

TEHMINE MARTOYAN,
THE CONTINUATION OF GENOCIDE
POLICY IN SMYRNA (1922),
Yerevan, YSU Press, 2024, 303 pages

Historians presenting the Armenian Genocide have not addressed in detail the genocidal policy organized by Mustafa Kemal against the Armenians and Greeks residing in Smyrna in September 1922.¹ The monograph by Tehmine Martoyan, a senior researcher at the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute and a Candidate of Historical

Sciences, makes a significant contribution to the discussion of this topic.

She studied the documents from the scientific archives of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute and the National Archives of Armenia, as well as contemporary press, primary sources, and historiographical literature on the subject preserved in libraries of various countries (Greece, Hungary, Austria). The author also used the works of prominent American diplomats such as George Horton, Henry Morgenthau, and others based in Smyrna and Constantinople and noted that “the purpose of this research is to present the extermination of Armenians and Greeks in Smyrna in the context of the continuation of genocidal policy” (p. 18).

T. Martoyan refers to the activities of the Armenian and Greek communities that survived in Smyrna at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Briefly addressing the presence of the Armenian community in Smyrna from the 12th to the 19th centuries, she rightly points out that Armenians “engaged in significant educational, scholarly, publishing, cultural, and artisanal activities.” The author notes that between the 17th and 19th centuries, Armenians had four printing houses, Armenian schools, a theater named “Vaspurakan” in Smyrna, as well as a “National Constitution,” according to which “the diaspora elected a national administration” (pp. 31, 35).

¹ See **V. Poghosyan**, *Le désastre de Smyrne de 1922*, Erevan, 2011. **V. Poghosyan**, *The Massacre in Smyrna in 1922 (Collection of Documents)*, Yerevan, 2015 (in Russian).

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Briefly addressing the history of the Greek community in Smyrna, T. Martoyan notes that it was one of the oldest in the city and “placed great importance on the development of culture, education, and the role of the church.” She also highlights that the ancient historical and cultural interactions between Armenians and Greeks testify to “the peaceful and creative cooperation of Armenians and Greeks in Smyrna” (pp. 38, 40).

Studying the implementation of genocidal policies by the Ottoman state in Smyrna, T. Martoyan addresses the deportation of Armenians from the city up until the massacres of 1922, evaluating it as a component of the genocide. She notes that the Young Turks carried it out under military conditions. The author emphasizes that although the deportation of Armenians was partial, during these events, “ritualized killings and examples of dehumanization were more of a rule than an exception.” Thus, she asserts that the Turkish state concealed its responsibility in this matter and later denied it (pp. 47, 48). Simultaneously, discussing Mustafa Kemal’s policy toward the Christian peoples between 1919 and 1921, the author states that both he and his supporters legitimized abuses and persecutions against the Christian communities.

T. Martoyan states that the Turkish organizers created a certain public atmosphere in order to easily carry out the massacres of the Armenian and Greek peoples. At the same time, she notes that the Ottoman state carried out its plan “with the support and direct participation of its people.”

The author also addresses the attitude of the Christian communities toward the Ottoman state’s policies, noting that they considered warnings about their genocide to be false information and relied on European diplomats in Smyrna, who assured them that all Christians were under their protection (p. 67). Nevertheless, revisiting this issue, T. Martoyan affirms: “The conviction of Smyrna’s Armenians and Greeks that nothing catastrophic would happen to them was, in reality, completely unfounded. Tens of thousands of innocent Greeks and Armenians became victims of the Kemalist regime’s genocidal policy” (p. 82).

T. Martoyan discusses in detail the genocide of Armenians and Greeks in Smyrna, using the testimonies of not only Armenian, but also English, American and Greek eyewitnesses, in particular the famous American writer Ernest Hemingway. He notes the attitude of European diplomats towards the extermination of the two Christian peoples, including the testimonies of the American diplomat George Horton, which he confirmed in his memoirs: “The

history of the Ottoman state is generally a history of massacres, always ordered by the higher authorities. "Anyone who believes that Mustafa Kemal's forces withdrew from Smyrna and that he had previously controlled it knows nothing about the history of Turkey or the events in the Near East" (p. 95). Consequently, the author concludes that the criminal plan of the Kemalists against the Christians residing in Smyrna was deliberately devised and executed, making the extermination of the unarmed population a systematic operation.

T. Martoyan also discusses the methods of extermination, particularly the circumstances surrounding the murder of the Greek Metropolitan of Smyrna, Chrysostomos Kalafatis, in 1922, and concludes: "This fact once again proves that the extermination of Armenians and Greeks in Smyrna was a pre-planned, systematic, intentional crime carried out under supervision" (p. 102).

The author also addresses the rapes of Christian women and girls and the suicides of individuals in Smyrna, which had "become common" (p. 113). Based on this, having all the rights, she concludes that Mustafa Kemal's "new state's foundation was built on the blood of innocent people and the appropriation of looted property. Just as the Ottoman Empire was created and strengthened over centuries with blood and fire, the new Turkey was being shaped in the same way" (p. 116).

According to American, European, and Armenian witnesses, T. Martoyan also thoroughly addresses the burning of Armenian and Greek neighborhoods, discussing conflicting viewpoints. Referring to their testimonies, the author notes: "The fire had left the Turkish and Jewish neighborhoods unharmed, while the European, Greek, and Armenian neighborhoods were unharmed" (p. 122). Additionally, regarding the conference held in Lausanne in December 1922, she mentions the statements of the Turkish delegation and points out that "most experts who objectively considered the facts emphasize the point that the accusations against Armenians and Greeks were false" (p. 126).

The author also refers to Mustafa Kemal's approach, that the burning of Smyrna and the extermination of the Armenian and Greek population "was carried out quite coldly." The head of the Turkish state, as T. Martoyan notes, presented the extermination of the Christian peoples of Smyrna and the burning of their city as "just revenge," not an accident, and at the same time states that "no massacres or anything like that took place in Smyrna" (p. 133). At the same time, she also refers to the burning of the Christian neighborhoods of the city, noting that the Turks

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thereby wanted to hide the traces of their own crime, as well as destroy culturally valuable institutions, monuments, and the high-value culture of Christians (p. 135).

The author also addresses the consequences of the genocide and its international legal assessment. She notes that tens of thousands of Armenians and Greeks from Smyrna were rescued and settled in Greece. The number of Armenians in the country ranged from 100,000 to 200,000, and the Greeks showed a friendly attitude towards them. Nevertheless, T. Martoyan states that the resettlement of Armenians and Greeks in Greece was the result of “*forced displacement*” (p. 156, 163).

Referring to the plan for the massacres of Armenians and Greeks in 1922, T. Martoyan notes that while developing it, “the criminal state, taking into account the issue of possible responsibility, consistently concealed the crime committed, placing the blame on the victim.” Therefore, she quite rightly views the targeted extermination of Armenians and Greeks in 1922 as “a periodic continuation of the policy of the Armenian Genocide, which fully complies with the provisions of the Genocide Convention” (pp. 173–174).

In the appendices of his book, T. Martoyan presents George Horton's report from October 27, 1922, testimonies of eyewitness survivors of the Smyrna massacres, a document from the 1924 Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* regarding the trial of the Smyrna fire, and the Armenian National Delegation's diplomatic report detailing the events leading up to the massacres in Smyrna and the fall of the city.


The editor of this book, Doctor of Historical Sciences Ashot Hayruni, in his brief introduction to “Editor's Note,” rightly calls T. Martoyan's book a significant contribution “to historiography and genocide studies” (p. 8). I completely agree with her assessment.

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