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Protestant Propaganda in Istanbul: The American Mission's Press and the Bulgarians

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American Protestant missionary organizations set up a wide network of mission stations throughout the Balkans and in the Middle East in the 19th century. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), based in Boston, was the most influential among them, operating in the European and in almost all Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire from 1819 to 1931. The Bulgarians were also in the scope of their activities although they were far from being among the firstly elected nations for evangelical propaganda. The Bulgarians were discovered for missionary labor after the Americans had been working in the Ottoman Empire for several decades and had elaborated more or less useful evangelistic strategies, which to apply in the new field. The aim of this paper is to study the methodology of the American Protestant missionaries and especially the use of printing press as a powerful implement in opening the minds of local people. Special attention is paid to the American mission's press in Istanbul and the newspaper *Zornitsa*, published in Bulgarian.

The reasons for establishing American Protestant missions in the Ottoman Empire were usually sought in the religious devotion and evangelistic ardour of the Protestant missionaries. The beginning of their work was connected with the romantic desire to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, having the long-term purpose to spread Christian truths among the Muslims. Being this an impossible task, the missionaries directed their efforts toward the non-Muslim population of the vast empire. The first proselytizing attempts were made in 1819 among the Jews in Palestine.¹ It was thought that conversion of Jews could represent a fine example to the Muslims of what the blessing may be when non-Christians accept Christianity.² This attempt soon ended without success and the chief immediate objective became the Oriental churches. The missionaries believed that by reforming and infusing new spiritual vigor into which, they could reach the hearts of more people, Muslims included.³ The Armenians in Asia Minor were the most responsive people to the carefully carried propaganda. The mission station in Smyrna (Izmir) was the first to minister them. Missionary work was also carried on among the adherents to the different Christian sects in the Eastern Ottoman provinces, such as Nestorians and Maronites, as well as other local groups, the Druzes of Lebanon for example.⁴ They preached also among the Syrian Arabs and a mission station was opened in Beirut (1823), followed by few others, but the progress there was far slower than in the Armenian field.

The Greeks were also in the scope of the missionary activities. Sympathizing for the Greeks' struggle for independence and hoping that new Greece would promote the regeneration of the East, the Board began a mission in Athens (1830), which was followed by other stations both on the mainland and on the islands of the Aegean

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1 W. Strong, *The Story of the American Board. An Account of the First Hundred Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, Boston, New York, Chicago, The Pilgrim Press, 1910, p.80.

2 P.B. Mojzes, *A History of the Congregational and Methodist Churches in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia*, PhD Thesis, Boston University Graduate School, 1965, pp. 51-52.

3 У. У. Хол, *Пуритани на Балканите*, София, изд. „Нов човек“, 2008, с. 21.

4 W. Strong, *The Story of the American Board ...*, pp. 99-101.

Sea. However, they met many obstacles and strong opposition both from the Greek clergy and secular authorities and the stations were gradually abandoned. More effective was the work among the Greeks in connection with the Armenian and later with the Bulgarian missions, and, notwithstanding they were not numerous, Greek-Protestant congregations were formed within the Ottoman Empire,⁵

Important stage in the development of the ABCFM work in the Ottoman Empire was the opening of the so-called Constantinople station. It was founded in 1831, a year after the signing of the American-Ottoman trade agreement.⁶ Actually, it is claimed that until the 1890s the American missionaries were the only Westerners engaged in missionary work whose activities in Europe were innocent of political motives.⁷ But the American Protestant propaganda was not entirely devoid of secular purposes, even though they were indirect.⁸ The religious missions were connected with the American economic and subsequently political interests in the region. Thus, penetrating the Ottoman Empire, the evangelical missionaries aimed at tracing the route for the future cultural and economic invasion of the USA in this part of Europe, offering huge market for the North American industrial products.⁹

The founders of the Constantinople station were the experienced missionary William Goodell and his family who settled in the Ottoman capital, being followed in the next year by H. G. O. Dwight and William G. Schauffler and their families. The position of the station in Istanbul was strategic. The great highways between East

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5 J. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions in the Near East*, Edinburgh and London, Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910, p.166.

6 C. P. Kiskira, *American Christian Penetration of Constantinople Society in the Late 19th Century*. - *Balkan Studies*, vol. 40, № 2, Thessaloniki, 1999, p. 313.

7 G. L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy and the Near East Missionary Influence on American Policy 1810-1927*, University Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1972, p. 40.

8 А. Пантев, *Историческата българистика в Англия и САЩ 1856-1919 г.*, София, Наука и изкуство, 1986, p. 37.

9 T. Mitev, *The United States of America and Macedonia (the the thirties of the 19th century - the forties of the 20th century)*, <http://macedonia.kroraina.com/en/tm/index.html> (28.08.2018).

and West passed through the city, as well as all the races and religious communities within the empire were represented there. Constantinople station was one of the oldest stations, as well as the largest and the most enduring, operating among different ethnic and religious groups. Its initial work was primarily connected with the Armenians in the Ottoman capital. Beginning quietly and carefully, the missionary labor among them had its results and soon the greater part of the Protestant congregation in Istanbul was comprised by Armenians. Being excommunicated by the Armenian Patriarch and consequently cut off religious and civil rights within the Ottoman society, the Protestants in Istanbul were in need of a separate ecclesiastical organization. Thus, in 1846 First Evangelical Armenian Church of Constantinople was constituted, to which thousands of people joint, separating from their old church and in 1850 a Protestant Millet was officially recognized by a Sultan's firman.¹⁰

Beside the Armenians, other ethnic and religious groups were also in the scope of the Constantinople station's activities. One of the missionaries (H. A. Homes) was especially commissioned to the Muslims. He spent much time in studying Turkish and Arabic but his evangelistic efforts were fruitless and in 1851 he eventually retired from the mission. Dr. Schaffler had come expressly for the Jews and worked for 10 years among them but was gradually replaced in this field by the English and Scottish missionaries. He continued the labor among the Muslims. In the 1860s there were several conversions but it was followed by problems with the authorities and evangelization attempts among Muslims ceased.¹¹

Comparatively successful work was carried on among the Greeks in the Ottoman capital. At first groups of them attended the service in Turkish, being later provided a service in Greek. But it was not until 1876 that regular and continuous services for the Greeks were undertaken, and the Evangelical Church among the Greeks was not organized until 1887.¹²

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10 W. Strong, *The Story of the American Board ...*, pp. 105-106.

11 J. Gabrill, *Protestant Diplomacy ...*, p. 18.

12 *Centennial of Constantinople Station 1831-1931. Near East Mission of the American Board, Constantinople, 1931*, pp. 54-57.

According to the practice of the American Board, after a mission had been established, it organized investigation in a vaster region in search of suitable places for missionary stations. Thus, in 1834 two of the Istanbul missionaries H. G. O. Dwight and W. G. Schauffler made a tour of investigation in Macedonia and Thrace, one of the results of which was the discovery of the Bulgarians and the great potential for missionary labour they promised. The American Board's work among Bulgarians can be traced to 1840, when the ABCFM's press at Izmir issued the New Testament in Bulgarian language. The missionaries were very much encouraged by the news of thousands of Bibles sold and envisioned evangelistic successes. Elias Riggs and Cyrus Hamlin were those, who insisted on a mission among the Bulgarians. However, the American Board decided that it was not able to begin this mission independently and entrusted Hamlin to invite the Methodist Episcopal Mission. Thus, purposeful propaganda among the Bulgarians was carried on by the Constantinople station of the ABCFM from 1851 onwards, after an agreement was made with the Methodist Episcopal Mission for cooperation in the vast Bulgarian field. The Methodists were to occupy the territories between the Balkan Range and the Lower Danube and the American Board – the regions south and west of the range. As a consequence of the great development of the American Board's work on the Balkans, in 1870 a distinct organization was formed under the name *European Turkey Mission* which at first included 5 stations: Adrianople (Edirne), Philippopolis (Plovdiv), Eski Zaghra (Stara Zagora), Samokov and Constantinople (Istanbul), ministering mainly the needs of the Bulgarians.¹³ In addition, in 1875, the native Protestants organized the

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13 For the American Protestant missions among the Bulgarians see: W. W. Hall, *Puritans in the Balkans: The American Board mission in Bulgaria 1878-1918*, Serdica: Cultura, 1938 (У. У. Хол, *Пуритани на Балканите*, София, изд. "Нов човек", 2008); М. Стоянов, *Начало на протестантската пропаганда в България*. - *Известия на Института по история*, 14-15, 1964; П. Шопов, *Пропагандната и просветна дейност на американските библейски общества в българските земи през XIX в.* - *Известия на Института по история*, т. 23, 1974; Х. Христов, *Протестантските мисии в България през XIX в.* - *Годишник на Духовната академия „Св. Климент Охридски“*, том 26, 3, 1976/1977; том 27, 3, 1977/ 1978; П. Петков, *Американски мисионери в българските земи*

Bulgarian Evangelical Society.¹⁴

Far before the beginning of the work among the Bulgarians, the missionary methodology had been worked out. According to W. W. Hall three were the aspects of missionary activities in use in the Ottoman Empire: the literary, the educational, and the evangelistic.¹⁵ To them could be added also their social initiatives, providing medical care and relief work.¹⁶ All these activities served one sole purpose: conversion of the local population and finally establishing self-sufficient Protestant communities, comprising of natives.¹⁷

The evangelistic aspect of the American Protestant propaganda in the Ottoman Empire included preaching, conducting services of worship, organizing and overseeing churches, Sunday Schools and regional associations, visitation, missionary touring, the oversight of native evangelist and Bible women, etc. It is important to note that, initially, the American missionaries did not aim at conversion of local Christians, neither at abandoning their native churches. Those who were sent to the Armenians and other Oriental Christians had received the following instructions: there was to be no attempt to proselyte, only an effort to help this enfeebled church.¹⁸ Their evangelizing efforts were thus confined to such personal interviews as they might have with those who called upon them or whom they might

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(XIX - началото на XX в.). - Исторически преглед, 5, 1990, с.18-32; Т. Несторова, Американски мисионери сред българите 1858-1912, София, УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 1991; В. Трайков, Протестантски мисионери на Балканите и българите (до 1878 г.). – В: Българо-американски културни и политически връзки през XIX и първата половина на XX в., УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, София, 2004; Ив. Илчев, Пл. Митев, Докосвания до Америка (XIX - началото на XX в.), София, Фондация „Хемимонт“, 2003; Джеймс Ф. Кларк, Американците откриват българите 1834-1878 г., София, Акад. изд. „Проф. Марин Дринов“, 2013.

14 С. Флад, За разпространението на христовата вяра. История на българското евангелско дружество (1875-1958), София, Изд. Верен, 2015, pp. 50-55.

15 У. У. Хол, Пуритани на Балканите, p. 24.

16 Missions of the ABCFM in Turkey, Constantinople, 1904, p. 2

17 Н. I. Gümüs, American Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire. A Conceptual Metaphor Analysis of Missionary Narrative, 1820-1898, Bielefeld, 2017, p. 35.

18 W. Strong, The Story of the American Board ..., p. 95.

meet as they went here and there.¹⁹ When converts were still made, the Americans did not discourage them from continuing attendance at the services of their own churches with the hope that such converts would act as a leaven that would gradually transform the whole ancient body of a church.²⁰ At this time the sole aim of the Evangelicals was to redeem the local ecclesiastical organizations to a more vital religion.²¹ The missionaries seemed genuinely surprised when such activities were not welcomed by the priests, and the converts were persecuted.

The pure evangelistic aspect of the missionary work was probably the less efficient one among the Bulgarians. The missionaries regularly visited towns and villages in the field and duly reported every single sign of someone being ready to confess the truth²² but it happened very rarely. Actually, the Americans were encouraged by the ecclesiastical dispute of the Bulgarians with the Constantinople Patriarchate and believed that it would possibly result in the establishment of a reformed evangelical Bulgarian church. Their hopes were dashed because the Bulgarians were inclined to allow Protestant propaganda as far as it supported their nationalism against the Greek cultural hegemony but were reluctant to accept its religious ideas.²³

The educational initiatives had been from the beginning the most prominent part of the American activity, and their work in this sphere was excellent,²⁴ having opened many schools providing both secular and theological training. Education was considered important and influential missionary method, a preparatory step to the reception of the Gospel.

The first endeavors of the early missionaries of the Constantinople station were directed at helping the local people to found

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19 Ibid ..., p. 92.

20 P. B. Mojzes, *A History of the Congregational and Methodist ...*, p. 54.

21 W. Strong, *The Story of the American Board ...*, p. 92.

22 For example, see: *The Seventh Annual Report of the Eski Zagra Station*, American Board Archives in Istanbul: ABA000200106001-9.

23 Дж. Кларк, *Американците откриват българите ...*, pp. 71-79.

24 J. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions ...*, p. 108.

Lancasterian schools, or schools for mutual instruction, for their children.²⁵ Gradually the missionaries began to introduce their own educational institutions in the Ottoman capital. As need arose to give formal training to a local staff, in 1840 Cyrus Hamlin opened a boarding school for boys at Bebek, his ambitious purpose being to train up leaders for the new era. The school later became Bebek Seminary, of which the theological department was afterwards removed to Marsovan, and the academic department developed into Robert College. The college was not part of the mission but had great significance for the spread of the ideas propagated by the American missionaries. It had huge influence on the Bulgarian society, having been considerable part of the Bulgarian political and cultural elite educated there.²⁶

In 1845 a female boarding school was opened in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Goodell, which was later transferred to Marsovan. The next stage of the development of the female education in the Ottoman capital was the Home School for Girls, started by the Woman's Board in Boston, being part of the development of a scheme for work for women by women, which was to include medical and social service branches as well. In 1876 the Home School entered its new building in Scutari and in 1890 was developed into the American College for girls at Constantinople. In 1904 pupils from 13 nations were presented in the college, Bulgarians included.²⁷ Actually, from 1878 to the beginning of the 20th century, the number of the Bulgarian students exceeded 100.²⁸

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25 Centennial of Constantinople Station ..., p. 54.

26 Ив. Илчев, Пл. Митев, Докосвания до Америка ..., pp. 181-367; Й. Желев, Роберт колеж - средище на мултикултурния ориент. – In: Българо-американски културни и политически връзки през XIX и първата половина на XX в., УИ "Св. Климент Охридски", София, 2004, pp. 132-158; О. Събев, Робърт колеж и българите, София, Изток-Запад, 2015.

27 Mission of the A.V.C.F.M. ..., 1904, pp. 7-9.

28 И. Танчев, Българи в американските учебни заведения в Цариград (от Освобождението до началото на XX в.). – Исторически прглед, 3, 1993, p. 103.

PROTESTANT PROPAGANDA IN ISTANBUL:
THE AMERICAN MISSION'S PRESS AND THE BULGARIANS

In the field of European Turkey Mission, schools designed especially for the needs of the Bulgarians were opened, too. In 1860 was founded a boys' school in Plovdiv and in 1863 a girls' school in Stara Zagora. Both schools were moved to Samokov in 1871, where they flourished until the First World War. In addition, in 1904 was opened the Thessaloniki Agricultural and Industrial Institute, which, in the first 10 years of its existence, was occupied predominantly by Bulgarian students.²⁹ All these educational institutions contributed to the spread of the evangelical ideas but still did not lead to conversion of all their students. The Christian elites in the Ottoman Empire chose the American missionary education as meeting the needs for a secular education, professional competence, and material prosperity.³⁰ The Bulgarians, therefore, appreciated the quality of the education given but most of them were reluctant to change their native church.

The literary aspect was probably the most successful part of the Protestant propaganda for all missionary fields in the Ottoman Empire, and among the Bulgarians in particular. It may be said in general that the American missionaries created a literature in every language in the Near East which fell within the field of their labors.³¹ A Protestant printing house was established in Malta with an equipment of three presses and fonts of type in seven languages, which produced within a decade millions of pages of printed matters, enabling the Scriptures, religious tracts and schoolbooks to be widely scattered throughout the Ottoman territories.³² By 1833 the publishing facilities were brought nearer to the centre of missionary operations, being the Arabic equipment taken to Beirut, while the Greek, Turkish and Armenian equipment was transferred to Izmir. In 1853 a printing press was established in Istanbul, where later was built a special building for it, known as the Bible House or American Han. Beside Bibles and other religious texts for use by the missionaries,

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29 B. Marder, *Stewards of the Land. The American Farm School and the Modern Greece*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1979.

30 D. Giannuli, "Errand of Mercy": American Women Missionaries and Philanthropists in the Near East, 1820-1930. - *Balkan Studies*, 39: 2, 1998, p. 324.

31 J. Richter, *A History of Protestant Missions ...*, 108.

32 W. Strong, *The Story of the American Board ...*, p. 86.

elementary and secondary texts on grammar, spelling, geography, and mathematics came off the press, as well as dictionaries, volumes on literature and history, and in the later 19th century were produced even college-level scientific and medical texts. In addition, Armenian and Greek periodicals were also printed to spread evangelical teaching. Thus, Protestants had an important place, along with leaders of several dozen publishing houses usually run by non-Turks, in bringing the Gutenberg epoch to the Ottoman Empire.³³

Very important for the development of these activities were the well-educated and creative leaders. Actually the profile of the American missionaries in the Ottoman Empire represents highly educated men and women, most of whom graduated from colleges and who devoted their lives to religious service in distant places in the world. The noted linguist Dr. Elias Riggs was the most prominent among them. He was proficient in 12 languages, both modern and ancient, among which were Chaldee, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Latin, Greek, Turkish, Armenian, Bulgarian. Together with his wife Martha, he spent almost 70 years (1832-1901) as a missionary at first in Greece and later in Izmir and Istanbul.³⁴ Because of his humble and devoted to the work life, he was regarded by the younger missionaries as a father-saint.³⁵ Dr. Riggs was the first and for years was the only one American Protestant missionary in Istanbul who learnt Bulgarian. He devoted many efforts and long years to the translation of the Bible into modern Bulgarian and to publication of grammars, school-books, religious and other books, studying the local language, history and folklore. Thus, Elias and Martha Riggs contributed significantly to the development of the Bulgarian language and literature.³⁶

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33 G. L. Grabill, *Protestant Diplomacy ...*, p. 22.

34 H. O. Dwight, *A Mighty Worker Before the God*. – *The Missionary Herald*, 97:3, 1901, pp. 98-103.

35 S. House, *A Life for the Balkans. The Story of John Henry House of the American Farm School Thessaloniki, Greece*, New York, 1939, p. 108.

36 L. Wiener, *American Share in the Regeneration of Bulgairia*. – *Modern Language Notes*, XIII, 1898, p. 37; Г. Генов, *Американският принос за възраждане на българщината, с особен оглед към личността на Илайъс Ригс*. – *Исторически архив*, кн. 15, 2008, p. 8.

The American contribution to the Bulgarian literary activities was at first connected with the station at Izmir and the missionary printing house, where from 1838 onward a Bulgarian department was set up in. The local Bulgarian teacher and tradesman Konstantin Fotinov published there the first Bulgarian periodical *Ljuboslovie*.³⁷ In 1853 the mission's printing house was transferred to Istanbul. A department for Bulgarian written works was also established there under the guidance of Elias Riggs. Actually, after European Turkey Mission was founded in 1870, Istanbul was regarded as a station of this mission because it was the residence of missionaries devoted to literary work in the Bulgarian language. Until 1898 many Bibles, books, pamphlets, brochures and schoolbooks were published.³⁸ Most of them were translations of already prepared Greek publications of English-language literature, but Bulgarian authors were published as well. It was claimed that half of the religious books in Bulgarian, printed between 1641 and 1877, were published by the missionaries in Istanbul.³⁹ The American Board had the credit of having provided a wholesome Protestant literature in the modern Bulgarian tongue.⁴⁰

Chief objective of the American missionaries among the Bulgarians was people's enlightenment by providing the Gospel to everyone. The New Testament in Bulgarian was received with great interest but the missionaries soon realized that it was not due as much to a spiritual hunger for God's word, as to the longing for Bulgarian literature, which at this time was neither numerous, nor accessible. The missionaries believed that by creating a literature in vernacular, evangelical ideas would easily penetrate Bulgarian society and would naturally reform it. The Protestant periodicals were important tools

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37 Н. Данова, Константин Фотинов в културното и идейно развитие на Балканите през XIX в., София, 1994.

38 After 1898 the mission's books, tracts and periodicals were printed on the mission press connected with the Industrial Department of the Mission School in Samokov.

39 Х. Куличев, Заслугите на протестантството за българския народ, София, Унив. изд. „Св. Климент Охридски”, 2008, p. 58.

40 J. Richter, A History of Protestant Missions ..., p. 170.

for achieving these goals, being considered as a form of evangelization and education, which would be able to reach folk who could be touch in no other way.

In 1864 the illustrated monthly magazine in Bulgarian language, named *Zornitsa* (Morning Star) came out in Istanbul. It was issued by Dr. Albert Long, who had been superintendant of the Methodist Episcopal Mission to the Bulgarians. He was stationed in Turnovo but moved in 1864 to Istanbul. He was assisted by the experienced missionary of ABCFM Dr. Elias Riggs. Actually, they worked together with two native assistants over a new edition of the Bible in Bulgarian and this cooperation was used also in the publication of the monthly paper.⁴¹ The editor in chief was A. Long but in 1865 he was replaced by Elias Riggs, who had probably from the beginning the leading functions in the *Zornitsa's* editorial office.⁴² They were also helped by some literate Bulgarians who were in contact with the Americans. For example, Peter Musevich-Borikov, who was among the first Bulgarians fascinated by Protestantism, worked as the paper's administrator.⁴³ Being able to use English, Armenian and Turkish, he often translated articles from the Armenian Protestant newspaper for the needs of the Bulgarian one. Some of the *Zornitsa's* native contributors were even not Evangelicals. One of them was the prominent 19th-century Bulgarian poet, publicist, folklorist and public figure Petko R. Slaveykov.⁴⁴ He was in close association with the missionaries in Istanbul, assisting them with the revision of the Scriptures' translation into Bulgarian and in the editorial office of the *Zornitsa*. When in 1866 Slaveykov started his own newspaper called *Makedoniya*, he often reprinted materials from the evangelical paper. What is more, even though he never converted to Protestantism, his views about religious reforms, the church question and educational

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41 Report of the Constantinople Station for the year ending, May 1865, American Board Archives in Istanbul: ABA000100061001; Дж. Ф. Кларк, Библията и Българското възраждане, София, Изд. къща „Мак“, 2007, р. 228-229.

42 Г. Генов, Американският принос ..., рр. 142-145.

43 Х. Куличев, Заслугите на протестантството ..., р. 74.

44 Letter from P. R. Slaveykov to N. H. Palauzov, 11 January 1866 – In: С. Баева (съст.), Петко Р. Славейков. Съчинения. Т. 8. Писма, София, 1982, р. 90.

initiatives were influenced by the Americans.⁴⁵ This was the reason why he was accused by his contemporaries of being an agent of the Protestant propaganda.

The *Zornitsa* had not been intended to be an informative paper but rather a didactic one. In the introductory article is explained that being the existing Bulgarian periodicals at the time engaged in current affairs, political, national and church matters, *Zornitsa* would have a different task, taking the empty space among the other press. It would be a moralizing and beneficial to the soul reading, which to be attractive both for the adults and the young, not only for men but also for women, to be useful and pleasant for everyone.⁴⁶ The monthly paper consisted of 8 pages, most of which were filled with religious and instructive materials. Being a missionary periodical, considerable part of it was devoted to spiritual matters, including Bible stories, moral lectures, Protestant hymns translated in Bulgarian. But the differences between Orthodox and Protestant Christianity were discussed carefully and unobtrusively and there were no direct propaganda. Simple vernacular was the language used, aiming at reaching the minds and hearts of a vast audience and introducing some basic Christian knowledge among the common Bulgarians, women and children included. Pictures were also included, illustrating the content and attracting the attention. Actually, the paper's illustrated format was innovative for the Bulgarians.⁴⁷

The priority objective of the *Zornitsa's* publishers was to deliver some missionary results by cultivating Protestant virtues within Bulgarian society. All efforts were directed at the education of the Bulgarians, believing that through the medium of acquired knowledge, Protestant ideas would spontaneously penetrate their minds.

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45 B. Reeves-Ellington, Petko Slaveykov, the Protestant Press, and the Gendered Language of Modern Reform in Bulgarian Nationalism. – In: M. A. Doğan and H. J. Sharkey (eds.), *American Missionaries and the Middle East. Foundational Encounters*, University of Utah Press, 2011, pp. 211-236; М. Стоянов, Петко Р. Славейков и протестантската пропаганда у нас. – Родина, III, кн. 3, 194, pp. 90-98.

46 Зорница, 1, 1864, p. 8.

47 B. Reeves-Ellington, Petko Slaveykov ..., p. 219.

This enlightenment should not be only spiritual but also practical, bringing changes in the native people's way of life. Thus, often were included publications concerning moral and domestic issues, as well as practical advises for providing better living conditions, according to the attainments and requirements of the contemporary Western world. For example, instructions for observance of personal and family hygiene were published, as well as some advises for the relationship between spouses and for bringing up children. Actually, it was the first time when a periodical in Bulgarian targeted women and children, being very popular the column *Letters for Mothers*, edited by Mrs. Martha Riggs. The *Zornitsa* had merit to introduce among the Bulgarians the American Protestant concepts of the important contribution to the society of the mothers, of the educated Christian women and of the associations of women-mothers.⁴⁸

In order to be overcome the backwardness of the common Bulgarians, articles of popular science were also published. They provided some knowledge about astronomy, medicine, zoology, giving simple explanations of natural laws and phenomena, description of the human body's structure, the specifications of various diseases, etc. Information for the contemporary technical developments and all kind of innovations were often included. Interesting were also the geographical articles, widening the Bulgarians' perceptions of the world. Special attention was paid to the American and British history, culture and way of life, being presented as models of modern nations. Examples of wealthy people, who succeeded to climb the social ladder, starting from the bottom, as well as biographies of prominent political figures, such as Washington, Franklin, etc. aimed to show the advantages of the Protestant ideology. These publications directed both at enlightenment and at opening the readers' minds to the Western way of life.

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48 Б. Рийвз-Елингтън, Списание „Зорница“ и нахлуването на американски идеали за половете в българското общество, 1864-1871: опит за ревизия. – В: К. Даскалова (ред.), История на книгата - начин на живот. Сборник в чест на проф. дфн Ани Гергова, София, 2002, р. 153.

In the absence of other similar periodicals in Bulgarian,⁴⁹ the *Zornitsa* was well received by the people. However, after few numbers had been circulated, the Government censor withdrew his approval, and the paper was stopped (between June 1864 and May 1865). This was probably connected to the restrictions enforced by the Sublime Porte through the Act of Publications of 1864.⁵⁰ The missionaries had to seek approval anew, using the mediation of the American Legation in Istanbul. Very interesting is the semi-legendary story about the talk with the Grand Vizier, who, being asked why he had not given his approval for the missionaries to publish their “little newspaper”, answered that because it had been a political newspaper. The American diplomatic representative replied that it had not been a political but a Protestant religious paper, and the Grand Vizier retorted that Protestantism actually meant Republicanism.⁵¹ Notwithstanding this, the permission was granted and the *Zornitsa* continue to be circulated without interruption in the next years, gaining popularity among the Bulgarians (there were 750 subscribers in 1867).⁵² Between 1872 and 1874 the *Zornitsa* was in crisis and again stopped. The reason for this suspension was probably the lack of a competent editor. A. Long was appointed professor at Robert College in 1872.⁵³ Because of healthy problems, in the autumn of 1872 E. Riggs made a trip to Egypt for several months and after returning he devoted

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49 The following papers in Bulgarian were published in Istanbul in the same time: the satirical paper *Gayda* (1863-1867), edited by P. R. Slaveykov; the socio-political newspapers *Savetnik* (1863-1870) – the organ of the conservative fraction of the Bulgarian ecclesiastical movement, edited by T. Burmov; *Turciya* (1864-1873) – which uphold “turkophile” positions, edited by N. Genovich; *Vremya* (1865-1867), edited by T. Burmov. See: М. Стоянов, Българска възрожденска книжнина, т. I, София, 1957.

50 С. Erhan, Ottoman Official Attitudes towards American Missionaries. - In: A. Amanat, M. T. Bernhardsson (eds.), The United States Relations to the Middle East: Cultural Encounters, New Haven, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 2002, p. 343.

51 Зорница, 12-13, 1931, p. 13.

52 Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Cambridge, Riverside Press, 1867, p. 58.

53 G. Washburn, Fifty Years in Constantinople and Recollection of Robert College, Boston and New York, 1909, p. 65.

much of his efforts to the new edition of the Turkish Scriptures.⁵⁴ Since August 1871 Joseph K. Green was mentioned as an editor in chief but he was obviously not very successful.

In December 1875 the publication was renewed under the guidance of Theodore L. Byington (1831-1888), who was one of the most gifted men in the history of European Turkey Mission.⁵⁵ He possessed huge missionary experience, having been the second American Board's worker sent among the Bulgarians. From 1858 to 1867 he was in charge of the mission station in Eski Zagra (Stara Zagora) and of the American girls' school in the town. At the beginning of his work he was very enthusiastic but just after a few months spent among the Bulgarians, he realized that they had not been so anxious to learn the Protestant truths. This influenced his ideas about the missionary approaches and especially those about what would be published in Bulgarian. For example, Th. Byington believed that publication of religious tracts directly attacking the "errors" of the Orthodox Church would do more evil than good, alienating the Bulgarians. He insisted that "they were to be feed with milk and not with strong meat" or to wait for the time, when, after having been enlightened, they themselves would wish to hear what the missionaries have to say on these subjects.⁵⁶ These visions were later applied during his work as the *Zornitsa's* editor in chief. In 1867 Th. Byington returned to America because of the failing health of his wife, was released from his connection to the American Board and in the next years was a pastor in New Jersey. However, being considered as a competent man, in 1874 he was invited by the Prudential Committee of the ABCFM to assist Dr. E. Riggs in the Bulgarian Publication Department in Istanbul and to take charge of the *Zornitsa*.⁵⁷ Undoubtedly, Dr. E. Riggs continued to be closely related to the issuing of the paper. Th.

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54 E. Riggs, *Reminiscences for my Children*, 1891, pp. 26-27.

55 G. W. Wood, Rev. Theodore L. Byington, D.D. – *The Missionary Herald*, 84: 8, 1888, pp. 342-344.

56 Letter from Th. Byington to Trowbridge, Eski Zagra, May 17th, 1864, American Board Archives in Istanbul: ABA003402666001.

57 Annual Report of ABCFM ... 1874, p. 9.

Byington had a short vacation only once in 1877, when the charge of the *Zornitsa* was turned over to J. H. House.⁵⁸

The *Zornitsa's* editorship was made up of eminent staff, providing editions of high quality, appreciated by many. Dr. Byington was aided in the editorial office by two Bulgarian full-time assistants.⁵⁹ A constituent part of the staff in the early period was Andrei Tsanov, who was a former pupil of the missionary boy's school in Plovdiv and had even studied for a while in America.⁶⁰ He was a teacher, publicist and public figure, one of the founders and prominent members of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society. The other Bulgarian editor was Peter Dimitrov who graduated Robert College in 1872 and worked for the *Zornitsa* until 1879, when he was appointed secretary of the Eastern Roumelia's Governor-General.⁶¹ In 1878 A. Tsanov resigned and was replaced by another graduate of Robert College – Luka Kasarov.⁶² Besides the work of the two Bulgarian scholars, the issuing of the *Zornitsa* was helped also by contributions from the faculty of Robert College.⁶³ Important contributor to the paper was Stefan Panaretov who graduated the college in 1871 and spent there the next 43 years as a professor of Bulgarian language and literature.⁶⁴ Articles were also written by Ivan P. Slaveykov, who studied at Robert College from 1865 to 1871 and after his graduation became a professor there⁶⁵ and by the college's librarian Robert Thomson. Ivan Karandjulov was also a Bulgarian who graduated from Robert College in 1879 and worked for a short period at the *Zornitsa's* editorial office.⁶⁶ I. Yovchev and H.

58 S. House, *A Life for the Balkans. The Story of John Henry House of the American Farm School Thessaloniki, Greece*, New York, 1939, pp. 82-84.

59 Зорница, 47, 1876, p.187.

60 А. Пенев, Андрей Цанов. - В: Н. Жечев, И. Сестримски (съст.), Радетели за просвета и книжнина, Народна просвета, София, 1986, pp. 467-472.

61 Зорница, 1, 1879, p. 77.

62 А. Цанов, Из старата история на Зорница. Спомен на един от редакторите и. – Зорница, 12-13, 1931, p. 13.

63 Annual Report of ABCFM ...1877, p. 17.

64 О. Събев, Робърт колеж и българите ..., p. 225.

65 Ibid ..., pp. 229-230.

66 Г. Каранджулов, Завръщане в Македония. Кратки биографични бележки за Иван Каранджулов. – Македонски преглед, 1, 2007, с. 130.

Velev were also mentioned as contributors in the period before 1890.⁶⁷ Dr. A. Long provided scientific materials and Mrs. Riggs continued her column *Letters for mothers*, while Mrs. Washburn edited a column called *Letters for Girls*. Besides, the editors often published letters and reports sent by local people, who sought publicity for pressing problems or simply wanted to contribute to the paper. Actually, the authors of many of the articles published did not subscribe their names, which were the practices of the missionaries, whose efforts were all the time directed *in majorem Dei gloriam*.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it was obvious that the *Zornitsa* was edited by highly qualified professionals, which was proved by the excellent language used. This is why the paper was characterized as a literary achievement.⁶⁹

In 1876 in addition to the monthly magazine, the weekly *Zornitsa* Newspaper was brought into existence. Actually, a division of the addressed audience was made, and from this time onward the monthly paper was especially designed for the young Bulgarians, while the weekly newspaper was for the adults. The new edition intended to be a home paper, covering both instructive and curious information of all kinds. It would also provide political news, as well as materials about the development of arts and science. The *Zornitsa's* program aimed to prove that people's enlightenment was the necessary condition for achievement of people's prosperity, as well as that strict morality was the sole and sound basis of personal and national welfare.⁷⁰ The paper was also considered as the organ of the European Turkey Mission.

The weekly *Zornitsa* consisted of 4 pages, covering a great variety of topics. Following the already established patterns of non-aggressive Protestant propaganda, the first page was devoted to religious issues in the well-known forms of Bible lessons, sermons and inspirational stories. The next pages were usually filled with various

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67 P. Ангелова, Периодичният печат на протестантските църкви в България (1844-1944), Издание на Българския християнски студентски съюз, София, 2003, p. 44.

68 L. Wiener, *American Share ...*, p. 39.

69 П. Петков, *Американски мисионери ...*, p. 27.

70 *Зорница*, 1, 1876, p. 1.

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encyclopedic articles of popular science, history, geography, technical inventions, practical instructions for some domestic problems, etc. In order to arouse curiosity and consequently to expand the readership, some odd facts also found their place within *Zornitsa's* pages. According to the missionaries the purpose of the paper was to present, together with valuable general information, much Christian truths.⁷¹

Unlike the content of the monthly *Zornitsa*, the weekly newspaper provided information for mundane affairs in a special news section, covering both local and international news. In the early issues this section was limited to one page only. After a year of existence, the editors made a recapitulation of the paper's successes and failures, concluding that it was far more well-accepted by the Bulgarians than they had expected.⁷² Responding to the readers' demands and realizing that articles of current affairs were those that made the paper popular, they promised to include more Bulgarian news. Thus, in the next years the amount of the news articles gradually increased, leading to further secularization of the paper's content.

The sources of information for the news section were mostly English-language newspapers and periodicals but some French, Austrian and Russian ones as well as the Ottoman press were also used. Materials about Europe and America, and especially those concerning the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire were translated and adapted for publishing in the *Zornitsa*. But it was especially focused on the Bulgarian affairs, covering all important for the Bulgarian nationalism issues, such as new schools, the struggle for autonomous

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71 The Missionary Herald, 79: 6, 1883, p.214.

72 Зорница, 47, 1876, p. 185.

church, and this for an independent state. Actually, the missionaries who spent long careers in the region naturally began to identify closely with the people and to express sympathy to their national aspirations. Besides, the first years of the *Zornitsa* Newspaper coincided with the Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878. The Americans believed that the Bulgarians formed one of the most important and interesting elements of the Eastern question⁷³ and naturally the basic task of the newspaper in that time was to provide information about the development of the crisis. The *Zornitsa* became especially popular after the Bulgarian uprising of April 1876 when all other periodicals in Bulgarian in the Ottoman Empire were banned. Besides, it provided first-hand information, delivered by the missionaries and their local collaborators, which was unavailable to anybody else. Actually, the paper's editors had found the right way to preach and, in the same time, to serve and to help the Bulgarian nation.⁷⁴

After the Treaty of Berlin from 1878, the Bulgarians were divided between the tributary Principality of Bulgaria, the autonomous province Eastern Roumelia and the Ottoman Empire. Both the monthly and the weekly *Zornitsa* continued to be published by the American missionaries in Istanbul, being for 12 years the only periodicals in Bulgarian to be issued within the Ottoman Empire. The *Zornitsa* Newspaper became more secularized and even acquired some political functions in terms to be considered by its editors as an organ of the united Bulgarian nation. Thus, the structure and development of the new political entities Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia were in the spotlight. Examples of their statutes and legislation were reprinted in the paper's news columns in attempt to popularize and explain to the readers the governmental principles of the modern democratic state. Actually, the newborn Bulgaria and the political strivings of the young nation were paralleled to those of the United States in the period after they had become independent.⁷⁵ The American missionaries were proud with the Bulgarian

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73 The Missionary Herald, 79: 6, 1883, p.212.

74 П. Стефанов, Протестантският в. „Зорница“ през Възраждането, - In: Годишник на Регионалния исторически музей - Сливен, 2, 2011, p. 301.

75 Зорница, 1-6, 1879.

achievements, believing that the Protestant mission had contributed for them. Thus, appreciating the long career of the *Zornitsa's* editor in chief Th. Byington, it was concluded that he had rendered a service to the cause of evangelization and to the nascent national Bulgarian movement.⁷⁶

In 1885 Th. Byington, in consequence of prolonged and painful illness, was obliged to give up work, and seek medical care and rest in the United States. The editorship of the *Zornitsa* was taken by Robert Thomson (1851-1921), who moved from Plovdiv to Istanbul, to devote himself to the Publication Department. He was a Scottish, graduated at the Edinburg University. He had worked in Robert College as a librarian⁷⁷ and in this period was one of the *Zornitsa's* contributors. However, he believed that the content was unnecessarily burdened with political news and scientific facts and after becoming editor in chief, tried to make the paper distinctly religious and evangelistic. For example, a new column was started called *Letters for the Clergy*, aiming to provoke a discussion over "the degradation of the religion in Bulgaria".⁷⁸ Despite his efforts, the *Zornitsa* never turned into a purely religious paper and continue to be very popular among the Bulgarians in the next years.

Because the missionaries regarded journalism as an evangelistic mission, the paper was comparatively inexpensive, being this a significant reason for its popularity. Still, the publishers needed enough financial resources to conduct their activity. This is why the *Zornitsa's* distribution system was well-developed, having distributing agents in all territories where Bulgarians lived within the Ottoman Empire and beyond its boundaries.⁷⁹ The papers were delivered to prepaying subscribers who were in contact to the local agents. These

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76 W. Wood, Rev. Theodore L. Byington ..., p. 343.

77 Зорница, 12-13, 1931, p. 3.

78 Зорница, 1, 1886, p. 1.

79 In the 1880s-1890s subscription fees were accepted by distributing agents in the following towns: Plovdiv, Sliven, Burgas, Yambol, Haskovo, Pazardzhik, Panagyurishte, Kazanluk, Samokov, Sofia, Orhanie (Botevgrad), Pleven, Lovech, Troyan, Svishtov, Turnovo, Russe, Tulcea, Varna, Shumen, Bitola, Thessaloniki, Lozengrad (Kırklareli).

agents were usually connected with the Bulgarian Evangelicals and the American mission stations and were remunerated for their services. Each of them who succeeded to provide at least 5 subscribers was rewarded with one tenth of the subscription price, a special edition of the newspaper and a gift.⁸⁰ The schoolteachers were especially targeted both as subscribers and distributing agents.⁸¹ At the beginning, in 1876 the circulation of the weekly *Zornitsa* was 1600.⁸² According to the Annual Report of the American Board in 1878 it attained circulation of almost 2500,⁸³ which was really huge number in comparison with the other periodicals in Bulgarian issued in the Ottoman Empire, which circulation was between 500 and 1500.⁸⁴ In 1884 the newspaper reached its circulation peak, having 5382 subscribers.⁸⁵ The monthly *Zornitsa* also enjoyed steadily increasing numbers, having circulation of 700 in 1876 that reached 3634 in 1884.⁸⁶ The number of the subscribers of both monthly and weekly editions again increased in 1885-1886, which was basically due to the marital status in Bulgaria after the unification with Eastern Roumelia, when the Bulgarian government significantly restricted the press.⁸⁷ Besides, the papers' readers far exceeded the number of subscribers and, moreover, the great majority of them were not Protestants. It was given hand by hand, read by all relatives of the subscribers, as well as in schools and in the community centers (the so-called *chitalishte*).

The *Zornitsa* strived to report news from all territories where Bulgarians lived. But the paper was of special importance for the Macedonian Bulgarians and those in the Edirne region because in the territories under the Ottomans, the circulation of other press

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80 Зорница, 1, 1883, p. 1.

81 Зорница, 1, 1879.

82 Annual Report of ABCFM ... 1876, p. 12.

83 Annual Report of ABCFM ..., 1878, p. 24.

84 А. Димитров, Българският периодичен печат в Цариград в условията на османската политическа действителност. – Исторически преглед, 10, 1991, p. 21.

85 Annual Report of ABCFM ..., 1884, p. 24.

86 Ibid.

87 Т. Несторова, Американски мисионери ..., p. 86.

in Bulgarian was not permitted from 1878 to 1890. This is why it was the *Zornitsa's* most important distributing destination, being its issuing day conformed to the day when the mail to Macedonia was being sent.⁸⁸ A special column called "Reports from Macedonia" was established in which regularly were published local news, sent by native reporters. This news usually concerned important for the Bulgarian nation issues, such as the foundation and function of church communities, schools, students' and guild associations, opening of new bookstores, etc. Thus, along with the fulfillment of their Protestant missionary aims, the *Zornitsa's* editors successfully propagated in favor of the Bulgarian language and culture. Besides, they proudly reported the progress of the Bulgarian nation in Macedonia. For example, in 1884 a note sent from Thessaloniki said that just a few years ago it had been impossible to hear Bulgarian language in the city's streets but now it was spoken by Jews and even by the Greeks.⁸⁹ In the same time the *Zornitsa* was also engaged in promulgating the "bad situation" of the Bulgarians under the Ottomans,⁹⁰ often publishing evidences of brigandage, violence, murders, plundering, etc.

The *Zornitsa* was considered as a forum for all pressing issues of the Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire. This is why it was supported by the most eminent Bulgarian intellectuals. A large number of influential teachers, as well as many of the Orthodox clergy, were known to read it with no little interest and even some of the bishops were subscribers.⁹¹ Besides, subscriptions for the *Zornitsa* were given as donations for Bulgarian schools and communities by wealthy and patriotic people. The paper was so popular that in some parts of Macedonia the word "Zornitsa" was used instead of "newspaper".⁹² The weekly *Zornitsa* was appreciated, therefore, as an authoritative ally of the Bulgarian national cause.⁹³

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88 Зорница, 40, 1883, p. 156.

89 Зорница, 21, 1884.

90 Зорница, 44, 1879.

91 Annual Report of ABCFM ...1877, p. 17.

92 Т. Несторова, Американски мисионери ..., p. 87.

93 П. Цокова, Вестник „Зорница“ за положението на българите в Македония (1876-1880). - Македонски преглед, 1, 2007, p. 101.

The missionaries realized that the *Zornitsa's* pages for secular news were those that enjoyed great popularity. In the 1880s the most important articles from the turbulent period 1874-1881 were published in 3 separate volumes. They were sold by the Bible House in Istanbul at least until 1896⁹⁴ and obviously enjoyed great interest.

The attitude of the Orthodox clergy to the Protestant missions had been decidedly hostile since the beginning of their work.⁹⁵ In spite of being a Protestant periodical, in the 1880s the *Zornitsa* closely cooperated with the most influential Bulgarian Orthodox institution within the Ottoman Empire, the Bulgarian Exarchate. Actually, the Exarch's primary purpose was not only to be the people's spiritual pastor, but to function as a unifier of the Bulgarians living in the Principality of Bulgaria, in Eastern Roumelia and in the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁶ In the period after 1878, the Exarchate's main activities were connected with support of the national spirit by providing religious service in Bulgarian and opening and supporting Bulgarian schools in as many towns and villages in the Empire, as possible. In the conditions of constant competition with the Greek religious and cultural influence, as well as with that of the other "foreign propagandas" in Macedonia (those of Serbia and of Austria-Hungary), the *Zornitsa* was undoubtedly important vehicle for delivering the Bulgarian Exarchate's messages to the local people. It is even believed that in the 1880s Exarch Joseph I had great influence over the *Zornitsa's* editorial office and some publications were inspired by him.⁹⁷ The obvious evidence of these close relations was that together with the newspaper's advertisements and reports for the American educational institutions, such as Robert College and the American school for Girls in Istanbul, there were also similar ones for the Bulgarian schools under the supervision of the Exarchate, the famous Bulgarian Boys' High School in Thessaloniki, for example. At the request

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94 Catalogue and price list of American Board publications available at the Bible House, Constantinople, 1896, p. 24.

95 И. Илчев, П. Митев, Докосвания до Америка ..., pp. 106-126.

96 Ю. Константинова, Гърци и българи в борба за османското наследство, Фабер, Велико Търново, 2014, с. 21.

97 С. Радев Ранни спомени София, Стрелец, 1994, p. 231.

of the Exarchate, some other materials were also published.⁹⁸ This cooperation continued until 1890, when the Exarchate's positions in the Ottoman Empire were comparatively stabilized and it was also permitted to have its own newspaper called *Novini* (News), which soon became *Zornitsa's* main competitor.

The Americans, as expected, denied that the *Zornitsa* had been disseminating any political, revolutionary or national propaganda and they attached the paper's considerable popularity to their own mission's successes. It was claimed that while many doubtless prized the papers (the monthly and the weekly editions) chiefly for their secular information they contained, still their favorable reception indicated that old prejudices were gradually yielding, and that a great work of enlightenment was in progress throughout the nation.⁹⁹ The non-religious materials published were simply justified as an evangelistic strategy, used to attract the local people. Thus, appreciating by the Bulgarians, the *Zornitsa* had been doing missionary work where no other agency could do it, entering hundreds of homes which no Protestant could enter.¹⁰⁰ Besides, civilizing and educating the people was considered an integral part of the entire evangelistic process, naturally leading to acceptance of the Protestant religious truths. The *Zornitsa* had been the only source of information to the Bulgarians of what was transpiring in the outside world and it was believed to have done much to form public opinion, and much towards educating the people to a just view of their political rights, while not neglectful of the interests of the Gospel.¹⁰¹ The missionaries, therefore, most positively evaluated the effectiveness of their papers, believing that the *Zornitsa* was becoming more distinctly a power in Bulgaria¹⁰²

Because the *Zornitsa* was under the protection of the British and American diplomats, it was believed that the paper enjoyed comparative freedom of censorship. But the American publishers had their difficulties, too. The *Zornitsa* was suspended by the Ottoman
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98 For example: Зорница, 26, 1887.

99 Annual Report of ABCFM ... 1877, p. 17.

100 Annual Report of ABCFM ... 1878, p. 24.

101 Annual Report of ABCFM ... 1879, p. 17.

102 Annual Report of ABCFM ... 1881, p. 30.

authorities between August 1886 and February 1887. The ground on which the suppression was founded was articles in the paper referring to brigandage in Macedonia. According to the missionaries, the real reason was that after the unification of Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, the Ottoman authorities were reluctant to allow such news among the Bulgarians in the Empire.¹⁰³ The missionaries succeeded to convince the Grand Vizier that it was a grossly falsified translation of the articles under consideration and the injunction was removed.¹⁰⁴ However, the Ottoman government continued to have their suspicions of revolutionary propaganda, which were not without reason. Intentionally or not, such ideas had been spreading through the *Zornitsa's* pages. Actually, disseminating Gospel truths and religious freedom among a down-trodden people, it simultaneously infused in them the associated ideas of civil and political emancipation.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the problems with the Ottoman censorship continued in the next years. The missionaries complained of the manifestly unfriendly attitude of the censorship, being suppressed single passages, paragraphs, sections, and entire articles, prepared with the utmost care to avoid giving offence.¹⁰⁶ When in 1891 the experienced missionary J. H. House took up R. Thomson's work in care of the press for a year, censorship was extremely strict, being everything in the *Zornitsa* severely censored. Thus, the work on the paper was much more difficult than during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.¹⁰⁷

In the 1890s the *Zornitsa* gradually lost its popularity and the circulation diminished. According to Dr. E. Riggs there were various combined causes for this limitation.¹⁰⁸ The publication of a paper under the patronage of the Bulgarian Exarch, expressly intended to rival and crowd out the *Zornitsa*, and the use of strong official pres-

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103 У. У. Хол, Пуритани на Балканите ..., с. 108.

104 Annual Report of ABCFM ...1887, p. 65.

105 C. Stephanove, The Bulgarians and Anglo-Saxondon, Berne, Paul Haupt, Librarie Academique, 1919, p. 305.

106 Annual Report of ABCFM ...1889, p. 37.

107 S. House, A Life for the Balkans ..., p. 108.

108 Annual Report of ABCFM, 1894, p. 28.

sure to promote its circulation was among the most important factors. Another one was the publication of a multitude of native political papers in Bulgaria, for which prepayment was not required, and some of which were favored with subsidies by the Bulgarian government. Besides, the *Zornitsa's* current news, so far as it related to Bulgaria, were less fresh than the given by papers printed in the Principality. Finally, the missionaries were debarred, partly by the general aim of their papers, and partly by the censorship, from full and free discussion of political matters. Actually, the *Zornitsa's* content was obviously changed in the 1890s, gradually abandoning the pressing political topics and discussions and relying more on religious, cultural and educational articles.

In addition, the *Zornitsa's* circulation depended on the financial difficulties on the American Board in the Balkans, which repeatedly questioned the paper's existence in the last 19th-century decade. The possibilities of transferring the editorial office in some town in Bulgaria and the responsibility for the papers to be assumed by the Bulgarian Evangelical Society were discussed as early as the Annual Meeting of the European Turkey Mission in 1891.¹⁰⁹ At the end of 1895 was decided the publication of the monthly *Zornitsa* to be transferred to Samokov, and united with that of the published by the local missionary station children's paper *Detevoditel*.¹¹⁰ In 1896, with the last issue of the year, the weekly *Zornitsa* was also stopped. This suspension was mainly owed to the lack of means to continue printing of the paper, as well as to the fact that Istanbul had been in a chronic state of uncertainty and disturbance. The missionaries hoped that publication in Bulgaria could be carried on at less expense and without the annoyance of Ottoman censors, even though the subscribers in Macedonia would be sacrificed, as the paper would not be permitted to circulate among the Bulgarians in the Empire.¹¹¹ The *Zornitsa* was renewed in 1902 in Plovdiv under the patronage

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109 Minutes of the 20th Annual Meeting of the European Turkey Mission, Station of Philippopolis, April 30 – May 4, 1891, ЦДА, Ф. 1521 оп. 1, а.е. 3

110 Annual Report of ABCFM ... 1896, p. 34.

111 Annual Report of ABCFM ... 1897, p. 37.

of the Bulgarian Evangelical Society and continued its existence as its official organ until 1948.¹¹²

The *Zornitsa* was the longest-published newspaper in Bulgarian. It was issued from 1876 to 1897 in Istanbul by members of the European Turkey Mission of the ABCFM, intended to be a missionary device delivering evangelical truths to the Bulgarian people. Being the other evangelistic methods not very fruitful, the *Zornitsa* was considered as the great success of the American Protestant mission among the Bulgarians. But it was destined to become something more than a religious newspaper. With their careful and unobtrusive propaganda, the editors tried not to enter in direct conflict with the existing beliefs, but to enlighten the readers and thus gradually to reach their minds and hearts. Besides, they were ready to compromise with the paper's content and, in order to be achieved higher circulation and consequently to be provided vaster audience for the propagated religious ideas, secular political news were allowed. The missionaries were successful in terms of being the *Zornitsa* undoubtedly influential and very important for the 19th-century Bulgarians. It was especially true for those, who, after the establishment of the autonomous Bulgarian state, remained in the Ottoman Empire. The paper significantly contributed to the enlightenment and to the increase of educational level of the Bulgarians under the Ottomans, being even read in the schools as part of the curriculum. People enjoyed both the detailed and interesting news section and the educational, religious and curious information provided. Actually, it was a significant source of information about the world beyond the Empire and for the Bulgarian Principality in particular. The *Zornitsa* was actively engaged in all pressing problems of the local Bulgarians and provided detailed and current news from the social and political events in all Bulgarian territories. Furthermore, in comparison with other local papers, it had some good qualities such as the accuracy of issuing and the available language. The *Zornitsa* definitely overstepped its role as a religious paper by supporting Bulgarian national cause but it was reason to be highly appreciated.

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112 С. Флад, За разпространението ..., pp. 175-181.

PROTESTANT PROPAGANDA IN ISTANBUL:
THE AMERICAN MISSION'S PRESS AND THE BULGARIANS

As to the delivered missionary results, the *Zornitsa* did not achieve great evangelistic successes by bringing people en masse to Protestantism. But it influenced the worldview and morality of the 19th-century Bulgarians. Thus, very interesting is the account of the famous writer, journalist, diplomat and historian Simeon Radev. Being a Bulgarian born in Macedonia under the Ottomans, he highly appreciated the importance of the *Zornitsa* for his co-patriots. In his memoirs he explained how the newspaper was widely sought and read by local people, his family including. Simeon Radev believed that despite the fact that his father was a firm adherent to Orthodoxy, as a result of reading the *Zornitsa's* spiritual materials, he was influenced by Protestant religious ideas in terms of returning to some primitive Christianity. The paper, therefore, had its missionary successes even though they were indirect.