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HIST209

RESEARCH PAPER

**THROUGH DIVISIVE LENSES: GEORGE E. WHITE ON THE
TURKISH-ARMENIAN CONFLICT**

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Abstract

George E. White, an ABCFM missionary who worked for 43 years in Turkey, wrote extensively about his experiences. Through the lens of his writings and other secondary literature, this paper aims to establish that missionary activity in the Ottoman Empire played a divisive role on the Ottoman society. Missionary focus on the elevation of the Christian peoples living in Ottoman Turkey exacerbated the tensions between the Turkish and Armenian people. Furthermore, prejudiced missionary writings, widely circulated in the Western media, helped shape a biased public opinion in the West (in favor of the Armenians and against the Turks) on narrow-minded grounds of religion and civilization.

Keywords: Missionaries in Turkey, Turk-Armenian Conflict, George E. White, Portrayal of Turks in Western Media

Özet

Türkiye'de 43 yıldır çalışan bir ABCFM misyoneri olan George E. White, deneyimleri hakkında kapsamlı yazılar yazdı. Yazılarının ve diğer ikincil literatürün ışığında, bu çalışma Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda misyoner faaliyetin Osmanlı toplumunda bölücü bir rol oynadığını tespit etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Misyoner odak Osmanlı'da yaşayan Hristiyan halkların yükselişine yardım etti ve dolayısıyla Türk ve Ermeni halkı arasındaki gerginliği artırdı. Dahası, Batı medyasında yaygın olarak dolaşan önyargılı misyonerlik yazıları, dar görüşlü din ve uygarlık alanlarında Batı'da (Ermeniler lehine ve Türklere karşı) önyargılı bir kamuoyunun şekillenmesine yardımcı oldu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türkiye'de Misyonerlik, Türk-Ermeni Çatışması, George E. White, Batı Medyalarında Türk Portresi

1. Introduction

George E. White was an American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) missionary working at the Anatolian College in Marsovan between 1890-1913. He was a witness to events leading up to the so-called Armenian genocide and wrote extensively about these. In this paper, our aim is to examine the writings of George E. White, paying special attention to the fragments dealing with his opinions of, and behavior towards, the different peoples living in Turkey, especially the Armenians. Through the lens of White's writings, and other secondary literature, we will analyze the events that occurred in, specifically, Marsovan, and more broadly, the Ottoman Empire, during White's tenure as administrator at Anatolian College. We aim to gain a better understanding of the influence of the ABCFM missionaries in Marsovan, Turkey as relating to the relationship between the Armenian and Turk people. This case study will be used to support the hypothesis that American missionaries played a divisive role in Turkish society, which exacerbated the conflict between the Turkish and Armenian people. Furthermore, the missionaries, to further their own aims, portrayed the complex Turk-Armenian conflict in very biased terms and these writings, circulated widely through the Western media, were instrumental in the shaping of an pro-Armenian and anti-Turk public opinion in the West.

Too much repetition and almost 0 explanation

2. A brief look at the ABCFM mission in Turkey

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was the earliest standardized missionary association in the United States established in 1810. In the early 19th century, the ABCFM missionaries arriving in the Middle East aimed to achieve four major goals; these included the spread of the Gospel worldwide, return of the Jews to Palestine and their

conversion to Christianity, fall of the pope and finally, fall of Islam¹. However, when the first ABCFM missionaries arrived in the Ottoman Empire, they found that the Muslim majority was largely unreceptive to their message of Christianity. The resistance of the Ottoman Muslims to the missionary message was due to two major reasons: first, there were “strong legal and social sanctions against conversion in force” in the empire and second, “like the Jews, for deep historical and mental reasons, the Muslims remained on the whole impermeable” to the message of the Protestants. Thus, the ABCFM was forced to work with other groups that were more amenable and these included Armenian, Assyrian and Greek minorities, as well as Muslim marginals, like the Alevi Turks as well as the poor². Focus on growth of the inadequately devout Christian population, including the Armenians, thus became the major aim of the mission. In addition, unorthodox Muslims, like the marginal Alevis, were seen as instruments to reach the majority Sunni population. Therefore, Christian minorities and unorthodox Muslims were “assigned a privileged place in the missionary scheme of salvation.”³ The consequences of this choice were profound and the rest of this paper is devoted to examining how.

3. A brief look at the life of George E. White

George Edward White (1861-1946) was an American missionary for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). He worked in the Anatolia College in Marsovan, a missionary established institution in the Ottoman Empire, for 43 years. He was born

¹ Hans-Lukas Kieser, “Muslim Heterodoxy and Protestant Utopia. The Interactions between Alevis and Missionaries in Ottoman

² Kieser, “Muslim Heterodoxy,” 92

³ Ibid.

5 Amerikan Bord Heyeti (American Board), Istanbul, "Memorial records for George E. White," American Research Institute in Turkey, Istanbul Center Library, Digital Library for International Research Archive, Item #17487, <http://www.dlir.org/archive/items/show/17487>

to missionary parents in the Ottoman Empire on October 14, 1861. He was educated in the United States where he attended Grinnell College and the Chicago Theological Seminary. White arrived in Marsovan in 1890. By 1905, he was made dean of the Anatolian College and in 1913, he rose to become the president of the college.⁴

unrelated

White's writings relating to Turkey provide a wealth of information relating to the time he lived in. He wrote for the general public of the US through his articles in high-profile American newspapers, including *The New York Times*. In addition, he wrote two books *Adventuring with Anatolia College*, which deals with his experiences working at the Anatolian College in Marsovan, and *Charles Chaplin Thracy: Missionary, Philanthropist, Educator*, a biography of Charles Chaplin Thracy, the ABCFM missionary who preceded White as President of the Anatolian College. He also published scholarly articles relating to culture and the people living in Turkey; examples include "The Shia Turks", "Some Non-Conforming Turks" and "Studies in the Faith and Folklore of Asia Minor."

too long and unrelated

4. Relationship between the missionaries, Ottoman State and the Armenian people

As mentioned above, the ABCFM missionaries were more focused on the uplifting of the Christian communities and conversion of the Muslim marginal groups in the Ottoman Empire. In this section, we aim to examine the relationship of the ABCFM missionaries with the different people they came into contact with in the Ottoman Empire. The major focus will be on a group of special interest: the Christian Armenian people.

wasn't the muslim majority special interest and the Armenians were plan Bs.

4.1 The Fundamental Conflict between the Missionaries and the Ottoman State

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⁴ American Board, Istanbul, "Memorial records for George E. White"

Logically, friction between the Ottoman State and the missionaries was to be expected; the State and the Missionaries had incompatible goals. The missionaries were working towards the conversion of people to Christianity by offering education and healthcare. Setting up of a Christian power hold in the heart of heathen Turkey, as the Armenian nationalists intended to do, was therefore an event that the missionaries would have welcomed. On the other hand, the Ottoman state, predominantly Muslim, was trying to maintain power and prevent the disintegration of the religiously and ethnically diverse empire. For the Ottoman State, missionary work on specific groups of people located at the distant fringes of the Ottoman power structure, which led to increased agency of these groups, was dangerous and destabilizing. Since these groups identified themselves as Christians, it is reasonable that they would view the Muslim Ottoman state as foreign, and the Ottoman state, to conserve its own power structure would be unlikely to view competing powers in the Empire favorably. Historian Hans-Lukas Kieser supports this view when he writes:

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 as seen by the rulers were differentiating society in religious, ethnic and social terms.⁵

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4.2 A Case Study: The Cyclostyle Incident

In *Adventuring with Anatolian College*, White mentions an incident that can be used to understand the complex relationships between the ABCFM missionaries, Armenian revolutionaries and the Ottoman state. On January 5, 1893, a “revolutionary and incendiary” placard, asking the Turks to invite the British to assume control of their country, just as the Indians had done, was found posted on the college gates. The Ottoman state was understandably

⁵ Kieser, “Muslim Heterodoxy,” 91

provoked by these placards, which it considered to be seditious. However, in addition to the placard found on the Anatolian College gates, similar placards were found to be widely posted all over Marsovan. The instrument used to print the placards was a cyclostyle. At the time, cyclostyles were rarely found in Turkey. However, the Anatolian College did own one. This naturally led the Ottoman officials to suspect that someone within the college was responsible for the printing of the revolutionary placards. However, White writes: “Dr. Herrick and the administration emphatically denied the charge of college complicity and certainly the administration was free from any knowledge of the affair.” Nevertheless, such a statement does not preclude the involvement of the other people associated with the college in the printing of the seditious placards. Certainly, White’s statement does not rule out the possibility of a faction of the college administration acting secretly, nor does it remove the students from the suspicion of involvement in the incident.

As a result of this incident, two Armenian professors at the Anatolian College, Professor Garabed Thoumayan and Mr. Kayayan, were arrested, and sent to Angora for a trial.⁶ However, this turn of events did not sit too favorably with the missionaries. They were convinced that the Ottoman state was trying to destroy the Anatolian College because the missionaries were preaching Christianity or because the Ottomans wanted to terrorize the Christian Armenians. George Herrick, a missionary working in the Anatolian college in Marsovan, made several forceful petitions to the Ottoman authorities, as well as to the US consulate, as to the innocence of the arrested Armenian professors. Charles Thracy, the president of the Anatolian College at the time, was also convinced of a scheme by the Ottoman authorities to “destroy Anatolia College and evangelical Christianity”. He too, firmly believed that the arrested Armenian

⁶George E. White, *Adventuring with Anatolia College*, State University of New York at Oswego. <http://www.oswego.edu/~baloglou/anatolia/college.html>.

professors were innocent. However, when he tried to voice his grievance in the Washington D.C., he found no support. This led to him holding an interview with the US media. In the interview, he claimed that the Ottoman state was falsely accusing Americans citizens of sedition and that the US Minister in Constantinople was supporting the prosecution of blameless Americans in Turkey. Contrary to his claims, no charges against the Americans were pressed by the Ottoman state in relation to the seditious placard business even though the placards had undoubtedly originated from the college run by the American missionaries.⁷

extra
knowledge

It also emerged that the reason Herrick and Thracy found no support in Washington D.C. was because the US had made their own inquiries into the matter had arrived at different conclusions than the ABCFM missionaries. The Legation Secretary from the US, Harrie R. Newberry, had investigated the matter, and concluded that the placards had certainly been printed on the cyclostyle present at the Anatolian College. Furthermore, Newberry judged that the two Armenian professors, Garabed Thoumayan and Kayayan, arrested from the Anatolian College were involved in Armenian revolutionary activity. He advised that the US not pressure the Ottoman authorities into releasing the professors. Later, some Armenian sources identified that Thoumayan had been a member of the Hunchakian Revolutionary Party as early as 1891.⁸ In addition, many years later, it emerged that a student at the Anatolian College and a Hunchak member, Max Baliyan, had hung the placards.⁹ In the light of these events, the Ottoman authorities were obviously justified in accusing the College of assisting in Armenian

⁷ William W. McGrew, *Educating across Cultures: Anatolia College in Turkey and Greece*, (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 81

⁸ Ibid., 82.

The Hunchakian Revolutionary Party was founded in 1887 in Switzerland with the goal of liberating Armenia from the Ottoman empire by revolutionary means.

⁹ Christoph K. Neumann. "Centres of Provocation and Progress: Anatolian Missionary Stations Within the Ottoman State and Among Apostolic Armenians," (Master of Arts thesis for the Istanbul Bilgi Universitesi, 2009), 87

revolutionary activity and taking action against the college. Despite their initial protests, paradoxically, the ABCFM also recognized the guilt of the two Armenian professors. While their trial was under way, the names of these professors were crossed off from the Anatolia College faculty list. Such a gesture was meant to renounce the connection between the college and the accused professors.¹⁰

Due to this incident, missionaries faced hostility from the Ottoman state, as well as with the local people in Marsovan. About these events, White writes “it was a dark time, trying to our souls”.¹¹ The missionaries were confronted, for perhaps the first time, with the possible ruinous results of their efforts in Turkey. They recognized that the nationalist ambitions of the Armenians could lead to disruption in their own missionary work and cause conflict in the wider Ottoman society as well. However, they also realized that the responsibility for encouraging the uprising of the Armenians fell upon them. Herrick echoed this sentiment when he wrote: “the Gospel in this world is revolutionary”.¹²

4.3 Missionary Attitude towards the Ottoman State And Armenian Revolutionaries

As examined above, the American missionaries were involved in creating environments where Armenians were awakened to their religious differences from the Ottoman state. Furthermore, the missionary-run institutes allowed the Armenian resistance against the Ottoman state to mature and grow. However, there is evidence to indicate that the missionaries were not only indirectly accountable for the Armenian resistance, but played some active roles as well. In 1983, the missionaries found a Russian Armenian revolutionary hiding inside a closet in the Anatolian College with some students guarding him to prevent his capture. The missionaries chose to

¹⁰ Neumann, “Centres of Provocation,” 92

¹¹ White, *Adventuring with Anatolia College*

¹² McGrew, *Educating across*, 84

only this?

rightfully faced?

so they really were trying to fuck up the Ottoman Empire?

freakin EIC

where the fuck is white's lens??

discreetly release the revolutionary instead of handing him over to the Ottoman authorities.

About this incident, White writes:

Our difficult and dangerous conduct in this and similar cases was guided by the authority of our American officials that American citizens were not required to do police duty for the Turkish Government [...] It would be indeed a solemn responsibility to commit students or others to the experiences of a Turkish prison in the days of Abdülhamid.¹³

While White provides a convincing humanitarian argument for the quiet release of the revolutionary they found hiding in their college, this event clearly indicates that the American missionaries were sympathetic towards the revolutionaries and even supported them, going as far as risking the wrath of the “government of Turkey in whose country [they] were guests”.¹⁴ However, the relationship between the missionaries and the revolutionaries did not end at compassionate efforts towards the saving of human beings from the torture of prisons. On the contrary, the missionaries probably engaged in a much more intimate relationship with the Armenian revolutionaries. Such a relationship is hinted at by another incident narrated by White, in which he describes a 1900 meeting of Thracy with an Armenian revolutionary band headed by a former graduate of the College:

[Thracy] was informed that a group of young Armenians desired to meet with him in private. According to their request, he was conducted by secret ways to a hidden chamber where he met the band, headed by a recent graduate of the College and the spokesman. Every man wore the well-known headdress of a brigand or revolutionist, was fully armed with good weapons, and wore his bandolier of cartridges. The fine, tall young leader explained to his College President that patriotism was a religious duty and he led in prayer. Then he stated their purpose. The Armenians had lived for generations as bondsmen under the unjust, oppressive, and cruel Turks. They were entitled to relief from such suffering, as was so well known throughout the world that the European powers at the Berlin Conference had promised reform measures. But nothing was done. It seemed necessary for the

it appears that it wasn't only the lens of white!! he was actively involved so biased lens. Get a better lens!!

¹³ McGrew, *Educating across*, 99

¹⁴ White, *Adventuring with Anatolia College*

Armenians themselves to take the lead, to create disturbances by insurrection to show the Europeans that Turks could no longer control or protect the Armenians, or maintain order in the country. They pledged their lives, their all, to the sacred cause. They would shed blood if necessary, and they would not spare their own blood. Then the Europeans would remember the Armenians and their promises in behalf of the Armenians and would come to their help.

The Christian educator was certainly in a difficult position. Wisdom, judgment, inevitable danger, probable failure, counseled peace, order, patience, in spite of some natural sympathy with the oppressed.¹⁵

biased

It is interesting to note that the Armenian revolutionary is described very favorably as “fine, tall young” while the Turks are “unjust, oppressive, and cruel.” Furthermore, White suggests that Thracy “felt some natural sympathy with the oppressed.” Such “natural sympathy” combined with the fact that the president of the Anatolian College was invited by the Armenian revolutionaries for a seemingly innocent chat suggest that there is more to this story than what is revealed here by White.

As illustrated above, the missionaries played a role in sheltering Armenian revolutionaries, perhaps unwittingly in the cyclostyle case, but certainly without hesitation in the case of the revolutionary hiding in a closet in the Anatolian College. Furthermore, the president of the Anatolian College had secret meetings with an Armenian revolutionary band in Marsovan led by a graduate of the Anatolian College. Entranced with Armenian cause for a Christian nation in the heart of “their beloved Turkey”, “natural sympathy” probably led the missionaries to provide the Armenian revolutionaries with more support than was politically correct. In this spirit, executive of the ABCFM, James L. Barton later proclaimed "Give the Armenian capital and a righteous government and he will turn the whole of Turkey into a Garden of Eden in ten

¹⁵ White, *Adventuring with Anatolia College*

years".¹⁶ White wrote: "we always counsel loyalty, but the inevitable effect of the open Bible, of Protestantism, of colleges, schools and books, is against tyranny in every form. We have aided in starting a movement which has gone beyond our power to check".¹⁷ It seems that White had some inkling of the destruction their missionary efforts would contribute to bring about.

Perceiving the close association between the ABCFM missionaries and the revolutionaries the Minister Terrell from the US Legation warned the missionaries that they were endangering his mission of protecting American life, liberty and property in the Ottoman Empire. He felt that the missionaries were so closely involved with the Armenians as to be revolutionaries themselves, or at the very least co-conspirators. He wrote: "The opinion amongst the Turks, [was] now well nigh universal, from the palace to the most ignorant fanatical, that American missionaries have encouraged sedition and were in sympathy with its designs".¹⁸ The missionaries were also forced to confront this perception when disgruntled Turkish mobs attacked missionary schools along with Armenian property during the violence that spread across Marsovan on November 15, 1895. Of this day, White writes: "Shots were fired into our premises[...] ours was but one experience in a wave that rolled across Asia Minor".¹⁹ Events in which the Christian Armenians, who were very close to the hearts of the missionaries, were mistreated increased the animosity of the missionaries towards the Ottoman state.

5. Portrayal of the Armenian and Turkish People In Western Media

¹⁶ Mark Malkasian. "The Disintegration of the Armenian Cause in the United States", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 16 (1984), 351

¹⁷ McGrew, *Educating across*, 84

¹⁸ Neumann, "Centres of Provocation," 102

¹⁹ White, *Adventuring with Anatolia College*

Most of the information about the events happening in Turkey reached the American public through letters from the ABCFM missionaries on the ground. Thus, the missionaries played a critical role in the formation of US public opinion on Ottoman matters. In this section, we examine the communications of the missionaries and the subsequent opinions these communications helped form in the Western world. To do so, an article written by White and published in *The New York Times* in November 1917 is used primarily as a lens along with other secondary sources for supporting evidence. As explained above, the missionaries and the Ottoman state did not see eye-to-eye due to the fundamentally conflicting nature of the goals they were trying to achieve. As a result, it is unreasonable to expect that the opinions communicated by the missionaries, which were then adopted by the American public, were objective.

deviating from title

The American public opined that “Christian civilisation” was under attack from a “barbarous” other.²⁰ Such messages communicated by the missionary letters from Turkey were circulated widely through the newspapers of the Western world. For instance, in NYT article written by White, he describes the alleged savagery of the “coarse peasant” Turks:

The slaughter of all the Armenian Faculty members of Anatolia College, [...] with 1200 others, by Turkish peasants, whose pay for the work was the privilege of stripping the clothing off their victims' bodies [...] The men were sent out in lots of one or two hundred in night 'deportations' to the mountains, where trenches had been prepared. Coarse peasants, who were employed to do what was done, said it was a 'pity to waste bullets,' and they used axes.²¹

²⁰Ann Marie Wilson. “In the name of God, civilization, and humanity: The United States and the Armenian massacres of the 1890s”, *Le Mouvement social*, 227 (2009), 28

²¹ “Armenians Killed With Axes by Turks,” *The New York Times*, November 1917.

Another pervasive idea in the missionary letters was the framing of the conflict in narrowly religious terms of Armenian Christians versus Turk Muslims, ignoring all other facets of the conflict including race, economy and politics.²² White wrote:

Then the Turks turned on the women and children, the old men and little boys. Scores of ox carts were gathered, and in the early dawn as they passed the squeaking of their wheels left memories that make the blood curdle even now. Thousands of women and children were swept away. Where? Nowhere. No destination was stated or intended. Why? Simply because they were Armenians and Christians and were in the hands of the Turks.²³

Yet another prominent message in the letter from the mission was the devastation of Christian Armenian women who were abused and “trodden in the mire of Moslem lust”.²⁴ It is very likely that the abuse of women occurred. However, the missionaries, predictably, frame such abuse in the narrow context of religion and civilisation. This suggests an attempt to use the incidents of sexual-abuse to shock people in the West into action in order to achieve their own missionary aims. In other words, the missionaries employed rape as a means to achieve their own ends instead of being against the sexual-abuse of women *per se*. Such an instance to frame abuse in terms of religion and civilization can be found in a collection of letters from missions reprinted as a book titled “The Armenian Crisis in Turkey” by a former missionary Frederick D. Greene: “sixty young brides and more attractive girls were crowded into a little church [...] where, after being violated, they were slaughtered, and a stream of human blood flowed from the church door”.²⁵

²² Wilson, “In the name of God,” 33

²³ “Armenians Killed With Axes by Turks,” *The New York Times*, November 1917.

²⁴ Wilson, “In the name of God,” 34

²⁵ Wilson, “In the name of God,” 34

One of the most striking features of this NYT article is that White declares: “There was no revolutionary activity in our region whatever.”²⁶ We know from his other writings that there were in fact revolutionaries in Marsovan. In *Adventuring With Anatolia College*, White describes the meeting of his predecessor Thracy with a revolutionary band headed by a former graduate from the college, as discussed above in greater detail. In addition in a biography of Thracy written by White, titled *Charles Chaplin Tracy Missionary, Philanthropist, Educator*, White again describes the same incident and further adds that Marsovan was a “revolutionary storm center” so much so that it was given special attention by Sir Charles Wilson, who wrote about Armenia in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.²⁷ Thus, this claim of Marsovan being free of revolutionaries, published in a newspaper that would reach a wide audience in America, is misleading. As discussed previously, the missionaries engineered the discord between “uncivilised” Turks and Armenians into uncomplicated black-and-white Muslim-vs.-Christian terms to further their own aims, while ignoring other significant political, economic and ethnic causes. In addition to this, as White’s deliberate falsehood regarding the absence of Armenian revolutionaries in Marsovan illustrates, the missionaries also downplayed the actions of the Armenian community that were instrumental to the causation of the conflict in the first place.

There is other evidence available, which shows that the missionaries tried to present the Armenians in a light that would be favored by the people in the West. For instance, the early 19th century letters from missionaries referring to the Armenians are not very complimentary; the Armenians were “nominal” Christians, with “low moral character”, a “dominant love for

²⁶ “Armenians Killed With Axes by Turks,” *The New York Times*, November 1917.

²⁷ George E. White “*Charles Chaplin Tracy Missionary, Philanthropist, Educator.*” (The Pilgrim Press, 1918) 34

money” and “addiction to concubinage”.²⁸ However, during the conflict, the Armenians were described in much more sympathetic terms; they were “people of Caucasian blood like ourselves”, “ancient” Christians and “Yankees of the Orient.” In addition to being cast as white and devout Christians, the Armenians were commended for their entrepreneurship. For instance, in the NYT article, White writes: “The Armenians are the Yankees of the East -- the merchants, manufacturers, capitalists, artisans, and among the best of the farmers.” Paradoxically, Armenians were also lauded for their patriotism.²⁹ In other words, the missionaries, in direct contrast to their earlier opinions, painted the Armenians in praiseworthy colors when they had the attention of the Western public. While earlier the Armenians, according to the missionaries, were immoral, titular Christians, obsessed with money and women, for the sight of the Western public, they were projected as being very much alike to the Protestant Christians in America.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there was a fundamental conflict between the Ottoman State and the missionary aspirations for the Middle East. While the Muslim Ottoman State was trying to prevent the disintegration of the empire, the missionaries were interested in spreading Christianity. The Armenian people who received the greatest attention from the missionaries in the early 19th century benefitted the most from missionary activities. The missionaries also tended to favor the Armenian aims of a separate Christian state, free of the predominantly Muslim Ottoman Empire. To this end, the missionaries sheltered the Armenian revolutionaries and likely provided other assistance and advice as well. Such missionary support of the Armenian aims intensified the tensions between the Armenian people, the Ottoman administration as well as the common

²⁸ Wilson, “In the name of God,” 34

²⁹ Wilson, “In the name of God,” 34

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people in the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, missionary letters, circulated widely through the Western media, painted the Turk-Armenian conflict in narrow terms of religion and civilization. Armenian people were portrayed as Caucasian American Protestants while the Turkish people were portrayed as being uncivilized barbarians, fundamentally corrupted by their religion. Thus, missionary work was instrumental in enflaming resentments among the different people living in the Ottoman Empire, leading to greater division between the communities of people. Furthermore, missionary portrayal of the conflict in Western media, painted the two sides in black-and-white terms, with the Turks being black and the Armenians being white.

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