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The Compulsory Exchange of Populations : Greek-Turkish Peacemaking, 1922–1930

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As a precedent in the resolution of Middle Eastern crises, the settlement of the embittered Greek-Turkish conflict of 1919–1922 constitutes a landmark. The swiftness and comprehensiveness of the settlement was hailed from the moment it was formally achieved by the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 23 July 1923. It has been rendered even more impressive since World War II by what, until recently at least, has seemed like the intractable Arab-Israeli dispute.

At the heart of both conflicts lay a massive refugee problem, precipitated by armed conflict and a clear-cut military victory of one side in the dispute. But the similarities end there. In the case of the Greek-Turkish conflict, Greece, the defeated and exhausted party, not only negotiated directly with Turkey, the victor, and signed a peace treaty which was hailed as a triumph for the victor. It welcomed a speedy resolution of the dispute, even though it knew that the resolution would exact a heavy price: acquiescence in the destruction of hellenism in Asia Minor, a hellenism enjoying a continuous existence there for some three millennia, and acceptance of the staggering burden of assimilating over a million refugees into a body politic suffering from political division, economic exhaustion, and psychological disorientation. As is all too well known, a peace treaty has never been negotiated in the case of the Arab-Israeli dispute. The vast majority of Palestinian refugees, neither

repatriated nor resettled, have remained in the limbo of refugee camps and, in the course of subsequent military rounds, have grown in numbers. Moreover, a Palestinian nationalism has crystallized if not originated from the refugees' very experience of homelessness and distress, whereas the Greek refugees, who once had an objective basis for distinguishing themselves from Greeks native to the Greek state, never considered themselves as anything more than a part of one single Greek totality.

Consideration of Greek-Turkish peacemaking during the 1920s in the light of the post-World War II Arab-Israeli dispute raises certain questions which, to my knowledge at least, have never been directly addressed by the literature on the former: Why was Greece willing, in fact anxious, to enter into peace negotiations right away? Why did Greece accept compulsory relocation of the refugees so easily and not, like the Arabs, insist on repatriation or the right of repatriation? Why was there no concerted challenge from the Greek refugees to the notion of compulsory exchange? In addressing these questions, I have discovered that, precisely because they were not consciously raised, the secondary literature and much of the primary literature on the subject will not easily offer up definitive answers. Full documentation will require detailed historical research which, hopefully, future historians will undertake if hypotheses are set forth on the basis of hints emerging here and there.

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Before going into these questions, it is first necessary to encapsulate the essentials of the compulsory exchange agreement and its implementation. *The Convention concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations*, signed by Greece and Turkey at Lausanne on 30 January 1923, antedated by six months the general peace treaty of Lausanne to which it was affixed.[1] By the terms of this convention, a *compulsory* exchange

1. For a complete English text of the Convention, see Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers, Turkey No. 1 (1923), *Lausanne Conference on Near Eastern Affairs, 1922–1923, Records of Proceedings and Draft Terms of Peace* (cm. 1814) (London, 1923), pp. 817–27; H. J. Psomiades, *The Eastern Question: The Last Phase* (Thessaloniki, 1968), appendix II, pp. 120–6; or D. Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact upon Greece* (The Hague, 1962),

would take place between 'Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory' and 'Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory'. These exchangeables constituted two distinct categories: (1) persons who had already emigrated; that is, Christians of the Ottoman Empire and Muslims of Greece who had left their homes between 18 October 1912 (the date when the First Balkan War was declared) and 30 January 1923, and (2) persons who had been left intact and were now to be transferred (Arts. I and III). In the first category, there were an estimated 847,931 Greeks, who had fled in panic from Anatolia with the withdrawing Greek army in September 1922, and 115,000 Muslims, who had voluntarily withdrawn from Greece in 1914 in response to a Young Turk invitation that they repopulated the regions of western Antolia from which Greeks were forcibly and massively displaced by the Ottoman government. In the second category, there were about 200,000 Greeks and an estimated 388,146 Turks.[2] Exempted from the compulsory exchange were Greek inhabitants of Istanbul and Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace, estimated at about 100,000 each (Art. II). The property of the exchangeable persons would be liquidated; that is, it would become the property of the state from which exchangeables emigrated. After total liquidation had taken place, the state receiving the greater value would pay the other state the equivalent difference or, if there was an equivalence in value, a balance would be struck. The exchangeable would 'in

appendix I, pp. 257–63. Psomiades also includes the text of the Lausanne Peace Treaty (op. cit., appendix I, pp. 111–19).

2. The two categories are emphatically distinguished by Pentzopoulos (op. cit., p. 68) in what is the best concise work in English on the refugee settlement. A comparable work in Greek is Ch. Zampathas, *Οἱ ἐκ Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας Ἑλληνορθόδοξων Πρόσφυγες* [*The Greek Orthodox Refugees of Asia Minor*] (Athens, 1969), a University of Athens dissertation, adds very little new information on the subject. The most detailed and still most basic work on the subject remains S. P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities. Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York, 1932). For the figures cited above, see Ladas, op. cit., pp. 16, 643, 711, and Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 68–9. The 388,145 figure, cited by Ladas as that of the Mixed Commission for the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations, is rendered 354,647 by Pentzopoulos, op. cit., p. 69, on the basis of C. B. Eddy, *Greece and the Greek Refugees* (London, 1931), p. 202. Eddy was third and last chairman of the Refugee Settlement Commission, which operated from 1923–1930.

principle' be entitled to receive as compensation from the state to which he emigrated 'property to a value equal to and of the same nature as that which he has left behind' (Arts. X and XIV). An eleven-member Mixed Commission, consisting of four Greeks, four Turks, and three neutrals, would be established 'to supervise and facilitate the emigration and to carry out the liquidation of the movable and immovable property' (Arts. XI and XII).

Implementation of the Convention extended through the decade of the 1920s in the midst of continuous tension between Greek and Turkish governments over issues of implementation raised by so complicated a process.[3] It can be said to have been completed by the Ankara Convention of 10 June 1930, which paved the way for a Convention of Commerce and Navigation and a Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality, both signed in Ankara on 30 October 1930. By the terms of the 1930 Convention, the exchange of populations was officially recognized as complete and abandoned property was legally transferred in complete ownership to the two governments respectively. To the outrage of most Greeks, the property of some 400,000 Turks and of some 1,100,000 Greeks was considered of equivalent value and thus a balance of accounts was drawn, with no compensation by Turkey to Greece. Finally, Greece agreed to pay Turkey £425,000. Of that sum, £150,000 was an indemnity to Muslims exempt from the exchange whose property in Western Thrace had been expropriated by the Greek government during the pressure of Greek refugee settlement; £150,000 was an indemnity to Greeks of Istanbul whose property in the Turkish areas of exchange had been expropriated by the Turkish state under the terms of the Lausanne Convention; and £125,000 as the balance in set-off between liquidated Greek and Turkish properties which, because their owners had ceased residence in the countries of their location *before* the outbreak of the First Balkan War, did not come under the general terms of liquidation.[4] In view of its

3. The most detailed account of the disputes generated by the general problem of implementation is presented by Ladas, op. cit., pp. 377–566. A concise overview of the same subject appears in Psomiades, op. cit., pp. 73–81.

4. The official text of the Ankara Convention of 10 June 1930 appears in French in Ladas, op. cit., appendix VIII, pp. 817–30. For an analysis and

financial terms, the Ankara Convention was regarded as yet another Turkish triumph and yet another major Greek concession for the sake of stabilizing Greek-Turkish relations.

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An answer to the question of why Greece was willing to enter into peace negotiations immediately points up important differences between the Greek situation of the early 1920s and the Arab situation of the late 1940s. First, there was only one Greek state to act in behalf of the refugees and no competing state ready to outshine it in professional zeal for the refugees when larger state interests came into play. Second, the Turkish victory over the Greeks in 1922 meant that a new peace settlement had to be negotiated between Turkey and the Entente powers. Greece had therefore the option of negotiating with the Turks at an international conference, where the opportunity for diplomatic manœuvre was much greater than it would have been if Greece had been negotiating unilaterally with Turkey. Third, thanks to the appointment of an able commander in Western Thrace, the military dictatorship in Greece was able, in a matter of months, to regroup an army, shattered and demoralized by the defeat in Anatolia, into a disciplined force of ten combat battalions. The threat that this force might take over Eastern Thrace and move on Istanbul, if the Conference of Lausanne broke down, played some role in causing Turkey to moderate its demands on Greece.[5] Finally, political conditions in Greece prompted both the military dictatorship and Eleutherios Venizelos, its appointee as Greek representative at Lausanne, to want a settlement at the earliest moment possible. The military leadership feared for the morale of its army as negotiations dragged on and for the mood of a war-weary populace subjected now to new financial exactions so as to keep the army on a war-footing. Venizelos was prompted, among other reasons, by the military's refusal to call elections for the

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evaluation of its terms, see Ladas, op. cit., pp. 567–83; Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 117–19; and Psomiades, op. cit., pp. 81–3.

5. G. Daphnes, *Ἡ Ἑλλὰς μεταξὺ δύο πολέμων* 1923–1940 [*Greece between the Two Wars*] (Athens, 1955), I, pp. 21–4, 60.

restoration of civilian government until after the national crisis had been resolved.[6]

If measured by the abortive Treaty of Sevres which it replaced, the Lausanne settlement represents for Greece loss writ large. Besides the territorial concessions of the İzmir enclave, Eastern Thrace, and the islands of İmvroz and Tenedos, Greece had to agree to a compulsory exchange of populations. Judged by Turkish maximal demands, however, the Lausanne settlement is a tribute to diplomacy's power to minimize the consequences of military defeat. The military dictatorship, by agreeing to negotiate at once along the lines recommended by Venizelos, and Venizelos, through the suppleness of his bargaining and his skilful courtship of Britain in particular, managed to secure several important Turkish concessions. Turkey agreed to forgo its demand for a large Greek indemnity, in return for Greek acknowledgement that the demand was legitimate in principle and for Greek evacuation of Karagach (Thrace), which the Greek general staff considered indefensible in case of war anyway. Thanks to the support of one or more powers at the conference, Greece managed to keep the Ecumenical Patriarchate located in Istanbul, exempt the Greek population of Istanbul from the compulsory population exchange, and secure itself a place in the International Straits Commission even though Greece was neither a great power nor a littoral state of the Black Sea. Finally, by returning the ethnically Greek islands of İmvroz and Tenedos to Turkey, Greece obtained Turkish recognition of its sovereignty over such Aegean islands as Samothrace, Mytilene, Chios, Samos, and Ikaria, though they were to remain demilitarized to allay Turkish fears that they might be used as bases of future aggression by Greece.[7]

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Why might Venizelos have welcomed a compulsory exchange? One answer is part of the conventional explanation of why he

6. Ibid., I, pp. 38, 41–60, where it is revealed that, when negotiations at Lausanne dragged because of differences between the Turks and the great powers, the Greek leadership seriously considered concluding a separate peace with Turkey.

7. Psomiades, op. cit., pp. 42–3, 45, 51–3, 58, 87–91, and Daphnes, op. cit., I, pp. 42–7.

'reluctantly' agreed to it. This answer was provided by Venizelos himself in replying to a refugee delegation in 1929:

> The Lausanne Convention is not really a Convention for the exchange of Greek and Moslem populations and properties, but rather a Convention for the departure of the Moslem population from Greece because the Greeks were driven out from Turkey. That is the real fact.[8]

And it is true that, when he proposed the idea of exchange to Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, who had just been entrusted by the League of Nations with relief for the refugees, he expressed greater worry about housing the refugees than feeding them. The housing problem would be facilitated, he wrote, if the some 400,000 Turks in Greece were immediately transferred to Turkey. Hence, the urgency of getting the process underway, even before the signing of a peace treaty. Moreover, the lands which these Turks left behind would then become available to at least a portion of the refugees as a source of livelihood.[9]

But there are certain problems with this explanation as a motive. The departure of some 400,000 Turks as part of a compulsory exchange would necessitate the acceptance of another 200,000 Greeks who still remained in Anatolia, a consideration which reduces the size of the capital gain. And, since a goodly portion, probably most, of the Turks in Greece were absentee landlords not directly involved in the cultivation of their lands, the lands that they left behind would not be anywhere near absolutely vacant for the refugees. Share croppers and tenants, native Greeks who had traditionally cultivated the Turkish land, would still have to be deprived of at least part of what they considered their patrimony.[10] Moreover, the proposal to be rid of the Turks in order to make room for already present refugees presupposed that the refugees were there to stay and, if accepted, virtually ensured that they would be.

8. Ladas, op. cit., p. 465.

9. Telegram from Venizelos to Nansen, dated 13 October 1922: ibid., p. 336. Also Pentzopoulos, op. cit., p. 104.

10. Morgenthau, *I Was Sent to Athens* (New York 1929), pp. 263, 277, and Eddy, op. cit., pp. 90–1.

Besides, the truth is not so simple. On 13 October 1922, Venizelos originated the idea of an exchange in a telegram to Nansen and requested 'that the transfer of the populations begin before signature of peace'.[11] As Ismet İnönü, chief Turkish delegate at Lausanne, later pointed out, a compulsory exchange was accepted by Lord Curzon and Venizelos at the meeting on 1 December of the Lausanne Territorial and Military Commission, before İnönü had even had a chance to speak on the subject.[12] To be sure, Venizelos made the original proposal to Nansen after noting that the Turkish Minister of the Interior had already announced Turkey's intention of proposing a compulsory exchange at the forthcoming conference.[15] But Stephen Ladas, author of *The Exchange of Minorities. Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, gathered from conversations in Turkey at the end of the 1920s 'that no final decision was taken to insist at Lausanne upon the compulsory exchange of the Greek and Turkish minorities'. Ladas went on to suggest that

> the Greek government, when the discussions began at Lausanne, had based a decision to favor a compulsory exchange upon an assumption which is not proven, namely, that the Turks would not permit the return to Turkey of any of the refugees.[14]

Why did Venizelos, a careful and skilled diplomat, base the Greek diplomatic stand on an issue of such vital importance on an unproven assumption? Even though Turkish officials, before the conference, had stated in strong terms Turkish determination to prevent the return of refugees, why had Venizelos not waited for that demand to be made at the conference and, if made, why was he not ready to challenge it as he did other initial Turkish demands. It takes little sophistication to know that, at the outset of negotiations, your opponent will set forth his maximal demands, and Venizelos had more than a fair share of sophistication.

It is a hypothesis of this paper that Venizelos welcomed a compulsory exchange for his own reasons and wished, for

11. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 336, 340.
12. Ibid., pp. 340–1.
13. Ibid., pp. 336, 341.
14. Ibid., p. 725.

domestic and international political reasons, to have it appear that such a brutal process was forced upon him by the Turks. It is also a corollary hypothesis that his desire was governed by the interests of the Greek state as he perceived them rather than merely by the interests of the refugees. The main contention and its corollary can only be hypothetical. Documentary testing is not easy, in part because the secondary literature has never assumed such a hypothesis, in part because, if the hypothesis holds, Venizelos would have been careful to disguise the facts for political reasons. The danger in arguing the hypothesis is that one may infer the motives for the exchange from the ultimate benefits of it. The consequences of a decision are not necessarily those intended or foreseen. Venizelos may not have been as foresighted as the hypothesis presupposes.

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At Lausanne Venizelos used the idea of compulsory exchange, which was tacitly accepted by all the principals at the conference by the time it began, if not actually before, as a basis for his bargaining strategy. To secure as much diplomatic support as possible from the great powers during the conference and to prompt the Turkish government to moderate its maximal demands against Greece, Venizelos went out of his way to demonstrate that Greece would no longer be a disruptive force in the Near East as an exponent of Greek irredentism. The surest way of putting Greek irredentism to permanent rest was to dislodge from the Turkish territorial domain that very hellenism which was its necessary justification and the basic precondition of its realization. As Nansen pointed out in a report submitted to the meeting of the Lausanne Territorial and Military Commission on 1 December, the four great powers (Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) believed 'that to unmix the populations of the Near East will tend to secure the true pacification of the Near East'.[15]

From that point on, Venizelos employed the principle of compulsory exchange as a means of arguing in behalf of other objectives for which he got the support of the great powers and to which the Turkish delegation ultimately assented. To the

15. Great Britain, *Lausanne Conference*, op. cit., p. 114, and quoted by Ladas, op. cit., p. 338.

Turkish demand that Western Thrace be placed under an autonomous régime rather than under Greek sovereignty, Venizelos pleaded the necessity of Western Thrace as an area for the absorption of so many refugees. To the Turkish insistence that the Greeks of Istanbul should be included in the compulsory exchange, Venizelos argued that this would only add to what was already the staggering problem of refugee absorption. Moreover, since the Turks had in 1914 challenged Greek sovereignty over the Greek islands off its western coastline on the grounds that, with large Greek communities in Western Anatolia lying so close to the islands, the islands' incorporation into Greece would constitute an intolerable danger to Turkish security, the absence of those communities reduced the force of that argument. Finally, by gaining Turkish assent to the exclusion of the Istanbul Greeks in return for the exclusion of Western Thrace Turks from the terms of compulsory population exchange, Venizelos provided part of the rationale for the retention of the patriarchate in Istanbul and for Greece's admission to the International Straits Commission.[16] But, even more the compromise constituted a kind of tacit agreement between Greece and Turkey that a restricted area of mutual irredentism be maintained. Greece retained an ethnological basis for irredentist claims to Constantinople; Turkey retained an ethnological basis for irredentist claims to Western Thrace. Such a tacit agreement seems to have been designed for domestic political reasons: to appease the incorrigible irredentists who continued to exist in Turkey as well as Greece.

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But there were, I think, larger substantive, rather than merely tactical, diplomatic problems that prompted Venizelos to favour compulsory exchange. They can be subsumed for analytical purposes under two broad categories: the national security and the internal development of the Greek state.

A legacy of Greece's territorial gains from the Balkan Wars (Macedonia) and World War I (Western Thrace) was the problem of ensuring against Bulgaria's irredentist claims to

16. See footnote 7 above.

both regions and the consequent challenge of mounting an adequate defence of a now dangerously expanded northern border (with four neighbouring states rather than with merely the Ottoman Empire before 1912). Both Macedonia and Western Thrace were, before 1913, areas of ethnically mixed composition in which Greeks did not constitute an absolute majority. Expulsion of some 400,000 Muslims from Macedonia and the settlement of the overwhelming majority of refugees in both Macedonia and Western Thrace definitively hellenized both provinces.[17] These territories were no longer disputable on grounds of national self-determination and defence of the northern frontier became a vital concern of the settled refugees, who subsequently responded to Bulgarian-, Yugoslav-, or Soviet-inspired proposal of an independent Macedonia with the passion of persons who knew the nightmare of forced displacement and feared its repetition at their expense yet another time.

Moreover, faced with a Bulgaria made more intensely revanchist by its additional loss of Western Thrace through the Treaty of Neuilly after World War I, Greece confronted a danger that had worried Venizelos immediately after the Balkan Wars and in the first year of World War I: that Turkey might support Bulgarian efforts to wrest both Macedonia and Western Thrace from Greece.[18] Undoubtedly, Venizelos welcomed the exclusion of Western Thracian Muslims from the compulsory exchange so as to give Turkey a vested interest in opposing that province's incorporation into Bulgaria at some future date. But, even more, the surest guarantee against Turkey's future alignment with Bulgaria against Greece was the emergence of Turkey from Lausanne as a 'satisfied state' with its energies concentrated on internal reform and with confidence that Greece no longer constituted a threat to its territorial integrity. Agreeing to the uprooting of hellenism from Turkish territories was the most dramatic way of inviting that confidence. It was probably also regarded by Venizelos as the surest guarantee of

17. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 639–40, 653, 700–2, and Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 31–2, 132–6 with accompanying tables and maps.

18. G. B. Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers 1914–1917* (Thessaloniki, 1974), especially p. 14, and chs. II, IV–VIII *passim*.

assisting Mustafa Kemal in curbing the Turkish counter-irredentist sentiment which had gained strength from the recent Turkish military victory.[19] It was almost universally agreed that the total expulsion of Greeks from Anatolia would deal a crippling blow to the Turkish economy because of the important economic role they had played.[20] That consensus was probably the basis for whatever concessions the Turks might have been willing to make on the matter of refugee repatriation and may have prompted Venizelos to believe that, through compulsory exchange, he was making any Turkish military ventures against Greece economically impossible for a long time to come.

In addition, a compulsory exchange was the most effective way of robbing any future Greeks, whether refugees or not, of any solid basis for remounting an irredentist programme at Turkish expense. Just as Mustafa Kemal was attempting to establish irreversible conditions, which would hamstring any future Turkish attempts at reviving the Ottoman Empire, Venizelos was, I think, engaged in a parallel enterprise of making the idea of a Greater Greece (Megale Idea or Great Idea) an anachronism. Like so many Greeks, he appreciated the heavy price paid by the Greek state for a century in pursuing a foreign policy that far exceeded its scarce resources: clashing with the interests of the great powers, a perpetual drain on the state treasury, political instability, and deterrence to internal reform.

Finally, an ethnically homogeneous state, even if realized by population exchange, was as much an objective for Venizelos as it was for Atatürk. As prime minister of Greece, off and on from 1910 to 1920, Venizelos had proposed or accepted the idea. In 1914 he accepted Turkish proposals for an exchange between the Greeks of Eastern Thrace and the Greek rural population of the İzmir region, on the one hand, and the Muslims of Greek Macedonia on the other. A mixed commission for the limited exchange was established in June 1914 but its operation was stillborn as a result of the World War's outbreak. To be sure, Greece's hand had been forced by the unilateral Turkish expulsion of some 200,000 Greeks from the western coastal

19. Lord Kinross, *Ataturk* (New York, 1965), pp. 382–3.
20. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 714–15, 728–9.

region of Anatolia, three-fourths of these to Greece and one-fourth to the interior of Anatolia.[21] But Venizelos' espousal of the principle of exchanging minorities as a solution of inter-state political problems is demonstrated by a number of his subsequent acts. In a memorandum of January 1915 to King Constantine I, in which he urged Greece's entry into the war on the side of the Allied powers and against Turkey, Venizelos proposed that the co-operation of Bulgaria be sought by transferring sovereignty over the Kavalla region from Greece to Bulgaria, to be followed by a reciprocal emigration between the two countries.[22] When Venizelos put forward at the Paris Peace Conference claims to Ottoman territory inhabited by Greeks, he also proposed a scheme of population exchange by which Greeks from other parts of Asia Minor could migrate to the İzmir region and Turks of the İzmir region could resettle in those parts of Anatolia remaining under Turkish sovereignty.

> There would thus be set up a current of mutual and voluntary migration, thanks to which it might be hoped that in the course of a few years the people remaining in the Turkish state would be composed exclusively of Mohammedans; whilst the Greek element would become overwhelming in Greek territory.[23]

Attached to the Treaty of Neuilly, by which Bulgaria was required to cede Western Thrace to Greece, there was a *Convention concerning Reciprocal Emigration between Greece and Bulgaria*, signed on 27 November 1919. Rules of emigration and liquidation had already been adopted by January 1921.[24]

21. Ibid., pp. 20–2. Also Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 54–7, and Psomiades, op. cit., pp. 61–2.

22. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 28–9.

23. *Papers relating to the Foreign Policy of the United States, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919* (Washington, 1943), III, pp. 863–75, as quoted by Psomiades, op. cit., pp. 63–4.

24. On the Convention of Neuilly and the voluntary Bulgarian-Greek exchange of populations, Ladas devotes a substantial part of his book (op. cit., all of part I, pp. 27–331, and part III, ch. XXXI, pp. 591–617) and provides a full text, together with two basic and related official documents, all in the French original (op. cit., appendices I–III, pp. 739–86). See also Psomiades, op. cit., p. 64.

What distinguished all these proposals or agreements from the Greek-Turkish exchange was their voluntary character. Yet, there is some cause to suspect that those, including Venizelos, who accepted the principle of population exchange steered clear of suggesting its compulsory form because, as David Mitrany once pointed out, a compulsory transfer 'broke with all the accepted principles of international law, as with all the humanitarian traditions of Europe. . .'.[25] Even under the stress of crisis, which hung over Lausanne at the end of 1922, none of the chief negotiators, even though they favoured the idea of compulsory exchange for this instance at least, dared take responsibility for freely espousing the idea.[26]

Finally, the forced Greek-Turkish exchange of populations gave a strong element of informal coercion to the *Greek-Bulgarian Convention of Reciprocal Emigration*, which provided only for voluntary exchange. At the outset, neither ethnic minority showed any strong desire to emigrate. Between November 1922 and 1 July 1923, only 166 Bulgarian families and 197 Greek families declared for emigration from Greece and Bulgaria respectively. As the settlement of Greek refugees from Turkey got systematically under way, however, the numbers rose sharply on each side. Bulgarians left as they felt squeezed by the presence of Greek refugees. With no administrative settlement agency provided by the Bulgarian state, they descended upon the Greeks of southern Bulgaria particularly and demonstrated such hostility as to prompt large numbers of Greeks to leave Bulgaria.[27]

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Thanks to the fact that Venizelos presided over the Greek government during the Balkan wars and brought Greece into World War I at the deadly cost of Greek internal political schism, he developed the reputation of being the very embodiment of the policy of Megale Idea. His greatest title to historical fame is still believed to derive from his achievements in the field of foreign policy. But it is often forgotten that

25. D. Mitrany, *The Effect of the War in Southeastern Europe* (New Haven, 1936), pp. 249–50. Also Eddy, op. cit., p. 51.
26. Eddy, op. cit., and Ladas, op. cit., p. 26.
27. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 107–8.

Venizelos started his career in the politics of Greece (as opposed to his earlier career in Cretan politics) as a self-conscious disciple of Charilaos Trikoupes, who ranks only second to him as an illustrious modern Greek statesman and who led that school of thought in Greece which placed greater importance on internal development than irredentism. Which is to say that Venizelos led a new government in Greece in 1910 as a domestic reformer who, against mighty pressure, concurrently adopted a cautious foreign policy. According to Douglas Dakin, rather than engineering the Balkan alliance against Turkey he was, with visible discomfort, overtaken by events.[28] And it appears that he adopted an expansionist foreign policy during World War I so as to consolidate territorial gains made during the Balkan Wars at the expense of Bulgaria and Turkey and in order to reverse the forced dissolution of Anatolian hellenism which the Young Turks had already undertaken in response to Greece's territorial gains during the Balkan Wars. The Anatolian disaster allowed his initial predisposition towards internal development to take wing.

I believe that Venizelos welcomed, in fact sought to impose on the Greek state, a massive ingathering as the most effective instrument for confronting the economic exhaustion, the political uncertainty, and the general demoralization that came as the aftermath of that disaster. Unredeemed hellenism had, almost universally, the reputation of far exceeding liberated hellenism in entrepreneurial skills, educational attainments and progressive attitudes. It would constitute a valuable source of human capital for the Greek state. Apart from that, the sheer weight of absorbing so many refugees would willy-nilly loosen established structures and tenaciously held practices. The refugees, for sheer survival, would be forced to work hard and exercise a maximum of resourcefulness. The natives would be forced to make the painful but necessary adjustments. A task of such critical importance would also deflect from the backbiting or resigned passivity which so frequently accompany defeat.

But to say that Venizelos welcomed a refugee problem because there were reasons of a domestic nature to make it welcome is not enough. More to the point is how, as adviser to

28. Dakin, *The Unification of Greece 1770–1923* (London, 1972), pp. 193–5.

the Greek military government of Athens, he used the refugee problem to secure foreign economic assistance for what became a major economic development programme, particularly in Macedonia and Western Thrace, and how, in the process, he ensured that the programme would be effectively executed regardless of who ruled Greece.

Judging from the difficulties encountered in securing a refugee loan abroad, it is unlikely that Greece could have successfully negotiated a foreign loan (which it needed) for mere economic recovery. The Greek credit rating was too low and Europe was still recovering from the war.[29] In the days immediately following the Anatolian disaster, when ultimate disposition of the Greek refugees was not clear, Venizelos appealed for relief aid to the United States, which responded through such private agencies as the American Red Cross and the Near East Relief Organization. He concurrently turned to the League of Nations, which provided for the first time an international framework for dealing with massive human tragedies. Having involved both the United States and the League already, Venizelos based his plans for a massive loan on them, as well as on Britain, once the Lausanne compulsory exchange convention determined that the Greek refugee problem would be one of permanent settlement rather than of temporary relief. Just three days after the convention was signed, N. Polites, Greek representative to the League of Nations, invoked the staggering refugee problem to formally petition 'the moral support of the League' for an international loan of £10 million.[30]

In the course of the referral to various committees, the League's conditions for providing that moral support became clear. Greece should provide securities sufficient to service the loan and a plan for the permanent settlement of refugees should be prepared. The League's reservations, by these criteria, were that political instability in Greece might affect the sources of revenue offered as securities, that some of the loan might be diverted to military purposes, and, by implication, that the settlement enterprise might be ineptly executed by reason of inadequate planning or administrative mismanagement on the

29. Eddy, op. cit., p. 58, and Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 77–8.
30. Eddy, op. cit., pp. 53–6, and Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 75–9.

part of the Greek state.[31] It is inconceivable that Venizelos did not share these worries. They were allayed when the Greek government allowed a comprehensive settlement plan to be framed by an ad hoc committee of the League (the so-called Greek Sub-Committee), which consisted of the British, French, and Italian members of the League Council and a representative from Greece.[32] Presented in the form of two documents, one called *Protocol* and the other *Organic Statutes*, the League Council approved and the Greek representative signed them on 29 September 1923.[33]

By the terms of these documents, the Greek government agreed to establish a Refugee Settlement Commission whose assigned function would be the formulation and execution of a long-range plan for 'the establishment of refugees in productive work'. Charity or temporary relief were specifically forbidden. The Greek state guaranteed the Commission's independence of any Greek executive or administrative authority, exempted it from all taxes and charges, and undertook to adjust the internal law of the country so as to ensure its prescribed capacity and powers. The Greek state undertook to assign to the Commission 500,000 hectares of land as its absolute property for the purpose of settling refugees and it agreed to raise an international loan whose proceeds would be placed 'directly under the disposal of the Refugee Settlement Commission for the purposes specified in its Organic Statutes . . .'. Of its four members, two would be appointed by the Greek government, one selected by the Council of the League of Nations, and one, its chairman, was to be a U.S. citizen representing relief organizations and appointed as the League Council should decide. Decisions were to be taken by majority vote, the chairman having the deciding vote in case there was an equal division of members. Three members, of whom two had always to be the two members not appointed by the Greek government, constituted a quorum. The Commission was required to submit a quarterly report of its operations to the League Council as well as to the Greek government. Ultimate

31. Ibid., pp. 79–82. Also Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 115.

32. Eddy, op. cit., p. 56, and Ladas, op. cit., p. 622.

33. The text of both documents appears in Eddy, op. cit., appendix E, pp. 253–62, and in Pentzopoulos, op. cit., appendix II, pp. 264–72. For an account of their provisions, see Eddy, op. cit., pp. 58–60, Ladas, op. cit., pp. 623–8, and Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 82–6.

control of this influential body was thus obviously in non-Greek hands.

Even with so marked an alienation of its sovereignty by the Greek state as the price for obtaining the League's moral support, the £10 million refugee loan of 1924 was raised on highly unfavourable terms. Its face amount was £12,300,000, issued at a net rate of 81 (as opposed to its official rate of 88) with a real interest of 8·71 per cent (as opposed to the official interest rate of 7 per cent).[34] Yet it is clear from his own account of the negotiations for the loan that its amount would have been far less or its terms even more unfavourable if Henry Morgenthau, the first chairman of the Refugee Settlement Commission, had not brought to bear on the Bank of England his financial expertise, his international standing, and a threat that he would resort exclusively to the American capital market.[35]

Thanks to the good work of the Commission, a second ('stabilization') loan of £7,500,000 was raised in 1927 on slightly better terms. Issued at a net rate of 86 and with a real interest rate of 7·05 per cent, its net yield was £6,500,000. That same year the United States government, under an agreement settling the Greek war debt to America, granted what might legitimately be regarded as a humane refugee loan rather than a strictly commercial loan for refugee purposes. In the amount of £2,500,000 issued at par, it bore an interest rate of 4 per cent. The full amount of this loan but only £500,000 of the larger loan was paid directly to the Commission for its purposes. The remaining sum of £6,000,000 was used to revise the finances of the Greek state; that is, cover budget deficits of previous years, stabilize the drachma, and strengthen the National Bank of Greece. In short, by invoking the problem of refugee settlement and employing the good offices of the Commission, Greece was ultimately able to secure foreign economic aid for purposes that were not strictly refugee; but at the heavy price of deepening and extending foreign financial control and by having to compensate, at fourteen times the compensation to Greek landed proprietors, English, French, and Italian nationals

34. Eddy, op. cit., pp. 62–3, Ladas, op. cit., pp. 633–6, and Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 87–90.

35. Morgenthau, op. cit., ch. XI, pp. 175–205.

whose large rural estates had also been expropriated as part of an extensive land reform programme.[36]

If the Refugee Settlement Commission was the device by which massive foreign economic aid was obtained, it was also the instrument for mounting, during the years of Venizelos' absence from power in Greece, a programme of economic development built on refugee settlement, particularly in Greek Macedonia and Thrace. Probably the most important aspect of its activities was a relatively radical land reform programme, by which the Greek government was bound in guaranteeing to provide the Commission with 500,000 hectares of land.

One plank in Venizelos' original reform programme had been the redistribution of land. The existence of large landed estates in Thessaly had constituted a major social problem which festered in Greece from the acquisition of Thessaly in 1882 until his arrival in 1910. Under his aegis the constitution was revised to allow for a redistribution law which was speedily passed but feebly executed. The acquisition of Macedonia in 1913 merely compounded the problem because, according to a statistical survey of that same year, the province contained 701 large landed estates, varying from 100 to 3,000 hectares. Of these 491 belonged to Muslims. A law of 18 November 1917 provided the basis for partial expropriation and sequestration of these lands. But that measure was moderate compared to the revolutionary decree of 14 February 1923, which subjected even monastic and medium-size estates to expropriation without prior compensation. By 1925, 1,496 landed estates had been expropriated, 571 in Thessaly, 341 in Macedonia, and 308 in Epirus. In 1932 Greece was reported, by a survey team of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, to lead other nations of Eastern Europe in total amount of agricultural land affected by reforms. Greece was given a figure of 50 per cent as compared with 6 per cent for Poland, 10 per cent for Yugoslavia and Hungary, and 19·7 per cent for Rumania. What, under normal circumstances, would have been fiercely resisted as radicalism was accepted without protest by landowners as patriotic necessity, as a stay against social upheaval, and as a condition for

36. Eddy, op. cit., pp. 63–8. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 636–9, and Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 90–2. Also A. Andreades, 'Les finances publiques', in *Les Effets Economiques et Sociaux de la Guerre en Grèce* (New Haven, 1929), pp. 92–102.

foreign aid. Increased agricultural productivity, due to the presumed greater interest of a man in what is his, was as much an aim of land reform as eliminating a source of social unrest.[37]

At the initiative of the Commission, mechanization and technical aid were also introduced into Greek agriculture, especially in the north but with demonstration effects in other parts of Greece as well: new plants, such as clover, sugar-beet, and millet; chemical fertilizer; cattle and livestock improvement; tractors, hay-cutters, winnowing machines, and harvester-binders.[38] Seventy experimental stations and demonstration fields were established in Macedonia[39] and, to compensate for the small size of landholdings and facilitate the repayment of refugee debts, agricultural co-operatives were promoted. At the end of 1927 there were already 656 refugee associations in Macedonia, with 44,815 members, and 234 in Thrace, with 13,258 members. Mostly associations for lending, buying, and selling, they were only one fourth the total number of co-operatives, many of which had a mixed membership of refugees and natives.[40] Drainage and irrigation, and even more significant effort at increasing productivity, was initiated and planned by the Commission and led to the subsequent drainage of vast marshlands near the mouths of three Macedonian rivers of Strymon (Struma), Axios (Vardar), and Aliakmon.[41]

In the field of industry, 918 new factories were established between 1923 and 1930, employing an estimated 300,000 people. Most of these were refugees employed by Thracian and Istanbul entrepreneurial refugees who, coming to Greece under

37. Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 151–4, 159, and Royal Institute of International Affairs, *World Agriculture—An International Survey* (London, 1932), p. 149. In addition, A. A. Pallis, 'Les effets de la guerre sur la population de la Grèce and M. B. Simonide, 'L'économie rurale grecque et la crise de la guerre mondiale' in *Les Effets Economiques*, op. cit., pp. 156–7 and 168–74 respectively. See also Dakin, op. cit., pp. 187, 251, and Ladas, op. cit., pp. 648–51, 654–5.

38. Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 154–7, Ladas, op. cit., pp. 660–4, Morgenthau, op. cit., pp. 276–9, and Eddy, op. cit., p. 93.

39. Pentzopoulos, op. cit., p. 155, Morgenthau, op. cit., pp. 277–8, and Eddy, op. cit., pp. 102–3, 190.

40. Pentzopoulos, op. cit., p. 160, Ladas, op. cit., pp. 670–2, and Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 280.

41. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 656, 665–9, Morgenthau, op. cit., 273–4, and Eddy, op. cit., pp. 197–8.

the later peaceful exchange, managed to bring some capital with them.[42] By a liberal and enlightened interpretation of the provision that it could only spend on productive work, the Commission took on the improvement of public health and communication on the justifiable grounds that only thus would the settlement of refugees have a sound and permanent basis. At the end of 1929, when the Commission was finishing up its work, it turned over to the Greek government a Macedonian health service consisting of 59 dispensaries with 145 medical officers and chemists.[43] Whenever the expense was minimal, the Commission authorized its services in Macedonia to have local roads and bridges constructed by the local communities.[44]

The Turkish process of settling Muslims from Greece provides a sharp contrast. As in the Greek case, the objectives were to establish the immigrants in those areas where there was room for them, e.g. in lands abandoned by the outgoing Greeks, and to settle them on a productive self-supporting basis. But the situation was otherwise different. The larger pool of abandoned Greek farmsteads for a smaller total number of settlers meant that these Turkish immigrants had a larger portion of land *per capita* than their Greek counterparts. Since these immigrants left Greece after hostilities and with international supervision, they were, unlike the Greeks they replaced, able to take with them the larger portion of their movable wealth, including livestock and some physical plant. But it would be a mistake to think that the exchange was easy for them. In many cases the physical plant of the abandoned Greek estates had been vengefully burned and destroyed as Turks resumed control of the area which had been under Greek military occupation. Insistent on its economic and financial as well as political independence, the Turkish government refused to resort to foreign aid or to foreign administrative help in creating a mechanism of settlement. The creation of a Ministry of Reconstruction, Exchange, and Settlement at the end of 1923 created conflicts of authority and proved too costly. It was replaced a year later by a more modest Department of Settlement within the Ministry of the Interior

42. Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 160–5, Ladas, op. cit., pp. 677–81, and Morgenthau, op. cit., pp. 248–58.

43. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 682–4, and Eddy, op. cit., pp. 101–2, 188–9.

44. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 684–8.

and finished this part of its work by the end of 1926. The state granted rural emigrants agricultural implements and seeds when these were needed and artisans were given a small amount of capital as a start, with easy repayment terms in both cases. But settlement was not used as the basis of a major economic development drive. The total Turkish expenditure for settlement was a little less than £1,000,000 or less than one twentieth the expenditure incurred by the Greek government for the settlement of its refugees.[45]

* * *

Why did the Greek refugees, unlike the later Palestinian refugees, accept displacement and the terms of its resolution? In the first place, they had only one state on which they could effectively bring pressure, not several whose rivalry they could exploit. Second, when they poured in, they fanned out or were directed to a variety of places, rather than being concentrated in a few large refugee camps, and they remained intermixed with the native population. Third, before the vast majority who had arrived penniless, broken and in panic, had a chance to recover from the shock, the international arrangements for their permanent settlement had been completed. Certainly the swiftness of these arrangements was prompted by the consideration, articulated by Nansen, that

> it would be easier from the political and psychological point of view to carry through an exchange at a moment such as the present [December 1922], . . . than it will be when affairs have settled down to a quieter routine.[46]

Fourth, the arrangements were made, on the Greek side, by Venizelos, their political darling.[47] It is extremely doubtful if a royalist politician, already held accountable by the majority of them for the Anatolian disaster, would have dared to agree to

45. Ibid., pp. 705–19.

46. From the Nansen statement read by Lord Curzon at the 1 December 1922 meeting of the Territorial and Military Commission of the Lausanne Conference, Great Britain, *Lausanne Conference*, op. cit., pp. 113–23, and quoted by Ladas, op. cit., pp. 338–9.

47. Pentzopoulos, op. cit., p. 176.

such an arrangement or could have done so with so little political impunity. Fifth, the Convention of 1923 was drawn up in such a way as to give a faint glimmer of hope that they might someday return to their native lands. Article I stated:

> These persons shall not return to live in Turkey or Greece respectively without authorization of the Turkish Government or of the Greek Government respectively.[48]

This statement denies the right of free return, but for desperate men who were being told or telling themselves what a severe economic blow their expulsion would be for Turkey, it also implied the possibility that Turkey might adopt some kind of immigration policy. Moreover, the convention guaranteed the refugee full compensation for property left behind and the government launched a partial indemnification programme by gradually issuing one fifth the minimal amount in cash and four-fifths in ultimately redeemable bonds bearing 8 per cent interest.[49] Had they known that they would never receive the full value of their claims, it might have been a different story. But by the time this became obvious in 1929 and definitively settled in 1930, they had helped elect Venizelos to power with an absolute majority, thanks to which he had the basis for concluding a reconciliation with Turkey which sacrificed the evaluation of their abandoned properties and meant that they would never be indemnified more than nominally. Finally, thanks to the balance of political forces in the 1920s and the organization of electoral districts, the refugees never developed the political strength that their 300,000 votes might have given them. Constituting 20 per cent of the population of Greece, they rarely contributed more than 13 per cent of the deputies in any one parliament. Though 45 per cent of the inhabitants of Macedonia, 35 per cent in Thrace, 19 per cent in Central Greece, and 18 per cent in the Aegean Islands, in terms of electoral districts they constituted a clear majority in only five communities. Though the refugees were overwhelmingly Venizelist, the political weakness of the royalists during the 1920s led to a mushrooming of Venizelist parties among whom

48. Ibid., p. 257, and Psomiades, op. cit., p. 120.
49. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 688–96.

the refugee support was divided and hence somewhat dissipated.[50]

But there were less tangible but no less real factors which, I think, rendered the refugees less disposed than the later Palestinians to resist the idea of displacement. One is that, in spite of poignant nostalgia for the lost homeland, many if not most were afraid to return, either because of anticipated mistreatment or realization that it would be a different kind of Anatolia to which they would return, one that denied them the privileged position they had once enjoyed. A second factor is the nature of Greek nationalism which, for over a century, the Greek state defined in terms of western classicism and its own image. This articulation of Greek nationalism gave the ancient Greek homeland a special status, which made displacement in some sense seem like a return, and accepted as a basic presupposition the notion that all Greek people should be united into one single state. Though this presupposition had been interpreted to mean that the boundaries of the Greek state should be enlarged to incorporate Balkan and Near Eastern hellenism, it was, I think, deeply enough engrained to carry conviction even when the realities of international politics indicated that this ideal might have to be achieved by contracting the boundaries of hellenism to fit the limits of the Greek state. The third factor relates to an ambience of that era, which would have made it seem like utter folly, because ostensibly outside the bounds of reasonable expectation, for the refugees or the Greek political leaders to refuse settlement and assimilation so as to keep the determination and hence the possibility of return alive. The vast majority of the refugees believed it only sane to bow to the inevitable and make the best of a desperate situation. A few undoubtedly felt that they might someday return to their homeland by virtue of Greek state arms, to uproot the Turks as they had been uprooted, but saw such an eventuality as in no way precluding temporary settlement in their new surroundings.[51] And some, but more, joined the Communist movement,[52] sublimating their alienation by struggling for an envisioned international order in which ethnic

50. Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 181–90.
51. Ibid., pp. 205–7, and Mitrany, op. cit., pp. 252–3.
52. Pentzopoulos, op. cit., pp. 190–5.

minorities would not constitute political problems. But the fourth factor, less tangible yet, was that, unlike the Palestinians, the Greek refugees had never in modern times comprised a majority in any detachable part of Anatolia and had not been displaced by an ethnic group perceived to have come in from the outside. In short, they seem not to have felt as intense a sense of outrage or injustice as the Palestinians have.

* * *

In conclusion, the implications of the hypothesis presented in this paper bear brief consideration. If valid, the hypothesis means that the interests of the Greek refugees were subordinated to those of the Greek state. In return for hellenizing and developing northern Greece and, indirectly, transforming all of Greece, the refugees, apart from suffering the agonies of displacement, never received anywhere near adequate compensation for the property they left behind and many were reduced to permanent or long-term penury. The terms of their settlement, e.g. that scarce resources be used for speedy and permanent self-support, tended inevitably to sharpen socio-economic inequalities and cleavages in their ranks, because those with some financial means, however limited, had a better chance of gaining economic independence quickly and at less expense to the Commission.[53]

Moreover, though Greece benefited in long-range terms in areas of national security, internal development, and culture,[54] it also paid a heavy price for the Venizelos strategy hypothesized. Because, in order to use distress as a way of launching economic recovery and development and as a method of overcoming political obstacles to internal reform, Venizelos limited even more a national sovereignty already qualified by international control. This strategy added to an already heavy burden of

53. Ibid., p. 184.

54. The cultural benefits, though universally acknowledged, have not been comprehensively treated in any scholarly work. For a brief evaluation, see ibid., pp. 212–19. For the impact of the Asia Minor disaster on subsequent Greek literary development, see, for instance, D. P. Liatsos, *Ἡ μικρασιατικὴ καταστροφὴ στὴ νεοελληνικὴ λογοτεχνία* [*The Asia Minor Catastrophe in Modern Greek Literature*, 2nd ed. (Athens, 1972) and N. E. Meliores, *Ἡ μικρασιατικὴ τραγωδία στὴ λογοτεχνία καὶ στὴν τέχνη* [*The Asia Minor Tragedy in Literature and Art*] (Athens, 1967).

servicing foreign and domestic loans and created a rate of taxation that threatened to handicap further development. And it gave a new lease on life to the International Debt Administration, which had operated since 1898 to limit the fiscal sovereignty of the Greek state.[55]

Finally, this hypothesis presents Venizelos in new terms which invite a revised comparison between him and Atatürk. Like Atatürk, Venizelos' major achievement lies, I think, in the domain of domestic reform and development. Just as Atatürk founded a new Turkey, Venizelos founded a new Greece, both by different brands of shock treatment. Both favoured a compulsory exchange of populations, with all its agonies, for the sake of the larger ethnic unit. Both sacrificed some of the interests of the refugees in behalf of the larger interest of the nation-state. Both were willing to pay a heavy price for these larger interests, Venizelos the price of greater foreign control and indebtedness, Atatürk the price of long-lasting damage to the Anatolian economy by virtue of uprooting one of its most progressive elements. But the contrasts are equally striking. Atatürk developed the new Turkey by insistently forgoing foreign help or interference. Venizelos developed the new Greece by manœuvring for foreign help and interference. Atatürk presided over the creation of the new Turkey as a virtually absolute ruler. Venizelos presided over the creation of the new Greece, until his return to power from 1928–32, by proxy and through international intervention.

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55. Ladas, op. cit., pp. 637–8.