

## HOW THE TURKS OF THE PELOPONNESE WERE EXTERMINATED DURING THE GREEK REBELLION

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### Russo-Greek intrigues

The peninsula of the Peloponnese (in southern Greece), which is also known as the Morea, was first partly conquered in 1397 CE by the Ottoman Sultan Beyazit I from the Byzantines, and was completely overrun in 1460 by Sultan Mehmet II, who was received as a deliverer by the Greek Orthodox Christian population, then suffering under the rule of the Roman Catholics<sup>1</sup>. In 1698 the Ottomans were compelled to cede the Peloponnese to the Venetians, under the Treaty of Carlowitz, but in 1718 it was retroceded to the Ottoman Empire under the Treaty of Passarowitz<sup>2</sup>. According to the late Professor Dr. Douglas Dakin, who was an expert on the history of modern Greece:

"This renewed Turkish rule the inhabitants found preferable to that of the Venetians; taxes were lighter; the administration was less efficient and therefore less harsh; and the (Ottoman) infidel was much more tolerant than the Roman Catholic"<sup>3</sup>.

The Ottomans established a province (*paşalık*) in the Peloponnese, the Greek population of which was about 400,000, gradually augmented by about 50,000 Turks and other Muslims. Despite the comfortable and easy life which the Greeks, especially those living in urban areas, led, they began to intrigue with the Russians during the reign of Tsar Peter the Mad. These intrigues, which aimed at the resurrection of the Byzantine Empire, continued under Empress Catherine II during whose reign Russian agents roamed the countryside in the Peloponnese, inciting the people to rebellion<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> F. Babinger: *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit*. Munich, 1953, p. 195; Selahattin Salıhık: *Türk-Yunan ilişkileri tarihi ve Etniki Eterya*, (History of Turco-Greek relations and the Ethniki Eteria), Istanbul, 1968, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas Dakin: *The Greek struggle for independence, 1821-1833*, London, 1973, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas Dakin: *Unification of Greece, 1770-1923*, London, 1972, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> N. Jorga: *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, Gotha, 1908-13, vol. IV, pp. 30 and 173; J.L. Burkhart: *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, London, 1822, p. 4; Steven Runciman: *The*

### Franco-Greek intrigues

The French revolution, which erupted in 1789, had much effect on some of the Greek Orthodox Christian leaders, who, being aware that their intrigues with the Tsar and other Russian notables were not successful, transferred their hopes and loyalty to France, following the appearance of Napoleon Bonaparte on the scene. French secret agents began to roam all over the Balkans, continuously inciting the Greeks, and deluding them with promises of autonomy or independence under French protection<sup>5</sup>. So widespread was Napoleon's fame among the Greeks that, even the women of Mani, a remote fastness in the southern Peloponnese, placed his portrait in their homely shrines<sup>6</sup>.

However, following the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, in June 1815, by the British military forces under the command of the Duke of Wellington, the Greeks retransferred their hopes to Tsarist Russia, hoping that Tsar Alexander I's foreign minister John (Ioannis) Capodistrias, who was of Greek origin, would assist them<sup>7</sup>.

### Greek revolutionary and terrorist organisations

Meanwhile the Greeks began to establish secret revolutionary and terrorist organisations abroad, and to publish newspapers and periodicals that would serve their purpose. One of these organisations, the *Athena*, was striving for Greek independence with the help of France, whilst another one named *Phoenix* hoped to achieve the same ambition with the help of Russia. However, a more sinister and ambitious organisation, named the *Philiki Eteria*, was established in Odessa in 1814, which strove to provoke a rebellion among all the "Hellenes", including the Balkan Christians<sup>8</sup>. In

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*Great Church in captivity*, Cambridge, 1968, p. 337; Lord Kinross: *The Ottoman centuries - the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire*, London, 1977, p. 365; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı: *Osmanlı tarihi* (Ottoman history), Ankara, 1962-83, pp. 71 and 391 ff.; William Miller: *The Ottoman Empire and its successors, 1801-1927*, 4 vols., London 1966, pp. 7 and 26; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw: *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. 1, Cambridge, 1977, pp. 248-9; also see Lionel Kochan and Richard Abraham: *The making of Modern Russia*, London, 1990.

<sup>5</sup> Miller, pp. 4-5; Runciman, pp. 392-3; Dakin: *Greek struggle...*, p. 27; Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis: *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, New York, 1982, pp. 18-9.

<sup>6</sup> Dakin: *Greek struggle...*, p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Runciman, pp. 396-8.

<sup>8</sup> Emmanuel Protopsaltis: *I Filiki Eteria (Philiki Eteria)*, Athens, 1964, pp. 19-20; see also S.R. Sonyel: *Minorities and the destruction of the Ottoman Empire*, Ankara, 1993, pp. 1, 21 and

October 1818 the tentacles of that organisation spread as far as the island of Cyprus where, its secret agent for Egypt and Cyprus, Dimitrios Ipatros of Metsovo, managed to enrol the Greek Orthodox prelate, Archbishop Kiprianos, as a member of the organisation. The Archbishop promised, and later fulfilled his promise, to give moral and material support to it<sup>9</sup>.

The chief inciters of the rebellion were the "external - or outside - Greeks" (Hellenes - *apodimi* Ellines), who lived outside Greece and aspired to initiate a national movement in the country, similar to the movements then in vogue in Europe. They were the ones who started the rebellion, and financed it in the first place. However, the *Ethniki Eteria* was quick to undertake the leadership of this movement when it began to spread everywhere like an octopus, and planned a widespread rebellion in the Ottoman Empire<sup>10</sup>. Simultaneously, Russian consuls operating in the islands and the Peloponnese, carried out intrigues among the Greeks, inciting them to rebellion and trying to inculcate in them a sense of patriotism.

On the eve of the rebellion, the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire were leading relatively peaceful and prosperous lives, whilst those with wealth and education found employment in the Ottoman government service. In areas where the Greeks were in the majority they were allowed to establish their own municipalities (*dimarchia*), free from the interference of the state; whilst the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate centred at Istanbul, the Ottoman capital, became a privileged institution, participating in the administration of the Ottoman state<sup>11</sup>. Then why did the Greek rebellion take place?

When Sultan Mahmut II, who was a patient and determined ruler, began to take action in order to reverse the weakening of the Ottoman Empire by trying to strengthen it through reform, he fell out with Ali Pasha of Tepedelen, the governor of Jannina. When the governor revolted against the Sultan in 1820, the action affected the Greek revolutionaries who rose up immediately in order to benefit from the rift among the Turkish rulers<sup>12</sup>.

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68; N. Botsaris: *Visions balkaniques das la préparation de la révolution grecque, 1789-1821*, Paris, 1962, pp. 83-100.

<sup>9</sup> John T. A. Koumoulides: *Cyprus and the war of Greek independence, 1821-1829*, Athens, 1971, pp. 69-70.

<sup>10</sup> Sonyel, p. 173.

<sup>11</sup> William St. Clair: *That Greece might still be free - the Philhellenes in the war of independence*, London, 1972, p. 7; David Howarth: *The Greek adventure - Lord Byron and other eccentrics in the war of independence*, London, 1976, p. 19; Dakin: *Greek struggle...*, pp. 18-9.

<sup>12</sup> St. Clair, pp. 9-10; Dakin: *Unification...*, p. 43; Salışık, p. 154.

When the Ottoman authorities in the Peloponnese, headed by the governor, Hurşit Pasha, became aware of the rebellious movement among the Greeks, they met at Tripolitsa, the capital of the province, and invited the local Greeks to hand over their arms to the authorities, and called upon some of the Greek leaders individually to go to Tripolitsa in order to discuss the situation with them. However, these Greek leaders refused to reciprocate to this invitation and instead provoked the rebellion. The Greeks began their rebellion in the Peloponnese on 6 April 1821 (new style) with the slogan: "Not a Turk shall remain in the Morea", which inspired indiscriminate and murderous action against all Muslims<sup>13</sup>.

### How the Greek rebellion began

The Greek rebellion began as follows: the Metropolitan of Patras, Germanos, who was enrolled as a member of the *Philiki Eteria* in 1819, weary about the invitation he had received to proceed to Tripolitsa, set out and arrived at the monastery of Ayia (Saint) Lavra, near the mountain town of Kalavrita. There, he met the other bishops who, like himself, were equally undetermined on what to do. Later, Germanos himself faked and read out to them a letter, describing how the Turks would throw them into prison or kill them. Then, taking advantage of the resulting excitement among the people, he unfurled the flag of rebellion on 6 April 1821, and called upon all the Greeks to join the rebellion. The first flag of the rebels portrayed a cross over an upturned crescent, or a cross over a severed Turkish head<sup>14</sup>.

When the Metropolitan began to return to Patras, together with the other bishops, they were accompanied by an ever-growing rabble of people armed with scythes, clubs and slings. The bishops and priests, wherever they went, exhorted their parishioners to exterminate "the infidel Muslims". Brigand *klepths* and guards of remote places known as *armatoli* came down from the mountains and began to ravage Turkish settlements. Control soon passed out of the hands of the leaders, and the whole country was overrun by bands of armed hooligans, killing and murdering. According to British writer, William St. Clair: "the savage passion for revenge soon degenerated into a frenzied delight in killing and horror for their own sakes". Another British writer, David Howarth, observes that, the Greeks did not need any reason for these murders, "once they had started... they killed because a mad blood-lust had come upon them all, and everyone was killing"<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Kinross, p. 444; Miller, p. 72.

<sup>14</sup> St. Clair, pp. 9 and 27; see also Dakin: *Unification*, p. 59; Miller, p. 71.

<sup>15</sup> St. Clair, p. 12; Howarth, p. 28.

During this period the Russian consulate at Patras handled the correspondence of the *Eteria* for the agents of the society in the Peloponnese, and served as their liaison with the Russians<sup>15a</sup>.

### Elimination of the Turks

It is estimated that about 50,000 Muslims, including women and children, lived in the Peloponnese in March 1821. A month later, when the Greeks were celebrating their Easter, there was hardly anyone left. A few of them who managed to escape to fortified cities were suffering from starvation. Everywhere the unburied bodies of the murdered Turks were rotting. According to William St. Clair:

"The Turks of Greece left few traces. They disappeared suddenly and finally in the spring of 1821, unmourned and unnoticed by the rest of the world... Upwards of 20,000 Turkish men, women and children were murdered by their Greek neighbours in a few weeks of slaughter. They were killed deliberately, without qualm and scruple... Turkish families living in single farms or small isolated communities were summarily put to death, and their homes burned down over their corpses. Others, when the disturbances began, abandoned home to seek the security of the nearest town, but the defenceless streams of refugees were overwhelmed by bands of armed Greeks. In the smaller towns, the Turkish communities barricaded their houses and attempted to defend themselves as best they could, but few survived. In some places they were driven by hunger to surrender to their attackers on receiving promises of security, but these were seldom honoured. The men were killed at once, and the women and children divided out as slaves, usually to be killed in their turn later. All over the Peloponnese roamed mobs of Greeks armed with clubs, scythes, and a few firearms, killing, plundering and burning. They were often led by Christian priests, who exhorted them to greater efforts in their holy work"<sup>16</sup>.

According to Steven Runciman, who wrote the history of the Greek Orthodox Church, "the great fathers of the Church, such as Basil, would have been horrified by the gallant (!) Peloponnesian bishops who raised the

<sup>15a</sup> Charles A. Frazee: *The Orthodox Church and independent Greece, 1821-51*, Cambridge, 1869, p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> St. Clair, p. 1; Miller, p. 72.

standard of revolt in 1821"<sup>17</sup>. This was not a war for Greek independence or liberation, but a war of extermination against the Turks and other Muslims, and the main provokers of it were the Greek Orthodox Christian clerics.

As soon as the rebellion began, Greek highwayman Petros Mavromichalis, alias Petrobey, descended from the mountains to the town-cum-port of Kalamata, together with his marauders, and murdered all the Muslim men, more ferociously even than the riff-raff of Patras had done, selling the young Muslim women and children as slaves. In order to celebrate this so-called "victory", twenty-four priests organised a *Te Deum* at the banks of the town's river. The Kalamata tragedy was followed by the total extermination of the Muslims of Patras and Livadhia<sup>18</sup>.

### **Turks burnt alive**

In April 1821 the Greek residents of the islands of Hydra, Spetsa and Psara joined the rebels. They attacked the ships carrying the Ottoman flag; captured the crew, killing or throwing them into the sea. They also captured and killed many Muslim pilgrims on their way to Mecca. According to British writers such as St. Clair, Howarth and William Miller, the Greek rebels captured the 57 crew of a Turkish vessel; took them to the island of Hydra amidst shrieks of triumph and there, on the coast, they roasted them alive on a fire<sup>19</sup>.

Many Greeks in Thessaly, Macedonia and Halkidiki, too, joined the rebels and began to attack the Turks without mercy. In some areas the rebel leaders, in order to provoke the local Greeks to join the rebellion, deliberately massacred the Turks living there. The Greek peasants who remorselessly killed their Turkish neighbours saw the rebellion as "a war of religious extermination", and for the most part, the bishops and priests who led them shared this view<sup>20</sup>.

### **The massacres of Monemvasia and Navarino**

The Muslims of the small town of Monemvasia, which was besieged by the Greek rebels, decided, in August 1821, to surrender to the rebels, as they

<sup>17</sup> Runciman, p. 411.

<sup>18</sup> Sonyel, pp. 175-6.

<sup>19</sup> St. Clair, pp. 1-2; Howarth, pp. 30-31; see also Miller, p. 72.

<sup>20</sup> St. Clair, p. 9.

could no longer endure the prevalent hunger and disease; but nevertheless they were all slaughtered barbarously. These events were hailed in Western Europe as "a victory of liberalism and Christianity"<sup>21</sup>. A few days later the same fate befell the Muslims of Navarino: between 2,000 and 3,000 of them were cruelly massacred. Turkish women were stripped and searched for valuables. Naked women plunged into the sea, and were shot in water; children were thrown in to drown, and babes were taken from their mothers and beaten against the rocks. Muslim girls and boys, who were kept alive, half-naked and in fear, later were offered for sale as prostitutes; some of them lost their minds and roamed round the ruins<sup>22</sup>.

Soon a stench began to hang over the towns in the Peloponnese, emitting from the rotting headless corpses of the Muslims; pariah dogs and vultures were devouring the bodies; the water-wells were polluted and the plague began to raise its ugly head. All over the place emaciated and half-naked young Muslim girls and boys were groaning. Meanwhile the Greeks of Navarino were relating with pride the terrible massacres that had taken place there. One of them was boasting that he had killed eighteen Turks; another one was relating how he had stabbed to death nine women and children in their beds. These merciless killers were, with pride, showing to the European volunteers, who had come to help the "Hellenic cause", the corpses of the Muslim women whom they had raped, carved up and then thrown over the fortifications some time earlier<sup>23</sup>. But these terrible scenes did not impress the volunteers; on the contrary, they shocked and disgusted them. A German volunteer named Lieber describes how they felt hatred and disgust towards the Greek rebels who were calling upon them to rape these women when they themselves had already sexually assaulted them<sup>24</sup>.

### The Tripolitsa massacre

In the town of Tripolitsa, where the Turkish governor resided, and which consisted of a population of 35,000 Turks, Albanians, Jews and others, a massacre occurred on 5 October 1821, lasting for two days, during which

<sup>21</sup> *The Examiner*, 1831, 2/632.

<sup>22</sup> St. Clair, pp. 41-3; Howarth, pp. 56-8; Miller, p. 76; George Finlay: *History of the Greek revolution*, Edinburgh, 1861, vol. 1, p. 263.

<sup>23</sup> E.V. Byern: *Bilder aus Griechenland und der Levant*, Berlin 1833, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> Franz Lieber: *Tagebuch meines Aufenthaltes in Griechenland*, Leipsig, 1823, p. 73; St. Clair, p. 83.

10,000 people were killed. Most of the corpses were decapitated and carved up<sup>25</sup>. The Greek rebels tortured the Muslims whom they believed hoarded their money. According to St. Clair, Howarth and the British Colonial Office and Foreign Office documents, "they were slowly burnt to death on a fire, after their arms and legs were chopped off". One can imagine what the rebels had done to pregnant Muslim women.

About 2,000 captives, consisting mostly of women, were stripped naked; driven to a plain outside the town and then killed. After this event, many starving Muslim children were running from place to place, and were targeted, slaughtered or shot dead by the Greek rebels, who were elated and with their mouths foaming<sup>26</sup>. The chief Greek brigand, Theodoros Kolokotronis, who occupies pride of place in the "Greek pantheon of heroes", also took part in these massacres and pillages with relish<sup>27</sup>.

European officers, including Colonel Thomas Gordon, who happened to be at Tripolitsa during the massacre, witnessed the hair-raising incidents there, and some of them later recalled these with all their ugliness. Colonel Gordon became so disgusted with these Greek barbarities that he resigned from the service of the Greeks. The young German philhellene doctor Wilhelm Boldemann, who could not bear to witness these scenes, committed suicide by taking poison. Some of the other European philhellenes, too, who were extremely disillusioned, followed suit<sup>28</sup>.

### The Acrocorinth massacre

Towards the end of January 1822, more than 1,500 Muslims at Acrocorinth surrendered to the rebels, but were atrociously killed by the ruffians of Kolokotronis and other Greek leaders. These bloody incidents were later related by a German officer as follows:<sup>29</sup>

"(The Greek rebels) spared the lives of beautiful Muslim women, but sold them as slaves. The proceeds from these sales went to

<sup>25</sup> Howarth, p. 58; see also Dakin, p. 67; Miller, p. 77.

<sup>26</sup> St. Clair, pp. 43-5; Howarth, pp. 60-61; British Colonial Office documents, CO 136/1095.

<sup>27</sup> See also Brenger: "Adventures of a foreigner in Greece", *London Magazine*, II, 1827, p. 41.

<sup>28</sup> See Le Febre: *Relation de divers faits de la guerre de Grèce*, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> Le Febre: *ibid.*, p. 21.



augment the pockets of rebel leaders such as Mavrokordatos. Mavrokordatos sold the women to the captain of a British ship<sup>30</sup>.

Turkish women used to be sold between 30 and 40 piastres, according to age and beauty.

An Italian volunteer named Brengeri, on a road before he came to Corinth, found the dead body of a Turk, and further on, he found his wife and a baby, still alive but very hungry. He and his friends gave her a few coins, in the hope that she would be able to feed herself and the baby a little longer. Before they had gone a few yards they heard two shots: some Greeks had killed her and the baby, and taken the coins<sup>31</sup>. Brengeri later saw some Greeks killing a Turkish family, a man, his wife and two children. Before they killed the mother they tore off her veil to see what she looked like, and at that moment Brengeri rushed up and begged them to spare her. They asked for 50 piastres, which he gave them and saved her<sup>32</sup>.

At Acrocorinth, following the Turkish capitulation, a Turkish couple, too starved and exhausted to carry their child any further, tried to hand it to a Greek. He immediately drew a long knife and cut off his head, explaining, as a German officer was trying to prevent him, that it was best to prevent the Turks from growing up<sup>32a</sup>.

Up to the summer of 1822 the Greek rebellion had cost the lives of more than 50,000 Turks, Greeks, Albanians, Jews and others. Many more were forced to live in slavery and depravation. Compared to this, very few people had died during direct and mutual confrontations. This so-called "Greek war of independence" hitherto was hardly a war at all in the conventional way, but mostly a series of "opportunist massacres". Many of the Turks and Greeks killed were not soldiers and rebels, respectively; the victims had merely paid the price of belonging, in their respective circumstances, to the weaker community and the wrong religion<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Howarth, p. 88.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>32a</sup> St. Clair, p. 50.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.

### **The massacres of Athens an Acropolis**

Meanwhile, many Muslims, who had been besieged in the Acropolis area of Athens for a long time, and who suffered thirst, surrendered on 21 June 1822, following the word of honour given to them by the bishops, the priests and the rebel leaders, that they would not be killed; but, with the exception of a few of them, saved with great difficulty by foreign consuls, they were all massacred without any pity. At the same time the 400 defenceless Muslims of the town of Athens were carved up into pieces in the streets.

When the Greek rebels were attacking Modon, they caught a Turk outside the city walls. They decapitated him; put his head on a pike; took it to Navarino where they kicked it about as if it was a football<sup>34</sup>. According to the statements of British sailors, the rebels used to torture the Turks they captured on the high seas. According to Anemat the Dutchman, the rebels used to bring round the Turkish sailors whom they captured unconscious, and then kill them with all kinds of torture, ultimately tearing them into pieces. The Dutch used to describe the Greeks as "cowards and barbarians"<sup>35</sup>.

### **The Dervenaki massacre**

When the Turkish army appeared before Corinth in the summer of 1822, the so-called "Greek government", which was established at Argos, tried to retreat to the coast, in panic, and to escape on ships. Thousands of Greek refugees in the Argos plain were following suit, whilst the Greek brigands of Mainotis were trying to rob their own people before escaping. Soon the Turkish army ran out of provisions and munitions, and tried to withdraw to Corinth; but as the mountain passes were under the control of Kolokotronis's marauders, thousands of Turks were massacred at the Dervenaki pass. Had the rebels not wasted time in robbing the dead bodies, the whole Ottoman army would have been routed then. Many years later, travellers who toured that area, used to come across heaps of bones belonging to the massacred Turks<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Johann Stabell, Leipsig.

<sup>35</sup> Hastings memoirs, 6.7.1822.

<sup>36</sup> St. Clair, pp. 104-6; Howarth, pp. 107-8; Dakin, p. 97.

In December 1822 it was the turn of Navplia town-cum-port. In the streets of that town, which had been besieged by the rebels for a long time, one very frequently came across the dead bodies of children who had died of starvation. Emaciated women were trying to scavenge for food in filthy drains. According to the German officer Kotsch, one of the European volunteers, who happened to be at Navplia during the incidents, a Greek Orthodox priest who was suspected of establishing relations with the Turks, had his fingers scalded by the Greeks with hot water and his nails burnt. He was then buried in the ground up to his neck, and his face was brushed with syrup so that he might be attacked by the flies. It took him six days to die in agony. A Jew who was trying to escape from the town was captured, completely undressed, his organs severed, and having been led around the town in that condition, he was hanged<sup>37</sup>.

When the town of Navplia surrendered to the rebels on 12 December, a terrible massacre took place. The rebels piled up the heads of the murdered in the form of a pyramid. At that very moment the arrival into port of the British warship *Cambrian*, under the command of Commodore Hamilton, was instrumental in saving some of the Muslim and Jewish residents of the town from certain death<sup>38</sup>. During the ransack of the town the lion's share went to the Greek rebels. The European officers were only given two or three Turkish girls as booty, whom they then took to Athens and sold to the consuls; whilst the consuls transferred them to Anatolia and thus saved their lives.

In a Turkish ship which struck the bottom of the sea just outside Misolonghi, 150 Albanians, who were returning to their own country, surrendered to the rebels following the promise given to them by Mavrokordatos, but another rebel leader had them all killed, after they were robbed of their belongings.

### **The murder of European Grecophile volunteers**

The Greek rebels went so far in their barbarities that they even began to murder their foreign supporters who had come from abroad, mainly from Europe, in order to help them. After the capture of the Navplia town by the

<sup>37</sup> St. Clair, p. 107.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107; Howarth, pp. 110-122.

rebels, it was observed that some Greeks led their foreign supporters into a sauna-bath, in the town, and disposed of them. The Greek owner of the sauna-bath persuaded the foreigners to take off their clothes so that when he murdered them, their clothes and boots would not be blood-stained, and he would then be able to sell them. Of course, the naive volunteers did not suspect what would befall them<sup>39</sup>.

The genocide orgy in the Peloponnese ended only when there were no more Turks to be killed<sup>40</sup>. The philhellene volunteers who went to help the Greeks and began to return to their homeland in 1822 and 1823 could not save themselves from the nightmare of those terrible days. They were expecting many good things from the Hellenes (or Greeks), but instead they were flabbergasted. They began to hate the Greeks and to curse themselves for having been taken in by them. Despite pressure from the Greek societies in Europe, they began to put pen on paper about their own experiences. In all that was written the same sentiments were expressed: "I am writing this so that others will not make the same mistakes that I have made. Modern Greece is not like old Greece. The Greeks are a wicked and barbaric race who know no gratitude"<sup>41</sup>.

### How Lord Byron was exploited

The Greek rebels also tried to exploit and abuse the well-known British poet Lord Byron in their sordid activities. In fact, all that they wanted was to lay their hands on Lord Byron's wealth<sup>42</sup>. The British poet died on 19 April 1824, not "as a leader bringing triumph to the co-called Greek independence fighters", but expired on his death-bed from an incurable disease. However, the Greeks have turned him into a legend as the so-called "fighter of the Greek independence revolution"<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> George Finlay: "An adventure during the Greek revolution", *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 1842.

<sup>40</sup> St. Clair, p. 12; Thomas Gordon: *History of the Greek revolution*, 2 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1832; Rev. Robert Walsh: *Residence at Constantinople during the Greek and Turkish revolutions*, London, 2 vols., 1836; see also Douglas Dakin: "The origin of the Greek revolution", *History*, 1952.

<sup>41</sup> St. Clair, p. 116.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150 ff.; Howarth, pp. 12, and 135 ff.; Edward John Trelawny: *Recollections of the last days of Shelley and Byron*, London, 1858.

<sup>43</sup> Howarth, pp. 163-5.

Meanwhile there were stirrings up in Crete, Cyprus, Samos, Samothrace Thessaly, Macedonia and Epirus<sup>44</sup>; whilst the strong measures taken against the rebels by the Ottoman authorities were echoed to the West by the hellenophiles and propagandists as "Turkish barbarity against the Christian people"<sup>45</sup>. The West, which closed its eyes and ears to the extermination of the Turks in Greece, began to raise its voice against the Ottoman reaction. The following leaflet distributed in August 1821 in Hamburg is very instructive:

"Invitation to the youth of Germany. The struggle for religion, life and independence is calling us to arms; humanity and duty are calling us to the aid of the noble Greeks, who are our brothers. We must sacrifice our blood and our life for the sacred cause. The end of Muslim rule in Europe is approaching. The most beautiful land of Europe must be saved from the monsters! Let us join the struggle with all our strength... God is with us, because this is a sacred cause - it is a cause of humanity - it is a struggle for religion, life and independence..."<sup>46</sup>.

The anti-dote of this hellenophile and Greek propaganda were the Western volunteers who, having witnessed the bloody events in the Peloponnese, began to return to their own countries. Many French officers who returned from Greece to Marseilles in April 1822 were describing the Greeks as: "Vile, cowardly and ungrateful". A Prussian officer who had witnessed the Corinth massacres appealed to the volunteers, who were getting ready to go to Greece, as follows:

"There (in Greece) you will find only misery, death and ingratitude. Don't believe what they tell you in Germany and Switzerland; believe what an old soldier is saying"<sup>47</sup>.

Another Prussian officer wrote the following:

"The ancient Greeks no longer exist. The place of Solon, Socrates and Demosthenes has been taken by blind ignorance. The logical laws of Athens have been replaced by barbarism... The Greeks do

<sup>44</sup> Dakin: *Greek struggle*, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *The Examiner*, 1821, pp. 372, 456, 631 and 689.

<sup>46</sup> Wilhelm Barth and Max Kehrig-Korn: *Die Philhellenezeit*, Munich, 1960, p. 95.

<sup>47</sup> Le Febvre, p. 29.

not fulfil the attractive promises they make to the foreigners through the press"<sup>48</sup>.

The same officer described the incidents that took place after the capture of Tripolitsa by the rebels, as follows:

"A young Turkish girl, as beautiful as Helen, the queen of Troy, was shot and killed by the male cousin of Kolokotronis; a Turkish boy, with a noose round his neck, was paraded in the streets; was thrown into a ditch; was stoned, stabbed and then, while he was still alive, was tied to a wooden plank and burnt on fire; three Turkish children were slowly roasted on fire in front of the very eyes of their parents. While all these nasty incidents were taking place, the leader of the rebellion Ypsilanti (? Alexandros Mavrokordatos) remained as a spectator and tried to justify the actions of the rebels as, 'we are at war; anything can happen'"<sup>49</sup>.

### Conclusion

During the Greek rebellion the British, French and Russian governments were clandestinely helping the rebels. These governments did not raise any objection to the dispatch of money, weapons and fighters to the rebels, and also they did their utmost to help them through their own secret agents. On the other hand, the "Reverend" John Hartle, who was in Greece in 1826, in his book published in London in 1831, and entitled *Researches in Greece and the Levant*, claimed that the Turks had suffered terrible things at the hands of the Greeks, and bloody incidents were recorded in the Ottoman Empire, because the Turks had refused to become Christians.

When, in 1825, the fortunes changed, and the army of İbrahim Pasha, the son of Mehmet Ali Pasha, governor of Egypt, began to reconquer the Peloponnese, all those Greek rebels who surrendered were spared. In April 1826, when Tripolitsa, Argos, Kalamata, and Missolonghi were recaptured by the Turks, all Europe began to raise an outcry against them.

<sup>48</sup> L. de Bolmann: *Remarques sur l'etat moral, politique et militaire de la Grèce, Marseilles, 1823.*

<sup>49</sup> St. Clair, pp. 75 ff.

On 4 April 1826 a protocol was signed at St. Petersburg between England and Russia in order to mediate between the Turks and the Greeks, which France also joined later. Following the intervention of Grecophile states England, France and Russia, in accordance with the London Agreement of 6 July 1827, and the complete rout of the Ottoman navy at Navarino on 20 October 1827 by the navies of the same powers, a protocol was signed on 22 March 1829 specifying the frontiers of an independent Greece.

A year later the Greek state was established. This state offered the crown in 1832 to the son of the king of Bavaria, Prince Otho. The resulting Greek kingdom, taking its inspiration from the *Megali Idea*, the driving force of Greek imperialism, began to follow a policy of aggrandisement, first against the Ottoman Empire and later against the government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, but received an unforgettable lesson from the Turks, in Western Anatolia, on 9 September 1922<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> See also S. R. Sonyel: *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Dış Politika* (Turkish War of Liberation and Foreign Policy), Ankara, vols. 1-2, 1973 and 1986.

