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CUTTING THE GORDIAN KNOT: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAUSANNE CONVENTION FOR THE EXCHANGE OF GREEK-TURKISH POPULATIONS AND THE ANKARA CONVENTION OF 10 JUNE 1930

by

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Introduction

The Lausanne Convention for the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations represents a turning point in the modern history not only of Greece and Turkey, but also of Southeast Europe and the Near East as a whole. This compulsory exchange, which was primarily based on the criterion of religion rather than language or ethnicity, brought a dramatic and unprecedented change to the anthropogeography of the region. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their homelands, whereas even more were denied the right to return to their birthplaces from where they were expelled in the most violent, inhuman, and abrupt way.

This essay, based primarily on research in Greek archives (both state and private), examines the reasons that led to the conclusion of the Lausanne Convention, its most important provisions, and the problems in Greek-Turkish relations as a result of its implementation. In this context, special attention will also be paid to Greek-Turkish negotiations on bilateral disputes leading up to the Convention of Ankara (10 June 1930), which definitively solved the problems connected with the implementation of the Lausanne Convention.

*The Lausanne Convention for the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations
(30 January 1923)*

In September 1922, after three years of war in Asia Minor, the Nationalist Turkish forces led by Mustafa Kemal finally defeated the Greek Army. The panicky retreat and evacuation of the Greek Army, however, was not as disastrous as the fate that befell the Christian populations of Asia Minor. The ensuing atrocities on the part of the Turkish armed forces against the Christians of Asia Minor resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of people,¹ as well as the destruction of much Christian property. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of Greeks from Asia Minor, Pontus, and Eastern Thrace were forced to leave their birthplaces and fled to Greece in order to protect themselves from the advancing Nationalist army of Mustafa Kemal and find a safe shelter.²

The shocking consequences of the violent uprooting of the Greek Orthodox populations of the Near East resulted in the intervention of the League of Nations. Indeed, in September 1922 the Assembly and the Council of the League decided to appoint the famous Norwegian explorer Dr. Fridtjof Nansen as high commissioner for the refugees and entrust him with the difficult question of relief for them.³ From the first days of his appointment, Nansen tried to establish contact with the governments of Ankara and Athens, and on 12 and 14 October sent a memorandum and a letter to Hamid Bey, the diplomatic representative of Mustafa Kemal in Istanbul, in which he set forth the various questions with which he wished to deal and "particularly that of an exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey." Nansen's proposal was accepted rather favorably by all the major Allied powers, namely, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan.⁴ At the same time, Eleftherios Venizelos, the diplomatic representative of the Greek government in London and later president of the Greek delegation at the Peace Conference of Lausanne, sent a letter to Nansen proposing the idea of a mutual exchange of Greek and Turkish populations. Assuming that the Kemalist authorities had decided not to allow Greeks on Turkish soil, Venizelos pointed out that the urgent problem of housing the refugees could be better facilitated only if the 350,000 Turks living in Greece were to be transported to Turkey independently of the forthcoming peace negotiations.⁵ Some days later, the Turkish government informed Nansen that they accepted the idea of an exchange of populations, excluding Western Thrace.⁶

On 20 November 1922 the Lausanne Peace Conference officially convened, and the problem of the refugees and the proposed exchange of populations was further discussed. On 1 December, Lord Curzon, president of the conference and foreign minister of Great Britain, announced at the meeting of the Territorial and Military Commission that the four Great Allied Powers favored the proposal of an exchange of populations, believing

that to unmix the populations of the Near East will tend to secure the true pacification of the Near East and because they believe an exchange of populations is the quickest and most efficacious way of dealing with the grave

economic results which must result from the great movement of populations which has already occurred.⁷

Thus, the road for the official conclusion of the final Greek-Turkish agreement on the exchange of populations already was paved.

The Convention for the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations was finally signed by Greek and Turkish government representatives in Lausanne on 30 January 1923⁸—six months before the conclusion of the Peace Treaty, which was signed on 24 July of the same year.⁹ According to the first article of the convention, Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory and Greek nationals of the Muslim religion established in Greek territory were to be exchanged as of 1 May 1923. What is more, these persons did not have the right to return to live in Turkey or Greece without the authorization of the respective governments. It was also agreed that the compulsory exchange would apply to those Greeks and Muslims who had since 18 October 1912 (the date that the First Balkan War broke out) left the territories included in the exchange (Article 3).

On the other hand, Article 2 defined the persons who were exempted from the exchange. These were, on the one hand, the Greek inhabitants of Istanbul who had already been living prior to 30 October 1918 within the areas under the Prefecture of the city of Istanbul (as this was defined by the law of 1912), and, on the other hand, the Muslim inhabitants of Western Thrace living in the region east of the frontier line laid down by the Peace Treaty of Bucharest (10 August 1913).¹⁰ At the same time, Article 16 explicitly stipulated that no obstacle should be placed by the two contracting parties to prevent persons exempted from the exchange from exercising their right to remain in or return to the exempted districts and from enjoying to the full their liberties and rights of property.

The idea of a mutual exchange of populations was not entirely new. In 1914 the Greek government under Venizelos, trying to protect the Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire from the persecutions of the Young Turkish regime, had accepted a proposal of the Sublime Porte to exchange the Greek populations of Thrace and the vilayet of Smyrna with the Muslims of Epirus and Macedonia.¹¹ But implementation of the agreement was suspended, because in November 1914 the Ottoman Empire entered World War I. In comparison to the Lausanne Convention, the 1914 Agreement had a major difference: in 1914 the exchange would have the form of a voluntary emigration, whereas Article 1 of the Lausanne Convention established a compulsory exchange. This difference came, of course, as a result of the tragic reality, since for the majority of the Christian inhabitants of Asia Minor, Pontus, and Eastern Thrace, the "exchange" was a *fait accompli* as a result of the Turkish ethnic cleansing policy long before the conclusion of the Lausanne Convention. On the contrary, most of the Muslim inhabitants of Greece who were included in the exchange were still living in their birthplaces and were finally forced to emigrate, not because of military operations or any other kind of persecutions against them, but in peacetime and in a methodical fashion following the guidelines set by the Lausanne Convention.¹² However, under the extremely unfavorable circumstances for the Greek side because of the Asia

Minor Disaster, the exchange of populations served the Greek government's urgent need to house the hundreds of thousands of Greek refugees in the abandoned Muslim premises.¹³

For the supervision and facilitation of the exchange, the Lausanne Convention provided for the creation of a Mixed Commission consisting of four Greeks, four Turks, and three neutral members chosen by the Council of the League of Nations from among the nationals of countries, which had not taken part in World War I. These neutral members were also to exercise in turn the Presidency of the Commission (Article 11).¹⁴ The convention granted the Mixed Commission extremely broad powers (Article 12) to take all measures necessary for the implementation of the convention's articles and to decide, by a simple majority of its members, all questions relating to thereto.

The commission was also the only competent body for carrying out the liquidation of the movable and immovable property of the persons subjected to the exchange (Article 12), since the rights of property and monetary assets of the latter were not to be prejudiced by the exchange (Articles 5, 8, 9, and 10). In order to serve this purpose, the commission had the right, after hearing the opinions of the interested parties, to determine the valuation of the movable and immovable property which was to be liquidated (Article 13). According to the procedure stipulated by Article 14, the commission was obliged to transmit to the owners in question a declaration stating their compensation for the properties of which they have been dispossessed. According to the same article, the total sums due on the total of these declarations would constitute a government debt from the country where the liquidation had taken place to the government of the country to which the emigrant belonged. Consequently, when the liquidation was completed, if the total sums were not balanced, the government in debt would have to pay the difference in cash. Finally, the persons subject to the exchange were in principle entitled to receive in the country to which they immigrated properties equal in value and of the same nature as those they had left behind.

In relation to property issues, the Greek delegation in Lausanne signed on 24 July 1923 a special Declaration as to the Muslim Properties in Greece. According to this declaration, which became known as the Ninth Declaration, the property rights of Muslims who were not included in the provisions of the Convention for the Exchange of Populations and who had left Greece (including the island of Crete) before 18 October 1912, or who had always resided outside Greece, were not to be prejudiced. Furthermore, these persons were to have the right to dispose of their properties, whereas the Greek government undertook the responsibility to cancel all exceptional measures against these properties as well as to return to their owners any revenues collected in the meantime. The declaration was made on condition of reciprocity in favor of Greek proprietors who had left Turkey before 12 October 1912 or who had always resided outside Turkey.

Problems Resulting from Implementation of the Lausanne Convention

Even though the Lausanne Convention tried to cover all aspects of the exchange of Greek-Turkish populations, a number of more or less serious problems relating to its implementation appeared almost immediately after its signing. Among these unresolved matters, the interpretation of Article 2, relating to persons exempted from the exchange, provided perhaps the most potent source of conflict between Athens and Ankara. Obviously wishing to reduce to the minimum the number of non-exchangeable Greeks, the Turkish delegation to the Mixed Commission maintained that the term "established" ("*établis*" in the original French text of the Lausanne Convention) could only apply to Greeks registered as citizens of Istanbul on the record books of the municipality under the 1914 Ottoman law of domicile. Despite the fact, however, that the Turkish demand appeared to be logical, in reality it was destined to lead to an extremely narrow interpretation of Article 2, thereby increasing the number of persons included in the exchange, since in the pre-1923 period only a small number of Greeks were actually registered on the Ottoman record books, preferring to register instead with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul).¹⁵

A similar problem to that of the *établis* was the question of about thirty to forty thousand non-exchangeable Greeks who had left Istanbul during the panic of September-October 1922, using different kind of passports (Ottoman, Greek, other European, etc.) or no official papers at all. Despite the fact, however, that according to Article 16 of the convention these persons were free to return to their domiciles, the Turkish government proclaimed that they were enemies of the Kemalist regime and consequently "undesirables," and so refused to consent to their return unless they possessed passports issued by the Turkish Republic. The prohibition of the return of such a great number of Greeks constituted a severe blow to the Greek community of Istanbul, since many of them were part of the city's social, economic, and spiritual elites. At the same time, the Turkish authorities started to confiscate and later sell the abandoned properties of the absent Greeks.¹⁶

The third—and perhaps most important—of the problems derived from the implementation of the Lausanne Convention was that of exchangeable property. Even though the convention stipulated the method of appraisal of these properties, it soon became obvious that this procedure was rather complicated and extremely slow. Greece and Turkey had, of course, great experience in similar matters, since in every territorial expansion of the Greek state at the expense of the Ottoman Empire there were cases of Muslim estates which had to be appraised, liquidated, etc. However, the circumstances after 1922 were extremely different, not only because the size of the properties and the number of persons involved was far greater than in the past, but also because there were claims from both sides, since the Lausanne Convention affected both Greeks of Turkey as well as Muslims of Greece. In addition, the situation was further complicated by the fact that most of the Greeks of Anatolia were swept away violently from their homelands and, as a result, the

stipulations of the convention had little or no practical effect as far as their properties were concerned.

One of the most striking examples of the difficulty of solving problems related to the liquidation of exchangeable properties was that of movable property, since even the definition of the term appearing in the convention became a matter of great dispute between the Greek and Turkish delegations to the Mixed Commission. Were unharvested crops, for example, or the material of burned buildings, the motor of a mill, or even tombstones to be considered as movable or immovable properties? In an attempt to solve the problem, the Mixed Commission defined as movable property "all things movable by their nature, regardless of the laws, usages, or customs according to which such things might be deemed . . . by reason of their destination, immovable."¹⁷ It was, however, evident that no definition could cover the wide range of cases that had to be examined from time to time.

For the Greek side, the question of movable property was of great importance, not only because of the estimated greater value of Greek movable properties in comparison to the Muslim ones, but also because of the extremely anomalous conditions under which the migration of the vast majority of Anatolian Greeks had been forced to leave their premises. As a result, many of the provisions of the Lausanne Convention were actually destined to remain a dead letter: Article 8 of the convention, for example, stipulated that any persons included in the exchange who were not able to take away all or part of their movable properties could leave them behind, and in that event the local authorities were required to draw up an inventory and valuation of the property left by them. Given the fact, however, that the convention was signed almost five months after the Asia Minor Disaster and the massive exodus of the Greek populations that followed it, it was almost impossible for any of these refugees to have proof of their abandoned movable properties. On the contrary, things were better for the Muslims of Greece and a few Greeks of Turkey who had emigrated regularly after the conclusion of the Lausanne Convention and under the auspices of the Mixed Commission¹⁸.

To make matters worse, problems also arose in relation to the appraisal and consequent liquidation of immovable property. From the very first stages of the function of the Mixed Commission, it became evident that the work of appraisal was far more difficult than anyone had originally imagined. Reliable data that could be used as a basis for any attempt at a just appraisal were only rarely available. Furthermore, the reliability of the emigrants' own declarations of their immovable property was often questioned, and it became obvious that any attempt to base any appraisal and final liquidation on these declarations was destined to create new and far more complicated problems.

Unsuccessful Attempts to Solve the Problems: The Agreements of Ankara (21 June 1925) and Athens (1 December 1926)

Realizing the urgent need to overcome these obstacles, the Greek and Turkish governments started negotiations. Thus, in January 1924 the sides

agreed to put into force Articles 65 and 66 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty (which were related to property issues) as well as the Declaration on Muslim Properties, regardless of the fact that the treaty had not yet come into effect.¹⁹ According to this agreement, the two governments undertook the responsibility to restore mutually to the Turkish nationals in Greece and to the Greek nationals in Turkey their immovable properties which had become the subject of exceptional measures since the outbreak of World War I.²⁰ However, implementation of the agreement met with great difficulties, mainly because of the inability of the Greek government to restore many of the properties to their owners, since these properties already had been distributed to refugees and rural tenants.²¹ As a result, the Turkish government resorted in April 1924 to reprisals, ceasing to restore properties to Greek nationals in Asia Minor.²²

Bilateral negotiations resumed in June 1924, and in the beginning of the following month the two sides reached a new agreement, according to which the Greek government secured the right to acquire, upon payment, landed properties occupied by refugees or farmers and which were indispensable for the settlement of refugees. On the contrary, Greece undertook the responsibility to restore all other properties to their owners, whereas at the same time the Turkish government was obliged to restore the properties of Greek nationals which had been confiscated by the Turkish authorities. Last but not least, the preparation of a draft resolution to be taken by the Mixed Commission in relation to the execution of Article 16 of the Lausanne Convention seemed to pave the way for the return of the absent Greeks of Istanbul to their premises and the subsequent restoration of their property rights.²³ Despite the fact, however, that the agreement was approved by the Greek government, which had already shown its intention to remove approximately forty thousand of the total one hundred thousand refugees from Western Thrace,²⁴ new problems surfaced as a result of the publication of the new Turkish law for travels, as the latter posed great obstacles to the return of the absent Istanbul Greeks to their premises.²⁵

In reality, most of the disagreements between the two sides were related to the interpretation of the much-disputed term "établissements" of Article 2 of the Lausanne Convention.²⁶ Thus, despite the fact that on 4 September 1924, the neutral members of the Mixed Commission decided unanimously in favor of the Greek view, the prolonged negotiations between Athens and Ankara would come to a dead end.²⁷ Two months later, Turkish prime minister Ismet Pasha made clear that he wished to sign an agreement with the Greek government for the restoration of properties of Greek and Turkish nationals, leaving at the same time the question of implementation of Article 16 of the Lausanne Convention to the decision of the Mixed Commission. Naturally, the Greek government refused to consent to the separation of the two issues,²⁸ thus leaving little hope that any kind of compromise could be reached in the near future.

The tension in Greek-Turkish relations reached its peak in January 1925, when the Turkish government decided to expel from Turkey the newly elected ecumenical patriarch Constantine VI, suggesting that he was exchangeable according to Article 2 of the Lausanne Convention, despite the fact that

the Mixed Commission—the only competent body under the convention—had not decided on the subject of his exchangeability.²⁹ The reaction in Greece was vigorous.³⁰ Constantine was received in Thessaloniki by thousands of people who demanded vengeance on the Turks, and similar demonstrations took place in Athens.³¹ Nevertheless, the Greek government under Andreas Michalakopoulos was not willing to push things to the limit and resorting to war, as some members of the opposition and part of the public opinion wanted. On the contrary, Athens decided to bring the matter to the Council of the League of Nations,³² which in turn requested from the Permanent Court of International Justice an advisory opinion.³³

The decision of the Greek government to internationalize the issue of the expulsion of the ecumenical patriarch would soon prove fruitful. Negotiations between Athens and Ankara resumed, and in May 1925 the two sides reached an agreement, according to which Constantine was forced to resign from his throne in return for explicit recognition by the Turkish government of the non-exchangeability of all the other members of the Holy Synod. Consequently, the Greek government withdrew its appeal to the League of Nations, and Basil III was elected ecumenical patriarch, succeeding Constantine.³⁴

The solution to the question of the patriarch paved the way for a Greek-Turkish agreement in relation to all the problems which resulted from the implementation of the Lausanne Convention for the Exchange of Populations. Indeed, on 21 June 1925, the heads of the Greek and the Turkish delegations to the Mixed Commission, Georgios Exindariis and Hamdi Bey, respectively, signed the Agreement of Ankara. In reality, the Agreement of Ankara did not modify greatly the conditions which had been agreed a year earlier, with one significant exemption: whereas according to the old draft the Turkish government was bound to restore all the properties of Greek nationals in Turkey, according to the new agreement the Turkish government had the power to purchase these properties for the same reasons and under the same conditions as those provided for the purchase of Muslim properties by the Greek government.³⁵

Furthermore, the agreement included a draft of a decision, to be adopted by the Mixed Commission, concerning the interpretation of Articles 2 and 16 of the Lausanne Convention. According to this draft, all non-exchangeable persons who were present in Istanbul and Western Thrace were to be recognized as *établis* by the Turkish and Greek governments, respectively; subsequently, these persons were to have full property rights. However, according to Article 4 of the draft, the two governments had the right to refuse the return to their domiciles of persons who had departed without using regular passports. Even though Article 4 was based on reciprocity, it was obvious that in fact it concerned mainly the thirty to forty thousand non-exchangeable Greeks of Istanbul who had left the city and who did not have regular passports of the Turkish Republic.³⁶

However, the Agreement of Ankara—which, according to Venizelos, was for the Greek side “the next best after the Lausanne Convention”³⁷—was never actually put into effect. A few days after its conclusion, the neutral members of the Mixed Commission informed the Greek and Turkish governments that they were unable to vote for the draft decision, since its

provisions, and especially those relating to implementation of Article 16 of the Lausanne Convention, were in fact in disagreement with the letter of the convention itself. At the same period of time, the Greek government under Michalakopoulos was overthrown by General Theodoros Pangalos, who imposed his dictatorship in Greece. Pangalos, in view of the heavy protests of the Greeks from Istanbul who appealed to the League of Nations, hesitated to implement the Agreement of Ankara.³⁸ In fact, the Greek dictator was in favor of a tougher policy toward Turkey, as he had never abandoned his dreams for recapturing Eastern Thrace and possibly a part of Asia Minor itself. As a result, Greek-Turkish relations deteriorated, and the Agreement of Ankara remained a dead letter.

In order to find a way out of the deadlock, the ministers of foreign affairs of Greece and Turkey, Konstantinos Rentis and Tevfik Rüstü Bey, respectively, met in Geneva and agreed on the need for certain modifications of some aspects of the Ankara Agreement.³⁹ As a result, a new round of bilateral negotiations began which, in fact, tended to revise the Agreement of Ankara. However, the two sides found it difficult to reach a new agreement. Even so, the fall of Pangalos's dictatorship in August speeded up the process, which resulted in the conclusion of the Agreement of Athens on 1 December 1926.

According to Article 1 of the Agreement of Athens, the Greek government acquired the right to buy all immovable properties necessary for the settlement of refugees and rural tenants which belonged to Muslim beneficiaries of the so called Ninth Declaration (that is, the Declaration as to the Muslim Properties in Greece) and to Turkish nationals, with the exception of properties located in Western Thrace. Correspondingly, the Turkish government had the right to acquire all Greek properties in Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace (but not in Istanbul) belonging to Greek beneficiaries of the Ninth Declaration up to the value of the properties which the Greek government was to acquire (Article 2). The Agreement of Athens provided for the establishment of a system of appraising the properties which were about to be acquired by the two governments. After the end of the appraisal, the value of these properties were to be balanced and, in case the Greek government should be found a debtor, it would have to pay the debt in cash to the Turkish government, using for this reason the surplus of the revenues controlled by the International Financial Commission, not to exceed the total amount of £500,000 (Articles 5 and 6).⁴⁰ Finally, the two contracting parties agreed that all the provisions of the Agreement of Ankara relating to the execution of Articles 2 and 16 of the Lausanne Convention were to be submitted to the Mixed Commission in order to take the form of a decision by the commission (Article III of the adjunct Declaration).

Obviously, the Agreement of Athens was much more favorable to Turkey—and much less favorable to Greece—than the Agreement of Ankara. In the eighteen months that lapsed between the conclusion of the two agreements, Greece had to make significant concessions, which to a great extent reflected the difficult negotiating position in which Greek diplomacy found itself as a result of the extremely unsuccessful foreign policy of the Pangalos dictatorship.⁴¹ Given these unfavorable circumstances, it was clear that by

signing the Agreement of Athens, Greece, in fact, made special sacrifices in order to secure the maintenance of the Agreement of Ankara, which in reality had remained a dead letter, mainly because of the reluctance of Pangalos's regime to implement it.

As a result of the decision of both governments to solve the problems relating to the implementation of the Lausanne Convention, the Agreement of Athens was soon ratified by both the Greek Parliament (25 February 1927) and the Turkish National Assembly (5 March 1927).⁴² Despite, however, the initial goodwill of both governments to implement the Agreement of Athens, new problems soon arose. The Greek government refused to restore the properties to some of the 119 Muslim beneficiaries of the Ninth Declaration who according to tangible proof were not lawful claimants under the declaration, since they were Greek citizens and should thus be regarded as exchangeable (for example, one had been a candidate for the Greek Parliament, and another had been a mufti in Greece after 1913).⁴³ As expected, in retaliation the Turkish government not only ceased restoring properties in Istanbul belonging to non-exchangeable Greeks or Greek nationals, but also resorted once again to illegal confiscations of Greek property in the former Ottoman capital city.⁴⁴ At the same time, the Turks tried to pose new obstacles to the procedure of recognition of the status of *établis* for many Greek residents of Istanbul.⁴⁵

Thus, the vicious circle of reprisals and counter-reprisals was once again resumed, as a result of an obvious lack of mutual confidence. Athens and Ankara did not trust each other and seemed unwilling to implement the agreement, uncertain of the other's intention to do so. The two governments often blamed each other for failure or unwillingness to comply with the agreement, but it was obvious that in reality both sides were to blame. In this context, the Greek-Turkish negotiations that resumed in December 1927 would not reach a new agreement, despite the fact that in the early months of 1928 Italian diplomacy under the personal guidance of Italian prime minister Benito Mussolini tried to act as a mediator between Greece and Turkey.⁴⁶

Final Settlement: The Convention of Ankara (10 June 1930)

In the summer of 1928, Venizelos became prime minister of Greece, an event that was to prove crucial in the prolonged but thus far unsuccessful Greek-Turkish negotiations. One of Venizelos's main interests was to change the course of Greek foreign policy, and in this context he was determined to pursue a Greek-Turkish rapprochement.⁴⁷ Indeed, on 30 August 1930, only eleven days after his victory in the Greek elections,⁴⁸ Venizelos sent two similar letters to Turkish prime minister Ismet Pasha and to minister of foreign affairs Tevfik Rüstü Bey, in which he suggested that a Greek-Turkish rapprochement was actually possible if the two governments could find a mutually acceptable solution to the abeyances related to the implementation of the Lausanne Convention.⁴⁹ Reacting favorably to Venizelos's suggestions, the Turkish side answered that they were ready to resume negotiations.⁵⁰

At that time, the Greek government seemed to be convinced that a new agreement with Turkey could be reached only if the two sides accepted in principle the lump set-off of Greek and Turkish properties provided by the Agreement of Athens.⁵¹ At the same time, however, the Greek side was not ready to accept such a method unless the Turks recognized at least all the present Greek inhabitants of Istanbul as *établis*.⁵² It was obvious that the Greek government was ready to make significant concessions in order to secure a final and mutually acceptable settlement of all the abeyances related to the exchange of populations. Despite the fact, however, that Greece was still in a weaker negotiating position than Turkey, Athens was not prepared to accept every single demand on the part of Ankara.

Despite the initial optimism, however, in the spring of 1929 Greek-Turkish negotiations seemed to have reached a deadlock. The Greeks were disappointed by the fact that during the negotiations, the Turkish authorities continued to confiscate Greek properties in Istanbul.⁵³ Trying to find a way out of the impasse, the two governments asked the neutral members of the Mixed Commission to submit proposals for the solution of the problems that remained unresolved. Indeed, the neutrals went to Ankara, where the negotiations continued with little success, and submitted their proposals, which were articulated around four main points: (1) the two governments would keep most of the properties which were already in their hands; (2) the Turkish government would have to return to their owners all the seized properties in Istanbul which belonged to Greek nationals; (3) the Greek government would have to pay an amount of money which, according to what the neutrals had told the Greek ambassador in Ankara, Ioannis Papas, would not exceed £400,000; and (4) all persons present in Istanbul and Western Thrace would be immediately recognized as *établis*.⁵⁴

Even though the neutrals' proposals seemed to offer the basis for a general Greek-Turkish compromise, the conclusion of a new agreement was in reality a far more difficult task than it appeared to be. The Turks insisted that all Greek inhabitants of Istanbul who had left the city without using passports issued by the Turkish Republic should not be allowed to return to their domiciles,⁵⁵ thus trying to exclude from the return even those persons who had departed from Istanbul with regular Ottoman passports. As it should have been expected, this Turkish demand brought new tension in the relations between the two governments. Furthermore, the situation was exacerbated by continued seizure of Greek properties by the Turkish authorities, both in Istanbul and in Asia Minor.⁵⁶ Thus, in the last days of July 1929 negotiations came to an end, and the problems remained unresolved.

Despite the disappointment from the course of Greek-Turkish negotiations, Venizelos insisted on the need to reach an agreement on all pending issues related to the Lausanne Convention. Indeed, a new round of negotiations began in November 1929 immediately after the appointment of Spyridon Polychroniades as the new Greek ambassador to Ankara. According to the instructions given to Polychroniades by the Greek government, it was clear that the latter believed that only through mutual concessions could all the pending questions be settled.⁵⁷

Polychroniades' appointment was about to prove crucial and a real turning point in the course of Greek-Turkish negotiations. Working systematically, Polychroniades gained the trust of the Turkish government and, in a relatively short period of time, managed to find solutions to most of the problems—including that of the Ottoman passports⁵⁸—that a few months earlier had led the bilateral negotiations to an impasse. Polychroniades also skillfully used the Italian mediation as a means of overcoming the last obstacles that were created because of the not infrequent inconsistency of the Turkish government and, at the same time, managed to eliminate any second thoughts on the part of the Greek government about the need for compromise.⁵⁹ As a result, on 10 June 1930 Polychroniades and Tefvik Rüstü Bey finally signed the Ankara Convention, which sought not only to resolve all pending issues, but also to avoid as much as possible those questions of interpretation which in the immediate past had prevented the implementation of prior agreements.

According to the Convention of Ankara, the immovable and movable property left by Muslim and Greek exchangeable persons in Greece and Turkey would be transferred in complete ownership to the Greek and Turkish government, respectively. Furthermore, according to Articles 5 and 6, the two governments acquired full ownership of the properties that belonged to beneficiaries of the Ninth Declaration, that is, to persons who had left Greece and Turkey before 18 October 1912 and as a result were non-exchangeable. In the same context, immovable properties of Turkish nationals in Greece—with the exception of immovable properties which had already been restored to their owners—passed to the full ownership of the Greek government, while immovable properties belonging to Greek nationals in Turkey—with the exception of those immovable properties which were situated within the zone of Istanbul that had been excluded from the exchange—passed to the full ownership of the Turkish government. Subsequently, the Greek and Turkish governments also acquired the movable property of Turkish and Greek nationals, respectively, which had been seized and liquidated after the Lausanne Peace Treaty went into effect (Articles 7 and 8).

The Ankara Convention also dealt with the thorny issue of the *établis* of Istanbul and Western Thrace and their rights and properties. Thus, according to Articles 10 and 14 of the convention, all persons who were actually present in the non-exchangeable zones of Istanbul and Western Thrace, regardless of the date of their arrival there or their place of birth, were recognized as *établis* and consequently excluded from the exchange. What is more, all persons exempt from the exchange who had left Istanbul and Western Thrace using passports issued by the Greek and Turkish Republics, respectively, were also recognized as *établis*. The wives, minor children of both genders, and unmarried adult daughters whose family head was recognized as *établis* had the right to join the latter in Istanbul or Western Thrace. The same rule applied to widowed mothers whose underage sons were recognized as *établis*. Moreover, the wives, minor children, and unmarried adult daughters recognized as *établis* whose family head was present in Istanbul or Western Thrace were not bound to quit their domiciles. At the same time, the two governments undertook the responsibility to repeal all measures which had prevented the exercise of rights of all persons recognized as *établis*, including the right to

get married, acquire and sell property, and move freely (Articles 11 and 15). As an exception, however, to this general rule, the Greek and Turkish governments acquired in complete ownership (1) the immovable and movable property belonging to persons who, even though they were non-exchangeable, had left Western Thrace and Istanbul without using passports of the Greek and Turkish Republics, respectively; and (2) all immovable and movable property situated outside the non-exchangeable zones of Western Thrace or Istanbul, respectively, which belonged to present Muslim or Greek *établis* or to persons who had the right to return to their domiciles (Articles 12 and 16).

Within a month of the coming into effect of the Ankara Convention, the Greek government was obliged to place at the disposal of the Mixed Commission a sum of £425,000, from which £150,000 was to be used to indemnify Greeks established at Istanbul for properties situated outside the non-exchangeable zone of the former Ottoman capital which were transferred to the ownership of the Turkish government, £150,000 to indemnify Muslims established in Western Thrace for their properties transferred to the ownership of the Greek government, and finally £125,000 to be remitted by the Mixed Commission to the Turkish government in three installments (Article 20). The Greek government also undertook the responsibility to place at the disposal of the Mixed Commission another £15,000 to indemnify Muslims established in Western Thrace whose properties were not to be restored to their owners by the Greek authorities (Article 22). Thus, the amount of money owed by Greece was raised to a total of £440,000, which was to be covered by the £500,000 deposited by the Greek government as a security to the Turkish government according to Article 6 of the Agreement of Athens (Article 21).

Unlike the Agreements of Ankara (21 June 1925) and Athens (1 December 1926), the Convention of Ankara was actually implemented, thus offering a solid basis for the final settlement of all major disputes related to the Lausanne Convention for the Exchange of Greek-Turkish populations. In reality, the Ankara Convention did nothing more than confirm all the *faits accomplis* of the past. From this point of view it can be argued that the convention was more favorable to Turkey than Greece, since it was evident that the properties of the Greeks who had left Turkey at various times were of much higher value than the properties of the Muslims who had left Greece, the former being three times as many as the latter. This obvious disequilibrium caused severe reactions in Greece, especially among the Greek refugees from Asia Minor, Pontus, and Eastern Thrace.⁶⁰ However, as Venizelos repeatedly stated, Greece had to sign the convention in order to clear up the differences with Turkey, even if Athens was to pay much of the cost, since that was the only possible way, on the one hand, of securing the Greek population of Istanbul who had suffered so much due to the tension in Greek-Turkish relations and, on the other, of paving the way for a political rapprochement between Greece and Turkey.⁶¹

Venizelos was right in predicting that the solution of the bilateral problems relating to the implementation of the Lausanne Convention for the Exchange of Populations would facilitate Greek-Turkish rapprochement. In the last days of October 1930 (less than four months after the conclusion of the Ankara Convention) Venizelos, accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs

Andreas Michalakopoulos, paid an official visit to Turkey. On 30 October 1930 a Greek-Turkish Pact of Friendship was signed in Ankara,⁶² establishing the official basis of an entente cordiale which served as the foundation of Greek foreign policy in the following decade.

Conclusion

"The year 1930," declared British ambassador in Athens Patrick Ramsay in his annual report,

marks the conclusion of over five centuries of hostility between Greeks and Turks. This remarkable achievement is almost entirely due to the moral courage of M. Venizelos in accepting the responsibility for sacrificing the claims of the Greek refugees, without which no solution of the financial disputes between the two countries could have been found. In this he was really sacrificing nothing more substantial than illusory hopes, because nobody supposed that the Turks could ever be brought to pay, whatever the rights of the refugees to compensation under the Treaty of Lausanne. But it was only the dominating personality of M. Venizelos and the overwhelming strength of his Government's position in Parliament which enabled the long negotiations to be brought to a successful conclusion, and ensured the ratification of the agreements signed at [Ankara] on the [30th] October [1930].⁶³

It was a fair judgment. The Convention of Ankara brought a definite end to a series of ill-fated negotiations and agreements. Even though the compromise seems to have been much more painful for Greece, it is doubtful whether the full implementation of the Lausanne Convention, which was indeed much more favorable to Greek interests, was actually possible, since, on the one hand, the Turkish government was not willing to execute the provisions which were not to its benefit, and, on the other, Greece found it difficult for practical reasons to fulfill some of its obligations resultant from the Lausanne Convention and the Declaration as to the Muslim Properties (the Ninth Declaration). Furthermore, in Venizelos's view, the settlement of Greek-Turkish disputes was not the final goal, but rather the means to effect the much broader goal of establishing a cooperation between Athens and Ankara that would serve as the basis for Greek foreign policy in the years to come. Only through this prism is it possible to understand fully the reasons why Venizelos was ready to make financial concessions in order to achieve diplomatic benefits, not to mention his desire to secure the future of the Greek minority of Istanbul.

The new spirit of Greek-Turkish conciliation very soon proved to be quite effective. Thus, despite the initial hostility of the Greek opposition and, most importantly, the refugees, toward the June 1930 Convention, gradually it became obvious that Venizelos's policy was gaining supporters. The cordial reception accorded by the Greek people (including most of the refugees) to Turkish prime minister Ismet Pasha and minister of foreign affairs Tevfik Rüstü Bey when they visited Athens in October 1931 (just a year after the con-

clusion of the Friendship Pact) proved that the policy of Greek-Turkish cooperation was becoming popular with Greek public opinion and accepted as the fundamental basis of Greek diplomacy by all the successive anti-Venizelist Greek governments throughout the 1930s. The conclusion of two more political agreements in September 1933 and April 1938 further expanded Greek-Turkish cooperation. In this context, Greece and Turkey formed quite a solid diplomatic relationship until the outbreak of World War II, as Turkey refrained from honoring its obligations toward Greece when the latter was attacked and subsequently invaded by the armed forces of the Axis. Instead of helping Greece, Turkey preferred to play the role of the "evasive neutral."⁶⁴

NOTES

1. Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 1983), 132-33.

2. According to the official Greek census of 1928, 1,104,216 from Asia Minor, Pontus, Eastern Thrace, and Istanbul had moved to Greece, of whom only 86,422 (7.8 percent) before and 1,017,794 (92.2 percent) after the Asia Minor Disaster; see Hellenic Republic, Ministry of National Economy, *Γενική Στατιστική Υπηρεσία της Ελλάδος: Στατιστικά αποτελέσματα της απογραφής του πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος της 15-16 Μαΐου 1928* (General statistical survey of Greece: Statistical results of the population census of Greece of 15-16 May 1928) (Athens: National Printing Office, 1933), 1:46, from which the figures of the following table are extracted:

| | Before the Asia Minor Disaster | After the Asia Minor Disaster | Total |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Asia Minor | 37,728 | 589,226 | 626,954 |
| Pontus | 17,528 | 164,641 | 182,169 |
| Eastern Thrace | 27,057 | 229,578 | 256,635 |
| Istanbul | 4,109 | 34,349 | 38,458 |
| Total | 86,422 | 1,017,794 | 1,104,216 |

3. League of Nations, Official Journal, November 1922, pp. 1140-41.

4. *Ibid.*, January 1923, p. 127.

5. Eleftherios Venizelos Archive, Benaki Museum (hereafter EVA), 173/268, Venizelos to Nansen, [London], 17 October 1922. For the firm decision of the Kemalist regime to expel all Greeks from Turkey, see also EVA, 173/269, Venizelos to Kepetzi, Lausanne, 17 January 1923.

6. League of Nations, Official Journal, January 1923, p. 127.

7. Stephen P. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), 338.

8. For the text of the Lausanne Convention in English, see Dimitri Pentzopoulos, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and Its Impact on Greece* (London: Hurst, 2002), 257-63.

9. It should be pointed out that, whereas the Peace Treaty was multilateral, the Convention for the Exchange of Populations was bilateral, as the only contracting parties were Greece and Turkey.

10. As a result of Article 14 of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, signed on 24 July 1923, the Greek inhabitants of the islands of Imbros and Tenedos were also excluded from the exchange. According to the same article, these islanders were granted wide local autonomy, which, however, was never respected by the Turkish government. For more details on the history of these two islands after 1923, see Alexis Alexandris, "Imbros and Tenedos: A Study of Turkish Attitudes toward Two Ethnic Greek Island Communities since 1923," *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 7 (1980): 5-21.

11. For more details on this matter, see Yannis G. Mourellos, "The 1914 Persecutions and the First Attempt at an Exchange of Minorities between Greece and Turkey," *Balkan Studies* 26 (1985): 389-413.

12. See, for example, Ioannis Politis Archive, Benaki Museum (hereafter IPA), 228/14, Politis to Rentis, no. 7212, Constantinople (Istanbul), 14 October 1925.

13. EVA, 173/268, Venizelos to Nansen, [London], 17 October 1922. See also Diplomatic and Historical Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter AGMFA), 1923, 2.2, Venizelos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 375, Lausanne, 3 December 1922.

14. It should be pointed out that on 7 July 1927, by agreement between them and with the view of reducing the expenditure of the Mixed Commission, the Greek and Turkish governments decided to reduce their representatives on the commission from four to two members for each country. Thus, from that day on the Mixed Commission had seven members (two Greeks, two Turks, and three neutrals) instead of eleven (Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, 356).

15. Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations (1918-1974)*, 2nd ed. (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992), 113.

16. AGMFA, 1928, B/61, "Σημείωμα περί του μη υπαγομένου εις ανταλλαγὴν Ἑλληνισμοῦ τῆς Τουρκίας καὶ εἰδικώτερον του ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει" (Note concerning the non-exchangeable Greeks of Turkey and more specifically those of Constantinople), 1 June 1926.

17. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, 446-49.

18. According to the official statistics of the Mixed Commission, only 189,916 Greeks (out of approximately 1,100,000) were transferred under the auspices of the commission, whereas 355,635 Muslims of Greece (practically almost every single one of them) were transferred under the auspices of the commission (Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, 437-39).

19. The treaty did not officially go into effect until 6 August 1924.

20. AGMFA, 1929-1930, B/68/I, "Ἱστορικὸν τῶν Ἑλληνοτουρκικῶν διαπραγματεύσεων ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰουνίου 1923 μέχρι τῆς υπογραφῆς τῆς Συμφωνίας τῆς Ἀγκύρας τῆς 10 Ἰουνίου 1930" (History of Greek-Turkish negotiations from June 1923 until the signature of the Ankara Convention of 10 June 1930). See also AGMFA, 1924, A/5/VI, 2, Papas to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Unnumbered, Athens, 4 July 1924.

21. AGMFA, 1929, B/68, Tsamadou to all Greek Embassies, no. 13076, Athens, 14 November 1929.

22. AGMFA, 1927, A.A.K., Politis to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 14035, Ankara, 19 April 1924.

23. AGMFA, 1924, A/5/VI, 2, Papas to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Unnumbered, Athens, 4 July 1924; "Projet de résolution à prendre par la Commission Mixte."
24. AGMFA, 1927, A.A.K., Kafandaris to General Administration of Thrace, no. 2049, [Athens], 10 February 1924.
25. AGMFA, 1926, 60.1, Diamantopoulos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 1792, Peran, 27 July 1924; Papas to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 1355, Peran, 30 July 1924; [Illegible signature] to Greek Embassy in Ankara, no. 28593, Athens, 8 August 1924.
26. AGMFA, 1926, 60.1, Exindaris to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 2069, Peran, 9 October 1924.
27. AGMFA, 1929-1930, B/68/I, "Ιστορικών των Ελληνοτουρκικών διαπραγματεύσεων."
28. AGMFA, 1927, A.A.K., "Ιστορικών των διαπραγματεύσεων προς συνολόγησιν των Ελληνοτουρκικών Συμφωνιών Ιούλιος 1924-Δεκέμβριος 1926" (History of the negotiations for the conclusion of Greek-Turkish Agreements June 1924-December 1926).
29. For more details on the subject, see Alexis Alexandris, "The Expulsion of Constantine VI: The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Greek-Turkish Relations (1924-1925)," *Balkan Studies* 22 (1981): 333-63.
30. IPA, 228/13, Michalakopoulos to Greek Embassies in Paris, London, Rome, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Washington, no. 1318, Athens, 30 January 1925.
31. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul*, 162.
32. IPA, 228/13, Michalakopoulos to Greek Embassy in Berne, Unnumbered, Athens, 7 February 1925.
33. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul*, 166-66.
34. *Ibid.*, 166-67; see also Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, 415-16.
35. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, 506-7.
36. AGMFA, 1929-1930, B/68/I, "Ιστορικών των Ελληνοτουρκικών διαπραγματεύσεων."
37. EVA, 173/281, Venizelos to Theotokas, [Athens], 3 March 1930.
38. AGMFA, 1929-1930, B/68/I, "Ιστορικών των Ελληνοτουρκικών διαπραγματεύσεων."
39. AGMFA, 1927, A.A.K., Rentis to General Consulate in Istanbul, no. 3213, Geneva, 17 September 1925.
40. The possibility of a balance payable by the Turkish government was actually excluded from Article 2 of the Agreement of Athens, which clearly stipulated that the acquisition of Greek properties by the Turkish government was to be made up to the value of the properties which the Greek government was to acquire.
41. For General Pangalos's foreign policy in general, see Harry Psomiades, "The Diplomacy of Theodoros Pangalos (1925-1926)," *Balkan Studies* 13 (1972): 3-26.
42. AGMFA, 1927, A.A.K., Diamantopoulos to Daveroni, no. 9643, [Istanbul], 14 March 1927.
43. AGMFA, 1929, B/68, Tsamadou to all Greek Embassies, no. 13076, Athens, 14 November 1929. See also AGMFA, 1929-1930, B/68/I, Tsamadou to Michalakopoulos, [Athens], 20 November 1929.

44. Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul*, 129. See also AGMFA, 1928, A/3, “Κτήματα εις μη ανταλλαξιμους ζώνας” (Properties in non-exchangeable regions), undated.

45. AGMFA, 1928, A/3, Diamantopoulos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 25926, Istanbul, 23 January 1928.

46. Antonis Klapsis, *Το ελληνoturκικό Οικονομικό Σύμφωνο της 10ης Ιουνίου 1930: Ο Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος και η δευτέτηση των εκκρεμοτήτων της Σύμβασης της Λωζάννης για την Ανταλλαγή των Πληθυσμών* (The Greek-Turkish Economic Pact of 10 June 1930: Eleftherios Venizelos and the settlement of abeyances deriving from the Convention of Lausanne for the exchange of populations) (Athens: Ekdoseis I. Sideris, 2010), 87-97. For more details about the Italian mediation, see Antonis Klapsis, *Ο Ανδρέας Μιχαλακόπουλος και η ελληνική εξωτερική πολιτική, 1926–1928* (Andreas Michalakopoulos and Greek foreign policy, 1926–1928) (Athens: Ekdoseis I. Sideris, 2009), 141-202.

47. For a detailed account of Venizelos’s diplomacy during the four years he remained in office, see Kostas A. Karamanlis, *Ο Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος και οι εξωτερικές μας σχέσεις, 1928–1932* (Eleftherios Venizelos and our foreign relations, 1928–1932) (Athens: Papazisis, 1995).

48. Venizelos and the political parties that supported him received a sensational 61.2 percent of the votes, thus securing 223 out of a total of 250 seats in the Greek Parliament.

49. EVA, 173/50, Venizelos to Ismet Pasha, Athens, 30 August 1928; Venizelos to Tevfik Rüstü Bey, Athens, 30 August 1928.

50. EVA, 173/50, Ismet Pasha to Venizelos, Ankara, 27 September 1928; Tevfik Rüstü Bey to Venizelos, Ankara, 27 September 1928.

51. AGMFA, 1929, A/3, [Politis], “Ελληνο-τουρκικάί διαφοραί” (Greek-Turkish differences), Athens, 18 October 1928. A copy of the same memo can also be found in EVA, 173/51.

52. AGMFA, 1929, A/3, [Untitled, undated, and unsigned memo].

53. AGMFA, 1928–1929, B/68, Tsamados to Greek Embassies in Rome, Paris, and London, no. 5188, Athens, 7 May 1929.

54. AGMFA, 1928–1929, B/68, Papas to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 750, Ankara, 17 May 1929.

55. AGMFA, 1929, B/68, Papas to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 1035, Ankara, 5 July 1929.

56. AGMFA, 1929, B/68, Sakellaropoulos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 1100, Beyoglou, 4 July 1929. See also AGMFA, 1928–1929, B/68, Niskos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 731, Smyrna, 8 July 1929; and Sakellaropoulos to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 1107, Beyoglou, 9 July 1929.

57. AGMFA, 1929–1930, B/68/I, “Οδηγίαι δοθείσαι εις τον Κον Πολυχρονιάδη” (Instructions given to Mr. Polychroniades).

58. The Turks agreed to allow all persons who had left Istanbul using a regular Ottoman passport to return to their domiciles but not to restore to them their seized properties. The total value of the properties was estimated at £50,000, which was to be paid by Greece and Turkey to the Greek owners; see AGMFA, 1929–1930, B/68/I, Polychroniades to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 1781, Ankara, 9 December 1929.

59. For more details, see Klapsis, *Το ελληνοτουρκικό Οικονομικό Σύμφωνο*, 143-79.

60. For more details about the reactions of the refugees, see *ibid.*, 208-25.

61. See, for example, the Greek newspapers *Ελεύθερον Βήμα*, 17 June 1930; and *Η Καθημερινή*, 17 June 1930.

62. For the full text of the Pact in French, see Foreign Office (Public Record Office) (hereafter FO), 371/14391, C 9142/8856/19, Clerk to Henderson, no. 456, Ankara, 15 December 1930.

63. FO, 371/15237, C 882/882/19, Ramsay to Henderson, "Annual Report, 1930," no. 49, Athens, 27 January 1931.

64. For more details on this subject, see Frank G. Weber, *The Evasive Neutral: Germany, Britain and the Quest for a Turkish Alliance in the Second World War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1979).