

Discourse of N. Lygeros

“From the recognition to the return” Central square of Sitagroi, Drama 24/05/2015

Translated from the Greek by Vicky Baklessi

I would first like to thank you, not only because you are here, because we are here, but perhaps because we continue to be here. I was very pleased when I saw our elders standing up in their own pace to reveal the marble, first of all marble. Marble is very symbolic for Greeks, because for other peoples it was rock, for us it became memory. So it isn't random that a monument here, in this place, was made out of marble. Of course the sculptor helped who put in his spirit and we must think of this, that probably with Hellenism the best marble we have found to record our ideas is our mind. This has been sustained for centuries and will be here for centuries. The monument as you see-and as they explained to me, thus I can interpret it as elements of nature, as is a rock, it has of course the pain, because there is a crack, of course it also has the memory. Sometimes we don't want to remember because it hurts. Gradually this memory we call it memorandum, why? Because we want to forget it in another manner. In reality, memory in Hellenism is future memory. We continue the past so that we generate the future. It isn't only a construction, it is a work. As you know we get confused due to generosity and we speak sometimes of our marbles, while we should say the sculptures. Because there are a lot of marbles, Marbles of Hellenism, though, a few. and for this sometimes they are sawed. Here the pain has been recorded. And for the second time I was pleased when I saw the young ones coming to continue and to be beside us as a continuity. I was please also when I heard that we speak about the genocide and we speak about the dead, but also for the unborn, because we usually forget them. I was pleased because I heard the Lord's Prayer which will slowly replace the minute of silence. Because the moment of silence is not was is proper for the genocide, It is for other occasions. It's been decades that we don't speak. Now we speak. Greece recognized the genocide in 1994, it continued with the genocide of the Armenians in 1996 and now we struggle also for the genocide of the Assyrians. And again I was pleased to see it being written even on this which they say that they did it in a rush. For the rush: When we paint in a church, as they say, the so called fresco, we need a technician that paints quickly, because the wall is damp and afterwards the color will stay. So sometimes this speed when it is recorded through matter it remains for centuries. At this point, I want to thank everyone who helped for this monument to exist, because sometimes we all struggle for the recognition of genocide, but most at much ease. There are some though that placed things here to remain for the others and this is very important, because it is a generosity and if we think that Hellenism is a gift of Time to Humanity, then we can understand how important it is. The other thing I wanted to tell you is that we get confused with words, we often speak of Pontians and I want to say it and I will say it

as long as it is needed. Pontians are not Pontians. Pontians are Greeks. Pontians in Pontus were Greeks. They became Pontians in Greece. Therefore we must understand that what is important is Hellenism and it is correctly written and we the others must also understand who supposedly are not Pontians, while in reality if you think about it that the Pontians are Greeks then we also have a piece. We are the same race, we were always here, we have endured wounds. We remember them though. We are of the rare peoples that remember also their defeats. There are other peoples that remember only the victories. We are proud of the defeats too. Why? Because they gave time to others to manage to achieve something else, because it was an offer. We heard the songs too. Good. But I will continue. Not with song. Don't worry, the musician quick to react, but those who brought me are at fault. When we read on the flag about Romania, we do not understand how important it is. Pontus remained here after the Fall of the City so that it sings for the City. No one remained after Pontus to sing about Pontus. It is very important that the most important Pontian song doesn't concern Pontus and it concerns Constantinople. And this is why the eagle of Pontus looks at Constantinople. Now for the politicians. The eagle of Pontus doesn't look nor right nor left, nor towards the east nor west, only towards the City. We must at last understand when we say this song, that some believe it –and there is worst some are loyal and don't forget. That means what? It means that this song reminds us all of the issue of genocide which continued with the exchange of population, which was a way of leaving our regions. Some of you call it, 'unforgettable homelands'. They get. Because when we speak of something that it is unforgettable it is usually for us to forget about it. Gradually it becomes a souvenir, then we don't dust it any longer, then we don't remember that it exists, because it remained as a post card of the fallen. In fact Pontus is the connecting link with Constantinople, it tells us what we are going to do. It tells us also that Pontus is occupied territories. When some of you speak of the return they get confused because they think that the return is to Greece. That is only the going. Only the going. The coming will come too. The thing is who believes it. You will tell me that most people don't think about these. It doesn't matter. It suffices that the few think about it, that will become rare. Subsequently most people will begin to believe it. So, we have to understand that the issue of genocide is not a personal issue. It was religious. It was against Christendom, against the trinity, the three peoples of Greeks, the Armenians and the Assyrians. It was a target of cleansing, but you are still here. They didn't succeed, neither will they do so. Hellenism has this characteristic, it is that, diachronically, it was never strong and yet diachronically it always succeeded to win the most powerful and this is due to its intelligence. When you manage the sea as it did-and this is why I was pleased again, because I saw that we barely see the line-someone who doesn't know could confuse the sea and the land and you must remember that the Greeks, we call them 'people of the sea' and for which reason? Because the Greeks built their civilization on the sea, they didn't build houses like we do now, they built ships. They built houses that travelled, they built civilization that mesmerize, it captivates the others and they wonder how we did it. So here, in Pontus you must understand this: Pontus is much

more significant than a memory issue. Pontus has an EEZ of 93,000 m², the largest piece of the Turkish EEZ is Pontian. You will tell me, what changes? It changes everything, because we have our own still there, we have our own who want to be free, the issue is if we want it, because sometimes we have people amongst us that hurt on an anniversary basis. Hellenism doesn't hurt only for one day, Hellenism doesn't forget and this is why Greece doesn't die. So we must look at it somewhat differently and to think the following, if they are so afraid of the recognition of the Genocide of the Greeks of Pontus, it isn't only because they built a whole state on the bones of victims, it is because they see the continuation, because we don't stop. We continue. It happened with the City's Fall, with the Empire of Trebizond, it happened with the Canticle, which continues to remember and we understand that Greece cannot be without the City, otherwise the song has no point. Unfortunately there are only a few that sing it thinking that it is a song and not an hymn. They get confused sometimes and they call other daily pieces hymn, because they don't know what is the substance. The substance here is the process of correction it starts only with recognition and subsequently there is the penalization of barbarism and Greece it managed get through this stage as well. Now it penalizes barbarism and it is very significant as an act. The writing of books, the reparation of the victims, the compensation for life insurances, the restoration of artwork all this is within what we call correction process, we simply must think of it rationally What can we correct when Genocide has been done? One thing. To return, but what is the issue now? Some of you speak about these homelands, but if they were given the ability to return they would stay here. They are not dangerous, they are useless. Those who are dangerous are those who have the intention to return and that is the continuity. Because when we have lived in a country, as in the phase of Genocide, they explained to us that we were strangers. Unbelievable! The indigenous came after the strangers in this region. Therefore we must realize that we the strangers, for the barbarians, we are the ones who will return. You will tell me how is that possible. First of all you must think that the first occupied lands we have to liberate is our mind, to think that it can be done. Hellenism when it thinks that it is done, it does it. Many of you they dream about it, but they need to stop the dreams, what matters is the vision. The visionaries generate reality. This reality may seem to you a utopia, as it was with this monument before it appeared here. You may not think that things can change. If you think of it though, then indeed they won't change. If you decide that they change, they will change. We have internal conflicts, we speak only about the Pontians and we wonder if it is a foreign component. There are some that accuse the Pontians even now. Some call them turkish seeds. It is those who use expressions like "my pasha". Every time someone tells you 'my pasha', respond 'yes, my slave'. Hence, Pontians are Greeks and as Greeks show the paradigm that a people can survive even from a Genocide. Who would believe that. Not even the genociders believe it and we continue achieving even more recognitions.

In 2006 in the European Union, in 2010 in Sweden, we continued with the states of America, the states of Australia now we speak of an international issue which was from the beginning. Because we all have to remember that all of Lemkin's work is based on the Genocide of the Greeks and the Armenians and the Assyrians. From there he invented the word Genocide. It is how he thought of it to characterize that which couldn't be characterized before. We have this instrument and if we read Lemkin's records we will understand that we are the paradigm. We gave the ability to Humanity to express a trespass a crime against Humanity and for this reason we continue. Some of you believe that we do this only for us, if it were only for us the recognition is meaningless. It is for that there won't any more genocides. Imagine if the Genocide of the Greeks, the Armenians and the Assyrians had occurred before World War II things would be completely different. Think about it if the population exchange had occurred before the Genocide and not afterwards as a continuation, how things would be. So we think of all this and we see the future and I can say the following: When you want to learn a lot of things about the future, look in the past. The only thing that remains is the diachronic. The diachronic is already in the past. We lived in the past for centuries in these regions and for centuries we shall live in these regions. You will tell me, but how is it possible? I would just like to remind you that the Spaniards were liberated after six centuries. Six centuries and yet they are now free. They are so free that they don't even remember that they were liberated. If someone told them after two hundred years that it not worth fighting for, they would have told him who gives you the right to stop? The Byzantine Empire lasted for eleven centuries, It even changed the capital and yet it returned. In its region. At its City. If you think about it after so many centuries we continue to call Constantinople, the City and no other city. If there are two cases either we are complete idiots and we haven't understood what has happened or we smarter than they think and we continue. Because we didn't make the City so that we leave, we made it so that we stay, this is why we chose this passage of the Mediterranean. This is why there is the two-headed eagle who looks towards both sides, this is why he holds the sword on the right, this is why he holds the earth on the left, with Christendom, with the Cross. So I want you to understand that all these symbols for some are only drawings, but the symbols speak of the substance because they were chosen by people that believed in the substance. As distant as they may seem these thoughts, that there is not any capability in returning, it doesn't matter, you shall see it. What is important is those who believe it to fight for it and to see that it isn't random, that it was Hellenism who invented the word strategy. Because only with this can we think differently. Only with this can we think of Chronostrategy. Only with this can we think of Byzantium as a fighter of time. So as many years as may have past remember that Time is with us. The question is, are we with him.

Thank you, be well. Good continuity.