

Speech of Dr. Nikos Lygeros with subject:  
***“When Pontus fights, Humanity fights also.”***  
Liberty Square of Drama, Thursday May 18<sup>th</sup> 2017

I think that you are ready. I will start in a simple manner, so that I won't surprise you with the ending. If Pontus is a struggle which helps Humanity it is because it's a righteous one. It doesn't only concern Pontus with a pontic element, it concerns the Greeks of Pontus and these Greeks are those which show the example to the Greeks and not only. What we need to realize is that each time we make a step forward towards the issue of recognition, each time it is a step also for Humanity itself.

Many of you speak about Pontus as if it is a lost homeland, even now. It is interesting, because you don't listen to the Pontians. For me Pontians sing only one song, none else, and it is about Constantinople. And this is why the eagle of Pontus looks towards Constantinople. So when you think Pontus is only the cue for a lamentation it is that you forgot the goal. The goal is that occupied territories must be liberated. As long as it takes for that liberation. Pontus is occupied territories. Thrace is occupied territories with Constantinople. It may surprise you, especially if you are servile people, but remember that it took the Spanish 600 years to be liberated and it has been only 2 centuries since our revolution. So, many of us see Pontus in an erroneous manner. They don't realize that it is a space to which we will return, they don't realize what is happening and they see on a daily basis as they hear about the Kurds, the Armenians for Kurdistan, about the Sevres Treaty, they don't understand that it concerns their own struggle. Those who understand it, they continue with it even alone, because they show the example. So we must realize that what Pontus tells us is that the greatest pain is not losing Pontus, it is to not thinking of Constantinople. The Greek of Pontus had only one point of reference and the same did Kolokotronis, Constantinople. If we forget this we are under the impression that we are simply in a cemetery and because 40 days passed we must come back. That is, thankfully there is tradition otherwise we wouldn't go. The anniversary is not made only to remember, it is for us to be prepared for the future. How many of you would go to Pontus if it were free? This is the question, the real question. Because only those who would return are really dangerous for the genocidors. Many of us in all of Greece have are under the impression that Turkey is powerful and nothing can change.

Turkey has proven with the issue of genocide that it is incapable. Even a genocide she didn't manage to complete. All of you who are living are the proof of its defeat. You are the proof that it cannot organize even this crime. So that which we have to realize, no matter if it surprises some it is that we are here even after. You cannot imagine how disturbing it is for the genocidors for the victim to still exist. And even if he thought that no one would be preoccupied with this, we were never this many involved in the recognition of genocide of Pontus. Each country that recognizes us, each city that recognizes us is again a defeat of a strategy which some of you believe is invincible. It isn't something significant to be of barbarity, what is important is to be for Humanity. It is surely difficult, it is surely painful but it is the only thing that is worthwhile. If we think of it rationally then we will see that the Greeks made strategy, they made it to fight people that are stronger than them. Hellenism has given the example to Humanity, it is not always the strongest which wins, it is he who insists, it is he who doesn't forget, it is he who returns after the battle. Here the battle has no relevance to the war, it has to do with human rights, it is about the Rights of Humanity. For those who do not know them, for those who haven't heard of them, today they did hear them. The issue is what will we do with them? Humanity has the right to protect itself, it has the right to live there where it used to live and no one can dismiss it, as barbaric as they may be. Therefore the struggle for Pontus is a struggle for Humanity. This is what you must have in mind and not only to simply look who is from there and who isn't. We are all Greeks here. The Greeks in Humanity are renowned for one thing, they help the others. Here we have some who cannot figure things out among them. For you to understand how dense they are and we try to give the example, the example of what? We give it already. We are already the spearhead in this struggle. When you make monuments place them where you must, where they disturb the perpetrator, otherwise it is not necessary to do it. It is not necessary to place a monument wherever you like, because you found a position. Claim a position. A monument here in Drama, if it has a position, it is here, in this central square. But not only a monument for some people,

a monument for the Greeks of Pontus, for the Thracians, for the young ones, for all the Greeks who have been submitted and make this obvious. Every time there is an anniversary let us see it, let it disturb with its presence. And if you have some of our own people against it be glad, if some of you are taken to court be glad about it, if Turkey takes us to court

Be glad about it, because in the end it will be here. What is important is that if you find resistance then the struggle increases. If Pontians delayed relative to Armenians it is only because it is because here in Greece they found a homeland. Armenians didn't have one, therefore the only things they had left for them is the issue of recognition. We have to move onto the next stages. The recognition has started and you see it on an international level. The penalization of denial doesn't have to be in theory, our people didn't believe that Greece would make this decision and yet it was taken, it was done. So we must continue with the writing of books, with the restitution of properties, and the most important of all with the return to the territories. The issue is who believes it and who is ready to do it, because we have many who say they put up a struggle, we have even more saying that are fighters, but when you ask them in which fight are they fighters they don't know the name. They just say it. The banners that you see here, would be good to think if they can rise. Let me see you. We are use to keeping the banners down. The banner never touch the ground. Have you ever seen someone holding the greek flag an keep it down? We have people who have been sacrificed and we must remember them and we have to remember them, but we also have to have the example. What is a move to raise the banners? Yet it is important, because you have never thought about it. How is it possible to have such events with the banners down? How is it possible that the priest sits down. He can raise though with the banners. And what do I mean by that? I mean that he is the example. This is the byzantine spirit. The Byzantium was eleven centuries old and we have it here in front of us and we wonder where it has gone. In reality it is the example. The church, the cross the banners are not simply symbols, they are our life. Only, who knows it? We have various people who have no idea for what reason we carry a cross, they have no idea why the eagle looks towards Constantinople, for a very simple reason, for a very simple reason, they no longer learn it, the books have changed them, the programs have change them. But I ask, so many years that we were under occupation, under the Turkish regime, who taught these? The church did, no one else. The issue then is it what is it that we do? Why do we allow the others to kneel, why do we allow to the others to tell us that it is not genocide? It is genocide. They all know it and you see it. What is the issue? The issue is how do we continue? How do we continue and not simply crying. The women who cry, they don't cry because they are women, it is because it is the proper, they have to cry but this isn't sufficient after. We must continue. The Kurds are being liberated and you see it, the Armenians are fighting for it already. The issue is what us the Greeks will do. We are talking about 1453 and you listen to the song and some of us think that Greece is this. But if the Peloponnesians had done the same we would had have only Peloponnesus who would have been liberated, we would still be under occupation, because they wouldn't have thought of Thrace . We are so used to seeing Thrace as another country that we are compelled to place also a geographic identification. With Thrace things are simple. Thrace is free and occupied. The occupied has to be free and this means that this eagle you see on your banners shows you what to do. We do this, we continue it. Know that the Kurds are obtaining identities, the Armenians are obtaining identities, the Greeks of Pontus can have identities and to claim it there, because we had people like Lemkin who helped us for the notion of genocide. We had people like Wilson who showed us where are those which we have the right to have. And I ask, we still haven't managed to name the Just? Lemkin and Wilson, how is it possible that Greeks of Pontus not thinking that there are others who help towards the same struggle? There are other peoples who have established the institute of the Just and we still wonder where it is, while we speak about Morgenthau. So it isn't only us, it is the other too. The others who believe in the same rights, who believe to the Rights of Humanity. What Wilson did is very simple, even after the genocide when he delimited the boundaries with Turkey, he did it respecting civilization and he also said that even if no one is here, in this place there was another civilization, you have no right to trespass it. And the question is this for us, we knew that we were there, the issue is how many of you know that we will be there again. This is what this day says, we will not forget, because we will return and I simply prepare you for the return. Therefore, if you

believe and you are indeed believers, show it with your struggle. We don't come to a square only to be together. We come so that we don't forget the future, not only the past. And the future is that for the Rights of Humanity we must fight also through Pontus. We have the right to be there, we have the right because we were there and we have the right to ask for it, because it is the right of Humanity. This is what I wanted to tell you, thank you all very much, to everyone have a good continuity: