

*What do American Sources
Reveal about the Role of
Eleftherios Venizelos in the Asia
Minor Expedition and Its
Outcome*

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Christos Mantzios Visiting Scholar

Australia, October/November 2023

Asia Minor Genocide by the Turks began in the 12th Century and continued until Its 20th Century Successful Conclusion.

- Documented by Speros Vryonis Jr., in a detailed large study on the Dehellenization of Asia Minor in 1971. Most of the Greek communities were destroyed and were repopulated in the 18th century. Except Pontus.
- ***In fact, Smyrna was first destroyed by the Turks in 1330/1332 and depopulated as reported by the Muslim traveller Ibn Battuta.*** It was later resettled and became prosperous again until its final destruction.
- U.S. Smyrna Consul George Horton called Ottoman history largely a history of massacres in his book *The Blight of Asia. Published in 1923.*
- I began my work specifically on Smyrna's 1922 destruction in the 1980's because for me, the subject is very personal, my mother and her entire family were there! Like many of you I heard about the Great Catastrophe from my family but did not know much about it. It has taken more than thirty years of research which I will for you summarize here. What was my purpose? What did I discover?



AU NOM
DU GOUVERNEMENT

DU

ROYAUME DE GRÈCE



Βασί-

N°

850

Signalement

Age *cinquante 50 ans*

Taille *moyenne*

Cheveux *Noirs*

Yeux *chataignes*

Nos *noirs*

Bouche *77*

Signes

Réquérons tous les officiers, civiles et militaires,
du Royaume de Grèce, et plus ceux des pays amis
de laisser passer librement Monsieur Dem. Linaidi réfugié

de Smyrne avec des femmes Gary falo et des ses enfants.

Evagelia dans Magia 19 ans Jeanne 16 Vassilio

12 Nina 10 Constantine et Eleni 2 ans

se rendant en

pour rejoindre sa soeur Ag. Anagnostaki sans

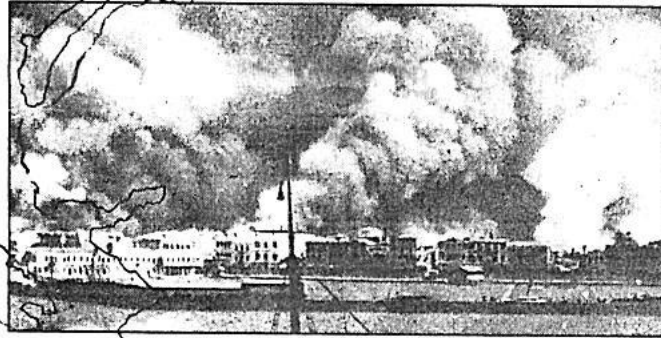
qu'il soit empêché ni molesté par personne et de l'ass

THE Greek American

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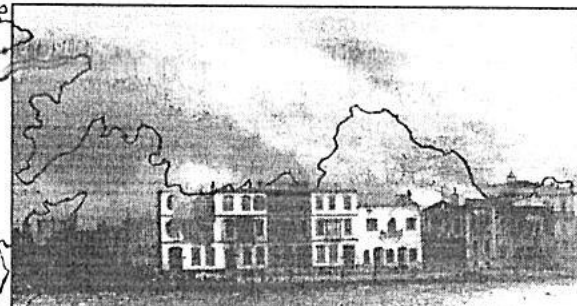
THE ASIA MINOR

CATASTROPHE:



A Personal Account

By Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou



pages
10 & 11

I Wanted to Find Out--Could the U. S. Archives Show Us who was responsible for burning Smyrna in 1922 and killing thousands of innocent Christians? What did the U.S know and do about it.

- I discovered four US Department of State originally classified secret key documents which prove that the Kemalist Turks burned the City as matter of policy and that the British Government and especially the United States Government including the President and the Congress knew shortly after the fire who was responsible and kept it secret for economic and political reasons. Published in my books in 2005 and 2022.
- The U.S. Secretary of State, the Director of the Near East Division and the Senior American Diplomatic and Military Representative in Constantinople-- the High Commissioner-- all had ties to Oil interests and negotiated with the Turks while massacres were taking place which they deliberately minimized and tried to keep from public knowledge. They maintained strict neutrality until public pressure made them order the U.S. navy to evacuate Christian survivors in collaboration with the Turks.
- Heroic American missionaries, teachers and social workers risked their lives and went against government policy to perform “unauthorized acts of humanity.” An American YMCA preacher collaborated with others to save over 200,000 Christians after the great fire.
- HOW DID WE GET TO THE GREAT CATASTROPHE? LETS LOOK AT VENIZELOS AND ASIA MINOR

**AMERICAN ACCOUNTS
DOCUMENTING
THE DESTRUCTION OF SMYRNA**

by the Kemalist Turkish Forces,
September 1922

Edited by
Constantine G. Hatzidimitriou



ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΣ Γ. ΧΑΤΖΗΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ

Η ΚΑΤΑΣΤΡΟΦΗ ΤΗΣ ΣΜΥΡΝΗΣ ΜΕΣΑ ΑΠΟ ΤΙΣ ΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΙΚΕΣ ΠΗΓΕΣ

Η ένοχη των κεμαλικών δυνάμεων για την πυρκαγιά και τις σφαγές σύμφωνα με μαρτυρίες, δημοσιεύματα, επίσημες αναφορές και διαβαθμισμένα έγγραφα

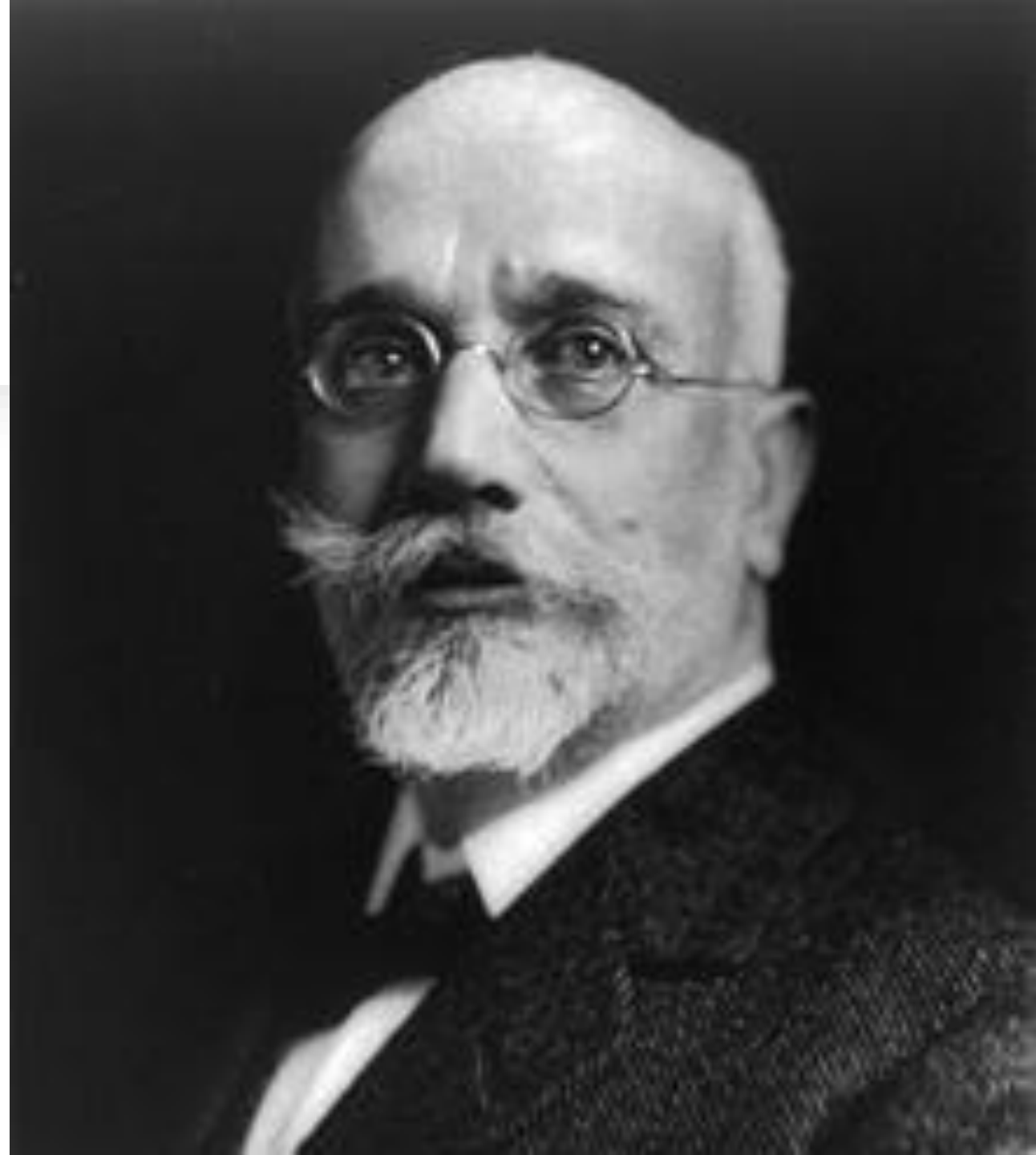
Μετάφραση:
Θελής Ν. Καραγιαννόπουλος



Λαβύρινθος

Eleftherios Venizelos as Prime Minister 1919

- After helping liberate Crete he comes to power in Athens - December 1910
- Greatly Expands Greece During the Balkan Wars, Oct. 1912- July 1913
- King George I is assassinated in March 1913 and his son Constantine is King
- Between 1914 and 1917 Pro German King Constantine wants neutrality during WWI, while Venizelos is pro-Entente (England, France, Italy, Russia).
- This Conflict became known as the National Schism. America is neutral until April 1917



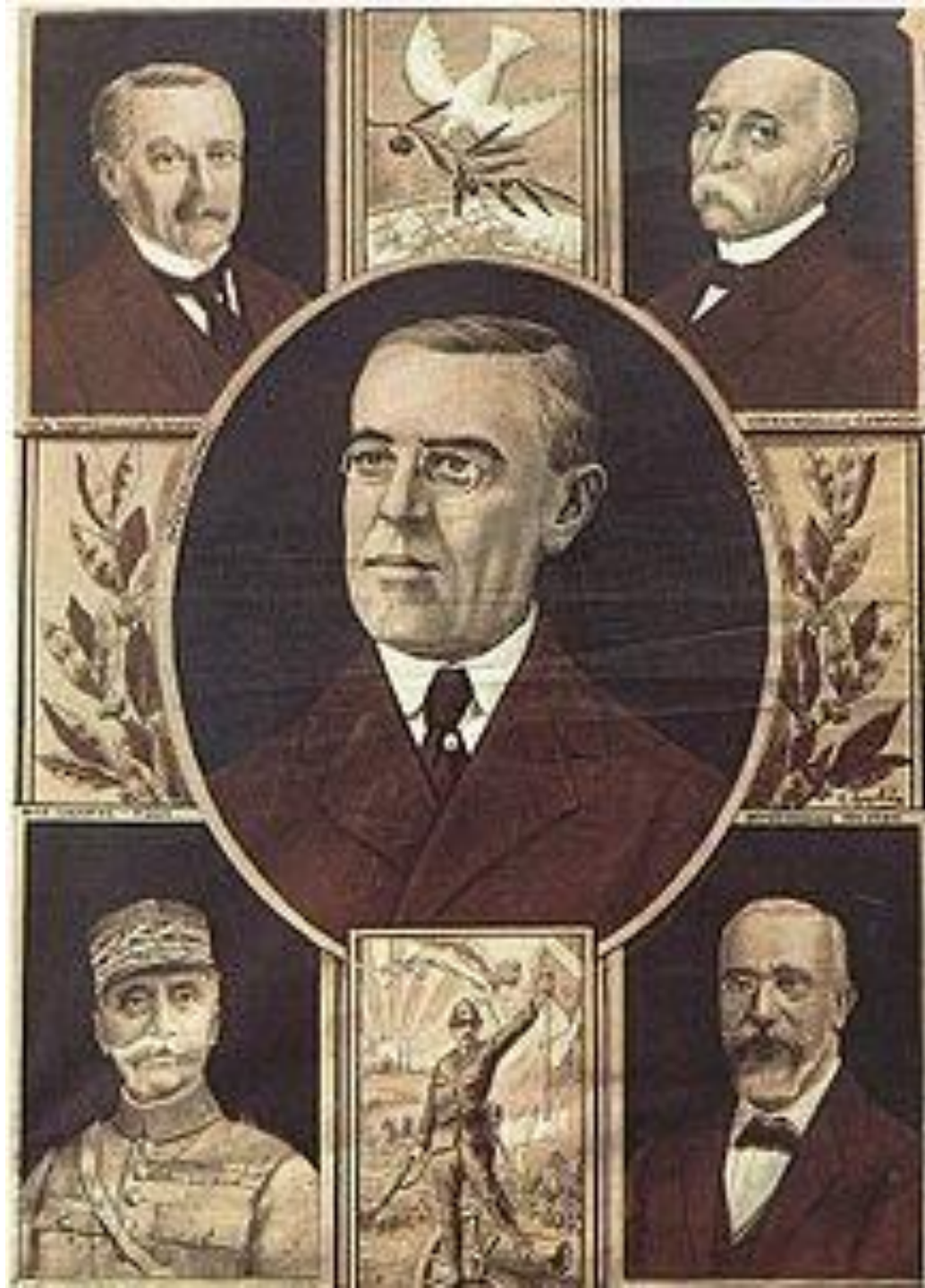
Venizelos'- the Grand Idea [Megale Idea] and Asia Minor

- The Entente need Greece to join WWI against Germany and Turkey. British offer Venizelos the region in and around Smyrna in Asia Minor if Greece joins the war in January 1915.
- King Constantine refuses to join the Entente and dismisses Venizelos. Oct. 1915- France and England land troops in Thessaloniki with Venizelos's support. He forms provisional govt. in August 1916.
- France and England force King Constantine to go into exile his son Alexander becomes King- June 1917.
- July 1917 Greece joins the Entente under Venizelos' leadership. America had joined the Entente in April under President Woodrow Wilson.



The Paris Peace Conference, Venizelos and Wilson Jan. 1919-1920.

- Venizelos led the Greek delegation in Paris and expected the victors to honor their promise to reward Greece's support during WWI with territory in Asia Minor and Thrace; although Italy also expected territory in Asia Minor near the Dodecanese islands it controlled.
- The negotiations were very complicated and led to many changes based on economic, political, and territorial interests which had a major impact on Europe and the Middle East. Experts argued that the Greeks of Asia Minor were not dominant in any region and fewer in number than Venizelos argued.
- England's Lloyd George supported the Greek claims more than France and Italy. Venizelos won over Wilson which was decisive, because he based his position on self-determination for minorities, and their security from Turkish misrule based on U.S. President's famous **Fourteen Points**.
- Point XII stated that: The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantee.



Venizelos Receives permission to Occupy Smyrna Area May 1919

- **The two major reasons he prevailed were:** 1) he included the population of the Greeks in the islands off the coast to make it 800,000; 2) He presented information about Turkish massacres of Christians in the area and the deterioration of law and order. An additional secret concern was that France, England and the US did not want Italy to extend its zone of influence.
- Christian massacres had been taking place all over Asia Minor since 1912. American missionaries such as Gertrude Anthony and Compton and reported them to the press and public outrage put pressure on the powers to do something.
- Evidence of the Ottoman massacres were presented in Constantinople at trials that anticipated those after WWII. Genocide of Anatolian Christians is still underway after WWI.



Venizelos receives permission for Greek Troops to Land in the Smyrna region. May 1919

- Christians view this as a liberation and Turks are outraged.
- Venizelos appoints Stergiades, a trusted colleague from Crete to be the governor who was supposed to win over the Muslim inhabitants.
- The landing results in bloodshed since Turks fire upon the troops and Turkish civilians are killed by the Greeks. A Western inquiry takes place, and 48 Greeks are executed.
- U.S. Consul George Horton returns to Smyrna and reports to Washington.
- Turks sign the Treaty of Sevres in August 1920 giving Greece control for five years when a vote would take place. Treaty NOT ratified.



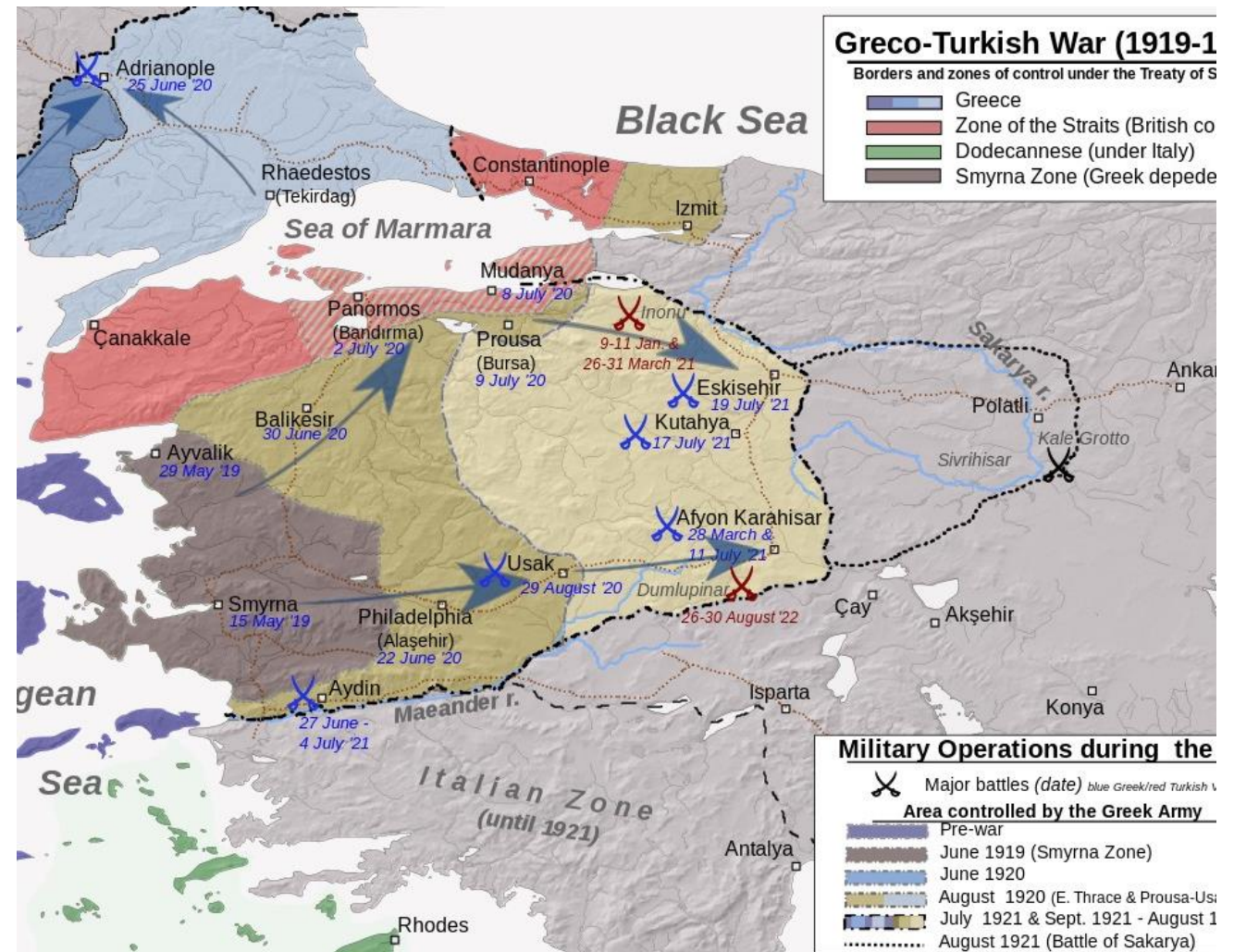
Mustafa Kemal and Rise of Turkish Nationalism After WWI

- May 1919 Kemal lands in Samsun (Pontus) and leads a Turkish nationalist movement which refuses to accept the Ottoman defeat, and the Greek occupation of Smyrna. He builds a new army and supports the massacre of Christians. New massacres occur.
- The Big Four do nothing to stop him and in fact, the Italians and the Russians after their revolution secretly supply him with weapons and supplies.
- Venizelos is forced to expand the Greek zone in order to protect Christians from genocide and stop the Kemalists from trying to turn the WWI defeat into victory.



Venizelos ignores military advice on the conditions needed to defeat Kemal and sustain the Grand Idea in Asia Minor.

- General Metaxas had advised Venizelos not to undertake the Asia Minor campaign unless he had the strong military and economic support of England, France and the United States and the benign neutrality of Italy and Russia.
- These conditions were not met, and the Greek Army becomes involved in an extended war beyond the Smyrna zone to defend Christians and stop the Kemalists from expanding the Turkish zone.
- October 1920, King Alexander dies from a pet monkey bite and Venizelos calls for elections the following month which he loses. He leaves Greece for Paris.
- In Dec. 1920 King Constantine returns and the Royalists now the govt. continue and extend the war. Again, Metaxas objected.



Kemal defeats the Greek Army and they leave Asia Minor

- Even without foreign aid, the Greeks achieved a series of stunning victories in July-August 1921 but failed to occupy Ankara the Kemalists capital which would have been decisive. Stalemate results.
- In the meantime, like Venizelos, U.S. President Wilson was no longer in power. Warren Harding became president in 1921.
- The British offer the Gounaris govt. mediation to broker a truce but they reject it. Venizelos goes to the U.S. on a visit.
- The Greek army was defeated in August 1922 and retreated to Smyrna for evacuation with thousands of civilians.
- As they fled in disarray, they burned Turkish villages and committed atrocities. Many Greeks were taken prisoner- panic/chaos.
- The Greek govt. falls and the Venizelists revolt and take over under Plastiras and Gonatas.



The Great Catastrophe

Smyrna, September 1922

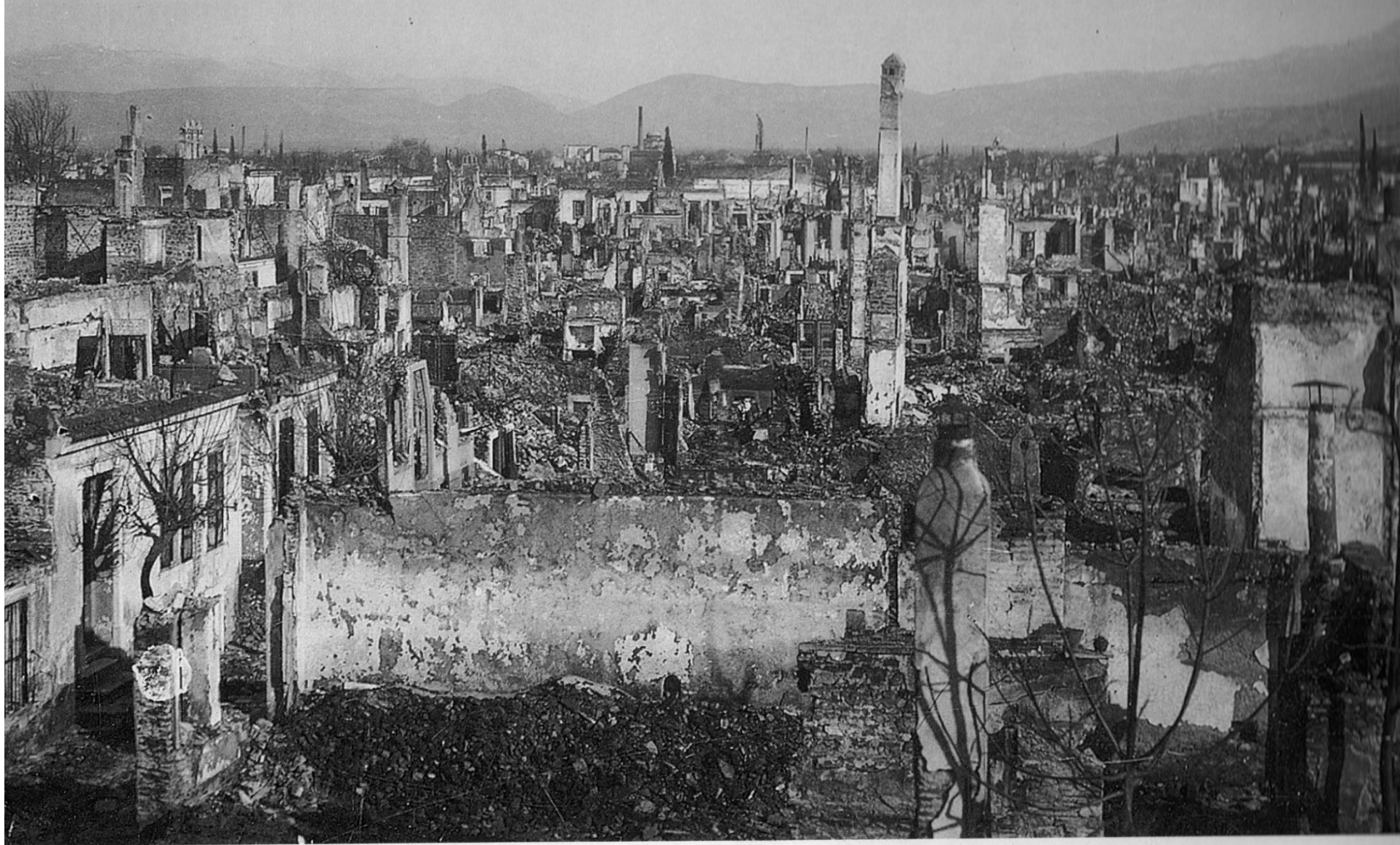
- 200,000 refugees from all over Asia Minor fled to Smyrna with the hope that the western ships would protect them and help them leave if they wished to go.
- Kemal and his troops took control on September 9th and the murder, rape and looting of the Christian sections of the city immediately began. All males above age fifteen were put into concentration camps and eventually massacred.
- Archbishop Chrysostomos, was tortured and then torn to pieces by a Turkish mob.
- Kemal relaxed in a mansion in the suburbs while his troops and the Turks of Smyrna took vengeance on the Christians.
- On September 13th a great fire broke out which devastated the Christian parts of Smyrna. The Turks blamed the Greeks and the Armenians for the fire.





**Οι φλόγες, μαζί με την όμορφη πόλη, αποτέφρωσαν και τα όνειρα
του ελληνισμού στη μικρασιατική Γη.**

The flames devoured both the lovely city and the dreams of the Greeks in Asia Minor.

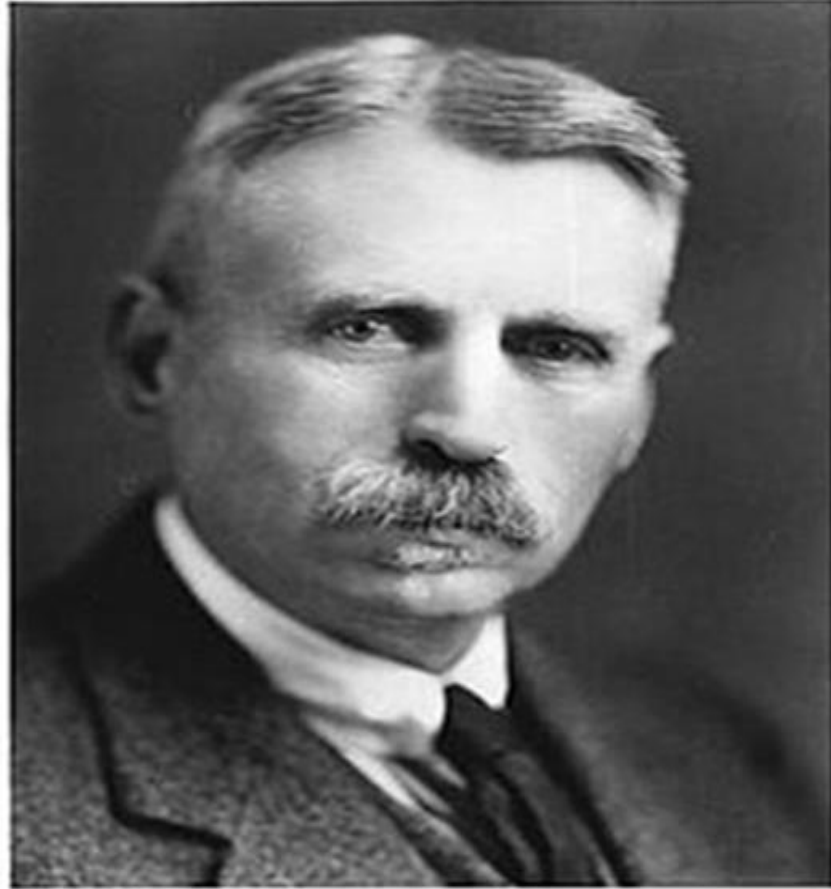


Η πυρκαγιά εξαπλώθηκε στις χριστιανικές συνοικίες και αποτέφρωσε 55.000 σπίτια και 5.000 καταστήματα.

The fire spread to the Christian districts and burned 55,000 homes and 5,000 shops.

Two Factors in U.S. Policy in Smyrna- *One Was, Consul George Horton*

- He had previously served as U.S. in Athens and Thessaloniki
- ***On September 5th 1922, he asked Washington for permission to arbitrate between Turkey and Greece to prevent a massacre— President Harding said no!***
- He was married to a Greek but even Bristol his opponent- declared him to be 'fair and Square." Spoke Greek & Turkish
- He was a scholar, accomplished journalist and writer of fiction and non-fiction.
- His reports to Washington predicted the catastrophe and provided many details of Turkish atrocities— the US kept secret.
- After retirement he published a book which gathered together many American eyewitness accounts.
- He testified before a Congressional Committee about Turkish Responsibility



The Second Factor in US Policy was Admiral Mark L. Bristol

- U.S. High Commissioner in Constantinople who distorted information going to Washington about Asia Minor.
- In charge of the American fleet in the region ***and ordered his ships to maintain strict neutrality despite Turkish atrocities***. Only Americans were to be protected.
- Colleague and friend of Alan Dulles, Head of the Near Eastern Desk at the State Department- ***Future CIA head***.
- Ties to Standard Oil and American business interests
- He was Pro-Kemalist Turkey and biased against Greeks and Armenians—emphasized Greek atrocities on Turks.
- Did not trust Horton and opposed his views.
- Did not trust American missionaries who reported on Turkish atrocities and minimized them.
- Founding member of the American Friends of Turkey



Four Official Key Documents that Prove That the Turks Burned Smyrna in the US Govt. Archives ALL Originally classified as Secret

- 1) A **wire telegraph** from Lieutenant A. S. Merrill, Bristol's intelligence officer dated 9/14 the day after the fire started which says the Turks burned the city to solve their minority problem.
- 2) We have a **summary document of reports** given to Secretary of State Hughes dated Sept. 15th which specifically states that based on many official reports the Turks deliberately burned the city as part of a plan to solve their minority problem. **This was also shared with the President.**
- 3) Merrill **kept a diary that became part of the official record** and was put into the State Department archives. In it he recorded that two American sailors that were stationed ashore, reported to him that they had seen Turkish soldiers throwing rags soaked in oil into homes to spread the fire; and elsewhere repeated his opinion that he believed the Turks burned the city as a matter of policy to prevent the Christians from returning.
- 4) *A lengthy confidential British document* sent to the State Department which indicates that *based on numerous reports they received* they had determined that the Turks had systematically burned the city as part of a deliberate policy---and also asked if the United States had similar information.
- 5) *These are part of numerous other non-Greek and Armenian sources I published as part of the 2005 book and the 2012 detailed article. We also have the text of Congressional Committee*

ing work in making American archival evidence available relating to earlier massacres. This is a model that the Greek-American scholars and community should emulate.³³

In order to illustrate their importance I will reproduce two heretofore unpublished documents from the National Archives that relate directly to the question of who was responsible for the fire that destroyed the Christian sections of Smyrna:

767.68/321³⁴

Telegram Received

Constantinople

Dated September 15, 1922

Rec'd 3 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington D.C.

185. September 15, noon.

Following from Smyrna: "Fourteenth. Am convinced Turks burned Smyrna except Turkish section conforming with definite plan to solve Christian minority problem by forcing allies evacuate Christian minorities. Believe that they will now prepare for an attack on Constantinople Merrill."

BRISTOL

WSB

[Stamped: Department of State, September 16, 1922, Division of Near Eastern Affairs]

Depart

Government

Secstate

U.S.S. *Maryland*

No. 50 for Hughes

My/44, September/1

Situation/in/Near/E

complications/which will
with/Turkey./....

[from page 3 of docun

Confidential/reports/

/and British Foreign Offi
conformity with/definite/

lem/by/forcing/the evacu
eral/hundred thousand t

made/impossible/by the
retreating/ Greeks/as well

[continues on page 4 o
advancing Turks.

Reports/indicate/hea

Native Americans are all
ing/missing/naturalized o

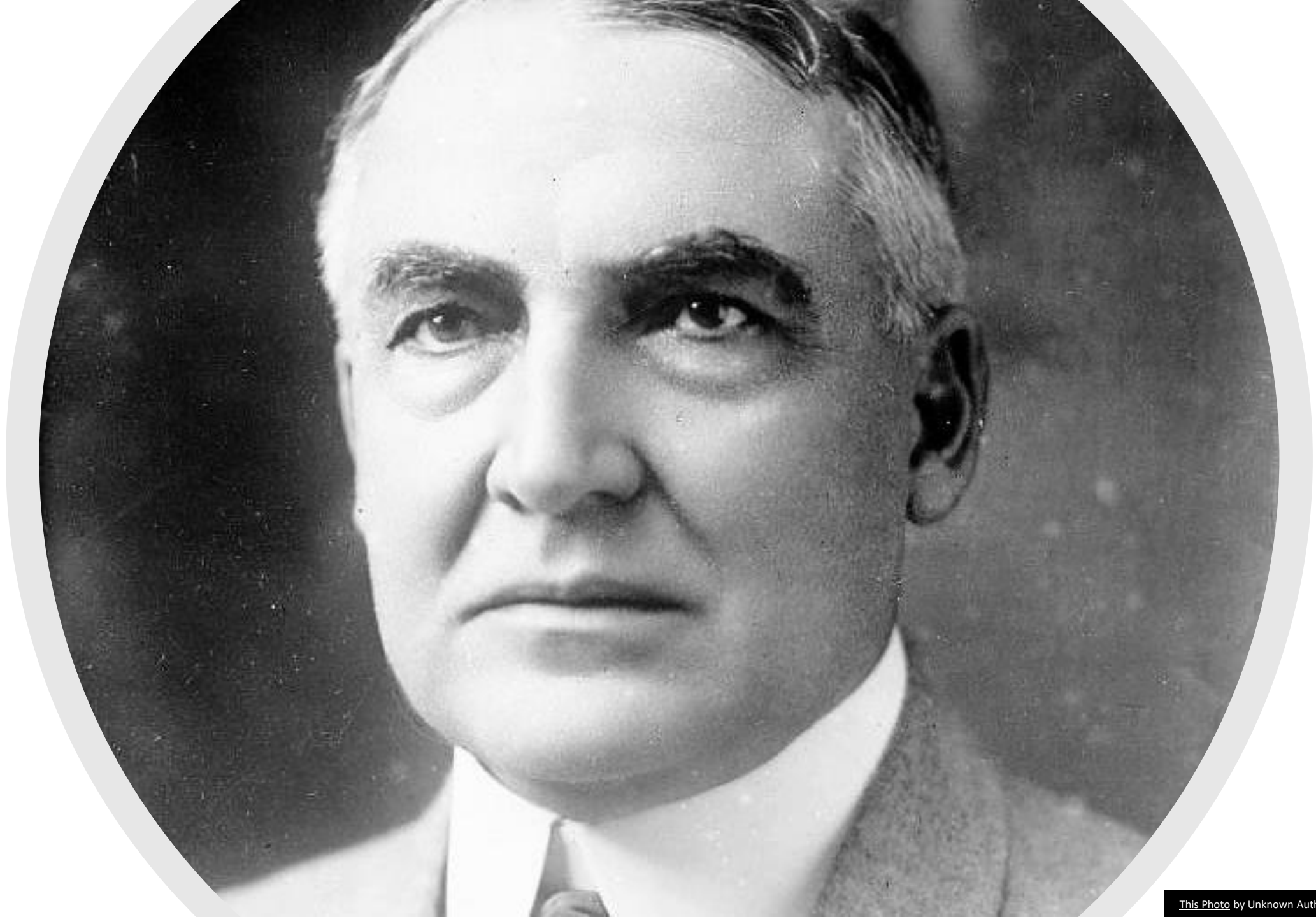
still/in Smyrna/assisting/

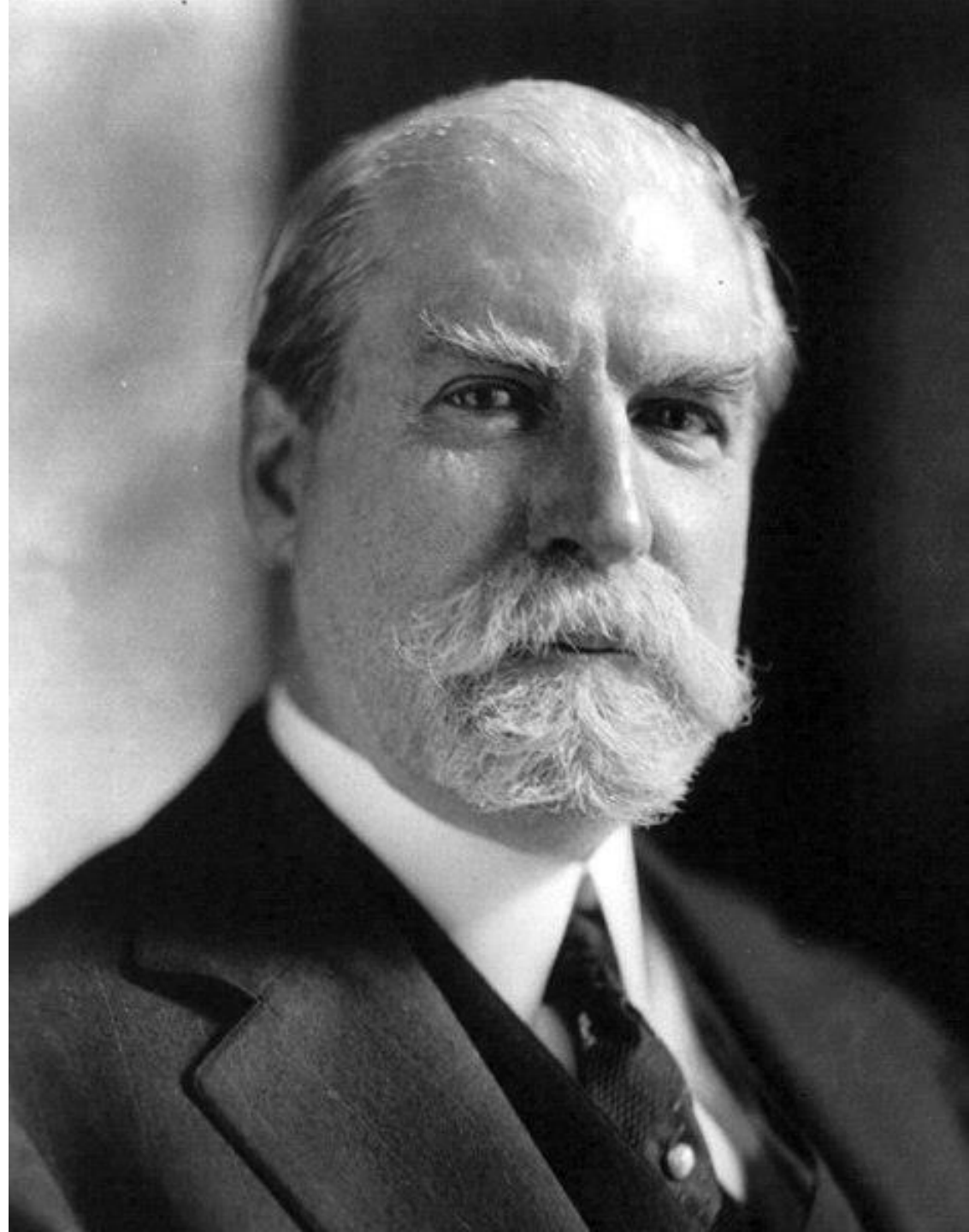
Secstate U.S.S. Maryland No. 50 for Hughes
My/44, September/15,/3p.m.

Situation in Near East extremely acute, with possibility of complications which will involve Great Britain and Allies in war with Turkey....

..... Confidential reports received from our many officials at Smyrna, and British Foreign Office, indicate that Turks burned the city in conformity with definite plan to solve the Christian minority problem by forcing the evacuation of the minorities. The return of several hundred thousand Christians to their homes is apparently made impossible by the wholesale destruction of villages by retreating Greeks as well as by advancing Turks.

Reports indicate heavy loss of American property in Smyrna. Native Americans are all safe. No further details received regarding missing naturalized citizens. Three American destroyers are still in Smyrna assisting relief workers and protecting the American property which escaped the fire.....





Two entries in **Lieutenant Merrill's diary**, sent to Washington as part of a collection of first-hand accounts dispatched by Bristol on September 21st 1922: The entry for **September 14th** reads:

All morning the glow and then the flames burning Smyrna could be seen. We arrived about an hour before dawn and the scene was indescribable. The entire city was ablaze and the harbor was light as day. Thousands of homeless refugees were surging back and forth on the blistering quay—panic stricken [sic] to the point of insanity. The heartrending shrieks of women and children were painful to hear... We had two men ashore from the LAWRENCE acting as chauffeurs... I located the two sailors in their cars. Their stories were identical. They both stated that they had seen Turks spreading the fire. The Turks used rags soaked in oil, which they threw in windows as they ran down the narrow streets in the Armenian quarter...

Merrill's entry for September 16th reads:

The Turks say the fire was set by the Armenians and that 22 of the guilty parties confessed. That the Turks only burned houses fighting the fire with fire. The French pretend to believe this. I am convinced in my own mind that the Turks burned the town. They burned it to force the Allies to evacuate the non-moslems [sic]. Their slogan is "Turkey for the Turks." They consider that all their troubles during the last 40 years can be attributed to the propaganda spread by Christian minorities and that the only solution is to remove these Minorities....

767.69

ackd
11/16/22
710
November 17, 1922

His Majesty's Ambassador is instructed

to communicate unofficially to the United States Govern-
ment the accompanying copy of a preliminary report on the
sacking of Smyrna from His Majesty's High Commissioner
at Constantinople.

767.69/517

It will be observed that the evidence con-
tained therein all points to the conclusion that the
European and native Christian quarters were systematically
destroyed by the Turks as a part of a deliberate policy.

If the United States Government are pre-
pared to communicate in the same way any reports which
may have reached them upon this subject, His Majesty's
Government will be glad to receive them.

The U.S. Government Cover-Up: “Smyrnagate”

- Instead of sending the British the documents we have reviewed or any of U.S. Consul Horton’s reports – the State Department sent the British a report by Vice Consul Barnes which minimized Turkish responsibility and the loss of life.
- The State Dept. lied to Congress: this is how they responded in 2/1923 to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge’s inquiry about the fire and who burned the U.S. Consulate:
- “...As the Consulate building was destroyed in the general conflagration it was not possible to attribute the destruction of this particular building to the individual act of any person or persons. As far as the Department is informed the authors of the fires, apparently of incendiary origin, which brought on the Smyrna conflagration have never been apprehended, nor their identity discovered. On this point conflicting evidence has been received by the Department and the various antagonistic racial groups in Smyrna have each ascribed the origin of the fire to the other..”
- This response ignored an official report that even Vice Consul Barnes and Clifton Davis of the Red Cross had observed the Turks spreading petrol on the consulate steps and spreading the fire!!

November 8, 1922.

UNDER SECRETARY,
NOV 8 1922
DEPT. OF STATE.

Handwritten initials/signature

Mr. Phillips

November 17, 1922

With reference to the British Embassy's inquiry for information as to reports we have received regarding the burning of Smyrna, I feel that it is a question of policy as to how far we should go in furnishing the desired information. The attached despatch from Barnes gives the most comprehensive statement of the Smyrna disaster which we have received and, while it contains information which we might not desire to make public, I do not know that there is anything that we could not appropriately communicate to the British Government on the understanding that it should be kept confidential.

I should, however, be glad to have your instructions on this point before proceeding to answer the British note.

Handwritten signature

F.W. 767.68/517

THE UNDERSECRETARY

Wm. S.

Mr. Dulles

Please prepare reply
to British note
accordingly.

W.S.

H. G. P.

No confidential
stuff, but no harm
accident of his witnessing
killing of Americans.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE SECRETARY

U
Mr. Phillips

The Secretary

proves
approves

W.H. 22

118/22

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE UNDERSECRETARY

Wm. S.

Mr. Secretary

I recommend that
we send a copy of
Vice Consul Barnes'
dep. (attached) to
the British for
their confidential
information

W.S.

ADMISSION OF NEAR EAST REFUGEES

HEARINGS

BEFORE

**THE COMMITTEE ON
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**SIXTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS
FOURTH SESSION**

ON

H. R. 13269

DECEMBER 15, 16, AND 19, 1922

Serial 1-C



WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1922

I also published secret US State Department documents about the *Great Betrayal Book*

- In 1924 Edward Hale Bierstadt, the Executive Secretary for Near East Refugees published a book which argued that the U.S. allowed the Kemalist Turks to massacre the Christians and burn the city for US economic gain. *Lausanne treaty signed with the blood of Christians*
- A series of secret State Department documents by Alan Dulles, Bristol and others outline how they systematically tried to suppress this information and tragically even recruited YMCA hero, Asa Jennings to help them.
- The documents summarized here however, speak for themselves. The Turks burned the city and the U.S knew it and systematically covered this up. I am sure that there are other documents which will show that Venizelos knew this as well and kept it quiet for his own reasons.
- Thank you for your kind attention.