

# Crimes against Law and Order: American Missionaries as the Object of Public Security in the Ottoman Empire

EMRAH SAHIN

TUESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 1901 WAS A HORRIBLE DAY for Ellen M. Stone. Born in Roxbury and educated at Chelsea Grammar and High School in Massachusetts, she had come to the Ottoman Empire as a missionary. On the way to Gorna Dzhumaia, a small town in southwestern Bulgaria, Stone and her local companion Katerina Stefanova-Tsilka were ambushed by an armed gang of twenty bandits. The gang captured them, hoping to intimidate the imperial authorities and demonstrate that in their corner of the Ottoman realm, anarchy ruled. Later known as “the Miss Stone Affair,” the capture received anxious reaction from American officials, churches, and press. Theodore Roosevelt, inaugurated as President of the United States eleven days after Stone was captured, instructed the State Department to “spare no efforts” on the matter. Church circles and newspapers collaborated, turning the affair into a *cause célèbre* and raising \$110,000 from church-going readers, the exact sum of ransom put on the head of Stone by the bandits. Stone was detained for about half a year until she was finally released on 23 February 1902.<sup>1</sup>

Amid American concerns for Stone, Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Tevfik Pasha declared his government was not liable for the Stone Affair. Regarding “this girl,” the pasha informed the American Consul-General Charles Dickinson, “our side, viz. the central government” shall retain “non-responsibility.” This diplomatic manoeuvre aside, the Miss Stone

---

<sup>1</sup> William Curtis, *The Turk and His Lost Provinces* (Chicago: Revell, 1903), 217-242; “Large Donations for Miss Stone’s Ransom: Kidnapped Missionary’s Family Among the Contributors,” *The New York Times* (Special Issue, 6 October 1901); John DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), 33-34; Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair: America’s First Modern Hostage Crisis* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003). The Ottoman Archives Division of the Prime Minister’s Office in İstanbul, Turkey, contains on the Miss Stone Affair the following records: Dh Mkt 441/21; Dh Mkt 458/21; Dh Mkt 460/56; Hr Sys 56/2; Ya Hus 424/41; Y Mtv 231/147; Y Prk Mk 11/6; Y Prk Tşf 6/70.

Affair received significant attention from the Ottoman bureaucrats, or high-ranking officials in the imperial capital İstanbul, whose actions suggested they felt a sense of responsibility. The affair invited their attention not only because it could upset relations with the United States, but because it revealed the extent to which social order had deteriorated and fallen into the hands of local gangs. The imperial bureaucrats diverted time and resources to resolve the matter: they regularly met to discuss the affair with Grand Vizier Mehmed Said Pasha and drafted decrees to be issued by the reigning sultan Abdulhamid II. Decrees promulgated laws and regulations to be executed by officials and security forces in Bulgaria, going so far as establishing a special committee for the purpose to negotiate with the kidnappers. Furthermore, the decrees ordered that local authorities “evacuate nearby villages,” and that half the Third Cavalry Regiment “move immediately” to corner bandits around Strumica in Macedonia, predicting this operation would rescue Stone.<sup>2</sup>

By characterizing the Miss Stone Affair as “one notorious outrage against the missionaries,” presenting aspects of “Washington’s” reaction to this outrage and yet failing to mention Ottoman endeavours to save Miss Stone, John DeNovo’s perspective encapsulates a broader trend in missionary historiography. Whereas the U.S. Government’s limited role in missionary affairs has drawn scholarly focus, the Ottoman Government’s commitment to maintaining social order by resolving missionary issues has not been examined at length.<sup>3</sup> Scholarship that discusses the Ottoman Government’s role in these affairs tends to portray imperial policies as “reactionary” and “anti-missionary,” and American missionary activity as an extension of U.S. imperialism. Moreover, we seldom find in existing literature any analysis of

---

<sup>2</sup> Ya Hus 424/41, #1-2; Y Ee 94/43; Y Prk Eşa 2/57; Y Prk Eşa 50/1; see the treaties between the Ottoman and United States governments in “Amerika-Devlet-i Aliyye [the United States and Imperial Government],” *Muahedat Mecmuası* [Collection of treaties] (İstanbul: Hakikat, 1878), II: 2-24; also Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türk-Amerikan Münasebetlerine Kısa bir Bakış* [Overview of Turkish-American relations] (Ankara: Doğu, 1959); Çağrı Erhan, “Main Trends in Ottoman-American Relations,” in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, eds., *Turkish-American Relations: Past, Present, and Future* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 3-35; Emrah Sahin, “American Turkish Relations in Retrospective,” *International Journal of Turkish Studies* vol. 12, nos. 1 and 2 (2006): 195-198; Ya Hus 424/41, #1; Şakir’s report to Sultan Abdulhamid II, in Y Prk Mk 11/6, #1.

<sup>3</sup> DeNovo, *American Interests*, 33. Examples of the existing literature include: James Field, *America and the Mediterranean World* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1969); Jeremy Salt, “Trouble Wherever They Went: American Missionaries in Anatolia and Ottoman Syria in the Nineteenth Century,” *The Muslim World* vol. 92, nos. 3-4 (2002): 287–313; Joseph Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East; Missionary Influence on American Policy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1971); Michael Oren, *Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East* (New York: Norton, 2007); Ussama Makdisi, *Faith Misplaced: The Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010); Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu’daki Amerika: 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğundaki American Misyoner Okulları* [Americans in Anatolia based on U.S. sources: American missionary schools in the Ottoman empire in the nineteenth century] (İstanbul: Arba, 1989).

how imperial statecraft manifested itself in dealings with American missionaries operating in the Empire.<sup>4</sup> A closer examination of the Ottoman system of governance and its impact on the legal condition of these missionaries at imperial and provincial levels can provide a balanced account of Ottoman Empire-American missionary relations.

This article introduces the Ministry of Public Security, a centrifugal force in Ottoman central government that grappled with crimes related to missionary activity in the Empire, by examining numerous cases in which the ministry's agents approached missionaries as foreigners who threatened, or were threatened by, Ottoman subjects. It is our contention that a defining policy was the government's subtle endeavour to exclude missionary cases from diplomatic purview and treat it exclusively as a domestic matter. In so doing, Ottoman bureaucrats aimed to thwart U.S. interference. They relied on Public Security officers in processing these cases, from collecting intelligence to orchestrating security operations and determining responsibility. In addition, the article moves away from the typical depiction of American missionary activity as an agency of U.S. involvement in the Islamic World. It instead works a novel approach by way of looking at American missionaries as individuals, not *en masse*, in an effort to investigate the largely uncharted area of contact between the central government and the missionaries in the context of public security, where the latter existed as the Empire's foreign residents both to be protected, and guarded against.

---

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), especially 87-129; Çağrı Erhan, "Ottoman Official Attitudes towards American Missionaries," *Turkish Yearbook* vol. 30 (2000): 191-212; James Dittes, "The Christian Mission and Turkish Islam," *The Muslim World* vol. 45, no. 2 (April 1955): 134-144; İlknur Haydaroglu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Yabancı Okullar* [Foreign schools in the Ottoman empire] (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1990), 193-211; Musa Çakır, *Anadolumuz Asla Hristiyan Olmayacak: Misyonerler Memleketinize Geri Dönünüz* [Anatolians shall never turn Christians: missionaries, go back home] (İstanbul: M.S., 1966); Nahid Dinçer, *Yabancı Özel Okullar: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kültür Yoluyla Parçalanması* [Foreign private colleges: the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire through cultural imperialism] (İstanbul: Er-Tu, 1970), 85-87; Nurdan Şafak, *Osmanlı-Amerikan İlişkileri* [Ottoman-American Relations] (İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları, 2003), 72-79; Şinasi Gündüz, "Misyonerlik [Missionary activity]," in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* [Turkish religious foundation encyclopaedia of Islam] (İstanbul: TDV, 2005), XXX: 193-199. On contemporary news and views published by American missionaries about Ottoman reaction to their activities and to the claims of non-Muslim subjects, see Justin McCarthy, *The Turk in America: The Creation of an Enduring Prejudice* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010); "The Unscrupulous Turk: His Double-Faced Treatment of Our Missionaries," *The New York Times* (17 April 1892), 17; "Turks as Violators," *Los Angeles Times* (2 June 1896), 9; and an untitled article by George P. Knapp, *The Washington Post* (24 March 1899), 6.

ON 16 OCTOBER 1904, OTTOMAN BUREAUCRATS REFUTED ALLEGATIONS that they were ineffective and biased in their treatment of American missionaries in the Empire. In a memorandum to the Sultan, they asserted: “Imperial decrees and the actions of the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âlî*, or the Ottoman government) have so far been completely effective.” Any criticism of their policies, which was being articulated by the U.S. government, missionaries, and their advocates had been directed by “partial information,” and thus had of no points in facilitating the rights and safety of foreigners in the Ottoman realm. The 1904 memorandum was an implicit expression of bureaucrats’ confidence in the prevailing imperial statecraft. It was also an explicit statement of their belief that the central government could and should handle these matters “alone.”<sup>5</sup> This memorandum revealed bureaucrats’ assumption that only they had access to complete and impartial information on the legal cases of missionaries. The work of provincial authorities nurtured this assumption. The central government had at its disposal numerous provincial agents that collected information, undertook investigations, and executed imperial orders. The Ministry of Public Security supervised these agents from İstanbul by tying them into what can be called an empire-wide security network. Moreover, other government branches respected the judgment of this ministry because it “consisted of the most trusted men” in the capital, and because it was indeed the only agency capable of coping with security matters via its extensive network of resources.<sup>6</sup> As the Empire’s principal law-enforcement agency, the Ministry of Public Security gathered evidence from local agents, analysed them, and proposed specific plans of action to the attention of the broader government branches, including the Sublime Porte, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice and Religious Sects. A detailed examination of the archival sources—files of correspondence between government

---

<sup>5</sup> Ya Hus 477/43, #4.

<sup>6</sup> On 14 June 1869, “the Law of Military Forces” (*Asakir-i Zaptiye Nizamnamesi*) granted extended authority to the Ministry of Public Security, known also as police, or the Gendarmerie. In 1879, “the Reform Commission” (*Islahat Komisyonu*) outlined administrative changes that affected this and other ministries. By the late nineteenth century, the Ministry of Public Security had already extended the network of its personnel across provinces. Derviş Okçabol, *Türk Zabıta Tarihi ve Teşkilâtı Tarihçesi* [Institutional history of Turkish police] (Ankara: Ankara Polis Entitütüsü, 1940); Glen W. Swanson, “The Ottoman Police,” *Journal of Contemporary History* vol. 7, no. 1-2 (January and April 1972): 243-260, especially 252-255; on the significance of the Public Security Forces in maintaining local order, see Ferdan Turgut, “Policing the Poor in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 38, no. 2 (April 2002): 149-164, especially 151-152. Shaw notes that most bureaucrats in public security, such as Hafız Mehmed Pasha (1880-1884), Kâmil Bey (1884-1890), Nazim Pasha (1890-1897), and Şefik Pasha (1897-1908), made distinguished careers in their previous posts. These bureaucrats earned the trust of the Sultan and of the imperial bureaucrats prior to their recruitment to the Ministry of Public Security. Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye* [the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey], (İstanbul: E Yayınları, 2000), II: 125-126, 267.

departments, debates over local safety and security at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, local petitions and their processing in government offices, and incident reports from the Ministry of Public Security—reveals the ministry’s priorities: its ultimate objective was to maintain law and order by means necessary; its specific objective was to find and punish persons, foreign missionaries and local subjects alike, who violated imperial laws by encroaching on another’s rights. On these grounds, the ministry even accused some of its agents of ignorance and abuse of their authority, resulting in government authorization to issue reprimands. Indeed, such cases help to capture another aspect of ‘imperial justice.’ A series of public security incidents suggest that the *fin-de-siècle* central government sought to establish its version of justice, stimulated by local events yet unenthused by local interpretations of these events, in punishing and defending missionaries.<sup>7</sup>

In early 1906, the case of a certain Mois Aşçıyan occupied a top-priority space in the filing cabinet of Alexandretta Law-Enforcement Office. Away from Maraş, his native town in South-eastern Anatolia, Aşçıyan had “been working in İskenderun for a period of several years.” He was the preacher of the Protestant Church and a member of the administration of a local college in Alexandretta, both of which were affiliated with American missionaries. For security officers, everything about him looked typical until his activities were found to be more complicated than their records had shown. In Summer that year, an investigation report required arresting Aşçıyan. He had “converted about 30 young Armenians to Protestantism, organized them into a new congregation under his leadership.” Also included in the report were results of interrogations: Aşçıyan requested and “received from U.S. government... security expenses and taxes... due to the central government.” On 30 October 1906, the Ministry of Public Security transmitted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs a verdict on Aşçıyan, and stated,

Considering the case, his stay [in Alexandretta] would be not good according to law and in fact as reported from the Alexandretta Port Authority. Based on further investigation... the committee of assessment states that he [Aşçıyan] should be

---

<sup>7</sup> Archival sources examined in this article include: Dh Eum 5Şb 2/59; Dh Eum 5Şb 72/12; Dh Eum 5Şb 75/-4; Dh Mkt 2355/32; Dh Mui 11-2/16; Hr Sys 73/14; İ Hus 84/1318 Ca 48; Ya Hus 409/84; Y Prk Eşa 24/58; Y Prk Eşa 52/2; Y Prk Um 67/30; Y Mtv 110/51. On Ottoman concept of justice, see Dh Mui 7-3/36; Hr Mkt 88/8.

made to reside in his native town Maraş... [the verdict is] to remove him to the mentioned town under the authority of the law-enforcement agency.<sup>8</sup>

The unfolding of the Aşçıyan case embodies the progresses of data collection and analysis in imperial security complex. It was local security officers who collected intelligence on cases of this sort, usually starting with third-person complaints. In collaboration with other state agents, these officers submitted comprehensive case-reports to the Ministry of Public Security. Then the ministry officials in the capital discussed on these reports and proposed a verdict to appropriate government branches, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In the final stage, the verdict would be approved by the Special Council of Ministers and issued by the sultan.

The process of handling missionary cases was all but identical with processes dealing with cases of any other nature. The inner machinations of the government demonstrate that central government branches viewed missionary issues in the orbit of domestic matters, thus classifying them within the body of internal affairs. Besides local security officers, provincial agents frequently submitted reports from their regions, concentrating generally on ethnic disturbances. These reports relate to American missionary activity as well. Most reports note incidents emanating from missionary propaganda and forced conversion of the native populace. These reports also contain details of specific cases in which missionaries suffered native prejudice and attacks. In either case, the priority of the imperial policy was to immediately restore local order and safety.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Zb 319/29, #1. This document collection does not reveal how Aşçıyan contacted the U.S. government and received financial support. Otherwise, it is likely that American missionaries helped Aşçıyan to meet the U.S. diplomats in Alexandretta.

<sup>9</sup> Y Mrz D 11662; Y Mrz D 11681; Y Mrz D 12425; Y Mrz D 14527; Y Prk Tşf 4/1; Y Prk Myd 20/87; reports from Aleppo, Beirut, Bitlis, Elazığ, Erzurum, İzmir, Trabzon, in Y Prk Um 67/30; missionaries converting their houses into institutions without government's approval, in Y Prk Um 23/69. On numerous occasions, the offices of the Ministries of Internal and Foreign Affairs collaborated with American, European, and Ottoman foreign intelligence services. This article does not examine the results of this international security cooperative as it would not be directly related to the Ottoman government's treatment of the missionaries. Importantly, though, Ottoman archival sources inform that the collaboration with foreign intelligence services provided a vital information source on anti-Ottoman activities. For example, the Bulgarian Revolutionary Organization purchased guns and ammunitions with money collected from U.S. donations (Y Prk Eşa 52/2); Albanian "committees of sedition" (*fesâd komiteleri*) had been working to revolt against the imperial authority (Y Prk Eşa 52/99); Armenian "mischief-makers" (*fesedeler*) came to Cyprus on their way to the Ottoman hinterland, i.e., Central and Eastern Anatolia (Zb 317/144); the U.S. Embassy requested Ottoman help to find an American citizen's particulars stolen from home during his imprisonment (Y Mtv 110/51); a note from the Ministry of Public Security informs the Ottoman Embassy in Washington that the name of the person writing, from the Ottoman Empire, anti-Ottoman columns in American

Bureaucrats in the capital were careful to spell out that the Ottoman government's "approach [to] non-Muslim" subjects and "missionaries" was on par with its treatment of Muslim subjects. They even claimed that the government "tolerated missionaries," though it did not have to do so. The reason for this subtle presentation of the imperial approach seems twofold: they wanted to shield 'imperial justice' from criticism by displaying their magnanimous treatment of missionaries. Ottoman institutions were there when the missionaries sought help. To the view of the imperial bureaucrats, indeed, Ottoman officials guarded missionaries, protected their property, and compensated them for their losses.<sup>10</sup> Those agents who knowingly allowed missionaries to suffer were subject to penalties and various forms of punishment.

Archival sources from the Internal Affairs, including incoming reports on important incidents and communications with the American Embassy and provincial administrations, demonstrate that imperial policy did not, as a rule, run counter to missionaries. Especially during the 1890s, the government's efforts to defend missionaries were striking in their visibility. At this time, civil turmoil—what the Ottoman government regarded as "movements of sedition"—became widespread, especially in the eastern provinces. Local incidents between fighting groups left missionaries and their property at the mercy of local mobs. Intelligence reports sent from, among others, Aleppo, Bitlis, Elazığ, Haçin, Merifon, Sivas, as-Suwayda and Urfa, drove imperial authorities to issue provincial authorities with a series of specific emergency orders that aimed to avert missionary suffering.<sup>11</sup> These sources navigate through retrospective cases as well. For the Ottoman government, these cases served not as a means to prevent incidents, but as a way to undo previous acts of injustice. An early report of this type records an Ottoman Nestorian Christian who gave a warm reception to a missionary group visiting his village. The

---

newspapers does not exist (Zb 339/51). For an orphanage owned by American missionaries and used to proselytize local children to Protestantism, see Ya Hus 409/84.

<sup>10</sup> Y Prk Bşk 35/78. Various examples include: an imperial order to assign police officers to guard the houses of American missionaries (Y Prk Eşa 26/100); a thief who stole a missionary's purse was caught and detained in a local police station (Ya Hus 322/5); the murderer of an American missionary priest on route from Adana to Alexandretta was caught and taken to court (A Mkt Um 521/47).

<sup>11</sup> For instance, see imperial orders to: "guard American missionaries in Bitlis," even though local unrest had ended (Y Prk Ask 10/60); "protect missionary houses" (Y Prk Eşa 26/100); "do anything possible to guard" the U.S. citizens during local unrest (A Mkt Mhm 609/5); "guard missionaries" in Haçin (A Mkt Mhm 616/11); "protect women missionaries" (A Mkt Mhm 617/21); "take all measures to guard missionaries" in as-Suwayda (A Mkt Mhm 651/4); "protect American missionaries" in Elazığ (A Mkt Mhm 657/23); "protect missionaries" in Merzifon (A Mkt Mhm 660/73) and in Sivas (A Mkt Mhm 662/5); and one directive even required that "police officers should escort" missionaries during their trip from Urfa to Van (A Mkt Mhm 648/13).

provincial officials intervened, found him guilty without legal justification, and imprisoned him in a local police station. On 1 January 1853, the central government, having discussed the case, urged these “ignorant” agents to release him as soon as they received the imperial decree. The agents also had to learn and implement imperial law. The government also wanted to know the grounds on which they had put this “innocent” man into prison.<sup>12</sup>

Intelligence reports and imperial orders exchanged between imperial and provincial authorities show reveal an interconnected cycle of operation. Provincial agents sent data to the central government and imperial orders were, in turn, transmitted to provincial governors and security officers. The orders analyzed the data, required governors and officers to undertake various actions. For instance, provincial governors were obliged to “assign sufficient number of police forces” (law-enforcement officers) in their regions to “properly watch and vigilantly guard” missionaries, protect their property, and “escort missionaries” during their travel. According to bureaucrats in the capital, “the central government” was indeed operating to “endow missionaries with safety by any means necessary.”<sup>13</sup>

In the final years of the 19th century, missionary-related reports became numerous and more substantial. This was evidently because missionaries turned the target of fatal attacks amid social disorder in provinces. Locals—mobs, rebels and even government agents—singled out missionaries, and their institutions, in regions where public security had been a sensitive issue. Besides other incidents, local gangs sabotaged the American College in Merzifon, several unnamed rebels charged and damaged missionary institutions in Tarsus, and in some instances American missionaries were verbally insulted, attacked and fatally assaulted by angry locals.<sup>14</sup> Bureaucrats in the capital visited local reports before reacting to these incidents. Their decisions registered three phases. In the first phase, they typically responded by ordering provincial

---

<sup>12</sup> Hr Mkt 56/3.

<sup>13</sup> “Properly watch” in Y Prk Ask 10/60; “by any means” in A Mkt Mhm 609/5; “escort missionaries” in A Mkt Mhm 694/4; A Mkt Mhm 648/13.

<sup>14</sup> The suffering of missionaries at the hands of local Ottomans deserves further analysis and will be the subject of a future study. For incidents that erupted between Ottoman locals and American missionaries, “Merzifon,” in Y Prk Ask 8/66; “Tarsus,” in Ya Hus 335/67; the case of Captain Hasan who insulted a missionary priest in Sivas, in A Mkt Mhm 701/5. In addition, see a local attack on two American missionaries in Halep, in Hr Sys 71/28; the murder of a missionary on the way from Adana to Aleppo, in A Mkt Um 554/74; the murderer of a missionary priest and his servant caught near Maraş, in A Mkt Um 521/47; 567/9; 568/54; a Muslim thief who stole the possessions of a missionary woman caught, in Ya Hus 322/5.

authorities to investigate the incident and provide the central government with substantive intelligence. In the second phase, the bureaucrats elaborated on intelligence data and amplified on the incident by transmitting an *ad hoc* resolution to proceed on the incident. Finally they passed the judgment that ordered to punish the guilty, redress the injustice, compensate the suffering party, and take measures to avert incidents of the same sort.

One case that represents the progression of a bureaucratic decision comes from the year 1892. In the 1880s, American missionary Bartlett settled in Burdur, Central Anatolia, with his wife, sister, and children. On the day of their arrival, the Bartletts “were not well-received by local Greek and Armenian residents.” Quickly, the residents made hostility out of their prejudice against the Bartletts. Residents made “frequent attempts to expel [the Bartletts] from their residence.” After failed attempts, the Bartlett residence “suddenly collapsed [was demolished because of neighbours] throwing dirt and stones.”<sup>15</sup> The Bartletts sought help for compensation. On their behalf, the U.S. Embassy in İstanbul requested from the central government “1,200 liras for *damnum absque injuria*,” i.e., loss without injury. The embassy also rendered “a certain demand to ‘correct’ and ‘replace’ local authorities responsible” in the Bartletts’ suffering. In response, the imperial bureaucrats resorted to the typical three-phased decision mechanism as described above, rather than pursuing a policy of procrastination by sending an affirmative response to the U.S. Embassy.<sup>16</sup> The bureaucrats, thereby avoiding U.S. interference on the matter, ordered the Konya General Governorship to investigate and return with substantive intelligence on the Bartlett case. Then in the second round of orders, they demanded that “judicial authorities carry out the obligatory investigation,” and “proceed with interrogating suspects” and eyewitnesses. Meanwhile, local governor and chief police officer in Burdur were

---

<sup>15</sup> Sources on the Bartlett family are: Dh Mkt 1916/93; Dh Mkt 1991/71; Dh Mkt 1996/63; Dh Mui 72/11; Hr Sys 71/59; Ya Hus 264/183.

<sup>16</sup> Ya Hus 264/183. We find the Latin term, *damnum absque injuria*, to be the appropriate transliteration of Ottoman expression, “duçar olduđu zarar ve ziyân mukabili.” U.S. diplomats in İstanbul were invited to the Sublime Porte for a meeting to discuss issues of importance with Sultan Abdulhamid II. In the meeting, they also mentioned the Bartlett case, and were told that their requests would be considered. While their requests were under consideration, the Sultan and Ottoman bureaucrats suggested that the U.S. diplomats “not attribute utmost importance to this specific incident” and “not think about sending battleships” to protect Bartlett. The Ottoman government did not seriously consider the diplomats’ requests at length, but looked as they did so. This supports our contention that the imperial bureaucrats would not upset Ottoman-U.S. relations and yet, they wanted to handle the Bartletts case as an internal affair. Ya Hus 264/183.

authorized to search and “seize persons whose intervention had been found in the destruction of the [Bartletts’] residence.”<sup>17</sup>

Later reports to the central government suggest that judicial investigations progressed at ease. Certain parties were found guilty, the Konya governor approved of the findings, and then local police arrested the criminals who led the attack. The government concluded that not only the guilty had to be punished, but the Bartletts had to be compensated. The final judgment on the case also aimed to pre-empt future incidents of similar sort. It stated,

There is no need to worry even for a moment of time... 400 liras, the value of destroyed property as noted by the Province [of Konya], and 200 liras in return for other damages will be given to Mr. Bartlett... the total sum of 600 liras shall be requested and taken from those who inflicted the damage [upon the Bartletts] and the imperial licence shall hereby be granted to Bartlett to rebuild the destroyed residence... in order to prevent future problems of the same sort, [we take the occasion of] this incident to give definite and obligatory warning to stop [bothering missionaries]... these are the imperial orders and the right thing to do.<sup>18</sup>

The Bartletts case epitomizes the principal value of local reports to public security matters in specific parts of the Empire. It also demonstrates that the imperial bureaucrats orchestrated local power holders—local governor, judge, and police—by practicing traditional norms of ‘imperial justice’ in missionary litigations.

By the time the 19th century drew to a close, the three-phased decision mechanism as practiced in the Bartletts case ended up as common practice, becoming the formative strategy in grappling with missionaries as the object of public security. Archival documents from the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Public Security also points out that the central government’s subtle policy of resisting American interference stemmed from the fact that the government espoused a unilateral approach to missionary litigations, their objectives being the claiming of

---

<sup>17</sup> On the correspondence between the capital and Konya, the greater province of Burdur in Central Anatolia, the archival document mentions that “all intelligence [on the case of Bartlett] has been obtained through constant communication with the Province of Konya” (*Konya Vilayeti ile bi'l-defaat vuku bulan iş'arat neticesine göre*),” in Ya Hus 264/183.

<sup>18</sup> Ya Hus 264/183, 24 R 1310.

imperial law and reclaiming provincial order. The imperial bureaucrats did not hesitate to protect missionaries and punish local authorities and residents in the name of ‘imperial justice.’<sup>19</sup>

IN THE 19TH CENTURY, OTTOMAN IMPERIAL POLICY STEMMED from a system of governance akin to the distribution of powers. This system helps to better understand the imperial approach to missionary presence in the Empire. It vested executive power in the reigning sultan, entrusted legislative power to imperial bureaucrats in the capital, and placed judicial power with provincial governors, judges and security officers. Up until the 1880s, the Sultan, the Sublime Porte, the Council of Ministers and the Assembly of Investigations were confident that the existing system was capable of coping with the issues of missionaries, who constituted somewhat negligible percentage of the Empire’s foreign population. By then, the flow of intelligence and investigative reports from the provincial level—by communities and missionaries as well as governors, judges, and officers—to the central government was considered sound and sufficient to effectively exercise executive and legislative power.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> This analysis is based on numerous cases that have been examined and not presented in this article, including: the murders of an American missionary and his servant (A Mkt Um 521/47); the imperial order to “search” the suspects of a murder (A Mkt Um 554/74); the imperial order to take all possible measures to resolve the case (A Mkt Um 542/55); suspects found and “the murderer captured” (A Mkt Um 568/54); “natives in Maraş not allowed to [make seasonal trips to] summer pastures” for security reasons (A Mkt Um 567/9). Hasan Rakım Effendi, a senior official at the İstanbul Post Office, was found guilty of stealing checks while doing his job of checking letters sent to the missionaries from the United States. He was “arrested, punished, and exiled” to “a far away village,” where he would work as “a low-key postman” away from missionaries and other foreigners. Zb 351/37, 9 Ş1323. A Muslim thief who had stolen the possessions of a missionary was found and arrested. Ya Hus 322/5, 19 N 1312. Numerous petition letters from locals and missionaries told the central government about losses during local incidents and asked for redress. For these letters, see A Mkt Mhm 647/39. Imperial procedures in “compensating the losses of [some American missionaries who had] suffered during [deadly and costly] incidents in Eastern provinces,” in A Mkt Mhm 538/27. The imperial order to local governors and law-enforcement agents to “facilitate the return trip of missionaries who want to leave,” in Dh Eum 5Şb 2/59.

<sup>20</sup> On Ottoman imperial statecraft, see Carter Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980); Suraiya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 2-73; Karen Barkey, “Islam and Toleration: Studying the Ottoman Imperial Model,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* vol. 19, no. 1/2 (December 2005): 5-19; Walter F. Weiker, “The Ottoman Bureaucracy: Modernization and Reform,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* vol. 13, no. 3 (December 1968): 451-470; Emrah Sahin, “Millet System,” in Andrea Stanton et al., eds., *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa* (California: SAGE, 2012), I: 181-183; Boğaç A. Ergene, “On Ottoman Justice: Interpretations in Conflict, 1600-1800,” *Islamic Law and Society* vol. 8, no. 1 (2001): 52-87; Richard S. Horowitz, “International Law and State Transformation in China, Siam, and the Ottoman Empire during the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of World History* vol. 15, no. 4 (December 2004): 445-486, especially 445-455. We should note that no scholarly analysis has presented a substantial framework to understand the impact of the Ottoman statecraft on the processes of imperial power and decision-making. For relationships between statecraft and state power, see David Currie, “The Distribution of Powers after Bowsher,” *The Supreme Court Review* vol. 1986 (1986), 19-40. The

Evidently, two major developments precipitated a reconfiguration of the central government's view on missionaries and its provincial agents: heightened social disorder and missionary activity that held potential to affect "the movements of sedition" across *millet*s, or local confessional communities. The bureaucrats in the capital carried out an extensive, and virtually exhaustive, study of specific incidents and surveillance of missionary activities at the same time that provincial agents continued reporting incidents and complained about obstacles to restore order in their region.<sup>21</sup> In the *fin-de-siècle* Empire, this dialectical relationship the central government and provincial governments caused the former to seek ways to renovate the overall structure of its statecraft and adjust the imperial approach to local officials and missionaries. These bureaucratic efforts fed into imperial orders, specific regulations, staff changes, preventive measures, and strikingly, into more reliance upon the achievements of the Ministry of Public Security.

Ottoman bureaucrats found a daunting challenge in incompetence and corruption of their agents at the provincial level. In long discussions held in 1893-1894 and 1897, the Council of Ministers voiced concerns about local "the movements of sedition provoked by missionaries" and "local administrations' incompetency to quell these movements." In pursuit of an effective solution, the council members agreed upon "the need for action." They were determined to act especially in three fields: protection of missionaries, punishment of local officials, and authorization of provincial law-enforcement officers as principal authority of public security operations.<sup>22</sup> Provincial authorities saw little to no point in giving special treatment to

---

Ottoman Council of Ministries founded the Assembly of Investigation (*Meclis-i Tahkik*) in March 1854 with the aim to settle criminal cases by giving due process of law to the involved parties, foreign and Ottoman alike. A Dvn 95/67. Archival documents on the efficiency of the existing system and provincial-level judicial practices are: A Mkt Mhm 1/14; A Mkt Mvl 147/29; A Mkt Nzd 318/17; A Mkt Um 566/67; A Mkt Um 574/50; Y A Hus 160/4; Y A Hus 165/64.

<sup>21</sup> Y Ee 43/103; Y Prk Mf 3/11. Late Ottoman social disorder will be examined elsewhere with particular focus on foreign missionary activity. For archival documents on socio-communal disorder in Ottoman provinces, see Ya Res 78/54; Ya Res 122/88; Y Prk Hr 7/36. Ottoman central government ordered to monitor missionaries, and other American citizens, in the Empire. One archival source, dated 29 August 1917, indicates that even an imperial survey was conducted on foreigners after Ottoman-Greek relations were severed. Dh Eum 3Şb 23/43, 8 Z 1335. On Ottoman census and surveys, see Kemal Karpat, "Ottoman Population Records and the Census of 1881/82-1893," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* vol. 9, no. 3 (October 1978), 237-274. Incident reports from provincial governors include: Dh Eum 5Şb; İ Hus 128/1323 S-052; Ya Hus 409/84; Y Mtv 183/10; Y Prk Myd 21/42; Y Prk Myd 20/87; also the memorandum of Saffet Pasha on these reports, in Y Ee 43/103.

<sup>22</sup> Local officials' abuse of authority, which is mentioned in pieces of one significant "memorandum" (*layiha*) written by Şakir Pasha, deserve further analysis. Y Ee 132/40. The council debate, in Ya Hus 269/129; and the incompetency of local authorities, in Y Prk Mf 3/11. In one case, the imperial bureaucrats learned that "flyers were posted" on the walls of a "missionary college in Kayseri." The flyers claimed that "Muslims [would] kill Armenians

missionaries at a time when Ottoman residents in their regions were deprived of equal protection. Nevertheless, the bureaucrats in the capital considered the security of missionaries to be critical: while providing missionaries with safety, local officers could also “monitor” and “prevent their involvement” in local affairs. Imperial directives required that missionaries receive “proper protection” in cases of emergency and that provincial authorities “do as is due” for their safety. Under specific orders, the governors of Adana, Bitlis, Elazığ, Merzifon, Sivas and as-Suwayda recruited local men as guards during the 1890s and assigned them to “protect missionaries, escort them when travelling,” and to “secure their residences.”<sup>23</sup> Based on incidents in which missionaries and their institutions had been attacked by local mobs, or “rebels,” imperial authorities forced provincial authorities to lead security operations and establish stricter control. In certain cases, they also required that security officers accompany missionaries on their travels.

A symbolic example comes from Bitlis. On 15 December 1895, the imperial bureaucrats contacted local authorities for further information on the security of missionaries in the region. The Bitlis authorities reported that local anarchy “put under risk the lives [and property] of missionaries.” The central government therefore ordered them—the governor, other officials, and officers—to take “the necessary security measures.” Its order conditioned that, under police watch, missionaries be “relocated to Van,” the safest city near Bitlis. In another order, the

---

in the neighbourhood.” Seeing local agents incapable of preventing this act of sedition, the bureaucrats in the capital concluded that “from now on, all schools owned by foreigners and Christians [referring to American missionaries] will be inspected directly by “the agents of the Ministry of Education” (*Maarif memurlarınca*). A Mkt Mhm 724/4; Y A Hus 269/129.

<sup>23</sup> Y Prk Eşa 26/100. Missionaries were afflicted “during the movements of sedition” (*fesad hareketler esnasında*) in the eastern provinces in the 1890s. According to imperial records, it is only “for this reason” that provincial authorities have to “give special attention to the safety and security of foreigners” in their regions. A Mkt Mhm 609/31; Y Prk Eşa 26/100; A Mkt Mhm 612/4; A Mkt Mhm 609/5. The central government’s objective in ensuing operations was to curb U.S. interference with missionary incidents. “Proper protection,” in Y Prk Ask 10/60; “do as is due,” in A Mkt Mhm 609/5, 13 Ca 1315. Whereas earlier imperial orders requested that provincial-level governors personally deal with all security matters, the orders from the 1880s onward required that these governors, judges, and law-enforcement officers protect missionaries. See, for example, an earlier order sent to Maraş on 1 July 1855, in A Dvn 104/64. “Protect American citizens in provinces during incidents,” in A Mmkt Mhm 609/5; “protect missionaries in Merzifon,” in A Mkt Mhm 660/73; “protect missionaries in Sivas,” in A Mkt Mhm 662/5; “recruit guards to protect missionaries and their property,” in Y Prk Eşa 26/100; “protect two missionaries on their way,” in Y Prk Ask 10/60; “take necessary measures to protect missionaries in as-Suwayda,” in A Mkt Mhm 651/4. For imperial directives to other regions, see A Mkt Mhm 609/31; A Mkt Mhm 616/11; A Mkt Mhm 617/21; A Mkt Mhm 660/73; A Mkt Mhm 657/23; A Mkt Mhm 616/11; A Mkt Mhm 617/21; and the imperial order to protect missionaries “against all risks” (*her türlü ihtimale karşı*), in A Mkt Mhm 612/4.

government specified that “their estates and belongings [would] be protected by any means necessary.”<sup>24</sup>

Details of correspondence between Bitlis and the capital demonstrate the severity of the local situation. The Bitlis authorities reported that the moving operation could be “fatally” dangerous. The central government admitted the risks involved, but noted that missionaries’ “estates and belongings [would] be protected by any means necessary [even] after the missionaries moved and [even] if no news came about their whereabouts.” The government was, in effect, forcing the provincial agency to assume responsibility for the missionaries’ safety by being vigilant and proactive.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, the Bitlis authorities took credit for the operation: the relocation of the missionaries and the protection of their property was a success. Their operation is but one example. There were myriad complex operations in which provincial authorities failed to implement imperial orders and regulations concerning on the issue of regional safety. For instance, the imperial bureaucrats showed signs of frustration upon hearing that a missionary residence in Talas, Kayseri, was hit by gunshots from a local mob that had yet to be unidentified by the time news of the incident had reached the capital. İstanbul wanted to know the motive—whether it was meant to kill or just frighten the homeowner—and ordered the local authorities to prepare and submit a detailed intelligence report on “who shot and why?”<sup>26</sup>

By and large, the bureaucrats in the capital were swift in reacting to local agents that proved to be incompetent or simply incapable of settling missionary cases. They removed these agents from active duty and reprimanded them. On other occasions, agents were exiled after having abused their position and power like in the case of Haydar Effendi, a district governor in Elazığ. In the early 1890s, the central government noted a high degree of incompetency in his work. Haydar perpetually failed implementing imperial directives. He also did not complete

---

<sup>24</sup> A Mkt Mhm 648/13; A Mkt Mhm 662/5; Y Prk Ask 8/66; “Bitlis,” in A Mkt Mhm 619/17 and 694/4. Local soldiers played a policing role in this operation as well. Military personnel acting as law-enforcement officers in the *fin-de-siècle* Empire will be the topic of a future study.

<sup>25</sup> A Mkt Mhm 694/4; A Mkt Mhm 619/17; A Mkt Mhm 662/5, 21 L 1314. A series of imperial orders sent to eastern provinces, including Amasya, Antep, Merzifon, and Bitlis, suggested local officers to keep protecting missionaries even after the incidents would end. A Mkt Mhm 612/4; Hr Sys 73/15. An archival source mentions that other provinces were informed of these orders as well. For example, municipal authorities in the imperial capital İstanbul were ordered to guard missionary institutions, such as the Girls’ College, despite the fact that the capital was unlikely to be affected by local unrest like the periphery, or farther regions. A Mkt Mhm 742/20.

<sup>26</sup> Dh Mui 11/2-16, 3 N 1327. Our research have not accessed to the report of the Kayseri authorities. The report must include substantial evidence on the course of investigation. It might also contain the gist of imperial perspective on similar incidents.

investigations and reports on missionaries in his region. The last nail in his coffin came from a memorandum the Imperial Ministry of Internal Affairs had submitted to the Council of Ministers on 4 April 1899. The memorandum revealed that American visitors and all types of donations were seeing missionaries in Elazığ. Haydar Effendi never reported on this. And worse, he did not even know about it when asked. The central government removed him from his position. Upon the recommendation of the council, Mazhar Bey became the new district governor. As an old-school bureaucrat rising through the ranks of the Imperial Court of Appeals, Mazhar Bey seemed to benefit from the trust of his fellow bureaucrats in the capital.<sup>27</sup>

In several cases, failure of agents to keep law and order in their locale caused them to be exiled. These cases occurred when a local official abused his authority, or took part in some sort of criminal activity. Hasan Rakım Effendi was one of these officials. He was an İstanbul Post Office worker who had been sorting foreign letters and packages. Hasan Rakım was working with letters sent from the United States in particular, and he was accused of “stealing checks, bank bills” (*poliçe*) and other valuables of that sort. Upon hearing the accusations on 22 February 1908, the bureaucrats in the capital ordered security officers to arrest him, and he was exiled. Even before the court of law processed his case, Hasan Rakım found himself transferred away from İstanbul to “a countryside where no foreigner was residing.”<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> Ottoman subjects were rewarded when they helped security operations. In one case, Musaddık Pasha, then unemployed, was rewarded with employment in state offices based on his assistance to find the murderer of an American priest near “Alexandretta” (İskenderun). A Mkt Um 566/67; the murderer brought to the court, in A Mkt Um 521/47. In another case dated 24 October 1909, the central government ordered the authorities in Kilis to honour persons who served in arresting a local bandit named Abdino. Abdino had stabbed an American missionary doctor who resisted robbery. Dh Mui 7-3/36. Examples on the treatment of local officials with gross misconduct include: A Mkt Mhm 701/5; Dh Eum Ays 23/1; Dh Mkt 2185/83; Hr Mkt 88/8; Ya Hus 318/97; Zb 93/64; Zb 351/37. The career and replacement of Haydar Effendi, in Dh Mkt 2185/83. In a later case dated 26 September 1919, Zekeriya Effendi, a police officer, was discharged from his duty because he had lowered the American flag in a local meeting house located in Bandırma, or today’s Balıkesir. There were obvious reasons behind Zekeriya’s pitty fate: the incident occurred on the Easter and he was off-duty that day. Dh Eum Ays 23/1. Strikingly, sanctions on state officials involved in local cases were far from an established practice prior to the 1880s and yet, there were few recorded cases in which local officials were punished. On 3 October 1854, the central government observed ignorance in the actions of several local authorities. A Ministry of Foreign Affairs document indicates that Kurdish bandits intercepted a missionary family en route from Diyarbakır to Antep and then robbed them of their possessions. Local authorities, especially the officers patrolling the route, failed to prevent this robbery from happening. And they failed to catch the suspects after the fact. The government ruled that these officers and officials in the region had to be penalized. Hr Mkt 88/8.

<sup>28</sup> Zb 351/37. Various cases required local authorities and public workers being exiled. On 21 February 1897, a high-ranking military officer named Hüseyin was punished and deported from Havza, Sivas, for beating an American missionary priest. Ya Hus 318/97. On 11 November 1917, Israel, a prestigious Armenian doctor working in the city hall, was demoted and sent to Bitlis because he was identified to be communicating with, and supporting “Armenian committees of sedition in the United States” (*Amerika’daki Ermeni fesad komitaları*). Zb 93/64. Some officials were

Arguably, then, *fin-de-siècle* Ottoman policy towards American missionaries was not an isolated struggle to limit missionary activities or for imperial dominance in a remote province. Rather, it was one part of a multi-faceted process in which many missionaries and provincial authorities were drawn together during periods of local upheaval. In response to “the need for action,” the imperial bureaucrats emerged as leading actors in missionary litigations, and despite the reluctance of provinces, they actively promulgated decrees and corrected provincial authorities’ irresponsible behaviour.<sup>29</sup> The İstanbul bureaucrats wanted to provide missionaries with safety and protection, while in broader context they aimed to restore law and local order. As a result of the central government’s persistence, inadequate provincial-level Ottoman officials became subject to penalties, demotion, firings, and exile. None of these measures, however, proved to be panacea for myriad problems surrounding the missionaries. Consequently, the government found its alternative in the authority of the Ministry of Public Security. The next section presents that the centre steadily granted greater authority to public security officers. It was these officers that would handle order and public safety issues, which in the long run turned the Ministry of Public Security into the locus of imperial power on specific missionary matters.

ON 5 MAY 1907, THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY RECEIVED an investigative report from the Konya Governor Mehmed Pasha on extraordinary activity going on in the residence of American missionary Maria A. Gerber. Gerber had “turned her house into a school without official permission,” and began to “adopt and teach eleven Armenian girls.” The report noted that Gerber “was about to leave Konya.” Prior to her departure, she left these girls at the hands of her missionary friend. “This move,” said Mehmed Pasha, “double-confirmed her intentions [coloured with] illegitimacy and secrecy.” Under the Sultan’s orders, and acting on

---

also exiled for having “married foreign women,” which imperial bureaucrats believed would change a groom’s views and customs. See, for example, the relocation of Muzaffer Paşazade Reşid Bey, the chief doctor of the Ottoman Embassy in Rome, after he married an American woman, in Y Prk Eşa 29/9; the news that one of Mahmud Paşa’s sons would soon marry an American, in Y Prk Mk 9/108. The significance of exiles and relocations as an imperial policy will be examined elsewhere. Zb 351/37. Significantly, the central government exiled several local officials even without waiting on the court’s decision. That is, the opening of a trial was sometimes sufficient to place a criminal card on the name of a local authority, and the card, an imperial opprobrium over one’s official career, led to exile. Political opposition and radical changes in the 1900s, especially during the Young Turks Era, must have contributed to rushing exile decisions, as in the case of Hasan Rakım. On the Young Turk Era, see Şükrü Hanioglu, *Preparation for a Revolution: the Young Turks* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> Ya Hus 269/129.

instructions from the Ministries of Public Security and Internal Affairs, security officers were sent to close Gerber's residence and "save the girls" she had adopted. The operation was successful. Among these girls, "five were natives of Konya and would be given back to their guardians." The other "six were from İstanbul." Mehmed Ali Effendi, the chief superintendent in the Konya Police Station, took the İstanbulian girls under protection and custody before handing them over to "the police officer Setrag who, with an Armenian childminder (as three girls were younger than ten years old), would take them back home to İstanbul. Security officers in İstanbul then searched the coordinates of the girls' families. They would be delivered variously to aunts, brothers, grandmothers, uncles, or distant relatives living in Beyoğlu, Dolapdere, Samatya, Yedikule and Yenisehir, all in İstanbul. In a matter of two weeks, security officers contacted family members and delivered the girls with verbal "confirmation" and "signed paper."<sup>30</sup>

The Gerber case is significant for it demonstrates the government's larger policy of undermining illegal missionary activity, such as adopting Ottoman children and using residential houses as schools. The development of the case is also important because it provides a microcosm for the extent to which the Ministry of Public Security and its local security force—security officers, law-enforcement officers or police—were involved in missionary activity. During the late 19th century, Public Security agents assumed a vital role to administer a wide array of security procedures: they generated intelligence data, made interrogations, and coordinated field operations, including rescue missions, custody of victims, and surveillance of suspects. As trusted authorities, they submitted their work directly to the Sultan and top government officials in the capital, who embodied respectively executive and legislative bodies of the imperial statecraft.<sup>31</sup> In practice, security officers affiliated with the Ministry of Public

---

<sup>30</sup> On the Ministry of Public Security, see Okçabol, *Türk Zabita Tarihi*; Shaw and Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, II: 125-126; Swanson, "The Ottoman Police," 252-255. Our research has located no scholarly work on the case of Maria Gerber. For popular works on Gerber's life and times, see Thomas Cosmades, *Maria, God's Angel to Widows and Orphans in Anatolia*, online at [cosmades.org/articles/maria.htm](http://cosmades.org/articles/maria.htm); Cosmades, "At Zion Orphanage," in *Anatolia, Anatolia!*, online at [armenianbiblechurch.org/food%20corner/anatolia/anatolia\\_index.htm](http://armenianbiblechurch.org/food%20corner/anatolia/anatolia_index.htm). This article reconstructs Maria Gerber's narrative from the records of the Ottoman Ministry of Public Security including, Zb 46/13, #1, 4-15, 21. The report mentioned above was the last document added to the folder submitted previously. Investigations on Gerber and her residence began a month earlier with the imperial order sent from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The ministry ordered the Konya authorities to check the Gerber residence, apparently after the ministry officials found "worthy of inquiry" the circular letter on the matter of Hasan Hazim Effendi, a local notable of Konya.

<sup>31</sup> The İstanbul government's increasing dependency on the work of the Ministry of Public Security seems critical during a time that the bureaucrats in the capital were overwhelmed with safety and security matters at the provincial level. The capital worried that local unrest and intra-communal conflicts would escalate in frequency and severity,

Security provided most intelligence and investigative services. Their work focused on ‘criminal’ and ‘preventive’ policing, that is, they were supposed to find and arrest criminals, and avert prospective incidents of the same sort. On case-by-case basis, the ministry prepared an intelligence “memorandum” and an investigative “survey” (*tahrîr*), based on the work of local officers, and forwarded them to other government branches.<sup>32</sup> In the *fin-de-siècle* Empire, imperial policy relating to missionaries stemmed largely from these sources of information. Between the 1890s and 1910s, communication of information and directives between provinces and the central government marked a high level of fluency. This fluency resulted from the use of the telegraph, and sustained through government pressure on officers. Around this time, an efficient communication network between the capital and the field allowed security operations to be conducted much faster than any other official business of the government.

Initial correspondence on the Gerber case among different agencies (namely, the Sublime Porte, the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Public Security, the Konya Governor and security officers) registered two days, a remarkably short time as far as distance and volume of correspondence are concerned. The governor sent the Ministry of Public Security a report on 9 May 1907; the next day, the bureaucrats in the Sublime Porte sent a note to Public Security after having discussed how to proceed. Following the security mission—searching Gerber’s house, removing girls and returning them to their families—, the case was closed following a pronouncement of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to all concerned parties.<sup>33</sup>

---

thus affecting missionaries in the provinces. For instance, see Ya Hus 409/84; Y Mtv 183/10; Y Mtv 242/43; Y Prk Eşa 24/58. On the Ministry of Public Security, also see Shaw and Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, II: 125-126; Swanson, “The Ottoman Police,” 252-255. “It was the public order that initiated the centralization of the police in the first place... the Ottoman Empire was a loyal follower of the French system in its administrative structure... In other words, crime fighting... is subsumed within a wide concern for administration and especially the good order of society,” in Ferdan Turgut, “Policing the Poor in the Late Ottoman Empire,” 151-152. The issue of maintaining public order also led to the centralization of police force in the late nineteenth century. In the *fin-de-siècle* Empire, fighting crimes not only were ‘subsumed within’ administrative concerns and ‘the good order of society,’ as Turgut mentions, but also targeted local concerns and the safety of the “individual,” missionary and Ottoman alike.

<sup>32</sup> Dh Kms 52-2/79; Y Mtv 110/51; Zb 311/44; Zb 309/29; Zb 321/78; especially Y Mtv 56/51; Y Mtv 107/8.

<sup>33</sup> Along with others, the Gerber case indicates that the Ministry of Public Security was connected to provincial-level officials through local security officers. Zb 46/13, #3-4; and see “the relations between law-enforcement officers and local administration officials (*Jandarmalarla mahalli idare arasındaki münasebetler*),” in Y Ee 132/40; the communication between security officers and Mustafa Şevket Efendi, the Director of the Post and Telegraphy Office in Hamidiye, in Zb 351/19; Zb 351/25; correspondence between law-enforcement and local authorities in Y Prk Um 74/122. While future research shall focus on specific dimensions of the relationship between officials and security officers, our research findings are based on the following archival documents: Dh Mkt 458/21; Dh Mkt 460/56; Hr Sys 56/2; Ya Hus 424/41; Y Mtv 231/147; Y Prk Tşf 6/70; Zb 46/13; Zb 351/19. Telegraphy, a symbol of Ottoman

Although cases were closed in imperial quarters, work remained for local security officers. For ‘preventing and controlling’ criminal activity against and among American missionaries, these officers were requested to escort the missionaries on travels and when they moved places, searched and arrested criminals and rebels that attacked missionaries, and engaged in fights with missionaries’ students who revolted against imperial authority. They then sent memoranda and surveys to the central government following each operation. If found incompetent by imperial standards, local officers shared the fate of other local authorities by seeing penalties, arrest, and exile.<sup>34</sup> The Ministry of Public Security and its officers changed the course of ‘imperial justice’ on incidents concerning the activity, safety, and security of missionaries at the local level. On these incidents, the imprint of the ministry was striking and enduring, a fact surprisingly not recognized in the existing literature. Led by the ministry and undertaken by local officers, their security operations profoundly affected imperial ‘prevention’ and ‘control’ of criminal activities across the Empire. Provincial officials and officers redefined the ways the central government dealt with ‘crime’ as it affected missionaries. In particular, intelligence memoranda and investigative surveys prepared by the Ministry of Public Security became amongst the most important sources of information on the subject of crime prevention.

Coupled with efficient lines of communication between government branches at imperial and provincial levels, these memoranda and surveys not only led to instructions and orders being issued from the capital but helped settle local incidents as well. A detailed examination of security issues during the late 19th and 20th centuries also suggests that, though a number of local agents partook in numerous operations, the imperial bureaucrats eventually saw all security issues under the purview of the imperial establishment. That is, the İstanbul bureacats loaded

---

centralizing efforts and reigning Sultan Abdulhamid II’s favourite technology, brought Ottoman imperial and local authorities in constant contact. Later, the Ministry of Public Works founded a telegraphy department. Shaw and Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu*, II: 120. Early in the 1870s, the Ottoman telegraph network was already the eighth-longest in the world, extending over 17,000 miles. Yakup Bektaş, “The Sultan’s Messenger: Cultural Constructions of Ottoman Telegraphy, 1847-1880,” *Technology and Culture* vol. 41, no. 4 (October 2000): 669-696. Memoranda, surveys, and imperial orders on matters related to security and safety of missionary were written in short and concise form. See, for example, Hr Sys 56/2; Ya Hus 424/41; Zb 46/13, #1-20; Zb 309/102. This terse style aimed to avoid confusion and leave no room for discussion on the document’s content. On intra-departmental communication on the Gerber case, see “The Konya Governor to the Ministry of Public Security,” 9 May 1907; “the Sublime Porte to the Ministry of Public Security,” 10 May 1907; and other correspondence in Zb 46/13, #1-15.

<sup>34</sup> Dh Eum 5Şb 2/59; Ya Hus 424/41, #1; Yprk Mk 11/6, #1; Zb 309/102; memoranda and surveys in Dh Kms 61-2/3; Dh Mkt 33/42; Dh Mkt 33/42; Y Mtv 56/51. Zb 309/102; on the arrest of an Ottoman chief-superintendent, see Dh Kms 61-2/3.

local security agents with utter responsibility during operation, and took immediate action against these agents in the case of an operation failure. Toward the 1910s, the role of security officers in missionary cases had become so critical that the U.S. government took an interest in imperial security operations. On 12 February 1914, the U.S. Embassy in İstanbul requested that the Ministries of Foreign and Internal Affairs prepare an introductory book “on how the Ottoman Gendarmerie and Police institutions” were dealing with security issues.<sup>35</sup> However, the İstanbul bureaucrats refused to reveal the inner workings of their security agency. As will be examined in the next section, a key objective of imperial policy was to solve missionary issues internally, without allowing the U.S. interference. The bureaucrats seemed well determined to exercise absolute control over any security matter.

OTTOMAN AND AMERICAN RELATIONS BEGAN in the early 19th century with commercial treaties. The U.S. government requested and acquired the legal right to mediate in matters involving Americans residing in the Ottoman Empire. Charles Rind and David Offley, functionaries vested with authority by Washington, negotiated with Ottoman bureaucrats in İstanbul. Sultan Mahmut II approved the final draft of the first treaty that the central government would sign with the United States.<sup>36</sup> Effective from 7 May 1830, the treaty stipulated,

If litigations and disputes should arise between the subjects of the Sublime Porte and citizens of the United States, the parties shall not be heard, nor shall judgement be pronounced unless American dragoman [interpreter or translator] be present. Cases in which the sum may exceed 500 piasters shall be submitted to the Sublime Porte, and be decided according to equity and justice. Citizens of the United States... shall not be molested; and even when they may have committed some offence they shall not be arrested and put in prison by the local authorities, but they shall be tried by

---

<sup>35</sup> Dh Eum Emn 52/19, 16 Ra 1332.

<sup>36</sup> The existing literature on Ottoman and American relations include: Aydın and Erhan, *Turkish-American Relations*; DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies*; Jacob Hurewitz, *Middle East Dilemmas: The Background of the United States Policy* (New York: Harper, 1953); James Field, *America and the Mediterranean World* (Princeton: University Press: 1969); Leland Gordon, *American Relations with Turkey, 1830-1930: An Economic Interpretation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania; 1966). Also see Hasan Fendoğlu, *Modernleşme Bağlamında Osmanlı-Amerika İlişkileri* [Ottoman-American relations in modern context], (İstanbul: Beyan, 2002), 188-205; Emrah Sahin, “Capitulations,” in *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East*, I: 177-179; Lucius Thayer, “The Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire and the Question of their Abrogation as it Affects the United States,” *American Journal of International Law* vol. 17 (1923): 207-233; Orhan Köprülü, “Tarihte Türk Amerikan Münasebetleri [History of Turkish-American relations],” *Belleten* vol. LI, no. 200 (August 1987): 927-947; Şafak, *Osmanlı-Amerikan İlişkileri*, 36-59.

their Minister of Consul, and punished according to their offence, following in this respect, the usage observed toward other franks [i.e. Europeans].

The judicial standards prescribed in this treaty remained in effect until 24 July 1923. The treaty allowed the United States to enjoy the same status as “European powers” and granted legal rights to Americans within the Ottoman realm. In principle, no Ottoman authority—the central government, local governors, judges, or police—had *de jure* right to intervene in the affairs of Americans, even “when proven guilty.” In reality, however, the terms of this treaty did not articulate what action would be taken in complex issues. When missionary activity gained momentum in the second half of the 19th century, the lack of specific reference to the legal status of missionaries caused serious tension between the Ottoman and U.S. governments.<sup>37</sup>

Loopholes in the Treaty of 1830 meant that it was less effective than the concerned parties had expected it to be. To begin with, terms like “equity and justice,” so essential in major cases, had been left undefined. Thus, Washington officials requested their Ottoman counterparts to recognize American missionaries as part of the treaty. They insisted that imperial laws be revised concerning the legal status of missionaries and their institutions. Essentially, Washington wanted the official recognition of the missionaries as U.S. citizens as this would grant them the rights of non-Muslim Ottomans, such as the right to special tribunals. But imperial bureaucrats in İstanbul did not agree, and restricted U.S. citizenship to Americans who functioned in the Empire as diplomats and merchants. Unlike these Americans, the missionaries were counted “permanent residents” of the Empire. This subtle approach gave the Ottoman government the

---

<sup>37</sup> Treaty’s English version in William Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the United States of America and Other powers* [1776-1909, Senate document # 357, 61st Congress, 2nd session], vol. I (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1910-1938); its Ottoman version in *Muahedat Mecmuasi* [Treaties collection], vol. II, section 1 (İstanbul: Hakikat, 1878); and in DE, *Amerika Nişan Defteri* (i.e., the book kept by Ottoman Foreign Relations Office, in which regulations and decrees related to the United States were registered), 1/1; also quoted in Şafak, *Osmanlı-Amerikan İlişkileri*, 119-133. The Treaty of Lausanne, signed 24 July 1923, abrogated the treaties between the Ottoman and United States governments. Y Ee 136/96. The terms and conditions of the 1830 Treaty, including “separate and secret article,” addressed diplomatic and commercial concerns, such as American-made ships and guns that the Ottoman government might purchase, or “the capitulations” (i.e., imperial privileges) that Sultan Abdulhamid II would grant to American diplomats and merchants in the Ottoman Empire. On interpretations of this treaty and others by American missionaries, see *The Treaty Rights of the American Missionaries in Turkey* (Boston: ABCFM, 8 April 1893) [ABCFM pamphlet box, Andover Theological Library, Massachusetts]; on scholarly analysis of controversial articles of the treaty, see Sinan Kunalp, “Ottoman Diplomacy and Controversy Over the Interpretation of the Article IV of the Turco-American Treaty of 1830,” *The Turkish Yearbook* vol. 31, no. 2 (2000): 7-20.

political option of plausible deniability when the U.S. government demanded redress and compensation for injustices and losses inflicted upon missionaries.<sup>38</sup>

At the end of the 19th century, the growth of missionary activity and social unrest in Eastern Anatolia and broader parts of the Empire culminated in heightened tension between missionaries and local residents. Missionaries were assaulted by local mobs, and their property, including houses, hospitals, seminaries, and schools, were attacked, burned or destroyed. To garner support for redress from the central government, afflicted missionaries publicized their cases in the American press to encourage the U.S. government to intervene on their behalf.<sup>39</sup> Ottoman bureaucrats readily admitted that missionaries had a difficult life in the provinces. They also thought that settling missionary issues would help to sustain, if not improve, Ottoman and American relations. Nonetheless, an aspect of their approach made it barely possible to reach diplomatic consensus. Whereas missionaries considered the central government to be liable for their grievances, Ottoman bureaucrats considered that their government bore no responsibility whatsoever.<sup>40</sup> They discussed this issue in depth on 11 October 1898, when Ali Tevfik Pasha criticized the missionaries for exploiting the treaty and turning to Washington on every matter. In his report, he stated,

Our Sultan, supposedly, has been refusing to pay compensation as per the requests of Americans [missionaries]... Publications on the matter [the New York Tribune] are extremely deceitful... [Their] statements are fake and those who will believe

---

<sup>38</sup> In addition, most legal cases could hardly translate into matters of monetary value; many of these cases exceeded 500 piaster. For instance, see A Mkt Mhm 702/12; Hr Sys 74/44; Mv 218/16; Y Prk Eşa 49/70; Y Prk Eşa 42/57; Ya Res 96/44; concerns of the United States Department of Foreign Affairs with the safety of American missionaries in specific parts of the Ottoman Empire, in Hr Sys 51/15; Hr Sys 69/34; ongoing debates over the articles of the treaty regarding U.S. citizens in the Empire and the report submitted to Washington officials on 6 December 1887, in Y Prk Tkm 11/44 (in French), especially #1-25.

<sup>39</sup> Some of these incidents are recorded in: Hr Sys 73/18 (22 January 1895 and 23 January 1895); Hr Sys 73/20 (27 January 1895 and 28 January 1895); Hr Sys 73/53; Hr Sys 74/46; Ya Hus 357/87; Y Prk Eşa 49/70; Hasan the Captain attacking a missionary priest in Sivas, in A Mkt Mhm 701/5 and Ya Hus 318/97, 9 Ş 1312; two missionaries attacked in Halep, in Hr Sys 71/28; missionary property damaged in Adana, Maraş and Harput, in A Mkt Mhm 647/39; a missionary residence burned, in Y Prk Bşk 36/107; the Anatolian College in Merzifon burned by “rebels,” in Y Prk Ask 8/66; a missionary school destroyed by local gang, in Y Prk Ask 8/66; the central government’s discussion on the extent of attacks on missionary schools, in Ya Hus 335/67.

<sup>40</sup> Ya Hus 357/87; Ya Res 96/44; Y Ee 94/43; imperial council memorandum (*lâyihâ*) on missionary institutions in response to the United States ambassador’s requests, in Ya Hus 278/29; the ambassador’s requests, in Y Prk Eşa 42/57; the imperial note sent to the U.S. diplomats on the cases in which missionaries were brought to imperial court, in Mv 218/16. The Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs recommends that the relations between the Ottoman and United States governments should be consistent and friendly, because there are many American missionary institutions in the land. Hr Sys 69/27. The Ottoman Embassy in Washington, however, suggests not giving in to the demands of the U.S. government. Ya Hus 317/89.

them are men of ignorance... Nay they [missionaries] bore profound influence on the affairs of the central government... [They influence the U.S. government and American press by claiming] Turks continue rejecting our rights and that the Ottoman government remains free to act the way it wishes.

The pasha provided a detailed depiction of the methods missionaries had been using to confront the central government. He could not understand how a minor issue like compensation could receive that much publicity and upset Ottoman-U.S. relations. He “regret[ted] hearing all the gossip and noise [as] the sum asked for in compensation is simply \$500,000 [while] relations between the Ottoman State and U.S. is worth much more.” He believed Ottoman bureaucrats in the capital to be capable of handling missionary cases on fair terms, and alone. In fact, Ali Tevfik Pasha could “not make [himself] believe that a government [the central government] which had shown so much respect for them was protested against to such an extent that delicacy and principles of diplomacy are trodden under foot.” The disputes, he found, were the missionaries’ fault because it was they who “invest[ed] their efforts in intrigues and contestation rather than dedicating themselves to the service of religion.”<sup>41</sup>

As indicated in the pasha’s report, missionaries’ political designs posed serious risks to the central government. Not only did they present a negative image of the Ottoman Empire in the U.S., but they damaged Ottoman relations with the U.S. government as well. To the greater surprise of imperial bureaucrats, U.S. battleships appeared on the horizon, navigating the Mediterranean toward Ottoman ports in Adana, İzmir, and Beirut. Washington officials assured that these “excursions” were not hostile, but just a show of support for the missionaries going through troubled times in the Empire. Ottoman bureaucrats in the capital could not help but conclude that American ships were anchored in imperial ports as the deterrence factor to manipulate diplomatic debates in favour of the missionaries. They looked unalarmed by the ships; rather they were disturbed by U.S. government’s attempt at this pre-emptive manoeuvre.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Y Ee 136/96, #1-2.

<sup>42</sup> A Mkt Mhm 702/12; Ya Hus 457/77; Ya Hus 473/123. Local events in Eastern Anatolia drew remarkable attention from other diplomats as well. While the United States Atlantic Navy would sail to the Ottoman Empire with the mission to settle compensation for afflicted missionaries, the Canadian Parliament discussed a collective action in the spirit of a crusade that would support missionaries in Anatolia. Hr Sys 73/51; Y Prk Tkm 10/32. Bureaucrats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs blamed themselves for encouraging the U.S. Department of Foreign Affairs and American missionaries to make bold claims against the Ottoman government. They noted that U.S. ships “sail through oceans and seas” to support missionaries against the Ottoman government partly because

The bureaucrats refused to alter the gist of imperial policy regardless of U.S. aggression: missionaries in the Ottoman domain had the right to enjoy not the privilege of being foreigners, but as the Empire's permanent residents, the same "equity and justice" as that given to Ottoman subjects. Missionaries would be defended and compensated, or punished and deported, only after the İstanbul officials obtained and discussed on intelligence from local sources. In sum, *fin-de-siècle* imperial diplomacy focused primarily on three objectives: minimizing U.S. interference, denying allegations in the media, and ensuring that missionary litigations remained within the sphere of "domestic affairs."<sup>43</sup>

THE SAFETY OF AMERICAN MISSIONARIES WAS a defining issue of Ottoman imperial policy. For missionaries too, who often debated the effects of imperial policy on public security, it was obviously of great concern. Suspicious of the Ottoman government and its subjects, the missionaries turned to the U.S. government for help, which duly tried to support them. Historians have examined missionaries' rights and security in the Empire in the context of American interests in, and diplomatic relations with, the Ottoman government. But there are no detailed studies of the Ottoman development of a missionary policy that was based on the dual principle of protecting missionaries from Ottoman subjects and protecting Ottoman subjects from missionaries. Drawing on understudied archival sources, this article argues that Ottoman bureaucrats did not embrace a steadfast position against missionaries. Rather, they regarded missionary safety as a matter of internal affairs, and worked to resolve missionary litigations without third-party interference. Amid rising social disorder in provinces and fatal attacks against missionaries, Ottoman bureaucrats dedicated the government's executive, legislative, and judicial authority to the task of restoring local order and providing missionaries with means of

---

imperial bureaucrats are "not dedicated to their job" and "cannot make themselves clear to Washington" or missionaries. İ Hr 437/58.

<sup>43</sup> American missionaries who suffered in Maraş and Harput would be compensated, in A Mkt Mhm 538/27; the notes of the Ottoman Ministry of and United States Department of Foreign Affairs on the deportation of several American missionaries from the Empire—after being found guilty of spoiling local order in eastern townships by encouraging ethnic riots—in Hr Sys 74/44; the meeting of the Ottoman ambassador in Washington with the U.S. officials, in Hr Sys 74/47; debates between the Ottoman and United States governments over Christians in the Ottoman Empire, in Ya Hus 357/87; the complaints of Ottoman Christian subjects about missionary support to Armenian rebels, in Hr Sys 2803/1; Hr Sys 51/16; İ Hus 21/1311 Ş-060; Ya Hus 278/29; Ya Hus 319/2; Y Mtv 144/135. See an insightful discussion between Ottoman bureaucrats and the U.S. diplomats in İstanbul on local judges and their treatment of Americans accused of murders, in Y Prk Eşa 30/49; Hr Sys 2803/1.

security. Based on various incidents, the article also reinvents that the Ministry of Public Security was the key government agency responsible for accomplishing this task.

The government's approach to individual missionaries as the object of public security is significant because it helps to reveal uncharted dimensions of Ottoman imperial statecraft during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Intelligence and investigative data arriving from provincial authorities, especially local security officers, was critical ahead of formulating and issuing imperial orders. Several government branches, especially the Sublime Porte and the Ministries of Foreign and Internal Affairs, were involved in the resolution of a given incident, and from the 1880s onward, the Ministry of Public Security agents directed the entire process of security projects. The Ottoman government's approach to missionaries was a source of concern for the U.S. government and the missionaries themselves. This anxiety stemmed from a distorted view of Ottoman intentions. For Ottoman bureaucrats, imperial missionary policy was the product of detailed, well-crafted, and thorough administrative procedures. At times, of course, it was exasperating as well. Yet they sought, whenever possible, to quickly resolve and avert incidents similar to the capture of Ellen M. Stone, the topic of the article's opening narrative. Interestingly, on 5 July 1905, four years after her return to the United States, Stone asked imperial authorities for permission to return and open a missionary college. And tellingly, the Ottoman government refused her request.<sup>44</sup> One Stone turned, away...

---

<sup>44</sup> Hr Sys 70/19.