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HELLENISM IN PONTOS

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BY

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*Messieurs les Ministres,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

When at the close of the panhellenic Struggle for independence only a small portion of the Grecian lands—that is the Morea, Continental Greece and some of the Aegean islands—was freed from the Turkish Yoke, the number of the Greeks rescued from bondage hardly attained half a million souls inhabiting lands which, besides being by nature barren were at the time fallow and in many parts entirely waste.

There were practically neither towns nor ports, commerce or shipping, nor any of those factors which make for the development and prosperity of a nation.

To make things worse, poverty and ignorance reigned everywhere, by reason of the longdrawn war and the bad habits acquired by the people during their bondage under the Turkish regime:

The spirit of political anarchy and petty local strife prevailed throughout these regions which offered a picture of desolation and ruin, among which could be hardly distinguished dimly outlined wherein the fair neat structure of Ancient Greek and Byzantine civilisation. Whence was the reconstruction to begin and was there any hope of its ever being achieved? Yet the hellenic miracle intervened once more. Three generations had hardly passed and Greece under the vigorous impulse of liberty saw herself regenerated, civilised and prosperous to a degree warranting the state-

ment that Hellenism is to day to be considered as the greatest factor of civilisation in this part of the world, the outpost of the West.

Yet in the opposite lands of the hoary East, on the coasts of Western Asia where the Hellenic race attained its highest point of civilisation, and more especially in the Ionian and Aeolian lands, that stretch from Colchis to Syria, where the Homeric poems, products, of a highly cultured people shone first as meteors of unparalleled splendour and where the Asiatic folk-songs of the Byzantine Marshes glimmered as the last rays of a blood-tinged sunset, just before the night of bondage fell upon the people—in those lands Hellenism is still groaning under the barbarous yoke, and the dawn of liberty is only just beginning to break on the Meander's banks in fair Ionia.

Northwards however along the Coasts of the Euxine, in the Greek lands of Pontos the struggle woke out long ago spontaneously nay independently of the rest of Hellenism; due to their being between the Mothercountry and her children at the pontic lands what the poet calls «οὔρεα οὐρανία», θαλασσάτε ἡγήσασα; on those shores which attracted the Argonauts of old and where over a hundred Hellenic Cities flourished, the home of the nation's highly cherished traditions, of the oldest monasteries of Christendom, of the heroic Acritas and of the Empire of the Comneni, there lived just but a while ago a million of Pontic Greeks who are now figured 800.000, as under the late Regime of terror 200.000 souls found an innocent death. Nevertheless, the struggle for liberty and consequently for life never wavered there and is still going on valiantly and perseveringly. The fact that this struggle has not so far evolved into regular warfare and spread throughout the Pontic lands,—although we find there the parallel of Souli in the brave Santa, untrod-

den as yet by Turkish feet, as well as, that of the Kleftes of Morea and Roumeli in the warriors of Amissos—the fact, I say that the whole country has not yet risen up in a desperate general effort for independence, should not be ascribed to any faint-heartedness; but merely to this that the Pontic Greeks considering themselves as sons of one and the same country entrusted the defence of their cause to the champion of the Hellenic Cause, their own mother country, and are looking forward to the verdict of the Peace Conference with full confidence as to the outcome of their appeal for liberty.

The question of Pontic Hellenism is thus placed, before the tribunal of the World. Its future possibilities, its paramount importance from the point of view of Greek national interests, the prospects of its future development and the influence that Pontic Hellenism is destined to exercise on the destinies of the Greek race, may well be gauged, if we picture to ourselves Greece and its evolution from 1830. up to this day. If we consider Greece as she came out from bondage in 1830 with scarcely half a million of inhabitants, and the progress she has accomplished up to this day so much from political as from social point of view, what could not the Pontic Hellenism achieve with its population of 800,000 with their superior education as compared with Greeks of 1830 were, and living in a fertile country being besides under liberal and democratic institutions and possessing already an organization which might serve as a bulwark in the Greek state.

Could not a free Pontos form a nucleus round which the Hellenism of Asia Minor might freely expand, just as the Greece that stretched not farther than Phthiotis and Acarnania in 1830 formed the nucleus of the expansion of Hellenism in Europe? This parallel was suggested to me the

other day by an eminent political personage, an exceptionally gifted Greek statesman, one of those men who, by good fortune, have been called upon to participate in the Government of the nation since the New Regime of 1910 and I bethought myself that I should take this parallel as the topic of this memorandum in order to explain the capital importance the Pontic Question has for Hellenism at large. And in fact this comparison alone would suffice to make everybody realise that if the rebirth of Greece had its beginning at Kalavryta, and its halfway stage at Psiloreitis in Crete, the crowning struggle will probably be at heroic Amisos (Samsoun) and famous Trebizond.

There, in the Pontic lands, the husbandmen and artisans of yesterday have been turned into soldiers, men of science, business-men, priests and monks becoming statesmen and military leaders; there at Batoum, as at Astros of old, has been convened the National Assembly of the Pontic Greeks, which resulted in the creation of a Provisional Government; the struggle for liberty is being carried on with intense activity and more methodically than was the case 1821 during the War of Independence. — As on that occasion Greeks from all Hellenic lands assembled in Odessa laid the plan for the Greek Revolution, so now the Pontic Greeks have grouped themselves into as many «Philikai Etaireiai» in various Russian cities, and have planned and organized the struggle for their independence. There, in the Chief city of Pontos, is working an eminent dignitary of the Church, a real Statesman, a man who would not flinch even before the gibbet of the Patriarch Gregory V; theretoo, is an other Churchman, a man full of national enthusiasm, ready to hoist the flag of liberty as courageously as ever the Bishop of Old Patras did at Calavryta of yore. But alas, and in order that the parallel between the two

epochs may be exactly similar, there have been and are being still perpetrated all those outrages against humanity for which the Turks have won a sinister renown, — to wit the burning and sacking of towns, pillage, slavery, murder, rape, wholesale slaughter of old people and children — so that hecatombs of innocent victims have to fall, before the paean of liberty may joyfully ring out in that ill-fated land.

The fearful agony of the Great war prevented the world from paying due attention to the desolation which befell the Pontic lands, nor would the din of the battle in which Greece too, was engaged have allowed the mother-country to listen to the wailings of her children in Pontos while slaughtered.

For when the Turk, a sinister tool of destruction in the hands of the imperial Teutons who coveted Greek Asia Minor, started to extirpate the Greeks it was, at the most critical stage of the Great war and at a moment when the attention of the civilised World was riveted to the Marne and Verdun. But there was another reason for which the agonizing appeal of the struggling Pontic people did not promptly and fully reach the ears of the whole Hellenic world: who does not remember the appeal of Mother Greece in the familiar verses: «ὦ παῖδιά μου, ὀρφανὰ μου σκορπισμένα ἐδῶ καὶ ἐκεῖ,» (O my children, o my orphans, scattered hither and thither)? Yes scattered only yesterday the children of Greece always needing her help, seeking relief from her, hold out to her supplicating hands and praying to be redeemed from bondage.

And the little country, the free Greece has always been straining every nerve, in an effort, to shield her children, now here, and now there, first those nearest to her, Crete Macedonia, Epirus, next her other children, the big islands of the Aegean Archipelago, the Dodecanese, Thrace and Ionia in Asia Minor.

And Pontos, with its million of Greeks scattered along the Black Sea coasts, the Great Hellenic Pontos was far away among barbarians and foreigners with its eyes always turned towards the free kingdom but restraining its longing for liberty, and holding back the outward expression of its national conscience until the fullness of Time should come. It was thus that the Hellenism of Pontos was vaguely known and in its broad lines to the free Greeks although the details of its martyrdom often reached as a feeble and confused sound the ears of the Mother Country.

We all know, that the Pontic lands which stretch from near the inlet where Batum is, that is to say from the little town of Athenae on the East, up to Ineboli westwards, including all the coastline and the hinterland which is in the form of a crescent extending southwards as far as Sivas, are inhabited by numerous Greeks. Many of these have taken refuge from time to time in the Caucasus or elsewhere, either to earn a living, since their country is devastated by the Turk, or to avoid his murderous knife. Some of them venture to return home whenever they find the opportunity, but all of them look forward to the day of their definite reparation and redemption.

It is also a wellknown fact that this large Greek population having a common origin and an unbroken historical continuity from the oldest times to this day, speaks a highly interesting archaic Greek idiom and preserves admirable folk-songs, folk-lore, pure Greek traditions which go as far back as the Byzantine Hellenism and the hoariest antiquity. The local customs are purely Greek; the people are characterized by a strong national consciousness and an earnest patriotism.

Moreover it is generally admitted and confirmed by all European Authorities that whatever culture exists in the

country in the form of science and letters is exclusively due to the Greeks; and it is thanks to the them that an advanced System of agriculture was introduced; notwithstanding that of the mines of precious metals near Trebizonde.

Trade Commerce and Shipping, in a word practically the whole economic life of the Pontos region has always been owing to their enterprising spirit.

But even if taking in view the historic associations of the past and the sacred relics it has bequeathed, can there be any foreigner with but limited knowledge of this region who would not admit the Greek character of the Country which prevailed over the conqueror's persistent efforts to alter it? The names of most villages, towns, mountains, rivers and valleys and sites are Ancient or Byzantine Greek, preserved either in their old purity or corrupted. Walls, monuments and ruins are equally Greek. Near Trebizond we find the site of Thethe when Xenophon with the 10 thousand erected a monument in commemoration of the moment they first came in view of the sea. Again around Trebizond we see the walls built by the Comneni and in the City among other vestiges are still to be seen old Churches of the Byzantine Age, and particularly one dedicated to S^t Sophia, resembling closely Justinian's and Anthemio's S^t Sophia at Constantinople on whose model the former is built.

There we find scattered throughout the country the old monasteries not only of the Greek Church but of the whole of Christendom, such as the Monastery of S^t John of Bazeon founded in the 3^d century, that of S^t George Peristeriotas, that of our Lady of Sumela, which was founded a few years after that of S^t John and sacredly preserves under its roof the famous Icon of S^t Luke the Evangelist which was brought from Athens. The schools there are some of the oldest belonging to the period of modern Greek Culture;

such is the College at Trebizond whose activities fill the last 3 centuries without interruption and with the best of results.

Even a large percentage of the Musulman population is of Greek origin, having turned Moslems to save their lives. A noteworthy example of this is offered by the Stavriotes, called Klosti in the Pontic idiom, from «κλώθω», to spin, to become renegade.

Most of them were islamised by force during the 17th century, and after the Crimean War part of them returned to the old faith. But there are still thousands and tens of thousands of Musulmans in the Pontos Regions, who are sure to return to the faith of their forefathers and to their national ideals as soon as liberty is bestowed on their country in whatever form.

Together with these, almost all the remaining law-abiding Musulmans will wellcome any new order of things that would enforce law and impart security to the country. On this connection it may be well to point out that most of the Musulmans desire to live in harmony with the Greeks and secretly wish that an end be put to the regime of terror which is now causing the ruin of their sorely tried country.

But this regime of terror, feeling the ground receding under its feet redoubled its sinister activities with the object of wiping out any trace of Hellenism in the Pontos region. The martyrdom that the country suffered and is still suffering has not been properly brought to the notice of the civilized world; the Greek nation itself has not even realised the situation in the Pontic lands. I therefore think it well, in order to acquaint you with the situation to apprise you some facts derived from the most authoritative and reliable sources. Prior to this however I must submit you an extract from a report of the eminent Metropolitan of Trebizond to the

Patriarchate, which gives a true picture of the situation.

«While the Greek ecclesiastical Authorities of this Diocese were doing every thing in their power to protect the musulman element of the Vilayet of Trebizond and after authority of the Russian government were re-installing the same in their homes with great difficulties and underhand opposition, the Turkish Government, at the same time, was wresting my flock from their homes, driving them cattle-like across impassable mountains in the heart of a severe winter.»

It is thus that the Metropolitan of Trebizond, a man of exceptional moderation and stern qualities, depicts in an official document the barbarous conduct of the Turks who, as soon as the Russians withdrew, resumed with redoubled rage the extermination of the Greeks, as a long matured plan to follow that of the Armenians at the instigation of the Germans and in accordance with the German scheme for clearing western Asia Minor of the Greeks and Armenians.

After the Russian retreat, the persecution was carried out with increased fury by the very Turks who had received protection and all sorts of benefits at the hands of the Greeks during the Russian occupation.

This is a patent example of Turkish mentality and Turkish policy and affords of itself a reply to those political men and Journalists in Western Europe who think that it is possible for Christians to enjoy peace and security of life and property under Turkish rule.

We may now pass to the terrible deeds referred to in the aforementioned report of the Metropolitan of Trebizond and which were perpetrated not only in his own diocese but throughout the Pontic region, at the time the Turks put into execution their programme for the extermination of the Christians and particularly of the Greeks in-

habitating the coast of Western Asia Minor and Pontos.

The execution of their destructive programme received of late thoughtful elaboration though the Germans, and immediatly after the Turks set out upon its execution which was marked by atrocities of the savage and bloodthirsty character peculiar to the Turkish race.

The following is an extract from a report by the Revd. Panaretos formerly abbot of the Monastery of St. John of Vazelon, who in the early months of this year travelled through the whole of Pontos at the request of the «Central Committee of the Pontos Greeks», up to Ecaterinodar, in order to gather information regarding the persecution of the Pontic Greeks by the Turkish Government. Here is a naked exposition of the atrocities committed by official Turkey in view of the extermination of the Greeks.

«According to information supplied to me by the ecclesiastical Authorities and from other sources, the Diocese of Amassia had before the War a population of 136.768 souls, 393 schools with 12.360 pupils and 493 teachers of both sexes, 498 Churches, 2 Bishops, 19 suffragans and 518 priests. Out of the whole population 72.395 were deported or exiled about 70% of whom died in exile or during their deportation, and hardly 30% returned to their devastated homes after the Armistice. At Samsoun alone 178 Greeks were hanged, the number of those who suffered this ignominious death throughout the Diocese amounting to 1630. 140 villages were completely destroyed. The purely Greek village of Cadikeny which numbered 3.640 souls before the deportation has now only 810, and out of its 450 houses there remain only 100 partly destroyed.

There are in the Diocese of Amassia 2 Orphanages, one at Amisos (Samsoun) and another at Bafra with a

» total number of 745 orphans, which is steadily increasing
» in proportion as more deportees come in from the Interior
» and also through the collection of orphans discovered in
» Turkish families and taken back.

« During the war, certain Rafet Bey, Governor of Amisos, became notorious for the excesses and the orgies he and his followers committed against the Greeks. Ladies of the best families, after their husbands had been deported were often compelled to take part in obscene evening parties organized by the Bey. The following incident may well illustrate the savage instincts of the Turkish Character. The Governor's wife having expressed her disappointment at having missed the sight of 48 Greeks being hanged that day, through her arriving too late, her amiable husband immediately ordered the corpses to be strung up again, so as to afford his lady the relish of the spectacle.»

The report proceeds:

« On the 13th April we left Amisos and on the same day arrived at Ordou, in the Diocese of Neokaisarea. It numbered before the war 14 towns, 166 villages, 1 secondary school, 18 grammar schools, 173 primary schools and a Greek population of 87.457 souls. 25.000 of these were deported or exiled, mainly from the communities along the coast, into the interior; some 2.700 of the inhabitants of Ordou were taken to Russia as a consequence of the Russian raid. In the Diocese of Neokaisarea the persecution raged and the attendant loss of life and property was appalling, but even in places which were spared the deportation, the loss of life was great, as about half of the Greek population died as a result of the hardships the beatings and imprisonment to which they were subjected by the Turkish Gendarmerie and officials who terrorized

» the country. On the coast all trace of the once flourishing villages has disappeared. Out of the 25,000 deported only 6 % of the villagers and 35 % of the townspeople have been saved, more shadows in rags and living witnesses of Turkish barbarism. Throughout the Diocese 20 priests were shot, or hanged, or burnt or buried alive. The town of Ordou presents a picture of utter devastation. 9/10 of the Greek houses are completely destroyed, and the sites are now used by the Turks as cabbage gardens. Yet, in the midst of this desolation, the Greek race shows its vitality; a community has again been started, schools have been opened, orphanages founded where the orphans, victims of the persecution, find shelter. The orphanage of the Community cares for 106 orphans and their number is steadily increasing. The Central Committee for relief to the Greek Deportees had sent from Constantinople up to the time of our arrival at Ordou Ltqs. 1,500 and the American Committee for relief in the Near East had given Ltqs. 3,300. The Greek Red Cross has also helped in the way of medicines and clothing.

» As regards the Diocese of Colonia, our information is that all its Greek villages have been razed to the ground; a very few of the inhabitants are alive at Nicopolis; at Amissos and Ordou we met some of these unfortunate people coming from the interior. »

After seven days' stay at Ordou - the report goes on - we left for Kerassound by sailing boat and on our way we called at Poulandjak on the 17th April. This purely Greek little town was thriving before the war and numbered 3,600 inhabitants with the villages around. All had to leave their homes at an hour's notice on the 1st of January 1917 and go into exile. After the Armistice, only 1,500 were left alive to return; they found 3/4 of their houses destroyed and all the

Greek villages in the district in ruins. Yet this undaunted people did not despair, but applied themselves at once to the work of reconstruction; they opened an orphanage with over 100 orphans most of whom hail from the Diocese of Colonia; They formed a Community, elected their Elders and the School Board, and founded a charitable Society which is now busy organising various forms of entertainment for the benefit of the orphanage.

From Poulandjak we arrived at Kerassound. This extensive Diocese had before the war 2 towns, 14 small towns, 266 villages, with a total Greek population of 167,450. Of these about 45,000 were compelled during the Armistice to seek refuge in Russia, and over 90,000 were deported by the Turks into the depth of Asia Minor, mostly from the coastal Communities, after 1915. 80 % of the Deportees died of hunger, hardships and beating. Only 7,500 have so far returned; 16 were hanged without any cause, 85 were shot in cold blood by Turkish Gendarmes and soldiers and over 600 were murdered by Turkish refugees. Not one of the 72 Greek villages of the Kerassound district has been spared; 3/4 of the houses of the Greek villages in the Argypolis, Kelkit and Cherrianon districts were razed to the ground. In the various districts of this Diocese the Government officials found additional tools for the extermination of the Greek population in the Turkish refugees who fled before the advancing Russian army when it invaded the Villayete of Erzeroum and Trebizond. These refugees particularly harassed the Greek population of the Argypolis (Gumushkhané) and Kerassound districts which were actually in the area of warlike operations during a year and a half. The same fate as that of Kerassound was reserved for Tripolis and Elevi with their respective districts. Of the inhabitants of the villages not one was spared from depor-

tation and out of the 3.000 Greek inhabitants of Tripolis only 300 widows, old men and orphans have returned. The inhabitants of Kerassound were not all deported, but many Greeks were exiled from that town as well; its leading citizens were court-martialled and died in prison. The property of the Greeks was confiscated by order of the Government; thus the wealthiest of the Greeks were reduced to extreme poverty and obliged to sell their furniture and clothing to get bread.

Orphanages have now been opened at Argyroupolis and Kerassound with 200 orphans from the latter town alone. Both the Central Committees for relief to the Deportees at Constantinople, and the American Committee for relief in the Near East have materially helped the Community in the work of reconstruction; the Greek Red Cross has also started a branch at Kerassound. In this connection we must mention that during the war the Turkish Government collected from the streets of Kerassound 250 orphans, emaciated with hunger and hardships and embarked them to Amissos, but on the way they were all murdered in cold blood and thrown into the sea.

We must close the sad account of these atrocities perpetrated against the Greeks of the Amassia, NeoKaisarea, Colonia, Chaldea and Kerassound dioceses. Before we pass to the Trebizond and Rodopolis districts which form a chapter by themselves, we will give a brief and sketchy account of the various fiendish methods of persecution which the Turkish mind has invented in order to exterminate the Hellenism.

a). The Turks invariably deported and exiled the Greeks during the winter and by preference in bad weather, without allowing them to take with them food, or clothing or bedding. This method was systematically applied in the Kerassound district, at Poulantzak, in the Ordou district, in the Dioceses of Colonia and Amassia, at Sinope and Inepoli.

b). The soldiers and officials who convoyed the deportees and the exiled, did not allow their victims to camp near inhabited places but only in out-of-the-way spots exposed to the severity of the weather. This had a double object: to prevent the deportees from finding shelter, and to starve them, as they could find nothing to buy in the wilderness. This method was adopted and carried out as a matter of course throughout Pontos at the suggestion of the Germans.

c). On no account whatever were the heads of families allowed to look after their wives and children who happened to be ill, nor were children allowed to comfort or sustain their tired parents. Little children, old people and the sick were forsaken in the ravines and the woods and either died of hunger and exposure, or were mercifully finished off by the bayonets of the Turks. At every step the traveller now finds the skeletons of Greeks who thus suffered martyrdom.

d). At various points in the Interior the Turks, at the suggestion of the Germans, built hot baths in which the soldiers obliged the poor deportees to bathe on the ground of alleged Sanitary measures. The unfortunate people had to remain in the bath promiscuously, men, women and children, in a temperature of 40°, while their clothes were taken away with the pretence of being disinfected. The best of the clothing was never returned to their owners, who, emerging from the hot-bath, had to stand in the open air often under a heavy snowfall awaiting the inspection of the police officer, who never came before they had stood there an hour. Then another hour had to elapse before the Doctor would be pleased to come for the medical examination. The latter was, on principle, so conducted, as to mark as sick the strongest, the healthiest and the youngest, who were sent to hospitals to be poisoned or otherwise done to death. The bath process was universally applied; the public baths of Nicopolis, Erbaa,

Tocat, Sivas and other places all have these dismal associations.

e). By an order of the Government, of which copies are in the hands of several Greeks, it was forbidden to give alms to the starving deportees, the infringement of this law being punished by death. The same penalty was applied to those deportees who on the way tried to collect herbs, roots or leaves for nourishment. A Greek from Patlama was run through by the bayonet of gendarme guarding the convoy for having dared to cut a leaf from a tree in order to break his twenty days' obligatory fast.

f). It was likewise forbidden by law to give alms, shelter or food to the abandoned infants and orphans who happened to fall on the way near inhabited places. These unfortunate creatures were the object of the most cruel persecution on the part of the police of Constitutional Turkey; whole cargoes of them were loaded in heaps on Turkish sailing vessels and thrown into the sea. But the fiendish Turkish soul invented a still more repellent way of exterminating the infants and orphan children. On the coast between Kerassous and Pulandzak there is a craggy cliff which the Turkish boatmen selected for their sinister work. On approaching the cliff they smashed the heads of their victims on the rocks and then hurled them into the sea.

The report from which I quote the above gives further details of the martyrdom of the deported population.

Whenever any of the deported Greeks, whether during the deportation or afterwards on the journey, managed to escape the vigilance of the soldiers and take shelter in towns, they were declared as outlaws, were actively pursued by the police and when apprehended, subjected to torture. No one can relate without a shudder the horror of the tragedy that was enacted in the Church of St. George of Patlam, which reads like another «Black Hole of Calcutta»?

Any fugitives who took refuge at Kerassound were taken, together with any inhabitant accused of having given them shelter, and imprisoned in the Church building. This Church was supposed to be the first halting-stage for such fugitives who were to be deported as soon as their number had attained 200. The imprisoned were left absolutely without food, and as the required number could not be completed before 15 or 20 days had passed, those who were cast into the church first, were starved to death without being allowed even to go out of the church to answer the calls of nature. On their corpses were thrown fresh victims, who had the same fate in the course of 10 or 15 days.

At the Metropolitan Office at Kerassound there is a report of a school-teacher who managed to escape from this hell by jumping from a window. He says that the imprisoned were eating each other's clothes and boots and even the putrid flesh of their dead comrades. Thus St. George «of » Patlama's Church was made into a slaughter house, where, according to very reliable estimates, about 3000 Greeks met a ghastly death. A Turkish doctor from Kerassound, Abdul Velap by name, who happened to pass within an hour's distance from the said church, was nearly suffocated by the stench of the dead bodies and characteristically called the place «Maktoul Hané», that is, a «Slaughter house».

The report then goes on to describe further details of the martyrdom which we must pass over, and proceed to that part which deals with Trebizond.

The town itself and especially the villages that surround it are almost deserted, the Greek inhabitants having emigrated to Russia on the re-occupation of the Trebizond district by the Turks. The houses have either been burnt to the ground, or seized by the Turks who still occupy them together with the other landed property of the Greeks. As

soon as the Turks re-occupied Trebizond, they set out to execute their programme of extermination, first by mild methods such as imprisonment, heavy fines, commercial boycott, confiscations, sporadic but frequent murders, reserving the extreme measure of deportation for the winter of 1918, but the Armistice thwarted their plans. This is common knowledge, and is acknowledged by the Officials themselves. Yet, although spared deportation, the Greeks of the Trebizond region were reduced to extreme poverty and the mortality consequent on hunger and underfeeding was very great.

According to official Statistics, the Diocese of Trebizond before the war numbered 5 towns, 73 villages and a Greek population of 55000. Of these, 5000 were exiled into the interior, chiefly from the Tripolis district, and over 26,000 were compelled to take refuge in Russia; of those deported into the interior, only 400 have returned. There are 1495 orphans in the Diocese.

Both the Constantinople Central Committee for relief to the Greek Deportees and the American Committee for relief in the Near East have materially helped the Community of Trebizond; and the Greek Communities of Russia have also contributed towards the relief fund. The Greek Red Cross and the Hellenic Patriotic Institution of Relief have each established a Branch at Trebizond.

I must now cut short the sad tale of the persecution of the Greeks of Pontus which official and unofficial Turkey organized with unsurpassed ferocity and where she is still carrying on the work of extermination on the plan originally suggested by the Germans.

I must pass over in silence other details not less revolting, and confine myself to taking a census of those Greeks who perished in Pontus during the Great War.

Out of a population of about 600,000 Pontian Greeks who were estimated as living in their homes in Pontus at the beginning of the European War—for about an equal number is estimated to have emigrated at various times to the Caucasus where they still live—235,000 were done either directly to death by the tyrant's knife or indirectly through famine and hardships, and about 80,000 succeeded in making their escape to the Caucasus where they lead the miserable life of the refugee.

But these are not the only Greek refugees in Caucasus and certain parts of Southern Russia. As I have already said above, there are those who have settled in Caucasus since the Crimean War and, later the Russo-Turkish War, known as the Pontians of Kars whence they were driven by the Moslems of Azerbaitzan and took refuge chiefly in the Governments of Kuban and the Black Sea. These still lead an unsettled life peculiar to the refugees, whereas those who remained in Kars and Ardahan live in the greatest poverty and under the continual threat of the Turk's knife.

But to make things worse, yet another misfortune befell the Pontian farmers settled in Southern Russia. An anti-foreign and predatory movement was set on foot by the native population imbued with Bolshevik Doctrines. As a result of this, the properties of hundreds of thousands of Greeks were destroyed or damaged or are now in danger of being destroyed, while the lives of the people in the interior are at the mercy of the bands of robbers known there as the Green Army (*zilionai armia*).

And now, after this very incomplete account of the atrocities that marked this catastrophe, we may well celebrate the triumph of the Hellenic Soul.

All these calamities not only failed to dishearten the Pontian Greeks, whether those who remained at home or those who are still wanderers in the neighbouring countries, but braced them up and spurred them on to greater activity. From the ruins of this desolation there sprung up numerous organizations of Pontian Greeks; a General Assembly of all the Pontians was convened at Batoum, resulting in the constitution of a Provisional Government having its seat temporarily in that town. It has all the prerogatives of a « de facto » Government in as much as it has decreed taxes with the consent of the people, issues certificates of nationality which take the place of Passports and are recognised to a certain extent as such by the British Authorities of Occupation, and generally by the Russian Authorities.

What is more interesting still is that from among this population of hardy refugees there are, ready to respond to the call of their Country when the time comes, thousands of staunch fighters who would willingly give their life for hearth and home. Many of them have come to me personally asking to be enlisted.

Fortunately the Mother Country, the now Greater Hellas, can now dispense with the sacrifice so readily offered by these patriots. Let them preserve their good Greek blood for the reconstruction of Pontus and let them turn their vitality to the works of Peace. The Mother Country will, on the contrary, make sacrifices for her children in those distant lands.

In fact this has already been done, for while the Pontians, in the words of a resolution of which I had the honour of being the bearer, « offer up their earnest prayer that God » may strengthen the Great Leader of the race who is now » engaged in the Herculean task of re-establishing the union » of the whole nation, » the collaborators of Mr. Venizelos

here have forestalled the wishes of these poor Greek refugees and before they had yet applied for help, the Government has of its own initiative decided to organise a relief mission to Pontus. Nothing more than this can be done for the present in-as-much as the foreign policy of this Country which is based on harmonious cooperation with the Allied Nations, does not permit of any other form of help.

The Minister of Relief who has been entrusted with the task of carrying out the Government's decision, being a man of enlightened understanding and quick decision, has taken vigorously in hand the work of relief to the Greeks of Pontos.

Thanks to his personal interest that region is now endowed with Hospitals and well-tended Orphanages.

The Pontian Greeks scattered throughout the Caucasus and Southern Russia, numbering, according to the Statistics I have before me, some 515.000, have already heard the Motherland's message of comfort and the needy among them, some 85.000, will soon be in receipt of the relief sent to them from this country. This care on the part of the Free Greek State for the enslaved portions of the race will not only strengthen and encourage the national organization which is steadily being consolidated in those regions, but will show to the world the strong bonds that bind together the Greek race, from the Phoenician and Myrtoan Seas to sorely-trying Thrace and from the shores of the Adriatic to the furthest recesses of the Black Sea.