

PREFATORY DEDICATION

In dedicating this book to Dêmétrios Kaloumenos, I wish to acknowledge his important contribution to our knowledge of the little-known pogrom of September 6-7, 1955, which inflicted massive destruction on the Greeks of Istanbul.* His contribution was twofold and resulted from both his copious photography, which was done under dangerous circumstances, and from his personal record of the events, published and unpublished. Above and beyond Kaloumenos's direct experience of the pogrom lie his keen perception and strong ethical values. A well-read man, with complete command of both Greek and Turkish, he is also highly intelligent, with great physical and moral courage, and dedicated to the truth.

Early on the evening of September 6, he quickly understood that violent and important events were in the making, and so hastened to his studio in Galata, took his camera and numerous rolls of film, and, over the next five days, shot some 1,500 photographs of damaged or destroyed Greek homes, businesses, churches, monasteries, cemeteries, schools, and print shops. These images soon made their way to the outside world. Consequently, we now have a plethora of visual documentation to illustrate the oral and written testimony of the pogrom's course and nature. In short, Kaloumenos was an extraordinary individual who understood history and politics, as well as the ethnic hatred and violence that often ensued from the former, and who, in full knowledge of the danger to him, undertook to preserve the truth.

That the pogrom of September 6-7, 1955, is virtually unknown—and has been effectively excluded from the scholarly and political discourse concerning its larger context—does not testify to its insignificance. Rather, it bespeaks the fact that, for the most part, the event has been, in turn, ignored, rationalized, excused, or denied by the Turkish government, and by the governments that have underwritten Turkey for half a century, in order to further their respective national and geopolitical interests. We are thus

*I have a short cv of Kaloumenos in manuscript form, dated July 22, 1987. The Komotêné newspaper *Chronos* carried brief biographical notes of him in April 1999. Finally, I inaugurated, with the assistance of a second interviewer, a taped interview (four reels) of Kaloumenos during his visit to the us in February 1991. This is his most detailed autobiographical account and is of considerable importance, and much of the biographical material in this preface is taken from this interview, as well as from the intense and extensive conversations I have had with him over a period of thirteen years, and from conversations with his wife, Euangelia, and daughter, Marina.

all deeply indebted to Dêmétrios Kaloumenos for his foresight, unwavering courage, and perseverance in documenting and preserving the historical truth of the pogrom, and for his unrelenting pursuit of justice.

Kaloumenos opened his studio, Embeka, in 1948 at Maden Han 5, in Galata. His father, uncle, and brother were also professional photographers, and their studio, Lumiye, which they had earlier established in Yüksek Kaldırım, was to be destroyed during the pogrom (see the photographic inset). Kaloumenos was not only the ecumenical patriarchate's official photographer, but served as import agent for the newspapers and magazines of Athens and Thessalonikê. Thus, his connections to the Greek press were close and constant, which was to be a significant factor in the subsequent dissemination of his photographs of the pogrom. Kaloumenos was well-prepared to document the violence against the Greek community because, in addition to his experience as a photographer and journalist, he was deeply knowledgeable—indeed a student—of the history of Istanbul and its culture.

Kaloumenos found himself at Tophane at 5:00 PM on September 6, 1955, among a group of Turkish soldiers preparing to participate in the pogrom. He observed that they were removing their uniforms and putting on civilian clothes while, nearby, people in parked trucks with official markings were arming them with crowbars and pickaxes. Sensing that something dramatic was about to take place, Kaloumenos hurried to his studio; by 6:00 PM, he was in Taksim Square prepared to photograph what he thought would be a demonstration. He caught the tail end of the speeches to the gathered mob and then witnessed the onset of violence.

From that time onward, and for many days thereafter, the patriarchal photographer busied himself with the dangerous business of photographing the destruction, although the conditions were anything but felicitous. The police and military forbade taking pictures, and so Kaloumenos had to hold the camera under his coat. Furthermore, despite the poor lighting, he could not afford to use a flash attachment, as this would have given him away. By 10:00 PM, he had boarded the ferry for Chalkê (Heybeliada), where his family had been staying for late summer vacation. On the morning of the seventh, he boarded the same boat at 6:00 AM and now went to his studio, took a second camera and ten more rolls of film, and spent most of the rest of the day photographing in Galata, Yüksek Kaldırım, Beyoğlu, Kalyoncu Kulluk, Tataula, Tarabya, and Büyükdere.

On September 8, he was joined by the correspondent from the Athens newspaper *Ethnos*, Giôrgos Karagiôrgas, who had been sent to cover the devastation suffered by the city's Greeks (and who was joined, in turn, on September 9 by Iôannês Iôannidês, the editor of *Makedonia*, the major

newspaper of Thessalonikè). Thus, on the morning of the eighth, Karagiôrgas followed Kaloumenos to the large Greek cemetery of Şişli. Both men have left accounts of their experience, and of their encounter with the police, which included Karagiôrgas's escape and Kaloumenos's arrest. Karagiôrgas's description of their "voyage of discovery" in the destroyed cemetery of Şişli contains details of how they furtively (since they were followed by security police) photographed the ruins and desecrations:

I...managed...to enter the cemetery of Şişli two hours before entrance was to be forbidden. Horror was scattered over all the little "streets" of the cemetery, over the fallen and smashed [marble] crosses, over the exhumed corpses, intermingled with the repulsive stench. To the left and in the distance, the ossuary was still burning [almost two days after the destruction]. From within the piles of bones, there arose a light, diaphanous white smoke....There were also two young Turks [police] with their wrinkled red shirts following us....

Dêmêtrios Kaloumenos...loaded with his camera was constantly grumbling, "Do not indicate that you know me...stay close to me...but with a little distance between us." He was continually turning to the left and right to see who was near us. He photographed everything, even the interior of the ossuary, which was smoking with a smoke that was choking us. We issued forth once more into the cemetery. There, with a small Japanese camera, I photographed a priest who had been slashed, with a knife, on the forehead....

[Throughout Istanbul] the Greeks were weeping, Dêmêtrios wept, the priests were weeping. Greeks had gathered at the [Greek] consulate...and mutely sought comfort from the consul....

Our rolls had finished, time was passing, and so we decided to leave. I led and Dêmêtrios followed; we had passed the rolls inside our socks. Suddenly, three men (one of them was the young policeman who had followed us) jumped out from behind the graves and ordered us..."Police, come here!" Two of them immediately surrounded Dêmêtrios....[†]

Karagiôrgas escaped by hiding in open graves; before leaving the cemetery, he quickly gave the film to a priest with orders to get them to Kaloumenos's studio. Kaloumenos was taken in for questioning, but, as he had managed to get rid of his film, was released. The priest, meanwhile, took the rolls of film to Kaloumenos's studio, and the photos were ultimately delivered to

[†]Giôrgos Karagiôrgas, "Enas Septemvrês prin apo 26 chronia," in *Dêmosiografika. Epilegmena keimena pente dekaetiôn*, Volume 1, pp. 540-544

Karagiörgas, who, on the day he left Istanbul, taped them on his back to keep them from being found in his luggage. Finally, on the ninth of the month, *Makedonia* gathered further photographs from Kaloumenos, and so it was that a large body of very graphic pictures found their way into the Greek press within two weeks of the pogrom.

Kaloumenos's life became increasingly difficult because of his harassment by the security police. On June 15, 1957, he was arrested, incarcerated in the central police station at Sirkeci, and alternately interrogated and tortured by the police. As he was held incommunicado, Kaloumenos's wife did not know where he was or what had happened to him. He relates that he was subjected to *bastinado* four times, estimating that the beating was spread out each time over twenty to thirty minutes over a period of about fifty-six hours. In the end, the police decided that he had little to tell them. He was subsequently expelled from the country by the Turkish authorities.

One is amazed at Dêmétrios Kaloumenos's persistent pursuit of truth, which endangered him bodily and psychologically. In these days of ready and crude compromise, such courage and willingness to persist are truly rare. On a final and personal note, without his generosity—and the direct and free access he gave me both to his extraordinary photographic archive of the pogrom and to his photographic collection on various aspects of the life, culture, and society of Istanbul's Greeks—this study would have been much diminished.