

Dour anniversary of 1955 Constantinople program observed



The tragic 65-year anniversary of a pogrom against the Greek Orthodox communities of Constantinople, modern-day Istanbul, was grimly observed this week.

Mobs descended on the city on the evening of Sept. 6 towards Sept. 7, many being ferried from rural parts outside the Bosphorus metropolis, under a detailed plan by the then Menderes government to wipe out the Greek presence from the city.

The plan commenced after a staged provocation in the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki, when an ethnic Turk born in Greece, and under the pay of Turkish intelligence, set off a bomb outside the residence where Kemal Ataturk was born, and which housed the Turkish consulate in the city.

Decades after the Turkish state's anti-Christian riots and ethnic cleaning, practically all scholars and historians point to the Menderes government's intent to shift domestic attention from a failing economy by playing the nationalist, populist and Islamist cards in Turkey — an eerie resemblance to the current policy followed

by Turkish strongman, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Menderes himself was arrested, tried and hanged five years later after a coup orchestrated by Kemalist officers in the Turkish armed forces.