

NEWSLETTER

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HELLENIC LINK Midwest

A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC
LINK WITH GREECE



Upcoming Events

Human Rights Violations in the Balkans and the Search for Justice

On Sunday October 7, 2001, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents professor Andrew Michels in a lecture on *Human Rights Violations in the Balkans and the Search for Justice*; 3:00 PM, Embassy Suites Hotel, 600 North State Street in Chicago.

In 1993 the Security Council of the United Nations created the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In its Resolutions 808 and 827, the Council stated that the situation in Bosnia constituted a threat to international peace and security, and a tribunal to prosecute war criminals would help to restore peace. A draft treaty to create an international criminal court was put together in Rome in 1998, and had the support of most states present. This treaty has not been ratified, as several important powers have not signed it. Professor Michels will discuss issues of justice, arising from human rights violations in the Balkans, especially before and after the conflict in Kosovo, and their impact on recent events in the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia.

Andrew Michels is executive director of the International Human Rights Law Institute at DePaul University. He has a wealth of experience as a peacekeeping administrator with numerous United Nations missions, most notably in recent years in Kosovo. He has lectured widely in international human rights and criminal justice issues, holding posts at the University of Cambridge, England, Loyola Marymount University, the University of Sydney, and Georgetown University. Since 1993, Mr. Michels has served as a United Nations administrator on missions in Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and his work has included refugee protection and repatriation, election supervision, and property restitution.

In 2000, he was appointed by Dr. Bernard Kouchner, Special Representative of the Secretary General, as President of the Registration Appeals Commission of the

U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, overseeing appeals from persons who have been denied residency status in Kosovo. As part of his U.N. duties, Mr. Michels has developed a special expertise in the post-conflict restoration of legal norms and civil order, and his advice is widely sought within the U.N. peacekeeping framework.

Mr. Michels also serves as adjunct professor in the College of Law at DePaul, and teaches in the areas of public international law, international protection of human rights, and international organizations. In addition to these duties, Mr. Michels serves as a Senior Consultant to the European Centre for Minority Issues and as Political Adviser to the Sudan Peace Initiative.

In addition to degrees in political science (from Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles) and law (from the University of Southern California School of Law), Mr. Michels is also a graduate of the prestigious United Nations University International Leadership Academy and the Hague Academy of International Law in the Netherlands.

Not Even My Name: A True Story

On Sunday November 4, 2001, Hellenic Link–Midwest presents Thea Halo, the author of *Not Even My Name*; 3:00 PM, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 600 North State Street in Chicago. This event is also cosponsored by the Hellenic American Museum.

Thea Halo in telling her mother's epic story of survival, brings to light a largely unknown chapter of our history: the genocide of the Pontic Greeks at the hands of the Turkish government in the years following World War I. In all, three million Christians of Turkey—Armenians, Greeks, and Assyrians—were slaughtered by the Turkish government, and millions of others were exiled. And with their slaughter and exile, 3,000 years of civilization came to an abrupt and brutal end. This shameful opening chapter to the 20th century, fueled by the indifference of the world, encouraged Hitler's

heinous policy against the Jews. Who still remembers the extermination of the Armenians? Hitler had said to justify his planned atrocities. Indeed, and who, even today, knows the Greeks and Assyrians of Turkey suffered the same fate?

Six thousand Pontian men, women, and children of the Bafra area were burned alive as they took refuge in churches, and their valuables were stolen. In the town of Alajam another 2,500 Christians were slaughtered. Of the 25,000 inhabitants of the Bafra region, 90 percent were eliminated by mass slayings or by sending them on long death marches where they were often raped and robbed and left to die of disease and starvation. Of the 1.5 million Greeks of Asia Minor, approximately 750,000 were massacred and 750,000 exiled.

Sano, born Themia, a Pontic Greek, recounts her story, beginning with her arranged marriage at age 15, to a 45 year-old stranger, then steps back in time to 1919, when at age nine her ancient way of life was still relatively intact. In the three Greek villages of Ayios Antonios, tucked away in the Pontic Mountains near the Black Sea, her people abided in their ancient customs and spoke their own ancient form of Greek. The dreadful realization that something was amiss came little by little to Themia's villages. Strangers began to inhabit the fields and forests, always watching from a distance like birds of prey. Turkish soldiers made periodic raids to seize the men of her villages for slave labor in foul, lice-infested labor camps where they died of disease, malnutrition, and exposure. Then in the spring of 1920, Turkish soldiers pounded the doors with the butts of their rifles and shouted Ataturk's dreadful proclamation: "You are to leave this place. You are to take with you only what you can carry." On their long death march, victims lay where they fell, while buzzards circled, waiting for the exiles to pass. Before the age of ten, Themia watched family and neighbors fall dead in their tracks, even holding her three-year old sister in her arms as she drew her last breath.

Not Even My Name is a story of tragedy and triumph, and the power of love; a brilliant and mesmerizing memoir, written in haunting and eloquent prose, *Not Even My Name* weaves a seamless texture of individual memory that evokes all the suspense and drama of the best told tales.

Author Thea Halo is a painter and writer, who has exhibited in galleries and museums in New York and elsewhere. She has worked as a news correspondent for Public Radio Station WBAI in New York, a public radio announcer and producer, and a column writer for a weekly paper in upstate NY. She has won prizes for both her poetry and essays. Sano "Themia" Halo, the hero of *Not Even My Name*, is a recipient of the New York State Governor's Award for Excellence in Honor of Women's History Month, "*Celebrating Women of Courage and Vision*."

Excerpt from "Not Even My Name"

"The Exile"

The slaughter, looting, and general elimination in this area lasted from February to August. These displacements and killings were conducted with the semiofficial participation of military and civic personnel...~ The Turkish authorities and the Turkish governments of 1919-20, including at the Peace Conference in Paris, attempt not to deny their actions but they attempt to put all responsibilities to the Young Turks; in other words to the government.

Six thousand Pontian men, women, and children of the Bafra area were burned alive as they took refuge in churches, and their valuables were stolen. In the town of Alajam another 2,500 Christians were slaughtered. Of the 25,000 inhabitants of the Bafra region, 90 percent were eliminated by mass slayings or by sending them on long death marches where they were often raped and robbed and left to die of disease and starvation.

Apologists for the Turkish government often claim the Christians were casualties of war and a crumbling Ottoman Empire, or they blame the Greek-Turkish War of 1919-22 for the slaughter and exile of the Greeks of Turkey. However, a series of communiqués found in the German and Austrian archives have now been made public.

They attest to Turkey's brutal intentions against its ancient Christian population, which included Greeks, Armenians, and Assyrians, long before Greece landed troops at Smyrna. The communiqués attest to Turkey's intentions even before Greece entered the war on the side of the Allies in 1917 - even long before World War I and the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. In fact, it was simply a more thorough continuation of the slaughters of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, neither the German nor Austrian authorities did anything to prevent Turkey from carrying out its plan of genocide.

24 July 1909, German Ambassador in Athens Wangenheim to Chancellor Bulow, quoting Turkish Prime Minister Sefker Pasha: "The Turks have decided upon a war of extermination against their Christian subjects."

26 July 1909, Sefker Pasha to Patriarch Ioakeim III: "... We will cut off your heads; we will make you disappear. It is either you or us who will survive."

14 May 1914, official document from Talaat Bey Minister of the Interior to Prefect of Smyrna. "The Creeks, who are Ottoman subjects, and form the majority of inhabitants in your district, take advantage of the circumstances in order to provoke a revolutionary current, favorable to the intervention of the Great Powers. Consequently, it is urgently necessary that the Creeks occupying the coastline of Asia Minor be compelled to evacuate their villages and install themselves in the vilayets of Erzerum and Chaldea. If they should refuse to be transported to the appointed places, kindly give instructions to our Moslem brothers, so that they shall induce the Creeks, through excesses of all sorts, to leave their native places of their own accord. Do not forget to obtain, in such cases, from the emigrants, certificates stating that they leave their homes on their own initiative, so that we shall not have political complications ensuing from their displacement."

31 July 1915, German priest J. Lepsius: "The anti-Greek and anti-Armenian persecutions are two phases of one program - the extermination of the Christian element from Turkey."

16 July 1916, German Consul Kuchhoff from Amisos to Berlin: "The entire Creek population of Sinope and the coastal region of the county of Kastanomu has been exiled. Exile and extermination in Turkish are the same, for whoever is not murdered, will die from hunger or illness."

30 November 1916, Austrian consul at Amisos Kwiatkowski to Austrian Foreign Minister Baron Burian: "on 26 November Raftt Bey told me: " Today I sent squads to the interior to kill every Creek on sight." I fear for the elimination of the entire Creek population and a repeat of what occurred last year." (The Armenian genocide.)

13 December 1916, German Ambassador Kuhlman to Chancellor Hollweg in Berlin: "Consuls Bergfeld in Samsun and Schede in Kerasun report of displacement of local population and murders. Prisoners are not kept. Villages reduced to ashes. Greek refugee families consisting mostly of women and children being marched from the coasts to Sebasteia. The need is great."

19 December 1916, Austrian Ambassador to Turkey Pallavicini lists the villages in the region of Amisos that were being burnt to the ground and their inhabitants raped, murdered, or dispersed.

20 January 1917, Austrian Ambassador Pallavicini: "The situation for the displaced is desperate. Death awaits them all. I spoke to the Grand Vizier and told him that it would be sad if the persecution of the Creek element took the same scope and dimension as the Armenian persecution. The Grand Vizier promised that he would influence Talaat Bey and Emver Pasha."

31 January 1917, Austrian Chancellor Hollweg's report: "... the indications are that the Turks plan to eliminate the Creek element as enemies of the state, as they did earlier with the Armenians. The strategy implemented by the Turks is of displacing people to the interior without taking measures for their survival by exposing them to death, hunger, and illness. The abandoned homes are then looted and burnt or destroyed. Whatever was done to the Armenians is being repeated with the Creeks. "

Horton asserted that Germany approved the deportations and massacres of Anatolian Creeks from the coastal regions in 1914, probably in preparation for World War I. Archival documents confirm that Germany even inadvertently instigated the Christian genocide by suggesting to the Young Turk leaders that they call for a jihad (holy war) in Europe by Muslims living in the Allied countries. Instead, the Young Turks recognized this as a perfect opportunity to rid the Ottoman Empire of its Christian populations once and for all under the cover of war. United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau, Sr., asserted that the Prefect of Police at Constantinople told one of his secretaries that the government "had expelled the Creeks [in 1914] so successfully that they had decided to adopt the same method to all the other races in the Empire. " The other races included the Armenians and Assyrians.

As with the Armenians, the Turkish government had accused the Anatolian Greeks of disloyalty to the Ottoman Empire, and further accused them of looking forward to the day when territories in Asia Minor could be united with Greece. In answer to these charges, Ambassador Morgenthau asserted that such longing "was to be expected ... after suffering for five centuries the most unspeakable outrages at the hands of the Turks."

In November 1922, with the deposing of the Sultan by Mustafa Kemal's National Assembly, the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist. Kemal had successfully driven the Allies out and, in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, forced the Allies to recognize the sovereignty of Turkey in Asia Minor and eastern Thrace, thus nullifying the

Treaty of Sevres in which the Greeks, Armenians, and Kurds had been granted territories.

History has been written by so few disinterested authorities that, depending on the nationality or loyalties of the writer, the facts have been slanted or even twisted to cast the events in a very calculated light. Numerous scandals have surfaced concerning the Turkish government's policy of paying American universities endowments, such as those to Princeton and Portland, to ensure that a history is taught that is favorable to Turkey, one that excludes reference to the Armenian, Greek, and Assyrian genocides. With many chairs for Turkish studies at American universities, Turkey's revisionist history has a chance of reaching a large segment of the American student population.

“Babies and Buzzards”

The march was a nightmare I have partially wiped from my mind so I could survive. The day-by-day events have disappeared, blended together much the way days blend one into the other in the lands of the midnight sun in summer. Our nights seemed no more than a cloud passing across the dazzling blue of the sky, when we could close our eyes before the sun would begin to shine again, as if time were a continuous stream not divided into zones. Each sweltering day ended not by night and calm, or an evening meal with family gathered around the fire, but by another death, another corpse, another wail of grief tearing a gaping hole in my heart.

Only certain memories come back, but those memories come with a reality that's frightening. I find myself standing before the scene again with glazed eyes. The years are wiped away, and I am ten years old again, seeing and smelling and hearing everything, as if it were before me now. Even with my eyes wide-open, all of my present surroundings disappear, and I am back again on that scabby road to hell. Corpses are lying on stone walls or on the road, lined up like targets at a shooting gallery, while the buzzards that follow us wherever we go, hang like grotesque prizes pinned to the sky.

By the time we reached central Turkey, the weather was so hot, even moving was a chore. Water was scarce, and the sun beat down and sucked the moisture from our lips, splitting them open to bleed against our swollen tongues. Sometimes in the distance, great clear pools of water lay in our path. They would draw our shriveled bodies on, our minds filled with the vision of falling headlong into a cool oasis to replenish our bodies lost sea of sweat and tears. Those who still could, quickened their steps with arms outstretched, grasping toward the moist, wavy air rising from the pool, their bodies falling forward with each step.

But time and again as we drew near, as if by some devil's dirty deed, the pool would grow smaller and smaller and we'd arrive in time to watch the last drops suck together and disappear, only to appear further down the road.

Each day Mathea was heavier on my back, and my clammy, long-sleeved dress, thick with dust and perspiration, stuck to me like wet glue. With each passing day, Mother seemed more debilitated, perhaps from the extra strain of nursing the twins without proper food or water. At the edge of a small town, there was a water fountain with water flowing continuously, spilling its cool treasure into a stone bowl, then overflowing onto the ground, turning the stones around it black.

I had never seen Mother so in need of anything before. She had always been the graceful, patient jewel the Turks rightly named Kuzel. But Mother left the file to stumble to the fountain. The exiles stopped and watched expectantly, ready to race for the fountain also if she succeeded in her quest. But just before she reached it, a Turkish soldier trotted up on his horse spitting out commands. He raised his whip and gave her a lash like one would an ox or a donkey. She fell to her knees as my feet rooted to the earth and my heart slit open. Father threw down his bundles and ran to her.

“Water, please,” Mother said to the soldier.

Father tried to raise Mother to her feet.

“Please.”

The soldier raised his whip again, spitting out more abuse. He would have hit her again but Father threw his arm around her shoulder and pulled her away.

The disappointment on the marchers' dirt-streaked faces was barely noticeable. It was more like numbness that showed in their eyes. The numbness that comes from deprivation and prolonged defeat. Mother stumbled back to her place as the others turned like robots to continue their march.

Was it on that day that little Maria died? I don't remember. I only remember her little body tied to Cristodula's back like a papoose, her little head bobbing back and forth, and the realization that something was wrong crept up my hot body with a cold, clammy, panic.

"Mama!" I said as calmly as I could, hoping my calmness would make everything all right. "Maria looks funny."

Mother looked up and burst into tears. Maria's face had turned ashen. Her eyes stared out at nothing like little doll eyes that were broken in an open position, and her head rolled back and forth with each step.

"What's wrong?" Cristodula demanded in a panic. "What is it?" We stopped in the road like a pile of stones in a river; the weary exiles ruptured out around us and continued their march. Mother took Maria from Cristodula's back and cradled her in her arms as her tears washed Maria's lifeless face.

"Move!" a soldier shouted as he trotted up to where we stood.

"My baby," Mother said.

She held out Maria for the soldier to see, as if her shock and grief could also be his.

"My baby."

"Throw it away if it's dead!" he shouted. "Move!"

"Let me bury her," Mother pleaded, sobbing.

"Throw it away!" He shouted again, raising his whip. "Throw it away!"

Mother clutched Maria's body to her breast as we stood staring up at him. Her face was gripped with a torment I had never seen before. Father reached for Maria, to put her down I suppose, but Mother clutched her even more tightly. Then she walked over to the high stone wall that separated the road from the town and lifted Maria up to lay her on the wall's top as if on an altar before the Almighty.

That night Mother cried herself to sleep. And each time I closed my own eyes, I saw her holding Maria up to the heavens like an offering. The image of her lifeless body lying on the wall, like some gift in a pagan ritual, followed me even into my dreams and all through the next days. Each time I thought of my little sister left lying there alone in the burning sun, with the buzzards flying about waiting for us to pass, the sobs would come without my ability to control them.

It was always with great relief each day when the call to prayer halted our march. We all secretly prayed it would come in or near a town so we could try to find food and water. The soldiers got down from their horses then and knelt on their little mats facing east. They bowed to touch their foreheads to the ground in supplication, steadying themselves with their hands. Their rifles and whips rested on the ground by their sides as a mullah's voice called out from a minaret: "Allahu akbar." "God is great."

From The Riches of Our Cultural Heritage

ΑΠΟ ΤΑ '18 ΛΙΑΝΟΤΡΑΓΟΥΔΑ ΤΗΣ ΠΙΚΡΗΣ ΠΑΤΡΙΔΑΣ'

Του Γιάννη Ρίτσου

1. Αναβάφτιση

Λόγια φτωχά βαφτίζονται στην πίκρα και στο κλάμα,
βγάζουν φτερά και πέτονται—πουλιά και κελαηδάνε.

Και κειός ο λόγος ο κρυφός—της λεφτεριάς ο λόγος
αντίς φτερά βγάζει σπαθιά και σκίζει τούς αγέρες.

2. Κουβέντα μ'ένα λουλούδι

—Κυκλάμινο, κυκλάμινο, στου βράχου τη σκισμάδα,
πού βρήκες χρώματα κι' ανθείς, πού μίσχο καί σαλεύεις;

—Μέσα στό βράχο σύναζα τό γαίμα στάλα-στάλα,
μαντίλι ρόδινο έπλεξα κ' ήλιο μαζεύω τώρα.

3. Καρτέρεμα

Έτσι μέ τό καρτέρεμα μεγάλωσαν οι νύχτες
πού τό τραγούδι ρίζωσε και ψηλώσε σα δέντρο.

Κι' αυτοί μέσ' απ' τά σίδερα κι' αυτοί μακριά στα ξένα
Κάνουν πικρό να βγάλουν τό «αχ» και βγαίνει φύλλο
λευκάς.

4. Λαός

Μικρός λαός και πολεμά δίχως σπαθιά και βόλια
γιά όλου τού κόσμου τό ψωμί, τό φως και τό τραγούδι.

Κάτω απ' τή γλώσσα του κρατεί τούς βόγγους και τά
ζήτω
κι αν κάνει πως τα τραγουδεί ραγίζουν τά λιθάρια.

5. Μνημόσυνο

Στη μιά γωνιά στέκει ο παππούς, στην άλλη δέκα εγγόνια
και στο τραπέζι εννιά κεριά μπηγμένα στο καρβέλι.

Μάνες τραβάνε τα μαλλιά και τα παιδιά σωπαίνουν
κι απ' τό φεγγίτη η Λευτεριά τηρά κι αναστενάζει

1. Re-baptism

Words poor words are baptized in bitterness and in
wailing,
they bring forth wings and begin to fly — birds and they are
warbling.

And that word hidden word — the single word of liberty,
instead of wings brings forth swords and rends asunder the
winds.

2. Conversation with a flower

“Cyclamen, cyclamen, inside the crevice of the rock,
where did you find colors to bloom? where stalk for you
to stir?”

“Inside the rock I collected blood drop by dripping drop,
I wove a rose-tinted kerchief and now I'm gathering sun.”

3. Biding of time

With the biding of time the nights have grown so much longer,
and there the song has taken root and grown tall like a tree.

Both those in fetters and those far away in foreign lands find
bitter to bring out the sigh and a poplar leaf comes out.

4. Populace

Small populace, and it's fighting without swords and bullets
for the bread and the light and the song of the whole wide world.

Underneath its tongue, it is holding the howls and the hurrahs,
and if it decides to sing them, the very boulders must crack.

5. Memorial service

In one corner stands the grandfather, in the next ten
grandchildren
And on the table nine candles stuck in the round loaf of bread.

Mothers are pulling their hair and the children are keeping still
and from the garret-window, liberty's watching and sighing.