



OSMANLI TÜRKİYE'SİNDE MİSYONER FAALİYETLERİ: ROBERT KOLEJİ VE AMERİKAN KIZ KOLEJİ'NİN ORTAYA ÇIKIŞI*

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ÖZET

Misyon, Oxford Sözlüğüne göre özellikle Hristiyan olan dini bir kurum adına yapılan ve o kurumun inancını yayma amacı güden bir görevdir. Misyon aynı zamanda dinsel bir kurum tarafından çalıştırılan yer anlamındadır. Misyoner ise bu dini görevi yayma amacını üstlenmiş kişidir. Bu tebliğ görevi, Hz. İsa ile başlamış, günümüze kadar devam etmiş ve hala etmeye devam etmektedir. Tebliğ ile görevlendirilen kişinin asıl amacı Hristiyanlık dinini yaymaktır. Bu görevi gerçekleştirmek için ise birçok yol ve yöntem bulunmaktadır. Bu yol ve yöntemlerin başında eğitim ve öğretim kurumları açmak gelmektedir. Bu kurumların amacı toplumdaki eğitimden yoksun kişileri eğiterek tebliğin nihai hedefe ulaşmasını sağlamaktır. Bu bağlamda, bu kurumlar Osmanlı Türkiye'sinin siyasi, sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik değişim ve gelişiminde etkili bir yere sahip olmuşlardır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında bu kurumlar misyonerlik faaliyetinin en önemli aracı olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadırlar. Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun yıkılmasında bile bu topraklarda açılan ve sayıları binleri aşan misyoner okullarının payının büyük olduğu bilinmektedir. Bu çalışmamızda misyonerlik faaliyetlerinin nasıl başladığından ve geliştiğinden bahsederken, hâlâ eğitimlerine devam eden, birçok ünlü işadamı, politikacı, yazar ve eğitmen yetiştirmiş olan iki eğitim kurumu üzerinde duracağız. Bu kurumlardan ilki resmi olarak 1863 yılında açılan Robert Kolejidir ve kolejin kuruluşunda en etkili olan kişi Cyrus Hamlin'dir. Diğer ise Amerikan Kız Kolejidir. Cyrus Hamlin, bu kolejin kurulmasında etkili olsa da asıl gelişme Mary Mills Patrick'in müdireliği zamanında gerçekleşmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Misyoner, Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri, Robert Koleji, Amerikan Kız Koleji, Amerikan Board Teşkilâtı.

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MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE LANDS OF OTTOMAN TURKEY: THE EMERGENCE OF ROBERT COLLEGE AND THE AMERICAN COLLEGE FOR GIRLS¹

ABSTRACT

According to the Oxford Dictionary, mission is a task that is done on behalf of a religious institution, especially a Christian one, which aims to spread the faith of that institution. Mission is also a place that is run by a religious institution. And the missionary is someone who has assumed the purpose of spreading the religious duty. This proclamation duty, which started with Jesus-the Prophet, has continued until today and still continues. The main goal of the person, who is appointed by such a decree, is to spread Christianity. There are many ways and methods to accomplish this task. The first and foremost of these ways and methods is to open educational and training institutions. The purpose of these institutions is to achieve the ultimate goal by educating people who are deprived of education in society. In this context, these institutions have had a great influence on the political, social, cultural and economic change and development of Ottoman Turkey. When viewed from this perspective, it appears that these institutions are the most important means of missionary activities. It is known that missionary schools, which were opened in this land and the number of which exceeded a thousand, have a large share even in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In this study we are going to indicate how the missionary activities have started and developed while at the same time we are going to focus on two educational institutions which still continue their education and have trained many famous businessmen, politicians, authors, and teachers. The first of these institutions is Robert College, which was officially founded in 1863, and Cyrus Hamlin is the person who was most influential in the establishment of the college. The other one is the American College for Girls. Although Cyrus Hamlin was effective in the establishment of this college, actual development was during Mary Mills Patrick's presidency.

Key Words: Missionary, Missionary Activities, Robert College, American College for Girls, American Board.

Introduction

Samuel Colcord Bartlett clearly summarizes the idea of the Turkey mission in his 1889 dated book, **Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board in Turkey**: "In a missionary point of view, Turkey is the key of Asia. Nowhere has the providential guidance of the missionary work been more remarkable."² Alfred DeWitt Mason, on the other hand, in his book **Outlines of Missionary History**, asks one poignant question. The question is; "What is Christian missions? And the explanation is as follows:

¹ This article is based on the doctoral thesis defended in 2014 at Dokuz Eylül University titled "Turkish Women, Education, and Missionary Practices in the Works of Hester Donaldson Jenkins" under the supervision of Assist. Prof. Dr. Füsun Çoban Döşkaya.

² Samuel Colcord Bartlett, **Historical Sketch of the Missions of the American Board in Turkey**, Published by the Board, Boston, 1889, p. 1.

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Christian missions is the proclamation of the gospel to the unconverted according to the command of Christ. Let us dwell a moment on the important words of this definition. The root idea of the word "mission" or "missions" is to send (Latin, mitto). The missionary is, therefore, one who is sent. He is simply a messenger. He goes not at his own initiative, nor to accomplish a purpose which he has originated, but as the agent of the one who sends him and to do that for which he is commissioned; and the more absolutely he succeeds in simply representing the One who has sent him, and the more intelligently, faithfully and consecratedly he does his work, the more perfectly does he fulfill his mission. Another word of importance in this definition is "proclamation" which literally means "to shout out" a thing. And that is the fundamental thought of the missionary message. We are to "cry aloud and spare not." ³

While living in an area like Turkey, 'the key of Asia', how should a missionary act? How should a missionary spend his first years in the country? First of a missionary should spend time with the local people. Within three years' time a missionary should try to learn whether these people are needy, illiterate, irrational and biased. Learning the qualities of the people will be more valuable for the missionary than learning the languages of the empire, even the vernacular.⁴ As it is understood, to achieve this goal a missionary should need time. The Missionary Chronology, therefore, is the only explanation for the length of missionary activities. The history of Missionary Activities is divided into six different eras. The first is the Apostolic Period (33-100 A. D.), the second era is the Period of Patristic or Early Church (100-800 A. D.), the third is the Medieval Period. (800-1500), the forth is the Reformation Period (1500-1650), the fifth is the Post-Reformation Period (1650-1800), and the last era is the Period of Modern Missions (1793 to date). Why the Period of Modern Missions starts in 1793 is because the first missionary who went to India was William Carey, and the journey was in 1793.⁵

The Church Missionary Society of the Church of England (CMSCE) and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM)⁶ were the first Protestant missionary societies to enter Ottoman Turkey. A missionary to Egypt was sent by the former in 1815; and two others were sent to Palestine by the latter in 1818. The pioneers of the American Board in Turkey were impressed with the fact that the Armenians were the most open to Protestant missionary influences.⁷ When the British and Russian Bible Societies took interest in the spiritual condition of the Armenian people it was 1813. Both Societies became so interested that they made the most active efforts to supply⁸ "Armenian people a Bible in their own tongue."⁹ The primary purpose of the ABCFM was to help the people change their religion and accept Protestantism mainly in the lands where the missionaries settled. To achieve this, these missionaries even paid money to the ones who accepted this new religion. In addition to this they thought the young minds about Protestantism in the schools they opened.¹⁰

³ Alfred DeWitt Mason, **Outlines of Missionary History**, Hodder & Stoughton New York, George H. Doran Company, 1912, pp. 3-4; Also see Kocabaşoğlu, p. 13.

⁴ E. D. G. Prime, **Forty Years in the Turkish Empire: Memoirs of Rev. William Goodell, D. D.**, Robert Carter and Brothers, New York, 1876, p. 173.

⁵ Mason, pp. 317-325.

⁶ The ABCFM was founded in 1810 as the first organized missionary society in the United States.

⁷ Leon Arpee, **The Armenian Awakening: A History of the Armenian Church, 1820-1860**. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1909, p. 93.

⁸ H. G. O. Dwight, **Christianity Revived in the East**, Baker and Scribner, New York, 1850, p. 7.

⁹ James L. Barton, **Daybreak in Turkey**, Second Edition, The Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1908, p. 150.

¹⁰ Yahya Bağçeci, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Amerikan Misyonerlerinin Ermenilere Yönelik Eğitim Faaliyetleri", Turkish Studies-International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic -, ISSN: 1308-2140, (Prof. Dr. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu Armağanı), Volume 3/4 Summer 2008, pp.169-192.

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As in so many other fields the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) was the first organization to begin Protestant missionary work in Turkish Armenia, and it distributed Bibles in Ancient Armenian at very low prices. When understood that this version of the Bible was not understood easily, BFBS prepared a new Armenian-Turkish translation of the New Testament in 1822 and in 1823 another version was prepared in the Armenian language.¹¹

Although the pioneers were well aware of the fact that the Armenians were open to religious change, the first attempts at missionary work were not directed particularly toward the Mohammedans nor to the Oriental Churches, but toward the Jews. Thus in November, 1819, Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons were assigned to work in Palestine,¹² then the Ottoman Land, and got the instructions regarding their missionary activities:

*From the heights of the Holy Land, and from Zion, you will take an extended view of the widespread desolations and variegated scenes presenting themselves on every side to Christian sensibility; and you will survey with earnest attention the various tribes and classes which dwell in that land and in the surrounding countries. The two grand inquiries ever present in your minds will be, 'What good can be done?' and 'By what means?' What can be done for the Jews? What for the pagans? What for the Mohammedans? What for the Christians? What for the people in Palestine? What for those in Egypt, in Syria, in Armenia, in other countries to which your inquiry may be extended?*¹³

Starting from its foundation, the American Board was very much interested in the Holy Land and the founders of the Board were willing not to leave the birthplace of Christianity under the control of Islam.¹⁴ The American Board started working in Turkey by planting its first station in Malta in 1819. Due to political difficulties at that time, it was not possible to establish missionary residence at any point within Turkish territory. The printing press set up in Malta remained there for some years, but later it was transferred to İzmir and then to İstanbul.¹⁵

The missionaries of the American Board divided their work into missions, stations and out-stations. They managed to establish such an organization that they reached so many people and enlarged this mission within a short time.¹⁶ On the other hand, the mission of the American Board was divided into three categories—evangelistic¹⁷, medical, and educational. The Jews and Moslems did not show much interest in the evangelistic work, but the medical and educational effort progressively reached all the peoples of the Empire. The strongest educational influence in these lands during the nineteenth century was exercised by the missionaries of the American Board, whose

¹¹ Julius Richter, **A History of Protestant Missions in The Near East**, Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1910, p. 106.

¹² William E. Strong, **The Story of the American Board**, The Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1910, p. 80. See also Greene, pp. 1-2.

¹³ Rufus Anderson, **History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners For foreign Missions to the Oriental Churches**, Congregational Publishing Society. Vol. I., Boston, 1872, p. 10.; See also Barton, 1908, p. 119; Strong, p. 80.

¹⁴ Strong, p. 80.

¹⁵ Kocabaşoğlu, p. 38.

¹⁶ Cenk Demir, "Amerikan Board Belgelerine Göre Talas Amerikan Kız ve Erkek Kolejleri", Turkish Studies - International Periodical for The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic-, ISSN: 1308-2140, (Prof. Dr. Mehmet Aydın Armağanı), Volume 7/4, Fall 2012, pp. 1405-1420.

¹⁷ According to K. Pelin Başcı, "[w]omen's missionary work served evangelical and American goals, because it empowered American women to regulate, control, and change the lives of others." See K. Pelin Başcı, "Shadows in the Missionary Garden of Roses: Women of Turkey in American Missionary Texts," in Zehra F. Arat, **Deconstructing Images of The Turkish Woman**, New York, Palgrave, 1999, p. 117.

work began in Smyrna in 1820,¹⁸ when the two missionaries Messrs. Fisk and Parsons landed in there.

The first thing they did was to study Modern Greek. They travelled a lot to explore the sites of the churches and reported their conditions. To make the work of exploration easy, Mr. Parsons went on to Palestine. He was alone and when he arrived there it was February, 1821. There were quite a lot of Christian pilgrims in Palestine, and Mr. Parsons' aim was to meet them. While he was in Palestine, the Greek revolution occurred. The revolution sent him back to Smyrna. His next station was Alexandria, Egypt. Mr. Parsons died at a young age in Egypt, in 1822.¹⁹ After the death²⁰ of Mr. Parsons, Jonas King, who was studying Oriental literature in Paris, joined Mr. Fisk to help him distribute Bibles. On the way to Jerusalem, they called at Alexandria and Cairo, in 1823. Finally they made it to Jerusalem, and from there they went to Beirut, where they separated. Mr. King chose Lebanon Mountains as his residence, and Mr. Fisk was in Beirut when he died on October 23, 1825. Two years before Mr. Fisk's death, Mr. and Mrs. William Goodell arrived in Beirut.²¹

It is highly understood that being a missionary requires knowing a lot of languages, including the vernacular to reach various branches:

*We almost daily read the Scriptures in Ancient Greek, Modern Greek, Ancient Armenian, Modern Armenian, Turkish Armenian (or Armeno-Turkish), Arabic, Italian, and English, and frequently hear them read in Syriac, Hebrew, and French. Seldom do we sit down to our meals without hearing conversation at the table in Armenian, Greek, Arabic, Turkish, Italian, and English, and prayer daily ascends from this house—I hope to heaven—in all these languages, excepting the Italian. In translating the Scriptures, we have open before us the Bible in Ancient and Modern Greek, Ancient and Modern Armenian, Turkish, Armeno-Turkish, English, two translations in Arabic and three in Italian, and occasionally Hebrew and Syriac.*²²

When Rev. William Goodell, arrived in Constantinople, it was 9 June, 1831. A year later the pioneer Rev. Harrison Gray Otis Dwight and the linguist Rev. William Gottlieb Schauffler followed him. Dr. Goodell devoted much of his time to the mission and stayed in the Empire for about 40 years. At the age of 73, he retired, and he died on February 18, 1867, in Philadelphia. Dr. Schauffler, on the other hand, lived on to 1883. He died at the age of 84 in New York. When he died, he was the veteran of the mission.²³

To meet the expenses, societies were formed. Rev. C. G. Young, for instance, was active in forming the Turkish Missions' Aid Society. The main idea behind this society was to support the Turkish Mission of the American Board. Donations came from members of different British denominations. Not only did they help to meet the salaries and accommodation and travel expenses of the missionaries, but they also helped the native clergy, the schools, the orphanages, and the

¹⁸ Hester Donaldson Jenkins, **An Educational Ambassador to the Near East: The Story of Mary Mills Patrick and an American College in the Orient**, Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1925, p. 18.

¹⁹ Barton, pp. 120-121.

²⁰ It is also "a satisfaction that missionaries are, generally, long-lived." They go to foreign countries, not to pass away early, but to live long, and to labor with ever-increasing usefulness. The average age is 76, but Dr. Elias Riggs is the exception who died when he was over 90 and did 69 years of service. See Greene, p. 256.

²¹ Barton, pp. 120-121.

²² Prime, p. 84.

²³ Julius Richter, **A History of Protestant Missions in The Near East**, Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1910, p. 107.

hospitals. After 1893 the name of the society was changed and became "The Bible Lands' Mission Aid Society," because of the extension of its funding to nearly all the missions in the Near East.²⁴

Although, many of the missionaries who served in the Ottoman lands were men, it was also possible to see women missionaries. Moreover, the best way to reach Turkish women was via these women missionaries. Some were married, some were single, but more importantly the coming of the single missionary women to the Turkish field brought a new "method of approach" towards Turkish girls. Some mainly dealt with opening kindergartens in many parts of the empire. With the aim of Woman's Boards' missionaries, as David Brewer Eddy stated, the success showed itself with statistical data and 378 village schools were built in various villages of Turkey. The duty of these women was to control teaching all around the villages. As a result, "[t]hese village schools [were] the trickling streams that swell[ed] into a mighty river in the boarding schools and colleges."²⁵

In the nineteenth century, the French and the Roman Catholics were well aware of the opportunity for political and religious propaganda. They had already established a number of schools to provide primary education. They had also persuaded many of the wealthy families to send their sons to Paris. French influence was everywhere in Constantinople. There were native schools but they were few in number. There were also naval, military and theological schools. Beyond that, there were mosque-affiliated religious schools for small children, and a small number of Protestant and Catholic mission-schools. The need for an American college in the empire was beyond question, and Constantinople was the natural place to start this kind of school.²⁶

Robert College

Cyrus Hamlin, the pioneer American educator and missionary in Turkey, founded a seminary in Bebek, a suburb of Constantinople, in 1840. Dr. Hamlin stayed in the capital and he established Robert College (the American College)²⁷ with the financial help of Mr. Christopher Rheinlander Robert²⁸, a New York merchant. The college was finally officially founded in 1863, with the extraordinary efforts of Hamlin, who had worked for nearly a generation in İstanbul under the ABCFM. Hamlin writes about the first meeting with Robert and the idea for Robert College:

Christopher R. Robert, Esq.²⁹, of New York, had visited Constantinople, in 1856, just at the close of the Crimean war. Seeing, along the shores of the Bosphorus, a boat laden with bread, the appearance and grateful aroma of which drew his attention, he inquired where it was made, and this led to our acquaintance, out of which has grown Robert College.³⁰

²⁴ Richter, pp. 118-119.

²⁵ Eddy, p. 155.

²⁶ George Washburn, **Fifty Years in Constantinople and Recollections of Robert College**. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1909, p. 3.

²⁷ George E. White, **Charles Chapin Tracy, Missionary, Philanthropist, Educator, First President of Anatolia College, Marsovan, Turkey**, The Pilgrim Press, Boston, 1918, p. 14.

²⁸ George Washburn, at the very beginning of his own Memoirs, **Fifty Years in Constantinople and Recollections of Robert College**, gives information, in a footnote, about the ancestry of Christopher Robert: "Mr. Robert was descended, in the fourth generation, from Daniel Robert of Rochelle, who was believed to have been a direct descendant of Count Robert of Normandy, the son of William the Conqueror, King of England. Daniel Robert was a Huguenot, and emigrated to New York in 1701, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, when he became a British subject. His grandson, Mr. Robert's father, was a graduate of Columbia and Edinburgh Universities, a physician by profession, who, after living ten years in the British West Indies, returned to New York in 1784 and bought a large estate on Long Island, where Mr. Christopher R. Robert was born March 23, 1802. When [he was] fifteen years old he went into a merchant's office in New York, and continued in business all his life" (1).

²⁹ The abbreviation for Esquire

³⁰ Cyrus Hamlin, **Among the Turks**, American Tract Society, New York, 1877, p. 284.

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Actually, the real idea of founding a college at Constantinople originated with neither Hamlin nor Robert. Rather, it was first proposed to Robert in 1857, by James and William Dwight, the sons of Rev.³¹ Dr. H. G. O. Dwight, a missionary in Constantinople.³² One day:

*[Once James and William Dwight] called upon Mr. Robert, as a well-known philanthropist and friend of missions, and stated that they had for some time contemplated founding a school at Constantinople, not in any way connected with the Mission and tolerant of the religious prejudices of the natives, which they hoped would soon become self-supporting, and they proposed to associate with themselves an Armenian, also a graduate of Yale.*³³

When the Dwights planned the school in Constantinople, which was going to be secular, there was a reaction from Robert and the others. They felt that there was no reason to fund a school in Constantinople, unless it was to be particularly Christian.³⁴ At the conclusion of all these negotiations about the school, the duty of founding a school in Constantinople was given to Hamlin.

It was in 1859 when Hamlin finally chose the site for the 'proposed college'.³⁵ The twenty-fourth site he found was quite reasonable, and it was in Korouchesme (Kuruçeşme). In the buying of the site, Hamlin experienced some difficulties, such as when he met some cunning agents who wanted to cheat him, but failed. The exact price that he paid for the site was \$7,000. Although Robert proposed obtaining a subscription of \$100,000, which was not enough, he would also solicit donations of smaller amounts for a library and a laboratory. Robert himself had promised to provide \$30,000 to meet the financial needs.³⁶

Hamlin and his wife were dedicated to the fulfillment of the plan. They placed their three daughters, Carrie, Abbie, and Clara, at the Deaconesses' School in Smyrna (İzmir), under the care of missionary sister Ladd. Alfred, their son, who had a serious illness at the time, was taken care by Henrietta Hamlin³⁷. About this departure, Hamlin wrote: "Not without deep emotions of anxiety and hope did I leave the place of more than twenty years' labor and break for a time so many bands of Christian sympathy and cooperation, and leave our children to the care of others." Hamlin left his children because he was well aware that the effect of the college would be intense, because the objective was to found the first American College.³⁸

On the way to the States, they visited Venice, Verona, Milan, Heidelberg, Mayence, Cologne, Paris, London, and Liverpool, where they met Mr. Jones and his family. They were very helpful and generous. The voyage was uncomfortable, and it was not fit for Mrs. Hamlin, but they landed safely in Boston just a few weeks before the Jubilee of the ABCFM. Hamlin was back in the States just to raise \$100,000, and with this mission in mind, he delivered several missionary addresses. Although the Outlook Committee was against the idea, Harvard College was in favor of it. Besides, the results in Boston and its vicinity were great; the amount collected was \$13,000. Additionally, Harvard College donated a valuable collection of law books.³⁹

³¹ The abbreviation for Reverend.

³² Washburn, p. 3.

³³ Washburn, p. 3.

³⁴ Washburn, p. 4.

³⁵ See Hamlin, 1877, p. 287.

³⁶ Hamlin, 1877, Chapter XIX.

³⁷ His daughter from his first marriage. She married George Washburn, the writer of **Fifty Years in Constantinople and Recollections of Robert College**.

³⁸ Cyrus Hamlin, **My Life and Times**, Second Edition, Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, Boston, 1893, p. 417.

³⁹ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 417-423.

There were some problems in raising the money, but Mr Williston offered valuable help with a donation of \$10,000. Later, Hamlin started giving lectures on Turkey and he earned \$1,000. With the money he earned, he paid for the furniture and books. Mr Corliss provided \$1,300 for an engine and other machinery. It was in 1861 when the American Civil War, which would last for four years, broke out, and Hamlin was in New York to see the whole city fluttering with American flags.⁴⁰

On the Hamlins' voyage back, they called at almost all the places they had visited on the way to the States, to solicit money. Just a few days after their arrival in Constantinople, Sultan Abdülmecid died and Abdülaziz took power. It was forbidden to build on the site which they had purchased before their trip to America. Something unbelievable happened, however, when they returned to Constantinople: Hamlin was offered a site by Ahmed Vefik Pasha at a reasonable price. He felt very happy, because not only was the site itself preferable in every way, but it contained excellent building-stones, too. Hamlin writes: "I purchased the ground of the celebrated Ahmed Vefik Effendi, afterwards pasha, on the condition that the money should be paid over when the government should give a legal permit to build the college upon the spot."⁴¹

It did not take long to receive permission; it was given just a few months later, and the money was then paid. As soon as he thought that everything was settled and that there were no obstacles preventing construction, two more problems surfaced. The first was a triangle of land, cutting into the site he bought and the latter concerned certain formalities. He paid eighty pounds for the land and thus solved the first problem. For the second problem, however, he had to wait and see.⁴²

Soon, Hamlin uncovered the main character behind this problem: Abbé Boré, the chief of the Jesuit mission. After all, "The Turks had for four hundred years guarded the Bosphorus from any such Christian contamination. Now, that a Yankee should accomplish what he, with the power of France behind him, had been unable to do, was naturally intolerable." The opposition came mostly from outsiders; all the Catholic embassies and Russia opposed Protestantism gaining a hold in Turkey. As this opposition surfaced Hamlin wrote letters to Robert telling everything. Robert's reply was: "We will fight it out to the end. You and I, Dr. Hamlin, will still see this thing through."⁴³

Hamlin was a man of intelligence, and it was evident to him that the delay might be a very long one; he "might turn the flank of the enemy and open the college, without asking anybody's leave. The Bebek Seminary having been removed to Marsovan (Merzifon), its premises were standing vacant. There was a principle of the Turkish government which, up to that date, had been held unchanged." He already knew "[t]hat was adet—prescriptive right. Anything that had been established for a length of time, known to the people and to the government, and not interfered with, had thereby earned the right of continued existence. There existed a saying that "The sultan's firman cannot abolish adet!"⁴⁴

With this idea in mind, Hamlin wrote to Robert and they then decided to put the plan into action. Hamlin renovated the building spending \$3,000 to finish all the painting and repairs.⁴⁵ Everything was ready, except for the college's name. Lots of names were offered, but all of them were rejected. Hamlin explains the naming thus:

The advisory committee objected to the name "American College," as being too much tainted with democracy. "The College of Constantinople" was proposed, but objected

⁴⁰ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 424-426.

⁴¹ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 426-430.

⁴² Hamlin, 1893, pp. 430-431.

⁴³ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 431-433.

⁴⁴ Hamlin, 1893, p. 433.

⁴⁵ Hamlin, 1893, p. 434.

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to, as being too assuming. "The Oriental College" (le College d'Orient) was objected to by some as being untrue, because it was an Occidental College. And so every name proposed was objected to by one or two persons. I said to them: "Well, gentlemen, this is very singular, if we can have a college, but cannot find a name for it! I propose that we call it 'Robert College!' This was received by acclamation."⁴⁶

Although Robert himself protested the name of the college, the committee said: "It is our business to fix upon the name for this country, and no other has any concern in it."⁴⁷ In 1863, Robert College was opened. The staff consisted of two American professors, Rev. George Perkins and Rev. Henry A. Schaufifier; a Greek professor, Mr. Kazakos; a professor of French, M. Dalem; a professor of Italian and of design, M. Marchesi; and, at a later period, as professor of Armenian, Mr. Hagopos Gigizian. In addition, there were several other teachers employed at different times for specific purposes.⁴⁸

At first, there were only four students in the college. In two years' time the number rose to almost 35, meaning just slow progress in enrollment. The students at the college were foreigners, because the natives regarded the school with suspicion. It was hard to find scholars from among the Armenians, Greeks, and Bulgarians, and the Protestants were too poor to pay the tuition, which was about \$200. There was an agreement between Hamlin and Robert to try this experiment for five years, and then decide whether the school was a failure or a success. When the fifth year arrived, the college had already become self-supporting, and the experiment was deemed a great success.⁴⁹

For almost eight years, the demand for the school was low and the low enrollment continued. This gave Hamlin and his colleagues another opportunity to try a different management system. By this time, they had convinced all that the main language of instruction should be English. There was also a plan to open a preparatory school. Although they tried to use the French language in equal proportion, they were not successful. Hamlin was a persistent man, and he never quit. Although there were obstacles before him, he—with the encouragement coming from Mr. Robert—never abandoned his mission. Ali Pasha (Grand Vizier at the time) even got irritated by his persistent demands and once said, "Will this Mr. Hamlin never die, and let me alone on this college question?"⁵⁰

Hamlin wanted to build a better school, and he needed permission to do so. The American Embassy was not active, but the British ambassador supported Hamlin and Sir Henry Bulwer (British Ambassador) wrote a note indicating that he had solved the problem. Sometime later, however, they learned that even Bulwer would not help. Upon deep queries, Hamlin discovered that Bulwer deliberately did not solve the problem, because he had received a bribe of \$50,000. The bribery offer meant Bulwer would lose his place, and he was recalled. He was a totally deceitful person, according to Hamlin. His successor, Lord Lyons, was also interested in the college question. At that time, Ali Pasha sent an invitation to Hamlin. When Hamlin was at Ali Pasha's house, Ali Pasha proposed to switch the current site with a piece of land that he owned. Hamlin did not like this land and refused the offer.⁵¹

To solve the problem, Hamlin went to speak with Fuad Pasha, a statesman and a member of the Liberal Party. Fuad Pasha referred the question to the neighbouring village of Hisar. The reply from Hisar was not straightforward. Hamlin had to wait until 1867-68 when Midhat Pasha was made

⁴⁶ Hamlin, 1893, p. 435.

⁴⁷ Hamlin, 1877, p. 292.

⁴⁸ Hamlin, 1893, p. 435.

⁴⁹ Hamlin, 1893, p. 436.

⁵⁰ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 436-438.

⁵¹ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 438-440.

Grand Vizier. Sometime later, Hamlin received permission to build the school. Admiral Farragut was another important Constantinople personality connected to the college. With the efforts of Hamlin, Morris, Morgan, and Secretary Seward, the “Imperial İrade”⁵² was given, and the college was placed under the protection of the United States. It carried the American flag. This privilege was only given to America, not to Britain, France, Germany, or Russia. The only reason was that America did not have political aspirations, as Hamlin stated.⁵³

The work started immediately, with the help of four different architects. Hamlin himself supported the idea that the school would be fireproof. He also needed an order from the Pasha, for the transformation of the iron and the other materials. The site of the college was in the Kayılar district, where there used to be towers at the site, and Hamlin thus wanted to study the area closely. The materials they found were really durable. The spot selected for the building was hilly, according to Hamlin, and composed of debris from a neighbouring quarry. Hamlin and the workmen spent time clearing it and the foundations and stones found at the site were used for the “binding corners” of the basement.⁵⁴

It was hard to find good stone for the building. Hamlin even had to buy “all the brick of an old Turkish bath” which was being torn down. Hamlin had great trouble with his quarrymen. They were Montenegrins and very violent and always ready to threaten the lives of others. At that time, Hamlin hired a Greek “stone blaster.” The Montenegrins did not like it, and threatened both the Greek and Hamlin. The head man once said to Hamlin that “it would not be good for [your] health to [hire other people]”. Hamlin was not just wise and witty, but also courageous. He wanted the head man’s name. Although they did not give him the name, Hamlin took some notes, and proclaimed: “Now I shall send this directly to the American minister. He will immediately give it to the minister of foreign affairs; he will give it to the chief of your guild, with orders to take care of you. You know him. You will find your match there, with as many daggers and pistols as you choose!”⁵⁵

With this, the Montenegrin workers calmed down and did not interfere with Hamlin’s work again. It was time to place the corner stone. Hon.⁵⁶ E. Joy Morris, American Minister, was there to do so. The event took place on July 4, 1869. There were lots of addresses on that day:

*[Morris’] address was followed by an address by Sir Philip Francis, judge of the English Supreme Consular Court; next, an able address by J. P. Brown, Esq., United States secretary of legation; fourth, the address by Rev. Canon Gribble, chaplain of the British embassy; the fifth, the most rhetorical and eloquent of all, was in Greek, by Philip Apostolides, Esq., a Greek lawyer; the sixth was by Hagop Effendi, Vekil of the Armenian Protestant community’, in Armenian; the seventh, in Bulgarian, by Mr. Petco Gorbanoff, professor of Slavic languages in the college; the eighth, in Turkish, by Pastor Avedis, of Northern Syria; the ninth, by Rev. Dr. Pratt, missionary.*⁵⁷

It was time to commence the building of the great structure. Hamlin found twelve Greek master-builders, twelve Armenian master-builders, for a total of twenty four. The northern half of the campus was assigned to Greeks’ and the southern half was assigned to Armenians’.⁵⁸ Hamlin depicts the work clearly:

⁵² A written decree of the Sultan.

⁵³ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 442-450.

⁵⁴ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 451-454.

⁵⁵ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 455-457.

⁵⁶ The abbreviation for Honorable.

⁵⁷ Hamlin, 1893, p. 458.

⁵⁸ Hamlin, 1893, p. 458.

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*I had many workmen — stonecutters, quarrymen, carpenters, plasterers, painters, blacksmiths, and as a general rule I was on excellent terms with them all. Every Saturday night they knocked off work in season for every man to receive his pay. If anyone had been indolent or careless during the week, he was dismissed on Saturday evening, and the reason given before all. I allowed no wine, beer, or alcoholic drinks on the college grounds. This contributed greatly to the harmony and success of the work. I had, first and last, more than two hundred workmen, of different nationalities and religions, and I can recall very few of them that I would not be glad to see again, or who, as I believe, would not be glad to see me. A right distribution of labor, fair wages, prompt payment, and good service, are four essential elements of success in such a work, and of content among the workmen.*⁵⁹

The interesting point that Hamlin mentions in his memoir, **My Life and Times**, is that the workmen would often read the Bible, in the Turkish language. During construction there were no deaths due to accidents, but there were severe injuries. Once, a buzz saw cut off two of Hamlin's fingers and the little finger of one of the workmen. Hamlin thinks the "prayer of Canon Gribble, at the laying of the corner stone 'that no life might be lost' was graciously answered".⁶⁰

Before the completion of the work, Robert appeared in Constantinople. He was shocked by the building and expressed his gratification to Hamlin thus: "So long as we live, Mr Hamlin, we shall never separate in this work!" When Robert was in Constantinople he was called to the Palace of Ali Pasha, the Grand Vizier. Hamlin was also called with him. Hamlin was congratulated for the work he had done. The transfer of the college to its new quarters was on May 15, 1871. The formal opening, however, was on July 4, in order to accommodate William H. Seward, the ex-Secretary of State who was on his way to Constantinople.⁶¹ Seward recounts this invitation in **William H. Seward's Travels around the World**, edited by his adopted daughter Olive Risley Seward:

*We repaired this morning, in accordance with an invitation, to Robert College, an American university for the education of Turkish youths, founded by the liberality of Christopher R. Robert, of New York. Twelve years ago the Turkish Government conceded the site, which is the most commanding one on the Bosphorus. But Mussulman jealousies caused delay in confirming the concession. A long and sometimes unpleasant discussion, which occurred on the subject between the two Governments, was happily brought to an end during the closing year of Mr. Seward's official term in the Department of State.*⁶²

The public opening was great. Some weeks after the opening ceremony, a Turkish man arrived at the college to examine it. When he had finished, he said: "I think more of English education than of any other. I have some little grandsons, and when they are old enough, I intend to send them to this college". Hamlin was inspired by the man's utterance, and he invited him to the college tower to view the scenery. The man compared the scenery with that at the European schools, and came to the decision that the scenery of this college was matchless. On his way down he said: "Ah, sir! We would never have given you leave to build your college here had it not been for that bloody insurrection in Crete!"⁶³

⁵⁹ Hamlin, 1893, p. 459.

⁶⁰ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 462-465, 466.

⁶¹ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 466-468.

⁶² Olive Risley Seward, **William H. Seward's Travels around the World**, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1873, p. 641.

⁶³ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 470, 479. For more information about the insurrection in Crete see Hamlin, 1893, pp. 471-473.

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Hamlin understood why Ahmed Vefik Pasha did not want to sell the site when he was in Paris and why he indeed offered to sell it when he came back to Turkey. Although the written letters to which Hamlin referred were translated by the Greek diplomats, they gave extra hints about the background of the permission given by the Ottoman Government.⁶⁴ The story of the bargain of the site owned by Ahmed Vefik Pasha was also clarified by the man's explanation of how the İrade was given. While Ahmed Vefik Pasha was in Paris as the Ottoman Ambassador, the secretary of legation, Brown, went to see him. He told Ahmed Vefik that they wanted to buy the site, and he offered \$15,000 for the whole field, as Hamlin had already told him earlier. Ahmed Vefik was very determined not to sell the site, saying: "Tell Mr. Hamlin if he has land to sell, I will listen to him; if he is only a purchaser, I have nothing to say, and no terms to offer."⁶⁵ The interesting thing was Ahmed Vefik's offer of the site when he turned back:

*While Sultan Abdul Medjid lived, his place at Paris was everything he could wish. His bills for diplomatic dinners were very heavy, but promptly paid. The Sultan enjoined it upon him to allow no embassy to surpass the Ottoman in the splendor and attractiveness of its dinners. "I assure you," he said, "that our dinners gathered to them the most distinguished guests and always received the highest praise." So long as Abdul Medjid lived, my reports and itemized bills received his full approbation. [Ali] was unable to undermine my influence. His death gave him the opportunity he had watched for. The ambassadorial expenses were cut down so that very useful employees were dismissed. Finally the bill for diplomatic dinners was disallowed. I was compelled to resign with a debt of 150,000 francs — \$30,000. I was driven out, without one charge brought against me. My honor and my regard for the honor of my government would not allow me to leave bills in Paris unpaid. I exhausted all my private resources, and then was compelled to sell this choice position which you now own, and where I hoped some day to build a kiosk.*⁶⁶

Ali Pasha was against this purchase and said Ahmed should pay back the money he got for the site, but Ahmed did not bother. The triumph was Ahmed's. After the death of Ali Pasha, Ahmed Vefik Efendi became Ahmed Vefik Pasha. From the very start of the foundation of the college, Cyrus Hamlin and George Washburn were great figures for the development of the college. In a way, the early destiny of Robert College was directed by these two missionaries, who were broadminded, especially where education was concerned.⁶⁷ College education was as important as raising a child as Washburn states: "Our theory of college education is not new. In substance it is as old as Plato and Aristotle. Its chief end is the highest possible development of character. . . The most important work of the College is to train and develop the physical, intellectual and moral powers of the student."⁶⁸ The consequences of the college and its outcomes are told in Chapter IV and in the Conclusion part.

The American College For Girls⁶⁹

In August, 1867, Dr. Hamlin made a proposal of a college for girls in İstanbul to Mr Robert. Hamlin thought it was necessary to the completeness of Robert College. He was determined not to have any connection

⁶⁴ Hamlin, 1893, p. 473.

⁶⁵ Hamlin, 1893, p. 475.

⁶⁶ Hamlin, 1893, pp. 475-476.

⁶⁷ Henry Morgenthau, **All in a Life-Time**, Doubleday, Page & Company, Garden City / New York, 1922, p. 208.

⁶⁸ Washburn, p. 295.

⁶⁹ It has also been called as Constantinople Woman's College or İstanbul Woman's College.

between these two institutions. Dr. Hamlin was persistent upon telling his plan in special letters to Mr Robert. At first, Mr Robert was reluctant and a bit resented as George Washburn quotes from a letter he got from Mr Robert:

*If I do not greatly mistake, those who come after us, fifty or one hundred years hence, will see more clearly than we ever shall that those who laid the foundations of the College were guided by the wisdom that cometh down from above. Although Dr. Hamlin is now highly appreciated by those who know him best it is only an index of far greater honor that will be showered on his name in after generations.*⁷⁰

Mr and Mrs Nathaniel G. Clarke willingly travelled to the Ottoman Empire in 1871-1872. When they were in the Empire they encountered a lot of schools for boys, but they were well aware of the need for education for girls. After they turned back, they started a campaign and made a lot of efforts to arise interest in the work of education for the women of the Ottoman Empire.⁷¹ Actually the idea of initiating such a movement for the education of women came to a number of people but it was Mrs Albert Bowker who started this movement. She was the first president of the Woman's Board of Missions which was founded in 1868. Her main interest was education, especially international education and most probably she was the first person who thought of founding a school for girls in İstanbul. There were some other institutions of that kind in the city at that time, but they only accepted boys or men and were mostly based on religious teaching.⁷² **To Caroline Borden**, the American High School for girls in İstanbul was not established as a mission school of the Missionary boards.⁷³ Besides, the main aim of the school for girls was told by Miss Borden as quoted in A History of Robert College by John Freely:

*The design of the High School shall be to provide for the thorough education and Christian culture of girls from the surrounding native communities, and also for a special training of such as may desire to become teachers and helpers in the missionary work. Its arrangement and missionary work shall be to secure, with the Devine blessing, a true and symmetrical Christian character in the pupils, well qualified teachers of native female seminaries and higher schools, wives of pastors, and well-ordered Christian homes. . .*⁷⁴

During Sultan Aziz's late years of reign, two international schools for boys were founded in İstanbul. One of them was a middle-class Lycee⁷⁵ which was established in 1868. The language of the school was French and it was in Galatasaray. The other school was an American institution called Robert College. This college was for men of all nationalities. It was in Rumeli Hisarı. The language of the college was English. Mrs Bowker⁷⁶ had the zeal to start a college for girls in İstanbul; however, this enthusiasm was unnoticed. In October, 1871, the first session started with three pupils in a rented house in Gedikpaşa. The youngest of these pupils was just six years old. Miss Julia A. Rappleye was the first principal of the school.⁷⁷ At the end of the school year 1874-75, Miss Rappleye had to resign her position and return to the United States. Before she left, she had seen some forty students graduate from the school. In the autumn of 1875 Mary Mills Patrick had the first connection with the school.⁷⁸ In 1876 the school moved to a new place in Scutari (Üsküdar), across the Bosphorus. This change is told by Mary Mills Patrick in **A Bosphorus Adventure**:

⁷⁰ Washburn, p. 31.

⁷¹ Jenkins, p. 25.

⁷² Mary Mills Patrick, **A Bosphorus Adventure İstanbul (Constantinople) Woman's College 1871-1924**, Stanford University Press, California, 1934, p. 29.

⁷³ Jenkins, p. 34.

⁷⁴ Freely, p. 140.

⁷⁵ Galatasaray High School (Galatasaray Lisesi) or "Lycée Impérial Ottoman de Galata-Sérai" (Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultanisi).

⁷⁶ Apart from Mrs. Bowker there were others, such as; Caroline Borden and Mary Mills Patrick.

⁷⁷ Patrick, 1934, pp. 30-31.

⁷⁸ Patrick, 1934, p. 36.

While the money was being raised in the United States a suitable site for a building was sought in Constantinople. Finally, after much searching, a spot of great beauty was found in Scutari, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus. Scutari was then an ambitious city of sixty thousand inhabitants. . . . The site chosen included two and three-fourths acres. The estate was called the Pishmish Oglou, or "that of the son of the man who was cooked." It was not wholly clear, however, who was cooked, and why anyone had to be cooked we never discovered. While negotiations for the purchase of the property in Scutari were going on, the Hon. Horace Maynard was the American Minister. By August 1872 he had overcome all obstacles to our acquiring the Pishmish estate; and since American citizens even then were able to hold property legally in Turkey, the deed of our Scutari campus was made out in the name of a member of the local committee. As purchasers of this site, we fell heir to Oriental frescoes around the ceilings of a small building on the property and to a treasure house of rare and beautiful china belonging to the luxurious life of the period. The embryo school of three pupils established in Stamboul under Julia Rappleye in 1871 slowly increased in numbers. After the purchase of the Scutari property the school was removed in 1873 to a rented house in close proximity to the new site.⁷⁹

Although English was taught to the students, they were instructed in Armenian because the students were all Armenians. The institution was originally called Constantinople Home or just Home School.⁸⁰ Since Üsküdar was on the Asiatic shore, and it was isolated from the American colony on the European side of the Bosphorus,⁸¹ and since new academic buildings were added to the Bebek campus of Robert College in 1914, so the American College for Girls moved from Üsküdar to Arnavutköy, which was a larger campus. In 1932 Robert College and American College for Girls came under the administration of a single President. In 1971 the two schools merged under the name Robert College, which became a co-ed school on the Arnavutköy campus. The same year, Robert College's Bebek campus was given to the Turkish government, and became Boğaziçi University. With the implementation of eight-year compulsory education in 1997, Robert College's middle school closed down and it became solely a high school. Currently, students who enter Robert College study one year of prep-class, followed by four years of high school.

Robert College and American College for Girls were just two of the many colleges that the ABCFM opened in Ottoman Turkey. For example; Harput American College, İzmir International College, Merzifon American College, Tarsus American College, Bursa American College, Antep American College were the other leading ones. Apart from these colleges they also opened primary schools and secondary schools. Among these colleges, Merzifon Amerikan College followed some separatist and destructive activities. To prevent these kinds of activities on 22nd March 1896, the ones who were involved in such clandestine activities were deported. But this was not enough to solve the problem. During that time Şakir Pasha did some investigation and put forward two important outcomes. The first was closing down all the foreign schools. "If this is not possible, there must be strict rules set forth by the government" he added. The second was an offer of opening "Turkish Trade Schools". Şakir Pasha was in favour of the second one. He knew that these foreign schools would not close down.⁸²

⁷⁹ Patrick, 1934, pp. 34-35.

⁸⁰ Freely, p. 140. The origin of the name is told in a monograph by Miss Borden. For this see Freely, p. 140.

⁸¹ Mary Mills Patrick, **Under Five Sultans**, The Century Co, New York, 1929, p. 74.

⁸² Nurettin Birol, "XIX. Yüzyıl Sonlarında Sivas Vilayetinde Azınlık ve Yabancı Eğitim-Öğretim Kurumları ve Faaliyetleri", Turkish Studies-International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic -, ISSN: 1308-2140, (Prof. Dr. Fahrettin Kırzioğlu Armağanı), Volume 3/4 Summer 2008, pp. 241-278.

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Conclusion

The most important tool of Missionaries was educational institutions. In this sense, missionaries used the schools in order to propagate their own mentality, traditions and customs by means of these schools. Therefore, it is noteworthy that, in 1900, there were over 400 American schools and the number of students was almost twenty thousand. The total number of foreign schools in the Ottoman Empire during the same period was about two thousand. When minority schools are added to this number it reached 10 thousand. Hence, as a result of the riots of these minorities within the weakening period of the empire and with the help of Western states the minorities gained their independence. The effect of the educational activities of the missionaries cannot be ignored for their independence. Missionary activities have very much contributed to their independence, such as Greece in 1829, Bulgaria in 1908, the Balkans before World War I and the Arab lands after World War I.⁸³ Although there were rejections from the missionaries, we have the information that Robert College affected the life of Bulgaria and made Bulgaria.⁸⁴ Essentially not just Bulgaria, but the unrest of Greeks in the north of Turkey and the upheaval of Balkan nations were all supported by the colleges above mentioned. It was, of course, not a physical but mental and spiritual support, as Atatürk declared in his **Nutuk**.⁸⁵

These private schools, belonging to foreigners and minorities, apart from providing students with the knowledge and skills to be successful in life, also made propaganda against the policies of the government, and the integrity and independence of the state. Foreign governments, with the schools spreading as far as the small villages, had influence in the Ottoman territories. The Turkish animosity they developed gave way to separations among societies that lived together through the centuries and had many common cultural values. Even Turkish communities relative to one another, were brought into such a struggle that they were eager to gain their independence. Presumably we are still suffering from the outcomes of these so-called educational policies of these American Institutions.

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⁸³ For more information see Ayten Sezer, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e; Misyonerlerin Türkiye'deki Eğitim ve Öğretim Faaliyetleri" Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, Ankara, October 1999, pp. 169-184.

⁸⁴ See Cox, p. 299. Anna Bowman Dodd also declares that: "It is no discredit — it is surely proof of the vitality of the teachings emanating from such foreign schools of learning — to learn, from those who know, that two-thirds of all the conspiracies and plots for overturning the hated Turkish yoke in Bulgaria, or Armenia, or other disaffected Turkish provinces, may be directly traced through the track of the fiery young revolutionaries who have been graduated from either Robert College, or from some other foreign mission school." See Dodd, p. 479.

⁸⁵ "Ateşkes Anlaşmasından sonra bütün Rumlar, Yunanlılık ulusal amacı ile her yerde şımardığı gibi, Etniki Eterya Derneği propagandacıları ile Merzifon Amerikan kurumlarınca eğitilip yetiştirilen ve yabancı hükümetlerin silahlarıyla kuvvetlendirilen ve yüreklendirilen bu bölgedeki Rum topluluğu da, bağımsız bir Pontus Hükümeti kurmak isteğine kapıldı. Bu amaçla genel bir ayaklanma hazırladılar." See Gazi Mustafa Kemal, **Nutuk (Söylev)**, Örgün Yayınları, İstanbul, 1980, p. 403.

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