



The Whispering Voices of Smyrna

Dr. Niki Karavasilis

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Smyrna, one of the wealthiest cities and the most advanced civilizations in the Middle East (present-day Turkey) with a unique mixture of many nationalities-Greek, Armenian, Jewish, Turkish, European, and American-perished into ashes in September 1922. The Smyrniots (inhabitants of Smyrna) became victims through the orders of Mustafa Ataturk, who was responsible for one of the largest purges of humanity known to man. This eradication led to the loss of 3.5 million Greek and Armenian Orthodox Christians who had occupied Asia Minor since the time of Alexander the Great. In September 1922, Ataturk led his troops into Smyrna (now Izmir), a predominantly Greek Christian City that was known as the City of Infidels to the Turks. The Turks then proceeded to indulge in an orgy of pillage, rape, and slaughter. This City of Infidels was cleansed and destroyed and with it the last hub of Christians in Turkey.

The Whispering Voices of Smyrna is proof of the horrible atrocities the Turks, whether private citizens or government officials, committed by plundering, torturing, mutilating, burning alive, and massacring women, children, and aged people. The book details these brutal acts that were decided, planned, and directed by the Turkish central authorities and were aimed at cleansing lands under Turkish control of non-Muslim citizens.

The Whispering Voices of Smyrna combines history and storytelling so that readers understand how the decision by government and military leaders of the victorious Allied powers affected the people of Smyrna. Through the eyes of the Samithakis family, one lives the cataclysmic events that determined the fate of Asia Minor following World War I. The Samithakis family lived a life of luxury among the different nationalities in Smyrna, until the Turks forced them to flee with other Greek, Armenian and European residents of Smyrna. In the course of their struggle to save themselves from the fire, the massacres, rapes, mutilations and plundering, they lost one another and became refugees, beggars and exiles. The reader also lives through the stages of destruction of a civilization centered on the once-thriving and beloved city of Smyrna.

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