



The “Un-mixing of Peoples” The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and Nation-Building in the Ottoman Empire and Beyond

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In 1923, Muslims from the Greek isle of Crete arrived on the Turkish island of Cunda having been compelled to relocate by the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne. Upon disembarking they were greeted by their new neighbors in a foreign tongue. These Muslim Cretans spoke a dialect of Greek known as *Kritika* and had lived on the island of Crete for generations. Some of them were Greek Cretans who at some point in their family history had converted to Islam. The only connection that these Greek-speaking Muslims had to their new “fatherland” and countrymen was their religious identity. In all other respects, the *Kritiki* were strangers in an alien land, far from everything they had known. The *Kritiki* were only a very few out of nearly 1.5 to 2 million people¹ who were forced to abandon the only homes that they had known for generations by the Exchange Convention of the Treaty of Lausanne.

The birth of nationalism and the death of the great multiethnic empires at the dawn of the twentieth century would begin a seismic shift in the treatment of these populations in international law. While minorities had throughout history been seen as “problem” populations at various points in time, it was not until the emergence of ethnic nationalism that the removal or eradication of such populations came to be seen as a prerequisite for national stability and unity. The demographic homogenization of the Turkish Anatolia carried out in the years surrounding World War I included the forcible displacement of close to one million Ottoman citizens and the annihilation over one million Ottoman Armenians at the hands of the state. The Treaty of Lausanne has primarily been considered in isolation from the earlier Ottoman demographic policies. I argue that The Treaty of Lausanne was a continuation of previous Ottoman demographic policies that emerged during the World War I.

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The Historiography on the Exchange Convention of the Treaty of Lausanne

While much has been written on the emergence of modern Turkey and the Armenian genocide, comparatively little has been written about the Treaty of Lausanne itself. Having been severely overshadowed by its European counterpart, the Treaty of Versailles, the historiography of the Lausanne Treaty in English is relatively sparse. The body of English language scholarship on the exchange is also relatively small, although there have been signs of a renewed interest in the subject in recent years.

The majority of the existing scholarship focuses on those issues discussed at Lausanne that were of the greatest importance to the primary western parties involved. This focus is reflected in two of the major works in English on the Lausanne Conference, Briton Busch's *Mudros to Lausanne: Britain's Frontier in West Asia 1918-1932* and Harry Howard's *Turkey, the Straits, and U.S. Policy*, both of which were published in the mid-1970s.² While Busch's is one of the most widely cited works on the Lausanne conference, he analyzes the entire conference and diplomatic process through the lens of Britain's Eastern Policy. Busch makes only one minor reference to the Exchange Convention. Similarly, Howard considers the entirety of the negotiations with reference to American interests and the question of the Straits and neglects to mention the Exchange Convention entirely. In a particularly well known essay on the diplomatic history of the early Turkish Republic, Roderic Davison mentions the exchange only in a single sentence at the end of his essay without even a footnote.³

Although the early historiography of the exchange might not be quite as problematic as that of the Armenian genocide, it is certainly not without its flaws. For many years, both Turkish and Greek historiography was plagued by overzealous nationalism and a steadfast belief that their own side's suffering far outweighed that of the other. It is undeniable that atrocities were committed by both Greeks and Turks, but many of these nationalistic narratives significantly downplay or attempt to justify the actions committed by their own "side."

Additionally, up until very recently, what has been written in English on the exchange is mostly from a Greek or philhellene perspective. This is partly due to the fact that there has been a long tradition of philhellenic scholarship in the West and partly because of the sheer amount work on the Lausanne exchange that was produced in Greece and by Greek scholars. In the Greek nationalist historiography the Lausanne exchange was the final, tragic culmination of the Asia Minor Catastrophe. Reflecting this strain of historical Hellenism, Douglas Dakin, writing in the late 1960s, describes Greece's reaction to the tragedy using the prevalent rhetoric of the time, "But for Greece, as on all occasions, bore her cross bravely. She gathered in her children, not by conquering the soil on which they had labored for centuries, but by receiving them—a

million or more—within the existing Greek homeland. No nation has ever achieved so much as Greece on this occasion.⁴

In many works following this nationalist narrative, the refugees themselves are lost. In the grand narrative of Greece's tragic fall in Asia Minor, the affected individuals came to represent the suffering of Greece as a whole. As a result, many of these studies neglect the problems that the refugees from Asia Minor encountered upon their arrival in Greece. It was assumed, particularly by British and American historians, that the Greeks of Asia Minor were ethnically and culturally the same as their mainland counterparts and so would be quickly assimilated into the social and political culture of their "Motherland."⁵

The events of 1919-1923 were viewed in the Turkish nationalist historiography as part of the narrative of Turkey's triumphant War of Independence and the birth of modern Turkey. By comparison the Greek historiography emphasized the remembrance of the exchange as a dramatic turning point in Greek history. In the Turkish historiography, the exchange itself is subsumed by the master narrative of the Turkish nationalist struggle for statehood, often being relegated to little more than a footnote.⁶ The Greek invasion of Izmir (Smyrna), the victorious campaign to regain Turkey from the foreign occupiers, and the diplomatic triumphs of the Lausanne Treaty were the center pieces of the Turkish narrative. This tendency was not only historiographical but cultural as well. In a study of 290 randomly selected novels and 60 volumes of short stories published between 1923 and 1980, Hercules Millas found that references to the exchange were very few and almost always indirect.⁷ It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that Turkish scholars began to critically address the issue of the exchange of populations.⁸

The most detailed study from the Greek perspective is Dimitri Pentzopoulos' *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece*.⁹ Pentzopoulos, a former Greek diplomat, wrote the book in 1962 shortly before his death. Although not all of his conclusions are sound and his work can be criticized for its bureaucratic bias, Pentzopoulos' book cannot be dismissed as merely a work of nationalistic rhetoric. In fact, his work was one of the very few of its era to take a truly scholarly rather than a purely nationalistic approach to the subject of the exchange.¹⁰ Due to its immensely detailed analysis of Greek, American, British, and League of Nations diplomatic archival material, it remains an invaluable reference on the population exchange to this day. Also significant is the fact that since 1962, there has yet to be published a work on the negotiation of the exchange that reaches Pentzopoulos' level of comprehensiveness or detail.

When discussing the historiography of the troubled relationship between Greece and Turkey in Asia Minor, it is impossible not to mention Arnold Toynbee's *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilizations* published in 1922.¹¹ This book features a mixture of first hand reporting and historical analysis. It was written in part as a rejection of the sort of Romantic philhellenism which identified modern Greece with classical antiquity (or rather, a westernized perception of classical antiquity) and thus assumed that the political and military culture of modern Greece would align with contemporary notions of "occidental" civilization rather than eastern culture.¹²

Although Toynbee arguably succumbs to a similar strain of cultural determinism that he is arguing against in *The Western Question*, but his book was progressive for its time. Written during the negotiations of the Lausanne Treaty, Toynbee denounced both the Turkish and Greek atrocities. At a time when nearly all of the scholarship concerning relations between the Turks and Christian minorities was suffused with nationalistic zeal or driven by a desire to prove the total innocence of one party and the unrelenting evil of the other, Toynbee's work stands in rather stark contrast. This is not to say that his work is without deep problems but it is perhaps telling that Toynbee and *The Western Question* in particular have been denounced by both Turkish and Greek writers.¹³

Beginning in the late 1980s there was a second wave of scholarship in English on the Exchange which focused more on the communities and individuals who endured the exchange rather than the diplomats and policy makers who instituted it. This new scholarship has consisted mostly of journal articles and essays in edited volumes. Two of the most notable exceptions are Renee Hirschon's *Heirs to the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus* published in 1989 and Onur Yıldırım's *Diplomacy and Displacement: Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations* published in 2006.¹⁴

Yıldırım's book is an example of another trend in the recent scholarship on the exchange: "post-nationalist" scholarship. Both Turkish and non-Turkish authors reject the nationalistic narratives put forth by some earlier historians. One of the most powerful contributions of Yıldırım's work is his critique of the earlier Turkish, Greek, and English historiographies.

The existing literature on the Treaty of Lausanne is focused on the Treaty in isolation rather than as part of the larger Ottoman context. Most literature on the subject tends to focus on the period right before the Treaty of Lausanne, such as the Armenian Genocide and the Ottoman Empire in the World War I, or right after the Lausanne Conference, such as Atatürk and the emergence of modern Turkey. In both cases, the

Lausanne Treaty is often relegated to little more than a footnote or epilogue mention, despite the fact that Lausanne shaped the demographic face of the Middle East and Aegean and that it continues to impact the geopolitics of the region to this day.

What has yet to be done in the current historiography is a close reading of the Exchange Convention and the placement of the Treaty of Lausanne within the broader context of imperial collapse and ascendant ethno-nationalism of the early twentieth century. Previous works have looked at the internal “cleansing” of Anatolia during the First World War and the Exchange Convention of the Treaty of Lausanne as distinct events. Neglected in such work is a clear continuity between the wartime practices of the Ottoman Empire and the aims of the Treaty of Lausanne.

The Road to Lausanne

The 1920 Treaty of Sevres, which was the original treaty ending the World War I between the Entente Powers and the Ottoman Empire, would have essentially dismembered the entire Empire amongst the Great Powers. In order to enforce the terms of the Treaty of Sevres, the British government backed a Greek military occupation of Izmir (Smyrna) and subsequent armed action in Anatolia. The terms of the treaty combined with the Greek military action, which was seen by the Turkish nationalists as an invasion, eventually led to successful armed resistance by the Turkish National Movement headed by Mustafa Kemal.

While Turkish nationalism did not emerge as a fully-fledged ideology until after the end of World War I, it had its roots in the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) era. The CUP formed during the 1908 Young Turk Revolution that ended Sultan Abdulhamid II's hold on absolute authority. The coup in 1913 led by the CUP eventually culminated in a single-party dictatorship headed by three men. The ruling triumvirate of the CUP consisted of Talât, as Minister of the Interior and later Grand Vizier, Enver, as Minister of Defense, and Cemal as the Minister of the Marine and Governor of Syria. The new government came to power just as various irredentist nationalisms, economic collapse, and war threatened to destroy the foundation of the multi-ethnic empire.

The nascent Ottoman-Turkic nationalism that became increasingly exclusive and ethnic in nature over the course of the CUP era informed CUP policies and ideology during World War I. It can be seen to varying degrees throughout the CUP's wartime policy as well as in the initial war aims of the state. By 1915, this ethno-nationalism was more clearly manifested in the demographic and economic policies of the CUP, which aimed at creating a homogenized Anatolia to serve as the heartland of a renewed state.

War Aims: Reasserting Ottoman Independence and the Revival of the State

The decision of the Ottoman Empire to enter into World War I was a momentous one which went against the Empire's traditional policy of avoiding conflicts that did not concern Ottoman territory.¹⁵ The alliance with Germany was not a foregone conclusion. A pact with the Entente powers or even neutrality were each considered to be viable options by elements within the CUP cabinet as late as the summer of 1914.¹⁶ Once the alliance with Germany had been made, the war aims of the CUP provide some insight into the state ideology.

Having allied itself with the only one of the Great Powers to have maintained a policy of relative non-intervention with regard to Ottoman domestic affairs, the state could free itself from the various forms of control that the other Powers had held over the Empire.¹⁷ Victory would mean the dissolution of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration as well as the repeal of the Armenian reform plan.¹⁸ The reform plan, along with the other agreements which had tied the Ottoman Empire to the Great Powers, was declared invalid on December 16, 1914.¹⁹ In this way, the state eliminated the legal underpinnings for foreign intervention in its domestic affairs.

Beyond the basic aim of preventing future foreign intervention was the goal of creating a strong, centralized state that could withstand the tests that the Ottoman Empire had not in the pre-war years. The vision of nation revival mandated that the resultant Turkish state would be ethnically homogeneous. The CUP's wartime demographic policies furthered this drive toward homogeneity. The economic and property related policies of these years demonstrated a desire to create a new Muslim bourgeoisie. This new bourgeoisie would take the place of the expelled non-Muslims and provided the economic basis for a new, modernized Ottoman state. The demographic and economic policies were implemented along with the Armenian genocide and ethnic cleansing of other non-Turkish minorities. These policies embodied a vision of a more ethnically homogenous, modernized state in which groups that could not be assimilated had no place.

Several scholars have identified this process of homogenization with the process of nation-building.²⁰ Nesim Şeker characterized the deportation of the Armenians as a "radical shift in the management of ethnic conflict from an imperial tradition to one peculiar to nation-state formation."²¹ While Sultan Abdülhamid had used repressive exemplary violence to control the Armenian population of the Empire in the 19th century, he had not considered the use of mass deportation to change the demographic face of Anatolia.²² The aim of the CUP policies was not the suppression of a "problem" population within the existing state context, but rather the complete removal of the "problem" population and a revision of the status quo. The end goal of these

demographic and economic policies was the establishment of a homogeneous state populated by Turks and assimilated non-Turkish Muslims. The enactment of these policies was only made possible by the elimination of the Armenian population from Anatolia. When viewed in this context, it is clear that ideology was not absent from the development of a policy of genocide.

Although the dispossession of the Armenian population was unprecedented in scale, this strategy was by no means completely new in the Ottoman Empire. In the wake of the Balkan War, some 130,000 Ottoman Greeks were expelled from the Aegean Islands, Thrace, and the western coast of Anatolia and made their way to the Greek mainland. These expulsions were precipitated by a number of factors, including Greece's role in the Balkan War, the demographic pressures caused by an influx of Muslim refugees, and the loss of Macedonia. Additionally, yet another war with Greece seemed ever more likely as the Empire and its former possession continued to dispute the status of the Aegean Islands. In addition to outright expulsions, official economic marginalization through the use of boycotts and attacks on Greek-owned business forced many Ottoman Greeks from the Empire before World War I. As with the wartime laws on abandoned property, the goal was to fill the places left by the Greeks with Muslim refugees, thus laying the foundation for a Turco-Muslim national economy.

The Lausanne Population Exchange

The signing of the Exchange Convention served to legitimize and legalize the massive reconfiguration of the ethno-religious configuration of the Near East. It was the first of its kind in that no other formal exchange of populations had been officially compulsory. For the Turkish nationalists, the outcome of the conference was a continuation of the late Ottoman pursuit of national homogeneity. The official Turkish historiography contends that there is a definite and complete break between the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the Turkish Republic. In reality, there are multiple layers of continuity between the two states which tie them to one another. The founding of the Republic of Turkey cannot be considered without the context of the late Ottoman Empire. Indeed, it was the sweeping demographic and economic changes executed by the CUP triumvirate which allowed for the Turkish nation state to come into being.

Turkey was not the only nation which had a vested interest in seeing an exchange take place. There were multiple discussions and heated debates on many topics. These discussions and debates included the liquidation of personal and real property, which communities would be exchanged, and the definition of a "minority." The British and, perhaps more significantly, Greek delegations were silent on certain key issues. The question of whether the Lausanne exchange could be voluntary was

only addressed superficially by the any of the delegations. This was despite the fact that there was recent precedent for a voluntary exchange in the Greco-Bulgarian exchange which had been part of a protocol in the 1919 Treaty of Neuilly-en-Seine.

The Greeks had much to lose, both strategically and historically, from the removal of the Greeks from Asia Minor. Eleftherios Venizelos, the former Prime Minister of Greece and the main representative of Greece at the Lausanne negotiations, readily agreed to the idea of relocation without any discussion of the right of repatriation. The reason why neither the question of repatriation nor any serious opposition to the compulsory nature of the exchange was raised was because both the Greek and Turkish representatives had come to Lausanne ready to agree to a mandatory exchange of populations. Great Britain and many of the other western nations who wished to see the “pacification of the Near East” also fully supported the idea of a swift and permanent exchange of populations.²³

The Terms of the Population Exchange

The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations was signed on January 30, 1923, six months before the general peace treaty of Lausanne was signed. The chief negotiators involved at the Lausanne Conference were Eleftherios Venizelos, former prime minister of Greece, İsmet İnönü from Turkey, and Lord George Curzon of Great Britain. Lord Curzon was to serve as mediator between the Greek and Turkish delegations. This convention mandated the compulsory exchange of “Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory.”²⁴ The “exchanged” communities consisted of approximately 1.1 million Greeks from Asia Minor and around 388,000 Muslims from Macedonia, mainland Greece, and the Greek islands in the Aegean.²⁵ The Greek inhabitants of Istanbul and the Muslims of Western Thrace were exempt from the exchange under Article II of the Exchange Convention. The implementation of the Exchange Convention was an arduous, contentious process which would not be declared “completed” until 1930 with the signing of the Convention of Commerce and Navigation and a Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality in Ankara on October 30, 1930.

For Turkey this task was the continuation of a process which began with the Balkan Wars. Just as Talât’s laws on “abandoned” Armenian property had mandated that the immovable and movable property be transferred to new Muslim owners, the Exchange Convention called for the liquidation of the movable property of the emigrants and the use of abandoned residences for housing the new immigrants (Articles IX and X). It is also important to note that nearly 900,000 of the 1.1 million Greeks that were required to move had already fled to Greece during the First World

War and the Turkish war for independence or earlier during the deportations and persecutions which followed the Balkan Wars.

Due to the fact that the majority of the exchangeable Greeks had already fled Turkey before the treaty of Lausanne was signed, the negotiations of the exchange and the Exchange Convention have sometimes been depicted as a retroactive endorsement of an existing reality.²⁶ The Exchange Convention, however, was far more than the recognition of a *fait accompli*. All of the Greek Muslims and over 200,000 of the Ottoman Greeks had yet to be transferred upon the conclusion of the Treaty negotiations.²⁷ Moreover, it gave the deportations and movements that had taken place during the war the international legal legitimacy and established a legal regime to organize relief and resettlement efforts.²⁸ This was a process of orchestrating new forced migrations as well as legalizing and legitimizing the dispossession and displacement which had already taken place.

The massive exchange of populations which took place between 1922 and 1930 had profound and lasting effects on both Greece and Turkey. These effects were similar for the two nations in the sense that both had to cope with a massive influx of refugees as well as the economic, cultural and social consequences that accompany the mandatory movement of over one million people. At the same time, however, there were vast differences between the Greek and Turkish experience, both in terms of the political circumstances in which the exchange took place and the scale of the communities involved.

At the time of the Lausanne negotiations, Turkey had just experienced a clear win and Greece had just suffered a grave defeat. For Turkey, the end of the military conflict constituted a significant triumph and was remembered as the War of Independence. The Treaty of Lausanne was a resounding diplomatic victory as well. Turkey was the only defeated nation in World War I that was able to negotiate peace terms and the only one to actually gain territory as a result. For Greece, on the other hand, this event was a major defeat known as the Asia Minor Catastrophe which marked the end of the Hellenic presence in the region which had persisted for over three thousand years.²⁹

Even in this asymmetrical environment, there were serious costs for both nations. Greece had the obvious problem of taking in over one million refugees while sending less than half that number to Turkey. Greece, however, did not have the added difficulties of having recently fought a war on its own soil. Additionally, when the actual exchange process began, a number of foreign agencies provided relief for the Greek refugees whereas the Muslim refugees received no outside aid.³⁰ The Turkish Red Crescent (Hilal-i Ahmer) was the only formal institution tasked with providing for the

Muslim refugees and they were seriously hindered in their efforts by a lack of funds and resources.³¹ In light of the difficulties caused by the forced migrations in both countries, the fact that both the Turkish and Greek delegations came to the conference determined to see an exchange take place is very telling. For Turkey in particular the risks and hardships of exchange were considered acceptable in order to finish the project of demographic homogenization and national consolidation started in the late Ottoman Era.

Prelude to the Conference: The Use of Population Exchange in the Near East

Population exchange as a tool for dealing with regional and demographic problems was not a new idea for either Greece or Turkey. In the wake of the Balkan Wars both the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria agreed to oversee and implement a population exchange in the areas along the newly defined border. The displacement which occurred during the war due to pressures of the conflict as well as formal and informal deportations had left both Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire with grave concerns over the security of the border as well as the refugee situation. With the conflict over, both countries wanted to secure their control over the populations in the periphery. One third of the Bulgarian population was Muslim and most of those Muslims were ethnically Turkish.³² As there were also ethnic Bulgarian Christians on the Ottoman side of the boarder, both countries were concerned about potential nationalist irredentism.

Although the exchange would nominally be a voluntary one, most of the demographic changes had already taken place over the course of the war. Therefore, the treaty served to provide retroactive legitimacy to the movements which had occurred during the war and to “encourage” those who still remained to leave as quickly as possible.³³ This process was to be implemented under the supervision of a Bulgarian-Ottoman mixed commission whose purpose was to maintain order along the frontier. Ultimately, formal implementation of this agreement was blocked by the outbreak of World War I, but the actual migrations had almost all taken place already.

While Venizelos was eager to avoid any appearance of being the originator of the exchange idea, he had, in fact, accepted Turkish proposals for a similar exchange operation as prime minister of Greece in 1914. Following the Bulgarian agreement reached in the previous year, the Ottoman and Greek governments agreed to exchange the Greeks of Eastern Thrace and the rural Greek population of İzmir for the Muslims of Macedonia. The preparations got as far as establishing a mixed commission to oversee and implement the exchange in June of 1914 before the operation was brought to an end by the outbreak of World War I.³⁴

Continuities in Homogeneity and Sovereignty

The Greek and Turkish delegations came to Lausanne intending to see an exchange of some sort take place. Greece was in a state of political and economic turmoil domestically due to the dramatic failure of the Asia Minor adventure.³⁵ Refugees had been fleeing from the Ottoman Empire into Greece ever since 1913, creating a desperate refugee crisis for the Greek government. In need of housing for the current refugees and international loans, Venizelos had every reason to try to bring about a resolution of the exchange issue as quickly as possible. Agreeing to the exchange would both speed the settlement process and help to mitigate the housing shortage with the departure of Muslims from Greece. Turkey, on the other hand, had just emerged victorious in a struggle to establish its national sovereignty. There was also a need in Turkey to deal with the refugee problems caused by World War I. The Turkish delegates, however, negotiated from a position of strength. They were intent upon securing a stable future for Turkey once and for all.

Although the Turkish nationalists would later present the “New Turkey” as wholly distinct from its Ottoman predecessor, in reality the two were tied not only by ideology and aspirations but also by policy and even political leaders. Although all members of the triumvirate of the CUP had fled the country two days after the signing of the Armistice of Mudros in 1918, key figures remained in Turkey and joined with Mustafa Kemal’s nationalists. Şükrü Kaya, who had been the head of the İAMM while it was tasked with organizing the Armenian deportations under the CUP, was promoted to the post of Interior Minister under Mustafa Kemal.³⁶ Also like many of the key leaders of the CUP, nearly half of those in core leadership positions during the earliest years of the Turkish Republic came from lands that were lost during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and became refugees following the Ottoman defeat.³⁷ They had been forced to flee their homes and rebuild their lives in Anatolia. This may shed some light on why the nationalists embraced and glorified Anatolia as the new heartland of Turkey with such fervor. The Turkish nationalists carried many of the goals, fears, and ideas which had driven the progressive radicalization of the CUP’s policies during the First World War with them into the Lausanne Conference.

War Aims and Peace Aims

The war aims of the CUP persisted as well after the initial Ottoman defeat and the dissolution of the party. Many of the original CUP war aims, such as the withdrawal of the trade capitulations and abrogation the planned Armenian homeland in Anatolia were issues that the Turkish delegation fought for at Lausanne. Moreover, the legacy of the CUP’s demographic engineering policies and the aim of creating a Muslim national economy can be seen clearly in the Turkish negotiations, particularly concerning the minority questions.

Just as it had been for the CUP, the creation of a homogeneous national economy was paramount for the Turkish nationalists. During the Greek invasion, Falih Rifki gave voice to this rhetoric of economic nationalism saying, "We will defeat the Greeks with bayonets in the field and with our boycotts behind the war front."³⁸ Additionally, "abandoned" residences of the exchanged populations were to be used to house the incoming Muslim refugees, functioning much like the laws on "abandoned" Armenian property. In the negotiations on the exchange, the Turkish delegation explicitly linked the issue of non-Muslim minorities with foreign intervention in domestic affairs. In nearly every statement on the exchange or the question of minorities, the Turkish delegation linked the issue at hand to that of internal security or national sovereignty.

Although it had been discussed with both the Greek and Turkish leaders prior to the conference, the first person to broach the subject of the exchange was Dr. Fridtjof Nansen. Despite the fact that both Venizelos and İsmet İnönü came to Lausanne with an exchange of some sort in mind, it is Dr. Fridtjof Nansen who was charged with being responsible for the origination of the exchange plan by historians in aftermath of the Convention.³⁹ Nansen had been appointed by the League of Nations as the League's High Commissioner for Refugees in 1921. He had worked with both the Greek and Turkish governments prior to the conference in an attempt to ameliorate the massive refugee crisis in both countries and attended the Lausanne conference in order to advise on refugee and humanitarian issues. During the Lausanne Conference, both Venizelos and İnönü accused each other of initiating the idea. But each of them pointed to Nansen as the principal figure behind the exchange.⁴⁰

In a meeting of the Territorial and Military Commission on December 1, 1922, the question of an exchange and how it could be carried out was brought up by Dr. Fridtjof Nansen. During this meeting of the Territorial and Military Commission Dr. Nansen spoke at length about his proposals for carrying out an exchange. He emphasizes that he is basing his recommendations "upon a knowledge that all Governments here represented are in favor of what I proposed."⁴¹ Dr. Nansen argued that "to unmix the peoples of the Near East will tend to secure the true pacification of the Near East."⁴²

While Nansen believed that an exchange was the best way to deal with the economic and humanitarian crises that were overwhelming the Near East, he was clearly also cognizant of the human costs that such an exchange would incur. He actually stated that he did not believe that the treaty would yield positive results for the Greek and Muslim minorities themselves. "On the contrary, I believe that any exchange of populations, however well it were carried out, must impose very considerable hardships, perhaps very considerable impoverishment upon great numbers of the individual citizens."⁴³ According to Nansen, the only reason he was willing to propose

such a plan was that he believed that the cost of inaction would be far greater for all involved.

During the same meeting İnönü and Venizelos also spoke on the subject of the exchange. At this point Venizelos voiced a rather half-hearted opinion that the exchange need not be compulsory. He stated that “did not wish to insist” that the Muslims of Greece leave the country. This sentiment is severely undercut by the fact that he immediately followed this statement with a description of the grave problem of Greek refugees who were being housed in schools and churches rather than the homes of Greek Muslims.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, he does repeat that he would prefer the exchange to be voluntary rather than mandatory.⁴⁵

İnönü stated that the question of exchange could not be discussed without considering the question of minorities as a whole. The fact he viewed the question of the Greek exchange as inextricably linked to the question of all minorities in Turkey is telling. It demonstrates that for the Turkish delegation at least, the aim of the population exchange was not merely the “pacification” of the disputed territories. Rather it was part of a larger project which involved all of the non-Muslims who still remained in Turkey.

Minority Questions and National Sovereignty

Nowhere is the imprint of the CUP more clearly stamped than on the Turkish delegation’s position on the minority questions. In a statement delivered on December 12, İnönü recounts a history of the Ottoman Empire’s relationship with the Great Powers and its non-Muslim minorities starting in 1774. In his account he described a series of unjustified foreign interventions upon a liberal Empire which was continually betrayed by disloyal minorities. He focused almost exclusively on the case of the Armenians prior to World War I and ended his speech with the firm declaration that “the amelioration of the lot of the minorities in Turkey depends above all on the exclusion of every kind of foreign intervention and of the possibility of provocation coming from outside.”⁴⁶ This remark is clearly informed by the history of World War I where the threat of nationalist fifth columns and the “inner enemy,” both real and imagined, was omnipresent. İnönü goes on to argue that Turkey’s security from foreign interference could “only” be established through the reciprocal exchange of Turkish and Greek populations.⁴⁷ The juxtaposition of a history of the Armenian question, which had been “addressed” brutally during World War I, followed by the proposed solution of the Greek exchange illustrates the connection that the Turkish delegation saw between the two cases. Both were part of a larger process to ensure Turkey’s freedom and national homogeneity.

The legacy of European intervention in Ottoman domestic affairs on the basis of protecting non-Muslim minorities was one of the main factors in setting the Turkish delegation's position on the minority issues. It is clear from the Turkish position during any discussion of the minority questions in the Lausanne Conference that Turkey was determined to eliminate this particular route into its internal affairs. During the December 13 meeting of the Territorial and Military Commission İsmet İnönü stated that view of the Turkish delegation was based on their "legitimate desire to prevent minorities in Turkey from becoming weapons in the hands of foreigners, capable of being utilized for subversive purposes."⁴⁸ The most dangerous of these "weapons" in the mind of the Turkish nationalists was the Armenians.

During the meetings of the Sub-Commission on Minorities, the Turkish representatives absolutely refused to discuss the matter of the Armenians and Assyro-Chaldeans.⁴⁹ Their staunch refusal to give an inch with regards to these particular groups stems from the fact that the Armenians had initially been granted an autonomous homeland in Eastern Anatolia under the now defunct Treaty of Sevres. This dismemberment of what remained of the Ottoman Empire was the Turkish nationalists' worst nightmare. While the territorial integrity of Anatolia had already been seen as sacrosanct before World War I, the experience of the nationalists, who had fought since 1919 to wrest Turkey from the Great Powers and the invading Greek army, had heightened its importance exponentially. Because the territory allotted to the Armenians included in the Treaty of Sevres had been granted a form of reparations for Armenian losses due to the CUP led deportations and massacres, the Turkish delegation refused to even acknowledge that crimes had been committed against the Armenians.

During his speech of December 12, İnönü gives a lengthy history of the Armenian problem but ends his narrative with the 1909 massacres. He explains the massacres of 1894-1896 and 1909 in terms of provocation by Armenian revolutionaries who were stirred to rebellion by Russian agents.⁵⁰ This narrative of justified state intervention to prevent a Russian backed Armenian revolt is so close to the early nationalist narrative concerning the 1914-1916 massacres that it is possible that İnönü was using these earlier instances to implicitly justify the actions taken against the Armenians during the war without formally acknowledging what happened.

This refusal to even give the appearance that the Turkish delegation would consider territorial concessions for the Armenians led the Turkish delegation to refuse to even be in the same room as the Armenian representatives. Although the Armenians were not permitted to send formal delegations they did send unofficial representatives. When the European delegates on the Sub-Commission on Minorities proposed to hear

the unofficial Armenian delegation to speak on the need for a national homeland, the Turkish delegation refused absolutely to allow them to be heard at the official session. Because of the protest of the Turkish delegation, the official session of the Sub-Commission was postponed and the Armenian representatives were heard by all the members of the Sub-Commission apart from the Turkish delegation.⁵¹ In the İnönü's December 12 speech, the last point he makes to in his summation of the delegation's position is that the "best guarantees for security" would be granted to "all communities whose members have not deviated from their duty as Turkish citizens."⁵² It is clear that the territorial reparations granted to the Armenians under the treaty of Sevres as well as their perceived treachery during the war had disqualified the remaining Armenians in Turkey from being Turkish citizens.

Although it was clear that discussions of the topics Armenian and Assyro-Chaldean minorities were not going to end productively, Lord Curzon had wanted the discussion of protections for minorities in Turkey to include Muslim minorities, including the Kurds, Circassians, and Arabs.⁵³ Any hopes he had for a broader definition of minority groups were quickly dashed by the Turkish delegation. The Turkish representatives insisted that "minorities" be defined in the treaty explicitly as non-Muslims. In a statement concerning the definition of "minorities" İnönü explained that there was no need for the Sub-Commission to concern itself with Muslims since "there were no Muslim minorities in Turkey, for no distinction was made either in theory or practice between the various elements of the Muslim population."⁵⁴ This definition of the minority groups is also mirrored in the definition of the 'exchangeable' communities. It was at the urging of the Turkish delegation that religion was used as the defining characteristic for determining who was to be transferred between the two nations.

The fact that religion rather than language separated "exchangeable" and "non-exchangeable" as well as "Turk" and "minority" served two purposes. First, it allowed the Turkish delegation to avoid discussions about the treatment of Muslim minorities such as the Kurds. Because they were not covered by the minority protections, the new Turkish government was able to continue the efforts to curtail the growth of a Kurdish national movement such as prohibiting the teaching of the Kurdish language.⁵⁵ Second, it ensured that the Armenians who had either fled or been driven out of Anatolia during the war would not be able to return and reclaim their "abandoned" property or land as Turkish citizens. Whereas the definition of who "belonged" in Turkey had been either ambiguous or implied during the late Ottoman era, it was now clearly laid out that non-Muslims had no place in Turkey.

The Turkish delegation believed that a population exchange based on religious criteria was the best way to ensure the survival of the Turkish nation. Dr. Rıza Nur, the deputy-head of the Turkish delegation at Lausanne, stated rather bluntly that the mandatory population would resolve the minority questions for Turkey since, without any minorities left in Turkey, there would no longer be a pretext for foreign intervention. In his memoirs, Nur explained the delegation's reasoning behind the hardline they took on the minority issue, "The most important thing was the liberation of Turkey from the elements which through the centuries had weakened her either by organizing rebellions or by being the domestic extensions of foreign states. Hence the making of the country uniformly Turkish ... was a huge undertaking."⁵⁶

Nur's explanation of the Turkish nationalists' view of the minority question taken together with their attitudes towards the Armenian matter and the Armenian representatives demonstrates an outlook that is quite similar to that of the CUP in its demographic policies.

This is not to say that Turkey was alone in its desire to homogenize and build the nation state. At the same time that the CUP saw its country embroiled in a fight for survival in the modern world, Venizelos was voicing almost identical concerns in Athens. Speaking about the need for Greece to consolidate the "Greater Greece" which had been won through conquest, Venizelos warned that "the establishment of Greece as a State, self-sustaining, able to defend itself from the attacks of its enemies was for her a matter of life or death."⁵⁷ Just as Turkey wanted to shed its former imperial identity and consolidate its power in Anatolia, Greece was abandoning the "Great Idea" (Μεγάλη Ιδέα) in the wake of the Asia Minor Catastrophe. The Great Idea was an ethno-nationalist aspiration of establishing a "Greater Greece" which would encompass all areas inhabited by ethnic Greeks, including the territories in Asia Minor.⁵⁸

For both Turkey and Greece, ethnic homogeneity was seen as a prerequisite for building a stable nation. On June 17, 1930, Venizelos spoke before parliament as prime minister, urging the members to ratify the Ankara Convention which would begin the conclusion of the Exchange Convention. In this speech he addressed the need for Greece to follow in Turkey's footsteps:

Turkey herself—new Turkey—is the greatest enemy of the idea of the Ottoman Empire. New Turkey does not wish to hear anything about an Ottoman Empire. She proceeds with the development of a homogenous Turkish national state. But we also, since the catastrophe of Asia Minor, and since almost all our nationals from Turkey have come over to Greek territory, are occupied with a similar task.⁵⁹

The CUP and, later, Mustafa Kemal sought to separate themselves from the shadow of the Ottoman Empire which they saw as overburdened, underfunded and unable to survive in this new age of nation states. Similarly, Venizelos decided that the enterprise of expansionism that had cost the Greek state dearly in money, political stability, and diplomatic credibility should be replaced with a strong, centralized nation state.⁶⁰ In the period following the Lausanne conference Greece as well as Turkey turned to ethnic nationalism to use as the foundation for building up and consolidating the state.

Conclusions and Implications for the Future

The Exchange Convention of the Treaty of Lausanne was the first officially conducted population exchange which was compulsory in name as well as effect. Its negotiation marked the first time that international legal legitimacy was given to the use of forced migrations as a tool for achieving national and regional stability. The Exchange Convention was used as a means of managing nationalist passions in two ways. First, the removal of minority populations from the state was a way of undermining the strength of any nationalist fifth columns. Second, the “repatriation” of the refugees to their supposed country of ethnic origin was seen as a way of channeling ethno-nationalism in a manner that would bolster the power of the state.

Although it had its roots on the periphery of Europe, this mechanism of compulsory population transfer as part of a peace settlement spread far beyond the Aegean and Near East in the years after its official implementation. The idea of large scale population exchange became more palatable following the Lausanne Exchange and was seen increasingly as a regrettably harsh but necessary means of pacification and nation building. Carl Schmitt actually cited the case of the expulsion of the Greeks from Turkey as an evidence that “democracy requires...first homogeneity and second – if the need arises – an elimination or eradication of heterogeneity.”⁶¹ In the 1930s and 40s numerous population transfers were carried out by Nazi Germany citing the right of protection over their own people, and later, compulsory transfers of ethnic Germans from central eastern Europe were orchestrated by the Allies. The British led partition of India in 1947 also involved the forced migration of large populations based on religious identity.

The *ex post facto* legitimization of the previously unsanctioned forced migrations in Cyprus in 1974 and Bosnia in the early 1990s also fit into the Lausanne model. In most of these cases, the Greco-Turkish exchange was cited as a crucial precedent.⁶² Although compulsory transfers are illegal under international law today, the use of nominally voluntary transfers and mass expulsions remains a “global legal commodity” for the purpose of bringing about conflict resolution and national stabilization.⁶³ The

Annan Plan for Cyprus was criticized as essentially the legitimization of the illegal displacement of the Greek Cypriots of northern Cyprus which occurred during the Turkish invasion in 1974. Although the Annan Plan had provisions for the resettlement of displaced peoples, the restrictions were so numerous and complex that the practical prospects for resettlement were rendered almost worthless. Speaking in 2003 before the referendum on the Annan Plan, Cypriot President, Tassos Papadopoulos, asserted that "Acceptance of the Annan Plan in its present form does not constitute an initiative. On the contrary, it constitutes acceptance of the fiat accompli of invasion and occupation."⁶⁴

The Annan Plan was ultimately rejected by the Greek Cypriot community, thus rendering the plan null and void, according to its own terms. Despite the rejection of the Annan Plan, the attitude of the international community to the Cyprus issue has been very similar to that seen in reaction to the Dayton Accords in Bosnia. As long as the threat of immediate bloodshed was gone and there was some promise of stability, maintaining the status quo achieved through war crimes came before the rights of the individuals. Although both the Annan Plan and the Dayton Accords pay lip service to the idea of the right of return, in neither case was large scale resettlement ever part of the intended outcome. In the evolution of such treaties from Lausanne to India and Pakistan, to Cyprus, to Bosnia, we can see how the Ottoman Empire served as a laboratory for establishing the legal underpinnings of the use of demographic engineering in the process of nation-building and stabilization.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Estimates of the exact number of exchanged persons are impossible. Many Greeks had already fled from Asia Minor before the Treaty came into effect. Many movements in either direction were informal. Estimates of the flow into Turkey range from 350,000-500,000 although the lower number is more likely. Flows into Greece are a minimum of 1.3 million and might well go as high as 1.5 million.
- ² Briton Busch, *Mudros to Lausanne: Britain's Frontier in West Asia 1918-1932* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1976); (Alexandra.J.Karambelas@gmail.com) Harry Howard, *Turkey, the Straits, and U.S. Policy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).
- ³ Roderic Davison, "Turkish Diplomacy from Mudros to Lausanne" in *The Diplomats: 1919-1939* edited by Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 207.
- ⁴ Douglas Dakin, *The Unification of Greece* (London: Ernest Benn, 1972), 268; for commentary see Onur Yıldırım, "The 1923 Population Exchange, Refugees and National Historiographies in Greece and Turkey," *East European Quarterly*, 40:1 (2006), p. 47.
- ⁵ Yıldırım, "The 1923 Population Exchange," p. 55.
- ⁶ *Ibid*, 46.

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- ⁷ Hercules Millas, "The Undertone of Text" in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Exchange Between Greece and Turkey* edited by Renee Hirschon (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), p. 224.
- ⁸ Yıldırım, "The 1923 Population Exchange," p. 63.
- ⁹ Dimitri Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact on Greece*, (London: Hurst, 1962)
- ¹⁰ Yıldırım, "The 1923 Population Exchange," p. 54.
- ¹¹ Arnold Toynbee, *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey: A Study in the Contact of Civilizations* (London: Constable and Co., 1922).
- ¹² Bruce Clark, *Twice a Stranger: The Mass Expulsions that Forged Modern Greece and Turkey* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 248
- ¹³ *Ibid*, p. 250.
- ¹⁴ Renee Hirschon, *Heirs to the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus* (New York: Berghahn, 1998); Onur Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement: Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
- ¹⁵ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, p. 66.
- ¹⁶ Kurat, "Zeytun and the Commencement of the Armenian Genocide," p. 293.
- ¹⁷ Levene, "Zone of Genocide," 406; Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, p. 67.
- ¹⁸ Hilmar Kaiser, "Genocide at the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire," in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, edited by Donald Bloxham et, al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 370.
- ¹⁹ Akçam, *Shameful Act*, p. 119.
- ²⁰ Erol Ülker, "Contextualising 'Turkification': Nation-Building in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1908-18," *Nations and Nationalism* 11 (2005), 613; Levene, "Zone of Genocide," 393; Üngör, "Seeing Like a Nation-State," p. 19.
- ²¹ Şeker, "Demographic Engineering," p. 471.
- ²² Ronald Suny, "Empire and Nation: Armenians, Turks, and the End of the Ottoman Empire," *Armenian Forum* 1(1998), p. 40.
- ²³ Fridtjof Nansen in *The Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922-1923* from University of Toronto, Roberts Library Interactive Archive, <https://archive.org/details/recordssofproceedOOconfuoft/> accessed February 29, 2012, p. 114. For a more detailed account of Nansen's specific role: Harry Psomiades, *Fridtjof Nansen and the Greek Refugee Crisis, 1922-1924* (Bloomington, IL: The Asia Minor and Pontos Hellenic Research Center, 2011).
- ²⁴ *The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations and Protocol*, Article 1.
- ²⁵ Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement*, 91 (Tables 3 and 4).
- ²⁶ For an example of this interpretation, see Joseph Schechtman *European Population Transfers 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 17.
- ²⁷ Umut Özsu "Fabricating Fidelity: Nation-Building, International Law, and the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 24:4 (2011), p. 828.
- ²⁸ *Ibid*. p. 828
- ²⁹ Renee Hirschon, "The Consequences of the Lausanne Convention," in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey* edited by Renee Hirschon (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p.14.

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- ³⁰ Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement*, p. 137.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, p. 180.
- ³² Yonca Köksal, "Minority Policies in Bulgaria and Turkey: The Struggle to Define a Nation," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 6:4 (2006), p. 506.
- ³³ Peter Loizos, "Ottoman Half-Lives: Long Term Perspectives on Particular Forced Migrations," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 12:3 (1999), p. 237.
- ³⁴ John Petropoulos, "The Compulsory Exchange of Populations: Greek-Turkish Peacemaking, 1922-1930," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 6:4 (1976), p. 146.
- ³⁵ Richard Clogg, *Parties and Elections in Greece: The Search for Legitimacy* (London: Hurst, 1987), p. 9.
- ³⁶ Bloxham, *Great Game of Genocide*, p. 99.
- ³⁷ Erik Zürcher "How Europeans Adopted Anatolia and Created Turkey," *European Review* 13:3 (2005), p. 383.
- ³⁸ Quoted in Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Diplomats*, p. 67.
- ³⁹ For example see Charles Eddy, *Greece and the Greek Refugees* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1931), p. 51.
- ⁴⁰ Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Diplomats*, p. 40.
- ⁴¹ Territorial and Military Commission Meeting Minutes (December 1, 1922), *The Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs 1922-1923*, p. 114.
- ⁴² *Ibid*.
- ⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 115
- ⁴⁴ Meeting Minutes (December 1, 1922), *The Lausanne Conference*, p. 120.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 121.
- ⁴⁶ "Statement By İsmet Pasha," annex to the minutes of the Territorial and Military Commission (December 12, 1922), *The Lausanne Conference*, p. 204.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid*.
- ⁴⁸ Territorial and Military Commission Meeting Minutes (December 13, 1922), *The Lausanne Conference*, p. 207.
- ⁴⁹ Territorial and Military Commission Meeting Minutes (January 9, 1923), *The Lausanne Conference*, p. 291.
- ⁵⁰ "Statement of İsmet Pasha," *The Lausanne Conference*, p. 200.
- ⁵¹ "Turks Bar Hearing of Armenian Plea," *The New York Times*, December 27, 1922.
- ⁵² "Statement of İsmet Pasha" *The Lausanne Conference*, p. 204.
- ⁵³ Meeting Minutes (January 9, 1923) in *The Lausanne Conference*, p. 296.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 301.
- ⁵⁵ Yıldırım, *Diplomacy and Displacement*, p. 110.
- ⁵⁶ Ayhan Aktar, "Homogenizing the Nation, Turkifying the Economy: The Turkish Experience of Population Exchange Reconsidered" in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange Between Greece and Turkey*, ed. Renee Hirschon (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p. 87.
- ⁵⁷ Speech before parliament published and translated as "The Proposed Extermination of the Hellenic Race in Asia Minor" in *Greece Her True Light: Her Position in the World-Wide War as Expounded by El. K.*

Venizelos in a Series of Official Documents (New York: Nicholas Sakellarios & Socrates Xanthaky, 1916), p. 191.

- ⁵⁸ Michael Llewellyn-Smith, "Venizelos' Diplomacy, 1910-23: From Balkan Alliance to Greek-Turkish Settlement" in *Eleftherios Venizelos: The Trials of Statesmanship*, ed. Paschalis M. Kitromilides (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 135.
- ⁵⁹ Quoted in Ayhan Aktar, "Homogenizing the Nation," p. 81.
- ⁶⁰ John A. Petropoulos, "The Compulsory Exchange of Populations: Greek-Turkish Peacemaking, 1922-1930" *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 20 (1976), p. 146.
- ⁶¹ Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* trans. Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), p. 9.
- ⁶² Özsu, "Fabricating Fidelity," p. 846.
- ⁶³ Outi Korhonen, "The 'State-Building Enterprise': Legal Doctrine, Progress Narratives, and Managerial Governance," *The Role of International Law in Rebuilding Societies after Conflict: Great Expectations* edited by Brett Bowden (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 15.
- ⁶⁴ Chrysostomos Pericleous, *The Cyprus Referendum: A Divided Island and the Challenge of the Annan Plan* (I.B. Taurus: New York, 2009), p. 255.

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