

**THE FORMATION OF A CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP:
AHMET EMIN (YALMAN), OTTOMAN INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF
OTTOMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE SECOND
CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD**

by
STEPHEN SCHALM

Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Sabanci University
July 2025

**THE FORMATION OF A CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP:
AHMET EMIN (YALMAN), OTTOMAN INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF
OTTOMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE SECOND
CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD**

Approved by:

Asst. Prof. EMRE EROL
(Thesis Supervisor)

Assoc. Prof. AYŞE OZIL

Assoc. Prof. YUSUF DOĞAN ÇETINKAYA

Date of Approval: July 18, 2025



STEPHEN SCHALM 2025 ©

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

THE FORMATION OF A CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP: AHMET EMIN (YALMAN), OTTOMAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF OTTOMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD

STEPHEN SCHALM

History, M.A. Thesis, July 2025

Thesis Supervisor: Asst. Prof. EMRE EROL

Keywords: Ottoman-American Relations, constitution, Ahmet Emin Yalman,
international student, Young Turk Revolution

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 inaugurated a new constitutional era in the Ottoman Empire, unleashing hopes of a reinvigorated state committed to progress after the decades of authoritarian Hamidian rule. While crowds of Ottomans of diverse backgrounds gathered in the streets to celebrate the dawn of a new era, foreign powers had mixed reactions to the changes brought about by the revolution. In contrast to the ambivalence of others, the official American reactions were unequivocally positive. The Ottoman-American relationship had been relatively unimportant to both states, though Americans had significant interest in the Ottoman Empire through trade and missionary presence. The historiography of Ottoman-American relations tends not to focus on the second constitutional period. However, the 1908 Revolution witnessed a more significant transformation in the Ottoman-American relationship than is often assumed. This thesis will analyze American diplomatic responses to the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, arguing that the shared commitment to constitutionalism emerging from the revolution opened up possibilities of cooperation that had not existed before, as seen in the Ottoman student experience at Columbia University and especially that of Ahmet Emin (Yalman). The cooperation of American and Ottoman embassies, Columbia University professors and administration, and Ottoman students forged ties of trust and cooperation rooted in the possibilities of progress that could emerge from constitutional friendship.

ÖZET

ANAYASAL ORTAKLIĞIN OLUŞUMU: AHMET EMİN (YALMAN), OSMANLI ULUSLARARASI ÖĞRENCİLERİ VE İKİNCİ MEŞRUTİYET DÖNEMİNDE OSMANLI-AMERIKAN İLİŞKİLERİNİN DÖNÜŞÜMÜ

STEPHEN SCHALM

Tarih, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Temmuz 2025

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi EMRE EROL

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı-Amerikan İlişkisi, Meşrutiyet, Ahmet Emin Yalman,
Uluslararası öğrencileri, Jön Türk Devrimi

1908 Jön Türk Devrimi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda yeni bir anayasal dönemi başlatarak, onlarca yıllık otoriter Abdülhamit yönetiminin ardından ilerlemeye kendini adanmış, yeniden canlanmış bir devlet umutlarını yeşertti. Farklı geçmişlere sahip Osmanlı kalabalıkları yeni bir dönemin şafağını kutlamak için sokaklarda toplanırken, yabancı güçler devrimin getirdiği değişikliklere karışık tepkiler verdi. Diğerlerinin kararsızlığının aksine, resmi Amerikan tepkileri tartışmasız bir şekilde olumluydu. Osmanlı-Amerikan ilişkileri her iki devlet için de nispeten önemsizdi, ancak Amerikalılar ticaret ve misyonerlik faaliyetleri aracılığıyla Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na önemli bir ilgi duyuyordu. Osmanlı-Amerikan ilişkilerinin tarih yazımı genellikle ikinci anayasal döneme odaklanmaz. Ancak 1908 Devrimi, Osmanlı-Amerikan ilişkilerinde genellikle varsayıldığından daha önemli bir dönüşüme tanık oldu. Bu tez, 1908 Jön Türk Devrimi'ne Amerikan diplomatik tepkilerini analiz edecek ve devrimden doğan ortak anayasalcılığa bağlılığın, Osmanlı öğrencilerinin Columbia Üniversitesi ve özellikle Ahmet Emin (Yalman) deneyiminde görüldüğü gibi, daha önce var olmayan iş birliği olanakları yarattığını savunacaktır. Amerikan ve Osmanlı büyükelçilikleri, Columbia Üniversitesi profesörleri ve yönetimi ile Osmanlı öğrencilerinin iş birliği, anayasal dostluktan doğabilecek ilerleme olasılıklarına dayanan güven ve iş birliği bağları oluşturmuştur.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My initial questions and curiosity about Ottomans as international students are rooted in two major influences on my life. One is that of international students themselves- the international student friends I have had the privilege to know and to learn from, as well as my own time at Sabancı University as an international student. In a world that often does not really see international students for fully who they are, I celebrate and honor the creative, resilient and beautiful vitality of international students wherever they are around the world. The other is that of my early introduction into the world of Ottoman history first through Dr. Gavin Brockett in Waterloo and then Dr. Virginia Aksan in Hamilton, along with Dr. Veysel Şimşek, all of whom encouraged me to look from the perspective of the other, and to find a far more vibrant life in doing so. Though it took me some time to continue the journey they helped to start, I am grateful for it all!

Regarding my time at Sabancı University these past two years, I want to especially thank my supervisor, Dr. Emre Erol, who introduced me to Ahmet Emin and the Ottoman presence at Columbia University and guided me along the thesis process. Many thanks to my other hocas, Drs. Ayşe Ozil, Abdurrahman Atçıl, Selçuk Akşin Somel, Banu Turnaoğlu, Nedim Nomer, and Marloes Cornelissen Aydemir, all of whose teaching I am very grateful for. Thanks also to Ülkü and Bilal hocas for their patient teaching of Ottoman Turkish.

Thanks to my stellar classmates for letting a yabancı into their çevre and sharing our passion together, for my officemates for giving me not just a desk but a sense of belonging on campus, for Jocelyn Wilk from the Columbia University Archives and for İzzeddin for help finding documents, for all those who helped decipher a word of Osmanlıca or helped navigate the life of an international student in Istanbul. We raise each other up, and are all better for it!

Finally, thanks to my family who supported me along the way however far my journey took me from home, to all those who have become and remained family over the years as I moved from one place to another, and especially to all who have become family in Istanbul these past few years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZET	v
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Historical Context	3
1.2. Literature Review	7
1.3. Research Aims and Questions	12
1.4. Sources and Methodology	14
1.5. Outline	16
2. THE EMERGENCE OF CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP: THE IMPACT OF THE OTTOMAN CONSTITUTION ON OTTOMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS	18
2.1. American Reactions to the Ottoman Constitution	19
2.2. Ottoman-American Relations Between Constitutional Moments	23
2.3. The 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the Ottoman-American Con- stitutional Relationship	28
2.4. Summary	37
3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNER- SHIP: COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AND THE SENDING OF OT- TOMAN STUDENTS TO THE UNITED STATES	39
3.1. Columbia University and Aftermath of 1908 in the Ottoman Empire .	40
3.2. Columbia University and International Diplomacy: The Sending of Ottoman Students	43
3.3. The Columbia Ottoman Student Society	49
3.4. Columbia Professors and their Ottoman Students	54

3.5. Summary	56
4. THE PERSONIFICATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNER- SHIP: AHMET EMIN (YALMAN) AT COLUMBIA UNIVER- SITY	58
4.1. Ahmet Emin’s Early Life	59
4.2. Ahmet Emin’s Student Life at Columbia	61
4.3. Ahmet Emin’s Doctoral Thesis and Contribution to the American Academy	66
4.4. Summary	76
5. CONCLUSION	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY	83
APPENDIX A	89
A.0.1. HR.İD.01390.00001.001	89
A.0.2. HR.İD.01390.00002.001	90
A.0.3. HR.İD.01390.00002.002	91
A.0.4. HR.İD.01390.00003.003	92
A.0.5. HR.İD.01390.00003.004	92
A.0.6. HR.İD.01390.00004.005	93
A.0.7. HR.İD.01390.00006.001	94
APPENDIX B	96
B.0.1. “Letter from William Rockhill to Nicholas Butler,” January 27, 1912.....	96
B.0.2. “Letter from Henry Morgenthau to Nicholas Butler,” Decem- ber 17, 1913.	96
B.0.3. “Letter from Nicholas Butler’s Office to Ottoman Embassy in Washington,” December 23, 1913.....	97

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1. Columbia University c. 1910 (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Columbia_University_1910.jpg)	41
Figure 3.2. Columbia Ottoman Society with Imam of New York Ottoman Consulate (https://hyetert.org/2019/06/01/columbia-universitesinin-osmanli-ogrencileri/)	51
Figure 4.1. Ahmet Emin Yalman at Columbia University ¹	61

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1893, an Ottoman named Ubeydullah with Young Turk sympathies marvelled along with countless others at the Statue of Liberty welcoming him into New York harbour, a moment he described years later in his memoirs. Written and published in serial form in the 1920s and re-published in 1989 as *Sıradışı Bir Jön Türk: Ubeydullah Efendi'nin Amerika Hatıraları*, (An Unusual Young Turk: Ubeydullah Efendi's America Memories) the memoirs consist of a series of humorous anecdotes of the cross-cultural encounters of an Ottoman visitor to the United States from 1893 to 1895. Mehmet Ubeydullah Efendi (1858-1937), a well-educated member of the ulema, joined the many Ottomans who fled the empire on account of opposition to Sultan Abdulhamid's authoritarian rule. While in a sort of exile in Europe, he received the somewhat ironic opportunity, given his politics, to join the Ottoman delegation at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 as the resident journalist, responsible for writing a series of articles about the fair. By the time of Ubeydullah Efendi's visit to the United States in 1893, connections between the Ottoman Empire and Americans had grown significantly, with the extensive network of missionary institutions across the empire and the increasing number of Ottoman migrants in the United States. America was not unknown to the Ottomans, but was nonetheless relatively in the background of the Ottoman consciousness compared with the European Great Powers with their unwieldy influence over Ottoman affairs especially since mid-nineteenth century. Ubeydullah Efendi's American experience and subsequent memoirs stood out as exceptional alongside the far more standard accounts of a Europe that was after all much closer to home and with such a long history of interaction with the empire.

Ubeydullah Efendi's reflections on his first American impressions highlight an important element, one that has been missed by the larger scholarship on the late Ottoman Empire due to the aforementioned relative prominence of Europe. According to his memoirs, Ubeydullah Efendi's first reaction upon arriving in New York harbour in 1893 was to marvel at America's freedom. The Statue of Liberty, or 'Hürriyet Heykeli' as Ubeydullah Efendi called it, greeted him and stirred up

feelings of wonder. In the context of anti-Hamidian opposition rooted in criticism of *istibdat*, or tyranny, America's democratic system was for Ubeydullah Efendi the very expression of freedom- different and greater than that found anywhere else. ¹ Though he was personally well acquainted with France and Britain, the primary Great Powers influencing and intervening in Ottoman modernizing reforms and primary examples for Ottoman reformers of constitutional political systems, Ubeydullah Efendi remarked on how much further the United States developed its constitutional system than its European liberal constitutional counterparts such as France and England. ² He wrote about American liberty being founded on people fleeing tyranny in Europe and searching for true freedom, with the result that the level of freedom found in the United States was greater than that of any other country, and connected its impressive record in achieving economic success and prosperity to this freedom. Though an incomplete picture, Ubeydullah Efendi gives a glimpse into Young Turk impressions of the United States in the years before the 1908 constitutional revolution, and though he did not go on to become a major influence on Young Turk foreign relations, this episode points to the potential impact mutual desire for constitution-based progress could have on the Ottoman-American relationship after 1908.

Ubeydullah's memoirs, besides providing an incredibly humorous and insightful account of cross-cultural encounters, point to important questions that have not been addressed in the historiography of the late Ottoman Empire and of its relationship with the United States. What exactly impressed Ubeydullah Efendi about the American political system compared with the European states better known to his Ottoman contemporaries? What were the links between American constitutionalism and the Ottoman case, and how did any mutual interactions relating to constitutionalism shape Ottoman-American relations whether from the level of the two states or from the level of intellectual engagement and relational networks?

What we see hints of with Ubeydullah Efendi in the 1890s developed into a much more significant interaction by the time of Ahmet Emin (Yalman)'s time in New York in the 1910s. ³ In many ways, Ubeydullah Efendi appears as a forerunner to Ahmet Emin - both were Young Turks who were significantly shaped by oppositional politics and by journalism, both saw aspects of the Ottoman war effort in the Great War beyond the borders of the empire, both were among the exiles under British imprisonment in Malta in 1920 and both remained engaged with Turkish politics

1. Ahmet Turan Alkan, *Sıradışı Bir Jön Türk: Ubeydullah Efendi'nin Amerika Hatıraları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1989) p. 166.

2. *Ibid.*

3. With the Turkish Surname Law of 1934, Ahmet Emin and his family adopted the surname Yalman.

in one way or another, Ubeydullah Efendi as a parliamentarian and Yalman as political commentator in the press. Most importantly for this study, both spent formative time in their youth in the United States and then wrote extensively about their experiences in later memoirs. While both figures wrote about their reflections on American freedom, about American business and opportunity, and about their comedic experiences of being the religious ‘other’ in the United States, Ahmet Emin’s experience as a student had a more profound effect on him. While America did not feature largely in Ubeydullah Efendi’s later life, it continued to cast a wide shadow throughout Ahmet Emin’s life. What to Ubeydullah Efendi was a mere passing reflection, however astute, became for Ahmet Emin a key part of his vision for a restored Ottoman, then later Turkish, state and national identity.

1.1 Historical Context

This thesis attempts to contribute to the historiography of the second constitutional period of the Ottoman Empire, focusing on the period between 1908-1914, beginning with the Young Turk revolution and ending its focus before the start of the Great War. The intersection of two important themes for the history of the Ottoman second constitutional period, namely Ottoman-American relations on one hand, and the significance of international studies in forming late Ottoman intellectuals on the other, forms the core of the study. Just as American diplomats in the late Ottoman empire complained that the influence of the European Great Powers kept them in the background, academic scholarship on the Ottoman-American relationship has been overshadowed by focus on Ottoman relations with the European Great Powers, and the same is true for the study of Ottomans studying abroad.

While unofficial connections between the United States and the Ottoman Empire existed since the 1780s, including the complicated Barbary Wars of the early 19th century, official diplomatic relations began with the 1830 Ottoman-American treaty.

⁴ As Şuhnaz Yılmaz argues, 19th century Ottoman-American relations were considered relatively unimportant by both states even while significant unofficial interactions took place. ⁵ On the Ottoman side, the increasing presence of American merchants and missionaries largely shaped the encounter, and at the same time, Ottoman migration to the U.S. slowly grew throughout the nineteenth century. Official

4. Şuhnaz Yılmaz, *Turkish-American Relations*, p.16. See also Sinan Kunalp, “Ottoman Diplomacy and the Controversy Over the Interpretation of Article 4 of the Turco-American Treaty of 1830.” *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*. 31 (2002) pp.8-9.

5. Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p. 1, 10.

American consular presence in Ottoman lands began the year after the signing of the 1830 treaty, while Ottoman consular presence in the U.S. began later, with the opening of a consulate in Boston and then the founding of the legation in Washington in 1867 after the end of the American Civil War.⁶ While supporting missionary and trade interests, the official American stance towards the Ottomans was part of the larger context of the Monroe Doctrine, attempting to keep Latin America as an American sphere of interest with minimal European involvement while staying out of European and by extension Asian and African affairs.⁷ This isolationist policy in the Middle East and beyond generally held sway until the American entry into the Great War in 1917, and remained a contested point in American foreign affairs in the following decades.

While American missionary networks are not a central part of this thesis, they certainly formed a considerable part of Ottoman-American relations. In particular whenever educational connections are concerned, such as the Ottoman university students analyzed in this study, the missionary connections hover in the background, with their significant investment into schooling in the Ottoman lands and their lobbying efforts relating to any significant topic relating to the empire. From modest beginnings with Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons arriving in the Ottoman Empire in 1819, by the later nineteenth century the American missionary endeavor in the Ottoman lands had become a massive network of churches, schools, hospitals and orphanages both in major cities such as Istanbul, Salonica and Izmir, and in more peripheral provincial contexts such as Harput in Anatolia and the Albanian highlands. The American missionary movement in the Ottoman empire attempted to reform the existing Christian population such as the Greeks and Armenians toward their vision of evangelical Christianity. Official restrictions on evangelization among Muslims and fierce social opposition from most Muslim communities reduced the missionary hopes to win Muslims to a negligible factor.⁸ Meanwhile, the initial focus on evangelism and direct church work gave way to a much wider variety of activities as the nineteenth century progressed, with increasing attention given to a growing network of missionary schools for non-Muslim children and to hospitals and other social services.

Besides Ottoman state concerns and general Muslim reactions to missionary presence, the official indigenous Ottoman church hierarchies also fiercely attacked the

6. Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p. 17, Ömür Budak, “The Ottoman Consuls in Boston, 1845-1914: An Untold Story.” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*. 7:2 (2020) pp. 179-180.

7. Roger Trask, *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939*, (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1971) p.13.

8. Mehmet Ali Doğan and Heather Sharkey, eds. *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters*, (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2011).

missionaries for what in their eyes amounted to leading their flocks astray and turning people toward heresy. While the total number of converts remained small, with the largest number coming from Armenian background, the impact of this extensive American missionary presence was felt significantly. Often their schools and hospitals provided services not otherwise accessible to the vast majority of the population, drawing increasing numbers to appreciate their contributions and in one way or another become influenced also by these examples of foreign culture, philosophy of education, ideas about nationalism and other aspects of modernity.⁹ Meanwhile, American public opinion concerning the Ottomans was primarily shaped by reports from the missionaries active in the Ottoman Empire, and in particular as violence against Ottoman Armenians grew, protests in the United States against the ‘Terrible Turk’ emerged as an influential lobby group.¹⁰ While such lobbying efforts undoubtedly had connections with the American government in one way or another, the missionary networks functioned mostly separately from the state, with complicated relationships that sometimes cooperated closely and other times involved significant dissonance.

The missionary influence among the Armenian community also contributed to an increasing tension regarding Ottoman immigration to the United States. Since the first known Ottomans began moving to the U.S. in the 1820s, a growing number of Ottomans were finding their way to the U.S. along with other destinations such as Brazil and Argentina.¹¹ The majority of these migrants were non-Muslim, but members of all Ottoman groups were found in the emerging immigrant communities of cities such as New York and Boston which had Ottoman neighbourhoods, factories full of Ottoman-background workers, and official Ottoman consular presence matching the American representatives in the Ottoman Empire.¹² Both the Ottoman and the American states were gradually solidifying their legal understanding of nationality during the later nineteenth century, and the same steamboat technology and international legal modernization formed a common background to the transformations in each of their laws regarding nationality, citizenship and immigration. On one hand, the American system gave incoming migrants the right to naturalize as citizens after five years before the later tightening of immigration, and Ottomans who arrived in the United States were not generally asked about what happened to

9. Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

10. Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p. 22.

11. Rıfat Bali, *Anadolu’dan Yeni Dünya’ya: Amerika’ya İlk Göç Eden Türklerin Yaşam Öyküleri*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004) p. 50.

12. Kemal Karpat, “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914.” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 7:2 (May 1985) pp.175-209, Işıl Acehan, “ ‘Ottoman Street’ in America: Turkish Leatherworkers in Peabody, Massachusetts,” In *Ottoman and Republican Turkish Labour History*, Ed. Touraj Atabaki and Gavin Brockett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

their Ottoman legal status.¹³ The Ottoman state however did not allow its subjects to emigrate without official permission, and the majority of Ottoman-background immigrants in the United States had not followed the legal process, leaving them technically still Ottoman subjects in the eyes of the Ottoman government. The Ottoman Nationality law of 1869 attempted to sort out some of the problems especially with Ottoman subjects trying to gain access to extraterritorial privileges through becoming proteges of the foreign consulates, but this did not stop these former proteges from continuing to use Ottoman subjecthood when it suited them despite technically taking on foreign nationality.¹⁴ Far from removing the root of migration difficulties, the succeeding decades only saw an increase in the problems and complications of migration issues between the Ottoman Empire and the United States.

Economic connections were also an important part of the Ottoman-American relationship since before the 1830 Ottoman American Treaty. The main purpose of this treaty itself was to regulate trade between the two countries, which grew slowly over the course of the nineteenth century and then especially in the early twentieth. By the time of the second constitutional period, Ottoman exports to the United States had grown dramatically, and the opportunities of further economic cooperation and investment caught the attention of the American government. So-called ‘dollar diplomacy’ emerged under President William Taft between 1909-1912, in particular with efforts to invest in Ottoman railways, known as the ‘Chester Project’ which ultimately failed to materialize.¹⁵

Among the Ottoman presence abroad during the late Ottoman period is that of international students, similar to other migrants in that they sometimes ended up staying in their host countries after finishing studies and other times returned back to their homeland, but also a unique group given their specific identity and duties as students. While the Ottomans were for the bulk of their history part of shared intellectual worlds that saw students and teachers coming and going sometimes across great distances for studies and for teaching opportunities, including Muslim connections between the Ottoman Empire and Central and South Asia as well as non-Muslim networks especially with Italian centers of learning, the nineteenth century saw the rise of a different kind of international student situation. By then it was already becoming common for there to be more direct intellectual exchange with

13. Will Hanley, “What Ottoman Nationality Was and Was Not,” In *The Subjects of Ottoman International Law*, ed. Lale Can, Michael Christopher Low, Kent Schull and Robert Zens (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020).

14. *Ibid.*

15. Şuhnaz Yılmaz, pp. 25-27. See also Bülent Bilmez, *Demiryolundan Petrole Chester Projesi (1908-1923)*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000).

European scholars and for experts in for instance military technology to spend time teaching in the Ottoman Empire. Out of these connections emerged a new pattern of Ottomans studying in European universities, sometimes privately through family efforts and other times directly through state involvement.

In 1839, Mahmud II sent the first group of state-sponsored Ottoman students to study in Paris, an experiment that grew into an ongoing project with a preparatory school and salaried teachers and imam.¹⁶ Even before this, Muhammed Ali the governor of Egypt who despite active rebellion was technically under the sovereignty of the Ottoman sultan, sent a group of students to Paris.¹⁷ As the nineteenth century wore on, the number of Ottomans studying in European universities increased significantly, and gradually became known more and more for oppositional political involvement. In the years of Hamidian authoritarian rule, the Young Turk opposition movement came to have a strong presence in European universities in cities such as Geneva and Paris, part of the already strong Ottoman student presence there but also increased by those sent into exile by the regime.¹⁸ Both in the Hamidian era and throughout the second constitutional period, some Ottoman international students consisted of privately sent individuals, which in the American case especially involved the support of missionary networks helping non-Muslim youth to study in the United States. Meanwhile, state-sponsored students studying in fields directly desired by the Ottoman government were scattered around European universities, and only began to include the United States after the Young Turk revolution as described below. Though the Ottoman international student presence in the United States in the 1910s was relatively small, Republican Turkey in particular would come to send much larger numbers by mid-twentieth century.¹⁹

1.2 Literature Review

Scholarship on American-Ottoman relations has moved from earlier focus on American foreign policy in the Middle East from historians such as John De Novo and Roger Trask, to work that balances American and Ottoman perspectives, such as that of Şuhnaz Yılmaz. Historians such as Sinan Kunalp and Ömür Budak have

16. Adnan Şişman, *Tanzimat Döneminde Fransa'ya Gönderilen Osmanlı Öğrencileri (1839-1876)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2004).

17. *Ibid.*

18. M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) p. 145.

19. See for instance Paul Magnarella, "Turkish-American Intellectual Exchange and Community Research in Turkey (1930-1980)," *Turkish Studies Association Journal*, 27:1-2 (2003) 69-89.

begun the study of Ottoman consular presence in the United States, and point to the need for more work to be done in this area. In particular, the second constitutional period remains underexplored, with emphasis on American anti-Turkish sentiment often clouding over the nuances of the wide variety of perspectives found at the time. Feroz Ahmad's article on Young Turk relations with the United States asserts that the Ottoman constitutional regime ignored the United States until shortly before the Great War, and that while official American interest in the Ottoman Empire grew after 1908, it was only an economic interest.²⁰ One earlier work on the history of Turkish-American relations states that the only deviation in the second constitutional period from the standard issues regarding missionaries and trade and the underlying distance in the relationship was one particular investment endeavor that ended up failing to materialize in the years leading up to the Great War, as if the 1908 revolution had no impact on Ottoman-American relations at all.²¹ Perhaps the most significant English-language work covering the longer arc of Ottoman and then Turkish relations with the United States, Şuhnaz Yılmaz's work follows the same line of development, looking at the brief engagement with potential economic opportunities between the United States and the Ottomans in the years before the Great War. She refers the positive American reactions to the 1908 revolution but quickly adds that this turned quickly into disappointment as the constitutional regime failed to live up to expectations.²²

However, the scholarship on Ottoman-American relationship has begun to progress particularly along the lines of two of the most pressing issues shaping this relationship, namely American missionary presence in the Ottoman Empire on one hand, and Ottoman emigration to the United States and the shaping of Ottoman-background immigrant identities in the United States. With regard to the American missionary movement in the Ottoman lands, the work of historians such as Selim Deringil and Emrah Şahin have analyzed Ottoman state perspectives on the missionary enterprise, revealing Ottoman efforts to counter missionary influence while remaining committed to protect and remove pretexts for foreign intervention.²³ Others have explored the complex interplay between missionary efforts and cultural shifts involving nationalism, modernization, and educational reform.²⁴ Meanwhile,

20. Feroz Ahmad, "Young Turk Relations with the United States, 1908-1918." in *American Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830-1989*. Ed. Nur Bilge Criss, Selçuk Esenbel, Tony Greenwood and Louis Mazzari, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011) p. 83-84.

21. Trask, p.14.

22. Şuhnaz Yılmaz, p. 28.

23. Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 1998), Emrah Şahin, *Faithful Encounters: Authorities and American Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2018).

24. See for instance Barbara Reeves-Ellington, *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and*

Ottoman migration to the United States (including return migration back to the empire) has been the subject of earlier work such as that of Kemal Karpat on Turkish migration and of Işıl Acehan looking at Ottoman-background worker communities in the Boston area. Added to these are more recent works such as that of Stacey Farenthold on Ottoman Arab and Daniel Gutman on Ottoman Armenian migration, and the issue of racism and integration into American society seen in the works of Sarah Gualtieri and more recently Bedros Torosian and Zeynep Devrim Gürsel.²⁵

While Farenthold introduces the question of Ottoman politics playing out within the United States itself regarding Ottoman migrants. She explores the efforts of the CUP to engage with Ottoman-background migrants in the United States and elsewhere in the Americas, and how the Great War in particular impacted Ottoman consulates and their efforts to direct the energies of the migrants in a direction favourable to CUP policies.²⁶ Though her focus is particularly on migration and on Arab Ottomans specifically, her research points to the need for deeper analysis of Ottoman-American relations in relation to the politics of Ottoman consuls in the United States, the political and intellectual exchanges, and the massive transformations of the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the decade of wars culminating in the Great War and then the Turkish War of Independence as played out in places like the United States. Other contributions are slowly emerging, but like the work of Farenthold and Gutman, they tend to focus on one community rather than look at Ottomans more broadly, which while it helps reveal critical aspects of each group, it cannot answer questions of connection between various Ottoman communities in these contexts or of how much they shared a common experience.

Compared with the underdeveloped but increasingly vibrant scholarship on American-Ottoman relations in the early twentieth century, Ottoman international students have not been the subject of significant study. A few early works looked at the history of the first Ottoman students going abroad for studies, including the case of Egypt which was still technically part of the empire and whose nineteenth century modernization was always connected with the developments of the Ottoman center.²⁷ These works however do not go beyond basic description of the earliest

American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).

25. Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), Bedros Torosian, "Ottoman Armenian Racialization in an American Space (1908-1914)", *Mashriq and Mahjar*, 8:2 (2021) pp. 31-39, and Zeynep Devrim Gürsel, "Classifying the Cartozians: Rethinking the Politics of Visibility Alongside Ottoman Subjecthood and American Citizenship," *Photographies*, 15:3 (2022)pp. 349-380.

26. Stacey Farenthold, *Between the Ottomans and the Entente: The First World War in the Syrian and Lebanese Diaspora, 1908-1925*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

27. Şişman.

state involvement in sending students abroad. It does not place these students into the larger historiographical debates concerning Ottoman modernization, as the field was still dominated at the time by a linear story of modernization as westernization and secularization found in the works of earlier scholars such as Bernard Lewis and Niyazi Berkes.²⁸ Meanwhile the well-developed historiography dealing with the Young Turks found in the works of M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, Erik-Jan Zürcher, Hans-Lukas Kieser and others emphasizes the key role played by students in forming the opposition movements against the Hamidian regime both locally in the Ottoman Empire and abroad among exiles and international students.²⁹

In addition to the scholarship on migration networks, the work of Ilham Khuri-Makdisi on radical leftist networks in the Eastern Mediterranean and of John Meyer on Turkic networks between the Ottoman and Russian Empires among others points to the need to break out of conceptual boundaries of nationalist histories not just for comparisons between contexts but to see missed categories and international connections that defy those boundaries. International students have much potential as a fruitful category of analysis with their inherent bridging roles between home and host cultures and their aspirations for using their studies for the sake of their home countries (or ideologies or national groups). Their cross-cultural student experiences inherently put them at the forefront for issues of creative adaptation and synthesis. The milieu in which they studied tended to gather international students from diverse but potentially similar backgrounds, experiencing similar tensions regarding politics and relationship with the Great Powers in their home countries and regarding questions of modernization, reforms, nationalisms and anti-colonial protest. With these possibilities in mind, this study will attempt to show the importance of international student networks for the Ottoman context, with a particular focus on the second constitutional period and on the United States as host country.

Meanwhile, though there has been some significant academic writing about Ahmet Emin Yalman, it has generally focused on his later political engagement and journalistic career, emphasizing his liberal political ideas and looking at his relationship with the United States as a key root of his liberal ideology.³⁰ Due to his unconventional ‘liberal’ political leanings, his post-Great War support for an American

28. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (New York: Routledge, 1998).

29. For instance, Hanioğlu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Erik Jan- Zürcher, *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk’s Turkey*, (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2010), and Hans-Lukas Kieser, “Turkey’s Elite in Switzerland,” *A Quest for Belonging: Anatolia Beyond Empire and Nation (19th-21st Centuries)*, (Istanbul: The ISIS Press, 2007)pp. 293-324.

30. Buğra Kalkan, *Ahmet Emin Yalman: Entelektüel Bir Biyografi*, (Ankara: Liberte Yayınları, 2018).

mandate, and his complicated relationship first with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the Republican Peoples Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, or CHP in Turkish) and then with the Democrat Party in the 1950s, he was and still is a controversial figure in Turkish political discourse. In particular, his pro-American stance found many opponents over the years, with Turkish public opinion concerning the United States waxing and waning over the course of the twentieth century for many reasons.³¹ Thus his later ideological contribution in the Turkish Republic has been well studied.

However, his earlier life has generally been neglected with regard to academic analysis, with the exception of a significant master's thesis. The thesis of Ahmet Abdullah Saçmalı provides an insightful analysis of the development and transformation of Ahmet Emin's thought regarding 'the other' during the Armistice period between 1918-1923, based on both his writings at the time such as those published in the journals *Vakit* and *Vatan*, and his later memoirs. As Saçmalı demonstrates, while Ahmet Emin's views of non-Muslim Ottomans and of non-Turkish Ottoman Muslims generally remained less nationalistic than many of his peers, there was a shift towards a more negative view of these groups as time went on. For instance, while his public views of the Rum community were never particularly positive, Saçmalı shows the immediate post-Great War engagement with the Armenian issue as relatively sympathetic toward the plight of the Armenians and the need for the post-war future to build a citizenship not based on blood or ethnicity, but then gradually taking on a more negative tone and gradually addressing Armenian issues less and less frequently and directly in his writings until the issues nearly vanished by his later memoirs.³² Particularly relevant to this study, Saçmalı also analyses the shifting views on Americans through this period of Ahmet Emin's life, again both in his contemporary writings and in his later works. While the overall picture of the United States in his writings is quite positive, still one can see shifts back and forth based on American war policy and developments in American foreign policy concerning the Ottomans.³³ Saçmalı's work contributes a nuanced discussion of Ahmet Emin's writings during the period under study, but given the significance of the years 1908-1918 in Ahmet Emin's development, the post-Great War period needs to be more deeply grounded in an understanding of his earlier years.

Alongside Saçmalı's thesis, a number of key studies have begun to recover some of the complexity of major intellectuals of the years surrounding the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic, in particular for those whose careers included elements of opposition to the dominant narrative of

31. Bali.

32. Ahmet Abdullah Saçmalı, "From Mudros to Lausanne: How Ahmed Emin's Perception of the "Other" Changed," Master's Thesis, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2012), pp. 29-30.

33. *Ibid.*, 31.

the Kemalist regime. This historiography is made possible by, and also contributes further to, the reinterpretation of the transition from empire to republic beyond the lens of Mustafa Kemal's Nutuk and the conventional Kemalist history led by historians such as Erik Zürcher. Figures who in any way opposed Mustafa Kemal or the Republican People's Party in the first decades of the republic are finally being given a more nuanced interpretation, beginning to move beyond the designation of traitor to the nation. As liberal-leaning intellectuals tended to find themselves in opposition to the government, whether at specific moments or more generally, this recent revisionist history is now reanalyzing these intellectuals. In particular, Christine Philliou's recent work on Refik Halit Karay uses him as a case study to explore the meaning of the concept of *muhalefet*, or opposition, from the late Ottoman opposition to Abdulhamid to the transition to multi-party politics and the rise of the Democrat Party.³⁴ Her focus on *muhalefet* as a framework for understanding late Ottoman and Republican Turkish politics is an especially useful conceptualization for any analysis of Ahmet Emin, as both were both significantly shaped by the new constitutional politics of the immediate aftermath of the 1908 Young Turk revolution, becoming key figures in the world of politically motivated journalism and remaining so throughout the ups and downs of their political fortunes well into the multiparty period. Both of them experienced times of close association with government as well as times of opposition and its consequences. While the aims of this study are limited to looking at the aspects of Ahmet Emin's early encounter with the United States and its part in the transformation of Ottoman-American relations, the early development of late Ottoman intellectuals such as Ahmet Emin is an emerging field that needs to be further developed.

1.3 Research Aims and Questions

While the literature on the Young Turks leading up to 1908 acknowledges a major role for Ottomans studying abroad, the role that they continued to play after 1908 remains hidden by assumptions that the key figures returned to the empire. The choice of this study to focus on the second constitutional period, and on Ottoman connections with the United States, is thus an intentional effort to help fill in some of the gaps in late Ottoman historiography. It is the hope of this study to point to the possibilities of developing both the study of second constitutional period Ottoman-American relations and of Ottoman international student networks in particular

34. Christine Philliou, *Turkey: A Past Against History* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021).

post-1908. What changed in Ottoman-American relations between the early Young Turk opposition to Sultan Abdulhamid in the 1890s and the 1911 arrival of Ahmet Emin in New York? What made the 1910s a period where closer cooperation could occur between Ottomans and Americans? How did the United States begin to play a part in the emerging ideas of the future renewal of the Ottoman Empire that shaped the second constitutional period? What role did international studies play both specifically in shaping the American-Ottoman relationship and in the larger picture of late Ottoman intellectual history, and why after decades of Ottoman experience with studies in Europe did the United States emerge at this time as a focus of educational exchange?

At the heart of these questions are the two key components of this thesis- the Ottoman 1908 constitutional moment as shift in the Ottoman-American relationship, and the resulting educational experiment, which led to the first Ottoman students being sent to the United States for studies at Columbia University in 1911. Understanding the intersection of these two themes will reveal both how the ‘American connection’ contributed to the shaping of late Ottoman (and then early republican Turkish) intellectuals, and also how a relationship of trust began to develop in the second constitutional period. This study will focus specifically on the period between 1908 and 1914, bookended by the Young Turk constitutional revolution on one hand and the Great War on the other, including the initial years of American responses to the revolution and the years of the experiment of government-sent Ottoman students at Columbia University. While the aftermath in the years of the Great War and beyond will be briefly analyzed in the conclusion, the main focus will finish with the heading back of the majority of the sent students in the spring of 1914.

The primary argument of this study is that the Ottoman constitutional revolution of 1908 ushered in a major shift in Ottoman-American relations rooted in American perceptions of shared commitment to constitutional politics, which along with Ottoman appreciation for closer ties with the United States, produced a new potential for partnership toward mutual progress. The second constitutional period, fraught with challenges though it was, provided an initial testing ground for this friendship, with both American and Ottoman governments seeing potential in cooperation. Despite the relatively low level of connection between these two governments until 1908 when compared with the Ottoman relationship with various European powers, the new sense of mutual trust and potential for partnership began to lead to new forms of cooperation, such as that which emerged between the Ottoman and American governments and Columbia University to send Ottoman students to study in New York beginning in 1911. Of the five students sent by the Ottoman government, it

was especially Ahmet Emin who played a key role, both being significantly shaped by this Ottoman-American encounter, and also contributing significantly to its development.

1.4 Sources and Methodology

This study will draw from a variety of sources from both American and Ottoman perspectives. American archival material from the Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, show the perspective of American consular officials based in Istanbul as they followed and reacted to the development of the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and its aftermath. This correspondence between Istanbul and Washington reveals a perspective on the emerging constitutional regime apart from the formality of direct American-Ottoman consular communication. The archival documentation found in the papers of the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Prime Ministry Archives are analyzed alongside the parallel sources found in the Columbia University archival collections to trace the development of American-Ottoman collaboration toward the sending of Ottoman students to the United States. While some documents are found only in one or the other of these archives, others are found in both places, sometimes in all three related languages- the English and Ottoman Turkish of each party, and the intermediary French used in all official communication between the two.

The Columbia Spectator, the student newspaper of Columbia University, gives another contemporary perspective alongside the official communications of foreign ministers, ambassadors and university presidents. The Spectator regularly featured Ottoman-related topics during the period under analysis in this study, giving some sense of how the wider Columbia community understood and engaged with the Ottoman Empire and with Ottoman-background students in their midst. Amidst the frequent Turkish cigarette advertisements, the newspaper documents the attention given by Columbia professors to political and social developments taking place in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the emergence of an Ottoman student society. The other key contemporary source used in this study is Ahmet Emin's own doctoral thesis, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press*, submitted in early 1914. A noteworthy contribution to the early development of Ottoman historiography in its own right, this study will use the thesis especially to analyze Ahmet Emin's academic work at Columbia as a work of synthesis, both in its content, ideas and methodology, and in its relevance to Ottoman-American relations at the time.

Finally, this study will engage with the memoirs of Ahmet Emin, both the earlier English *Turkey in my Time* published in 1956 and the later Turkish *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim* published in 1970. While these memoirs were written in very different contexts than the second constitutional period at the center of this study, with political agendas and considerations of genre shaping each in unique ways, they form an indispensable lens into the Ottoman connection at Columbia University in the 1910s. The memoirs explore the development of the importance Ahmet Emin placed on the Turkish-American relationship and the degree to which his perspectives on this relationship were rooted in his student years at Columbia. When looking at Ahmet Emin's life during the second constitutional period, his own later reflections provide rich if complicated additions to documentation from the period itself. Of the two memoirs written later in his life, the English-language *Turkey in My Time* was written earlier, begun shortly before the start of the Second World War but finished and first published in 1956.³⁵ It is the "inside story" he wanted to tell to an English-speaking, and especially American, audience in the heyday of Democrat Party cooperation with the United States. By the time he wrote *Turkey in My Time*, gone were the days when journalism was merely one side job alongside studying, teaching or translating. In it he directly introduced himself as "a Turkish journalist, owner and editor of the Istanbul daily paper, the *Vatan*."³⁶ From this later perspective, or at least from the image of himself that he wished to cast to an English-speaking audience, his life-calling as a Turkish journalist was primarily to tell one story- that of the reversal of Turkey from being the 'Sick Man' of Europe to being a thriving member of the family of nations in the world.³⁷ Also at this later stage in his professional career, it was clear that the role of the United States in helping encourage this Turkish success story, and of his own in helping facilitate this Turkish-American relationship would be a significant part of his story, although this was less clear to him in the moment as he soaked in the effect of being a graduate student in New York in the 1910s.

As a source for understanding his own experiences in the second constitutional period, it must be treated with some caution, as it highlights or omits according to the broader context and personal goals of the 1950s. In it, Ahmet Emin emerges as a primary architect of Turkish-American closeness whose promotion he saw as the key to ongoing Turkish progress. His relationship with the Democrat Party had begun to sour over his criticisms of its early steps toward the authoritarianism that ultimately

35. Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), v.

36. *Ibid.*, 3.

37. *Ibid.*

led to its demise in 1960.³⁸ It is a work that attempts to convince an American audience of the value of their partnership in an awkward time when opposition to this relationship was growing alongside anti-Democrat Party sentiment. The Turkish-language *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim* on the other hand was published in 1970 when much had changed in Turkey, not least the tone of political debates and international relations. Near the end of his life, Ahmet Emin felt the need to justify his own story with its recurring themes of support and opposition to government. This later version included much more detailed reflections on certain aspects, for instance his experiences with missionaries in the United States and reflections on the nature of their legacy in Turkey. These memoirs are useful and indeed necessary for any analysis of Ahmet Emin's earlier life, but must be read according to their own contexts.

When the various types of sources are looked at together, they reveal a layer of official international relations on one hand, a more informal layer of university student life on the other, and importantly, the significant degree of overlap between the two. This interplay between different levels of engagement is at the heart of the thesis, which argues that these levels were deeply related to one another even though remaining distinct. Overlapping connections do not conflate the layers, but they emphasize their interrelatedness. Alongside this focus on multiple layers of relationship, this study also intentionally brings together contemporary and later sources, balancing the divergent perspectives of the later memoirs with significant reliance on sources directly from the primary period under discussion.

1.5 Outline

The first chapter will analyze the American consular reactions to the initial inauguration of the Ottoman constitution and then to the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, revealing a change in the American perception of the Ottoman Empire. The chapter will primarily use the reports of the American consular officials residing in Istanbul to analyze the place of the Ottoman constitution in official American diplomatic engagement with the Ottomans, especially comparing the initial discourse used in the 1870s with that of 1908 and its aftermath.

The second chapter will explore one of the early manifestations of this shift in Ottoman-American relations, the sending of Ottoman students to study in New York beginning in 1911. The perspectives of the Ottoman government, the U.S. consuls,

38. *Ibid.*, 275.

Columbia University and the students themselves will show that this was not merely one more example of Ottomans sending students abroad, but rather a result of the new kind of Ottoman-American relationship in the second constitutional period and at the same time a significant contribution to its development. The chapter will highlight the overlapping of formal government and informal student worlds.

Finally, the third chapter will focus specifically on the international student experience of Ahmet Emin at Columbia University to understand how this Ottoman-American relationship played out in the life of one of its most significant products and promoters. Ahmet Emin's student years in New York played a crucial part in his development as a late Ottoman liberal intellectual, profoundly shaped by the new possibilities of Ottoman-American partnership made possible by the constitution. From his relationship with professor-mentors investing in Ottoman success through him, his analysis and engagement with American society, and finally his doctoral thesis that contribute academically to the synthesizing of Ottoman and American academic worlds, this chapter's focus on Ahmet Emin's student life at Columbia will demonstrate a concrete expression of the new possibilities of Ottoman-American relations emerging out of 1908.

2. THE EMERGENCE OF CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP: THE IMPACT OF THE OTTOMAN CONSTITUTION ON OTTOMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS

I offer Your Imperial Majesty my congratulations of your accession to the throne with such universal acclaim, voiced by the people's representatives, and at a time so propitious to the highest aspirations of the great nation over which you rule as the august head of a constitutional Government. I assure you of the friendship of the Government and people of the United States, who earnestly wish for Your Majesty's happiness and for that of the people within your dominions.¹

(American President William Taft to Ottoman Sultan Mehmet V, April 28, 1909)

On April 28, 1909, American President William Taft sent his congratulations to newly enthroned Ottoman Sultan Mehmet V, openly highlighting American delight at the successes of the constitutional movement in the Ottoman Empire with an effusive language not seen in the more formal previous congratulatory messages. Just the previous year, the American secretary of state, Elihu Root, had instructed U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, John Leishman, to "express the sympathetic interest with which the President has observed the confirmation of representative government in Turkish dominions, and his cordial hope that this important step will aid in enhancing the permanent peace and prosperity of the great Ottoman nation."² The U.S. expressed its approval and excitement over the progress of constitutionalism in the empire, first tentatively in 1908 to Sultan Abdulhamid following the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution, and then practically gushing with enthusiasm by the end of April of 1909 in the aftermath of the upheaval of March/April of

1. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS) 1909: No. 560, April 28, 1909. These papers contain the correspondence of the American consular officials in the Ottoman Empire with the State Department in Washington.

2. FRUS 1908: No. 703, August 3, 1908.

that year. The language of American diplomatic correspondence with the Ottoman state and of the reports of the consular officials indicates a shift in perception of what kind of Ottoman-American relationship might be possible. While it might appear at first to be just more customary polite congratulations of the sort obligatory in diplomatic relations, the tone of these formalities expresses a real transformation of American perception of the Ottoman state rooted in American support for constitutionalism.

This chapter will analyze the official American consular responses to the Ottoman constitutional movement, comparing the reactions to 1876 and 1908 and putting these reactions into the context of Ottoman-American relations between the end of the Tanzimat and the end of the Great War. It will argue that the years surrounding the 1908 Constitutional Revolution marked a major shift in official American perception to the Ottoman Empire centered on American support for the constitution and its proponents, and that this new phase of Ottoman-American relations post-1908 opened the door to new opportunities such as the sending of Ottoman students to the U.S. analyzed in the succeeding chapters. American attentiveness to the Ottoman constitutional movement emerged tentatively in the first constitutional period, then remained dormant throughout the Hamidian era, only to reemerge with full force in 1908 in the immediate aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution. This post-1908 constitution-based feeling of friendship then formed the basis for American-Ottoman relations during the second constitutional period.

2.1 American Reactions to the Ottoman Constitution

The Ottoman constitutional movement grew out of the Tanzimat era, in some ways the culmination of decades of reform legislation while at the same time being the product of the Young Ottoman opposition movement. Though recent historiography now argues for the existence of proto-constitutional features already in the early modern Ottoman state, and hence against the long-dominant thinking that it emerged in the Ottoman context strictly as a European import in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman constitutional movement was certainly a transformative development.³ Already a major aspect of Tanzimat reforms was

3. See for instance Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), Hüseyin Yılmaz, "Containing Sultanic Authority: Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire before Modernity," *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 45 (2015) pp. 231-264, and Erdem Sönmez, "From Kanun-ı Kadim (ancient law) to Umumun Kuvveti (force of the people): Historical Context of the Ottoman Constitutionalism," *Middle Eastern Studies* 52:1 (2016) pp. 116-134.

the proliferation of smaller-scale consultative bodies such as the provincial councils and then also the first municipal councils such as those in Beyoğlu and Salonica. Meanwhile, as argued by Murat Silivrioğlu, the growth of a new journal and newspaper culture beginning in the 1860s led to the emergence of public opinion in a modern sense.⁴ Young Ottoman intellectuals began to use this new journalism to promote their ideas, including the idea that the Ottoman state should become a constitutional monarchy. A combination of Young Ottoman frustrations with what they perceived to be arbitrary rule by Tanzimat era grand viziers, rereading of early Islamic history to emphasize deliberative politics, along with both the influence of European political thought and the idea that a constitution would secure ongoing support from constitutionalist states such as Britain and France, came together to form a uniquely Ottoman constitutional movement in the 1860s and early 1870s.⁵

The opportunity to implement such ideas came through the 1876 coup deposing Sultan Abdulaziz and putting first Murad V and then Abdulhamid II on the throne in his place, all in the context of Ottoman suppression of insurrection in the Balkans beginning in 1875. Spearheaded by Midhat Pasha among others, the coup paved the way for the development of the first Ottoman constitution, the ‘Kânûn-ı Esâsî’ in Ottoman Turkish. The constitution was written and debated and finally officially approved on December 13, 1876, printed and distributed in various Ottoman and foreign languages, and formed the basis for setting up the new parliament shortly thereafter on 23 December, 1876, which began to meet in early 1877. While discussions about constitutionalism had been growing since the 1860s, the international pressures resulting from the conflict in the Balkans increased the urgency to adopt a constitution. What began as local insurrection and Ottoman suppression had turned into much bigger international conflict as Serbia and Montenegro, with Russian support, declared war on the Ottomans, and then the European powers protested the violence of Ottoman suppression of increasingly nationalist Balkan non-Muslims.

Midhat Pasha and other reformers believed the implementation of a constitution would prove Ottoman commitment to reform on behalf of its non-Muslim population, removing the primary excuse of foreign powers in intervening in Ottoman affairs both in general and particularly in 1876. Shortly after the announcement of the constitution, the Ottoman Council of State rejected the ultimatum given by the European powers, peace talks fell through, and Russia declared war shortly after the Ottoman parliament began to meet. Istanbul itself was threatened, and the ensuing San Stefano peace treaty was so harsh that the other powers intervened

4. Murat Şivrioğlu, *The Emergence of Public Opinion: State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

5. See for instance Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif, ed. *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy*, (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag GmbH, 2010).

and worked out an alternative treaty through the Berlin Congress in the summer of 1878. In these conditions, the young Abdulhamid used the rights given to him by the constitution by the compromises he insisted upon in the drafting process to remove Midhat Pasha from the grand vizierate, and to ‘temporarily prorogue’ the parliament. Though the constitution continued to be published each year in the official state yearbooks throughout the Hamidian period, the parliament was not called back into session until the aftermath of the 1908 Young Turk revolution some thirty years later.

European reactions to the constitution, contrary to the hopes of Ottoman constitutionalists such as Midhat Pasha, were not positive. Accustomed to close connection and regular interference with Ottoman politics, European politicians and diplomats tended to disparage the constitution as one more cosmetic reform intended to placate them rather than to pursue real transformation, and at the same time did not want Ottoman political developments that could threaten their influence in the empire’s affairs.⁶ In this context, the significant differences of American relationship with the Ottoman Empire led to a different kind of reaction. The American diplomatic presence in the Ottoman Empire was overall newer, smaller, and focused more on the lobbying of American interest groups such as missionaries and companies engaged in trade with the empire rather than the kind of semi-colonial relationships that had developed between the Ottomans and the European powers as the nineteenth century wore on. American missionary and founder of Istanbul’s Robert College, Cyrus Hamlin, writing his *Among the Turks* in the immediate aftermath of the new Ottoman constitution, wrote about the problems plaguing the Ottoman Empire and about potential remedies which “provided the present war does not change all things, are sure before long to be accomplished.”⁷ Hamlin argued that sultanic power needed to be limited, for which “the whole empire is ripening,” with the opening of the new parliament as a key sign of this, and wrote that “I have heard Turks of the greatest intelligence speak of this as the only hope of their existence as a nation.”⁸

The American consular reports written by the principal American resident in Istanbul, Horace Maynard, reflect this, demonstrating a more positive outlook at the Ottoman constitutional process. Besides the usual issues regarding trade and missionary concerns that typically occupied the American diplomatic personnel in the Ottoman Empire, the years surrounding the 1876 proclamation of the constitution saw the Americans following the course of the war in the Balkans. The reports

6. Hanioglu, *The Late Ottoman Empire*, p. 118.

7. Cyrus Hamlin, *Among the Turks*, (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1878) p. 377.

8. *Ibid.*

give attention to the mediation attempts ultimately culminating in the Congress of Berlin in July of 1878, as well as the shifting political fortunes culminating in the enthronement of Abdulhamid and the seeming success of the constitutional movement. Though the first mention of the new Ottoman constitution in Maynard's consular reports was made only in the immediate aftermath of its proclamation, Maynard wrote that there had been talk about it since before the dethronement of Sultan Abdulaziz, and that Ottoman government ministers were debating since Abdulhamid's enthronement whether it should be promulgated before or after the Istanbul conference.⁹ The reports sent back to the U.S. included English translations of the constitution and of news articles written by the foreign press in Istanbul, from which it seems the American information stemmed. That Maynard had to rely for information on the *Levent Herald*, the most prominent English-language newspaper in Istanbul at the time, shows the underdeveloped nature of American diplomatic presence still in the 1870s.¹⁰

A later report from April, 1877 states that the new constitution "has made such progress that the General Assembly, a legislative body contemplated by it, has convened and commenced deliberations."¹¹ Maynard described the visual impressions of the opening ceremonies of the Ottoman parliament based on press reports, and then also of the first session of the House of Deputies that he himself attended, though without understanding due to lack of an interpreter.¹² He wrote, "the arrangements for the accommodation of the members are analogous to those of the old hall of our House of Representatives. Such a body is a great innovation upon the traditional usages of this government. I shall watch the experiment with great interest."¹³ In another report from July 1877, Maynard commented about the progress of the constitutional system, noting that deputies engaged in earnest debate but that not all expectations had been immediately fulfilled. As with other aspects of reporting on the constitution, Maynard relied on the *Levant Herald* and other foreign papers for information and opinion.

Overall, while these reports indicate an awareness of the importance of the Ottoman constitution and the opening of parliament in 1876/77 as well as some level of interest in the similarities with the American political system, they remain distant. American diplomatic opinion is hardly expressed in its own voice, as the communication relied on the foreign press for both information and interpretation. Maynard mentioned the language barrier keeping him from following parliamentary debates or

9. FRUS 1876: No. 318, December 26, 1876.

10. FRUS 1877: No. 328, July 2, 1877.

11. FRUS 1877: No. 321, April 7, 1877.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

coverage of the events in the local press, strange given the many translators working for the European embassies at the time, and did not in any way discuss thoughts of American involvement or the implications for Ottoman-American relations. When Sultan Abdulhamid temporarily closed the parliament in February of 1878, the consular reports did not take notice, busy as they were following the developments of war and peace between the Ottomans and Russians. By the time the constitution was re-instated in 1908, much had changed, and the American diplomatic attention to the constitutional developments would take on a very different nature.

Meanwhile, though the U.S. example was known to some of those involved in the Ottoman constitutionalist movement in the 1870s, it did not draw a lot of attention. The Young Ottomans were far more focused on examples from Europe, looking at examples such as Britain, France and Switzerland for models of modernization, political reform and constitutionalism. At this time, it seems the relationship was not deep enough for either side to take a more active role in collaboration or closer ties with regard to the development of the Ottoman constitutional system in the 1870s. From the perspective of the Ottomans, the U.S. was relatively weak and far away compared to the more compelling examples in Europe, while American interests apart from the missionary enterprise and some private trade tended to avoid getting entangled in the affairs of distant lands in favour of Monroe Doctrine focus on the Americas. Thus the Ottomans' first constitutional moment passed with some vague thought given in either direction but without significant impact.

2.2 Ottoman-American Relations Between Constitutional Moments

While the Ottoman-American relationship throughout the nineteenth century remained for both sides a relatively minor relationship compared to either of their relationships with the major European powers, the Hamidian era saw a gradual increase in the American presence in Ottoman lands, both missionary and economic. Meanwhile, Ottoman immigration to the U.S. began to dramatically increase to the point of becoming a priority issue for the Ottomans. The historiography dealing with these topics, especially regarding Ottoman perspectives on missionary activity and on Ottoman immigration to the U.S., have grown considerably in the past couple of decades. While there was no end to thorny issues to work through, involving significant disagreement and difference of perspective, the Ottoman-American relationship in this period remained relatively smooth, with neither party wanting to antagonize the other too much, and with both parties very much functioning as

smaller powers in relation to the major European imperial states such as Britain, France, Russia and the newly united Germany. Though the two states were often at odds with each other and espoused conflicting goals on many issues, they remained essentially committed to negotiation even while having little expectation of influencing the other side towards its point of view.

By far the most significant factor shaping Ottoman-American relations in the Hamidian period was the extensive American missionary enterprise spread out through the Ottoman lands. The politics and diplomacy undergirding this American missionary activity in the Ottoman Empire was one of constant low-level friction, occasionally rising to higher levels of conflict before settling into the usual pattern again shortly after. As the works of Selim Deringil, Emrah Şahin and others show, the Ottomans resorted to a variety of responses to the challenge of the missionaries. After the 1867 law permitted foreigners to own property directly for the first time, restrictions came to especially take the form of permits and accountability to state inspection, especially using the emerging Ministry of Education to attempt to regulate and restrict missionary schools from straying too far from Ottoman state expectations.¹⁴ Modernity involved increasing tendency toward state centralization, regulatory regimes, codification of laws, and as recent scholarship shows, these changes were not rooted in a simplistic story of westernization as told by much of the earlier historiography of the Ottoman Empire. Local trajectories merged with foreign elements and produced uniquely Ottoman versions of these modernizing practices, in particular in the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II.¹⁵ While American consular representatives felt obliged to defend missionary interests against a hostile Ottoman state and society, with varying personal opinions and levels of connection to the missionary networks, the general picture emerging from recent scholarship is of an Ottoman state actually actively trying to prevent direct anti-missionary agitation and to find mutually acceptable compromises in a less-than-ideal situation.¹⁶ American diplomatic pressure on behalf of missionaries, sometimes aided by British support, was at times facilitated with naval presence, such as the role played by Admiral Farragut in pressuring the Porte into giving the long-awaited-for permission for Robert College to open in Rumelihisarı above the Bosphorus in 1868.¹⁷

14. Berna Kamay, "Osmanlı'da "Yabancınn" Mülkiyet Hakkı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme: 1867 İstimlak-I Emlak Nizamnamesi." *Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinde Yeni Çalışmalar: Kaynak, Bağlam, Yöntem*, (Istanbul: Vakıfbank Kültür Yayınları, 2023) pp. 129-160, and Emine Evered, *Empire and Education under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks*, (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2012).

15. Avi Ruben, "Modernity as a Code: The Ottoman Empire and the Global Movement of Codification," *JESHO* 59/5 (2016) 828-856.

16. Şahin, Deringil.

17. Orlin Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti: Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society (1863-1923)*, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2013) p. 74.

Meanwhile, American missionaries were key agents of shaping American public opinion, actively campaigning for American society to support the missionary enterprise financially and to exert pressure on the American government to use its diplomatic relationship with the Ottoman state to further the missionary cause. This led the missionary networks to increasingly support the perspective of non-Muslim Ottomans, and the Armenian community in particular, those most open to connection with the missionary world. As the Hamidian period progressed, increased violence against Armenians culminating in the 1896 massacres drew a public outcry from Americans increasingly seeing themselves as the protectors of the Armenian minority, and brought the Americans into increasing conflict with the Ottoman state over how to interpret the Armenian issue and what kind of reform could return the Eastern provinces to peace and the road to progress. The Ottomans increasingly accused American missionaries of supporting Armenian nationalist ideas and aspirations, foreshadowing the cataclysm of 1915.¹⁸

While immigration led to general complications for Ottoman-American relations regarding nationality, property and inheritance, the issuing of passports, competing legal jurisdictions rooted in the capitulations, etc., it was especially the immigration of Armenians to the U.S. that alarmed the Ottoman state. Sultan Abdulhamid was deeply concerned with the possibility of foreign-based Ottomans conspiring against his regime, whether that be Young Turks, socialists or nationalist revolutionary groups, but especially focused on countering any form of Armenian opposition stemming from the U.S.¹⁹ Already anti-Hamidian opposition grew both in numbers and in influence among the mix of immigrants and political exiles, and the boundary between these was not always clear. As Armenian nationalism and separatist political movements grew in strength, and as American missionary connections contributed to the emigration of Ottoman Armenians out of the empire, concerns regarding Armenian political activities abroad increased, along with Ottoman attempts to further regulate and restrict an Ottoman Armenian from being able to return to the empire. Armenians returning to the Ottoman lands with American passport and intending to use this legal protection as cover for their separatist activities posed a real threat in the eyes of the Ottoman state. Armenian migration to the United States, similar to that of other groups, was not a clear unidirectional process. As David Gutman describes in his *The Politics of Armenian Migration to North America 1885-1915*, many migrants intended to move back to the Ottoman Empire after some time with whatever income, skills or networks they acquired overseas, with the return migration ironically peaking in 1914 in the months before the start of the

18. David Gutman, *The Politics of Armenian Migration to North America, 1885-1915: Sojourners, Smugglers and Dubious Citizens*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

19. *Ibid.*

war.²⁰ Gutman's analysis of Ottoman-American migration issues argues that the American reactions to Hamidian era anti-Armenian migration policies were mixed—on one hand deeply sympathetic to the Armenian people, while on the other hand sympathetic to the suspicion of the Ottoman government of the ways migration could be used to undermine the security of the state.²¹

Besides direct immigration, the Ottomans were concerned about improving their international public relations through Ottoman participation in world fairs. That of Chicago in 1892 was especially important for American-Ottoman relations, with the Ottoman government investing significant cost and effort to set up a display that would prove Ottoman legitimacy as a civilized nation. It was this fair that brought the young Ubeydullah Efendi, discussed earlier, to the United States to spearhead the journalistic efforts of the Ottoman delegation. Despite his oppositional politics, Ubeydullah Efendi was given the task of reporting on the progress of the fair to literate Ottomans, and also to shape foreign but especially American public opinion about the Ottoman Empire and its representation at the fair.

To understand the American-Ottoman relationship during this time, it is necessary to also see it in the wider context of Great Power rivalry, a reality which both the Ottomans and the Americans as lesser powers had to reckon with. While the relationship never reached the level of importance of the Ottoman relations with the European Great Powers, it was precisely this supposed disinterestedness that came to invest this relationship with particular meaning in the late Ottoman period. In many ways, the U.S. built upon the pattern of diplomatic relations already existing between the Ottomans and European states. While most early modern European states had official ambassadors in Istanbul, regular mutual exchange of embassies that included Ottomans going and staying abroad did not emerge until the later eighteenth century in the aftermath of the disastrous Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca that ended war with Russia. Meanwhile, by the nineteenth century, Ottoman international relations centered largely on the famous capitulations, agreements giving 'most favoured nation' status to an ever-increasing number of foreign states and their subjects residing in Ottoman lands. The Ottoman-American Treaty of 1830 permitted the Americans to enter this privileged category, which ensured that they had the right to be tried by their own consular courts and to have many privileges regarding trade and residency, all of which became increasingly frustrating for the Ottomans as the nineteenth century wore on. Foreign governments used the capitulations to infringe on Ottoman sovereignty more and more, and local Ottoman subjects increasingly took advantage of ambiguities in nationality laws to acquire

20. *Ibid.*, 191.

21. *Ibid.*

foreign passports and use foreign citizenship to their advantage both to assert rights that would otherwise not been theirs and to avoid responsibilities such as Ottoman taxes. The United States was part of this wider context, seeking to uphold their capitulatory privileges and seeing themselves alongside their European counterparts even if they had some disadvantages in relation to them.

While they were part of the capitulations, their diplomatic representation in the empire did not have embassy status. American foreign policy since the development of the Monroe Doctrine in the early nineteenth century had focused their attention on the Americas and avoided too much entanglement elsewhere, and European powers sought to keep it that way- in other words to keep Americans from meddling too much in their affairs in Europe, Asia and Africa. American diplomats believed that European powers lobbied against any increase in their influence in the Ottoman Empire, and bristled at the reminders of their lower status. Meanwhile they sought every opportunity to show themselves to be at least symbolically the equals of the European powers.

The years immediately surrounding the 1908 Young Turk Revolution saw a shift in the formal relationship status between the Ottomans and the United States. While the European powers had long since exchanged official embassies with the Ottomans, the American diplomatic presence in Istanbul begun in 1832 remained at the lesser level of legation into the twentieth century. During John Leishman's tenure as official American resident in Istanbul beginning in 1902, the American Foreign Ministry began to pursue official embassy status. When it became clear that the desired change was not forthcoming, the Foreign Ministry orchestrated a diplomatic coup of sorts, commissioning Leishman as formal ambassador to the Ottoman Empire without receiving prior permission, and hoping that the Ottomans would accept it as a *fait accompli*.²² Having already served for four years as resident, Leishman could claim intimate knowledge of the Ottoman context and the American-Ottoman relationship, and both he and the Foreign Ministry hoped for an increased role for the U.S. in the empire.

The Americans were well aware that their action could be seen as provocation by the Ottomans- Leishman wrote to the Foreign Ministry in Washington that "there has been considerable newspaper talk about the Sultan being displeased at the action taken by the Government which may have been more or less well founded," and that "there can be little doubt about the Sultan having been greatly surprised and perhaps a little provokes(sic) at having the Embassy forced upon him."²³ Leishman commented that the Sultan "was probably not half as much annoyed as the European

22. Letter from John Leishman to Elihu Root, August 3, 1906.

23. *Ibid.*

Powers who have always looked upon any encroachment here with a very jealous eye, as they wishes (sic) to regard Turkey as their own special reserve,” seeing their intrigue as the root of Ottoman reluctance to receive an American ambassador. ²⁴ Leishman also alluded to the Ottoman Foreign Minister as having had a favourable reaction to the President’s letter and expressed hope that the Ottomans would in turn appoint an ambassador to Washington. ²⁵

In the end, the Ottoman response was positive- the American legation was upgraded to formal embassy status on October 5, 1906, and the Ottoman legation in Washington became a embassy a few years later when Hüseyin Kazım Bey was sent to Washington in 1910. ²⁶ The American push to have full embassy status in Istanbul indicated a commitment both to closer attention to Ottoman affairs and the promotion of American interests in the empire, and to overcome resistance to this development whether coming from the Hamidian regime or from European pressures. The bringing of the Scorpion naval vessel to Istanbul in 1908 was also seen in this light- since the European powers had permanent naval presence in Ottoman waters, whether docked at Istanbul or used in some other part of the empire, the Americans wanted to exercise the same rights. They asked permission to bring the Scorpion, and it remained in Ottoman waters on and off until the American entry into the Great War. Once the regime changed in Istanbul in 1908, the Americans were diplomatically more ready to respond to the changes and capitalize on the new opportunities that might stem from closer ideological affinity based in constitutionalism.

2.3 The 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the Ottoman-American Constitutional Relationship

As the Hamidian regime grew more and more authoritarian after the shutting down of the parliament, new forms of opposition began to emerge that came to be called Young Turk, though there was always a wide spectrum of ideology beyond the consensus of opposing Hamidian oppression. What began as a conspiratorial movement by medical students at the Royal Medical Academy in Istanbul gradually turned into a network of groups that formed, merged, split and ultimately argued over the future of the empire once it could be saved from tyranny. A merger took place in

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Syed Tanvir Wasti, “Ahmed Rüstem Bey and the End of an Era”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 48:5 (September 2012) p. 781.

1907 between the Committee of Progress and Union, primarily led by émigré exiles in Europe, and a secret association of army officers in Macedonia called the Ottoman Freedom Society, bringing together the more intellectual currents of the CPU with a quickly growing network within the Ottoman military, centered on Macedonia. As the inter-ethnic conflicts in Macedonia worsened and the threat of foreign intervention became clear, the committee felt forced to act prematurely in early July of 1908 to launch a military movement to take control of the situation. Defecting army units defeated the troops sent against them, and marched on Istanbul, forcing Abdulhamid to submit and to reinstitute the constitution that had been dormant for over thirty years.

All across the empire there were celebrations on the streets, as many Ottomans of all nationalities looked with great expectation on the reinstatement of the constitution as the key to the salvation and progress of the state, to Ottoman unity between different groups, and to an end to Hamidian repression. Parliamentary elections were held, the constitution was updated to ensure sultanic authority was truly curtailed, and the CUP tried to hold power behind the scenes while a variety of political factions and actors competed for influence in the new system. Opposition to the new political situation grew and led to the 1909 counter-revolution, which though it seems to have included a variety of perspectives, ultimately led to an attempt to reinstate Hamidian autocracy and abolish the constitution. Again CUP-led forces came from Macedonia to suppress the insurrectionists, and upon retaking Istanbul, they dethroned Sultan Abdulhamid and replaced him with Mehmet V. The following years saw ongoing political instability, and finally in response to the catastrophe of the First Balkan War, the CUP took near- absolute control of the state and governed autocratically despite the ongoing parliamentary system until the end of the Great War.

The 1908 Revolution dramatically changed the political situation of the Ottoman Empire, and foreign powers pivoted with mixed reactions to relate to the new constitutional regime, and the American reaction in particular was one of positive expectations. The American consular reports concerning the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution engage at a far deeper level than those from 1876/1877 with the changes taking place and with the character that constitutionalism would take in the Ottoman context. Ambassador Leishman sent back much more thorough reports to Washington, and consistently communicated information and opinion in his own voice as opposed to that of İstanbul's foreign press. Compared with Maynard's watching with interest from a distance, Leishman was far more invested in the outcome of the events of 1908/09 with regard both to American interests in the Ottoman Empire and to the kind of relationship that constitutional government would lead to. As in 1876, the direct discussion of constitution was in

response to proclamation of the constitution by Sultan Abdulhamid in July of 1908. Leishman wrote, “The Sultan, yielding to the demand for reforms, has proclaimed the constitution, which had lapsed for 30 years, and imperial orders have been sent to all the governors throughout the empire with a view to proceeding to the election of parliamentary representatives.”²⁷ Once Sultan Abdulhamid announced his constitutional policy to the foreign diplomatic corps in Istanbul, Ambassador Leishman was instructed by Washington to “express the sympathetic interest with which the President has observed the confirmation of representative government in Turkish dominions, and his cordial hope that this important step will aid in advancing the permanent peace and prosperity of the great Ottoman nation.”²⁸

The 1908/09 American consular reports written by Ambassador Leishman from Istanbul and sent to Washington shower the Young Turks with praise throughout. While European powers had mixed feelings about the July 1908 revolution, the March/April 1909 events, and the Young Turks in general, the American reports consistently identify the Young Turks with constitutionalism and progress, and applaud their leadership during these early years of the second constitutional period. Leishman’s reports also consistently identify the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress with the constitution, with reform and with progress, and those who opposed them particularly in the events of March/April 1909 as reactionaries. While this was precisely the perspective perpetuated by the CUP and often accepted uncritically in later historiography, it was not self-evident that the Americans should see the Young Turks in this way. For instance, Feroz Ahmad’s work on the foreign policy of the Young Turks in the aftermath of the 1908 revolution demonstrates that the British and French embassies leaned toward the so-called ‘reactionary’ elements that took control of Istanbul on March 31, 1909 despite the desire of Young Turk leadership to have closer relations, in particular with the British.²⁹

By contrast, the American diplomatic perspective maintained a clear division between Young Turk progress and anti-CUP reactionary elements. The first post-revolution reports do not mince words in their critique of the pre-revolution situation, writing about the “deplorable state of affairs which finally brought about the revolution,” and commenting that the “dissatisfaction with the old regime was so general that the change has been brought with comparatively little bloodshed.”³⁰ The Ottoman population is described as the “liberated masses” who have “suffered

27. FRUS 1908: No. 701, July 24, 1908.

28. FRUS 1908: No. 703, August 3, 1908.

29. Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: Struggle for the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2019) p.9.

30. FRUS 1908: No. 702, July 28, 1908.

so long at the hands of the unscrupulous palace camarilla.”³¹ Immediately upon the reinstatement of the constitution in the summer of 1908, Leishman writes that the palace guard along with the “rabble of the city probably sympathizes with the Sultan” against the Young Turks.³² A few weeks later, he continued, “The constitutional government is busily occupied in an energetic process of house cleaning and ridding the different bureaus of the deadwood with which the former regime had encumbered them.”³³ Leishman practically gushes with confidence in the new regime’s capacity to renew the empire: “I am quite of the opinion that Turkey has taken on a new lease of life and will continue its progressive march despite all the difficulties that may be encountered.”³⁴

The ‘Young Turkish Party’ as it is called in these documents is first mentioned in the context of restraint in the aftermath of the revolution, a refrain that is repeated again and again in the reports especially in connection with the suppression of the unrest of March/April 1909.³⁵ Leishman writes that the “leaders of the constitutional party continue to act in the most conservative manner and are evidently doing everything in their power to calm the bellicose spirit of the army, much to the discomfort of the reactionaries.”³⁶ In their efforts to regain control in the spring of 1909 the Second and Third Army Corps are described as “well disciplined” and as having “conducted themselves in a manner that has caused universal admiration.”³⁷ The reports also repeatedly praise the Young Turk capacity to ease tensions in previously difficult regions, beginning already within the first few weeks after the 1908 revolution. On September 28, 1908, Leishman wrote that:

What European diplomacy failed to accomplish Turkey has done for itself, and, as if by magic, the reforms which Europe sought for years to impose have been accomplished over night, and, wonderful as it may seem, revolutionary bands, brigands and grafters of all grades have suddenly disappeared. . . all the more remarkable when one stops to think that the country is temporarily being controlled by sheer moral force, as many of the districts are without organized government and the old officials having either been dismissed or chased away...”³⁸

The expected orientalist tropes of Turkish administrative inefficiency and need for outside intervention are replaced by a remarkable confidence in Young Turk constitutionalism to regenerate the empire. A month later, Leishman adds that:

31. Ibid.

32. FRUS 1908: No. 704, August 3, 1908.

33. FRUS 1908: No. 706, August 20, 1908.

34. FRUS 1908: No. 707, September 28, 1908.

35. FRUS 1908: No. 704, August 3, 1908.

36. FRUS 1908: No. 709, October 9, 1908.

37. FRUS 1909: No. 553, June 1, 1909.

38. FRUS 1908: No. 707, September 28, 1908.

The brightest feature of the situation lies in Macedonia. The action of the Bulgarian, Greek, Servian, and Vlach bands, which for years had disturbed the calm of European diplomacy and elicited project after project of reform, has suddenly ceased, and their chiefs, declaring their readiness to abide by the constitution, have made their submission. What the concerted efforts of diplomacy and an international gendarmerie have been unable to accomplish the success of the Young Turks has apparently brought about.³⁹

Again the critique of the European powers is seen. Another report tells of the CUP “inducing the brigands, who for years had terrorized the Smyrna district, to lay down their arms, and have thus effectually suppressed for the time what had been the scourge of an otherwise prosperous region.”⁴⁰ Similarly, the CUP is praised for permitting and then settling strikes in Istanbul and Izmir, balancing a newfound freedom to strike with a desire to address concerns and keep strikes from getting out of hand.⁴¹

In the immediate aftermath of the events of March 31, 1909, Ambassador Leishman wrote about the violent reactionary movement that overthrew the cabinet.⁴² Before it became clear that the forces connected to the CUP would manage to retake control, Leishman wrote to Washington criticizing the “so-called liberal party” allying with reactionary theological students and supporters of Abdulhamid ending the “first era of universal good will and general fraternity among all the races and creeds of the empire.”⁴³ The CUP and its allies are continually referred to as the ‘constitutional party’ in opposition the reactionaries, and Leishman’s writings make clear that he hoped this ‘constitutional party’ would manage to regain control. As they did indeed regain control and Abdulhamid was dethroned and replaced by Sultan Mehmed V, Leishman was clearly relieved and happy to know that the constitution and ensuing progress could continue having its good effect both on the prosperity of the Ottoman Empire and on American interests there.⁴⁴ These consular reports show a consistent belief that the Young Turks/CUP and the constitutional reforms they advocated would directly lead to the well-being and progress of the Ottoman Empire, solve many of its troubles, and clear away the negative consequences of absolute rule associated with Sultan Abdulhamid. They demonstrate consistent American belief both in the inherent good and power of constitutional government and in the Young Turks as its champions, and exude real excitement about the

39. FRUS 1908: No. 705, August 8, 1908.

40. FRUS 1908: No. 706, August 20, 1908.

41. Ibid.

42. FRUS 1909: No.528, April 14, 1909.

43. FRUS 1909: No. 529, April 15, 1909.

44. FRUS 1909: No. 555. June 8, 1909.

progress that they were already beginning to witness. This excitement would combine with expectations of progress specifically in Ottoman-American relations and in the furtherment of American interests in the Ottoman Empire.

Within a few weeks of the announcement of the reinstatement of the constitution, Ambassador Leishman wrote that:

It is not without particular and material interest to us, as it practically removes the fundamental causes of most of our troubles with Turkey—i.e. missionaries and naturalized citizens of Ottoman origin—and enhances the opportunity of extending our commerce many folds, as the development of the country, which was retarded and almost strangled by the methods of the old regime, will be encouraged to the greatest extent possible by the new government, which is sure to result in a great wave of prosperity. ⁴⁵

To Leishman, the new constitutional regime was set to resolve any conflicts between the U.S. and the Ottomans while facilitating mutual progress and opportunity, particularly in commercial development, further growth of American educational institutions in the empire, and migration issues. Regarding education, Leishman wrote that “the very sources of friction and unpopularity in the past are certain to redound to our credit, as the new government is as interested in encouraging the general education of the masses as the old despotic regime was in opposing it.” ⁴⁶ Though the works of historians such as Selçuk Akşin Somel and Benjamin Fortna have highlighted the degree of Hamidian era support for the development of mass education in the Ottoman lands, the Americans in 1908 still perceived Abdulhamid’s regime as opposing widespread education. ⁴⁷ Regardless, the differences in emphasis between American and Ottoman education philosophy certainly were the cause of ongoing tensions through the Hamidian era, and these tensions appeared to the Americans to be on the verge of disappearing with the new regime. In their eyes, if the Ottoman government could remove the prejudices against missionary education held by the autocratic Hamidian regime, they would be able to see the supposedly pure motives and unbiased universal quality of the education offered by American schools, and promote them as part of a general commitment to the key role of education in the progress of the empire.

Meanwhile, the Americans believed the thorny problem of migration would also

45. FRUS 1909: No.707, September 28, 1908.

46. FRUS 1908: No.707, September 28, 1908.

47. Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education*, Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

be solved due to the reinstatement of the constitution and the attitudes of the new Young Turk regime. As discussed earlier, the migration issue was a constant source of friction between the Hamidian state and the United States because of Hamidian fears of Ottomans naturalized as American citizens and returning to the Ottoman lands to become involved with opposition movements. By 1908, the number of Ottoman-originating persons suspected to be in the U.S. was around 150,000 according to Ottoman government statistics.⁴⁸ The American belief in the efficacy of constitution and the Young Turk progressive reforms beginning in 1908 led to the idea that these migration troubles would be resolved. Ambassador Leishman wrote in September, 1908 that “the naturalized citizen, who was forbidden to return and who caused us so much trouble when he surreptitiously re-entered Turkey, will now be welcomed, and no doubt a considerable percentage of the several hundred thousand emigrants who during the past 20 or 30 years have found refuge upon our hospitable shores will now return to their native land and further strengthen the bonds of friendship which bind the two countries.”⁴⁹ The new constitutional regime did indeed permit freedom of travel, allowing many, including those who had opposed the Hamidian state from abroad to return. Leishman had to clarify later that while the freedom of travel had indeed been granted, the nationality laws had not changed and still regarded Ottoman-originating persons returning to the Ottoman lands as Ottoman citizens rather than as naturalized Americans.⁵⁰ Still, the language of freedom, progress and liberal policy continued to shape the framing of the issue.

An example that brought together the major concerns of the Americans and their idealistic hopes for the constitutional regime are the intertwined issues of typewriter sales and bible colportage freedom.⁵¹ Among the reports and correspondence between Ambassador Leishman and Washington is found a letter written by the Remington Typewriter Company of New York to the Secretary of State, then forwarded to Istanbul. The company, writing within a few weeks of the proclamation of the reinstatement of the constitution, asked for help in confirming the facts regarding newfound freedoms and in promoting their cause: “It has occurred to us that if a more liberal government for Turkey, about which there is so much in the newspapers at this time, becomes an established fact, some measures may be taken to remove the prohibition against the introduction of Arabic and Armenian machines

48. Tuncer Çalayan and Nedim İpek, “The Emigration from the Ottoman Empire to America.” *International Journal of Turkish Studies*. 12:1/2 (2006) p.35.

49. FRUS 1908: No. 707, September 28, 1908.

50. FRUS 1908: No. 723, September 28, 1908, and FRUS 1909: No.524, April 3, 1909.

51. John De Novo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East, 1900-1939*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963) p.21.

into Turkey.”⁵² The company had received word of a report by another American diplomatic representative in the provinces who wrote that “the press is now free, and type, printing presses, and all materials for printing may be freely imported by anyone. Newspapers are starting up all over the land... there ought to be a demand soon for these machines.”⁵³

The prospect of commercial benefit arising from the removal of the strict controls of the Hamidian regime immediately drew the attention of American business looking for expansion opportunities, one of the most important priorities of the American embassy in Istanbul. The Hamidian restrictions against Armenian and Arabic script typewriters was partly due to concerns of nationalist insurrection, but also to efforts to restrict American missionary efforts, and the lifting of these restrictions meant not just business opportunity but also the chance for missionaries to more freely print and distribute their materials in the empire. Ambassador Leishman wrote that the lifting of restrictions “happily disposes of a large number of irritating questions and relieves the department as well as the embassy of a great amount of annoying correspondence.”⁵⁴ This then was also tied to the bible colportage related friction with the Hamidian state.⁵⁵ Travel restrictions within the empire had seriously hindered the movement of those trying to sell bibles throughout the provinces, and Ambassador Leishman wrote:

I have the honor to state that among the immediate benefits arising from the establishment of constitutional government in Turkey is the settlement of the difficulty regarding bible colportage, as the restrictions on the general sale of books and on the freedom of Ottoman subjects to travel have been removed, and consequently, the American Bible Society will probably have no further cause for complaint.⁵⁶

Thus the two main lobby groups pressing the embassy to work for their causes, namely American business and missionaries, both saw in the constitution the solution to their problems and the door to further growth, and the American embassy celebrated both opportunities and the perceived end to the troubles caused by these topics.

At the end of 1909, American President Taft echoed much of the previous year and a half of praise for Young Turk progress in his annual message of December 7, 1909, saying that “the quick transition of the Government of the Ottoman Empire from one of retrograde tendencies to a constitutional government with a Parliament and

52. FRUS 1908: No. 719, October 2, 1908.

53. Ibid.

54. FRUS 1908: No. 721, September 19, 1908.

55. Yasin Coşkun, “A Subject of Dispute Between the Ottoman Empire and the American Bible Society in the Early 1900s: The Bible Colportage.” *Middle Eastern Studies*. 59:4, (August 2022) p. 556.

56. FRUS 1908: No.721, September 19, 1908.

with progressive modern policies of reform and public improvement” was one of the momentous events of the era.⁵⁷ Similar thoughts were repeated by Taft at the close of 1911.⁵⁸ The American reactions to the reinstatement of the constitution and to Young Turk reforms was overwhelmingly positive, closely identifying them with progress in line with their own values. They also were convinced that their own specifically American interests would be able to progress now unhindered, due to this alignment of political values and the prosperity they believed would come to the Ottoman Empire as a result. Meanwhile, from the perspective of the Ottoman state in the second constitutional period, the same supposed American disinterestedness in the Ottoman Empire had previously been seen as a sign of weakness in comparison with the European Great Powers’ exerting of influence over the Ottoman state became the grounds for growing Turkish trust in partnership with the U.S., and the ideological alignment of the Americans with the Young Turks in the second constitutional period was a key factor in paving the way. As seen in the work of Stacy Fahrenthold, the CUP tried to encourage the significant Ottoman diaspora in the United States to work for the good of the empire, a goal that would disintegrate during the Great War.⁵⁹

This is just one of many examples of increasing complication as the 1910s progressed, as the increasingly authoritarian reactions of the CUP to ongoing crisis and then decision to enter the Great War would go some way to tarnish the idealistic perspective of the earlier diplomatic reports. The CUP continued earlier Ottoman policies of attempting to restrict American missionary activities, while migration issues were not as easy to solve as Leishman first assumed.⁶⁰ While the Americans did not directly declare war on the Ottomans when they entered Great War, their siding with the Ottomans’ enemies against Ottoman allies nevertheless put the Americans living in the Ottoman Empire into a difficult situation- diplomatic relations were severed and the Scorpion naval ship docked at Istanbul was taken over by the Ottoman navy.⁶¹ Still, despite the complications of war, including in particular the looming shadow of the Armenian deportations and massacres, from the discussions of the possibility of an American mandate after the war to American support for multi-party politics in the aftermath of the Second World War, the idea of American encouragement of constitutional or democratic political system in Turkey would continue to shape American-Turkish relations in the heyday of close cooperation during the mid and later twentieth century.

57. De Novo, p.48.

58. Ibid.

59. Fahrenthold, pp. 48-56.

60. De Novo, p. 35.

61. FRUS 1917: No. 763. April 23, 1917.

2.4 Summary

As this chapter has shown, official American diplomatic perception of the Ottoman Empire was significantly impacted by the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution, making way for new possibilities in Ottoman-American relations. Already when the Ottoman constitution was first promulgated in 1876, American reactions were more positive than their European counterparts who tended to look with suspicion at the motives of Ottoman reforms by this time, though this reaction remained on the surface and died away quietly along with the constitution in the Hamidian period. Then, after decades of attempting to strike a balance between simmering tensions and the desire for good relations in order to facilitate American trade and missionary interests in the empire, the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution was seen as a one-size-fits-all solution both to any relational difficulties between the two states and also to the future progress of the empire. In contrast to the *realpolitik* of the European powers, most Americans living in the empire seem to have really desired this progress. While earlier American millennial ideas had called for hopes of the demise of the Islamic empire and the freedom of newly religiously reforming local Christian communities, the diplomatic perspective in 1908 seems to have been one of real hope in a workable future for the Ottoman Empire, built on the growth of liberal democratic principles that could ensure both real progress and the well-being of the non-Muslim communities under the constitutional regime. If the Ottoman Empire could now begin to truly ‘catch up’ to the civilization and progress of the Western powers under the constitutional regime, then real friendship and partnership became possible- a partnership that could help encourage and further this progress.

The remaining question is that of why deeper Ottoman-American collaboration would be desirable to either state in 1908 and in the succeeding years. We have already seen that the Americans understood the constitutional revolution as being the solution to all extent tensions between the two states, in particular the concerns regarding migration and American missionary schools. In addition, the relative weakness and distance of the U.S. from the empire and its differences from its European Great Power counterparts at this particular juncture holds a major part of the answer. The Americans criticized the ongoing attempts to keep them from holding real influence in the region. They looked for chances to increase that influence, and to reach the level of whatever privileges the European powers already enjoyed. The aforementioned examples of the unilateral upgrading of the consular representation to full embassy status in 1906 and the bringing of the Scorpion warship after the

revolution show this well. Meanwhile the Ottomans after 1908 similarly had something to gain from increasing friendship between the two lesser powers. Support from the U.S. came with less strings attached compared with the betrayals of European powers acting clearly in their own interests and constantly occupied with great power rivalries and alliances. Young Turk commitment to progress could use the support of less threatening powers who might contribute to strengthening the state, and American commitment to the idea of progress was well known.

A new era of closer relationship between the Ottomans and Americans after 1908 was seen to be mutually beneficial, and managed to weather major setbacks during the Great War and in its aftermath. Historians such as Feroz Ahmad and Şuhnaz Yılmaz are correct in asserting that the excitement of 1908 died down in the complications of the constitutional era, and that robust partnership of the kind seen after the Second World War certainly did not emerge in the second constitutional period. However, there does seem to be some very real transformation in how the two states perceived and engaged with each other, with practical implications including in particular the subject of the remaining parts of this study, namely the sending of Ottoman students to New York in 1911 in the name of constitution-based international friendship, as we shall see in the following chapter. The tentative sense of closer affinity based on constitutionalism and commitment to progress would begin to be fleshed out with practical connections, which would prove quite significant when the dust settled after the Great War.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP: COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AND THE SENDING OF OTTOMAN STUDENTS TO THE UNITED STATES

This university having learned that the Ottoman Government desires to train a certain number of young men each year in foreign lands, and deeply sympathizing with this purpose of the Government under the present régime, the Trustees of the University have passed a resolution that for a term of ten years from July 1st, 1910, free tuition will be granted to students of the Ottoman Empire, not exceeding three students in each one year, who may be nominated by the Ottoman Government and recommended by the American Ambassador at Constantinople.¹

(American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Oscar Straus, to Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rifaat Pasha, June 18, 1910)

The reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution ushered in a new era of hope and expectation as euphoric crowds across the empire celebrated what looked to many to be the solution to the empire's problems. As the previous chapter has demonstrated, the initial successes of the 1908 Young Turk revolution and the reinstatement of the Ottoman constitution shifted the official American perception of the Ottomans. American diplomats were quickly and thoroughly convinced that the new era would see the end to their conflicts with the Ottoman state, and usher in a new path toward progress that the United States was both eager to cheer on and to help support. One of the primary fields where this new kind of relationship based on mutual commitment to constitutionalism and progress would work

1. Columbia University Central Files (hereafter CUCF), Office of the President Records: Series 1.4: Turkish Students File, 1910-1914, Box 543, Folder 3, "Letter from Rifaat Pasha to Oscar Straus," June 18, 1910, and also from the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi(BOA): BOA-HR.İD.01390.00003.004. See Appendix A-5. The Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives, or contains documents relating to the students sent to the United States in the Foreign Ministry records (see the Hariciye Nezareti İdare Evrakı).

itself out in the years following the revolution was in education, already at the center of American interests in the Ottoman lands. The institution that particularly stepped in to help facilitate the tentative possibilities of educational partnership was Columbia University, offering to concretely support the new Ottoman constitutional regime by sponsoring Ottoman students. This chapter will explore this experiment in partnership- the sending of Ottoman students to the U.S. for graduate studies, and the place of Columbia University as a key intermediary between Ottoman and American educational interests.

3.1 Columbia University and Aftermath of 1908 in the Ottoman Empire

Columbia University in the early twentieth century already had a long and illustrious history as one of the important academic centers of the United States since its founding in 1754, the oldest institution of higher education in New York. Its graduates were known for their impact on American society and politics, setting trends for other universities to follow through its innovative programs such as the school of journalism and the teacher's college. Columbia in the early twentieth century was beginning to develop more of a global vision, influenced by the powerful Rockefeller family and its philanthropic investments. At the same time, Columbia University's international student presence was becoming significant enough to impact wider campus life. Student societies comprising of international students from particular countries emerged, canteens specializing in foreign cuisines ranging from Chinese to Middle Eastern popped up in and around the campus, and Earl Hall, the student center of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) became the site of gatherings representing the interests of these diverse groups. A student editorial in the *Columbia Spectator* in 1912 shows the degree to which the international student community had grown. The author, an Ottoman from Palestine studying at the Columbia Teachers College named Khalil Abdallah Totah, wrote:

It is high time for some foreign student to let the university public generally and the Young Men's Christian Association particularly to know how much we foreigners appreciate the efforts made to acquaint us with the best in American life. Special mention must be made of the Sunday evening suppers of Earl Hall. These gatherings offer both foreign and American students an excellent opportunity to get acquainted. ²

The student went on: "Where could you find a better forum for the discussion of the Chinese upheavals, Indian unrest, Ottoman grievances, Japanese ambitions and

2. Khalil Totah, "Communication," *Columbia Spectator*, 55:124, March 16, 1912, p. 4. The archives of the *Columbia Spectator* are found online at <https://spectatorarchive.library.columbia.edu/>.

Figure 3.1 Columbia University c. 1910
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Columbia_University_1910.jpg)



Latin-American possibilities than Earl Hall on the campus of Columbia?”, emphasizing the learning opportunities touching on “world tendencies in education, social progress, and international understanding” brought by the presence of these students and by the academic interest shown by professors in global affairs.³ According to the editorial, this cosmopolitan mix widened the perspective of the student body both for the international students themselves and for the Americans, encouraging cross-cultural learning and developing skills of sympathy for the ‘other’ that could almost pass for twenty first century diversity training. To a surprising degree, many of the features of current global international student life can be seen at Columbia in the early twentieth century, with Columbia at the cutting edge of the development of these trends in its search for global significance. By the early 1920s the number of international students had grown enough for a separate international student dormitory and center to be built by Rockefeller funding, part of that family’s larger investment into culture, education and politics especially in New York. It was this emerging interest of Columbia to draw international students and to expand their global reach that coincided with the massive transformations of the Ottoman state from 1908 onward, a transformation that also attracted the attention of Columbia.

Early twentieth century growth of American interests in the Ottoman Empire led both to a deeper American academic interest in the region and into new visions of influence there, and Columbia increasingly saw itself at the center of these practical and academic possibilities. In the aftermath of the 1908 revolution, three prominent Columbia professors visited the empire, visiting the American educational institutions such as Robert College in Istanbul and the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut and taking note of the changes taking place under the new constitutional regime. Their travels both influenced their regular classes and became the occasion for special lectures widely advertised through the *Columbia Spectator*, the student daily newspaper that covered everything from campus gossip and major student events, sports competition with other schools, notices about bible studies and chapel services, and advertisements (including the regular presence of Ottoman products in

3. Ibid.

the form of ‘Turkish cigarettes’). Upon his return to New York, Professor of Semitic Languages Richard Gottheil gave the student body his authoritative professional scholarly opinion on the constitutional regime:

In regard to the future of Turkey, personally I have every hope of the accomplishment of the tasks which the Young Turks have set themselves. It is so great that one wonders at their courage in undertaking it. But the mere fact that they have this courage shows that they are the men to take it in hand. What this courage really means may be understood, when one thinks of the degradation and corruption which has been going on in the Turkish empire for so many years and especially of the conditions which the former Sultan, Abdul Hamid, has caused. Almost every improvement has to be commenced from the very foundations. Not only has the new to be created, but so much that is old and rotted has to be gotten rid of. As I say, I have faith in the Young Turks. ⁴

Professor Gottheil’s hope in the new Ottoman constitutional regime mirrors the initial official diplomatic reports seen in the previous chapter.

The Columbia Spectator reported on a few other similar professor reports. Professor S. Dutton of the Columbia Teachers College included the Ottoman Empire in his European educational research trip that included England, Scandinavia and Austria-Hungary among others countries, focused both on observation and scouting potential opportunities. His public lecture upon return highlighted the potential for Columbia in particular to play a role in developing educational partnerships with the Ottoman Empire, noting “the profound respect which the Turkish leaders seem to have for America and its education.” ⁵ Meanwhile, Professor of Architecture Albert Dwight Foster Hamlin, son of the famous founder of Robert College Cyrus Hamlin, brought back reports shaped not only by his academic perspective but by his own upbringing in Istanbul and his close ties to the missionary establishment. Hamlin’s lecture also emphasized the American hopefulness around the Young Turks:

This visit was especially interesting because we witnessed the first anniversary of the adoption of the Turkish constitution and probably the first spontaneous popular festival which the Turks have ever had. I can assure you that it was a wonderful sight. It had been only three months since the reactionary revolt had been suppressed and the display of the military force was very impressive, as well as the demonstration of popular enthusiasm. The most vivid impressions I received in Turkey, were those experienced in witnessing the marvelous changes in the public life and feeling since the constitution went into effect. The freedom of speech

4. “Dr. Gottheil Visits Turkey and Egypt,” Columbia Spectator, 54:25, October 26, 1910, p. 2.

5. “Teachers College Professor Learns in Foreign Countries how American can Improve Education Methods,” Columbia Spectator, 54:16, October 15, 1910, p. 2.

and movement, the general joy and happiness of the people, the good order and progressiveness were all very striking and remarkable to one who had known Turkey under the old regime. ⁶

All three professors returned from travels in the Ottoman Empire with the same overwhelmingly positive view of the Young Turk Revolution and its aftermath that had characterized the diplomatic perspective. They shared excitement over the future progress of the empire under the constitution, with trust that ‘the constitutional party’ would cure it of its Hamidian era ills and set it up for long-term success. This perspective raised awareness among the student body who listened to the professors’ lectures, and encouraged the growth of the idea that the United States, and Columbia in particular, would play a key role in this progress and in the opportunities that would come from it. Thus when the news broke out on campus that students were to be sent by the Ottoman government to Columbia for graduate studies in 1911, the university was already poised to engage more deeply with Ottoman progress.

3.2 Columbia University and International Diplomacy: The Sending of Ottoman Students

When Professor Dutton of the Columbia Teacher’s College returned from his research trip to the Ottoman Empire and various European countries, his public lecture of October 15, 1910 included a reference to a practical idea that came to him during his travels. Commenting on the Ottoman educational situation following the 1908 revolution, he stated that “upon my return I was glad to suggest to Columbia and other universities that the offer of free scholarships to Turkish young men would be one of the best expressions of interest and helpfulness on the part of the United States.” ⁷ Already there had been Ottoman students at Columbia University and other American universities already since the later nineteenth century, although none with the official backing of the Ottoman government. Meanwhile, by the 1910s, the Ottoman government already had a long history of selecting and sending students abroad for studies. However with the United States so far away, and not nearly as connected to the Ottoman world when compared with the European powers such as France and Britain, it was not until the second constitutional period that the

6. “Prof. Hamlin Returns from Organization of Great College on Shores of the Bosphorus,” *Columbia Spectator*, 54:18, October 18, 1910, p. 2.

7. “Teachers College Professor.”

Ottoman government took notice of the potential opportunities of cooperation with university education in the United States.

Before the opportunity stemming from Columbia University emerged in early 1910, the United States had already become the object of preliminary ideas of partnership within some circles of the constitutional regime. In January of 1910, a request from the Ottoman Ministry of Agriculture, Mining and Forestry came to the Foreign Ministry, asking for them to find out whether scholarship opportunities might be possible in the United States specifically for a student named Hussein Husni to study in an agricultural school, and if not on scholarship, how much such studies might cost.⁸ Foreign Minister Rifaat Pasha passed this request along to Alfred Rustem Bey, the Ottoman ambassador in Washington. A month later, the Under-Secretary of State Huntington Wilson wrote back to Rustem Bey that the United States government would be happy to use its influence to try to help an Ottoman youth to study in such an agricultural school, and asked for the academic credentials of the said Hussein Husni, and what kind of specialization he might focus on.⁹ By October of 1910, the efforts of the Ottoman and American diplomats had found an appropriate school for Hussein- the agricultural program of the University of Minnesota accepted the responsibility to bring him on full scholarship.¹⁰ While this exceptional and limited case was being negotiated, the much bigger attempt at partnership was developing through Columbia University.

On March 7, 1910, the trustees of Columbia adopted a resolution “that for a period of ten years from July 1, 1910, exemption from the regular tuition fees be granted to students from Turkey, not exceeding three students in any one year, who may be nominated by the Turkish Government and recommended by the American Ambassador at Constantinople.”¹¹ As Ahmet Emin would later write in his memoirs, Columbia’s decision stemmed from the “special interest in the Young Turk experiment with constitutional government” developed at that time.¹² The news was then conveyed to the Sublime Porte by Oscar Straus, American Ambassador in Istanbul via French translation. Straus highlighted to the Ottoman government that Columbia University “stands in the front rank of our great seats of learning in America.”¹³ Straus went on to describe that Columbia “having learned that the Ottoman Government desires to train a certain number of young men each year in foreign lands, and deeply sympathizing with this purpose of the Government under

8. BOA-HR.İD.01390.00001.001. See Appendix A-1.

9. BOA-HR.İD.01390.00002.001, BOA-HR.İD.01390.00002.002. See Appendix A-2 and A-3.

10. BOA-HR.İD.01390.00005.002.

11. CUCF, “Letter from President Butler’s Office to Huntington Wilson,” June 29, 1910.

12. Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p. 26.

13. CUCF, “Letter from Oscar Straus to Rifaat Pasha,” April 15, 1910, and BOA-HR.İD.01390.00003.003. See Appendix A-4.

the present régime, the Trustees of the University have passed a resolution,” which was then explained in detail.¹⁴ The letter ended by emphasizing the key factor in making this partnership possible: “It gives me great pleasure to convey to you this information, as it is another evidence of the sympathetic interest that my country takes in the development and progress of the Ottoman Empire under its new régime of constitutionalism.”¹⁵

Rifaat Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs, expressed his great pleasure in response, thanking both Columbia and the American government for showing interest “in the intellectual development of Ottoman youth.”¹⁶ He informed the American embassy that the information would be passed on and acted upon by the Ottoman Ministry of Public Instruction, and concluded by emphasizing that the same sympathy shown by the Americans to Ottoman wellbeing “corresponds perfectly to the sentiments which the Ottomans feel toward the American nation.”¹⁷ Straus wrote back to the American State Department that he had met with both Rifaat Pasha and the Education Minister Emrullah Efendi, and that they were working on the process of finding suitable student candidates.¹⁸ Meanwhile, correspondence between Rifaat Pasha and Zia Pasha the Ottoman Ambassador to the United States explored the new opportunity from the perspective of the Ottoman government. Zia Pasha wrote that “since the establishment of the constitutional regime in the empire, the government of the United States has not missed any opportunity to demonstrate their sympathies with regard to our country.”¹⁹ He also described Columbia University to give Rifaat Pasha a better sense of what kind of environment the Ottoman students would find themselves in, emphasizing its beautiful campus and relatively affordable student housing and eating opportunities.²⁰ The Teachers College and technical programs were also highlighted, and in conclusion Zia Pasha confirmed how well suited Columbia would be for training Ottoman students.²¹

It was in this context that a certain “Mr. Selehaddin, a young Ottoman, who has spent some years in the United States and is said to have taken two years at the School of Medicine of Richmond, Va.” sought the help of the Ottoman embassy in Washington to transfer to Columbia University to complete his studies.²² He somehow had the idea that the government could negotiate for the waiving of his tuition

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. CUCF, “Letter from Rifaat Pasha to Oscar Straus,” June 18, 1910, and BOA-HR.ID.01390.00003.004. See Appendix A-5.

17. *Ibid.*

18. CUCF, “Letter from Philip Hoffman to Elihu Root,” October 14, 1910.

19. BOA-HR.ID.01390.00006.001. See Appendix A-7.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. CUCF, “Letter from Rifaat Pasha to Oscar Straus,” June 18 1910.

fees so as not to have to spend his time earning a living while studying, indicating that the news had already spread of Columbia's decision to give scholarship to Ottoman students. In June of 1910 his request was passed on first to the American State Department, and from there to President Butler of Columbia.²³ The university responded to the State Department by confirming their earlier decision to give scholarships to Ottoman students under the conditions laid out in their resolution, and asked for more information on Mr. Selehaddin as the correspondence had not included any details of his academic standing.²⁴ By December of 1910 it was noted that no further information had come from Mr. Selehaddin himself or the respective embassies to pass on the required information, and this curious second false start faded while the process of finding suitable students continued.²⁵

The Columbia Spectator reported the perspective of Hugh Poynter, one of the examiners responsible for administering the competitive examination to find the students to be sent. Poynter said of the candidates that "while some of the papers showed but an elementary knowledge of English, the ideas of all, struggling as they were to express themselves in a foreign language, showed thought and originality. The essays of the four candidates which I placed first in order of merit were excellent and would have done credit to any young man writing in a foreign language."²⁶ The 180 candidates wrote on the topic of "Education and the State," fitting for this experiment that would bring together second constitutional era Ottoman educational politics, American diplomatic efforts to forge a closer relationship with the Ottomans, and Columbia's non-state but nevertheless very much state-adjacent efforts to be involved in international educational reform and progress.²⁷ Of the four candidates most favored by Poynter, the one Turkish Ottoman and one of the three non-Muslim Ottoman students were selected in the end by the Ottoman Ministry of Education, who added another Turk from among the next best candidates.²⁸

After some prodding by Zia Pasha for a final decision, in the end, news of five, not three, Ottoman students chosen by the Ottoman Ministry of Education was sent from the Foreign Ministry. That there were five and not three seems to stem from Ottoman pushing of the limits of the deal and Columbia accepting it as a fait-accompli, something that would reemerge later as a source of tension.²⁹ There was

23. CUCF, "Letter from Huntington Wilson to Nicholas Butler," June 28 1910.

24. "Letter from President Butler's Office to Huntington Wilson," June 29, 1910.

25. CUCF, "Letter from Elihu Root to Huntington Wilson," December 3, 1910.

26. "Five Turks at University: Oriental Students Coming," *Columbia Spectator*, 54:93, February 8, 1911, p. 3.

27. *Ibid.*, Ahmet Emin Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerimiz ve Geçirdiklerimiz*. Cilt 1: 1888-1918 (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019) p. 111.

28. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*.p. 111.

29. BOA-HR.İD.01390.00004.004, BOA-HR.İD.01390.00004.006. These documents show the names of the five students.

Ahmet Emin (Yalman), born in Salonica and receiving his education at the military preparatory school there, the Beyoğlu German School, and finally the Darülfünun School of Law, his studies at Columbia involved history, sociology, politics and journalism, and his PhD thesis “The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press” set the stage for his later journalistic career in Turkey pushing for democracy and progress.³⁰ As the primary subject of the final chapter of this study, more will be said about him below. Fellow journalist Ahmet Şükrü (Esmer) was born in what was then British-occupied but still formally Ottoman Cyprus, and also studied at the Darülfünun School of Law before being sent to the United States.³¹ Abdullah Hamdi (Fevzi Toker) from Istanbul studied electrical engineering at Columbia and later would go on to work on the development of the public electricity system in Turkey.³² Cevat Eyüp (Taşman) from Bolu also had an American-influenced education through Robert College in Istanbul before heading to Columbia to study mining engineering and chemistry.³³ After some years of work in the United States, he also would return to develop petroleum exploration in Turkey. Finally, Nikolaki Agnides was the one non-Muslim among the five. Born in Niğde, hence his surname, he had his first encounter with American education while studying at Tarsus American College, from which he moved onto the Darülfünun Law School just like Ahmet Emin.³⁴ Despite being of Rum (Greek Orthodox) heritage, his doctoral work at Columbia, entitled “Mohammedan Theories of Finance with an Introduction to Mohammedan Law,” became an influential work on economic and financial aspects of Islamic Law in the United States. He was the one of the five who would not return to the Ottoman Empire due to the outbreak of war, and his friend Ahmet Emin would later write of his attempt to visit Turkey in the 1960s being stopped by the American consulate in Athens wrongly telling him that former Ottoman subjects were not permitted to enter Turkey.³⁵

After the initial excitement of all parties involved at the successful start of the experiment, it did not take long for problems to emerge. When Columbia passed on news of the successful completion of the first semester on the part of the five students in the summer of 1911, the response of the Sublime Porte expressed both gratitude

30. The Darülfünun of Istanbul became Istanbul University with the university reforms of 1933.

31. See for instance Işıl Arpacı, “Prof.Dr Ahmet Şükrü Esmer’in yaşamı, yapıtları, fikirleri, uygulamaları ve Türk toplumsal yaşamına katkıları: Kamu yönetimi açısından bir araştırma,” (unpublished MA thesis, 2005), Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p.132.

32. See for instance Serhat Akcan, “Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Petrole Adanmış bir Ömür: Cevat Eyüp Taşman’ın Hayatı ve Çalışmaları,” *Dicle Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 37 (2024).

33. See for instance Suad Erten, *EİE 33 Yıl:1935-1967* (Ankara: Elektrik İşleri Etüt İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü, 1970).

34. Şenay Atam and Gülin Öztürk, “Amerika’da Niğdeli Bir Şahsiyet (1884-1976): Nicolas P. Agnides,” *MANAS Journal of Social Studies*, 9:2 (2020) p. 1262.

35. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte* p.147.

and news of a few emerging developments. The Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs regretfully informed the Americans that the Department of Public Instruction was unable to find funds to send more students to Columbia. The theory of Columbia and the Ottoman government jointly investing in Ottoman students in Columbia joined the long list of admirable goals of the Ottoman Ministry of Education in the aftermath of the 1908 revolution that had to be shelved due to budgetary struggles, a problem inherited from the Hamidian era that the reinstatement of the constitution could not easily resolve. At the same time, a special request was made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Ministry of Public Instruction for Columbia to waive the tuition fees for another Ottoman student who had been at Columbia for nine months already.³⁶ It was reported that his family had become unable to continue to pay tuition fees, and that they had asked for help from the Ottoman government. Though Columbia promised to take the matter into consideration, when pressed again by Ambassador Rockhill early in 1912, Columbia responded firmly by reminding that the original resolution had specified the maximum number of three students to be given free tuition in a year. The frustration of Columbia at the Ottomans' failure to stick to their end of the agreement is clear:

As soon as the announcement was made, the Turkish government sent us five students whom we were very glad to have, and to all of whom we extended the privileges of the above resolution. The same five students have remained for a second year on the same conditions. Will you be good enough to call this matter to the attention of the Ottoman Government? More students should not be sent to us under the resolution, until some of those students who are now taking advantage of it withdraw.³⁷

This correspondence reveals the reason as to why there were five scholarship students rather than three. While the *Columbia Spectator* interpreted the initial resolution as meaning that only three of the five who came had been given scholarship, it seems all five were studying with full tuition waiver and support from Columbia.³⁸ Already pushing the boundaries of the initial agreement from the very first, the Ottoman government was attempting to add even more Ottoman students into the framework of the scholarship.

The process of negotiating the sending of Ottoman students to study at Columbia University shows an ongoing partnership between the Ottoman and American governments and Columbia. Both states were invested in the success of the project, and saw it as not only an educational opportunity for a handful of students but as a concrete representation of the growing friendship between the two states following

36. CUCF, "Note Verbale from Ottoman Foreign Ministry to United States Embassy," September 13, 1911.

37. CUCF, "Letter from William Rockhill to Nicholas Butler," January 27, 1912. See Appendix B-1.

38. "Five Turks at University," p. 3.

the Constitutional Revolution. The Americans consistently tied the experiment to their great appreciation for the new post-1908 Ottoman constitutional regime, with which they were very pleased to collaborate with over common goals of progress. While Hamidian era American involvement in Ottoman education always had to pay lip service to Sultan Abdulhamid, the post-1908 rhetoric and practice was one of real desire to partner in new ways. The Ottoman constitutional regime was also ready to trust the United States as a partner for common goals in a way that was much less clouded with concerns about dangerous ulterior motives that haunted offers of collaboration from the European powers. Meanwhile, Columbia University was eager to play their part in the new opportunities afforded by the post-1908 Ottoman situation, embracing its role as mentor to the new Ottoman constitution-based progress.

3.3 The Columbia Ottoman Student Society

Upon learning of their selection, the five Ottoman students met an Istanbul dessert shop at the initiative of the Education Ministry, who advised them that the best way to prepare for their studies abroad was to get to know one another and form the sort of cooperative friendship that would help navigate the difficulties ahead.³⁹ Ahmet Emin later wrote that the five became close friends almost immediately, and remained so long after their time together at Columbia.⁴⁰ Through various routes, they arrived together in Paris, from where they continued to London and then on the long voyage across the Atlantic to arrive together in New York. After a lengthy dispute with customs officials over Ahmet Şükrü's unwillingness to denounce polygamy on religious principle, the group managed to get through with the help of a representative of Columbia.⁴¹

On February 8, 1911, the *Columbia Spectator* announced to the student body that "Five Turkish students will be added to the enrollment at Columbia University on February 11, when the *Mauretania* on which they will sail arrives here on that day."⁴² The article went on to describe the unfolding story of Columbia's involvement in international diplomacy that was bringing these five students, emphasizing that "this is the first time in the history of the university that students have come from Turkey under such circumstances, and it is believed by the authorities at the university

39. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte* 132.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*, 139.

42. "Five Turks at University", p. 3.

and by the Turkish government that it will go a long way toward the increasing friendliness between the two countries.”⁴³ The wider student body was reminded of the challenges of students arriving from foreign lands, and both the role they could play in helping these arriving Ottoman students to acclimatize to Columbia campus life and also that of the university itself in coordinating their welcome with the Ottoman consul in New York and then providing their lodgings.⁴⁴ While these new students were not the first Ottoman students at Columbia, the circumstances surrounding their arrival and the massive changes taking place back in the empire certainly were very different.

For one, these students came to Columbia with the official support of the Ottoman government and the direct encouragement of the American Foreign Ministry. In addition, they represented a different demographic when compared with other Ottoman students studying at Columbia until that point, who generally represented the mix of Christian-background Ottoman peoples and who often had connections with the American missionary establishment such as the aforementioned Palestinian Ottoman Khalil Abdallah Totah whose family was connected to the small Quaker missionary presence there.⁴⁵ With four Muslim Turkish and one Rum student, the group represented the prevailing second constitutional period increasing emphasis on Turkishness while making room for the other peoples of the empire- the kind of Ottomanism associated with CUP politics in this period. The other difference of these five is that they had just experienced the 1908 Revolution first-hand, and represented the new potential of an Ottoman Empire freed from the restrictive hand of Hamidian autocracy. In his later Turkish memoirs, Ahmet Emin Yalman mentioned that these other Ottoman students often represented the worldview of the old regime, not having the experience of the enlightened post 1908 Ottoman transformations.⁴⁶ These students set to work improving their English and adjusting to American student life, and before long began to make an impact on their new Columbia environment.

After some nine months of quiet presence at the university, the Ottoman students sent to Columbia emerge again in the pages of the Columbia Spectator in November of 1911, with a notice detailing a meeting to be held with the goal of founding a new Ottoman student society. The notice called for “all Ottoman students of Columbia and Teacher’s College” to gather at the Earl Hall student center to help, and the reporting on the event the following day gives an indication of what was meant by

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Joy Totah Hilden, *Passion for Learning: The Life Journey of Khalil Totah, a Palestinian Quaker Educator and Activist*, (Wiltshire: Ex Libris Press, 2016).

46. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p. 157.

Figure 3.2 Columbia Ottoman Society with Imam of New York Ottoman Consulate (<https://hyetert.org/2019/06/01/columbia-universitesinin-osmanli-ogrencileri/>)



‘Ottoman:’ “There were fifteen students present, all of whom come from the Turkish Empire, including four Turks, two Greeks, three Syrians, one Jew and five Armenians. Other Ottoman students are expected to join the society later.”⁴⁷ As reported in the *Spectator*, the goal of the student society was “to promote the Ottoman spirit and good fellowship among its members,” along with drawing in the wider Columbia community to learn about and support the empire.⁴⁸ Ahmet Emin took on the role of first ‘corresponding secretary’, for which his journalist background made him an obvious choice.⁴⁹ In his memoirs he later wrote about the importance of correcting the plentiful misinformation in the population at large, disseminated either by American anti-Turkish sentiment or by propaganda efforts of nationalist groups trying to sway public opinion, and as corresponding secretary he worked hard to respond to false statements published by other groups.⁵⁰ The gathered students drew up initial plans for the writing of a constitution for the student club, which while it may have had significant precedent in the United States, was doubtless shaped from the Ottoman context by two key interrelated developments- the reinstitution of the Ottoman constitution itself in the aftermath of the 1908 revolution, and the constitution written by the newly formed student society at the Darülfünun in Istanbul where Ahmet Emin was a law student before coming to New York.⁵¹

The Columbia Ottoman Society began immediately to organize activities and meetings. The group hosted social events throughout the school year, including traditional dancing and music as well as food brought from the establishments of New

47. “Ottoman Students to Form Society,” *Columbia Spectator*, 55:32, November 2, 1911, p. 7, “Ottoman Students Form New Club,” *Columbia Spectator*, 55:34, November 4, 1911, p. 4.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, pp. 156-157.

51. Yücel Aktar, *İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi Öğrenci Olayları (1908-1918)*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990) p. 27.

York's extensive Ottoman community, who were also invited to a few of the most significant events.⁵² Students themselves gave speeches, as did supportive professors. These society activities became a significant part of the campus life of the Ottoman students, who both met regularly and spent time preparing and executing the planning the ongoing events. The reporting in the *Spectator* makes it clear that at least some of the events were quite well attended by the larger student body, providing an opportunity for American and Ottoman students to get to know each other and to shape the perspectives of Columbia students at large.⁵³ In fact, the whole tone of the *Spectator*'s reporting on the Ottoman Society throughout the period between 1911-1914 was overwhelmingly positive, praising the club for its hospitality and well-organized activities and endearingly referring to them as the "Otto-men" in jest. The Ottoman presence on campus thus drew positive attention, and attempted to inform the wider student body. In particular, a whole series of campus debates were put on jointly by the Teacher's College and the Ottoman Society exploring the current situation and future opportunities of Ottoman education reform, the American educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire such as Robert College and the American College for Girls in Istanbul, and especially the rising push for investing more in education for girls.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, the Ottoman Society had ongoing ties to the Ottoman government. As Stacey Fahrenthold shows in her work on Ottoman Arab migrant communities in the United States and Latin America, the constitutional regime after the 1908 revolution gave significant attention to developing a new kind of relationship with these migrant communities, attempting to strengthen the ties between the Ottoman government and the migrant communities especially through community associations. It was hoped that these migrant communities would support the Ottoman state, and increasingly the CUP specifically, although after the outbreak of the Great War these ties began to falter.⁵⁵ The same kind of dynamics were found at Columbia University. Already New York was the center of the Ottoman migrant presence in the United States, and while the ambassador was stationed in Washington, the consul in New York had considerable influence. From the start, the honorary presidency was given to the Ottoman ambassador in Washington, a sign of the political ties of the student group to the Ottoman government. Both the ambassadors and the consuls of New York were regular guests of the society events, including at times giving important speeches. In particular, Ambassador Zia Pasha addressed the gath-

52. "Turks to Entertain Ambassador," *Columbia Spectator*, 55:108, February 27, 1912, p. 5.

53. Khalil Totah, "Communication," p. 4.

54. "Ottoman Society Discusses Education," *Columbia Spectator*, 55:146, April 16, 1912, p. 7.

55. Fahrenthold, pp. 48-56.

ering in March of 1912, reading his speech in French and receiving help to translate into English. He “commended the policy of the Turkish Governments on sending students to American universities and expressed himself as heartily in favor of the modern movement toward conciliation as a manner of settling international differences,” a recurring theme both of the event and of the society meetings in general.⁵⁶ In this same evening, Professor of Indo-Iranian languages, A. V. W. Jackson, also applauded the collaboration between Ottoman and American governments and Columbia University in bringing Ottoman students to the United States as part of the “work done in both countries to promote good fellowship and understanding between their citizens.”⁵⁷ While some of these developments may represent a degree of formality common to international relations, the Columbia Ottoman Society had ties to inter-governmental partnership on some level, and was treated by the Ottoman diplomatic establishment as an important venture. Besides the official events, the consular officials took significant interest in the five students, introducing them to other notable connections.⁵⁸ A particularly amusing memoir anecdote tells of the New York consul taking the five students to a fancy dinner to introduce them to Columbia President Butler, telling them to come in frock coat and fez which astonished and amused Butler.⁵⁹

While it is hard to discern exactly what kind of Ottoman identity prevailed in the student society in these years before the start of the Great War, it is clear that it represented an experiment of unity that, like the larger Ottoman context of the time, became increasingly unworkable at least from 1915 onward. The *Spectator* ceases to mention the Columbia Ottoman Society beyond the end of 1914, and its references to the Ottoman Empire and to Ottoman background students at Columbia become increasingly colored by the war and by reactions to atrocities committed against the empire’s Armenians. Nevertheless, the years 1911-1914 shaped by the presence of the five state-sent students appear to have been a testament to hope in the progress of united Ottoman nation, however fragile, and despite Ahmet Emin’s later perspective that Ottomanism was doomed to fail from the start.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, the society was quite a significant public relations campaign, between the attempt to gather wide audiences to listen to talks given by both professors and students and Ahmet Emin’s secretarial role of correcting misconceptions published in the local newspapers. While the society was not directly started by the students sent by the Ottoman government, its founding soon after the arrival of these students cannot

56. “Eminent Diplomat Here: Ottomen Entertain Turkish Ambassador,” *Columbia Spectator*, 55:114, March 5, 1912, p. 1.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p. 141.

59. *Ibid.*, pp.141-143

60. *Ibid.*

be a coincidence. The attention given to the society by the Ottoman government and the degree that the five who were sent were openly framed as representing a new era of Ottoman-American relations points to the importance of this Ottoman student presence at Columbia to those wanting to foster closer relations between the two states.

3.4 Columbia Professors and their Ottoman Students

The involvement of Columbia professors with Ottoman affairs and with the newly formed student society went beyond the realm of extracurricular activities and public lectures. The *Spectator* article announcing the expected arrival of the five state-sent Ottoman students refers to the responsibilities of professors in relation to newly arriving international students, describing it as the custom of the university to assign a professor to each student to look after them during their time at Columbia.⁶¹ While this sense of ‘looking after’ an international student could have been understood at times in a more minimalist sense, it is clear that some of the professors took their duties seriously enough to really involve themselves in the lives of these students as mentors and encouragers. Already we have seen the degree to which some got involved in the student society, even to the point of becoming honorary members.⁶² It comes as no surprise therefore to see them soon enough as part of the official diplomatic relations playing out in the background concerning the five state-sent students.

Already after the end of the first term, a progress report showing the academic records of the five Ottoman students was sent to the American Embassy in Istanbul and also to the Sublime Porte.⁶³ A report was sent in December of 1913 from Columbia University to the American diplomatic staff, and from then onward to the Ottoman government, reporting on the progress of the five students sent by the Ottoman Ministry of Education. Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, responding to the initial understanding of the five students as a particularly significant interest of American relations with the Ottoman Empire, wrote to American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau in early December of 1913. “I have thought that the proper officials of the Turkish government, as well as you yourself would be interested to know what has been the result of this interesting experiment,” he wrote, asking Morgenthau to ensure that the Sublime Porte would

61. “Five Turks at University,” p. 3.

62. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p. 157.

63. CUCF, “Letter from Ridgley Carter to Nicholas Butler,” July 1, 1911.

receive the reports. ⁶⁴ Morgenthau wrote back to Dr. Butler, saying, “Your letter of December 2, enclosing reports on the five Turkish students pleased us here very much.” ⁶⁵ He went on to add, “I think it is quite unusual to receive such favorable report on all the students that represent one country. I have taken great pleasure in sending a copy of it to the Sublime Porte and have congratulated them on the fine record made by their representatives.” ⁶⁶ Not only was Morgenthau impressed by the Ottoman students at Columbia, he clearly understood their role as being in a sense a diplomatic one. The students were seen as representatives of the Ottoman government despite them not having official positions. Morgenthau went on to write that in his role as ambassador he had the opportunity to “observe the benefits of education and the disadvantages of literacy” and promised to correspond with Dr. Butler more in the future about his particular vantage point between American-Ottoman relations and the development of education in the Ottoman context. Columbia University intended to play a role in this nexus, and these students were a taste of the role Columbia could play in influencing global education and with it the role of the United States as its champion.

The discussed report was a summary from four professors especially knowledgeable about the situation of the Ottoman students through their role as chosen mentors. Some professors merely commented directly on the academic merits of their international student mentees and on their general adaptation to life at Columbia. Others revealed more of their underlying views concerning the Ottomans or the non-western world in general, expressing common tropes of the characteristics of ‘orientals’ even if praising a particular student. Draft Engineering professor Ralph E. Mayer wrote about Abdullah Hamdi that he managed to overcome his English language struggle and become an excellent student by the second year of his program, and about Djebad Eyoub that he was one of the most clever students ever to enter the program. ⁶⁷ Edwin R. A. Seligman, professor of the Political Economy wrote that Aghnides was one of the most thoughtful and able students of his program, completing “a very good essay for his Master’s thesis which he proposed to complete for his Doctor’s thesis” and enjoying the esteem of fellow students. ⁶⁸ Professor Harlan F. Stone, Dean of Columbia’s Faculty of Law, wrote about Ahmet Şükrü that he was an exception to Stone’s standard biases: “In these subjects his record has been

64. CUCF, “Letter from Nicholas Butler to American Embassy in Constantinople,” December 2, 1913.

65. CUCF, “Letter from Henry Morgenthau to Nicholas Butler,” December 17, 1913. See Appendix B-2.

66. *Ibid.*

67. CUCF, “Letter from Nicholas Butler’s Office to Ottoman Embassy in Washington,” December 23, 1913. See Appendix B-3.

68. *Ibid.*

good- decidedly good when one considers that he is working with a foreign language and that his race and antecedents tend to make the common law a good deal of a mystery to him. Our experience with most Orientals is that they are quite unable to grasp the principles of English law. Shukri is a notable exception to this rule.”⁶⁹ Finally, sociology professor Franklin Giddings remarked that Ahmet Emin was worthy of respect in every aspect, from intellectual capacity to personal character and influence.⁷⁰

These descriptions give a picture of the spectrum of perspectives found in the early twentieth century American academy concerning the ‘East’ and the Ottomans in particular, ranging from a kind of encouraging paternalism to clearly racist outlook. Whatever their ideas of the ‘oriental’, each spoke overwhelmingly positively about the Ottoman students, with the only exception being the initial struggle some had with English. In light of these reports from professors being passed from university officials to diplomatic representatives directly to the Sublime Porte, they cannot be read simply as academic reports. They also function as concrete building blocks of international relations between an American state eager to grow their influence in the world through education, and an Ottoman state hoping to find more trustworthy partners in their efforts to build a new strong Ottoman state and society in the aftermath of the revolution. Diplomats on both sides followed the developments of these students with interest, and both Columbia University itself as well as some of its professors would go on to play a significant role in the post-Great War Ottoman and early Republican era Turkish context.

3.5 Summary

When President Butler of Columbia University wrote to Ambassador Morgenthau in December of 1913 of “this interesting experiment” of state-sent Ottoman students at Columbia since 1911, he understood this experiment to be one that connected the university with the larger goals of Ottoman-American diplomacy. While the Ministry of Public Education had been the one charged with selecting and sending these students, it was the Foreign Ministry that President Butler wanted to share the news with, along with the American Embassy in Istanbul. Meanwhile, on the ground in New York, Ottoman consular officials went beyond merely asking for news, and involved themselves directly into the campus life of the Ottoman students through

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

their Columbia Ottoman Society, visiting and giving speeches in front of both the Ottoman students themselves and the wider student body that attended the society's events. From all sides, the impression made by the students and their society on campus was positive, with professors giving glowing reports of their progress and taking real interest in their development, and American students at the university joining their activities and finding themselves discussing how to be involved in the future of the empire's educational progress. The Columbia Spectator made sure that their friends the 'Ottomen' were regularly noticed as a positive and integral, if somewhat exotic, feature of Columbia campus life. Both the American and the Ottoman embassies were evidently pleased with the experiment, with Columbia University proud of their role of facilitators, a role that would continue long after the Ottoman Empire had ceased to be. While the experiment involved multiple parties, including the five students themselves, the one figure that stands out at the center of this experiment in educational diplomacy was undoubtedly Ahmet Emin, the subject of the next and final chapter.

4. THE PERSONIFICATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP: AHMET EMIN (YALMAN) AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Very few students have come under my observation who have interested me so much as Emin has done. His keen, accurate mind first made appeal to me, and then I noticed that he was becoming a favorite with our very best men. They discovered his substantial intellectual gifts, and found him, as I soon after did, a charming personality. In our seminar he has read papers of remarkable grasp, information and insight. I respect him in every way, for character, for mind, for influence, and I like him as much as I respect him.¹

(Professor Franklin Giddings of Ahmet Emin, December 1913)

Ahmet Emin stood out both in the eyes of his professors and in depth of engagement with the United States during the studies at Columbia. While each of the students played their part in the ‘experiment’ of Ottoman-American educational diplomacy along with many other actors from each of the respective states as well as Columbia University, Ahmet Emin in many ways was at the very center of the experiment. His deeply formative encounter with Columbia and with the United States between 1911-1914 became a representative aspect of the Ottoman-American and then Turkish-American relationship, and he came to act as a sort of spokesperson or cheerleader for the importance of this relationship for Turkish progress. This chapter will analyze the student experience of Ahmet Emin in New York in order to explore the deepened Ottoman-American relationship of the Second Constitutional Period through the life of an emerging Ottoman intellectual who would go on to play a significant public role in Turkish society. The roots of his important role in Turkish-American relations later on can be found in the years spent as a student at Columbia University,

1. CUCF, “Letter from Nicholas Butler’s Office to Ottoman Embassy in Washington,” December 23, 1913. See Appendix B-3.

where his own worldview, skills, networks and academic work were both shaped by and contributing to the tentative new friendship between Ottomans and Americans forged in the aftermath of the 1908 revolution. He was not merely the fruit of the goals of the major state and institutional players, but one who actively contributed to how it would all take shape.

4.1 Ahmet Emin's Early Life

The broad contours of Ahmet Emin's life are relatively well known. Born in 1888 to a prominent family in Salonica, among the most important Ottoman cities after Istanbul at the time. The Dönme community that Ahmet Emin grew up in was more or less blended into regular Sunni Muslim Turkish community by that time, and particularly invested in new-style progressive education.² While his more conservative uncle emphasized Islamic tradition in Ahmet Emin's childhood, His father was a teacher first in local community schools known for their progressive and western-leaning outlook along with an emphasis on traditional morality, and then of the Salonican state military preparatory school where one of his own students was Mustafa Kemal, and where Ahmet Emin would also go on to study at.³ Encouraged by his family and school environments, he began his own journalistic activities as a child of only eight years old.⁴

In his studies at the military prep school and then at the Beyoğlu German School in Istanbul, Ahmet Emin was introduced to the ideas of Young Turk opposition to Sultan Abdulhamid II, to which he fully subscribed as a young student, describing it as “the first spark of revolution that was sparked in me in the 1890's in the same town and school where, a few years later, another native schoolboy started on his

2. Dönme is a contested term sometimes carrying derogatory connotations, referring to the community stemming from followers of Sabbatai Zevi, the seventeenth century Ottoman Jewish rabbi who led a messianic movement, converted to Islam when tried by the authorities, and led his followers to accept Islam. They continued to form a separate community, externally Sunni Muslim but covertly practicing their own syncretic religious observations, and by the late Ottoman period formed a powerful socio-economic elite class centered in Salonica. The question of their Sunni orthodoxy and communal identity came into question only beginning in the late Ottoman period and continued to be debated throughout the twentieth century, and Yalman and most others tended to downplay or remain silent on their affiliation to this community. See Rifat N. Bali, *A Scapegoat for All Seasons: The Dönmes or Crypto-Jews of Turkey*, (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 2008), Marc Baer, *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

3. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p.49.

4. Buğra Kalkan, *Ahmet Emin Yalman: Entelektüel Bir Biyografi* (Ankara: Liberte Yayınları, 2018) pp.24-25.

way to become the famous Atatürk.”⁵ He was impacted by the poetry of Robert College professor of Turkish language, Tevfik Fikret, whose poetry was published by Ahmet Emin’s father in the literary journal *Mutalea* as a form of indirect protest that could avoid for a time the Hamidian-era press censorship.⁶ Then, finishing his studies at the Beyoğlu German School, he pursued three separate commitments that would be critical for his later work and identity. On one hand, he entered into the *Darülfünun*, which had not long before been re-established under Abdulhamid, where he studied in the School of Law but did not in the end finish his degree.⁷ His connection with the *Darülfünun* was to continue after his return from the United States, when he took up a position as a research assistant under Ziya Gökalp.⁸ At the same time, he found work in the translation office of the Sublime Porte where he put to use his knowledge of foreign languages and became a small part of the larger field of Ottoman foreign relations. Finally, at the same time, Ahmet Emin took up work as a journalist at the *Sabah* newspaper, what he later described as “the best possible post for observing conditions in the country.”⁹ By the time the revolution unfolded in July of 1908, Ahmet Emin was immersed in the world of Ottoman journalism. As a young relatively inexperienced journalist, his early journalistic experiences were shaped by the regime of censorship characteristic of especially the later years of Hamidian rule.

When the revolution broke out in 1908 and quickly succeeded in bringing back the Ottoman constitution and parliamentary politics, Ahmet Emin’s position as journalist with Young Turk sympathies put him in the middle of the efforts of the Ottoman press to proclaim and support the formation of the constitutional regime. His later memoirs describe that “we journalists decided to take open action. . . and to electrify the public. We staged a small revolution of our own in Istanbul.”¹⁰ After a night spent working in the newspaper offices, these young journalists “held the first street demonstrations, called a meeting of all sorts of writers, and organized a press association” and informed the censors that their role had come to an end.¹¹ Ahmet Emin transitioned almost immediately to a new newspaper, and was quickly promoted to the job of chief editorial writer, managing its editorial policy by the age of 20.¹² It was in this context that Ahmet Emin found out about the Columbia University scholarship competitions, where his success prepared the way

5. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p.4.

6. *Ibid.*, 17-18.

7. Saçmalı, p.3.

8. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p. 211.

9. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte* p. 37. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p.19.

10. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p. 23.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, 24.

for his years of study in New York and his encounter with the United States that would go on to shape so much of his life.

4.2 Ahmet Emin's Student Life at Columbia

Figure 4.1 Ahmet Emin Yalman at Columbia University¹³



In *Turkey in My Time*, Ahmet Emin summarized his time in the United States by emphasizing how much it contributed to his “efforts later for closer Turkish-American relations,” and in particular how much the connections made during those

13. Source: https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmet_Emin_Yalman#/media/Dosya:Ahmet_Emin_Yalman.png

years became the foundation for these later efforts. ¹⁴ Looking back, he would go on to write that his student years at Columbia had served as his “early education in democracy,” at a time when “Turkey had been struggling for constitutional government while still politically paralyzed by her traditional psychology of imperial despotism.” ¹⁵ As Columbia professor Gottheil advised the Ottoman Society members, “the high ideals and the best principles of the republican governments. . . are the necessary subjects for them to study and carry back to their countries. The Turkish Empire has great need for well-trained men in the laws of government rather than for improvement along material lines.” ¹⁶ This approach of trying to understand the American host society and of searching for a way to adopt aspects of it for fruitful application back home without losing identity in the meantime was very much a part of Ahmet Emin’s life in the United States. It contrasted with his observations of the Turkish workers he encountered in Peabody, Massachusetts, who tried on purpose not to learn English or American customs in order not to be tempted to stay in the United States, hoping to earn money and ultimately move back to carry on their earlier lives back home in the Ottoman lands as if they had never seen America. ¹⁷ Through his classes, his participation in the wider student life at Columbia, the influence of his professors and his journalistic opportunities, Ahmet Emin participated in American student life, digesting American constitutional values and in particular how they could play out in the field of journalism. All of this he meant all along to somehow bring back and use for the further development of his homeland.

When looking back years later, Ahmet Emin put significant emphasis on the influence of the professors under which he studied, and their mentoring inside and outside of the classroom, calling them American *hızır*, or guardian angels. In his Turkish-language memoirs, Ahmet Emin described making a point of meeting as many potential professors as possible to determine whose classes he wanted to take and who might become a beneficial connection, and described them as being some of the most progressive and advanced professors in the United States at the time. ¹⁸ There was Professor of Sociology, F.H. Giddings, who Ahmet Emin credited with inspiring him “with rational views of past ages and future possibilities which later often rescued. . . from falling into the errors of shortened perspectives and emotional irrationalism” in reaction to the recurring crises occurring back home in the Ottoman context. ¹⁹ This description points to the professor’s interest in Ottoman news and in Ahmet Emin’s experience of following this news from a distance, as well as influencing the academic perspective that Ahmet Emin would use in his thesis and ultimately in his later writings. Professor Giddings wrote in the report sent to

14. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p.27.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

16. “Ottoman Society Hears Prof. Gottheil,” *Columbia Spectator*, 55:43, November 16, 1911, p. 2.

17. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p. 162.

18. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, pp.139-140.

19. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p.27.

the American and Ottoman embassies that:

Very few students have come under my observation who have interested me so much as Emin has done. His keen, accurate mind first made appeal to me, and then I noticed that he was becoming a favorite with our very best men. They discovered his substantial intellectual gifts, and found him, as I soon after did, a charming personality. In our seminar he has read papers of remarkable grasp, information and insight. I respect him in every way, for character, for mind, for influence, and I like him as much as I respect him.²⁰

In his Turkish-language memoirs, Ahmet Emin wrote of Professor Giddings that he became a true friend, constantly inviting him to his home and to times with his family.²¹ Professor J.M. Shotwell of history passed on “two invaluable keys to the gates of knowledge- a purely scientific approach to religion and a vivid sense of economic factors in history- both of which enabled me later to grasp certain basic problems of my country, where religious authority and superstition have stubbornly resisted change.”²² While he would have opportunity to see firsthand the more devout sectors of American university life in the 1910s, an academic approach to looking at religion would have on one hand aligned with significant portions of Young Turk worldview, while on the other hand providing a different flavor to the kinds of secular thought prevalent in the more influential European contexts most Young Turks were engaged with. From history professor Charles Beard, Ahmet Emin took a class on the history of the American Constitution, as well as a class from the Columbia Teacher’s College.²³ He managed to receive one-on-one lessons in social anthropology from Professor Livingston Farrand due to that class not having been advertised in the regular manner.²⁴ These Columbia professors were clearly impressed by Ahmet Emin, and invested in him in ways that went beyond typical professor-student relationships, particularly significant given his cross-cultural international student situation.

Most significant of all was the professor Ahmet Emin would call his “chief hızır,” Talcott Williams, dean of the newly established Pulitzer School of Journalism, who was born and raised in the Ottoman Empire.²⁵ Professor Williams seems to have invested in Ahmet Emin to a remarkable degree, introducing him to the world of American journalism beyond the university context and thus shaping both his

20. CUCF, “Letter from Nicholas Butler to American Embassy in Constantinople,” December 2, 1913.

21. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p.140.

22. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p.27.

23. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p.139.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p.27.

journalistic career and his wider worldview significantly:

My American teacher, Professor Williams, by his personal example of devotion and tolerance in private and public life, produced in me a life-long distaste for all abuses of religion which engender discrimination, intolerance and hatred.. and his ideals of clean, independent, fearless journalism have carried me through many conflicts with authorities in my own career. ²⁶

Under Professor Williams' leadership, the Pulitzer School of Journalism was opened on September 30, 1912 at Columbia to much fanfare about the cutting-edge education that would transform American journalism. It is worth looking more closely at the Spectator's reporting of the opening:

A capacity for clear and lucid writing, knowledge of the way in which news is obtained by the reporter and in which it is prepared and edited for the newspaper and lastly but most important of all consciousness of the dignity and importance of his calling, of the fashion in which it takes hold of all the ways and works of men, goes into every home and touches every task from the highest to the lowest and constitutes the great medium by which civilized communities awake to consciousness as an organized whole. ²⁷

The article went on to describe the need for journalism to be done with responsibility to serving the state and society, going so far as to say that this new program would contribute to "the equipment and armament by which liberty is protected, law rendered secure and a great nation aided in its march towards a greater future than its past." ²⁸ To celebrate the opening, Professor Williams organized a series of lectures from prominent American journalists, tying the new school from the start to practical expertise from the professional world. ²⁹ Ahmet Emin found out about the new journalism school from a brochure found while selecting courses for the following semester. ³⁰ Such idealistic vision for the role of the press in protecting and strengthening constitutional government fit exactly into his earlier passions seen during the 1908 revolution and then cooled down in the complicated political environment of post-revolution Ottoman constitutional politics.

The idea that journalism could be something studied at a high level professional

26. Ibid., p. 28.

27. T. M. Curry Jr., *Columbia Spectator*, 56:5, September 30, p. 4.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p.180.

school in an academic setting changed his mind about future career plans and drove him to go meet Professor Williams to ask special permission to take classes from the school alongside his other studies. ³¹ According to the later memoirs, Professor Williams' response was to excitedly tell Ahmet Emin about his upbringing in Mardin, the debt he felt towards the Ottoman Empire as the land of his birth and youth, and his delight in being able to pay back the debt by helping train Ahmet Emin to serve his homeland through enlightened journalism. ³² Ahmet Emin took classes in newspaper headlines and the history of journalism from Professor Williams, and like Professor Gottheil, Professor Williams had him in his home regularly to the point of Ahmet Emin calling it his American home, introducing him to many important figures in society and the world of journalism. ³³ Though Ahmet Emin was not primarily a student of the journalism school, Professor Williams worked with him on his doctoral thesis, giving feedback and helping with the English editing. ³⁴ During summer break, Professor Williams organized for Ahmet Emin to take his place at the annual congress of the American National Editorial Association, helping him visit prominent newspapers along the way with short term work opportunities and introducing him to journalists and editors. ³⁵ He spent two weeks working for the Chicago Inter Ocean newspaper, seeing different departments in the organization and joining editorial meetings, and continued in a similar way until he reached the congress in Colorado Springs. ³⁶ An anecdote from his Turkish-language memoirs details conversations with Ottoman migrants in the United States about both Istanbul and American newspapers and their coverage of Ottoman politics, to which it seems his American experiences were leading him to first play with the idea that a given newspaper might not necessarily need to support only one political party. ³⁷ At the congress itself, Ahmet Emin read Professor Williams's speech and shared about the Balkan Wars, and then through connections made at the congress made his way through small-town America visiting newspapers and continuing to discover American culture and society beyond the context of New York and Columbia University. ³⁸

Behind Professor Williams' mentoring and the practical academic and journalistic arenas was a worldview that Ahmet Emin especially valued and tried to bring back to his home context. The anecdote that he used in his later memoirs to best express

31. *Ibid.*, 181.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

34. *Ibid.* 183.

35. *Ibid.* 184-185.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*, 186.

38. *Ibid.*, 188-189.

this was that of Professor Williams' invitation for him to attend what was essentially a student missionary conference where fiery speakers rallied support for the spiritual conquest of the Muslim world. ³⁹ Obviously out of place at such a conference, Ahmet Emin processed his experiences of it with Professor Williams, who explained that he wanted Ahmet Emin to see and understand different sectors of society both to better comprehend the United States and to be able to use such a perspective of observation and reflection in his journalistic career. His distaste for the ways in which missionary work, political power and popular social movements could come together did not become a generalized critique of the United States, but served to give him a more nuanced sense of society both abroad and in the Ottoman Empire, and to have a better sense of the kind of liberal secular order he would go on to advocate through his life back home. ⁴⁰

4.3 Ahmet Emin's Doctoral Thesis and Contribution to the American Academy

The American side of the partnership regarding Ottoman students at Columbia assumed that they were the senior experienced partner who would both mentor directly the students as well as in the larger sense the Ottomans as a whole in constitutionalism and progress, and the Ottoman perspective accepted their need for a degree of help in training up leaders in their respective fields to contribute to the new remaking of their empire post-1908. Tutelage under European academic advice or supervision had already been going on in some form for more than a century. At the same time, as the nineteenth century wore on, Ottoman resentment toward European sense of superiority also grew, as did efforts to demonstrate the rightful place of the Ottomans among so-called civilized nations. As Emrah Şahin addressed in his article "Sultan's America: Lessons from Ottoman Encounters with the United States," much of the literature has tended to "ignore reciprocity and has largely ignored evidence of Turkish agency." ⁴¹ As we have already seen, the rhetoric of Americans training up and helping Ottomans at Columbia University was balanced with Ottoman attempts to shape American public opinion, correcting misconceptions and attempting to show a more positive face to sceptical or unaware Americans. In Ahmet Emin we see both of these threads play out- on one hand, he openly acknowledged the impact of American mentoring during his time at Columbia

39. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p.202.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

41. Emrah Şahin, "Sultan's America: Lessons from Ottoman Encounters with the United States," *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*, 39 (2014), p. 59.

throughout his life, and on the other, as press secretary for the Ottoman Society, he worked hard along with the association as a whole to show the Ottomans' good side. However, Ahmet Emin's student life at Columbia did not remain within the relatively narrow framework set up by these perspectives. His academic efforts went beyond merely fulfilling the requirements of a doctoral program, and ended up contributing in his own right to the American academic world through his doctoral thesis.

Ahmet Emin's PhD thesis, entitled *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press*, was submitted in February of 1914, not long before the start of the Great War in July and the subsequent Ottoman entry into the war in November of the same year. It was the culmination of his studies in the fields of history, journalism, sociology and political science, along with his first-hand experiences as a young journalist in the momentous transformations surrounding the 1908 revolution. The doctoral thesis is truly an interdisciplinary work - on one hand Ahmet Emin draws on both the first significant historians of the Ottoman Empire in the newly emerging academic discipline in the West and key Ottoman historians of the late nineteenth century to write a history of the role of the press in Ottoman modernization, as well as making use of numerous Ottoman journals and newspapers as primary sources. On the other hand, it includes survey-based field work done in Istanbul according to the latest sociological methodologies being developed at Columbia at the time, and attempts to interpret its own contemporary moment with commentary on the empire's fundamental weaknesses and potential for future progress and on the nature and role of the Ottoman press as a key part of this progress. Academically, it is a fusion of American historical sociology with the worldview and academic background of an Istanbul-educated post-1908 Young Turk, and should be taken more seriously than it has been as part of the development of Turkish historiography and the historiography of the late Ottoman Empire. Ahmet Emin built his thesis both upon prominent Western Ottomanists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries such as Hammer-Purgstall's work from the 1830s and Lybyer's work published as recently as 1913, and also upon Ottoman writings such as that of Cevdet Pasha and of Ebbouzzia Tevfik. It is thus a work of synthesis drawing from both historical traditions and contributing to the capacity of the slowly emerging academic discipline to bridge the two in an era before the scholarly interactions of the early Republican period.

Meanwhile, the thesis was written with an awareness of American public opinion of the Ottoman Empire in the background, both in terms of its history and in terms of the current moment. With it, Ahmet Emin contributed to and subtly challenged American academic perspective on the Ottomans, bringing the already discussed

public relations campaign into the Columbia academic context so tied to the halls of power and influence in the United States. From the brief preface of the doctoral thesis, it is already clear that Ahmet Emin was thinking about a Western audience. Of course, a thesis submitted to Columbia University by an international student would inevitably be read at least by a few professors there – however not all theses written by international students concern subject matter that they might consciously attempt to affect the views of their hosts. The preface begins by stating that “much has been written in western languages on decaying Turkey, on Turkey as a spoil to be divided among foreign powers, but very little on Turkey developing and striving to develop.”⁴² American public opinion on the fate of the Ottoman Empire, or at least that of Ahmet Emin’s academic environment at Columbia, was most certainly on his mind as he wrote the thesis. At one point he directly addresses those “wishing for their own interests only a weak and decaying Turkey.”⁴³ While admitting to both past and present weaknesses of the empire and generally following the logic of what would become known as decline paradigm thinking, the thesis continually tries to carve out space to see the empire through a positive lens- one of hope, progress and internal capacity for renewal.

Ahmet Emin referred to Lord Palmerston saying in 1856 that “in the last thirty years Turkey has made greater progress than any nation of Europe,” and to mid-nineteenth century historian of the Ottoman Empire Ubicini writing, “If we compare the state of things in Turkey thirty years ago with what is at the present day, we shall be struck with the wonderful change, and this change, this progress. . . has it not been brought about in a great measure by the influence of the press?”⁴⁴ Ahmet Emin’s telling of recent Ottoman history is not one of passive Ottomans enamored with the West or bullied into submission, but of consistent active agency of Ottomans to pursue the ‘betterment’ of their society, to use one of his oft-repeated words. In the midst of all of the crises of the second constitutional period, Ahmet Emin describes major social shifts in relation to women’s education, a less divisive public discourse on religion in the empire, and new energy stemming from the beginnings of Turkish nationalism.⁴⁵ His Western academic audience accustomed to thinking only in terms of Ottoman decline are confronted with a view of the empire full of potential despite the very real obstacles and struggles. Standard Euro-American ideas of Ottoman stagnation are challenged head-on: “for those who take delight in saying that things in Turkey never change, who are only able to see the surface

42. Ahmed Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press* (New York: Columbia University, 1914), p.5.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 32.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111

and to think in terms of conventional prejudices, it will not be easy to account for, and to understand, the great and continued changes in Turkey, as indexed and measured in these pages by the development of the press.”⁴⁶ Thus the new hopeful perspective of Columbia professors describing their trust in the commitment of the new constitutional regime to progress was grounded by Ahmet Emin into an academic framework, ensuring that the protagonists of the story were Ottomans such as himself and his friends at Columbia, actively forging a path ahead while gladly incorporating elements learned from their American friends along the way.

The doctoral thesis made use of Ahmet Emin’s own journalistic background to explore the history of the press in the Ottoman Empire, it attempted to accomplish a goal much bigger than merely a history of the press. The thesis uses the theme of the press to analyze a far more all-encompassing topic, namely Ottoman modernization and progress. His work does not merely trace the parallel development of Ottoman modernization and press history, but interprets each of them in reference to the other, seeing them as the inherently intertwined and as the key to understand the recent history and current moment of his homeland. Ahmet Emin saw the press as the driving force of late Ottoman society, both the vehicle for progress and development and a potentially destabilizing force hindering that very progress. While his main claim is that the press was the most central agent of late Ottoman political and social change and development, a central conclusion of his thesis is the ambivalence of the press as both champion and opponent of progress. His own political views are caught in the middle of these contradictory tendencies, which the thesis ultimately does not resolve, revealing the paradox and struggle of late Ottoman intellectuals in their relationship with the state, the idea of progress, and the role of the press. The doctoral thesis attempts to give a hopeful vision for the future of the empire in the brief period between the Balkan Wars and the subsequent outbreak of the Great War and the ongoing conflict ultimately ending with the formation of the Turkish Republic. Yet this hopeful vision is weighed down by the same unanswered questions of the role of the press in the political development of the empire. The thesis, completed less than six years after the 1908 revolution, was written with full awareness of how fragile the Ottoman constitutional regime was. The initial idealism and excitement had given way to waves of ongoing problems both internal and external, and in this difficult context “a liberal constitution could hardly play the part of a panacea and transform this picture immediately into one of harmony and progress, as the Turkish idealist hoped.”⁴⁷

Ahmet Emin’s thesis consciously puts the press at the center of the story of Ottoman

46. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

political and social development, bringing the innovation of the new academic discipline of journalism at Columbia into creative contact with the early historiography of the Ottoman Empire. It is not just that as a journalist himself he focused on his own area of expertise, although the preface refers to his personal connection to the field of journalism as a major foundation of his work. The preface boldly argues that the press “has always been the leading factor in the Modern Turkish movement.”⁴⁸ He went on to write that the Turkish press “did the most to prepare the ground for the present situation in Turkey.”⁴⁹ His view of the press as being at the heart of the recent Ottoman past was quite common among late Ottoman intellectuals, most of whom like Ahmet Emin either spent significant time working as journalists and editors or at least publishing much of their writing in the prolific journals and newspapers of the period. M. Hakan Yavuz writes that “both Ziya Gökalp and Benedict Anderson took the view that newspapers created public opinion and national consciousness, using a common language and popular idioms to express ideas that the authorities wished to see adopted by the masses.”⁵⁰ To those that might argue that the importance of the press is surely exaggerated in a context with such low literacy rates as found in the late Ottoman Empire, Ahmet Emin countered:

It must be remembered, however, that a circulation of a few thousands had in that period, when the old Turkish social life had not quite begun to disintegrate, a greater importance than a much larger circulation today. A single copy could reach a great many more people through the medium of the coffee house and through the evening gatherings of neighbours in the different houses of the neighbourhood.⁵¹

The coffee house and neighbourhood relations are thus depicted as a traditional cultural characteristic that helped the press achieve its influence in the late Ottoman context where low literacy rates might have otherwise significantly limited its impact. Ahmet Emin’s analysis of the origins of Ottoman journalism foreshadows recent work on coffeehouses and pamphlet communication by historians such as Aslihan Gürbüznel and Nil Shafir, tracing the antecedents of nineteenth century developments.⁵²

After exploring the earliest efforts to set up printing presses and newspapers, including the work of foreigners living in the empire, Ahmet Emin’s thesis explores

48. *Ibid.*, p5.

49. *Ibid.*, p.16.

50. M. Hakan Yavuz, “Nationalism and Islam: Yusuf Akçura and Üç Tarz-I Siyaset,” *Journal of Islamic Studies*. 4:2 (1993) p. 181, and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

51. Ahmed Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey*, pp.40, 47.

52. See Aslihan Gürbüznel, *Taming the Messiah: The Formation of an Ottoman Political Public Sphere, 1600-1700* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2023), and Nir Shafir, *The Order and Disorder of Communication: Pamphlets and Polemics in the Seventeenth Century Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2024).

the newspaper founded by Sultan Mahmud II in 1831, the *Takvim-i Vekayi* as the real beginning of the Turkish press. He argued that this newspaper was founded to secure the support and cooperation of the empire's population toward his efforts to modernize the empire, praising the sultan for his "single-handed struggle against the existing abuses and prejudices" and succeeding in "building a modern structure on the old ground."⁵³ He acknowledged that the purpose of the newspaper was to inform the Ottoman population and to shape their interpretation of events, especially to prevent criticism stemming from potential misunderstanding.⁵⁴ Özgür TÜresay argues that the *Takvim-i Vekayi* helped shape a particular idea of the public in the 1830s tied to the state and its desire to shape the opinions of its subjects, but that in the 1860s this same notion of public would be turned by Young Ottomans such as Namik Kemal as the space in which to criticize the government and push for a different kind of reform agenda.⁵⁵ As would become clear in Ahmet Emin's analysis of the second constitutional period, this irony would be part of the contradictory discourse around the press and politics used by Ahmet Emin. Was the press meant to persuade the public of inherently positive goals of progress and development of the state that they might not otherwise see in the same light? Or was the goal to criticize the overbearing control of the state over its reform agenda? Is progress the state goal or the idea of open public debate outside of state control?

Ahmet Emin continued his history of the role of the press in Ottoman modernization with the rise of independent newspapers in the years after the Crimean War. He wrote that "there was a new movement afoot, a spirit of dissent and revolt, which needed expression," led by "a new type of young men, who were sincere but overzealous patriots, nationalists, instead of religious fanatics. They wanted to save Turkey from decay by awakening a new national consciousness and ending foreign interventions and intrigues."⁵⁶ These Young Ottomans such as Şinasi, Namik Kemal and Ali Suavi established newspapers such as the *Tercüman-ı Ahval*, the *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, the *Müşbir* and *Hürriyet*, helping to create a new form of public sphere through open discussion of social issues and initial attempts at political analysis.⁵⁷ Ahmet Emin described their goal as "to adopt the most progressive system of government, and the most advanced European laws" and that it had the advantage of uniting young idealists under a common hope for parliamentary government.⁵⁸ However, his depictions of these early Ottoman journalists were thus mixed- on one hand they were responsible for "awaking the people and creating a new national consciousness," and on the other hand their style of journalism was politically "very

53. Ahmed Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey*, p.27.

54. *Ibid.*, p.30.

55. Özgür TÜresay, "The Political Language of *Takvim-i Vekayi*: The Discourse and Temporality of Ottoman 'Reform' (1831-1834)," *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 31 (2020) p. 12.

56. Ahmed Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey*, p.33.

57. *Ibid.*, pp.34-41.

58. *Ibid.*, p.33.

destructive.”⁵⁹ While Ahmet Emin saw Sultan Abdulaziz as capricious, he defended Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha, arguing that they were “able statesmen with political experience and the best of intentions for the welfare of the country” and that the intense criticism of the Young Ottomans in the emerging press interfered with the good work of the government of the time.⁶⁰ He summarizes this problem thus:

As in the later periods of the Turkish reform movement, radical agitation was more attractive for some of the idealists and patriots than constructive work within the field of practical possibilities. It is remarkable that the most sweeping reforms in public instruction were realized during the time when the government was free from the immediate attacks of Young Turkish papers.⁶¹

As in the later periods of the Turkish reform movement, radical agitation was more attractive for some of the idealists and patriots than constructive work within the field of practical possibilities. It is remarkable that the most sweeping reforms in public instruction were realized during the time when the government was free from the immediate attacks of Young Turkish papers. While Ahmet Emin justified the need for the government measures to prevent disruption from opposition journalists through sending them into exile, he also critically described these very same government measures: “This practice of promulgating a liberal law, and suspending it through extraordinary measures became after that time the usual procedure in Turkey.”⁶² On one hand Ahmet Emin praises the Young Ottoman journalists for accomplishing national awakening and on the other hand criticizes their methods of political opposition through the press. Meanwhile he both justifies government repression of this kind of journalistic agitation and at the same time finds in it the heart of what was wrong with the empire ever since, namely excessive control and stifling opposition. At the same time, Ahmet Emin pointed to a major social shift underlying the politics stemming from the willingness of the press to admit Ottoman weaknesses and argue for the need to adopt change: “The change was a tremendous one. Owing mainly to the press, in the last instance, the sleeping, self-satisfied medieval community had become within two or three decades a self-conscious, self-critical and potentially progressive one.”⁶³

Ahmet Emin’s analysis of the early Hamidian period continues the fascinating contradictions seen earlier. Though describing Abdulhamid as an evil genius, he again criticized the press:

59. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

61. *Ibid.*

62. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

The press felt itself above him and gave over-emphasis to this sense of superiority. The *Vakit* (Time) stated on every occasion that the real sovereignty rested with the people and that they could depose their Sultan whenever they chose to do so. The *İstikbal* (Future) reminded the people again and again that the constitution was not a gift of the sovereign but was obtained by a group of patriots after a hard struggle.

64

He wrote of the press that it had “given the readers a new sort of national enthusiasm, it had taught them that they had rights which arbitrary sovereigns had withheld from them, and that a democratic constitution based upon the idea of the rights of all Ottomans without distinction of race and creed would immediately cure and reform everything. . . the leading journalist Zia Bey was almost worshiped by the whole capital.”⁶⁵ Ahmet Emin saw in Abdulhamid’s response to this situation a reaction to an overly-successful and overly self-confident press, and went on to describe the shutting down of this brief period of press freedoms and the years of Hamidian censorship, describing it as “an end of an open struggle for betterment.”⁶⁶ He added that Hamidian repression also had a positive side-effect in that the removal of political commentary from the press made room for the flourishing of literary and scientific writings in the press.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, similarly to the early Young Ottomans’ press activities abroad, Hamidian repression encouraged an ever-growing Ottoman press beyond the Sultan’s control, where late Ottoman political thought and journalism could continue to develop freely.⁶⁸

Finally, the thesis addresses the recent 1908 revolution and the second constitutional period. About the revolution itself, so recently the subject of academic interest at Columbia, he wrote: “with a single stroke it had done away with all those imposed restrictions against development and betterment,” and that people “saw in it, not the opening of opportunities for change and betterment, but betterment itself.”⁶⁹ The degree of control the CUP would come to exercise he treats as the natural desire of the people who “developed a Committee-mindedness and a Committee faith, which did not admit opposition and was in most instances incapable of critical consideration.”⁷⁰ Meanwhile the press freedoms that resulted from the 1908 revolution, of which Ahmet Emin himself had taken part in, he condemned as excessive desire for freedom. He wrote that though the new parliament passed a new liberal press law, the press demanded even more liberty and began to divide along partisan lines not before seen in the Ottoman press. In particular, pro- and anti-CUP papers emerged with very little in between, and all manner of dissatisfaction found aggres-

64. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

65. *Ibid.*

66. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-65.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-74.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

70. *Ibid.*

sive voice in this heady atmosphere that resembled the opening up of press freedoms after the dethronement of Abdulaziz.⁷¹ Then in the aftermath of the 1909 crisis and the dethronement of Abdulhamid, constitutional rights were again suspended to deal with the threats, and Ahmet Emin wrote that this situation of suspended freedoms continued ever since.⁷² The press was held responsible for the 1909 crisis, the majority of opposition papers were taken down and their staff exiled, and again opposition journalism began to flourish abroad just like it had before. He wrote:

The Counter-Revolution of April 13, 1909, had confirmed the idea of the Committee leaders that they, as the originators of the Revolution of 1908, had to watch over the destinies of the empire and save it from all destructive tendencies. To be able to play such a role, power and influence were considered necessary. The methods followed by the dethroned Sultan to gain power were still fresh in the minds as tempting examples. Unconsciously the Committee leaders began to follow them more and more closely, but with the great difference that the Young Turks were sincere and to a great extent disinterested and self-sacrificing patriots who were, even in their gravest blunders and mistakes, influenced more by their over-zealous patriotism than by a conscious lust of power. . . . Worst of all a blind and aggressive Turkish imperialism became the dominating motive of the Committee's policy.⁷³

Writing from a distance at Columbia, Ahmet Emin could use his thesis to wrestle with his own relationship to the CUP and the struggles of the Ottoman constitutional regime. While the newly opened Pulitzer School of Journalism proclaimed the role of the press in defending the constitutional state, the Ottoman experience was one of either excessive and ultimately destructive press freedoms or of the clamping down of press freedoms in the name of stability needed to ensure progress. Despite this ambivalent analysis, the thesis concludes with hope for the immediate future, highlighting the progress of the Ottoman press since the 1860s in spite all the challenges.⁷⁴ He argued that the primary need of the empire in early 1914 was stability in order for the fruits of progress to solidify after repeated crises, and he called for the press to “forfeit some of its idealism, and some of its virtues” in order to serve the moment.⁷⁵ He himself firmly believed both in the need for strong government to work for progress, and for a free and thriving press as the key agent in achieving this social and political development. However, the tendency of press freedoms at least in his observing of the Ottoman case tended toward excess both in anti-government opposition and in subsequent repression of the press. As the CUP used

71. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

the crisis of the Balkan Wars to take a more complete control of the state, though press freedoms diminished significantly, elements of progress could be seen to be growing according to Ahmet Emin, a contradiction that can be seen for instance in his much later efforts to defend the Democrat Party even while they were descending into authoritarianism and while he himself was beginning to be critical.⁷⁶ Ahmet Emin described a growing self-reflectiveness in society that made the people more open to change, more open to sacrificial work for the good of the empire, and more fruitful in various aspects of science and community organizing.⁷⁷

From the early descriptions of the reforms of Mahmud II through to that of the emergence of the CUP dictatorship of 1913, Ahmet Emin was committed to a politics of progress and the need for a strong government to work toward this goal even at the risk of stifling the press when it unnecessarily agitated against the government. As a journalist himself, he both glorifies the profession and critiques it throughout the work, showing that one of the fruits of his American experiences was the capacity to reflect from a distance on the state of journalism in the Ottoman Empire. As Palmira Brummett argues, the press generally “saw itself as a primary agent of that working out process,” and Ahmet Emin most certainly saw the late Ottoman Empire through that lens.⁷⁸ The boundaries of excessive opposition and of excessive repression are never clearly stated, and his analysis alternates between them far too often to say for certain. The ambiguities at the heart of Ahmet Emin’s doctoral thesis regarding the place of the press in reformist politics would not easily be solved in the following years – not during the Great War or its confusing aftermath, and not in the early Turkish Republic, where he would continue to get himself into trouble for his political commentary in the Turkish press.

In summary, Ahmet Emin’s thesis is the outworking of the Ottoman-American constitutional friendship in the academic world. It brings together the two academic traditions, both in outlook and in source material, synthesizing them in a manner that hoped to contribute and to attempt to shape both Ottoman progress and American academic engagement with the Ottoman Empire. Seeing Columbia University and similar prominent American institutions not just as useful for developing Ottoman youth but as critical for American involvement in the Ottoman Empire, the thesis sought to persuade – in particular, to persuade Americans of Ottoman capacity to actually progress and of the rich potential for American support of this journey as a constitutional ‘older brother’. With its history of constitutionalism and of relative press freedom, Ahmet Emin wanted for the Ottomans to be able to learn

76. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, pp. 273-277.

77. *Ibid.*, pp.110-111.

78. Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 328.

from America's example without forfeiting agency as a nation able to contribute in its own right. As his later writings continued to emphasize, his vision was for a thriving Ottoman state and society to emerge from the 'sick man of Europe', where assistance from a well-meaning friend like the United States could come without being at the expense of Ottoman pride.

4.4 Summary

When Ahmet Emin prepared to leave the United States in the Spring of 1914, he received among the special moments of parting with his friends and professors a fifteen-page letter from his chief hızır Professor Williams. As he described in his Turkish-language memoirs, Professor Williams charged him with the duty to spend his life paying back the debt owed to his homeland that had chosen and sent him to Columbia. Professor Williams warned Ahmet Emin of the challenges ahead, imploring him to overcome every obstacle for the sake of the wellbeing of the Ottoman Empire and its people and emotionally declaring that even after his own death he would continue to pay back his own personal debt to the Ottoman lands through Ahmet Emin's lifetime of fruitful service.⁷⁹ The memoirs emphasize that Ahmet Emin's own goals upon returning to the Ottoman Empire were to bring back all that he had learned and experienced in his time in the United States and to use it for the wellbeing of his embattled homeland, fulfilling the wishes of his professors in their mentoring, of the Ottoman government in its selection of him to go study, and of the American diplomats and university administrators that wanted to support the Ottoman constitutional regime.⁸⁰

While the other Ottoman students at Columbia University were most certainly part of the experiment in intentional international friendship and cooperation between the Ottoman Empire and the United States, Ahmet Emin in particular played an incredibly significant role in this relationship already during his time at Columbia. The relationships he forged with Columbia professors went well beyond the usual mentor-mentee relationship. While not all professors shared the same perspective, quite a few went to great lengths to support him both in his studies and in his overall development, introducing him to aspects of American society that one would never see remaining only on campus and interacting with other international students. As he would go on to describe in his later memoirs, these professors represented a side

79. Yalman, *Yakın Tarihte*, p. 246.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

of the United States that was progressive, supportive, tolerant and wanting to serve, even while he also had up-close experience of the opposite as well. ⁸¹ Even if one leaves room for a degree of exaggeration and self-promotion as is common in such memoirs, it is clear that an influential group of professors disposed to support the Ottoman constitutional regime invested in Ahmet Emin as a concrete support to its progress. Ahmet Emin himself contributed to this process with his unusual level of initiative, adaptability and relationality that drew the professors and others to him. Rather than causing him to reject one in favour of the other, his American experiences really seem to have been put to use in a way that would be integrated with Young Turk worldview and support for the Ottoman constitutional regime. The journalism education he received through the Pullitzer School of Journalism and his later work and travel experiences under Professor Williams' guidance transformed his outlook on journalism, enabling him to reflect critically on the Ottoman press and his own emerging career as a journalist. His doctoral thesis was the culmination of this integration, synthesizing American and Ottoman academic perspectives and advocating for a sympathetic view of Ottoman constitutional progress that had been already the root of his being at Columbia in the first place. Ahmet Emin's Columbia student experience truly was both the product of and a major contributor to the early development of Ottoman-American constitutional friendship.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated that one of the major transformations brought about by the 1908 Young Turk Revolution was that of the Ottoman-American relationship, a transformation that has until now received little attention in the historiography of the Ottoman Second Constitutional Period or of Ottoman-American diplomatic relations. In line with the already considerable American investment in education in the Ottoman Empire in the decades leading up to the revolution, one of the first and most significant arenas for this warming up of relations between the United States and the Ottoman Empire was in the field of education. Coinciding factors ranging from Ottoman government discussions on the need for trained personnel to Columbia University's desire to play a leading role in the spread of American global influence via education came together through the help of middlemen such as ambassadors and professors, culminating in the 'experiment' of sending five Ottoman students to pursue graduate studies in Columbia. These students became key diplomatic agents working to strengthen American-Ottoman relations, to reshape American public opinion on the Ottomans, and to leverage their American connections for the good of the empire in its last years and then for the good of the new Turkish Republic after 1923. Among them, the most prominent on many fronts was Ahmet Emin, with his active role in the Columbia Ottoman Society and his academic work on the role of the press in Ottoman progress and development. His own memoirs describe the many years it took for his dreams of deeper American-Ottoman friendship and cooperation to become more fully realized in the 1950s with the Democrat Party's well-known close relationship to the United States. Nevertheless, the formative years both of his own relationship with the United States and of the beginnings of deeper trust between the two states and respective societies was rooted in the years immediately following the 1908 revolution, when constitutional politics and ideas of progressive education combined to form an early experiment in cooperation.

The years following Ahmet Emin's return to the Ottoman Empire in 1914 included much that would test the tentative Ottoman-American rapprochement. Though the United States remained neutral as the Ottomans chose to join the Great War on the

side of Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1914, their neutral status did not guarantee smooth relations. American Ambassador Morgenthau would play a major role in criticizing CUP policy towards the Ottoman Armenians, a topic which also made his alma mater Columbia begin to sour in its view of the Ottoman Empire and its CUP government.¹ When the United States finally did enter the war on the side of the Triple Entente in 1917, they chose not to declare war on the Ottomans largely in order to protect their extensive missionary infrastructure of schools, hospitals and churches.² Meanwhile, the Ottomans broke off diplomatic relations with the United States, occupying the Scorpion warship docked at Istanbul and making life for Americans in Ottoman territory considerably harder, but not otherwise harming American life or property. Unofficial relations were tense but managed to continue to a degree.³

As for the educational experiment at Columbia, the year 1914 saw the experiment come to a natural pause, and then eventually dissolve in the context of war. Already in June of 1914, Columbia University wrote to Ambassador Morgenthau that the first of the five students embarked for Istanbul, and that the student was asked to visit the embassy to personally pass on the greetings of the university.⁴ Then in August, in the context of the outbreak of the Great War, Columbia again passed on the record of the five Ottoman students to the American Embassy in Istanbul in the hope that their success would serve to help secure continued Ottoman presence at the university.⁵ The agreement between Columbia University and the Ottoman and American governments to have three Ottoman students at Columbia in a given year exempt from needing to pay tuition fees seems to have remained intact a few years into the start of the war, though it was not followed upon.⁶ Some years later, through the organizing of Halide Edip (Adivar) and Charles Crane, a new group of students was selected to be sent to the United States to study, prominent among them Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel who studied at Columbia from 1919-1922. The couple's path in many ways mirrored that of Ahmet Emin- prominent politically active Turkish journalists whose oppositional politics and journalism got them into trouble with the Turkish state, and with formative experiences as graduate students at Columbia bookending the Great War. Columbia University would go on to continue its quest to support progress in the Ottoman (and then Turkish) state,

1. "The Good Old Blue and White," *Columbia Spectator*, 63:18, March 24, 1919, p. 2.

2. Ahmad, "Young Turk Relations with the United States," p. 92.

3. *Ibid.*

4. CUCF, "Letter from Nicholas Butler's Office to Henry Morgenthau," June 5, 1914.

5. CUCF, "Letter from Nicholas Butler's Office to Ottoman Consulate in New York," August 18, 1914.

6. "No Tuition Fees for Selected Foreigners," *Columbia Spectator*, 60:31, November 1, 1916, p. 7.

and went on in the republican era to go much deeper in its legacy both of hosting Turkish students and of engaging in Turkish reforms in education and beyond. As the Turkish-American relationship grew stronger in the mid-twentieth century, one of the most significant aspects was educational partnership—significant American influence in Turkish intellectual development through investment in universities in Turkey.⁷

Ahmet Emin himself returned to Istanbul and continued both his academic and journalistic passions, working under Ziya Gökalp in teaching philosophy at the Darülfünun while working for the CUP's Tanin newspaper through which he spent quite some time in Germany covering the war. During the war years he maintained close friendships with Americans in Istanbul.⁸ As the war came to a close, another significant Columbia University graduate who had been much talked about on campus while Ahmet Emin was at Columbia became the subject of much attention among post-war Ottoman intellectuals. President Woodrow Wilson's inclusion of an article in his famous fourteen points on Turkish sovereignty gave hopes to many that the United States would somehow help preserve the integrity of the remaining Ottoman lands in the face of plans by the victorious powers to carve it up. Ahmet Emin joined the Wilsonian League along with Halide Edib (Adivar) to push for American support for the Ottomans and eventually to directly ask the United States to establish a mandate over the remaining parts of the empire.⁹ While the Turkish nationalist movement increasingly being led by Mustafa Kemal came to reject the mandate idea altogether and ultimately succeeded in establishing the new Turkish Republic, many of the intellectuals associated with the fledgling nationalist movement initially felt that only the involvement of a safe partner such as the United States would preserve what remained of the Ottoman state. As the King-Crane and Harbord Commissions explored the conditions on the ground in the remaining Ottoman lands, both Turkish nationalists and their opponents tried to win over American support.¹⁰ However unpopular this mandate idea was to the Turkish public later in the twentieth century, its protagonists such as Ahmet Emin and Halide Edib always insisted that their idea was not for the kind of mandate that ended up established in large parts of the formerly Ottoman Middle East under British and French occupation,

7. Paul Magnarella, "Turkish-American Intellectual Exchange and Community Research in Turkey (1930-1980)," *Turkish Studies Association Journal*, 27:1-2 (2003), Ali Erken, *America and the Making of Modern Turkey: Science, Culture and Political Alliances*, (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2018).

8. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p. 55.

9. Şuhnaz Yılmaz, pp. 42-44.

10. Şuhnaz Yılmaz, *1800-1952: Between the Stars, Stripes and the Crescent*, (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 41-49, Seçil Karal Akgün, "The General Harbord Commission and the American Mandate Question," In *Studies in Atatürk's Turkey: The American Dimension*, Ed. George S. Harris and Nur Bilge Criss, (Leiden: Brill, 2009) pp. 55-82.

but rather a trust in American good-will towards the rejuvenation of their homeland. This trust in the United States by Ahmet Emin and others, to the degree of calling America ‘informal ally,’ was at least to some degree rooted in the kinds of closer relations that sprung up through American support of the constitutional regime and the atmosphere of mutually beneficial possibility that allowed experiments like the sending of students to emerge during those years.¹¹ Factors such as the ongoing difficulties and ambiguities of the early Turkish Republic’s international relations and the ongoing influence of the American isolationism kept the Turkish-American relationship from deepening significantly in the inter-war period, and the new Turkish state by no means simply inherited the international relations legacy of the Ottoman one.

Ahmet Emin would go on playing ambivalent roles between supporting the state in its mandate to achieve progress and development and resisting the tendency of the state to stifle open discussion in the press over the road forward. He would end up repeatedly in and out of major journalistic roles as the state either shut down a newspaper or forbade him from practicing journalism. In the transition to multi-party democracy after the Second World War, he supported the Democrat Party of Adnan Menderes hoping they would advocate for a more open and democratic public forum only to watch them turn toward the same overbearing control of their predecessors. It was just in these complicated times when his support for the Democrat Party began to show signs of weakening in reaction to their increasing dictatorial tendencies that Ahmet Emin Yalman would use his memoirs *Turkey in My Time* to attempt to justify his pro-American stance and the Democrat Party that pursued a closer relationship with the United States. In a context of public debate surrounding the Democrat Party, the Turkish-American relationship and Ahmet Emin Yalman’s relationship to both, he lashed out at those who would try to sabotage this important international relationship and the NATO membership that went along with it.¹² With pride, Yalman wrote:

in contrast to my student recollections of American ignorance and prejudice concerning Turkey and my own embarrassment from them, I took extraordinary pleasure in the cordial demonstrations of friendship for Turkey and appreciation for Turkey’s conscientiousness and courageous service for stability in a free world. Turkey now seemed to mean to many Americans the only reliable and understanding ally in the common cause of nonaggression and freedom, and the only ally appreciative and grateful for American cooperation.¹³

As it was throughout his own life and writings, the Turkish press was the place where debates about American influence in Turkey as well as his own defence of the

11. Yalman, *Turkey in my Time*, p. 71.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 264, 271.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

Turkish-American relationship played out. While his support for specific political parties and leaders frequently switched back and forth from support to opposition, his confidence in the ongoing benefit of close relations with the United States remained strong: “Fundamental ideals of a democracy of political equality for citizens, representative government, and freedom of religion and the press. . . should perpetuate the sympathetic relations already established between the United States and Turkey.”¹⁴ It is this concept of ‘sympathetic relations’ based on values of constitutionalism that has its roots in 1908 and that began to develop through connections such as the experiment of Ahmet Emin and the other Ottoman students at Columbia between 1911-1914 that has been the subject of this thesis.



14. Ibid., p.279.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:Archival

Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi(BOA)/Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives: Hariciye Nezareti İdare Evrakı

U.S. Department of State. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office (1876, 1877, 1908, 1909, 1917).

Letter from John Leishman to Elihu Root, August 3, 1906.

Columbia University Central Files, Office of the President Records: Series 1.4: Turkish Students File, 1910-1914, Box 543, Folder 3

Primary Sources:Published

Columbia Spectator (Vol. 52-63: 1909-1919)

Hamlin, Cyrus. *Among the Turks*. New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1878.

Yalman, Ahmed Emin. *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by its Press*. New York: Columbia University, 1914.

Yalman, Ahmed Emin. *Turkey in my Time*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956.

Yalman, Ahmed Emin. *Yakın Tarihte Gördüklerim ve Geçirdiklerim. Cilt 1: 1888-1918*. İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019. (first published 1970).

Secondary Sources

Acehan, Işıl. “ ‘Ottoman Street’ in America: Turkish Leatherworkers in Peabody, Massachusetts.” In *Ottoman and Republican Turkish Labour History*. edited by Touraj Atabaki and Gavin Brockett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Ahmad, Feroz. *The Young Turks: Struggle for the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1918*. Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2019.

- Ahmad, Feroz. "Young Turk Relations with the United States, 1908-1918." In *American Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830-1989*. edited by Nur Bilge Criss, Selçuk Esenbel, Tony Greenwood and Louis Mazzari. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.
- Akgün, Seçil Karal. "Louis E. Browne and the Leaders of the 1919 Sivas Congress." In *Studies in Atatürk's Turkey: The American Dimension*. edited by Nur Bilge Criss and George S. Harris. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Akgün, Seçil Karal. "The General Harbord Commission and the American Mandate Question." In *Studies in Atatürk's Turkey: The American Dimension*. edited by Nur Bilge Criss and George S. Harris. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Aktar, Yücel. *İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi Öğrenci Olayları (1908-1918)*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990.
- Alkan, Ahmet Turan. *Sıradışı Bir Jön Türk: Ubeydullah Efendi'nin Amerika Hatıraları*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1989.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Atam, Şenay, and Gülin Öztürk. "Amerika'da Niğdeli Bir Şahsiyet (1884-1976): Nicolas P. Aghnides." *MANAS Journal of Social Studies*, 9:2 (2020) 1260-1267.
- Baer, Marc. *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.
- Bali, Rifat N. *Anadolu'dan Yeni Dünya'ya: Amerika'ya İlk Göç Eden Türklerin Yaşam Öyküleri*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004.
- Bali, Rifat N. *A Scapegoat for All Seasons: The Dönmes or Crypto-Jews of Turkey*. İstanbul: ISIS Press, 2008.
- Baykal, Erol. *The Ottoman Press (1908-1923)*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.
- Berkes, Niyazi. *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Bilmez, Bülent. *Demiryolundan Petrole Chester Projesi (1908-1923)*. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000.
- Brummett, Palmira. *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- Budak, Ömür. "The Ottoman Consuls in Boston, 1845-1914: An Untold Story." *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* .7:2 (2020) 179-215
- Coşkun, Yasin. "A Subject of Dispute Between the Ottoman Empire and the American Bible Society in the Early 1900s: The Bible Colportage." *Middle Eastern Studies*. 59:4, (August 2022) 551-560.
- Çağlayan, K. Tuncer, and Nedim İpek. "The Emigration from the Ottoman Empire to America." *International Journal of Turkish Studies*. 12:1/2 (2006).
- De Novo, John. *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East, 1900-1939*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963.

- Deringil, Selim. *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*. New York: I.B. Taurus, 1998.
- Doğan, Mehmet Ali and Heather Sharkey, eds. *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2011.
- Ekinci, Mehmet Uğur. "Reflections of the First Muslim Immigration to America in Ottoman Documents." In *Turkish Migration to the United States: From Ottoman Times to the Present*. edited by A. Deniz Balgamiş and Kemal Karpat. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.
- Erken, Ali. *America and the Making of Modern Turkey: Science, Culture and Political Alliances*. New York: I.B. Taurus, 2018.
- Evered, Emine. *Empire and Education under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks*. New York: I.B. Taurus, 2012.
- Fahrenthold, Stacy D. *Between the Ottomans and the Entente: The First World War in the Syrian and Lebanese Diaspora, 1908-1925*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Fortna, Benjamin. *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Ginio, Eyal. *The Ottoman Culture of Defeat: The Balkan Wars and Their Aftermath*. London: C. Hurst and Co., 2016.
- Gualtieri, Sarah. *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- Gutman, David E. *The Politics of Armenian Migration to North America, 1885-1915: Sojourners, Smugglers and Dubious Citizens*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019.
- Gürsel, Zeynep Devrim. "Classifying the Cartozians: Rethinking the Politics of Visibility Alongside Ottoman Subjecthood and American Citizenship." *Photographies*. 15:3 (2022) 349-380.
- Gürbüzel, Alsihan. *Taming the Messiah: The Formation of an Ottoman Political Public Sphere, 1600-1700*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2023.
- Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü. *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü. *The Young Turks in Opposition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Hanley, Will. "What Ottoman Nationality Was and Was Not." In *The Subjects of Ottoman International Law*. edited by Lale Can, Michael Christopher Low, Kent Schull and Robert Zens. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020.
- Herzog, Christoph, and Malek Sharif, ed. *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy*. Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag GmbH, 2010.
- Hilden, Joy Totah. *Passion for Learning: The Life Journey of Khalil Totah, a Palestinian Quaker Educator and Activist*. Wiltshire: Ex Libris Press, 2016.

- Kalkan, Buğra. *Ahmet Emin Yalman: Entelektüel Bir Biyografi*. Ankara: Liberte Yayınları, 2018.
- Kamay, Berna. “Osmanlı’da “Yabancınn” Mülkiyet Hakkı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme: 1867 İstimlak-I Emlak Nizamnamesi.” *Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinde Yeni Çalışmalar: Kaynak, Bağlam, Yöntem* . İstanbul: Vakıfbank Kültür Yayınları, 2023. 129-160.
- Kamay, Berna. “The Ottoman Empire, the United States, and the Legal Battle Over Extradition: The ‘Kelly Affair’.” *New Perspectives on Turkey*. 65 (2001) 78-99.
- Karpat, Kemal. “The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914.” In *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* , 7:2 (May 1985) 175-209.
- Kieser, Hans-Lukas. “Turkey’s Elite in Switzerland.”. *A Quest for Belonging: Anatolia Beyond Empire and Nation (19th-21st Centuries)* . İstanbul: The ISIS Press, 2007.
- Kuneralp, Sinan. “Ottoman Diplomacy and the Controversy Over the Interpretation of Article 4 of the Turco-American Treaty of 1830.” *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, 31 (2002) 7-20.
- Kuneralp, Sinan. “Ottoman Diplomatic and Consular Personnel in the United States of America, 1867-1917.” In *American Turkish Encounters: Politics and Culture, 1830-1989*. edited by Nur Bilge Criss, Selçuk Esenbel, Tony Greenwood and Louis Mazzari. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, 100-109.
- Levy-Aksu, Noemi, and Georgeon, Francois. *The Young Turk Revolution and the Ottoman Empire: The Aftermath of 1908*. New York: I.B. Taurus, 2017.
- Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Magnarella, Paul. “Turkish-American Intellectual Exchange and Community Research in Turkey (1930-1980).” *Turkish Studies Association Journal*. 27:1-2 (2003) 69-89.
- Philliou, Christine. *Turkey: A Past Against History*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2021.
- Reeves-Ellington, Barbara. *Domestic Frontiers: Gender, Reform, and American Interventions in the Ottoman Balkans and the Near East*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013.
- Rubin, Avi. “Modernity as a Code: The Ottoman Empire and the Global Movement of Codification.” *JESHO*, 59:5 (2016) 828-856.
- Sabev, Orlin. *Spiritus Roberti: Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society (1863-1923)*. İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2013.
- Saçmal, Ahmet Abdullah. “From Mudros to Lausanne: How Ahmed Emin’s Perception of the “Other” Changed.” Master’s Thesis. İstanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2012.

- Shafir, Nir. *The Order and Disorder of Communication: Pamphlets and Polemics in the Seventeenth Century Ottoman Empire*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2024.
- Somel, Selçuk Akşin. *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839- 1908*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Şafak, Nurdan. *Osmanlı-Amerikan İlişkileri*. İstanbul: Osmanlı Araştırmaları Vakfı, 2003.
- Şahin, Emrah. *Faithful Encounters: Authorities and American Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2018.
- Şahin, Emrah. "Sultan's America: Lessons from Ottoman Encounters with the United States," *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*. 39 (2014) 55-76.
- Şişman, Adnan. *Tanzimat Döneminde Fransa'ya Gönderilen Osmanlı Öğrencileri (1839-1876)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2004.
- Şiviloğlu, Murat. *The Emergence of Public Opinion: State and Society in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Sönmez, Erdem. "From Kanun-ı Kadim (ancient law) to Umumun Kuvveti (force of the people): Historical Context of the Ottoman Constitutionalism." *Middle Eastern Studies*. 52:1 (2016) 116-134.
- Tezcan, Baki. *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Torosian, Bedros. "Ottoman Armenian Racialization in an American Space (1908-1914)." *Mashriq and Mahjar*. 8:2 (2021) 31-39.
- Trask, Roger. *The United States Response to Turkish Nationalism and Reform, 1914-1939*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1971.
- Turnaoğlu, Banu. "Despotism (İstibdad) in Ottoman Political Thought." *History of Political Thought*. 41:1 (Spring 2020) 16-42.
- Türesay, Özgür. "The Political Language of Takvim-I Vekayi: The Discourse and Temporality of Ottoman 'Reform' (1831-1834)." *European Journal of Turkish Studies*. 31 (2020) 1-45.
- Wasti, Syed Tanvir. "Ahmed Rüstem Bey and the End of an Era". *Middle Eastern Studies*. 48:5 (September 2012) 781-796.
- Yavuz, M. Hakan. "Nationalism and Islam: Yusuf Akçura and Üç Tarz-I Siyaset," *Journal of Islamic Studies*. 4:2 (1993) pp. 175-207.
- Yılmaz, Huseyin. "Containing Sultanic Authority: Constitutionalism in the Ottoman Empire before Modernity," *Journal of Ottoman Studies* . 45 (2015) pp. 231-264.
- Yılmaz, Şuhnaz. *Turkish-American Relations, 1800-1952: Between the Stars, Stripes and the Crescent*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Yosmaoğlu, İpek. "Chasing the Printed Word: Press Censorship in the Ottoman Empire, 1876- 1913." *Turkish Studies Association Journal*. 27:1 (2003) 15-49.

Zürcher, Erik J. *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building: From the Ottoman Empire to Atatürk's Turkey*. New York: I.B. Taurus, 2010.



APPENDIX A

Documents from the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi(BOA)/Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives: Hariciye Nezareti İdare Evrakı

A.0.1 HR.İD.01390.00001.001

Sublime Porte, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères

Rifaat Pacha à Alfred Rustem Bey, Washington 19 Janvier, 1910

Objet: requête de Hussein Husny Effendi

Dans une requête adressée au Ministère de l'Agriculture et des Mines et Forêts, Hussein Husny Eff, diplômé du Dar us-Chefakah de Consple., demande à être envoyé au Amérique pour étudier l'agronomie. Il voudrait à ces effet être admis comme ouvrier dans une ferme modèle et être en même temps, si possible, autorisé à suivre les cours d'une école d'Agriculture. Le referant qui est jeune homme, digne d'intérêt, ne disposant pas de moyens suffisants, nous serions heureux de pouvoir le faire admettre dans une belle école comme boursier. Je vous prie donc de faire des démarches dans ce sens auprès des Etats Unis qui, je pense ne refusera pas de satisfaire à notre demande. Dans ce cas où la chose serait impossible, vous aurez soin de me dire quelle est la somme qui serait nécessaire pour faire les dites études à ses frais. Recevez etc.

English Translation:

Sublime Porte, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Rifaat Pasha to Alfred Rustem Bey, Washington January 19, 1910

Object: request of Hussein Husny Effendi

In a request addressed to the Ministry of Agriculture, Mines, and Forests, Hussein Husny Eff, a graduate of the Darüçşafaka of Constantinople, requests to be sent to America to study agronomy. To this end, he would like to be admitted as a worker on a model farm and, if possible, be allowed to attend an agricultural school. The referent, who is a young man, worthy of interest, does not have sufficient means; we would be happy to have him admitted to a good school on a scholarship. I therefore ask you to take steps to this end with the United States, which, I believe, will not

refuse to grant our request. In the case where this is impossible, please inform me of the amount that would be necessary to complete the said studies at his own expense. Receive, etc.

A.0.2 HR.ĪD.01390.00002.001

Ambassade Impériale Ottomane Washington le 24. Fevrier, 1910

Rep: Requête de Hussein Husny Effendi

Monsieur le Ministre,

Me référant à la dépêche en date du 16 Janvier écoulé, No. 219-6, que Votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser concernant la requête présentée au Ministère Impériale de l'Agriculture par Hussein Husny Effendi qui demande à être admis dans une école d'Agriculture en Amérique, j'ai l'honneur de Lui transmettre, ci-joint, en traduction, une lettre que j'ai reçue du Secrétaire d'Etat auquel j'avais communiqué le contenu de la dépêche ministérielle sus-mentionnée. Le ressort de cette réponse, ainsi que Votre Excellence voudra bien le relever, que le Gouvernement Américain est tout disposé à donner suite à la demande du requérant. Mais il voudrait, avant de prendre les dispositions nécessaires à ce sujet, savoir quel genre d'études a déjà faites Hussein Husny Effendi et quelle serait la spécialité du cours agronomique qu'il voudrait suivre. J'ajouterai de mon côté qu'il importe de savoir s'il possède une connaissance suffisante de la langue anglaise. J'ai l'honneur d'être, de Votre Excellence, le très humble et très obeisant serviteur, Alfred Rustem

Son Excellence Rifaat Pacha Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultane, etc. etc. etc.

English Translation:

Imperial Ottoman Embassy, Washington February 24, 1910

Object: Request of Hussein Husny Effendi

Mr. Minister,

Referring to the dispatch dated January 16, No. 219-6, which Your Excellency was kind enough to address to me concerning the request submitted to the Imperial Ministry of Agriculture by Hussein Husny Effendi, who is requesting admission to an agricultural school in America, I have the honor to transmit to You, enclosed, in translation, a letter I received from the Secretary of State, to whom I had communicated the contents of the aforementioned ministerial dispatch. The response,

as Your Excellency will be kind enough to pass on, is that the American Government is fully prepared to grant the applicant's request. However, before making the necessary arrangements in this regard, it would like to know what type of studies Hussein Husny Effendi has already completed and what would be the specialty of the agricultural course he would like to follow. I would add on my side that it is important to know whether he has sufficient knowledge of the English language. I have the honor to be, Your Excellency's most humble and obedient servant, Alfred Rustem

A.0.3 HR.ĪD.01390.00002.002

Département d'État, Washington Le 16 Février, 1910

Monsieur Huntington Wilson, sous-Secrétaire d'État à Rustem Bey

Me référant à notre récente conversation au sujet du désir qu'aurait Hussein Husny Effendi d'être admis dans une école agronomique de ce pays-ci, je prends plaisir à mes informer que le sous-Secrétaire de l'agriculture me fait savoir que son Département serait bien aise d'user de ses bons offices pour faire entrer ce jeune homme dans une pareille école et en même temps de lui faire donner les moyens de suivre un cours pratique dans quelque ferme-modèle. Avant de faire ces arrangements, toutefois, il sera nécessaire de savoir quell cours d'études a déjà suivi ce jeune homme, et s'il desire étudier les sujets que l'on enseigne principalement dans les écoles agronomiques du Sud, c'est-à-dire, la culture du tabac, du coton, etc., ou bien s'il préfèrerait étudier la culture du blé, du maïs, etc. Voudriez vous aussi avoir l'obligeance de me donner des d'étails plus circonstanciers concernant le genre d'instruction académique qu'il a déjà reue? Si vous aviez la bonté de me fournir des renseignements sur les points sus-mentionnés, celà faciliterait grandement la tâche du Département de l'Agriculture, par rapport aux arrangements qu'il serait à même d'effectuer.

English Translation:

Department of State, Washington February 16, 1910

Mr. Huntington Wilson, Under-Secretary of State to Rustem Bey

Referring to our recent conversation concerning Hussein Husny Effendi's desire to be admitted to an agricultural school in this country, I am pleased to inform that the Under-Secretary of Agriculture has informed me that his Department would be pleased to use its good offices to secure this young man's admission to such a school and at the same time to arrange for him to pursue a practical course on some

model farm. Before making these arrangements, however, it will be necessary to know what course of study this young man has already pursued, and whether he desires to study the subjects principally taught in the agricultural schools of the South, that is, the cultivation of tobacco, cotton, etc., or whether he would prefer to study the cultivation of wheat, corn, etc. Would you also be kind enough to give me more detailed information regarding the kind of academic instruction he has already received? If you would be so kind as to provide me with information on the above-mentioned points, it would greatly facilitate the task of the Department of Agriculture in relation to the arrangements which it would be able to make.

A.0.4 HR.İD.01390.00003.003

American Embassy, Constantinople April 15, 1910

Excellency,

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, the President of Columbia University in the city of New York, has written me a letter of which I enclose a French translation. Columbia University stands in the front rank of our great seats of learning in America. This university having learned that the Ottoman government desires to train a certain number of young men each year in foreign lands, and deeply sympathizing with this purpose of the Government under the present régime, the Trustees of the University has passed a resolution that for a term of ten years from July 1st, 1910, free tuition will be granted to students of the Ottoman Empire, not exceeding three students in each one year, who may be nominated by the Ottoman Government and recommended by the American Ambassador at Constantinople. It gives me great pleasure to convey to you this information, as it is another evidence of the sympathetic interest that my country takes in the development and progress of the Ottoman Empire under its new régime of constitutionalism. I take this occasion to renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

Oscar Strauss

To His Excellency Rifaat Pasha, Imperial Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sublime Porte.

A.0.5 HR.İD.01390.00003.004

Sublime Porte, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères Le 18 Juin 1910

Rifaat Pacha à Monsieur Oscar S. Straus

J'ai eu l'honneur de recevoir la note que V. Exc. A bien voulu m'adresser le 15 Avril der. No. 59 pour m'informer que les administrateurs de l'Université Columbia, à New York ont décidé d'accorder chaque année pendant dix ans, à partir du 1er Juillet 1910, enseignement gratuit à trois étudiants qui seraient désignés par le gouv. Ottoman. En exprimant à V. E. la vive satisfaction du Gt. Il. Pour cette offer gracieuse qui temoigne de l'intérêt que l'université veux bien prendre au development intellectuel de la jeunesse ottoman. Je m'empresse de l'informer que mon collègue de l'Instruction Publique ne manquera d'aviser, en temps voulu, au nécessaires à ces égard. Je prie V. Exc. De vouloir bien en avise l'Université Columbia eu lui faisant parvenir au même temps nos plus vifs remerciements pour cette marque de sympathie qui répond si parfaitement aux sentiments qui animent les ottomans vis-à-vis de la nation américaine.

English Translation (from Columbia University Archives)

Sublime Porte, Ministry of Foreign Affairs June 18, 1910.

Rifaat Pasha to Mr. Oscar S. Straus

I had the honor to receive the note that Your Excellency was good enough to address to me on April 15th last, No. 59, informing me that the Trustees of Columbia University, New York, have decided to grant each year, for ten years, from July 1, 1910, gratuitous instruction to three students who shall be chosen by the Ottoman Government. In expressing to Your Excellency the keen satisfaction of the Imperial Government for this gracious offer, which shows the interest that the University is good enough to take in the intellectual development of Ottoman youth, I am eager to inform Your Excellency that my colleague the Minister of Public Instruction will not fail to give the necessary advice in the matter, in due course. I beg Your Excellency to be good enough to advise Columbia University, sending it, at the same time, our best thanks for this indication of sympathy, which corresponds so perfectly to the sentiments which the Ottomans feel toward the American nation.

A.0.6 HR.ID.01390.00004.005

American Embassy, Constantinople June 25, 1910.

Mr. Minister:

It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's courteous note, No. 2506/32, of the 18th instant, in which the Embassy is informed that His Excellency the Minister of Public Instruction has accepted the offer of the Univer-

sity of Columbia, transmitted through this Embassy, to grant free tuition to three Ottoman students each year. In accordance with the desire of Your Excellency, I have transmitted a copy of said note to the President of the University of Columbia. I avail myself of the opportunity to assure Your Excellency of my highest esteem and consideration.

Oscar S. Straus

His Excellency Rifaat Pasha, Imperial Minister for Foreign Affairs, etc. etc. etc.

A.0.7 HR.ID.01390.00006.001

Ambassade Impériale Ottomane, Washington Le 12 Août, 1910

Monsieur le Ministre,

Votre Excellence n'ignore pas que depuis le rétablissement du régime constitutionnel dans l'Empire, le Gouvernement et le peuple des Etats-Unis ne laissent échapper aucune occasion pour manifester leurs sympathies à l'égard de notre pays. Ainsi, comme une nouvelle preuve de ces dispositions amicales, le Département d'Etat vient de me communiquer une résolution que le comité directeurs (Trustees) de la "Columbia University" a pris l'initiative d'adopter à l'égard de nos jeunes étudiants ottomans serait admis annuellement à partir du 1er Juillet de 1911, pour une période de dix ans, à cette université, avec exemption des frais d'enseignement. Ils devront être choisis par le Gouvernement Impérial et présentés par l'entremise de l'Ambassade Américaine à Constantinople. Il va vous dire que l'entretien de ces étudiants restera soit à la charge de Gouvernement Impérial, comme c'est le cas pour ceux qui sont envoyés aux institutions similaires en Europe, soit à leur propre charge. D'après mes informations, l'université de Columbia, qui est située dans la ville même de New York, s'occupe également, d'une façon indirecte, de l'organisation et du maintien des colonies d'étudiants à ces environs où ces derniers trouvent, à des prix relativement modérés, logement et nourriture et vivent sous une surveillance aussi utile que discrète. Parmi les écoles dont l'université de Columbia se confesse, les deux écoles normales (Teachers College et Pedagogical School) et les différentes hautes écoles professionnelles et techniques (Electricité, Mécanique, Mines etc.) devront attirer spécialement notre attention. Le "Teachers College," surtout, est une institution normale de 1er ordre avec une grande école d'application (Horace Mann School) contenant pour les degrés de l'enseignement où les élèves qui se préparent au professorat complètent leurs acquisitions pratiques, depuis le Kindergarten jusqu'au collège. Dans le cas où le Gouvernement Impérial voudrait profiter de cette offre, je

m'empresserai de lui faire parvenir d'autres renseignements supplémentaires don't il pourrait avoir besoin. Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Ministre, les assurances de ma très haute considération.

Youssuf Zia

English Translation

Imperial Ottoman Embassy, Washington August 12, 1910

Mr. Minister,

Your Excellency is aware that since the restoration of constitutional rule in the Empire, the Government and people of the United States have taken every opportunity to express their sympathy for our country. Thus, as further proof of these friendly dispositions, the State Department has just communicated to me a resolution that the Trustees of Columbia University has taken the initiative to adopt regarding our young Ottoman students, who will be admitted annually, starting July 1, 1911, for a period of ten years, to this university, with exemption from tuition fees. They will be selected by the Imperial Government and presented through the American Embassy in Constantinople. It was communicated that the oversight of these students will remain under the Imperial Government, as is the case for those sent to similar institutions in Europe. According to my information, Columbia University, which is located in New York City itself, is also indirectly involved in organizing and maintaining student colonies in the vicinity, where students find, at relatively moderate prices, lodging and food and live under supervision that is as helpful as it is discreet. Among the schools to which Columbia University belongs, the two normal schools (Teachers College and Pedagogical School) and the various professional and technical colleges (Electrical, Mechanical, Mining, etc.) should particularly attract our attention. Teachers College, in particular, is a first-rate normal institution with a large school of application (Horace Mann School) containing teaching degrees where students preparing for the teaching profession complete their practical training, from kindergarten through college. Should the Imperial Government wish to take advantage of this offer, I will hasten to provide it with any additional information it may require. Please accept, Mr. Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Youssuf Zia

APPENDIX B

Documents from Columbia University Central Files, Office of the President Records: Series 1.4: Turkish Students File, 1910-1914, Box 543, Folder 3

B.0.1 “Letter from William Rockhill to Nicholas Butler,” January 27, 1912.

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler’s Office, to Hon. W.W. Rockhill, American Embassy, Constantinople. Dear Sir, President Butler asks me to acknowledge your letter of January 13, and to say that it will be impossible for us to grant free tuition to Sami Nedon under the resolution of the Trustees, granting free tuition to certain Turkish students. The original resolution, passed March 7, 1910, provides as follows: “RESOLVED, that for a period of ten years from July 1, 1910, exemption from the regular tuition fees be granted to students from Turkey, not exceeding three in any one year, who may be nominated by the Turkish Government, and recommended by the American Ambassador at Constantinople.” As soon as the announcement was made, the Turkish Government sent us five students whom we were very glad to have, and to all of whom we extended the privileges of the above resolution. The same five students have remained for a second year on the same conditions. Will you be good enough to call this matter to the attention of the Ottoman Government? More students should not be sent to us under the resolution, until some of those students who are now taking advantage of it withdraw. Very truly yours, Secretary

B.0.2 “Letter from Henry Morgenthau to Nicholas Butler,” December 17, 1913.

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President, Columbia University, New York City. My Dear Doctor: Your letter of December 2, enclosing reports on the five Turkish Students pleased us here very much. I think it is quite unusual to receive such favorable report on all the students that represent one country. I have taken great pleasure in sending a copy of it to the Sublime Porte and have congratulated them on the fine record made by their representatives. This post offers me an unusual

opportunity to observe the benefits of education and the disadvantages of illiteracy. Some day, when I have come to a more complete understanding of the situation, I will take great pleasure in writing you in detail about it, as I know it will interest you. With kindest regards, Yours very faithfully, H. Morgenthau

B.0.3 “Letter from Nicholas Butler’s Office to Ottoman Embassy in Washington,” December 23, 1913.

His Excellency, the Turkish Ambassador Turkish Embassy, Washington, D.C. Sir I have the privilege of handing you herewith extracts from letters from professors in Columbia University regarding the progress of the five Turkish students who came to Columbia in 1911 on the arrangement whereby Columbia University agreed to grant free tuition to a certain number of Turkish students upon the nomination of the Turkish Ministry of Education and the recommendation of the diplomatic representative of the United States in Constantinople. I have the honor to be Faithfully yours, Secretary

Letters from Professors in Columbia University regarding the progress made by Turkish students:

1. From Edwin R. A. Seligman, McVickar Professor of Political Economy- “I am glad to be able to state that Mr. Aghnides is one of our most thoughtful, as well as our most able, students. He has made, so far as I can see, excellent use of his stay at Columbia and has written a very good essay for his Master’s degree which is proposed to complete for his Doctor’s thesis. Mr. Aghnides also enjoys, I believe, the esteem of his fellow students.”
2. From Harlan F. Stone, Dean of the Faculty of Law- “Ahmed Shukri has taken examinations in only four subjects: Criminal Law, Pleading and Practice, Real Property, and Agency. In these subjects his record has been good- decidedly good when one considers that he is working with a foreign language and that his race and antecedents tend to make the common law a good deal of mystery to him. Our experience with most Orientals is that they are quite unable to grasp the principles of English law. Shukri is a notable exception to this rule.”
3. From Ralph E. Mayer, Associate Professor of Engineering Drafting- “I beg to advise you that Mr. Abdullah Hamdi is now a student in the third year in the course of Electrical Engineering and has done very good work. He had some difficulty in his first year, probably due to the lack of a thorough understanding of English. His report of the second year shows that he got rid of his first year deficiencies and

succeeded in maintaining a very creditable standing in his second year. The work he has done shows that he is above average in scholarship.

Mr. Djebad Eyoub is now a student in the third year of Mining Engineer and a graduate B.S. from Columbia College and is one of the cleverest men that we had over here and is a fine manly chap. Both these lads are a credit to Columbia.”

4. From Franklin H. Giddings, Professor of Sociology- “I am glad to have the opportunity which you give me to say a word about Mr. Ahmed Emin. Very few students have come under my observation who have interested me so much as Emin has done. His keen, accurate mind first made appeal to me, and then I noticed that he was becoming a favorite with our very best men. They discovered his substantial intellectual gifts, and found him, as I soon after did, a charming personality. In our Seminar he has read papers of remarkable grasp, information and insight. I respect him in every way, for character, for mind, for influence, and I like him as much as I respect him.”