Mission as Factor of Change in Turkey (nineteenth to first half of twentieth century)

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ABSTRACT  This article explores the complex role Protestant missionaries played in late Ottoman Asia Minor. For several generations they were important, even if today almost forgotten, actors of social and mental change. They succeeded in establishing autonomous schools, hospitals and factories not only in the capital, but also in the provinces. They had a vision of integrating minorities into an egalitarian pluralist society which was diametrically opposed to the ideas of the ruling groups and the nationalists. Instead of homogenizing society and strengthening its (Turco-)Muslim unity, missions were differentiating society in religious, ethnic and social terms. Protestant missions supported religious minorities such as the Armenians and Assyrians, heterodox groups such as the Alevis and Yezidis and the poorer classes, but could not win over the state, which was based on the support of the Sunni majority and saw the missions’ successful puritan and liberal modernity as a threat. Even if during and after World War I the missionaries’ human networks and social visions tragically broke down, their strong contribution to modern education in Turkey remained.

The missionary impact on Turkey during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been strong and complex and is far from having been satisfactorily researched. There are many published and unpublished contributions on this theme, including historiographical sketches, but hitherto there has been no modern monograph on this fascinating subject.

Mission in Turkey is a delicate topic for several reasons, not only because of its real or supposed link with Western hegemony, but especially—and this is our point—because mission was concerned with minorities and had a vision of integrating them into a new form of society which was in some ways diametrically opposed to the ideas of the ruling groups. Instead of homogenizing society and strengthening its unity, missions were differentiating society in religious, ethnic and social terms. Missions worked with religious minorities such as the Armenians and Assyrians, heterodox groups such as the Alevis and Yezidis and with the poorer classes. For many missionaries, notably for the Protestant internationalists, the pursuit of human rights meant making visible the existing discrimination against individuals and groups—and against the female sex—and fighting for their advance and equal rights in society.

Exploring unknown geographical regions and ethnic or social particularities was the imperative condition for a successful approach to ‘unreached peoples’. The Turkish historian Uygur Kocabaşoğlu has stated correctly that:

...when the Ottoman intellectuals in the first quarter of the twentieth century began to discover Anatolia and wonder about it, we can say that American missionaries already knew it well. And because they did so, they probably knew much better than the Ottoman rulers the values, patterns of behaviour,
desires, prejudices and expectations of the different ethnic and social groups living there.\(^1\)

The assertion of religious freedom was an evident part of mission policy in the expansive last decades of the nineteenth century and corresponded to the missions' self-interest. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the attitude toward Ottoman society changed somewhat. The missionaries, notably those belonging to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the strongest organization in Asia Minor, seem for the first time to have become seriously concerned with the functioning of society as a whole, including the Sunnî Muslim majority. In 1908 we see many members of the ABCFM siding with the new Young Turk rulers in propagating a democratic plural Ottoman ‘nation’. Both sides praised the benefits of civil society. During the wars, however, from the Balkan wars to World War I and the ‘National War’ (1912–22), hardliners came to power who were influenced by European nationalist and social-Darwinist ideas. The honeymoon between American Protestants and Young Turks turned into deep distrust, mutual accusations and, as in the case of a chauvinist like Enver Pasha, bitter hatred.

The Protestant missions were not only a modernizing factor outside the big centres through their schools and hospitals, but also clear promoters of federalist solutions regarding the future of the crisis-ridden Kurdo-Armenian eastern provinces of the Empire. During and after the Armenian genocide, the government expelled the whole of the flourishing missionary network which had become a thorn in its side. After the establishment and international acceptance in Lausanne (1923) of a unitary Turkish state, all the Christian missions left in Turkey remained under suspicion of agitating against national and religious unity. Nationalists of the political Right as well as of the Left accused them of jeopardizing national sovereignty by means of internationalist humanitarian concepts.

The Republic of Turkey, however, did not succeed in establishing interethnic peace and social justice in Eastern Anatolia. The economic, ecological, political and social cost of 76 years of coercive unitary politics there is tremendous.\(^2\) Nearly all young nations of the former Ottoman area are based on ideologies with strong ethnic overtones. Ethnicity, especially with its religious factor, remains a major problem for building open ‘civil societies’ in the Balkans and the Middle East.

This article proposes a summary analysis of the ambiguous identity-forming role of the ABCFM in late Ottoman and early nationalist (Republican) Turkey. It focusses especially on the ABCFM’s little-known relation with the Anatolian Alevis, an important heterodox group living among Kurds and Turks in Central and Eastern Anatolia. The triangle formed by ethnicity, mission and the state best exemplifies the missionary dynamics and failures in the Middle East.\(^3\) The creation of a Protestant millet in 1850, which was a result of the new missionary identity formation, is a significant starting-point, and the cultural destruction in 1938 of the Dersim—the Kurdish Alevi heartland dear to the Protestant missionaries—forms a logical conclusion to this analysis.

**Integrating Minorities in the History of Salvation**

The first missionaries of the ABCFM learnt early on the impossibility of evangelizing members of the Ottoman ummet, the state-supporting Muslim majority (üss-i saltanat). Their resistance to conversion was partly due to the strong legal and social sanctions against conversions, but not only to that. Like the Jews, for deep historical and
psychological reasons the Muslims remained on the whole impermeable to the enthusiastic approach of the Protestants. Therefore the ABCFM concentrated its work on the Assyrian, Armenian and Greek minorities and kept in contact with Muslim marginals. Its eschatological view of history during the first half of the nineteenth century was related to four expectations of great import to the Ottoman Middle East: (1) the global spread of the gospel; (2) the return of the Jews to Palestine and their ‘restoration’ (acceptance of Jesus Christ); (3) the fall of the Pope; and (4) the collapse of Islam. Concerning the time scale, the spiritual fathers of the ABCFM were more prudent than others and did not believe that the millennium would be realized before 2000.

The above-mentioned Muslim resistance led to the missions developing the following key concept: using the oriental Christians or heterodox Muslims as agents for ‘leavening [i.e. Christianizing] the Levant’. So Protestantism first had to bring about a spiritual and educational revival of the ‘flaccid’ Oriental churches before moving on to evangelizing non-Christian populations.

Christian minorities and some heterodox groups thus won a privileged place in the missionary scheme of salvation. The majority of the people, on the other hand, the Sunni Muslims, were seen as a group corrupted by a misguided faith and the abuse of power. Only after they, too, had accepted enlightenment could they take part in the blessings of eschatological progress.

The missionary focus on minorities had far-reaching consequences. The ABCFM contributed decisively not only to furnishing them with what appeared to be a place in the future, but also to constructing a collective past, in accordance with Western concepts, and to upgrading their spoken languages by putting them into a written form and using them for publications. All this led to the cultural and national ‘renaissance’ of peoples such as the Armenians, the Assyrians and the Alevi. The missionary discovery and description of the ‘mountain Nestorians’ in the 1830s were a scientific sensation. The interpretation of them as the lost tribes of Israel by Asahel Grant may have been speculative; but the really important thing was the astonishing discovery of a diversity of ethnicities and the attempt to integrate them into a universal eschatological order. By so doing the missionaries challenged fundamentally the old universal Ottoman order with its religious hierarchy between true believers (ümmet), possessors of Holy Scriptures (the Jewish and the Christian millets), heterodox groups and ‘pagans’. The egalitarian principles of the Tanzimat (Ottoman Reform) Era of 1839–76, which theoretically encouraged the missions to challenge the old order, were only very partially realized in Central and Eastern Anatolia. But in spite of its declared equality and religious liberty, the Tanzimat had a clear Sunni touch: the restoration of a lost order—the ‘Pax Ottomanica’—and of the power of the ümmet essentially determined the project for the future. We can easily see this in the works of eminent Tanzimat officials like Ahmed Cevdet Pasha and Mehmed Esad. In this sense, the religious ideology behind the Ottoman order of the nineteenth century was backward-looking.

The mental universe propagated by the missionaries, however, could deal perfectly with many elements of the modern world and was much more open and dynamic than the ideology behind the Ottoman order. But it was inadequate in the main sense that it could not integrate Islam convincingly into its view of the future and that it lacked the experience of religious cohabitation. The early missionaries could only see Islam as an ‘obstacle’. In the eyes of most representatives of the ümmet, mission was closely linked with the threat posed by Western political and social worlds (even if in reality there were some important rifts between the West in general and the groups supporting
Protestant missions). The later missionaries were aware of this problem without being able to resolve it. Some of them revised their image of Islam and began to see Muhammad in a more positive light.\(^7\)

The missionary impact on identity in the millets in late Ottoman Turkey was ambiguous, notably in the eyes of the Greek and Armenian nationalists or the traditional élite. The missionary aim was not national reconstruction but the insertion of renewed communities into the utopian plan of building up the global ‘kingdom of God’. Conflicts with the traditional élites (which felt their position threatened) and with the rising nationalist leaders (who submitted culture and religion to the goal of national strength and union) were inevitable. The creation of a separate Protestant millet in 1847, confirmed by imperial firman in 1850, was an inevitable development, but not a long-term project devised by the ABCFM. The ABCFM had intended to ‘revive’ and not split the established communities. It is true that in the 1860s and 1870s the Missionary Herald emphasized proudly the numerical increase of the Protestant millet (though it still remained much smaller than the traditional churches), but in the last three Ottoman decades at least, the ABCFM seemed hardly interested in enlarging ‘its’ millet.

The constitution of this new community was important as a modern model of redefining collective social relations. Unlike the Catholic millet (created 1831) and the traditional millets, all headed by patriarchs, it separated millet membership and church affiliation. The representative of the millet was not an ecclesiastic. He was elected by an assembly of deputies representing the local Protestant communities. There is no doubt that this ‘democratic’ constitution had a major impact far beyond the Armenians, on the minds of the people with regard to their civil rights.\(^8\)

In the first decades very often we see leaders of the millets and, less frequently, the state of the Tanzimat opposing the missionaries. This changed considerably after Sultan Abdulhamid’s ascent to the throne in 1876. This young ruler was traumatically marked by the Turco-Russian war in the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia (1877–8). He adopted policies of Muslim unity in the face of the real danger of the final disintegration of his Empire. Within the eastern provinces, his defensive Islamist politics proved to be aggressive.

Let us understand these important changes with regard to missions, ethnic groups and state by analysing the long-lasting love story between Protestants and Alevis in Central and Eastern Anatolia.

**The Missionary Discovery of the Anatolian Alevis**

The story of the missionary–Alevi relationship begins in the 1850s, shortly after the establishment of the Protestant millet. It is one of mutual sympathy, shared spiritual and social values and common hope in a new age. The reality fell far short of the great expectations. But missionary enthusiasm for this people and curiosity concerning them remained constant. Henry Riggs wrote in 1911: ‘The more one learns of this strange and attractive religion, the more the question is forced upon him, What is the source of this religion, and what the history of these simple, ignorant people, who possess so much that their wiser neighbours have not?’\(^9\) It is amazing to hear a member of the expensive missionary movement before World War I referring to a non-Christian religion in these positive terms!

The Anatolian Alevi are the descendants of an ethnically mixed heterodox rural people who opposed their integration into the Ottoman state body during the fifteenth
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and sixteenth centuries. With Selim I, the sixteenth century definitely turned out to be dominated by Sunnīs. The Kızılbaş—so called then because of their red headgear—pinned their hopes on the Persian Shah Ismail, and became, in Ottoman eyes, traitors and public enemies. The state propaganda reviled them as immoral unbelievers without Holy books—‘kitabsiz’ (they dared to deviate from the Qur‘ān)—and therefore far worse than Christians or Jews. They had to live at the edge of society and in remote regions, notably the Dersim between Sivas, Erzurum and Harput, and the Elbistan, south-west of the Dersim. Without mosques, their villages were clearly recognizable, until Sultan Abdulhamid (and his successors till now) constructed mosques there. Until the twentieth century, Kızılbaş remained a term of invective. The partial replacement of that term by ‘Alevi’ in about 1900 did not effectively change the deep prejudices against this important minority among the Sunnī majority. Alevi then and now constitute between a third and a quarter of Turkey’s Muslim population.

In the 1850s the missionaries of the ABCFM were probably the first people from outside to enter the close endogamous community of the Kızılbaş and were perhaps the first non-Alevis to be admitted to the secret religious assemblies of the djem. They were deeply touched by this ‘unique people’, its whole-hearted hospitality, its fine tenderness during the djem and its persistent wish to be instructed by the missionaries. They marvelled to hear about a Kurdish Kızılbaş chief near Çemisgezek who had proclaimed himself a Protestant and continued stubbornly to do so—without ever having been in direct contact with the mission. This Ali Gako and other Kızılbaş in the regions of Harput, Sivas and Marash, who called themselves Protestants, had usually learnt from their Armenian neighbours about the new Protestant movement.

But this attempt by several Kızılbaş groups to redefine their identity and social role touched vital interests of state. The missionary George Nutting expressed it as follows:

The Moslems do not consider them as Moslems, and the only reason why they should oppose their evangelization is that now they have often opportunity to oppress them in various ways, in respect to taxes, &c., and they fear that when they become Protestants we shall inform the powers above them of their oppressions, and bring them to punishment, or prevent such wrongs.

Nutting’s suggestion of a special charter (firman) for the Kızılbaş based on the Hatt-i Hümayun of 1856, which had laid down such principles as religious liberty, was no more than wishful thinking.

In fact, the state feared for its unity and power. Internally the members or at least the leaders of the ümmet did not see the Alevi as their equals. But in relations with outsiders the state preferred to include them in the ümmet, wanting to keep them under its sole control and thus avoiding the possibility of an external international intervention in their favour. Indeed, attempts of Sunnitzation had threatened the Bektashi organization, and partly also the Alevi affiliated to them, since the suppression of the Bektashi order in 1826. In order to avoid confusion, it is, however, important to keep in mind that despite their religious kinship, Bektashism, which aroused so much interest among the Young Ottomans, and Alevism, are two very distinct phenomena. The first was a religious order largely present in the Balkans, and urban, the second, an ethno-religious community scattered in many Anatolian villages, and rural by nature.

The missionaries found themselves compelled to reduce to a minimum their contacts with the Alevi in the 1860s and 1870s. Notably in the region of Sivas, they feared for the lives of their native employees and of the Alevi concerned. The ABCFM could not bring the Alevi any improvement in their precarious social position. Repression by
local officials and Sunnî neighbours on account of their Protestant inclinations intimidated them. Yet more than a handful continued to avow themselves *protes* (Protestants), a term which meant for them social and scientific progress in accordance with the precepts of a religion of the heart. George Herrick from the Sivas station said: ‘Once bold, and desirous of being enlightened and reckoned as Protestant Christians, if they have become timid, is not the fault largely our own’.

**Sultan Abdulhamid II and the Protestantism**

The post-Tanzimat Sultan Abdulhamid could not do other than see the disastrous Turco-Russian war (1877–8) as a failure of the Tanzimat. So he began to carry on in the 1880s a socio-political strategy of the ‘restoration of the Ümme’ or of Islamic unity, which was by no means the same as the promotion of social equality. On the other hand he implemented more effectively than any reformist before him the centralizing and modernizing concepts of the Tanzimat in administration, education and health. He tried actively to integrate the Alevis and other heterodox groups such as the Yezidis into the Ümme (i.e. to Sunnitize them). He succeeded in reintegrating the Sunnî Kurds by giving numerous tribes the status of privileged cavalry units, the so-called *Hamidiye*. (Sunnî Kurds had been frustrated by the pre- and early Tanzimat state which destroyed the age-old Kurdish autonomies.)

Abdulhamid sent his own *Hanefi* missionaries to Central and Eastern Turkey. They mobilized the Muslims for his policies. It seems that this little-known semi-official network played an important role in the extensive anti-Armenian pogroms in 1895 and 1896. Even if his policy of incorporating Alevis and Yezidis did not win them over, it isolated them successfully from the ABCFM.

Protestantism as represented by the ABCFM had become a main ideological enemy in the eyes of the Sultan. It was not only a major factor in the renaissance of Armenian and Syriac self-consciousness, but seemed to have the ideological potential to initiate something like an Alevi renaissance. For historical reasons, the relationship between Alevis and native Christians was, at least in Eastern Anatolia, much more intimate than that between Alevis and Sunnîs. An Alevi community influenced, educated and consolidated by Protestants would stand side by side with the Armenians and ultimately promote common political ideas such as social equality and regional autonomy. Abdulhamid first informed himself seriously about the eastern Alevis. Probably he already feared the possible Alevi–Armenian alliance which was to become a nightmare for Young Turk nationalists on the eve of World War I. In fact, such an alliance would have gravely challenged the demographic and political predominance of the established system in Central and Eastern Anatolia. George E. White wrote shortly before the Young Turk revolution of July 1908:

Yet in the stronghold of Turkish power, the fair provinces of Asia Minor, about one-fourth of the people are not Mohammedan at all but Eastern Christians, and of the Mohammedan population about one-fourth—some propose one-third—are not Sunnîtic at all but are schismatic Shias [Alevis]. For the present this line of cleavage is kept very much out of sight, but circumstances might easily take such shape that this internal breach would come to the surface as a deadly wound.

Abdulhamid saw also a danger in missionary attempts to reach Kurdish people. Since the early Tanzimat, Sunnî Kurds were confused about their social and political role and
looking for a new orientation. The sheikhs rose as new politico-religious leaders. The ABCFM tried to work among them too, but was unable to do so because ‘Hamidism had reached an acute stage as against Armenia and Koordistan.’

Printed gospels in Armeno-Kurdish (Kurmandji-Kurdish written in Armenian letters) and later in Arabo-Kurdish, and modest Kurdish village schools and Christian instruction appeared as dangerous attacks on Islamic unity and as germs of ethnic self-consciousness.

From this perspective, the missionary work of the Protestants was subversive and seditious (fesad-pezfi), as Yıldız Palace documents state over and over from the 1890s. Catholic mission was not seen in this way at that time. It had got the reputation of being loyal to the government, and it profited from the diplomatic rapprochement between the Sultan and the Pope.

The Utopian Moment of 1908: building plural civil society

The Young Turk revolution of July 1908 abruptly ended the Hamidian régime. It brought to power an élite of young patriotic officials and officers of middle-class origin. All members of the party of Union and Progress (also called Unionists) were largely influenced by the European ideologies of the time, notably positivism, social-Darwinism and racial nationalism.

Their declared goal was the establishment of a liberal system to follow the Hamidian autocracy; yet their first aim was the gaining of unrestricted national unity and sovereignty.

It would be wrong to judge Young Turks only by their dark acts during the ensuing dictatorial wars (1913–22). Let us take seriously the numerous testimonies of missionaries and other qualified eyewitnesses who were overwhelmed by what they experienced in summer 1908. ‘I confess that my faith has been weak. I did not expect in my lifetime to see Turks, Armenians, and Greeks mingling as brothers, or to hear Moslems speak in a Christian church in praise of liberty for all and equality before the law,’ wrote the Revd James L. Fowle in Kayseri in an article with the significant title ‘The Birth of an Ottoman Nation’.

Undoubtedly, a utopian moment seemed near: the overcoming of religious and ethnic divisions and the common construction of a pluralistic Middle Eastern ‘Ottoman Nation’ with a constitutional system.

Perhaps nobody was more willing than the American missionaries to believe in such a future and to contribute to building it. As James Barton, the ABCFM’s secretary in Boston and former missionary in Harput put it:

... never before in the history of Moslem and Christian intercourse have believers in these two religions so drawn together and publicly demonstrated their purpose to exalt patriotism above creed and love of country above religious hatreds. A long step has been taken toward a better understanding between Mohammedans and Christians as these hitherto widely separated classes join in a common purpose to make the constitution a success. This fact alone reveals unmeasured possibilities for the future.

In the same text he expressed the hope that the crucial Armenian question would find its solution within a free Turkey and allow relations between the ABCFM and the state to be put on a more friendly basis. The pogroms of the 1890s had seriously damaged them. The Unionists’ condemnation of the pogroms, their fraternization with the non-Muslims and political cooperation with the Armenian Dachnak seemed to confirm hopes of improving relations.
American missionaries suddenly gained prestige as ‘pioneers of progress’ and were invited as speakers at the Young Turk club meetings in provincial towns like Mezere-Harpurt.24 The 60-year-old missionary Mary Barnum, on home leave in 1912, hastened to return to Harput saying: “The rapid changes that are going on among those among whom we have labored, now so suddenly awakened, challenge us to go back and have share in building the new life of Turkey.”25 The open use of nineteenth-century spiritual terms like ‘awakening’ and ‘new life’ for processes taking place in society as a whole is very significant.

Ottoman society had been plural but never pluralistic in the modern secular sense:26 its functioning had always been hierarchical and coercive. The modern ideology of equal citizens (vatandaş) within a multi-religious empire was designated as ‘Ottoman-ism’ (osmanlılık) and had some roots in the Tanzimat.27 Its most prominent missionary ideologue in the last two Ottoman decades was James Barton.28 From 1908 on, forming a pluri-religious national leadership and making good and equal citizens were the declared aims of missionary schools. By taking on social responsibility for the promising development of Young Turkey, the ABCFM won large support from the political establishment of the USA, including the Presidents. For Theodore Roosevelt, the ‘young Moslems educated at the American schools and colleges’ were ‘especially fitted to take part’ in the ‘present movement to introduce far-reaching reforms, political and social, in Turkey, an effort with which we all keenly sympathize’.29 The USA and its missionaries were to lead the Ottoman renewal.

American and other missionaries became the fiercest critics of European policies in the Balkans, seeing that they destabilized the fragile Young Turkey.30 Despite many setbacks, the ABCFM kept up its optimistic approach.

The ABCFM’s declared change from a minority-orientation to a civil-society-orientation was far from having a broad effect in the short lapse between the Young Turkish revolution and the outbreak of World War I. Muslim attendance at mission schools increased somewhat, but remained low.31 Nevertheless, important steps toward a change were undertaken. Missionaries began analyzing some of the constraints and the barriers that resulted from the religious stance of their institutions. They changed some of the rules which gave offence to Muslim students. The pioneers of the mid-nineteenth-century in the Armenia and Kurdistan of Eastern Turkey had not ignored the dangers of the ethnocentric approach, but had scarcely revised their biased view of Islam. Some missionaries began to do so and asked for a ‘politically correct’ language with regard to Islam.32 ‘Civic force’, ‘Ottoman citizenship’, ‘humanitarian leadership’, ‘moral contagion’, ‘antidote’ (to corruptive Western influences) and social ‘leavening process’ were the new keywords.

Despite the low percentage of Muslim students, the global impact of missionary schools was most important—both catalytic and conflictive—for Young Turkey: they were an educational model, notably for girls, a channel of Westernizing influence and a challenge to the nationalist millet-schools. I will deal with these points in the conclusion.

A remarkable step toward a focus on civil society was the weekly newspaper The Orient, published by American missionaries in Istanbul from 1910 to 1914. Apart from the address ‘Bible House, Constantinople’, nothing would directly indicate the missionary connection. The Orient had a clear touch of Ottomanism, declaring itself as a ‘paper devoted to the religious, educational, political, commercial and other interests of the Ottoman Empire’. Its major target group were English-reading natives, who naturally often had a link with mission. Information on ABCFM activities was very prominent,
but political and social news prevailed, and there were reviews of secular books and the press. The editors tried to point out what they regarded as positive developments in civic society. When they criticized the government, they did so in a friendly and constructive way. Evidently such an optimist Ottomanist publication could not continue after the dictatorial government had deliberately attacked Russia (1914) and destroyed its own Armenian population (1915).

No less clearly and nearly as drastically as in the case of the Armenians, the history of the Alevis shows us the problem of identity formation and affirmation after 1908. There is a great shortage of research on the Ottoman Alevis. It seems safe, however, to say that no other ethnic group was more interested in the promises of early Young Turkey. The slogans ‘liberty’, ‘equality’ and ‘justice’ (hardly ‘fraternity’) were most attractive for a group that knew neither the privileges of the īmāmet nor the guarantees of a recognized millet. Marginalized among a Sunni majority in Central Anatolia, in constant low intensity rebellion in their heartland, the Dersim, against the state, the Alevis affirmed publicly in 1908, for the first time since the big Kızılbaş revolts of the sixteenth century, their distinct identity and were engaged in opening their own village schools. The emissaries of Union and Progress successfully convinced the Dersimis of the benefits of the new era. Several Alevis joined the party. Pillaging and uprisings ceased.

The honeymoon between the Alevis and the state removed all previous obstacles and gave the missionaries the chance to resume and strengthen their relations with the Alevis. Materially, the missionaries did not do much for them, but morally they clearly supported their aims and brought them before an international public. ‘Hitherto they have had small part in office or public influence. For the general welfare of the Ottoman Empire, it is much to be desired that this section of the community should obtain its full quota of strength in the commonwealth,’ George E. White, the president of the Anatolia College in Merzifon, wrote in the Contemporary Review.33 Alevis as much as Kurds and other natives tended to overestimate the real political weight of the missionaries’ verbal support. It probably influenced them more than was good for them politically.

With the diplomatic re-emergence of the unsettled Armenian question and the constitution of a dictatorial Unionist government during the Balkan war in 1913, government suspicion toward the Alevis, especially the eastern, mainly Kurdish-speaking Alevis, increased rapidly. Indeed, for a single party régime, ready to establish national unity at all costs, the scenario appeared catastrophic: the Anatolian Kızılbaşs, in its own eyes ‘genuine Turks, who have preserved in the purest manner the national tradition’,34 were far from adopting the identity that Young Turk ideologues had designed for them. Many of these ‘pure Turks’ happened, in fact, to adopt political and social ideas similar to the Armenians.

Since 1913 the latter had been more and more seen as alien elements and adversaries in an imminent social-Darwinist fight (secular social-Darwinist apocalypse fantasies circulated widely among the pre-war European intelligentsia influencing the Young Turks as well as the other nationalist élitesthe Near East). Unionists interpreted the close relations between Armenians, Alevis and missionaries as the result of unscrupulous propaganda on the part of the Protestants and Armenians.35 The rulers there did not doubt that the Alevis of the eastern provinces supported the hated international reform plan for the eastern provinces, the so-called ‘Armenian Reforms’, signed by the Ottoman government under diplomatic pressure, on February 8, 1914. They feared eastern Alevis would vote side by side with the Armenians in the elections scheduled by
this plan. Logically, the Alevis would be involved in what should happen to the Armenians.

The reforms of February 1914 were a compromise that made no one into a loser, as the historian Roderic Davison has rightly said. There was hardly any other way toward creating pacified and functioning multi-ethnic eastern provinces. After such bloody events and the government’s failures since the Congress of Berlin, the establishment of a balanced system under effective international control seemed unavoidable, but this proved to be too much for the régime’s understanding. Its choice to go to war was co-determined by the intention to avert the Armenian Reforms, seen as a first step to regional autonomy and Russian hegemony. Cemal and Talat Pasha filled dozens of pages in their memoirs to justify this viewpoint.

The Defeat of Missionary Concepts in and after World War I

The destruction of the Armenians in Central and Eastern Anatolia in 1915–16 signifies the most brutal end of the 1908 social utopia. This man-made and avoidable catastrophe—the basic genocide at the door of the twentieth century—was fatal for a whole people, and for the missionaries. They lost not only their principal clients, but also most of their confidence and their concepts. From the 1920s on, they were quite alone with a traumatic memory: the eyewitnesses of a genocide, the breakdown of the missionary work of four generations and the large-scale failure of their social and political plans for their beloved Turkey. Not only the few missionaries remaining in that land, but also those who returned to Europe and, perhaps, the States, found themselves in a postwar society that suppressed the trauma and refused to interrogate the recent past. Silence was in any case the price for future cooperation with the nationalistic winners of the Anatolian wars (1919–22). Mustafa Kemal’s civil and military cadre was Unionist and almost identical with the preceding one of Talat, Enver and Cemal.

Since the collapse of the Tanzimat, observers as experienced as the ABCFM members knew clearly that ethnic co-habitation could not be saved and put on solid foundations without international help. This attitude made them deeply suspect to both the Hamidian and the Unionist and Kemalist régimes, for which national sovereignty and unity was the first and sacrosanct political goal. In the first half of 1914, the missionaries, too, had pinned their hopes on the international reform plan, the first efficient reform proposal since the vague promises of article 61 of the Berlin Treaty.

The ABCFM had contributed substantially to the internationalization of the Armenian Question in the 1870s. Its political commitment was then focussed on native Christians’ rights, and, subliminally, on the religious liberty of the Alevis and other nominal Muslims or heterodox people. The Sunnî Kurds, the major group in the eastern provinces, were in those days outside the missionaries’ interest.

The ABCFM’s view of society became broader after 1900. An important reason for this change of perspective was the haunting question of why and how the large-scale pogroms of 1895 had happened. The Ottoman government categorically put the blame on ‘Armenian provocations’ and accused the American missionaries of being the spiritual fathers of social unrest after the Berlin Congress. US diplomats, normally supportive and proud of their famous missionaries, felt for the first time really uneasy at this sight. In 1904 they submitted a questionnaire to the Eastern Turkey missionaries with suggestive queries such as: ‘How far have results of training in American schools and contact with American ideas unfitted Armenians here to live quietly under existing conditions?’
Relations with the Hamidian régime remained volatile. Only the détente in 1908 gave the opportunity to cooperate with the new rulers in the building of a liberal Ottomanist society. But when the friendship between the Young Turks and the ABCFM broke down in World War I, concepts had to be revised. It was inconceivable to reconstruct postwar Turkey without justice. Therefore an energetic political adjustment was necessary. For missionaries from Eastern Turkey like Clarence Ussher, who after contacting Kurdish and liberal Ottoman leaders in Istanbul participated in the peace deliberations in Paris, justice meant three things: first, the return of hundreds of thousands of Armenian and Kurdish refugees to Eastern and Central Anatolia; second, the reconstruction of this most ravaged area, including the establishment of a secure home under international protection for the Armenians who constituted the most victimized group; and third, the prosecution of war criminals, with the logical appointment of a new cadre in the Ottoman state, or an amnesty on condition of collaboration with the above-mentioned new order.\footnote{41}

We all know very well that for several reasons and despite some minor successes on the part of the League of Nations, internationalism failed to be convincing in the period between the two world wars. Its first obvious failure was postwar Turkey. Missionaries—the first strangers to return to the provinces—appealed pathetically to the Allies, reporting that immediate action in the interior was required to give the new order a chance.\footnote{42} The unrestricted continuity, even re-implementation of Unionist structures and cadres in 1919 was nowhere more manifest than in the eastern provinces.

But post-imperialist Europe was paralysed and Soviet Russia antagonistic. The USA was turning to isolation. For missionaries on the ground, the Greek occupation of Izmir (May 15, 1919), permitted by the Allies, was a fatal error and the refusal by the US Senate to accept a mandate was a deep deception (June 1, 1919). A year later, in 1920, the missionaries of the eastern provinces, from which the nationalist ‘Independence War’ was organized, began to be expelled. Mehmed Nuri Dersimi, a veteran from Dersim and Kurdish Alevi leader of that time, cursed the régime for that: ‘The cruel and oppressive Turkish government … went so far as to abolish the American, French and German colleges which spread in this region the lights of knowledge, understanding and science.’\footnote{43} By the Kemalis, the missionaries were seen as inconvenient observers and ‘foreign agents’, carrying on a policy of reconstruction opposed to the nationalist one. ‘In most cases no charges were made against these Americans, but it came to be the general conviction that the reason for their expulsion was their active connection with Armenians, Kurds and other non-Turks in the country,’ Henry Riggs wrote in his unpublished historical review of that ‘period of disaster 1914–22’\footnote{44}.

George White had been fairly cautious when writing during the war that the purpose of the Party of Union and Progress ‘is alleged to be to create a uniform state, one in Turkish nationality, and one in Moslem Orthodoxy’.\footnote{45} In 1925, two years after the proclamation of the Republic, the basis of the new state was Turco-Sunni\footnote{46} to an extent nobody could have foreseen. Its ideology consisted of an exclusive ethno-nationalism replacing the public function of religion. ‘Any individual within the Republic of Turkey, whatever his faith, who speaks Turkish, grows up with Turkish culture and adopts the Turkish ideal, is a Turk,’ the schoolchildren learnt in the 1930s. This vision of culture was an exclusive category as much as race, Erik-Jan Zürcher rightly said.

A unitarian Turkish nationalist system for the essentially pluri-ethnic (before the genocide) Kurdo-Armenian area in eastern Asia Minor was never the future the ABCFM had hoped for. They had hoped instead that by way of federalism, long-term
outside help and a broadened education, civil society would take root and create space for a new form of co-existence among different ethnic identities. This would not have been wishful thinking if the Allies had been far-sighted and could have acted promptly. In the first few months of 1919 most people in the provinces, including the Alevi Kurds and many Turks, were awaiting an internationally sponsored new order.47

Again Alevi history sheds light upon social utopias as well as on identity and loyalty questions in Anatolia during the long war years (1912–22). We have touched on the renewed sympathy in relations between Alevis, Armenians, missions and the early Young Turk state. We have seen that, for several reasons, the Unionists of the dictatorial régime after 1913 no longer believed in a common plural future. In their eyes, native Christians could definitely not be assimilated into a unitarian body, but at the same time their determination to incorporate the Alevis increased.

During World War I, the Unionist party engaged some of its members to investigate and make propaganda among the Alevis. A concrete reason for this step were disturbing papers on the Alevis confiscated in the ABCFM’s Anatolia College in Merzifon. In Unionist eyes these papers, probably written by George E. White, were ‘separatist’, as they highlighted Christian affinities to the Alevis.48 In spite of these and other efforts, the war régime did not succeed in winning over the Alevis. It is true that it brought onto its side Çelebi Cemalettin Efendi, the head of the Bektashi order, but he had little influence over the village Alevis. When he was sent to those people in the Sivas, Marash and Dersim regions, he failed almost completely. He could not convince them actively to take part with tribal militias against Russia.49

The war deeply alienated the eastern Alevis from the state. The gravest reason for this development was the extermination of the Armenians, which the Alevis witnessed. They identified themselves with their neighbours and feared they might suffer the same fate.50 Thus the Dersim became the sole collective place of asylum for thousands of victims of the genocide. We are not surprised to see Dersimis and Harput missionaries work hand in hand to establish an ‘underground railway for which our [hospital] back porch was a station sending people to Dersim’.51 Such illegal smuggling set missionaries at risk, but it did not place them in a moral dilemma. At their conference in Edinburgh (1910) they had stated that ‘where Government itself becomes an instrument of violence and massacre, the ordinary principles governing the relations between Missions and Governments cannot be applied, because one of the related terms has ceased to carry its true meaning.’52

The German missionary Christoffel in Malatya witnessed how Alevi tribes attacked deportation caravans in order to liberate Armenian friends.53 In March 1916 some tribes of the Dersim assaulted and destroyed the government buildings of the towns in their neighbourhood and marched toward Mamûretulaziz, the residence of the province governor. Finally a substantial military force with numerous participants from the local Zaza Sunnî Kurds repulsed them. Unionists took revenge, deporting the whole population of the tribes concerned.54

It seems logical that in the summer of 1919 Kurdish Alevi tribes were the first ‘interior enemies’ to oppose Mustafa Kemal Pasha’s reorganization of the Unionist power structures (congresses of Erzurum and Sivas), and to prepare the first Kurdish uprising against the Ankara government (revolt of Kocgiri-Dersim, 1920–1).55 In vain they tried to get political support through the missionaries. Both sides, Alevi Kurds and Unionist–Kemalist officials, over-estimated the political influence missionaries were then able to exert. ABCFM contacts with Kurds aroused much suspicion among
officials, so that such intercourse became practically impossible, as Henry Riggs wrote sadly to James Barton in December 1919.\textsuperscript{56}

In 1923 Sunnî Kurds finally realized that the Kemalists were not keeping autonomy promises they had given when they needed Kurdish military support. The ‘honourable fight for the Caliphate’ against ‘imperialist unbelievers’ had been a mere trick, seeing that the Ankara government abolished the Caliphate on March 3, 1924. The Sunnî Zaza Kurds around Sheikh Said stood completely alone against the newly established state, with support from neither the Kurdish Alevis, who disdained them for their cooperation with the Unionists during the wars, nor resident ‘international agents’ as the Eastern Turkey missionaries had been in late Ottoman times. Said’s revolt in 1925 failed in the end, but had brought the state in the East near to collapse.

In the following thirteen years the Republic of Turkey established its military and administrative control. Its gravest measure was the destruction, ‘ethnocide’ (Martin van Bruinessen), of the traditional Dersim society in 1936–8.\textsuperscript{57} In vain did the Dersim leaders pathetically appeal to the League of Nations in Geneva in July and November 1937.\textsuperscript{58}

At the end of the twentieth century, the building up of a civil society and a functioning economy in and beyond the eastern provinces still remains a project for the future. The so-called transition to democracy and the synchronous orientation to the West following World War II did not substantially change the quasi-continuous state of emergency in force in large parts of Eastern Turkey. On the contrary, NATO membership seems to have sanctioned the authoritarian status quo. American ideas for that region as seen by resident missionaries in late Ottoman times and American interests as represented by the State Department some years later were a great contrast.

The ABCFM’s adaptation to nationalist Turkey in the 1920s was painful, self-denying and partly illusionist. The question of an abandonment of its Turkey Mission was omnipresent after the ‘tragic year 1922’ (which saw the expulsion of the last provincial native Christians and of many missionaries). In contrast to other missionary organizations, the ABCFM continued a part of its work in provincial Turkey, but with reduced staff and without its stations in the east. Its new policy was that of non-political character-formation and obedient nation-building—instead of seeking self-confidently a role in the construction of a plural society. Its major change was to work without open religious expression (the secular state forbade that), addressing itself mainly to Turkish Muslims. Its new keywords were: ‘unnamed Christianity’, ‘personal and sympathetic approach’, ‘Christian radiance’, ‘missionary home—a social centre’, ‘personal talks on vital subjects’, ‘publications with a high moral tone’, ‘cooperation with sympathetic Turks for the uplift of their country’, etc.\textsuperscript{59}

On the one hand, the Turkey Mission did finally reach the Muslim majority it had wanted to reach since 1908. On the other hand, the price was high: it had to depend to a large extent on nationalistic regulations and to give up any orientation toward the poorer classes. In Republican Turkey attendance at the American schools was above all a matter for the well-to-do. The broad direct contact with the poor in provincial Turkey had been lost.\textsuperscript{60}

The regulations of the Ankara government required that missionary schools put politically important subjects such as geography and history in the hands of Turkish teachers, and that each school have a titular head who was a Turkish citizen. High salaries were compulsory for these members of staff forced on the schools and these were a heavy financial burden. In January 1923, when an ABCFM meeting in Istanbul held its decisive vote for a continuation in Turkey, missionaries cherished the illusionist
hope that the restrictive measures of those days would soon be removed; ‘a hope which, it must be said, has not yet been fulfilled’, Henry Riggs wrote circa 1940.61

**The Catalytic and Conflicitive Impact of Protestant Mission on Modern Turkey**

We can sum up our conclusion in two main points.

(1) The ABCFM’s impact on Turkey was catalytic in the sense that it accelerated the promotion of Western models in education, health and standard of living. These models of civilization agreed with the reform ideas of the ruling elite in Tanzimat and Young Turkey. In particular Protestant missionaries showed in an exemplary way that a successful reform movement had to win over Anatolia by investigating and penetrating its provinces, villages and mountain tribes.

(2) The ABCFM’s impact on Turkey was conflicitive in so far as it furthered political and ethno-social visions as well as views of history that were, with a short exception, opposite to those of the country’s leaders. The materialist and racist options of the Unionists after 1913 completely contradicted the missionaries’ convictions. Especially from 1915 on, American and other missionaries were the keepers of large first-hand records on a genocide nobody was willing to speak of in later decades.

Let us deal with these conclusive points, beginning with the second. Evidently views of history, designed identities and social visions are closely related. In a historical view of triumphant Islam, the ruling classes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries worried about preservation of Sunnî Turkish power, believing in the virtues of centralization, social homogenization and technical modernization. Missionaries on the contrary strove for an equal participation of non-Sunnî and non-Turkish groups with established distinct identities, believing in the values of Enlightenment, federalism and congregationalist basic democracy against a background of eschatological Christian history. As the missionaries’ idea of Islam was known to be derogatory and hostile, their efforts were seen as a subversion of foundations of power. So the ‘missionaries of the Board [in the 1920s] found themselves hated and despised because of what had been done to the Christian races of Turkey,’ as Henry Riggs wrote.62 Enver Pasha is a striking example. For this Unionist wartime leader, the American missionaries were ‘the fighters and representatives of whole America’. Although he knew well that the USA kept strict neutrality toward Turkey, he believed—in its social-Darwinist philosophy of life—that America, by entering World War I, aimed ‘to destroy us ... Turks and Muslims, in order to save Christianity in the East’. Enver accused the missionaries of setting Armenians, Kurds and Syrians against their rulers. In this same article in a Turkish magazine, he urged that Turkey should profit from the state of war to eradicate the ABCFM.63 Hypocritically or not, the same person gave the American hospital staff in Harput a war medal for their great services on behalf of wounded Turkish soldiers.64

The Alevis best exemplify the conflicitive Protestant impact upon an important nominal Muslim group in Anatolia. In the mid-nineteenth century, members of the ABCFM were the first to open a door to these socially marginalized people. Protestantism seemed to many of them to be the modern way out of discrimination and backwardness. Yet before Abdulhamid and the rise of the Armenian question, the Protestant–Alevi connection alarmed the state, which feared for its Muslim unity. The representatives of the government began to side more than ever with the Sunnî population. In the Kurdo-Armenian highlands, the Ottoman state was far from being
able to play the integrative role it had in the special case of mountain Lebanon.\textsuperscript{65} Missionaries were instrumental in inspiring something like an Alevi renaissance. It is true that during the War of Independence, an important part of the West Anatolian Alevis set their hopes on Mustafa Kemal Pasha. But the majority of the eastern Alevis distrusted his Unionist reorganization. Many expected an internationally sponsored new order, considering the missionaries as its agents. Several became early Kurdish nationalists, believing that a Kurdish autonomy corresponded to President Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the agreements of the Paris Peace Conferences. They were deceived. Thus the thesis of a categorical loyalty of the Alevis to Mustafa Kemal Pasha is an invention of the neo-Kemalism that grew up in some circles in the 1960s as a reaction against the Sunnī Muslim revival in the 1950s, and at a time when a majority of the Alevi youth adopted oppositional socialism and secularism. Neo-Kemalist Alevi paid tribute in their discourse to the fact that collective social prestige in the Turkish Republic largely depended on the historical partisanship for the ‘good’ side during the War of Independence.\textsuperscript{66} The anti-Alevi pogroms in the 1970s were bloody evidences of the embarrassing fact that the Turkish state had still not succeeded in integrating important parts of its Alevi community.

Most serious was and remained the conflictive power of the genocide memory that jeopardized all missionary work for the future. Henry Riggs formulated it as follows:

During the preceding decade the Turkish people, and again especially their leaders, had been guilty, before God and man, of one of the most revolting crimes in history [1915]. The triumphant reestablishment of the Turkish sovereignty not only left that crime unpunished, but, in the mind of probably a majority of the Turks, the horrid course which they had pursued had been gloriously vindicated. In the minds of many members of the Mission were two questions which demanded an honest answer: first, could there be any hope of a regeneration of the Turkish people, and real progress toward a decent national life, without some real repentance and repudiation of that crime, in which now they glory? And second, can any missionary have any influence spiritually and permanently of value if, by keeping silence, he seemed to condone the crime?\textsuperscript{67}

The frustration and self-questioning of Central and Eastern Anatolia missionaries in 1923 was deep. They had lost everything. Most of ‘their’ people had perished, the rest of them were without a home. Missionary conceptions of multi-ethnic civil society and of a federalist system in Asia Minor had ‘proved’ to be wrong in ‘real history’. How to bear a shattering memory hardly anybody was ready to share? The missionaries’ silent agony on this point persisted in the following decades without finding a satisfactory response either in Turkey or in the established international historiography. It goes without saying that diplomacy did not encourage clarification of these matters.

As the lack of an approved treaty jeopardized the greater interests of all American institutions in Turkey, missionary leaders like James Barton ardently supported America’s adherence to the Lausanne Treaty. In 1927 the United States resumed ‘normal’ diplomatic relations. The price was the absolute dismissal of the Armenian question.\textsuperscript{68} Twenty years later the Truman doctrine made Turkey a close partner to the USA.\textsuperscript{69} However the ABCFM had made one early attempt to break silence. In its January meeting in 1923, it drew up a ‘statement of attitude sternly condemning the massacres and horrors of the past, and giving repentance as the one hope for a better day in Turkey’. Although aware that ‘such a stern rebuke of the actions of the
government would probably result in the summary closing up of all our work', some members made a motion to present the statement to the Ankara authorities, regardless of results. But it was voted down.\textsuperscript{70} A lot of relevant memory work was laid down in unpublished texts such as the papers of Henry Riggs, which I have cited several times. Significantly, missionaries did not publish anything more on this topic.

The ABCFM’s catalytic impact on Turkey has often been summed up as Westernization. It is true to say that, quite against the intentions of nineteenth-century missionaries, the substantial contribution to Westernization is their most evident and well-known heritage in modern Turkey.\textsuperscript{71} Not a few present Turkish leaders are graduates of former mission schools and live with one foot in the USA. Educational Westernization in (former) missionary institutions, under rigid Turkish nationalist control, was the most visible continuation after the breakdown of the missions during World War I. Progressive Ottoman elites and Western missionaries had agreed in the conviction that the Ottoman Near East should benefit from the Western technical, educational and sanitary superiority. In the provincial towns missionaries built up prestigious schools, among them revolutionary institutions for girls’ education, as well as hospitals. These provided a model which \textit{millets} and the state were strongly motivated to emulate. As the Greek, Jewish and Armenian \textit{millets} were most successful in emulating the given model, the incentive impact it gave to the Muslim community increased.

Yet we should all stress more strongly the importance of missionary penetration of the Anatolian countryside, villages and mountains. Quite before the Russian ‘Narodniki’ movement and many decades before the state provided civil services there, missionaries showed Eastern Anatolian people the possibilities of modern life. Again, the state learned from the missions, using this know-how for a political—centralist and nationalist—purpose: go into the country, make contact with the people and win them over by bringing them schools and medical care in order to gain a foothold, develop and control regional society.

Most authors, Turks and Americans, agree on the benefits of the educational and health-care models missionaries brought to Turkey. They do not agree on the disintegrative or ‘separatist’ consequences this impact had as interpreted by Turkish state ideology. In fact, the Anatolian missionaries saw, early on, the abysses of nationalism which opened before them. No doubt they underestimated the impact of their liberal teachings. They lacked a sufficiently critical view of nineteenth-century liberation movements with their disproportion between strong national and weak universal values. Yet missionaries fought in their schools, as well they could, for their liberal ideas on a universalist basis. Most of them clearly and constantly condemned any exclusive ethno-nationalism, be it Armenian, Greek or Turkish, in addition to rebuking despotism. As Roderic Davison justly stated with regard to the Turks, unfortunately, ‘the only Western religion accepted was the creed of nationalism’.\textsuperscript{72} The same is true for the Armenians, at least for the greater majority of Armenian young men frequenting mission schools. After the 1880s the conflict with nationalist agitation becomes obvious in ABCFM school records. The files of the Missionary Conference in Edinburgh 1910 allow us to perceive an open suffering on the part of mission teachers due to the lack of interest in their spiritual message. Men saw education as an instrument for a professional career or a political commitment. Young women had a more holistic orientation. Their understanding for the deeper concerns of missionaries was generally better. They were more able to translate spiritual contents into their social lives. Men were subject to fairly different, perhaps more compelling group dynamics. They adhered generally to positivist views of the world.\textsuperscript{73}
No doubt, the educative and social rise of women—a programmatic point of ABCFM work since the mid-nineteenth century—was the most successful and long-lasting impact of Protestant mission in Anatolia. It was one of the few things Unionist and Kemalist Turks supported without having ideological reservations. By way of contrast, pragmatic solutions regarding ethnic cohabitation in Eastern Turkey failed completely for ideological reasons. The Protestant missionaries were important factors of individual and collective change in late Ottoman Turkey, but their cherished idea of an Ottoman civil society had no success. Confronted with the massive pressure of powerful first Islamic and then nationalistic groups, they did not even succeed in establishing a genuine Turkish church. Though various elements of the missionary impact remained active until the end of the twentieth century, transformations in Turkey as a whole were far from being what the missionaries had worked for.

NOTES
2. For half a century American Turkology has stood under the primacy of a functioning ‘partnership’, and corresponding financial dependencies, not of open research on difficult truths. Optimistic views upon ‘modern [Republican] Turkey’ and a focus on the ‘harmonious’ functioning of Ottoman plural society have prevailed since 1950. ‘All too often in the field of Turkology we forget that the modern state of Turkey was built on ethnic cleansing on a massive scale’, the Dutch scholar Erik-Jan Zürcher has rightly said (The Rise and Fall of ‘Modern’ Turkey, The Turkology Update Leiden Project’s (TULP’s) Working Papers Archive for Turkology; http://www.let. leidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/research/lewis.htm, February 2000). A foreign historian should not wonder that American scholars of late Ottoman and early Republican Turkey use in a measure fairly disproportionate to their importance—and with some presuppositions due to the conceptual spell of young national histories—the archives of the American missions, notably concerning the Eastern Provinces of Turkey. (If US–Armenian circles use them with justification, their view is often too strictly focussed on the preservation of a national memory.) Jeremy Salt’s Imperialism, Evangelism and the Ottoman Armenians, 1878–1896 (London, 1993), which uses neither missionary nor Ottoman primary sources, is a recent example of a well-meant, but failed attempt to reconsider an important and difficult topic.
18. Cf. the reports sent to him, notably by the Ankara Vali, speaking of the ‘terrible’ political dangers and loyalty problems Alevis’ ‘wrong faith’ represented. Its adherents were ‘completely outside of Islam [Ümmet]’ and Muslims ‘only by name’ (Öz, *op. cit.*, 143–9 (148)).
26. Equality of different social, ethnic or political groups within a democratic structure, based upon some common ‘patriotic’ values.
28. Cf. his *Daybreak in Turkey* (Boston, 1908) and his numerous articles in the *Missionary Herald*.
31. In 1909, less than 1% of the total of more than 20,000 students of ABCFM schools were Muslims, in 1912 they were 2.3% in the high schools, in the—partially independent—colleges 10%. Only the last in Istanbul, Izmir and Beirut had 20% or a little more (*The Orient, Istanbul, February 26, 1913, 3; July 2, 1913, 3; and December 17, 1913, 3; World Missionary Conference. Reports of Commissions* (Edinburgh, 1910), vol. 3, 215.
32. Cf. Howard S. Bliss, president of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut: ‘We shall not talk about “modern crusades”’; we shall not speak of Islam as a “challenge to faith”. Except indeed as applied to our struggle against weaknesses and temptations common to humanity, we shall drop the whole vocabulary of war’ (*International Review of Missions*, London, 1913, 655).
34. Fuad Köprüülü, ‘Bemerkungen zur Religionsgeschichte Kleinasiens’, in: *Mitteilungen zur Osmanischen Geschichte*, vol. 1 (Wien, 1922), 203–22 (215). The Turkish and Kurdish speaking Alevi used actually in their cem liturgical texts an old Turkish that was free from the excessive Arabic and Persian mixture of the Ottoman language.
40. ABC Pers. Papers J. Barton 11:2. The answer of Dr. Clarence Ussher was significant: ‘The effort has always been and is to train Armenians to love their country and to be loyal to their government, but every thought that leads a man to respect himself and distinguish himself from a beast leads him to rebel inwardly against being treated as a beast. Every particle of education and every thought of America and her institutions tends, in this sense, to unfit Armenians and others to live quietly under existing oppression. As our work has touched many thousands of lives we are forced to say that a very large number in this vilayet are so unfitted to consider themselves as mere beasts.’

41. ABC, Pers. Papers Ussher.


43. Nuri Dersimi, Kürtistan Tarihinde Dersim (Aleppo, 1952), 45.


48. Nejet Birdoğan, İnihat-Terakki’nin Alevilik Bektâsilik Araştırması (Baha Sait Bey), (İstanbul, Berfin, 1994), 11.


51. Tacy W. Atkinson, Account of the events in Turkey during the past three years as I have seen them and as they have had an effect upon our work in the Amte Tracy Hospital, 1917, ABC 16.9.7.

52. World Missionary Conference. Reports of Commissions (Edinburgh, 1910), vol. 8, 49.

53. Ernst Christoffel, Aus dunklen Tiefen (Berlin, 1921), 68.

54. Riggs, Days of Tragedy, 177–84.


60. ‘In all cases the charges are higher, often much higher, than in government schools ... The paramount aim is to produce men and women who will become master workmen in whatever walk of life they enter’ (J. Barton, ‘American educational and philanthropic interests on the Near East’, The Muslim World, 23 (1933), 121–36 (133 and 136).


64. Missionary Herald, 1917, 28.


66. Most of the contemporary Occidental writers on Alevism uncritically adopt in their historical chapters this invented neo-Kemalist tradition. For a perspicacious historical analysis see Hamit


69. NATO personnel soon obtained more privileges and immunities than missionaries and other foreigners had ever enjoyed under the Ottoman Capitulations, which had provoked Unionist pride. Cf. George S. Harris, Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American problems in historical perspective, 1945–1971 (Washington DC, American Enterprise Institute–Hoover Institution, 1972), 9–30 and 54–7.

70. Riggs, ABCFM History, 20–1.


