

THE ANNIHILATION
of
THE GREEKS
in
PONTUS
by
THE TURKS

**UNION OF THE FIGHTERS
FOR THE LIBERATION
OF THE GREEK LANDS
SEIZED BY TURKEY**

Research Work

by

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INTRODUCTION

IT IS HIGH TIME a special file on the records of the persecutions in Turkey is opened. The hour has struck. Those are not only our words but also those of the Turks who consider themselves a mature, cultural European people and persistently look for a place in the European community, a place that really would be theirs when they are able to admit their historical part.

At a time when Turkey is looking for a place in the European family --with which it is not connected culturally but only by its interests -- **IT IS USEFUL FOR MANKIND AND MOST OF ALL FOR EUROPE TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE AWFUL PERSECUTIONS OF CHRISTIANS AND WITH THE GENOCIDE OF ARMENIANS AND GREEKS THAT HAVE BEEN BARBAROUSLY PERPETRATED BY OUR NEIGHBOUR.**

Turkey of today can rightly be considered a cradle of Christianity. It is where the Christian apostles Paul, John, Peter, Andreas and others founded the first Christian communities. It is where ancient Christianity had one of its most fascinating moments. As early as the fifth century the whole peninsula of Asia Minor with its 22-million population was completely Christian, and the Greek language was the official language of the various nationalities.

However, when today one mentions religion in Turkey one immediately has in mind Islam. If we open the modern encyclopaedias of the Christian Churches in the East, we shall notice that Turkey is mentioned almost nowhere in spite of the fact that even today it is in Constantinople that the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchate -- the centre of the Orthodox Christians all over the world -- is situated. In short, it seems that Christianity has disappeared from Turkey. But how has this happened? It must have been a tormenting question first for the Emperors, courtiers and the Church in Byzantium and then for all those bigger and smaller states that had been established within its frontiers only in their own interest.

When for the first time in the eleventh century the Turks came in contact with the Byzantine state they were so few in number that even if they had imposed their will by force they would have not been enough for mayors and governors of the Byzantine towns and villages. They would have scattered and merged religiously and linguistically with the 22-million Christian Greek-speaking peoples in the same way as the Roman conquerors had been assimilated by the inhabitants of the Greek and Asia Minor region.

But things turned out quite the opposite. Making use of all methods, all diplomatic and coercive means that man's mind can imagine, the Turks, since the very first day they set foot in this area, geographically considered as easy to conquer, succeeded slowly and methodically to assimilate linguistically and religiously the population of Asia Minor not in one conquest, as we think, but in consecutive conquests in the course of entire 10 centuries.

Epilogue and culmination of all diabolic methods invented and applied by them have been the 1908 - 1923 persecutions on the part of the Young Turks. **THEY RESULTED IN THE EXTERMINATION OF THE ARMENIANS, THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ASIA MINOR GREEKS AND THE REDUCTION OF THE 22-MILLION CHRISTIANS TO 1 MILLION AND 280 THOUSANDS THROUGH FORCED POPULATION EXCHANGE: A BARBAROUS ACT FOR THE CARRYING OUT OF WHICH NO ONE ASKED WHAT THE OPINION OF THE INTERESTED PEOPLES WAS.**

I believe that today it is not enough just to remember because it goes without saying that it will become only a memory. The horrific historical fact about the decrease of the number of the Greeks in the present-day Greek region has not been a momentary crime - everybody knows it. **THIS IS A LASTING, 10-CENTURY-LONG, INCESSANT ANNIHILATION OF THE GREEKS, A PROCESS THAT EVEN NOW-A-DAYS IS UNDER WAY IN CYPRUS AND IN THE TORMENTED TURKISH KURDISTAN.**

And, as long as we, the victims of the Asia Minor catastrophe and the historians, remain just silent spectators to the numberless crimes com-

mitted according to specific plans, as long as we do not take a political stand as a modest tribute to the millions of innocent victims, the Turks will carry through their destructive undertaking in suffering Cyprus, in fighting for autonomy 'Turkish' Kurdistan and elsewhere in Turkey where, under severe isolation, some remaining groups of Asia Minor peoples still exist.

There is still time for the European community and the politicians in Europe who are now flirting with Ozal to consider not only the strategic situation of Turkey but also history of diplomacy with an emphasis on its part in World Wars 1 and 2 and to take an unprejudiced political stand on the basis of the documents that are kept in the archives of the Foreign Ministries of their countries. **LET THEM ESTABLISH AN UNBIASED COMMISSION OF IMPARTIAL WORLD-FAMOUS HISTORIANS AND STUDY THE FILES OF THE PERSECUTIONS. AND, IF TURKEY IS FOUND GUILTY, LET THEM ASK IT TO DEFEND ITSELF.** Let Turkey take a clear stand on the genocides and not resort to Nasreddin Hodza's methods that insult human mind. Only then the door of the European community should be opened to it.

GENOCIDE OF THE PONTIANS

This title was prompted to me by the wonderful articles of Michalis Haralambides, deputy-chairman of KEPOME, entitled: 'Pontus, a Right to a Memory', published on September 17 and 18, 1986. In those articles Michalis Haralambides, in his peculiar style, depicted the tragedy caused to the Pontian people by all the Great Powers that, by means of the Lausanne Treaty, or, 'the bargain of the century' as the author calls it, wanted to close a chapter of the latest history of the Pontian Greeks. The article's subject was 'The Annihilation of the Pontians' or, more correctly, 'The Genocide of the Pontians' since only the last victims are more than 350,000.

It is not an easy life in times when words become void of their meaning under the political tendentiousness of the Great powers, big interests or other ignoble factors. Those days we have read in the press ('Eleutherotipia', Sept. 26, 1986 and 'Proti' of Sept. 25, 1986) that Evren's political supporters, surpassing in insolence all former Turkish governments, which at least had not dared discuss this issue, are trying hard through well-paid in dollars accomplices to distort history and cover up the crimes against the Armenian and Greek peoples committed at the beginning of our century.

Evren has bribed an American professor from the University of Louisville, Justin McCarthy - and some other participants in the Congress on history (actually, where else could he have found them?) in order to take a stand on the Armenian question at the Congress which was held several days ago in Constantinople. Paid by Evren, McCarthy topped his part and declared at the Congress that the documents of the western consulates concerning the massacres and the genocide as well as the detailed descriptions by various correspondents -witnesses 'were to a large extent partial and false'.

Evren has required this from the American professor McCarthy in order to impudently support the official stand of the Turkish government that the genocide of the Armenians was the brain-child of Western diplomats, Greeks and Armenians. He declared that massacres had never hap-

pened. It were rather the Armenians who had made life difficult for the Turks in this region by constant robberies and murders.

These fabrications were analysed by the short-sighted Turkish chauvinist Ahmet Vera in his book in German 'The Truth about the Armenians' (Ankara, 1976). Evren tries to hush up the Armenian question as painlessly as possible because for some time now he has a new goal: the destruction of the third large people in the region of Asia Minor - the Kurds. It is no accident that the well-paid Congress of the Institute for Turkish Studies in Constantinople was held at the time when behind the political curtain for the first time the third act of one and the same play is on in such a dirty manner, a play that can be entitled: 'The Genocide of the Asia Minor Peoples: Armenians, Greeks, Kurds'.

THE STAND OF MIKIS

In the statements in support of Peace published in the press ('Proti', Sept. 30 and 31, 1986 and 'Nea' of Sept. 31, 1986) by the great Greek composer Mikis Theodorakes we read about a new Greek-Turkish friendship. I for one cannot or, inwardly I do not want to interpret his stands. But I am sure in one thing: now-a-days Evren could not find a better ally than Mikis Theodorakis for the success of his expansionist plans.

Had he been a bit smarter and a bit more familiar with the modern Greek-Turkish problem Theodorakes would have known what an evil to Greece only had been caused by the previous 'Greek-Turkish friendship' of Eleutherios Venizelos and Ismet Inonu in 1931. He should have known how and why the number of the 130,000 Greeks from Constantinople who, under the Lausanne Treaty, had remained there, was reduced to 3,000 people.

However, it is not for the first time that, by his statements, Mikis Theodorakes, whom I admire for his music, stains his record and causes traumas to the Greek refugees, in particular. I remember an interview about the 1922 refugees given for the Los Angeles Times newspaper and carried by the Athens newspaper Vima (Aug. 30, 1973). Speaking about the victims of the Asia Minor catastrophe, he said: 'Those were weak people who had no other means to fight against the law and the ruling

society but resorting to drugs.

In other words, according to Mikis Theodorakes, the refugees had been , or have become drug traffickers. I am not sure whether a greater abuse to this live cell of the Greek society has ever been pronounced by someone else. And, in spite of the fact that he has had enough time to correct his declarations after the violent protests of the refugees, Theodorakes, in 6 years, repeated them in Vima of April 22, 1979.

THE DESTRUCTION

To avoid an unintentional involvement into the play of any Evren, I mark this with sorrow in brackets. I go back to the subject about the genocide of the Pontian Greeks. So far it has not been recognized neither by any government of Turkey nor by those that secretly support it. However, there are unpublished diplomatic documents, mainly by Turkey's allies at that time, which reveal also the extent of Turkey's barbarity and the fiendish means for destruction it has invented. First, I shall discuss in brief the political situation in Asia Minor in general and in the Pontus area in particular in the attempt to inform better the reading public.

After the reforms of 1856 known in history as the Hatt-ı Hümayun, the Greeks in Pontus lived under a comparatively bearable Turkish yoke. The beginning of some equality of rights and some privileges that were granted to them for the first time improved the conditions of the enslaved Pontian Greeks the bigger part of whom up to that time had lived in fear in the inaccessible mountains. For the first time they dared settle in more fertile areas, wherever they smelled an easy profit. The Greeks abandoned their hiding places and began to build up new villages.

The opinion of the German missionary H. Gelzer on the Greeks in Asia Minor is very indicative. 'Unexpectedly, the Greeks in Asia Minor make progress. They are on the constant move. First, a grocer would settle down, then - several families. They would be followed by the teacher; then, a church would be built, the priest would come and the Greek commune would be ready.'

Due to the group migrations, the coast line of Pontus regained its Greek character. New schools

new houses, new churches were built everywhere. The example of the Greek Amisos proves the above-said. According to the statistical studies by the English historian A. Briver, Amisos - Samsun in Turkish - up to 1860 had been a Turkish village with 4,000 inhabitants. In 1910 it was the biggest commercial port of Pontus with 40,000 inhabitants, two thirds of whom were Greeks. In 1896 the town had 214 enterprises and 156 of them were Greek.

COMMERCIAL GENIUS

At the beginning of 1900 trade in Pontus passed in the hands of the Greeks and to some extent - of the Armenians. Though famous for their commercial genius, the Armenians could not develop it to a satisfactory level in the Pontus area since they were a minority. The Pontian Greeks got goods from the big markets in France and England. The goal of the British and the French was to play high in the whole Middle East. They had no direct contact with the Asia Minor population; people from the government quarters were in charge of the exchange. They had trade centres in the big coastal towns; most of these centres were also centres where political decisions were taken and the political aspirations of their countries in the Mediterranean served. The British and the French did not deal in retail-trade.

After the 'shameful war' of 1897 the commercial situation in Turkey developed to the detriment of the Greeks. Germany has appeared in the East comparatively early, about 1867. It began consolidating its political positions after the Berlin Congress of 1878 where the German Chancellor Bismark took a stand in favour of the Empire. Thus he won the favours of the Sultan and the road to the Middle East was wide open for him. Bismark could smell the Mosul oil which was badly needed for the newly-undertaken industrial revolution. Later on, in order to give a boost to the German propaganda, Wilhelm II, or our brother-in-law (our King married his sister) undertook travels to the East. When he first visited Constantinople - because he went there two times more - he embraced Sultan Abdul Hamid and decorated the Turkish dignitaries with orders. He officially opened the doors of the Military Academy

in Berlin for the Turkish officers. The King assigned general von Goltz the task to reorganize the Turkish army. The German embassy in Constantinople and the consulates in the East turned into intelligence centres. Wilhelm II sent from Germany hundreds of scientists from all fields of science to get acquainted with the political, economic social, military, religious and cultural situation of Turkey and to inform about it. The political department of the Foreign Ministry in Berlin was flooded by long reports. All the reports encouraged the near future of Germany in this region. The only obstacles that were pointed out by the German spies were the large-scale supervision on the part of the British and the French in the Ottoman state and the Christian minorities in the East, i.e. Greeks and Armenians. The last ones were seen as an obstacle both because trade and the economy as a whole were in their hands and they were considered friends of the British and the French - if a war broke out between Germany, England and France they would be on the side of the British and the French. That is why, in order to reach their goal, the Germans did not hesitate to bring slanders against the Greeks to the Sultan. They would avail themselves of the tiniest political anomaly that could be blamed on the Greeks and the Armenians and could develop to their detriment. The Germans urged the Turks by all means to take a stand against them. They presented to the Sultan the development of the national movements and the people's search of their national identity as deadly weapons that would bring about the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. It was for this reason that, in token of love for the Ottoman people, they suggested to him plans for the suppression of the movements and these plans were accepted by the Sultan without reserve and later on were taken up by the Young Turks.

THE YOUNG TURKS:

'WE SHALL CUT YOUR HEADS OFF'

With the second stage of the Young Turks' revolution and with the Crete question in particular many things became clear. The young Turks showed their real policy and their immediate plans.

The Asia Minor Greeks soon became victims to their own immense enthusiasm. Giving vent to their national aspirations suppressed for centuries in their hearts, as early as in the first stage of the Young 'Turks' movement when all revolutionaries were speaking about human rights, freedom, equality, brotherhood among nations, they revealed themselves in front of the adherents of Panturanism who were quick to get the upper hand and who took an extreme and barbarous stand towards the minorities. Frightened by the dimensions of the national movements in the Balkans, the Panturanists preached hatred and annihilation of the nationalities fighting for autonomy. The words of Nazim bey, an active participant in the Young Turks' movement in Smyrna, to the Greek poet Argiropoulos are quite indicative: 'THE GREEK SPIRIT SHOULD BE DESTROYED NOT ONLY IN SCHOOL, BUT ALSO EVERYWHERE IT IS MANIFESTED IN ORDER TO SAVE TURKEY'. The far-reaching goal of the Young Turks was the assimilation of all peoples in one society where the Moslem Turks would be masters.

In connection with the Crete question (1909) and the struggles for the unification of the Greeks, the Turkish nationalism forgot once for all the slogans about equality and brotherhood, and started carrying out its annihilation programme aiming at the creation of a purely Turkish state. The Great Turkish chauvinism showed its real face, without a mask. Speaking about the Greeks in Asia Minor the Turkish ambassador used to say: 'New Turkey wants to put an end to the mixing of the two nationalities, i.e. Greeks and Turks because under the term Greeks it has in mind all Christians. It wants the Greeks to realize that Greeks in Turkey are Turks and not Greeks. The oecumenical Patriarchate should no longer be the cradle of the Greeks. The Ottomans who are the only masters in their home will impose their will over everybody gradually and with understanding but with the greatest firmness ever known.'

The German R. Scafer has presented more laconically the political principles of the Young Turks: 'ONE FATHERLAND, ONE EDUCATION ONE LANGUAGE.'

On July 24, 1909, the German ambassador to Athens Mangenheim wrote to Chancellor Bulow what the Turkish prime minister and minister of war, commander-in-chief Shafket-pasha had said about the new situation: 'THE TURKS HAVE DECIDED TO START AN ANNIHILATING WAR AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS IN THE EMPIRE. THEY WILL START IN TURKEY WHERE THE BIGGEST PART OF THE CHRISTIANS LIVE AND THEN - OUTSIDE TURKEY WHERE THERE ARE STILL CENTRES OF RESISTANCE'.

WE SHALL DESTROY YOU

Two days later, on July 26, 1909, the German ambassador to Constantinople cabled to the ministry in Berlin about the dramatic meeting of Patriarch Joakimes III with the Turkish prime minister Shfket-pasha which made a front-page sensation of all Turkish, Greek, and foreign newspapers appearing at that time in Constantinople. That was the first time when the Turkish prime minister personally threatened the spiritual and religious leader of the most numerous minority, saying among other things: WE SHALL CUT YOUR HEADS OFF, WE SHALL DESTROY YOU. EITHER WE SHALL LIVE, OR - YOU.'

Patriarch Joakimes III did not say anything in return. Once again he showed his superiority. He was one of the few patriarchs who did not hesitate bear the martyr' cross. Without uttering a word he opened the door and went out.

Under the new circumstances and the tension that was created the Turks complied no more with the conventionalities. They were on the offensive. Grievances were coming from every place in Asia Minor where Greeks lived. On may30, 1911 the bishop of Amasia, Germanos, famous for his support for the Macedonians, while on a visit to the bishop in Kastoria informed the patriarchates and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece about the unprecedented crimes committed by the Turkish authorities in his area and more specifically in the village of Alancik, Erpaa district. The fol-

following excerpt reveals the tragic state of the inhabitants and at the same time it shows the beginning of the destruction of the Pontus Greeks.

'When the tyrant, the notorious mudur (district constable) came to this area most of the inhabitants went away to the mountains, many women ran away to the neighbouring villages. Having seen that, the respectable government officer deployed his headquarters in the village and in the course of eight days destroyed the livestock of the poor peasants, profaned all the holy places, let the gendarmes commit outrages and barbarities that had been committed in the dark ages by the Barbarian conquerers against the enslaved population. First, eight gendarmes caught Tsakira Eleitheriou from the village, then they tied up her hands, locked her up in a house that was temporarily turned into a prison and in the course of six days they were violating her honour. The same thing happened to Sophia Vasiliou Bayramoglu, found in the village..'

THE YOUNG TURKS DECLARED ECONOMIC WAR TO EVERYTHING GREEK IN ALL TURKEY. The Greek ships were forbidden to cast anchor in the Turkish harbours. The import and the sale of Greek goods was also forbidden. Greeks were forced to join the Young Turks' movement and to take part in their meetings. The young Greeks were forced to treat their compatriots badly and boycott the Greek trade; they were made to vote against their feelings and oppose the activities of the Greeks. This information has come to us through the report of the Austrian consul in Trapezus, Motitz, of May 27, 1910. Here is how he explains the resistance of the Greeks:

'The Greeks are forced to do it because their resistance cannot be tolerated ... and ... this time, no doubt about it, their (the Turks') patriotism is false. The Turks also know it.... But, for the Young Turks it is enough that they (the Greeks) declare that they would boycott.'

'A HOLY WAR'

The situation was no different in Amisos, according to the report of the Greek vice-consul to this town that was sent to Foreign minister D.Kalergis on June 19, 1910.

On June 13, 1910 the Turks from Trapezus

organized a demonstration on the occasion of the Crete question and they carried banners with the inscriptions: 'Crete or Death'. The Austrian consul in Trapezus informed Vienna and took down the words of the first speaker: a mullah who, after 20 minutes of praying started with the words: '...Allah and his prophet, will they be our witnesses that we shall shed even the last drop of our blood for our fatherland?' And the crowd answered in one voice: 'Yes! We are ready!'

WITH GERMANY

When the Patriarchate realized that it is impossible to render any help, it decided, in token of grief, to close on May 25, 1914 all the churches and schools and to inform the Great Powers about the new persecutions. But it did not succeed because World War I broke out and made things simpler. Turkey joined the war on the side of Germany. The fiendish couple could carry out its old plan about the destruction of the Christians without fearing that the supposed allies of the Christians - English, French and Russians - would interfere as they were in the other camp. The war untied their hands.

The Young Turks had drawn a lesson from the Balkan wars: only through the annihilation of the Greeks and the Armenians they could make Asia Minor their fatherland. The various forms of violence were not enough to turn the Christians into Turks.

On June 20, 1914 they mobilized all the peoples from the Ottoman Empire. All the men from 19 to 45 years of age were called to the colours. He who did not present himself within 11 days was considered a deserter and condemned to death. The order was stuck on the walls of the mosques, the churches, coffee-houses and all the public works. **HAVING THE ORDER AS A LEGAL JUSTIFICATION THE TURKS STARTED MURDERING THOSE WHO WERE ON THE BLACK LISTS.** They would excuse their doings by saying that they killed deserters. **THE YOUNG TURKS INSTILLED INTO THE MIND OF THE BACKWARD PEOPLE RELIGIOUS AND NATIONAL FANATICISM AND BY MEANS OF DEMONSTRATIONS PREPARED THEM PSYCHOLOGICALLY FOR THE BIG MASSACRES.**

In pursuance of its goals in this tenderest spot and being well aware that in the future the stakes would be high, Germany did not hesitate to sacrifice the Christian peoples from the East on the altar of Panturanism. TO A CERTAIN DEGREE IT IS ALSO TO BLAME FOR THE GENOCIDES OF GREEKS AND ARMENIANS. This is made evident by the unpublished archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus for example, the German commander-in-chief Liman von Sanders was the one who suggested to the cautious Turks to remove the Greeks from the coast allegedly for military reasons qualifying them as Entente's agents.

In spite of the fact that the Greek king was a son-in-law of Emperor Wilhelm II, all the German leadership looked disapprovingly on the progress of the Greeks in Asia Minor and never missed a chance to show its hostility to them. Wherever it was possible they would accuse the Greeks in Turkey about their strong national conscience. The German Foreign minister von Jagow complained to the Greek charge d'affaires in Berlin Ion Dragoumes on April 7, 1914: 'Every Greek in Turkey is an apostle of pan-Hellenism.' Later, on July 13, 1914 ambassador Mentins sent the same information from Constantinople to Chancellor Hollweg.

'The Oecumenical Patriarchate is a body of pan-Hellenism.' - a fact that was seen as an obstacle for the expansionist plans of Germany.

It was with Germany's approval that the Turks began the mobilization of the Christians into the labour battalions (amele taburu). They were exactly described in reports sent to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

'The Christians in the Turkish army are subjected to such privations and sufferings and their plight is so terrible that they do not differ at all from the criminals convicted to forced labour. They are on the verge of starvation.'

Also: '... THE SITUATION OF THE SOLDIERS WHO ARE CHRISTIANS IS APPALLING. UNDER THE GUISE OF MISTRUST TO THE CHRISTIANS IT WAS ORDERED TO FORM THE BATALLIONS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS... THEY DIE BY THE THOUSANDS WITH DISEASES, FEVER, TYPHUS, CHOLERA.'

The tragical dimensions of the persecutions in Pontus frightened even the consuls of the central powers that were Turkey's allies. Many Germans began to voice their disagreement with their country's policy and to take a stand on the misfortunes of the Christians. The German missionary J. Lepsius admitted that **'THE ANTI-ARMENIAN AND THE ANTI-GREEK PERSECUTIONS WERE THE TWO STAGES OF ONE AND THE SAME PROGRAMME ON THE ANNIHILATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ELEMENT IN TURKEY'**.

In the Turkophilic German and Austrian documents a careful concealment of the crimes of the Turks is observed. However, some consuls categorically disclosed the events in the region under their wardship. Probably they had remorse for the Armenians.

On July 16, 1916 the German consul in Amisus Kkuckhoff wrote to Berlin: 'I was informed by reliable sources that the whole Sinop population as well as that of the coast of Kastamoni province has been sent into exile. **EXILE AND EXTERMINATION IN TURKISH MEAN ONE AND SAME BECAUSE THOSE WHO ARE NOT KILLED USUALLY DIE OF DISEASES AND STARVATION.'**

The Young Turks thought that by destroying the male population their plan would be carried out very easily. The new measures they undertook frightened even the Austrian vice-consul in Amisus Kwiatkowski. On Sept. 30, 1916 he informed the foreign minister of Austria S. Baron Byrian of the latest decisions of Rafet bey, district governor of Amisus: 'On Nov. 26 Rafet bey told me: Now we have to finish with the Greeks. **TODAY I SENT BATTALIONS AROUND TO KILL EVERY GREEK THEY MEET.** I am afraid of the exile and the deportation of the Greek population and a repetition of the last year events (The Armenian genocide is meant.).'

The fanaticism of the Turkish people grew up by what it heard in the streets, the squares, the coffee-houses said by the special bodies of the Young Turks and by what was written in the local newspapers. For example, the Echo newspaper in Amisus of Oct. 13, 1911 wrote an article under the title: 'Ottomans, to the arms!' 'The holy war is the order of God and it is impossible not to ful-

fil it in this period because today God has ordered us to fight... Forward, brothers, let us get ready for the clash with the enemies, let us drink up their blood! The Europeans will no longer call us cowards or fools!

The Balkan wars worried the Turks because they had realized that the development of the national movements meant an end to the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. That is why they decided to suppress the national movements in Asia Minor by all possible means. And undisguised threats followed. The persecutions gained strength. An all-out war was under way. The Moslem population was distributed weapons. The press published provocative articles against the Christians. The Turkish newspapers in Trapezus encouraged the readers to start persecutions and massacres. The Hatem Milel newspaper in Kerasus of May 28, 1912 carried the article 'The sword, no policy!':

'We, Turks, know no subtle politics which is a fraud, but we wield weapon. For two centuries politics has been parcelling out our motherland and throwing it to the dogs. We have to draw out the sword because the governments of those who believe in the Cross have united against the innocent Islamic world... The sword in the hands of the Crescent's soldiers is an awful weapon while in the hands of the others it is just a piece of iron. The sword will liberate Islam from the conspiracy against it.'

The unification of Crete with Greece which was done in compliance with the London treaty on May 30, 1913 served as a pretext for the opening of a real war. In all the mosques and coffee-houses, and at meetings the Turks pronounced fiery speeches. They organized meetings and forced the Greeks participate in them, make contributions for the war. The Greeks were forced to pay part of the expenses needed for the widows and the orphans from the war.

On Nov. 19, 1913 the Austrian consul Moritz cabled to Vienna the words of the member of the Young Turks's Committee in Trapezus, Omer Naci bey:

'... There are still towns in our Empire that have ancient Greek names: Trapezus, Amisus, Agia Sophia, etc. Why haven't we changed them? And, why don't we change them now?'

Things got worse for the Pontian Greeks. The Young Turks forbid any sell-trade of the real-estates of the Christians. On January 29, 1914 the Austrian consul Moritz wrote to the Foreign ministry:

'... Five days ago I heard Turkish women say to Greek shpkeepers that their husbands did not allow them buy things from the Greeks because they sent the money as a gift to the Greek ships.'

MURDERS INCREASED. EVERY DAY PEOPLE FOUND MURDERED PEASANTS WHO WERE GOING TO WORK IN THE FIELDS. ORGANIZED GANGS RANSACKED TOWNS AND VILLAGES AT NIGHT.

Population resettlement, plunders, arsons of villages, rapings and murders - all this was aimed at changing the ethnological character of the Greek regions so that they could be easily converted into Islam. In an official report sent to the Foreign ministry of Greece on January 14, 1915 one can read:

' Among the decisions taken by the Young Turks' Committee is also the one about the conversion into Islam of the Greek population which is not possible as long as compact Greek settlements exist. **MILITARY REQUIREMENTS SERVED AS A SUITABLE PRETEXT FOR DISPERSING THE CHRISTIANS AND MAKING EASY THEIR CONVERSION INTO TURKS.'**

Death , in most awful forms was in the Pont region. The Greek embassy in Peterburg informed from Russia the Greek Foreign ministry about the tragical situation of the inhabitants of the Trapezus area. On Apr. 15, 1916; '...On Apr. 15 the inhabitants of sixteen villages from the Vazelon county, province of Trapezus, all Greeks, having been ordered by the Turkish authorities to go to the interior of Argiroupolis, fearing that they might be killed on their way, since they had seen with their own eyes the massacres of the Armenians, left their homes and ran into the woods, hoping to be saved by the quick advance of the Russian troops. They were 6,000-strong. Of them 650 found refuge in the Vazelon monastery where before them 1,500 refugees had been hiding, also from Trapezus. Other 1,200 people were hiding in a big cave near to the village of Kunaka, while the rest of them scattered into the caves in the moun-

tains and other hiding places. All the houses in those villages were sacked and the possessions - plundered by the Turkish troops. Forced by hunger those who were hidden in the cave of Kunaka surrendered. And 26 women and girls, in order to avoid dishonour, threw themselves into the river by the village of Gefira despite the efforts of the others to save them... After the offensive of the Russian army towards Argiroupolis I was the first one to enter the monastery of Vazon, together with Dr. Fotiadis. I admit, I cannot describe what I saw there. Everything was destroyed both in the villages and the monastery. In the monastery's entrance-hall there lay five unburied semidecayed corpses of Greeks... inside the monastery five more in the same state. In one room, lying on her back was a naked, beheaded and with a bayonet wound in the chest, a girl's body from the village of Tersa, by the name of Kiriaki, in a posture that revealed the disgrace done to her...

**THE ANNIHILATION: EVIDENCES BY
FOREIGNERS**

TELEGRAMS

The Austrian consuls who witnessed the shameful acts of their allies changed their stand and started sending open telegrams to the Foreign ministry in Vienna informing about the great danger facing the Greeks. Their German colleagues did the same but with a certain diplomatic cover - an element that also proves their guilt. Nevertheless, these documents are valuable for the realistic presentation of modern history because despite the money spent by the Turks on briberies to discredited historians, they cannot challenge the authority and the impartiality of the consuls' reports since they had been written by their own men.

On Dec. 19, 1916 the Austrian consul in Constantinople Pallanicini described the latest events in Pontus, particularly in the martyr town of Amisus.

'Dec. 11, 1916. Five Greek villages were ransacked and then burned down. The inhabitants were interned. Dec. 12, 1916. In the vicinity of the town villages are set to fire. Dec. 14, 1916. Whole villages, together with the schools and the churches are burned down. Dec. 17, 1916. In the vicinity of Sampsus the Turks have burned down 11 villages. The plunders never stop. The peasants are ill-treated. Dec. 31, 1916. The Greek villages are burned to the ground. Other 15 villages - partially. About 60 women have been raped. Even the churches have been ransacked.'

FIVE VILLAGES REDUCED TO ASHES

On Dec. 13, 1916 The German ambassador Kuhlmann informed Chancellor Hollweg in Berlin:

'The consuls in Sampsus (Bergfeld) and in Kerasus (Schedt) reported about the imminent threat of banishment of the Greek population from along the coast... Up till now 250 partisans (andartes) have been killed. The Turks hold no captives. Five villages have been reduced to ashes.' And, on Dec. 26, 1916: '... Greek families of refugees, most of them women and children, have been sent to exile from the coast to Sevastia.'

The disclosures made by the Austrian ambassador Pallancini infuriated the Turks who wanted him recalled. On Jan. 20, 1917 he wrote to Vienna:

'Information is coming from Sampsus about new exiles and arrests of Greeks. The condition of the exiles is desperate. All of them face death. I tried to draw the attention of the Grand Vizir to these events and to underline how unfortunate it would be if the persecutions of the Greek element took the shape and the dimensions of the Armenian persecutions. The Grand Vizir has promised to me that he would try to exert his influence on Talaat bey and Enver pasha.'

But Talaat bey confided something else to an Austrian agent on Jan. 31, 1917:

'... I see that time has come for Turkey to have it out with the Greeks the way it had it out with the Armenians in 1915.'

APPALLING NEWS

The seizure of Trapezus by the Russians (Apr. 5, 1916) and the forced creation of Greek partisan formations served as pretexts for the destruction of everything Greek. The reports of the Greek Embassy in Constantinople sent to Athens on Jan. 14 and 29 and on Feb. 7 and 29, 1917 contain appalling news about Sampsus and its vicinity.

'Eighty people from among the most well-to-do Greeks in Amisus have been arrested without any reason, they have been held in complete isolation and on the following day they have been moved to the interior of the country. The most eminent inhabitants have had the same doom... Other 28 villages have been burned down in a week time from January 15 besides those burned down in December. The women and the children have been sent in rain and snow to the vilayets of Sevastia and Angira. Infant children, girls, women in childbirth, pregnant women, ill and old people jostled from one place to another, they spent the nights by thousands in inns where there was no bread, no other food... Many children who had lost their parents went into the mountains or to the Turkish villages. The exiles died on the roads of hunger, cold and of hardships. They were buried in the mountains or left prey to the wild

beasts... Their number is approximately already over 20,000 and it increases every day... The whole male population was sent from Pafra to Voyvat... Eight villages in Pafra, producing the best quality tobacco in Turkey, have been set on fire and their inhabitants have been moved to the vilayet of Angira while the inhabitants of other villages around Amisus have been sent to the interior of the country. At the moment one can see smoke and blazes over the mountains.

... And the entire population of Kerasus has been sent to the interior. The same thing has happened to the provinces of Neskesaria, Fazda and Warsamba... Still worse were things in Pafra where in the last weeks 20 villages, together with the churches and the schools have been burned down after the movable property had been plundered and the rest - reduced to ashes. The whole population was sent to the interior... All those awful events are aimed at the annihilation of the Greeks in Turkey who are to die the way the Armenians died. One fourth of the population is already dead.'

A report by the Austrian minister Hollweg which was found at the German Foreign ministry in Berlin confirms the information about these events. The report is dated Feb. 9, 1917. It contains additional information of the arrest of about 100 Greeks accused of high treason for allegedly maintaining contacts with the Russians and with the partisans. In a summary of these reports of his envoys to Turkey Hollweg asked his German colleague what might happen because:

'The information arriving from Turkey most probably presents things as consequences caused by the landing of the Russians on the Turkish Black Sea coasts. The creation of the partisan units served as pretext to the Turks to embark on a general persecution of the Greeks as enemies to the state, the way they dealt with the Armenians before. The Turks have carried out this tactics persecuting not only the partisans but also the interned population while the Turkish administration does not care whether this population will survive on the way from the coast to the interior, without taking any measures, therefore, the exiles are exposed to misery and starvation. The Turkish punitive battalions ransack the houses left by the exiles; they set them on fire or destroy them. What

had been a daily routine with the persecutions of the Armenians is repeated now against the Greeks. It is quite possible that these events might cause a wave of indignation against the Turkish regime in the whole political world.

KEMAL'S BENEVOLANCE

Unfortunately, the political world once again has placed its material interest above its human duty. When the balance tipped in favour of Turkey both enemies and friends of Greece were quick to become allied with Kemal Ataturk in order to gain his benevolence and greater political concessions.

On Jan. 7, 1917 the bishop of Amisus wrote to the Patriarch: 'It is heartbreaking to see the tragedies that go on in our wretched, bloodsoaked land. The military outrages of Rafet pasha are no less terrible than the police machinations of Vahaedin, the extraordinary envoy of the Foreign ministry in Constantinople. While Rafet pasha carries out the executions Vahaedin, together with the police bodies, makes up black lists of innocent people. Thus, this week as well, another group of respectable citizens has been sent into the interior of the country. Amisus is faced with the danger of being left with no men.'

On February 7, 1917, the bishop of Haldia Laurentius also made a complaint to the Greek charge d'affaires in Constantinople, Kalergis:

'... After Trapezus was seized by the Russians tens of thousands of Turkish settlers attacked the province of Kerasus; they ransacked the Greek villages and withdrew leaving behind cholera and typhus. On the order of the vali of Trapezus there followed a new wave of persecution of the Greeks, the richest ones were arrested and sent into exile. The decision of the headquarters to intern the Greeks from the Black Sea coast was carried into effect by the vali of Trapezus and his bodies in a most horrible way. Despite the assurances by the commander of the Third army corps the villages were emptied of people in 24 hours. The Turks did not allow the exiles to take neither food nor clothes with them, to say nothing about household belongings. They spent the night in the open air under a torrential rain and close gendarme guard. They were not allowed to contact the bishop's re-

sidences in any village; and, the houses they left behind were ransacked by Turkish officials and private persons. The deserted villages now are 38 and their population - 23000.'

Similar crimes were committed in other parts of the Pontus area, too. I'll quote excerpts from the report of bishop Policarpos of Neo Kesaria which was submitted to all Patriarchates and published in the Neo Zoy newspaper in Constantinople of November 12, 1918, No 98.

CONVERTED INTO TURKS BY FORCE

'... After having suffered all the evils - plunders, persecutions, rapings and massacres - the inhabitants of Kolonia were left behind unlamented and unburied in the inhospitable Turkish land of Tokat and elsewhere...' Turkish inventiveness of evils has no limits.

In the course of their expulsion from their native houses massacres were carried out, holy temples were profaned and turned into cattle-sheds or barns, or destroyed. The worst of all is that under the pretext of protecting the small children and the girls, official representatives have taken all infants and even babies, made them Turks and kept them in the Turkish school of Sevastia. Thus, they have enriched the field of culture with a new model that was taken up by the Turkish hordes and spread everywhere..'

The grandeur of the Janissaries in a new edition. As if all those evils - exiles, banishments, tortures, rapings, plunders, murders - were not enough and they had to add to them the most terrible one: the conversion of the Christians into Islam:

'... There are numerous cases of conversions into Turks because the Turks availing themselves of the poverty, the cold, the hunger and the despair of the poor Christians, for 100 grams of bread rape ten-year girls, children of the wretched God's creatures and for a bowl of lentils convert to Islam the starving...'

ALIVE IN THE FIRE

Similar was the fate of the provinces of Tripoli, Kerasus, Pulandzaki and Kotoria. A simple compilation of official tables and consuls' reports reveals the tragical dimensions of the committed

crimes. In the above-mentioned regions the notorious villain Topal Osman slaughtered most of the notables. The rest of the men he interned to the interior of Turkey. Few of them survived. Many unfortunate Greek women he gave out to his bands and associates. All the Greek villages were set on fire, the belongings of the Greeks became a booty for the Turkish swash-bucklers. Many Greek women preferred death to shame. Some parents even killed their own children to avoid their falling into the hands of the Turks.

In Merziphone Topal Osman himself, after plundering the Greeks and the few surviving Armenians burgled the houses and the shops and set the quarters of both communes to fire. Terrible things happened in this fire. Topal Osman's assistants blocked all exits. They either killed on the spot or threw back into the fire those who tried to escape from the hellish blazes. All the time Topal Osman was shouting in a loud voice: 'Let the English, the Americans, let your Christ come to save you now!'

Only in the town of Trapezus there had been a relative calmness up to 1918. It was due to bishop Chrisantos who, by his diplomatic moves, succeeded in limiting the atrocities of the Turks. The Austrian consul in Trapezus Kwiatkowski wrote very favourably about the bishop in his report:

'As I have mentioned many times, relations between Turks and Greeks had not been bad until the Russians seized the town (April 18, 1916). The considerable Mohammedanian majority and the example of the wise bishops restrained the Greeks in Trapezus from the carelessness we have noticed in Amisus. ... This wise behaviour was to a great extent due to the personality and the reasonable stand of the present bishop of Trapezus Chrisantos who never missed a case to be helpful to the population and to the Turkish government. When in the winter of 1916 the Russian occupation was near at hand he advised his flock to be helpful to the Turkish population that had not abandoned the town and after the seizure of the town he was constantly frustrating the outrages of the Armenian military units against the Turkish population.

**A DEATH SENTENCE AS A REWARD
FOR LOVE**

And while the Turkish people who is well aware of the love of Chrisantos composes songs in his honour, a short time later the revolutionary Kemal Ataturk sentenced him to death as a reward for his love and sacrifice.

The withdrawal of the Russians had unfavourable consequences for the Greeks from the Trapezus region. Only in that area 30,000 of Greeks were forced to leave with the Russians - says Kwiatkowski - of them 8,000 were inhabitants of the town. The Turks found good pretext to appropriate the property of the Greeks who had run away from fear. In the end of his report Kwiatkowski wrote:

'... The confiscation ordered by the Turkish part for the movable property of the Greek refugees to Russia and the frequent settlement of Turkish refugees into their houses only add to the distress of the Greeks.'

AND 70 PERCENT DIED IN EXILE

The end of World War I, the defeat of the Germans and the Turks by the forces of the Entente, and the change of the Turkish governmental officials have for some time frustrated the cruel plan of the Young Turks. The new Turkish government was compelled by Greece's allied forces to permit the return of the refugees and of the few surviving exiles. But, actually, the dead were more fortunate because they were spared the endless tortures. The tragedy of the few alive went on because when they went back to their homes they found only ruins. In some villages, where there were some half-destroyed houses, Turks had moved in and would not let the owners back in. The French consul in Trapezus wrote to the French Foreign Ministry on July 4, 1919:

'The newly appointed high officials of the Trapezus vilayet do not seem to wish the end of what is going on more than the former ones. The new vali Chalil bey seems to be much more pre-occupied with preserving the privileges of the Ottoman government than with fighting against the authors of the disturbances and with the removal of the obstacles created by the hostile and self-confident bureaucracy. The perpetrators of the massacres do not seem to be as worried as before and the kidnapped women are kept in their houses without any guaranty. Unpunished crimes increase in number. The repair of the Greek houses, may be more than before, is faced with difficulties of legal nature and some others...

In the interior, in Erzincan, the local authorities sell in broad daylight the furniture of the killed Christians as if they have never existed.'

In another report he wrote: '...The hatred of the Turks against the minorities is expressed in humiliations which in many parts are like real hunts of Christians. Almost all of them become more aggressive and get ready to strike back. The entire people seems to be on the verge of madness.'

The Greek landing in Smyrna, the victorious battles and some retaliatory measures on their part deteriorated the situation in the whole of Turkey and in distant Pontus in particular. By means of new plans, enriched by experience, the Turks car-

ried out the second stage of the annihilation of the Greeks. They were protected by the still hard pressed Ottoman government and mainly by the liberation movement of the revolutionary Kemal pasha. Thus they had enough ground for success. The Greeks were in Smyrna. The Pontians fought for the establishment of an independent state and, before all, Islam was in jeopardy. Without complying with the Greek allies - England and France - which were supposed to have full control over the Black sea, the Turks attacked wherever there was something Greek still undestroyed. That was the end of the first stage of the hunt. On Apr. 15, 1919 the Greek major Leondopulos in a report about Pontus wrote:

'... The state of the public security in the Pontus area which I visited can be called anything but satisfactory. One might say that there is no security for the Greeks before all... Most of the inhabitants seriously contemplate emigration.'

THE EXTERMINATION

On May 20, 1919 in a long report to colonel Katchakes, the archimandrite of Trapezus Panaret revealed by means of statistical data the dimension of the barbarities committed by that time by the Turks. I quote parts of the report:

'... Before the war the eparchy of Amasia had 136,768 inhabitants. Of them 73,375 have been exiled or interned; only 30 percent of them came back. Out of 25,000 exiles from the eparchy Nea Kesaria only 6 percent of the peasants survived but they were broken down by the satanic Turkish atrocities; of the town dwellers only 35 percent survived - ragged and robbed, living proof of the Turkish barbarity... The eparchy of Colonia was completely destroyed, all the villages were devastated and only a few inhabitants escaped to Nikopolis... In the eparchy of Haldia Kerasus had 167,450 Greek inhabitants. During the occupation about 45,000 of them have been forced to leave for Russia, over 90,000 had been exiled into the interior of Asia Minor... Of the exiles 80 percent have died of hunger, persecution, miseries and thrashings... Out of the 72 Greek villages in the Kerasus area not a single one was spared...'

Similar statistical data are available for the rest of the Pontus areas.

The tragic situation of the Pontian Greeks was taken to heart by the Greeks all over the world and they showed their sympathy in various ways. But those who came to stand shoulder to shoulder were the refugees from Pontus who had left Turkey. On July 25, 1919 the Chairman of the Congress of the Pontian Greeks with headquarters in Batumi (Russia) V. Joanides in a letter in French to the Greek embassy in Constantinople asked for help for the suffering Greeks in Pontus:

'According to reliable information and authentic Greek sources... numerous organized and armed gangs from different areas devastate the country, raping, murdering and committing outrages against the non-violent and unarmed Greek people. Special messengers informed us today that a mass massacre of the Pontian Greeks was prepared. That is why we ask the Greek government to contribute to the immediate occupation of Pontus by the allied troops in order to frustrate the massacre and save the rest of the Greeks. Every minute is precious. Chairman: Vassilis Joanides.'

In Athens the Pontian club 'Board of the Pontians in Greece' informed the Minister of the Interior Politics (Feb. 25, 1920) of the Turkish atrocities and asked for the immediate interference on the part of the Greek government.

REBELS IN THE MOUNTAIN

The terror, the labour battalions of death, the exiles, the gallows, reducing to ashes of the villages, rapings and murders forced the Pontian Greeks to go into the mountains as rebels. The mountains in the Pontus area abounded in heroes. The Turks began to fear retaliatory measures. Militants like Vassil aga, Istil aga, Andon Chavus, Evvlides, Anastas aga, Abadzis, Deli aga, Emil aga, were glorified in the everyday songs of the Greeks. Dispersed in the mountains they would help each time when the few surviving peasants needed them.

But unorganized as they were they often had difficulties when they had to oppose the organized enemy and to try their strength. Often they lacked provisions and had one enemy more: starvation. The Pontians abroad helped in the difficult struggle of the rebels in Santa with money and other undertakings.

In the spring of 1919 they organized in Batumi a club called 'League of the Foreign Organization of the Santa Rebels' with the aim of supporting materially and morally fighting Santa. The first sums of money gathered by the club (its chairman was Christos Sitmalides who had launched the idea) have been given to the Santa professor Philipos Himonides when he went to Batumi to contact the National Council and the National Assembly of Pontus.

APPEAL FOR HELP

Meanwhile the League appealed to the Pontian Greeks all over the world to help their compatriots pointing out: 'No Greek heart is to remain indifferent to the news coming from afar, from beyond the mountains of heroic Santa. In the dark years of the war Santa became the heroic Souli of Pontus. Its people, rifle in hand, did not bow its head to the Turk. It did not submit to the tyrant. Armed, with a few brave young men, nowadays it has not stopped its heroic struggle against our centuries-old enemy. Every hour we get news about the tragic heroism of Santa's children. Every day innocent blood is shed painting red its suffering land.

But Santa has two equally wild beasts to fight with: the Turks and Hunger. Unfortunately, Hunger is worse even in comparison with the Turks. It is because the Turks are helpless in front of the bravery and the heroism of Santa's children. The Turkish gangs are easy to defeat; while the wild beast of hunger is unconquerable... Heroic Santa is starving. Santa is waiting for our help. There where Santa's men are fighting the Turk and Santa's women keep watch rifle in hand, the last hope is with us. Help for the heroes. Help for our brothers...'

Despite the everyday losses the rebels did not let the Turks boast that they have defeated them. They caused them enough trouble even to the very day they succeeded to to escape to Greece.

AWFUL NEWS

But in the areas where the rebels could not operate the Turks went on freely with their destructive actions. The news coming every day were discouraging. The awful news mobilized all Ponti-

ans abroad. On July 27, 1920 the Pontians' club in Athens 'Board of the Pontians in Greece' sent a cable to Eleutherios Venizelos who was in Paris at that time:

'We get news about massacres of Greek notables, rapings of Greeks women, plunders of Greek real estates by the Turkish hordes and authorities everywhere in Pontus. In Kerasus 16 notables have been massacred, in Galieni, Trapezus district - 15 notables and 2 eight-year-old children. In Ofi the Greek priest was murdered. If this situation is not changed the Greeks in Pontus will be liquidated before diplomacy can start putting forward their issue.

In keeping with the orders of your Highness we have done nothing so far as to taking protective measures for our brothers who are being slain and defamed. Obedient to you we ask for your personal mediation before our strong allies in order to stop the destructive deed of the Turks and to save the Pontian Greeks facing annihilation. Our only hope is in you to contribute to putting an end to the shedding of Greek blood in Pontus.'

The information bulletins of the Oecumencal Patriarchate speak of terrible events. Topal Osman did not leave a stone standing. The Patriarchate translated the news and forwarded them everywhere it thought there was hope for help. On Aug. 31, 1920, in a report of the Patriarchate in French it is said:

'...The mayor of the town Osman aga ... gave an order to all the Turks to leave the town immediately. Then he locked up all the Christian men in the Greek school, in 'Belle Vue' hotel and in a big building with the intention to kill them all. The women were raped and all the houses of Christians were ransacked by the tyrant's hordes. Every night they took five Christians out of the school and murdered them. Only after a 300,000-liras ransom was paid (in silver and goods) are were they let go. Fear reigns in town. Some Christians have gone crazy with fear.'

KEMAL RAZES TO THE GROUND

On October 31, 1921, in a telegram, the Greek community in Dresden asked the Secretary General of the League of Nations in Geneva Eric Drummond to inform the members of the

Council about the persecutions of the Greeks by Kemal's troops: 'The Greek community in Dresden among whose members there are many relatives of fiercely persecuted innocent Pontians, in the name of humaneness, requests the League of Nations to interfere immediately and protect the prisoners and the exiles; to interfere before the Ankara government so that all Greeks willing to leave Asia Minor be allowed a free departure.'

The change in the political attitudes of Italy and France and the secret agreement for friendship, economic and military assistance between Russia and Mustafa Kemal were the final blow upon the struggle and the dreams of the Pontian Greeks. The troops of Kemal, after the first big successes, have razed to the ground everything Greek they have come upon. Greece was betrayed by its allies. Only the British remained. But, in their attempt to preserve part of the privileges they had enjoyed for centuries, they too began flirting with Kemal. The reports of the Austrian consul in Bucharest Storck are very unmasking of the mean part played by the Great Powers in the region of Asia Minor at that time.

Meanwhile the persecutions became still more fierce. The Turks felt reassured by Kemal's triumph. They brought death everywhere. The official protest no longer worried them. Along with the massacres extraordinary courts in the Pontus towns passed sentences that any free nation would qualify as insulting for human reason; they condemned to death every rich and distinguished notable and almost all the religious leaders. They confiscated their property under the pretext that they had interfered in the struggle for the establishment of an independent Pontian state. On Oct. 21, 1921 the Central Council of Pontus protested before the Greek Foreign ministry in connection with the latest decisions of Kemal's government: '...After all the Sampsus and Pafra notables were hanged, from the Turkish newspaper we have understood that the bishops of Trapezus, Amasia, Nea Kesaria and Haldia together with all the rich and eminent notables of Trapezus, Kerasus and Ordu have also been sentenced to death and all those who were in Turkish hands have already been hanged under the pretext that in Pontus there were Committees aiming at its liberation.

1922: CULMINATION OF THE DRAMA

The end of Pontus was coming. Fewer voices were raised. On May 25, 1922 a delegation of the Greek naval base with headquarters in Constantinople wrote in a report which was forwarded to the Foreign ministry by the general staff of the navy:

'The situation of the Christians from the upper areas is miserable. The village areas are completely depopulated. All Christian villages have been burned down while a part of the inhabitants has been slain on their way to exile and another part, has been killed on the spot or burned alive.'

George Horton, Consul-General of the United States in the Middle East in the course of 30 years, in 1926 wrote the following about the drama of the Asia Minor Greeks:

'At the time of this lamentable story the Christians got armed against their oppressors but then they were abandoned and left to the revenge of the Turks.

They were abandoned because no Christian force wanted to attack Turkey. They all expected some favours that would be granted to the subjects of that state that seemed best disposed to the Turks.'

No need to make comments today on the political stand of George Horton on the role of the Great Powers because it is evident from the documents of the American consulate and they will be denunciators for ever in the history of the Christians' genocide in Asia Minor.

The reports in the unpublished archives of the foreign ministries about the drama of the Pontian Greeks are numberless. MORE THAN 450,000 PONTIANS DIED AN AWFUL DEATH CAUSED BY THE YOUNG TURKS IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES, IN GORGES AND IN MOUNTAINS, IN EXILE AND IN PRISONS. In a report of the bureau of the Central Board of Pontus sent to the Greek Foreign ministry on June 6, 1922 we read:

'According to trustworthy information Kemal's authorities, after the complete destruction of 13 villages in the regions of Galieni, Kapikoy and Livera, sent to Vayvurt all the children of Trapezus under the age of 10.

The scenes when they were torn way from

the bosoms of their mothers surpass any tragedy. Mothers driven mad and in tears were embracing their children and did not want to part with them.

But the Turkish gendarmes ... were hitting them with the butt-stocks and only after the mothers lost consciousness, the poor children could be torn away from their sweet mothers' embrace.'

HORROR FILMS

Only those who do not know the Turks can doubt the reliability of the reports which sometimes look like a horror film. But in those dark years there were some foreigners, ordinary people, who had not been a part of the political games behind the scenes but who had witnessed the genocide; their evidence is beyond questioning because they had no ulterior motives. The evidence carries most weight because it has been written to serve men and not any political interest. Such an evidence was written by Miss Ethel Thompson from Boston (Massachusetts), who, as a member of the American Relief Committee, lived with the drama of the Asia Minor Greeks from June 1921 till June 1922:

'I went to the East because of the orphans of the American Relief Committee without any prejudice to nationality or religion. I came back with the feeling of horror and disappointment, knowing that it is possible for people to live in such conditions and that such governments exist, in 1922...

...We gave clothes and food when we were permitted to... to the groups of ghosts, weak, dying with hunger Greek women and children who, staggering, were crossing Anatoliya through Harput. Their dim eyes were bulging and they were just bags of bones. They were carrying on their backs their emaciated children; the gendarmes led them without giving them food or clothes till they fell down dead. I still see this horrifying sight which I shall never forget; I shall never forget also that open graveyard near Harput where I lived last winter. Many people ask me whether this information is reliable. The question surprises me after my one-year experience. My work at the orphanages took me to the near-by villages where our offices had been established. I can swear that I speak literally

the truth about what I had been seeing every day... During my stay in Amisus at the beginning of July (1921) the surrounding villages were burned down and their inhabitants, together with the women and children, were moved away from them. In June before my arrival, the young Greeks from Amisus had been exiled. Immediately after my arrival the old men were given the warning and moved from the villages at night. The moans of the Greek women would not let us sleep at night. Every night, from the Armenian orphanage where I stayed most of the time, I could see the villages in flames and I thought what a hell on Earth this really beautiful country was turned into. In August we learned that the women were to follow the old men. Our house was immediately surrounded by these poor women who were knocking at the door, offering their children and imploring us to keep them if we could not save the mothers. All in tears they were embracing us and never before have we felt how helpless we really were. At the same time the Greek navy warned that it would shell the town and this has saved the women for the time being.

DEAD EVERYWHERE

We got permits at the end of August and we could leave. We crossed Anatolia in the scorching heat and on our way we met groups of old people from Amisus and other Black sea port towns who were going God knows where led by the Turkish gendarmes... When we got to Matalia we met some young men who had dropped behind... They were trying to feed on some soup of grass...

... The Turks had given them no food for the whole travel from Amisus, i.e. 500 miles... When some woman with her baby in her arms died, the baby was taken from her cold embrace and passed to another woman while the appalling group went on... The entire road was a procession of dead people, a procession of death in Anatolia's heart. A great number of those who had walked in winter time as well as the thousands suffering of typhus had terrible gangrene on the feet. They have been thrown out of Harput in a heap, abandoned, without anyone to take care of them...

On February 5 we went on horseback to the group of another American to visit some orphanage

out of town. We reached a fountain, an old one, at a five minutes ride from Mezre. At this moment we heard voices, different from the usual moaning of the refugees. We went nearer and we saw about 300 small children, packed like sardines in a circle. Twenty gendarmes dismounted from their horses, were hitting them cruelly with their heavy swords. A mother who rushed to save her child had the same doom and was thrown out. The children fell on the ground or they raised their small hands to prevent the hitting. We did not stay any longer...

... According to statistical data from Sevastia about 30-80 thousand people had died on the way to Harput and two thousand remained in Malatia till the end of last March. Other 15,000 have been exiled to Dyarbakir (Kurdistan) in the winter snow storms. Two thirds of them were women and children. And when they died on the road or in the ditches they were thrown aside and left to be eaten up by the birds of prey... The most beautiful girls were taken to the harems of the Turks who evidently were proud with the women held there... 3,000 people from the exiled in Diyarbakir died on their way and a thousand more - after their arrival. 9,000 Greeks have been sent to Bitlis but we do not know what happened to them. Probably they have died since Bitlis is partially destroyed...

When we were getting ready to leave the Turkish vali sent for us and asked us, when we arrive in Beirut or Istanbul to deny the reports of Mr. Jogwell and Dr M. Word... The vali threatened us that if we refuse to do so we will not be given the permit to leave. Finally we succeeded in getting our permit without promising anything else but that we will speak the truth about what we have witnessed and here I am keeping my promise to Harput's vali.

SHAME

Making this statement I wish that the American women who have some influence in the government do something for the women and children in Anatolia who are dying and suffering indescribable misfortunes. Commercial interests, envy, territorial claims etc. should be put aside in defence of humanism. I think it is a shame that such things happen in 1922 and it is time that something is done to prevent a repetition of these evils.

Negotiations and discussions are under way to decide whether an Inquiry committee should be sent to the East. However such a Committee was sent and the present statement is a fact... I have written this statement without the approval of the American Relief Committee and after I have cut off every connections with it.'

Ethel Tompson's proposal, in spite of time, is up-to-date even now: something should be done so that the shame of 1922 is never repeated. **IF THE CRIMES ARE NOT TO BE REPEATED WE SHOULD FIND OUT THE PERPETRATORS, THE REASONS THAT HAD LED TO THOSE ACTIONS. WE SHOULD LAY BARE TRUTH NO MATTER HOW IMMORAL IT MAY BE AND WE SHOULD EXPOSE IT AS IT IS, WITHOUT ANY DECORATIONS TO THE UNCORRUPTIBLE JUDGE: THE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION WHICH CONDEMNS ACTS AND NOT PEOPLES.**

I am not a romanticist, nor a castle-builder. But this first step is to be made. I know that it is very difficult because in that genocide of the Pontian Greeks the perpetrator was not alone. He had associates - all those who today are deciding mankind's fate. They are those who do not want truth revealed. They are those who have stopped the Inquiry Committee in Anatolia when they realized that Kemal Ataturk had imposed his will in Asia Minor. They are those who make the impossible seem possible in order to avoid admission of the genocide of Armenians and Greeks and on the other hand they allow that dubious congresses be organized by the Turks in their countries with a far-reaching goal: faking modern history.

J.Gerard wrote in the prologue of G. Horton's book 'Asia's Damnation':

'... The fact that in the 20th century a small and a backward people as the Turkish one could commit such crimes against civilization and world progress is a matter that should make all conscientious peoples think about...

We have remained deaf to the desperate cries for help by the dying Christians though we knew perfectly well that America was their only hope. It is clear today that in this country the trend to covering the crimes of the Turks and to forgiving

them in return for some advantages is getting stronger every day.

AND NOWADAYS

The unmasking of the U.S. policy by an American weights much more because it is free from prejudice.

It is a fact that the Americans have always considered the Turks as their most reliable ally in the Eastern Mediterranean. The same thing has happened with the Germans who, for a long period of time, had considered the Turks as the 'honorable Germans' of the Middle East. On the other side were the British and the French who could not lag behind in the immoral game for supervision over the Middle East. They did their best to preserve Turkish benevolence. As a result of all that the Asia Minor peoples have more than one masters.

The question is: **HAVE WE GOT THE RIGHT TO FORGIVE THE TURKS BY A STROKE OF THE PEN, AFTER THE TURKS HAVE SHOWN SUCH A DISREGARD FOR EVERYTHING HUMAN AND AFTER THEY HAVE BURIED HISTORY?**

Shall we thus help mankind find its way? My answer is: **NO**. Our times are precarious. War spots are springing up everywhere. It is high time that some organizations set up to be in defence of world peace start fulfilling their tasks.

Nowadays, when the Turkish government has embarked on distorting history of that period at pseudoseminars, it is time **TO ESTABLISH AN INQUIRY COMMITTEE BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS SUPREME COURT IN ORDER TO REVEAL TO THE WORLD THE DRAMATIC EVENTS OF THAT TIME THROUGH THE DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE, AND, IF TURKEY IS FOUND GUILTY, ITS ACCESS TO THE COMMUNITY OF RESPECTABLE NATIONS BE FORBIDDEN AS LONG AS IT DOES NOT SHOW A SINCERE REPENTANCE FOR ITS CRIMES**