

## The Just of Pontiac Hellenism

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I am very glad that we begun with an Armenian. It should be the right thing to do in all similar events. Not only because we have been together for hundreds of years but because they serve as an example. You said it correctly that for many years you had no country, but you should know that it is exactly this that helped you. Because you have set the gauge of value at a human level much higher and other peoples who had a homeland or who found a homeland stopped struggling, because they thought that they had found a solution. Therefore, all of you should understand that we are honoured to begin this speech on the genocide of the Pontiacs with him here; to begin with someone who is Armenian. This means that he recognizes us. This means that he doesn't stand only for his genocide, and this means that, when we have three peoples genocided, as the Armenian, the Hellenic and the Assyrian have been, what matters is to remember that the perpetrator is the same. The same perpetrator is always Turkey. The Ottoman Empire, the Young-turks and finally Mustafa Kemal had always had the same goal to exterminate these nations, because these nations represent a culture. You must understand that our own were victims of the genocide because they were worthy. Because they had raised the cultural gauge, no matter where they were, and this is the reason why they became a target. If they had never created a work, genocide against them would have never been committed. Now, I want to point out something that touched me particularly - I hope you also see it later - I saw the monument of the genocide here in your town. It is really beautiful, because it is always difficult to make a monument for genocide. There are many insinuations. If you see it from above it seems like a cross. If you see it from an angle it looks like a ship, if you see it from up close, you will see that the marble became memory. And you did this. Therefore, it is very important when I see such a work -Nikos created it, of course I know that Zaira, and the whole Pontiac leading group, gave a hand. What matters is that this will stay. And what we see is that this will serve as an example. What I can promise you is that I will make it known everywhere. Because when you are capable to make such a monument for genocide in a town, it means that there are still values that have not been lost. Because we are constantly told that Hellenism has perished and it has no longer values. Usually those who say this are those who live in daily routine and in society and they don't see the diachronic element. Now, I would like to focus on a point that we very often do not analyze and I think I can help. It is this word. This word: genocide, many of you think that is a Greek one. It is not Greek; it is a mixture of a Latin root and a Greek one. Simply when we translate it in Greek we think it is Greek. Genocide - in order for you to understand how important this word is, and I think that after this speech you will be using this vocabulary more – had not existed before Raphael Lemkin invented it. Many of us now consider that it is a great struggle to have our genocides recognized and they forget that earlier we did not even know how to say the word. We had no word. Now we have the word. This word, though, we

simply think that it is a label only and what we want to say is that – I see it now with the young ones in the background: Greatgreeks (Trantellenes), that we have the word genocide – I don't know if they conceive the importance of it. And I explain. Many of us try to understand that what happened to us is what is described by the word genocide. It is wrong. It is exactly the opposite. In reality, when Lemkin thought for the first time the word genocide, he had to give examples to others who did not understand what it was. And which examples did he give? The Greeks and the Armenians. The approach of "I want to look like a definition" is incorrect. Whereas, if you see the manuscripts of Lemkin, which are accessible at the library of Congress, you will see that it is written, that he chose the word genocide, to characterize the facts, as those that happened to the Greeks and the Armenians. Namely, in reality you have to understand this: that every time we say the word genocide, at an international level, in reality we recognize the facts that occurred to the Armenians and the Greeks. If you reverse this, you will understand that any speaker who uses the word genocide, in reality participates in the struggle. I want to give you an example: when Turkey forbids the use of the word Pomakos, we must say Pomakos as often as possible. When Turkey forbids 'The Little Prince' because there is a reference to Kemal, we have to read 'The Little Prince'. When Turkey forbids the painting of Liberty leading the people -Delacroix's painting- we have to see this painting. What barbarity forbids are marks of culture. Therefore, here, and you said it very correctly, there was no reference to the word genocide of the Armenians and it is reasonable, because the word in reality is self-referring and they avoid it. We hear now from my friend, who is hosting, to watch the words. It is always the same word: genocide, genocide, genocide, genocided, were genocided, and genociders. All the rest have no legal validity and this, if we realize it and indeed understand that the historical frame of the invention of the word comes from us, it is as if we have these nations, the Greeks, the Armenians and the Assyrians allow Humanity to express itself. To express itself how? You know we talk about human rights. But how many of us speak of the Rights of Humanity? We always read it in the opposite. Now many of us know what the crimes of Humanity are. But they don't know what its rights are. While the use of the word genocide, for the conviction of a barbarian, is a right indeed. And this is a right as well, the prohibition of barbarity. We can no longer allow to curse on us, to say that we don't exist, that we did not have victims, that genocide never happened and we simply to say "it is a matter of freedom of expression". It is not free expression, it is an expression of barbarity, which does not accept the difference. It does not accept the contribution of these peoples to Humanity and considers that, if there is peace in an area, there is peace everywhere. It considers that if you are proud of belonging to a people, you have the right to exterminate all the others. It is not like that. We are not peoples that genocided other ones. We are peoples that constitute gifts to the Humanity. When you go to Pontus, when you go to Armenia, when you go to Artsakh what you see are marks of culture. And even if there are ruins, even if there are occupied areas, we must understand that the marks of Humanity already exist. Therefore we indeed, you said it clearly, we are not only the next ones but we are the ones continuing this memory. And every time we say in a year that we did not forget,

in order to do this, it is every day that we must not forget it. In reality we are the results of the non effective strategy of Turkey. Normally, we all should have been dead. We should not have existed. Therefore, every time I hear that, Turkey has an effective strategy, you are the proof that this is wrong. They did not succeed. And they will not succeed, because what the barbarians forget every time is that light defeats darkness. No matter how long the issue of the recognition takes, the issue of compensations, the issue of restoration, generally the correction process, we stand up for our right; it is a matter of justice and we simply are, not only the next ones but the ones continuing the same struggle. If our ancestors were genocided, it is because they left us something. What they left behind, they did not leave it for our people only. They did not leave it for your people only. They left it for all the peoples. In reality we are an example to imitate. Only if you knew how many peoples would like to have our history, even if they had their people genocided.... We have this history, we have these victims, yet we are within the frame of justice. We do not transgress. We do not want to expand. We claim for the existing rights. In reality, we claim for the rights of Humanity. No society has the right to conduct a crime against Humanity, to assassinate the dead, to commit genocide against the peoples. The example of Greeks and Armenians is not local, it is not an issue of localism; it is a paradigm. In other words, all peoples trying to recognize the genocides, which they have suffered from, always use the same word; genocide. They use the word that was invented from our sufferings, from our facts, because Kemalism attempted to exterminate us. It attempted but it did not succeed in it. And now for those that think that we cannot overcome it, never forget that Hellenism is capable of placing four hundred years of occupation in a parenthesis. It is able to overcome this barbarity and still be here to offer. It is capable of lifting the future's memory, in order to show to other peoples also that whoever offers to Humanity already belongs to the future. Those who try to terminate the future, to terminate humans - that should have existed now and to be with us now- belong to the past and try with the present to place a mark. They will not leave any mark, because they have no foundations. The foundations of Humanity are based on humans who offer. The Pontiac Hellenism, Armenism are marks of offering. You should not feel sorrowful. You should not feel that things cannot change. On the contrary. The fact that you are here proves that those who wanted to change things radically and to exterminate us, they did not succeed and they will not succeed. Because now step-by-step even the victims, even the survivors are learning strategy, they are learning how to resist, they are learning how to claim and to be here as protection, as a shield. You who are the survivors, who are the descendants of our ancestors you are the shields of Humanity, you are the Just of Humanity, who watch over the others, because they have overcome even a genocide. There are rare peoples who can say that they have overcome a *genocider* and are still here after his death. Therefore, since you all began with the "Christ is Risen", I would like to simply end with "Truly, He is Risen". Thank you very much.