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### Αιτία της υποχρεωτικής ανταλλαγής πληθυσμών συνέπεια του Ελληνοτουρκικού Πολέμου: (1922-1923)

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MOTIVES FOR COMPULSORY POPULATION EXCHANGE  
IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE GREEK-TURKISH WAR  
(1922-1923)

The central theme of this paper deals with the motives and the genesis of the idea of compulsory population exchange at the end of the Greek-Turkish War (1922-1923). In order to discuss these the paper will be divided into two parts. The first will investigate the diplomatic negotiations which took place between the representatives of Greece, Turkey and the Great Powers after the end of the Greek-Turkish War. The second part will place these negotiations into the context of the international and domestic changes occurring in Greece and Turkey at that time.

The population exchange made at the end of the Greek-Turkish War (1922-1923) was not a unique event. Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, religious turmoil in Europe had led to the mass expulsions of populations on several occasions. The expulsion of the Sephardic Jews from Spain in 1492 paved the way for large-scale persecutions of minority groups such as the French Protestants, the Spanish Muslims and other religious minorities<sup>1</sup>. European rulers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became increasingly concerned with the problem of extensive refugee flows, as the nation-state became the dominant form of political organisation. Between 1880 and 1914

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1. H. B. Talal and S. A. Khan, *Refugees: The Dynamics of Displacement*, London 1986, p. 85.

states witnessed the greatest mass migrations yet known, “which underlined the differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’”<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, extensive refugee flows tended to be common in Europe during the inter-war years. The flight of at least three quarters of Russian refugees from the upheavals of revolution and civil war in the Soviet Union created one of the first groups of “stateless” people<sup>3</sup>.

In this context, the idea of a mutual exchange of populations had been put forward several times, as a panacea for peace and stability in the Balkans. In May 1914 a plan for exchanging of the Greek rural population of the Smyrna region with the Muslim minority of Macedonia was submitted by the Turkish Minister in Athens as “his personal opinion”<sup>4</sup>. A proposal of voluntary reciprocal exchange of Greek and Bulgarian minorities was made by Venizelos in his memorandum of January 1915 to the Greek King Constantine<sup>5</sup>. At the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris, the Greek Prime Minister suggested once more transferring co-nationals between Greece, Armenia and Turkey<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, almost all these proposals were objected to on various grounds. In this respect, the first reciprocal transfer of populations was finally implemented on a voluntary basis between Greece and Bulgaria in 1919 (Treaty of Neuilly)<sup>7</sup>. This voluntary exchange of populations served as forerunner of the subsequent convention of compulsory population exchange after the end of the Greek-Turkish War.

Actually, the compulsory nature of the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations (1923) makes it the first of its kind in modern world history<sup>8</sup>. The Lausanne Peace Treaty of 23 July 1923, a milestone in Greek-Turkish relations, not only signified the confirmation that the Venizelist irredentist dreams of a Greece of

2. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge 1990, p. 91.

3. J. H. Simpson, *The Refugee Problem. Report of a Survey*, Oxford 1939, pp. 80, 87.

4. B. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, New York 1932, p. 21.

5. Th. Couloumbis, J. A. Petropoulos, H. J. Psomiades, *Foreign Interference in Greek Politics. An Historical Perspective*, New York 1976, p. 40.

6. N. Petsales-Diomides, *Greece at the Paris Peace Conference 1919*, Thessaloniki 1978, p. 324.

7. League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. I, September 1920, no 9. – Convention between Greece and Bulgaria respecting reciprocal emigration, signed at Neuilly-Sur-Seine, 27 November 1919, pp. 67-71.

8. S. Seferiadès, «L' échange des populations», *Académie Internationale de la Haye. Recueil des Cours*, vol. 24 (1928), p. 366.

two continents and five seas had failed<sup>9</sup>, but also served to define the national identity of almost two million people by means of a convention<sup>10</sup> which came into force with the ratification of the Peace Treaty in August 1923<sup>11</sup>. The first article<sup>12</sup> of the Convention laid down the principle of a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory and of Greek nationals of the Muslim religion established in Greek territory<sup>13</sup>.

As a result, Greece, whose population was hardly over five million, was called upon to absorb 1,221,489<sup>14</sup> “homeless people”<sup>15</sup>. A country war-weary, politically divided and “suffering from financial anaemia”<sup>16</sup>, had to incorporate the largest influx of refugees in the world history. In return, 355,000<sup>17</sup> Muslims were removed from Greece to Turkey, with the conclusion of this convention. This compulsory population exchange has been characterised as a crime with no respect to the principles of international justice and to the human rights of the people subjected to it<sup>18</sup>.

It is no coincidence that while such a population exchange was agreed to by all the Governments participating in the Lausanne Peace Conference, none of the

9. C. Svolopoulos, *Ἡ ἑλληνικὴ ἐξωτερικὴ πολιτικὴ, 1900-1945* [*The Greek Foreign Policy, 1900-1945*], Athens 1994.

10. League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XXVIII, 1925, numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4, no. 807, pp. 12-87.

11. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, November 1923, 4th Year, Document no. C569 (I) 1923 I. Annex 565: Report by Viscount Ishii and Resolution adopted by the Council on 17 September 1923, pp. 1466-1469.

12. “As from 1st May 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory. These persons shall not return to live in Turkey or Greece respectively without the authorisation of the Turkish or the Greek Government respectively.” League of Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. XXVIII, 1925, numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4, no. 807, p. 12.

13. The Muslims of Western Thrace and the Greeks of Constantinople were not included in the exchange of populations (Article 2).

14. *Statistical Annual of Greece*, Athens 1930.

15. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 5th Year, 1924. Third Meeting, held at Geneva on Tuesday, 1 March 1924, pp. 508-510.

16. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year (no. 8, August 1923). Eighth Meeting, held at Geneva on Thursday, 5 July 1923, p. 903.

17. H. J. Psomiades, *The Eastern Question. The Last Phase*, Thessaloniki 1968, p. 68.

18. C. Svolopoulos, *Ἡ ἀπόφασις γιὰ τὴν ὀποχρεωτικὴ ἀνταλλαγὴ τῶν πηλοσμοῦν μεταξὺ Ἑλλάδος καὶ Τουρκίας* [*The Decision of the Obligatory Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey*], Thessaloniki 1981, p. 27.

chief negotiators dared to take responsibility for it by freely espousing the idea<sup>19</sup>. Thus, any attempt to understand the genesis of this idea is a complicated process.

To this end, the evolution of the negotiations which took place between the representative parties will be traced in order to examine the mediating role played by Dr Fridjof J. Nansen, entrusted by the League of Nations to study and develop a plan to relieve the Asia Minor refugees<sup>20</sup>. According to the report of Dame Edith Lyttelton (British delegate at Lausanne), "soon after his arrival in the Near East Nansen became convinced that, if an early exchange of populations could be effected between the Turks and the Greeks, it would constitute a very substantial contribution towards the solution of the refugee problems"<sup>21</sup>. He travelled to Istanbul (Constantinople), where he made an attempt to negotiate with Turkish officials. On 22 October 1922, Nansen received a telegram from Mustafa Kemal stating his agreement with the proposal that an exchange of populations take place<sup>22</sup>. Actually, Kemal had stated previously (16 March 1922) that "the Ankara Government was strongly in favour of the idea of that an exchange of populations take place between the Greeks in Asia Minor and the Muslims in Greece"<sup>23</sup>.

19. Ch. B. Eddy, *Greece and the Greek Refugees*, London 1931, p. 26.

20. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 3rd Year, November 1922. Note by the Secretary General Resolution, adopted by the Third Assembly of the League of Nations at its meeting held on 19 September 1922, p. 1140.

21. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year. Supplement Record of the Fourth Assembly, Annex 26, Document no. A. 108. 1923, Work of the High Commission on behalf of Near East refugees. Report submitted by the Fifth Committee to the Fourth Assembly, p. 371.

22. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year, January 1923. Telegraphic communication from Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Brussa, 22 October 1922), Document no. C. 736.M.447.1922, pp. 126-132. Kemal noted that although he favoured the proposal of Dr Nansen for an exchange of populations, he had to postpone their meeting since "it was impossible for him under the present conditions to wait in any town".

23. *British Documents in Foreign Affairs (= B.D.F.A.)*, (General Editor: Kenneth Bourn/D. Cameron Watt), Part II, First Series, *Turkey, Iran and the Middle East*, vol. 3: *The Turkish Revival, 1921-1923*, Document no. 555 [Memorandum of an interview between the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston and Yussuf Kemal Bey], 16 March 1922 (E3000/5/44), pp. 657-660: "Yussuf Kemal Bey had remarked at the previous meeting (16 March 1922), where speaking of the fundamental principles of peace, that Lord Curzon had dwelt upon the safeguarding of minorities". He also noted that "the Ankara Government was strongly in favour of a solution that would satisfy world opinion and ensure tranquillity in its own country. It was ready to accept the idea of an exchange of populations between the Greeks in Asia Minor and the Muslims in Greece". In reply to this proposal, Lord Curzon noted that "no doubt something was possible in this direction but it was not

Moreover, the Ankara Government empowered Hamid Bey (Diplomatic Representative of the Government of the Turkish Grand Assembly) "to conduct the necessary negotiations, on the basis of a total enforced exchange of populations and from which the population of Constantinople would not be exempted"<sup>24</sup>. Nansen refused to limit the discussion in this way and asked that Hamid Bey to discuss with Ankara whether the Turkish side was willing to negotiate an exchange of populations on the basis of voluntary emigration. Nansen noted that he never received any communication from the representative of the Ankara Government in response to this request<sup>25</sup>. In the meantime, "a preliminary draft for voluntary emigration"<sup>26</sup> was prepared by the High Commissioners of the Allied Powers and Greece. On 9 November 1922, Nansen travelled to Lausanne without precise instructions, nor any indication whatsoever how Turkey was disposed towards a compulsory exchange.

As a result, Greece and Turkey arrived at the negotiating table in Lausanne with a lack of consensus as to the character of the population exchange. This resulted in a situation where even while the negotiations were taking place, the idea of a compulsory exchange was vague. In this framework, a new dispute broke out when the British Foreign Minister (Lord Curzon) denounced the statement of Ismet Inonu (Head of the Turkish delegation) that "the question of peace in the Asia Minor could be best solved by a compulsory exchange of populations"<sup>27</sup> as lacking in "human spirit"<sup>28</sup>. When Venizelos (heading the Greek delegation at Lausanne), noted that "the Greek Government shared Lord Curzon's views", Ismet Inonu expressed the great surprise of the Turkish delegation, "because their impression had been that the exchange of populations had been proposed and upheld by the Greek delegation"<sup>29</sup>.

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a complete solution. The population in Asia Minor was somewhere near half a million. For physical reasons such a large number could not be entirely transported and for agricultural and commercial reasons many of them would be unwilling to go".

24. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year, January 1923, Document no. C.736.M.447.1922, pp. 126-132.

25. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year, January 1923, Document no. C. 736.M. 447. 1922, p. 131.

26. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year, January 1923, Annex B, pp. 130-132.

27. Public Record Office (= P.R.O.), FO 371/9058, Registration no. (E83/1/44), Annex I, Lausanne Conference on Eastern Affairs, pp. 11-20.

28. P.R.O., F.O. 371/9058, Registration no. (E83/1/44): Letter from Lord Curzon, dated on 31 December 1922, transmitting draft minutes of Thirteenth Meeting of the Lausanne Conference (held on 12 December 1922), pp. 7-10.

29. *ibid.*

Venizelos's response was that the idea of an obligatory exchange had not been put forward by the Greeks, but that "it had been suggested by Dr Nansen who believed that the Turkish Government would not allow the Greeks to return to Turkey"<sup>30</sup>.

In actual fact, many participants at the Lausanne Conference held Nansen responsible for having personally "recommended the compulsory system"<sup>31</sup>. Horace Rumbold, the High Commissioner at Constantinople and delegate of Great Britain at Lausanne, pointed out that "the idea of a population exchange came from Nansen but it was the Turkish Government, through their representative Hamid Bey, which insisted that an exchange should take place upon a compulsory basis"<sup>32</sup>.

What needs to be emphasised at this point are the explanations by Nansen himself. Although Nansen stressed that "the Treaty of Lausanne had embraced his views on the exchange of racial minorities"<sup>33</sup>, he remarked that "public reports had wrongly attributed to him the proposal of a compulsory exchange of national minorities between Greece and Turkey"<sup>34</sup>. According to his claims, "he had made no such proposal but had only explained to the Sub-Commission that an essential preliminary question to be settled was whether the exchange should be voluntary or compulsory"<sup>35</sup>.

So far the genesis of the idea of a compulsory population exchange has been examined only with respect to negotiations being carried out between Greece and Turkey. It would be short-sighted and misleading to continue this survey exclusively in this context. As we have seen, although this exchange was finally agreed to by all the Governments participating in the Lausanne Peace Conference, it was criticised by each represented side as being cruel. It was characterised as a crime with no respect to the principles of international justice and to the human rights of the people subjected to it<sup>36</sup>. It was perhaps not surprising that none of the

30. P.R.O., F.O. 371/9058, Registration no. (E169/1/44): Draft minutes of the Fourteenth Meeting, dated on 13 December 1922, p. 80.

31. P.R.O., F.O. 371/9058, Registration no. (E1004/1/44): Draft Minutes of the Twentieth Meeting at Lausanne Conference on Eastern Affairs under the presidency of Lord Curzon, 10 January 1923.

32. Ch. B. Eddy, *Greece and the Greek Refugees*, London 1931, pp. 51-52.

33. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year. Records of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Fourth Assembly, held on Monday 24 September 1923, pp. 61-63.

34. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year, Annex 471. Report by Dr F. J. Nansen for refugees in the Near East, 13 March 1923, pp. 383-384.

35. *ibid.*

36. C. Svolopoulos, 'Η απόφαση για την υποχρεωτική ανταλλαγή των πληθυσμίων μεταξὺ

chief negotiators dared to take responsibility for freely espousing the idea which they had favoured<sup>37</sup>. Consequently, a prerequisite for identifying the “accessory before the fact” is to investigate the motives of the negotiating parties.

Therefore, attention will now shift to the international context of this period, which allows us to speak of “an interdependence of foreign and domestic policy, rather than the primacy of either one or the other, as a guiding principle”<sup>38</sup>.

In the Greek case, it is important to note that while on several occasions since 1913 Venizelos had advocated an exchange of populations, at the Lausanne Conference Greece was the defeated country and the compulsory exchange has to be seen in the context of the end of the irredentist aspirations of the Great Idea, which inspired the policy-making of the Greek State almost from its inception until the early 1920's<sup>39</sup>. At Lausanne, the Greek foreign policy was not to be passionately attached to these nationalistic illusions. “Just as the various forms of nationalism are bound by historical conditions and time, so these figures belong to an era that ended with the defeat in Asia Minor”<sup>40</sup>.

From this perspective, the return of the Greek-Orthodox refugees in Anatolia was seen as unrealistic and unattainable<sup>41</sup>. As the Greek representatives, Caclamanos<sup>42</sup> and Politis<sup>43</sup>, stressed “the exchange had been imposed on Greece by necessity”. In other words, they implied the convention recognised a *fait-*

*Ἑλλάδος καὶ Τουρκίας* [The Decision of the Obligatory Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey], Thessaloniki 1981, p. 27.

37. Ch. B. Eddy, *Greece and the Greek Refugees*, London 1931, p. 26.

38. G. B. Leonardaritis, *Greece at the First World War: From Neutrality to Intervention, 1917-1918*, New York 1990, p. XI.

39. P. M. Kitromilides, “Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans”, in the M. Blinkhorn and T. Veremis. (eds.), *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, Athens 1990.

40. G. Augustinos, *Consciousness and History: National Critics of Greek Society 1897-1914*, New York 1977, p. 142.

41. C. Svolopoulos, *Ἡ ἀπόφαση γιὰ τὴν ὑποχρεωτικὴ ἀνταλλαγὴ τῶν πληθυσμῶν μεταξὺ Ἑλλάδος καὶ Τουρκίας* [The Decision of the Obligatory Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey], Thessaloniki 1981.

42. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year, December 1923. Minutes of the Seventeenth Session of the Council, Tenth Meeting, held at Paris on Monday 17 December 1923, p. 366.

43. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 5th Year, October 1924. Minutes of the Thirteenth Session of the Council, Sixteenth Meeting, held at Geneva on Monday 29 September 1924, pp. 1353-1354.



*accompli*<sup>44</sup>. As Alexandros Pallis (Member of the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission) points out “in the face of impossibility of forcing Turkey to readmit the refugees except by a fresh recourse to arms Greece bowed to the inevitable”<sup>45</sup>. These views are underpinned by Lord Curzon’s note that “to say the compulsory exchange was a Greek suggestion is ridiculous”<sup>46</sup>, since it was a solution enforced by the Turkish Government by expelling thousands of people.

In actual fact, by April 1923, there were already 786,431 refugees on the move<sup>47</sup>, who had been uprooted by the war in Asia Minor and “had left their homes with such precipitation that they had no possessions of any kind other than the slight summer clothes which they wear”<sup>48</sup>. Dr Nansen noted that “there was not a problem comparable in gravity to that of refugees in Greece”<sup>49</sup>. The winter combined with daily deaths from epidemics<sup>50</sup> motivated Venizelos to hasten the exchange, in order to provide adequate housing and relief for the refugees by settling them “in a place of safety”<sup>51</sup>. The reports on the problem highlighted the pressure put on the poor and war-weary Greek State in the face of the challenge of establishing the waves of destitute refugees. Dr Nansen, soon after his arrival in the Near East, pointed out that “if an early exchange of populations could be effected between the Turks and the Greeks, it would constitute a very substantial

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44. A. A. Pallis, «Φυλετικές μεταναστεύσεις στα Βαλκάνια και διωγμοί τοῦ ἑλληνισμοῦ, 1912-1924» [“Racial Migrations in the Balkans and the Persecutions of Hellenism, 1912-1924”], *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικῶν Σπουδῶν*, vol. 1 (1977), pp. 75-88.

45. A. A. Pallis, *Greece’s Anatolian Adventure*, London 1937, p. 168.

46. P.R.O., F.O. 371/9058, Draft minutes of the Lausanne Conference, Confidence FC 14, Registration no. (E169/1/44), pp. 212-218.

47. D. Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact upon Greece*, Paris 1962, p. 97.

48. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year, 1923. Document no. C. 736(a) 1922. Extracts from a report by Dr Nansen, 18 November 1922, Part II. The Question of Refugees in Greece and Asia Minor.

49. *ibid.*

50. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Special Supplement, no 18. Records of the Fourth Assembly. Minutes of the Fifth Committee, Geneva A.V. 35. 1923. Annex 26. Refugees Question: Draft Report of Dame Edith Lyttelton (British delegate) to the Assembly. It was reported that “in Constantinople, the plight of these refugees was such that among a total of 27,000, no fewer than 500 deaths were recorded weekly from typhus and smallpox”.

51. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year, Records of the Third Assembly. Sixteenth Plenary Meeting, held on Monday 25 September 1922. Statement by Lord Balfour (delegate of the British Empire), p. 226.

contribution towards the solution of the refugee problem in both countries"<sup>52</sup>. Henry Morgenthau (President of the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission) notes that Venizelos may also have been motivated by the fact that many Turkish landlords who lived in northern Greece were subject to this exchange. He stressed that these "Turkish landlords occupied many thousands of acres of the most fertile lands of Macedonia and Thrace, and if these lands could be promptly vacated they would immediately provide farms and homes for thousands of refugee families now starving in Salonica and the other of Greece"<sup>53</sup>. As a matter of fact, about 500,000 rural and 300,000 urban refugees were established in the northern provinces of Greece. The Greek Government proclaimed its alarm and anxiety about such huge transfers of refugee population. Thus, in 1922, Venizelos, as a chief negotiator at Lausanne, in his letter to Dr Nansen pointed out that the prompt exchange of the Greek-Orthodox populations "with the Turks living in Greece, and amounting to about 350,000 will considerably alleviate the difficulties which attend this problem and for that reason it is necessary that Mustapha Kemal should, as quickly as possible, be persuaded to give his consent to the speedy transfer of the Turks now in Greece. This could be affected under your supervision and may be sure that the Musulmans who leave Greece will not only be allowed to take with them all their possessions, but also every possible facility given to them by the authorities to enable them to depart in comfort. [...]". He also noted that "perhaps if reasons of a higher order fail to persuade Mustapha Kemal it will be possible for you to point out to him that if he does not concur in his migration of the Turks in Greece, the Greek Government under the pressure of unavoidable necessity will be very probable compelled to impose this migration on the Turks living on Greek soil"<sup>54</sup>. Moreover, Nansen was firmly convinced that "the settlement of the refugees in Greece might be considerably facilitated if arrangements could be made for an exchange of populations, so that about 400,000 Turks living in Greece could be sent to Turkey to make room for the incoming refugees"<sup>55</sup>. The result was that about 500,000 rural and 300,000

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52. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Year. Supplement Record of the Fourth Assembly, Annex 26, Document no. A. 108. 1923, Work of the High Commission on behalf of Near East refugees. Report submitted by the Fifth Committee to the Fourth Assembly, p. 371.

53. H. Morgenthau, *I Was Sent to Athens*, New York 1929, p. 87.

54. L.N.A. (League of Nations Archives), R 1761, 48/2441/24357, Letter from Eleftherios K. Venizelos to Dr Fridtjof Nansen, 17 October 1922, pp. 1-2.

55. L.N.A., R. 1761, 48/24722/24337. Report of Dr Nansen on the refugee situation in Greece. Part II, 28 November 1922, p. 9.

urban refugees were established in the northern provinces of Greece<sup>56</sup>.

Nonetheless, apart from the aim of bringing about a settlement of thousands of refugees, many other factors were contributors to the compulsory exchange of those populations.

As to Turkey, the exchange of populations has to be considered in the context of the times including the radical changes taking place in the social and state apparatus, as well as the dissolution of the religious and administrative communities of *millets*, where all religious minorities had enjoyed autonomy. In October 1923, the proclamation of the Turkish Republic was considered to be synonymous with a national regeneration under the flag of secularisation and Europeanisation.

Within this framework, three main considerations of the Young Turks programme were used to justify to the dissolution of the *millets*: firstly, the Young Turkish programme of political and cultural reform required that a break be made with the values and norms of the pre-national past. This past was seen as reflecting the heritage of the multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic social structure of the Ottoman Empire<sup>57</sup>. As a result of various political and social transformations, the *millets* “disappeared and law emancipated from religion”<sup>58</sup>.

Of course, the role of the *millets* in the consolidation of the Ottoman power in the Balkans had been explicitly challenged by the growth of nationalism and establishment of national Churches (like the Bulgarian Exarchate) in the nineteenth century<sup>59</sup>. In the twentieth century, however, the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) followed by the First World War resulted in the irreversible division of the Ottoman Empire into nation-states, and the *millets* metamorphosed into ethnic groups struggling for national liberation<sup>60</sup>. They were considered to be the chrysalis for the preservation of a sense of common ethnicity and for the perpetuation of ethnic disputes. In this context, the *millet* institution could no longer to accommodate religious and national diversity.

In this respect, Kemal declared that “his Government desired a Turkey populated in the majority by Turks, and independent”<sup>61</sup>. The views of the National

56. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 6th Year, Eleventh Meeting, held at Geneva on Tuesday 10 September 1923, Minutes of the Thirty-fifth Session of the Council, Work of the Greek Settlement Commission, pp. 1359-1360.

57. K. R. Minogue, *Nationalism*, London 1967, p. 37.

58. F. Hertz, *Nationality in History and Politics*, London 1945, p. 144.

59. R. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge 1992, p. 10.

60. J. Dunn, *Modern Revolutions*, Cambridge 1989, p. 103.

61. *B.D.F.A.*, no 555, Part II, First Series [Memorandum of an interview between the Marquess

Pact regarding “the necessity for the evacuation of Turkey by the Greeks”<sup>62</sup> were embraced by foreign powers, whose commissioners<sup>63</sup> contended that there was “little hope for the Christian Communities”<sup>64</sup>, since Nationalists regarded them “as having been the cause of unending trouble in the past”<sup>65</sup>. In actual fact, many of these commissioners were deeply concerned about the terror and instability all over Anatolia and Pontus which were frequently accompanied by actual persecutions of minorities. Signor Tuozzi, the Italian agent in Ankara, remarked that Christian minorities had run into serious difficulties, since the Nationalists “want to destroy all Greeks in that territory and to leave Turkey for Turks”<sup>66</sup>. All these hostilities

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Curzon of Kedleston and Yussuf Kemal Bey], 16 March 1922 (E3000/5/44) pp. 657-660.

62. *B.D.F.A.*, Part II, Series B, *Turkey, Iran and the Middle East*, vol. 3: *The Turkish Revival (1921-1923)*, Document 42, Registration no. (E3036/5/44), Confidential print and piece number: 12068/61 [Report of Sir Horace Rumbold addressed to Lord Curzon, after his discussion with the Grand Vizier]. Sir H. Rumbold noted that “the Central Government is by no means in agreement with the National Pact with regard to the necessity for the evacuation of Turkey by the Greeks”, pp. 51-52.

63. Manuscripts of Cambridge Library (Templewood Papers), Part II, Box 4, File 8, Piece 38, Confidential correspondence. Letters, reports and minutes concerning League of Nations, Refugee work: Constantinople 1920 to 1924 [Memorandum of Sir Samuel Hoare attached to a letter of 18 February 1922, addressed to the Hon. Frank O. Lindley]. In February 1922 Sir Samuel Hoare noted that “the Nationalists are still using conscription, namely the forcing of Christians into serving in labour battalions, as the most effective method for exterminating the Christian populations. Conscription is not an old institution in Turkey. Indeed it was only introduced by Enver and the Young Turks in 1898. It has been consistently used as the best instrument for destroying the Christian male population. As long as the Turks conscribe Christians and draft them where they will, there is little hope for the Christian communities”, p. 5.

64. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Eighth Plenary Meeting, held on Tuesday 9 September 1922, Continuation of the Discussion on the Report of the work of the Council, pp. 99-100.

65. *B.D.F.A.*, Part II, Series B, *Turkey, Iran and the Middle East*, vol. 3: *The Turkish Revival, 1921-1923* [Memorandum by Mr Rendel on Turkish Massacres and Persecutions of Minorities since the Armistice, 20 March 1922], Report of Signor Tuozzi, the Italian agent in Ankara, Document 44 (E3148/19/44). The Italian agent in Ankara (Signor Tuozzi) pointed out that “the deportations were continuous and that he saw numerous gangs of Christians formed into labour battalions going up into the interior”. He regarded the outlook for these gangs “as utterly hopeless, since the Nationalists hold a perfect view of the minorities in question. They regarded the minorities as having been the cause of unending trouble in the past, and have decided that the best way to prevent the recurrence of this trouble is to put an end to the existence of the minorities”, pp. 54-60.

66. *ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

provided an indication that religion and nationality, inseparably blended in the Ottoman Empire, were elements of friction and had to be removed. Nansen shared these attitudes noting that “the Near East had, by reason of its mixed populations, been a centre of discord and disorder”<sup>67</sup>. Consequently, the exchange of populations aimed at bringing an end to those hostilities and ensuring the safety of thousands of Christians remained in Anatolia.

Last but not least, Ottoman Turkey was subjected to massive intervention by foreign Powers after the mid-nineteenth century. In the view of the Young-Turkish nationalists, the Christians stood under the protection of foreign rulers<sup>68</sup>. Distrust and animosity prevailed between religious minorities was exacerbated by the war in Asia Minor. The Greeks had been allowed to land at Smyrna under the pretext of preventing the total massacre of their compatriots, although the interwoven objectives and motives were quite different<sup>69</sup>. As a result, the Turks felt that they were once again being subjected to the military challenge of Christian expansionism. In this respect, Hamid Bey stressed that Turkish sovereignty had always been infringed upon by foreign interference based on pleas of humanitarian considerations for the protection of Christian minorities in Asiatic Turkey and stated that would not be acceptable any more since “the Nationalists have not the least intention of accepting any outside interference in the matter”<sup>70</sup>. Similar thinking lays also behind Izzet Pasha’s statement that “protective measures could no doubt be taken, but not of a character injurious to

67. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 3rd Year, Record of the Third Assembly, Minutes of the Sixth Committee, Ninth Meeting, 22 September 1922, p. 44.

68. F. Hertz, *Nationality in History and Politics*, London 1945, p. 142.

69. R. Davison, “Turkish Diplomacy from Mudros to Lausanne”, in the G. Craig and F. Gilbert (eds.), *The Diplomats 1919-1939*, 1979, pp. 191-192.

70. Manuscripts of Cambridge Library (Templewood Papers), Part II, Box 4, File 8, Piece 38, Confidential correspondence. Letters, reports and minutes concerning League of Nations, Refugee work: Constantinople 1920 to 1924 [Memorandum of Sir Samuel Hoare attached to a letter of 18 February 1922, addressed to the Hon. Frank O. Lindley], p. 2. In the same letter Sir Samuel Hoare noted: “I told him [Hamid Bey] that if the Nationalists wished to make peace, they must by their policy and action remove the strong feeling in Western Europe that they will continue to massacre Christians and stir up trouble against Europeans. As to the protection of the Christian minorities, I cannot emphasise too strongly the loss of prestige that would follow an unconditional surrender of the Greek, Armenian and Syrian Christians to the Nationalists. The Eastern Christians rely upon us alone in the peace negotiations. The appeal that the Syrian and Armenian Patriarchs made to me in Constantinople was really pathetic. The French have abandoned the Christians in Cilicia whilst the Italians were thinking of nothing but concessions. From our point of view, it is likely that we shall raise ourselves in Moslem estimation by sacrificing our own co-religionists.”

Turkish independence or calculated to excite undue aspirations and revolutionary tendencies among the minorities"<sup>71</sup>.

From this perspective, Young Turkish nationalism can be seen as developing at least in part "a political movement depending on a feeling of collective grievance against foreigners"<sup>72</sup> and it demonstrated revealed strong xenophobic tendencies towards minorities. On similar lines, Ismet Inonu (representative of the Turkish Government) cited the example of the "hardworking and intelligent element of Jews in Turkey, who had never asked for treatment differing in any respect from their compatriots, and it is most improbable that they would ever make such a request"<sup>73</sup>. He also contended that "the best way –for a minority in Turkey– to enjoy all the rights of a Turkish citizen was to have no compromising relations with a foreign country and to keep aloof from all foreigners"<sup>74</sup>.

In this framework, the exchange of populations functioned as an *ostracism* of the "compromised" minorities which came to be "considered as alien"<sup>75</sup> in the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into nation-states, and particularly in the ethnic unification of the Turkish State. This policy was also carried out "by the reception of kindred immigrants expelled from the Balkans"<sup>76</sup>. Religion was a practical and powerful criterion for Turkishness, as indicated by the hesitation<sup>77</sup> of the Turkish authorities to encourage the immigration of Turkish-speaking Christian Caugavuz of Bessarabia (then part of Rumania), or by their unwillingness to oppose the departure of Turkish-speaking Christians (*Karamanlides*). The same attitude towards minorities could be also traced in the readiness to accept Greek-speaking Muslim Cretans or the Slavic-speaking Muslim Bosnians and Pomaks of the Balkans<sup>78</sup>. Apparently the Turkish policy-makers thought that it was rather easier to make a Turk out of Muslims than out

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71. *B.D.F.A.*, Part II, First Series, no 554 [Memorandum of an interview between the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston and Izzet Pasha], 16 March 1922, Registration no. (E 3087/5/44) p. 656.

72. J. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester 1991, p. 146.

73. P.R.O., F.O. 371/9058, Registration no. (E169/1/44), Draft minutes of the Lausanne Conference (speech of Ismet Inonu), pp. 80-82.

74. *ibid.*

75. C. McCartney, *National States and National Minorities*, London 1934, p. 433.

76. *ibid.*

77. *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 1B: *The Central Islamic Lands since 1918*, Cambridge 1970, p. 563.

78. These were some of the cases which question the validity of religion as an exclusive criterion of exchanging compulsory of populations and as the only means of defining national identities.

of Christians. One may thus suggest that in the Balkans religion connoted “a whole way of life”<sup>79</sup>. Within this framework, religion was chosen as the criterion of this compulsory exchange of populations by the new-established secular Turkish State.

On the other hand, the concept of a compulsory population exchange was formed in the context of the Wilsonian ideals of national self-determination. Actually, much of Europe and Asia “was in a state of chaos, and subject to the twin influences of Bolshevism and Woodrow Wilson’s idealistic vision of a new world order”<sup>80</sup>. As Benedict Anderson points out “the collapse of the Great Empires of Europe, made desirable for the Allies to play the Wilsonian card against the Bolshevik one”<sup>81</sup>. In this perspective, the emergence of a powerful Turkish nation-state was expected to provide “an effective barrier to Bolshevik Russia”<sup>82</sup>. It could be argued that this was one of the most powerful elements in the formation of foreign policy of the Great Powers in the future<sup>83</sup>.

Considering also the strategic value of Turkey with regard to the international rights of navigation through the Dardanelles<sup>84</sup>, a friendly and self-determined Turkey came to be regarded as crucial to the West. In fact, at Lausanne the Allies were compelled to ratify the political results of the Turkish victory. Everything which symbolised the old regime of Western supervision was swept away. In the aftermath of the settlement, the British life-line moved southward to Suez, Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq. The Soviet Union withdrew its pressure on the Straits because it had to concentrate on securing the results of its revolution. French interests were confined to Danubian Europe in the north and to Lebanon and Syria in the south and only Italy “maintained an active and troublesome presence in the area”<sup>85</sup>. “The Turk was resolved to be a master in his own

79. A. D. Smith, *National Identity*, London 1991, p. 62.

80. M. L. Docrill and G. J. Douglas, *Peace without Promise, Britain and the Peace Conferences, 1919-1923*, London 1981, p. 253.

81. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London 1991, p. 131.

82. C. Bartlett, *The International Rivalry of the Great Powers. The Global Conflict (1880-1970)*, London 1984, p. 253.

83. R. H. Davison, “Turkish Diplomacy from Mudros to Lausanne”, in the G. A. Craig and F. Gilbert (eds.), *The Diplomats 1919-1939*, Princeton N. J. 1953, p. 200.

84. C. Svolopoulos, *Η ελληνική εξωτερική πολιτική, 1900-1945 [The Greek Foreign Policy, 1900-1945]*, Athens 1994, p. 174.

85. Th. Couloumbis, J. A. Petropoulos, H. J. Psomiades, *Foreign Interference in Greek Politics. An Historical Perspective*, New York 1976, p. 77.

home"<sup>86</sup>. It could be argued that the compulsory population exchange was one of the implications of this policy-making.

In this context, it is not surprising that the exchange of national populations between Greece and Turkey had first been suggested many months before the conclusion of the war in Asia Minor, in a telegram from Mr Lindley (British Minister to Athens) addressed to Lord Curzon in February 1922. Although they both agreed that no question of peace terms could be raised until the Asia Minor war had been won, they made it clear that "if no progress has been made regarding guarantee for the Christian population, a radical solution to the problem would be to consider the exchange of that population for the Turkish population in Eastern Thrace, under the auspices of the League of Nations"<sup>87</sup>. Although they conceded that "the operation presented many difficulties and would cause an economic set back both in Thrace and Asia Minor", they considered it as "the only alternative to maintaining a trustworthy armed force in Smyrna district"<sup>88</sup>.

In conclusion, no matter who was the first that put forward the idea of a compulsory population exchange in a formal way, all the participants in the Lausanne Conference favoured his suggestion on different grounds. A wide range of historical sources shows that since the *exodus* of the Greek-Orthodox refugees from Asia Minor, their obligatory exchange was favoured by all the participants in the Lausanne Conference on different grounds. For the Entente Powers it was an attempt to eliminate any possibility of future conflicts based on the minorities question as well as to protect the expelled refugees who endured terrible poverty, and witnessed appalling violence. Moreover, it implied an attempt of France and Britain to create an independent friendly Turkish nation-state which would allow them to control the Turkish Straits and the Black Sea at the expense of the Communist Russia. According to Gökay's work, it was within this framework that the Turkish diplomacy managed successfully to play off Britain against Russia<sup>89</sup>. As it has been analysed, for the Turks, the presence of

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86. H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, vol. II: *From the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century to 1935*, London 1935, p. 1283.

87. *Documents of Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, First Series, vol. XVII, no. 539, Mr Lindley (Athens) to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (Received 22 February 1922). Telegraphic communication (E 2260/5/44), pp. 635-636.

88. *ibid.*

89. B. Gökay, *A Clash of Empires: "Turkey between Russian Bolshevism and British Imperialism 1918-1923"*, London and New York 1977.



Christian minorities entailed not only an impediment to the pleasing uniformity of the secular New-Turkish national state, but also a pretext for future interventions by the Western European States. As for the Greeks and for Nansen, the obligatory exchange fulfilled the expectations of creating as soon as possible more space for the establishment of the refugee waves –who had fled to Greece even before the conclusion of the Lausanne Treaty– in the lands which were evacuated by the Muslim minorities of Greece.

Looking also at the problem in its broadest sense, it must be remembered that the predominant international institution of the twentieth century, the League of Nations “compromised too much with national sovereignties”<sup>90</sup>. It appeared that the best way to devise frontiers was to establish them based on a national homogeneity. The adoption of such a mononational homogeneous formula entailed some form of minority exclusion<sup>91</sup>, which according to Benedict Anderson might take the form of their “mass expulsion or extermination”<sup>92</sup>. It was in this context of transforming a pluralistic society into a homogeneous one, that the idea of a compulsory population exchange was formed, generating “the most radical solution ever attempted in the handling of the Near East problem”<sup>93</sup>.

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90. F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, Cambridge 1988, p. 311.

91. A. R. Zolberg, A. Suhrke and S. Aguayo, *Escape from Violence, Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World*, New York and Oxford 1989, p. 13.

92. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London 1991, p. 133.

93. G. Lewis, *Modern Turkey*, Oxford 1974, p. 147.