THE 1923 GREEK-TURKISH EXCHANGE OF POPULATIONS AND THE REFORMULATION OF GREEK NATIONAL IDENTITY

Triadafilos Triadafilopoulos
Department of Political Science
Graduate Faculty
New School for Social Research
65 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10003
(718) 721-5622
441361@newschool.edu

Paper prepared for presentation at the international conference on the Exchange of Populations Between Greece and Turkey: An Assessment of the Consequences of the Treaty of Lausanne
Hosted by the Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, September 17-20, 1998
Introduction

Greece’s incorporation of approximately 1.5 million refugees following the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations in 1923 was instrumental in forging an exclusive conception of Greek national identity. The defeat of the Greek military by Turkish forces in Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace in 1922 effectively ended the irredentist, polity-seeking phase of Greek nationalism. The relocation of what had been the core of the Hellenic diaspora within the borders of the Greek state transformed Greek nationalist discourse into a nation-shaping instrument. This shift in the Greek nation-building project facilitated the consolidation of an exclusive ethnic identity founded on membership in the Eastern Orthodox Church and fluency in the Modern Greek language. This notion of ‘Greekness’ continues to hamper the formulation of more inclusive forms of Greek national identity, necessary for the successful accommodation

I would like to thank Adamantia Pollis, Aristide R. Zolberg, Patrick Hossay, and Peter Benda for their valuable suggestions and criticisms. Thanks also to Tina Tzatzanis for research assistance. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the CUNY Seminar on the Modern Greek State, March 4, 1998.

1 The compulsory mass transfer of Muslims from Greece and the Greek Orthodox population from Turkey was effected on the basis of the convention concerning the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations signed by Greece and Turkey on January 30, 1923. The convention was one of a number of documents signed at the Conference of Lausanne, as part of larger peace treaty between Greece and Turkey. See Kalliopi K. Koufa and Constantinos Svolopoulos, “The Compulsory Exchange of Populations Between Greece and Turkey: The Settlement of Minority Questions at the Conference of Laussane, 1923, and its Impact on Greek-Turkish Relations,” in Paul Smith, ed., Ethnic Groups in International Relations: Comparative Studies on Governments and Non-Dominant Ethnic Groups in Europe, 1850-1940, Vol. V. (New York: New York University Press, 1991).

2 Although Greece continued to make claims on Albania (for ‘Northern Epirus’) and sought enosis (union) with Cyprus, the defeat to Turkey ended the dream of reconstituting the Byzantine Empire within the borders of a Greater Greek state.

3 I take the idea of polity-seeking vs. nation-shaping nationalism from Rogers Brubaker, “Nationalizing States in the old ‘New Europe’—and the New,” Ethnic and Racial Studies 2 (April 1996): pp. 411-437. Elsewhere Brubaker has noted that “nation-shaping” or “nationalizing” nationalisms “involve claims made in the name of a ‘core nation’ or nationality, defined in ethnocultural terms, and sharply distinguished from the citizenry as a whole. The core nation is understood as the legitimate ‘owner’ of the state, which is conceived as the state of and for the core nation.” See Rogers Brubaker, Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): p. 4.
and possible incorporation of recent ‘non-Greek’ migrants.⁴

This paper’s argument complements Aristide Zolberg’s idea of state making as a refugee-generating process.⁵ In brief, Zolberg notes that the formation of nation-states often leads to the expulsion of groups who fail to conform to prevailing national characteristics (i.e. language, religion, ethnicity). The creation of refugees is part and parcel of the “unmixing of peoples,” which typically accompanies the dissolution of multiethnic empires or, in more contemporary circumstances, multiethnic federations. In contrast to Zolberg’s argument, I hold that large scale refugee movements which follow bouts of “unmixing” can act as a catalyst for the formation, or reformation, of national identity in receiving countries.⁶ Patrials arrive with unique cultural features and identities born out of different historical legacies. Their insertion into the national ‘homeland’ tends to magnify their difference and ‘otherness’.⁷

---

⁴ For useful discussions of the constitutional and legal manifestations of ‘Greekness’ see Stephanos Stavros, “Citizenship and the Protection of Minorities,” in Kevin Featherstone and Kostas Istantis, eds., *Greece in a Changing Europe: Between European Integration and Balkan Disintegration*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996); Adamantia Pollis, “The State, the Law, and Human Rights in Greece,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 9 (1987): pp. 587-614; and Nicos C. Alivizatos, *Les Institutions Politiques de la Grèce à Travers les Crises 1922-1974*. (Paris: R. Pichon et R. Durand-Auzias, 1979), esp. pp. 72-93. For a discussion of recent migration to Greece see Rossetos Fakiolas, “Migration From and to Greece During the Last Four Decades,” (Unpublished Manuscript, National Technical University, Greece). Fakiolas notes that according to Greek government statistics, there were approximately 70,000 registered foreigners in Greece at the end of 1993. Added to this number are about 250,000-400,000 illegal immigrants and overstayers. Greek authorities have stated that at least 400,000 Albanians have crossed into Greece since the fall of the Communist regime in that country. Albanian migrants join scores of Bulgarians, Romanian, Georgians, Turks, Armenians, Iranians, and others. While many of these migrants are likely to move on to states in Western Europe or North America, one may assume that a significant number will choose to settle in Greece, thus prompting the Greek state to consider both their legal status and that of their children born on Greek soil.


⁶ Zolberg, Michael Marrus (1985), and others who have written on the “unmixing of peoples” tend to gloss over the incorporation side of the process. They therefore leave the impression that the uprooted are simply inserted into the correct ethnic slot. Indeed, the phrase “unmixing” implies the existence of correct slots for national minorities who happen to be on the wrong side of a given border. While Zolberg and Marrus would probably object to having their work interpreted in this way, other scholars lacking their sophistication openly advocate policies which assume the existence of readily observable ethno-national categories. See for example Chaim Kaufman, “Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars,” *International Security* 4 (Spring 1996): pp. 136-175.

and Reed point out, this often leads to the creation of new oppositional identities based on the refugee experience. Conversely, with regard to the receiving country, the entry of large numbers of refugees strains existing social institutions, thus affecting the political affairs of the state. Attempts to ‘transform’ refugees into nationals propels both the refashioning of socio-politico institutions (i.e. schools, the military, the police, the civil service, churches, etc.) and the creation of new notions of cultural belonging. That said, it is important to note that the incorporation process is not linear. In democratic states, control over the pace and scope of refugee incorporation may be contested by rival political parties engaged in electoral competition. Hence, political parties, state institutions, and the refugees themselves are all critical actors in the incorporation drama. The discrete events, or acts that make up this drama need to be disaggregated and analyzed in order to better understand the process as a whole.

The paper is structured as follows. I begin by briefly outlining the main features of Greek nationalism in its polity-seeking, pre-exchange phase. Following this, I summarize the events leading up to the compulsory exchange of populations and the mechanics of the exchange itself. The summary of Greek political history prior to the exchange is included in order to specify the cleavages that animated Greek partisan politics before the arrival of the refugees.


10 My emphasis on events owes much to the insights of William H. Sewell Jr. According to Sewell: “Social life may be conceptualized as being composed of countless happenings or encounters in which persons and groups of persons engage in social action. Their actions are constrained and enabled by the constitutive structures of their societies. Most happenings reproduce social and cultural structures without significant changes. Events may be defined as that relatively rare subclass of happenings that significantly transform structures. An eventful conception of temporality...is one that takes into account the transformation of structure by events.” “Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology,” in Terrence J. McDonald, ed., The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996): p. 262. For a similar approach see Brubaker, Nationalism Reframed, particularly pp. 19-21.
then trace the impact of the exchange of populations in Greece. I emphasize the political effects
of the incorporation process, particularly the reinforcement of the split between republican and
conservative political parties. Throughout most of the inter-war period, the republican Liberal
Party's (Komma Fileleftheron) advocacy of the refugee cause was vehemently opposed by the
conservative People's Party (Laiko Komma), who cast themselves as the representatives of the
'native' Greeks. The demise of the Liberal Party following the death of its leader Eleftherios
Venizelos in 1936 effectively robbed the refugees of their political voice. The replacement of
Greece's constitutional democracy by the Metaxas dictatorship in 1936 compounded the
refugees political marginalization. This, in turn, prompted many of them to turn to the Greek
Communist Party (KKE). The Right's decisive victory over the Communists in the Greek Civil
War (1946-1949) and its active promotion of the Metaxas inspired doctrine of "national
mindedness" (ethnikofrosini) in the 1950s and 1960s solidified the exclusionary ideal of
'Greekness' that persists to this day. The paper's conclusion briefly considers how this notion of
'Greekness' may be challenged by Greece's contemporary incorporation dilemmas.
Greek Nationalism Before the Exchange of Populations

Greek nationalism before the exchange of populations was driven by the Megali Idea: the 'great idea' which envisioned the retaking of Constantinople from the Ottoman Turks and the creation of a large state similar to the Byzantine Empire. While this goal dominated Greek politics up to the catastrophe in Asia Minor, it is useful to break the history of the Megali Idea down into three phases. During the first phase, that is, roughly from the declaration of Greek independence in 1830 to mid-century, proponents of the Megali Idea envisioned a Greek state that might replace the Ottoman Empire in the Near East. They recognized that this enlarged Greek state would invariably include non-Greek communities within its borders. As Augustinios points out, "the important position of the Greek Patriarchate among Balkan Christians...and the significant role of Greeks in the administration and economy of the Ottoman Empire encouraged this type of thinking." Early Greek nationalism was also punctuated by a belief in the 'civilizing mission' of the Greek people. Minorities, it was assumed, would be grateful for the privilege of living under Greek rule. In the words of Yiannis Kolettis, a popular mid-century politician and advocate of the Megali Idea, Greece was the spiritual center of Europe, "having on its right the East and the left the West." Consequently, Greece was destined to "enlighten the East through its rebirth as it illuminated the West through its fall."

The shift to the second phase of the Megali Idea was triggered by the intensification of nationalist stirrings in other Balkan countries, particularly Bulgaria and Serbia. Conflicting claims over the same territory gave rise to more exclusive nationalist ideologies. This was

---

particularly evident in the struggle over Macedonia, the territory roughly encompassed by the
Ottoman vilayets of Monastir, Salonika, and Kossovo. Even at this stage, however, Greek
nationalists believed that the inhabitants of a given territory could be ‘Hellenized’ through
education and exposure to the ‘glory’ of the Greek past. Given that the residents of Macedonia
and other ‘unredeemed’ territories often failed to exhibit a definitive ‘national consciousness’,
the Greek state established two critical mechanisms for ensuring their ‘awakening’: (I) a broad
network of consulates and vice-consulates extending from city to city in the Balkans and Asia
Minor; and (II) an equally expansive web of Greek schools which followed a curriculum
designed and exported by officials in Greece.14 As Kitromilides has pointed out, the consulates
and schools created important audiences for Greek nationalism in the Ottoman Empire.15

The third phase of the Megali Idea came on the heels of Greece’s humiliating military
defeat at the hands of the Ottoman Empire in March 1897. The defeat led to a reappraisal of
nationalist tactics by Greek intellectuals and political elites in the first two decades of the
Twentieth Century. It was during this period that influential figures such as Kostes Palamas,
Perikles Giannopoulos, and Ion Dragoumis attempted to craft a Greek identity that was not
beholden to either the glory of classical Athens or the cultural standards of the West.16 This

1991): p. 405. For an excellent discussion of the workings of the Greek schools in Asia Minor see
Gerasimos Augustinios, The Greeks of Asia Minor: Confession.-Community and Ethnicity in the
15 Paschalis M. Kitromilides, “‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the
Balkans,” in Martin Blinhorn and Thanos Veremis, eds., Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality,
(Athens: ELIAMEP, 1990): p. 50. This volume was originally published as a special issue of the European
History Quarterly Vol. 19 (1989). See also Paschalis Kitromilides, “The Dialectic of Intolerance:
and Caglar Keyder, “The Ottoman Empire,” in Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, eds., After Empire:
16 As Augustinios has noted, Palamas, Giannopoulos, and Dragoumis rejected their predecessors’ attempts
to reconcile traditional Greek society with Western rationalism. By the turn of the century, it was clear that
the optimistic expectations of intellectuals such as Adamantios Koraes had failed to materialize.
Consequently, “prevailing assumptions of enlightenment and progress through emulation of the
West...began to be questioned.” Consciousness and History, p. 139.
spirit of reform was clearly expressed in controversies over language. Dragoumis and others argued that *katharevousa* -- the stilted pastiche of Modern and Ancient Greek favored by earlier nationalists -- should be abandoned in favor of demotic Greek. They claimed that the simpler form of the language allowed for more authentic expressions of 'Greekness'. In their view, a revised interpretation of the Greek 'self' based on authenticity could be used to revive the state's lagging nationalist program.

This striving for an authentic national 'essence' influenced debates over the *Megali Idea*. Assertions of Greek particularity clashed with the more territorial nationalism that typified earlier phases of the *Megali Idea*. Dragoumis and others argued that the goal of reconstituting the Byzantine Empire and reclaiming Constantinople should be set aside in favor of more realizable objectives, such as the incorporation of Macedonia into a Greater Greek state. That said, the older ideals of the *Megali Idea* persisted; even Dragoumis found himself drawn back to the idea of a multinational Greek state extending over the lands of the Ottoman Empire. This inconsistency reflected an inherent tension between Greece's territorial and ideational boundaries. So long as the 'imagined community' extended beyond the borders of the state, the possibility of a multiethnic Greece could not be discounted. Hence, the formulation of a thoroughly ethnic nationalism was foreclosed despite its growing attractiveness to many Greek intellectuals.

The experience of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) did not resolve this tension in Greek nationalism. By 1913, Greece had increased its territory and population by over 60 percent.

---


Many of the people in what came to be known as "The New Lands" were non-Greeks. Indeed, some 400,000 were Turkish and Albanian Muslims.\textsuperscript{19} Added to this group were Bulgarians, Macedonians, and a thriving Jewish community in Thessaloniki. For many Greek nationalists, the old dream of recreating the Byzantine Empire was tantalizingly real. Yet this older, imperial idea was tempered by an increasingly exclusive conception of Greek national identity. Greece's ethnic minorities were no longer deemed to be potential coverts to Hellenism; they were Slavs, Turks, and Jews and would remain so forever. Hence, on the eve of the First World War, Greece remained an unsatiated irredentist state animated by the spirit of both empire and ethnic nationalism. The shift to an exclusively ethnic conception of the nation had yet to occur.

National Schism and World War: Prelude to the Catastrophe

The debate over Greece's entry into World War One precipitated what came to be known as the National Schism (Ethnikos Dikhasmos). Venizelos, arguably at the height of his popularity after Greece's successes in the Balkan Wars, offered to commit Greek troops to the cause of the Entente (Britain, France, and Russia) shortly after the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914. Britain's Foreign Secretary, Edward Gray, initially turned down Venizelos's offer. He did so in order to avoid precipitating an alignment between the Central Powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) and Greece's regional rivals Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Greece's King Constantine was also against his country's entry into the war. Constantine argued that Greece's interests would be best served by adhering to a policy of strict neutrality.

The King's opposition to Venizelos's foreign policy also reflected a deeper cleavage which lay at the heart of Greek domestic politics. Venizelos was the political standard bearer of Greece's modernizing capitalist middle-class. Venizelism was made into a potent political force through the joining of this class to a mass base attracted to Venizelos's promise of social reform and irredentism. It was this broad social group that animated the 1909 coup that first brought Venizelos to national prominence. Conversely, the King represented what George Mavrogordatos has termed the "petty bourgeoisie counterrevolution" against the bourgeois revolution of 1909. According to Mavrogordatos, the petty bourgeoisie reacted to the threat of capitalist modernization by "rallying around the crown under slogans in which church-steeple patriotism, chauvinism and xenophobia, religious bigotry, romanticism, and anti-capitalist resentment were inextricably linked."

---

Events quickly exacerbated the divisions separating the two sides. The Ottoman Empire’s entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers led the British to reverse their position on Greek participation. In an effort to gain Constantine’s support, Gray offered the Greeks the opportunity to annex the city of Smyrna and its hinterland after the war.\textsuperscript{22} Venizelos eagerly took up the offer, but Constantine remained wedded to a policy of neutrality. After a series of confrontations between the King and Prime Minister, Venizelos resigned. He was replaced by Dimitrios Gounaris, a Royalist politician who shared Constantine’s distrust of Venizelos and reservations on committing Greek troops to the allied war effort.

The King’s attempt to bring Greek foreign policy under his control failed. Growing rifts between Royalists and Venizelists forced him to call an election in June 1915. Venizelos and his Liberal Party won 187 of the 317 seats in the Greek parliament.\textsuperscript{23} Despite this sizable Venizelist majority, the crisis intensified. Bulgaria’s mobilization in September led to another confrontation between Constantine and Venizelos. Venizelos argued that Greece’s 1913 Treaty of Friendship with Serbia left him no choice but to mobilize Greek forces to meet the Bulgarian threat. Constantine presented a very different interpretation of the Treaty and refused to reconsider his commitment to neutrality. Moreover, he asked for and received Venizelos’s resignation.

Following his resignation, Venizelos and his supporters withdrew from active participation in the political process. In August 1916, a group of Venizelist officers launched a successful coup in Thessaloniki. By October of the same year, Venizelos had established the seat of his provisional government in the city. Britain and France, angered by Constantine’s obstinacy, promptly recognized the new regime. In June 1917, Constantine was driven into exile.
as a result of British and French pressure, and Venizelos was once again recognized as the Prime Minister of the whole of Greece. Shortly thereafter, Venizelos returned to Athens, where he reconvened the 1915 parliament. A thoroughgoing purge of Royalist military officers and civil servants soon followed, heightening the enmity between Venizelists and Royalists.  

Venizelos took advantage of his new found power and inserted Greek troops into the war on the side of the allies. After the signing of the general armistice in 1918, Venizelos looked forward to reaping the rewards of his unflagging obligation to the Entente. As Greece’s chief representative at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, he set forth Greece’s principal demand: the annexation of Smyrna and its surrounding hinterland. The Allies encouraged the Greeks to occupy the territory and await formal recognition of their claim.

### The Catastrophe and Compulsory Exchange of Populations

Greek troops landed in Smyrna in May 1919. Within weeks, they had taken control of the city and part of the Anatolian interior. The Treaty of Sèvres signed on August 10, 1920, granted formal recognition of Greece’s claims in Asia Minor. However, Allied support for the Greek position was thrown into question following Venizelos’s defeat in the election of October 1920. Despite campaigning on a peace platform, the new government expanded military operations in an effort to wrest control of the Anatolian interior. The decision was fully supported by King Constantine, who had reclaimed the Greek throne after Prince Alexander’s death.

The Greek advance was halted in August 1921, within sight of Ankara. After winning a decisive battle at the Sakarya River, Ataturk’s forces took the offensive and drove the Greek

---

24 Clogg, p. 111; Smith, p. 59.
army back into Smyrna. Turkish nationalist forces entered Smyrna in September 1922 and found the city swollen by masses of Orthodox and Armenian refugees. Soon thereafter, the order and discipline of the Turkish troops broke down.

Massacres occurred almost immediately. An enraged Moslem mob murdered the Greek Archbishop of Smyrna and dragged his body about the Turkish quarter. Pillage and rape engulfed the Armenian district. Turkish soldiers rounded-up thousands of Greeks, slaughtered them in the suburbs, and set the city ablaze.27

In the midst of the chaos, the Greeks desperately evacuated refugees from Smyrna at rates of 45,000 people per day.28 Eyewitness testimony bears witness to the horror faced by those who managed to escape:

In one case...seven thousand people were packed into a vessel that would have been crowded with a load of two thousand. In this and many other cases, there was neither food to eat nor water to drink, and in numerous cases the ships were buffeted about for several days at sea before their wretched human cargo could be brought to land. Those who survived were landed without shelter on the open beach, loaded with filth, without blankets or even warm clothing, without food, and without money.29

Ataturk’s advance was halted in Eastern Thrace by an ultimatum from the British. In Athens, a revolutionary committee of Venizelist army officers took control of the country and forced King Constantine to give up the throne to his son George. The arrest and arraignment of eight of the King's top military advisers followed; five were sentenced to death and executed on November 28, 1922.30

In late 1922, Fridtjof Nansen, the League of Nations’ High Commissioner for Refugees,

28 Ibid., p. 100.
30 Campbell and Sherrard, p. 127.
reported that approximately 900,000 refugees from Asia Minor and Thrace had entered Greece in
the weeks following the fall of Smyrna.\textsuperscript{31} The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-
Turkish Populations, signed by Greece and Turkey at Lausanne on January 30, 1923
acknowledged and extended the ‘unofficial’ uprooting of the preceding months.\textsuperscript{32} Its primary
aim was to ensure that the ‘sorting out’ of ethnic populations during the war would not be
reversed.\textsuperscript{33} Under the terms of the Convention, a compulsory exchange of the approximately
150,000 remaining Turkish nationals of Greek Orthodox religion in Turkey and approximately
350,000 Greek nationals of the Muslim religion remaining in Greece would commence
immediately. The Convention also barred the return of all those who had fled either country
since the Balkan Wars. Exempted from the exchange were the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of
Istanbul and the Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace, estimated at about 100,000 each. The
Convention stipulated that the property of exchangeable persons would become the property of
the state from which they emigrated. The state receiving the greater value would pay the other
state the equivalent difference. The uprooted were entitled to receive compensation from the
state to which they emigrated to.\textsuperscript{34} An eleven member Mixed Commission was established to
implement the terms of the Treaty.

\textsuperscript{31} Marrus, p. 101.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., pp. 101-102.
\textsuperscript{33} Aristide R. Zolberg, Astri Suhrke, and Sergio Aguayo, Escape From Violence: Conflict and the Refugee
Crisis in the Developing World, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). It should be
noted that while the compulsory nature of the exchange of populations was driven by the Turkish
delelegation, the principle of ethnic unmixing was accepted both by the Greeks and the Great Powers. This
point is captured nicely by statement made Lord Curzon at the Conference: “the Conference...yielded to the
[Turkish] demand that the exchange be compulsory because all those who had studied the matter most
closely seemed to agree that the suffering entailed, great as it must be, would be repaid by the advantages
which would ultimately accrue to both countries from a greater homogenization of population and from the
removal of old deep-rooted causes of quarrel...” Cited in Psomiades, pp. 64-65.
\textsuperscript{34} John A. Petropoulos, “The Compulsory Exchange of Populations: Greek-Turkish Peacemaking, 1922-
The flight of the refugees signaled the end of the *Megali Idea* and Greece’s yearnings for empire. In Douglas Dakin’s words, Greece’s defeat in Asia Minor removed at last the inconsistency between the modern ambitions of Greeks (which they had learned from the West) to live in a single nation state, and their geographical dispersion which had resulted from their historical existence within the ‘Oecumene’ of a theocratic empire.

From now on, the vast majority of Greeks would inhabit the same country and be bounded by the borders of a single state. Consequently, the cultural and linguistic differences that had previously been submerged in the fiction of a homogeneous ‘imagined community’ could no longer be ignored.

This shift in ideational bearings was brought home by the swift realization that the ‘Greeks’ of Asia Minor, Thrace, and the coasts of the Black Sea were often quite different from the ‘Greeks’ of ‘Old Greece’. The sheer number of refugees, coupled with their miserable condition, made them extremely visible. This heightened visibility made their ‘difference’ all the more palpable. Indeed, their arrival resembled an invasion more than a homecoming:

Refugees were literally everywhere -- camped in boxes in the Athens Municipal Theater and in the shadows of the Acropolis and cramming railway stations, schools, public buildings, churches, sheds, warehouses, and cinemas.... In eighteen months, the population of Athens more than doubled, from 300,000 to over 700,000...Salonika, with a population of 174,000 received 160,000 refugees.

---


36 Dakin, p. 129.

37 In Mavrogordatos’s words, “the conceptions and forms that Orthodox Christianity, the Greek language, and ‘Greekness’ itself had assumed within the refugees’ cultural heritage were, or at least appeared to be, so different from those of the natives that both sides experienced what can only be described as a *traumatic cultural shock*.” Mavrogordatos, p. 193.

38 Marrus, p. 103.
Many of the refugees had little or no consciousness of being Greek. Their expulsion was based either on their adherence to Orthodox Christianity, their Greek sounding name, or their use of Greek characters in writing. League of Nations officials who confronted so-called Greeks from Turkey noted that many of them spoke little or no Greek and displayed a bewildering variety of languages, dialects, customs, and loyalties. These cultural differences were seized upon by many ‘native’ Greeks who saw the refugees as a threat to both their economic interests and the purity of the Greek nation. Indeed, the ‘Greekness’ of the refugees was essentially denied at the time by a large proportion of the ‘natives’. In Mavrogordatos’s words, “[t]he invidious distinction between refugees and natives provided the basis for the most salient cleavage in inter-war Greek society, which truly dominated the politics of the period.”

“The distinction was then often characterized as fylietike, which...should be translated as ‘ethnic’.”

The ethnic boundaries separating refugees (prophyges) and the ‘Old Greeks’

---

39 Ibid., p. 101. “Some presumably Greek rug-makers from one resettled village refused even to incorporate Greek designs into their rugs, so outraged were they at having such a label applied to them; according to one relief worker, ‘they were wedded to Turkey. They sulked at the idea of attempting to do anything Greek’.” Marrus, p. 101.

40 As Hirschon points out, the status of ‘refugee’ conferred certain rights to monetary indemnification, housing, and social services. The Refugees also benefited from the work of the Refugee Settlement Commission, established by the League of Nations in 1923 (see-Marrus, p. 104). While the refugees’ rights were often unfulfilled, they did breed resentment from natives who objected to the special privileges heaped on the newcomers. Hirschon, p. 45.

41 The salience of ethnic conflict among Greeks in the interwar period is recognized by Mavrogordatos, whose Stillborn Republic remains the best English language source on the subject. Anthropologist Renée Hirschon has also explored the dynamics of ethnic relations between the refugees and ‘natives’. In her words: “The experience of the Asia Minor Greeks merits special attention, since it provides a long-term case study of adjustment and settlement in both rural and urban areas. Understanding social life in such localities may provide insights into some ways in which uprooted peoples cope with the challenges of survival, with material deprivation, with social and personal disruption, and with the issues of identity.” Renée Hirschon, Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989): 2.

42 Mavrogordatos, Stillborn Republic, p. 182.

43 Ibid.
were particularly pronounced in the cities.\textsuperscript{44} The settlement of the refugees set-off rapid and unprecedented urbanization in a country that had been overwhelmingly rural.\textsuperscript{45} Mark Mazower notes that this seemingly "uncontrolled" urban expansion caught many of the inhabitants of 'Old Greece' by surprise.\textsuperscript{46} Henry Morgenthau, an American in Athens at the time, described the impact of the refugees' arrival as follows:

[T]he city had been almost somnolent before this irruption. It had been living the staid life of an orderly capital, where business had grown into established channels and where life had settled into an easy and familiar routine. Overnight all this was changed. Now the streets thronged with new faces. Strange dialects of Greek assailed the ear. The eye was caught by outlandish peasant costumes from interior Asia Minor. Sidewalks were crowded. Avenues that had been pleasantly ample were now filled with peddlers' carts of refugees who were now trying to make a living by selling a few strings of beads.... The great rock of the Acropolis...looked down upon as strange a sight as it had seen since the days when Phidias was adorning the Parthenon at its summit.\textsuperscript{47}

The urban refugees' alienation was compounded by their lack of adequate housing and meager job prospects. Hence, cultural differences were reinforced by economic and material hardships. The experiences of refugees settled in rural areas differed markedly.\textsuperscript{48} About 90 percent of the approximately 670,000 rural refugees were settled in the 'New Lands' of Macedonia and Thrace.\textsuperscript{49} More than half of them were given the land, homes, livestock and tools of exchanged Turks and Bulgarians.\textsuperscript{50} The other half benefited from Venizelos's drastic

\textsuperscript{44} An estimated 615,000 refugees were settled in cities and towns. See E.G. Mears, \textit{Greece Today: The Aftermath of the Refugee Impact}, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1929): pp. 299-300.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Morgenthau, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{49} Mavrogordatos, p. 187.
\textsuperscript{50} The Treaty of Neuilly signed by Greece and Bulgaria on November 27, 1919, allowed for the voluntary exchange of minorities between the two countries. See Stephen P. Ladas, \textit{The Exchange of Minorities}:
land reform policies which resulted in the summary expropriation of large estates in Macedonia and Thrace.\textsuperscript{51} Furthermore, the rural refugees did not have to face the enmity of the ‘Old Greeks’ in the manner that their urban counterparts did. The ‘New Lands’ still possessed sizable minority populations despite the unmixing that had marked the years since the Balkan Wars.

Consequently, the rural refugees were deemed to be a ‘Hellenizing force’ which would finally tip the demographic scales in Greece’s favor.\textsuperscript{52} The presence of more radical ‘others’ (Jews, Vlachs, Roma, Slav-Macedonians, Pomacks, Chams) reaffirmed the ‘Greekness’ of the rural refugees and blunted conflicts between themselves and native Greeks in the region. As shall be noted below, this differentiation in the incorporation of rural and urban refugees would have important political consequences.

Refugee Incorporation and the Politics of Difference: 1923-1939

The settlement of approximately 1.5 million refugees after ten years of intermittent war and political crisis was a challenge the Greek state could not meet alone. The gravity of the situation mobilized international assistance, which culminated in the establishment of the League of Nations sponsored Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC), in November 1923.\textsuperscript{53} As Dakin points out, the Commission was instrumental in meeting calls for humanitarian assistance in the years following the disaster in Asia Minor. The Commission also succeeded in settling many

\textsuperscript{51} Mazower, pp. 74-79.

\textsuperscript{52} Pentzopoulos notes that “[t]he colonization policy of the Greek government was implemented with due consideration to national security. While it is true that Macedonia, and to a lesser extent Thrace, offered many advantages for the inexpensive and immediate rehabilitation of the refugees, the number of persons settled there exceeded any figure justified by economic arguments (p. 36).”

\textsuperscript{53} The Commission had four members: two were appointed by the Greek government, one by the Council of the League of Nations. The fourth member, and chairman of the Commission, was a United States national representing a variety of relief organizations operating in Greece. For a detailed account of the work of the Refugee Settlement Commission see Société des Nations, L’Etablissement des Réfugiés en Grèce. (Geneva: League of Nations Publications, 1926).
refugees in rural areas. Indeed, by 1930, the year of the Commission’s dissolution, 145,758 families had been settled on farms in Macedonia and Thrace. The work of the Commission complemented the Greek state’s break up of large estates in the ‘New Lands’ and helped turn Greece into a nation of small holders.

Despite the aid of the RSC, the bulk of the refugees, both urban and rural, found themselves near the bottom of Greek society. The refugees were typically shunted into exclusively refugee villages and neighborhoods and derided for their cultural heterogeneity. ‘Natives’ referred to the refugees as “Turkish seed” (Tourkosporoi) and “giaourtovafiesmeni” (baptized in yogurt). Many were motivated to do so not only out of prejudice, but also because of the refugees’ affiliation to the Liberal Party and Venizelos. As both John A. Petropoulos and Mavrogordatos have noted, the origins of “refugee Venizelism” stretched back to the beginning of the First World War. Venizelos’s pro-Entente, pro-war platform was considered to be in accord with the interests of the Asia Minor Greeks, who feared the increasingly hostile nature of Turkish nationalism. Conversely, Antivenizelist neutrality meant inaction, and the abandonment of “unredeemed Greeks.” The catastrophe’s coincidence with Antivenizelist rule solidified the refugees’ association with Venizelos and the Liberal Party. In the opinion of many refugees, “King Constantine and the People’s Party were responsible for their exile.” Moreover, “[the] Monarchy and the party which supported it, represented...the established structure of

54 Dakin, p. 139.
55 Mazower, p. 78; Dakin, p. 145. By 1930, 90 percent of the Greece’s 953,000 farms were of 12.5 acres or less.
57 This rather novel slur (giaourtovafiesment) referred to the refugees’ penchant for adding yogurt to their cuisine. It is interesting to note that today, yogurt based dishes such as tzatziki have been appropriated as ‘national’ foods. Indeed, I recall reading an editorial in a Greek student newspaper in Toronto that claimed that Macedonia was “as Greek as tzatziki[!]”
58 Clogg, p. 9.
59 Mavrogordatos, p. 199.
60 Ibid.
privileged society from which they...were excluded.”

The Venizelist parties quickly recognized the importance of the refugee vote and set about working for the integration of the refugees into the Greek political system. The refugees were deemed to be an integral part of the Venizelist camp and refugee candidates ran on the Liberal Party’s ticket in local and national elections. Refugee associations also became an important part of the broad network of Venizelist partisan organizations. Partly as a response to their exclusion from ‘native’ patron-client networks,

the refugees rapidly developed their own...political machines, headed by refugee or pro-refugee politicians and enjoying access to the top Venizelist leaders, including Venizelos personally.... [T]he refugees justifiably saw the Venizelist Republic as ‘their’ regime, and the L.P. [Liberal Party] in particular as ‘their’ party.

The Venizelists’ embrace of the refugees evoked even greater hostility to the newcomers from the conservative Antivenizelists. As Pentzopoulos and Mavrogordatos have pointed out, Antivenizelism became the vehicle for ‘native’ aggression. At the political level, Antivenizelists demanded the exclusion or segregation of the refugees from the political process. For instance, they initially refused to accept the refugees’ right to vote and, having lost that argument, insisted on the institution of separate refugee electoral colleges, similar to those created for Moslems and Jews. Although this and other demands were also rejected by successive republican governments, they did deepen the split between refugees and ‘natives’. Indeed, Antivenizelism systematically cultivated a ‘native’ consciousness that coalesced against the symbolic figure of the refugee. Radical Antivenizelists denied the refugees’ status as ‘true’ Greeks, effectively

---

61 Dakin, p. 141.
62 Pentzopoulos, p. 186.
64 Ibid., p. 203.
65 Ibid.
revoking their membership in the "core nation."

The conservative backlash against the refugees reached its apogee in the election of 1928. Antivenizelists accused the refugees of depriving the ‘native’ majority of its legitimate political power. Conservatives used the mainstream press to heighten awareness of the refugee “menace.” An editorial in the Athenian daily Kathemerine warned that


Another editorial castigated the People’s Party for running refugee candidates on their Athens ticket. According to the author of the piece, refugees could not be considered to be true Greeks and, therefore, had no place in the party. In the words of the editorial: “When they [the refugees] acquire a political consciousness and the will of free citizens--which will never happen--then they will be entitled to be considered among us, not only as electors, but also as eligible. For the present, the refugees have no place on the tickets of the People’s Party (emphasis added).”67

‘Native’ supporters of Venizelos were characterized as unthinking dupes who had lost sight of their interests as ‘natives’:

Voting for Venizelos, they necessarily vote for refugees, and voting for refugees, they vote for the plunder and the loss of their property.... Why must we endure this total expropriation of Greece for the benefit of the refugees? [The] answer must be practical and easily understood: The Natives, those among them who do not want the likes of Kirkos [a pro-refugee republican politician] to snatch even the window shutters of their houses, must cross out two refugee candidates and write-in, whether two of their own party, or even, if there are no such candidates, two opponents. For while the opponents may bring the King, they will not bring the bailiff, and the auction.68

Another editorial warned that a Venizelist victory would invariably lead to a political

66 "To Fellow Believers," Kathemerine July 16, 1928. Cited in Mavrogordatos, p. 204.
dictatorship of the Liberals and an economic dictatorship of the refugees.69

Venizelos’s decisive victory in 1928 forced many conservative politicians to reconsider their strategy toward the refugees. Two issues provided an opening for conservatives hoping to steal refugee support away from the Venizelists: I) the question of refugee compensation; and II) refugee debt. Venizelos’s brokering of the Ankara Convention in June 1930 gave the conservatives a convenient pretext for aggressively courting the refugee vote. Under the terms of the Convention, Greece and Turkey agreed to drop all claims for refugee compensation.70 This was meant to inculcate a spirit of friendship and goodwill between the two states. The debate over the ratification of the Ankara Convention led to a partial split among refugee politicians. While the bulk of refugee deputies submitted to Liberal Party discipline, a sizable minority denounced the Convention as a sell-out and severed their ties to the party. The People’s Party sought to capitalize on this by forcefully attacking the Convention and siding with the refugees on the subject of compensation.71 By 1933 a broad range of conservative, pro-Royalist parties had fused under the banner of the “United Opposition,” whose rallying cry was 25 percent compensation for “our refugee brothers!”72

This strategy proved to be effective. As Mavrogordatos points out, “[e]nough refugees were moved by the bait of 25 percent to secure electoral victory for Antivenizelism.... 20 out of the critical 21 Athens seats were lost to Venizelism by less than 2000 votes, almost certainly less than the refugee defections.”73 Not surprisingly, the United Opposition failed to deliver on its 25 percent promise and the Right quickly reverted to its more customary anti-refugee rhetoric and

70 For the full text of the Ankara Convention (in French) see Ladas, The Exchange of Minorities, pp. 817-830.
71 Mavrogordatos, p. 211.
72 Ibid., p. 212.
73 Ibid., pp. 212-213. Although the United Opposition won only 46.19 percent of the popular vote,( as compared to 46.32 percent for the Venizelist coalition) this translated into a 136-110 advantage in terms of seats. Dakin, p. 152.
policies. This was manifested in the government’s redrawing of electoral districts in Athens and Thessaloniki to diminish the weight of the refugee vote in those cities.  

Anti-refugee sentiment reached a near fever pitch following the failed Venizelist coup of March 1935. Richard Clogg has noted that the coup had “a disastrously destabilizing effect on political life,” which re-awakened “in all its intensity, the bitterness and antagonism of the national schism.” Conservatives used the situation to purge the armed forces and civil service of Venizelists. They also restored the monarchy and sent Venizelos into exile in Paris, where he died on March 18, 1936. The declining fortunes of the Liberal Party caused many more radical refugees to abandon mainstream politics altogether. Consequently, more and more of them turned to the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) as a means of voicing their grievances.

To their credit, Communist politicians quickly recognized the opportunity made available to them by the decline of the Liberals. They immediately set about re-working their platform in order to make it more palatable to refugee voters. The KKE’s traditional opposition to Venizelist irredentism had limited its popularity with refugee voters in the past. The KKE had also alienated the refugees by taking the side of ‘native’ workers in the cities and ethnic minorities in the countryside. Indeed, the party denounced the settlement of refugees in Macedonia and Thrace as a scheme designed to forcibly alter the ethnic composition of the ‘New Lands’. After the Venizelists’ failed 1935 coup, the KKE dropped its policy for an independent Macedonia and began to address itself as the unabashed party of the refugees. The refugees were courted as a coherent group, without concern for their internal differentiation or class distribution. The dire economic conditions which marked Greece throughout the 1930s prompted many poor, indebted urban refugees to join the KKE.

---

74 Mavrogordatos, p. 213; Dakin, p. 154.  
75 Clogg, p. 11.  
76 Mavrogordatos, p. 219.  
77 Ibid., p. 222.
The growing popularity of the KKE among the refugees and other sectors of the population was reflected in the results of the December 1935 election. The voting resulted in a hung parliament, with the Venizelists winning 143 seats to the Antivenizelists 141. The KKE dominated Laiko Metopo (Popular Front) held the balance of power with its 15 seats. News of both the Populists’ and Liberals’ negotiations with the Communists prompted a strong reaction from the staunchly anti-communist armed forces. The Minister of War, General George Papagos, warned the two main parties that the army would not tolerate any coalition with the Communists. The King felt that Papagos had over stepped his authority and replaced him with another general turned politician, Ioannis Metaxas. After the death of Konstantinos Demertzis, the caretaker Prime Minister, the King appointed Metaxas as his replacement.

Metaxas immediately set about dismantling the democratic party system. He used mounting incidences of labor unrest in Greece’s towns and cities as a pretext for suspending parliament, restricting freedom of the press, and declaring martial law. A military dictatorship was formally established on August 4, 1936, the day Metaxas’ repressive measures were accepted as binding by his cabinet. Metaxas declared that only a strong, extra-parliamentary government could save Greece from political ruin. The dictatorship was ostensibly instituted to preserve the state from both communism and party faction. Indeed, Metaxas claimed that his government would be “entirely beyond parties.” A “Third Greek Civilization” would replace the divisiveness that plagued parliamentarism. This new society would be built around loyalty to the nation, acceptance of the monarchy, steadfast faith in Greek Orthodoxy, and the valorization

---

78 Dakin, p. 155.
79 According to Dakin, 344 strikes of varying scale and severity were staged during the first six months of 1936. Ibid., pp. 159-160.
81 Mazower, 289.
of traditional family life. Bourgeois liberal values would be discarded in favor of spiritual values
drawn from 'genuinely Greek' sources.\textsuperscript{82} 

The regime's advocacy of a genuine and incontestable brand of 'Greekness' was not
simply a pale imitation of German and Italian fascism. Indeed, the "Third Greek Civilization"
lacked both the ideological sophistication and sheer brutality of genuine fascism.\textsuperscript{83} Rather, it
reflected the Greek Right's desire to settle the question of national identity, which lay at the
heart of party politics throughout the inter-war period.\textsuperscript{84} While the dictatorship proclaimed the
dawn of a "New Greece," it drew its bearings from 'Old Greece'; its rejection of "foreign
influences" and explicit references to the "Greek race" were meant to blur the differences
between 'natives' on the one hand and refugees and minorities on the other. Metaxas' "collectivist nationalism" sought to eliminate societal conflicts and inculcate a sense of "national
mindedness." It succeeded largely because it stifled the political voice of the refugees and
minorities. Their cultural, political, and economic grievances could no longer be channeled
through the political parties. Metaxas' successful marginalization of the KKE also took this
more radical option away from the refugees.\textsuperscript{85} In short, the elimination of the partisan
democratic party system succeeded in driving the refugees' unique cultural identity out of the
political public sphere and into the private sphere of the home and neighborhood. Throughout
Metaxas' four year reign, the politics of cultural difference was effectively shut-out of the public

\textsuperscript{82} Dakin, 165.
\textsuperscript{83} Sarandis, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{85} See Haris Vlavianos, "The Greek Communist Party Under Siege," in Robin Higham and Thanos Veremis, eds., \textit{The Metaxas Dictatorship: Aspects of Greece, 1936-1940}, (Athens: ELIAMEP, 1993): pp. 193-226. It is worth noting that official anticommunism did not originate during the Metaxas period. As Mavrogordatos correctly points out, the \textit{Idionymnon} law stipulating the protection of the "established social order" was clearly aimed at the perceived communist menace. The law was passed a Venizelos's led Liberal government in 1929. See \textit{Stillborn Republic}, p. 99.
Post-World War II Greek Identity: The Entrenchment of ‘National Mindedness’

The Axis occupation of Greece (1941-1944) and the subsequent Civil War (1946-1949) changed the country dramatically. Many of the minorities that had lived in the ‘New Lands’ suffered terribly: the Jews of Thessaloniki and Janina were wiped out by the Nazis, while the Chams and Slavo-Macedonians were driven out of the country by the Greeks themselves. Of all of Greece’s large pre-war minority populations, only the Muslims in Western Thrace remained. The War also accelerated the assimilation of significant elements of the refugee population. As Mavrogordatos has noted, the most notorious nationalist bands in Macedonia were composed of and even led by refugees who sided with the government during the Civil War. The Civil War divided all Greeks, refugees and ‘natives’ alike, along ideological lines. Consequently, the refugees could no longer claim to form a coherent interest block, as they had during most of the inter-war period. Rather, many who supported the government did so in part to affirm their membership in the Greek nation. This was particularly the case among rural refugees.

The victory of the Right, the fragmentation of the refugees, and the expulsion or destruction of the minorities all contributed to the entrenchment of a highly exclusive national identity founded on ‘national mindedness’. Like the nationalism of the Metaxas dictatorship, the

---

86 I do not mean to imply that the refugees stopped voicing their concerns altogether; Pentzopoulos and Hirschon have shown that the refugees continued to lodge formal complaints well into the 1950s and 1960s. Rather, I hold that the shift in regimes did alter the public rhetoric of the refugees, minorities, and ‘native’ Greeks. The emphasis on divergent group identities that was so salient in inter-war politics was submerged in a discourse affirming essential similarity of the nation’s members. Expressions of cultural difference were effectively expunged from the public sphere. For a discussion on the relation between nationalist rhetoric and the public sphere see Craig Calhoun, Nationalism and the Public Sphere. (Toronto: Robert F. Harney Professorship and Program in Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies, 1994).

new fundamentalism

was not situated within a general and all-enveloping irredentist project; it was defensive, regressive, and inward looking. Inevitably, the entire reactionary arsenal of glorifying nationalist themes was indiscriminately revived. The tenets of the Metaxas dictatorship provided an ensemble of well-rehearsed tunes: nation, army, family, religion, Greekness and tradition, language, and purity were all revived and given high value.88

This is not to suggest that the Greece of 1949 was simply a throwback to the Greece of 1939. On the contrary, unlike Metaxas, Greece's post-war leaders could depend on the United States to sustain them financially through the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan. Greece was deemed to be on the front line of the ideological battle pitting East against West. Consequently, the United States was eager to lend credibility and support to Greek politicians committed to guarding against the spread of Communism. Hence, official anti-communism quickly combined with Metaxas inspired ethnic nationalism to produce a stifling environment in which expressions of cultural difference were equated with treason.89 Those who dissented from the official political ideology were marginalized, excluded, or imprisoned.90 Under such conditions it is not surprising that the identity politics that marked the 1920s and 1930s ceased all together. As during the Metaxas era, refugees and minorities who wished to express their cultural diversity did so in private.91

89 “Reflecting on the Manichean outlook manifested in cold war ideology, the right reduced Greek nationalism to bare essentials. The territorial integrity of the country and its national unity were weapons in the struggle against the enemies of the nation, deftly denominated by the ‘Slavo-Communist’ menace.... The pervasiveness of nationalist order extended to basic aspects of public life. Before any license, permit, or passport could be issued or if public employment was sought, an individual was required to obtain a certificate of national loyalty (pistopolitikon ethnikon fronimatòn).” Augustinios, “Hellenism and the Modern Greeks,” p. 189.
91 Hirschon’s fieldwork confirms the fact that many of the urban refugees steadfastly held on to their cultural heritage right up to the 1970s. She notes that even in 1972, her subjects referred to themselves as
The highly exclusive form of 'Greekness' that crystallized in the post-war period was enshrined in legislation that continues to allow the Greek state to hinder the public expression of religious and cultural difference.\textsuperscript{92} For instance Greece maintains laws that: I) impede non-Greek Orthodox religious groups from establishing places of worship; II) prohibit the establishment of non-Greek Orthodox private schools; and III) allow state officials to withdraw Greek citizenship from persons of non-Greek ethnic origin.\textsuperscript{93} Moreover, Greece enjoys the dubious distinction of having the most restrictive citizenship laws in the European Union.\textsuperscript{94} While citizenship is readily conferred to ethnic Greek patrials who are deemed to be part of the nation (\textit{omogeneis}), non-Greeks (\textit{allogeneis}) face a series of hurdles, including a lengthy residency requirement. In short, Greece continues to cling to an official ideology based on the concept of a single nation, with a common creed and language.\textsuperscript{95}

\textbf{Conclusion: The Past as Future?}

refugees (\textit{prosphyges}) and Asia Minor people (\textit{Mikrasiates}). The refugees referred to the natives as "locals," "vlachs," or simply "Greeks." Hirschon, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{92} Limitations in space preclude any substantive discussion of Greek nationalism in the post-World War II period. This is unfortunate, given the important events that took place during this time, most notably the military coup of April 21, 1967 and the dictatorship of the Colonels. For background see C.M. Woodhouse, \textit{Modern Greece: A Short History}, (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1986); and \textit{The Rise and Fall of the Greek Colonels}, (London: Granada, 1985), by the same author.

\textsuperscript{93} Stephanos Stavros, "Citizenship and the Protection of Minorities," pp. 117-128. See also Pollis, "The State, the Law, and Human rights in Modern Greece."

\textsuperscript{94} Stavros, p. 120. See also Adamantia Pollis, "Greece: A Problematic Secular State," (Unpublished Manuscript, New School for Social Research, 1998).

The Orthodox Christians expelled from Asia Minor, Eastern Thrace, and the coasts of the Black Sea entered Greece as citizens and members of the Greek *ethnos*. Soon after their arrival, however, their status was challenged those who wished to revoke their membership in the nation. The antagonistic relationship that marked encounters between ‘refugees’ and ‘natives’ made pre-exchange conceptions of the nation obsolete. The imagined community of the *Megali Idea* gave way to new realities.

The refugees took advantage of Greece’s democratic party system to assert their unique identities and advance their political and economic claims. While the refugees were derided by conservative ‘natives’ and their political representatives, their identity was not quashed. Rather, the democratic system gave them a distinct political voice as refugees. Conversely, the demise of Greece’s democratic system effectively silenced the refugees’ political voice and allowed the Metaxas dictatorship to advance a highly restrictive notion of Greek identity that left little room for public claims of cultural difference. The contraction of the public sphere that accompanied the imposition of authoritarian rule privileged a single conception of the nation and placed debates over the criteria of membership beyond politics.

Greece’s relatively new status as an immigrant receiving country may lead to renewed deliberation over the nature of ‘Greekness’ and the boundaries of Greek nation. The arrival of both legal and illegal non-Greek migrants in large numbers since 1990 has changed the face of Greek society, prompting some scholars and intellectuals to reject the moral and practical costs of maintaining an exclusive ethno-national identity. The fundamental difference between the current situation and that of the inter-war period lies in the political status of the migrant groups. Unlike the refugees, recent immigrants are not automatically entitled to Greek citizenship. Consequently, they cannot take advantage of Greece’s democratic political system to publicly

---

voice their claims as the refugees did. This difference between the two eras is worthy of our attention. It affirms the importance of political institutions in facilitating or constraining political discourses and collective action. That said, one must recognize that political institutions are not timeless entities immune to change. Recent debates over the legal and ethical dimensions of citizenship in Germany suggest that migrants need not resign themselves to outsider status indefinitely.⁹⁷ As in Germany, the settlement of more and more migrants in Greece may lead to increases in requests for citizenship and calls for the refashioning of this critical political institution.⁹⁸ The response of Greek political elites, bureaucrats, and citizens to such requests will be a good indicator of whether present conceptions of ‘Greekness’ might also be open to reinterpretation. A shift to a more inclusive form of citizenship may prompt further debate over the criteria defining membership in the nation itself. Perhaps, in time, ‘Greekness’ will shed its exclusivity and take on more inclusive connotations.

⁹⁸ According to Fakiolas, only about 6000 requests for citizenship have been accepted in the past twenty years. Most of these 6000 were ethnic Greeks. Fakiolas, p. 12.
Bibliography


Fakiolas, Rossetos. “Migration From and to Greece During the Last Four Decades.” Unpublished Manuscript, National Technical University, Greece.


———. “Modernity, Civil Society and the Papandreou Legacy.” Unpublished


