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## A Critic of American Diplomat in İzmir: George Horton and His Observation

*İzmir'deki Amerikan Diplomatının Bir Kritiği: George Horton*

Dr. Hakan GÜNGÖR  
(ORCID:0000-0002-8282-5481)  
Ordu Üniversitesi – Ordu

**Abstract:** The years 1915-1923 were so crucial to the history and destiny of the Turkish nation that they would either come under a foreign tutelage or fight against foreign incursion to become a sovereign nation. George Horton, an American diplomat in Turkey, presented this struggle of independence as an act to exterminate Christians in Turkish soil. Horton desired a post in Turkey for a long time and he eventually became the US consul-general in İzmir (Smyrna) during WWI and its immediate aftermath. After Horton concluded his service in İzmir in 1922, he published two provocative works, *The Blight of Asia* and *Recollections Grave and Gay*, to tell retaking stories of İzmir (Smyrna) by Turks in 1922. His accounts intentionally miss-presented the recapturing of İzmir by the Turks as the last stages in the ethnic cleansing of Greek and Armenian Christian populations. Horton's works go beyond the blame of Muslims and Turks. His works and report to the United States were a study of prejudice. He described the Turks intellectually as the lowest of Islam, with no civilization and cultural history. Further, he presented the Turks as the only branch of Islam which never contributed to the progress of civilization, but the Turks have had numerous great civilizations including the Seljuks and the Ottomans. Horton's explicit hostility toward the Muslims and Turks have already proved to have no benefit of the scholarly apparatus. His works were written from the perspective of Greeks and Armenians and produced the greatest falsehood on the Turkish history. This paper endeavors to understand his motivation and his animosity against the Turks.

**Keywords:** George Horton, İzmir (Smyrna), Turks, Greeks, Armenians

**Özet:** 1915-1923 yılları, Türk ulusunun tarihi ve kaderi açısından o kadar önemliydi ki, ya Türkler yabancıların vesayeti altına gireceklerdi ya da yabancı işgaline karşı savaşa girip egemen bir ulus olacaklardı. Amerika'nın Türkiye'deki diplomatı olan George Horton, Türklerin bağımsızlık mücadelesini Türk topraklarındaki Hıristiyanları ortadan kaldırmak için yapılan bir eylemiş gibi dünyaya sundu. Uzun yıllardan beri Türkiye'de görev yapmak isteyen Horton, I. Dünya Savaşı sonrasında ABD'nin İzmir Başkonsolosu oldu. İzmir'deki (Smyrna) hizmetini 1922'de tamamlayan Horton, İzmir'in Türkler tarafından yeniden alınmasının hikâyesini anlatmak için *The Blight of Asia* ve *Grace and Gay* adlı iki provokatör kitap yayınladı. İzmir'in Türkler tarafından ele geçirilmesini Yunan ve Ermeni Hıristiyan nüfuslarının etnik temizliğinin son aşamaları olarak dünyaya sunan Horton'un eserleri Müslümanları ve Türkleri suçlamının ötesine geçiyordu. Yayınladığı kitaplar ve Birleşik Devletlere gönderdiği raporlar Türklere karşı oluşturulan bir önyargının çalışmasıydı. Horton kitaplarında Türkleri entelektüel olarak İslam'ın en alt tabakası diye yazıp, onları medeniyet ve kültür tarihi olmayan bir millet olarak tanımlıyordu. Üstelik Türklerin uygarlığın gelişimine hiçbir zaman katkıda bulunmayan tek Müslüman millet olduğunu savunuyordu. Ancak Türklerin bir medeniyet sahibi olup olmadıkları sadece Selçuklu ve Osmanlı tarih ve kültür miraslarına bakılarak anlaşılabilir. Horton'un Müslümanlara ve Türklere yönelik düşmanlığı eserlerinden anlaşıldığından dolayı, çalışmalarının bilimsel mecraya bir fayda sağlamadığı açıkça anlaşılmıştır. Çünkü eserleri Yunanlıların ve Ermenilerin propagandasını yapmasının yanı sıra, Türk tarihindeki gerçekleri çarpıttığından bilimsellikten tamamen uzaklaşmıştır. Bu çalışma,



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*Horton'ın motivasyonunu ve Türklere karşı olan düşmanlığını nedensellik çerçevesinde değerlendirip anlamaya çalışmaktadır.*

*Anahtar Kelime: George Horton, İzmir, Türkler, Yunanlar, Ermeniler*

## Introduction

George Horton was born in a strict Protestant family in October 1859, in New York. Raised in a conservative middle-class family, he received his college degree from the University of Michigan where he came under the influence of Prof. Martin D'Ooge, a Professor of Greek Language and Literature at the University of Michigan from 1868 to 1912, and became a passionate Hellenist. D'Ooge taught him ancient Greek and the Classics. He later learned to speak and write Modern Greek fluently. In 1922, when he left from the American consulate in İzmir (Smyrna), Horton had time only to take one or two of his possession and he grabbed D'Ooge's book, *The Acropolis at Athens*.<sup>1</sup> Horton made his early living as a journalist in Chicago. In 1893, President Grover Cleveland rewarded Horton for the journalistic work he made to help Cleveland's campaign. This reward came in the form of a consulate. Cleveland offered Horton to a prestigious post in Berlin, but Horton beseeched for a post in Athens, Greece. As a Philhellene, Horton had always longed for a visit to Greece. He served as U.S. Consul to Athens between 1893-1899 and 1905-1906. In 1911, Horton became U.S. Consul in Smyrna—then part of the Ottoman Empire, now İzmir, Turkey.

The Ottoman State joined into the First World War as the one of the Central Powers. The Central Powers' defeat, thus the Ottomans' defeat, marked the eventual dissolution of the state, which ignited and united Turks for the War of Independence in 1919. Turkish nation gave an honorable fight for their independence from 1919 to 1922. Horton utilized this war of independence and predicted upon the same stereotype of Turks as 'brutal barbarian' to convince the westerners that the Turks strove to rid their Christian citizens. In his novels written before the Turkish-Greek war of September 1922, Horton had already identified the Turks as the villain of the world civilization. He demonizes the Muslim Turks by presenting them as beasts, one of the bloodiest race on earth, and having inherently a violent religion of Islam. His Turkish antagonism was due to his Philhellene, a supporter of Greek independence, and missionary love. Further, he was heavily influenced by orientalist worldview and he longed for a revival of Christian state in Anatolia. As the U.S. representative in İzmir, Horton run after a Christian state until Turks recaptured İzmir. However, when his dream ended in fiasco, Horton revealed two controversial points to back his argument about the Muslims and Turks; the so-called Armenian genocide of 1915 and the Greek massacre of 1922.

Horton had coveted a position in İzmir for a long time, which he described, "[Smyrna] had long been the Mecca of my ambitions."<sup>2</sup> He served as U.S. consul-general in İzmir until 1922 when the Turks reclaimed the city. During practically the entire duration of his post in İzmir, Turkey was at war. Growing up in a conservative Protestant family and being a Philhellene, Horton endeavored to create and feed anti-Muslim and anti-Turkish feelings during his post and through his writings, which substantially influenced American-Turkish relations. However, Horton is best known for his *The Blight of Asia and Recollection Grave and Gay*, which cover allegedly the systematic ethnic cleansing of Christians during the

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<sup>1</sup>George Horton, *Recollections Grave and Gay: The Story of a Mediterranean Consul*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1927), p. 3; Marjorie HousepianDobkin, *George Horton and Mark L. Bristol: Opposing Forces in U.S. Foreign Policy, 1919-1923*, (Athens: Kentro Mikrasiatikōn Spoudōn, 1983), p. 132.

<sup>2</sup>Horton, *Recollections Grave and Gay*, p.194.

retaking of Izmir by the Turks in 1922. Although many Turkish and non-Turkish historians mention Horton's accounts being bias and anti-Turkish, they mostly focus on his account of Izmir.

Historian Biray Kolluoğlu Kirli concludes, "George Horton[s] anti-Turkish bias is crudely explicit."<sup>3</sup> Describing Horton as a philhellenic, scholar David Roessel shares a similar view, "Even in its most philosophic and abstruse form, such as in *The Revolt of Islam*, Philhellenic literature was anti-Turkish and anti-Eastern and so by extension at times employed anti-Muslim language."<sup>4</sup> Another criticism of Horton's work came from Brian Coleman, who stated, "His [Horton's] account, however, goes beyond the blame and events to a demonization of Muslims, in general, and of Turks, in particular. In several of his novels, written more than two decades before the events of September 1922, he had already identified the Turk as the stock-in-trade villain of Western civilization. In his account of Smyrna, he writes not as a historian, but as publicist."<sup>5</sup> Lastly, Heath Lowery states, "Horton...accounts suggests that the Turkish Nationalist forces were not only barbarians, but lacked the instincts of earlier barbarian hordes!"<sup>6</sup> These are few historians among many who have questioned the legitimacy of Horton's works. Horton reports and series of publications distorted the facts to mislead and create opposition against Turks in the west.

To counter the version of the Armenian and Greek stories he presented in his works, it is necessary to look at the publication of historians' scholarly works who have dealt with the Turkish war of independence and thereafter. Donald Webster, Lord Kinross, Richard Robinson, and Stanford Shaw wrote vis-à-vis stories than Horton presented. While Webster and Shaw held Armenians responsible for the crimes taking place in İzmir,<sup>7</sup> Kinross stated that even before the arrival of Turks in İzmir, the Armenians called in the churches "for the burning of the city as a sacred duty."<sup>8</sup> Although Robinson mentioned the Battle of Sakarya with Greek and defeat of Greeks at İzmir, he did not write about burning of İzmir.<sup>9</sup>

Turkish-Greek relations and hostilities since the Greek declaration of independence in 1821 had a profound impact on Turkish international affairs. This hostile relationship between the two states also had an effect on Turco-U.S. relations. U.S. officials, including George Horton, who held several consular offices in the Ottoman Empire and Greece between 1893 and 1924, did not disguise their sympathy for the Greeks and the Armenians. In his writings, Horton identified the Turks as villains. Brain Colman, who published an article about Horton, explained how "his writings- poetry, novels, journalism, travel writing and memoirs — had as well an abiding love of Greek life, literature and language."<sup>10</sup> Although Horton was always a Yankee, Greece was a second homeland for him. In his published works before 1922 such as A

<sup>3</sup>Biray Kolluoğlu Kirli, "Forgetting the Smyrna Fire," *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 60, Autumn 2005, Oxford University Press, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> David Roessel, *In Byron's shadow: Modern Greece in the English & American Imagination*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup>Brian Coleman, "George Horton: The Literary Diplomat," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* Vol.30 No. 1, 2006, p. 81.

<sup>6</sup> Heath W. Lowry, "Turkish History: on Whose Sources will it be Based? A case Study on the Burning of İzmir," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies IX*, İstanbul 1989, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Donald E. Webster, *The Turkey Of Atatürk: Social Process In The Turkish Reformation*, (Philadelphia, 1939), 96; Stanford Shaw and Ezel K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, vol. II: Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 363.

<sup>8</sup> Lord Kinross, *Atatürk: A Biography of Mustafa Kemal, Father of Modern Turkey*, New York: William Morrow Company, 1965, p. 370.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Robinson, *The First Turkish Republic: A Case Study in National Development*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 74-5.

<sup>10</sup>Coleman, "George Horton," p. 81-93.

Fair Brigand (1899),<sup>11</sup>The Tempting of Father Anthony (1901),<sup>12</sup> The Long Straight Road (1902),<sup>13</sup>Horton depicted the Turks as inferior. Although Horton stated and depicted himself as though he spoke and acted on behalf of the disadvantaged and oppressed, it was the European tradition and his love of the Greeks and the Classics that influenced and inspired his writings. The same philhellenic tradition and love also encouraged Horton to demonize Muslims in general, and Turks in particular.<sup>14</sup> He did not disguise in his writings that he detested, Asian minors, Turks, and Muslims who interfered in Christian and Greek interests. However, such hatred feelings had an effect on U.S.-Turkish relations. What is unfortunate for the Turkish-American relations is that Horton held a post and a key position in Turkey during the Great War.

The First World War broke out in August 1914, but the United States did not enter until April 1917. During this period, Horton stayed at the strategically and materially important city of İzmir. As he states, he was “in charge of British, French, Italian, Russian, Belgian, and other interests, including, of course, American.” He had to take responsibility for important and difficult decisions. During this particular three years, British, French and Italian allotted “large sums of money, amounting to many thousands of pounds sterling...for the relief of individuals.”<sup>15</sup> Horton became a key figure for many states that wanted to reach their citizens in İzmir until 1917.

In 1917, the United States severed relations with the Ottoman Empire. At the time, the U.S. ambassador in Istanbul was Henry Morgenthau, and the U.S. consul in İzmir was George Horton. Both these men were notorious for their ill feelings against the Muslims and Turks.<sup>16</sup> In 1919, the United States and Turkey resumed their friendly relations. However, Horton immediately tried to undermine this friendly approach by reporting the Secretary of State that French, Italian, and British subjects were privileged while Greek and American were excluded from the same rights.<sup>17</sup> Horton considered Greek and American as one nation and strove to make Greek-Turkish issue a source of problem between Turkey and the United States. However, the American High Commissioner at Istanbul Mark Lambert Bristol immediately intervened and informed the Department of State that the “Council of Ministers has decided to extend to American citizens the treatment at present applied in judicial matters to British, French, and Italian subjects.”<sup>18</sup> As an American diplomat, George Horton should have defended Americans’ interests rather than assuring privileges for Greeks. While Ambassador Morgenthau used the Armenian incident to create anti-Turkish sentiments in Europe and the United States, Horton benefited from Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922) to draw a fuzzy picture of the Turks in westerners’ mind. Horton lists his objections of writing *The Blight of Asia*, which was essentially to create a negative image of the Turks.

#### Objections of Horton’s Works

Horton’s objections explicitly show his strengthened animosity toward Islam and the Turkish people. One of his objection is “to show that the destruction of İzmir was but the

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<sup>11</sup> G. Horton, *A Fair Brigand*, Chicago and New York; Bert S. Stone, 1899.

<sup>12</sup> G. Horton, *The Tempting of Father Anthony*, Chicago; A.C. McClurg, 1901.

<sup>13</sup> G. Horton, *The Long Straight Road*, Indianapolis; The Bowen-Merrill Company, 1902.

<sup>14</sup> Coleman, “George Horton,” p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> Horton, *Recollections Grave and Gay*, p. 219-20.

<sup>16</sup> Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1919.

<sup>17</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*, Department of State / Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1919, Vol. II, “The Consul General at Smyrna (Horton) to the Secretary of State,” November 7, 1919.

<sup>18</sup> *FRUS*, “The High Commissioner at Constantinople (Bristol) to the Secretary of State,” January 26, 1920.

closing act in a consistent program of exterminating Christianity throughout the length and breadth of the old Byzantine Empire; the extirpation of an ancient Christian civilization.”<sup>19</sup> Horton’s aim seemed to be mobilizing Christians against Muslims as he deliberately depicted the Greco-Turkish War as the extermination of the Christians among the Muslims. In fact, such assertion portrayed the Turkish War of Independence against the invaders as if it was an attack against Christianity. The invasion of Izmir by the Greek army on 15 May 1919 became a major reason for the upheaval that followed. This invasion could have not been done without the British support. The founder of Turkey Mustafa Kemal Atatürk concluded, “On 15 May 1919 the Greek army invaded Izmir with the consent and help of the Entente Powers.”<sup>20</sup> In 1922, the Turks retook the annexed territories by Greeks.<sup>21</sup> However, Horton depicted the war as if it was a war between Christians and Muslims. In so doing, he carried the Independence war on a religious scale to create a public outcry against the Turks who were fighting for their freedom, liberty, and sovereignty.

Horton’s next objection in writing his book was to cut the line of funding that was going to missionary schools in Turkey. He stated the goal of his book as “to give the church people of the United States the opportunity of deciding whether they wish to continue pouring millions of dollars... into Turkey for the purpose of supporting schools which no longer permit the Bible to be read or Christ to be taught.”<sup>22</sup> Instead of acting on behalf of the White House, Horton had a religious agenda. He invested his time in protecting missionaries’ interest because he believed the Turks were doing harm to the Christians by not allowing them teaching Bible at schools. However, Horton kept the westerners in the dark by not acknowledging the reforms and democratic directions that the Turks undertook under Mustafa Kemal, the founder of Turkey, after the First World War. One should note that closing religious schools was not exclusively applied to missionary educational institutions. The Atatürk government dismantled all religious schools including Islamic Madrasah and immediately banned all their activities.<sup>23</sup> The Turkish government replaced all religious schools with secular ones.<sup>24</sup> The animosity towards the Turks did not merely belong to the American diplomat in İzmir, conservative British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898) long before him had the same hatred feelings against the Turks.<sup>25</sup>

Prime Minister Gladstone deeply influenced Horton. In his writing, Horton often mentions his admiration for Gladstone and quote his ideas about the Turks. Describing Gladstone as “one of the wisest of English statesmen,” Horton found the characterization of

<sup>19</sup>George Horton, *The Blight of Asia: An Account of the Systematic Extermination of Christian Populations by Mohammedans and of the Culpability of Certain Great Powers: with a true Story of the Burning of Smyrna*, Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1926, Intro.

<sup>20</sup>Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk: 1919-1920*, Cilt I, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul, 1969, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>After the Ottoman State recognized the Independence of Greece in 1829, the Greeks pursued their foreign policy objectives of the ‘Megali Idea’ which was simply to revive the old Byzantine Empire with İstanbul being its capital. The strategy was to claim and recapture the Greek-inhabited territories, including İzmir. İsmet Binark, *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Balkanlar'da ve Anadolu'da Yunan Mezâlimi*, Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1995.

<sup>22</sup>George Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, Intro.

<sup>23</sup>The Turkish parliament passed *Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu* (Law on Unity of Education) on 3 Mart 1924, two years before Horton published his work. According to the law, all educational institutions in Turkey are affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. To look at the detail of the law, *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, “Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu”, no 63, 6.3.1340 (3.3.1924).

<sup>24</sup>*T.C. Resmi Gazete*, “Tevhidi Tedrisat Kanunu”, no 63, 6.3.1340 (3.3.1924).

<sup>25</sup>Gladstone has been fighting with the Ottoman Sultans Sultan Abdulaziz and Abdulhamid for many years and making plans to demolish the Ottoman Empire before Horton appeared on the scene. For more see, Taha Niyazi Karaca, *Büyük Oyun: İngiltere Başbakanı Gladstone'un Osmanlı'yı Yıkma Planı*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2011).

Turks by Gladstone as a pertinent remark. For the Turks, Gladstone concluded, “They were, upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity.” He continued, “Wherever they went a broad line of blood marked the track behind them, and, as far as their dominion reached, civilization disappeared from view. They represented everywhere government by force as opposed to government by law.”<sup>26</sup> Horton endorsed this characterization of Turks defined by the UK Prime Minister, and he believed the events that occurred between the Armenians and Turks as well as the Greeks and Turks from 1915 to 1922 aptly verified Gladstone’s ideas.

Establishing his works on presenting the Turks as the villain of the world civilization, Horton endeavors to convince his audiences that the Turks systematically liquidated the Christians living under the Ottoman domain. He sees the Armenian incident during the First World War as a “systematic extermination of Christians and Christianity in that region.”<sup>27</sup> He believes and accuses the Turks that they have committed such crimes against Christian civilization and the progress of the world.

#### Twentieth Century Orientalism

One can discern the influence of orientalism in Horton’s works when thoroughly look at his books. Orientalism took east as completely alien to the west, and they believed east was unchangeable.<sup>28</sup> This view constituted Horton’s approach against to the easterners. In his writing, he used the very core idea of orientalism and concluded, “One must remember that the East is unchangeable. The Turks of to-day are precisely the same as those who followed Mohammed the Conqueror through the gates of Constantinople on May 29, 1453.”<sup>29</sup> In fact, this orientalist perception was common among the American journalists in the early 1920s. Journalist like Lothrop Stoddard, a white supremacist, stated in his work, *The New World of Islam*, that “The World of Islam, mentally and spiritually quiescent for almost a thousand years, is once more astir, once more on the march.”<sup>30</sup> Although Stoddard is right about the world of Islam being astir and on the march, he was completely wrong in defining Islamic World as stagnant and unchangeable for thousand years.

Both Horton and Stoddard were wrong in asserting the Turks or the World of Islam has been stagnant and unchanging for centuries. Things were constantly changing in the east, including the predominantly Muslim lands of the Middle East. Edward Said stated, “What seemed stable-and the Orient is synonymous with stability and unchanging eternity-now appears unstable. Instability suggests that history, with its disruptive detail, its currents of change, its tendency towards growth, decline, or dramatic movement, is possible in the Orient and for the Orient.” Said concluded, “History and the narrative by which history is represented argue that vision is insufficient, that ‘the Orient’ as an unconditional ontological category does an injustice to the potential of reality for change.”<sup>31</sup> As Said explained, the idea of Orient or Orientalism itself is problematic and in that nothing can stand against the change. Horton also believes the Turks “do not differ from those whom Gladstone denounced for the Bulgarian

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<sup>26</sup>Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 25.

<sup>27</sup>Horton, *Ibid.*, Intro.

<sup>28</sup>Orientalism is a European invention, and the east had been a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes in westerners’ minds. For more detailed information about Orientalism see, Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

<sup>29</sup>Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup>Lothrop Stoddard, *The New World of Islam*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921, p. 355.

<sup>31</sup>Said, *Orientalism*, p. 240.

atrocities of 1876.”<sup>32</sup> Such biased perception and orientalist view of the east prevails throughout Horton’s work, which curtails his works’ legitimacy reference sources.

Another term that Horton often uses is Mohammedanism.<sup>33</sup> Muslims dislike the terms Mohammedan and Mohammedanism because it carries the implication of worship of Mohammed, as Christian and Christianity imply the worship of Christ. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, missionaries and orientalist usually used Mohammedanism to disdain Islam. Their view was shaped by “the belief that Islam is an inferior religion. This is the case with most missionary literature.” This missionary’s “prejudgment is inherent in their attitude towards Islam, and it cannot be left out of account in any assessment of their writings.”<sup>34</sup> In fact, Horton’s account should be taken into consideration as missionary works because his works not only carry the same biased language but also uses the same terminology to characterize the Muslim Turks. For instances, Horton concludes, “Mohammedanism has been propagated by the sword and by violence ever since it first appeared as the great enemy of Christianity.”<sup>35</sup> He believes Islam, which he prefers to call Mohammedanism instead of Islam- is “a creed to be spread by the sword.”<sup>36</sup> This vicious language explicitly shows the influence of missionaries on him because missionaries have used this rhetoric since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Middle East to disdain Islam and spread out Christianity in the region. Horton’s language leaves no doubt out that he favors Christians over Muslims. While it is certain that he provides some information about Turkish-Greek war and Armenian-Turkish conflict, his account is not completely trustworthy and it should carefully be treated as it is biased and one-sided.

Horton claims that the Turks had committed many crimes including cutting Christian throats and raping their women while disregarding the Ottoman Turks living with their Christians neighbors in peace and friendly manners over centuries. Under the Ottoman State’s millet system, all religious groups were Dhimmi (protected). The state was protective domination; equal justice and protection for everyone summarized the basic Ottoman State philosophy.<sup>37</sup> İlber Ortaylı, a Turkish historian, stated, “the Ottoman Empire had the most colorful and crowded list of religions.” Even the list of Christian denominations and churches in the present Turkey is a dozen: “Greek Orthodox Church, Armenian Gregorian, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Protestant, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, Chaldean Catholics and Chaldean Church, Nestorian Church,”<sup>38</sup> and many others. Horton ruled out the very principal of the Ottoman ruling philosophy and concluded, “They [crimes] were made possible by the teachings of the Koran, the example of Mohammed, lust and the desire for plunder. They sink into insignificance when compared with the vast slaughter of more recent years, conducted under the auspices of Abdulhamid II, Talaat and Company, and Mustapha Khemal.”<sup>39</sup> While these groundless assertions was an attack against Islam and the Turkish nation, he also strove to pervert Qur’anic teaching. A great deal of Qur’anic verses encourages forgiveness and

<sup>32</sup>George Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup>Horton uses Mohammedanism in various places. For instance, in his work *The Blight of Asia*, he uses these words in 19 and 25 pages to show that Islam is inferior. In fact, Horton abuses the word ‘Mohammedanism’ and ‘Mohammedan’, he at least uses these words six times in 246 and 247 pages of the same book.

<sup>34</sup>H. A. R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism: An Historical Survey*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. VI, 1-2.

<sup>35</sup>George Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup>George Horton, *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>37</sup>Halil İnalçık, *Devlet-İ ‘Aliyye Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar-II*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2009), Önsöz; İnalçık, *Osmanlı’da Devlet, Hukuk, Adâlet*, İstanbul, 2005.

<sup>38</sup>İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı’da Milletler ve Diplomasi*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2012), p. 1.

<sup>39</sup>George Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 28.

tolerance.<sup>40</sup> While Horton is determined with these baseless allegations to fling dirt at Islam, he purposively misleads the Christian world by falsifying the Qur'an and its teaching.

#### Dramatizing Armenians

The Armenian revolts of 1915 have become a paramount theme of the US diplomats serving in Turkey. Although Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1916, played a leading figure in dramatizing Armenian situation and presenting the Turks as butchers who systematically massacred the Armenians,<sup>41</sup> Horton inherited Morgenthau's legacy and describes 1915 as "the time of the vast extermination of Armenians."<sup>42</sup> Despite dozens of published and unpublished dossiers about these conflicts in Turkish archives,<sup>43</sup> Horton and likeminded diplomats persistently used few Armenians and Americans eye-witness' accounts to make their cases. These diplomats often linked the so-called Armenian genocide to the Armenian 'migration' of 1915. Although the word migration or displacement constantly appear in their works, they do not examine the reasons that necessitated these extraordinary measures by the Ottoman government. However, survived documents to the present can help us to decipher facts hidden behind the Armenian relocation of the time. The following decision took place in Erzurum, Northeastern Turkey, where the Armenian Dahsnak delegations were present:

- “1. To continue to show submission and keep silent until the declaration of war; but in the meantime to become well equipped with the weapons to be obtained from Russia and from the inner regions,
2. Should the war be declared, all the Armenians in the Ottoman Army would join the Russian forces with their arms.
3. To keep silent should the Turkish Army advances,
4. Should the Turkish Army withdraws or comes to the point of standstill, all the gangs should start their activities behind the lines in accordance with the plan they already have...”<sup>44</sup>

As the Ottomans were dragged into the war and the circumstances became apparent by the end of 1914, separatist Armenian organizations intensified their attacks and activities within the homeland, thus, leaving no secure zones behind the Turkish home-front. In fact, Mahmud Kamil Pasha's, commander of the Third Army in the Russian Border, letter to the Ministry of War in Istanbul, which partially initiated the Armenian relocation in Eastern Anatolia, explicitly explains as to why the Turkish authority assumed this task.

Recently found Mahmud Kamil Pasha's letter, which is now in ATASE- the General Staff Military History Archive, carries a vital merit in comprehending motives behind the displacement of Armenians. Turkish eastern frontline extended along the provinces of Erzurum, Trabzon, Van, Bitlis, Elazig, Diyarbakir, and Sivas. Since the Turkish army mounted

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<sup>40</sup> Numerous Qur'anic verses empower tolerance in Islamic society. For details see, Al-Baqarah, 175, 263; Al Imran, 134, 159; An-Nisa', 22, 149; Al-A'raf, 199; An-Nahl, 90; An-Nur, 22; Ash shura, 40, 41, 42, 43.

<sup>41</sup> Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1919.

<sup>42</sup> George Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 52.

<sup>43</sup> Turkish scholars published eight volumes of documents and each has about five hundred archival documents related to Turkish-Armenian tensions during the First World War. These documents are published with their original version located in the archives. Ahmet Tetik, *Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents, 1914-1918*, Ankara: GenelkurmayBasımevi, 2007, p. IX.

<sup>44</sup> First World War Collection (BDH); File (Kls): 528, O. Folder (E.D.): 1029, N. Folder (Y.D.): 2061, Index (F): 21(1-18). See p. 109. Quoted in Tetik, *Armenian Activities*, p. IX.



assaults from these provinces, the logistics including the food items and ammunition were provided from these cities. Pasha stated, “The Armenians are escaping and participating in the enemy side, forming gangs to cut the roads, showing people their real intention by plundering and destroying foods and warehouses in the provinces of Erzurum, Van, and Bitlis.” Kamil Pasha stated, “Armenians living in Sivas, Diyarbakir, and Elazig proved to carry the same attacks on the Turkish supply lines because their organizations were caught with the same arms, bombs, and explosive materials...” These Armenian’s attacks on the Turkish logistics weakened and demoralized the army.<sup>45</sup> Thus, in order to avoid the worse situation in the future, Kamil Pasha requested from the department of war ministry that the above mentioned Armenian inhabitant of the border area be referred and settled in the Aleppo and Mosul regions. Such letters and increasing activities of the Armenian rebels in the inner regions that initiated the terror events forced the Ottoman government to issue the security decree on April 24, 1915.

Horton never pronounced the reasons that paved the way for the relocations in 1915, and taking refuge behind a psychological defense mechanism he concealed the facts from notice. In fact, Kamil Pasha’s letter by itself is extremely important in displaying an army commander’s helplessness in besieging. An army cannot fight if it is not certain in the regions behind. In so doing, the Ottomans felt that it had to take security measures, which included resettling Armenians.<sup>46</sup> However, the Armenians and the Turks experienced great sufferings in 1915, which is impossible to be forgotten by both nations, but the obligation of the state, the need for a secure line behind the home-front, and more importantly the ‘good defense’ in those days forced the Ottomans to relocate the Armenians. Nonetheless, Horton degraded the facts and made the Armenian incident of 1915 a religious war between Islam and Christianity by concluding, " As we are still dealing with the systematic extermination of Christians previous to the burning of Smyrna by the Turks, a few pages will be devoted to the destruction of the Armenian nation, the most horrible crime in the history of the human race in its details of lust and savagery and suffering."<sup>47</sup> The Armenian relocation is not the only misleading information that Horton provided in his works, he also much said about the Turkish army retaking İzmir.

#### Greek Invasion of İzmir

On May 15, 1919, the Turkish newspapers headlines were “İzmir is invaded”<sup>48</sup> and “İzmir was invaded yesterday.”<sup>49</sup> While this news stuck in the heart of the Turkish people and the Turkish government, it brought joy and excitement to Horton’s life. Seizing the opportunity, shortly after the Greek invasion, Horton returned to İzmir in 1919. Although he said much about the Turks and the so-called Turkish brutality, he hardly disclosed, if any, atrocities and massacres committed by the Greek troops at the time of their incursion at Smyrna. İzmir was a city in peace and serenity where people lived in unity for centuries until on May 15<sup>th</sup> when Greece invaded the city. Their army committed brutal persecution and massacres; killing children, torturing people, and raping women were just few war crimes that the Greek army

<sup>45</sup> Mahmud Kamil Pasha’s original letter is now in ATASE, the General Staff Military History Archive. However, a Turkish journalist Murat Bardakçı published a full copy of this letter in one of the leading Turkish newspapers, *Habertürk*. To see the letter, Murat Bardakçı, “İşte Tehcirin Uygulanmasını ve Doğu’daki Bütün Ermeniler’in Sürülmesini Başlatan Mektup!” *Habertürk*, 19 Nisan 2015. [Accessed on 13/10/2017] <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1067546-iste-tehcirin-uygulanmasini-ve-dogudaki-butun-ermenilerin-surulmesini-baslatan-mektup>

<sup>46</sup> Tetik, *Armenian Activities*, p. IX-XI.

<sup>47</sup> George Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 54-55.

<sup>48</sup> Ömer Sami Coşar, “İzmir İşgal Edildi,” *Milliyet*, May 15, 1919.

<sup>49</sup> Coşar, “İzmir Dün İşgal Edildi,” *İstiklal Harbi Gazetesi*, May 15, 1919

committed during their incursion.<sup>50</sup> In 1919, Atatürk wrote “The Greek army oppressed and murdered the Muslims residing in the province of İzmir. For this, we pledged from the Ottoman government to ask the Entente powers stopping the crimes.”<sup>51</sup> Although the inhabitants of İzmir were subjected to oppression, murder, and rape, none of these atrocities mentioned in Horton’s work.

Ridiculously, Horton described the invasion as “the Greek landing” and gave irrational death numbers. He asserted, “various estimates have been given by Americans who were present as to the number killed, ranging from fifty to three hundred.” Quoting from William Pember Reeves, Horton even endeavored to lower the death numbers he previously had mentioned. In a pamphlet entitled *The Great Powers and the Eastern Christians*, Reeves says, “So far as the persons killed in Smyrna were Turks, they numbered, I am told, seventy-six, killed partly by Greek soldiers and partly by the town mob. About one hundreds of other nationalities were killed also.”<sup>52</sup> However, these are far from the massacred Turkish numbers. According to Turkish historians the butchered Turkish women, children, and men by the Greek army were over thousands. Based on archival documents and eye-witness accounts these historians has reached and revealed many of these victim names and their occupations.<sup>53</sup> Despite these atrocities committed by the Greek army, Horton still misleads people by presenting Greek authorities as “succeeded in giving Smyrna and a large portion of the occupied territory, the most orderly, civilized and progressive administration that it has had in historic times.”<sup>54</sup> Although the Greek atrocities are evident in so many accounts, Horton did not hesitate to distort information about these Greek cruelties to the Turks.

The American High Commissioner in Istanbul Mark L. Bristol refuted what Horton and American media wrote about the burning of İzmir. Bristol concluded, “American press accounts of Smyrna irregularities arriving here contain gross exaggerations and untruths....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.”<sup>55</sup> Indeed, even Horton’s superior confuted his accounts about destruction of İzmir by the Turks.

Horton saw the invasion of İzmir as a chance to lay the seeds of a new Christian Empire in Anatolia, which went down the plughole after Turks reclaimed the city in 1922. Horton shows his frustration and his despair as, “The last act in the fearful drama of the extermination of Christianity in the Byzantine Empire was the burning of Smyrna by the troops of Mustapha Khemal. The murder of the Armenian race had been practically consummated during the years 1915- 1916, and the prosperous and populous Greek colonies, with the exception of Smyrna

<sup>50</sup> Dozens of archival documents show that the Greeks did not only attempt to massacre the Turkish inhabitants of the regions but also destroyed their sacred places including mosques and madrasah. To see these documents, İsmet Binark, *Arşiv Belgelerine Göre Balkanlar'da ve Anadolu'da Yunan Mezâlim* Cilt I ve II, Ankara: T.C., 1995; Mustafa Turan, *Yunan Mezalimi (İzmir, Aydın, Manisa, Denizli – 1919-1923)*, Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1999, p. 74-91.

<sup>51</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Nutuk: 1919-1920*, Cilt I, Milli Eğitim Basımevi, İstanbul, 1969, p. 277.

<sup>52</sup> William Pember Reeves, *The Great Powers and the Eastern Christians* (published by the Anglo-Hellenic League, No. 49), Quoted in George Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 75.

<sup>53</sup> To learn more detailed information about the victims and the Greek incursion see, Turan, *Yunan Mezalimi*, p.73-90; Salâhi R. Sonyel, *Türk-Yunan Anlaşmazlığı*, Ankara, 1985, p. 25; Nurdoğan Taçalan, *Ege'de Kurtuluş Savaşı Baslarken*, İstanbul, 1970, p. 212-69; Sonyel, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Dış Politika I*, Ankara, 1973, p. 53-61; Kamil Su, *Manisa ve Yöresinde İşgal Acıları*, Ankara, 1982, p. 21-48.

<sup>54</sup> Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 82.

<sup>55</sup> Library of Congress, Bristol Papers, Subject Files, Container 75, Washington D.C.

itself, had been ferociously destroyed.”<sup>56</sup> However, Horton does not intentionally reference the facts that the Turks fought against the Greek invaders and in that it was a war of independence for the Turkish nation. He further accused the Turks destroying Izmir in 1922. He concluded, “No act ever perpetrated by the Turkish race in all its bloodstained history, has been characterized by more brutal and lustful features, nor more productive of the worst forms of human sufferings inflicted on the defenseless and unarmed. It was a fittingly lurid and Satanic finale to the whole dreadful tragedy.”<sup>57</sup> Once again, he dramatized and twisted the facts. Unlike what Horton claimed, the Turks did not fight with civil people or Christians, their war was against the very well-armed and Allied backed Greek army. In facts, this Greek Army did not stop its invasion at Izmir, the Greeks launched their invasion as far as to Eskisehir which was about 200 km away from the Turkish capital, Ankara. The Turks soon propelled a counter-attack to avert and repel the foreign incursion. After a successful attack against the Greek army, Turkish army gradually advanced until Izmir where the Greek army eventually expelled from the Turkish mainland.<sup>58</sup> Although the Turkish-Greek war is so explicit in so many accounts, one wonders as to why Horton distorted information about this war and presented the Greeks as Christian victims.

Horton’s motivation is hidden in his lines. He had great hopes for the establishment of a Christian state and for the revival of the Roman Empire, therefore the reclaim of Izmir by the Turks ended his hopes. Thus, Horton described his frustration:

“The destruction of Smyrna by the Turks was an event of great significance in Church history.... Asia Minor and Africa are famous in the history of the Church as the habitat of many of the most famous Christian fathers and martyrs.....The Seven Churches of Revelation were in Asia Minor, and the fact that Smyrna was the last of these, and kept her light burning until 1922, emphasizes the significance, in Church history, of her destruction by the Turks.... If Constantinople could have been spared and Christianity saved in the Near East, the results to civilization would have been incalculable. What a glorious city a Greek Constantinople would be today, if it had always stayed Greek, with its long traditions and its immense treasures of ancient culture! Another and more beautiful Paris, bestriding the Bosphorus, great in commerce, learning, science and all the graces and influences of Christian civilization.”<sup>59</sup>

Horton saw Izmir the last stronghold of Christianity and Greek culture in the Near East in that he described the Turkish-Greek War of 1922 as a war between Christianity and Islam, forgetting the fact that it was Turkish independence war. In fact, the victory and retaking Izmir sealed the Turkish independence, sovereignty, liberty, and freedom.

#### Conclusion

Looking back at the period between 1919 and 1922, one can surely say that Izmir went through great sufferings because the city was turned into a battle zone by Greeks and Turks. Although both parties discourse was to liberate the city from one another’s oppression, they left great sorrows for Muslim and Christian inhabitants of the city. Greek invasion of 1919 turned the city into a battle field which lasted until the Turks reclaimed the city in 1922. Had

<sup>56</sup> Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 112.

<sup>57</sup> Horton, *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>58</sup> For detailed accounts of the Turkish-Greek War see, Sonyel, *Türk Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Dış Politika I*; Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

<sup>59</sup> Horton, *The Blight of Asia*, p. 168-71.

the Greek army not invaded Izmir, it would not have become a field of dispute and faced with sufferings, sorrows, and misery. Since the Greek incursion ignited the fire in the city, then the question of why Horton presented Turks as villain necessitates clarification. His background is a decisive factor in choosing the Turks as scapegoats. Being raised in a conservative family influenced and shaped Horton's worldview from the very early age. Further, missionaries and orientalist nurtured his conservative world-view, which is explicit in his writings. Coming from a conservative middle-class family and being pro-missionaries while made Horton a philhellenic, it also fed his rage against the Turks. This rage transformed into an animosity when Mustafa Kemal and his soldiers expelled the Greek army from the Turkish mainland because Horton's ultimate dream was to revive a Christian state in Anatolia, Izmir in particular.

Horton saw himself as the voice of the radical Christians in Turkey. In so doing, he used the radical Armenian and Greek Christians' rhetoric as an instrument to dramatize these Christians' situation in Turkey. In fact, Horton was not alone in deceiving the world by falsifying the information, his closeness to the American Protestant missionaries and their influence on Horton played a key role for his animosity against the Muslims, in particular the Turks.

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