Hıfzısısıhha Institute in Ankara: Building the Healthy Citizen of a Young Republic

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Abstract

Ankara was declared the capital of the newly-founded Turkish Republic in 1923. This provincial town soon became a well-organized city with modernist architecture designed mostly by Austrian, German, and Swiss architects during the first half of the twentieth century. Some of these construction projects received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation (RF). Although the RF support for healthcare projects, such as public health demonstrations and nurse training programs, began in Turkey in the early 1920s, the most visible project that relied on RF support in the early years of the Republic was the Hıfzıssıhha Institute (The Central Institute of Hygiene) building complex, designed by Austrian architects Theodor Jost and Robert Oerley in the late 1920s. The documentation found at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) suggests that the founders of the Turkish Republic regarded public health as an essential aspect of the country’s economy and a means of maintaining control over the masses. The monumental and modernist architecture of the Hıfzıssıhha buildings embodied many of the ideals of the Republic. They included centralized power, modernity, health, and the visibility of women in public, as evidenced by the Hygeia relief by William Frass, commissioned for the façade of the Bacteriology and Chemistry building of the Institute. While the financial contribution of the RF amounted to twelve percent of the building costs of this complex, the know-how that the RF provided for the establishment of the Institute was priceless. The Hıfzıssıhha project was one of many RF-supported public health institute complexes built around the world in the 1920s and 1930s, which can be regarded as precursors to the multifaceted medical campus of the 1970s.
My research at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) focused on the public health institutions supported by the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) in the early years of the Turkish Republic (1923-1938). I mainly concentrated on the Hıfzıssıhha Enstitüsü (Central Institute of Hygiene) in Ankara, while I also worked on documents related to other healthcare institutions founded in this city, such as the Numune Hastanesi (Model Hospital). To understand why these institutions were established in Ankara and not anywhere else in Turkey, this paper will look briefly at the events that led to the rise of this minor town of central Anatolia. This background information elucidates why certain architectural choices were made for these healthcare institutions which were intended to symbolize the modern Turkish Republic.

The Ottoman Empire entered World War I alongside Germany, by the end of October 1914, and was on the losing side when the war officially ended on November 11, 1918. The Ottoman Empire signed the Armistice of Mudros on October 30, 1918, and the Allied warships anchored on November 13, 1918 in Istanbul, the capital of the Empire, despite the promise that the city would not be occupied. The Allies rationalized this move as a precaution to ensure that the Ottomans met the terms of the Armistice. The Allies imposed the Sèvres Peace Treaty on the Ottomans which Sadrazam Damat Ferit’s government signed, despite the initial refusal of its harsh terms. Although signed, the treaty could not legally be ratified by the Meclis-i Mebusan (Ottoman Parliament of Elected Representatives), since the Parliament had been dissolved in 1915 due to war conditions. The Allies, in particular Britain, required the disarmament of the Ottoman Empire. Reports from Anatolia suggested that there was some resistance to the presence of the occupying Allied armies. The Istanbul government assigned high ranking Ottoman officers to carry out the management and inspection of the Sèvres protocol all over the Empire. Mustafa Kemal, the officer tasked with this duty in the coastal town of Samsun in the Black Sea region arrived at his post on May 19, 1919, only to go against the Sultan’s orders. He organized meetings that gathered delegates of the resistance movement in the Anatolian provinces which led to the formation of the Heyet-i Temsiliye (Committee of Representatives). Mustafa Kemal’s activities soon became a concern for the Allies and the Istanbul government recalled him to the capital. His response was to resign from the Ottoman army in order to lead the resistance against foreign occupation. When Ottoman elections were held to reconvene the parliament in Istanbul, with hopes to get the Sèvres Treaty ratified,
Mustafa Kemal was elected as a member of the Ottoman Parliament representing Erzurum, a province that had become a center of the resistance in Eastern Anatolia. Since there was an arrest warrant for Mustafa Kemal, he remained in Anatolia after being elected. Along with the members of the Committee of Representatives, he relocated to Ankara, a small malaria-stricken town in Central Anatolia, on December 27, 1919. This poor and underdeveloped, yet strategically located, town was a safe haven and one of the rare areas in Anatolia which remained unoccupied. When the Parliament reconvened in Istanbul on January 12, 1920, the elected MPs unanimously approved and published a set of decisions, spearheaded by Mustafa Kemal, called the Misak-ı Millî (National Pact) in lieu of the Treaty of Sèvres. On March 16, 1920, British forces stormed the Ottoman Parliament, raided police stations, and arrested several MPs. When the Ottoman Parliament shut down on March 18, 1920, following Istanbul’s de facto occupation, a new Parliament, called the Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly), was formed in Ankara on April 23, 1920, with the participation of MPs who were able to escape from Istanbul, along with additional elected representatives from the Anatolian provinces.³ The town became the headquarters of the national resistance movement where a new government was formed, and Ankara was declared the capital of Turkey on October 13, 1923. On October 17, 1923, the cabinet of ministers started discussions on how to reorganize and turn the provincial town of Ankara into a modern capital.⁴ Although the Ankara government deposed the Sultanate on November 1, 1922, the Grand National Assembly waited until October 29, 1923 to proclaim the new Anatolian state as a republic. The Khalifat was abolished shortly after the declaration of the Turkish Republic, on March 3, 1924. Ali Cengizkan explains that Turkey remained a country with a dual identity until this watershed moment⁵ which marked the beginning of a campaign to transform Ankara into the heart of a nation state with a modernizing agenda that included ideas such as the inclusion of women in public life, an emphasis on public health and healthy citizens, and modern architecture that represented the new ideals of the Republic. The Central Institute of Hygiene, with its intended mission, and the architecture of its buildings, was a vital component of this program.

In the early 1920s, Ankara faced a major housing problem as its population grew with the new bureaucracy’s move to this town. One of the responses to this crisis came from the Ottoman-American Development Company, a corporation founded by US Admiral
Colby Mitchell Chester. The company intended to develop railroads and pipelines in Anatolia and to gain access to oil fields and mineral resources in the region; in June 1923, it proposed to transport prefabricated shelter units to Ankara. Understanding the American position during the *milli mücadele* (national struggle) period in Turkish history is crucial in decoding the involvement of the RF and other American organizations in Turkey. In the years of occupation following the Armistice of Mudros, there were supporters of an American mandate in Turkey among local intellectuals. The US acted as an intermediary between the Allies and Turkey during the Paris Peace Conference and the British side also favored an American mandate in the region, since there was still a positive view of Americans in Anatolia, as they had never engaged in active warfare in the Ottoman territories, despite having been involved in World War I alongside the Allies. While there was a great deal of animosity towards Britain, an American mission led by Major General James G. Harbord was able to meet with Mustafa Kemal in the early days of the resistance movement, on October 20, 1919, in Sivas. In the days that led to the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, which granted the Ankara government most of its demands from the European powers, the US support for Turkey was crucial. Despite hesitancy towards resorting to foreign capital to avoid the past mistakes of the Ottoman Empire, the Ankara government agreed to granting concessions that favored American business interests to guarantee US backing in the Lausanne process. The development of the new Republic as a modern state was going to cost a lot financially and required expert know-how, which Americans could provide. The Chester proposal to develop the new Turkish Republic was eventually abandoned, but the relationship it fostered between Americans and the Ankara government was likely among the factors that contributed to the positive attitude towards the RF.

In 1924, the German architect Carl Cristoph Lörcher prepared reports and plans to revive Ankara and urbanize it as a modern capital with open spaces, public parks, avenues, train stations, monumental institutional buildings, and a dedicated section for healthcare establishments. These new buildings would occupy the empty spaces of Ankara, urbanizing it and turning this newly developed area into a national center. This plan would automatically push the older sections of the town to the periphery. Poignantly, this new center became known as *Yenisehir* – literally ‘the New City’. A copy of Ankara’s city plan displaying the area reserved for the Central Institute of Hygiene is available at the RAC. As Ankara outgrew Lörcher’s plan faster than
expected, Hermann Jansen, another German architect and urban planner, prepared an updated version which was adapted in 1928.

Americans have been involved in humanitarian work in Anatolia since the 1820s, initially with the activities of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in healthcare and education. During World War I and the years that followed, American aid organizations such as the American Red Cross (ARC) and the American Women’s Hospital Services (AWH) were offering healthcare services in various locations across Anatolia. Many of these operated under the Near East Relief (NER) in the aftermath of World War I. Medical missionaries of the ABCFM corresponded with RF representatives throughout World War I and provided information about public health conditions in Anatolia in their reports. During the occupation years after the war, Admiral Mark Lambert Bristol of the US Navy spearheaded the establishment of several American healthcare institutions such as a nursing school, a hospital, and a medical school for women in Istanbul. Records found in the RAC suggest that Admiral Bristol requested RF support for these initiatives in his meetings with RF representatives. For instance, Dr. Victor George Heiser’s diary entry, dated August 1, 1922, mentioned that Admiral Bristol made “a strong appeal” for RF support of the American Hospital in Istanbul. Heiser, who at the time was the International Health Board director for the East, explained to Bristol that the RF policy was to provide aid for hospitals which were connected to medical schools. He also pointed out that the ARC and the NER were engaged in providing emergency services and that his appeal for support to the American Hospital would most likely not be approved. As the 1920s progressed and Ankara’s development as a modern capital continued at full speed, the RF became more interested in contributing to projects in this new city rather than in Istanbul.

Selskar M. Gunn and F.F. Russell from the International Health Board of the RF met in December 1923 with Dr. Adnan Bey, who had been the minister of health of the Ankara government between 1920 and 1921, upon Adnan’s request. In his reports, Gunn described the action taken by the Ankara government to develop the new capital into a modern city as follows:

The Turks in the past have been famous for their inertia, but their present...
activity, which is almost feverish, in attempting to make Angora a modern city, pushing the railroads far into Asia Minor and developing educational and judicial systems, would seem to give the lie, at least in part, to the charge of inertia.\textsuperscript{16}

The RF representatives were also trying to understand the societal implications of the new regime during this time. Gunn noted:

It has been difficult for us to really find out what is going on in the minds of the Turkish peasants. One might readily ask whether or not they really accept willingly the new regime. Americans who have lived in Turkey for some time are inclined to believe that they do.\textsuperscript{17}

Dr. Refik\textsuperscript{18} corresponded with the RF during his time as the minister of health in 1924. In his letter to the RF, he mentioned his awareness of the RF’s previous contacts with Turkey dating back to 1919 and 1921.\textsuperscript{19} The main RF focus in the region during this time was public health with the intention to control the spread of infectious diseases. In his letter to the RF, Refik mentioned malaria and syphilis explicitly and used the term ‘social evils’ to describe communicable diseases:\textsuperscript{20}

The Minister of Health would accept in Turkey, nevertheless with gratitude, all material and scientific assistance, which might be granted in connection with the fight against malaria and syphilis and other social evils.\textsuperscript{21}

Dr. Refik made his first official request for aid to the RF on behalf of the Turkish Ministry of Health in a letter to Gunn written in April 1924.\textsuperscript{22} The communication between F.F. Russell, who was the director of the RF’s International Health Board, and Selskar M. Gunn of the RF suggests that the RF was indeed waiting for this invitation. Russell communicated to Gunn that he would inform the International Health Board to get approval to station an RF representative in Turkey and that Gunn should take action towards a preliminary survey of the health situation in Turkey in the meantime.\textsuperscript{23} Initially, the RF support funded and enabled public health demonstration projects and nurse training programs.\textsuperscript{24} The RF was particularly involved in the development of a robust curriculum at the Red Crescent School of Nursing, founded in 1925.\textsuperscript{25} In June 1927, Russell recommended that the RF support the establishment of experimental “county health units” in rural Anatolia and pointed out that the lack of organization in
the healthcare system was an obstacle that prevented the new Republic from reaching its healthcare goals.\textsuperscript{26} He suggested that a rural area could be selected as a pilot region for a district health system which could later be applied to the entire country. However, the first major project in Turkey to receive support from the RF was the establishment of the Central Institute of Hygiene in Ankara in 1928, rather than a system made up of separate local health units. A letter to Dr. George Strode, assistant director of the RF’s International Health Division, by Ralph K. Collins dated January 22, 1928 stated that the Turkish Ministry of Hygiene was planning to establish a new school of medicine in Ankara. To lay the groundwork, a service school to train the employees of the Ministry would be established; this school was later to become the Central Institute of Hygiene. The Turkish Ministry of Health at the time was planning to duplicate the example of a public health school founded with the financial support of the RF in Zagreb in 1927 under the leadership of Dr. Andrija Štampar.\textsuperscript{27} Since the living quarters for personnel and students were already being provided by the Ministry, they assumed that the school in Ankara would not need facilities as large as the ones in Zagreb.\textsuperscript{28} The Turkish Parliament ratified a law on May 17, 1928 which led to the creation of the Hıfzıssıhha Enstitüsü (Central Institute of Hygiene), with a plan to meet the country’s public health needs for the next twenty-five years, such as serum and vaccine production, general diagnostic laboratory services, and training of public health personnel.\textsuperscript{29} Four laboratories located in Istanbul, Sivas, Erzurum, and Izmir would support the Central Institute of Hygiene.\textsuperscript{30} The RF appropriated 80,000 USD for the Central Institute of Hygiene in Ankara to be used for the procurement and installation of equipment.\textsuperscript{31} Upon launching this project, Ralph K. Collins visited Ankara in 1928 and his report sent in January 1928 concluded that this trip was not fruitful in terms of the RF’s expectations regarding detailed information about the proposed school of hygiene, but that the situation looked promising regarding work related to the prevention of malaria.\textsuperscript{32}

Ralph K. Collins and George K. Strode of the RF met with Ismet Pasha, then the prime minister of Turkey, in November 1928. In this meeting, Ismet Pasha noted that he regarded public health as an essential aspect of the country’s economy and that providing healthcare services was “one of the methods by which the government can get in direct control with the people.”\textsuperscript{33} Strode wrote his impressions following his November visit to Turkey, as follows:
One cannot visit Turkey for the first time without carrying away the impression that the whole country has undergone a profound awakening. New ideals and new aims have been adopted and put into effect which challenge the admiration of the West.34

During Strode’s visit the floor plans of the School of Hygiene (referred to as “the Service School” in Strode’s reports) had already been prepared by Robert Oerley along with a construction budget.35 According to Strode’s report, the project consisted of four buildings for the use of public health training and a hospital building that would offer medical care. In contrast with Collins’s report in January of the same year, the Ministry of Health was able to present an elaborate plan during Strode’s visit to Ankara ten months later. Strode noted in his report:

Much study and care have been devoted to the problem and an effort made to meet the requirements of Turkey during the next twenty-five years. The Government, realizing that it must keep the needs of the future clearly before it, has been rather liberal with the Ministry of Health in its building program. In fact, it has voted a special credit of two million pounds Turkish, to inaugurate the construction of the Institute and the hospital. The diagnostic laboratory, which is a unit of the group, is now completed. The other units comprise the school, vaccine and serum section, rabies section, stable and two dormitories. [...] The aid given by the I.H.D. has been very much appreciated, not alone for its financial help but even more for the moral support which it brings, and he (Ismet Pasha) hopes to see, each year, an increasing interest on our part.36

Dr. Refik, who spearheaded the Central Institute of Hygiene project, went on a 47-day tour of the United States in 1929 and visited several public health schools, hospitals, and local health departments around the country.37 Despite the interest in American medical systems, public health institutions, and technology, the new Turkish Republic preferred Austrian, German, and Swiss architects and urban planners.38

The program to build the institute was initially developed in 1927, as per the RF records.39 The Bacteriology and Chemistry building was designed by Theodor Jost and built between 1928 and 1929.40 Jost previously designed the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance building in Ankara between 1926 and 1927, a structure which Bernd Nicolai defined as a continuation of the Revolutionary Viennese Architecture of the
1910s, rather than a representation of the Weiße Moderne.\textsuperscript{41} This building was one of the first examples of international modernist architecture in Turkey\textsuperscript{42} and Turkish newspapers of the time took pride in its resemblance to similar structures in Europe:

[...] the Ministry building is truly the most asrî\textsuperscript{43} edifice of Ankara. It resembles the latest and most modern buildings of Europe. At the same time, the fact that it was built in Yenişehir has added value. As part of the architectural dava\textsuperscript{44} of our Ankara, we have established the principal of building magnificent and monumental buildings in Yenişehir and on the Gazi Avenue, which comprises the backbone of Yenişehir. By bringing this (principal) to fruition for the first time, the Ministry of Health has served for the dava to develop Yenişehir.\textsuperscript{45}

The language used in such articles celebrating the modernist architecture of Ankara as proof that the new architectural vocabulary chosen for the Republic’s capital was regarded as a part of the national struggle. The motivation to embellish Ankara with monumental and imposing buildings became a symbol of the national struggle to move from being a weak empire to a strong republic. The large-scale brick and concrete buildings of Yenişehir were in striking contrast to the traditional wooden dwellings of Ankara’s old settlements. The organizational structure of Yenişehir was to serve as an example of order and progress for the entire country; the city of Ankara pushed its organic and chaotic provincial Ottoman past to its outskirts and became a shining seat of centralized power complete with grand monuments in the heart of Anatolia.

The significance and symbolic meaning of the Ministry of Health building designed by Jost must have captured the attention of the RF representatives in Ankara, as suggested by the presence of construction phase photographs at the RAC, dated 1927. A series of these photographs displaying, what would later be known as the Sıhhiye (Health/Hygiene) district of Yenişehir, are particularly valuable in understanding how this part of the new capital was developed in a systematic manner.\textsuperscript{46}

The Bacteriology and Chemistry building boasted a semi-spherical façade featuring a sculptural relief of Hygeia, the mythological daughter of the Greek god of healing, Asklepios, by the Austrian sculptor Wilhelm Frass.\textsuperscript{47} The early photographs of the building during its construction phase reveal that this feature of the building was completed before many of the other external details of the building.\textsuperscript{48} In the carefully
planned architectural program to develop Ankara, the selection of Hygeia as a representation of healing, rather than the rod of Asklepios, was certainly not a coincidence. As architectural historian Sibel Bozdoğan has pointed out, the new regime put women in the center as a symbol of modernism, and the architectural dava, a righteous cause or struggle, of the Republic included structures that emphasized not only science and progress but also the image of the modern Kemalist woman. The Hygeia of the Bacteriology and Chemistry building, as Kıvanç Kılınç noted, could be regarded as one of many carefully selected symbolic female figures that decorated Yenisehir. While the choice of Hygeia is less usual than the rod of Asklepios as a symbol of healing, it was not the first time she graced the outer walls of a public health institution. Although different in style, Laboratorium voor Hygiene in Groningen, Netherlands, built in 1883, also boasted a relief of Hygiea holding the rod of Asklepios. Hygeia also made a controversial appearance in the studies Klimt had proposed for Medicine, one of the ceiling paintings the artist had been commission to create for the University of Vienna in 1901.

From a technical point of view, an essential feature of the Bacteriology and Chemistry building was the way in which natural light entered the interiors in order to accommodate the specific functions intended for each section of the building. The photographs found at the RAC suggest that window installations were still incomplete in 1928, but a note accompanying these images emphasized that the building was well-lit:

The building is decidedly modernistic in style. The allegorical figure represents Science in the battle against Disease. The laboratories are exceptionally well lighted. The sections of Bacteriology, Chemistry and propaganda are to be housed in this building. There is a well-equipped hall for lecturing, etc.

One of the functions of this building was the production of health propaganda material. As mentioned earlier, Ismet Pasha, then the prime minister of Turkey, regarded public health as an essential aspect of the country’s economy and viewed the provision of healthcare services as “one of the methods by which the government can get in direct control with the people.” Documents at the RAC confirm that population growth and the desire to create a healthy society was of utmost importance for the new Republic.
The laboratories in the building served different functions with varying installation requirements. In 2009-2010, architects Mehmet Emin Yılmaz and Hasan Fevzi Çügen prepared a restoration plan for this building in order to repurpose it as a museum and library of healthcare. Although the plan was abandoned, their findings brought to light some of the techniques utilized in the original design in the late 1920s. For instance, the lower ground floor, which was designed as an English basement and housed the diphtheria and bacterial vaccine preparation and research laboratories, featured see-through partitions as separators to arrange the space in a flexible manner. The shutters for the windows were imported from Germany and produced by the Stuttgart-based C. Leins & Co. Construction images found at the RAC suggest that these were not fully installed at the time these photographs were taken. While the Division of Chemistry became functional immediately after the completion of the building in 1929, as per the RF International Health Division (IHD) records, there were some complications with the installations in the Division of Bacteriology at the beginning. At that point, the Institute mainly served as the “technical arm” of the Ministry of Health, in charge of inspection of locally manufactured or imported chemical and pharmaceutical products prior to their nationwide distribution, as noted in the 1929 RF reports.

The Hıfzıssıhha complex had five components: a bacteriology and chemistry building, stables, a vaccine-serum institute, the public health school, and residences. According to Ali Cengizkan and Müge Cengizkan, the residential facilities were of particular importance due to their resemblance to the Hanusch-Hof residences in Vienna. Except for the Bacteriology and Chemistry building, all other buildings were designed by Robert Oerley, then the vice president of the Austrian Chamber of Architects. A letter discovered in the Turkish State Archives reveals that Oerley arrived in Ankara upon an invitation by Mustafa Kemal himself, who asked Oerley, in a letter dated April 15, 1928, to carry out the necessary surveys for both the Central Institute of Hygiene and the Model Hospital projects. In 1929, the Turkish government issued a second request to the RF for 200,000 USD, when the Bacteriology and Chemistry building had been completed and almost fully operational. During this time, the Ministry of Health was considering building three additional units for the complex, and their proposal to the RF received a positive response with the allocation of the requested amount in January 1929.
The 1929 RF reports included information about the creation of a modern 320-bed model hospital featuring an outpatient unit in Ankara, which was also under construction at the time.63 These reports emphasized the role this hospital would play in medical education as a “commendable addition to the facilities offered in Angora for the training of medical personnel.”64 The construction and installation costs would amount to 4,079,336.55 Turkish liras and the Turkish Ministry of Health had 2,400,000 Turkish liras already available for the project; the Ministry was planning to pay the remaining balance over a three-year period.65 Construction work for the serum and vaccine production building, the service school, and the living quarters of the personnel and students began in the spring of 1929. The RF IHD reports mentioned the progress made in the construction of the complex.66 By the end of the year, there were roofs on all three buildings and work in the interiors had begun; according to the 1929 RF report, in their incomplete state the buildings already looked impressive: “All three buildings are considerably larger than the original unit and the ensemble makes a very imposing impression even at this early date.”67

The RAC has original copies of the plans for the buildings drawn by Oerley in July and August 1928, but not those of the Bacteriology and Chemistry building designed by Jost. This might be due to the nature of the earlier RF support, which was limited to installation and equipment costs. Some of the buildings designed by Oerley, such as the stables, no longer exist, and the extant buildings were shut down in 2011. The site plan prepared in 1928 featured a T-shaped serum and vaccine production building, an E-shaped school of hygiene building, an L-shaped dormitory with “Casino-Club” and “apartments” penciled in, an additional block marked as dormitory, a rabies institute, and stables.68 The basement of the serum and vaccine production building69 housed a refrigerated unit and several storage and packaging rooms while the ground floor as well as the first and second floors had several laboratories and sterile rooms.70 The ground floor of the school of hygiene building featured a library, an amphitheater, a lecture room, two teaching laboratories for the students, three rooms designated as museum spaces, bathrooms, cabinet rooms, and an area marked as a ‘room’ which might have served as an office space. The basement of the school had a depot, centrifuge and a refrigerated room, a room dedicated for the “observation of small animals” as indicated on the floor plan, a room for coal storage and an engine room, and sleeping
quarters for the orderlies. The first floor housed laboratories, administrative units such as the offices of the directors and secretaries, two terraces, and miscellaneous rooms. The second floor also featured several miscellaneous rooms and a lecture hall, a kitchen, a tearoom, a great hall, bathrooms, and three terraces, one of which opened to the great hall and was large enough to hold social gatherings.\textsuperscript{71}

The young Turkish Republic represented the Hıfzıssıhha project, which included the Model Hospital, in Ankara as its pride and joy. Newspapers of the time announced the grand opening of the Hospital and the completed sections of the Institute on November 1, 1933, with lines such as “the greatest achievement of the Republic.”\textsuperscript{72}

The official opening ceremony of the complex took place on November 2, 1936, and Refik Saydam, who was still the minister of health, thanked the RF explicitly in his speech that day:

I have yet another duty as the School of Hygiene of Turkey opens. That is to state that the existence of this institution is closely linked with the Rockefeller Foundation, which is highly regarded around the world, and gratefully remind that besides 280,000 USD the Foundation has donated for the construction and establishment of the Central Institute of Hygiene, they have given us our lovely friend Dr. Collins [...] Before concluding my acknowledgments of the Rockefeller Foundation, I have to recall the names of Dr. Russell, Dr. Gunn, Dr. Sawyer, and Dr. Strode who have provided us with moral support as great friends over the years.\textsuperscript{73}

The amount covered by the RF for the construction and installment expenses of the Central Institute of Hygiene in Ankara was only about twelve percent of the total cost. Regardless, a plaque commemorating the initial 80,000 USD donation for the installation and purchase of equipment was mounted in the Bacteriology and Chemistry building. From the Ministry of Hygiene’s perspective, perhaps the RF aid in the form of know-how, fellowships, assistance in the purchasing of scientific equipment, and what Saydam referred to as “moral support,” was even more crucial than the monetary contributions.

Finally, it is important to consider the Central Institute of Hygiene in Ankara in the greater context of the global public health movement and the role the RF played in
establishing similar institutions around the world. The RF support not only solved financial problems and provided know-how, but also connected healthcare institutions in different corners of the world. From an architectural perspective, a building complex such as the Central Institute of Hygiene was a step towards a new approach to healthcare design that turned the hospital into a multifaceted medical campus which would reach its zenith many decades later in North America in the 1970s.74

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1 Various spellings of the city’s name such as Ankyra and Angora appear in pre-1928 primary sources. Most American sources, including the RF records, use “Angora.”
2 Equivalent of “Prime Minister.”
3 For more information about the milli mücadele period and the Turkish War of Independence: Mustafa Kemal ( Atatürk), Nutuk (Ankara, 1927); Halide Edib (Adıvar), The Turkish Ordeal (London: John Murray, 1928); Kemal H. Karpat, Kısa Türkiye Tarihi (İstanbul: Timiş Yayımları, 2012).
5 Ibid.
10 RF Records, maps and flat files, 1/805, drawer B 4, folder 3
11 RF Records, RG 5, series 1.2, box 17, folder 277
12 RF Records, RG 5, 805, box 148, folder 1942.
13 Ibid.
14 He later took the surname ‘Adıvar’. Citizens of the Ottoman Empire, and later the Turkish Republic, did not have surnames until 1932 when the ‘surname law’ was adopted.
15 RF Records, projects, SG 1.1, series 805, box 1, folder 1 – Ralph K. Collins’ report on public health in Turkey (1926)
16 RF Records, projects, SG 1.1, series 805, box 1, folder 1 – report on public health in Turkey (1926)
17 Ibid.
18 He later took the surname ‘Saydam’. Some of the institutions made possible with RF support were led by physicians such as Refik Saydam and İhsan Doğramacı who became prominent figures in Turkey. While Saydam served as the Minister of Health and later as the prime minister of the Turkish Republic from 1939 until his death in 1942, Doğramacı went on to become the president of the Council of Higher Education of Turkey which was established in 1981, following
a military coup. These physicians played an important role in RF’s decision to support their projects. Similarly influential physicians were central in RF projects in other countries such as Canada’s Wilder Penfield.

19 RF Records, RG 5, series 805, box 207, folder 2652.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 RF Records, SG 1.1, series 805, box 1, folder 5.
25 RF Records, field offices, RG 6, series 1, box 37, folder 457.
26 RF Records, projects, SG 1.1, series 805, box 1, folder 9 – Letter from Russell to Gunn (June 23, 1927)
27 For more information see: https://www.snz.unizg.hr/en/about/school-history/ (Last Access: November 2, 2023)
28 RF Records, RG 2, series 805, box 12, folder 101
29 RF Records, projects, SG 1.2, series 805, box 1, folder 5.
30 The new administration inherited several public health and healthcare establishments from the Ottoman Empire. These included a vaccine production facility founded in Istanbul in 1892 (Telkıhane), the Bakteriyolojihane-i Şahane (Imperial Bacteriology, renamed as the Bakteriyolojihane-i Osmani in 1911) founded in 1893, the Kimyahanı (chemistry lab) founded in 1894, the Daülkelp Ameliyathanesi (Rabies Treatment Institution) founded in 1897, a serum production facility in Erzincan, founded in 1911 (Erzincan Serum Darülistihzarı), bacteriology centers in İzmir and Sivas, founded in 1916 and 1917 respectively, and veterinary medicine centers such as the Bakteriyolojihane-i Baytari (Veterinary Bacteriology Institution) founded in 1901 and the Pendik Veterinary Control Institute founded in 1913. For more information, see Meryem Bulut, “Refik Saydam Hıfzıssıhha Merkezi Başkanlığı, 1928-2017,” MA thesis (Ankara: Hacettepe University, 2021): 14-16.
31 RF Records, projects, SG 1.2, series 805, box 1, folder 5.
32 RF Records, RG 2, series 805, box 12, folder 101.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 RF Records, SG 1.1, series 805, box 1, folder 12.
38 This might be related to the German training of the founders of the Republic. German generals, such as Colmar von der Goltz, often taught at Ottoman military colleges and led the Ottoman armies. Furthermore, German and Swiss universities were a popular choice for Ottoman students in the nineteenth century in fields such as engineering and medicine. University education in the late Ottoman Empire was also under German influence (Uğurgül Tunç, “Osmanlı Modernleşmesinde Eğitim, Sanat ve Kadın: İnşas Sanayi-i Nefise Mekteb-i Âlisi Örnegi,” MA thesis, Istanbul Technical University, 2018, 65). Enver Pasha, the Minister of War between 1914 and 1918 whose decisions resulted in the Ottoman Empire’s involvement in World War I alongside Germany, was known as an admirer of Germany. Many of the Ottoman military officers, who later abolished the Sultanate and established the Republic, served under German generals during World War I. For more information see Salih Kış, Osmanlı Ordusunda Alman Ekolü: Von der Goltz Paşa (1883-1895) (Konya: Palet Yayınları, 2017).
39 RF Records, IHB/D records, RG 5, Series 3-700, box 234, folder 2862.

Bernd Nicolai, Modern ve Sürgün, 27.


An adjective meaning “up-to-date,” in compliance with the requirements of current times, and could also be interpreted as “modern.”

A noun meaning righteous cause or struggle.

Hakimiyet-i Milliye, July 4, 1927 (trans.: Uğurgül Tunç)

RF Records, photographs, series 805, box 167, folder 3243

Bernd Nicolai, Modern ve Sürgün, 29.

RF records, photographs, series 805, box 167, folder 3243


RF Records, photographs, series 805, box 167, folder 3243

RF Records, RG 2, series 805, box 12, folder 101. (Meeting with Ralph K. Collins and George K. Strode of the RF in November 1928)


RF Records, IHB/D records, RG 5, Series 3-700, box 234, folder 2862.

Ibid.


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RF Records, projects, SG 1.2, box 1, folder 5.

RF Records, IHB/D records, RG 5, series 3-700, box 234, folder 2862.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

RF Records, maps and flat files, 1, series 805, drawer B 4, folder 4

RF Records, maps and flat files, 1, series 805, drawer B 4, folder 3

Ibid.

Ibid.