171</sup> The main obvious sign of the high tension was the decision of the United States of sending military forces to the Ottoman ports in order to frighten the Ottoman Empire and made them accept the American demands. The naval forces of the United States visited the Ottoman Ports, several times between these years. (Erhan, p.336).

<sup>172</sup> Erhan, p.336.

against the Armenian community. Apart from the Great Britain, France and the United States showed their reactions by calling the event as massacre<sup>173</sup>. However, the big powers mostly claimed that, the Ottoman Empire could not organize such a systematic massacre by itself and Germany was the brain of the massacre idea. Moreover, they argued that even if Germany did not take place in the organization process, it could easily prevent the application of the plan<sup>174</sup>.

Both the missionaries and the ambassadors of the big powers in the Ottoman territories tried to create a public opinion in their countries, in order to protect and help to the Armenians. The interest of those countries on the eastern regions had a crucial role in this work. The American missionaries sent various reports to their countries about the relocation of the Armenians however, the discrepancies at the reports about the given population and the number of the relocated Armenians was very obvious<sup>175</sup>.

In the case of the United States, apart from the missionaries, the ambassador Henry Morgenthau<sup>176</sup> asked for the establishment of a committee, which would work to help the Armenians<sup>177</sup>. Morgenthau, from the beginning of the Armenian problem, which occurred in 1890s, was on the Armenian side and his anti-Turkish attitude was very obvious<sup>178</sup>. In his memoirs published after his return to the United States, he made comments on Van Revolution:

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<sup>173</sup> The State Department protested the Turkish Government and even requested Germany to remonstrate against the treatment of the Armenian Minority. (Gordon, p.27).

<sup>174</sup> Taner Timur, *1915 ve Sonrası Türkler ve Ermeniler*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Ankara: Imge Kitabevi, 2001), pp. 50-57.

<sup>175</sup> Özdemir, Çiçek, Turan, Çalık, Halaçoğlu, pp. 70-75.

<sup>176</sup> Henry Morgenthau was the Chairman of the Financial Committee of the Democratic Party during the Wilson's presidential campaign at 1912. After the success of Wilson, Morgenthau was awarded with a political appointment as Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. He started to his new post at November 27, 1913. He worked at this position for twenty-six months. (Heath W. Lowry, *Les Dessous des Mémoires de L'Ambassadeur Morgenthau*. (Istanbul : Les Edition Isis, 2001), p.3).

<sup>177</sup> The first report for the establishment of a Relief Organization was prepared by William Peet. (Joseph L. Grabill, "Missionary Influence on American Relations With the Near East, 1914-1923", *The Muslim World*, Vol. LVIII No:1, January 1968), p.48.

<sup>178</sup> Şimşir, p.149.



“After massacring hundreds of thousands of Armenians in the course of thirty years, outraging their women and girls and robbing and maltreating them in every conceivable way, the Turks still apparently believed that they had the right to expect from them the most enthusiastic “loyalty”.”<sup>179</sup>

His opinions about the 1915 event were also obvious in his memoirs:

“As a matter of fact, the Turks never had the slightest idea of reestablishing the Armenians in this new country. They knew that the great majority would never reach their destination and those who did would either die of thirst and starvation, or be murdered by the wild Mohammedan desert tribes. The real purpose of the deportation was robbery and destruction; it really represented a new method of massacre. When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact.”<sup>180</sup>

As a close friend of President Wilson, his demand was taken into consideration, and as an organization to help the Armenians in the region, the Armenian Relief Committee was established. James Levi Barton<sup>181</sup> became the president of this committee. In 1915, committees of Palestinian-Syrian Relief and Persian Relief were also established. These three committees, in order to become more powerful, organized the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief together at the end of the year. The Chairman of this new committee was Barton again. Samuel T. Dutton<sup>182</sup> became the secretary, Walter H. Mallory was the field secretary and Charles R. Crane<sup>183</sup> became the treasurer. The name changed again in

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<sup>179</sup> Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2003), p. 203.

<sup>180</sup> Morgenthau, pp. 212-213.

<sup>181</sup> He was working at the Harput station of American Board. At the age of 38, he became the head of the Fırat College. After becoming the secretary of foreign affairs of ABCFM, he started to deal with the educational activities took place in the Ottoman Empire. He always tries to protect the American Missionary organizations and institutions in the Near East. (Fatih Gencer, *Ermeni Soykırım Tezinin Oluşum Sürecinde Amerikan Yakın Doğu Yardım Komitesi*, (Istanbul: Alternatif Yayınevi, 2006), p.47.

<sup>182</sup> He was a professor in Teacher's College of Columbia University, he was the treasurer of the Constantinople College for Women, Secretary of the World Peace Foundation and member of the Balkan Commission in 1913 (James Levi Barton, *Story of Near East Relief (1915-1930) An Interpretation*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p.6).

<sup>183</sup> He was a business man and a close friend of President Wilson; he was the president of the Board of Trustees of the Constantinople College for Women and an extensive traveler in the Near East (Barton, p.6).

1918 and became American Committee for Relief in the Near East. In 1919, finally, it took the name of the Near East Relief Society and James Levi Barton stayed as the chairman of the committee.

#### **4.2. Organization of the NERS.**

NERS was mainly established in order to help to the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire because of the law of relocation declared by the Ottoman government. As the events of 1915 were described at the missionary reports with the intention of protecting the non-Muslim communities against the Ottoman rule and as these reports were used by the American Press<sup>184</sup>, the hostility towards the Ottoman government reached to the peak.

With the establishment of the NERS, various American religious and political institutions started to make high amount of financial aids to the Armenians<sup>185</sup>. The headquarters of the committee was in New York. One year after its formation, the NERS had 38 offices in 16 different states of the United States. For each of the overseas administrative centers, an administrative committee was appointed by the executive committee<sup>186</sup>. The members of those committees were chosen among the leading American residents living in these regions and the members were making a volunteer work<sup>187</sup>. The frequencies of the meetings of those committees were different according to the region; for instance in Istanbul, the meetings were held each week and in Beirut not less frequently than once a month<sup>188</sup>.

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<sup>184</sup> Howard M. Sachar, *The Emergence of the Middle East: 1914-1920*, (Washington D. C.: The Penguin Press, 1968), p.342.

<sup>185</sup> The Baptist Churches, the Lutheran churches, the Methodist Episcopal Churches, The Presbyterian Churches, The Reformed Churches, The Congregational Churches, The Society of Friends, The Armenian Churches and Young Men Christian Associations were some of them. (Gencer, p.27).

<sup>186</sup> Lodge, Report of the Near East Relief, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), p.3.

<sup>187</sup> Report of the Near East Relief, p.3.

<sup>188</sup> Report of the Near East Relief. p.3.

The members<sup>189</sup> of the committee were mostly the missionaries already working in the Near East stations such as the stations in the Persian and Syrian territories, Caucasus and Istanbul or they were the persons who had close contacts with these missionaries<sup>190</sup>. After the establishment of the committee, the American missionary organizations of all Near East headed by the Committee. The missionary activities in the Ottoman territories governed by the NERS, even during the World War I<sup>191</sup>.

The NERS was using the network and the personnel of the ABCFM in order to distribute the relief funds and for the establishment of its own organization<sup>192</sup>. Apart from supported by the American Consulate and the embassies, the Committee was also supported by the German diplomats<sup>193</sup>.

The relief activities of the NERS could be grouped under five subtitles: general relief, medical work, rescue work, industrial work and orphanage work<sup>194</sup>. The general relief is related with providing the necessary food and shelter for the deported Armenian population<sup>195</sup>. In terms of medical works, the NERS established hospitals, clinics and dispensers in order to help the Armenian population but mostly to the children<sup>196</sup>. The rescue work was related with the Armenian women and girls who were living in the special homes established by the NERS<sup>197</sup>. With the industrial work, the NERS was aiming to give the job opportunities to the Armenian people by educating them in different matters and by the way to give them the chance to earn

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<sup>189</sup> Some of the members of the board of trustees are as follows: James Levi Barton, Charles E. Beury, Arthur J. Brown, Edwin M. Bulkley, John B. Calvert, William I. Chamberlain, Henry S. Coflin, Charles R. Crane, Henry Churchill King, Walter George Smith, Josephus Daniels, Cleveland E. Dodge, Charles W. Eliot, Harold A. Hatch, James H. Speers, William Howard Taft, Oscar Straus and Stanley White (Report of the Near East Relief, p.1).

<sup>190</sup> Barton, pp. 6-7.

<sup>191</sup> Report of the Near East Relief, pp. 5-10.

<sup>192</sup> Kieser, p.492.

<sup>193</sup> Kieser, p.492.

<sup>194</sup> Report of the Near East Relief, pp.5-10.

<sup>195</sup> Report of the Near East Relief, pp. 5-6.

<sup>196</sup> Report of the Near East Relief, p.6.

<sup>197</sup> Report of the Near East Relief, p.7.

their own money<sup>198</sup>. The orphanage work was the most crucial task of the NERS and for this reason they concentrated the greater amount of the relief funds for the establishment of the orphanages<sup>199</sup>.

The strategy of the NERS for taking financial aid from the American citizens was to use the American press. By using the press, they can easily create public reaction to the issue that they wanted and they could get more donations. Apart from the American missionaries, British government was also trying to affect the American public opinion against the Turks. However, the intention was not financial, this time it was diplomatic and strategic. The Great Britain wants to become the ally of the United States at the World War I.

Although, their aim was different, the strategies of both the American missionaries and the British government were the same. They were benefiting from the press. They misguided the press with the claim of Ottoman's religion based bad treatment against the Armenians. They displayed the Armenian uprisings as the massacres against the Armenian population. The argument was that the Ottoman government as a Muslim government was intended to kill the Armenian people only for they are Christians<sup>200</sup>.

The most powerful effect created by Arnold Toynbee's book, *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*. This book is better known as the Blue Book<sup>201</sup>. In the preparation process of this book Toynbee mostly benefited from the documents coming from William Rockwell, James Levi Barton, Boghos Nubar Pasha and Leopold Fovre<sup>202</sup>. The book was prepared in the inter-war period just for

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<sup>198</sup> Report of the Near East Relief, p.7.

<sup>199</sup> Report of the Near East Relief, pp. 8-10.

<sup>200</sup> Gencer, p.55.

<sup>201</sup> This book was one of the 3 sources used by the Armenians until the end of the Second World War in order to prove the reality of the "Armenian Genocide". The other two sources were the Ambassador Morgenthau's Story written by Ambassador Morgenthau and the Memoirs of Naim Bey Written by Aram Andonian. (Kamuran Gürün, "İngiliz Mavi Kitabı ve İstanbul Divan-ı Harbi", *Ermeni Araştırmaları 1. Türkiye Kongresi Bildirileri- 1. Cilt* (Ankara: ASAM, 2003), p.53).

<sup>202</sup> Gencer, p.56.

the anti-Ottoman propaganda<sup>203</sup>. As the objectivity of the documents was not intentionally searched, the British Foreign Ministry could not print the book as an official document. However, if it would not have been printed as an official document it would not have created the expected effect over the Americans or the citizens of the other countries<sup>204</sup>. As a result, the Foreign Ministry of the Great Britain approved the printing of the book as an official document without taking the responsibility for the accuracy of the intent<sup>205</sup>.

The British propaganda continued with the claim of the danger for the American missionaries in the Near East and the Christian minorities in the Ottoman territories. The reason behind this was the same, to make an alliance against Germany. If the United States would declare war against the Ottoman Empire, the country would have also been in war against Germany, by the way the United Kingdom and the United States alliance would have been realized. However, the United States was not affected too much from the British propaganda as the country was not declared war against the Ottoman Empire

Ambassador Henry Morgenthau was one of the most adherent supporters of the declaration of war of the United States against the Ottoman Empire. As he wants the involvement of the United States into the war as an ally of England, he was consciously misguiding the American government about the treatment of the Armenians in the Near East.<sup>206</sup>

Barton, on the other hand, was preparing booklets which displayed the Turks as barbarous against the Armenians by using the one-sided missionary reports<sup>207</sup>. These reports were also used by the well known American Journals<sup>208</sup> such as the

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<sup>203</sup> Sabit Duman, “Amerikan Basınının Tehciri Soykırımı Dönüştürmesi”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları 1. Türkiye Kongresi Bildirileri- 1. Cilt* (Ankara: ASAM, 2003), p.170).

<sup>204</sup> Gürün, “İngiliz Mavi Kitabı ve İstanbul Divan-ı Harbi”, p56.

<sup>205</sup> Gürün, “İngiliz Mavi Kitabı ve İstanbul Divan-ı Harbi”, p56.

<sup>206</sup> Morgenthau, pp. 203-215.

<sup>207</sup> Gencer, p.62.

<sup>208</sup> Some of the headlines used by the American Press are as follows: “The Armenians Were Killed by the Turks by Axes” (*Current History*), “Save the Armenia” (*The Missionary Review*), “The Armenians Wants Help From the USA” (*The Survey*), “Under the Heel of the Turks” (*National Geographic*), “The Mission of America in Turkey” (*The Independent*). (S. E. Moranian, “Bearing

New York Times. There were 145 articles published in New York Times at 1915 related to the Armenians<sup>209</sup>. Moreover, visual documents were also used in order to affect the American citizens<sup>210</sup>.

After affecting the people, the NERS demanded help from the political organizations. They even cooperated with President Wilson with the help of his close friend Cleveland H. Dodge and persuaded him to declare two days of help campaign for the Armenians<sup>211</sup>. By the way, the members of the NERS, created the most powerful aid organization ever. The support of the President Wilson to the committee also affected the high bureaucracy; both the mayors and the head of the municipalities acted as the members of the NERS<sup>212</sup>.

Twenty three states gave more than one million dollars, each; namely, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Four states gave seven million dollars or more: New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois and California. Pennsylvania has to its credit \$11,672,632 and New York \$13,871,815. The three states of Massachusetts, New Jersey and Ohio gave over four million dollars each. These princely contributions demonstrated confidence in the organization and the work.<sup>213</sup>

During 15 years of activity, the total amount of donation that the NERS has obtained was 116 million dollars and 25 million dollars of this sum was directly donated by the State<sup>214</sup>. This amount of money distributed in Turkey, Caucasia, Iran,

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Witness: *The Missionary Archives as Evidence of Armenian Genocide*, Ed. Richard G. Hovannissian, (London: Macmillan,1992), p.175).

<sup>209</sup> Moranian, p.175.

<sup>210</sup> Moranian, pp. 219-220.

<sup>211</sup> The first grant coming to the Near Eastern Society was the 40.000 dollars coming from the Rockefeller Foundation. (Gencer, p.30).

<sup>212</sup> Gencer, p.49.

<sup>213</sup> Barton, p. 410.

<sup>214</sup> Kieser, p.496.

Syria and Greece<sup>215</sup>. According to a booklet prepared by the NERS, in order to meet the basic expenditures of a child which were food, cloth, shelter and education; they needed \$180 for each in one year. By the way, they could meet the expenses of 42.962 children during 15 years<sup>216</sup>. According to a declaration of Barton, until the year 1929, 1.5 million people including 132.552 children survived thanks to the aid of the NERS.

The real aim of the establishment of the NERS was to help to the Armenian people after the mass deportation. Missionaries believed that, in order to help to the Armenians they should firstly provide the basic needs for them. In accordance with this idea, the money accumulated from the grant send to the American missionaries and ambassadors, which located in the Near East. The first financial aid sent to Ambassador Morgenthau at 1915. The amount of money was 100.000\$. An organization committee established in order to organize the aid traffic and an American ambassador Lewis Heck became the president of the committee. William W. Peet from the American Board became the secretary. The other members were Mrs., George Huntington and Luther Fowle as treasurer, Ambassador Morgenthau and the president of the Robert College Mr. Gates. These kinds of committees were also gathered in Syria, Persia and Caucasia.<sup>217</sup>

The buildings, which belonged to the American missionaries, especially in the Eastern part of the Ottoman Empire, were redesigned as aid stations to the Armenians. Although, some of these stations were closed in the wartime conditions, most of them continued their activities even in the post war period. These stations were acting secretly in the Ottoman Empire at the initial years of the war but they were freely worked in the Russian territories.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> “In round figures, the \$90,000.000 dispersed from the national office prior to July 1, 1929, was distributed as follows: to the Caucasus, \$28,017,000; Turkey, \$20,551,000; Syria and Palestine, \$12,527,000; Persia and Mesopotamia, \$7,736,000; Greece, \$5,709,000; other areas \$667,000; for freight, personnel, warehousing and general relief expense \$7,566,000; administration and other expenses \$6,944,000.” (Barton, p. 411).

<sup>216</sup> Gencer, p.53.

<sup>217</sup> Gencer, p.71.

<sup>218</sup> Gencer, p.72.

After the beginning of the mass deportation, a group of missionaries guided by Ambassador Morgenthau tried to have the approval of the CUP for the official permission of help to the minorities, mainly to the Armenians. However, the Ottoman government rejected the will of the American group. For this reason, at the beginning of the World War I, the helping activities were done in a secret way<sup>219</sup>. The American missionaries were even sometimes collaborated with the German missionaries in order to continue to their activities and sometimes for getting information. As the Ottoman State had an alliance with Germany, the conditions of the German missionaries were better than the other ones. The policy of collaboration of the American missionaries was also supported by Germany because in such conditions Germany could stop to aid to the Armenians and could canalize the aid potential of its country to the other locations<sup>220</sup>.

The secret activities of the American missionary institutions were understood by the Ottoman State in 1916. As it was very difficult to stop these secret activities, the Ottoman government changed its former policy and decided to give official permission for help to the NERS. The aim of this permission was to control the amount of money given to the Armenians by using the Ottoman officials as the control mechanisms. Moreover, the Ottoman government could not get the risk of damaging its relations with the United States. Talat Paşa by giving the permission, also aimed to make an equal partition of help among all the Ottoman people who needed help. However, this act did not bring the equal distribution of aids. The Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire was almost having nothing from the missionary aids.<sup>221</sup>

The support of the United States' government for the NERS was inevitable. They provide this support by two major ways: by using the relations of the members of the NERS' close contacts with the peoples in the government stage and the effects of the public opinion created by the missionaries over the government. The support

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<sup>219</sup> George E. White, *Bir Amerikan Misyonerinin Merzifon Amerikan Koleji Hatıraları*, (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1995), p.232.

<sup>220</sup> Kieser, pp. 492-493.

<sup>221</sup> The Muslim population was only benefited from the 2% of the NERS's total aid amount. (Gencer, p.76).



of the government was not only diplomatic; the United States was helping to the NERS also in terms of finance, transportation, food and necessary means.<sup>222</sup>

The officials and citizens of all the Near East countries saw the representatives of the United States government intimately and actively co-operating with all the relief operations. Ambassadors Morgenthau, Phillips and Elkus; Admiral Bristol at Constantinople; Ministers Laughlin and Skinner in Greece; Ministers Howell and Gunther in Egypt; Consul Smith in the Caucasus, Consul Jackson in Syria and Consul Paddock of Persia; Consul Ravndal in Constantinople, and United States officials in all areas of activity, served on local administrative committees or fostered the work.<sup>223</sup>

Although, the American missionaries rejected to turn to their countries when the World War I get started and the officials of the American Schools which were closed in the Ottoman Empire chose to join the missionary organizations, the number of missionaries sharply decreased in the Ottoman territories in 1915. The wartime conditions and the epidemics resulted with high losses for the NERS. However, they could continue their activities as it was before. The NERS was helping 485.000 people in the Near Eastern in 1916 according to a report prepared by Dr. J. K. Marden<sup>224</sup>. However, the number of refugees helped by the NERS sharply decreased in 1917 and became 113.600.

The United States' declaration of war to Germany forced the Ottoman Empire to put an end to the diplomatic relations with the country. The transfer of money for helping activities and the integration of the government of the United States to the problematic issues between the missionaries and the Ottoman government also affected by this new structure. Although Sweden and some other impartial countries took place in the transfer of money process, the situation became more difficult

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<sup>222</sup> "It proposes to dispatch a ship with a cargo of foodstuff, clothing, agricultural machinery, seed, medical supplies and the like, together with some 300 doctors, relief workers, mechanics, agriculturalists and so forth." (The Department of State, "the Secretary of State to the Chargé in Great Britain" *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, 1919 Volume 2 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1934), p.817) (This source will be mentioned as FRUS in the next pages).

<sup>223</sup> Barton, 352.

<sup>224</sup> Gencer, p.59.

compared to the former period<sup>225</sup>. The American missionaries also left their places to the German missionaries, as the Ottoman Empire was an ally of the Germany during the First World War.

The members of the NERS did not appreciate the United States' declaration of war to Germany because the possibility of the American-Ottoman war emerged in that condition. James Levi Barton carried a campaign to inform relief workers, the press, the Congress and the State Department that war with Turkey would bring no advantages but many disadvantages<sup>226</sup>. Secretary of State Robert Lansing was also supported the idea of Barton by claiming that the war between the two countries could be the worst thing for the missionaries in terms of the activities, the buildings and the citizens<sup>227</sup>. However, only a minority among the missionaries was supporting the idea of war, but they were mainly affected by the Turkish image designed in the United States' territories or affected by the Armenian lobby of the United States.

Dodge and Barton, by benefiting from their good relations with the President tried to persuade him that such possibility of war could damage the American buildings in the Near East and the life of the American citizens would be in danger<sup>228</sup>. With the efforts of Dodge and Barton, the declaration of war stayed limited with Germany. The ideological divergence between the Armenian lobby and the missionaries was the first case that the two had such an opposite way of thinking. At the final stage, the missionaries were the victorious side in ideological base; however, they were mainly affected by the war after 1917.

In the final year of the war, the number of the American missionaries was 36 and the number of their local assistant was 200<sup>229</sup>. However, this number sharply increased after the Mudros Armistice because the problems that occurred in terms of

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<sup>225</sup> Trask, p.23.

<sup>226</sup> Robert L. Daniel, "The Armenian Question and American-Turkish Relations, 1914-1927", *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Sep., 1959), pp. 252-275.

<sup>227</sup> Lansing to William J. Stone, December 6, 1917, FRUS, 1917 Supplement, (2 vols. Washington, 1932), II, pp. 448-454.

<sup>228</sup> Daniel, *The Armenian Question*, p.258.

<sup>229</sup> Gencer, pp. 86-87.

transfer and transportation disappeared with the armistice<sup>230</sup>. In one year, the number of American missionaries in the Ottoman territories reached to 85<sup>231</sup>.

The NERS, after the acceptance of the Mudros Armistice, started for the reestablishment in the Near Eastern regions such as Anatolia, Caucasus, Syria and Palestine. Their first act was to send a commission<sup>232</sup> to the region in order to make investigations about the post-war situation. The members of the committee were chosen among the missionaries, which were already worked in this area. However, they firstly visited London, Paris and Rome in order to speak with the Allied Powers. One of these committee members, Arthur Curtiss James stayed in Paris for joining to the Peace Conference<sup>233</sup>. The other members, went to different regions<sup>234</sup> in the Near East and apart from making investigations, they reorganized the NERS network<sup>235</sup>.

At the end of the First World War, the German missionaries were sent back to their countries. This act provided the NERS to be the unique missionary power in the region. As the properties belonging to the German missionaries given to the American missionaries, the German missionaries and the influence of Germany became more powerful. In order to reorganize the missionary network<sup>236</sup> the

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<sup>230</sup> Gencer, p.88.

<sup>231</sup> Moranian, p.139.

<sup>232</sup> The Commission was composed of Harold A. Hatch, a New York businessman, a member of the Board of Trustees of Constantinople College for Woman and one of the two editors of "Reconstruction in Turkey"; Arthur Curtiss James, a business man of New York, a member of the Board of Trustees of Robert College; Professor Edward C. Moore of Harvard University, president of the American Board of Missions; Doctor J. H. T. Main of Iowa, president of Grinnell College at Grinnell, Iowa; Walter George Smith of Philadelphia, president of the American Bar Association; Dr. Stanley White, secretary of the Presbyterians Board of Missions; Rabbi Aaron Teitlebaum of New York, representing the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee; Dr. George H. Washburn of Boston, son of a former president of Robert College, director of medical relief with Dr. George H. Richards as assistant; and Dr. William W. Peet, treasurer of the American Board of Missions in Turkey for thirty years, also a member of the Relief Committee in Constantinople and its treasurer, until forced to leave when diplomatic relations with Turkey were broken. The Chairman of the Commission was the chairman of the National Committee. (Barton, p.110).

<sup>233</sup> Barton, p.111.

<sup>234</sup> The regions of the Near East that the NERS dealt with were Anatolia, Syria, Caucasus and Palestine. (Gencer, pp.89-91).

<sup>235</sup> Gencer, pp.89-91.

<sup>236</sup> "Relief units were stationed at Adana, Aintab, Angora, Brusa, Caesarea, Constantinople, Derindje, Diarbekr, Izmit, Kharput, Konia, Malatya, Marash, Mardin, Marsoyan, Samsun, Sivas, Smyrna, Tarsus, Trebizond and Urfa." (Barton, p.141).

American missionaries who returned their countries in the wartime came back to the Near East and the NERS started to use the volunteers that they choose among the American citizens.

The priority of the NERS was the rehabilitation of the refugees who were now in Syria and Caucasus to their homes in Anatolia<sup>237</sup>. The NERS was pioneering for a special campaign in the United States in order to collect the \$30.000.000 needed for the rehabilitation<sup>238</sup>. According to the NERS activity report of 1919, the society made an expenditure of 4.802.000\$ and this money used to help to the 561.970 refugees<sup>239</sup>. The amount of money used according to the 1920 report was 13.129.117\$<sup>240</sup>.

The total amount of expenditure that the NERS made until 1921 was \$ 60 million. This sum reached to 70 million in the next year and in 1924, it expanded to 90 million dollars. 24 million of the expenditure used for the Armenians and 20 million of the total amount used in the Anatolian region.<sup>241</sup>

In May 1929, NERS made its last call for help from the public. James Levi Barton announced that for the final stage they needed \$ 1.048.108. This amount was going to be used for the 20.043 children under the protection of the NERS. He also pointed out that, these children should be under the guarantee of the NERS until finding a location for them or they could earn their own money.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Barton, p.108.

<sup>238</sup> Barton, p.109.

<sup>239</sup> Gencer, p.98.

<sup>240</sup> Gencer, p.98.

<sup>241</sup> Gencer, p.98-99.

<sup>242</sup> Gencer, p.117.

### 4.3. The Activities of the NERS

The NERS aids were mostly concentrated on the Armenians<sup>243</sup>. The amount of aid which would be done and where would be sent mostly determined by the missionary reports and by the lists given by the Armenians<sup>244</sup>. The ambassadors were not active in order to find the people in bad conditions however; they actively worked with the missionaries during the mass deportation in order to find settlements of the Armenians, which were sent to Aleppo, Dayr-al Zor, Musul and Damascus.<sup>245</sup>

The missionaries were also educated the volunteers among the American citizens in order to get their help at the relief works. These volunteers were sent to Anatolia under the supervision of the missionaries. The Principal of the Merzifon College, Henry E. White worked as the director of personnel of the NERS in Istanbul for making the arrangements about the volunteers.<sup>246</sup>

The network of missionaries for help to the Armenians was firstly established in the eastern part of the Empire, as this part was highly Armenian populated compared to the other parts of Anatolia. Moreover, the rehabilitation of the Armenian population in this region will be easier compared to the other regions of the Ottoman Empire as this part of Anatolia was under the supervision of the Allied Powers<sup>247</sup>.

In order to provide the basic needs for the refugees, the missionaries firstly dealt with the issues of clothing, settlement and food. Due to the bad climate conditions, the next issue was to provide fuel for the Armenians. Although, there was wartime conditions, the missionaries achieved to acquire the needs for the refugees in

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<sup>243</sup> Although the relief funds were distributed among the all who suffers, the greater part of the reliefs were distributed among the Armenians, Greeks, Syrians and Assyrians. (Near East Report, p.4).

<sup>244</sup> Gencer, p.77.

<sup>245</sup> Gencer, p.78.

<sup>246</sup> White, pp. 230-232.

<sup>247</sup> Stanley. E. Kerr, *The Lions Of Marash, Personel Experiences With Near East Relief 1919-1922*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1973), p.49.

the regions that they work. Even if they could not make the aids in terms of food or fuel, they made financial helps to the Armenians.<sup>248</sup>

Apart from providing the needs by buying, the missionaries also organized the base for production of the needs. For instance, they rent the vineyards and the gardens, which left free after the leave of the Turks and the Armenians from Van. On the one hand, they acquired financial benefits from this kind of areas for supporting the aid activities, and on the other hand, they provide the opportunity of employment for the unemployed male and the female population in this region<sup>249</sup>. Near East Industries were extended to America in an effort to secure wider distribution, larger sales and consequently enable the NERS to give more refugee women self-sustaining employment<sup>250</sup>. Workshops were operated in three refugee centers: Athens, Beirut and Constantinople<sup>251</sup>.

These activities of the American missionaries were also supported by Russia and even Russia made high amount of financial assistance to the help activities.<sup>252</sup> Moreover, the Russians granted vast territories to the NERS in order to provide them the necessary places for the continuation of their activities in terms of relief and education.<sup>253</sup>

The health and the sanitation issues were other crucial points for the missionaries. The main target population was once again the Armenians. There were many missionary doctors in the Near East. The big hospitals were located in Erivan, Kars and Gümrü during the war. However, some of the hospitals of the NERS were destroyed because of the war and it was very difficult for the NERS to restore them due to the financial problems<sup>254</sup>.

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<sup>248</sup> Gencer, p.79.

<sup>249</sup> Gencer, p.83.

<sup>250</sup> Barton, p.181.

<sup>251</sup> Barton, p.181.

<sup>252</sup> Gencer, p.83.

<sup>253</sup> Barton, pp.180-181.

<sup>254</sup> Barton, p.189.

In the armistice period, the NERS completed the preparations. 36 doctors and medical assistants with 50 nurses chosen from the Red Cross sent to the Near East. Fifteen complete hospital units and adequate medical supplies were purchased. These included surgical instruments, beds, bedding, chinaware, glassware, cutlery, linen, towels, electric lighting units, ice machines, laundry equipment, sterilizers for hospital use and for delousing purposes, chlorinators, vaccines and medicines.<sup>255</sup>

After the hospital equipments and operation were shipped in early 1919, in the post war period the existing hospitals were enriched in terms of personnel and equipment<sup>256</sup>. Moreover, new hospitals were established. Adana, Antep, Kayseri, Konya, Sivas, Harput, Mardin, Maraş and Merzifon became the new health centers. According to the 1922 Annual Report of NERS, 36.231 persons were benefited from the health facilities in Anatolia<sup>257</sup>.

The warehouses of the Baghdad railroad at Derince were used for the storage and the distribution of the shiploads of relief supplies<sup>258</sup>. Derince was an important storage center as it has both sea and land connection<sup>259</sup>. The transportation issue was a great problem for the distribution of relief because the Baghdad railroad was the unique railroad in the region and it was not expanded to a vast area. In order to reach to the inner locations, the missionaries had to do long and difficult caravan journeys<sup>260</sup>.

The works of the medical staff can be grouped under three categories: sickness and epidemics among the refugee population, restoring health of the orphans and the care of the American and local personnel<sup>261</sup>.

The NERS was also active for dealing with the orphans. At the beginning of the relief works the adults and the children were treated in the same way but within

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<sup>255</sup> Barton, p.190.

<sup>256</sup> Barton, p.190.

<sup>257</sup> Gencer, p.101.

<sup>258</sup> Barton, p.191.

<sup>259</sup> C. F. Gates, *Not to Me Only*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p.256.

<sup>260</sup> Barton, p.191.

<sup>261</sup> Barton, p.192.

the time it has been understood that children needed special care and consideration<sup>262</sup>. However, due to the financial difficulties, the first big orphanage could not be established until 1919. After this year, Gümrü and Kars became the world's largest orphanage cities. As there were too many orphans, the NERS confronted with a great housing problem at first<sup>263</sup>. The second problem was to provide food and clothes for the orphans who lived in the missionary institutions<sup>264</sup>. Health and the education of the orphans were the last issues that created problems<sup>265</sup>. When the organization process completed, the NERS also started to deal with finding the Armenian children who were adopted by the Muslim families. They gathered all the children that they found and dealt with their care<sup>266</sup>.

According to the 1921 Annual Report of the NERS, there were 64.107 children in 124 orphanages governed by the NERS. Apart from these children, there were 50.000 children who were not located in the Orphanages but their needs were compensated by the NERS. According to the 1922 Annual Report, there were 30.698 children in the orphanages located only in the Anatolia.<sup>267</sup>

The orphans were raised within the framework of the Protestant understanding. The children were canalized to different vocational education programs which were started in the 1890s<sup>268</sup>. Their gender, skills and the region that they were located were effective to which program they would be attending<sup>269</sup>. There were approximately 50 different vocational education courses. The main aim of the missionaries was to raise the children as persons who can take the responsibility of their lives<sup>270</sup>.

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<sup>262</sup> Barton, p.207.

<sup>263</sup> Barton, pp.212-214.

<sup>264</sup> Barton, pp.215-216.

<sup>265</sup> Barton, pp.217-220.

<sup>266</sup> Kerr, pp.43-44.

<sup>267</sup> Özdemir, Çiçek, Turan, Çalık, Halaçoğlu, p.70.

<sup>268</sup> Kieser, p.426.

<sup>269</sup> Barton, p.239.

<sup>270</sup> White, p.229.



For the girls the most popular professions were teaching and nursing. Apart from these, the vocational education programs that the girls attended were rug making, embroidery, dressmaking, lace making, poultry raising, farming, candy making, stocking making, textile weaving, toy making, animal husbandry, baby care, brush making and basket weaving.<sup>271</sup>

The boys were raised as teacher, carpenter, weaver, shoemaker and repairer, tailor, musician, painter, printer, farmer, poultry man, dairyman, animal husbandry, coppersmith, tinsmith, baker, barber, mechanic, shopkeeper, chef, candy maker, textile worker, ironworker, cabinetmaker, blacksmith, shipbuilder, commercial worker, toy maker, potter, machinist, electrician, auto mechanic, designer, silversmith, photographer, mason, pharmacist, bookbinder and plumber.<sup>272</sup>

Although, the NERS claimed that they were not separating people according to their religion or race, the total amount of the aids given to the Muslim population was only 2% of the general aids<sup>273</sup>. However, behind this 2%, there was the intention of exemption from the custom levies<sup>274</sup>. Moreover, they do not exactly cooperate with the *Hilal-i Ahmer*, the Turkish Red Crescent. The NERS sometimes ignored and sometimes did not believe the reports coming from this organization. On the other hand, *Hilal-i Ahmer* was not making any distinction between the Muslim and the non-Muslim population and even received grateful letters from the commissions which were dealing with the Armenians and the Greeks<sup>275</sup>.

Help activities was only one aspect of the missionaries' works. Apart from providing the basic needs for the Christian Minority groups, mainly to the Armenians, they also cooperated with the Armenian bands in terms of logistic and financial support<sup>276</sup>. Moreover, they prepared one-sided reports which are always

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<sup>271</sup> Barton, p.240.

<sup>272</sup> Barton, p.240.

<sup>273</sup> Grabill, p.40.

<sup>274</sup> Gencer, p.126.

<sup>275</sup> Seçil Karal Akgün, Murat Uluğtekin, *Hilal-i Ahmer'den Kızılay'a I*, (Ankara: 2000), p.230.

<sup>276</sup> Gencer, p.129.

defending the minorities and blaming the Ottoman governments and the Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire.

The missionaries were also helping to the minorities but mostly to the Armenians for migrating to the United States<sup>277</sup>. Their aim was to make the Armenian community larger in the United States in order to get the support of a wider range of people and by the way, getting more financial assistance and more political and diplomatic support from the government of the United States.

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<sup>277</sup> Çiçek, p.68.

## CHAPTER 5

### POST WORLD WAR I ERA

#### 5.1. Paris Peace Conference

The interaction of the American missionaries and the United States foreign policy were still in existence in the post war period too<sup>278</sup>. The post-war policy of the United States was mainly formulated according to the 14 Principles of President Wilson. The 12<sup>th</sup> principle of self-determination was the one that was mainly related with the Ottoman Empire. However, the application of the principles displayed differences in country and nation based situations. The negative attitude emerged against the Ottoman Empire resulted in unequal treatment in the case of the applications of the principles. Moreover, the importance of the religious factor between Turkey and the Christian States could not be ignored. The Turks were always treated differently, not because of their ethnicity but because they were Muslims<sup>279</sup>.

James Levi Barton, in a letter that he wrote to the delegation member who would participate to the Paris Peace Conference asked for the permission for the religious education of the American citizens in Anatolia, for the continuation of the custom levies' exemption, financial assistance for the medical schools and facilities for the expansion of the relief works<sup>280</sup>. Clarence Usher and Walter George Smith were the representatives of the NERS at the Peace Conference. They were dealing

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<sup>278</sup> Grabill, *The Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East*, p. 287.

<sup>279</sup> Sonyel, p.444.

<sup>280</sup> Gencer, p.172.

with the issue of the rehabilitation of the Armenians in Anatolia<sup>281</sup>. The support of the President Wilson for the realization of the demands of the missionaries was inevitable in the conference. If they could not convince the President, they could not have a chance to convince the other Great Powers.

The main aim of the missionaries in the armistice period was to make the government of the United States to accept the Armenian Mandate because if another power had the mandate of the region, the investments done by the missionaries would be in danger and their acting area would be limited.<sup>282</sup> Actually, they were trying to convince the government of the United States for taking the mandate of the whole Ottoman territories as Clarence Ussher expressed in the Paris Peace Conference<sup>283</sup>. Moreover, they were asking for an international supervision for the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, a special status for Constantinople, liberty of religion for all the people living in the region including the Muslims and right to vote only for the literate people<sup>284</sup>.

However, there were ideological divergences among the missionaries about the mandate issue. For instance, James Levi Barton was first defending the idea of a federal Turkish system under the American control<sup>285</sup>. Barton believes that in order to prevent disintegration in the Near Eastern region, a federal system consisting of Georgia, Armenia, some parts of Syria and Anatolia should be formed under the American supervision. He believed that Istanbul should be under the governance of an international commission<sup>286</sup>.

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<sup>281</sup> Joseph Leon Grabill, *Missionaries Amid Conflict: Their Influence Upon American Relations With the Near East, 1914-1927*, Indiana University Ph. D, p.84.

<sup>282</sup> That the department recommend to the US Congress the immediate passage, on humanitarian grounds, without commitment to any political or international programme, such bill or resolution as will most effectively protect the Armenians from further unnecessary suffering or decimation, and that Congress by such bill or resolution make available sufficient funds to buy food, foodstuffs, clothing and other provisions, which, under the administration of Colonel Haskell, may help to keep these people alive until their political status is determined by the Peace Conference. (FRUS, "The Executive Committee of Near East Relief to the Secretary of State", pp. 822-323).

<sup>283</sup> Kieser, p.516.

<sup>284</sup> Kieser, p.516.

<sup>285</sup> Daniel, *The Armenian Question*, p.259.

<sup>286</sup> Grabill, *Missionaries Amid Conflict: Their Influence Upon American Relations With the Near East*, pp.75-76.

Then, he supported the idea of William W. Peet and Cleveland H. Dodge of United Armenia transcending from Erivan to Cilicia region. According to Barton, this plan could be realized by the relocation of the Kurds and the Turks to the other regions in Anatolia. Moreover, the Armenians who were living in the other countries should also be relocated in this region. After 1920, when the Armenians were under the Russian control he argued for a national homeland for the Anatolian Armenians in the Cilicia region.<sup>287</sup>

The other main argument came from another member of the NERS, the principal of the Robert College, Calep Frank Gates. He was entirely against the idea of an independent Armenian state. He believed that the minorities should stay under the governance of the Turks; however; their rights should be under the guarantee of one of the big powers<sup>288</sup>. He argued that if an independent Armenia was established in the region, the majority of the new state's population would belong to the Turks and under these circumstances the statue of the Armenians would be worst<sup>289</sup>.

At the initial phase of the Paris Peace Conference, both the big European Powers and the United States supported the establishment of an independent Armenian State. They both agreed that if such a state were to be established, there would have been the need for high amount of political, economic and military assistance. Although, both great powers agreed on the idea of the establishment of an Armenian state, they did not tend to take part in the formation and assistance process. The reason behind this was that, none of the powers wanted to create problems with the Muslim population of the Middle East and such a support would exactly cause a disturbance among the Muslim countries. Another reason was that for the assistance of the establishment of this new state, the amount of financial sources needed was very high and none of them want to make such expenditure. Moreover, they did not

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<sup>287</sup> Gencer, p.179.

<sup>288</sup> Gencer, p.180.

<sup>289</sup> Grabill, p.174.

tend to leave the country to the other's domination because their interests in the region could confront with damages.<sup>290</sup>

The policies of the Great Powers for the Paris Peace Conference were formed according to their national interests. The major points that the Great Britain were dealing with were the issue of India and the superiority in the Near East<sup>291</sup>. To protect India meant also to protect the routes to India and for this reason the Ottoman territories had crucial importance for the Great Britain. Although, the Great Britain tended to protect the Ottoman territorial integrity before the World War I, this policy did not seem suitable for them in the after war period<sup>292</sup>. For this reason, the Great Britain was looking for another solution. On the other hand, the competition of the Great Britain and France and the British hostility against Russia converted the British government to cooperate with the United States on the issue of mandate and the Straits question<sup>293</sup>.

The aim of France was to get the economic rights over the territories of Syria, Cilicia<sup>294</sup>, Lebanon and Palestine<sup>295</sup>. However, the problem between the Great Britain and France was very obvious about these territories as both of these two countries wanted to get the superiority over this region<sup>296</sup>.

On the other hands, the Arabs headed by Faisal at the Peace Conference were displaying their objections against the French Mandate as they were seeing France

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<sup>290</sup> Paul C. Helmreich, *Sevr Entrikaları: Büyük Güçler, Maşalar ve Türkiye'nin Taksimi*, (Istanbul: Sabah Kitapları, 1996, p.36.

<sup>291</sup> Helmreich, pp. 7-8.

<sup>292</sup> Helmreich, p. 8.

<sup>293</sup> Helmreich, p. 9.

<sup>294</sup> The region of Cilicia was vitally important for France in order to acquire the needed amount of cotton for its textile industry. (Pierre Redan, *La Cilicie et Le Probleme Ottoman*, (Paris: Gauthiers-Villars, 1921), pp. 114-117.

<sup>295</sup> Laurance Evans, *Türkiye'nin Parçalanması ve ABD Politikası (1914-1924)*, (Istanbul: Örgün Yayınevi, 2004), p.116.

<sup>296</sup> France and the Great Britain signed a secret treaty in 1916 known as the Sykes Picot Agreement. According to the treaty, the claims of the France over Syria were accepted by the Great Britain and France accepted the British presence in Iraq. This agreement, apart from creating problems between these two Great Powers at the after war period, it was also problematic because it ignores the promises of the Britain to the Sheriff Hussein. (William L. Cleveland, *Modern Ortadoğu Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2008), p.182).

less powerful than the Great Britain<sup>297</sup>. Faisal was trusting to Wilson's principle of self determination and he also cooperated with the Zionist leaders as there was a clash of interest between the Zionist and French territorial claims<sup>298</sup>. The most adherent supporter of the Arab claims was the president of the Syrian Protestant College Howard A. Bliss<sup>299</sup>. He was invited to the Peace Conference by President Wilson in order to make a speech<sup>300</sup>.

The Armenians were in collaboration with France even before the First World War. The most concrete evidence of this fact was the establishment of the Légion d'Orient (Eastern Legion)<sup>301</sup>. This legion was established in 1916 in Cyprus and was composed of both the Armenians and the Syrians<sup>302</sup>. The Armenians tried to get their revenge from the Turks by using France and France, by adopting the mission of the protection of the Armenians tried to maintain its political, economic and cultural interests in the region given to them according to the Sykes-Picot Agreement<sup>303</sup>.

Both the Great Britain and France did not want the Russian hegemony over these territories also they did not want to take the mandatory. The aim of the Great Britain was to convince the United States for the Armenian mandate. According to Admiral Bristol the Great Britain aimed to create a new buffer zone between Russian territories and the British area of influence<sup>304</sup>. The Great Britain wanted to solve the mandate problem of the Ottoman Empire as soon as possible because it also wanted

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<sup>297</sup> Evans, p.120.

<sup>298</sup> Evans, p.121.

<sup>299</sup> Evans, p.128.

<sup>300</sup> Evans, p.129.

<sup>301</sup> The first official military collaboration of the Armenians and France were realized at November 1916. The French Minister of War DeFrance wrote to the French Foreign Ministry that the Project of the Légion D'Orient (Eastern Legion) was finalized: "On November 15, I have decided, without delay, to establish the Eastern Legion from the volunteers of Ottoman citizens and under the guidance of French soldiers. Those Armenian and Syrian volunteers, who want to join, will serve under the French flag in Turkey during the war." (Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık, "Establishment and Activities of the French Légion D'Orient (Eastern Legion) in the Light of the French Archival Documents", *Review of Armenian Studies*, Volume:4, No. 10, 2006, p.97.).

<sup>302</sup> Serdar Palabıyık, "The Establishment and Activities of the French Légion D'Orient (Eastern Legion)", *Review of Armenian Studies*, No. 13-14, (November 1916-May 1917), 2007, p.145.

<sup>303</sup> Bige Sükan Yavuz, "Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı Sırasında Fransa'nın Anadolu'daki Çıkarları ve Ermeniler", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Cilt 3, sayı 9, (Bahar 2003), p.160.

<sup>304</sup> Evans, p.182.

to get rid of the economic burden of its military forces located in the Empire in order to provide the security and British national interests<sup>305</sup>. Although the United States did not want to become a part of the mandate in the beginning, the attitude of President Wilson on the issue became very encouraging within the time. However, he argued that the mandates should be under the control of the League of Nations<sup>306</sup>.

The tendency of President Wilson for taking the Armenian mandate led him to send a commission to the area in order to make investigations about the issue. The effect of Bliss was the most important reason behind this decision<sup>307</sup>. General Harbord was the first to be charged for this duty. However, the commission was headed by two trustees of the NERS; Henry Churchill King and Charles R. Crane was the first that went to the region.

Although, their duty was to make a general investigation on the minorities in the Near East, they dealt mainly with Syria and Palestine problem. The report recommended the mandate of the United States over Syria, the establishment of an Armenian State, establishment of two different governments for Istanbul and the other parts of Turkey and was against to a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine because of Arab and Christian opposition<sup>308</sup>. The Commissioners, King and Crane believed that the United States should abandon the policy of isolation and policy of economic nationalism in order to help to the minorities who were in need<sup>309</sup>. However, their report had no effect on the Paris Peace Conference because just after their return, the United States decided to remove from the conference and the report itself was not declared to the public until 1922. The most important reason for the delay was the fact that its recommendations were hostile to English, French and Zionist Plans<sup>310</sup>. On the other hand, the impartiality of the report was open to the

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<sup>305</sup> Evans, p.104.

<sup>306</sup> Evans, p.135.

<sup>307</sup> Evans, pp.144-145.

<sup>308</sup> FRUS, "Minutes of the Daily Meetings of the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary, March 27, 1919 *Peace Conference*, XI, pp.133-134.

<sup>309</sup> Kieser, p. 515.

<sup>310</sup> Trask, p.26.



discussion because four of the Commission members were also the members of the NERS.

After the return of the King-Crane Commission, the commission of General Harbord went to the region. The aim of the Harbord Commission was to investigate the American interests and the responsibilities in the region in terms of politics, military, geography, administration and economics<sup>311</sup>. The mission spent thirty days in Anatolia and Transcaucasia<sup>312</sup>. The report was prepared according to four main subject: history and the present situation of the Armenian people, the political situation and suggestions for the readjustment, the conditions and problems involved in a mandatory and the consideration for and against the undertaking of a mandate<sup>313</sup>.

According to the report prepared by this commission, in any regions of the Near East, the Armenians could not constitute the majority of the population<sup>314</sup>. The report also pointed out that there was no indicator of danger for the lives of the Armenians who returned to their homes in Anatolia<sup>315</sup>.

Moreover, if the United States would take the mandate, they should take Anatolia and the Rumelian part of the Turkey<sup>316</sup>, the Armenian lands and the lands belonging to Azerbaijan and Georgia<sup>317</sup>. Although, the result of the investigation of the mission was saying that the people in the region were open to welcome a trustworthy mandatory power in the region<sup>318</sup>, the report also pointed out the economic burden that such a mandate will cause.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p. 841.

<sup>312</sup> FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p. 842.

<sup>313</sup> FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p. 843.

<sup>314</sup> FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p. 847.

<sup>315</sup> FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p. 851.

<sup>316</sup> "without dependable centralized control of Constantinople a power exercising mandate in Armenia would be crippled in administration, restricted in trade development, ridden by concessionaires, dependent on Turkish discredited diplomacy for redress of local and boundary grievances, and in extreme case practically cut off from communication with the Western World". (FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p. 857).

<sup>317</sup> FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p. 854.

<sup>318</sup> FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p. 855.

<sup>319</sup> FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" pp. 841-873.

However, apart from these, he also focused on the responsibility of the Turkish government for the massacres of the Armenians, the mass deportation of 1.100.000 Armenians, the bad treatment against the Armenian woman and the religious pressure over the Armenian population.<sup>320</sup>

The reliability of this report was also open to the discussion because Harbord benefited from the report of the King-Crane commission, the American missionaries inhabited in the region<sup>321</sup> and from the Armenian sources. Moreover, he was affected from the missionary propaganda made in the United States as he was using a very similar terminology with the propaganda phrases<sup>322</sup>.

The United States participated to the conference with the guarantee of the acceptance of the Wilson's principle<sup>323</sup>. The twelfth principle was the most known of them because it was the one related with the self-determination<sup>324</sup>. Wilson argued that if a nation could provide to be the majority in the areas that they lived, they should have the right to have their own state if they want. The United States, expressed its opinions about Germany very easily because the country had declared war against Germany but the Ottoman Empire issue was more problematic for the

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<sup>320</sup>FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" pp. 841-873.

<sup>321</sup> "The mission is indebted for assistance to the American High Commissioner,, Rear Admiral L. Bristol, U.S. Navy, and the Consul General G. B. Ravndal at Constantinople, to American consuls Jackson at Aleppo, and Dolittle at Tiflis, as well as to the Allied High Commissioner to Armenia, Colonel W. N. Haskell, U.S. Army. Acknowledgements are also made to Dr. Mary Mills Patrick, President of the Woman's College of Constantinople; to the authorities of Robert College, particularly Professor Hussein Bey; and to Messrs. Barton, Chambers, Christie, Riggs, Partridge, Professor Robert P. Blake, of National University, Mr. Benjamin Burgess Moore, Chief American Political-Intelligence Mission to the Transcaucasia, Tiflis, and Misses Graffam and Fenanga, as well as to various other representatives of the American Committee for Relief in the Near East, and of the several missionary centers. All of these devoted missionaries have passed years of exile in this country, offering their lives for its betterment, and have the high respect of not only the people among whom they live, but of the various foreign representatives to whom they are known. American Missions and Schools have for a hundred years produced striking and far reaching results in Asiatic Turkey, and are a credit to our country. The mission is also under obligation to government officials in all the countries visited, from whom it has received nothing but courteous assistance in its work." (FRUS, "The Chief of the Military Mission to Armenia (Harbord) to the Secretary of State" p.874.).

<sup>322</sup> Gencer, p.177.

<sup>323</sup> Apart from the invitation coming from the Allied Powers, the government of Germany send President Wilson a note and asked from the United States the establishment of the peace according to the 14 principles of Wilson. (Evans, p.89).

<sup>324</sup> FRUS, 1918. Supplement 1, The World War Volume I, "Adress of the President of the United States Delivered at a Joint Session of the Two Houses of Congress, January 8, 1918, p.16.

United States, as the country was not became a part of the war with the Ottoman Empire<sup>325</sup>.

The minorities in the Near East mostly used these principles as the base of their demands. The Armenians of course was one of them. At the beginning of the conference, there were two Armenian delegations. The first one was the Armenian National Delegation headed by Boghos Nubar Pasha. This one was represented both by the Armenians in the Ottoman territories and by various Armenian colonies all around the world. Boghos Nubar Pasha was appointed by the Echmiadzin Katolikos Kevork V as a special representative to the European countries in order to discuss the reform planned to do in the “Vilayet-i Sitte” after the Balkan Wars. He also played a very important role at the establishment of the Légion d’Orient which was mostly composed of the Armenians.<sup>326</sup>

The second delegation was headed by Avetis Aharonyan. He was the representative of the Armenian Republic established after the collapse of the Russian Empire. Avetis Aharonyan was a member of the Dashnak Party. During the year 1918 he was the chairman of the Armenian National Delegation. He was appointed by the Armenian government as a representative for the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>327</sup>

These two delegations had some difference of opinion about the borders of the Armenian state. However, the intermediary role of the Armenian Church between the two convinced them to make cooperation. The major demands of Aharonyan were the recognition of the Armenian state and the unification of the “Vilayet-i Sitte” with the Armenian Republic but at the Peace Conference he was supporting Boghos Nubar Pasha and added the Cilicia Region, Maras and some parts of the Trebizond<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Evans, p.92.

<sup>326</sup> Ömer E. Lütem, “1919 Paris Barış Konferansında Ermeni Talepleri”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, (Yaz 2006), sayı 22, p.164.

<sup>327</sup> Lütem, “1919 Paris Barış Konferansında Ermeni Talepleri”, p.164.

<sup>328</sup> Boghos Nubar Pasha was accepting that the region was not highly Armenian populated but Trebizond was the only outlet for the Armenian Republic to the Black Sea. He also supported his argument with the speech of Greek President Venizelos that accepting the integration of Trebizond into the Armenian State. (FRUS, Paris Peace Conference 1919, Volume IV, 1948, pp.872-873).

region to his demands<sup>329</sup>. They were also closer to the idea of the United States mandate<sup>330</sup>.

The borders of the state in the Armenian minds were expanding between the North Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Sivas, Erzurum and Harput would be the part of the new state. Moreover, the whole Cilicia region would be integrated into it. They accept that they were not forming the majority over the area that they had claims on. However, Boghos Nubar Pasha argued that one million<sup>331</sup> over 4.5 million of death in the First World War were Armenians and if the state would have been established, the Armenian population lived in European countries, Russia and in the United States would have returned to their homelands and by the way the Armenian population would increase vis-à-vis the Muslim population.<sup>332</sup>

Moreover, Boghos Nubar Pasha argued that the Ottoman official records of census were far from being correct because the Ottoman government wanted to display the Armenians as an insignificant minority group<sup>333</sup>. In order to prove his thesis he gave some examples. For instance the Ottoman government showed the Armenians of the vilayet of Van as numbering 80.000 however according to Nubar Paşa, there was certain evidence that the number of Armenians from this vilayet who took refuge in Russia exceeded 220.000.<sup>334</sup>

The uncertainty of the United States about the Armenian issue and the Straits question led the European Powers to take a break for the debates, which was about the Ottoman Empire<sup>335</sup>. The emergence of the Turkish national liberation war was

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<sup>329</sup> FRUS, Paris Peace Conference 1919, Volume IV, 1948, pp. 139-157.

<sup>330</sup> Helmreich, p. 36.

<sup>331</sup> Boghos Nubar Pasha argues that the number of deaths should also be counted in order to calculate the Armenian population in the region. (FRUS, Paris Peace Conference 1919, Volume IV, 1948, pp.150-151).

<sup>332</sup> Helmreich, p.35.

<sup>333</sup> According to the calculations done by Justin McCarthy, the percentage of the Armenian population in the requested territories for an independent Armenia was 14.02% for the year 1912. (Justin McCarthy, "The Population of Ottoman Armenians", ed. by Türkkaya Ataöv, *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*, (Ankara: TTK, 2001), p.70.

<sup>334</sup> FRUS, Paris Peace Conference 1919, Volume IV, 1948, pp. 148-149.

<sup>335</sup> Helmreich, p. 93.

another factor for the break. The United States public opinion on the other side was not supporting the idea of taking the Armenian mandate because this act seemed very unbeneficial to them<sup>336</sup>. Apart from being a big financial burden, the idea of mandate was against to the principles of the Monroe Doctrine.

Summarily, during the Paris Peace Conference, the interaction between the members of the NERS and President Wilson reached to a considerable stage. The members of the NERS took place in the American delegation and they expressed their opinions in the international arena. Although, their status became very important during the final years of Wilson's presidential term, the situation changed during the next president of the United States, Warren G. Harding.

## **5.2. Lausanne Treaty**

The first peace treaty after the First World War was the Versailles Treaty, which was signed between the Allied Powers and the Germany. This treaty was not ratified by the Senate of the United States due to the Wilson's loss of power at his own country<sup>337</sup>. As Wilson vetoed the resolution of the congress about ending the war with Germany, the United States stayed technically at war with Germany until July 2, 1921 when his successor approved a resolution for a separate peace<sup>338</sup>.

In the aftermath of the war, the United States was economically demobilized. The country was powerless to cope with the inflation which was the most urgent postwar domestic problem. This situation resulted with an epidemic of strikes in the United States. The reaction against Wilson became more obvious and as a result he lost the elections of 1920 and was succeeded by Warren G. Harding.<sup>339</sup>

President Wilson's loss of power was also resulted in the decrease at the importance of the missionaries and the opinions of the American diplomatic

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<sup>336</sup> Helmreich, p. 36.

<sup>337</sup> Link, Coben, p.438.

<sup>338</sup> Link, Coben, p.438.

<sup>339</sup> Link, Coben, p.441.

representatives in the region became more important for the American policy. For instance, the American High Commissionaire of Istanbul, Admiral Bristol became one of the most important figures. He was the defender of the Ottoman territorial integrity and he believed that if there would be a mandate it should not only contain Armenia but the whole Ottoman territory<sup>340</sup>. The reason behind this idea was to protect the American national interests in the Near East. Admiral Bristol was trying to establish the American commercial superiority in the Ottoman lands by using the open door policy<sup>341</sup>.

As a result of the gaining importance of the commercial interests of the country, the United States Senate rejected to take the Armenian mandate. The United States foreign policy confronted with a change just after the start of Harding's presidential term. The new president was sharing the same idea with Admiral Bristol. He declared that the major issue for the United States was to protect the commercial interests of the country out of border. He also stated that the unique thing that the United States could continue to do for the Armenians was to make financial helps in humanitarian base.<sup>342</sup>

The last treaty after the Peace Conference was the Sevres Treaty that was signed between the Ottoman Empire and again the Allied Powers on August 10, 1920. The major reason behind this delay was the uncertainty of the President Wilson about the Armenian mandate issue and the Straits question. The Treaty of Sevres was not ratified by the Ottoman Parliament, since there was no assembly due to the occupation of the Ottoman capital by the Allied forces. The Sevres Treaty was mainly aiming the partition of the Ottoman Empire and gave no rights to the

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<sup>340</sup> Gencer, p.182.

<sup>341</sup> Evans, p.336.

<sup>342</sup> The Great Britain and France were also against the establishment of such a huge Armenian State. They believed that the integration of a small quantity of land to the Armenian Republic would be sufficient. However, even in a very small area, to provide the security of the Armenians will be very difficult as they could not be the majority in any areas. They were also not trusted to the Armenians. France and England saw the Armenians as potential massacre applicator, for this reason they usually reject the Armenian demands of weapons. In the end, Clemenceau proposed the assistance of the League of Nations to the Armenians in terms of employment and finance. (Helmreich, pp. 153-156).

Ottomans over their territories. The unacceptable articles<sup>343</sup> of the treaty fastened the activities and the organization process of the Turkish national movement.

There were many articles in the Sevres related to the Armenians. The most significant one of these articles was the Article 88 which said that Turkey, “in accordance with the action already taken by the Allied Powers, hereby recognizes Armenia as a free and independent State<sup>344</sup>”. However, at the preparation time of the treaty the Armenian State was not established yet. According to the Article 89:

“Turkey and Armenia as well as the other High Contracting Parties agree to submit to the arbitration of the President of the United States of America the question of the frontier to be fixed between Turkey and Armenia in the vilayets of Erzurum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, and to accept his decision thereupon, as well as any stipulations he may prescribe as to access for Armenia to the sea, and as to the demilitarization of any portion of Turkish territory adjacent to the said frontier<sup>345</sup>”.

Wilson was asked to provide the answer to the question whether the territories of the planned Armenian state should encompass all or part of the aforementioned provinces. Articles 226-230 of the treaty too were involved with the Armenians. These articles envisaged that those responsible for the “Armenian incidents” would be tried by the tribunals to be determined by the Allied Powers<sup>346</sup>. The articles 142<sup>347</sup> and 144<sup>348</sup> of the Sevres Treaty were about the return of the

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<sup>343</sup> “The treaty of Sevres, a through humiliation for Turkey, detached a substantial part of its territory, limited its sovereignty, maintained the Capitulations and internationalized the Straits.” (Trask, p. 27).

<sup>344</sup> Seha L. Meray, Osman Olcay, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Çöküş Belgeleri (Mondros Bırakışması, Sevr Andlaşması, İlgili Belgeler)*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1977), p. 74.

<sup>345</sup> Meray, Olcay, p.74.

<sup>346</sup> Meray, Olcay, pp. 113-114.

<sup>347</sup> Article 142 of the Sevres Treaty: “Whereas, in view of the terrorist regime which has existed in Turkey since November 1, 1914, conversions to Islam could not take place under normal conditions, no conversions since that date are recognized and all persons who were non-Moslems before November 1, 1914, will be considered as still remaining such, unless, after regaining their liberty, they voluntarily perform the necessary formalities for embracing the Islamic faith. In order to repair so far as possible the wrongs inflicted on individuals in the course of the massacres perpetrated in Turkey during the war, the Turkish Government undertakes to afford all the assistance in its power or in that of the Turkish authorities in the search for and deliverance of all persons, of whatever race or religion, who have disappeared, been carried off, interned or placed in captivity since November 1, 1914.

The Turkish Government undertakes to facilitate the operations of mixed commissions appointed by the Council of the League of Nations to receive the complaints of the victims themselves, their families or their relations, to make the necessary enquiries, and to order the liberation of the persons in question.

Armenians and the abandoned properties of these persons. However, it should be mentioned that the Ottoman government started to deal with this issue before this treaty were prepared. According to a document prepared by the Ministry of Interior, dated October 20, 1918; “permission to return shall be given to all of the people willing to do so who have been removed from their places of residence and transferred to other places following the military decision taken due to the state of war”<sup>349</sup>. The document also emphasizes the precautions which should be taken for the realization of this plan in terms of food supplies, accommodation and security. Just one day after, the governmental decree about this issue was prepared<sup>350</sup>. There were also other documents prepared at this time about this issue.

The Turkish National Movement, following a preparation period in the summer of 1919, established the Turkish National Assembly in Ankara on April 23, 1920. This assembly ratified the National Pact in the same day which was adopted three months earlier by the nationalist deputies who dominated the newly elected imperial parliament at Istanbul<sup>351</sup>. This pact was a new political program based on the complete territorial, political, judicial, and economic independence for Turkey<sup>352</sup>. The borders announced by this pact were covering the territories over which the

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The Turkish Government undertakes to ensure the execution of the decisions of these commissions, and to assure the security and the liberty of the persons thus restored to the full enjoyment of their rights.” (Meray, Olcay, pp. 85-86).

<sup>348</sup> Article 144 of the Sevres Treaty: “The Turkish Government recognizes the injustice of the law of 1915 relating to Abandoned Properties (Emval-i-Metroukeh), and of the supplementary provisions thereof, and declares them to be null and void, in the past as in the future.

The Turkish Government solemnly undertakes to facilitate to the greatest possible extent the return to their homes and re-establishment in their businesses of the Turkish subjects of non-Turkish race who have been forcibly driven from their homes by fear of massacre or any other form of pressure since January 1, 1914. It recognizes that any immovable or movable property of the said Turkish subjects or of the communities to which they belong, which can be recovered, must be restored to them as soon as possible, in whatever hands it may be found. Such property shall be restored free of all charges or servitudes with which it may have been burdened and without compensation of any kind to the present owners or occupiers, subject to any action which they may be able to bring against the persons from whom they derived title...”, (Meray, Olcay, pp. 86-87).

<sup>349</sup> Türk-Ermeni İhtilafı Belgeler, Document Dated 20 October 1918- To the Governorates of certain Provinces and Sanjaks on the Permission Granted to the Armenians to Return, p.494.

<sup>350</sup> Türk-Ermeni İhtilafı Belgeler, The Governmental Decree Dated 21 October 1918- On the Arrangement of the Returning of the Relocated Armenians, p.498.

<sup>351</sup> Hurewitz, p.172.

<sup>352</sup> Trask, p.28.



Turkish majority lived. For this reason the Turkish army started the Eastern campaign against the Armenian forces, left after the withdrawal of the Russian forces in Eastern Anatolia. After the war was won on the eastern front, the Treaty of Gümrü signed with Armenia at December 3, 1920. However, two days after this treaty, the Bolsheviks annexed South Caucasia and the treaty could not be put into force<sup>353</sup>. The Armenian Republic, established after the collapse of the Russian Empire, was invaded by the Soviet armies in November 1920 after nearly two years of independence. In December 1920, Armenia became a Soviet Republic.

First, the Treaty of Moscow was signed between the Turks and the Soviets on March 16, 1921 and then the Treaty of Kars was signed on October 13, 1921 between Turkey and Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan which were under the Soviet rule. Within this legal framework, the frontier problem between Turkey and Armenia was solved<sup>354</sup>. According to the Article 15<sup>th</sup> of the Treaty of Kars, each of the contracting parties came under the obligation to declare a full general amnesty for the nationals of the other party for crimes and offenses committed due to the war on the Caucasian front<sup>355</sup>. The solution to the Armenian problem in the Eastern front prepared the base for the Turkish Nationalists to focus to the Greek occupation in Western Anatolia.<sup>356</sup>

The Turkish National Movement achieved the success at 1922, after their final war with the Greeks. The Mudanya Armistice was signed between the Turkish Nationalists and the Allied Powers on October 11, 1922.<sup>357</sup> According to the treaty, the Greeks would retreat from the Turkish Territories, the Treaty of Sevres would be annulled and a new conference would be held for a new peace agreement<sup>358</sup>. After this victory, the Turks started to deal with the Lausanne negotiations. Although, the

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<sup>353</sup> Gündüz Aktan, “Lozan Barış Antlaşması ve Ermeni Sorunu”, ed. by Ömer Engin Lütem, *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, (Ankara: ASAM, 2007), pp. 28-29.

<sup>354</sup> Aktan, p.29.

<sup>355</sup> Ed. by Lütem, *Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler*, Treaty of Friendship between Turkey, the Socialist Soviet Republic of Armenia, the Azerbaijan Socialist Soviet Republic, and the Socialist Soviet Republic of Georgia (Treaty of Kars), p.313.

<sup>356</sup> Cleveland, p.200.

<sup>357</sup> ed. by Oran, p.214.

<sup>358</sup> Cleveland, p.200.

United States did not declare war against the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the United States government decided to send observers to Lausanne in order to protect their national interests and declare the American opinion about the issues of the Straits and the minorities<sup>359</sup>. The trade relations and the continued residence of the American citizens in Turkey played an important role for this decision<sup>360</sup>. Richard Washburn Child argued that the primary objective of the United States in sending observers to Lausanne was “to protect American interests, idealist or commercial, humane or financial, without discrimination”<sup>361</sup>.

Admiral Bristol was one of the most important figures who supported the idea of American attendance to the conference. The secretary and the managing director of the American Chamber of Commerce for the Levant E. E. Pratt, was also supporting this idea for the protection of the American commercial interests. Moreover, the delegates of the ABCFM drafted a petition at their annual meeting of 1922 for the participation of the United States to the forthcoming conference.<sup>362</sup>

The representatives of the United States were Richard Washburn Child, Admiral Mark Bristol and J. C. Grew<sup>363</sup>. The United States government desired the continuation of the capitulations and the American cultural, educational and religious activities in Turkey; the security of minorities, including the granting of an Armenian homeland; equal trade opportunities and free passage through the Straits; and reparation for American losses during the war<sup>364</sup>.

On the other hand, the government of the United States supported realistic policies. The written protocol<sup>365</sup> laying down American expectations at the Lausanne Conference, it stated that granting a territorial home to the Armenians might give rise

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<sup>359</sup> Gencer, pp.187-188.

<sup>360</sup> Trask, p.30.

<sup>361</sup> FRUS, 1923, V. II, p.962.

<sup>362</sup> John A DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East 1900-1939*, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press), p.132.

<sup>363</sup> Joseph C. Grew, *Amerika'nın İlk Türkiye Büyükelçisinin Anıları Lozan Günlüğü*, (İsatanbul: Multilingual Yayınları, 2001), p.19.

<sup>364</sup> Trask, p.32.

<sup>365</sup> Uras, pp. XL-XLI.

to debate, and that since conditions in Russia had improved somewhat, Russian Caucasus would provide a good refuge for the Armenians who left Turkey.<sup>366</sup> As this protocol shows, America did not expect an independent Armenia to be established in Turkey.

However, the American delegates were under heavy pressure of the American interests groups and the foreign delegations which were aiming to get the support of the United States diplomacy. During the conference, Child asserted that there were “various American missionaries and representatives of relief organizations and humanitarian associations on my neck”<sup>367</sup>. As a result of this pressure, the American Delegation added the statement of the Federal Council of the Protestant Churches of the United States which pointing out that the financial support for the National Armenian Homeland could be provided by the American Relief Organizations to their statements<sup>368</sup>.

James Levi Barton and W. W. Peet were the representatives of the Federal Council of the Protestant Churches of the United States at Lausanne. The aim of the missionaries, apart from providing an area for an Armenian homeland was to protect the missionary institutions, which were in the new Turkish territories.<sup>369</sup> Barton and Peet argued that if an Armenian homeland was not given to the Armenian population, there will be a strong opposition in the United States<sup>370</sup>. According to Richard Washburn Child, the main aim of the missionaries was to provide the security for over one thousands victims of war in the Near East and they made high amount of financial help in order to reach this goal<sup>371</sup>. Dwight argued that the rehabilitation of the Armenians, the return of their belongings to them and a general

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<sup>366</sup> Ömer Turan, “The Armenian Question at the Lausanne Peace Talks”, ed. by Türkkaya Ataöv, *The Armenians in the Late Ottoman Period*, p.213.

<sup>367</sup> DeNovo, pp. 143-144.

<sup>368</sup> Uras, p. XLI.

<sup>369</sup> Gencer, p.188.

<sup>370</sup> Seha L. Meray, *Lozan Barış Konferansı Tutanaklar, Belgeler I*, (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları), p.244.

<sup>371</sup> *Lozan Barış Konferansı Tutanaklar, Belgeler I*, p.203.

amnesty law for the Armenians should be one of the major goals of the conference<sup>372</sup>.

The issues to be discussed at Lausanne Conference were divided into three categories, for each of which a commission was formed. The first commission dealt with frontiers and military issues, the second with foreigners and minorities in Turkey, and the third with financial and economic affairs. It was decided that the chief delegates of Britain, France and Italy should chair the commissions.<sup>373</sup>

Ismet Inonu was the head of the Turkish Commission. The other two major members were the minister of health Dr. Ali Rıza Nur and the former minister of finance Hasan Bey. İnönü acted as an envoy and he informed the participants about the ideas of Mustafa Kemal. Mustafa Kemal's approach to this treaty was very clear. He declared that the new Turkish government would not accept any of the partition plans over Anatolia, by the way, to give any lands for homeland to the Armenians or any other nations<sup>374</sup>.

Although, the decisions of Mustafa Kemal were told to the Conference by Inonu, both the Great Britain and the United States were arguing about the homeland issue for the Armenians. The insistences of Great Powers were resulted with the abandonment of the conference by Turkish delegation sometime. However, at the final stage of the first phase of the conference, the Armenian issue was only discussed in the sub-commissions and it was not defended by the Great Britain and the United States as it was before. The issue was not discussed in the second phase of the conference and finally it did not take place in the treaty's text.

At the end of the conference, the new Turkish state signed treaties with nearly forty states around the world. The aim was of course to establish good relationships in terms of diplomacy and economics. However, the Lausanne Treaty was not ratified by the Senate of the United States. When the articles of the treaty were prepared, the whole text was sent to the United States for the approval of the Senate.

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<sup>372</sup> Turan, p.225.

<sup>373</sup> Turan, p.209.

<sup>374</sup> Ed. by Oran, p.217.

The treaty provided for an exchange of diplomatic officials, decreed complete abrogation of the capitulations, prescribed condition for establishment and residence for individuals and businesses of each country in the other on the basis of reciprocal equality of treatment, guaranteed freedom of commerce and navigation based on the most favored-nation principle, provided details related to taxes, import and export duties, and rights of the United States vessels in the Straits area, dealt with the rights and duties of the consular offices, provided that the missionaries could stay in the country if they accept the Turkish legal system and their belongings would be preserved<sup>375</sup>.

Following the Lausanne Treaty, the reactions started to emerge in the United States regarding the Armenian issue. The Armenian and the Greek lobbies were strongly opposed the establishment of such close relations between the two countries. The opposed people and institutions, chose to establish various organizations and organized protest movements in order to affect the United States' policy. The most known was the new version of the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia: The American Committee opposed the Lausanne Treaty<sup>376</sup>. Another influential group was a group of 110 bishops of the Episcopal Church who were emphasizing at their propaganda the bad treatment of the Ottoman Empire against the minorities<sup>377</sup>. Their effect over the United States policy was obvious due to the positions of the members of such organizations at the governmental level<sup>378</sup>. With the efforts of these opposed organizations, the Lausanne Treaty was rejected by the American Senate<sup>379</sup>.

The attitude of the missionaries was very interesting in comparison to their former activities. The main aim of the American missionaries was to organize public opinion against the Turks and provide the base for the establishment of an Armenian State. However, after the Lausanne Treaty, they became aware of the impossibility of

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<sup>375</sup> Trask, p. 34.

<sup>376</sup> Trask, p. 38.

<sup>377</sup> Trask, p. 38.

<sup>378</sup> Trask, p. 39.

<sup>379</sup> Trask, p. 44.

the emergence of such a state and concentrated to protect their citizens and belongings in the Turkish territories<sup>380</sup>. If the treaty would be ratified by the United States, their status would be legalized by full diplomatic recognition<sup>381</sup>. The President of the Robert College Caleb Frank Gates<sup>382</sup> expressed that:

“We believed that the future welfare of all these interests depended upon the good will of the new government, and that we should accept its pledges and cooperate with it. The fact that all the well informed Americans in Turkey so strongly urged ratification was in itself a weighty argument”<sup>383</sup>.

In a letter of Undersecretary of State Grew to Senator Charles Curtis, Grew summarized the reasons of the adherents for the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty as follows:

“Old treaties with Turkey are out of date and could not be used to protect American interests, all of the Powers except the United States had recognized the abolition of the capitulations, all Americans in Turkey favored ratification of the treaty, defeat of the treaty would harm rather than aid the Greeks and the Armenians minorities because the United States would not be in a position to give them even moral support, territory for an Armenian national home could be detached from Turkey only by war, the treaty would give Americans treatment equal to that accorded to nationals of the twenty seven other governments which had concluded treaties with Turkey and the Turkey of Kemal Atatürk was no worse than the Turkey of Abdul Hamid and the Young Turks”<sup>384</sup>.

Moreover, the missionaries were also filled with the admiration for Atatürk's Turkey<sup>385</sup>. They also supported the General Committee of American Institutions and Associations in Favor of Ratification of the Treaty with Turkey. The anxiety for their interests in Turkish territories and their admiration for Atatürk's acts led the missionaries to act in favor of the acceptance of the treaty.

After the rejection of the Treaty by the American Senate, the adherents of the ratification of the treaty started to look for the new solutions for the establishment of

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<sup>380</sup> Trask, p. 41.

<sup>381</sup> Trask, p. 41.

<sup>382</sup> He participated to the Lausanne Conference as the personal adviser on education of Admiral Bristol. (DeNovo, p. 144).

<sup>383</sup> Gates, p. 295.

<sup>384</sup> Trask, pp. 42-43.

<sup>385</sup> Şimşir, p.156.

the official relation with Turkey. Secretary Kellogs charged Admiral Bristol for the restoration of the official relations with an exchange of notes instead of a treaty<sup>386</sup>. The negotiations between Admiral Bristol and the Turkish Foreign Minister Tevfik Rüştü Aras resulted in an agreement in mid-February 1927<sup>387</sup>.

According to the notes exchanged, the United States and Turkey were to establish diplomatic and consular relations and appoint ambassadors as soon as possible, the two countries would regulate commercial and consular relations and conditions of establishment and residence in their respective territories by treaties or conventions, the Treaty signed at Lausanne would be resubmitted to the governments of both two countries for ratification and negotiations for a naturalization convention would start in six months<sup>388</sup>. The exchange of notes was crucial because it restored formal diplomatic relations after a break of nearly ten years<sup>389</sup>. During this time, the American High Commission was the sole instrument of the United States government in Turkey and the need for an ambassador was a very obvious need for the American Institutions and the commercial interests of the United States.<sup>390</sup>

The works of the missionaries, therefore, lasted longer than their former works for their demand but they were the victorious side at the end. It can thus be said that a group of American missionaries was effective in the establishment of official relations between the United States and the new Turkish Republic in 1927.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> FRUS, The Secretary of State to the High Commissionaire in Turkey (Bristol), February 1, 1927, III p.784.

<sup>387</sup> FRUS, The Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Tewfik Rouschdy) to the American High Commissionaire (Bristol), February 17, 1927, III p. 799.

<sup>388</sup> FRUS, The American High Commissionaire (Bristol) to the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Tewfik Rouschdy), February 17, 1927, III pp.794-795.

<sup>389</sup> Trask, p. 51.

<sup>390</sup> Trask, p. 51.

<sup>391</sup> Şimşir, pp. 146-147.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

The relations between the Ottoman Empire and the United States started to emerge at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although, the beneficial commercial activities were the main aim in the relations between the two countries, the evangelical and the philanthropic aspect of the relations also started to emerge with the arrival of the American missionaries into the Ottoman lands. This paper, apart from analyzing the philanthropic and the evangelical side of the missionaries, also aimed to display the interactions between the United States foreign policy and the Near East Relief Society.

During the expansion of the missionary activities to the various regions all around the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestant missionaries aimed not only the conversion of the non-Christian population to the Protestant faith, but also to bring the American way of life to these regions. In this aspect, missionaries intended to become the protector of the non-Muslim communities in the Ottoman Empire in order to be more successful. Consciously or not, the American missionaries were the major force behind the successful spread of the American imperialism.

When the Ottoman territories put into the program of the ABCFM, the American missionaries who came to the region, made researches about the circumstances of the Ottoman State and the people. Although, their initial target populations were the Muslims and the Jews, the researches done by the missionaries proved that the success could only be achieved within the Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire.

Their close relations with the people were very unusual for the Ottoman public because the Ottoman officials and the religious authorities never established face-to-face contacts with their people in their localities. The integration of the



American missionaries into the public and private sphere facilitated the application of their plans: to penetrate into the human minds and to proselytize them.

As a result of the missionary activities, a Protestant community in the Ottoman territories was formed. As the number of the Protestants reached to a considerable amount, the Ottoman government gave them the status of community. By this recognition, the Protestants obtained the same rights as the other communities had, and this was another convenience for the missionaries. This right facilitated the establishment of their network on the Ottoman lands.

During the establishment process of their network and mainly after they were settled down, the missionaries started to affect the American public opinion about the Ottoman Empire and the Christian minorities living in the empire. Their reports sent by them and the publications that they made created entirely negative effect for the Ottoman government and the Muslim population of the Ottoman Empire. The reports of the missionaries were generally prepared with the intention of displaying the Christian minorities as the oppressed population under the Ottoman rule. The ones, which were not written with this intention, were never displayed to the public in their countries.

Moreover, the role of the missionaries over the national awakening of the minorities could not be ignored. They indoctrinated the Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire not only by teaching them their own history, language and literature but also the missionaries were the source of inspirations for the minorities in terms of liberal and revolutionary ideas. The missionaries were also actively working for the continuation and internalization of the Armenian question. Starting from the 1890s, they were obviously used their economic and political power for supporting the Armenians in the Ottoman territories.

In addition to their religious role and proselytism activities, the American missionary institutions were also active in the secular affairs. All the institutions established by the American missionaries except the churches, had a secular aspect. For instance, in the curriculum of the schools founded by them, there were the courses like mathematics, physics, history, economy, geography and chemistry. The proportion of the religious courses was very low. These schools were aiming to raise

their students as the political leaders of the near future and the missionaries were aiming to prepare the Ottoman public opinion for the application of their plans. The health facilities that they provided were another aspect of the secular understanding and one of the best ways to establish good contacts with both the Muslim and the non-Muslim population. The establishment of the missionary printing offices and the publications that they made were also influential in order to create the Ottoman Protestant community. In addition to this, the American missionaries expanded their cultural interactions and welfare activities through close relations with the local inhabitants of the regions.

The American missionaries were mostly using religion for demanding grants from the American people. The American press mostly focused on the status of the Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire and their living conditions, with the pressure of the missionaries. After the formation of a positive public opinion for their aims, the missionaries moved forward to the political and religious authorities in the United States in order to get financial and diplomatic support. The reason why the Ottoman Empire could never forbid the missionary activities that they did not appreciate was the permanent support of the government of the United States for the American citizens in the Empire. Both the United States and the Ottoman Empire tended to preserve the good relations between them however; the attitude of the United States became more aggressive during the issues that concern its missionaries.

With the establishment of the NERS, the American missionary activities in the Near East started to lead by this organization. The NERS was established to provide aid to the Armenians after the relocation law of 1915. As this society was established with President Wilson's will, it can be argued that the emerging signs of the American interventionist policy reached to the peak with this event.

In order to gather the grant, the NERS, similar to the other missionary organizations used the press for affecting the public opinion. The members of the committee also used their political connections and got the support of the government and the Senate. Every day the amount of grants given to the NERS and the number of its members increased.

The first official approval for the aid activities was given in 1916 to the NERS by the Ottoman government. Until this date, they organized their activities in a secret way. However, the United States declaration of war to Germany was again resulted with the formation of the troubles for the actions of the NERS. Until the end of the war, in order not to take a break at the missionary activities they cooperated with the German missionaries. After the Mudros Armistice, the American missionaries were again back to their job. The aid given by the NERS was sometimes financial and sometimes they gave the needed means, clothes or fuel. They prevented the opportunities of employment for the refugees.

The aid activities were not the unique face of the NERS. There was also a political side of their activities. Their effects over the issues were sometimes seen in a form of the direct intervention and sometimes they indirectly affects the American foreign relations with the Ottoman Empire. The assistance that the NERS provided for the Armenian's migrations to the United States territories was the major reason of the formation of such a powerful Armenian lobby in the United States and a good example of the indirect intervention of the NERS to the political affairs. As a direct intervention, we can see the personal letters of the missionaries written to the members of the government or the political and logistics assistance of the missionaries to the Armenians especially during the period of armistice.

The interaction between the NERS and the American foreign diplomacy was obviously appeared in 1917, when the NERS tried to prevent the United States declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire. In order to protect their properties, citizens and the future of their activities, the members of the NERS were successfully create an obstacle for the declaration of war and they achieved their goal.

During the period of armistice, their aim was to persuade the government of the United States to take the Armenian mandate. They actively took place at the American Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. Moreover they made very important contributions to the report of General Harbord and the report of the King-Crane Commission which played an important role at the American foreign policy in the post-war era. Although, they achieved to persuade the government, Wilson's loss of power resulted with their failure.

The missionaries also worked actively during the Lausanne Conference. Their statements about the Armenian issue were added to the statement of the American delegation at Lausanne. Apart from the Armenian issue, they were mostly concerned with the establishment of official relations between the United States and the new Turkish Republic in order to guarantee the future of their activities in Anatolia. Although, the United States Senate did not ratify the Lausanne Treaty in 1924, The NERS with the other missionary organization also showed its power in politics after the Lausanne Conference. The official relations started with an exchange of note between the United States and the Ottoman Empire in 1927. The diplomatic relations between the two countries restarted after ten years of break.

The first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century apparently displayed the interaction of the missionary activities and the foreign policy of the United States towards the Ottoman Empire. The missionary institutions were used by the United States as the protector of the American national interests in the Near East, in terms of economic, cultural, diplomatic and political interests. Apart from expanding the Protestant area of influence, the missionaries aimed at bringing the American way of life to the Near East. On the other hand the missionaries were benefited from the government and the Senate of the United States in terms of financial and diplomatic support. Moreover, they acted as the protector of the Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire.

The American people's support behind the missionaries was on the one hand, the result of their capability to affect the public opinion on behalf of their interests. To obtain the public support was also bringing the support of the government and the Senate. On the other hand, the close relations between the members of the missionary institutions and the members of the governmental circles facilitated the creation of the common interests. These relations were another factor which provided the support of the government and the Senate.

As a result it can be argued that the American missionaries, just after their arrival to the Ottoman territories started to deal with the Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. The Armenians were the main target population for the missionaries as the Armenians were the higher intention for the conversion to the Protestant faith. As the interaction between the missionaries and the Armenian

population reached to a considerable stage, the American missionaries were involved to the Armenian question from the beginning. After the relocation law of 1915, they prepared the necessary conditions for the establishment of the NERS. This society was founded as a response to the relocation law. In order to help to the Armenians, the missionaries and the NERS cooperated with the American government and the Senate against the Ottoman government. On the other hand the American government benefited from the missionary organizations in order to protect the American national interests in the Ottoman lands.

The activities of the NERS did not end with the establishment of the mutual relations between the United States and the new Turkish Republic. This institution continues to play an active role in the Near Eastern region and the interaction of the NERS and the foreign policy of the United States continued. As the scope of this study does not cover the period after 1923 and as it was only focused to the activities of the NERS in the Ottoman Empire and the new Turkish Republic, the other activities of the NERS were not analyzed. This topic can be the subject of analysis of another work and such a future study could also strengthen the argument of this thesis.

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