

LEONIDAS KOUMAKIS

THE MIRACLE

A True Story



2019 Edition

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based on the 3rd Greek edition.**

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*In memory of my father, Gerasimos
L. Koumakis, who died in Athens on 5th March, 1991.*



A few words about the author

Leonidas Koumakis was born in Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey) where he attended the Greek Primary School of Saints Constantinos and Eleni at Pera. After spending two years at the Zographion High School, he had to leave Constantinople when his father was deported from Turkey in 1964. In Greece, he completed his schooling at Pangrati High School in Athens, before graduating from Athens University Law School. Since 1967, he had been working for a major wine producer for an uninterrupted period of 30 years. During the decade 2003–2013 he dealt with printed and electronic publications. He has published hundreds of articles and analyses on Turkey, on Scopia of Former Yugoslavia, on the Greek and international food and beverage market, as well as on various other issues.

He is the author of the following books: "The Miracle - A True Story" (first edition, in Greek & in English, 1993), "Farewell" (in Greek, 1996), "Glances at the Roots of Hellenism" (in Greek, 1997), "Turkey in Flames" (in Greek, 2017).

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Introduction 2019

The origins of today's Turks emerge from the nomadic tribes of presentday Mongolia and China, some of whom became Muslims when they moved west. By 1037, these tribes had expanded into Palestine, and some even settled within Asia Minor, in the then Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire), creating a small sultanate based in Iconium. It is precisely from these nomadic peoples of Mongolia and China that the Ottoman Turks originated. Eventually, they conquered the Byzantine Empire establishing the Ottoman Empire. The beginning of the end of the multiethnic Ottoman Empire occurred in 1908, when Abdul Hamid II, the last powerful sultan of the Ottoman Empire, was forced by the Young Turks to sign a decree to revise the Ottoman Constitution. The abolition of the Ottoman Empire was accomplished ten years later, in 1918.

In 1909, the Young Turks gained complete control of the Ottoman state when, on the occasion of the counter-revolution of the Sultan against them, they deposed Abdul Hamid II and placed the sultan-puppet Mehmet V as the head of the Ottoman state. The victory of the Young Turks with the constant proclamations of "equality and justice" towards all the inhabitants of the multinational Ottoman Empire, did not prevent

their most extreme and most fanatical, including Mehmet Talat Pasa, Enver Pasha, Cevit Pasha, and Cemal Pasa, to become their leaders. They dreamed of the “liberation” of "enslaved" lands in a vast area extending from the Balkan region and reaching China!

However, as soon as the Young Turks acquired full control of the Ottoman state, their most immediate and most basic goal was the forced Islamization or the physical extermination of all non-Muslim ethnicities living in the multinational Ottoman Empire. Starting in 1914–1915, the ethnic cleansing committed by the Young Turks spread from Eastern Thrace, with the genocide of its Greek populations, through Asia Minor and the relentless slaughter of 1,500,000 Armenians and hundreds of thousands of Greeks in the Pontos and the Asia Minor coasts. These genocidal massacres continued until 1922.

In the meantime, the Young Turks entered World War I (1914) on the side of the Central Powers led by Germany, to serve the idea of PanTurkism, furiously seeking to expand their empire by appending among other regions, the Caucasus and Azerbaijan. The defeat of Turkey along with the Central Powers in 1918 and the death of Enver Pasha in the battlefields during August, 1922, put an end to the aspirations of Young Turks.

Unfortunately, the idea of Pan-Turkism with its variants still affected, both secretly and openly, the policy of the Turkish Republic founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal (for the Turks Atatürk: the father of the Turks) after the definitive dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. In 1965, the ideology of Pan-Turkism was adopted by the Turkish Parliament and its official parliamentary representative called the Nationalist Action Party founded by Alparslan Türkeş.

In the Republic of Turkey established by Mustafa Kemal, the military regime, with control of both public or private sectors, wielded a dominant

role. Kemal's successors, General Mustafa İsmet İnönü (a fanatical Young Turk who publicly swore to force wealthy Christians to sell lemons on the streets), Celâl Bayar (a senior military officer who played a key role in the massacres of ethnic and religious minorities of Asia Minor), as well as Adnan Menderes (leader of a guerrilla gang with decisive participation in the genocide of Greeks, Armenians and Assyrians), were all expressions of the military state created by the Young Turks hiding behind the misleading inscription "Republic of Turkey."

Şükrü Saracoğlu, another faithful proponent of the Young Turks, who served as Prime Minister (July, 1942–August, 1946) during World War II, negotiated Turkey's entry into World War II on either the Fascist Axis alliance, or on the side of the Allied Forces—depending on the number of Greek islands in the Aegean and other Greek territories that were ensured to be "exchanged" after the end of the World War. At the same time, with the occupation of Greece under the boot of the Germans and Europe dipped in the blood of the Second Great War, he found the opportunity to physically and financially annihilate non-Muslim minorities with the confiscatory "capital tax" (Varlık Vergisi) in November, 1942. Those unable to pay were sent to Aşkale (a region of northeast Turkey) to labor in the battalions in harsh conditions, where many more died. This was another genocidal policy against Greeks by the Young Turks within their long-term strategy "Turkey for the Turks."

Turkey's speculative tactics during World War II were completed with the "declaration of war" against Germany on February 23, 1945, a few weeks before the death of Adolf Hitler, when the defeat of the Germans was all but certain.

After World War II, the Turkish regime, with its accession to NATO (1952), established a pro-West policy with one more unchanging commitment: the strategic cooperation with Israel. A factor in this

strategic decision was that important military officers within the Turkish army, as well as main supporters of the Young Turks in 1908, were mainly Donme, i.e. forcibly Islamized Jews.

The various military coup interventions by the Turkish army (1960, 1971, 1980) were aimed at restoring the "right course" in the planned direction as well as serving the long-term goals of the Young Turks. Furthermore, the basic strategy of the Turkish regime, implemented by several prime ministers who did not deviate from the given course, allowed impressive "successes." In 1955, a deadly pogrom against Christians living in Constantinople brutally violated the Treaty of Lausanne and was executed with the tolerance of all Western Allies. This same tolerance occurred in 1964, when the forced deportation of 10,000 individual Greeks from Constantinople (a total of about 40,000 with their families) was carried out, dramatically shrinking the Greek-Orthodox minority in Turkey. In 1974, the undisturbed invasion within the Republic of Cyprus on the basis of the British strategy "divide and rule" was also encouraged by all Western Allies.

The political system of the Republic of Turkey has been operating on a fixed axis established by the Young Turks under the watchful eye of the military for many decades. The dominant right hand for all the wicked nefarious work of the Turkish political system—from pogroms and murders to drug trafficking—was the notorious "Deep State" of Turkey. All this lasted until the pro-Islamic Welfare Party (Revah) appeared on the horizon in the mid 1980s, seriously putting in doubt Turkey's proWest stance.

One member of the party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan served as mayor of Constantinople (1994–1998) and one of his actions was to blockade the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople for many days, demanding its eviction from Turkey after 17 centuries from its founding in the city.

Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the pro-Islamic Welfare Party, managed to secure a majority in the Turkish national elections of 1996 and to become the first Prime Minister representing an Islamic political movement in Turkey. He served in office for only one year (June 28, 1996 – June 30, 1997). The military establishment and the Turkish Deep State perceived the existing party as high-risk to Turkey's long-term strategy and succeeded in neutralizing the Welfare Party by adopting other means, such as the Constitutional Court, which declared the Islamic party illegal and led to the resignation of the Prime Minister.

During the next five years, the military establishment and the Turkish Deep State recruited two experienced supporters: Mesut Yılmaz (from June 30, 1997 to January 11, 1999) and, when things became difficult, the elderly hero of the invasion of Cyprus, Bulent Ecevit (from January 11, 1999 to November 11, 2002). Meanwhile, the wave of public support for the pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party had turned into a monsoon that brought Islamists back into power in 2002.

With little room for maneuvering, the military establishment was trying to prevent Recep Tayyip Erdoğan from taking over, so the prime minister succeeding Bülent Ecevit on November 18, 2002, was Abdullah Gül, a more "moderate" Islamist. He lasted only for a few months as the power of the Islamists in the popular strata left no room for an ordinary "intervention" of the military, as had occurred in the past. Thus, on March 14, 2003, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan took over as Prime Minister of Turkey, waiting patiently for full control and sovereignty. This began in August, 2007, with the election of Abdullah Gül as the 11th President of the Republic of Turkey and the launching of the "Ergenekon conspiracy," aimed at overthrowing the Islamist government with a military coup.

At first, the Turkish Islamists tried to show a modern and advanced image of the Republic of Turkey towards the United States, Europe, the former Soviet republics (particularly the Caucasus), the Middle East and

North Africa, with one firm exception: the Republic of Cyprus. Cyprus was the only matter on which the Islamists fully agreed with the military establishment and its proponents—the first of the many "proofs" that followed, that the dominant ideas of Pan-Turkism were held in common with the Islamists, the old regime, and the Deep State. Their differences lay in the tactics by which they would succeed, which took over a decade to be proven. In the beginning, in order to "build" the new image of the Turkish Republic, the Islamists made bold changes that had been unthinkable for more than half a century:

Primarily, the Turkish economy was liberalized, and individual, social and religious freedoms were greatly improved in several ways. The frontal conflict between the Islamists and the Derin Devlet (so called deep state) ended, although later the deep state was fully coopted by the Islamic authorities. The elimination of Donme (Islamized Jews) from the Turkish army and the Islamic Party was completed, while the "zero problem" policy with all the neighbors was advertised in all its facets— with the only exception (always) of the Republic of Cyprus. These actions resonated well with the public and led to increasing support from the Turkish voters and the wider Turkish society, despite the repeated opposition warnings that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Islamists had a "hidden agenda."

Gradually, the Islamic hidden agenda began revealing itself within Turkey with absolute control of the army, the deep state, security forces, the justice system, the restriction of individual freedoms, and the gradual restrictions on the Turkish press. Externally, Turkey used the bait of a common religion as a means of controlling Muslim populations extending from the outskirts of Central Europe and the Balkans, continuing in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, the Suez Canal, to the Indian Ocean.

This campaign mimicked the well-known Ottoman practice of overt expansionism and the imposition of force (threat, or use of force) in stark contrast to the initial assurances of "zero problems." It was based on the very same model of the original policies of the Young Turks who shared promises of "equality" and "justice" before the genocides started with organized massacres of civilian populations.

However, the strategy of neo-Ottoman and pan-Islamic megalomania outside Turkey also caused a rupture on one of the two arguably stable strategies that the Turkish Republic followed after the Second World War: the intense, constant and public confrontation with the State of Israel in order to facilitate communicative "penetration," and neoOttoman influence in the Arab and Muslim world in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. This change in Turkish strategy has dangerously shaken the stable balance of the foreign policy of the Republic of Turkey, creating a new geopolitical landscape and a shift in its approach in regional balances.

When the Republic of Cyprus agreed with Israel on the cooperation (joint venture) of the Exclusive Economic Zone between Cyprus and Israel, along with the technical support of large American and European companies, the balance was largely altered leading to the creation of a new scenario that gridlocked the neo-Ottoman sovereignty that Islamists seek.

The image of Turkey as a regional superpower that had been methodically built for decades rapidly began to collapse in many important spheres, creating serious obstacles in achieving the dream of "neo-Ottoman sovereignty."

The military coup of July 15, 2016, gave Islamists a wonderful opportunity to launch a massive persecution of thousands of "dissidents" of all categories—politicians, members of the armed forces, journalists,

judges, public servants, academics, trade unionists, and ordinary citizens. Turkish Islamists blame imam Fethullah Gülen, who lives in exile in the United States, as the leading proponent of the failed coup. For his part, Gülen has suggested that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan staged the coup, which was scheduled in order to establish an Islamic dictatorship within Turkey.

Three years after the alleged coup, thousands of Turkish citizens are still rotting in Turkish prisons, thousands have fled to other countries, and more than 100,000 have been dismissed from their jobs on suspicion of being dissidents. The Turkish army has been continuously and surreptitiously persecuted since July, 2016. These repercussions led to a rapid demystification of Turkey's "sweeping force," which was a key component of neo-Ottoman sovereignty. Erdoğan's megalomania knows no limits. In fact, he has no touch with reality either. He insists, however, on identifying Turkey as a "great power," rhetoric that no longer holds any weight.

The loss of the catalytic power that Turkey had drawn in the past from the support of the Americans, the British, the Germans, and the Israelis (which allowed Turkey to create the most absurd demands, particularly towards Greece and Cyprus), certainly is not offset by a dubious influence in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The Turkish attack on, and destruction of, a Russian fighter jet on the morning of November 24, 2015, and the hasty diffusion and accord with Russia that followed, came at an extremely high price. The reckless invasions of ethnic and political enclaves in Syria and Iraq after many years of cooperation with the Islamic State, as well as the civil war with the Kurds, Alawites, and every Turk who does not bow to the Islamic "sultan," compose only a part of the complex scenery that prevails in the Turkey of 2019.

This work, *The Miracle - A True Story*, is this author's personal testimony of Turkey's cynical and inhuman policy towards the Greek minority of

some 120,000 people who remained in Turkey under the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. The persistent persecution, murder, rape, the imposition of an outrageous and purely racial capital tax selectively on Christians and Jews for the purpose of plundering their property (1942); the deadly pogrom of 1955 with the burning and destruction of thousands of Greek-owned homes, shops and churches; the expulsion, with only short notice and a small suitcase in hand, of 40,000 Greeks of Constantinople including immediate seizure of all their movable and immovable property in 1964; and many more instances of violence against Christian minorities has led to the dramatic contraction of the Christian population of Constantinople from 120,000 in 1923, to just a few thousand souls today.

On the contrary, the 80,000 Muslims who remained in the Greek province of Thrace by the Treaty of Lausanne (referred to as "Muslims" using a religious definition rather than a national, after forceful insistence by Turkey) live peacefully in Greece, and their population has grown to more than 120,000 (2019), within a free European nation.

This book, *The Miracle - A True Story*, was first published in September, 1993, and translated into English. Its content was read in a five-hour radio program, divided into ten half-hour episodes, distributed free of charge and broadcast by dozens of radio stations in Greece and around the world. Until 1996, more than 16,000 complimentary copies of the book were made available to all Members of the Greek Parliament, members of the Academy of Athens, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Bishops, Greek Consulates around the world, school libraries throughout Greece, journalists and social life celebrities of Greece. The English version of the book was also offered to the 626 members of the European Parliament, 439 members of the American Congress, 100 members of the American Senate, 659 members of the British Parliament, 575 members of the French Parliament, 591 members of

the Canadian Federal Parliament and 223 members of the Australian Federal Parliament.

I am well aware that amidst the vast array of enormous problems facing the world and the clashing interests of the so-called Major Powers, a small voice such as mine has an infinitesimal chance of being heard. But I have faith in the timeless human virtues of Truth and Justice, even under hopeless circumstances.

I believe that, even today, these virtues are worth fighting for!

Leonidas Koumakis

1

Constantinople, September 1964 : *Vatandas Turkce konus**

Her eyes darted about nervously. She turned around and looked anxiously behind her and when she was sure we could not be overheard, admonished me in a voice that betrayed her distress:

“You’re practically grown up now! How many times have I told you not to speak Greek in the street? Haven’t we got enough problems? Isn’t this disaster bad enough already? Do you want someone to hear you and give us more trouble, now that your father is gone? Have you already forgotten what happened to Uncle Sideris?”

She was right. Ever since my father had left in such a hurry, she had made herself hoarse warning my sister and me, over and over again, that when we were out in the street or any other public place, we should

* Citizen, speak Turkish!

keep our mouths shut—out of necessity, because our lives were in danger.

To speak Greek in the street or other public place in Turkey was more or less the equivalent of committing suicide. It was akin to crossing a national highway on foot with your eyes closed, because of a special law which had come into effect in Turkey in 1932, on the “vilification of Turkism.” The law had been introduced to terrorize and oppress the country’s non-Turkish population. It was sufficient for two Turks to give false testimony and make vague claims that you had insulted Turkey or the Turks, for you to be sent to prison without bail. So, we were afraid to utter a single word in Greek in the street, lest we should be accused of insulting Turkey.

What had happened to Uncle Sideris about four years earlier, when he was lucky enough to have escaped with his life by handing over all his savings to the “right” people, was absolutely typical of the times.

Sideris Vafias, a distant cousin of my mother’s, ran a grocery store in the commercial centre of Constantinople, at the upper end of the Kapalıçarşı, the covered market. His shop, which he kept spotlessly clean—this was one reason why he was so popular both with the Greeks and the Turks—was filled to the brim with cheeses, olives, butter and other foodstuffs. Uncle Sideris was a very stingy man. He had amassed a considerable fortune through his hard work and his miserliness, and was known throughout his circle of friends by the nickname “fat hen.” He was a philosophical person and remained faithful to his goal of making lots of money, so he was not at all bothered by the nickname.

One day, on August 30, 1960, he was in his shop, tidying up and arranging goods on the shelves, despite the fact that it was a public holiday: the Turks were celebrating the beginning of their campaign that

ended in victory over the Greeks in the Asia Minor disaster of September, 1922.

Suddenly, a Turk appeared in the doorway and pointing his finger at my uncle said in a challenging voice:

“Hey, giaour (infidel)! How dare you work today? Have you no respect for Turkish public holidays?”

With little heed to the risk he was running, Uncle Sideris smiled and answered:

“Holidays are for lazy people! There are no holidays when there’s work to be done!”

That was enough. His eyes blazing, the Turk gave an odd smirk and disappeared without saying a word.

In less than an hour, three men from the Turkish police appeared at the shop. One of them barked rather than said:

“Drop everything, close the shop and come with us to the police station!”

Uncle Sideris looked at them in surprise and asked:

“Why should I go to the police station?”

“You’ll find out when we get there!” was the sharp retort, which left little room for argument.

My uncle’s surprise gave way to a vague feeling of foreboding. Taking off his apron, he locked up the shop and followed them.

On arrival at the police station, they entered a room just as someone was coming out. It was the Turk who had appeared at the door of my uncle’s shop a short while before and reprimanded him for working.

As soon as the door was shut, one of the three Turks suddenly began, without saying a word, to punch my uncle in the face and stomach and beat him around the head. When my uncle passed out, they dragged him to a chair and threw a bucket of cold water on him.

After some time, he started to come around. He gradually realized where he was and what had happened when he heard a voice swearing at him spitefully.

“Isidoros Vafias, you are a filthy infidel who dared to insult the sacred Turkish flag! We should have killed you on the spot for such a crime—but your life is over anyway. These worms, the Greeks, have to learn that this is Turkey and they can’t insult the Turks and the Turkish flag without expecting to pay for it with their life! You still don’t seem to have grasped that you are living in our land, which belongs to us! And as if that were not enough, you people even insult the Turks! Like you, you filthy infidel, who dared insult the sacred Turkish flag!”

“No, no!” stammered Uncle Sideris, in protest. “I didn’t insult the Turkish flag! I haven’t the faintest idea what...”

His words stopped abruptly when two of the policemen pounced on him and began to beat him up again until, totally defenceless and quite unable to put up any resistance, he lost consciousness. When he came around, several hours later, he found himself in the darkness, on the damp floor of a cell.

Time began, torturously slowly, to trickle past. His whole body was a mass of open wounds and the pain was unbearable. “It’s all over!” he thought. “That’s it, I’m done for... I’ll die in this place!” Twenty-four hours passed, then forty-eight hours, then seventy-two. The monotony of his squalid prison was relieved only once or twice, when a dirty plate of what was supposed to be food was thrust noisily into the cell.

Meanwhile Uncle Sideris's family was making frantic endeavours to find out what had happened to him. Neither his parents, nor his five brothers and sisters, nor his friends could explain his sudden disappearance. On the third day after he failed to return home, they went to the police station where they learned that Isidoros Vafias was being held on charges of vilifying Turkism, in accordance with the Law passed in 1931.

Things looked very bleak. The Turks never missed an opportunity to exterminate an infidel—unless, of course, he had money. Then the scales of justice in implementing the Law were known to tip in favor of the accused in direct proportion to the amount of gold placed on his side. And Uncle Sideris had plenty of gold. Thus, began the battle to save him, a battle based on the unfailing Turkish “weakness” of widespread corruption which permeates the whole of Turkey from top to bottom.

First, it cost a small fortune for his file to be “removed” from the “current” cases and placed at the bottom of the pile so as to gain time. Then, a huge sum was handed over as “bail,” guaranteeing his release by the date set for the trial. Finally, more money was needed for his escape to Smyrna on the day he was released, so that he could cross to the island of Chios and enter free in Greece.

When he arrived in Smyrna, Uncle Sideris was a mental and physical wreck. He went to Çeşme—Krene in Greek—which lies just across the sea from Chios, so close that at night the lights of the town are visible from the mainland. There he found a small ship that plied between Chios and Çeşme and, posing as a tourist, he boarded the boat ready for the journey to freedom and a new life. However, as they were approaching their destination the captain received a wireless message instructing him to return to Çeşme, whereupon he turned the ship around and headed back to the Turkish port. My uncle was scared out of his wits, convinced that he was the reason for the ship's return to Turkey; but he was

powerless to do anything except wait calmly and patiently for the reason for the about-turn to be announced.

The ship returned to Çeşme, remained there for three hours and fifty minutes—to my uncle it seemed like three centuries—and then weighed anchor again for Chios. Uncle Sideris never learned the reason for the sudden return to Turkey, nor did he want to, even when he finally set foot, alive and safe, on Chios to start his life afresh.

All this went through my mind as we walked in silence down the street. We were on our way to Sirkeci, my mother, my sister and I. Ten weeks earlier, my father had literally been dragged through the door of an airplane taking him to Athens, an emigré against his will at the age of 50.

Constantinople's Central Railway Station was at Sirkeci. We had already handed over, packed up in a large trunk, our life's belongings which the Turks had "magnanimously" allowed us to take with us—that is, essential items of clothing only. Everything else had been confiscated by the Turkish authorities.

This "confiscation" was of a particular nature. The Turks made a list of all the movable assets, which the victim had no right to sell. The same was true, of course, for fixed assets. So, all those who were forced to flee had to leave behind their life's possessions for the Turks to plunder.

The only things the authorities allowed their victims to take with them were a few items of clothing. These few belongings, squeezed into a trunk, had to undergo a customs check and we had to be present. My mother was then nearly forty years old; my sister was seventeen and I was fifteen.

Feeling as if our hearts were gripped in an invisible hand clenching our hearts, we walked in silence along the road to Sirkeci. There we would

have to face the fanatic officers of the Turkish state performing their “duty” with obvious pleasure and satisfaction. Their “duty” was to do whatever was humanly possible to make sure their victims left their homes completely crushed, financially ruined and with not one penny of the fortune they might have amassed.

2

The signatures

For us, it all began one hot afternoon in July, 1964. It was a Tuesday, which my father had always considered to be an unlucky day because 29th May, 1453, when Constantinople fell to the Turks, was a Tuesday.

He was at the electrical goods store in the centre of the aristocratic district of Cihangir. He had been looking after this shop for 25 years and had spent a major part of his life there.

In common with all the other Greeks living in the city, my father had recently become very concerned. Greeks were now being deported from Constantinople on a variety of senseless pretexts. He was well aware that Turkey had, several decades earlier, mapped out a strategy to get rid of the Greeks living there and was merely biding its time and turning to full advantage any opportunity that might arise to put this strategy into effect.

However, with the outbreak of the Second World War, Turkey generously offered “facilities” to Fascists and Allies alike and managed not to shed a single drop of Turkish blood. On the contrary, it saw the period as an excellent chance to deal a severe blow to Hellenism in Constantinople.

Thus, with the fall of Crete in May, 1941, Turkey devised a plan for the general mobilisation of the non-Muslim population; men aged between 23 and 48 - including Greeks, naturally, but also many Armenians and Jews - were taken to forced labour camps in Anatolia, as had also happened in 1914.

These were in effect labour battalions operating under military conditions and led by junior officers in the Turkish army, who did not bother to conceal the ulterior motives of their superiors.

“You can forget about Istanbul!” they used to say. “That’s it, you’re finished here! Your wives and daughters will never see you again - they’ll become Turkish women!”

However, under foreign pressure against this act of provocation, even in time of war, the Turks were obliged to stop the mobilisation procedure a year later and release all those who had survived. After wiping them out physically, they now proceeded to do so financially.

On 11th November, 1942, Law 4305 on a capital property tax (Varlik Vergisi) was debated and passed in a single sitting of the Turkish parliament; this law meant, in essence, economic ruin for the non-Muslim population and was applied in an eminently “Turkish” fashion to the Greeks, Armenians and Jews in Constantinople: the local tax officer summoned non-Muslim residents of the city and informed them of the amount of tax they owed - a quite arbitrary figure that was frequently as much as ten times the taxpayer’s salary or many more times greater than a businessman’s assets.

Non-Muslim taxpayers had no right to discuss or appeal against this decision. Within 15 days the unfortunate citizens had to hand over the whole amount that had been arbitrarily determined by the tax officer, even if this meant selling off their entire property, otherwise they would be sent to a forced labour camp.

In other words, if they did not manage to pay all the tax within the specified period of 15 days, followed by a further two-week extension period with penalty, they were packed off to Askale, in Asia Minor, which was seen as the Turkish equivalent of Siberia. The offenders-built roads or cleared them of snow, for which they were paid two Turkish lira a day; the rest of their “wages” went towards paying off their debt to the Turkish state. Most of them would have had to work for between 200 and 300 years to pay off the tax debt levied against them!

Thus Greeks, Armenians and Jews, some with vast amounts of both fixed and movable assets, were forced, as a result of this law, literally to give away their entire property at ridiculous prices and at the same time were exiled in order to pay off their “debts” through forced labour.

Furniture, gold, hand-woven carpets, tapestries - all these were the movable assets on which this legalised form of pillage had set its sights. Sick people were even turned out of their beds so that these items of furniture could be removed.

The property was purchased mainly by members of the confiscation and liquidation committees, who then resold it at a much higher price. In 1943, when the law was introduced, a total of 1,869 prominent members of Constantinople’s Christian community were sent to the Turkish “Siberia” at Askale, once their property had been confiscated. Many of them died there as a result of the privations they suffered, but the names of only eleven of them are known. Two women who could not pay the

unreasonably high taxes imposed on them were sent to Askale to clean the toilets and other public areas and were never seen again.

Conditions in these concentration camps were appalling. The prisoners lived in make-shift tents that afforded little protection from the extreme cold. They had to quench their thirst with water from a dirty lake, placing their fingers across their lips as they drank so as to prevent the frogs and waterweed from getting in their mouths. One of the first prisoners to die at Askale was the father of Dr M. Hekimoglu. The cause of his death was pneumonia.

The testimonies of those who survived that period paint one of the blackest pictures in the history of mankind.

There is no doubt that introduction of the property tax, exile and the conditions at the labour camps all dealt a severe blow to the Greeks in Constantinople, but the measures did not “solve” the problem which the Greeks represented for Turkey, especially when in March 1944, seeing the end of the Second World War approaching, it was obliged to release all the prisoners in the concentration camps.

As soon as they were freed, of course, all those prisoners who had managed to survive the ordeal gradually began to leave Turkey in fear of their lives. The Greeks fled to Greece, the Jews to Palestine and the Armenians to Russia. Afraid their letters might be censored, the Armenians said before they left that as soon as they arrived, they would send their family and friends still living in Turkey a photograph of the whole family. If the family was standing up, that would mean they were happy and give encouragement to those who stayed in Turkey to emigrate to Russia, but if the people in the photograph were sitting down, this would indicate that conditions in Russia were as bad as, if not worse than, those in Turkey and the family should not consider leaving.

Following imposition of the property tax in 1942, Turkey waited patiently for many years until September, 1955, when, with masterly organisation, it staged a pogrom against the Greeks in Constantinople and their property, destroying 4,350 shops and stores, looting 2,600 homes and setting fire to or ravaging 73 Greek churches, all within the space of six-and-a-half hours.

In the early 1950s, Cyprus's struggle for independence had horrified the British who were afraid they might lose their bases on the island. They therefore decided to activate the interest of Turkey which, needless to say, was very happy to oblige. As a result, Greece was persuaded to take part in the 3-day London Conference which opened on 29th April, 1955, to discuss the Cyprus problem with Britain and Turkey. The real purpose of the conference was to confirm Turkey's active involvement in the Cyprus issue. Failure was merely a matter of time. Everything naturally served the British policy, which in this case was one of "divide and rule". But it was not an opportunity that the Turks were going to let pass, and they didn't. On 6th September, 1955, Turkey staged its night of terror.

Now in 1964, my father held the view that, as on all previous such occasions, Turkey would seize the opportunity presented by the current circumstances in its relations with Greece and deal with its problem of the "Greek minority" once and for all. A year earlier, the Anglo-Turkish alliance in Cyprus had brought Greece to the brink of war with Turkey. After condemning to failure all the attempts to draw up a Cypriot constitution, the Turks tried to invade Cyprus using their fleet. However, intervention by the United States forced them to stop, especially when the American president of the time, Lyndon Johnson, sent a letter to the Turkish prime minister, Ismet Inonu, warning him that if Turkey invaded Cyprus, the United States would remain a neutral observer should Russia take any action against Turkey.

The American president then invited the prime ministers of Greece and Turkey to the United States for talks. The Greek prime minister, Georgos Papandreou, declined the invitation, saying the meeting would be “a parody enacted by deaf people” which would lead nowhere, as had happened in London in 1955. Mr Inonu, on the other hand (who, as it happened, was actually deaf), accepted the invitation, thereby creating a favourable international climate for Turkey which it would naturally turn to full advantage.

Any decisive blows meted out by Turkey during the course of the twentieth century have been inflicted by taking advantage of a “suitable opportunity”. The Armenian genocide that took place during the First World War, the Capital Tax known as the Varlik Vergisi which was imposed mainly on Turkey’s Greek population in the Second World War, the pogrom of 1955 and the expulsions in 1964 - all these occurred at times when circumstances were “suitable”.

“Are you Gerasimos Koumakis?” a stern voice asked in Turkish, bringing my father back from his thoughts with a bump. It was the afternoon of 9th July, 1964.

“That’s me!” replied my father, his heart pounding.

“You’re to report to the officer on duty at police headquarters at 9 o’clock tomorrow morning!” came the order. “Now close your shop and go home - and don’t get any ideas about moving any stock out of here until an inventory has been carried out!”

My father went pale.

“What’s going on?” he asked. “Why do the police want to see me? I haven’t done anything that needs explaining to the police.”

“We don’t know that. Maybe even you don’t know. Anyway, we needn’t discuss that now. Make sure you’re there at 9 o’clock tomorrow morning, as I told you. Now get your things together and close the shop.”

My father realised the moment had come, the moment he had been thinking about for years. He remembered the words his father had spoken in Kadikoy (a district in Constantinople) when he said the Greeks of Constantinople had roots that went back not to the Emperor Constantinos Paleologos, but to Byzas, who built the city (then called Byzantium) in 650 BC, and these roots could not be severed. Now my father saw that things were not quite as his father had said.

He quickly closed his shop and hurried towards Pera. Our house was near the Church of St Constantinos and the primary school that I had attended. As soon as he entered the house, my mother realised something was seriously wrong.

“Wife, the time has come. We must pack up and leave for Athens. I have to appear at the police station tomorrow morning.”

My mother began to sob. My sister and I watched in stunned silence.

My father did not sleep that night. He spent the night worrying that our whole family could find itself in the position of starting out again from scratch. Our financial situation in Constantinople, while not particularly prosperous, was certainly satisfactory. My father had his business, we had our house and my sister was attending the Convent School. I was in my second year at the Zographion High School, right in the centre of Pera. Almost every summer, my father would shut up his shop for a month and take us to Greece for a holiday. Chios and Athens were our favourite destinations.

Yet the family had no savings to speak of. My mother, ever the more provident, frequently urged my father to purchase some property in

Athens, even if this meant taking out a small mortgage. On one of our trips, he was offered a splendid plot in Hiera Street. The year, as my mother recalls, was 1952 and my father was on the point of buying the land when at the last minute my mother's brother, Uncle Iannis, made him change his mind.

"What will you do with land over here?" he said. "It would be useless to you. You'd be much better keeping your money and investing it somewhere else."

No further words were needed to fuel my father's indecision, to my mother's immense disappointment.

Now, quite out of the blue, we stood at a critical turning-point in our lives. The uncertainty of the future loomed before us like a dark avenue full of potholes and hidden dangers. My father, who had been born and raised in Constantinople, was suddenly aware of the void that our unpredictable future presented.

That Tuesday night will remain etched in the memory of every member of the family. The numbness from the unexpected blow, the impending change in our lives and the fear of the unknown served to heighten our senses and we were all very keyed up.

The next morning my father reported to the General Police Headquarters (Müdüriyet). The stark and uninviting building was draped in Turkish flags as if to make quite sure nobody forgot the power wielded by the Turks. Under its roof the most obnoxious individuals had been assembled, all characters with a marked disposition for hatred and spite, who took daily pleasure in destroying the Greeks of the city, both psychologically and economically, and imperceptibly transmitted to you their frustration at not being able to wipe them out physically as well.

Where the Greeks in Constantinople were concerned, the Turks had not succeeded in indulging in their favourite pastime of slaughtering civilian populations - which was the Turkish national heritage and had received repeated glorification in the twentieth century with the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians and the extermination of an even greater number of Greeks, Pontians and Kurds -whose massacre went on for decades under the indifferent gaze of the “civilised” world. More “refined” methods, though, had to be employed with the Greeks in Constantinople.

The General Police Headquarters was in Sirkeci. On the ground floor was a vast area with two flights of stairs on either side, one on the right and one on the left of the building, which did not communicate. To reach the fourth floor, where the Birinci Şube or political section was located, you had to go up the left-hand staircase.

Over the door at the entrance to the fourth floor was a coat of arms with the two crescents of the Turkish flag facing each other. At the front of the building was a large empty space and at the back, a row of cells and some offices.

My father shivered. He had heard so much about the “activities” of the people on the fourth floor that just being there brought him out in a cold sweat.

The plump fellow in thick glasses who sat behind the desk which my father had approached did not look like a Turk - until he raised his eyes and looked at my father. Then two fiery shafts of hatred pierced the myopic lenses and my father was left in no doubt that he was a Turk, and one who was quite prepared to treat his victim to an overdose of Turkish zeal. Over his head hung a portrait of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk looking down on him with a stern expression.

“My name is Gerasimos Koumakis and I was sent to you by the Duty Officer,” said my father.

The fat man bent over some papers and shuffled them about a bit. After a while he muttered:

“Koumakis Gerasimos. Father’s name Le-on-i-das?” he asked.

“Yes, sir, Leonidas. Gerasimos Koumakis, son of Leonidas and Zoe.”

At that moment the door opened. A tall, skinny man with a sallow complexion and a thin moustache slipped into the room and sat down on a chair opposite my father without saying a word. My father suddenly thought of the opinion of the Turks expressed by the great Islamic prophet Mohammed, which he had read somewhere: “The Day of Judgement will not come unless battles are won against the Turks, whose features are small eyes stretching back towards their ears, a flat nose and a brutal facial expression.”

The fat man gave a little cough to clear his throat and began:

“You know, Koumakis, that our brothers in Cyprus are suffering. That devil in a priest’s cassock who goes under the name of Makarios is giving them a really hard time. They are subjected to daily oppression in a place which naturally belongs to Turkey. And as if that wasn’t enough, the Greeks have the cheek to call for “union” with Greece. Is that fair? I’m asking you, is that right?”

The fat man’s gaze fell on my father like a bird of prey landing. My father, too, cleared his throat and said:

“Beyefendi, I am a simple law-abiding man and work hard for my living. I don’t concern myself with politics.”

“Do you mean to say that you don’t know about the ordeal suffered by our brothers in Cyprus at the hands of Kizil Papaz [meaning red, therefore left-wing, priest]? Haven’t you heard about their struggles and their dreams to see Cyprus become Turkish? Either you are very insensitive, Koumakis, or else you are pretending. Of course, I know it’s the second of these.”

“No, no, Beyefendi,” stammered my father.

“What do you mean, no?” the fat man bellowed. “Our brothers in Cyprus are suffering. Our brothers in Cyprus are being oppressed by the filthy Greeks. I ask you straight out: do you approve of all this? Do you approve of the Turks being tortured by the Greeks in Cyprus? Go on, tell me - do you or do you not approve?”

His passion was genuine. The fat man lived every moment like a great theatre star.

Struggling to retain his equanimity, my father said:

“Torture is a very bad thing, Beyefendi. Of course, I don’t approve, nor would any civilised person.”

Like a viper lying in wait for its prey and ready to strike when the right moment presented itself, the sallow-faced man with the moustache extended a threatening finger and said suddenly:

“Then why do you, Koumakis, why do you yourself send money to support the devil-priest Makarios? Why do you stab our brothers in Cyprus in the back by helping Makarios? Are you so ungrateful to Turkey, which has raised you and tolerated you since you were born?”

My father just managed to say “Beyefendi, I haven’t sent any financial aid to Makarios - or to anybody else in Cyprus,” when the sallow-faced man sprang out of his chair and yelled:

“Shut up! Anything you say will just make your situation worse, you fool! We have reliable evidence to back what we are saying, and are quite sure that with the right kind of interrogation you will confess to everything!”

The fat man interrupted calmly:

“But that isn’t our aim - unless, of course, you force us. Turkey is a civilised country and doesn’t want to inflict on you givours the same suffering as our brothers in Cyprus have to endure. So we have generously decided to give you a great opportunity: you will sign a number of papers which we need for our files. Then three policemen will accompany you to your shop and your home to make an inventory of anything you have which is of value. Don’t forget, you acquired these things through the toil and sweat of the Turkish people, and you have conscientiously been sending part of your profits to Cyprus to be used against our brothers there. You have six days in which to settle only any urgent outstanding affairs. You will be deported from Turkey by the first flight next Tuesday. This is a very small punishment for the crimes you have committed against Turkey.”

The sallow-faced man started shouting again. “I don’t agree! I don’t agree! We are letting them get away with their lives and are ignoring the serious crimes they have committed! That’s not civilisation, that’s stupidity!”

“Don’t forget that we are a very magnanimous people, which is something our enemies have always taken advantage of,” replied the fat man. “Come on, Koumakis, sign these papers before I make up my mind that we shall have to send you for interrogation to make you confess.”

The colour drained from my father’s face; indeed, he felt as if his blood had left his whole body. He had heard various things about visits by

Greeks to the Turkish police, but this blatant cynicism shown by the fat man was beyond anything he could have imagined.

Through my father's mind, like lightning, flashed stories about the dreadful tortures carried out, along with the image of a man we knew who had passed through the hands of the Turkish police and emerged, mutilated and disfigured, to spend the rest of his life a cripple because he rejected the "charges" they were trying to lay on him.

My father felt as if he had been knocked over by a piece of thread. For a few seconds he considered his chances of resisting. He knew at that moment that it would be futile to attempt to do anything other than what they were telling him, to do.

He stood up, went up to the fat man's desk, took a pen and began to sign his name on papers that he hadn't even read.

When he had finished, the fat man seemed pleased.

"Aferim! (well done!)" he said. "That shows what a sensible man you are."

My father was then led to a small room where his photograph and fingerprints were taken.

The fat man and the sallow-faced one with the thin moustache had completed their task.

3

The eve of deportation

The days that passed until the following Tuesday morning were very busy and extremely tense.

The Turkish officials lost no time in carrying out the inventory of our property, both at home and in the shop. At home, everything went on the list—furniture, rugs, pots and pans, right down to the smallest kitchen utensil—all except our clothes. At the shop, anything that was even remotely valuable—tools, equipment, furniture, stock—was noted down.

Friends and acquaintances had gathered at our house to offer their support. Some were weeping but others were smiling, trying to encourage us with assurances of the chance of a better life.

My father tried in vain to sell off the few paltry items that had not been recorded in the inventory. The Turks were standing by hoping to grab

the booty for free. And that is precisely what happened: the shop was taken over by a Turk who had been employed as my father's assistant, and as for the house, it was later taken over by the Turkish caretaker of the apartment block next door.

My father faced the situation with characteristic calm. Over the next few days my mother seemed to get over the initial shock and come to terms with the idea of a new beginning. But my sister was in despair. She was having to give up her school, her friends, the whole world she had grown up in. She was quite inconsolable.

As for me, circumstances forced me to grow up very quickly. Without realizing the full extent of the change that was about to take place in our lives, I sensed the gravity of the situation. It was many years till I would feel like smiling again.

As Tuesday approached, the day when my father would leave us, clutching one small suitcase and making his way to Athens to seek a new life for us all, we grew increasingly agitated.

On Monday evening, only a few hours before he was due to depart, he called the whole family together and said:

"Tomorrow morning, when I go, I shall be leaving behind everything in my life that I hold most dear: the place where I was born and grew up, our home, my work, your mother, and you, my children. But as you can see, I am trying very hard to stay calm and I believe all the things that are happening to us are beyond our control and that there is nothing we can do to alter our fate. I'm going to Athens and I'll try to rent a small apartment so that you can come over to join me as soon as possible. Of course, this won't be easy; first I'll have to find a job because, as you know, we'll have no money. But I'll do everything in my power to have you with me again as quickly as possible. Till then, I want you to live together peacefully, do as your mother says, and be careful.

Make sure you don't give the Turks the slightest excuse to make trouble. When you're out on the street, you shouldn't open your mouths—even if you're provoked.

Leonidas, you will now be the only man in the family. Take good care of your mother and your sister. I don't think it will take me more than a few weeks to sort things out in Athens. But however long it takes, I must have an easy mind—as far as it's possible—about things back here so that I can bring you over to join me soon."

We all listened silently to my father's words with rapt attention.

"Perhaps," he went on, "it's better, from one point of view, that things have turned out like this. At least you, children, will have a far better chance of making a life for yourselves in Athens, where there is freedom and equality. Here in Turkey, the future for us Greeks in Constantinople is very bleak. The Turks cite—and implement—the agreements which serve their interests, but write off and completely ignore the parts of the agreements they have signed that don't suit them. Look at the way they have used the Treaty of Lausanne which ended the war with Greece in 1923: before the Treaty was signed, there were 300,000 Greeks in Constantinople and another 15,000 on the islands of Imvros and Tenedos. The Turks agreed—ostensibly with difficulty—to exempt Constantinople, Imvros and Tenedos from the agreement on the population exchanges; this was to be offset by the 80,000 Muslims living in Western Thrace, who would not be returned to Turkey. The aim of the Turks was quite clear: they wanted to maintain a Muslim population in Western Thrace, as the Treaty of Lausanne provided, since this served their interests.

"Meanwhile they had plans ready to wipe out the entire Greek population in Turkey, never mind what it said in the Treaty! They began with Imvros and Tenedos. Although the islands were Greek—like all the Aegean

islands—they were ceded to Turkey, supposedly for security reasons, as they lay at the entrance to the Dardanelles. However, according to Article 14 of the Treaty of Lausanne, these two islands would have a separate administration and the non-Muslim population would be given guarantees regarding their safety and the protection of their property, their religion, their education and their language.

“What nonsense! The Turks sign things and then proceed to ignore them. Before the ink had dried on the Treaty they had signed, the Turks had closed the Greek schools on the two islands and banned the instruction of the Greek language. Greek children were sent to attend Turkish schools. In 1943, the property owned by the monasteries at Lavra and Koutloumousion was confiscated, and the buildings were given to Lazes whom they brought over as settlers. Bit by bit, of course, under such conditions of oppression and persecution, the Greek population on Imvros and Tenedos was reduced to next to nothing. We’ve already heard that a dissolution program is being put into effect, aimed at removing all traces of Hellenism from these Greek islands and at the same time making them completely Turkish.

“In the meantime, of course, it’s been our turn here in Constantinople. In 1928, the Turks burnt Tavatla and renamed it Kurtulus. In 1930, Greeks were banned from certain professions to prevent them from making money. In 1941, the special labor battalions were thought up. In 1942, came the destructive property tax which was impossible to pay, and more forced labor camps. The looting of our property in 1955 was carried out under the guidance and organization of the official Turkish state. You were very young then, but I’m sure you remember what a narrow escape I had - otherwise I’d have been dead now.

“And now, in 1964, they are callously deporting us without the slightest grounds for doing so, with a completely inhumane, and swift, process.

What kind of a future can we have in a country which captured our land through violence and bloodshed, and doesn't want us here?

"So, let's go to Greece, where the air has the breath of freedom and where if we work as hard as we do here, I'm sure we'll have a much better life.

"Now I want you to go to sleep like good children, and have faith in God."

As my father finished, my mother was unable to hold back any longer and, throwing herself into his arms, burst into tears. A few moments later my sister did likewise.

My father managed to stay calm.

"Please don't behave like this! Didn't we say we must show courage and patience? What sort of patience is this, drowned in tears? Off you go to bed, so that I can get a few hours' rest. Don't forget what tomorrow has in store for me ..."

4

The nightmare of the pogrom

Lying on my bed, I found it impossible to sleep that night. My father's words kept running through my head: "Remember what a narrow escape I had..." He was talking about the night of September 6, 1955.

The picture came into my mind, as in a dream, of us all gathered on the flat roof of our house, squeezed into a corner that overlooked the road and watching for my father to appear. Later, when he had come home, it was in this same spot that we waited, terrified, for the murderous mob to go past. Those moments will remain imprinted in my memory forever. The fear that we might be attacked made us like mice caught in a trap. No matter how many years go by, I shall never forget the scene, which is etched in my memory like a nightmare: wherever you looked, the sky was filled with fire and smoke, and shouts of "Damn the giaours!" pierced our ears like bullets.

On the afternoon of September 6, 1955, all seemed quiet. A small group of students demonstrating against Greece had gathered in Taksim Square, at the top of Pera Street. The Turkish authorities had always viewed Greece as a target for the mob. In the early 1950s, Turkey had found a new source for the renewal of anti-Greek fury: Cyprus. The British had given part of the island as a gift to Turkey, so that they would assume the role of “arbitrator” between the two sides, and thereby safeguard their own interests.

Through his inflammatory anti-Greek articles, Sedat Simavi, a Turkish Jew working as a reporter on the newspaper Hurriyet, had managed to boost the newspaper’s daily circulation from 11,000 copies in 1948, when it was first issued, to 600,000 copies a day! Naturally the other Turkish newspapers were not long in following suit and so the general climate had been well prepared.

A large part of this negative mass psychology was spawned by jealousy of the increasing economic prosperity of the Greeks of Constantinople. To this, Turkish propaganda artfully tacked on the notion that the Christians, the Armenians, the Jews and the other minorities who enjoyed most of the country’s wealth, were to blame for Turkey’s misfortune and inability to make economic progress. The Emperor Nero had likewise misled his wretched people by ascribing all evil and adversity to the Christians. The Turks improved on his tactics: the fanaticism which permeated the popular masses was more acute, extremely well-organized, and for the most part, very well-controlled.

Organizations known as “Cyprus is Turkish” sprang up like mushrooms. Their leader was another reporter of the newspaper Hurriyet, Hikmet Bil, who was also very successful in channelling inflammatory anti-Greek feelings to the masses.

There followed the staged failure of the tripartite London Conference at the beginning of September and the implementation of a perfectly devised plan to wipe out Hellenism in Constantinople.

As was later established, the official point of departure for the plan was 500 kilometres away, in the city of Thessaloniki. A few hours before a demonstration was due to take place, Oktay Engin, a Muslim student at Thessaloniki University's Law School, who came from Komotini, in Thrace, delivered a bomb to the guard at the Turkish consulate in Thessaloniki, Mehmet Hasanoğlu. The guard planted the device in a garden shared by the Turkish consulate and the house where the Turks believe Mustafa Kemal was born. The bomb went off but caused no damage, apart from shattering a few windows. However, this was of no importance. The plan drawn up by the Turkish state was not aimed at destroying the building. The bomb explosion was merely a pretext to blacken Greece's name. And this is precisely what happened: two Turkish newspapers had already prepared special editions with prefabricated texts full of disinformation.

"Greek terrorists destroy Atatürk's family home in Thessaloniki!" ran the headlines in a special evening edition of the Istanbul Express on September 6, 1955, which contained photographs that had been specially doctored to suit the purpose.

It was later discovered that the wife of the Turkish Consul General had asked a photographer called Kyriakidis for these photographs. She attended the opening of the 20th International Fair in Thessaloniki on September 3, 1955, and said she wanted them as a souvenir of the Kemal Atatürk house, as she was leaving for Constantinople the next day.

These photographs—suitably doctored, of course—were then used in the special editions published by the two Turkish newspapers on the evening of September 6, 1955.

“Kemal Atatürk’s house totally destroyed!” was the message put about. The special editions published by the two Turkish newspapers at the time of the demonstration were the signal. The five main streets leading to Taksim Square were suddenly filled with a raging mob armed with axes, shovels, clubs, sledge-hammers and iron bars and shouting “Kahrolsun giavurlar! Curse the giaours!” and “Yikin, kirin, giavurdur! Smash it, pull it down - it belongs to the giaours!”

The police and state security forces were supposedly caught by surprise. They received no instructions to restore order and merely watched the goings-on with cool indifference.

When the yelling mob had swelled to approximately 50,000, the next stage of the plan came into effect: the destruction of all Greek property and the desecration of all churches and holy places belonging to the Greeks in the city. The instructions were that nothing was to remain standing.

The hours that followed were a living hell for Constantinople’s Greek population.

One part of the mob moved off towards Istiklal Caddesi, formerly known as Pera Street, a kilometre-long road that was the city’s best-known shopping centre with about 700 shops and stores, most of them owned by Greeks.

The first place to come under attack was a cafeteria on Taksim Square known as “Eptalofos” (meaning “Seven Hills”). The mob burst into the café like a herd of bulls and smashed everything in sight: windows, tables, chairs, sideboards, glasses, cups—nothing was left intact.

The next place destined for attack was a textile store owned by a Greek businessman. Four members of the rabble ripped up a tram rail and used it to break down the door and smash the shop windows. Within the space of a few minutes, the shop looked like a bombsite. Lengths of textiles and shelving were strewn on the streets and a sewing machine was smashed on the road outside before the eyes of the screaming mob.

The next target was an electrician's shop, where the rampaging mob fell upon the goods and scattered them in the street.

A little further down was a grocery store owned by two elderly Greeks. The old man stood firmly outside the door of his shop and said with remarkable courage: "Get out of here! We've been living in this country for six generations and you can't touch us!"

These were the last words he ever spoke. The rabble fell on him; within a few minutes his shop was completely demolished and the old man was the first victim of that dreadful night. His wife managed to save herself by huddling in a corner but she died of shock shortly afterwards.

The mob proceeded to destroy all the Greek stores located on Pera Street in similar fashion: the famous cake-shops Kervan, Baylan and Şehir, and the splendid shoe and dress shops. Here the demonstrators pulled out clothes and footwear, selecting silk shirts, suits and new shoes for themselves and putting them on then and there, before continuing with their mission of destruction.

At Frangoulis's magnificent jewellery shop the mob charged in, fighting with each other to see who could grab the most valuable pieces. It took them only a few minutes to pocket the expensive gold jewellery.

When the crowd reached the Church of the Holy Trinity, it hesitated for a moment. But this quickly passed when the cry went up "Curse the

infidels!” and the mob invaded the church. Anything in the building that could be moved was destroyed or desecrated: icons, holy chalices, priests’ robes—everything. The pews and the bishop’s throne were overturned by another group of demonstrators who burst into the church with a can of kerosene to set fire to it. We will never know why, in the end, the Turks were unable to burn the church.

In just a few hours, Pera Street had taken on a totally different appearance. The road surface had acquired a curious extra layer composed of a mixture of the items that had been destroyed: bits of machinery, furs, watches, shoes, oil, cheese, dress materials, smashed crockery, various foodstuffs and items of clothing—all mixed up and gradually trampled down by the rabble passing over it till it resembled a greasy sea of mud.

At around seven o’clock that evening, my father was in his shop when he heard the shouting of the group of demonstrators far in the distance. With his heart pounding, he remembered the words that Ahmet Buldur, a Turkish neighbour who was very fond of him, had said to him only the previous day:

“Gerasimos, don’t go out tomorrow evening—stay at home with your family.”

“Why, Ahmet Bey?” my father had asked.

“Don’t ask questions—just stay at home. Information has reached me which may not mean much, but may be very serious.”

For a moment my father was puzzled. He connected Ahmet Buldur’s words with a number of other “curious” signs: for example, the shutters and walls of the houses and shops belonging to Christians had suddenly been daubed with strange, distinctive markings or Turkish letters. Many stores belonging to Turks had displayed the Turkish flag as if to convey

a message of some kind, which remained a mystery to my father. Groups of Lazes and various other people belonging to tribes which came from the far east of Turkey, had appeared in the centre of Constantinople in the last few days, dressed in rags and starving.

How was my father to know that a few hours later these people would be posing as “outraged citizens” and embarking on a spree of looting, desecration, rape and destruction?

Despite giving the matter serious thought, in the end my father failed to interpret the words of Ahmet Buldur correctly. He did not realize their true meaning and now, hearing the shouts of the distant mob, he regretted it.

He hurriedly turned out all the lights and slipped out of the shop. At that very moment, he was approached by five people who had broken away from the main body of the rabble.

“Why haven’t you hoisted the Turkish flag in your shop, eh, giaour?” one of them asked.

That was the signal. All five of them fell upon him and began to pummel and kick him. Fortunately, they were not armed with shovels and pickaxes. Reeling from the repeated blows, my father tried desperately to defend himself and as soon as he had a chance, to return some of the punches. He was in a sorry state. Any moment now the main mob would be on the scene and any hope of saving himself would have vanished.

At that moment the sound of an ambulance siren rang out. The scuffle on the street stopped to allow the vehicle to pass. My father realized this was his only chance to save his life. Bleeding profusely and dizzy from the heavy pounding he had received, he summoned all his strength and started to run. By the time the ambulance had passed, my father had

disappeared; the target of the mob's wrath was now his shop, which they literally ransacked from top to bottom. Meanwhile it took my father two hours to walk the distance to our house, a journey he normally completed in twenty minutes. He was a total wreck.

We were all waiting for him in a state of great agitation. As soon as my mother heard about the rioting, she positioned herself anxiously by the window, waiting impatiently for my father to appear. When she saw him coming, we all ran to open the front door. With our shock and horror clearly etched on our faces, we helped him crawl into bed and attended to his injuries.

Meanwhile, the plan to destroy all Greek property in the city was now fully under way. A hundred gangs of rioters were busy carrying out their terrible task, covering a vast area that stretched from the Bosphorus to the Sea of Marmara. Each gang had a leader who was armed with a list of the houses and shops in his area owned by Greeks. It was an organized tornado of violence that swept away everything in its path. Dozens of Greek citizens and clergymen were beaten up. Altogether 73 Greek churches were plundered or burned. Icons, murals and holy chalices of inestimable historic and archaeological value were destroyed. All the city's 26 Greek schools were completely demolished. The Patriarchal School at Fanari, established in 1453, and the Theological School on Halki were subjected to the fury of the rabble in an act of extreme barbarism. The Zappeion High School was attacked and the statue of its benefactor, Constantinos Zappas, sent tumbling down the great marble staircase. The mob did not stop at ruining desks, a piano and the school hall, but also did immense damage to the murals that decorated the interior walls of the school.

In all, 4,340 Greek shops and stores were looted and destroyed that night; 2,600 Greek homes were caught in the eye of the storm and submitted to the mob's unprecedented wrath. The offices and printing

presses of the city's three big Greek newspapers were literally smashed to pieces. The offices of Olympic Airways, then known as T.A.E., on Cumhuriyet Street in Elmadag, were visited twice by the rabble. The first time, the offices were protected by a strong guard and the "demonstrators" were obliged to withdraw temporarily without completing their task. However, one of the guards told them they had arrived too early and advised them to come back later; and indeed, the second time they turned up the guards had all disappeared, save the one who had suggested they return later. After destroying the airline's offices, leaving almost nothing standing, they were about to make their exit when the "guard" urged them to finish the job by destroying a large advertisement displayed in the inner office. This they did, and when they finally departed, they left behind them a scene that resembled a bomb site.

In another part of the city, one group of demonstrators had spent two whole hours venting their blind rage and hatred by destroying the tombstones and crosses in the Greek cemetery at Şişli. Opening up the most recent graves, they removed the bodies and hacked them to pieces with knives.

At the Church of the Virgin Mary of Vlacherna, which was built on the foundations of a Byzantine church that dated back to AD 470, the frenzied mob destroyed what the Greeks had managed to preserve for 1,485 years.

The historic 13th century Church of Saint George at Psomathia, which the Turks called kanli kilise (bleeding church) because of the blood shed on that spot during the Fall of Constantinople, was turned into a heap of ruins.

In the Bosphorus district, the screaming mob pushed a Turkish flag into the hands of a priest and forced him to chant "Cyprus is Turkish!" as

loudly as he could “so that Archbishop Makarios could hear him.” Scared out of his wits, the wretched priest was unable to shout very loudly and was savagely beaten up, kicked and left in a bloody heap on the road.

In the Byzantine district of Pikridion, known as Hasköy in Turkish, the mortal remains of the latter-day saint, Argyri, kept in a silver urn, were strewn on the streets. Nothing was left except for a few charred relics.

In Therapia, the Metropolitan Church of Derki and its library containing rare and valuable documents, were burnt to the ground. The historic church building, where secret meetings had taken place prior to the 1821 Revolution between the city’s elders and Papaflessas—a member of the Filiki Etairia who stopped in Constantinople on his way to Odessa on the Black Sea—was completely destroyed. Bishop Iakovos of Derki managed to escape at the last minute and was saved thanks to the help offered to him by Dimitris Koutsopoulos and the head waiter at the Touring Club.

Mega Rema—called Arnavutköy in Turkish—was the residence of Bishop Gennadios of Ilioupolis, a learned and exceptional man: sociologist, historian, theologian and prolific writer, he was a highly cultured man who spoke seven languages and was renowned not only amongst the Greeks of Constantinople but throughout Christendom. It was precisely this prestige that marked him as a target of the Turkish wrath. That night the mob broke into his house and, having found him on the upper floor, beat him up savagely and threw him down the stairs. It then set about destroying everything inside the building, including a valuable library which the Bishop had built up. Finally, he was dragged outside and assaulted yet again before being left, unconscious, on the street. Bishop Gennadios died from his injuries three days later.

At the historic Monastery of Zoodochos Pigis, known as the Baloukliotissa, it was the policemen and night-watchman who were

supposed to be guarding the building who led the mob to the task of destruction and looting. The three monks who were in the monastery on the night of September 6, were either killed or badly beaten up. One 90-year-old monk, Chryssanthos Mantas, was burned alive. The 60-year-old abbot, Bishop Gerasimos of Pamfilios, was tortured and received severe head injuries. The 35-year-old monastery priest, Evangelos, was also beaten and tortured. The mob wanted to put him to death slowly and sadistically, by crucifixion, but they ran out of time. Martial law was declared at midnight and they were too afraid of the consequences to flout the law.

The Patriarchal tombs and relics of the great Greek benefactors, which had been kept in the wall of the monastery courtyard since 1850, were flattened and desecrated with an almost cannibalistic zeal. The graves of the Patriarchs were ripped open and their bones scattered everywhere.

Twenty-one Greek factories were completely demolished. Any that lay along the coastal road beside the Bosphorus had their machinery and equipment torn out and thrown into the sea.

A total of 110 Greek restaurants and hotels were plundered and then smashed or burned down, while all 27 Greek pharmacies in the city were stripped and demolished.

It is estimated that the number of cases of women raped that night, irrespective of their age, was well over 200. The total number of people who lost their lives exceeded 20, despite the orders that there were to be no killings. Of the hundreds of cases of rape reported, some incidents were particularly shocking to the Greek community. At Ortaköy, a group of demonstrators seized a woman dressed in black who had the misfortune to find herself in their path. After each of them had “had his fun” with her, they abandoned the wretched woman where she lay,

unconscious and bleeding. She was discovered the next day, still alive, and taken to hospital where doctors confirmed the experience had driven her insane.

At a house in Tatavla, two orphan girls were waiting anxiously for their father to come home. But instead of their father, who worked in the Bosphorus district and was unable to return before the disturbances started, a gang of rioters suddenly appeared, raped them both and left them lying in a pool of blood. When their poor father finally came home, the shock of what had happened to the two girls was too much for him and he hanged himself.

At Yenişehir, egged on by the shouts of the crowd, an 8-year-old girl was raped by a well-known porter nicknamed the Gorilla, so called because of his repulsive face, which was pocked with the marks of syphilis. The little girl survived the ordeal but was to carry the trauma of that night with her for the rest of her life.

Two women, Zinovia Charitonidou and Asimonia Parapandopoulou, died as a result of being raped that night.

The names of some of the others who died in the Turkish pogrom that September night were Olga Kimioglou, aged 80, who was trampled to death by the mob in the area of Golden Horn Bay; Giorgos Korpovas, Emmanuil Tzanetis, Avraam Anavas and Nikolaos Karamanoglou.

I still remember that appalling night as if it were yesterday; I remember being huddled in terror in a corner of the flat roof of our house, waiting frantically for our turn to come. And indeed, at around 11 o'clock the night sky, already thick with smoke and fire wherever you looked, was suddenly filled with fearful cries of "Death to the giaours! Death to the giaours!," "Yikin, kirin, giavourdur! Smash it, pull it down - it belongs to the giaours!"

The shouting was getting dangerously close. My mother crossed herself, whispering with trembling lips: "Jesus Christ wins and scatters all evils." Without being conscious of doing so, we all followed suit and crossed ourselves, repeating our mother's words.

The rabble was drawing nearer.

Our house was on a steep hill called Enli Yokuş. At the top of the hill, at the junction with the main road called Kalyoncu Kulluk, was a large store named Crystal which occupied the ground floor and basement. It sold household goods and glassware and belonged to a Greek. The mob charged into the store and began to wreak havoc; some of the items that were hurled out on to the street rolled down the hill and ended up outside our front door.

The noise of the merchandise being smashed combined with the shouting of the crowd, produced an atmosphere of sheer terror. The destruction was accompanied by cries of "Today your property, tomorrow your life!" When they had finished breaking and looting the Crystal store, the mob moved on towards our house.

The leader of the gang, who was holding a list of houses in the area, stopped in front of the building.

"Giaours live here!" he cried. "In this house there live infidels who torture our brothers in Cyprus and plant bombs in the family home of our Father, Kemal Atatürk!"

The sound of that voice will remain with me for the rest of my life. The hatred and passion in it were like a knife plunged deep into our sensitive souls.

The frenzied mob began to throw the first stones at the door. Paralyzed with fear, we crouched motionless on the roof, hardly able to breathe.

Suddenly a familiar voice shouted out “Stop!” from the opposite building. The wife of the infamous Papa Eftim, who lived across the road from us, had appeared on the flat roof of the opposite house.

Papa Eftim was a shady character, detested by the Greeks because he was suspected of being a Turkish agent. It was he who had organized the so-called “Turkish Orthodox Church.” The Greek Orthodox Church had repudiated him and all the Greeks viewed him as a traitor; they avoided him whenever possible, even to the extent of not greeting him on the street. Now his wife, who must have weighed at least 130 kilos, suddenly appeared at the last minute on the roof of their house, which was exactly opposite ours.

The mob, knowing perfectly well who and what Papa Eftim was, paused for a moment. The pseudo-priest’s wife continued in a voice that did not waver:

“Please, go away. Giaours used to live in that house, but now there are peace-loving people who love Turkey as much as you and I do.”

Our anguish was indescribable. We hadn’t the strength to make even the slightest movement, not even to look.

“Are you sure, abla (sister)?” asked the leader of the group in disbelief.

“I am sure; you know who I am,” came the voice of the fat woman.

“Of course, we do,” was the reply.

“Then you should also know that I get very angry when my word is doubted. Take my word for it and get out of here.”

After a slight hesitation, which seemed to us to last a century, the leader shouted:

“Let’s go! We still have a lot of work to do!”

The mob followed him as he led the way down the hill past our house, still shouting “Death to the giaours!”

We stayed where we were, transfixed, until the last member of the gang had turned the corner at the bottom of the road.

The houses of the Greeks who lived in the suburbs of Constantinople sustained worse damage that night than those belonging to Greeks living in the city centre. Two areas completely devastated by the Turkish mob were Chrysokeramo (Çengelköy), on the shores of the Bosphorus, and Eptapyrgio (Yedikule).

A man called Apostolos Nikolaidis lived in Chrysokeramo with his wife Efterpi and their two children, Domna and Miltos. We knew the family and were shocked when we learned what had happened to them. Early in the evening, when word had spread of the anti-Greek demonstration taking place in Taksim Square, Apostolos Nikolaidis left his shop in Karaköy and took the boat home to Yeni Mahala (new neighbourhood) in Chrysokeramo.

They lived in a two-storey house which belonged to Stefanos and Tarsi Sarandidis. After carefully locking all the doors and windows, the family gathered in the little kitchen at the back of the upper floor of the building and the owners of the house went upstairs to a small attic. Opposite the house was a street-lamp which lit up the road and an empty plot, where only the previous night, Apostolos Nikolaidis had dumped a load of coal that he was going to store in the basement of his house for the winter. They then turned out all the lights in the house and the Nikolaidis family huddled round the radio, listening anxiously for news of what was happening.

Suddenly they remembered that somewhere in the house was a small Greek flag, and as a precaution they decided to destroy it. The little flag was burned, using a small quantity of spirit.

As time passed, their despair and anxiety increased. Turkish Radio started to broadcast news of the rioting and the whole family froze when the noise from the disturbances began to reach their ears as the yelling mob destroyed houses in a district further down the road.

The contents of every Greek household were gradually being thrown out on to the streets and strewn all over the pavements; the sound of the homes being smashed and the shouts of the crowd on the rampage produced an appalling din.

The interior of the parish church was totally demolished and the blackboards from the Greek school, with the last lesson still written on them in chalk, were hurled out on to the streets.

The cordon was beginning to tighten around the district of Yeni Mahala, where the Nikolaidis family lived, when Apostolos Nikolaidis suddenly jumped up; he had heard on the radio that martial law had been declared. It was midnight.

"I hope we're through!" he whispered to his family. "As martial law's been declared they'll have to stop!"

He slipped out of the tiny kitchen and peered through a crack in the shutters, trying to see what was going on down in the street. He strained his ears to hear whether the noise of the mob's yelling and destruction was receding. Then he heard the sound of a jeep approaching and through the chink in the shutters he saw a police vehicle stop outside the house. Its engine was switched off. The hope that the police had come to offer their protection leaped inside him, but his intuition told him this was not the case.

He stood there waiting, as still as the jeep and its passengers outside. Five minutes must have passed and no-one moved. The racket from the mob's destructive operation seemed to be showing no signs of diminishing, much less of stopping altogether.

Then, suddenly, the engine of the police jeep was started up again and it disappeared as mysteriously as it had come.

Soon the rabble's cries became even louder and the family realized it was now very near. Apostolos Nikolaidis went back into the little kitchen.

"It seems they have destroyed Giovanni's grocery store and the house of Iannis Vlastos." Both of these were very close to their home.

The first stone landed with a terrible crash, sending fragments of window pane flying into the room. Whooping and yelling, the mob began to throw pieces of coal from the heap lying on the empty plot opposite at the doors and windows.

Paralyzed with fear, the Nikolaidis family watched as their house filled up with coal tossed through the broken windows. Half the pile of coal which had been brought the previous evening was now lying in their living room! One spark would have sufficed to set fire to the whole lot and burn them like torches.

All of a sudden, the mob began to move away from the house, still shouting: "Today your property, tomorrow your lives!" Half an hour passed; all was dangerously quiet. Everyone felt as if they were sitting on a time-bomb whose fuse had already been lit.

At that moment a muffled voice called to Apostolos Nikolaidis from outside. It was immediately recognized as being the voice of their neighbour, a Turk from the Pontus:

“Apostolos-efendi! Apostolos-efendi!” Come down and we’ll hide you in our house! You’ll be much safer with us. If you stay in there, you’ll be in danger. They’re sure to come back!”

The members of the family looked at each other with desperation and fear written all over their faces. The wife of the Pontian Turk was a secret Christian. She used to go to church every Sunday morning, very early, light a candle and leave without uttering a word. She must have asked her husband to protect the Christian families in the neighbourhood.

But under such circumstances you could not afford to trust anyone. Apostolos Nikolaidis pressed a finger to his lips, indicating that no one was to speak. The Pontian Turk repeated his suggestion twice more, then disappeared. The noise of the Turks breaking up Greek homes was meanwhile continuing unabated.

Once more, thirty minutes of uneasy silence passed and then a fresh wave of rioters began to approach, their passions whipped up to such an extent that their behaviour resembled that of wild animals.

His eye glued to the crack in the shutter, Apostolos Nikolaidis saw the mob returning. For the second time that night, hope sprang up inside him when he saw that it was led by Biletçi Kemal. This was the man who issued the tickets for the ferry that operated between Çengelköy and Karaköy. He also owed his life to Apostolos Nikolaidis. Once when he had been seriously ill—something wrong with his head—it was the ice that Apostolos Nikolaidis kept supplying him with that had saved him. The Nikolaidis family were the only people in the area with a refrigerator at that time.

* Efendi is an honorific title in Turkish, attached to the first names of people to indicate respect.

Seeing that the leader of the gang was Biletçi Kemal, who was so obliged to him, Apostolos Nikolaidis decided to do what a priest at the church of Beykoz had done a few days earlier: the priest had stood at the entrance to the church holding a Turkish flag, and speaking in fluent Turkish managed to convince the crowd which was bent on destroying the church that nothing separated Turks from Greeks.

Wasting no time, Apostolos Nikolaidis went downstairs, grabbed a Turkish flag which they always kept ready for an emergency like this, opened the front door and confronted the mob.

Inside the house, everyone held their breath. An awkward silence fell on the angry rioters. Making his way over pieces of coal, stones and broken glass, which cut into his flesh through his thin shoes and still clutching the Turkish flag, Apostolos Nikolaidis summoned up the courage to speak to the crowd.

“I am Apostolos Nikolaidis,” he said, “and I was born in this country, just like all of you. My parents, like your parents, were also born here. So were my grandparents. I have Turkish citizenship, just like you. I served in the Turkish army, like you did. And not just once, not even twice, but three times!”

He paused for a moment, out of breath. Total silence reigned, as if an invisible hand had immobilized the crowd that had been raging so angrily a few minutes before. Speaking in faultless Turkish, he continued, his voice clear and resonant:

“I have nothing to do with Cyprus! I have no connection with what is going on there or anywhere else, for that matter. I live here, like you do. There is absolutely no reason for you to destroy our home. In any case, like you, I believe in God. And in both our faiths, wrong-doing is a great

crime. So, I would ask you to leave quietly without causing any further damage and remember that my family and I are part of this country, just like you!”

The deathly hush which fell after his speech lasted just a few seconds. Then a voice charged with hatred and fanaticism cut through the silence like a sharp knife:

“What’s the Turkish flag doing in the hands of that giaour?”

Some of the rioters who were standing close to Apostolos Nikolaidis pounced on him as though they had been waiting for the slightest provocation. One of them, holding a club, came forward from behind and delivered a sharp blow on the back of his head. As Apostolos Nikolaidis collapsed, unconscious, in a heap, a frenzied cry pierced the air, sounding as if it had come from deep within the entrails of a wild beast that had been injured:

“Kemal abi! Babami öldürüyorsunuz!” (“Uncle Kemal! You’re killing my father!”)

The cry, which came from 15-year-old Miltos Nikolaidis, had the effect of a high-voltage electric shock directed into the crowd. Everyone stopped in their tracks. They all looked like naughty children caught in the act by their parents. Their leader looked around, embarrassed.

“Let’s get out of here!” he ordered, gesturing to the crowd.

After a slight hesitation, the mob began to move away. But it had not gone very far before it started to shout slogans again, rekindling its wrath to be vented on the next Greek target.

Efterpi Nikolaidis and the two children ran to the help of the injured man and dragged him inside the coal-filled house. They secured the doors and windows again as best as they could and gathered round the

wounded man. His head and feet, lacerated by the broken glass, were bleeding profusely.

The minutes ticked past agonisingly slowly. The danger of another attack was immense. Efterpi Nikolaidis attended to her husband like a real nurse. When at length he began to recover, he asked them to collect a few essential items of clothing and be ready to leave for Tarlabası at first light. They would be much safer in the centre of the city, where there were many houses and lots of people. They had several friends and relatives who would be glad to take them in.

The Nikolaidis family spent the rest of that long night of Saint Bartholomew in a state of restless agitation, listening and watching anxiously for any sign of danger.

When dawn finally broke, they began to get ready to leave.

“We shouldn’t carry suitcases!” Apostolos warned them. “We’ll only attract attention, and they’ll think the cases are full of things we’ve stolen from people’s houses. We’ll each put on four sets of underwear and carry as little as possible in our hands. We’ll leave by one of the first boats from Karaköy and then go on up to Pera on foot.”

They set about boarding up the windows of the house until they were all covered with pieces of wood. Then they decided to leave all together, but in pairs: Apostolos with his daughter and Efterpi with her son. All the way to the pier, there was an almost tangible feeling of terror in the air. The Turks, overjoyed at the havoc they had wreaked during their night on the rampage, were celebrating the damage they had caused to *giaours*’ property.

“Dün Şeker Bayramı, bugün Kurban Bayramı (yesterday we celebrated the Festival of Sweets, today it is the Festival of Sacrifices),” they told the terrified Greeks when they saw them leaving.

It was as if they had said “Yesterday we looted your property, today we’ll kill you.” They wanted to make sure no one would dare to go back to Çengelköy amid such a formidable atmosphere of terror. This is precisely what happened with the Nikolaidis family. After the night of September 6, 1955, they never returned to their house. They made straight for the centre of the city and stayed there until they had to leave Turkey a few years later. Some months after that dreadful night, Apostolos Nikolaidis was suddenly smitten with amnesia. The blow he had received on the head caused serious injuries from which he never recovered, despite two major operations.

There were times when he could not remember whom he had seen or what he had said just a few moments earlier. He was to relive that September night in 1955 over and over again for many years.

Among the many Christians who lived in the district of Eptapyrgio (or Yedikule), were the Vafias and Soukas families. They lived in a threestorey wooden house in front of the castle walls. The building was in the middle of a row of houses which formed a semi-circle around the western wall of the castle; an enormous garden full of trees was in front of the houses. It was an idyllic place for children to play or generally to relax in. How excited I was whenever I learned we were going to visit people there!

At one end of the semi-circle was the local police station. Most of these wooden houses, which all looked alike and were linked by a huge communal garden with a high fence round it, were occupied by Christians. At the bottom of the garden, right up against the castle walls, was a spoon factory owned by some Armenians who, although they had converted to Islam and had Turkish names, were at heart still loyal to the Christian faith. They never showed their Christian feelings overtly, but it was obvious in the way they behaved towards their Christian neighbours.

In one of these three-storey wooden houses lived Thanassis Vafias with his wife Irini, two of their sons, Sideris and Yannis, and their newly-wed daughter Olga with her husband, Nikos Soukas. The previous year the young couple had had their first child, Yannis, an unusually restless baby from the day he was born.

Nikos had installed some sewing-machines in the basement of the house where he could work at home, stitching clothes. Early in the evening of September 6, 1955, he was just finishing an order for a hundred shirts which had to be delivered, when news of the demonstration taking place in Taksim Square began to filter through.

Only the day before, he had noticed some white circles chalked on to the houses where Christians lived and had wondered what they meant. Neither he nor anyone else in the house could explain what the chalk marks signified, but they were all aware of a heavy atmosphere of hostility that was widespread. Their senses were heightened by the dangers they faced every day which had become permanent features of their lives and now they felt a kind of numbness, like an invisible pressure weighing down on them.

At about 8 o'clock in the evening, shouting and banging was heard from outside the front of the house. The rioters had arrived, yelling their frenzied slogans: "Death to the giaours!" "Damn the infidels!" and "Today your property, tomorrow your lives!"

The whole family ran upstairs to the second floor in panic. From the window they could see the mob moving about in the main street; its numbers seemed to swell with every moment that passed.

A stone was suddenly flung through the second-floor window, scattering pieces of broken glass all over the bedroom. The stone landed at the far side of the room beside the baby's cot. As everyone in the room screamed with terror, Nikos Soukas leapt to his feet and dashed across

the room, seized the infant in his arms and with extraordinary calm said quietly:

“I’m going to hide in the garden with the baby! You go and hide in the hut next to the spoon factory. We’ll have to try and get out the back way, but we mustn’t make a sound. Right, let’s go!”

With bated breath and their blood running cold in their veins, they began to go downstairs. On the ground floor was a door that would take them out into the garden. The last one to leave was Thanassis Vafias, who had a heart condition. Helped by his sons and stopping every few minutes to catch his breath, he moved slowly down the stairs. Outside, at the front of the house, the shouting from the mob was getting louder. Stones started hurling at the front door and the windows in increasing numbers.

The first to go out into the darkness of the garden was Nikos Soukas. Clutching his infant son tightly in his arms, he made his way in the dark along the familiar path towards a fig tree which produced the best fruit in the garden, and crouched down under its sheltering branches.

Olga came behind him, holding her mother’s arm, and they were followed by her brothers supporting Thanassis Vafias. The poor man was having difficulty breathing, he was so flustered and upset. At that moment they heard loud banging coming from the front door of the house; the demonstrators, shouting at the tops of the voices, were trying to break it down with crowbars.

With a look of anguish and horror on her face, Olga Vafia-Souka looked behind her and waited for her brothers and her father, who was now having evident difficulty walking, to catch up with her.

A sudden thunderous crash made them all shake with fright. The front door had given way under the constant battering, and the clamouring of the mob could now be heard even more clearly.

All five members of the family were now out of the house and standing paralyzed with fear in the garden behind. The pitch blackness smothered their slow steps away from the building. The banging and shouting coming from inside the house was terrifying. In the back hall, beside the door into the garden, was a piece of furniture containing glassware, kitchen utensils and a radio. The rioters smashed everything they could lay their hands on—plates, glasses, saucepans: everything was demolished.

One of the intruders opened the garden door and threw out the broken radio and some plates just as the residents of the house reached the hut at the bottom of the garden, next to the spoon factory. They slipped inside the hut as silently as they could, trying not to fall over anything in the dark.

Further down, Nikos Soukas was huddled under the fig tree with his son in his arms, praying the child wouldn't open its mouth and start crying loudly in its customary manner.

From different parts of the garden, they all stared with eyes rounded in horror at the havoc being wreaked on their home. Inside the hut, Olga Vafia-Souka could contain herself no longer and let out a deep sob. The terror in her voice distorted her words:

“Oh God, how shall we ever get out of here alive? They'll murder us all! I'd rather just die outright and not be tortured, not live to see all this! Oh God, please help us—help my child! None of this is his fault—his innocent little life has hardly begun!”

She had hidden her face in her hands to deaden the sound of her sobbing. Her mother, standing beside her, pulled her into her arms and whispered, her voice trembling: “Ssh, my daughter—be brave! We’re not going to die!”

The others had not moved nor said a word. The pandemonium of the destruction going on inside the house pierced their ears like knives. Now and again the mob let out a cry of triumph when it discovered something of value to take.

Suddenly Yannis Vafias’s clear, steady voice came quietly through the darkness as if from the beyond:

“Soon we will have to get out of here and walk from the end of the garden to the police station. If we can make it, they won’t dare leave us outside—their chief officer has received some very handsome handouts from the Greeks. Now—in this corner of the hut there is a bucket; I’m going to leave my wallet with all my savings beside the bucket. In it there are 5,000 Turkish lira. Whichever one of us survives will know where to come and find the money!”

No-one uttered a word; they were all overcome with the emotion of the moment. Even Olga had stopped weeping. Their attention was now drawn outside the garden. By this time, the rioters had gone upstairs to the first floor of the building and were throwing chairs, picture-frames, tablecloths, ornaments, ashtrays and anything else they could lay their hands on out of the windows. The sky was a bright red and the smoke, accompanied by a strong smell of burning, was suffocating. Above the infernal noise of the vandals carrying out their work, rose the sound of a bell ringing.

“They’re burning the church!” whispered Irini Vafia in horror. “They’re burning the church of St. Constantinos! My God, what a dreadful thing to do!”

A moment or two passed and then Thanassis Vafias said:

“We must go! We must try to reach the police station. We’ll all go together, without splitting up. Whatever happens to us, it will be our common fate!”

Suddenly Sideris Vafias shouted rather than said: “The gold! We forgot to bring the gold!”

“Be quiet, don’t shout!” whispered his father. “Our lives are in danger and you think about the gold?”

“I’m going to fetch it! You set off for the police station and I’ll meet you there. I’ll go into the house and pretend I’m one of the demonstrators; then I’ll go up to the second floor before they do and get the gold out of the trunk!”

Irini Vafia crossed herself.

“God have mercy! Have you gone mad, my son? Are you in your right mind? Do you want your father to die of heart failure?”

But it was too late. Sideris had left the hut and was running towards the house. The rest of them stared after him in anguish, unable to move.

Crouched under the fig-tree, Nikos could make out Sideris’ silhouette moving across the garden and thought the rioters must have started to search the garden. His heart pounded in his chest. It occurred to him, too, that under the present circumstances the safest place to seek refuge would be the police station, which was only a few hundred metres away. Very slowly he got up and started to walk cautiously, with the child, unusually quiet as if it sensed an unseen danger, clutched tightly in his arms.

There were two points at which the huge garden communicated with the road outside. One was the entrance to the factory, which was closed at night. The other was a path which led from the garden to the main road, emerging right beside the police station. Nikos set out slowly and carefully along this familiar path. His eyes anxiously scanned the darkness for human shadows and his ears were alert for any sound of danger close at hand. Every now and then he stopped to make sure no one had seen him. The short distance to his destination seemed like a thousand miles.

Finally, he reached the police station. A guard on duty outside blocked his way.

“I must see the chief, it’s urgent!” he told the guard, who had been observing the rioting as if he were watching a war film.

The guard had been employed at the police station for many years and knew Nikos Soukas. He took one look at the child in his arms and the distraught look on the man’s face, and said with a languid gesture: “He’s in his office.” He stood aside to let Nikos pass.

Nikos Soukas dashed into the police station and went up to the chief police officer.

“At this very minute our house is being destroyed, my family has scattered and I don’t know where they are! This little tot is in danger and I must protect him! Please, I beg you, keep us here tonight—our lives are in danger outside!”

The chief looked at him with an apparently indifferent air and said:

“What happens if the child cries? Do you think I’m in any less danger than you or the child if they find out I’ve given refuge to Christians? Do

you really think that with just a handful of policemen I'm in any position to help you?"

"I realize that, sir! I also know what a good man you are. In my position, wouldn't you have done the same? So please, help us—you know we have always found ways of showing our gratitude!"

The chief police officer scrutinised him carefully, a barely perceptible smile on his lips.

"All right!" he said. "Stay here, but if the child cries, he'll have to leave immediately!"

At about the same moment, Sideris Vafias had managed, with the aid of a stick with which he beat about him dramatically, pretending to be an enraged demonstrator, to get up to the second floor of the house. Pushing aside anyone in his path, he reached the place where the family gold was hidden. With a dexterity that would have aroused the envy of the most experienced burglar, he wrapped the gold in a piece of cloth and pushed it into his trouser pocket.

Then, employing exactly the same tactic as when he had entered the house, he went back downstairs, threw away the stick and sidled towards the door into the garden. It was at this moment that one of the demonstrators recognized him and shouted: "Get him! He's a giaour!"

Sideris tried to get out through the door but four Turks who were closeby jumped on him and started beating and kicking him, using their hands and feet and any object they happened to be holding.

Sideris tried desperately to make use of the narrow space which did not allow his attackers much room for manoeuvre. Summoning all his strength, he pushed two of them away and rushed out into the garden before they could catch him. In a moment the Turks were in hot pursuit,

shouting and swearing. One of them who could run faster than the others managed to catch up with him and lunged at him, dragging him to the ground. Sideris tried to struggle, but the other three chasing him also pounced on him. All four went berserk, beating him up savagely; but as they were out of breath from the chase, Sideris once again managed to get away from them and headed in the direction of the police station.

Helped by the fact that he was familiar with every inch of the garden, Sideris succeeded in making off into the darkness. His whole body was racked with pain as though it had been punctured by a thousand needles and his nose and mouth were bleeding.

The four Turks who were after him charged about the garden like mad bulls, shouting wildly. The instinct for self-preservation told him he should stay still for a few minutes, and so he stood like a statue, leaning against the trunk of a tree. He could hear the footsteps and shouting of the Turks who were chasing him very close. After a while, he bent down and started to crawl slowly along the ground, making sure not to make the slightest sound that would give him away. His persecutors seemed to be further away now. With a supreme effort, he dragged himself towards the garden gate. Then his blood froze in his veins.

At the exit near the police station he could make out a number of figures walking slowly about. In despair, he thought the rioters must have closed off the exit beside the police station as well, that they were planning to loot Christian homes by breaking down the back gate into the garden. Then it dawned on him that the four figures in front of the police station were none other than his parents and his brother and sister. Gathering what little strength he had left, he stood up and ran over to join them. When they had recovered from their surprise, his mother crossed herself and said: "Thank God! That was a very stupid thing to do!"

Soon the whole family was inside the police station, along with several other Christians who had also sought refuge there. The Turkish chief police officer kept them there until the early morning of September 7, 1955.

It took about six hours for the organized plan for the total destruction of property belonging to the Greeks in Constantinople to be carried out. By midnight, when the well-organized gangs had just about completed their task, the Turkish government was kind enough to impose martial law in a city that was by now engulfed in flames. The plan had been singularly successful. Almost all Greek property had been destroyed. The Greek population was in a state of terror and those who had survived the ordeal were aware of a menacing atmosphere. Hellenism in Constantinople was never to recover from the severe blow it received that night. Gradually the Greeks began to stream out of the city; having lost their properties, they now had to concern themselves with saving their lives.

The exodus of Greeks from Constantinople took on gigantic proportions. Whole suburbs and settlements once densely populated by Greeks were decimated. Churches formerly overflowing, their congregations filling the courtyards as well, were now deserted. The number of children attending Greek schools began to dwindle and one by one the schools were obliged to close down.

Shortly after the events of that September night, Oktay Engin, the Muslim student who had delivered the bomb to the Turkish Consulate in Thessaloniki, was arrested by the Greek police. When he was released on June 15, 1956, he escaped to Turkey where he was given a welcome befitting a national hero. The supposedly serious Turkish newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, employed him to translate news and comments broadcast by Athens Radio. He was later to be made chief of police in Ankara.

Only three days after the incidents of September 6, 1955, the leader of the Turkish opposition People's Party, İsmet İnönü, made a provocatively clear statement at his party's headquarters:

"It is a good thing that our party was not involved in the incidents; nonetheless, the events were a well-organized national action and beneficial in ridding the country of the Greeks, who are a trial and tribulation to the Turks!"

Five years later, when a military coup overturned the government of Adnan Menderes in May, 1960, the prime minister and his foreign minister, Fatin Rüstü Zorlu, were sent to appear at a court martial on the island of Plati. At the trial, which lasted from October 20, 1960, to January 5, 1961, both men were found guilty of, among other charges, the organization and execution of the acts of vandalism carried out on the night of September 6, 1955.

The trial's verdict said they were found guilty not because they organized the pogrom, but because of the bad publicity and damage to Turkey's international image that the incidents provoked.

A few weeks after the incidents, the village of Gerze in Asia Minor, where most of the Lazes who had been involved in the rioting came from, was totally destroyed in a major fire, while two other villages whose inhabitants also took part in the raid were razed to the ground in a powerful earthquake.

5

The disabled teacher Mr. Kleopas

My father was deported from Turkey on the morning of July 16, 1964. In the weeks that intervened until September, when the rest of the family would also leave the country, we waited anxiously for news from him.

"I have arrived and am well. I've been to Pangrati and found Maritsa and Yannis. Such good people—from the first moment I arrived they have been a great help to me. Their only daughter, Jenny, is the same age as Angeliki, so our daughter will have a friend to play with as soon as she gets here," he wrote in his first letter.

Later he informed us: "I have found a small apartment in Kononos Street, opposite Yannis and Maritsa's house. It's in a lovely two-storey building owned by a teacher who comes from Asia Minor. It's a bit expensive, but we'll only have to find the rent to begin with: we don't need to spend money on furniture and other luxuries at the moment. I'll

let you know as soon as I'm ready to send for you. Take care, all of you, and watch out ..."

We absorbed every word of his brief letters with deep longing, counting the days until word came for us to join him.

Everywhere around us there was great commotion as the Greeks of Constantinople fled the country. Family and childhood friends were scattering to the four corners of the earth. Kyriakos and Anna, close friends of my parents, were leaving, with their two little girls Eftalia and Evangelia, for Vancouver, in Canada. My sister cried inconsolably at losing her best friend, Eftalia.

Other people we knew were preparing to go to Australia. Most people, of course, headed for Greece, the most natural and most welcoming place to go.

My classmate in high school, Giorgos Vakadimas, was one of those leaving for Athens with his parents. They all had Turkish citizenship, so the Turks were implementing a more "indirect" method of driving out cases such as these: they forced them to leave by exerting unbearable pressures on them and imposing a regime of tyranny, terror and threat amid a climate of intense racial hatred. The Vakadimas family was therefore afraid to stay in Turkey and decided, like thousands of other Greeks in Constantinople who were forced into the same position, to leave their family homes and move on.

I remember that when I said goodbye to my friend Giorgos, I wasn't upset; on the contrary, I was overjoyed because I discovered that in a few weeks he, too, would be in Athens. Knowing little about Athens, I suggested we meet up at 5 p.m. on December 15, at Zappion. How was I to know that Zappion was an entire district that needed half a day to walk through!

The final act of the Turkish plan to rid Constantinople of its Greek population was fully under way in 1964. Hundreds of Greek households were in the throes of being dismantled.

Our house was in a similar state of disarray. Following the events of that night in September, 1955, we had moved to a two-storey house in Kordela Street, near Tarlabasi. We lived on the ground floor and also had the use of a large basement. Mr. Kleopas with his sister lived on the upper floor; he was a teacher who had fallen ill and had been confined to a wheelchair for over twenty years. The house belonged to a Greek by the name of Ioannidis.

In the chaos and confusion that prevailed in the house, my mother was trying to sort out the essential things that we should take with us: clothing, bed linen, a blanket or two.

There were, of course, many things we could not take because they had been recorded for confiscation. There were also things which the authorities would not allow us to take with us; these were carefully packed up and given to the Church. There would no doubt be some Christian who needed them.

My mother gathered together all the absolutely essential things that she wanted to take and packed them into a large trunk. Bit by bit the trunk filled up.

"Let's see how much of this those monsters will let us take!" she said.

And indeed, the Young Turks, having confiscated both the fixed and movable assets of their victims, carried out one last attempt to plunder what few items had been left behind by the Greeks who were being deported. It was well known to those leaving that the final act of plunder was carried out at the Customs: it was an act that I was to experience for myself at first hand.

Towards the end of August, we received a last letter from my father.

"I am almost ready for you to join me. I finally decided to rent the little apartment I told you about in my previous letter. Life here in Athens is hard. It is difficult to earn a living, but God is great. Those who are not afraid of hard work will never go wrong. I work as a labourer in the construction industry, putting in electrical installations. Of course, you'll tell me what a come-down this is! But didn't we say—work is nothing to be ashamed of? I have also met the family of Sideris and Evangelia. They have three children, the oldest of whom, Evgenia, is about the same age as our Angeliki. So, she will have company and shouldn't cry (as I am told she does). Be ready to go as soon as I have booked your tickets at the travel agency here in Athens; they will let you know when to leave. Take care, all of you—and see you soon!"

We were in a constant state of turmoil and apprehension waiting for the day of our departure.

Every two or three days from mid-August on, the caretaker of the apartment block next door would knock at our door and ask when we were leaving. He told us he had "bought" the house and wanted to move in immediately. The man had always been very courteous and smiled at us—until the day he learned my father had been deported. From then on, he watched us with the eye of a hawk, impatient to devour its prey.

We did not dare ask when and how he had bought the house. My mother kept repeating to him that we were expecting to hear word of our departure at any time now. He would go away, only to return the next day or the one after. We lived in fear that something bad might happen in those last few days.

In the afternoon of the day that we received my father's last letter, Mr. Kleopas, the invalid teacher who lived upstairs, asked to speak to my sister and me. We could not refuse. His wrinkled face and forbidding

presence had always instilled a kind of fear in us, but his outside appearance concealed a tender heart.

My sister, who was in the depths of despair at the uncertain future we faced, could barely summon up the courage to move, so I went upstairs alone. Mr. Kleopas's sister, Miss Alexandra, who had devoted her life to looking after her invalid brother, greeted me sadly.

"What shall we do now, without your cheery voices to listen to?" she asked, leading me into the room where her brother was sitting in his wheelchair by a kind of bay window that jutted out, affording an excellent view of the street. Mr. Kleopas gestured towards the couch. "Sit down, sit down!" he said.

Despite his 70 years, he spoke in a sonorous voice that seemed to come from the depths of his being.

"Before you set off for Greece, dear boy, I want to tell you a few things which can't be taught in school and which nobody can tell you about without risking his life. It's a pity your sister isn't here to listen, too, but when you get to Greece, you must tell her yourself."

Miss Alexandra brought us each a little saucer of preserved fruit with a glass of water. The room was a small one and contained a table for four, a couch and a few chairs. There was a large carpet on the floor and several framed photographs hung on the walls.

"The Turks," he began, "are a barbaric people. Just as a wild animal or a bird of prey tears its victim apart as soon as it catches it, a Turk also has the ruthless and savage instinct of a creature in the jungle. He has an insatiable desire to conquer, an unquenchable passion to plunder; that is his nature—he is born with it and will remain so until he dies.

"The Turks originate from the nomadic tribes of Mongolia and China. When they moved west, some of these tribes converted to Islam, but they still retained the psychology of the predator. In AD 1037, these nomadic tribes set up their own empire which extended as far as Iraq, Syria and Palestine. One section managed to establish itself in Central Asia, creating a sultanate based in Iconium. It is from these nomads that the Ottoman Turks are directly descended. During the 300 years from 1300 to 1600, the Ottoman Empire was established through the use of weapons and violence, causing much bloodshed and destruction. The prophet Mohammed said that when the Turks were hungry, they took to stealing and pillaging. Having converted to Islam, the Turks threw out the Arabs and did enormous damage to the Islamic religion, adulterating and alienating it from its fundamental characteristics which were spiritual rather than material. They destroyed the oldest and most valuable source of information about Islam, the library at Baghdad. They distorted the Islamic religion deplorably and prevented the Arabic population from developing its faith on the basis of the tenets of the authentic Islamic religion.

"Al Mukaffa, a leading spiritual figure in the Islamic world in the 8th century, wrote of the Turks that they existed only to carry out brutal attacks on other peoples and nations in order to plunder and thus survive.

"One hundred and sixty years before Mehmet the Conqueror captured and enslaved Constantinople, Islam's most illustrious writer and poet, Saadi, recorded that the Turks were a bloodthirsty race, behaving much like wolves and spreading fear and terror in their path.

"During the 300 years when the Ottoman Turks were establishing the Ottoman Empire, the populations that fell under their power were plunged into spiritual and intellectual darkness. In order to convert all the peoples who lived in the conquered lands to the Islamic faith and

create a corps of personal bodyguards for the Sultan, which became known as the Janissaries, the Turks put into effect an appalling system of child recruitment from amongst 'infidel' youngsters. This involved, simply, the forcible enlistment of Christian children who then underwent a harsh religious and military training which was aimed at producing individuals with a high degree of religious fanaticism, strict discipline and a blind allegiance to their superiors. Most of the children who were wrenched away from their families by the Turks were between 6 and 14 years of age.

"In 1601 Sultan Mehmet III sent an edict to the administrators of the corps of Janissaries, describing the manner in which 'good-looking young men, sound of limb and suitable for fighting in wars' were to be recruited from amongst the 'infidels.' He made it clear that if parents objected to handing over their children to the Janissaries, they were to be hanged forthwith and their bodies strung up at the entrance to their houses.

"The barbarity of the Turks is not simply the result of their lack of culture. It is also due to their boorish nature. It did not manifest itself only to those peoples who were forced to submit to the Turkish yoke but was also evident in their relations with each other. No sooner had Sultan Murat ascended the throne than he hanged his five brothers, and in order to ascend the throne himself, Sultan Mehmet III first made sure that his 19 brothers were strangled. Sultan Murat IV had a habit of killing off his subjects just for his own amusement—it's thought that as many as 20,000 people were slaughtered during the 16 years he ruled the Ottoman Empire.

"When Hellenism was at its height, before the 11th century, the Christian population in Asia Minor numbered more than 30 million people. For 600 continuous years, the Turks have practised the only skill nature has endowed them with: destruction and pillage.

"When Greece managed to establish the Free Greek State after the Revolution of 1821 and rid itself of the Turkish yoke in just one small part of its territory, the greed of the Turks was once again aroused and they realized they could not hang on indefinitely to the territories they controlled without exterminating the population in its entirety or converting it to Islam.

"So once again the persecutions, the slaughter and enforced Islamisation were stepped up, along with the practice of trading in the most beautiful Greek girls they could get their hands on. Unfortunately, my child, this is a story that has been repeated time and time again, even in this century.

"In 1895, Sultan Hamit began massacring the Armenians in Constantinople. From what my parents told me, I understand a lot of dreadful things happened at that time. The Turks killed the Armenians wherever they came across them, right there in the street, on the pretext that there was a rumour the Armenians were conspiring to kill the Sultan.

"The Turko-German Alliance was established during this period following a visit from the Kaiser; this was later to lead to the Turks aligning themselves with the Germans in World War I.

"In the meantime, the nucleus of a group known as the Young Turks set up a movement calling itself 'Union and Progress', which promised 'freedom, equality and justice'. In order to avoid losing everything to the rising power of these Young Turks, the corrupt regime of Sultan Hamit agreed to make a number of concessions and on July 24, 1908, an edict authorising a review of the constitution was signed. Elections were held to form an Ottoman Parliament and in spite of state terrorism the Greek presence in the new parliament was impressive: 26 of the 288 seats in parliament were occupied by Greeks.

"However, Sultan Abdul Hamit was not at all favourably disposed towards limitation of his power, which he considered to have been granted him by 'divine grace'. He staged an unsuccessful counterrevolution on April 13, 1909, and was deposed. The Young Turks beheaded him and installed the puppet Sultan Mehmet V as leader of the Ottoman State.

"To begin with, the ideas of freedom, equality and justice, which the Young Turks had proclaimed, gave hope to millions of non-Turks living under the Ottoman yoke. Indeed, the fact that many leading figures in the 'Union and Progress' movement were inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution served to reinforce that hope. But in vain: before long, the ranks of the Young Turks were dominated by the most extreme, fanatic and chauvinist elements, led by Mehmet Talat Paşa, Enver Paşa, Cevit Paşa and Cemal Paşa.

"As soon as the Young Turks had stabilized their hold on power, it occurred to them that if the ideas proclaimed by these liberal Young Turks were put into practice, all those living under the Turkish yoke would develop and acquire economic power—and sooner or later demand self-rule. They therefore decided to solve the problem in the only way the Turks know how: by forcible conversion to Islam or death. The Turks are past masters at killing mainly civilian populations; they have been doing it for centuries. So, on August 10, 1910, Mehmet Talat Paşa publicly announced these decisions by the Young Turks, which have been implemented to the letter right up till today and will continue to be implemented whenever the opportunity arises for the next hundred or thousand years.

"The new beginning of the plan to wipe out non-Turkish populations started with the almost total extermination and murder of important figures in the Christian communities. On October 11, 1911, Bishop Emilianos of Grevena was assassinated. These incidents were all

contributory factors in the Balkan War which broke out the following year and gave the Young Turks the opportunity to carry out the systematic extermination of civilian populations, all in the name of executing their plan.

"After the Balkan War ended with the defeat of the Turks, they continued to implement their barbarous strategy. On May 14, 1914, Mehmet Talat Paşa sent confidential telegrams to all of Turkey's political leaders and military commanders. The text of one of these cables, which was addressed to the governor of Smyrna, Rahmi Bey, was published in the French newspaper 'Le Temps' two years later, on July 29, 1916. It said:

To Rahmi Bey, Governor of Smyrna.

The Ottoman Greeks in your region constitute a majority, a fact which may prove to be dangerous. However, in general all those living along the Asia Minor coast, including your prefecture, must be forced to leave their homes and be moved on to Erzerum, Erzincan or elsewhere. This is absolutely essential for political and military reasons.

If they refuse to leave their homes, then you should instruct our Muslim brothers to force them to go by using all possible means, whether legitimate or not.

The Greeks should also be made to sign a statement to the effect that they are leaving of their own free will; this is absolutely essential, in order to avoid any political complications in the future.

Signed: Mehmet Talat, Minister of the Interior,

Hilmi, Director of the Interior Ministry,

Ali Riza, Correspondence Officer.

Mr. Kleopas paused for a moment to sip some water. My eyes were riveted on him as I drank in his every word.

"As you can see, my boy, and as you will find out for yourself when you are a little older and have read what history has to tell us about the subject, the Turks are and always will be a race of barbarians who are constantly looking for new territorial conquests. The only thing they know how to do is to destroy. As they have never established any kind of culture or civilisation of their own, they don't want any culture to exist; they have never respected any nation's culture throughout their bloody history. Everywhere they went they demolished, plundered and burnt down. They have always done it, it's what they are doing now and always will do as long as Turkey exists, because the Turks have never had any interest whatsoever in the peaceful arts—the only things they enjoy doing are sacking and conquering.

"As soon as Mehmet Talat's telegrams were received, the Young Turks embarked on their macabre task. When World War I broke out a few months later in July, 1914, it was an excellent opportunity for Turkey to set up the so-called Forced Labour Battalions. More than 400,000 Greeks were liquidated in these battalions.

In November, 1914, Turkey entered the war on the side of the Germans and at the same time set about the brutal extermination of the Greeks in Eastern Thrace. Thousands of families were turned out of their houses and scattered to the four corners of the earth. By March, 1915—that is, ten months after Mehmet Talat's telegram was received—180 Greek villages had been abandoned and 320 others destroyed in regions which the Turks considered to be sensitive areas.

"Then it was the turn of the Armenians. According to official sources, the regime of Sultan Abdul Hamit slaughtered 300,000 Armenians, but in fact the real figure was much higher. The Young Turks who had talked

so nobly of freedom, equality and justice had to do something—and they did.

On September 16, 1915, the regional administrator of Halep received a telegram signed by the leader of the Young Turks, the monstrous Mehmet Talat, which read:

"We hereby inform you that the government has decided on the total extermination of the Armenian population living in Turkey. Anyone disagreeing with this decision will no longer be thought of as a member of the State Administration. The Armenians must be wiped out without mercy towards women, children and invalids, irrespective of whether this extermination is considered as an atrocity.

Talat Bey,

Minister of the Interior"

“What followed was the greatest cold-blooded genocide in the history of mankind. Within the space of just a few months, one and a half million Armenians were mercilessly wiped out by the hand of the Turks, as Talat had ordered. In all their history of bloodshed and violence, the Young Turks excelled themselves in this instance: 1,500,000 people were massacred by the most inhuman butchers of the modern world who quite rightly earned for themselves the eternal title of the most barbaric race on earth.

The French prime minister, Georges Clemenceau, faced with the inconceivable proportions of the Armenian genocide, said there was no other example of such an abominable crime in the history of the world."

Here Mr. Kleopas paused again, quite clearly overwhelmed, drank a few more sips of water and then went on:

"Throughout 1916 and 1917 Turkey continued with its systematic extermination of the non-Muslim populations. The end of World War I, however, found Turkey on the side of the losers. The country fell apart. On June 4, 1918, Turkey recognized Armenian independence through the Treaty of Batum.

"After the Turkish defeat in World War I, the allied fleet, led by the Greek warship Averof, passed through the Dardanelles. The enthusiastic welcome it was given by the residents of Constantinople that day was indescribable. Everybody in Pera and on the shores of the Bosphorus hoisted Greek flags, while a number of people jumped into small boats and converged on the Averof to kiss the ship's hull. There was much rejoicing and festivity that went on all night.

Many people started to say it was time for the legends about the Marble King and the Red Apple Tree to be fulfilled."

Mr. Kleopas' face took on a sad, wistful expression.

"What are these legends about, Mr. Kleopas?" I asked.

"After the Seljuks had won the Battle of Manzikert in Asia Minor in 1071 and the countdown had begun for the dissolution of the Byzantine Empire, the Greeks in Asia Minor created the legend of the Red Apple Tree with the unerring instinct of a people that could foresee the forthcoming disaster.

"According to the legend, the Turks, after laying siege to Constantinople in every way they could think of, would overcome those defending the city and start to take over its command. But at that very moment, by

divine intervention, the Turks were put to flight and pursued as far as Monodendri—known as the Red Apple Tree.

"Later, after the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the last Byzantine Emperor, Constantinos Paleologos, disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Many people said he had died in the battle at the Romanus Gate (Topkapi) and that the Sultan had ordered a search for his body amongst the corpses lying there, but without success.

The Emperor's body was never found; instead they buried a headless corpse thought to be that of Constantinos Paleologos because it was wearing sandals decorated in gold with the eagles that were the royal emblem.

"All of this contributed to the legend of the Marble King, which says that the Emperor Constantinos Paleologos was not killed in battle, but was turned to marble and hidden behind the Sealed Door in the Church of St. Sophia until the day when the Lord's angel will bring him back to life and hand him his sword so that he can chase the Turkish conquerors away to the Red Apple Tree.

Even today, many people still say that, as they approach the Sealed Door, they can hear hymns and chanting coming from behind it, telling of the legend of the Marble King.

These legends have withstood the test of time and have been passed down from generation to generation over the centuries.

Greece's great national poet, Kostis Palamas, included them in the stark verses of his poem entitled 'The King's Flute':

*I shall emerge, unlocking the founded Gate of Gold,
And will run, who conquered the kaliphs and hunted the tzars,
And far, near the Apple of Gold, I will draw my breath" **

"The people created not only traditions, prophecies and legends in order to maintain their faith and hopes for freedom in their patrimonial lands, but also a kind of folk poetry which has expressed the feelings of the Greeks everywhere for centuries.

"According to another myth, which became a popular song with a number of variations, when Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, a monk at the Monastery Church of Zoodochos Pigis—known as the Baloukliotissa—heard the news that the city had fallen while he was frying fish near the holy water.

It seemed to him so unlikely that he said he would believe it only if the fish he was cooking came back to life. At that very moment the fish did come back to life and leapt into the church's holy water.

Tradition has it that the fish will finally be fried only when the city's conquerors are routed and Constantinople is once again free.

* Translated by Frederic Will

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"The marvellous poem entitled "Lament for St. Sophia," ends with lines that speak with certainty of the city's eventual liberation:

"The city's taken, it is lost, they've taken Salonica!

And St. Sofiá they've taken too, the Minster great they've taken,

Which has three hundred sýmandras, bells sixty-two of metal;

And every bell has its own priest, and every priest his deacon.

And as came forth the holy Saints, the Lord of all the Kosmos,

A message came to them* from heaven by mouths of holy Angels:

'Cease ye your psalms, and from their place take down the Holy Objects,

And send word to the Frankish lands that they may come and take them,

That they may take the golden Cross and take the Holy Gospels,

The Holy Table let them take, that it may not be sullied.'

And when the Virgin heard the words, all tearful were the Icons;

'O hush thee, Virgin! Icons, hush! Mourn not, and cease your weeping;

Again, with years, the time shall come when ye once more shall dwell here.'***

* Those carrying the Icons.

** Translated by Passow (CXCIV), "Greek folk poesy" Lucy M. J. Garnett - J. S. Stuart - Glennie, M. A., Vol. 1 -Folk-Verse, David Nutt. London, 1896.

Mr. Kleopas stopped, picked up the half-empty glass and once more sipped a little water. He was clearly trying to conceal how upset he was. I was aware of a lump in my throat as he took a deep breath which sounded to me more like a groan and resumed his story:

"On May 1, 1919, with an agreement having been reached between the Allies, the Greek army disembarked at Smyrna. The Italians, who wanted Smyrna for themselves, were not at all pleased with this development. They set free all the convicts serving long prison sentences, armed them and dispatched them to attack the Greek army as soon as it had landed. Having cleared the whole area of these small pockets of resistance, the Greek army soon reached Aydin.

The Italians, whose borders extended along the River Meander (Menderes), permitted Turkish rebels to enter Aydin, led by the man who was later to become prime minister of Turkey and who masterminded the pogrom carried out against the Greeks in Constantinople in September, 1955: Adnan Menderes—he took his surname from the name of the river. He was the leader of a band of Turkish irregulars who entered Aydin and massacred the advance guard or drowned them in the river.

"Then the Greek general, Giorgos Kondylis, received the order to march to Aydin. He asked permission to cross the River Meander, but the Italians objected on the grounds that the region was under Italian occupation. General Kondylis told them: 'You let the Turks across so that they could go and slaughter civilians; if you don't let us cross, we'll attack!'

"All these things that I'm telling you, my child," said Mr. Kleopas, "were told to me by soldiers who had fought in these battles when they returned to Constantinople.

"The Italians panicked and made way for Kondylis to pass. So, the Greek army entered Aydin and naturally attacked the Turks without mercy. From then on, right up until the debacle of 1922, no Turk ever set foot in the area again.

"After that, General Kondylis was called to take command of the division that would seize Eastern Thrace, and so he led his troops north to Raidestos, where they joined forces in fighting alongside those of King Alexandros. The Greeks occupied Eastern Thrace as far as Catalca and took 20,000 Turks as prisoners. They remained there until 1920, when they moved on to retake Constantinople.

"It was then that the French allies used tanks to prevent the Greek army from entering the city. I actually saw this happen with my own eyes.

"We were living near the French embassy in Pera at the time and were friendly with the children of French people working at the embassy. On July 14, 1920, a big reception was held at the embassy. This was followed by a meeting at which Franchet d'Espirey, a French official, stated quite categorically that the French would never allow the Greeks to stay on in Constantinople and Asia Minor. These, my child, were our 'allies'...

"Now we come to August 10, 1920, and the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres which gave the Armenians their independence and the Kurds and all the other peoples living along the shores of Asia Minor and in Eastern Thrace, the right to self-determination. For the first time in five hundred years, Greece could see her dreams about to become reality. I regret to have to tell you, however, that the dissension which has always been the curse of the Greek race, together with the betrayal by our so-called allies, deprived Greeks of the joy of seeing their dreams come true.

"Two categories of events contributed to what has become known as the Asia Minor disaster. The first was of a totally Greek nature. In the summer of 1920, paid assassins and traitors tried unsuccessfully to kill Eleftherios Venizelos in Lyons. The Allies demanded that Venizelos hold elections because he was not an elected leader. The King and Gounaris, who had promised demobilisation, were opposed to Venizelos because they said he had kept the army at the front, fighting a war for eight consecutive years. Venizelos lost the election and Hellenism its dreams. Instead of demilitarisation, the winners of the election—the King and Gounaris—declared a general mobilisation and escalated the war; by July, 1921, the Greek army had reached Polatli, only 20 kilometres away from Ankara.

"The sharing-out of defeated Turkey caused considerable conflict amongst the Allies. Under the terms of a secret agreement reached in 1917, the French would be given Syria and Cilicia, Britain would get Mesopotamia and the Arab Protectorate, south-western Anatolia along with Aydin, Smyrna and the whole of the prefecture of Iconium would go to the Italians, while the Russians would control Constantinople, the Caucasus, Armenia and part of the Black Sea coast.

"However, this division contained the seeds of major disagreement amongst the Allies. Indeed, when the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia soon after, there was no way the secret agreement could be kept. So, in 1919, Greece was given the go-ahead to land in Smyrna. Later, though, the Allies did not trust the leadership duo of King Constantinos and Gounaris, both of whom they considered to be pro-German, and were clearly reluctant to provide any support in the way of weapons and munitions—that is, the necessary supplies for war.

"The French were at that time in Antioch. There they made an agreement with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who had by then undertaken the undisputed leadership of the Young Turks.

"On May 19, 1919, only three weeks after the arrival of the Greek army in Smyrna, Kemal Atatürk landed in Samsun and declared the Struggle for National Liberation. You know, I could never understand who Kemal was going to liberate Asia Minor from. From the Greeks, who had lived there for centuries?

Even now, after 500 years of destruction, the whole region of Asia Minor is Greek to the core... Or did he perhaps want to liberate the area from the Armenians, the Pontians, the Kurds and the other people who were natives of Asia Minor? No, this was no 'Struggle for National Liberation': it was clearly a war of expansion aimed at hanging on to the regions they had conquered and wiping out the populations that lived there.

"When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, Lenin didn't have a friend in the world. The first person to reach agreement with him was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. So, unfortunately, Lenin helped the Turks. On the one hand the wily Kemal gained two million golden rubles, four thousand horses and all the Russian ammunition in the Pontus, and on the other he succeeded in making the Allies terrified that he might enter into close collaboration with the Bolsheviks. In other words, he killed two birds with one stone.

"The result was not long in manifesting itself. The French were the first to fear an alliance between Russia and Turkey and agreed with Atatürk to stage a mock battle in which they would be defeated by the Turks at Antioch. It was widely reported that the Turkish army had been resurrected and had defeated the French army, which consisted at that time not of French soldiers, but of natives from France's West African colonies, such as Morocco and Senegal. France agreed to withdraw and hand over all its heavy weapons to Kemal Atatürk.

"As far as the Allies were concerned, Greece was not a country to be reckoned with. It was quite obvious from the outset that the Italians were

not at all happy about Greece's presence in Asia Minor. As for the British—they were all hollow words and empty promises. The Turks, meanwhile, were accepting aid from one allied power in order to harm another—exactly as they do today! The fight soon turned into a very unequal affair.

"On September 9, 1922, the Turks invaded Smyrna and spent the next five days in a frenzy of destruction, conflagration and slaughter. Over 150,000 Greeks were massacred by the Young Turks when Kemal entered Smyrna. Between 1914 and 1922, they killed 323,000 Greeks in the Pontus region and more than 400,000 living on the Asia Minor coast.

"After the Smyrna debacle, Venizelos was called back from exile and returned to leadership to try to salvage what he could from the desperate situation. In January, 1923, an agreement on the exchange of populations was signed: 1,300,000 Christians, i.e. Greeks, living in Asia Minor, were to be exchanged for 480,000 Muslims living in Greece. The agreement was incorporated into the Treaty of Lausanne, under the terms of which 120,000 Christians (out of a total of 315,000 who lived in Constantinople, Imvros and Tenedos), offset by 80,000 Muslims in Western Thrace, were exempted from the population exchange.

So, the Turks succeeded in getting rid of the non-Muslim population 'by all possible means', as Talat had instructed.

"A month after the Treaty of Sèvres was signed, the Armenians were attacked by Kemal's Young Turks. The attack ended on December 2, 1920, with a fresh massacre and by Turkey annexing half of Armenia.

"Next it was the turn of the Kurds, but they proved to be considerably tougher. After holding out for 79 days, the Kurdish revolution ended in a bloodbath in July, 1924. The Kurds are an ancient and historic people who are mentioned by Xenophon—he refers to them as the Karduchs.

The Kurdish uprisings began long before the Greek Revolution of 1821, and they all ended in bloodshed. Over and over again, in 1925, 1926, 1927 and 1928, they paid their longing for freedom with their blood.

"The Turks were putting their usual tactics into effect: civilian populations were being massacred and villages destroyed, creating more refugees.

"On September 30, 1930, the Turkish newspaper Milliyet published a statement by the Turkish Minister of Justice, which presented the ageold Turkish philosophy that applies at any time and in any place occupied by the Turks: 'The Turks are the only masters in this country. Anyone who is not a genuine Turk has only one right in this country: the right to be a servant, the right to be a slave.'

"And the Kurds who are still living in Turkey today, my boy, have this right only. The Greeks who stayed on in Turkey were all wiped out after the events of 1955. The final act of this terrible Greek tragedy is now being played out.

"The British, having bought Cyprus from the Turks on June 4, 1878, made sure that they were involved in the issue again because they were quite sure the Cypriots' right to self-determination would severely damage their own interests on the island."

Here Mr. Kleopas stopped; he looked tired. There was a glint in his eye as he said these final words:

"Wherever you go, my child, make sure you read all about the history of Hellenism and always keep it in mind. There will be no better weapon against the Turks, as far as the Greeks are concerned, than a thorough knowledge of their own history. Because I can assure you, the Turks will never stop. Their predatory nature pushes them on constantly to make new demands and claims.

"The idea of the re-establishment of the Ottoman Empire will always be the goal of the modern Turks. Sooner or later, having resolved the Kurdish problem by massacring innocent civilians, they will turn their attention to Cyprus, Western Thrace and the Greek islands in the Aegean. The next generation of Greeks will have to do better than the previous one; they know the Turkish goals—they state them quite clearly—and so they will be able to deal with them.

"When you go and settle in free Greece, don't ever forget the roots of Hellenism which the Turks so violently tore up."

Miss Alexandra, who had been listening in silence to what her brother had to say, stood up quickly when she saw how upset he had become.

"You've said enough for one day," she said. "I think you should stop now." Turning to me, she added: "And you, young man, mustn't breathe a word of what you have heard today until you reach Greece. There, though, you must tell people about all this and make sure they realize the true facts. Now, off you go downstairs because your mother will be looking for you!"

Slowly, I stood up. My head was spinning with all that I had just heard.

"Thank you for telling me all this, Mr. Kleopas," I mumbled. "I promise I'll never forget it."

I turned around quickly in order to conceal my own emotions, left the room and dashed down the stairs.

6

The Miracle

We were on our way, my mother, my sister and I, along the road to Sirkeci. The trunk containing our belongings had to be checked by the customs authorities.

We walked in silence. The slogans daubed on the walls had but a single target: the Greeks. "Fellow citizens, speak Turkish!" "Damn the infidels!" I felt like a lamb being led to the slaughter. My mother held my sister tightly by the hand and told her to keep her eyes looking down, never to the left or right.

I have often wondered where the bounds of human endurance lie. It would appear that man is a very hardy creature. We had put up with being subjected to a monstrous strategy of extermination and economic ruin, by clinging on to every last bit of strength we had and upholding all the principles we held most dear. It was as if the continued persecutions, the oppression and terrorism, the plunder of our property and now

banishment from our homeland had strengthened our will to survive and given new impetus to our resolve to create a new beginning.

When we reached the customs building, we went into a vast, long hall. A seemingly endless line of benches was being used to lay out people's belongings for examination.

After being questioned and hanging about for an hour, we reached the bench with our belongings. The customs officer, a typical Turk with spite written all over his face, looked at us searchingly.

"Is this your trunk?" he asked.

"Yes, it is," my mother answered.

"What do you have in it?"

"Some clothes and a few essential household things," replied my mother in her broken Turkish.

"What sort of things?" came the question.

"A few sheets, one or two blankets—the kind of things we'll need straightaway when we get there."

"You do know, don't you, that you are not permitted to take anything valuable, gold sovereigns, jewellery or foreign money?" the official asked meaningfully, his eyes fixed intently on us.

"No, no, we have nothing like that," my mother hastened to assure him.

"We shall see!" grunted the Turk. "Empty the trunk on to the bench!" he ordered, and walked off.

Behind him stood an armed soldier who was following the whole procedure in silence. There were several such soldiers standing at intervals behind every custom official.

My mother beckoned us to come forward. We opened the trunk and began to take out all the possessions we had left, laying them on the bench. Soon the bench was covered with the contents of the trunk.

In a while the customs officer returned. The first thing he did was to remove four pillows from the heap of our belongings.

"Why do you want to take these pillows with you?" he asked my mother in a tone of voice I did not understand.

My mother shrugged her shoulders helplessly, not sure whether an answer was expected or indeed what she should answer.

The officer grabbed one corner of a pillow and slit open the seam from top to bottom. He began to pull out the feathers from inside, working dexterously until the pillow was completely empty and in shreds. Then he picked up a second one, all the while looking us straight in the eye as if he was enjoying our helplessness and concern. This, too, he ripped apart, tearing the feathers from inside until all that was left was a piece of rag. He continued to do the same with the third and fourth pillows. When he had finished, the whole place was covered in feathers; it is a scene I shall never forget.

The customs officer appeared irritated; he had been hoping to find something valuable hidden in the pillows which he could confiscate. He picked up a pair of my trousers and held them up in the air while he searched the pockets. Glancing at me, he said: "These trousers are too big for this child. They're staying here." And he put them on the side of the bench where all the things we were not permitted to take with us were to be collected.

My mother could no longer hide how upset and frightened she was. She had gone red in the face and was on the point of tears, as was my sister. I looked at her anxiously and wished fervently for the ordeal to be over as quickly as possible.

Every single item in the trunk was subjected to a rigorous check; not even the tiniest thing was passed without being thoroughly scrutinised, even though it was of trivial value.

The things which we were to be allowed to take with us—thanks to the generosity of the Turkish customs authorities—were packed back into the trunk. Those items that they did not consider we should take, were placed in a pile at one end of the bench.

Suddenly the officer pounced on a piece of cloth, held together with safety pins, in which we had wrapped four precious icons from the family icon stand. My mother had been given them by my grandmother and looked upon them as her most cherished possessions. She never let the oil that burned in the little dish in front of the icons run out, and she never went past that part of the house without crossing herself devoutly. My grandmother had told her:

"Look after these icons, my daughter. They work miracles and are very valuable."

My mother froze as she saw the customs official undo the four safety pins and examine the contents of the cloth.

"What have you got in here?" he asked, eyeing my mother enquiringly.

"Just some icons which we always keep in our house," she whispered.

He looked at the icons one by one. Then without hesitation he wrapped them up again in the same cloth and put them with the pile at the end of the bench, snarling: "These icons aren't going anywhere! They're

staying here!" At the same moment he raised his hand and called over a younger colleague who happened to be passing and was smoking a cigarette.

"Come here, you!" he said. "You're younger than me and don't need to rest. I need a break, and anyway I have to leave a bit earlier today. You can stand in for me!"

The other man objected loudly: "Do what?! Stand in for you? You must be joking! I work like a dog for ten hours a day and I don't take orders from you."

At this, the official dealing with our case grew livid. A fierce row broke out before our very eyes and they almost came to blows. Finally, some other customs workers intervened and our official said: "We'll go the manager and get him to resolve our disagreement. I'll teach you to respect your elders and betters!"

Then he ordered the soldier standing behind him: "You make sure nothing's touched while I'm out—if it is, you'll be responsible!"

"As you say, sir!" barked the soldier, clicking his heels loudly.

The two officials left to find the manager, still arguing at the top of their voices.

I glanced at my mother, who was on the verge of collapse. Then I looked at my sister; there seemed to be a strange gleam in her eye. I turned to look at the soldier, who was standing as rigid as a statue and watching us with a blank expression.

Suddenly my sister began to walk towards the end of the bench. My heart gave a great leap. When she reached the place where the customs official had piled up the things we were not allowed to take with us, she picked up the cloth with the four icons and carrying it reverently to the

trunk, put the bundle inside and covered it with some clothes. Then she came back and stood beside us. The soldier's gaze followed her every step of the way. Then he resumed his previous blank expression. He showed no reaction whatsoever; he had seen what happened, but it was as if he had seen nothing.

We stood there in silence, not moving, and waited anxiously for the official to come back.

After about a quarter of an hour we saw him approaching. As soon as I saw the expression on his face, I froze. He had obviously lost the case against his colleague and looked as if he was quite capable of killing someone.

He returned to his position and asked the soldier: "Did they touch anything while I was away?"

For a few seconds there was silence. To us, it was as if time stood still; our blood ran cold. The soldier blinked nervously for a moment, trying to make up his mind what to reply. Then he said clearly and firmly: "No, sir! They didn't touch anything!"

The customs officer was in a terrible rage, which increased his rancour and gave the impression that he was looking desperately for someone to vent his wrath on. I prayed that we would not be the recipients of this anger. The instinct for self-preservation had turned us into silent, motionless statues. The pile of things on the bench that we were not permitted to take with us now resembled a small mountain. There were feathers everywhere from the pillows that had been ripped open. Some of them were floating in the air and bothered him. He made several irritated gestures to brush them away from his nose and face.

When the customs check was finally over, the trunk was now only half full. Its contents represented the things we were allowed to take with us. Including, of course, the icons.

The trunk was sealed, after which there were a number of formalities to be carried out. When it was all over, we walked out of the customs building, holding on tightly to our mother. Once we were outside, she could control herself no longer and burst into tears.

"It's a miracle, my children! Today a miracle happened!" she kept repeating between her sobs.

7

Departure

There were just 24 hours left before our departure for Athens. Each of us was living in our own world. I felt a vague numbness and a total lack of energy.

Before I left, I wanted to make a last pilgrimage to the places where I had been born and spent the happiest years of my childhood. The day before we were due to leave, I visited our first neighbourhood where we had experienced the events of September, 1955.

I stood in front of the house where we had once lived, and looked at the big iron gate. I remembered how we used to say the basement was haunted. How many stories had been spread about Mrs. Vasso, who lived on the first floor and used to claim that after midnight she could feel a hand pulling her foot while she was asleep! They said it was the spirit of the house which came from the well in the basement. We were all

afraid of going down to the basement, and I certainly don't remember ever going near it.

Three blocks behind the house was my first school, the Primary School of Saints Constantinos and Eleni. I went through the iron gate and into the churchyard. Most of the church windows had been smashed and were boarded up. The reason was that, every time the shattered panes were replaced, the Turks threw stones from the road and broke them again. This had happened so many times that the priest, who also lived beside the church, had decided not to replace the glass but to block up the windows with cardboard.

I walked slowly around the yard until I reached the school which was behind the church. Memories of the happy times I had spent there came flooding into my mind. I stood still and looked for the last time at the place that was so familiar, so well-loved.

Then I went out on to the street and started to climb up the hill towards Pera. On my left was the house where my father's brother, Uncle Nikos, lived with his wife, Aunt Despina. Passing Tepebaşı, the place where in a few more hours, we should be leaving Constantinople for good, I reached Pera and turned into the little narrow street that led to the Zographion High School and the Greek Consulate.

I stopped in front of the imposing school building and was suddenly filled with a mixture of sadness and awe. I wanted to go inside and feel the atmosphere there just one more time and so, knocking hesitantly on the door, I entered the building and said in a voice that trembled slightly:

"Tomorrow we are leaving Constantinople for good and I should like very much to say goodbye to my teacher."

I looked at the two impressive marble staircases that swept up on either side of the hall, leading to the classrooms.

The first door I came to was the headmaster's office. I knocked several times, but there was no answer. Then I went to the office of my teacher, Mr. Apostolou.

"We are leaving, too, and I've come to say goodbye," I told him. "I should like to say goodbye to the headmaster as well, but he's not here!"

My teacher stood up and crossing the room slowly, as he walked with a limp, came and embraced me.

"Have a safe journey, my boy. If you continue to be just as good a student as you were here, you'll do well in life. I wish you and your family the very best of luck." There were tears in his eyes.

As I left the room, I caught sight of the Turkish deputy headmistress who was known as "the snake." I pretended I hadn't seen her as I had no wish to see her satisfaction that we "infidels" were finally being booted out of the country one by one.

Slowly, I climbed the stairs to my classroom on the first floor. I took one last look round, and then left.

As I walked towards Cihangir, I passed the Zappion School, which my sister attended, and found myself in front of my father's shop. I looked despondently at the new owner standing inside and remembered all the evenings I had kept my father company while he mended something in the shop.

I went into the barber's opposite my father's shop. The barber, an Armenian who was extremely fond of all of us, looked at me in surprise.

"We're leaving tomorrow," I said, "and I've come to say goodbye."

His eyes filled with tears, and without saying a word he came and hugged me tightly, patting me on the back.

"Give my greetings to your father! Have a safe journey, and good luck! God is there for all of us, and He is great."

I emerged from the shop with a lump in my throat and began to walk on slowly, unable to see where I was going from the tears in my own eyes.

Without my being conscious of it, my footsteps took me towards Karaköy. I went past the indoor market and began to climb up the steep hill when I suddenly found myself in front of the magnificent Church of Saint Sophia.

I stared at it as if in a dream, imagining the scenes that the people who had passed through this historic place had witnessed over the 2,500 years of its history—since 665 BC when Byzas consulted the oracle at Delphi, wanting a prophecy that would tell him where to build his new city. And when the oracle told him to build it at the place where three seas met, he came to where I was standing now: I could see the three seas before me—the Bosphorus, with water from the Black Sea; the Sea of Marmara, with water from the Aegean and the Mediterranean Sea; and Golden Horn Bay (Halic), with waters from the rivers of Thrace. On this hill, the first of the seven that Constantinople stands on, the temples of Apollo and Athena were built.

Nine hundred and twenty-five years later, Constantinos the Great and his son Constantios built the Churches of Saint Irini and Saint Sophia on the selfsame spot. I thought of how the Church of Saint Sophia had been destroyed by the Arians in AD 381 and later by supporters of Patriarch Chrysostomos and Queen Eudoxia in 404, to be finally and totally demolished during the Nikas Rebellion in 532. It had taken 10,000 people five whole years to rebuild the ruined church from its foundations. I recalled the words of the Emperor Justinian at the church's inauguration on December 27, AD 537, when, enraptured by the

magnificence of the building he proclaimed: "Glory be to God who found me worthy to carry out so great a work. I have outdone you, Solomon!"

I stood transfixed, gazing at the sacred place while other events in its illustrious history passed through my mind: the defeat of the Persians and the Avars by the Emperor Heraclius in 628; the schism of the churches after the Great Synod in support of Patriarch Fotios, from November AD 879 to February 880; the acceptance of Orthodoxy by the Russian people in 967; the excommunication of Cardinal Umberto at the altar in the Church of Saint Sophia in 1054, which resulted in the final schism in the Christian churches; the plundering carried out by the Crusaders in 1204 and its conversion to a Western church; the great celebration of 1261, when the Franks were driven out and the church reverted to Orthodoxy.

I imagined I could hear the wailing and lamenting mingled with the hymns and prayers on the eve of the Fall of Constantinople in May, 1453; and then came the long period of darkness when Mehmet the Conqueror and most of the Ottoman Sultans who followed him all had a hand in changing the status of the church, which from the moment the city fell was converted into a mosque. Minarets, rostrums, pulpits, mausoleums, quotations from the Koran written on the domes and walls of the church, daubing with whitewash—all these changes were carried out in a vain bid to alter the church's appearance.

What myths, what legends, what traditions of Hellenism and the Orthodox Church are associated with this sacred spot, this mystic place! Tears came into my eyes as I observed the hundreds of foreign visitors who queued up at the entrance to the church, which had been turned into the Museum of Byzantine Art in 1926.

I walked home in silence and found my mother packing the last possessions we were to take with us. The house was full of friends and acquaintances calling to say goodbye.

And, needless to say, the caretaker of the next-door apartment block was also much in evidence: "So you're finally leaving tomorrow?" he asked. "I want you to give me all your keys; I shall be the new householder when you've gone."

The next morning, September 14, 1964, we rose early, collected our belongings, closed the door and handed over the keys to the new "owner." As we left, I looked around for the last time. Mr. Kleopas, sitting in his usual place at the window, waved his hand in farewell; I thought I saw him crying, and I felt my chest tighten.

We arrived at Tepebasi, where the coach in which we would be travelling was already filling up. With the persecutions and deportations, the number of coaches leaving for Athens had increased but was still not enough. Three times the number of people actually travelling were milling around the coach, saying goodbye to their loved ones. Lots of people had come to bid us a last farewell—so many that we hadn't time to say goodbye to them all.

When the bus pulled away, a forest of raised hands and handkerchiefs was waving behind us. We were all very moved. We watched as the city slipped away around us, like water sliding through one's fingers. The houses and familiar streets were rapidly disappearing from view. Into my mind came scenes of all the happy times we had spent there. I pictured the huge house in Yedikule which belonged to my Aunt Olga.

I recalled the faces of all my childhood friends—Makis, Rena, Soukaki, Vangelis, Eftalia and Pitsou. Happy scenes of us playing in the school playground; fishing on the shores of the Bosphorus with Eftalia's parents, Anna and Kyriakos, and the teasing we always got when we

returned empty-handed. I remembered the enchanting vista presented by the flowers in the enormous garden of the Theological School on the island of Halki, where my Uncle Costas was head cook; the beautiful beach at Floria where I used to go sometimes with Marika and Sotiris, neighbours of ours who loved me as if I were their own child and who had not been fortunate enough to experience the joys of parenthood themselves; the huge apartment where Makis' parents lived in Cihangir, where we used to set up a large, meandering track and play with his electric train. We would spend hours on end absorbed in this, our favourite game.

The trips we used to make with the families of lots of friends and relations to the huge Günaydin estate at Kuruçesme; the lambs we roasted on the spit in that heavenly place, which was planted with masses of white and red mulberries. How we laughed when our hands and faces were stained bright red from the juice of the fruit!

The whole Günaydin family behaved like a genuine Turkish Muslim family, religiously observing all the Muslim festivals. They had adopted Turkish names and customs, but deep down they still cherished the Christian faith. Carefully preserved in trunks inside the house were icons depicting the saints, which were brought out every Sunday for worship. When the family was alone, they spoke Greek together and used their Christian names: Osman was Christos to the rest of the family, Gulistan was Maria, Yasar was Kostis, Naciye was Athanasia and Mayide was Katerina. When necessary, they would go secretly to remote churches where they were not known, in order to pray, take holy communion or be baptised.

I also thought of the wonderful excursions we had gone on to the Prinkiponisia: the islands of Proti, Antigoni, Halki and Prinkipos—each one of them with its own kind of beauty. I remembered the house where Dora lived with her sea-captain husband. Every time he went to sea, he

would promise to bring back a tiger cub for me; how I used to long for his return so that he could fulfill his promise!

All these images passed before my eyes. Farewell, my beloved places! Goodbye, my dear friends! Goodbye, my beloved Constantinople! We hadn't even reached our destination and the seeds of a deep sadness and longing were already taking root inside me.

As we progressed, the landscape kept changing, presenting different pictures, different scenes until we finally arrived at the Greek border. The coach drew up in a large open space in front of a long building that was the Customs House. All the passengers alighted and we were told to collect our belongings and keep them with us. A long queue of people clutching whatever they had managed to bring with them gradually formed outside the entrance to the customs building.

After an hour of waiting, a Turkish customs official got on to the coach to check that nothing had been left inside. Then he went straight to the back entrance of the customs building and the final plunder began; this, too, was organized down to the last detail.

When our turn eventually came, three or more hours after our arrival at the Greek-Turkish border, we entered the long customs building where our belongings were subjected to a rigorous check. Many were confiscated by the Turkish customs officers because they said it was "forbidden" for us to take them with us into Greece.

My consternation was indescribable when they discovered amongst our possessions a little handmade rug with a white cat on it so skillfully embroidered that you thought it could talk. I was so upset that my mother plucked up the courage to say in her broken Turkish:

"Sir, this little rug has no special value for you to confiscate it," she said. "But it has great sentimental value for the children because they grew up with it. It was a present from their grandmother who is now dead."

The official looked up at her, annoyed. "Keep quiet, or even the things you are allowed to take will be confiscated!" he bellowed at her.

We were dumbfounded at his words and looked at one another in silence. I was ready to burst into tears, but I held them back because I knew I shouldn't cry.

After the customs check came a physical check of our persons. One by one, standing in line, we went forward to be frisked.

The Turks had issued a special law "for specific needs," forbidding anyone leaving the country to take with him notes worth more than a total of 100 Turkish lira. This amount was ridiculously low, but if anyone was found, during the personal body check, to have over 100 Turkish lira hidden about his person, he was taken to court immediately. After a certain conviction, apart of course from confiscation of everything he had with him, he suffered hell on earth, mainly so that he would serve as an example to others who were leaving, to make them hand over to the Turks whatever they had left, of their own free will.

When it was my turn to be checked, I was told to take off my shoes, which had thick soles. They ripped them apart so badly that the shoes were rendered practically useless. Then they searched my pockets and left me waiting while they finished with the others.

They tore open a cloth amulet which my mother used to wear, in case it contained a golden sovereign.

Five hours had passed by the time they had completed their check and allowed us to get back on to the coach.

Very soon, we crossed the border into Greece, where the coach drew up. There I witnessed a scene I shall never forget: people poured off the vehicle to kneel down and kiss Greek soil!

There were tears in everyone's eyes and I couldn't tell whether they were tears of joy or of sadness. After a while we left the Greek border guard post and continued on our journey to Athens uninterrupted. Alexandroupolis, Komotini, Kavala, Thessaloniki, Larissa, Lamia, Thebes: with only brief stops and travelling all through the night, we approached our final destination and in the afternoon of September 15, 1964, we finally arrived at Platia Vathis in Athens. I knew we had really arrived because of the noise and shouting of the passengers who had leapt up in their seats as we stopped. I watched what was going on around me with strangely mixed feelings.

In just a few minutes the coach was empty. I stood up slowly and walked towards the door. I saw my mother and sister hugging my father who was searching for me with his eyes.

Our eyes met.

I began to go down the steps of the coach. As I set foot on the pavement, two tears rolled down my cheeks.

In a few hours a new day would begin, and with it, a new life.

THE END

Appendix

Throughout the 20th century, Turkey has maintained a steady strategy based on two main axes:

The first is to create a common national consciousness amongst the 72 different tribes that live in the lands where the Turkish Republic was established on October 29, 1923. There were deeply-rooted national and religious differences between these tribes. Until the beginning of this century, most of the population of the Ottoman Empire was comprised of the various peoples of Asia Minor, whether Muslim (such as the Arabs, the Kurds, the Lazes and the Çerkezi) or Christian, like the Greeks or the Armenians. It is precisely for this reason that the populist approach of Kemalism sought to unite and blend all the various population groups into a single nation. According to the philosophy propounded by Kemal Atatürk, "anyone who lives in Turkish territory and considers himself Turkish, is a Turk."

The second major pivot the Turkish strategy was focused on was, on the one hand, the eradication of all those populations, without exception, that did not "consider themselves Turkish" from the territories it

controlled. On the other hand, to establish and enforce, whenever the opportunity arose, an expansionist tactic that comes naturally to the Turks and which is inspired by the ideals of Pan-Turkism.

The body that has been responsible for implementing this policy almost continuously, from the time of the Sultans until 2018*, with only a few brief intervals, is the so-called National Security Council. For the most part, this Council has always been largely controlled by whatever military regime rules the country at the time. It consists of the President of the Republic (who is also the president of the Council), the Prime Minister (until 2018), the general chief of staff, the heads of the army, navy, air force, police and secret services, the general director of security and the ministers of the interior and foreign affairs. The Council's secretary is the deputy general chief of staff.

The decisions made by the Council constitute express orders. There is no question of any criticism or questioning of these decisions by either the government, the opposition parties or the Turkish press: such a possibility is strictly taboo.

So far, Turkey has implemented both parts of this two-pronged strategy with remarkable consistency. Any peoples living in Asia Minor that did not "consider themselves Turkish" have been massacred and mercilessly wiped out in an appallingly gruesome manner.

The Turkish Republic has put into effect, now as then, the practices of the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire—with painstaking attention to detail.

* On August 2, 2018, the Turkish Security Council met for the first time with a new composition, following the constitutional revision that placed Turkey under the full control of R. T. Erdoğan and his family.

Having forced the great mass of Muslim populations to "consider themselves Turkish" through violent means, and "purged" the Asia Minor region of the Christian populations living there, the Turks turned their attention to a number of other issues that were on the agenda of the so-called National Security Council, which to all intents and purposes governs the country: the Cyprus dispute, the Kurdish question, Greek Thrace, the Greek islands in the Aegean, and the Muslim Bow in the Balkans surrounding Greece.

The Cyprus Dispute

A common language, religion and culture have linked Cyprus and Greece for over 3,500 years. The first recorded invasion of the island by the Turks was in 1570 when, after seven weeks of desperate resistance put up by the local inhabitants, Sultan Selim succeeded in capturing Cyprus. Nicosia was burnt to the ground and 20,000 Cypriots were massacred. The Turks forcibly seized control of the long-suffering island of Aphrodite just as they did with the rest of Greece. They remained in command of the island until August 14, 1878, when, full of gratitude for the British support which had literally saved them from total collapse after their defeat in the Turko-Russian war, they sold Cyprus to Britain.

Two years later, on September 24, 1880, all the Cypriot representatives gathered in Nicosia and in a joint proclamation, declared their desire for union with Greece.

This wish on the part of the Cypriot people was reiterated on every possible occasion and at every public event, but it met with persistent indifference from the British side which finally announced, on November 5, 1914, that Cyprus had been annexed to the British Crown.

In November, 1917, a Pan-Cypriot Council was convened at the Archbishop's Palace in Nicosia and voted unanimously in favour of union with Greece. Britain, however, was not disposed to make even the smallest step in that direction. Julian Amery, the British undersecretary for colonial affairs at the time, declared on October 16, 1920, that "Britain would keep Cyprus."

On March 25, 1921, the British banned any form of celebration by the Cypriot people to mark the 100th anniversary of the Greek Revolution in 1821.

On July 24, 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne was signed, ending the war between Greece and Turkey. Under the terms of Article 16 of the Treaty, Turkey was to relinquish all claims in Cyprus; in accordance with Article 27 of the same Treaty, Turkey would recognize that it had absolutely no power or jurisdiction in respect of any issue whatsoever in Cyprus, whether the matter was of a legal, political or administrative nature. In the meantime, the overwhelming majority of Cypriots continued to demand the island's union with Greece.

On January 17, 1931, came the Proclamation of Limassol which was tantamount to a declaration of revolution. The whole of Cyprus reverberated with protest marches, rallies and demonstrations calling for union with Greece, but the British government remained steadfastly dedicated to its colonialist policy. Eleven days later, on October 28, 1931, there was bloodshed when six Cypriot demonstrators were shot and killed by the island's British "owners" during a major rally of civilians chanting slogans in favour of union with Greece.

To stifle this growing popular demand, the British imposed a regime of undisguised dictatorship. Teaching of the Greek language in schools was replaced by English, and Greek books, even subsidiary ones, were banned. Events in Greek history were treated as if they had never

happened, and it was strictly forbidden to display pictures showing the heroes of the Greek Revolution.

Yet, when World War II broke out, 35,000 Cypriots came forward of their own free will to join the Allied Forces in the fight against fascism. Sir Winston Churchill said: "When the war is over, the name of Cyprus will be amongst those to whom a debt of gratitude is owed—not just by our generation but by the future generations of mankind."

As soon as the war was over, however, all this was quickly forgotten. Turkey, which had cunningly contrived to remain neutral and had not spilt a single drop of Turkish blood throughout the war, was waiting patiently for a suitable opportunity to present itself.

On January 15, 1950, the elderly Bishop of Kyrenia, Makarios II, organized a referendum, the result of which showed that 95.7% of the people of Cyprus wanted union with Greece. The British still refused to accept the results of the referendum. Then Cyprus was shaken by demands for the self-determination that had already been granted to dozens of nations around the world. The British colonial secretary, H. L. Hopkinson, told the House of Commons on July 28, 1954, that the principle of self-determination could not be applied in Cyprus. Asked when it could be applied in the future, he replied with one word: "Never."

Thus, the people of Cyprus were forced to take up the only option left open to them by British intransigence: armed rebellion, which erupted in April, 1955.

The British reaction was immediate. In the most devious and underhand manner, Britain started to implement its policy of "divide and rule," letting the Turks back into Cyprus by the back door. Urged by the British, they immediately began to threaten that, once British control of the island came to an end, the Turks would take it back. On August 29, 1955,

Greece was virtually dragged to the tripartite London Conference whose sole purpose was to formalize Turkey's involvement in Cyprus.

The Cypriot struggle for self-determination was thus caught up in a fatal noose which was tightened not only by the British but also by the Turks. The opportunity the Turks had been waiting for so patiently was presented to them on a silver platter by the British.

The blood of the Cypriot freedom-fighters ran freely. Gallows were set up and the youth of Cyprus was cut down in its prime as it fought for the cherished dream of union with Greece. Turkey appealed to the few Turkish-Cypriots who had remained on the island after the Turkish occupation of Cyprus, for their help in creating volatile situations.

Britain had now fulfilled all the prerequisites that would allow its continued presence on the island. Instead of self-determination, the trap of independence was sprung on the island and on February 11, 1959, the Treaty of Zurich was signed requiring the Greeks of Cyprus, 82% of the Cypriot population, to comply with the formidable clauses contained in the Constitution of the Independent Cypriot Republic, formally established on August 16, 1960: according to the constitution, the vicepresident of the Cypriot Republic had to be a Turkish-Cypriot and he would have the right of veto in any legislative power, irrespective of the fact that he represented only 18% of the island's population - including 6% of various foreigners!

The Turks now, whose appetite had been well and truly whetted and their rapacious greed aroused, began to put all their efforts into dissolving the newly-established Cypriot Republic, taking full advantage of the privileges they had so provocatively acquired with the help of the British. Only three years after the establishment of the Cypriot Republic, its Vice-President, Dr. Fazıl Küçük, told the New York Times: "The

constitution of the Cypriot Republic no longer exists because Greeks and Turks cannot live together. The Cypriot constitution is dead."

Acting on orders from his bosses in Ankara and their political advisors in London, he proceeded to do all that was in his power to prove this, by rejecting anything that had to do with the exercise of his preferential duties. The aim was to bring about the collapse of the Cypriot Republic and the partitioning of the island so as to safeguard British interests in Cyprus.

It therefore came as no surprise when a little while later, in 1964, the former vice-president of the Turkish government, Kemal Satir, "prophesied" what was to happen ten years later: "Cyprus will be split in two and one part will be united with Turkey."

On July 20, 1974, with the blessing of Britain and the tolerance of the United States, Turkey seized the opportunity presented by the collapse of the military dictatorship in Greece and the factional fighting that broke out in Cyprus, and invaded the island. The Turkish prime minister at the time, Bülent Ecevit, a disciple of the man who was then the American secretary of state, Dr. Henry Kissinger, declared in the customary propagandist style that is characteristic of the Turkish language: "We bring peace, not war, to Cyprus."

The "peace" which the Turks brought to the island was yet another example of the same behaviour they had exhibited over the centuries: 5,000 Cypriots murdered, 70% of the Cypriot economy destroyed, women aged from 12 to 71 attacked and raped—very often in front of their own children—torture, robbery and the destruction of historic monuments and valuable works of art thousands of years old.

In the whole of the 8-year war in Vietnam, the American side suffered a total of 800 missing persons. In the brief war in Cyprus, the Turks broke yet another world record in brutality: 1,619 people were reported missing

after only a few days of fighting. For 22 years, Turkey stubbornly refused to provide any information regarding the fate of the missing persons—until January 29, 1996, when Turkey's puppet in Cyprus, Rauf Denktaş, stated with amazing cynicism that the missing Greek-Cypriots who had been taken prisoners during the Turkish invasion in 1974 had been handed over by the Turkish army to paramilitary Turkish-Cypriot "freedom-fighters," who had had them all executed.

Having occupied 40% of Cypriot territory by force, with the political tolerance of the western world, Turkey began to put its familiar formula into practice: first, by means of murder, torture and intimidation, persecution and terrorism, the Turks drove most of the Greek-Cypriot population out of the territory they had occupied; indeed, the Greek-Cypriots were obliged to submit an application for "voluntary emigration!"

What lack of imagination, to insist on implementing the same methods that have been used over and over again for the past 100 years!

The result, of course, was that 200,000 Greek-Cypriots were made refugees in their own country. Half a million of the island's total population of 650,000, were Greek-Cypriots. Half of these became refugees through the so-called "peace" brought to Cyprus by the Turks. The territories illegally occupied by the Turks were suddenly full of statues of the "Father" of the Turkish people, Mustafa Kemal.

In 1980, six years after the invasion of Cyprus, the Turkish foreign minister, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, made Ankara's future plans for Cyprus quite clear when he stated: "We have a specific mission to carry out in Cyprus: to make it part of our homeland." How this was to be achieved had been explained, in the initial stage, two years earlier in the German magazine, Der Spiegel, on July 17, 1978: "The Turkish-Cypriot population will be modified in the ratio of two Turkish settlers from

mainland Turkey for every Turkish-Cypriot. The total Turkish population will be over a quarter of a million."

The Turks applied this strategy to the letter. In November, 1983, Ankara's stooge, Rauf Denktash, proclaimed himself president of the self-styled Turkish-Cypriot "state."

The Turkish invaders maintain that "Cyprus is Turkish" and are waiting patiently for a suitable opportunity to arise over the next fifty or a hundred years, to fulfill their obsessive desire to seize and plunder and make the island completely Turkish.

The Kurdish Question

This is yet another treacherous, hypocritical and dark side of Turkish policy.

"There are no Kurds, only Turks," has always been the firm position maintained by Turkey. The former Turkish prime minister, Yildirim Akbulut, was quite revealing when he expressed similar views on July 31, 1990: "I declare quite unequivocally that there are no Kurds in Turkey, only Turks. All those who live in this land are Turks. They are by obligation Turks!"

It is precisely for this reason that it is forbidden for anyone to declare Kurdish identity in Turkey. If, for example, a pupil says he is a Kurd, he is expelled from school. Any shopkeeper or farmer who dares to mention that he is of Kurdish descent will find his credit cut off, or the seeds he needs for his crops no longer available.

In Western Thrace, on the other hand, there was an unprecedented storm of protest, with many crocodile tears shed over the alleged violation of human rights by the Greek state, when it moved to punish Ahmet Sadik and Ahmet Faikoglu, two Greek citizens acting as agents

for Turkish separatist propaganda, who brazenly call themselves Turks. In Turkish-occupied Kurdistan, whole villages are being torched and demolished by the Turkish army; household utensils, mattresses, beds, food supplies, crops, barns and sheds have all been reduced to ashes. Hounded out of their villages and uprooted from their homes, the Kurds end up losing touch with their homeland and their national identity.

Just as in 1600, under Sultan Mehmet, when the Turks issued edicts enabling them to round up the children of the Christian population and create the Janissary Corps, now, here they are in the 20th century, rounding up Kurdish children to turn them into little Turks. By applying systematic brainwashing techniques, they are endeavouring to make the Kurds ashamed of their origins and to want to shed them as being something disgraceful. The extent to which this policy is methodically applied knows no bounds.

In the spring of 1960, the then president of Turkey, Cemal Gürsel, invented a slogan which he insisted should be used: "Anyone who calls you a Kurd should have his face spat upon!" Any person who was brave enough to insist on claiming he was Kurdish was tortured and faced economic annihilation.

The Turkish mass media never provide any information about acts of state terrorism. On the contrary, from time to time the Turkish state is presented as a compassionate and caring body that actually offers assistance to the wave of Kurds "voluntarily" migrating (according to a report in the newspaper Milliyet, on November 6, 1990).

The hypocrisy and cant displayed in 1990 was no different from that of 1916, when Mehmet Talat issued an edict requiring those who were forced "by any legal or illegal means" to flee their homes to sign a statement to the effect that they were migrating "of their own free will."

On the one hand, we have Turkish police raiding the camps at Kiziltepe in October, 1990, confiscating textbooks, pencils and notebooks and banning the education of Kurdish children, who were terrorized and left illiterate. On the other—and at almost the same time—the then Turkish President, Turgut Özal, took part in a United Nations Conference on the Rights of the Child and apparently felt no embarrassment at all in claiming that "Turkey takes all young children under its wing—and is even celebrating a special Day of the Child on April 23!"

So far we know of no written ordinance stating that "the Turkish government has agreed on the total obliteration of the Kurdish population," as had happened in 1915 with the Armenians. But it is a widely-held belief that "whether you kill a Kurd or an animal amounts to the same thing."

At one time, the Kurds were repeatedly exploited in the expansionist plans of the Young Turks. Mustafa Kemal succeeded in using them against the Greeks and the Armenians with the promise that "after we have won, the Kurds will be granted their national rights."

However, instead of the Kurds acquiring their national rights, the southeastern part of Turkey—which includes Turkish-occupied Kurdistan— now finds itself under a regime of tyranny governed by martial law, special decrees and prohibitions, where the provincial rulers have unlimited administrative and military powers conferred on them to act oppressively.

There are special courts that have the right to make and carry out decisions that take no account whatsoever of the most basic human rights. Kurdish place-names in Kurdish areas have been forcibly changed to Turkish names: thus Dersim, where Atatürk put down yet another bloody Kurdish uprising in 1925, became Tunceli, Meydin

became Seslie, Berkavir became Tekcinar, Spivyan became Karagecit, Osyan became Doganli, and so on, in an unending list of new names by means of which the Turks have been endeavouring to remove all trace of Kurdish place-names from the map.

The only option for so many peoples around the world living under such conditions is to resort to armed conflict. When the Kurds announced the National Struggle for the Freedom of Kurdistan on August 15, 1984, 300,000 armed Turkish troops poured into the entire Turkish-occupied region of Kurdistan, along with 40,000 men specialized in difficult missions and 10,000 men belonging to the special forces. Their purpose, once again, was to stifle the Kurdish struggle for freedom.

This orgy of torture is aimed at forcing the Kurdish civilian population to flight and to eradicate popular support for the Kurdistan Workers Party, the PKK, which is the political party faction of the Kurdish uprising. The headhunters positively relish going after the reward offered by the Turkish government, which is announced quite blatantly in the Turkish press from time to time. These headhunters, whose official title is "defenders of the villages," receive weapons and payment from the Turkish state; their mission is to denounce, apprehend or exterminate Kurdish freedom-fighters.

Communication with the Kurdish population living in neighbouring Iran and Iraq is prevented by every possible means, including the use of electric fences and observation towers, and through military operations, as well as by political means. With the full cooperation of the authoritarian administration in Tehran and the fascist regime of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, Turkey has succeeded in carrying out a series of genocidal attacks against the Kurdish population.

On September 1, 1990, the then foreign minister of Turkey, Vahit Halefoglou, stated quite openly in the newspaper Milliyet that, "Iran, Iraq and Turkey would never allow the establishment of a Kurdish state!"

Each of the three allies, all mavericks in their own way yet united in the fight against the Kurdish nation, has thus carried out separate attempts to wipe out the Kurds. In March, 1988, the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, used chemical weapons in the region of Halepçe to wipe out 5,000 Kurds: women, children and the elderly were all victims of a hideous crime that went almost unnoticed by the so-called "civilized" governments, which in other respects display sensitivity to such situations.

On July 13, 1990, Iranian "diplomats" held a top-secret meeting in Vienna with the leader of Iran's Democratic Kurdistan Party, Abdurrahman Quasimio and his colleagues, to discuss the autonomy of the Kurds in Iran. The Iranian "diplomats" suddenly assassinated the Kurds in cold blood, and the Austrian authorities, having arrested them, allowed them to go free under the threat of an occupation of the Austrian embassy in Tehran.

The Kurdish nation, which today numbers more than 35 million people, has survived despite the merciless, coordinated attacks by its oppressors. Half the Kurdish nation still manages to live in Kurdistan, which Turkey occupied by force and strength of arms. The "Kurdish Question" is gradually beginning to attract the attention of an increasing number of progressive European peoples, in contrast to the silent indifference shown by their governments.

In Yugoslavia, the major powers created a number of new states populated by only a few hundred thousand citizens, because it served their interests. The 40 million Kurds, scattered in four hostile countries in the area of Kurdistan, have been fighting in bloody uprisings for over

a hundred years. So far, they have been unsuccessful in establishing their own state.

Greek Thrace

Having completely ignored its obligations towards the Christians who stayed behind in Constantinople, Imvros, and Tenedos, and used "all possible means" to turn Greeks out of their homes, Turkey proceeded to exploit to the full the civilised nature of Greece, which instead of ridding itself of the Muslims living in its territory as Turkey had done with the Greeks, allowed the population to increase in conditions of total freedom - and this, despite being well aware that Mustafa Kemal had himself quite openly clarified Ankara's goals in the Misak-i Milli, the oath of the Young Turks which was taken during a secret session of the Turkish Parliament in January, 1920: "It is our aim that Western Thrace should remain in Turkish hands as a unified whole and that as soon as a suitable opportunity presents itself, it should be united with the Motherland. We shall not accept any expropriation of this Turkish region. Our brothers in Western Thrace must, as a first step, fight to gain the region's autonomy and independence."

Celâl Bayar—the butcher who had embarked on his macabre task in 1914 when the Young Turks sent him to Smyrna to eliminate the Greek population living there, and who went on to slaughter the Greeks and Armenians in the Pontus and Ionia—visited Komotini in 1952 as the

president of the Turkish Republic, officially to "promote Greek-Turkish friendship." Unofficially, however, the purpose of his visit was to put into effect Turkey's latest plan to "turkify" the Muslim children living in Greek Thrace through education and training. The aim was clear: to kill two birds with one stone by giving the Muslims who were not Turks a Turkish national consciousness, on the one hand, and on the other to set up agencies that would faithfully carry out Turkey's strategic goals with blind and unquestioning obedience.

In Komotini, with the indifference and tolerance of the Greek authorities, Celâl Bayar founded a high school named after him that would "turkify" the Muslim children attending it—in the name of so-called "GreekTurkish friendship!"

The next stage of the plan had been laid down several decades earlier: the Muslims of Greek Thrace would organize themselves and make constant protests—for no reason whatsoever—about the supposedly oppressive conditions under which they lived in Greece. Turkey would then invoke the "Greek-Turkish friendship" and call for agreements to be signed that would recognize Turkey's right to have a say regarding the minority it had created in Greece. Finally, Turkey would "intervene" at the appropriate moment—which could be in ten, thirty or even a hundred years' time! If Celâl Bayar were alive today, he would no doubt be extremely satisfied to see that his plan was working excellently.

By exercising a suitable education policy, which was criminally ignored by the Greek state, pawns of the "glorious Turks who reigned supreme in three continents" who blindly obeyed the orders of their Turkish masters, were established in Greek Thrace. The region was inundated with Turkish agents who, whether as employees of the Turkish Consulate in Komotini or as teachers or clerics posted to serve in Western Thrace, systematically incited a nationalist fervour amongst the Muslim population. The clerics embarked on an intensive propaganda

program, with the result that, from a total of 85 in 1920, the number of seminaries in Greek Thrace had reached 320 by 1996.

The Turkish organs in Greek Thrace now no longer feel the need to make the slightest effort to cover up their plan, which is proceeding according to schedule and is presently at the stage where issues concerning real or imaginary situations are constantly created; indeed, if there are no grounds over which to create an issue, they have no difficulty inventing them!

Under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne signed between Eleftherios Venizelos and Ismet İnönü on behalf of Mustafa Kemal in 1923, it was agreed that the approximately 80,000 Muslims living in Greek Thrace would remain in Greece, and that roughly 120,000 of the 315,000 Christian Greeks living in Constantinople, Imvros and Tenedos islands would stay in Turkey. By 1993, 70 years later, the number of Muslims in Greek Thrace, many of whom had "acquired" a Turkish consciousness as a result of Turkish propaganda, had increased up to 150,000, while the number of Greeks in Turkey had dwindled below 2,000 people!

In order to effect this deliberate and pre-meditated reduction of the Greek population in Asia Minor, despite its clear commitments under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, Turkey devised a series of schemes that were methodically put into action. These included:

- The slogan "Vatandaş Türkçe konuş" ("Citizens, speak Turkish") and the notorious legislation about insulting Turks and Turkey, which had terrorized the Christian population for decades to the extent that they dared not utter a single word of Greek in a public place lest they should be accused of insulting the Turks or the Turkish flag; Greek in a public place lest they were accused of insulting the Turks or the Turkish flag;

- The law prohibiting Greeks from practising certain professions, which was aimed at strangulating the Greek minority's prospects for economic growth;
- Another law imposing a special "surveillance" tax on the institutions of the Greek community, in order to weaken them economically and restrict their activities;
- The intolerable pressure placed on the Greek schools with the appointment of Turkish deputy head teachers, and the refusal to appoint (or delay in appointing) Greek head teachers so that the schools were, in fact, run by Turks; the banning of the school prayers recited by Greek pupils and the restriction of any kind of activity or event which might be displeasing to the Turks, even indirectly;
- The obligatory mobilisation in 1941 of the Christian population with an age-span of 20 years, and their dispatch to the forced labour battalions;
- The selective imposition, in 1942, of punitive and excessive taxes on the minority populations, aimed at ruining them economically—notably the infamous property tax (Varlik Vergisi);
- The pogrom that was organized by the Turkish government itself against the Christians and their property on September 6, 1955; in a single night 4,340 Greek shops, 2,600 Christian homes, 73 churches, 26 Greek schools, 110 restaurants, 21 factories, 27 pharmacies and the 3 Greek newspapers still operating—out of the nine that had been in existence in 1923—were all destroyed, burned and looted;

- The mass deportations carried out in 1964, when a total of 50,000 Greeks were summarily and quite inhumanely turned out of their homes;
- The closure of the Theological School on Halki, aimed at stifling religious freedom and undermining the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople;
- The confiscation of Greek properties in Constantinople through a secret decree passed in 1964, denying people of Greek descent the right to buy or sell property.

The Muslims who live in Greek Thrace today are mostly Pomaks and Gypsies, yet Turkish propaganda invariably describes them all, collectively, as "Turks" and goes to enormous lengths to complain about alleged "oppression." The Turks are waiting for a suitable opportunity for another success, such as when Alexandretta was annexed one year after the Turkish army had entered the town, with the tolerance of the French, on July 5, 1938.

The fact that the region's Turkish inhabitants were the minority, compared to the local Arab population, was a mere "detail." Similarly, the fact that the land of Orpheus and Dimocritos has been Greek for centuries and is inhabited by Greeks is a mere "detail" to the Turks.

As long as Greece refuses to revoke the clause concerning mutuality contained in Article 45 of the Treaty of Lausanne, in order to harmonise the number of Muslims living in Greek Thrace with the Christian population in Constantinople, Imvros and Tenedos, the Turks will continue, with impunity, to prepare the ground for conditions that will allow them to fulfill their expansionist ambitions when the right moment presents itself.

Those responsible for the massacre of entire peoples and the coldblooded implementation of inhuman methods which wiped out hosts of innocent people, have already caused buckets of crocodile tears to be wept on account of the alleged "ill-treatment" of Greek Muslims. Having turned them into blindly obedient agents of the Turkish state and persuaded them to carry out separatist activities through unprecedented irredentist propaganda, they conveniently forget that the primary obligation of a minority, in accordance with international law, is to respect the sovereign rights and territorial integrity of the host country. They "forget" that when the Turks carried out their cold-blooded genocide of the Kurds in south-eastern Turkey, they themselves had invoked Article 8 of their anti-terrorist law which states: "Any activity that aims at violating the indivisibility of the Turkish state and nation is forbidden, regardless of the purpose or motive behind it."

Yet Turkish agents are permitted to move about freely in Greece and proclaim "This is Turkey!" If they are called to account for their actions, in the context of a favorable European state, a veritable chorus of hypocritical voices can be heard, complaining of the alleged "oppression" of Greek Muslims.

Greek Islands in the Aegean

Greece's islands in the Aegean are the next target of Turkish expansionism. On August 9, 1976, Süleyman Demirel (who was later to become president of Turkey) told the newspaper *Hürriyet*: "I would rather call them Aegean islands, not Greek islands." Two years earlier, on June 9, 1974, he had spoken even more revealingly, as leader of the opposition, about Turkey's expansionist efforts: "The differences of opinion with Greece arise because the islands that lie much closer to Turkey belong to Greece, not Turkey. These islands are part of Anatolia and have for centuries belonged to the state that ruled Anatolia."

On April 4, 1975, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, then foreign minister of Turkey, declared: "Half the Aegean belongs to the Turks and the other half to the Greeks. This has always been Turkey's official view."

That same year, to reinforce this "official" view, Turkey founded its Fourth Army which it called the Aegean Army, based in Smyrna. This corps is not part of NATO and does not, of course, serve any defence purpose. The overwhelming majority of Turkey's landing crafts are also based in Smyrna, along with a large number of rubber dinghies, each capable of transporting up to twelve men to nearby shores.

Anything that is not ceded voluntarily may be seized when a suitable opportunity presents itself: this has steadfastly remained Turkey's abiding philosophy. In the case of the Aegean islands, Turkey made valiant attempts to seize Greece's islands in the Aegean "when a suitable opportunity presented itself," which it did during World War II, when—at an enormous cost to human lives—Greece joined the Allies in supporting the ideals of freedom and democracy. Turkey attempted, from the safety of its "neutral" position, to turn the situation to good account by negotiating with Germany to denounce the 1939 Anglo-Turkish Treaty (which was never implemented) and to open the way for Germany to have overland access to Egypt. Its demands, in return, were quite modest: three Aegean islands, a land corridor to the west of Alexandroupolis and Turkish jurisdiction over certain regions of Syria and Iraq.

The draft treaty, which was drawn up in collaboration with the Turkish foreign minister, Şükrü Saracoğlu, was sent to Berlin on May 23, 1941. Seven days later, on June 1, the British entered Baghdad and drove out Rashid Ali, quelling the Iraqi uprising he had organized, which was the most important of the many reasons behind the rapprochement between Germany and Turkey. As a result of the British intervention, the Turko-German pact was derailed and the Greek islands in the Aegean remained in Greek hands.

During the course of World War II, the Turks endeavoured once again to occupy the Aegean islands, on the pretext of "protecting" them. This attempt also met with failure because of decisive reaction from Greece.

Turkey, however, was still waiting for a "suitable opportunity" to apply its philosophy of "seizing whatever is not voluntarily ceded." It has laboured indefatigably to fulfill this long-term strategy. In 1974, when Greece faced major problems following the fall of the military dictatorship and the restoration of democracy, Turkey decided that conditions, as a

whole, were ideal. Preparations had already been set in motion the previous year, when on November 1, 1973, the Turkish Government Gazette published details of legislation granting the Turkish State Petroleum Company exploration and exploitation rights in respect of deposits of hydrocarbons in 27 regions of the north-east and central Aegean, which were suddenly considered to be Turkish! The map accompanying the legislation showed an arbitrary and totally unilateral delineation of the continental shelf in the Aegean that reflected Turkey's predatory appetite and comprised mainly Greek areas.

On January 10, 1974, the Turkish defence minister, İlhan Sadar, provided a clear indication of Turkey's latest strategy when he declared that Turkey's future now lay in the sea. Turkey's next move, which had been well thought out beforehand, was of a symbolic nature. On May 29, 1974, 521 years to the day since the Fall of Constantinople, the Turkish oceanographic vessel Çadarlı sailed into the Aegean, ostensibly to carry out deep-sea explorations, in a blatant attempt to create a "fait accompli" situation by openly disputing Greek sovereignty in the Aegean, laid down by international treaties.

A few months later, on February 27, 1975, the then prime minister of Turkey, Bülent Ecevit, declared in a speech that the oil explorations had been merely a front: the real purpose of the expedition had been to redefine the borders with Greece!

In June, 1974, Turkish officials issued wordy statements in which they made no attempt to disguise their intentions regarding the new borders that Turkey sought to impose. On June 1, 1974, Hasan Isik announced that Turkey would never allow the Aegean to be turned into a Greek sea—as if the Aegean had not always been a Greek sea, from the dawn of history right up to the present day.

On June 4, 1974, the then Turkish foreign minister, Turan Güneş, declared that Turkey would never agree to the extension of Greece's territorial waters in the Aegean to twelve nautical miles. This is a position which Turkey has reiterated time and again, at every opportunity, even after the international treaty on the Law of the Sea came into effect on December 10, 1982, with 166 countries around the world signatories to the agreement.

According to the terms of the treaty, Greece is entitled to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles; yet Turkey persists in threatening that if Greece implements the international treaty it has signed, this will be considered as a cause for war between the two sides!

In order to clear all doubt as to its intentions, the Turkish parliament passed a resolution granting the Turkish government power to declare war on Greece if it exercised its sovereign rights and extended its territorial waters from six to twelve miles!

Turkey judged that Greece's weak position in 1974 presented the ideal conditions for seizing as much as it could. From then on, Turkish aggression knew no bounds. On July 18, 1974, a new law was published in Turkey, again giving the Turkish State Petroleum Company nonexistent rights of exploration in Greek regions, this time in the south-east Aegean. Two days later, Turkey invaded Cyprus and, with the tolerance of the West, forcibly occupied 40% of the island.

Two weeks after the invasion of Cyprus, the Turkish government published NOTAM 714, in which it demanded that all aircraft flying over half of the Aegean should report to Turkey. This was an attempt to abolish the existing system of Flight Information Regions (FIR), under which, in accordance with the Paris Agreement of 1952 and the Geneva Agreement of 1958, the whole of the Aegean comes under the Athens FIR. Greece's reaction on August 14, 1974, in declaring the entire

Aegean a danger region eventually forced Turkey to revoke NOTAM 714 six years later, on February 22, 1980.

On January 18, 1975, the then Turkish prime minister, Sadi Irmak, spoke quite openly about Turkey's expansionist intentions: "The Aegean Sea belongs to us and everyone should realize this!"

Four days later, on January 22, the same official went on to clarify the way in which Turkey intended to enforce this position: "We are obliged," he said, "to adopt a dynamic policy in the Aegean. Conditions today are different from those of 1923. Turkey's power has grown. Cyprus is the first step towards the Aegean!"

A year and a half later, on August 7, 1976, the Turkish ship Hora sailed into the Aegean to continue the task of "claiming fresh borders" with Greece. Greece sought recourse at the International Court of Justice at The Hague, but Turkey flatly rejected any idea of mediation.

In December, 1995, the then Greek prime minister, Andreas Papandreou, became seriously ill and unable to carry on ruling the country; he was admitted to the Onassis Heart Centre in Athens. The ensuing power vacuum in Greece provided Turkey with a fresh opportunity for aggression.

A Turkish sailing boat apparently "went aground" on the rocky Greek islets of Imia, but when Greek vessels sped to their assistance, the Turkish agents on board the boat refused to accept help, saying the rocky islet was Turkish and that they would accept help only from Turkish vessels. (The same scenario had been described with remarkable accuracy seventeen years earlier by the Turkish journalist, Reşit Aşçıoğlu, when he wrote an article entitled "Where are we going? To the Aegean?" which was published in the newspaper Günaydin, on July 7, 1977.)

The Greek prime minister, Andreas Papandreou, resigned from office and on January 18, 1996, Kostas Simitis was sworn in as the country's new prime minister. Nine days later, on January 27, Turkish agents posing as journalists for the newspaper Hürriyet (the long-standing antiGreek weapon operated by the Turkish government's National Security Council) landed on Imia and replaced the Greek flag flying there with a Turkish flag!

Three days after this, during the night of January 30, Turkey increased the tension and the two countries found themselves on the brink of war. Military conflict was avoided, but the Turks have persistently called into question Greece's clearly-defined sovereignty over the Imia islets. Shortly afterwards the Turkish ambassador in Rome warned his government in a confidential report of the existence of documents that proved Greece's sovereignty over the rocky islets in question. The documents, he said, came from both Italy and Turkey itself!

The Turkish government totally ignored the ambassador's warning since its aim was to create an issue where one did not exist. Expansionism and the call for a fresh demarcation of the border between Greece and Turkey gave rise to a new Turkish theory of "grey areas" in the Aegean—that is, areas disputed by Turkey. When Greece proposed recourse to the International Court at The Hague, Turkey pretended not to understand why this course of action should be taken.

The task of law courts is to administer justice, and Turkish expansionism has nothing whatsoever to do with justice. Turkey therefore called for "dialogue" and "unconditional negotiation aimed at settling all outstanding issues in the Aegean as a whole" (Mesut Yilmaz, Turkish prime minister, March 25, 1996). In other words, Greece was being asked to "negotiate" with Turkey concerning the sovereign rights granted to it by international treaties, whether over the islands, air space or the continental shelf!

Turkish aggression has always had the backing and tolerance of the major powers; indeed, Turkey has been turning this tolerance to good account for over 600 years, ever since the Fall of Constantinople and the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, when the people of Asia Minor were reduced to servitude.

The Muslim Bow in the Balkans surrounding Greece

In the early 1990s, the conflicting interests of the major powers in the Balkans brought about the dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation into a number of small states. The abolition of communism, the civil war in Yugoslavia, the enforced liberalisation of Albania, the most fascist and most racist regime in Europe, created a new framework in which Turkey was not slow to find a role.

The Albanians were suddenly described as "brothers" by the president of the Turkish republic, Süleyman Demirel, the Bulgarians were controlled through the Muslim minority that supported the Bulgarian government, and the leader of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kiro Gligorov, was showered with promises by the hungry Turks.

The aim of all this was, of course, to exploit the conflict that existed in the relations between these countries and Greece.

Greece's problems with Albania began with the Greek Revolution of 1821, when Greece wanted to free Epiros, a region inhabited almost exclusively by Greeks and in the eyes of Greece, is Greek.

Italy and Austria, however, wanted to establish an Albanian state and when the Greek forces reached Chimara in November, 1912, and Tepeleni in March, 1913, the Italians issued Greece with an ultimatum, demanding that they should not proceed to Avlona and the Adriatic coast. On May 29, 1913, the London Conference, under intolerable diplomatic pressure from Italy and Austria, set up the Albanian state, thereby granting autonomy to a people that had never even asked for it!

A few months later, on December 17, 1913, the Florence Protocol gave Albania the Northern Epirotic regions of Chimara, Delvino, Argyrokastro and Korytsa. The 300,000 inhabitants of these areas are Christian, with a strong Greek consciousness. Yet here they were, suddenly, violently and inhumanely cut off from the rest of Greece. "Good night, dear Greeks, and good luck with the Albanian brigands," wrote the noted French politician Georges Clemenceau, in the newspaper *Homme Libre*. The wrath of the Greeks in Epiros finally led to a popular uprising and the Corfu Protocol of April 17, 1914, granting autonomy to Northern Epiros.

The Allied Conference in Paris on January 13, 1920, agreed to let Greece have Northern Epiros. However, Italy's frenzied reaction led to a reversal of the decision. When World War II broke out, Albania sided with its lord and master, Italy.

But Greece achieved something that no one could have imagined: it won the first great victory of the war against the axis powers, thereby offering hope of freedom to the enslaved people of Europe. At the same time, it liberated Northern Epiros for the third time, receiving abundant promises from the major Allied Powers concerning national rights that came to nothing.

After the end of the war in Northern Epiros, all the promises and commitments were forgotten and Hellenism in Epiros was plunged into

darkness under the most authoritarian kind of tyranny Europe had seen since the Middle Ages. This continued until the overthrow of real Socialism, when the strong wind of democratic reform burst open the gates of the last stronghold of totalitarianism, Albania. But attitudes did not change along with this new cloak of democracy. Turkey was always at hand to "assist" in Albania's anti-Greek hysteria, which manifested itself frequently and in a variety of ways.

As far as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is concerned, it was the creation of the Communist leader, Marshall Tito, immediately after World War II. It was he who, within the context of a Federal Yugoslavia, founded a small republic in the broader region of the upper reaches of the River Axios, which he called Macedonia and which had Skopje as its capital.

The Greek character of Macedonia can be dated back for more than 3,000 years and has a rich history that would fill whole volumes with evidence. The name Tito gave to the new federal Yugoslav state was surely an act of provocation towards Greece. At the same time, however, it constituted a domestic matter of Yugoslavia, in the sense that, in the United States of America for example, there are 11 cities called Athens, 15 called Arcadia and 10 called Sparta.

Tito sought to manufacture a nationality that would plunder Macedonian heritage and which he would endow with a "national vision," which was the expansionist prospect of a united Macedonia; in other words, a mortgage on the future.

In 1944, U.S. Secretary of State Edward Stettinius sent a letter, dated December 26, 1944, to U.S. Missions, warning about the expansionist prospect of the Communist leader, Marshall Tito, as follows:

The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers

The following is for your information and general guidance, but not for any positive action at this time.

The Department has noted with considerable apprehension increasing propaganda rumors and semi-official statements in favor of an "autonomous Macedonia," emanating principally from Bulgaria, but also from Yugoslav Partisan and other sources, with the implication that Greek territory would be included in the projected state.

This Government considers talk of "Macedonian nation," "Macedonia Fatherland," or "Macedonian national consciousness" to be unjustified demagoguery representing no ethnic or political reality, and sees in its present revival a possible cloak for aggressive intentions against Greece.

The approved policy of this Government is to oppose any revival of the Macedonian issue as related to Greece. The Greek section of Macedonia is largely inhabited by Greeks, and the Greek people are almost unanimously opposed to the creation of a "Macedonian state." Allegations of serious Greek participation in any such agitation can be assumed to be false. This Government would regard as responsible any Government or Group of Governments tolerating or encouraging menacing or aggressive acts of "Macedonian forces" against Greece. The Department would appreciate any information pertinent to this subject which may come to your attention.

In 1954, Tito embarked on an organized propaganda campaign, formulating theories about Philip of Macedonia and his son, Alexander the Great; he appropriated the language of St. Paul and the Greek freedom-fighters of the 1821 Revolution—just as the Bulgarians had

done 100 years earlier. Still licking its wounds from the enormous loss of life during World War II and the bitter fighting of the civil war that followed, Greece pretended not to see Tito's obvious designs.

When, in 1991, Tito's creation—the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—emerged from the mists of the civil war in Yugoslavia, every possible form of provocation was put into effect against Greece.

Maps of the republic that included ancient Macedonia, i.e. part of Greece, were printed and circulated around the world. Coins were minted depicting the White Tower, the emblem of Greece's northern capital, Thessaloniki. A flag was devised depicting the sun of Vergina, the symbol that was discovered on the tomb of Philip of Macedonia during the excavations carried out in Northern Greece by the great Greek archaeologist, Professor Manolis Andronikos.

By calling itself "the Republic of Macedonia," the former Yugoslav republic clearly sought to trade on the Greek name for expansionist purposes in the future and cultivate a mentality of irredentism in the younger generation.

And naturally Turkey was the first country to rush headlong to recognize the fake name of the new republic whose inhabitants are an amalgam of Slavs, Albanians, Gypsies and Serbs, with a small number of Greeks.

Turkish officials go backwards and forwards regularly with a wealth of promises that have no security, expecting to create one more link in the Muslim Bow against Greece that runs through the Balkans.

Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Bulgaria, form the basis of this bow which the Turks aim to establish in the name of peace and friendship between Balkan peoples.

The Turks make hypocritical use of the pretext of peace and friendship whenever it suits them. They still have no hesitation, when circumstances dictate it, in making a big song and dance about the need for "Greek-Turkish friendship," inventing and proposing to Greece whole packages of carefully designed initiatives to this end.

However, whenever Turkey starts to talk about Greek-Turkish friendship, Greece can be quite sure Turkey is merely paying lip-service to the idea and that it is a tactical manoeuvre.

The phrase used by Ismet İnönü, with reference to Eleftherios Venizelos, after the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne and proclamation of the Greek-Turkish friendship ("The fellow believed us!"), has gone down in history.

Zorlu and Menderes also spoke of Greek-Turkish friendship prior to launching the pogrom against the Greeks on September 6, 1955.

The same thing had happened only a few months earlier, in March, 1964, when Turkey denounced the Trade, Establishment and Shipping Agreement signed by Greece and Turkey on October 30, 1930; the result was the persecution and deportation of the Greeks who had stayed on in Constantinople.

Before the Turks invaded Cyprus, they again came out with the same patter about Greek-Turkish friendship to persuade the man at the head of the Greek junta, Giorgos Papadopoulos, to withdraw the Greek regiment stationed in Cyprus in order to facilitate the Turkish invasion that ensued. He believed them too!

In 1996, immediately after the major crisis engineered by the Turks over the Imia islets, Turkey began once more to beat the big drum about the need for Greek-Turkish friendship, offering up sweet and hypocritical words that had no substance. Their purpose was to get Greece to lift the

veto it had imposed on any progress being made in the customs association agreement between Turkey and the European Union in April of the same year.

Thus it has been historically proven that whenever Turkey speaks of Greek-Turkish friendship, it seeks to achieve a specific goal and then, once this has been attained, it reverts to its abiding aggressive nature and its unshakable intention to put its expansionist strategy into effect.

Pan-Turkism: The Ideology of Turkish Expansionism.

The phenomenon known as "Pan-Turkism," which first manifested itself at the beginning of the 20th century, was to determine the course of Turkish diplomacy right up until the present day. According to this ideology, which is identified with the policy of irredentism in respect of lands inhabited by Turkish-speaking peoples, "Greater Turkey" should be established in territory of the Crimea, the Caucasus, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Siberia, Turkestan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Western Thrace, Cyprus and, of course, the Aegean islands.

Although officially embraced only by the regime of the Young Turks after the 1908 revolution, the ideology has had considerable influence on Turkish policy, either overtly or secretly.

Since 1965, it has found expression in the Turkish parliament in Alpaslan Turkes' Nationalist Action Party. Its emblem is the Bozkurt, or steppe wolf; this is also the name of a magazine which first appeared in 1939 and contained strong Pan-Turkish propaganda. The issue

published in August, 1941, contained a map of unredeemed territories stretching from Greece to China.

Turkey has made so many attempts, both before and after the Mustafa Kemal era, to promote the idea of Pan-Turkism and to fulfill its so-called "Great Idea" (Büyük emel or Büyüük mefküre) that a separate volume would be needed to record them all.

The Young Turks entered World War I on the side of Germany in order to serve the ideal of Pan-Turkism. The Germans gave the Turks every encouragement in this direction and the German ambassador in Constantinople, von Wagenheim, told the Grand Vizier in a confidential letter dated August 6, 1914, that, "Germany would fight for Turkey's eastern borders to be restored, which would allow it to have direct access to the Muslims in Russia."

In 1915 and 1916, just as in 1910, several thousand propaganda sheets and leaflets supporting the ideal of Pan-Turkism and using the common religion of Islam as bait were distributed over vast expanses of Central Asia. The language used was that which Ismail Gasprinsky (1851–1914) had endeavoured to establish.

He was a Turkish agent who began to publish a newspaper in 1833 that served the interests of the Turks. Gasprinsky's language had Turkish as its basis and was embellished with words used by the Muslim populations in Central Asia, so that they would all feel "Turkish." The fact that only 10% of the population in the former Soviet Union was Muslim was merely a trivial "detail"!

The Young Turks, with Emver Paşa as their true spokesman—a man with a real passion for Pan-Turkism as a political and military ideal—were obsessed with the idea of extending the Ottoman Empire to the Northern Causasus and Russian Azerbaijan. They dreamt of a Turkey that stretched from Alexandroupolis to China.

The dream came to an abrupt end, though only temporarily, with the defeat of Turkey as an ally of Germany and with the death of Emver Paşa on the battlefields of Asia Minor on August 4, 1922.

Even during World War II, Turkey—demonstrating unbelievable cynicism—would sometimes side with the Axis powers and other times with the Allied forces, granting "facilities" to both sides and joining the war on the side of one and then the other, depending on the pay-offs that would come its way and serve the "Great Idea" of Pan-Turkism.

In the situation created by the outcome of World War II, the policy of Pan-Turkism was applied selectively against Greece, which was probably thought to be the region where it could most easily be implemented. Nevertheless, fanatic zeal for the Atatürk philosophy that says "Anyone who considers himself Turkish is a Turk," is being whipped up amongst the Muslim masses everywhere. Of course, they live outside the confines of the country that is Turkey today, but still within the lands that belonged to the former Ottoman Empire.

The fanaticism that Turkey is covertly channelling to these peoples represents an essential prerequisite for proceeding to the next stages of Turkey's expansionist strategy.

An excerpt from a Turkish poem (in translation)

"MY CYPRUS BECAME TURKISH"

by Musa Korkmaz, published in Turkey's Police Gazette on February 1, 1978, and later broadcast by radio stations in Turkey and the Turkish radio station in the occupied part of Cyprus:

"The blood of 400 years is on your soil, my Mehmetcik*,
In your bravery lies my honour,
Justice has won its place in Cyprus.
The twelve states must heed our voice
And fools come to their senses.
They should all be thankful for our point of view.
Cyprus has earned the right to independence.
We have uprooted our attackers with our teeth:
Some of them we threw into the sea**.
That was the day we raised the flag on the walls.
My Cyprus, the hand that held the sword was made of steel.
Cyprus is written into our history, this we know.
We shall take the Aegean islands, every one.
So, let us set off for Thessaloniki, the birthplace of Atatürk.
A most favourable wind is blowing,
My Cyprus."

* Nickname meaning "Turkish soldier"

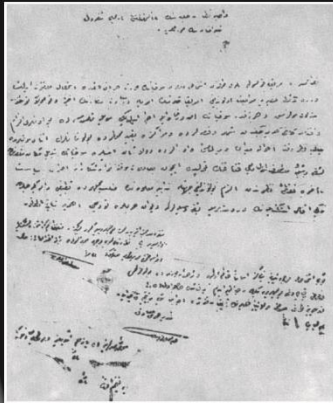
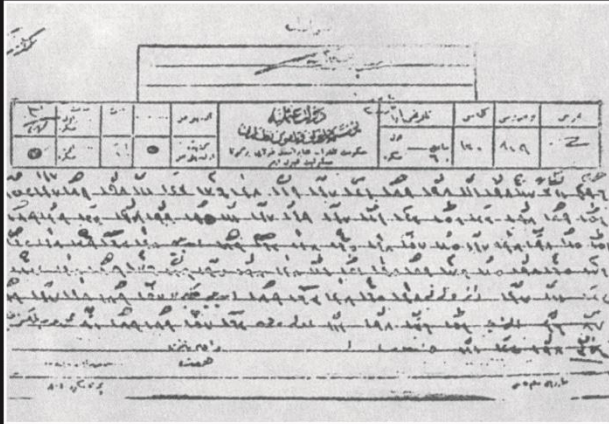
** Reference to the drowning of Greeks at Smyrna in 1922

PHOTOGRAPHIC APPENDIX

**REPORT BY THE CONSUL GENERAL
OF USA IN SMYRNA, DATED
27 SEPTEMBER 1922**







September 16, 1915:
Telegram by Mehmet Talât, Turkish Minister of the Interior,
sent on September 16, 1915. It orders the massacre of the
Armenian population.

September 16, 1915

To the Provincial Governor of Aleppo

We inform you that the Government has decided on the complete extermination of the Armenian population living in Turkey.

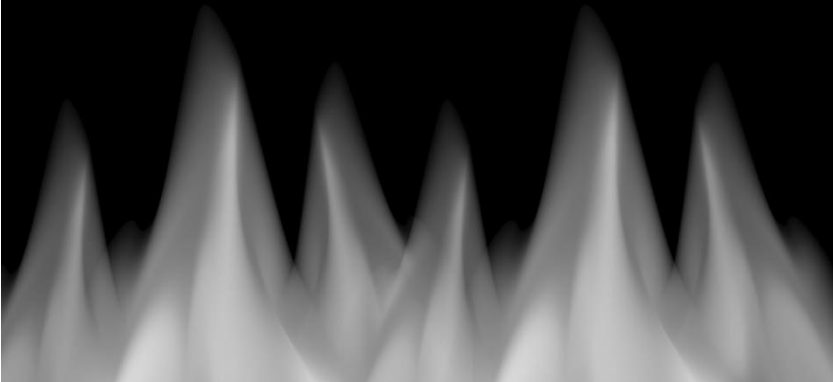
Anyone with an opposing view is no longer a member of the state administration.

An end must be put to their existence without any mercy for women, children, or invalid persons, regardless of whether this extermination is considered an atrocity.

Mehmet Talât
Minister of the Interior



1915:
From the massacres of Armenians.





1915:
From the massacres of Armenians per order of the Minister
of the Interior of Turkey.



1919-1922:

Pictures from the mass annihilation of Greeks by Turks who decided to "get rid of" the native residents of the conquered lands.



According to written instructions that I received from the Central Administration, under the present necessary conditions, Greek nationalist feelings might turn fanatic.

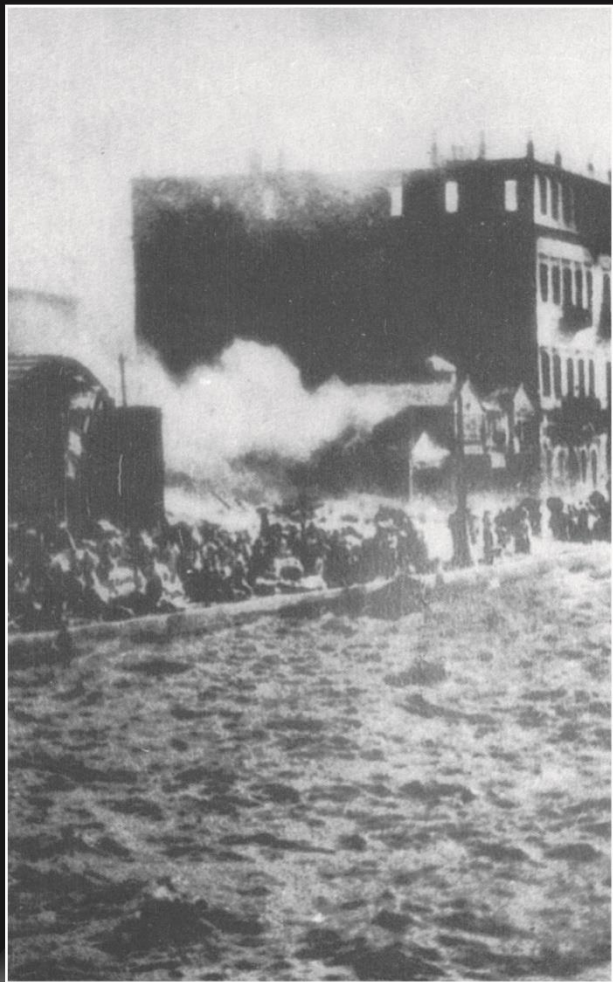
Hence, in the case of even the least resistance, each soldier must do his duty by murdering a great number of these people. The homeland orders it.

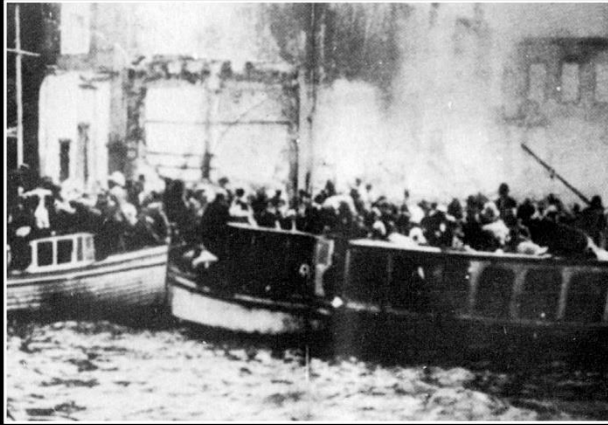
You should not fail in your duty. Each soldier is obliged to kill four or five Greeks for the good of our homeland.

I am obliged to make this written order known to the Central Administration, and I am at the disposal of anybody who might request verbal clarification.

It is compulsory for each soldier to carry out these instructions.

Nureddin
Head of the Turkish Army
in Smyrna





September 9, 1922:

Smyrna in flames. Its native residents thrown mercilessly into the sea - some of them to meet their death, and others to become refugees in free Greece.

CLASSIFICATION CANCELED AUTHORITY LETTER
OF 1-8-62 FROM W. H. ANDERSON, STATE DEPT
- BY [Signature] DATE 2/1/66

EX-100
OCT 27 1922
RECEIVED

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Athens, Greece, September 27, 1922.

10073
1922

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Athens, Greece, September 27, 1922.

SUBJECT: The Near Eastern Question

OCT 23 1922

REPT. OF STATE

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

Sir:

I have the honor to submit to the Department a statement of what has been and is going on in the Near East, with a brief discourse on the events and causes which have led up to this appalling tragedy that is now being enacted in Syria.

I have the honor to call the attention of the Department to the fact that immediately after the Greeks landed in Smyrna, I telegraphed that this would prove a second "Byzantine Expedition", referring to the war against Byzantium in 413 B.C. which led to the complete depletion of the Athenian treasury and the effacement of Athens as the leading power of the ancient world.

In another dispatch, whose date I cannot refer to here as the archives are in Smyrna, I predicted that if the Greek army retreated from Asia Minor it would be followed by the entire Christian population and said that anyone who could not foresee this was not familiar with the situation of the Near East and the mentality of its peoples. A copy of this was forwarded to Constantinople, and I remember receiving an explanation to the effect that the new Turkish administration which would be established would be a "kindly and benevolent administration."

Of course in some circles, the hideous and outrageous conduct of the Turks in Smyrna will be excused by the fact created among the Turks by the devastation caused by the Greek army in its retreat upon this city. I have been in the Consulate in service in the Near East for nearly thirty years and there are some things which all men who have had long residence in this country absolutely know. After the atrocious and frightful massacre of Armenians in 1915, of which I reported to the Department full accounts given me by the native-born American consuls by witnesses - representatives of American firms who came to Smyrna, I did not see how anyone could longer have faith in the kindly intentions of the Turks towards the Christian populations of the empire. About one billion and a quarter Armenians perished in that awful affair, were to death by slow torture under circumstances of the most dreadful cruelty. This methodical extermination of the Christian Armenians has been noted by

September 27, 1922:
The first page of the report written by George Horton,
Consul General of the United States in Smyrna.

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Athens, Greece, September 27, 1922

SUBJECT: The Near Eastern Question

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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This methodical extermination of the Christian population has been going on steadily ever since. The fear inspired in the Christian population is such that the non-Mussulman inhabitants of Smyrna would in any case have run away at the first definite announcement that the Turks were coming back. This is so plain that anybody ought to be able to see it. The last great Sultan of the old Ottoman empire was Abdul Hamid, the last great ruler who knew what the Ottoman empire was, namely the remains of the old Byzantine empire, composed of various industrial and progressive races whom the Turks lived upon as a parasite by taxing them.

Abdul Hamid knew that the safety of the so-called Ottoman empire lay in keeping the Christians in dissension, a not very difficult task, and as far as Macedonia was concerned, he kept a special expert at Salonica whose duty was to provoke rows between the Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians. When he was deposed and the so-called new Turk came into power, they commenced, as my dispatches and those of all my colleagues at the post at that time will show, to persecute and exterminate Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbians indiscriminately and a general reign of terror was started.

The prisons overflowed and Salonica began to fill with women reporting their husbands had been killed or spirited away. No general massacre took place but sporadic killings almost amounting to a massacre, besides brutal tortures, prevailed all over Macedonia.

The situation became so intolerable that the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians were obliged to get together for long enough to drive out the Turk, a thing which they could have done at any time for many years past but for the dissensions mentioned above. It is true that they fell at each other's throats as soon as their task was finished but they stayed together long enough to accomplish this.

What has been at the back of the minds of the Turks ever since the fall of Abdul Hamid is well-represented in their slogan, "Turkey for the Turks". Themselves unprogressive, except in the arts of war, incapable of commerce on a large scale or manufacturing, inventions or modern industry, they are jealous of the Christians whom they regard as thriving at their expense. I have heard Turkish politicians make speeches at Salonica in which they affirm that if the Christians were exterminated and driven out, the Turks would of sheer necessity progress and develop schools, commerce and industry. Then followed the great massacre mentioned above and other great massacres on a smaller scale.

The landing of the Greeks in Asia Minor as actually carried out was the great mistake of Venizelos. Though undoubtedly asked by the representatives of all the allies to go to Smyrna, he should not have done so without an actual treaty, with a written statement of what support they would give. To avoid the horrible catastrophe which has followed, which is exciting the fanaticism and daring of the entire Mussulman world, involving both France and Italy in untold dangers, only two plans were possible:

(1st) Never to have sent the Greeks to Asia Minor; (2nd) Once having sent them there, to support them in a loyal manner. What really happened was immediate dissension among the allies as always in history among Christians. Italy, which had practically been promised Smyrna, started a port at New Ephesus to draw the trade if possible, away from the former city and began to sell arms to the Turks and to flatter them. The French, to undermine Great Britain in the Near East, took up an attitude towards the Turks which finally resulted in the Treaty of Angora and the recognition by the French of that government.

Previous to this, there had been no such thing as patriotism among the Turks, an ignorant, nomadic people. But the landing of the Greeks gave Mustapha Kemal the very argument he desired for uniting Turks and the forming of an army. He could not incite the Mussulman peasant to leave his plough or his camels or his herd of goats by an appeal to his patriotism; but an appeal to his fanaticism to drive out the hated Greeks and plunder their rich towns and capture their women found a ready response.

Throughout the whole Mussulman world, since the fall of Constantinople, there has been a legend that the Turk was the Musulman race which could

make Europe tremble. The flattering of the Turk and the zoology of him by the great Christian nations, has again revived in India and Egypt and among Mussulmans generally this ancient tradition.

The regime of the Greeks in Asia Minor was the only civilized and beneficent regime which that country has seen since historic times. I was in close touch with Mr. Sterghiades through in all, I have talked with scores of native-born Americans who have travelled over the region and I absolutely know of what I am talking.

Greeks were more severely punished for aggressions against Turks than Turks for aggressions against Greeks. Brigandage was practically suppressed, security very generally reigned and insofar as the means of the Greek government permitted, Mr. Sterghiades supported and originated civilized institutions and progress and promoted agriculture, and industry.

The Greek farmers, who had but a few years before been driven out from their homes and their villages destroyed, had largely returned and had begun again the cultivation of the famous Sultana grape on a large scale, of tobacco and other agricultural products. I am sending the Department, in another dispatch, a list of the various benevolent acts towards American educational institutions by Mr. Sterghiades together with another list of the opposite kind of treatment which they have suffered from the Turks.

Those institutions are forever lost in Smyrna and vicinity—the large college and agricultural school of Dr. MacLachlan, which has been growing for thirty years, with its expensive buildings constructed with American money, has no longer a reason for existing. The end of that admirable institution was significantly brought to a full stop by the attack upon Dr. MacLachlan himself by Turkish soldiers, in which he nearly lost his life. The Greeks and Armenians who largely supported it are gone, not to return for many years. The Turks will not attend it. Mrs. Caldwell, wife of one of the professors, told me yesterday that their Turkish students whom they regarded as fine young men, with well-molded characters, slumped all their civilization and became savages when the Turks arrived in Smyrna.

The Girls School, one of the most admirable institutions in the Near East, the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A. and two institutions for working among the Turks, both of which had been liberally supported by Mr. Sterghiades,

are all hopelessly gone. There will doubtless be some business with Smyrna in the near future, some figs will be raised and possibly some raisings and tobacco, but the whole territory is devastated, the real progressive workers are gone and any large development along progressive lines is over perhaps forever.

The Greeks in Smyrna district contended with many difficulties; (1st) the apathy of the native population which did not support them as it should, (2nd) the impossibility to really placate the Turk, (3rd) the big Levantine, British, French and other merchants who had made fortunes under the old Turk of the capitulations and knew that it was impossible to exploit the Greek, (4th) the hostility of the large Catholic element which is just as bitter against the Greeks as it was in the days of the Byzantine empire.

Another thing that has greatly handicapped the Greeks is their pernicious and corrupt politics. The amount to which politics is played in Greece and the extent to which the Greek politician will go, even to the sacrifice of his country and of many lives in order to keep his party in power for a few weeks can hardly be believed. The overthrow of Venizelos, Greece's great advocate in Europe and America, and the bringing back of its discredited king, was the beginning of the end. Politics is played to such an extent that even now, in the face of this tremendous tragedy to Greece, it is not lost sight of, and the Royalist party will not even allow Venizelists to distribute money which they are receiving from Europe or to establish soup kitchens.

I firmly believe from my observations in Smyrna and from information which I have received from various sources, that the terrible disaster which has happened to the inhabitants of Asia Minor was the result of a contemptible political move. The party in power believed they could not get the help of Europe without turning out Constantine and bringing back Venizelos. Without that help, they could not stay in Smyrna, they could not announce that they were willing to withdraw their armies from the Smyrna district, and they therefore deliberately provoked the debacle which the world has seen.

For months there has been a steady withdrawing of Venizelist officers and their replacing by trusted Royalists, many of whom have been deserting their troops, leaving whole regiments without officers.

I am credibly informed that the Greek army, even at the last moment, could have made a stand and retrieved the situation as the Turkish forces which entered Smyrna were insignificant. But even the Greek officers who desired to make a stand and expressed their ability to do so were ordered to retire.

The whole pitiful tragedy, resulting in the most poignant human suffering on a great scale, must provoke general disgust, and discouragement, with reference to Greeks, Turks and Europe. Mustapha Kemal had an opportunity to justify the praises of his European and American propagandists and to put the Christians to shame by entering Smyrna peacefully and affording protection to all its inhabitants. Instead a revolting massacre was perpetrated, which I have already described but which I shall refer to again.

Looting and pillaging and rape and massacre went on a large scale immediately after the entry of the Turks, their vengeance first breaking upon the Armenian population, who were accused of having thrown bombs.

The truth is that very few bombs were thrown, possibly half a dozen at the utmost and those in a quarter of the city where Armenians are seldom seen. This was no excuse for a hunting, night and day for three days, of Armenians by squads of regular soldiers and their killing in the most revolting manner by being shot, stabbed, hacked to death or having their throats cut publicly in the streets.

Armenians were systematically hunted and killed throughout the entire city and their houses methodically broken into, street by street, pillaged, and the men taken out and killed. No pro-Turk propaganda can obscure what actually occurred in Smyrna; -there were too many reliable witnesses. The truth is sure to come out.

After the great fire, as a result of which the whole Christian population was forced upon the quay where it remained for days stretching its hands to the battleships in the harbor, screaming and pleading for help and dying of hunger and thirst, the conduct of the Turks was abominable.

Miss Emily MacCallum, director of the Girls School in Smyrna, who returned from that city this morning, says that there are still great throngs of these miserable creatures on the quay and along the seashore,

without water and without food and dying, and that the stench of these dead bodies is terrible. There are still two hundred thousand waiting on the quay to be taken off. It has been announced that all of the men from eighteen to forty-five years of age are to be taken as prisoners of war and marched into the interior, and she saw, corroborating statements by others recently from Smyrna, large bands of men being marched away by Turkish guards.

The heart of the whole world has been calloused by the European war but there are still people living who can appreciate the fearful suffering caused by this forcible separation of these people is certain death. During the Great War, while I was in Smyrna, the rayahs, or Greek Ottoman subjects, were forcibly taken for military service and set to digging trenches and other work in the rain, without blankets or tents or food, and three out of four of them died. The families will be brought away, wives and sisters and children will be without natural protectors, and must perish unless indefinitely cared for.

It will be the theory of some that no relief work should be done in Greece and that the brunt of feeding all the refugees brought there should be borne by that country as she was responsible for the great debacle, but the funds of Greece are exhausted and she is unequal to this task, and I do not know why innocent third parties should be made to suffer for the faults of others.

I wish to repeat that the consistent policy of the Turk, since the fall of Abdul Hamid, has been the expulsion, killing and elimination of the Christian races. I have made several successful prophecies and I now make another: if the Kemalist forces are allowed to enter Constantinople, the awful scenes which we have witnessed in Smyrna will be repeated in that city. In view of all that I have said and of all that has happened, I see no reason why the Turks should massacre Armenians and Greeks, in the Pontus, in Armenia and Asia Minor, and give them a "kindly and benevolent reign" in Constantinople.

I wish now to point out the difference between the Greeks and the Turks. The Greeks have undoubtedly massacred Turks, but no nation has such a consistent history of massacres on a great scale or ever had in the world's history as the Turks. Greek politics are corrupt and vicious but the Greek is capable of civilization along modern lines; he builds hospitals, universities, founds steamship lines, introduces modern agriculture and given liberty, he develops. I see a difference between

the excesses of a furious and betrayed army, retreating through a country which it had held for several years and without its officers, and the conduct of the victorious Turkish army which, instead of protecting the helpless people which it had in its power, deliberately set about massacring and outraging it.

No one who has not lived in the Near East can understand how utterly incapable of progress the Turk is. No one, who has not travelled through the Turkish villages or through the back region of the Turkish empire, can understand how hopelessly unprogressive a people is, who, holding for nearly five hundred years the fairest and richest part of the earth's surface, has never made a sewing machine nor a plough, nor a steam engine, nor a battleship, nor a cotton gin, nor a pin, nor a match. Anyone who hopes for the progress of Turkey inhabited only by Turks is hoping for the leopard to change its spots.

The Mussulman religion, which is now having a great renaissance throughout the world, with its polygamy, its attitude toward women and to all non-Mussulman races, and the example and teachings of Mohammed as opposed to the teachings and life of Christ, is one of the dark forces at work in the world which are combining to destroy modern civilization. The killing off and extermination of progressive Christian populations and its substitution by Mohammedanism, is a slump in those regions in the world's progress back to the days of Abraham.

I have the honor also to point out to the Department that all massacres on a large scale perpetrated by Turks, and the history of the Turkish empire is largely a history of massacres, are always ordered by higher authorities.

Anyone who believes that the forces of Mustapha Kemal got out of hand at Smyrna and that he controlled them as soon as he could, knows nothing about the history of Turkey or events in the Near East. I believe also if the Allied fleets in Smyrna harbor, the French, Italians, British and Americans, had emphatically told Mustapha Kemal that there must be no massacring, none would have taken place. If they told him today that he must cease carrying off the men between eighteen and forty-five into the interior, he would stop, but when he sees the great powers of the world sitting by in security on their battleships watching his fearful procedures, he is emboldened to greater and still greater excesses.

The sight of a massacre going on under the eyes of the great powers of Europe and with their seemingly tacit consent, is one that I hope never to see again.

I believe that when the real truth is known of what happened in Smyrna and what has been happening in the Near East, all decent people in Europe and the United States will feel as I do.

September 26, 1922

Since writing the above, I have been informed that the three Entente powers have sent a note to Mustapha Kemal announcing that, with their consent, his armies will be allowed to occupy Constantinople and Thrace. The panic, which this announcement must necessarily cause among the native Christians and even European inhabitants of Constantinople, has, I am sure, commenced. The Department is better qualified to know what is going on in Constantinople than I am here but I hazard this assertion as a certainty without definite information. The native Christians do well to leave, such of them as can get away, for even if measures are taken to prevent a savage massacre on the arrival of the Kemalists troops, the life of the Christians will be intolerable and unsafe and massacres will surely be perpetrated from time to time in the future. Long observation has convinced me that the Turk is incapable of governing Christian populations. Such may have thrived under the old Turk in a general way, despite the numberless massacres which are a blot upon Turkish history, but the policy of the New Turk will render the life of the Christian element impossible.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

(1) Turkish massacres are always carried out by order of superior authorities. This is a well-known principle and the way in which various historic massacres have been conducted abundantly proves it. Such was the case at Smyrna, and Mustapha Kemal's statement that he could not control his troops is false. It is a curious fact that the Turk is still able to deceive Europeans, despite long observation of his tactics. It is probable that one emphatic word to the Turkish commander by the French Admiral would have stopped the massacre and all the horrors that followed.

(2) It should be borne in mind that it has been for some time the policy of the Turkish nationalists to exterminate and eliminate the native Christian element in Turkey. Any one forming plans for future business or diplomatic relations with Turkey should bear this in mind and be fully aware of the changed conditions in the country.

(3) Kemalism has been built up by the Allies by their weakness and dissension. The conduct of France has been one of faithlessness to the Allies, with the purpose of obtaining concessions, and undermining British influence in the Near East. Great Britain, on account of labor opposition and Mussulman unrest in India, is obliged to swallow this bitter pill, with the hope that concessions to Kemal will quiet the Mussulmans of India. This is a mistake and has been a mistaken policy from the beginning. The entry of the Kemalists into Constantinople will arouse the Mussulmans of India beyond control.

(4) Constantinople is today as it was at the time of its fall the outer bulwark of Europe against the hordes of Asia, and once it is given over to the Turk, he will commence a war of conquest upon the Balkan States, -if not today, tomorrow, and if not this year, next year, and the peace of Europe will be perpetually in danger. The Turk is a race who has no interests in the arts of peace and who knows nothing but war and conquest. It is impossible for him to refrain from warlike operations. Any plans made on his promises or on any different suppositions are doomed to disappointment, and statesmen who form any schemes for the future on any different basis are building on a false foundation.

I am unfortunately but a simple official, not occupying an exalted position, and my words will perhaps not bear great weight, but I know whereof I am speaking and some who read these lines will live to see them verified.

OBSERVATION:

The men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, who are today being torn from their wives, sisters, mothers and children, amid pitiful scenes that only a DeQuincey could describe, and being driven away by the Turks to perish by slow starvation and exposure, are the peaceful farmers of Asia Minor and the citizens of Smyrna who were never in sympathy with the government of Constantine and who are in no ways responsible for the fearful fate which has befallen them. This unrighteous act is being carried out without even a word of protest by any civilized government.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
American Consul General, Smyrna

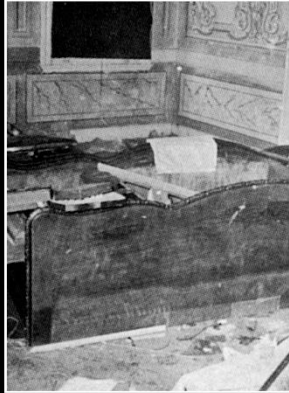


September 6, 1955:

A Turkish collage of false news. The extra edition of the newspaper Istanbul Express gives the signal for the pogrom against native Greeks in Constantinople.

The news reads: "Our father Atatürk's house was destroyed by a bomb." A lie to ignite the fanaticism in the Turkish rabble.

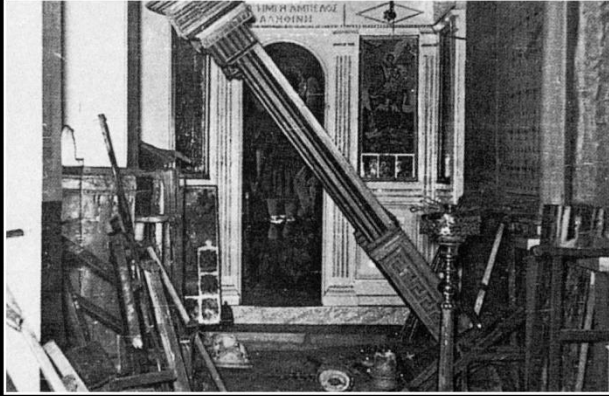
The BBC transmitted the news at 1 p.m., 5 whole hours before the bomb exploded!



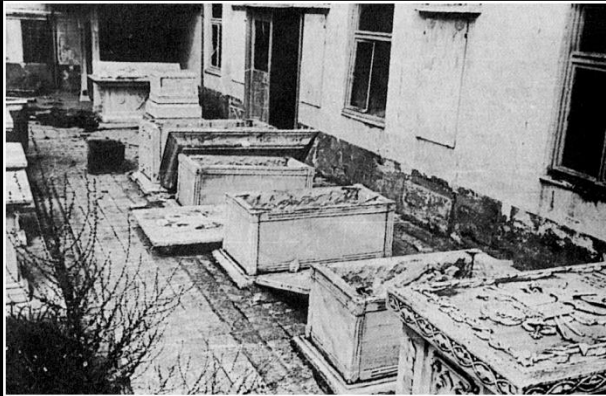
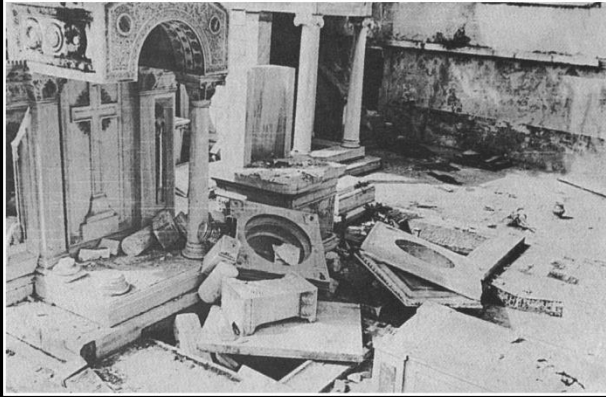
September 6, 1955:

Photographs from the destruction of Greek houses after the circulation of Istanbul Express. Victor Hugo's saying came true again: "Turks have passed this way..."





September 6, 1955:
The organized mad mob in action during the night of September 6, 1955 - another "Night of St. Bartholomew."



September 6, 1955:
The tombs of the Orthodox Patriarchs smashed, destroyed and defiled the night of September 6, 1955, at the Greek Orthodox Cemetery of Balukli, Constantinople.



1964:

An instant from the deportations of Greeks from their motherland Constantinople, on charges that "they sent financial aid to Makarios in Cyprus". This sick old lady was deemed "a dangerous person for Turkey" and was deported to Greece forcefully, where she arrived only with what she was wearing.



Tü
sal

Kıbrıs'ta Türkler bu şarkıları söylü

Kin

Kahpe Yunan bu dünyada durdukça
Bu kin benden vallâhi de gidemez
Durup durup köpek gibi gördükçe
Bu kin benden vallâhi de gidemez
Bin Gâvur kellesi bir kin ödemez

Öç almaktır yegâne tasam
Sıra gelse savaş meydanına uğrasam
Bir günde bin Gâvur kellesi doğrasam
Bu kin benden vallâhi de gidemez
Bin Gâvûf kellesi bir kin ödemez

Otuz binin taşla ezsem başını
On binin pense söksem dişini
Yüz binin çaya döksem leşini
Bu kin benden vallâhi de gidemez
Bin Gâvur kellesi bir kin ödemez

Bütün dünya bilir Türk'ün farkını
Yunan'ın başına yakan çarkını
Külhanlarda yaksam beş bin kırkını
Bu kin benden vallâhi de gidemez
Bin Gâvur kellesi bir kin ödemez

Kırk binini süngü ile pullasam
Seksen binini ceheneme yollasam
Yüz binini ipe çekip sallasam
Bu kin benden vallâhi de gidemez
Bin Gâvur kellesi bir kin ödemez

The text of a macabre poem titled Hatred and published by the large circulation Turkish newspaper Hürriyet on July 18, 1974, just 48 hours before the Turkish invasion of Cyprus by order of the Bülent Ecevit government.

HATRED

As long as the vulgar Greek exists in this world
By Allah, this hatred won't leave me
As long as I see him there like a dog
By Allah, this hatred won't leave me
A thousand heads of infidel Giaours
cannot wash away this hatred.

My only aim is revenge
When my turn comes to go to battle
In one day I'll butcher a thousand Giaours
By Allah, this hatred won't leave me
A thousand heads of infidel Giaours
cannot wash away this hatred.

Even if I crush thirty thousand of their heads with a stone
Even if I wrench out the teeth of ten thousand
And throw a hundred thousand of their corpses into the river
By Allah, this hatred won't leave me
A thousand heads of infidel Giaours
cannot wash away this hatred.

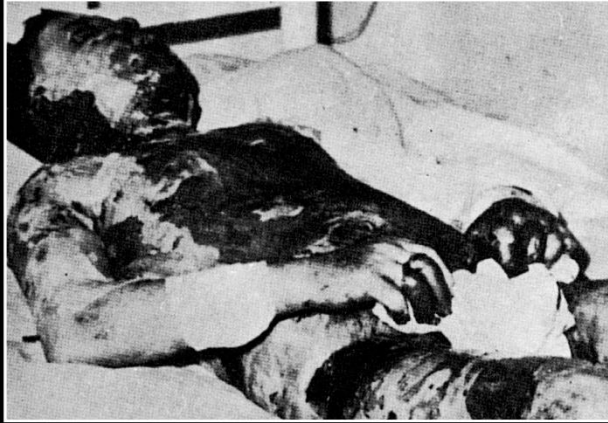
The whole world knows how superior the Turk is
Who crashed the Greek's fucked world over his head
Even if I burn in stokeholes the heads of five thousand of them
By Allah, this hatred won't leave me
A thousand heads of infidel Giaours
cannot wash away this hatred.

Even if I slash forty thousand of them with my bayonet
And send eighty thousand of them to the devil
And hang a hundred thousand of them
By Allah, this hatred won't leave me
A thousand heads of infidel Giaours
cannot wash away this hatred.

**KAHRAMAN
MEHMETÇİK**

KIBRIS'ta





July 20, 1974:

With a hypocrisy that could have been envied even by the notorious Joseph Goebbels, Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit stated: "We bring peace, not war, to Cyprus."





July 20, 1974:

The "pacifist mission" of the Turks in Cyprus created a new world record of barbarism: 1,619 missing Greeks after a war of a few days - USA listed only 800 people missing in Vietnam after a bloody war of 8 years - 200,000 Greek Cypriot refugees within their own homeland, countless brutal crimes, extensive destruction, and the devastation of a 9,000-year-old Civilization.



1984-1995:

The extermination of the Kurds in Turkey where according to Ankara, "the Kurds do not exist in Turkey; there aren't any." A genocide of 25 million people on the threshold of the 21st century.



1984-1995:

The destruction and plunder of a Kurdish village in Turkey whence the Kurds emigrate "by their own volition"(!) according to Ankara.



1993-1996:

In complete disregard of the international outcry and turning the tolerance of the governments of the Major Powers to good use, Turkey has continued to torture and exterminate the Kurds using the same methods it has used for centuries.



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