

# The Atrocities and Genocide Committed in the Province of Bursa by the Greeks

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## Abstract

The most difficult years in the history of Bursa were experienced during the Greek occupation. A black cloth was draped over the pulpit of the Turkish Grand National Assembly until Bursa was liberated from the enemy occupation. The insulting of the Greeks to the tomb of Osman Gazi caused the people of Bursa to become even more resentful towards the invaders. Since the last months of 1920, the Greek troops displayed great brutality with their terror in the central villages of Bursa, the townships of İnegöl, Orhangazi, Gemlik, Mudanya, Karacabey and Mustafakemalpaşa. As a result of this terror, many Muslims were killed or maimed in the aforementioned regions. Villages were looted, burned and destroyed. Actually, in order to prevent this unavoidable situation, the Istanbul Government applied to the High Commissioners of the Allied Powers with a report containing the events. However, this attempt did not yield any results, and terrorist incidents continued until the end of the occupation.

Bursa was saved after 2 years, 2 months and 2 days of occupation. During the occupation period, the destruction of the Greek troops in and around Bursa was so terrific that it attracted the attention of all Anatolia and even the world. After the fierce clashes between the Turkish forces and the Greek troops, the Turkish National Forces entered Yenişehir and İnegöl on September 6; Orhangazi and Bursa on September 10; and Orhaneli on September 11, 1922. Simultaneously, on September 11, the Greek troops in Gemlik withdrew towards Mudanya following the coast.

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DOI:10.37879/9789751758866.2024.445

With the withdrawal of Greek troops from the region, the ruins left behind showed the bitter face of the occupation. The destruction and looting in the Western Anatolia region were revealed with various researches and reports. As understood from these reports, what the Greeks did from the first day to the last day of the occupation, especially while fleeing in defeat, was such as to astonish the world of humanity. In the first days of the occupation, the Occupation Command took the food and other needs for the provision of the Greek occupation forces and other supporting units from Bursa. In addition, many of the Greek soldiers looted and plundered the crops, vineyards and orchards in the Bursa Plain in large quantities, injured the Muslim people whom they saw in the fields, such as farmers and laborers, and killed many of them. Meanwhile, the people of the Greek villages around Bursa, encouraged by the confusion arising from the occupation and the support they received from the Greek army, attacked the Muslim villages and harassed the people, as well as usurping the large and small cattle and valuable goods they could find in the villages.

In this paper, I will try to deal with what happened in Bursa during the occupation period in the light of archival documents and published works.

**Keywords:** Bursa, Atrocities, Genocide, Massacre, The Greek Occupation.

## Bursa Vilayeti'nde Yunan Vahşet ve Soykırımı

### Öz

Bursa tarihindeki en zor yıllar Yunan işgali ile döneminde yaşandı. TBMM kürsüsü üzerine, Bursa düşman işgalinden kurtuluncaya kadar kalmak üzere siyah bir örtü örtüldü. Yunanlıların Osman Gazi türbesine hakarete bulunmaları Bursalıların işgalcilere karşı daha da kinlenmesine sebep oldu. Yunan birlikleri 1920 yılının son aylarından itibaren, Bursa'nın merkez köyleri, İnegöl, Orhangazi, Gemlik, Mudanya, Karacabey ve Mustafakemalpaşa kazalarıyla köylerinde estirdikleri terör ile büyük bir vahşet sergilediler. Girişilen bu terör sonucu adı geçen bölgelerde çok sayıda Müslüman katledildi veya sakat bırakıldı. Köyler yağmalanarak, yakılıp yıkıldı. Nitekim önüne geçilemeyen bu durumun önlenmesi için İstanbul Hükümeti, İtilâf Devletleri Yüksek Komiserleri'ne olayları içeren bir raporla başvurdu. Ancak bu teşebbüsten bir sonuç alınamadığı gibi terör olayları işgalin sonuna kadar devam etti.

Bursa, 2 yıl, 2 ay 2 günlük işgalden sonra işgalden kurtarıldı, işgal dönemi boyunca Bursa ve çevresinde Yunan birliklerinin tahribatı bütün Anadolu'nun ve hatta dünyanın dikkatini çekecek miktardaydı. Türk kuvvetleri ile Yunan birlikleri arasında meydana gelen şiddetli çarpışmalardan sonra Milli Kuvvetler 6 Eylül 1922'de Yenişehir ve İnegöl'e, 10 Eylül'de Orhangazi ve Bursa'ya, 11 Eylül'de de Orhanlı'ya girdiler. Bu gelişmeler olurken 11 Eylül'de Gemlik'teki Yunan birlikleri kıyıyı takiben Mudanya'ya doğru çekildiler.

Yunan birliklerinin bölgeden çekilmesiyle geride kalan harabeler işgalin acı yüzünü gösteriyordu. Çeşitli araştırmalarla ve hazırlanan raporlarla Batı Anadolu bölgesindeki tahrip, yağma ve yıkım ortaya konulmuştu. Bu raporlardan anlaşıldığı kadarıyla işgalin ilk gününden son gününe kadar, özellikle Yunanlıların mağlup olarak kaçarken yaptıkları insanlık âlemini şaşkınlıkla nitelikteydi. İşgalin ilk günlerinde Yunan işgal kuvvetinin Bursa ve on kilometre ilerideki havalide bulunan dört beş bin kişilik işgal kuvvetinin iâşesi için lazım gelen erzak ile diğer ihtiyacın İşgal Kumandanlığınca alma yönüne gidildi. Ayrıca Yunan askerlerinden pek çoğu Bursa Ovasındaki mahsulleri ve ekinleri, bağ ve bahçeleri külliyetli miktarda talan edip yağmaladılar, tesadüf ettikleri ve tarlalarda çalışan çiftçi, amele gibi Müslüman halkı yaraladılar, birçoğunu da katlettiler. Bu sırada işgalden doğan karışıklıktan ve Yunanlılardan aldıkları destekten cesaret alan Bursa civarı Rum köyleri ahalisi de, Müslüman köylerine saldırarak halkı taciz ettikleri gibi, köylerde bulabildikleri büyük ve küçükbaş hayvanlarla kıymetli eşyaları gasp ettiler.

Bu tebliğimizde arşiv belgeleri ve yayınlanmış eserler ışığında işgal döneminde Bursa'da yaşananlar ele alınmaya çalışılacaktır

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bursa, Vahşet, Soykırım, Katliam, Yunan İşgali.

## Introduction

The Greeks, who occupied İzmir on May 15, 1919 in line with the decision taken in the Paris Peace Conference under the supervision of the British, French and American naval forces, expanded the areas of occupation in western Anatolia starting from April of 1920 for the purpose of allowing the decisions to be taken in San Remo regarding the Ottoman State to be applied and creating pressure on the Turkish Grand National Assembly. While the struggle in the region regarding sovereignty between İstanbul and Ankara was going on, the Greek troops, which started their attack with superior forces, occupied Akhisar, Salihli, Soma and Kırkağaç by proceeding

fast against the resistance of the Turkish National Forces, which did not fully organized yet. The Greek military operation started again on June 29 and Balıkesir was occupied on June 30. In the meantime, some of the Greek troops that moved from the Lemnos Island on July 1 to hit the Turkish troops from the north in the Balıkesir and Mustafakemalpaşa areas landed on Erdek and Bandırma on July 2 accompanied by a few torpedo boats and later on the troops moved towards Karacabey and Susurluk.

The Greek troops supported by the Entente Powers and equipped with superior weapons and equipment moved towards the province of Bursa<sup>1</sup> on July 7. It was not possible to stop those troops for a long time by the Turkish troops who were less than 2.500 soldiers and demoralized. In fact, the Turkish Command of the Western Front decided to move those troops towards east of Bursa to gain time and strength. Bekir Sami Bey, commanding the troops in the region, started to evacuate Bursa from the morning of July 8 after making the necessary preparations and taking measures to evacuate the city. In the same day, the Greeks occupied the city without encountering any serious resistance. Bekir Sami Bey, Governor Hacim Muhittin Bey and people accompanying them reached İnegöl two hours after leaving the city. Also in the same day, Colonel Mavridis, the Bursa Central Commander of the occupying troops came to the Governorate of Bursa, occupied six rooms and settled there. On July 10, the Sixth Naval Regiment and a military unit composed of a mountain cannonry and cavalry troops under the command of the Colonel moved towards Kestel to provide security in the direction of İnegöl and Yenişehir and settled in Çataltepe and Kızıltepe locations.<sup>2</sup> The Greeks moved in the Bursa front and occupied Yenişehir and İnegöl on October 27.

1 In 1919, the province of Bursa, whose center was Bursa, composed of nine sub provinces including the central sub province and Mudanya, Gemlik, Orhangazi, Karacabey, Mustafakemalpaşa, Orhaneli, İnegöl and Yenişehir. Also, there were also townships of Trilye, Emirali, Armutlu, Yalova, Tahta Köprü and Domaniç. Raif Kaplanoğlu, *Bursa Şehrinin Gelişmesi ve Kentsel Planlama Kültürü*, Osmangazi Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, Bursa 2008.

2 Adnan Sofuoğlu, *Kuvayı Milliye Döneminde Kuzey Batı Anadolu 1919-1921*, Ankara 1994, pp. 28-29; Saime Yüceer, *Bursa'nın İşgal ve Kurtuluş Süreci*, Bursa 2001, pp. 16-17; Mümtaz Şükrü Eğilmez, *Milli Mücadelede Bursa*, ed. İhsan Ilgar, İstanbul 1981; Adnan Sofuoğlu, "Osmanlı Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında İşgal Döneminde Bursa", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol. 19, No. 55, March 2003.

The most difficult years in the history of Bursa were experienced during the Greek occupation. When the news of the occupation reached Ankara, a black cover was spread on the platform of the Turkish Grand National Assembly only to be removed when Bursa would be saved from the enemy occupation. The Greek desecration of the tomb of Osman Gazi deeply affected all people in Anatolia. With the terror that they caused, the Greek troops displayed great atrocities starting from the late 1920 in the villages of Bursa and the sub provinces and villages of İnegöl, Orhangazi, Gemlik, Mudanya, Karacabey and Mustafakemalpaşa. Due to this terror, many Muslims in the mentioned locations were either massacred or mutilated. The villages were looted and burned down. In fact, to prevent the atrocities, the İstanbul Government applied the High Commissars of the Entente Powers repeatedly with the reports including the descriptions of the incidents. However, no result was obtained from those attempts and the atrocities continued until the end of the occupation.

Bursa was saved after the occupation, which lasted 2 years, 2 months and 2 days; and the destruction caused by the Greek troops in and around Bursa for the duration of the occupation was in an amount that would get the attention of the whole Anatolia and the whole world. After the heavy conflicts between the Turkish and Greek troops, the National Forces entered into Yenişehir and İnegöl on September 6, 1922; Orhangazi and Bursa on September 10, and Orhaneli on September 11. While those events were taking place, on September 11 the Greek troops in Gemlik withdrew towards Mudanya by following the shoreline.

### **The Greek Atrocities in the Province of Bursa**

The Greeks established a complete occupation administration in Bursa. The Greek Occupation Command banned the exportation of all kinds of goods and items from Bursa, imposed limitations on free travel and established checkpoints in some locations, and thusly took control of everything in the province. In this regard, nobody among the people of the province and especially among the migrants was allowed to travel to İstanbul for any reason whatsoever. Those who obtained a travel document from the Police Department and those who were deemed as significant and trusted by the Greek Occupation Command were not objected and they were allowed to go.<sup>3</sup> The notification of eliminating the Ottoman Lira and imposing the

3 Sofuoğlu, "Osmanlı Arşiv Belgeleri Işığında İşgal Döneminde Bursa", p. 69.

Greek Drahmi indicated to the people that the occupation became an annexation. Upon the Greek military personnel's mandatory enforcement of the circulation of the Greek Drahmi with the market value of thirteen and a half piasters in Bandırma, Bursa, Karesi and İzmir, the necessary attempts were made by the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prevent that to the Extraordinary Commissariat of the Entente Powers and it was notified that this application was against the treaties.<sup>4</sup>

In the meantime, the number of the refugees amounted to about ten thousand individuals who escaped from İzmir and Manisa and came to Bursa and its sub provinces. The refugees of İzmir and Manisa were facing with a new occupation, leaving the tents, villages and towns again and migrating to the areas up to İstanbul, which were away from the area of occupation along with the people of Bursa.<sup>5</sup> The Greeks attempted to scare the Turkish people away by the acts of terror that they had carried out via the Greek gangs even before the occupation and the plan for collectively forcing people to migrate in the region was directly put into action. All kinds of means were used to scare, intimidate and even totally terminate the existence of the Turkish people in the region. While the males were mostly joining the movement of the National Forces against the atrocities that the occupying troops committed in the region, the women, children and elderly had no chance other than migrating. The condition of the migrants who needed all kinds of help was heartbreaking in all aspects. Many of them died due to starvation, infectious diseases, neglect and other reasons. Besides having serious problems in many aspects, the administrators in the region and the leaders of the National Forces attempted to help the migrants with scarce resources.<sup>6</sup>

By various studies and prepared reports, the destruction, looting and devastation in the western Anatolian region were revealed. As it is understood from those reports, from the first day of the occupation until the last, and

4 Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) (The Ottoman Archives of the General Directorate of State Archives of the Office of the Presidency), Dahiliye Nezareti İdare-i Umumiye Evrakı (DH. İ. UM.) (Documents of the General Administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs), 20/14.

5 *Harp Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi*, Year 41, No. 93, Document No: 2378; 2379; Mustafa Turan, *Yunan Mezalimi*, Ankara 2006, p. 45.

6 Mehmet Şefik Aker, 57. *Tümen ve Aydın Milli Mücadelesi (1918-1920)*, eds. Ahmet Tetik, Ayşe Seven, Mahmut Yüksel Canbaz, Genel Kurmay ATASE Bşk. Yay., Ankara 2006, p. 66.

especially the actions that the Greeks committed while they were escaping after being defeated were in a scale that would shock humanity. In the early days of the occupation, the food and other needs of the Greek occupying troops in Bursa and in the surrounding area, which was ten kilometers away from the city and composed of four or five thousand soldiers, were purchased with cash by the Command of the Occupying Troops. Additionally, many Greek soldiers greatly looted the crops, produce and gardens in the Bursa plains, injured the Muslim people such as farmers and workers whom they saw and killed many others. In the meantime, the people of the Greek villages around Bursa who were encouraged by the disorder arising from the occupation and the support provided by the Greek Army attacked Muslim villages, intimidated people and stole the cattle and small cattle and valuable items that they were able to find in those villages.

The Greeks, during the İnönü Wars raided 12 Muslim villages in the region including Bursa and stole money, carpets, items and animals whose value amounted to thousands of liras, raped young girls and women, killed and mutilated many Muslims. Additionally, they emptied those 12 villages and sent their people to Eskişehir as migrants and other than those villages, the villages named Tahtalı, Mis, Kutra, Hasköy, Çayırköy, Vakıf, Narlı Dudaklı and seven other villages were raided by the Greek soldiers accompanied by the local Greeks, the people in those villages were tortured, their possessions were stolen and young girls and women were raped.<sup>7</sup>

The carpets, prayer mats and rugs of many village mosques were stolen, the tombs were robbed, and various acts of desecration were committed by playing trumpets in and around tombs and cemeteries. In addition, attacks took place in the villages named Fetiye, Hamamlı, Dereköy, Cumalı and Değirmenli located on the foothills of Mt. Uludağ in a continuous manner. Therefore, the people of other four villages except the Hamamlı village migrated to Bursa due to their fear regarding their lives and properties. Moreover, the people of the Hamamlı village, who witnessed the continuous increase of the Greek atrocities and torture day by day, had to hide in the forests of Mt. Uludağ.<sup>8</sup>

7 Talat Yalazan, *Türkiye'de Yunan Vahşet ve Soykırımı Girişimi (15 Mayıs 1919-9 Eylül 1922)*, Vol. 2, Ankara 1994, pp. 78-79.

8 Yalazan, *ibid*, pp. 81-82.

The village named Hamamlı Kızık was burned down completely, and out of 150 houses in the villages, only the poor district composed of 19 houses remained intact. Although the village named Fetiye was burned down a few days before the Hamamlı village, the people of the village previously escaped to Bursa and they were able to save their lives. The other three villages were completely evacuated and the people of the villages encountered no casualties as they escaped to Bursa previously. In addition, the Karalar village was burned down and the village was destroyed. The Müstahre Hasan village was also burned down, and all people in the village including women and children were brutally martyred.

While the Greeks were withdrawing, they increased their level of destruction excessively. In the Maskara Hasan village, which was composed of 80 houses, all but two houses were burned down. In addition, many injured children, women were encountered in the Alaşyar village, and some of them were carried to the hospital in Bursa by horse cars. The Ahmet Bey village, which was composed of 50 houses, was completely burned down. Due to the brutal attacks of the Greek Army, no one was encountered in the village to ask questions. The people of the Müsahhare village left the village and hid when they saw that the Greeks started to burn down the village. The Greek troops who arrived the village the next day finished burning down the whole village and later they felt that the people of the village were hiding nearby, searched for the people and found them, got all their money, gathered the men near the village and took all the women away. İsmail Suphi Bey, the representative of Burdur who submitted a parliamentary question to the Speaker's Office of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on June 5, 1922 indicated that the Greeks would cause destruction during the evacuation, act in a manner that they would not leave anything to the Turks and asked a question to the Government regarding the measures to be taken in this regard. The Ministry of the National Defense stated that it chose the fastest course of action against the Greek plan to destroy the Turkish land and it would struggle to prevent that.<sup>9</sup>

According to the inspection conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in and around Bursa a total of 15.977 houses and buildings were burned down and destroyed. The Greeks did not have the time to burn down Bursa,

9 Cumhuriyetin Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivi (BCA) (The Republican Archives of the General Directorate of State Archives of the Office of the Presidency), 30-10-0-0/Muamemat Genel Müdürlüğü (General Directorate of Applications), 5-28-29.



Mudanya, Kirmastı and Gemlik completely due to the fast pursuit of the Turkish Army; however, they burned down the sub province of Karacabey completely and looted about fifty villages of Karacabey and some other sub provinces and tortured the people of those villages.<sup>10</sup>

Following the withdrawal of the Greek soldiers, the Governor's Office and the Municipality Building in Yenişehir which were occupied by the Greeks earlier were destroyed by bombs, the local market was completely burned down, and all of the properties and possessions of the people in the houses and shops, the carpets and praying mats in the mosques were stolen and looted by the local Greeks and Armenians following the Greek soldiers and they were taken away to Gemlik and in this short amount of time young girls and women were raped under the threat of death. The properties and animals of roughly about 20 villages of the Yenişehir sub province were taken to Gemlik. The Greeks completely destroyed and desecrated schools, and holy places such as mosques and madrassas in Yenice which they occupied. The downtown of Orhangazi was completely burned down and the following villages of this sub province were completely burned down by the Greeks: Keramet, Vefa, Refahiye, Çakırlı, Ödekfi, Yeniköy, Çobanköy, Çilingir, Beşpınar, Reşadiye, Esadiye, Çeltikçi, Gedelek, Dutluca, Heceler, Hamzalı, Şarlıca, Fındıklı, Mahmure. Number of burned houses: 3411, official buildings: 29, religious buildings: 27.

Some Greeks who attacked the village named Akçaköy came to the Deliballılar village, broke the doors of the mosque, stole two rugs and one carpet with the value of 70 liras and broke all of the oil lamps and other lamps in the mosque. They searched all of the houses in the village, and took away whatever they wished. Later, they put all of the men in the village into the mosque. After getting roughly about a thousand barnyard fowls from the village, they took the village prayer leader, the village director, and three or four more persons with them, took out the men in the mosque, searched the men and women of the village and took whatever they wished from their possessions.

The villages named Unçukuru, Taşlımahalle, Gelemedi and Mamuretülhamit were completely burned down and the Greek troops destroyed the mosques of the villages, which they were unable to burn down, tore the Holy Quran and threw them into the toilets. The villagers told this terrible event

10 Yalazan, *ibid*, pp. 86-87.

by crying. The Greeks burned down a total of 496 houses, 1192 shops, 5 official buildings and 10 religious buildings in downtown Orhaneli and later completely burned down 11 villages. Akçaköy was also destroyed in this manner.

Downtown Karacabey was completely burned down, and no single building was left intact. The Greek troops started to burn down the sub province of Karacabey three or four days before their withdrawal. The people of the sub province stated that Muslim residents of the town were filled into inns and they were burned alive. The withdrawing Greeks also destroyed the bridges on the Karasu creek located on the west of Karacabey. At downtown Karacabey, a total of 7136 houses and shops, 18 official buildings and 6 religious buildings were burned down. In Bandırma, 6134 houses, 1357 shops, 32 official buildings and 28 religious buildings were burned down.<sup>11</sup>

The information provided by M. Gehri, the representative of International Red Cross in this regard is striking:

While there were 16 Muslim villages in the Yalova region 6 weeks ago, currently there are only 3 or 4 villages. Six weeks ago, while the Muslim population was 7.000, now the number of those who are able to survive is either 1.500 persons or less. Accordingly, this means that only in one region about 5.500 Muslims were killed in the last 6 weeks. Until now, no military operations took place in this region. This operation is the operation of massacring the unarmed Muslim population altogether by the armed Greek gangs in an organized manner which is composed of some of the local Greek population and the professional gangsters cooperating with the Greek Army. One of the gang leaders in Gemlik turned out to be a well-known Greek manufacturer in Yalova and the other one turned out to be an egg trader. I am unable to provide the number of persons killed in the Gemlik massacre and of the villages which were destroyed fully, however approximately it is comparable with the massacres and destruction that took place in Yalova, or it might have taken place in a larger area and in a larger scale.<sup>12</sup>

11 Talat Yalazan, *ibid*, p. 96.

12 Mustafa Çufalı, "İstiklal Harbi Döneminde Batı Anadolu'da Yunan Zulmü, 1921 (Arnold Toynbee'nin eşi Bayan Rosalind Toynbee'nin İzlenimleri)", *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, Vol. 6, No. 21, p. 35.

The prisoners of war confessed that the Greek officers and commanders encouraged the massacres and atrocities. Among the other divisions, the Third Division of the Greek Army became well-known for the atrocities and destruction that it committed. Therefore, the Greeks named this Division as the “*Division of Revenge and Destruction*”. The Greeks started to destroy and burn down villages while they were withdrawing within a plan that they had prepared earlier and this was the time when the people of those villages started to escape towards the mountains.<sup>13</sup>

In and around Karamürsel, Yalova, Orhangazi, Yenişehir and Orhaneli which were under Greek occupation, the Greek and Armenian gangs supported by the Greek occupying troops continued their massacres and atrocities for two years. According to the information given by the committee, which came to İstanbul from Orhangazi and Yalova, on September 8, the Damlıca village of Orhangazi and Bayır village of Yenişehir were raided by the Armenian gangs and the people of those villages were all massacred, all of their belongings and animals were looted. Orhangazi was sieged by the Greek troops, and weapons were collected from the Muslim villages around Orhangazi. Seven persons from Orhangazi and twenty persons from Çakırlı village were executed by firing squad. The people of Üreyil and Çakırlı villages were brutally massacred and executed collectively, their belongings were looted and the collected weapons were distributed to the Christian people. Greek and Armenian gangs were established in the region, and they started terrorizing people and looting villages along with the outsider Greek and Armenian gangs. During the Greek occupation of Karamürsel, two thousand people from the local Greeks of Yalova joined the occupying troops. During the occupation, due to the naval and ground gunfire, fourteen villages were completely destroyed in the region. All of the farms were looted and the animals were stolen. In the report which was submitted by the Ministry of War to the Grand Vizier on November 15, 1920, the atrocities and massacres committed by the Greek Army and the local Greeks against the Muslim people (in Yalova and Karamürsel) were reported and it was stated that the atrocities were increasing and spreading day by day, and a priest from the Samos Island armed the non-Muslims and provoked them for enmity and attacking the Muslims, and the people running away from those brutal people were in fear

13 *Milli Mücadelede Hilâl-i Ahmer, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinin Teşkilinden Sakarya Zaferine Kadar İcraat Raporu 23 Nisan 1920-23 Eylül 1921*, ed. İsmail Hacifettahoğlu, Ankara 2009, pp. 75-76.

and terror and in many places the Greek troops also prevented the migration of the Muslims upon the incident of opposition.<sup>14</sup>

In January of 1921, in a telegram message sent by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, it was notified that the Greeks collected the weapons of the Muslim population and the Gendarmerie and ignored the looting and theft performed by the Christians based on the information coming from the Governor's Office and asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to perform the necessary attempts in the international arena.<sup>15</sup> Upon the repetition of such information, the Parliament debated the Greek atrocities in and around Bursa in its gathering dated February 6, 1921 and decided that it would be useful to submit the reports prepared by various committees that were sent to investigate the atrocities and massacres committed by the Greeks in the provinces of İzmir and Bursa to the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>16</sup> The findings of the investigations conducted by the international commissions were repeatedly submitted to the administrators of the Entente Powers and the Chairmanship of the Paris Peace Conference, however no result was obtained from them. Because in fact a complaint was being made regarding the Greeks to the powers who were behind the Greeks. Until the Greek occupation ended, such violations of human rights, atrocities, torture and massacres continued, and all Europe simply watched those massacres. Despite that unresponsiveness, the people of the region did not stop writing their experiences to the authorities in İstanbul. The Governor of Bursa, Emin Bey, who conveyed those writings and the pressures that he experienced to İstanbul and who did not submit to the Greek pressures was dismissed by the Commander of the Greek occupying troops just like other administrators in the region at the beginning of March in 1921 and sent to İstanbul with the threat that he needed to be court martialed because he did not report the attacks. Abdülcebbarzade Osman Efendi was assigned for managing the affairs of the Province by the Greeks and thusly an administrative chaos ensued in Bursa. The Ottoman Government which reported this situation to the representatives of the Entente Powers would not get any positive outcome regarding this situation.<sup>17</sup>

14 Adnan Sofuoğlu, "Kurtuluş Savaşı Döneminde Kocaeli-Yalova-İzmit Çevresinde Rum ve Ermeni Terörü", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 2002, Vol. 18, No. 54, p. 810.

15 BOA, Dahiliye Emniyet-i Umumiye Asayiş Kalemi Evrakı (DH. EUM. AYŞ.) (Documents of the Secretariat of Security of the General Directorate of Security of the Ministry of Internal Affairs), 49/61.

16 BOA, Meclis-i Vükela Mazbataları (MV.) (Records of the Parliament), 221/49.

17 BOA, Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası Evrakı (BEO.) (Documents of the Sublime Porte Document

After this change, the applications of the Greeks increased regarding massacres and exiling people around Bursa. The following matters were emphasized in a telegram which was sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs on April 20, 1921 and signed by the Mayor of Orhangazi, Mehmet, Alaeddin among the notables of the city, and persons named Ahmed, Mehmed Ali and İsmail whose copies were submitted to the representatives of the Entente Powers in İstanbul in French: Only five villages out of 21 Muslim villages within the boundaries of the sub province of Orhangazi remained intact. Other sixteen villages were looted and burned down for no reason by the occupying troops of the Greek Government, and people's honor was violated and some people were massacred. On April 16, 1921 Saturday all of the residents of the town of Orhangazi were forcibly exiled to the town of Gemlik along with the members of the government in the city. During the exile, the Greeks looted the items and crates that belong to the Administration of Public Debts (*Düyun-ı Umumiye*) and the Regie (Monopoly) Administration were looted and applied atrocities, torture, rape and destruction and did not allow anyone from the public to take their possessions with them and all of their belongings were stolen from them. The people of the town were placed into the military building in Gemlik and at the night the Greek troops raided the military building and all of their monies and valuable items were stolen from them and they were left without any food and items. Those atrocities and injustices committed by the Greeks until now consisting of a policy of mere exile and destruction and pressures that may not be accepted by any international law and civilized government in addition to the atrocities and tortures that they committed until now in the town of Orhangazi have completely become unbearable. It is necessary to help the Muslim population in Gemlik who are in a desperate situation by the Red Crescent and Red Cross committees, to secure the lives and honor of the people in the remaining villages of the town for the purpose of terminating the unbearable torture and atrocities which have been continuing until today, to transport the people of the town along with the representatives of the government in the town who were subjected to brutal actions in Gemlik which would not be allowed by the civilized world to the General Directorate of Migrants in İstanbul or to return those people to their residences and protect their properties and lives.<sup>18</sup>

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Room), 4676/350673; BOA, Dahiliye Nezareti Dahiliye Kalem-i Mahsus Evrakı (DH. KMS.) (Documents of the Special Secretariat of Internal Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs), 60/68.

<sup>18</sup> BOA, DH. KMS. 60/7.

One day after this telegram message, in the letter which was sent on April 21 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Grand Vizier with the note of urgency it was stated that five persons along with the district governors of Yalova and Gemlik applied to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and complained about the atrocities and torture committed by the Greeks in those areas lately. According to both the testimonies of those people and the telegram messages sent by the Mayor of Orhangazi, notables and other persons, the Greek soldiers acting with the Greek and Armenian gangs armed and encouraged by the Greeks completely burned down 11 villages of the sub province of Yalova, massacred part of the people in those villages and raped women, and the properties and animals that belonged to the people were completely taken forcibly and looted. The bodies of the massacred people were kept out in the open and the people of other villages left their villages out of fear and gathered in other regions. The sub province governor and mufti of Gemlik and some of the officers were arrested by the Greeks. They were sent to İzmir and the Gendarmerie Commander of Armudlu was also arrested and sent to Gemlik and the Greek soldiers raided the residences of a few people among the notables of Gemlik and looted their valuable items with the excuse of searching for weapons. Sixteen out of twenty Muslim villages of the sub province of Orhangazi were burned down by the occupying Greek troops and some of the residents were massacred and women were raped and all of the people in the town were forcibly sent to the town of Gemlik along with the local government officials. The Ottoman Government needs to notify those who need to perform the effective measures immediately to end these atrocities finally and to protect the lives, honors and properties of the Muslim people.<sup>19</sup>

One of the actions of the occupying Greek troops in Bursa violating the international law was their policy of occupying official buildings. The greeting of the Greek King Konstantin I as a king who owned the whole Anatolia, organization of welcoming ceremonies for him and his residence at the Royal Mansion (*Kasr-ı Hümayün*) were striking events. The Central Commander of Occupation at Bursa visited Deputy Governor Ziver Bey on December 19, 1920 and told him that in a few days General Papolos, the Chief Commander of the General Headquarters of İzmir and King Konstantin I would certainly visit Bursa and the surrounding areas. The Commander requested from the Governor to prepare the Royal Mansion for the King

<sup>19</sup> BOA, DH. KMS. 60/7.

immediately and the Governor asked a question to the Ministry of Internal Affairs regarding whether it would be appropriate to allocate the Mansion for the King or not. The Minister of Internal Affairs notified him in his response that he provided on December 22 that it would not be appropriate to allocate the Royal Mansion for him and to organize a ceremony for him and they needed to accept the visit of the Greek King as the visit of a guest king, however, if the Greeks attempted to occupy the Mansion, it would not be possible to oppose that action so he needed to be mandatorily silent about the issue.<sup>20</sup> King Konstantin I, who stayed at the Mansion and left Bursa on September 24, 1921, issued a declaration to the Greek Army in which he stated the following: *“I heard that you have been shouting out towards Ankara, towards Ankara! We struck at the heart of the Turks. The things that have been done until now are sufficient for our purpose. To retake what they have lost, the devastated Turkish Army is waiting and hoping that the Greeks would be tired. Yell at them with your bayonets turned forward: Come and get it!...”*<sup>21</sup>

Those expressions clearly indicated that the Greek rulers were in Anatolia for revenge and destruction and their goal was to punish the Turks and push them away from their lands. This intention needs to be questioned in terms of international law and it is a situation that may be characterized as “*genocide*”.

### **Evaluation of the Extent of Damage by the Organization of Red Crescent**

After the liberation of Bursa and the surrounding areas from the Greek occupation, it is seen that the Organization of Red Crescent made an intense

20 The Ministry of Internal Affairs was stating the following in its response that it gave to the letter of the Governorate of Bursa dated December 20, 1920: “Due to the fact that the condition of peace has not taken place between the Ottoman State and Greece yet, and in the matters regarding the Greek Commissariat, we apply the mediation of the commissars of the Entente Powers by communicating with the Greek Commissariat and the existence of the Greeks in that area is a temporary occupation, it would not be appropriate to accept the Greek King in his visit in and around Bursa which was declared by the statement of the Central Command of the Occupying Troops just like the kings of outstanding states and allocation of the Royal Mansion which is assigned for high level accommodation and to perform a greeting ceremony as a matter of form by the local representatives of the government. However, in the event that they attempt to forcibly occupy the mentioned mansion, it would not be possible to prevent that, so when such an offense takes place it is mandatory to choose to be silent”. BOA, DH. KMS. 60/37.

21 Zeki Sarıhan, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Günlüğü*, Vol. 4, Ankara 1996, p. 72; Salahi Sonyel, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Dış Politika*, Vol. 2, Ankara 1991, p. 181.

attempt to eliminate the destruction and hunger in the region. In this regard, the Headquarters of the Red Crescent, which wanted to determine the extent of destruction in and around Bursa and to understand the amount of the assistance to be made, conducted studies in the region by a commission that it sent to Bursa and the surrounding areas. In the report, which was prepared in the consequence of those studies, the amount of destruction in and around Bursa was indicated as a list including the names of the villages. In the telegram message that was sent by the representative of the Red Crescent on April 15, 1923 to the General Directorate, the table for the damages in the province of Bursa was submitted along with the maps.<sup>22</sup> This table is important for indicating the damages to property caused by the Greek occupying troops.

**Table 1:** The Table for Damages regarding the Province of Bursa

<b>Names of villages and towns</b>	<b>Buildings existed before the occupation</b>	<b>Buildings burned down and destroyed by the enemy</b>	<b>Existing buildings</b>
<b>Province of Bursa</b>			
Balyaz Village	80	20	60
Mamure Village	70	35	35
Tak(n)sarı Village	130	35	95
G(k)örükle Village	480	260	220
Runkuş Village	40	39	1
Mes'udiye Village	60	6	54
Yörük Yenicesi Village	55	5	50
Badırğa Village	50	50	0
Söğüdpınarı Village	70	46	24
Kite Village	40	8	32
Baraklı Village	115	65	50
Dağardı Village	92	90	2
<b>Sub province of Mudanya</b>			
Frenkli Village	60	13	47
Yörük Ali Village	49	11	38
Kızılköy Village	67	1	66

<sup>22</sup> Kızılay Arşivi (KA) (Archives of the Organization of Red Crescent), 1323/10 (6-10).



Eşk (g)el Village	130	90	40
Yalı Farm	350	300	50
Mahmudiye Village	70	46	24
Burgaz Village	200	20	180
Balbancık Village	40	9	31
<b>Sub province of Orhangazi</b>			
Downtown	1200	1198	2
Keramet Village	200	180	20
Osmaniye Village	30	30	0
Vefa Village	20	20	0
Refahiye Village	25	25	0
Çakırlı Village	150	144	6
Evrekli Village	130	120	10
Yeniköy Village	2000	1985	15
Gözede Village	70	1	69
Burhaniye Village	55	1	54
İvalaki (ayvalaki) Village	80	7	73
Aksu Village	110	2	108
Cebte (?)Village	25	1	24
Baba Sultan Village	170	3	167
Kestel	119	1	118
Hasanköy Village	46	9	37
İğdir Village	75	4	71
Kazıklı Village	100	6	94
Hamamlı Kazık Village	121	94	27
Kumlukalanı Village	30	3	27
Fethiye Kızık Village	150	146	4
Araba Yatağı Village	79	3	76
Ertuğrul Village	37	31	6
Bilad-ı Yunus Village	140	90	50
Karaman Village	16	8	8
Fethiye	80	2	78
Odunluk Village	20	19	1
Conkara Village	56	24	32
Beşod Village	22	17	5

Doğan Village	21	5	16
Nilüfer Village	85	1	84
Bademli Village	52	37	15
Göynüklü Village	59	37	22
Geçit Village	51	18	33
Kebirle Village	110	13	97
Hamidler Village	57	2	55
Aksungur Village	41	1	40
Ahmedbey Village	46	39	7
Mashara Hasan Village	110	100	10
İnesi Village	127	2	125
Maralı Çavuş Village	30	10	20
Filadar Village	700	700	0
Dürdane Village	120	38	82
Ayazme Village	70	35	35
Gölcük Village	140	111	29
Panayır Village	39	10	29
Tahtalı Village	140	22	118
Ovaakça Village	73	67	6
Tepecik Village	250	243	7
İrfaniye Village	15	15	0
Ortaköy Village	150	150	0
Çekiler Village	300	300	0
Cihanköy Village	70	67	3
Beşpınar Village	30	30	0
Reşadiye Village	600	580	20
Esadiye Village	50	47	3
Hamzalı Village	60	60	0
Çeltikçi Village	200	197	3
Gedelek Village	130	130	0
Fındıklı Village	40	40	0
Mamure Village	30	30	0
Dutluca Village	70	70	0
Sağur Village	162	132	30
Hece(r)ler Village	60	23	37

Narlıca	70	30	40
<b>Sub province of Gemlik</b>			
Armudbey Village	447	120	327
Hamidiye Village	102	2	100
Engürücük Village	129	55	74
Kurşunlu Village	327	322	5
Haydariye	60	60	0
Kumla-i Kebir Village	127	127	0
Karaca Ali Village	130	130	0
Selimiye Village	61	8	53
Latife Village	20	20	0
Sultaniye-i Sağır Village	10	6	4
Sultaniye-i Kebir Village	83	2	81
Armudlu Town	430	185	245
Arnabud Village	130	130	0
Kapaklı Village	112	69	43
Hayriye Village	41	41	0
İhsaniye Village	21	21	0
Mecidiye Village	30	30	0
Aşağı Benli Village	69	69	0
Yukarı Benli Village	588	588	0
Yenice town of Orhangazi	380	320	60
Akça (H)Öyük Village	35	27	8
Deli Yalılar Village	65	45	20
Çatak Osmaniye Village	15	15	0
Akalan Village	69	4	65
Danişmend Atik Village	31	4	27
Karaoğlanlar Village	50	1	49
Süleyman Bey Village	47	3	44
Çardı Village of Harmancık Town	79	2	77
Bilad-ı Danişmend Village	32	27	5
Beytimur Village	110	25	85
Kozluca Village	16	11	5
Gedikviran Village	70	6	64

Kepekdere Village	35	5	30
İşsan Village	50	6	44
İssız Viran Village	50	4	46
Kaçmanlar Viran Village	32	1	31
<b>Sub province of Kirmastı</b>			
Karapınar Village	36	18	18
Paşalar Village	113	6	120
Dallı Mezarlık Village	35	2	33
Timurdere Village	157	2	155
Yumurcaklı Village	79	1	78
Hacı Ali Village	95	1	94
Kömürcü Ali Village	66	7	59
Kosova Village	67	30	37
Un Çukuru Village	65	8	57
<b>Sub province of Karacabey</b>			
Town of Karacabey	4225	4165	60
Kıranlılar Village	40	40	0
Hacet Pınarı Village	60	60	0
Arızköy Village	60	60	0
Dağkadı Village	165	165	0
Cezler (Cevizler?) Village	20	20	0
Orhaniye Village	40	40	0
Karasu Village	30	27	3
Doğla Village	60	15	45
Kerangir Village	150	31	119
Çarıkköy Village	25	5	20
Mera Village	10	10	0
Sutatlı Village	80	80	0
Makriköy Village	80	38	42
Mahbubeler Village	45	5	40
Okçugöl Village	30	30	0
Şahinköy Village	60	60	0
Uluabad Village	80	80	0
Karaağaç Kebir Village	150	140	10

Baş Village	100	100	0
Karaca Oba Village	60	60	0
Çatal Ağıl Village	60	60	0
Kemertepe Village	150	130	20
İkizce Village	100	100	0
Subaşı Ağılı Village	130	55	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>22.768</b>	<b>16.857</b>	<b>5.911</b>

According to this report, during the occupation, the Greeks entered into 161 settlements in Bursa. They either destroyed or burned down 16.857 buildings among 22.768 buildings. Approximately 6.000 remained intact. In Reşadiye village, which was the most populous village, there were about 600 buildings before the war, and after the occupation, no buildings were left, they were either burned down or destroyed. About 2.000 residents of the Reşadiye village migrated or escaped to the mountains during the war. Out of 161 settlements, 58 of them were destroyed and no buildings were left. All of those numbers clearly indicate the level of destruction in Bursa during the Greek occupation.

### Conclusion

According to Justin McCarthy for the duration of the National War of Independence, about 640.000 Turkish civilians were killed by the Greek Army. Arnold J. Toynbee indicated that the massacres were executed in an organized manner after the occupation of İzmir by the Greeks on May 15, 1919, and he witnessed the atrocities performed by the Greeks in the regions of İzmit, Yalova and Gemlik, and the houses were looted and burned down in those regions. The largest massacre against the Turks was made in Yalova in terms of the number of people who were massacred and the local Armenians and Greeks cooperated with the Greek Army in the Yalova massacre. Orhangazi, Yenişehir and Armutlu were burned down during the massacre and the women in Armutlu were systematically raped.<sup>23</sup> All of those massacres were attempted to be conveyed to the international circles along with their evidence, documentation and photographs. Those documents which especially had a vital significance for the committee that

23 Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims (1821-1922)*, New Jersey 1995, p. 265; Arnold J. Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilizations*, Boston 2009.

would go to the Lausanne Conference were started to be prepared starting from late September of 1922 with great care. In fact, during the days when the Lausanne Conference was held, it was continued to send documents that would support the Turkish delegates who went to Lausanne. In the telegram message which was sent from İsmet Pasha to Refet Pasha in Lausanne dated November 23, 1922, it was stated that the tables that belong to İzmir, Manisa, Balıkesir and Bursa reached to İstanbul among the tables whose detailed statistical information have not reached and prepared in their localities in this regard about the destruction of movable and immovable properties caused by the Greeks while they were withdrawing in the provinces of İzmir, Manisa, Balıkesir and Bursa which were saved from the occupation, and it was requested to send those reports to Lausanne immediately with a courier “*which was waiting for all orders in İstanbul*” and to record the damages in other provinces in the same manner and send them to Lausanne too.<sup>24</sup>

The documents, photographs, and the lists of killings, injuries and damages which were deemed as important regarding massacres, lootings, thefts and violations of human rights performed by the Greeks in the province of Bursa during the National War of Independence were addressed in the book written by Canip (Haraçcioğlu) Bey who was the Permanent Chief Clerk of the City Council of the province of Bursa in 1925. When it is compared with the archival documentation, the book is based on facts and satisfactory which does not include any valor and deception.<sup>25</sup>

The Greek policies of occupation and intimidation applied in the province of Bursa was a complete voluntary manslaughter as this was also the case in other occupied regions when it is considered from a humanitarian and civilizational perspective. To have a perspective about those massacres, Miss Elen who was the Anatolian representative of the American Near East Humanitarian Committee located in Ankara and Miss Yelingis who was the member of the same Committee provided the following information regarding the atrocities witnessed by a representative who accompanied them in a travel that they made in the occupied and destroyed places:

“It is undoubtedly clear that the murders and atrocities committed by the Greeks were not performed out of anger or they accidentally

24 BOA, Hariciye Nezareti İstanbul Murahhaslığı (HR. İM.) (İstanbul Representativeness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), 13/56.

25 Canip Bey, *Bursa Vilayeti'nde Yunan Fecâyi'i*, Bursa 1340.

or incidentally took place; however they were performed willfully by prior thinking and planning".<sup>26</sup>

The venue for the solution of the problem would be the Lausanne negotiations. İsmet Pasha, who made a speech on December 13, 1922 in the conference stated the following: "*For the last eight years, not just this or that minority in Türkiye suffered, actually all people suffered. The Turks whose weapons were taken away from them in the last four years were attacked from all directions. It has been determined that the Greeks in Anatolia destroyed 27 cities, 1400 villages and 98.000 houses*". Türkiye was demanding the cost of destruction that the Greeks have caused in Anatolia in monetary terms. And the Greek side also requested the losses of the Anatolian Greeks that they encountered during the First World War from the Turkish side.<sup>27</sup> The aggressive attitude of Greece which may take the risk of entering into the war again and the pressures of domestic politics on the delegates made the matters of compensation and repairs an issue of debate. While the Conference was entering into a turbulent process with Greece's stake, the Italian representative Montagna reminded Venizelos the possible outcomes to be caused by a possible new war and in the event of outbreak of a war, Venizelos was reminded of the possibility of loss of lives of about 400.000 Anatolian Greeks. The response given by Venizelos to Montagna highly surprised the Italian delegate: "*If something like that happens, then we will kill the Muslims in Greece...*" Against that response, Montagna stated that an act like that would be butchery and how the Greeks would consider such a thing, and Venizelos was unable to hide his embarrassment regarding his response.<sup>28</sup>

Türkiye requested 4 million gold coins from Greece as the cost of repairs, however this request was not accepted. Whereby, Türkiye renounced its right of compensation with the 59th Article. In addition, as the war damage compensation, Greece just gave the Karaağaç region to Türkiye. This war damage compensation indicates that Greece has accepted the destruction and the violations of human rights that it has committed in Anatolia during the National War of Independence.

26 *Milli Mücadelede Hilâl-i Ahmer*, p. 74.

27 Ali Naci Karacan, *Lozan*, İstanbul 1971, p. 192.

28 Çağla D. Tağmat, "Lozan Barış Konferansı'na Yunanistan Tarafından Bakış: Venizelos'un Dünyasında Lozan", *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Vol. XIV/No. 29, 2014 Fall, p. 161.

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