

A MISSIONARY DREAM: THE WIND OF PROTESTANT IN MIHALIC¹

Bir Misyoner Rüyası: Mihaliç'de Protestan Rüzgârı

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to try to reveal and expose the Protestant missionary activities that were carried out by one of the most influential and ascendant missionary organizations, the American Board in one basic and important town of Bursa in the 19th century. Primarily how the members of this organization settled to this region and in which respects they tried to affect the natives of this area were searched. Then, what kind of means they used to strive to survive in the region was discussed. To reach this purpose, basically and mainly the first-hand sources in other means the archive records of the aforementioned committee were used. In the first place, these documents were compiled and then classified according to the importance and effectiveness. On the other hand, despite the influence of Catholics, the members of the American Board Organization struggled to form a Protestant congregation in Mihalic (Karacabey). They were mainly focused on the Armenian community and partially Greeks. However in the end the winner of this conflict was not Protestants because they were not successful in establishing a church and a school which were the most important institutions in Mihalic that would lead the Protestants to victory.

Keywords: Mihalic, American Board, Protestant, Missionary.

ÖZ: Bu makalenin amacı 19. yüzyılın en etkili ve nüfuzlu misyonerlik teşkilatlarından birisi olan Amerikan Board Örgütü tarafından Bursa'nın en temel ve önemli kasabalarından birisinde gerçekleştirilen Protestan misyonerliği faaliyetlerini açığa çıkarmak ve ortaya koymaktır. Öncelikle örgüt mensuplarının bu bölgeye nasıl yerleştikleri ve yerli nüfusu hangi yönleriyle etkilemeye çalıştıkları araştırılmıştır. Ardından ne tür vasıtalar kullanarak bölgede var olma mücadelesi verdikleri konu edilmiştir. Bu maksada ulaşabilmek için

¹ Bu çalışma anket, mülakat, odak grup çalışması, gözlem, deney, görüşme teknikleri kullanılarak katılımcılardan veri toplanmasını gerektiren nitel ya da nicel yaklaşımlarla yürütülen herhangi bir araştırma bilgisi içermemektedir. Ayrıca çalışmada insan ve hayvanların deneysel ya da diğer bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılması, klinik araştırmalar gibi bilgilere de yer verilmemiştir. Bu doğrultuda makale etik kurul izni gerektirmeyen çalışmalar arasında yer almaktadır.

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temelde ve esas olarak birincil kaynaklar bir başka deyişle bahsi geçen komitenin arşiv kayıtları kullanılmıştır. İlk olarak bu belgeler derlenip toplanmış sonrasında ise önem ve etkilerine göre sınıflandırılmışlardır. Bununla birlikte Katoliklerin nüfuzuna rağmen Amerikan Board Örgütü mensupları, Mihaliç'de (Karacabey) Protestan bir cemaat teşkil etmek için mücadele vermişlerdir. Onlar esas itibariyle Ermeni cemaatine odaklanmış kısmen Rumlarla da ilgilenmişlerdir. Netice itibariyle bu çekişmenin kazananı Protestanlar olmuştur. Zira onlar, Mihaliç'de Protestanları zafere götürecek en önemli kurumlar olan kilise ve okulu tesis etme konusunda başarı elde edememişlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mihaliç, Amerikan Board, Protestan, Misyoner.

INTRODUCTION

When the American Board Organization established in Boston in 1810 nobody has foresight about the future expansion and influence of it. It was a kind of dream or in other sense a miracle to open a door to Protestantism with hat in hand (Strong, 1910: 3). In those years, the only real aim of the Board was declaring the truths of the New Testament and the precise principles of Jesus (Barnum, 1859: 208-209). However, as time passed this organization started to carry an essential and critical role in the imperialist policy of the USA. The confidence that they gained and the impression that they awaked all around the world expedited this process. In this context undoubtedly it was unthinkable for the members of the American Board to not deal with Anatolia that is also called Asia Minor by orientalist. Because aforesaid territory has been from the beginning of history linking Europe to Asia and the only expansion way of Europeans to reach 'The Old World' can be possible by passing over this region (Ramsay, 1890: 23).

When all these circumstances are taken into consideration one of the most important domains of Protestant missionaries was Bursa that was the first capital of the Ottoman Empire. The first American Board member who came to the mentioned city was William Goodell. He visited Bursa in 1833. During his stay, he met with the governor of Bursa by the means of a respectable Frank, who, as his title signifies, is chief physician to the governor, soon called him to offer his services (Goodell, 1833a: 153). He (1833b: 156-157) gave amazingly detailed information about the city, talked about Greeks and Armenians. According to missionary, it's time to serve in Bursa. The reaping time has just come and if the crops do not harvest, it will be so late to get good results.

At this point, it is useful to give brief information about non-Muslim elements residing in Bursa during the 19th century. The allocation of neighbourhoods for non-Muslims in the Ottoman State was first realized in Bursa due to the fact that it was the capital of the foundation period. Bursa, which consisted only

of the fortress surrounded by walls during the conquest (1326), expanded by moving out of the fortress just after this date. Before the conquest, the Greeks lived in Bursa. When the city was conquered by Orhan Ghazi, the Greeks who resided in the fortress and did not leave their places during the war were resettled outside the fortress. Muslims were placed to the houses which were emptied by Greeks (Karataş, 2007: 127). Armenians came to the city after the conquest (Karataş, 2005: 83).

Initially, the neighborhood numbers of both Muslims and non-Muslims were few. However, due to being a major attraction centre, the numbers of the neighborhood soon increased with the arrival of large numbers of Muslims and non-Muslims in the city in the years following the conquest. There were 168 neighbourhoods in Bursa in the 16th century (İnalçık, 1992: 447). According to another claim, there were 247 neighbourhoods in the city at the mentioned time (Köseoğlu, 1946: 18). Evliya Celebi (1314: 8) stated that there were 22 non-Muslim and 1 Coptic neighbourhood in Bursa in the seventeenth century, including 7 Armenians, 9 Greeks, 6 Jews. The Jews who came to Bursa afterward settled to the neighbourhoods of early Jewish settlers (Ergenç, 1980: 105). Except for their neighbourhoods, non-Muslims could also live in Muslim districts (Rifat, 1986: 125). Nothing has changed in the missionary age. There has only been an increase in the number of people of different ethnic backgrounds due to the opening of foreign schools and increased missionary activities (Kepecioğlu, 2010: 41).

The words of Goodell would be considered by the headquarters of the Board and the Prudential Committee of the organization, they determined to appoint Benjamin Schneider as a missionary to the city. Schneider arrived in Bursa on 15 July 1834 (Schneider, 1835: 97). Afterward Philander O. Powers joined to him. Powers reached the city in February 1835 (Powers, 1844a: 119). In the first place, the two missionaries tried to recognize society. They strove to learn the languages of different communities and after a while, they were capable of preaching in Ottoman Turkish, Armenian language, and Romaic (Powers, 1844b: 120).

After gaining ground in the city, and ensuring the sufficient conditions, Board members gazed upon to the out-stations. According to the Protestant missionary, the cities were all called stations. On the other side, small locations were named as out-stations. Hereunder while Bursa was a station, Mihalic was an out-station (Yıldız, 2009: 25). In this context, considering Bursa, the first out-station visited by Protestant missionaries was Demir Tash also known as Demirtaş in Turkish. The missionaries reached to this town in 1833 (Goodell, 1833c: 190). Gemlik was the other location visited in the same year. On the other hand, Board members set foot in Mihalic and Kirmasti in 1841 and 1844 respectively. (Schneider,

1844a: 168). When evaluated in the view of such information, this article aims to try to perceive and set forth the Protestant missionary activities in Mihalic depending on the Board archive resources. In which ways they tried to effect and control the Christians, basically the Catholic congregations of Armenians and Greeks, their fought against the clergy of Papacy, the different means and establishments that were founded by Protestants were the other subjects of this work. Consequently, in this study, it was aimed to understand the success of Protestant missionaries in one of the smallest but strategically important towns of Bursa by using first-hand archive records.

METHODOLOGY

While the study was carried on, primarily, sources were scanned and relevant first-hand records were compiled. Since this study was based on missionary documents and carried out by taking into consideration the criteria of objectivity. After providing the archive records the information to be obtained from these were determined, examined, and classified. In this way, the writing scheme was formed. Undoubtedly, during the classifying, the historical process was taken as a basis, and attention was paid to chronology. Also, neutrality has been the main goal.

Classification will be carried out according to the subject, taking into account the chronology. The mutual examination method may also be preferred for classification. In this way, differences and similarities between the missionaries will be revealed and it will be easier to determine what matters are given importance and emphasis.

In the analysis process, it will be investigated whether the information and data obtained are sufficient. At this stage, the content of the classified information will be evaluated. Attention will be paid to the objectivity, reliability, and provability of information. By analysing the information, the material at hand will be ready for use and it will be made valuable. In addition, the information and data will be reviewed and determined whether the data is sufficient for the full disclosure of the subject. At this stage, it is also decided where and how to use the data. After classifying, analysing, and criticizing the data, the order in which the information will be structured will be determined. After these determinations, the missing information will be completed.

In the writing process, mutual examination and descriptive methods will be preferred. The events will be evaluated according to the circumstances of the time they occurred. An event that is not well known will not be explained by the causes and consequences of a similar one. Care will be taken to be impartial when the information is given. Particular attention will be paid to making objective

assessments. On the other hand, this study does not contain any research information carried out with qualitative or quantitative approaches that require data collection from participants using survey, interview, focus group work, observation, experiment, interview techniques. In addition, the study does not include information on the use of humans and animals for experimental or other scientific purposes, such as clinical research. In this respect, the article is among the works that do not require the permission of the Ethics Committee.

THE FOOTFALLS OF PROTESTANTS IN MIHALIC

Mihalic is located at the west edge of Bursa and visited by the first missionary in 1841. This voyage was especially carried out to take some soundings and observations. The geographical position of the town, the communities, and the impressions about the congregations, the demographic structure, etc. were the basic features that the missionaries dominantly interested in. And the next section will be closely associated with these issues.

The General Impressions about the Town

The Board members, who reached a city or a town, first evaluate and scrutinize the geographical position of the province and distance between this location and the important centres of the state. The pros and cons of the region were the other issues that the missionaries took notice of profoundly. Also if there were enough indicators, they would give detailed information about the population of the location by separating all the communities. In this context according to the first archive record that was kept in 1841 Mihalic was lying twelve hours of Bursa and two hours from the sea-coast. On the other hand, it was situated on a piece of pretty high ground, amid an enormous plain, also during the whole winter; it was almost completely beset by water. The houses seemed repellent and the roads and streets did not have any pavements (Schneider, 1841: 299).

In this document penned by Benjamin Schneider (1841: 299), there was also some information about the demographic conditions of the town. As missionary alleged, the population was eleven thousand, of whom one thousand one hundred fifty were Armenians, three thousand five hundred were Greeks, and the rest Muslims.

In another record, it was told that Mr. Schneider visited five villages lying to the west of Bursa. He was accompanied by a pious Armenian during this excursion. The first village to which the missionary came was Mihalic where is situated about twelve hours north of west from Bursa. The impetus that attracted the missionary was a spirit of interrogation aroused in this town. And of course, it was amazing and encouraging (Schneider, 1844b: 166-167).

The demographic structure of the town is the other issue that was kept in this document. As it was claimed, in Mihalic approximately there were two hundred and fifty Armenian dwellings, and the houses of Turks and Greeks were visually more than Armenians'. Another archive record written in 1863 alleged that Mihalic was a town of about nine hundred houses (Outstations, 1863: 269). As it is understood that, this time the population information of members of different communities was not included...

In 1865 the distance between Bursa and Mihalic, which was twelve hours, was repeated once more (Greene, 1865e: 110). As it is clear from the archive records that normally when missionaries talked about the distance, they compared the town with Bursa. However, there is also one exception that only in one document missionaries mentioned the distance between Mihalic and Bandırma, because as it will be expressed in the following chapters, at one stage these regions were connected strongly in terms of missionary activities. According to this document, the pastor of Bandırma Abraham made occasional visits to Mihalic that was eight hours distant to the town (Richardson, 1874).

As it can be understood from what has been expressed so far, the documents revealed the rough impressions of missionaries about Mihalic predominantly presented the distance of town to Bursa. And a tiny bit referred to the demographical conditions of the region... In the eyes of the Board members, these two criteria were so important. Missionaries needed to get in contact with the main stations to draw up a durable and consistent strategy in every time. Also, as was mentioned before, to become influential and successful, Protestants had to move together with minorities. That's why nearly every time they tried to notice the population of Armenian and Greek congregations. After doing these analyses it's now time to start the big war to bring mentioned minorities into their fold.

At this point, it will be useful to give the population data of Bursa and Mihalic during the 19th century according to the second-hand sources and Ottoman archival records. As it is known the Ottoman State conducted its first official census in 1831. Since the purpose of this census was to reveal tax sources and determine who could do military service, only the Muslim and non-Muslim male population were included in the census (Demiryürek, 2016: 191). According to the census, the population of Bursa consisted of 16,138 men, including 10,552 Muslims, 2,159 Christians, 627 Jews, and 2,800 Armenians (Karal, 1997: 10). When this figure is multiplied by two and the approximate number of women is taken into account, the adult male and female population of the city can be estimated to be around 32,276 (Çadırcı, 1997: 49; Behar, 2003: 25). The French archaeologist Perrot, who made a visit to Bursa in 1861, suggested that the population of the city was around 35,000 (Darkot: 1979: 808). According to V.

Cuinet, the population of Bursa in 1890 was 76,303, including 58,902 Muslims, 5,158 Greeks, 8,444 Armenians, 2,548 Jews, and 1,251 foreigners (Demiryürek, 2016: 192).

In 1881, Sultan Abdulhamid II wanted a new census. The census took much longer than expected due to some obstacles, and the results were published in 1893. The census was conducted on the basis of ethnic and religious belonging and the population was recorded in categories such as Muslim, Armenian, Greek, Jewish, and Catholic (Demiryürek, 2015: 111). During the mentioned date Bursa, the central Sanjak of Hudâvendigâr province, comprised of Gemlik, Mudanya, Mihalic (Karacabey), Kirmasti (Mustafakemalpasa) and Atranos (Orhaneli) districts (Emecen, 1998: 286). According to the census, Bursa had a population of 121,590 and Mihalic had a population of 28,263. The total population of the Sanjak was 285,782 (Karpat, 2010: 278).

There is also some information in the annuals of Hudâvendigâr related to the population of Mihalic. According to the annual of 1871 (151), there were a total of 4060 households in Mihalic. The male population of non-Muslims was 4573. There were also 6689 Muslims in the town. The same information was repeated in the annuals of 1872 (117) and 1873 (112) and it was stated that the total male population was 11262. However in the annuals of 1874 (119) and 1875 (112), although the total number of households did not change, the numbers of male populations were different. In these records, the population of male non-Muslims was 4541 and Muslims were 6332. In the annuals of 1879 (181) and 1880 (173), the non-Muslim population was divided into two as Armenians and Greeks. According to these documents, the number of households in Mihalic was 3473. The male population of Greeks, Armenians, and Muslims was 4159, 445, and 4112 respectively. The female population in Mihalic was first mentioned in the annual of 1886. As the archival record stated (92-93) the total number of households in the town was 6632. The male population was 16693. The number of females was 14388. In this sense, the total population of the town was 31081.

The Protestant Missionary Activities in Mihalic

The Board members, on the one hand, were trying to identify and recognize the society of the town; on the other side, they were drawing the scheme of their activities. After apprehending the population of the communities, they started to do some observations on these people. The first inferences were made about Greeks and Armenians. According to the archive records Greeks had two sanctuaries, one school which was modelled regarding the Hellenic system², and one other on the traditional plan. However, the Armenians had one temple

²It was a kind of school that the schedule was based on the mixture of Greek and Latin literature. The education was given in these languages. Some cultural aspects, historical issues, art, and design were the main parts of this system.

and a school. Undoubtedly these churches were not of the Protestants. On the contrary, they belonged to the Catholics, the most important opponent and foe congregation of American Board members in Asia Minor. On the other hand, none of the congregations spoke their national tongue. The only language they were able to speak was Turkish. Hence their religious aspects and activities were not understood by the Christian communities. Also, the school lost its functions. Nobody could perceive the curriculum and read the books properly. The teacher who was attendant in Armenian school frankly admitted that he and also his students were not able to understand the school subjects and read materials. Nevertheless, the teacher of one of the Greek schools had little or no knowledge of Modern Greek. He was trying to cite his knowledge to the pupils of the school (Schneider, 1841: 299).

There is also some information about the institutions of non-Muslims in Mihalic in Ottoman archival records. According to a document, there was a Greek church in Kuyumcuoglu neighbourhood (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [BOA], C.ADL, 20:1234). There was also a Greek church in İkizce (BOA, İ.DH, 1172: 91648). Büyükada and Apolyond were other regions that had Greek churches (BOA, İ. HR, 130: 6667). As the documents indicate there were also Armenian churches in the town (BOA, C. ADL, 17: 1059). However, the location of these churches could not be determined.

The problems mentioned by Schneider were not just affecting the teachers. The ecclesiastics were in the same breath ignorant and disreputable. Like the instructors, they could only speak Turkish. They were so unaware of religious aspects and ceremonies. They were performing all these unconsciously. Also, they did not have any idea why they were praying or preaching. Correspondingly it's not so hard to imagine the conditions of the congregations. The missionary who penned this archive record gave all the Greek and Armenian priests one copy of the New Testament. He also had a chance to get in contact with the local people about the religious aspects. In the end, he left the town with great hopes about the future (Schneider, 1841: 299). This attitude and behaviour are reflecting the general cognizance of Protestant missionary. According to this sect, getting desperate and dreading are not admissible approaches. In all cases and conditions, they mustn't lose control and always try to be careful and vigilant.

In another document that was written by missionaries in 1844, the numbers of churches were repeated. The new information is the same as the previous one. According to this record, there were three churches in the region. Two of them belonging to the Greeks and one of them were for Armenians (Schneider, 1844b: 167).

In this record, the Board members were also referring to the harsh and effective opposition to the clergy. The ecclesiastical defiance that was implied here was certainly related to Catholics. In consequence of this opposition local Armenians strongly depressed and scared. This dread did not only take hold of the Armenian congregation but also the teacher of the school. He was ordered not to teach the books and the New Testament of Protestants to the students. Even he had to remove some simple grammar books prepared by the Board members. However although there were a lot of troubles, hassles, and discouraging circumstances on missionaries and Protestant activities, quite a lot of times it was witnessed, the Board members still had some hopes and they dreamed to be successful soon (Schneider, 1844b: 167).

The reason that made them so optimistic was closely related to the attitudes of the teacher. This person, his name had not been given, in some sense an enlightened man and supporting the activities of Protestant missionaries. He came from Istanbul and even though he was afraid of the ecclesiastical influence of Catholics at all, he did not retreat and tried to support the activities of Protestants clandestinely. Of course, he stood aloof from missionaries because he had to. But nothing changed his feelings. He trusted the missionary activities profoundly and on all occasions, this man struggled for their success. He gave the books of Protestants to the students stealthily. And they were reading the Old and New Testament together. He ordered four new copies of the holy book for pupils. In this way maybe some priests and the members of Christian minorities could be affected by these new and promising beliefs (Schneider, 1844a: 167).

One of the other heartening features was, even though people of Mihalic were quite insensitive to the missionary activities there would be some individuals who were showing their great respect to the Protestants. The first man who had some sympathy for this faith came from Istanbul for a limited time. The reason for his presence was not given but it's clear from the document that he was an enlightened person and he was there temporarily. His cognizance and perspicacity about the claims of Protestantism were highly crucial and remarkable. His sojourn in Mihalic had critical importance on account of his supports to the missionaries (Schneider, 1844a: 167). One other person worth mentioning here was a native of the town. According to the missionary point of view, he was interested in the truth of Protestantism. Before he got in contact with the Board members he had found and bought the books of Protestants somehow. In this way, he improved himself about religious aspects. He also wanted to enrol his son in a school. It would be Bebek seminary which was established in Istanbul. As a result of these two important examples, missionaries had the impression of the Protestantism claim would begin to

work in this town and the results would at short notice become more visible (Schneider, 1844a: 167).

All these developments were giving the signs of the improvement of the Protestantism in Mihalic. But until 1863 nobody became affiliated with this sect. In the mentioned year one person who was a member of the Bursa church accepted the principles of missionary activities and converted to Protestantism. Although the aim of his visit was not known, as it was guessed he came to town for official purposes in other means he was there for government business. Then he got in contact with the missionaries and after a while, he became a strong supporter of Protestantism and got involved in the missionary service. In the same year in Mihalic, seven people were following the truth of Protestantism. They were called brethren. Moreover, there could be no persecution attempts from Catholics in this region in those years (Outstations, 1863: 270). Probably for the improvement of Protestantism the most important circumstance was this because on every corner of Asia Minor there was decisive and constant persecution realized by Catholics. The Board members and also supporters of Protestantism had to resist and survive against these attacks.

The mood of optimism was repeated by Joseph K. Greene (1864: 31) in another record which was kept in the same year. According to the missionary, they had many reasons to be hopeful about the future. He had written the following lines in this regard:

“In Mihalic a few have been added to the number of our brethren, five of whom give hopeful evidence of being truly Christian men. It is refreshing and gratifying to witness their love for the Bible, for one another, and the cause of Christ. The brother Vertanes, the pioneer in the work, who until deprived of employment served the Lord at his charges, has continued his faithful labour during the past year and has received a small compensation from the Board. Yet he is not a regular helper and expects soon to luggage in business elsewhere. We should now be disposed to comply with the request of the brethren of Mihalic to be organized into a church if there were to be found a suitable preacher to whom to commit the care of the Protestantism.”

If it is evaluated in this context it can be easily seen that the members of the Protestant congregation decreased when compared with the previous document. Namely according to the preceding archive record, it was seven but with the second document, the number has changed and became five. This decline can be interpreted as a real decrease, as well as due to incomplete information. Besides, in this instance the name of the first person became affiliated to Protestantism was given and he was Vertanes. Correspondingly missionaries were esteeming him profoundly. He was praised by the members of the Board. But he was not a native helper. To put in a different way he was

not appointed by the American Board Organization officially. However, he was holding his suitcase and was ready for duty. He was very determined and willing to be appointed overenthusiastically. Another point worth mentioning here is the desire of brethren in Mihalic to come together around a church, even though the numbers did not reach the fingers of two hands. This incident is important because establishing a church in a region is the most obvious indication that the missionary cause has reached sufficient maturity there. In other words, it meant that essential conditions were fulfilled and the Christian congregations especially Catholics at least in some ways, were ready to accept all the principles of Protestantism. Of course, sometimes this feeling would have arisen based on a misconception or depending upon an early and inopportune decision. In any case, it was worth experiencing, and the missionaries would prefer to try in such circumstances.

As a consequence of this encouraging process and progress as of the date of 1864, Joseph K. Greene, a missionary in Bursa visited the town. During this trip, he had occasional opportunities for interviews with burgess. He was also successful in sales of some books. But what is more to the point was the missionary's opinion about the town. He compared Mihalic with some other districts and he concluded that the effort to reach the salutary result and earnestness was more clear and significant (Greene, 1864: 31). In the same year in another document, it was claimed that a few had been added to the number of brethren, five of whom gave hopeful evidence of being truly Christian men (Broosa, 1864: 266). All these were interpreted by the headquarters of the Board Organization as encouraging developments in Mihalic (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions [ABCFM], 1865: 55). In 1865 another family joined the little band of brethren at Mihalic (Greene, 1865g: 32). Thus the number of supporters of Protestantism reached almost a dozen.

All these positive steps revealed another requirement. That was the need for a local preacher or helper. In every condition, missionaries uttered this requirement and invited the headquarters to solve this problem. The dimension of this issue that concerns Mihalic was reflected in the lines as follows:

"This cursory review of the state of the Lord's work in the Mihalic field affords some idea of the extent and importance of the work to be done and shows clearly that the Providence of God is pressuring us to do special work now. The cry of Asia Minor reaches us from every part of the field, and many of those who raise this cry appear to the men who have been born again by the Spirit of God. Alas, that such community is found at Mihalic should call us in vain for preachers of the Gospel! Let not the friends of Christ fail to supply the means, and earnestly to implore the Lord that He supplies the still greater need of faithful labourers to gather the perishing harvest!" (Greene, 1865g: 32).

All these cries and implores were only for having a qualified native helper or preacher. That is to say, by these words, at the same time comprising a veiled threat in terms of the course of the case was aimed to mobilize headquarters. However, if Mihalic was taken into consideration this was not the only problem the missionaries had to overcome. Just as the nuisance of native helper, the brethren at Mihalic also had to deal with one more trouble. The Governor of the town had refused to make an apportionment of the taxes of the Protestant community fairly or to treat their head-man with respect. And because of the violent oppositions of the Armenians and the imbecility of the Governor, the Protestants were for ten days prevented from burying the body of the wife of one of their member. And though the Turkish government sent strict orders, in 1862, to all the provinces that a burying ground should be given to every Protestant community from the public domain, the Pasha of Bursa still delayed obeying, in respect to the Protestants in Mihalic (Greene, 1865e: 110). In addition to the irrepressible ascent of Protestantism in this region against the incitement of Catholics, the Government had to make provision against the supporters of missionaries. These precautions were such exaggerated that Protestants were even prevented from fulfilling a right that they had obtained. As it is remembered during the 19th century the most serious opponents of the Protestants and those who showed hostility to them were Catholics.

As stated by the missionaries, the Ottoman Empire took some precautions in order to redress the balance between the communities and to show sufficient sensitivity in this regard. For example, the distribution of written materials belonging to the Protestants was not allowed for a long time, unless official permission was obtained (BOA, DH. MKT, 61: 33). Another incident in which the lack of supervision was questioned and attempted to be eliminated was the result of the news that some Protestant booksellers had confused the mind of people by distributing books in small towns and villages without charge (BOA, DH. MKT, 1847: 116). Upon the question of how to treat these people, it was decided that Protestant booksellers should be banned from travelling around the villages to distribute books with or without money, and those books were not allowed to be sold in villages except in shops and private places (BOA, DH. MKT, 1903: 37). There are also examples showing that there are no restrictions on the sale of books if the rules are followed (BOA, DH. MKT, 948: 42).

According to another archive record penned by Greene (1865h: 113) these occurrences, they were reluctantly compelled to believe, were the echo of the persecution done by the Turkish Government during the past summer at Constantinople. They led them to fear that secret instructions may have been given to the rulers of the provinces, so far as possible to thwart and prevent their work, even among Armenians. Hence fearful that the advancing light

of Christianity, entering the darkened minds of the Muslim population, may weaken the spiritual authority of Turkish rulers, the Government by its acts during the past six months, has given abundant proof that it would gladly put an end to the whole Protestant reformation.

The missionary attributed all these persecutions to an important and vital justification. As it was mentioned before by the provocations of Catholics, Sublime Porte took the action. They feared that this dangerous and heretic movement could also affect the Muslims. That's why the Government tried to take some precautions to hinder these poisonous thoughts. Thankfully, the British were the ones who offered the recipe for salvation to the missionaries in the face of their depression and troubles. This issue was reflected in the documents of missionaries as follows: *"We greatly fear that unless the representative of the English Government at Constantinople stands firm in maintaining the rights of the native Protestants, who look England for protection, the safety of our brethren will be in danger, and our efforts to disseminate the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ frustrated"* (Greene, 1865h: 113).

This was a typical example of Britain's intervention to missionary affairs. In Anatolia when the Board members ran into trouble especially with Sublime Port the first designated authority to apply was Britain. Employing British ambassador they sought a solution. And the British government demonstrating munificence with a great earnest and respect were by the side of religious ambassadors of the USA (Şafak, 2003: 36-37). In the end, all these attempts put forth fruits, and an order had at last, and with difficulty been obtained from the government to the effect that Protestant brethren at Mihalic were to be recognized as a separate community (Greene, 1865a: 113). This order contained one remarkable peculiarity. In former days, every imperial order for the organization of a Protestant community contained words to affect that *"whoever desires to profess the Protestant faith shall be enrolled and recognized as a Protestant"* (Greene, 1865c: 113). Yet in this order, authorizing the formation of a Protestant community in Mihalic, it is stated that *"whoever from the Greek and Armenian nations desires to profess the Protestant faith is to be recognized as a Protestant"* (Greene, 1865c: 113). This was a direct declaration from the Sublime Porte, that if a Turk wishes to profess Protestantism, he is not to be allowed the privilege. Hence a Protestant Turk is an outlaw in the view of Government, and religious liberty for the Turk is a thing of the past.

After all these events, the following words written by missionary Greene are meaningful in terms of showing that despite all the negativity, things were going well: *"During the past winter, the work of the Lord encountered a great deal of opposition in several places especially in Mihalic, and some of the native brethren*

suffered annoyance and loss, yet never has there been so much religious interest manifested by the people as during the same period” (Greene, 1865b: 113).

As it was mentioned above in the town of Mihalic, the work of the Lord made encouraging progress after a short persecution period. However, it did not mean that everything was going in the right way. For instance, in the last days of 1865, the tumult raised by the Catholic Armenians over the burial of Protestant woman was followed by a spirit of religious inquiry on the part of several men. Three Armenians and one Greek became convinced respecting the truth and permanently joined themselves to Protestants’ little band of brethren. Several other Armenians and three Greeks appeared likewise to learn the folly of their former superstitions, and the necessity of worshipping God in spirit and truth. After all, these people started to attend the simple meetings for prayer, and reading and studying the Scriptures, conducted by the native brethren (Greene, 1865f: 204).

The missionary went all around the houses and lastly, he came to the need of a preacher. Also to further strengthen this claim Greene (1865d: 204) mentioned his visit to the town: *“Four weeks ago I spent a few days at Mihalic, and preached there on Sabbath. Twenty-five people were present at our service and gave earnest attention. Night after night the brethren almost robbed me of sleep, by their eager discussions and questions...”* As taking into consideration of the missionary activities in Mihalic, this number was implying an unbelievable situation. Probably all these visitors were not a member of the Protestant congregation. The report of the station which was penned by Joseph K. Greene (1866b: 33) gave this number as a dozen. According to the same report two native preachers had laboured in the town and the little community of Protestants grew in strength and character. However, this place, like several others was left without any special cultivation, because of the lack of self-dedicated and faithful native labourers.

All these statements reveal that Board members were not satisfied with the approach of the headquarters in Boston. Even so, nothing changed the tendency of missionaries. They continued to be optimistic and patiently maintained their activities as expected. Because according to Greene (1866a: 70) at Mihalic, the work was still progressing in 1866 since more than thirty people attended their religious services on the Sabbath that he passed at the place. Several of the Protestants were from the Greek community, and one of them, who may be described as mighty in the Scriptures, was both zealous and prudent in his efforts to convince his brethren after the flesh. Greene hoped much from the efforts of these brethren, all of whom were young or middle-aged, and the majority of whom appeared to be truly pious men. Also, the brethren fitted up a large and convenient room for religious services.

Although it is unlikely to see a worship place that was tamped into one room as a church, this step is important. More importantly, the Board Organization took an important decision and appointed a pastor to the said place of worship. The developments in this regard and the identity of the pastor were reflected in the missionary papers as follows:

“Reverend Serope Dionean, one of the first fruits of missionary labour in Bursa, a man of approved piety and long experience and acceptable preacher, for some years pastor of the church of Nicomedia, and subsequently for five years acting pastor of the Bursa has since December been labouring at the much-neglected out-station of Mihalic. Besides ministering greatly to the spiritual comfort and edification of a few faithful friends of long-standing, he has interested others in the truth, and at least two new brethren have been added to the little company of believers” (Richardson, 1868: 35).

All these statements prove that the town would no longer be neglected. Indeed, the developments confirmed this point. In such a way that Mihalic had had a helper since September 1868 who had laboured both as a preacher and teacher. His community was still small numbering only about twenty souls. Some of them seem to be truly pious people. They had recently purchased an eligible building for chapel and school costing four thousand piasters, half of which they had collected among themselves. They also contributed to the support of their preacher (Richardson, 1869: 36).

This incident was an important turning point for the aftermath of the missionary activities in Mihalic because this was the first document that was mentioning the existence of a sanctuary and school in the town. But as it was seen this place of worship was still not called a church. However, talking about these two institutions, which were the basis of missionary activities, was enough to increase the excitement of the headquarters.

This mood of optimism would not continue so long. The station report which was written in 1869 expressed that except for the short time, this place had occupied during the year but there were very few people who gave evidence of piety. A chapel organization existed. But it couldn't be called a church. Nevertheless, the average audience on Sabbath was about twelve. There was also a small school. Some religious inquiry existed. On the other hand as a whole, the attention to work was not cheering. Following the decision that was taken at the last meeting, the salary of the labourer was reduced from five to four Turkish liras. He consented reluctantly and informed the missionaries that this was not sufficient for himself, his wife, and his three or four children. In the end, he proposed to retire from the service. However, the Board members did not have another labourer to take his place. And the town would accordingly remain unsupplied (Schneider, 1870: 37).

All these developments showed that, contrary to the missionaries' claim, things were not going well in the town. While the Board members tried to draw an optimistic picture in a positive mood at every turn, the pessimism reflected in the reports does not escape from the attention. In 1871, a new arrangement was made and Mihalic was associated with Bandırma. In other words, the two regions were gathered under the same roof and were started to control from a single-centre because they were in much carrying the same condition. However native helpers had been stationed there only three months during the year. In these circumstances, no tangible results could be anticipated. If the present status was maintained and scattering of what the missionaries had been gathered was prevented, everything would be better. As a result, the problems could not be solved if the town would not have qualified and loyal native labourers (Schneider, 1871: 38). As it was mentioned before, all the out-stations were crippling for the deficiency of native helpers. And one of the most vital and basic principles of Board members was trying to achieve a result on this subject. In return for this implore, the problem of native helper was solved partly.

According to the Board document written in 1872, the district of Mysia which involved Bandırma, Edincik, and Mihalic had a permanent labourer who was dealing with all these three regions. He was residing in Edincik and visiting Bandırma and Mihalic occasionally. Also, two theology students were giving aid to the Protestants. They came to Mysia for the winter holiday. Besides in this report, it was mentioned that there was a church in Mysia but it was not as active as the missionaries expected. Although the location of the church was not given, it could be easily understood from the other documents that it was not established in Mihalic (Richardson, 1872: 39).

In another report penned two years after the previous document, the location of the church was given as Bandırma. On the other hand, the name of the native preacher was also mentioned in this document. As the report stated his name was Pastor Abraham. According to this document Abraham was visiting Mihalic occasionally and trying to sustain the religious services (Richardson, 1874: 41). As it is understood from the Ottoman archival records this church was established on a foundation land (BOA, DH. MUİ, 53: 28).

Probably the turning point about the town came up in 1875. The station report of the mentioned year referred that the work at Mihalic so long depressing was at last giving hopes. There was a little band of brethren there who laboured with much faith and zeal. Their families by great joy persuaded them to go with together to the place of evangelical and spiritual worship. They had raised a considerable amount considering their fewness and their poverty to build a chapel. The building purchased some years ago has gone to decay. To stop this

decaying they had to have some amount of currency. The other basic need was the chronic one that was a preacher who would be also charged as a pastor. For this purpose, a student who would graduate from Marsovan Theology School would go to Mihalic. They had already pledged themselves for a part of his salary (Richardson, 1875: 42).

After a while, all these attempts gave their fruits. The visit of Richardson occurred in 1876 showed the positive effects of the struggle to have a consistent community in Mihalic. According to the missionary, six new members added to the congregation and the number increased to twelve (Richardson, 1876: 185). More importantly, the happy end came in 1878. In the mentioned date Mihalic rejoiced in the possession of new chapel, schoolroom, etc., for which the people contributed one half of the expense, receiving fifty pounds from the avails of medical practice at Sivas. Dr. West whose spirit was full of the light of gospel did this service for them (ABCFM, 1878: 68).

Of course, having a chapel is not enough for Protestantism. Normally Board members who were trying to spread their faith and claims in a region had to reach the top target, which is having an autocephalous sanctuary. In other means establishing an independent church... Although the missionaries could not achieve their dream in this town, it was also a great success to hold a small chapel after a string of bad luck. On the other hand, while they were trying to reach this target the aids came from an interesting place. A physician who was residing in Sivas helped the brethren of Mihalic to feel this amazing end.

As a result of all these events, a preacher was sent to Mihalic. His name was Baron Toroe Kendigian. He had laboured during the year with a good degree of fidelity and success. By his struggles, one Greek family of several people had recently commenced coming to the Protestant service. The congregation was the number forty people in all. A small school had been taught a part of the time. There were much poverty and distress in this place, arising from want of work for the poor and the high prices of all kinds of provisions. Nevertheless, the church members here it would seem, originally formed a branch of the Bandırma Church, but they were started to act by themselves after a while (Barrows, 1880: 47).

After having a chapel and a pastor, the number of brethren immediately increased from decimal digits to forty. Nevertheless, in the beginning, since the place of worship could not stand itself and satisfy its needs, it was associated with the Bandırma Church. But as time went by, it got its autonomy. Also, there was instability in the existence of the school. In some documents, there was some information about the educational institution but the number of students and lecturers was not given. Also, nothing was expressed about the schedule.

On the other hand, this state of peace would not last very long. After one year, some problems began to emerge because severe dissensions between several of the sisters started to disturb the peace of the chapel at Mihalic and made the young preacher feel desperate there. Here, as in many places, the place of worship was built on rocks, as if to show the greatness and glory of God. On the other hand, the mischief-makers were not yet remorseful for their sins. The care of the school, all day in addition to regular work of preacher was preventing him to deal with both institutions together (Baldwin, 1881: 48). All these problems have been announced to the world by the board headquarters as follows: *“In Mihalic the peace of the chapel has been disturbed by dissensions among the sisters, but faithful discipline has been maintained”* (ABCFM, 1882: 72). As it was seen in other examples, the Board Organization maintained its optimism here once more and tried to create the impression that things were going well.

The year 1882 corresponds to an important and critical period in terms of missionary activities in Mihalic. After this date, the Board archive records did not give satisfying information about the town. Maybe the main reason for this was the end of the hopes about Mihalic. The determined and impressive efforts of the missionaries did not produce results that would meet their expectations. So it can be easily said that the struggles of Board members in Mihalic were resulted by disappointment.

CONCLUSION

In this article, it was aimed to reveal the Protestant missionary activities in a small town of Bursa. These missionaries were the members of the American Board Organization, which produced the most effective and lasting results in the United States and all around the world in the 19th century. The Board members reached the mentioned town, Mihalic, by the way of Bursa. On the other hand, the first American Board archive record related to the town was dated 1841. It seemed that they set foot in the town in that year.

When the Board members came to a region, firstly they tried to do some inspections and endeavoured to recognize the congregations. In this way, they took some soundings and knew the congregations of the region. Mainly they were interested in minorities because in general Armenians and partly Greeks were giving ear to the missionaries. Undoubtedly the same scenario was staged in Mihalic. However, during these attempts Board members had to cope with some troubles. The basic problem was the hostile attitudes of Catholics. Until the Protestants arrived at the Asia Minor, the followers of Papacy were the dominant sects of Anatolia. It could even be said that they had no rivals at all.

On Ottoman lands, in those years there were also the defenders of Orthodox and Gregorian Churches. But their political aspects were not as powerful as Catholics. Also, these sects were not aiming for missionary activities as Protestants and Catholics.

After having some information about the region Board members set to work. They got in contact with the natives especially minorities, made propaganda about their faith, delivered and sold some books, met with the communities and having religious conversations, etc. But all these activities were not as effective as having some durable and pervasive establishments. Therefore, after completing the necessary conditions, they immediately took action to establish a school and a church. The most essential conditions to be permanent in a region were to have these institutions. Because in this way the congregation would gather under a single roof and the missionary would be performed easier and more practical.

In the end, although the exact dates could not be given a chapel and a school were founded in Mihalic. However, as the archive records signify the opening year could be 1869. The real aim was establishing a church but the missionaries were not able to build a church. Correspondingly they had to confine themselves with a small place of worship. Besides, the highest number of the congregation was only forty. On the other hand, they also had a chance to open a school. The number of students was not given. But probably it could not be more than the members of the congregation. Given all this information, it will be concluded that the expected success in Mihalic has not been achieved. In other words, the missionaries failed to get the result of their nearly forty-year efforts and were frustrated.

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