

Marjorie Housepian, *The Smyrna Affair*, New York, 1971. Greek translation by T. Karzis, Athens, 1972, pp. 335.

This is a book written with compassion, but without overstatement or partiality. The presentation of the tragic story does not go beyond the limits of a respectable objectivity. It is a work based solely on authenticated sources that are wholly contemporary with the events, on diaries, on documents, or personal accounts by both officials and humble witnesses of the frightening tragedy. Yet I would make one observation. Every witness or document that was consulted could perhaps have been cited without exception in the footnotes. It is certainly true that the addition of a bibliography was very useful, but I believe in this instance that it is not quite enough. Undoubtedly the sources were used as they should have been, yet more footnotes would have helped to remove even the very slightest suspicions of bias or partiality, if these existed.

The manner of presentation and the relation of events hold the reader spellbound from beginning to end. And the bitterness, and frustration, and rage that come from reading the book is overwhelming. The work contains 21 chapters of which the first three introduce the reader to the background succinctly and clearly, to the status of the non-Moslem populations of the Ottoman Empire, the frightening Armenian massacres perpetrated by the Turks in 1915 and the recurring genocidal policies practiced against this hapless Christian minority, to the treaty of Paris and the encouragement on the part of the Allies for the disembarkation of Greek troops in Smyrna. The remaining chapters deal with life in that thriving and bustling city before and after the Greek occupation, with the abominable policies of the Great Powers, particularly of the United States, towards Greece and Turkey, with the social conditions of the Armenian element in Smyrna, the premeditated and systematic slaughter of this prosperous minority at the hands of the Turks, with the burning of Smyrna, and with the acute refugee problem that ensued.

The book deals primarily with the Armenian problem of which the most dramatic phase unfolds when the Turkish troops sweep into Smyrna in August of 1922. The writer herself is an Armenian and it would appear that she was an eyewitness to the fateful event (see photographs on pp. 237, 287). Yet she does not allow herself to be carried away by the bestialities and horrifying massacres by the Turks. She allows the witnesses themselves, mostly Americans, to pass comment on these. In fact, the author has relied for the most part on American documents, published and unpublished. Perhaps she found it difficult or impractical to consult also British, French and Italian archives and sources. Her sources are thus a bit one-sided, although the American evidence up to a point is the most significant, since the United States was not involved in the war against Turkey as were the Allies, and after the war, she practiced a Turcophile policy the motives of which are explained in a most convincing manner (i.e. petroleum exploitation, business investments in the Middle East, and so on). Yet she does not omit to mention the great efforts made to preserve and rescue the hapless Christian refugees, and the humane feelings of individual Americans or semi-official organizations in Smyrna which contrast sharply with Asiatic barbarism, and the indifference of the European Powers, not to mention the official American policy, which was blatantly opportunistic. The author does not herself put the finger of blame on any particular party. She confines herself to presenting the cold facts and allows the reader to find his way easily enough through the labyrinthine ways of the Great Powers leading to their economic interests, which in turn caused the destruction of the celebrated and pros-

perous city of Smyrna, and the death or wretchedness of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Of the latter, the Armenians stand out. Perhaps one may have some reservations as to the author's claim that the Turks were particularly selective in their choice of victims, that they persecuted the Armenians more than the Greeks. But I do not wholly agree with such a contention. The lower administrative and military echelons of the Turkish government whose centuries-old hatred was further inflamed by the recent Greek victories would certainly not distinguish Greek from Armenian. I do not doubt for a moment that the persecution of the Armenians was for the most part completely unjustified, although the undying, righteous and legitimate ambition of the Armenians to establish an independent state of their own goaded and incited the Kemalists into perpetrating their heinous deeds. The distinguishing of the victims whether Greek, Armenian, or Nestorian, on the part of the Turks in those tragic-laden moments would not have been a feasible or an easy thing.

The author understandably deals mostly with the fate of the Armenians and touches upon the lot of the Greeks in Smyrna in a few pages. This is, after all, the purpose of the book, and the author succeeds most admirably from the point of view both of historical accuracy, and the reconstruction of the events in bringing the tragic story to life, yet the title of the book (in the Greek translation) would suggest a broader treatment of the subject, for when we say that Smyrna was consumed by fire, we do not mean only the Armenian quarter or the Armenian refugees. Perhaps a sub-title in both the Greek and the American editions would have indicated more precisely the theme of the book and would dispel any misunderstanding or expectation on the part of the reader.

All told, the study by Marjorie Housepian<sup>1</sup> is a welcome addition to the Greek bibliography of the Anatolian disaster (see K. N. Triantaphyllou, «Bibliography of the Asia Minor Campaign (1919-1922)», in *Mnemosyne*, 4 (1972-1973), pp. 86-116). The bonds of compassion and friendship will always exist between these two peoples, for when Greece was crushed in 1922 and economically impoverished, she without discrimination and with open arms welcomed the uprooted and destitute fellow-victims of Turkish nationalism.

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Peter Bien, *Kazantzakis and the Linguistic Revolution in Greek Literature*, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 292.

I have often wondered about the extent to which a foreigner, reading Kazantzakis in translation, would become aware of matters that made this author so highly controversial in his own country. Even in translation, some of the reasons for the controversy should be apparent; at least in the differences between his poetry and prose, in terms of manner, style, tone of voice, choice of theme, ideology, and overall objectives. Exactly what Kazantzakis did with the Greek language, however, no translation could give the feeling of, yet

1. Cfr. the observations of Kostas P. Kyrris in *Kypriakos Logos*, v. 7, n. 37 (January-February 1975), pp. 3-9.