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International Red Cross: a mission to nowhere

*“Remembering”
Forget! Forget! Forget!
I close my eyes,
but cannot.*

Sofia Kontogeorge Kostos (2004)

The United Nations' (UN) convention on Genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 has been used as the international definition for Genocide by the international community; and yet, this has been subjected to major criticism by scholars such as Fein, Chalk, Kuper and Charny as being completely inadequate¹. They all argue, that whilst, the UN definition is a good starting point, it is limited as it excludes political and social groups.

Lemkin's original definition attempted to embrace all groups, but the Soviets and British opposed his definition for their own political purposes. Both nations argued that the inclusion of political and social groups would “weaken the whole convention”. In the end these two groups were omitted in the final definition of the 1948 Convention².

Genocide is defined in the UN Convention in Article 2 as follows:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its psychical destruction in whole or part;

1. George J. Andreopoulos (ed.), *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical dimensions*, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 1994.

2. Frank Chalk, “Redefining Genocide”, in Andreopoulos (ed.), *op.cit.*, pp. 47-48; Evin Staub, *The Roots of Evil*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989, pp. 7-8.

- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within that group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group³.

I will define genocide to mean a deliberate pre-arranged plan of a majority group to systemically uproot, remove, destroy or murder a minority group in whole or in part within a defined territory, because the minority group does not fit into the worldview of the perpetrator.

While genocide can be studied under the intentionalist and functionalist schools, the author believes that the perpetrator is involved in a deliberate and systematic plan to destroy and murder a particular target group. It is a calculated and rational plan to inflict maximum damage on a selected target group. There is also the act of intentionality and pre-meditation to commit genocide by the perpetrator⁴.

Denialists will use the provocation thesis as an excuse to argue that a government has a right to take strong measures against a particular minority group, whom it perceives to pose a threat to its territorial sovereignty and independence⁵. From any angle the murder of innocent men, women and children of any group cannot be justified under any circumstances, nor can the perpetrator use it as an excuse to justify his actions. The memories of the victims of genocide should be respected and preserved and not be denied or trivialized by those who seek to deny such horrible episodes in human history.

From the middle of 1921 to May 1922 *the Entente* —Great Britain, France and Italy— and the United States were receiving information from American relief workers that the Kemalists were deporting large numbers of Greek-Pontians from the coastal regions of the Black Sea into the Anatolian interior. The European powers, in particular, maintained their policy of neutrality in the Greek-Turkish conflict⁶.

3. Frank Chalk, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

4. For a brief discussion on the intentionalist and functionalist schools see Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, Oxford University Press, New York - Oxford 1993, pp. 396-397.

5. For a discussion on the provocation thesis see Leo Kuper, Robert Melson, Richard G. Hovannisian and Vigen Gurojan in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick - New Jersey 1986, pp. 55-57, 67-71, 115-117, 137-138.

6. This paper is a shortened version of a larger study of the Pontian issue.

Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary 1919-1924, suggested to his counterparts in Paris, Rome and Washington that allied officers should be dispatched to investigate these claims. The French tried to delay the setting up and sending of an inter-allied mission to Asia Minor. In order to maintain allied unity, Britain was able to win the support of the other powers, whereby the International Red Cross (IRC) as an international organization was to be approached to conduct the investigation of the reported atrocities in Anatolia. The IRC wanted the *Entente* and US Governments' to provide it with the funds so that it could discharge its duties.

This article will address several issues. Firstly that the *Entente* and US used the IRC as a convenient front in order to avoid responsibility towards protecting the Christian minorities from Turkish reprisals. This situation raises the role of the bystander where the major powers were passive and indifferent to the plight and suffering of the Christian minorities. If the major powers were prepared to apply military force or threaten the use of force; then it is conceivable that it may have moderated the actions of the Turks against the Christians of Pontus.

This paper will be divided into four parts. These are: (1) The British initiative and the reaction of the other powers; (2) the approach to the International Red Cross; (3) the financial assistance to the IRC by the major powers; and finally the involvement of the League of Nations.

1. The British initiative and the reaction of other powers

a) Curzon's initiative

The Turkish Nationalists deported Greek-Pontians from along the Black Sea coast into the Anatolian interior in 1921-1922. This information was based on the reports received from American relief workers in Sivas. In early May 1922, Dr Mark H. Ward of the American Near East Relief (NER) informed Sir Horace Rumbold, the British High Commissioner in Constantinople, that the Turks continued their "deliberate plan to get rid of minorities" where the deportees were assembled at Amassia from the regions between Samsoun and Trebizond. They were then marched off to Erzeroum, Van, Bitlis and Sari Kamish in Eastern Anatolia to join the labour battalions, where many of them perished before reaching their final destination. Rumbold immediately passed this informa-

tion on to Lord Curzon at the Foreign Office in London⁷.

Another eye-witness account given by F. Yowell, former Director of NER in Harput, added further weight to Ward's testimony. Yowell mentioned to Charles E. Hughes, the US secretary of State, that he was expelled from Turkey as the local Turkish administration had shown an antagonism towards the work of the Near East Relief. He stated the Turks refused the Americans to travel "within the limits of the work on the Harput unit for the purpose of giving medical aid to the Armenians dangerously ill with typhus". Yowell cites the example of 1000 men being taken by the Turks to work on the roads between Diarbekir and Harput. These men received no pay for their work and slept out in the open. When they became ill, they received no medical assistance. These poor wretched individuals would have quickly perished in the bitter cold winter of Eastern Turkey. He concluded:

I beg to state that I have endeavoured to confine myself strictly to the facts as they are evidenced and to base my statistics on the most reliable data obtainable under abnormal conditions. I feel that as an American citizen I should emphatically protest against the treatment accorded American citizens and more especially the treatment accorded the helpless Christian subjects of the Turkish Empire by the Turkish Nationalist Government⁸.

He hoped the major European Powers and the United States would strongly pressure the Turkish Nationalists to halt the deportations and that the Christians would receive better treatment.

On May 12, 1922 Curzon decided that an impartial team of allied

7. *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939, First Series*, Vol. 17, p. 817, fn. 1. Hereafter cited as D.B.F.P.; *Records of the Department of State relating to Internal Affairs of 1910-1929, 867.4016/459*, British Embassy, Washington DC to Hon. Charles E. Hughes, May 15, 1922 (hereafter cited as *Turkey Internal*); *Turkey Internal 867.4016/588* Admiral Mark L. Bristol, Constantinople to Secretary of State, July 12, 1922, *Encl. 1*, Extracts from Diary of Dr Mark Ward. It is interesting that Dr Ward kept a diary from May 1921 - February 1922 which contains the information on the number of deportees passing through Harput or Kharput on their way to Van, Bitlis or Diarbekir; Marjorie Housepian Dobkin, *Smyrna 1922*, New Mark Press, USA, 1998, p. 96.

8. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/882* F.D Yowell to Sec of State Washington (marked strictly confidential not for publication).

officers should be dispatched to Trebizond or Black Sea ports to investigate the American accounts of Turkish deportations of Greeks. Curzon informed the British Ambassadors Lord Hardinge, Sir R. Graham and Sir A. Geddes in Paris, Rome and Washington DC, respectively, to request the co-operation of the governments to which they were accredited. Furthermore Curzon instructed Rumbold to seek the co-operation of the other High Commissioners once their respective governments had given their High Commissioners their official approval⁹.

On May 18 Rumbold informed Curzon that while the French and Italian High Commissioners had yet to receive instructions from their governments, they, nevertheless, believed that two inter-allied commissions should be dispatched which would also include the Greek occupied areas. It was envisioned that such a plan would not give the Kemalists the opportunity of rejecting the Commission of enquiry to their territory¹⁰. It can be seen that Curzon was trying to elicit the support and collaboration of his allied and associated partners for a united approach in investigating atrocity claims raised by the American relief workers.

Bristol reported to Hughes on May 18 of the instructions Rumbold had received from Curzon regarding the proposed dispatch of allied officers. Bristol believed that Curzon's proposal should be rejected and overall was highly critical of the British action. Some of the reasons advanced for rejecting the British proposal were: (1) the British were using the Yowell report for anti-British propaganda purposes in order to bolster their position in the Near East; (2) the publicity given to Curzon's telegram in the House of Commons and in the British press "clearly [pointed] to purpose of political propaganda"; and finally the plight of minorities in Anatolia was known for a long time by the British, as full information had been provided by Colonel Rawlinson¹¹.

9. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 817-818 & fns 2-3. Sir Eyre Crowe, the permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office made representations to the French, Italian and American Ambassadors in London regarding Curzon's proposal; Dept of State, *Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1922*, Vol. 2, U.S.G.P.O., Washington DC, 1938, pp. 919-920 (hereafter cited as F.R.U.S. 1922, with the relevant volume number); Harry Tsirkinidis, *The genocide of Greeks of Pontos, Thrace and Asia Minor through French archives*, Thessaloniki (translation from the Greek by the author), pp. 257-258.

10. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, p. 824.

11. *Turkey Internal* 867.4016/463 Admiral Bristol Constantinople to Secretary of State, May 18, 1922; This dispatch is also in F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2, pp. 920-921; Dobkin,

Taking note of Bristol's comments, Allen W. Dulles, the director of Division of Near Eastern Affairs in the State Department, pointed out in his memorandum to Charles E. Hughes on May 20, that it was important for the US to participate in the proposed commission of enquiry. Dulles mentioned that there might be repercussions for the US, if it did not participate in the enquiry. Some consequences for the US, if she refused to participate were:

- (1) It would be taken by the churches and Missionary societies throughout the country and severely criticized. Telegrams have already started to flood in.
- (2) The Allies might put the blame on US for being responsible for possible failure of the proposed commission and also to certain extent for the consequences of such a failure for the Christians of Anatolia.
- (3) The Turks would interpret it in supporting their claim that atrocities had not been committed and that there was no reason for an investigation¹².

Dulles believed that US involvement would demonstrate that Washington was interested in the fate of Christian minorities "but also

op.cit., pp. 96-97; Laurence Evans, *United States policy and the partition of Turkey 1914-1924*, The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore 1965, p. 342.

The French High Commissioner in Constantinople, General Pelle, stated that Admiral Bristol had told him confidentially that Lord Curzon's telegram was intended for political propaganda purposes rather than humanitarian concerns. The Italian High Commissioner revealed that assuming the Kemalists allowed the Allied investigation to take place on its territory, the Turks would probably judge that the Allies lacked the resources to uncover the truth regarding the persecution of Christian minorities. Pelle concluded that how easy it was blame only one side for all the atrocities in the Greek-Turkish war. Only the restoration of peace would end all violence in the Near East. See Harry Tsikirmidis, *op.cit.*, pp. 259-260.

Lt-Col, A. Rawlinson, the British military officer and also ex-Prisoner of War in Kemalist Turkey, stated " ... [when] we arrived without incident at Trebizond on October 14th [1921], the tenth day after leaving Erzeroum. I noted, however, that the coast range and its fertile valleys, hitherto intensively cultivated by the Greeks, was at this time everywhere deserted, the villages being abandoned and the crops unreaped. Also I had not failed to observe the many gangs of Greek prisoners which we had passed on their way to the interior under guard, so that it was evident the Greek population was being deported into the interior to replace the Armenian prisoners, of whom, by this time very few remained alive". A. Rawlinson, *Adventures in the Near East*, Andrew Melrose, London & New York 1924, p. 348.

12. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/500* A.W. Dulles, Division of Near Eastern Affairs, memorandum for the Secretary May 20, 1922.

on our trade and commerce and would put us on much firmer ground in insisting that the Allies give proper consideration to our interests in Turkey”¹³. He concluded that “an impartial report was important for the State Department in terms of responding to the incessant Church and Missionary demand” in helping the Christians and could be useful in “directing the activities of the American Relief Societies in Turkey along really constructive lines”¹⁴.

b) British parliamentary discussion, American, Turkish and Greek responses

In the meantime Rumbold’s information including Curzon’s proposed action were raised in the British parliament. Furthermore the American, Turks and Greeks responded to Curzon’s proposition too. Austen Chamberlain, the Conservative leader in the House of Commons, answering a question in Parliament on May 18, 1922 admitted that Greek aspirations in establishing a Pontine Republic were ill-conceived; but this did not excuse the Turks’ actions in carrying out the wholesale deportation of women and children into the Anatolian interior¹⁵.

The US President Warren Harding informed Hughes on May 20, 1922 that he did not wish to see US troops becoming involved in the Near East, as this would be contrary to American public opinion. Harding favoured the appointment of General Harbord to the Commission of Enquiry who was an individual respected and trusted by the administration. The President left it to Hughes’s discretion to come up with an official US response to Curzon’s proposal¹⁶. On May 25 Hughes expressed his views to Harding regarding US participation in the proposed commissions of enquiry to Anatolia. In many respects, Hughes’s note had similarities to Dulles’s memorandum of May 20 which outlined the consequences for the US, if she refused to participate in the enquiry. There were advantages, however, for American involvement in the enquiry¹⁷. Two such advantages were: (1) it “would give England courage

13. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/500*; Dobkin, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

14. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/500*.

15. *Great Britain, House of Commons 5th Session Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 154, 1922, Cols 538-39.

16. F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2., pp. 921-922; Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 343.

17. F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2., pp. 922-926; Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 343.

to publish the facts to the world even in the face of the Indian Moslem opposition”, and (2) it would have “a salutary influence in France where there is a tendency to favour the Turks and to belittle reports of acts of injustice and cruelty. We cannot but believe that it would help bring about a better understanding among all the nations of Europe and furnish the basis in fact for a settlement of the Near Eastern question”¹⁸.

The Turks reacted in dismissing the atrocity stories as lies, distortions, and fabrications that were intended to portray Turkey in a negative light. Angora used the press as part of its propaganda strategy to dismiss the claims of Ward and Yowell. This was part of the denial tactics exercised by the perpetrator. The Anatolian News Agency published an article on May 20 trying to debunk Yowell’s allegations of atrocities in Anatolia as “lies”. It continued that “The accusations against the Angora Government for mistreatment of Christians in Anatolia have proven to be baseless on investigation by Americans who travelled in Asia Minor”. In order to lend credibility to its new story, the Anatolian News Agency quoted Americans such as Florence Billings, an official of Near East Relief, and H. C. Jaquith, the Director of Near East Relief, who was visiting Angora at this time, who dismissed Yowell’s statement as being baseless.

It was also critical of Curzon’s proposal in creating commissions of inquiry to be sent to Anatolia. It concluded: “We are glad to hear that America has refused to participate in Curzon’s plan”¹⁹.

The Angora newspaper *Hakimet-I-Mille*’s editorial titled “England and us” published on May 22 was strongly anti-British accusing Britain of trying “to strangle [Turkey] and to [put] an end to our existence”. It concluded: “We are said to have massacred the Christians in Anatolia. This new comedy put to scene by Lord Curzon”²⁰. The plight and suffering of deported people into the Anatolian interior could hardly be described as a comical scene.

Even the so-called Turkish Orthodox Church and Catholic Christian Communities protested to Papa Eftim Effendi (Efthymios Karahissaridis)

18. F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2., p. 925; Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 343.

19. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/554, Encl. 4*, Anatolian News Agency, Angora, May 20, 1922.

20. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/554, Encl. 5*, *Hakimet-I-Mille*, Angora, May 22, 1922; Dobkin, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

and US High Commission regarding Yowell's allegation of Christian persecution in Asia Minor. In the latter case, the Catholic Christian Communities stated that they lived "in perfect security in the bosom of justice of the Anatolian Turk" and "the Orthodox Christians of Anatolia are treated with the greatest courtesy, their lives and securities are assured by the Angora Government". On the other hand, the Turkish Orthodox Church described Yowell's assertions as "lies and slander against our national government". They argued that the "Pontus incident cannot be concealed. The uprisers went to the mountains, revolted against our Government and pillaged our villages". Papa Eftim had very close links with members of the Turkish Nationalist movement²¹. There is no doubt such public pronouncement on the part of the Turkish Christians were part of Angora's propaganda campaign to deflect criticism away from itself by shifting the blame onto the Greeks.

Fethi Bey, the Minister of Interior in the Angora Government, explained to a correspondent of the Anatolian News Agency that Yowell and Ward were asked to leave because they "spread lies about Turkey". Fethi Bey's remarks were intended to create an impression in western capitals that Turkey was treating its minorities with kindness and justice. He cited a few examples that:

- (1) Christian men are never put to prison without legal cause. Prison registers refute lies of this kind;
- (2) Christian women are not employed in Moslem houses against their will. These lies are spread about to picture the Turks as mean people;
- and (3) Greeks were deported into the interior in good order and have been left free.

He concluded that Yowell had a personal grudge against Turkey by helping to spread lies about "persecution of the Christians"²².

The Turkish press in Constantinople responded to the atrocities and

21. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/554* Admiral Mark L. Bristol US High Commissioner, Constantinople to Secretary of State, Washington DC June 7, 1922, *Encl. 3 and 4*; Angora to Stanav, Constantinople via Turkish telegraph Catholic Christian Communities signed by Dr Habib, Lata Oghlou, Agha Papa et al.; Anatolian Orthodox Churches Congress held in Kaisseri to Papa Eftim Effendi, Angora, May 23 Anatolian Agency; Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish relations 1918-1974*, Centre for Asia Minor Studies, Athens 1983, pp. 151-152.

22. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/554, Encl. 6*, Fethi Bey's statements.

proposed commission of inquiry to Anatolia. Rumbold informed Curzon that the position of the Turkish press varied in its coverage regarding the proposed commissions of enquiry. Some Turkish journalists believed that Angora had nothing to hide and would “welcome [an] enquiry provided it is properly conducted, and provided the same treatment is given to Turks and Greeks”. There were those who considered the proposed allied commission as “an illegitimate interference with Turkey’s internal affairs”. The editor of newspaper *Wakt*, who was a Salonica Crypto Jew, stated that Turkey was at war with 3 of the powers and suggested that “if any enquiry at all is necessary, it should be carried out by the Americans only”²³.

What is interesting is that according to Rumbold the French authorities in Constantinople gave greater latitude to the local Turkish press to attack Britain, at time of strict press censorship in the Sultan’s capital. Rumbold told General Pelle, the French High Commissioner, that while the Turks were given some latitude, it would be fair if the Greek press too were offered the opportunity to respond to the Turkish press. Pelle acquiesced to Rumbold’s views²⁴.

On a visit to London the former Greek Premier Eleftherios Venizelos held a conversation with Sir Eyre Crowe, a British Foreign Office official, on May 25 regarding the situation in the Near East. On the issue of dispatching a commission of enquiry into Greek and Turkish territory met with the approval of Venizelos. There were two issues that needed to be considered before the commission began its mission.

Venizelos understood that in a war zone that a retiring army might cause damage during its retreat. He believed that nothing would be gained from such an enquiry. What really mattered was to compare the areas where Turks and Christian populations lived under Greek and Turkish administrations which were not part of the war zone.

He cited the example of Turks living under a Greek civil administration in Macedonia, Thrace and Smyrna. Venizelos believed that if an enquiry was conducted in Smyrna, the “Greek administration would receive the warmest praise from any impartial observer”.

23. *National Archives of United Kingdom (formerly Public Record Office), London, FO406/41-50 series, Eastern Affairs 1918-1922, FO406/49, no. 137, Sir H. Rumbold Constantinople to Curzon May 23, 1922.*

24. FO406/49, no.137.

The second problem cited by Venizelos was that the dispatching of two separate commissions of enquiry would result in no communication between them and that they would be making separate reports. This problem could be solved by creating “only one commission, under the one supreme head which would then divide this commission into two sub-commissions, to go to the Turkish and Greek sides respectively”.

The interchange of officers between the two sub-commissions would greatly assist in the collection of information and attainment of first-hand knowledge as a means of cross-checking and verifying each sub-commissions report.

Venizelos stated “it would be the head Commissioner who would make [final] the report, on receiving the evidence submitted by the two sub-commissions”, thus ensuring that impartiality was maintained²⁵.

Curzon considered Venizelos’ ideas to be theoretically sound. However Curzon considered the problems of geography, such as inaccessible country and the interchange of officers, as impractical. The impartiality of the French and Italian onto this single commission could not be counted particularly as the former was close to the Kemalists. Curzon thought that the “Americans are suspicious and disloyal, like Admiral Bristol, or frightened of publicity”. His solution was that “2 sub-commissions report to the High Commissioners in Constantinople or select some like a Dr Nansen to act as a liaison between the 2 sub-commissions”²⁶.

Another Greek response was that of Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Baltazzis who addressed the Greek National Assembly on May 31, 1922. He outlined the Turkish atrocities committed in Asia Minor and Pontus and identified “the famous Osman Agha, unhappily celebrated for his cruelties and sanguinary instincts, [who had] assassinated a great many notable Greeks”²⁷. Baltazzis quotes Yowell as the individual who had witnessed the terrible cruelties and sufferings of the Christians in Asia Minor and that the Turks had embarked on deliberate policy “to exter-

25. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 839-840.

26. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, p. 841, fn. 3.

27. *The Turkish atrocities in Asia Minor and in the Pontus, Speech given before Greek Third National Assembly* by G. Baltazzis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, May 31, 1922, p. 7.

minate all the Greek race”²⁸.

He welcomed the commission of inquiry to be conducted by the allied powers “to the centres where the massacres and persecutions are taking place”. It was important that the lessons of recent history were not overlooked when implementing policy measures affording guarantees and protection to the Christian populations of Asia Minor. Baltazzis emphasized that Greek Government was “quite ready open [its] doors wide to this Commission [of enquiry]” and that an impartial commission would form a favourable impression of the Greek administration in Smyrna²⁹.

He raised an important point that was solely aimed at the major powers that Greece had done everything in her power to protect both Christians and Moslems under her administration “from the forced recruiting and the operations of Angora, and she had given them the means to live peacefully and continue their work”³⁰. Therefore, Athens had nothing to hide from such an impartial commission proceeding to areas under its authority.

The French, Italian and American Governments agreed on May 17, 19 and June 3, 1922, respectively, to the British proposal to appoint representatives to these commissions of enquiry. They all agreed that the commissions should proceed to investigate alleged outrages in both Greek and Turkish occupied areas of Thrace and Anatolia³¹. Moreover the US suggested that the two commissions should represent one joint and thorough report. This would permit the exchange of officers between the 2 commissions during their respective investigations and would “ensure impartial application of identic standards of judgment and comparison of like with like”³². It is interesting that the American suggestion sounded similar to the one proffered by Venizelos.

On June 9 Hughes cabled Bristol in Constantinople outlining his reasons for the US involvement in the proposed investigations for Asia Minor and Thrace. This was probably something that Bristol disliked but

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

31. F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2, pp. 927-928; D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, p. 842 & fn. 2; Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 343.

32. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 842-843.

had no choice in obeying the orders from Washington³³.

2. *The approach to the International Red Cross*

On June 11 Caffery, the US Chargé d'Affaires in Athens notified Hughes that the Greek Government had accepted the commissions of enquiry. The British Chargé D'Affaires in Athens, Lindley, informed Caffery that Angora had not been officially approached regarding the proposed investigations and that the French and Italian High Commissioners in Constantinople were suggesting that neutral officers be appointed to conduct the enquiry. The overall tone of Caffery's telegram indicates one of pessimism and the unlikelyhood of the enquiry being conducted³⁴.

To complicate matters the Greek navy bombarded the Black Sea port of Samsoun on June 7, 1922 trying to destroy Turkish ammunition dumps. Britain was furious with Athens over this incident and Rumbold informed Lindley "to make strong representations to the Greek Government pointing out that bombardment ... is quite useless". In fact Rumbold thought that the Greek action would make Angora unlikely to accept the commission of enquiry to Pontus. The Greek action could be used by the Kemalists to "lend colour to Turkish contention that Pontic district is within zone of active hostilities and give fresh stimulus to persecution of minorities. HMG's earnestly hope that Greek Government will prohibit such bombardments in future"³⁵.

33. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/463* Charles E. Hughes Washington to Admiral Mark L. Bristol, US High Commissioner, Constantinople, June 9, 1922 *with enclosures* Copy of note from British Embassy, May 15, 1922; Memorandum from British Embassy, May 19, 1922; Copy of reply of Department of State to British Embassy, June 3, 1922; Copy of Statement given to the press June 3, 1922.

34. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/532* Caffery Athens to Secretary of State, Washington DC, June 11, 1922.

35. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 853-854, fn. 1; Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 340. It is worth noting that there were fresh reports from American and British relief workers in late May 1922 who "reported to H. M. Consul General at Beirut that the Ottoman Greeks and Armenian deportees who passed through Arabkir came not only from Pontus but from Konia and South Western Asia Minor and even from Kars". Another report in early June 1922 by "American relief workers reported to Sir H. Rumbold that the deportees passing through Sivas district were clothed in verminous rags and ravaged by smallpox, typhus and dysentery. The men were formed into labour gangs to work on the roads without shelter". See *National*

Lindley raised this issue with the Greek Foreign Minister who stated categorically that he knew nothing of the shelling of Samsoun that had been reported in the Athenian press. Maybe Baltazzis did not read this news report. It is hard to believe, however, that the Greek Foreign Minister did not know of the action taken by the Greek Navy in the Black Sea. In their ensuing discussion the Greek Foreign Minister admitted that Athens “had positive information that large quantities of munitions of war were reaching the Kemalists via Mediterranean port”. The Greek Government informed Paris and Rome that it wanted “a renewal request for right to visit and search” French and Italian ships carrying munitions to the Kemalists³⁶.

The Angora Government protested through its representative Hamid Bey to the Allied High Commissioners in Constantinople over the Greek shelling of Samsoun. In its note Angora protested over the Greeks being permitted to use Constantinople as a naval base despite the allied proclamation of neutrality in May 1921. The Kemalists argued that the Allied undertakings of impartiality and neutrality in the Greco-Turkish war could not be trusted, when Greek navy was allowed to enter and leave the Black Sea with impunity.

Angora blamed the Greek Government for creating “complications calculated to make peace impossible”³⁷.

A British Foreign Office memorandum submitted by Lancelot Oliphant to Mr Wakely at the India Office on July 7, 1922 regarding the Greek bombardment on Samsoun raised some important issues. The Greek shelling of Samsoun may have been justified under Article 2 of the 9th Hague Convention which “regulates bombardment by naval forces in time of war. It is further stated that a Kemalist battery replied to the Greek fire, so that town would not appear to have been undefended”. British authorities in Constantinople were instructed to obtain a full

Archives of United Kingdom, FO371 Series, the General Political Correspondence of the Foreign, FO371/7955/E10952, Notes on Turkish atrocities from February - September 1922” by Mr Rendel, Foreign Office, October 10, 1922, p. 3; An interview given by Dr. Mark H. Ward, Near East Relief, to a journalist of the Times newspaper. He told of the deportations of Greeks and Armenians and that the Kemalists displayed hostility towards American relief measures. See “Kemalist war on Christian. Hostility to American Relief Work”, The Times [London], June 8, 1922, p. 7.

36. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 853-854.

37. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 861-862.

report with respect to this incident.

This document also mentions that the Bolsheviks were supplying war material to the Kemalists ports along the Black Sea. The most important issue raised in this document was importance of Samsoun as a port. It states: "Samsoun is the port for one of the most important routes from the coast to the interior of Anatolia, and is natural landing place for shipments from Russia to Asia Minor and there is every reason that it should be used as a distributing base, as the Greeks allege"³⁸.

Bristol reported that the Greek naval shelling destroyed a municipal building, some 50 Greek and Turkish houses and that the number of casualties was very small. There was damage to American property owned by the Alston Tobacco Company and "a garage rented by the Near East Relief". What really irked the Americans was that before the Greek bombardment, the Turks had refused American citizens from leaving Samsoun. Bristol interviewed Hamid Bey regarding the detention of American citizens by Turkish authorities. Hamid Bey replied "that Samsoun authorities had feared serious disturbance, if anybody were allowed to leave"³⁹. Obviously Washington would have been unhappy with Angora Government pursuing such a policy towards its citizens.

On June 30, Balfour, the acting British Foreign Secretary, informed Rumbold that the French Government had given Lord Hardinge, the British Ambassador in Paris, a note on June 26 which mentioned that the commissions of enquiry would be better served if instead neutral delegates or the International Red Cross were approached to conduct the investigations. It would appear the French were trying to frustrate the British proposal by offering an alternative one of their own⁴⁰.

38. *National Archives of United Kingdom, FO424 series Confidential Correspondence respecting Turkey Part. 1, "Further Correspondence respecting Eastern Affairs", July-September 1922, FO424/254, no. 13, Mr. Oliphant, Foreign Office to Mr. Wakely, India Office July 7, 1922 encl. in no. 13 Foreign Office memorandum respecting the neutrality of Constantinople and the Straits and Greek bombardment of Samsoun.*

39. *Records of the Department of State relating to Political relations between Turkey and other States 1910-1929, 767.68/208 Bristol to Secretary of State, Washington DC, June 9, 1922; 767.68/215 Bristol to Secretary of State, Washington DC, June 22, 1922 (hereafter cited as Turkey Political;) FO424/254, no.12 Mr. Henderson, Constantinople, to Earl of Balfour, July 4, 1922; Evans, op.cit., pp. 340-341.*

40. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 871-872. Lord Hardinge was instructed to inform the French Government that Britain agreed to " (1) agree that period to be covered by enquiry ... should

Nevile M. Henderson, the Acting British High Commissioner in Constantinople, replied on July 2 to Balfour's note by stating that Rumbold objected to the French proposal on two grounds: firstly, the French approach was seen as another stalling tactic in assisting the Kemalists; and secondly, the Kemalists could use the French offer for their own advantage against Britain. However Henderson believed that the appointment of selected neutral delegates "would carry as much conviction as that of enquiry by Allied and American Commissions"⁴¹.

Britain changed its policy of replacing the allied commissions of enquiry with a neutral organization out of deference for its French ally. On July 7, Lancelot Oliphant, a British Foreign Office official, approached the British Red Cross to explain to them that the 4 major powers had intended to dispatch two separate commissions of enquiry who would submit "one joint report on the facts for the information of Allied and Associated Governments". With the changed circumstances, the British Government requested that the British Red Cross approach the International Red Cross in Geneva to see if it "would be in a position to undertake the proposed enquiry and to appoint suitable delegates in the immediate future to proceed to Smyrna and Kemalist Turkey"⁴².

Chilton, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Washington DC, was instructed to approach the American Government regarding the International Red Cross (IRC) being invited to conduct the investigations. This

be limited to one year. (2) maintain objections to reinvestigation of previous excesses. (3) wish to point out that US Government agreed to participate only on condition that commissions were confined to fact finding. (4) propose that commissions be appointed by 4 High Commissioners at Constantinople acting in concert". See D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 850-851.

41. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, p. 872, fn. 4; FO424/254, no. 6, Mr. Henderson, Constantinople to Earl of Balfour, July 2, 1922; On July 5, 1922 Saint-Aulaire, the French Consul in London, reported to the French Foreign Ministry of his conversation with Lord Balfour and Sir Eyre Crowe regarding the proposed investigations on occupied Greek and Turkish territory. Sir Eyre Crowe who is described as a confirmed Turcophobe was suspicious of French intentions that were designed to support the Turks. Crowe stated that the Allies had to pressure the Turks to accept Allied officers based in Constantinople. It was important for the Allies to display a united front for the investigations to proceed without a hitch. He believed that if the Allies lacked the resolve to impose its will on the Kemalists, then it would be better to invite neutral delegates or an organization like the International Red Cross. According to Crowe, so that there were no more delays, the Committees of the Red Cross based at Constantinople could undertake the investigation. See Tsirkinidis, *op.cit.*, pp. 267-268.

42. FO424/254, no. 12, Foreign Office to British Red Cross Society, July 7, 1922; Dobkin, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

was a wonderful opportunity for the Europeans and Americans to avoid their direct involvement in the actual enquiry.

Charles E. Hughes and US President Warren Harding agreed with the British on July 20 and 21, respectively, that the IRC was the best organization to conduct such an impartial investigation⁴³. The French Government had approved the IRC conducting the investigations and the British, French, Italian and American High Commissioners in Constantinople, in turn, were to be instructed to approach Athens and Angora for them to grant facilities by allowing the IRC to carry out its mission “especially in the Black Sea coastal regions, as well as in territory in occupation of Greek forces”⁴⁴.

3. The financial assistance to IRC by the major powers

The IRC would not undertake such a mission without the provision of financial assistance from the *Entente* and the United States.

On August 3, Chilton informed Charles E. Hughes the conditions that the IRC was willing to conduct the inquiries. These were: (1) that the two commissions were to be composed of 3 Red Cross and 2 neutral delegates each; and (2) that the IRC did not have sufficient funds to conduct the investigations but asked the 4 Governments to advance it 1000 pounds each to cover its expenses for a two month period.

Chilton, also, stated that the IRC was “extremely anxious that no unnecessary publicity should be given to the proposed enquiry”. Lord Balfour approached the British Treasury for it to advance the necessary funds for the IRC missions⁴⁵.

By August 23, William Phillips, the Acting US Secretary of State, notified Sir A. Geddes, the British Ambassador in Washington, that the American Legation in Berne had been “authorized to advance 1000 pounds to the [IRC] to contribute its share toward the expenses of the Commissions”⁴⁶.

The French, again, changed their position over the proposed enquiry.

43. F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2, pp. 929-930; Evans, *op.cit.*, p. 343; Dobkin, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

44. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, p. 901 and fns 1-3.

45. F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2, pp. 933-934; D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, p. 922, fn. 5; *Turkey Inter-nal 867.4016/717 Annexes* FO to the President, IRC Society, Geneva, August 2, 1922.

46. F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2, p. 935.

Poincaré, the French Premier, objected to the appointment of neutral delegates to the Red Cross Missions and raised difficulties over the French share of the expenses. Poincaré pointed out that any French expenses would require the approval of the French Parliament. Curzon reminded the French Premier that they had originally accepted in May the British proposal of sending commissions to investigate the alleged atrocities. The French employed their customary stalling tactics to slow down and frustrate the British initiative. Such a ploy on the part of the French could only benefit the Kemalists' final offensive against the Greeks in late August. The French probably reasoned that the Red Cross might produce an unfavourable report which could show them to be partial to the Turks and indifferent to the plight and suffering of Christian minorities in Pontus. After all, the French supported and supplied the Kemalists with war material, but were also in a position to influence Ankara to moderate its harsh policy towards the Christian populations⁴⁷.

On August 14, 1922 the IRC was to approach Athens and Ankara for both Governments to grant it the necessary facilities for the investigations to take place in the Greek and Turkish occupied areas⁴⁸. In an interesting development, Red Cross officials in Constantinople informed Rumbold that the Greek Government had yet to consent for the dispatch of an inquiry team to Thrace. It was important for the Greek Government to approve of a mission to Thrace, as not to give Ankara officials a pretext for delaying or refusing a commission for Asia Minor⁴⁹.

Caffery reported on September 6 that an IRC representative in Athens had told him that Greek Foreign Office saw no purpose in including Thrace because "(it) is open for anyone who likes to come and go as he pleases". He also stated that the British Chargé d'Affaires informed Greek officials that the Red Cross believed "that Turkish authorities will insist in Thrace being included" and therefore "under these circumstances, Greek authorities had no opposition to the inclusion of Thrace"⁵⁰.

If the Greeks had refused, the Turks could, then, argue that Athens had something to hide in Thrace.

47. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, pp. 924-925 & 922, fn. 6.

48. F.R.U.S. 1922, Vol. 2, p. 935; D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, p. 922.

49. D.B.F.P., Vol. 17, p. 932.

50. *Turkey Internal* 867.4016/662 J.Caffery (Athens) to Sec of State, Washington DC, September 6, 1922.

On August 24, Raymond Schleirer, a delegate of IRC, visited Bristol at the US High Commission in Constantinople where the former raised the issue of an American being appointed to the commissions. Bristol was surprised by Schleirer's remark that America was a neutral party in this matter. Bristol explained that America could not be considered a neutral because its policy was "to stand with the Allies in the same way that we had been expected with in the war".

In their conversation, Schleirer told Bristol that the British High Commissioner favoured the appointment of an American as a neutral delegate for the IRC mission to Anatolia. Bristol believed that Britain was trying "to embroil America in the Near East mix up and at the same time if possible break down the prestige that America has succeeded in establishing in this part of the world".

Schleirer even stated the French and Italian High Commissioners had raised "no objection to an American being on the committee". Bristol concluded that since no British, French or Italian delegates were to be appointed to these committees, then no American representative should be selected either⁵¹.

By early September, Britain, France and the US Governments had undertaken to contribute their share of the funds towards the proposed atrocity enquiry. Eager to commence its task, the Red Cross sought the permission of the Angora and Greek Governments to proceed with the enquiry. Athens replied granting its permission, whereas Angora failed to respond to the Red Cross request. Italy promised on September 24 to contribute 25,000 gold francs as its contribution to the IRC investigations. The responses of the major powers was pitiful in the light of the evacuation of the Greek army from Asia Minor in early September, thus leaving the surviving Christian minorities to fend for themselves. Angora, on the other hand, did not want the IRC to report of atrocities committed on Pontian Greeks in its area of control⁵².

51. *Turkey Internal 867.00/1542* Admiral Bristol (US High Commissioner, Constantinople) to Secretary of State, Washington DC, August 31, 1922.

52. D.B.F.P., Vol. 18, p. 64 & fns 1-5; *Turkey Internal 867.4016/717* Annexes Lancelot Oliphant, F.O., London to President of IRC, Geneva, September 14, 1922 and to Sec, IRC, Geneva, September 27, 1922; *Turkey Internal 867/4016/691* Joseph C. Grew, Legation of US of America, Berne to The Secretary of State, Washington DC, September 26, 1922 with *four encl.*: 1. The American Legation, Berne to The International Red Cross. Ge-

4. *The involvement of the League of Nations*

In order to deflect attention away from themselves, the Turks would blame the Greeks for excesses committed in Smyrna and Thrace by appealing to the League of Nations. On September 9, Rechad Noury's, the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires in Berne, letter to Mr. Edwards, the President of the Third Assembly of the League of Nations, outlined the destruction committed by the Greek army in its evacuation of Asia Minor. He mentioned that "Systematic massacres of peaceful people, the burning of entire districts, ... such is the terrible toll of three years of Greek occupation in Anatolia and in Thrace" and protested "most emphatically against the savage methods used by our enemies. As soon as I receive precise details of the appalling havoc wrought by the Greek armies in their retreat, I shall hasten to forward them to the Secretariat of the League"⁵³.

The Persian delegation, acting on behalf of the Angora Government, raised a motion on September 18 and duly adopted by the League Assembly urging the League Council to send a commission of enquiry to investigate alleged atrocities in Thrace and Asia Minor. As far as the Greeks were concerned, they had nothing to hide regarding the treatment of minorities and would have welcomed the commission of inquiry to Thrace⁵⁴.

On September 19 Giorgios Streit, President of the Greek delegation to the Assembly, sent a note to the Secretary-General of the League

neva, September 9, 1922; 2. The American Legation, Berne to The International Red Cross, Geneva, September 22, 1922; 3. The International Red Cross, Geneva to The American Legation, Berne, September 23, 1922; 4. Translation of above note.

53. *League of Nations C684.11.398.1922 V11*, "The Near East", Note by Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League of Nations, Geneva including letter from Rechad Noury, the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires, Berne to Mr. Edwards, President of Third Assembly, September 9, 1922 (Held on microfilm at Deakin University Library Waurn Ponds, Geelong, Australia); FO424/255, no. 516, Director of Military Operations, War Office to Foreign Office, November 14, 1922 with enclosure on Greek and Turkish atrocities subsequent to the burning of Smyrna.

54. *League of Nations A88. 1922 V11*, "The Situation in the Near East", signed by Prince Arfa-Ed-Dowleh & Emir Zoka-Ed-Dowleh, Geneva, September 19th, 1922; League of Nations, Third Assembly of the League of Nations, "The Situation in the Near East", motion proposed by the Persian delegation on September 19th, 1922, Geneva, September 19th, 1922 (available on microfilm at Deakin University); D.B.F.P., Vol. 18, p. 64, fn. 1.

questioning the Persian action on three grounds. In the first case, the Angora Government was not even recognized as a state by members of the League. Next, he questioned the admissibility of the procedure adopted by Persia to act on behalf of a non-member state. Finally, he pointed out that the enquiry over the alleged atrocities never took place owing to the intransigence of the Angora Government. Streit was correct in criticizing the actions of the Persian delegation but this did not assist Greece in her hour of crisis. She was now facing the monumental task of accommodating hundreds of thousands of refugees from Asia Minor⁵⁵.

The IRC mission, in the end, went nowhere. On October 20, Lucien Brunel, the Secretary-General for Mission Service at IRC, thanked the US State Department and the British, French and Italian Governments for entrusting it to carry out the proposed investigations but failed in its mission due to the refusal of the Angora government⁵⁶.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has attempted to show that the deportation and massacres of innocent men, women and children by the Kemalists in Pontus fits within the definition of genocide. The Kemalists' actions were deliberate and pre-meditated designed to inflict maximum damage on the target population.

The powers did nothing to halt the deportations and massacres of the Pontian-Greeks. They simply used the commissions of enquiry as a smokescreen to hide behind their inaction and too simply pass the buck on to the IRC. The *Entente* and the United States were not interested in becoming involved in a war with Kemalist Turkey.

The Turks used the press as an effective tool to deny the allegations of Ward and Yowell and to attack Britain for attempting to organize a commission of enquiry to Anatolia. The stalling tactics of France and Kemalist Turkey were instrumental in the IRC mission going nowhere.

55. *League of Nations, A98.1922.V11*, "The situation in the Near East", signed by Giorgios Streit, President of Greek Delegation, Geneva, September 20th, 1922.

56. *Turkey Internal 867.4016/717* Lucien Brunel, Secretary General of the Mission Service, International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva to Department of State, Washington DC, October 20, 1922 (translation).