

OSMANLI ARAŖTIRMALARI
IX

NeŖir Heyeti — Editorial Board
HALİL İNALCIK — NEJAT GÖYÜNÇ
HEATH W. LOWRY

THE JOURNAL OF OTTOMAN STUDIES
IX

İstanbul - 1989

TURKISH HISTORY :
ON WHOSE SOURCES WILL IT BE BASED?
A CASE STUDY ON THE BURNING OF İZMİR

Heath W. Lowry

«No Picture then, and no history,
can present us with the whole truth :
but those are the best pictures and
the best histories which exhibit such
parts of the truth as most nearly
produce the effect of the whole. He
who is deficient in the art of sel-
ection may, by showing nothing but
the truth, produce all the effect
of the greatest falsehood.»
Thomas Macaulay : 'History.'

My purpose today is rather simple : by citing a number of
examples from scholars who have written on the burning of İzmir
(Smyrna) in September of 1922, and juxtaposing these illustrat-
ions with a variety of eyewitness testimonies preserved in the
National Archives of the United States of America, I intend to
demonstrate the truthfulness of Macaulay's injunction that :

'He who is deficient in the art of selection, may by
showing nothing but the truth, produce all the effect of
the greatest falsehood.'

This task, however, is secondary to my real intent, namely
the issuing of a warning to my Turkish colleagues and to their go-
vernmental representatives who control access to the raw materials

out of which Turkish history should be written. The warning is simple: unless prompt action is taken to provide access to qualified scholars seeking to conduct research in the archives of the Ottoman and modern Turkish states, the history of *your* past is going to be written exclusively by non-specialists on Turkish History, who selectively utilize the archives of other states to buttress preconceptions in regard to Turks and their history.

To illustrate this point, I will return to an examination of the secondary literature dealing with the burning of Izmir, which is available in western languages. Not surprisingly, the majority of such studies have been written from the perspective of Greeks and Armenians. I say not surprisingly, because to date no Turkish source material has been made available to either Turkish or non-Turkish specialists on the period. Consequently, the major body of source material hitherto utilized in writing the history of this event, is that preserved in the United States Archives. The conclusions drawn from this material were recently summed up quite succinctly by the Armenian-American historian, Richard Hovannisian, who wrote :

«When the Turkish Armies pushed the Greek forces into the Aegean Sea and *burned the city of Smyrna in 1922*, the Armenian presence in Turkey, except for Istanbul, was virtually eliminated»¹.

As his source, Hovannisian cites the study of another Armenian American scholar : Marjorie Housepian's *The Smyrna Affair*². Housepian, a Professor of English at New York's Barnard College, published her study in 1966. Written without benefit of the scholarly apparatus (Footnotes & Index) which normally accompany works of history, Housepian concludes that the city was

1 Hovannisian, Richard G., «The Armenian Question, 1878-1923», Published in : *A Crime -Of Silence - The Armenian Genocide Permanent Peoples' Tribunal*. Edited by Gerard Libaridian. London (Zed Books Ltd.), 1985. pp. 11-33. For the quotation in question, see : p. 27.

2 Housepian, Marjorie. *The Smyrna Affair*. New York (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.), 1966 [Hereafter: Housepian, Smyrna].

fired by the Turkish army³, in order to rid the city of its Christian inhabitants. In so doing, she follows the approach adopted forty years earlier by an American Consul, one George Horton, in his book entitled : *The Blight Of Asia : An Account Of The Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers; with the True Story of the Burning of Smyrna*⁴. Horton, as the title of his work implies, believed that the Turkish troops burned the city because military representatives of the Great Powers had led them to believe that they would not be interfered with⁵.

Aside from a slight disagreement over motivation, Horton and Housepian (utilizing many of the same eyewitness sources) are firmly united by their conviction that the actual firing of the city was the work of organized Turkish military units.

*
**

To anyone familiar with the Turkish nationalist struggle between the years of 1919-1922, the Horton-Housepian school of thought (predicated upon a view of Turks as brutal barbarians) rings somewhat hollow. In September of 1922, the Aegean port city of Izmir was the long-awaited goal of the nationalists in their three year struggle against the invading Greek armies. The staging point for the Greek occupation of western Anatolia, it was a veritable storehouse of all the items needed by the forces of Mustafa Kemal. Its warehouses overflowed with much needed supplies of food, clothing, medicine and weapons. Yet, within days of the entry of the Nationalist forces, a massive fire destroyed over three-fourths of the city, and the victorious Turkish armies found themselves in possession, not of the only real city in the territories they controlled (Istanbul was still under Allied occupation), but rather with a smoldering ruin occupied by several hundred

3 Housepian, *Smyrna* : Chapter XIV., pp. 141-.

4 Horton, George. *The Blight Of Asia*. Indianapolis (The Bobbs-Merrill Company), 1926 [Hereafter : Horton, *Blight*]. See : Chapter XVII. 'Where and When the Fires Were Lighted,' pp. 144-154.

5 Horton, *Blight*: pp. 153-154.

thousand homeless refugees. Indeed, if one is to accept the Horton-Housepian analysis, we are faced with one of the few incidents in history where a victorious army systematically destroyed the fruits of their victory. Even the barbarian Huns made certain they retrieved movable properties before firing the cities they overran. Logically then, the Horton-Housepian account suggests that the Turkish Nationalist forces were not only barbarians, but lacked the instincts of earlier barbarian hordes!

*
**

To counter the version of the Izmir fire presented in such works, we must turn to western accounts written by scholars who are specialists on the Turkish history of the period. Names such as Bernard Lewis, Donald Webster, Lord Kinross, Richard Robinson, and Stanford Shaw, come to mind. A quick survey of their works dealing with this period reveals the following :

- a) *Bernard Lewis* : «The Turks won a crushing victory at Dumlupınar and, driving the Greeks before them, re-occupied Izmir on 9 September, thus completing the reconquest of Anatolia»⁶. In other words, Lewis does not mention the fire at all;
- b) *Donald Webster* : «All the world heard about the great fire which destroyed much of beautiful Izmir. While every partisan accuses enemies of the incendiarism, the preponderance of impartial opinion blames the terror-stricken Armenians, who had bet their money on the wrong horse — a separatist national rather than a cultural individuality within the framework of the new, *laïque* Turkey»⁷. Webster, who does not footnote this passage,

6 Lewis, Bernard, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Second Edition. London (Oxford University Press), 1968, p. 254. [Hereafter: Lewis, *Emergence*].

7 Webster, Donald Everett. *The Turkey of Ataturk - Social Process In The Turkish Reformation*. Philadelphia (American Academy of Political and Social Science), 1939, p. 96.

presumably formed his opinion while serving as a teacher at the International College in Izmir between 1931-1934;

- c) *Lord Kinross* : «The internecine violence led, more or less by accident, to the outbreak of a catastrophic fire. Its origins were never satisfactorily explained. Kemal maintained to Admiral Dumesnil that it had been deliberately planned by an Armenian incendiary organization, and that before the arrival of the Turks speeches had been made in the churches, calling for the burning of the city as a sacred duty. Fuel for the purpose had been found in the houses of Armenian women, and several incendiaries had been arrested. Others accused the Turks themselves of deliberately starting the fire under the orders or at least with the connivance of Nur-ed-Din Pasha, who had a reputation for fanaticism and cruelty. Most probably it started when the Turks, rounding up the Armenians to confiscate their arms, besieged a band of them in a building in which they had taken refuge. Deciding to burn them out, they set it alight with petrol, placing a cordon of sentries around to arrest or shoot them as they escaped. Meanwhile the Armenians started other fires nearby to divert the Turks from their main objective. The quarter was on the outskirts of the city. But a strong wind, for which they had not allowed, quickly carried the flames towards the city. By the early evening several other quarters were on fire, and a thousand homes, built flimsily of lath and plaster, had been reduced to ashes. The flames were being spread by looters, and doubtless also by Turkish soldiers, paying off scores. The fire brigade was powerless to cope with such a conflagration, and at Ismet's headquarters the Turks alleged that its hose pipes had been deliberately severed. Ismet himself chose to declare that the Greeks had planned to burn the city»⁸. Kinross devoted an entire chapter of his work to the fire which destroyed Izmir;

⁸ Lord Kinross, *Ataturk: A Biography of Mustafa Kemal, Father of Modern Turkey*. New York (William Morrow & Company), 1965, pp. 370-371. Kinross devotes Chapter 40 of his work, 'The Burning of Smyrna' [pp. 365-375] to the fire which destroyed Izmir.

- d) *Richard Robinson*: «The Battle of Sakarya began on August 22. By the end of the first week of September the Greeks began to weaken. In another week, they were falling back. One year [sic. week] later they were literally driven into the sea at Izmir, where they were evacuated by Allied ships. The date was September 9, 1922»⁹. Robinson, likewise does not make any reference to the burning of the city;
- e) *Stanford Shaw* : «On September 13 a fire broke out in the Armenian quarter of the city. It spread rapidly through gasoline-soaked buildings while the Turkish army's efforts to extinguish it were stymied by the discovery that all the city's fire hoses had been cut and the fire cisterns emptied. In a single day as many as 25,000 buildings were burnt and half the great city destroyed. Perhaps the last atrocity of the war was the suggestion, quickly taken up by the western press, that the victorious Turkish army was responsible for burning the conquered second city of the old empire. Actual culpability has never been proved»¹⁰. Shaw, while rejecting outright the suggestion that the Turkish army fired the city, remains neutral on the question of who did.

*
**

This random sampling of the information contained vis-à-vis the burning of Izmir in standard works by western scholars is a natural reflection of the dearth of consensus on this question. Running from the absolute silence of Bernard Lewis and Richard Robinson, to Shaw's rejection of the charge of Turkish army complicity, to Kinross' determination that it resulted from accidental causes, and Webster's conclusion of Armenian involvement, it is

9 Robinson, Richard D. *The First Turkish Republic : A Case Study in National Development*. Cambridge (Harvard University Press), 1963, p. 74.

10 Shaw, Stanford J. & Shaw, Ezel Kural. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Volume II : Reform, Revolution, and Republic : The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press), 1977, p. 363.

clear that no consensus exists among western specialists on the founding of the Turkish Republic, as to the cause of the fire.

*
**

We must now turn to an examination of the only archival material hitherto employed in the published works on the Izmir fire. Specifically, the American Archives utilized by Marjorie Housepian in her work : *The Smyrna Affair*. A careful analysis of Housepian's discussion of the fire, establishes that she relied on three basic archival sources, plus a variety of survivor testimonies. Chief among her sources are a variety of materials preserved in the papers of Admiral Mark L. Bristol in the U.S. Library of Congress¹¹. In addition, she often cites material from the National Archives of the United States : Naval Records Collection [Record Group # 45]¹², and from the same archives, a variety of 'Files of the Department of State'¹³.

At the outset it must be acknowledged that her analysis is fully supported by the sources she uses. What is not so clear at first reading is the fact that her utilization of her sources has been extremely *selective*. As a case in point, let us examine her

11 Housepian, *Smyrna* : pp. 105-140 & pp. 251-255. As previously noted, Housepian fails to conform to anything resembling standard scholarly apparatus in her work. In place of 'footnotes', she provides notes for each chapter at the end of her study. Arranged in the same order as the contents of the chapter they refer to, the reader is forced to attempt to determine which item referred to in the 'notes' serves as her source for statements made in the text. Stated differently, in order to evaluate her utilization of the sources she uses, the reader must actually check the originals of the documents she cites. The extent to which she relied on the Bristol Papers in her discussion of the fire may be determined by checking the 'notes' for Chapters X-XIII (pp. 251-255).

12 Given the fact that most of the relevant documents pertaining to the fire in Record Group # 45, are likewise found in the Bristol Papers, it is difficult to determine why Housepian chose to cite these two sources in the manner she did, i.e., rather than referring to both she generally provides a reference to one or the other. For her utilization of RG # 45 materials on the fire see: pp. 251-255.

13 Among the 'Files of the Department of State' used by Housepian are: Nos. 763.72, 767.68, 867.00 and 868.48. See: Housepian, *Smyrna*: p. 235 & pp. 251-255.

discussion of the testimony of Paul Grescovich, the commander of the Smyrna Insurance Company Fire Brigade, relative to the origins of the fire and efforts to control it. Housepian was aware of the existence of Grescovich and his testimony, because in her Bibliography under 'Official' published sources she cites the following :

«Report of Mr. Grescovich, Commender [sic] of the Smyrne Fire Brigade on the Great fire in Smyrna. Constantinople, 1922¹⁴.

Interestingly enough, the above source is the only one in her 'Bibliography' which Housepian annotates. As regards Grescovich's testimony, she writes :

«Mr. Grescovich alleges that he saw two Greek soldiers light a box of matches on September 8 and throw the lighted box in the house of an Englishman. Further, that the Greeks said they would burn Smyrna when they left, and that the British signalmen on their ships were signalling to each other as follows : 'The British Hospital is to be burned.' On the 11th and 12th, Mr. Grescovich saw through his field glasses, 'The activities of the Armenians on the Armenian cathedral and on the roofs of their other high buildings'. A number of firemen 'saw from the steeple of the Armenian Cathedral signaling in code known to be previously prearranged.'

From here on Mr. Grescovich describes how houses exploded and burned all over the Armenian quarter. He complained to Kiazam Pasha and suggested the area be blockaded. He was fired on while at work, and bullets made holes in his hose»¹⁵.

As if in anticipation of queries as to why she chose not to cite Grescovich's report in her notes, the above annotation appears un-

¹⁴ Housepian, *Smyrna*: p. 229.

¹⁵ Housepian, *Smyrna*: pp. 229-230.

der a heading which reads : «Three publications by the Turks give their view of Greek atrocities in Turkey, and of the fire»¹⁶. Indeed, a thorough reading of her notes appended to the chapters dealing with the fire, establishes that she completely ignored the testimony of Grescovich¹⁷.

More important than her rejection of the Turkish publication of Grescovich's testimony, is her failure to deal with a very important document housed in the Bristol Papers, relative to Grescovich and his testimony. This document (a newspaper report) was written by Mark O. Prentiss, an eyewitness to the burning of the city in his capacity as a member of the 'Constantinople Disaster Relief Committee', and as a representative of the 'Near East Relief' organization¹⁸. Prentiss, together with his fellow members of the 'CDRC' arrived in Izmir at 8:30 a.m. on the morning of September 9, 1922 aboard the USS Lawrence¹⁹. Prentiss provides the following

16 Housepian, *Smyrna*: p. 229.

17 Housepian, *Smyrna*: pp. 251-255.

18 Housed in the Library of Congress series titled: Bristol, *General Correspondence*, Container # 38 (November-December, 1922 & January-February, 1923), is a letter from Mark O. Prentiss to Adm. Mark Bristol dated January 11, 1923. Attached to it is a seven page article titled : «The Hitherto Untold Story of the Smyrna Fire Told by Mark O. Prentiss, American Representative of the Near East Relief. Armenians, Not Turks, Set the Fire. Evidence of Smyrna Fire Chief Revealed». [Hereafter : Prentiss, *Fire*]. This key document appears as *Appendix I.* at the end of this paper. Given the extent to which Housepian utilized the Bristol Papers, it is hard to imagine that she remained unaware of this document. As its testimony runs counter to her arguments, one of two reasons must account for its absence in her work: a) she missed it in the research phase of her work; or, b) she was aware of its existence and for reasons of her own decided to suppress it.

19 For the most important day by day account (covering September 8-16, 1922) is that compiled by A.J. Hepburn, the senior American naval official present in Izmir throughout the time in question. Hepburn's 'Report Upon Smyrna Disaster' was submitted to Admiral Bristol (Commander, U.S. Naval Detachment in Turkish Waters) on September 25, 1922. It provides a day-by-day record (comprised of 48 single-spaced typed pages). In his own words, Hepburn's report was intended to be «a narrative of the significant and outstanding features of the period, with such comment and explanation as are necessary to a clear understanding of events, measures taken, and the general situation as they appeared to me at the time». Selectively utilized by Housepian,

information relevant to Grescovich and his eyewitness testimony of the conflagration :

- a) He identifies Grescovich as : «Paul Grescovich, Chief of the Smyrna Fire Department»²⁰.
- b) Reports that Grescovich told him that on Wednesday, September 13, 1922 «he had discovered bundles of discarded clothing, rags and bedding, covered with petroleum, in several of the institutions recently deserted by Armenian refugees»²¹;
- c) Grescovich, whom Prentiss had first met on Sunday, September 10th is described by Prentiss as follows : «I needed no interpreter, as he speaks English fluently. He is an engineer, born and educated in Austria, and has been identified with several large engineering enterprises in Turkey. Twelve years ago he became chief of the Smyrna fire department, which he continued to conduct in a very efficient manner, for that part of the world, during the Greek occupancy»²².
- d) On the week prior to the entry of the Turkish forces to the city, Grescovich stated the following : «During the first week of September there had been an average of five fires per day with which his crippled department had to cope. In his opinion most of these fires were caused by carelessness, but some undoubtedly were of incendiary origin. The average number of fires in a normal year, he said, would be about one in ten days, and the increase to five a day seemed significant»²³.

Hepburn's account [See: National Archives of the United States: Naval Records Collection, Record Group # 45(Box 713)] of the origins of the fire [pp. 46-7] is totally ignored by Housepian. For his analysis of the origins of the fire, see: *APPENDIX II*. attached to this paper. [Hereafter: Hepburn, *Smyrna Disaster*].

20 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 1.

21 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 4.

22 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 4.

23 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 4.

- e) Following the arrival of the Turkish authorities, Grescovich «applied for additional men and fire fighting equipment. Instead of helping him, the Turkish military governor, learning that there were still twelve Greeks in the fire department, ordered their immediate arrest, which left the department with only thirty-seven men. Sunday night [Sept. 10th], Monday and Monday night [Sept. 11th] and Tuesday [Sept. 12th], so many fires were reported at such widely separated points, that the fire department was absolutely unable to deal with them. They were extinguished by Turkish soldiers»²⁴.
- f) As to the source of the fires which ultimately destroyed the city «it was on Wednesday [Sept. 13th] that Grescovich himself found evidence of incendiarism. He told me that early that morning he had seen two Armenian priests escorting several thousand men, women and children from the Armenian schools and Dominican Churches where they had taken refuge down to the quays. When he presently went into these institutions, he found petroleum-soaked refuse ready for the torch»²⁵.

Grescovich further stated «that his own firemen, as well as Turkish guards, had shot down many Armenian young men disguised either as women or as Turkish irregular soldiers, who were caught setting fires during Tuesday night [Sept. 12th] and Wednesday [Sept. 13th] morning»²⁶.

- g) Grescovich described Turkish response to the fires in the following terms (as reported by Prentiss) : «Shortly after noon [Wednesday, Sept. 13th] Grescovich convinced that the city was doomed, again went to the military authorities to ask for help, and again it was not forthcoming. It was not, until six o'clock in the evening that he was given a company of 100 soldiers to serve under his direction and it was eight o'clock at night before the soldiers began the

24 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 4.

25 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 5.

26 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 5.

destruction of buildings by bombs, in order to check the spread of the fire»²⁷.

- h) On Grescovich's veracity Prentiss states : «Grescovich impressed me as a thoroughly reliable witness»²⁸. In support of this assesment he provides the following account of the nature of his discussions with Grescovich : «It was not until Three days later [Saturday, September 16th] that I saw Grescovich again. He told me he had had no sleep for five days and nights and he looked the part. Not only was he physically exhausted, but his emotions had been so wrought upon by the sights he had seen, that he begged to be excused from talking over details. Realizing, however, that this was the time to get the truth, I pressed him for information, and we went over in chronological order the history of the fire. On that, and on several succeeding days, we explored the greater part of the burned area of the city, and I made notes of the most important things he told me. Later, when Lloyd's men came to ascertain the extent of the damage, he refused to make any statement at all»²⁹.

Regardless of whether or not one credits the testimony of Grescovich, the individual charged with fighting the fire, no serious discussion of the burning of Izmir is possible without taking his account under consideration. As a case in point, we may cite Housepian's one example of an American eyewitness who claimed to observe Turkish soldiers lighting fires in the city. Her source is the American Vice-Consul Maynard Barnes who she states :

«Had seen Turkish soldiers pouring gasoline liberally along the street in front of the consulate, was meanwhile working feverishly to save the consular records»³⁰.

Barnes' account, the most frequently cited source of official Turkish complicity in the fire, appears somewhat differently in the

27 Prentiss, *Fire*: pp. 5-6.

28 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 4.

29 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 6.

30 Housepian, *Smyrna*: p. 155.

official American account, that compiled by Hepburn. There, in describing the events of Thursday evening, September 14th., the following description is given :

«The fire continued to burn throughout the night though considerably diminished. Several separate fires were observed to start in locations distant from the general conflagration, plainly indicating incendiarism. The Passport office, located upon the North pier of the inner harbor, burned after midnight with many heavy explosions, probably caused by gasoline, as a number of drums had been observed in and near this building a day or two previously. This building was only a few hundred yards from the 'Litchfields' anchorage, and the actions of the person that fired it were plainly observed by Vice Consul Barnes from the forecastle, although the distance was too great to allow of any sort of identification. A number of Turkish troops were stationed at the inshore end of the building at the time»³¹.

Leaving aside the major discrepancies between Housepian's version and that found in the Hepburn report, and recalling Grescovich's account of attempts to halt the spread of the fire, it is clear that from six o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, September 13th. forward, a company of 100 Turkish soldiers, under his orders, were destroying buildings by bombs, in an attempt to check the spread of the fire³². In other words, any description of uniformed Turkish soldiers lighting fires in the city, which occurs after 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday the 13th of September, may be assumed to be part of the fire-fightings rather than incendiary attempts.

Vice-Consul Barnes offered his own assessment of the fire and its causes in another document preserved in the Bristol Papers. As in the case of the Prentiss report, Housepian conveniently and selectively managed to ignore Barnes' conclusions :

31 Hepburn, *Smyrna Disaster*: p. 33.

32 Prentiss, *Fire*: pp. 5-6.

«American press accounts of the Smyrna irregularities arriving here contain gross exaggerations and untruths. Impossible to say definitely number Greeks and Armenians killed-perhaps 2,000. Atrocities committed in the interior by Greeks and Armenians outstrip those committed by the Turks in Smyrna in savagery and wanton destruction. Majority of the Americans here believe Smyrna fired by Armenians.»³³

Housepian's failure to deal with the testimony of Fire-Chief Grescovich, also raises serious questions in regard to her attempts to use the testimony of two of the city's Greek firemen vis-à-vis Turkish culpability³⁴. Specifically, her reliance on the accounts of a Sergeant Tchorbadjis and fireman Emmanuel Katsoros as preserved in the transcript of a London trial in 1924³⁵, suffers from her failure to rebut Grescovich's statement that following the arrival of the Turkish authorities on September 9, 1922, he had :

«applied for additional men and fire-fighting equipment. Instead of helping him, the Turkish-Military Governor, learning that there were still twelve Greeks in the fire department, ordered their immediate arrest, which left the department with only thirty-seven men. Sunday night [Sept. 10th.], Monday and Monday night [Sept. 11th.] and Tuesday [Sept. 12th.], so many fires were reported at such widely separated points, that the fire department was absolutely unable to deal with them. They were extinguished by Turkish soldiers»³⁶.

33 Library of Congress : Bristol Papers - 'Subject Files'. Container # 75 (Folder on High Commissioner Messages Received, 1922; and, Inquiry, 1919). Barnes' dispatch is dated October 9, 1922 and was sent from the USS Edsall by radio.

34 Housepian, *Smyrna*: pp. 142-144.

35 Housepian, *Smyrna* : pp. 235 & 142-144. The trial in question was held at the Royal Courts of Justice, King's Bench Division, Commercial List, London, on December 2, 1924. It was a law-suit brought by the American Tobacco Company, Inc. versus the Guardian Assurance Co., Ltd. Housepian used a copy of the transcript preserved in the Bristol Papers - U.S. Library of Congress.

36 Prentiss, *Fire*: p. 4.

This statement must be reconciled with Sergeant Tchorbadjis claims that he was fighting fire on Tuesday [Sept. 12th.] and Wednesday [Sept. 13th.] morning³⁷. If, as Grescovich states, Tchorbadjis and his eleven fellow Greek members of the department were under arrest, his account of the following incident on Wednesday [Sept. 13th.] morning, is highly questionable :

«The ten thirty alarm on Suyane Street disclosed ten houses ablaze. These fires were barely under control when an alarm came from the Armenian church several streets away. Leaving some firemen at the church, Tchorbadjis hurried on alone toward some flames on Tchoukour Street; 'I climbed to the roof and found bedding on fire', he testified later. 'Then I went down into one of the rooms and saw a Turkish soldier, well armed. He was setting fire to the interior of a drawer. He looked rather fiercely at me when he saw me, but he left. I caught the strong smel of petroleum»³⁸.

By 'selectively' ignoring the contemporary eyewitness testimony of the Fire-Chief Grescovich, and totally endorsing that of Tchorbadjis (delivered two years the event), Housepian raises serious doubts as to her historical methodology.

In short, Housepian's study fully illustrates the truth of Macaulay's observation:

«He [she] who is deficient in the art of selection, may by showing nothing but the truth, produce all the effect of the greatest falsehood».

As even these few examples establish, Housepian's highly selective utilization of the materials preserved in the U.S. National Archives and the Library of Congress, casts serious doubt upon her contention that the Turkish military were the perpetrators of the conflagration which destroyed the city of Izmir on September

37 Housepian, *Smyrna*: pp. 142-143.

38 Housepian, *Smyrna*: p. 143.

13-15, 1922. Her study, while well written (as befits a professor of English), adds up to very poor history, i.e., she has produced a work of polemic rather than one based on sound historical scholarship.

*
**

What is important here however is not the quality of Housepian's scholarship, but rather, the fact that the testimonies preserved in the United States National Archives and the Bristol Papers in the Library of Congress, are, to say the least, conflicting. On the basis of a selective utilization of their contents each of the following conclusions may be reached :

A) The Izmir fire was deliberately set by the Armenian population of the city;

B) The Izmir fire was deliberately set by the Greek inhabitants of the city;

C) The Izmir fire was deliberately set by the Turkish army;

D) The Izmir fire was an accident - stemming from the looting of Turkish irregular troops.

Given the diversity of interpretations it is possible to draw from the wide variety of testimonies preserved in the American accounts (as well as those in the British, French, and Italian sources), the actual cause and origin of the conflagration will never be determined on the basis of this material alone. One key missing element is obviously the records of the Turkish military authorities, nominally in control of the city throughout the period in question (Turkish forces entered the city on September 9, 1922).³⁹ To date, no scholar

³⁹ The clearest chronology of what occurred in the following days is that preserved in Hepburn, *Smyrna Disaster*: pp. 1-48. He provides the following detail on the actual sequence of the fire:

a) *Saturday, September 9, 1922*: At 11:30 a.m. the first Turkish cavalry forces enter the central city [p. 7]. The senior Turkish officer is a Murcelle Pasha [p. 8];

b) *Sunday, September 10, 1922*: Reports of isolated incidents of sniping and looting [pp. 10-12]; Murcelle Pasha is replaced by Nouredine Pasha [p. 12]; looting and scattered killings are reported [p. 13];

(Turkish or foreign) has been given access to any of the records surviving for the events in question.

c) *Monday, September 11, 1922*: American relief officials establish first personal contact with Nur-ed-din Pasha [pp. 14-20];

d) *Tuesday, September 11, 1922*: Meeting with the military commander, Kiasim Pasha [pp. 21-2]; plans for evacuation of naturalized American citizens [p. 23];

e) *Wednesday, September 13, 1922*: U.S. Consul-General Horton sails from Izmir for Piraeus with naturalized Americans [p. 24]; First report of fire: a house burning in the Armenian quarter in the forenoon [p. 25]; 2:00 p. m. reports of three fires burning around the compound of the Intercollegiate Institute [p. 25]; By 6:00 p.m. Hepburn observes that: «Three distinct lanes of fire were to be seen, two of which appeared to have originated in the Armenian district close to the Collegiate Institute, so far as I could judge, and the third was somewhat to the left. The first two fires were burning fiercely and sweeping directly towards the water front. The Consulate was directly in the path of the southernmost blaze. The adjacent fire to the northward was on a somewhat broader front and its center appeared to be headed about for the Smyrna Theatre. The third and most northernmost fire seemed to be under control, or almost burned out. The wind had been very light during the day from the southeast and it was now increasing. I judged the fire would reach the Consulate in about two hours if the wind held; but this estimate was considerably in error, as the Consulate did not burn until about midnight» [pp. 26-7]; at approximately 9:00 p.m. Hepburn reports: «The wind had been steadily increasing since sunset and was now blowing fresh on the port quarter» [p. 28]; «From the Point to the Passport office, a distance of about a mile, the broad waterfront streets appeared to be one solidly packed mass of humanity, domestic animals, vehicles and luggage. Beyond, still separated from the crowd by a few short unburned blocks, the city was a mass of flame driving directly down upon the waterfront by a stiff breeze» [p. 29];

f) *Thursday, September 14, 1922*: «The fire continued to burn fiercely all day. It had reached the waterfront about 1:30 a.m., at a point near the open square just south of the Smyrna Theatre. It did not immediately spread along the waterfront from this point, but during the course of the day worked slowly in from the rear at several points both north and south of its original outbreak on the quay» [p. 31]; «The fire continued to burn throughout the night though considerably diminished. Several separate fires were observed to start in locations distant from the general conflagration, plainly indicating incendiarism. The Passport Office, located upon the north pier of the inner harbor, burned after midnight with many heavy explosions, probably caused by gasoline, as a number of drums had been observed in and near this building a day or two previously. This building was only a few hundred yards from the LITCHFIELD's anchorage, and the actions of the person that fired it were plainly observed by Vice-Consul Barnes from the forecandle, although the distance was too great to

Indeed, even standard sources, such as Mustafa Kemal's six-day speech, the *Nutuk*, make no reference to the fire which destroyed Izmir⁴⁰.

Such refusal to permit scholars to the raw material out of which history must be written means only one thing: TURKISH HISTORY WILL BE WRITTEN (AND DISSEMINATED IN THE WEST) ON THE BASIS OF RECORDS PRESERVED BY OTHER STATES. Hopefully, the case study of *'The Smyrna Affair,'* as written by Housepian, illuminates the obvious danger inherent in this approach.

History can serve as a guide only to the extent that each generation is willing to benefit from the lessons it preserves. Between 1915 and 1980, that is, for sixty-five years Turkey sat quietly by as the history of Turco-Armenian relations during World War I was being written by Armenians and a few foreign scholars with access to western archives. Today, in the face of a contemporary political problem represented by Armenian terrorism, Turkey, all too belatedly, is attempting to counter sixty-five years of Armenian publi-

allow of any sort of identification. A number of Turkish troops were stationed at the inshore end of the building at the time» [p. 33];

g) *Friday, September 15, 1922*: «The fire burned itself out during the night to such an extent that in the morning, the situation could no longer be regarded as one of imminent personal danger for the refugees on shore». [p. 33]; Hepburn visits Kiazim Parha, who, «with a dramatic gesture he answered my expression of condolence with 'We have lost the war!' Neither he nor the Vali gave any evidence of having heard any rumor as to Turkish responsibility for the disaster». [p. 35];

h) *Saturday, September 16, 1922*: No more reference to the fire.

40 See: *A Speech Delivered by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk - 1927*. Istanbul, 1963. Indeed, Mustafa Kemal's account of the conquest of Izmir avoids any mention of the fire whatsoever:

«In a wireless telegram which was sent to me personally, I was informed that the Allied Powers had given the requisite authority to their consuls at Izmir to enter into negotiations with me and I was requested to decided what day and at what place I would grant them an interview. I replied that we would be at Nif [a small town east of Izmir] on the 9th september, 1922. It happened that I was at Nif on that very day, but those who had begged for an interview were not there; for our armies, which were already on the quais at Izmir, had reached the first aim which I had indicated to them in pointing them to the Mediterranean». [p. 567].

cations. For such efforts to have any success in influencing western public opinion (fed for seven decades on Armenian accounts of Turkish brutality), the Ottoman archives covering the First World War must be thrown open to all qualified scholars, Turkish and non-Turkish alike.

The burning of Izmir is only the final page in the struggle of Turks to establish their own national state out of the remnants of the Ottoman empire. Not surprisingly (given the inavailability of the relevant Turkish records), the only book-length study dealing with its destruction is written by an Armenian on the basis of carefully vetted American accounts. *'The Smyrna Affair,'* will continue to be the only study dealing with this event, until and unless the government of Turkey throws open the doors to its history. Only then will we have the possibility to more fully comprehend the chronology of events which resulted in the destruction of Izmir in September, 1922.

**
*

APPENDIX I.

JAMES L. BARTON JOHN H. FINLEY CHARLES W. ELIOT CLEVELAND H. DODGE FRANK L. POLK GENERAL COUNSEL	NEAR EAST RELIEF <small>INCORPORATED BY ACT OF CONGRESS</small> <small>(FORMERLY AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR ARMENIAN AND SYRIAN RELIEF)</small> 151 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK <small>TELEPHONE: ASHLAND 7480</small>	<small>CABLE ADDRESS:</small> NEAREAST <small>TELEPHONE:</small> ASHLAND 7480
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



January 11, 1923.



Rear Adm. Mark L. Bristol,
 U. S. Navy,
 American Embassy,
 Constantinople, Turkey.

Dear Admiral Bristol:

These stories will be published in a syndicate of about 100 of the greatest newspapers in America. It occurs to me that you might be interested in seeing them; I am, therefore, enclosing the advance copies of the manuscript.

With renewed assurances of my kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

Mark O. Prentiss
 M.O.P.

Mark O. Prentiss.

MOP:HEN

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
 EDWIN M. BULKLEY, Chm.
 JAMES L. BARTON
 CLEVELAND H. DODGE
 JOHN H. FINLEY
 HAROLD A. HATCH
 WILLIAM E. MILLAR
 HENRY MORGENTHAU
 GEORGE A. PLIMPTON
 WALTER GEORGE SMITH
 CHARLES W. VICKERY
 STANLEY WHITE

NATIONAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES
 WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT
 JOSEPHUS DANIELS
 ABRAHAM I. ELKINS
 MYRON T. HERRICK
 HENRY MORGENTHAU
 ELIJAH HOOD
 OSCAR S. STRAIN
 JAMES L. BARTON
 CHARLES E. BEUAT
 ARTHUR J. BROWN
 EDWIN M. BULKLEY
 JOHN E. CALVERT
 WILLIAM E. CHAMBERLAIN
 HENRY ELDAH COPPIN
 CHARLES R. CRANE
 ROBERT J. CUDDEY
 CLEVELAND H. DODGE
 CLEVELAND H. DODGE
 CHARLES W. ELIOT
 JOHN H. FINLEY
 JAMES G. HANCOCK
 HAROLD A. HATCH
 WILLIAM I. HAYEN
 PATRICK J. HAYES
 HOWARD HEUTE
 HAMILTON HOLT
 FRANK W. JACKSON
 HARRY PRATT JUDSON
 HENRY CHURCHILL KING
 FREDERICK LYNCH
 CHARLES R. MACFARLAND
 VANCE C. MCCORMICK
 WM. T. MARRINS
 JOHN H. T. MAIN
 WILLIAM E. MILLAR
 FRANK MORRISON
 JOHN R. MOTT
 FRANK MADON NORTH
 GEORGE A. PLIMPTON
 FRANK L. POLK
 WM. COOPER PROCTOR
 PHILIP RHEHLANDER
 FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
 WILLIAM JAY SCHIFFELIN
 OLIVER J. SANDS
 GEORGE T. SCOTT
 ALBERT SHAW
 WALTER GEORGE SMITH
 ROBERT ELIOT SPEER
 JAMES M. SPEER
 ANSON PHELPS STEVENSON
 CHARLES W. VICKERY
 HARRY A. WHEELER
 STANLEY WHITE
 RAY LYMAN WILBUR
 TALCOTT WILLIAMS
 STEPHEN S. WIRE
 EDWARD WOOD

NOTE: HOUSED IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS - BRISTOL PAPERS COLLECTION UNDER THE FOLLOWING CLASSIFICATION: BRISTOL, GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE, CONTAINER #38 (NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1922 & JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1923).

THE HITHERTO UNTOLD STORY OF THE SMYRNA FIRE TOLD BY MARK O. PRENTISS, AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NEAR EAST RELIEF. ARMENIANS AND GREEKS, NOT TURKS, SET THE FIRE. EVIDENCE OF SMYRNA FIRE CHIEF REVEALED.

(COPYRIGHT ## 1923, BY NORTH AMERICAN NEWSPAPER ALLIANCE IN UNITED STATES, CANADA, GREAT BRITAIN AND SOUTH AMERICA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED).
---BY MARK O. PRENTISS---

NEARLY EVERYBODY IN AMERICA, IT APPEARS, IS CONVINCED THAT THE TURKS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FIRE WHICH ADDED THE FINAL TOUCHES OF TRAGEDY TO THE SMYRNA HORROR. THE UNANIMITY AND FIRMNESS OF THIS CONVICTION SURPRISED ME, AT FIRST, AS I BELIEVE IT WOULD HAVE SURPRISED ANYBODY ELSE, OF WHATEVER NATIONALITY OR POLITICAL ALLEGIANCE, WHO HAD RECENTLY COME FROM THE SCENE OF THE DISASTER. THE MOTIVE, USUALLY CONSIDERED OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE IN CRIMES OF THIS SORT, DOES NOT CLEARLY POINT TOWARD THE TURKS. THEY HAD CAPTURED SMYRNA. THE CITY, AS IT STOOD, WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST PRIZES EVER TAKEN IN ORIENTAL WARFARE. THE TURKS HAD UNQUESTIONED TITLE TO ITS FOOD, ITS COMMODITIES OF ALL SORTS, ITS HOUSES. IT WAS A STORE HOUSE OF SUPPLIES MOST URGENTLY NEEDED FOR THEIR PEOPLES AND ARMIES. WHY DESTROY IT?

IT WAS A MATTER OF COMMON KNOWLEDGE, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT THE ARMENIANS AND GREEKS WERE DETERMINED NOT TO LET THIS BOOTY FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THEIR HATED ENEMIES. THERE WAS A GENERALLY ACCEPTED REPORT IN SMYRNA, FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THE FIRE, THAT AN ORGANIZED GROUP OF ARMENIAN YOUNG MEN HAD SWORN TO BURN THE CITY IF IT FELL TO THE TURKS. THEY CERTAINLY HAD MOTIVE ENOUGH, AND IF THIS WAS THEIR PLAN, RUTHLESSLY CARRIED OUT, THEY PAID A TERRIBLE PRICE. NO ARMENIAN MAN, WOMAN OR CHILD WHO WAS IN THE ARMENIAN QUARTER AFTER THE FIRE STARTED ESCAPED ALIVE. THEY WERE EITHER BURNED OR SHOT DOWN BY TURKISH SOLDIERS. THE TURKS COMMITTED ATROCITIES ENOUGH WITHOUT CREDITING THEM WITH OTHERS, TO WHICH THEY HAVEN'T CLEAR TITLE.

EVIDENCE GATHERED BY PAUL GRESCOVICH, CHIEF OF THE SMYRNA FIRE DEPARTMENT, AND CAREFULLY CHECKED BY MYSELF, TOGETHER WITH INFORMATION WHICH CAME TO ME FROM OTHER SOURCES, POINTS TO THE ARMENIANS

SMYRNA FIRERELEASE NOT BEFORE
JANUARY 16TH

AS THE AUTHORS OF THE FIRE. THE SERIES OF EVENTS WHICH LED UP TO FINAL TERROR ON THE SMYRNA WATERFRONT, AS I WAS ENABLED TO FOLLOW THEM, BEGAN IN THE FIRST DAYS OF SEPTEMBER, WHEN REAR ADMIRAL MARK L. BRISTOL, UNITED STATES HIGH COMMISSIONER AT CONSTANTINOPLE, ORGANIZED THE SMYRNA EMERGENCY RELIEF COMMITTEE IN ANTICIPATION OF WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IN THE CITY IF IT FELL, AS THEN SEEMED INEVITABLE, TO THE TURKS.

AN AMERICAN RELIEF UNIT IN SMYRNA

THE U. S. S. DESTROYER LAWRENCE, UNDER COMMAND OF CAPT. WOLL-ESON PROCEEDED TO SMYRNA, CARRYING THIS COMMITTEE, OF WHICH I WAS A MEMBER. WE ARRIVED ON THE EVENING OF FRIDAY, THE EIGHTH OF SEPTEMBER, IN TIME TO SEE THE LAST OF THE GREEK ARMY LEAVING THE CITY. EARLY IN THE MORNING OF THE NINTH, WE WENT ASHORE AND IMMEDIATELY ORGANIZED A RELIEF COMMITTEE WHICH CONSISTED OF PRACTICALLY ALL OF THE AMERICAN RESIDENTS THERE, TOGETHER WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NEAR EAST RELIEF AND THE AMERICAN RED CROSS FROM CONSTANTINOPLE. ADMIRAL BRISTOL HAD SENT HIS CHIEF OF STAFF, CAPTAIN HEPBURN, AS HIS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE AS CHAIRMAN OF THIS COMMITTEE.

ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS SITUATIONS THAT CONFRONTED THE COMMITTEE WAS THE POSSIBILITY OF FIRE. THIS SITUATION DEVELOPED INTO ONE OF EXTREME ANXIETY WHEN WE LEARNED THAT THE ENTIRE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT, TOGETHER WITH NEARLY ALL OF THE GREEKS WHO WERE MEMBERS OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, HAD DESERTED THEIR POSTS AND FLED THE CITY IN FEAR OF THE APPROACHING TURKISH ARMY.

I MADE IT MY BUSINESS TO MAKE A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE SITUATION, AND I FOUND THAT THE FIRE FIGHTING FORCES CONSISTED OF APPROXIMATELY SIXTY MEN WITH TWO SMALL STATION HOUSES. I FOUND TWO REASONABLY GOOD FIRE ENGINES AND ABOUT HALF A DOZEN HAND MACHINES THAT WERE USED ALONG THE WATERFRONT BY DROPPING AN INTAKE HOSE OVER THE SEA WALL INTO THE WATER. THERE WERE ONLY A FEW BUILDINGS IN THE CITY OVER THREE STORIES HIGH, THE GREAT MAJORITY BEING TWO. THE WATER PRESSURE WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO FORCE A STREAM OF WATER OVER ALMOST ANY BUILDING IN THE CITY AND THERE APPEARED TO BE PLENTY OF HYDRANTS.

THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY MORNING, MR. JAQUITH, OF THE NEAR EAST RELIEF, MAJOR DAVIS OF THE RED CROSS AND I TOOK A TRIP BY AUTOMOBILE IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY. THE TURKS, BY THIS TIME, WERE IN FULL

SMYRNA FIREFOR RELEASE NOT BEFORE
JANUARY 16TH

OCCUPATION. WE SAW THREE WIDELY SEPARATED FIRES TOTALLY CONSUME ISOLATED BUILDINGS. ONE OF THESE WAS A SMALL SHOP, AND IN THE BURNING DOORWAY WERE THE BODIES OF TWO WOMEN. OBVIOUSLY, LOOTING, MURDER, AND ARSON HAD BEEN COMMITTED HERE BY TURKISH SOLDIERS.

THE ARMENIAN HOSPITAL NOT BURNED BY THE TURKS

A REPORT HAS BEEN WIDELY CIRCULATED IN THIS COUNTRY TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ARMENIAN HOSPITAL, WHERE SOME FIFTEEN HUNDRED REFUGEES HAD GATHERED, WAS BURNED BY TURKISH SOLDIERS WHO SLAUGHTERED MANY OF THE HELPLESS OCCUPANTS. THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT ON TUESDAY, EARLY IN THE AFTERNOON, IN RESPONSE TO AN EMERGENCY APPEAL, I HAD GONE TO THE HOSPITAL, ACCOMPANIED BY DR. POST AND TWO NURSES, ALL OF US MEMBERS OF THE NEAR EAST RELIEF STAFF.

WHILE I WAS THERE A SQUAD OF FROM FIFTEEN TO TWENTY TURKISH SOLDIERS, UNDER COMMAND OF A CAPTAIN, CAME TO TAKE OVER THE HOSPITAL FOR TURKISH MILITARY PURPOSES. THE REFUGEES WERE SEARCHED, AS THEY CAME FROM THE GROUNDS, AND ARMS OF VARIOUS SORTS SUFFICIENT TO FILL A TRUNK WERE TAKEN FROM THEM. ALL OF THEM, MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, WHO HAD TAKEN REFUGE BOTH IN THE HOSPITAL BUILDING AND IN THE ADJOINING GROUNDS, WERE DISPERSED BY SIX O'CLOCK THAT AFTERNOON.

THE CAPTAIN IN COMMAND OF THE SQUAD HAD WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE TURKISH MILITARY COMMANDER TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE HOSPITAL AND PREPARE IT FOR IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY. HE TOLD US THAT THEY WOULD BEGIN MOVING TURKISH PATIENTS TO THE HOSPITAL THAT NIGHT. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT HE HAD ORDERS TO SHOOT THE REFUGEES, WITHOUT MERCY, IF THEY REFUSED TO DISARM, AND THAT HE CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE DONE SO BUT FOR THEIR UNEXPECTED DOCILITY IN GIVING UP THEIR WEAPONS. HE CREDITED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO DISARM TO THE PRESENCE OF THE AMERICANS, DR. POST, THE TWO NURSES AND MYSELF. I HAD PREVIOUSLY GONE AMONG THEM AND EXPLAINED, WITH THE AID OF AN INTERPRETER, THAT THEY WOULD BE SHOT IF THEY PERSISTED IN HOLDING ON TO THE BOMBS, KNIVES AND REVOLVERS THEY HAD CONCEALED ABOUT THEM. THE FIRST COMMAND OF THE TURKISH CAPTAIN THAT THEY SURRENDER THEIR ARMS HAD NOT PRODUCED RESULTS, FOR THEY WERE CRAZY WITH FEAR, AND IT WAS SOME TIME BEFORE I COULD PERSUADE THEM TO TRUST THEIR CONQUERORS.

SMYRNA FIREFOR RELEASE NOT BEFORE
JANUARY 16THSIGNS OF INCENDIARISM

ON THE FOLLOWING MORNING, WEDNESDAY, THE THIRTEENTH OF SEPTEMBER, THE SITUATION WAS CRITICAL IN THE EXTREME. PAUL GRESCOVICH, CHIEF OF THE SMYRNA FIRE DEPARTMENT, TOLD ME THAT HE HAD DISCOVERED BUNDLES OF DISCARDED CLOTHING, RAGS AND BEDDING, COVERED WITH PETROLEUM, IN SEVERAL OF THE INSTITUTIONS RECENTLY DESERTED BY ARMENIAN REFUGEES.

GRESCOVICH IMPRESSED ME AS A THOROUGHLY RELIABLE WITNESS. I HAD MET AND HAD A LONG TALK WITH HIM THREE DAYS PREVIOUSLY, ON SUNDAY MORNING. FORTUNATELY, I NEEDED NO INTERPRETER, AS HE SPEAKS ENGLISH FLUENTLY. HE IS AN ENGINEER, BORN AND EDUCATED IN AUSTRIA, AND HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED WITH SEVERAL LARGE ENGINEERING ENTERPRISES IN TURKEY. TWELVE YEARS AGO HE BECAME CHIEF OF THE SMYRNA FIRE DEPARTMENT, WHICH HE CONTINUED TO CONDUCT IN A VERY EFFICIENT MANNER, FOR THAT PART OF THE WORLD, DURING THE GREEK OCCUPANCY. HE TOLD ME THAT DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER THERE HAD BEEN AN AVERAGE OF FIVE FIRES PER DAY WITH WHICH HIS CRIPPLED DEPARTMENT HAD TO COPE. IN HIS OPINION MOST OF THESE FIRES WERE CAUSED BY CARELESSNESS, BUT SOME UNDOUBTEDLY WERE OF INCENDIARY ORIGIN. THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF FIRES IN A NORMAL YEAR, HE SAID, WOULD BE ABOUT ONE IN TEN DAYS, AND THE INCREASE TO FIVE A DAY SEEMED SIGNIFICANT.

AS SOON AS THE TURKISH MILITARY AUTHORITIES ASSUMED CONTROL, GRESCOVICH HAD APPLIED FOR ADDITIONAL MEN AND FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT. INSTEAD OF HELPING HIM, THE TURKISH MILITARY GOVERNOR, LEARNING THAT THERE WERE STILL TWELVE GREEKS IN THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, ORDERED THEIR IMMEDIATE ARREST, WHICH LEFT THE DEPARTMENT WITH ONLY THIRTY-SEVEN MEN. SUNDAY NIGHT, MONDAY AND MONDAY NIGHT AND TUESDAY, SO MANY FIRES WERE REPORTED AT SUCH WIDELY SEPARATED POINTS, THAT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT WAS ABSOLUTELY UNABLE TO DEAL WITH THEM. THEY WERE EXTINGUISHED BY TURKISH SOLDIERS.

I DISCUSSED WITH GRESCOVICH THE DANGER OF FIRE AT THE PLANT OF THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY. ALTHOUGH THESE TANKS WERE LOCATED AT LEAST A COUPLE OF MILES FROM THE CITY, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT FIRE AND EXPLOSIONS THERE WOULD DO TERRIFIC DAMAGE, AND IN SPITE OF THE DEPLETED PERSONNEL OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE ISOLATION OF THE

SMYRNA-FIRE

FOR RELEASE NOT BEFORE
JANUARY 16TH

PLANT, WHICH WAS BEYOND MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION, HE SET AND MAINTAINED TWO MEN TO ACT AS GUARDS THERE.

DURING TUESDAY NIGHT AND WEDNESDAY MORNING, THE TURKISH SOLDIERS SHOT DOWN MANY ARMENIANS WHO, THEY CLAIMED, WERE CAUGHT THROWING PETROLEUM AND STARTING FIRES IN THE ARMENIAN QUARTER AND ALSO AROUND THE WAREHOUSES AND STATION OF THE CASSABA RAILROAD. IT WAS ON WEDNESDAY MORNING THAT GRESCOVICH HIMSELF FOUND EVIDENCES OF INCENDIARISM. HE TOLD ME THAT EARLY THAT MORNING [HE] HAD SEEN TWO ARMENIAN PRIESTS ESCORTING SEVERAL THOUSAND MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM THE ARMENIAN SCHOOLS AND DOMINICAN CHURCHES WHERE THEY HAD TAKEN REFUGE DOWN TO THE QUAYS. WHEN HE PRESENTLY WENT INTO THESE INSTITUTIONS HE FOUND PETROLEUM-SOAKED REFUSE READY FOR THE TORCH.

THE CHIEF TOLD ME, AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HE WAS SURE OF IT, THAT HIS OWN FIREMEN, AS WELL AS TURKISH GUARDS, HAD SHOT DOWN MANY ARMENIAN YOUNG MEN DISGUISED EITHER AS WOMEN OR AS TURKISH IRREGULAR SOLDIERS, WHO WERE CAUGHT SETTING FIRES DURING TUESDAY NIGHT AND WEDNESDAY MORNING. TURKISH SOLDIERS, ARMED WITH RIFLES AND MACHINE GUNS, WERE GUARDING EVERY STREET IN THE ARMENIAN QUARTER, AND EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD WHO WAS IN THIS SECTION OF THE CITY AS LATE AS MID-AFTERNOON ON WEDNESDAY, WAS EITHER BURNED ALIVE OR SHOT DOWN WHILE ATTEMPTING TO ESCAPE.

AT 11:20 WEDNESDAY MORNING, AT LEAST HALF A DOZEN FIRES WERE REPORTED ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY AROUND THE FREIGHT TERMINAL WAREHOUSES AND THE PASSENGER STATION OF THE AIDINE RAILROAD.

IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THESE FIRES BROKE OUT IN BUILDINGS WHICH IT WAS GREATLY TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE TURKS TO PRESERVE, AND EQUALLY TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE ENEMIES TO DESTROY.

AT 12:00 O'CLOCK FIVE FIRES WERE REPORTED AROUND THE ARMENIAN HOSPITAL, THEN OCCUPIED BY THE TURKS. AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, TWO FIRES WERE REPORTED AT THE ARMENIAN CLUB, AND A FEW MINUTES LATER SEVERAL FIRES STARTED SIMULTANEOUSLY AROUND THE CASSABA RAILROAD STATION.

SHORTLY AFTER NOON GRESCOVICH CONVINCED THAT THE CITY WAS DOOMED, AGAIN WENT TO THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO ASK FOR HELP, AND AGAIN IT WAS NOT FORTHCOMING. IT WAS NOT UNTIL SIX O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING THAT HE WAS GIVEN A COMPANY OF 100 SOLDIERS TO SERVE UNDER HIS DIRECTION AND IT WAS EIGHT O'CLOCK AT NIGHT BEFORE

SMYRNA FIRE

FOR RELEASE NOT BE
JANUARY

THE SOLDIERS BEGAN THE DESTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS BY BOMBS, IN ORDER TO CHECK THE SPREAD OF THE FIRE.

A SOUTHEAST GALE FANS THE FLAMES

EARLY IN THE AFTERNOON, I WAS AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF KAIZIM PASHA, TURKISH MILITARY GOVERNOR OF THE DISTRICT, AND FROM HIS WINDOW I COULD SEE SMOKE FROM SEVERAL FIRES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE CITY. I CALLED HIS ATTENTION TO THIS, BUT HE ASSURED ME THEY WERE OF NO CONSEQUENCE. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF CONFLAGRATION, AND THAT HIS SOLDIERS HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS TO PREVENT IT. WHEN I LEFT HIM I MADE AN APPOINTMENT TO RETURN AT FIVE O'CLOCK THAT AFTERNOON BUT THE FIRE HAD SPREAD SO RAPIDLY, THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMES DOWN TO THE QUAY IN SUCH NUMBERS, AND THE PANIC WAS SO GREAT, THAT I FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH HIS HEADQUARTERS TO KEEP THE APPOINTMENT.

DURING THE AFTERNOON THE WIND BEGAN TO RISE AND BLOW FROM THE SOUTHEAST, WHICH I WAS TOLD WAS MOST UNUSUAL AT THAT SEASON OF THE YEAR, AND BY NIGHT A PERFECT GALE WAS BLOWING. PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED IN SMYRNA FOR MANY YEARS ALL TOLD ME THEY HAD NEVER KNOWN A WIND OF SUCH VIOLENCE DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. DENSE SMOKE AND SPARKS WERE BLOWN ACROSS THE DECKS OF THE U. S. DESTROYER LITCHFIELD, WHICH AFTER MIDNIGHT WAS ANCHORED 780 YARDS OFF SHORE.

IT WAS NOT UNTIL THREE DAYS LATER THAT I SAW GRESCOVICH AGAIN. HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD HAD NO SLEEP FOR FIVE DAYS AND NIGHTS AND HE LOOKED THE PART. NOT ONLY WAS HE PHYSICALLY EXHAUSTED, BUT HIS EMOTIONS HAD BEEN SO WROUGHT UPON BY THE SIGHTS HE HAD SEEN, THAT HE BEGGED TO BE EXCUSED FROM TALKING OVER DETAILS. REALIZING, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS THE TIME TO GET THE TRUTH, I PRESSED HIM FOR INFORMATION, AND WE WENT OVER IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER THE HISTORY OF THE FIRE. ON THAT, AND SEVERAL SUCCEEDING DAYS, WE EXPLORED THE GREATER PART OF THE BURNED AREA OF THE CITY, AND I MADE NOTES OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS HE TOLD ME. LATER, WHEN LLOYD'S MEN CAME TO ASCERTAIN THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE, HE REFUSED TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT AT ALL.

"WHY SHOULD WE BURN THE CITY?"

DURING SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER THE FIRE I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK WITH MANY TURKISH COMMANDERS, AND THEY WERE ALL OF ONE MIND IN LEVELLING EITHER BITTER OR PHILOSOPHICAL ACCUSATIONS AT THEIR ENEMIES FOR DESTROYING THE CITY. THEY WERE CONTEMPTUOUS OF THE

SMYRNA FIRE

FOR RELEASE NOT BEFORE
JANUARY 16TH

SUGGESTION, MADE IN A FEW QUARTERS, THAT THEY HAD ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BURNING.

"WHY SHOULD WE BURN THE CITY?" THEY WOULD ASK. "SMYRNA, WITH ALL ITS WEALTH AND TREASURE, WAS OURS. THE FLEEING GREEK ARMY HAD ABANDONED HUGE QUANTITIES OF MILITARY STORES AND FOOD SUPPLIES THAT WERE DESPERATELY NEEDED BY OUR ARMIES AND CIVILIANS. THESE HAVE BEEN DESTROYED, TOGETHER WITH THE WAREHOUSES AND STATIONS WHERE MANY OF THE FIRES BROKE OUT. BESIDES, THE FLEEING GREEKS AND ARMENIANS, MANY OF THEM WEALTHY AS YOU KNOW, HAD ABANDONED EVERYTHING IN THEIR HOMES AND THEIR STORES. WE WERE IN ABSOLUTE AND UNDISPUTED POSSESSION. DO YOU THINK WE ARE SUCH FOOLS AS TO HAVE DESTROYED EVERYTHING?"

MY ATTENTION HAS BEEN CALLED TO MANY STATEMENTS PUBLISHED BROADCAST IN THIS COUNTRY TO THE [EFFECT] THAT THE TURKS WERE SEEN POURING PETROLEUM AROUND THE AMERICAN CONSULATE. I WAS IN THE VICINITY OF THE CONSULATE MOST OF THE TIME AND I SAW NO PETROLEUM.

IT IS A FACT WORTHY OF THE ATTENTION OF THE HONEST HISTORIAN THAT VERY FEW PEOPLE IN SMYRNA AT THE TIME OF THE FIRE, OR DURING THE SUCCEEDING WEEKS, BELIEVED THAT THE TURKS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. THAT THE TURKS WERE GROSSLY AND CRIMINALLY NEGLIGENT IN THE MATTER OF ORDINARY PRECAUTIONS AGAINST AN OUTBREAK OF FIRE, WE ALL REALIZED, AND THAT THEY WERE TRAGICALLY INEFFICIENT IN FIGHTING THE FIRE WAS OBVIOUS TO US ALL, BUT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND NO EVIDENCE THAT EITHER TURKISH SOLDIERS OR TURKISH CIVILIANS DELIBERATELY FIRED THE CITY OR WISHED FOR ITS DESTRUCTION. THE EVIDENCE ALL POINTS IN ANOTHER DIRECTION.

APPENDIX II.

NOTE: THIS 'APPENDIX' CONSISTS OF THE FINAL TWO PAGES (PP. 46-7) OF THE 'REPORT UPON SMYRNA DISASTER,' COMPILED BY A.J. HEPBURN, THE SENIOR AMERICAN NAVAL OFFICER PRESENT IN IZMIR FROM SEPTEMBER 8-16, 1922. SUBMITTED TO ADMIRAL BRISTOL ON SEPTEMBER 25, 1922, HEPBURN'S REPORT PROVIDED A DETAILED DAY-BY-DAY RECORD OF THE PERIOD IN QUESTION. LOCATED IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE UNITED STATES: NAVAL RECORDS COLLECTION, RECORD GROUP #45 (BOX 713), THIS IS THE MOST DETAILED EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT BY AN AMERICAN WHO WAS PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE CONFLAGRATION:

ORIGIN OF FIRE.

THE ONLY DIRECT EVIDENCE BEARING UPON THIS SUBJECT WHICH CAME TO MY NOTICE AT THE TIME WAS THE STATEMENT OF VICE CONSUL BARNES THAT HE SAW TURKISH SOLDIERS POURING KEROSENE IN THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE CONSULATE. THIS WAS AT A TIME WHEN THE FIRE HAD MADE CONSIDERABLE HEADWAY, AND IT WAS APPARENT THAT AT LEAST A LARGE PART OF THE CITY WAS BEYOND SAVING. THERE WERE OTHER REPORTS THAT SIMILAR ACTIONS HAD BEEN OBSERVED BY SOME OF OUR MEN ON DUTY AS GUARDS, BUT I DID NOT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTIGATE THESE FULLY AT THE TIME. ALL OF THESE REPORTS PUT TOGETHER, HOWEVER, DID NOT INDICATE ACTIVITY ON A SCALE COMMENSURATE WITH AN ORGANIZED PLAN TO BURN THE CITY. IT IS EVEN UNDERSTANDABLE THAT INDIVIDUAL TURKISH SOLDIERS, SEEING THE CITY BURNING, AND EITHER ASSUMING THAT IT WAS BY ORDER OF TURKISH AUTHORITY OR SEEING IN THE EVENT A FURTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR LOOT AND DISORDER, SEIZED THE OCCASION TO HELP THE CONFLAGRATION ALONG.

WITH REGARD TO ALL COLLATERAL EVIDENCE ON THE SUBJECT, AND ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS THE QUESTION OF MOTIVE, THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION SEEMS TO ME TO EXONERATE THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES, SO FAR AS DELIBERATE INTENT TO BURN THE CITY IS CONCERNED. THE ONLY TWO MOTIVES I HAVE HEARD SUGGESTED ARE, FIRST, THAT THE INTENTION WAS PRIMARILY TO BURN THE ARMENIAN QUARTER IN ORDER TO DESTROY EVIDENCE OF LOOTING AND MURDER; AND, SECOND, THAT SMYRNA WAS LARGELY A FOREIGN CITY, KNOWN AS 'INFIDEL SMYRNA,' AND THE TURKS HAD DETERMINED TO RID THE COUNTRY OF ALL NON-MOSLEMS. THE LATTER SUGGESTION SEEMS FAR-FETCHED, AND THE FORMER INCONSISTENT WITH THE OPEN WAY IN WHICH THE LOOTING WAS CONDUCTED; THERE WAS SO MUCH EVIDENCE OBTAINABLE ON THIS HEAD THAT THE BURNING OF THE ARMENIAN QUARTER WOULD HAVE MADE LITTLE DIFFERENCE.

THE TURKISH ATTITUDE WAS THAT THE CITY WAS FIRED BY ARMENIANS; THAT THE GREEK ARMY HAD MADE ALL PLANS FOR THE EVENT, BUT WERE PREVENTED FROM CARRYING IT OUT BY THEIR UNEXPECTEDLY HASTY EVACUATION; THAT THE GREEK CIVILIANS REFUSED TO CARRY OUT THESE PLANS, BUT THAT THE ARMENIANS LENT THEIR AID. THERE IS A CERTAIN CONSISTENCY ABOUT THIS VIEW, OR, AT LEAST, THE SINCERITY OF THE TURKISH BELIEF IN IT, IN THAT IT CHECKS WITH THE ACTIONS OF THE ARMENIANS IN THROWING BOMBS AT THE ENTERING TURKISH TROOPS, AND THE GREATER SEVERITY WITH WHICH THE ARMENIANS WERE TREATED IN COMPARISON WITH THE GREEKS. THE INCREASED SAVAGERY EXHIBITED BY THE TURKISH POPULACE TOWARD THE ARMENIANS AFTER THE FIRE, AS WELL AS THE GENERAL DEPRESSION EXHIBITED BY ALL THE TURKISH CITIZENS AND OFFICIALS, WERE INDICATIONS THAT COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN COUNTERFEIT.

IF THE TURKS REALLY WISHED AND INTENDED TO PRESERVE THIS CITY, AS I BELIEVE THEY DID, THEY WERE STUPID AS WELL AS CULPABLE IN ALLOWING ANY SUPPRESSABLE DISORDER. ONLY THROUGH THE MAINTENANCE OF GOOD ORDER COULD ATTEMPTS UPON THE CITY BY HOSTILE ELEMENTS, SUCH AS THE ARMENIANS, BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE LAWLESS ACTS OF THE CHETAS AND OTHERS WHOSE CONDUCT WAS BEING OPENLY TOLERATED.

A.J. HEPBURN