

The Greek Atrocities in Western Anatolia During the Turkish National Struggle from the Pages of a Trabzon Newspaper İstikbal

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Abstract

After the Armistice of Mudros, various regions of Anatolia began to be occupied by the Entente Powers. In only one of these occupied areas, the minorities living in the region and the occupying forces had the same ethnic identity. The Greek occupation of Izmir and the participation of the local Greek people in this occupation changed the balance in the region. Against the pressure of the intertwined Greek military power and the armed Greek gangs, the settled Turkish people formed resistance groups with the reflex of self-defense, and even the first organization of the Kuva-yı Milliye after the Southern Front took place in this region. However, due to the existence of a regular Greek army, various atrocities and intimidation policies could not be prevented against the Muslim Turkish people in both Western Anatolia and Thrace. Even though it is far away from the region where these bloody events took place, İstikbal Newspaper, which had been published since 1918, could not remain indifferent to the events in Trabzon, which has experienced similar difficulties due to the Pontus Issue. The newspaper frequently brought up the persecution performed by the Greeks, especially during their retreat against the Turkish army, and described the events in cities such as İzmir, Kocaeli, Bilecik, Edirne and Kırklareli as “mass murder”, “villainousness”, “violence” and “atrocities”. According to the news, in many settlements, the Greeks burned or destroyed property belonging to Muslims such as households, shops, inns, baths, schools, and haystacks without distinction. They also tortured, raped and massacred the Muslim people in the same regions. Various insults were made to mosques, which are the

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DOI:10.37879/9789751758866.2024.397

symbol of Islam, crosses were placed there or sacred texts were trampled on. At fiscal side, the Greek administration, which collected money under the name of tax and confiscated the food of the Muslim population, forced them to migrate by making the living impossible. Thus, they planned that the Greeks would become the majority in the places they occupied.

In this study, the reflections of the Greek atrocities that took place in Western Anatolia on İstikbal Newspaper will be evaluated.

Keywords: Anatolia, Greek Atrocities, Occupation, İstikbal Newspaper, Press.

Milli Mücadele Döneminde Batı Anadolu'da Yaşanan Yunan Mezalimi ve Bunun Trabzon'da Yayımlanan İstikbal Gazetesine Yansıması

Öz

Mondros Mütarekesi'nden sonra Anadolu'nun çeşitli bölgeleri İtilaf Devletleri tarafından işgal edilmeye başlanmıştı. Bu işgal bölgelerinden sadece bir tanesinde bölgede yaşayan azınlıklarla, işgalci güçler aynı etnik kimliğe sahipti. Yunanistan'ın İzmir'i işgali ve yerli Rum halkının bu işgale katılım göstermesi bölgedeki dengeleri değiştirmiştir. İç içe geçen Yunan askerî gücü ile silahlı Rum çetelerinin baskısına karşı yerleşik Türk halkı da kendini savunma refleksiyle çeteler kurmuş, hatta Kuva-yı Milliye'nin Güney Cephesi'nden sonraki ilk teşkilatlanması bu bölgede gerçekleşmiştir. Ancak düzenli bir Yunan ordusunun varlığı nedeniyle gerek Batı Anadolu'daki gerekse Trakya'daki Müslüman Türk halkı üzerinde çeşitli mezalim ve yıldırma politikaları izlenmesine engel olunamamıştır. Bu kanlı olayların gerçekleştiği bölgeden çok uzakta yer alsa da Pontus Meselesi nedeniyle benzer zorluklar yaşayan Trabzon'da, 1918 yılından beri yayın hayatını sürdüren İstikbal Gazetesi yaşananlara kayıtsız kalmamıştır. Gazete, özellikle Yunanların Türk ordusu karşısındaki gerileyişleri sırasında uyguladığı zulmü sıklıkla gündeme getirmiş, İzmir, Kocaeli, Bilecik, Edirne, Kırklareli gibi şehirlerde yaşanan olayları "topluluk kıymı", "alçaklık", "vahşet" ve "mezalim" olarak tanımlamıştır. Burada yer alan haberlere göre Yunanlılar birçok yerleşim yerinde; Müslümanlara ait hane, dükkân, han, hamam, mektep, samanlık gibi mülkleri ayırım yapmadan yakmış ya da tahrip etmiştir. Aynı bölgelerdeki Müslüman halka işkence etmiş, tecavüz ve katliamlarda bulunmuştur. İslam'ın simgesi olan camilere de çeşitli

hakaretlerde bulunulmuş, haçlar yerleştirilmiş ya da kutsal metinler ayaklar altında çiğnenmiştir. Ekonomik olarak ise vergi adı altında para toplayan ve yiyeceklerine el koyan Yunan idaresi, Müslüman halkı yaşayamaz hale getirerek göçe zorlamıştır. Böylece işgal ettikleri yerlerde Rumların çoğunluk haline gelmesini planlamıştır.

Bu çalışmada Batı Anadolu'da gerçekleşen Yunan mezaliminin İstikbal Gazetesi'ne yansımaları değerlendirilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anadolu, Yunan Mezalimi, İşgal, İstikbal, Gazetesi, Basın.

Introduction

Amongst the armistice agreements ending the First World War, the agreement imposed upon the Ottoman Empire had more devastating results compared to other defeated nations signed. This was partly caused by the fact that the Allied Powers already had secret agreements about the partition and subsequent occupation of the Ottoman territories long before the end of the War. The Allied Powers put these agreements in force with the Armistice of Mudros signed on August 30, 1918 with some altercations according to their wartime understanding. Based on the clauses of the Mudros Armistice, the Allied Powers occupied the Ottoman territories in regional blocks or in some cases partially, focusing on the control of administrative and strategic centers. Joining the Allied Powers in 1917 Greece now wanted to share the spoils of the victory, and to this end the Greek leader Venizelos who had irredentist designs on Anatolia, at least on Western Anatolia, was conducting vigorous diplomatic manoeuvres among the victors. The Allied Powers who promised to leave the İzmir region under Italian control according to the secret agreements now changed minds fearing Italy could become a colonial rival with its territorial gains leading to their increased presence in the Eastern Mediterranean basin. Therefore, France and Great Britain allowed Greek occupation of Western Anatolia that would soon spread to Eastern Thrace, Central Anatolia and the Marmara regions. The large-scale Greek offensive in Western Anatolia which began with the occupation of İzmir on May 15, 1919 created mass reaction amongst the Turkish public. The inhumane policies that the Greeks used against the Turkish and Muslim people in the occupied territories prolonged and disseminated Turkish protests. The Greeks applied various methods in order to enlarge the territories they occupied. They used the local Greeks to disturb the public order and thus, to

legitimate the Greek occupation, they forced the Turks to leave their lands and settle the Greek populations in their stead while encouraging the local populations by all means in asking for the Greek administration or rule.¹ The cruel treatment of the Turks by the Greeks attracted the attention of the foreign observers and became the subject of their correspondences.²

The daily newspaper *İstikbal*, which started its publication on December 10, 1918 in the Vilayet of Trabzon did not fall of deaf ears during the atrocities being witnessed in Western Anatolia, Marmara region and Eastern Thrace. The paper strove to inform its readers about what was going on in the west of Anatolia with news and articles. The issues of *İstikbal* we have date back to the second quarter of 1920. Therefore, we could not examine the news and articles written during the occupation of İzmir but an editorial titled "İzmir'in Âtisi" and dated May 4, 1920 written by the editör-in-chief and owner of *İstikbal*, Faik Ahmet read that the occupation of İzmir by the Greeks was seen as "a temporary occupation". According to the article, based on a decree by the Ottoman Parliament (Meclis-i Ali) İzmir would still be under Ottoman sovereignty but it would be under temporary Greek administration. The fate of İzmir would be determined by a plebiscite that would be made after a few years of occupation. Faik Ahmet stated that this decision was not a surprise one since the efforts of Venizelos in European diplomatic circles certainly had an influence on the Ottoman members of the Parliament.³ In another article dated May 23, 1920 it was reported that because of the Greek attitudes during the occupation there would be a new Ottoman proposal on the status of İzmir by the Ottoman government (Bab-ı Ali). According to the proposal the Ottoman government would ask the Allied Powers to order the Greek soldiers to evacuate İzmir and to arrange a referendum under the patronage of an Allied Power for its future. Bab-ı Ali stated that if the referendum resulted in favor of the Ottoman sovereignty İzmir would be administered as a free port and the Greek population would be granted some economic privileges and right to say in the municipal government.⁴

1 Salim Gökçen, "Milli Mücadele'de Yunan İşgallerinin Genel Karakteri", *CTAD*, 12(23), 2016, p. 92.

2 See Mustafa Çufalı, "İstiklal Harbi Döneminde Batı Anadolu'da Yunan Zulmü, 1921 (Arnold Toynbee'nin Eşi Bayan Rosalind Toynbee'nin İzlenimleri)", *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, 6/21, 1998.

3 Faik Ahmed, "İzmir'in Âtisi", *İstikbal*, 4 May 1920.

4 "Türkiye'nin İzmir Hakkındaki Teklifati", *İstikbal*, 23 May 1920.

As time went on the hopeful news of İzmir's return to the Ottomans were replaced by the news of Greek atrocities and savage acts. In one of his articles Faik Ahmet argued that only by looking at the decrease of Muslim population figures in the Greek administered regions would reveal the Greek occupation mentality but the European Committee of Inspection in the region connived in the Greek annihilation policies toward the Muslims.⁵ Another news in the paper read that the atrocities that the Greeks committed could not be tolerated even in wartime and there was not any example of such inhuman treatment in history. It was concluded that by tolerating this, European nations demonstrated that unlike their material and technical progress their moral standards retrogressed.⁶ The newspaper placed the Russians at a separate level than the Europeans. *İstikbal* published a memorandum issued by the Soviet Russia's Foreign Relation Commissar Chicheryn on December 27, 1921. The memorandum was sent to all related parties and told about the atrocities committed by the Greek Army in Anatolia. According to the text, the Greek troops caused devastation and disaster in the Turkish vilayets, which they occupied unfairly. Even the neutral telegram agencies transmitted that the Greek troops turned the lands into deserts from which they retreated from. While the Turkish villages were burnt down their inhabitants were either killed or captivated. The ones who were not dead or captive escaped to the forests or the mountains. All these atrocities were committed upon the order of the Greek headquarters according to the memorandum. The Russian correspondent reported that it was of utmost necessity to stop the Greek destruction.⁷ *İstikbal* newspaper also brought the demise of the refugees who could escape the Greek destruction and atrocities to the attention of its readers. Based on the reports of the Disasters Inspection Committee (Tetkik-i Fecayii Komisyonu) the loss of the refugees who escaped to İstanbul region amounted to 50 million liras whereas it was impossible to record the losses of the ones who took refuge in other parts of the Empire. Those who went to Bulgaria were sent loss declaration forms in adequate numbers and they were given notice to report their losses.⁸

In addition, *İstikbal* published the statements of the Turks who escaped captivity by the Greeks along with the quotes from the publication of the Turkish

5 Faik Ahmed, "İzmir'in Âtisi", *İstikbal*, 4 May 1920.

6 "Yunan Silsile-i Cinayati", *İstikbal*, 26 July 1921.

7 "Anadolu'da Yunan Mezalimi", *İstikbal*, 27 December 1921.

8 "50 Milyon Lira", *İstikbal*, 10 February 1922.

Army Western Front Second Division (Batı Cephesi Erkan-ı Harbiye İkinci Şubesi) and these were compiled in a series of articles titled “Greek Atrocities in Central Anatolia”. According to the articles, the captives were questioned in order to obtain information about the destructed villages. The statements revealed that the Greek Division Commander Prince Andreas ordered his troops to burn down the villages they passed through. Some captive Greek pilots also told in their statements that they saw burning villages between the east of Sakarya and Seyitgazi-Alpuköy line, and their commanders were fully informed about these villages, which were burnt down by the Greek troops. It was reported that the Turks who were captured by the Greeks were asked questions about Mustafa Kemal Pasha and the Turkish army, that very little food was given to the captives, and that all the money, belongings and even clothes of the survivors were taken and left in remote places.⁹

The Grand Turkish National Assembly (GTNA) also started some initiatives in order to inform the world public about the inhuman policies executed by the Greeks. One of these initiatives was sending diplomatic memoranda. In one of these memoranda sent by the GTNA and published by *İstikbal* it was stated that in the territories they occupied the Greeks killed hundreds of thousands of Muslims and they burnt down buildings worth 25 million liras in only five towns. This memorandum was telegraphed to the diplomatic correspondent of the Turkish government in Paris, Ferit Bey, to be transmitted to the parliaments of all developed nations such as France, Italy, Great Britain and the United States; the press of Germany, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria; the Committee of Human Rights (Hukuk-i Beşer), Lausanne Turkish Motherland Committee and the Committee of Indian Caliphate (Hint Hilafet Komitesi); and to all Asian nations such as Iraq, Iran and Azerbaijan.¹⁰ After İzmir was liberated and Greek armies left Western Anatolia and the Marmara region, *İstikbal* newspaper initiated a relief campaign caused by the Greek devastation. It was mentioned that the relief could be sent to the poor Muslim people in those places whose houses were burnt down by the Greeks through the Society of Red Crescent (Hilal-i Ahmer Cemiyeti).¹¹ In a document dated 1923 the devastation caused by the Greek armies were listed as shown in the following table:¹²

9 “Orta Anadolu’da Yunan Mezalimi”, *İstikbal*, published between 15 December 1921 and 8 February 1922.

10 “Düşman Şenaatini Bütün Cihana İlan”, *İstikbal*, 27 June 1922.

11 “Yakılan Yurdlara Yoksul Kardeşlere Yardıma Koşunuz”, *İstikbal*, 22 September 1922.

12 *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Balkanlar’da ve Anadolu’da Yunan Mezalimi – II*, T.C. Başbakanlık Dev-

Name of Vilayet	No. of Totally Burnt Villages	No. of Partially Burnt Villages	No. of Totally Burnt Houses	No. of Partially Burnt Houses	Total No. of Houses
İzmir	66	87	3541	1453	4994
Bursa	28	37	8560	-	8560
Aydın	8	96	10292	-	10292
Ertuğrul	14	99	5834	425	6259
Eskişehir	105	87	4790	250	5040
İzmit	30	83	6383	816	7199
Balıkesir	21	41	2994	319	3313
Kal'a-i Sul-taniyye	-	2	25	-	25
Karahisar-ı Sahib	2	2	56	-	56
Kütahya	66	42	9902	949	10851
Total	340	576	54377	4212	56591

The destruction policies against the Muslim people were executed by Greece in three regions under full or partial Greek occupation: Aegean region, Marmara region and Eastern Thrace. In its news *İstikbal* covered only a limited portion of this destruction and there had been so many instances of massacre, pillage, arson and rape.¹³

Major Events in Western Anatolia

The Western Anatolian occupation campaign by the Greeks began with the occupation of Izmir and soon expanded in east, north and south directions. The estimated number of Greek troops landed in Izmir for occupation on the 15th of May, 1919 was fifty thousand.¹⁴ After the occupation and the towns in its vicinity, the Greek army occupied the cities of Manisa (May 26, 1919), Aydın (May 27, 1919), Uşak (August 29, 1920), Afyon (March 28, 1921) and Kütahya (July 17, 1921). Because Afyon changed hands twice during Turkish resistance it was occupied twice. The city of Denizli was not actually

let Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Ankara 1996, p. 313.

13 For detailed information see *Anadoluda Yunan Zulüm ve Vahşeti*, ed. Mustafa Zahit Önder, Dün Bugün Yarın Yay., İstanbul 2020.

14 Mustafa Turan, *Yunan Mezalimi İzmir, Aydın, Manisa, Denizli (1919-1923)*, ATAM, Ankara 1999, p. 73.

occupied but its towns of Çivril and Buldan were occupied by the Greeks.¹⁵ Some of these news were also published by the local newspapers in other regions.¹⁶ The Greek activities in Izmir and its vicinity often found space in *İstikbal* whereas the newspapers of Istanbul were urged by the censorship committee under the direction of the British occupation authorities not to make news of the Greek, and this strict order by the British was mentioned in *İstiklal* in its news.¹⁷

Among the news that mentioned the humiliating and aggressive policies of Greeks towards Muslims the ones about the attacks on the sacred places covered significant space. According to news reported from İzmir the Greeks who intruded the village mosque of Çorakkapı painted the picture of a Greek soldier with the Greek flag and Christian cross on the inner walls of the mosque and wrote insulting sentences on the sword of that soldier. In another instance, the Greeks hung a mail box on the walls of the Hatuniye Mosque and painted many crosses there in the meantime. These acts, which were made to insult the faith of the Muslims, worried the local people.¹⁸ Such acts were also witnessed in the villages surrounding İzmir according to numerous news that appeared in *İstikbal*. In the village of Mersinli the dead body of a Muslim was found and in mid-March of 1922 came the news of Muslims (including children) were burnt to death in some villages as well as the news of the raping of children aged eight-nine years old were reported.¹⁹ Again in İzmir, the Turkish flag, which was customarily raised on Hisar Mosque was targeted by bullets during the Easter and the dome of the mosque and the flag was destroyed as a result. The mufti and judge of the town and some of the notables were arrested and left to starvation and misery by the Greeks in jail for over a month. On 13th of April, 1921 Urlalı Kasap (Butcher) Hüseyin and Kerim Ağa's brother and son-in-law were brutally killed around the village of Bademler in Urla. The next day a certain shepherd called Ali was killed in Old İzmir. The following day a horse cart full of goods with a 12-year-old girl was taken by the Greeks and despite all complaints and investigations no traces were found.²⁰

15 *Anadolü'da Yunan Zulüm ve Vahşeti*, p. 45-48.

16 For example see Nurten Çetin, "Açıksöz Gazetesi'ne göre Milli Mücadele Dönemi'nde İzmir", *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, XLX/ Special Issue: *İzmir'in İşgali*, 2019, pp. 217-241.

17 "Yunan Mezalimini Setr İçin", *İstikbal*, 29 May 1921.

18 "Yunan Alçaklığı", *İstikbal*, 21 March 1921.

19 "Yunan Mezalimi", *İstikbal*, 23 April 1922.

20 "Yunan Mezalimi", *İstikbal*, 5 May 1922.

In *İstikbal* there also appeared the news of Greek atrocities witnessed in the town of Torbalı. In one of the town's villages the Greeks kidnapped four Muslim girls, raped them, and let them free after holding them for a night of horror. The same week a Greek officer and a few of his soldiers went to the house of Osman Efendi in Servili Mescid in İzmir, taking him out of his residence with the pretext that he would be brought to the police station but instead gave him a beating on the street and escaped after robbing his 150 liras. On a holyday night in the Tahtalı village of Bornova the house of Hamza Ağa was invaded by the Greeks. Because they could not find Hamza Ağa at home they tortured his wife to learn where their valuable goods and money was and upon returning the house of Hamza Ağa they took all the money and goods hidden in chests. On May 31st the Greeks killed a refugee living in the Kamalı district of Urla called Necip. Finally, in the reported news, the wives and a servant of four Muslims were kidnapped to the hills by the Greeks. They held them captives for ransom and raped them in captivity.²¹

To establish the Greek majority in total population in case of a future plebiscite and reach their final objectives, the Greeks burnt down some villages around Tire on the 14th and 16th of May and caused the death of their inhabitants.²² In and around İzmir the Muslim farmers were being arrested while commuting to the fields and they were either deported or killed. It was reported that on each day around fifty or sixty Muslims were arrested and brought to İzmir. People like Eminoğlu Mustafa Efendi who was accused of being related to the Turkish National Resistance Forces (Kuvayı Milliye) were being killed and their villages were being destroyed under artillery fire. In his village those who escaped the artillery fire were either killed or forced to return to their villages after heavy insults and beating by the Greek troops who blockaded the village.²³ The policy of deporting the local natives continued the following as news from Alaşehir and Balıkesir demonstrated that 17 and 10 people, respectively, from these towns were arrested and brought to İzmir.²⁴

In one of the works that recorded the Greek destruction in the İzmir region reads that in the town (nahiye) of Bornova 7 schools, 11 mosques and

21 "İrz Düşmanları Melunlar", *İstikbal*, 22 June 1922.

22 "Yunanlıların Vahşetleri", *İstikbal*, 7 June 1921.

23 "Yunan Mezalimi", *İstikbal*, 29 June 1921.

24 "İzmir'de Tevkifat ve Müsadereler Devam Ediyor", *İstikbal*, 21 May 1922.

maşjids, 7 cemeteries, 1 factory, 4 houses and 4 farms; in the town (nahiye) of Torbalı the town hall, 2 schools, 2 madrasas (higher school), 1 mosque, 3 factories, 562 houses, 2 commercial buildings, 28 shops and 5 farms; in the town (nahiye) of Değirmendere 2 mosques; in the town (nahiye) of Dağ-1 Kızılca 15 schools, 26 mosques and maşjids, 6 factories, 1 convent, 909 houses, 2 commercial buildings, 5 madrasas, 2 shrines, 3 military buildings, 91 shops and 11 farms; in the town (kaza) of Tire 3 schools, 1 mosque, 91 houses and 1 shop; in the town (kaza) of Kuşadası 1 mansion, 8 schools, 173 houses and 1 farm; in the town (kaza) of Karaburun 2 mosques; in the town of Nif 3 schools, 11 administrative buildings, 5 mosques, 2 cemeteries, 1 convent, 5 factories, 394 houses, 6 commercial buildings and 66 shops were destroyed by the Greeks.²⁵

Among the news reported by *İstikbal* about the Greek occupation of Western Anatolia, the southernmost case occurred in Muğla. In the village of Kavaklıdere in Muğla, a 70 year-old man called Adalı Mehmet was brutally beaten in his house and he was robbed of his 80 gold and 300 liras. In another instance of usurpation, a Greek platoon heading toward the village of Uzundere in İzmir region brutally battered Bakkal Ali, Bakkal Mehmet and his friend and stole their money. In the Yanye village of Menemen the Greek and Armenian gangs forcefully gathered the locals in a mosque, cut the throat of a villager and took their 4000 liras.²⁶

After the defeat by the Turks in the II. İnönü War the Greek Army began to retreat. While retreating the Greeks committed such atrocities on their way back to İzmir as well as increasing their inhuman oppression in the occupied territories. On their retreat the Greek army forced the locals to destroy all the bridges between Alaşehir and Uşak while at the same time persecuting and raping them.²⁷ On 15th of May, 1921 the Greek troops locked 120 people in the village mosque of Çamköy, Germencik in Aydın region and burnt them alive. Minor instances such as the arrest of local Muslims commuting to İzmir on the pretext of singing the march of Mustafa Kemal Paşa and beatings and disappearance of arrested people like them were everyday events. The Greeks even occupied a Muslim hospital in İzmir.²⁸

25 *Anadoluda Yunan Zulüm ve Vahşeti*, p. 257-258.

26 "Yunan Vahşeti", *İstikbal*, 2 July 1922.

27 "Yunan Mezalim ve Şenayii", *İstikbal*, 13 May 1921.

28 "Yunan Mezalim ve Cinayati", *İstikbal*, 5 June 1921.

In a village of Uşak, the Greeks started a fire with a piece of gasoline cloth and all but 14 of the village people were burnt to death.²⁹ During the occupation of Çivril the Greeks ransacked the town for three days and all the means of transportation, livestock and grain were seized and brought to İzmir. In another village of Çivril, 26 Muslims were killed by the Greeks. The Greek authorities forced the village people to sign a document declaring their satisfaction of the treatment by the Greek occupation.³⁰ In the surroundings of Çivril, three Turkish soldiers were killed at an armed confrontation with the Greek troops and their ears were cut by the Greek soldiers after death. The news appeared in *İstikbal* as a symbol of barbarian act by Greeks.³¹ In the town of Söke similar savagery was witnessed. After an armed confrontation the eyes of four dead Turkish soldiers were taken out and their ears were cut off. Their genitals were also cut off by the Greek soldiers and placed in their mouths. The news of *İstikbal* read that this kind of savagery was peculiar to the Greeks.³²

After the Greeks set the town of Gördes ablaze all but 17 of the 1500 houses could be saved from the fire. Ten mosques and a madrasa were destroyed, and all the houses were pillaged. Then, all the valuables of the Turks were usurped by the Greeks. In Gördes and Akça 33 people were killed; 113 were injured and 42 women were raped.³³

According to *İstikbal* newspaper the oppression and cruelty exercised against the Muslim people by the Greeks in the occupied territories had become tough and permanent. Everyday four or five Muslims in İzmir were killed for no reason. Those men who fought back to protect their families' honor and chastity were killed ruthlessly. For instance, in the Eşrefpaşa neighborhood of İzmir the Greek soldiers brutally killed a noble Muslim gentleman when he resisted the rape of his household. Such brutality was joined by the local Greeks and Armenians who continued killing Muslims in schemes organized by the Greek and Armenian crime gangs.³⁴ *İstikbal* made news of one of these gangs formed in İzmir that started assaults against the Muslims and killed six Muslims in the first place. This gang set fire in some parts

29 "Yunan Mezalim ve Cinayati", *İstikbal*, 5 June 1921.

30 "Yunan Mezalim ve Cinayati", *İstikbal*, 5 June 1921.

31 "Yunan Barbarlığı", *İstikbal*, 15 May 1922.

32 "Yunan Vahşeti", *İstikbal*, 1 July 1922.

33 "Yunan Mezalimi", *İstikbal*, 12 July 1921.

34 "Yunanlıların Zulüm ve İmha Siyaseti", *İstikbal*, 27 December 1921.

of the Sancak village of Karşıyaka and killed another six Muslims around Derebaşı. According to the news the people of these villages began to move to central parts of İzmir after these instances.³⁵ The Greek army dressed the local Greeks and islanders in Muslim attires and formed crime gangs. These gangs stole the livestock of the local Muslims. The Greek army also employed volunteer gangs among the Armenians who came from Erzurum, Muş and Bitlis to join the onslaught against the Muslims. According to *İstikbal* the number of Armenians who joined the Greek gangs reached 155. The Greek army did not accept these Armenians into the army but formed assault gangs of them. These gangs attacked the Muslim villages especially in Kırkağaç, Soma and Akhisar localities of Manisa.³⁶

On the pages of *İstikbal* newspaper the massacre news from Söke often found voice. In one of these, it was mentioned that 161 innocent people were killed and women were raped in Söke. Based on the inspections made by the Aydın Red Crescent Society and Aydın Protection of Rights Committee (Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti) this savagery occurred in the enemy occupied villages of Söke.³⁷ In another news it was claimed that the number of Muslim men and women killed brutally in Söke exceeded hundreds. Based on the statements of the people who witnessed the Greek occupation the names of the dead people were mentioned in the same news. In just the village of Karaağaçlı three people fell victim to Greek bayonets and bullets, and eight villagers were beaten and tortured by the Greek soldiers. Two women who were raped by the Greeks died then after. The deceased people were dropped in the wells and the River Menderes. Also, in various villages numerous houses were burnt down and pillaged by the local Greeks and Greek soldiers.³⁸ In another village of Söke the women were attacked by the Greeks and some of them were killed. The cruel treatment of the Muslim girls and women in Söke by the Greek soldiers was regarded as the copy of the tragedy happened in Sakarya. These women were tortured and forced to dance for the entertainment of the Greek soldiers. Most of them were killed afterwards. Among the people who were assaulted were girls around the ages of 12-13. Just like the people who were killed in the village of Ağaçalı, some of the people who were killed were thrown down the wells.³⁹

35 "Yunan Fecaat ve Zulümleri", *İstikbal*, 29 January 1922.

36 "Yunan Çeteleri ve Ermeniler", *İstikbal*, 22 March 1922.

37 "Alçak Düşmanın Zulüm ve Vahşeti", *İstikbal*, 6 July 1922.

38 "Yunan Vahşeti", *İstikbal*, 21 July 1922.

39 "Kahbe Yunanlı", *İstikbal*, 24 July 1922.

The Head of the Executive Ministers (İcra Vekilleri Heyeti) Hüseyin Rauf Bey sent a telegraph of protest to the nations of the world and this protest letter was published on the pages of *İstikbal*. According to the text, after the Great Offensive of the Turks the retreating Greek armies burnt down the villages with Muslim majority and killed their inhabitants. In Olucak village around Altuntaş all inhabitants of the village including women and children were locked in the mosque and they were burnt alive. During the Battle of Dumlupınar the Greek army burnt down all of Hamurköy and Çalköy. While some of the villagers were burnt alive, the surviving ones were tortured and some of them were killed. Dumlupınar was also partially burnt down. The Greek army intentionally set up fires and killed the Muslim people in the occupied lands that remained out of battlezones according to a plan. With the protest letter written in order to stop the Greek atrocities it was aimed to put pressure on the Greek government.⁴⁰

Major Events in the Marmara Region

After the Greek forces landed on İzmir they had advanced towards north and reached the shores of the Sea of Marmara. They occupied the major cities around Marmara in less than a year. On June 30, 1920 they occupied Balıkesir and Bursa fell on July 8, 1920. Bilecik was occupied by the Greeks on January 8, 1921; Yalova on February 23, 1921; Adapazarı on March 26, 1921 and İzmit April 28, 1921. Because Bilecik changed hands a few times during the war, it was occupied three times by the Greeks.⁴¹ In the same fashion as the Aegean region, the Greeks continued their massacres and atrocities in the territories reached and occupied. These events were often made news in *İstikbal*.

Just before İzmir was occupied, in April 1919 the Greeks were increasing the number of their troops in Çatalca and Hadımköy. It was documented in the Turkish archives that the number of Muslim people in these regions decreased, and Turks gradually became minority because of Greek oppression and atrocities. The documents warned the authorities to take precautionary measures.⁴² When the Greek forces were surrounded in the Kocaeli district the Greek troops in Çubuklu and Beykoz were transferred to Kandıra and these new forces committed atrocities in these Kocaeli villages. They set the

40 "Yunan Zulüm ve Vahşetini Protesto", *İstikbal*, 5 September 1922.

41 *Anadoluda Yunan Zulüm ve Vahşeti*, pp. 45-48.

42 *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Balkanlar'da ve Anadolu'da Yunan Mezalimi – II*, p. 34.

village of Tepeören ablaze and burnt the people of the villages of Kuruçay and Demirci by locking them up in their homes. The Greek soldiers cut the ears of a villager off in Çubuklu and arrested several people.⁴³ In the Kantarcılar village of Kandıra the household of Çarıklı Hasan were stripped naked; 20 Greek soldiers attacked Hasan Efendi's wife. To prevent her telling others he was hung to the stove and bayoneted to death. In the same village several women were raped, and their money and gold were pillaged. In the village of Kışla Doğançioğlu İbrahim was stabbed on the back of his neck to death. After stealing the three valuable carpets of the mosque in Kandıra, the Greek soldiers ravaged the telegraph office and destroyed the official documents in the town hall. They kidnapped Adapazarlı Aliye, the young girl of Recep Ağa and the family of Çankırlı Mustafa and brought them to Çubuklu. In the Bay of İzmit a Greek torpidoe stopped a passenger ship and stole the valuable goods and money of them and let them free.⁴⁴

According to news appeared in *İstikbal* the Muslims of Kandıra including their children were burnt alive by the Greeks by pouring gasoline on them. Some of the local Muslims were threatened to be kidnapped for ransom and some of them were actually kidnapped to the hills and 300 liras worth of ransom was asked to let them free. In the same news it was mentioned that some of the local Christians and gangs in Yeniköy participated in atrocities. Around Kandıra a retired police officer called Cemal Efendi was killed by daggers and bayonets, and some local man called Çavuş was torn into pieces. The Greeks also pillaged the properties of the villagers where these events occurred. In the village of İnanlar a Muslim man was stabbed to death; a group of women were locked in a house and after they were stripped of their money and jewelry they were raped and brutally injured. In the village of Şakirler 15 girls were raped and they were hung upside down. They were tortured and stabbed in order to get money off of them. In the village of Karadere 4 adults and 3 children of ages 7 and 8 were stabbed to death. According to the testimonies of the Greek prisoners of war, the gangs formed by the Paşaköy Greeks were set loose around İzmit and Kocaeli in order to torture the local people.⁴⁵

43 "Yunan Şenaati", *İstikbal*, 5 April 1921.

44 "Yunan Mezalim ve Cinayati", *İstikbal*, 22 May 1921.

45 "Yunan Mezalim ve Cinayati", *İstikbal*, 24 May 1921.

Among the local Muslims who remained in Bilecik after the Greek occupations around 80 women were transported to the gasoline house and were tortured.⁴⁶ In Bilecik 1800 houses, 320 shops, 18 commercial buildings, 4 bath houses, 20 factories, 2 madrasas, 20 convents, 1 masjid and 8 mosques were burnt or destroyed by the Greeks. In total 35 Muslims were killed, of which 22 were burnt, 8 were strangled and 5 were stabbed to death. In addition, the celibacy of 21 girls was taken, 52 women were raped, and 18 miscarriages occurred. In Pelitözü village of Bilecik 41 houses, 21 barns, 1 mosque and 1 school; in Çakırpınar 11 houses; in Cuma 8 barns; in Kepirler 1 commercial building, 2 barns and 2 houses were burnt and in Çukurören village 1 person was killed. In the village of Aşağı 1 mosque, 1 school and 50 houses were burnt added to 1 school, 1 mosque and 130 houses in Yeniköy and 2 houses in Bekdemir village. In the town of Küplü the minbar of the Veliüddin Mosque was destroyed, and the Greek soldiers violated all the plates and goods inside. They injured a person and killed four in Abbaslık village; took three captives from Şükranıye village and killed further two people in the village of Kurt. In the town (nahiye) of Yarhisar in Bilecik 8 houses were burnt, in İlyasbey 32 houses, 22 barns and 3 bakeries, and in the village of Okluca 1 house and 1 barn were burnt down. In almost all the villages of Bilecik there were the cases of inhuman deeds by the Greek soldiers.⁴⁷

The Greek forces slaughtered 25 adult males and their households in the east of Gemlik. In another instance they opened fire on 13 injured people who were accommodated in a school in a village. Only Salihoğlu Hüseyin Çavuş and Ahmedoğlu Ahmed were saved from the bullets. Those who fell captives to the Greeks were also executed by shooting.⁴⁸ More than 100 dead bodies washed up to the shores of Bandırma. Later they were diagnosed to be women and young adults from and around Gemlik. At the Bay of Gemlik and other piers the Greeks were not allowing any ships with Turkish flag or passengers. Their objective was to burn and destroy all the towns and roads that remained behind the Greek front beginning from Şile and covering Bandırma and Sakarya, almost all of the Black Sea and Marmara shores and ports as well as killing the local people.⁴⁹ In Sındırgı a Greek platoon of 25

46 "Yunan Şenaati", *İstikbal*, 6 April 1921.

47 "Yunanlıların Silsile-i Şenaat ve Cinayati", *İstikbal*, 22 April 1921.

48 "Yunan Vahşetleri", *İstikbal*, 15 May 1921.

49 "Yunan Mezalim ve Cinayati", *İstikbal*, 5 June 1921.

soldiers assaulted an Ottoman village and threatened the elder councils of neighboring village with their lives if they comply with the tax and man-power demands of the Turks. They also forcefully married Muslim girls with Christian ceremonies.⁵⁰

İstikbal also conveyed its readers news from the foreign newspapers about the Greek atrocities. A report from a French daily newspaper involved the events occurred around Gemlik and Yalova and appeared in *İstikbal*. According to the report prepared by a commission under the officer C. Frank who was charged with an investigation of the atrocities committed by the Greeks, the Muslims under Greek administration were victims of massacres, looting, arson and extortion. The report concluded that the Muslims who suffered such treatment were compelled to migrate to İstanbul leaving their homes and all belongings behind in order to save their lives.⁵¹ According to news taken from the American newspaper *Daily Telegraph*, in a report of the American delegation it was mentioned that the Greek Army caused devastation while retreating from Sakarya and on the order of their superiors the Greek soldiers burnt down the houses of the Muslims, raped and killed them.⁵²

The statements about the Greek atrocities made by the Turkish government officials also made headlines in *İstikbal*. Upon the inquiry of İzmir deputy Sırrı Bey, the Minister of Interior Affairs Fethi Bey gave a statement in the Parliament. His statement read that in İzmit and its vicinity the Greeks attacked the honor, pride, and sanctity of Turks, and committed massacres unequalled in history with the participation of the local Greeks. The Greeks also strove hard to destroy the economic existence of the Turks. In only İzmit, Adapazarı, Karamürsel, Kandıra and Yalova the destruction and casualties included: loss of movable properties worth 92.350.840 lira, damages on estate worth 63.603.250 lira, 192 instances of rape (defloration), 1194 killed and 151 injured, 314 captives and extortion cases.⁵³

The Greeks brutally killed 10 men, 9 women and a girl whom they accused of accommodating anti-Greek gangs in Çam village of the town of Ayvacık and then burnt down the entire village. The village was burnt in a manner

50 "Yunan Mezalim ve Şenayii", *İstikbal*, 13 May 1921.

51 "Yunan Facayini Teyid Eden Raporlar", *İstikbal*, 26 June 1921.

52 "Mezalim Tahkikatı Gürültüler Etrafında", *İstikbal*, 19 June 1922.

53 "Yunan Fecayii", *İstikbal*, 2 January 1922.

that the number of the people who were left under the wrecks could not be estimated. The village of Çamlıca was looted and a certain villager called Ali was killed and his wife was fatally injured. In *İstikbal* the news of the tortured and extorted inhabitants of various places were often seen. For example, the Greeks broke the kneecap and feet bones of a village boy accusing him of helping the bandits. Finally, the Greek did not allow free trade for the Muslim people.⁵⁴

Major Events in Eastern Thrace

After the signing of the Mudros Armistice the Eastern Thrace region was left defenceless for occupation. Initially, the French came to the region to control the railway between Edirne and İstanbul but later they left the control of the railway to the Greeks. Then after in the towns and cities lined on this railway the Greek troops began to guard and patrol.⁵⁵ After the San Remo Conference (18-26 April 1920) where the Allied Powers agreed the occupation of Eastern Thrace by the Greeks, they also permitted the Greek advance in the region to force the Ottoman Empire to accept the Treaty of Sevres. In this context, after the occupation of Tekirdağ on July 20, 1920 Edirne and Kırklareli were also occupied by the Greek forces on July 26, 1920.⁵⁶

Whereas the events in Eastern Thrace found less space in *İstikbal* newspaper the news about the region were more detailed and contained more information. According to news dated March 21, 1921, 1500 Muslims were arrested by the Greeks in the region, their grain and livestock were looted, in the town of Saray the Muslim inhabitants were hitched to carts like animals and exposed on the streets, and the Greeks collected 15-20 liras livestock tax per person forcefully from the Muslims. The rape cases were also widespread. On the road from Dedeğaç, Uzunköprü and Kırkkilise to İstanbul such cases were rampant. After the women were raped in Edirne they were killed, and their houses were burnt down. In Kırkkilise there were also rape and killing of young women. In Çerkezköy four Muslims were tied to the trees and constantly beaten for three days. Two of these people died

54 "Yunan Edepsizlikleri", *İstikbal*, 19 March 1922.

55 Türkmen Törelî, "Trakya'nın İşgali ve Yunan Mezalimi (1919-1922)", *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 31/51, 2012, p. 241.

56 Özgür Mert, "İşgalden Kurtuluşa Doğu Trakya", *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, 58, 2016, pp. 141-142.

because of excessive torture. Despite all these inhuman treatments the Greek forces held siege to the mosques and urged the Muslims to send telegraphs to the London Conference stating that they were satisfied with the Greek administration.⁵⁷ The Greek policies of resettlement of the ethnic Greeks from Caucasia in the region caused the forceful evacuation of the Turkish houses and placing the Greeks in their stead.⁵⁸

The anti-Muslim activities of the Greeks in Eastern Thrace continued on to 1922. According to news dated January 23, it was claimed in *İstikbal* that the Greek administration provided the Greeks a freehand in the region in conducting illegal activities to the detriment of the Muslims in order to consolidate its domestic policies. The Greek military and administrative officers encouraged the local Greeks against the Turks. Therefore, any kind of arrest, rape, assault, beating, torture, looting and murder of the Muslims by the Greeks continued without any decrease. The estates and properties of the Muslims who were compelled to leave their homes because of the ill treatment were pillaged and their estates were given to the Greeks who were brought from Caucasia, Russia and Bulgaria. Except the small number of Muslims in collaboration with the Greeks, the inhabitants of some Muslim villages were migrating to İstanbul or seeking asylum in Bulgaria because of the Greek oppression or threat. Especially the villages around Kırkkilise were evacuated by this way and the Greeks were settled in their stead. For instance, around 2000 Greeks were brought to some villages of Keşan in Edirne in order to lessen the population density of the Muslims. The Bulgarian villages around Edirne and Çorlu were totally displaced. Special Greek gangs were formed around Dimetoka in order to force the deportation of the Muslims. Despite all these resettlement policies the Greeks also created various kinds of difficulties during the travel of the Muslims. According to the news, every Muslim who wanted to travel from village to another had to show the Greek authorities a picture and an identity card. Traveling long distance was totally prohibited for the Muslims. On the other hand, almost all of the Muslim schools were shut down; the Muslim authorities in the Mufti's office were sacked and replaced with those who collaborated with the Greeks.⁵⁹

57 "Yunan Vahşetleri", *İstikbal*, 21 March 1921.

58 "Yunan Mezalimi Teşeddüd Ediyor", *İstikbal*, 31 March 1921.

59 "Trakya'da Yunan Mezalimi ve İtisafatı", *İstikbal*, 23 January 1922.

On January 13, 1922 the Turkish people of Tekirdağ were forced to participate in the rallies the Greeks organized for their benefit. The passport applications of the Turks were denied by the Greek authorities unless they declared their satisfaction with the Greek administration. According to the news quoted from the İstanbul daily *Tan* newspaper, Bab-ı Ali (Sublime Porte) protested this practice and communicated this issue with a memorandum to the Allied Commissions.⁶⁰ The policies of terror by the Greeks in Eastern Thrace found significant space in *İstikbal* newspaper. In its news it was stated that the Greek officers dressed up like the Allied officers and strolled around. It was also mentioned that the people of Thrace were forcefully included in the payment of Greek domestic debt. The Muslim inhabitants were insulted, beaten, and tortured just because they held drahmis. Although the drahmis decreased day by day any amount of money transferred to someone in Thrace via the banks became the object of deduction. For instance, if someone wanted to transfer 30 liras the addressee only received 26 liras 4 liras being shown as the difference in exchange rates. On the other hand, if a local Greek is conscripted in the army their agricultural chores were burdened on the local Muslims leaving them no time and opportunity to their own chores. The Muslims who could only till 10 acres of their 100 acres of land were still taxed on the entirety of their land. The Greeks who were lured with some benefits from Caucasasia and Russia and resettled on the lands of the Muslims in Thrace, on the other hand, soon became destitute after their compensation and subsidies were cut. They all regretted their decision of leaving their own lands. Some 8-10 Greek soldiers broke into the house of Turkish female teacher raped her and stole all of her belongings before killing her with bayonets and burning her house down. The Greeks in Thrace occasionally arrested single commuters or people travelling in small groups on the roads in Thrace and put them in jail. Nevertheless, the Muslims had to bribe the Greek officers or show their picture identity cards to them in order to commute between villages.⁶¹

Conclusion

With the help of the Great Powers, the Greeks carried their struggle for independence, which they had started in 1821, from the Ottoman Empire to a new height by founding the Greek nation-state in 1830. Since the

60 "Yunan Mezalimini Bab-ı Ali'nin Protestoları", *İstikbal*, 15 January 1922.

61 "Trakya'da Tedhiş Siyaseti", *İstikbal*, 18 July 1922.

beginning of the struggle for independence the Greeks gradually enlarged their territories in a time span of 100 years, again with the support of the Great Powers. This strategy of expansion to the expense of the Ottoman Empire was morally rooted in an ideal (policy) called *Megali Idea*, which had been approved by the Greek National Parliament in 1844. This understanding meant “the ideal of a Greater Greece” and had its grand objective of cleansing the Turkish-Muslim population from the lands on both sides of the Aegean Sea with its center in İstanbul (Constantinople) where they lived for over 400 years by forcing them to migrate or by just killing them. *The Tripolitza Massacre*, which was committed by the Greeks against the Muslims in the Peloponnesian Peninsula in September 1821, can be considered as the clear manifestation of *Megali İdea*. This massacre can be regarded as the first modern example of a series of ethnic cleansing acts toward the Muslims in the respective territories that was repeated throughout the rest of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century in Macedonia, Crete, Thessaly, and Western Thrace. Following the end of the Great War it was the turn of Greek ethnic cleansing targets in Eastern Thrace and Western Anatolia. This campaign had begun on May 15th, 1919 with the occupation of İzmir by the Greeks. According to the understanding that was reached at the Paris Peace Conference of January 1919 the march of the Greek army in Western Anatolia began with the support of the Allied Powers except Italy. By August 1921, the Greek army had advanced in the Anatolian heartlands only to be stopped at the western bank of the River Sakarya. Both during their advance and retreat (which began as a result of the Turkish offensive that started in August 1922) the atrocities committed by the Greek armies toward the Turkish and Muslim populations of Western and Central Anatolia were widely condemned both by the Turkish and Western public. The instances of inhuman treatment of the occupied people were duly published on the pages of the newspapers as the tangible evidence of the humiliation and destruction. One of these newspapers that appealed to the hearts and minds of the Turkish public was a certain regional newspaper called *İstikbal*, which began its press life at the end of 1918. The Trabzon-based newspaper gathered news from the press agencies and followed the events that occurred in Western Anatolia, Marmara region and Eastern Thrace closely. By informing its readers *İstikbal* proved itself as a successful and important public diplomacy agent.

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