

THE “GREAT CATASTROPHE:” AN ANALYSIS OF THE GREEK MIGRATION FROM  
ASIA MINOR DURING AND FOLLOWING THE GRECO-TURKISH WAR OF 1919

Nicholas J. Tuzzolino

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Dr. Allyson Brantley

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## Introduction

[The Turks] put a lot of the people in the church inside the building, and tried to burn them. Burned the Orthodox church over there [in Anatolia]. ... There was smoke and everything and they were hurting, but it did not catch on fire. They put hay in the church, but because it was not dry, it didn't succeed. It didn't catch on fire. So then they took them out, somebody, I guess, came and they survive[d].<sup>1</sup>

This is how Anastasia Pavlidis responded when asked about what her parents went through before fleeing their home in Anatolia, which is today Western Turkey, during the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 to 1922. The Greco-Turkish War began in the aftermath of World War One, in which the Greeks invaded the Ottoman Empire to put a stop to the Greek Genocide, which had intensified in recent years.<sup>2</sup> The Greeks were supported by the Allies of WWI, who later signed the Treaty of Sèvres which “formalized the Greek presence in Asia Minor.”<sup>3</sup> Following the Greek occupation came the Greek offensive against the Young Turks, the revolutionary group born out of the fallen Ottoman Empire. Greece would achieve many victories, yet the tide of war drastically changed with the August 1922 Turkish counteroffensive, known as the Great Offensive. This counterattack would push the Greeks back to Smyrna, where the city was burned to the ground in September; the Greeks were forced to retreat in defeat. During this war, the Greek genocide would continue and immensely intensify after the Great Offensive. The Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923 would formalize the Turkish victory while the

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<sup>1</sup> Anastasia Pavlidis, Christina Pavlidis and Anastasios Pavlidis, June 13, 2021, in Neos Milotopos, Greece; Apple Voice Memos.

<sup>2</sup> Vasileios Th. Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, 1913–1923: A Comprehensive Overview,” *Genocide Studies International* 9, no. 1 (2015): 129, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26986016>.

<sup>3</sup> Stathis N. Kalyvas, *Modern Greece: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 71.

League of Nations sponsored Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations (Lausanne Convention) resulted in a compulsory population exchange of Greeks and Turks based on ethnicity and religion.<sup>4</sup> From 1919 to the end of 1924, roughly 1.4 million Greeks had left Anatolia: including Anastasia Pavlidis's parents. This astonishing movement of peoples begs the questions, "What factors caused the great migration of Greeks from Western Anatolia during and after the Greco-Turkish War of 1919? Furthermore, how has this great migration of approximately 1.4 million Greeks impacted Greece as a whole?" I argue that the Greek migration out of Asia Minor during the period of 1919 to 1922, and the postwar period up to May 1923, was largely due to the imminent dangers of war, fear of ethnic cleansing, or via forced removal: all of these factors cumulating into the Greek Genocide. The smaller migration that occurred in the post war years from May 1923 to 1924 was a result of the Lausanne Convention. Ultimately, this mass forced migration of approximately 1.4 million Greeks, primarily by the genocidal pressures, dramatically increased Greece's population, led to drastic political changes, bolstered the Greek economy, and reconstructed the nation's contemporary national memory.

### **Literature Review**

Although historians can agree on the general chronology of the Greco-Turkish war, they fundamentally cannot agree upon why the war actually began. Some crucial questions to understanding the war arise like, "Why did Greece invade Turkey and did the Greek Genocide play a role in the invasion?" Furthermore, some of the most important questions for this present research surround the population exchange: Who was exchanged, when, who, and why were they

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<sup>4</sup> Greece and Turkey - Convention concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations and Protocol, signed at Lausanne, January 30, 1923 [1925] LNTSer 14; 32 LNTS 75, <http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/LNTSer/1925/14.html>.

exchanged, and what role did ethnicity and religion play? Historians have responded to these questions in different ways, many times even contradicting one another. As will be reviewed, historians like Renée Hirschon have taken social and transnational approaches to respond to these questions. Others, like Stathis N. Kalyvas, have taken a cyclical approach. Some historians apply the Rational Actor and Organizational Process Models to a national approach, such as Vasileios Meichanetsidis. As will be discussed, this present paper aims to answer these questions using a social and transnational approach that places the Greek Genocide and the migrant experience at the center of the narrative.

When it comes to understanding the historiography of the Greco-Turkish war, one leading historian is Renée Hirschon, author of critical works *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe...* (1989), “Lausanne Convention” in *Immigration and Asylum...* (2005) and *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (2008). As these works have been cited numerous times in the sources used for this project, it is clear her works are critical to the field. Although all three are used in the present paper, the most influential that is subject to review is *Crossing the Aegean*. This work is fundamentally a social history, as it uses statistics and focuses on the experiences and lives of the Greek population residing in Anatolia before, during, and after their expulsion. Rather than letting statistics speak for themselves, Hirschon uses primary source evidence like, “Men aged between fifteen and forty-five were detained in the notorious labour battalions: many were sent on forced marches, or died of disease and malnutrition, and the active male population was decimated.”<sup>5</sup> Additionally, this is a work of transnational history. Although Anatolia is confined to the borders of Turkey,

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<sup>5</sup> Renée Hirschon, ed., *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*, 1st ed. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 5.

Hirschon points out that this region had no boundaries in the past; it was a region where Christian Greeks and Muslims lived freely together for millennia.<sup>6</sup> Her history expands across the Aegean Sea and into Greece from modern day Turkey, unconfined by political boundaries. However, Hirschon seems to neglect much of the war time experience of Greeks in her narrative, focusing more on the post war experiences. Nonetheless, she challenges the traditional Lausanne Narrative that states the population exchange occurred primarily from the convention in 1923, rather than prior. Hirschon uses primary sources to show that 1.2 out of the 1.4 million Greeks fled before the convention's exchange provisions took effect in May 1923.<sup>7</sup> *Crossing the Aegean* has been particularly helpful to the present paper because I have adopted a similar historical approach. Additionally, the challenge to the traditional Lausanne narrative has allowed this paper to more accurately explain the impacts of the convention.

Another critical historian and political scientist to both the field and this present project is Dr. Stathis N. Kalyvas, a Greek professor of political science at Oxford University. Author of *Modern Greece: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Dr. Kalyvas argues that in order to understand the full scope of the 2009 Recession in Greece, one first must acknowledge the “boom” and “bust” cycle of Greece's history. In the first chapter of his book, Dr. Kalyvas describes his cyclical historical approach: “I have identified a key recurring pattern in the course of Greek history, namely a succession of peculiar boom and bust cycles. These cycles begin with highly ambitious projects and produce in turn disastrous failures, extensive foreign bailouts, and ultimately positive outcomes.” His training as a political scientist may have led Dr. Kalyvas to take such an unorthodox approach. This approach is apparent throughout his book and shines

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<sup>6</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 235.

<sup>7</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 14.

through in his discussion of the Greco Turkish War. To conclude his history of the war, Dr. Kalyvas writes, “Once more, an ambitious project [to conquer Anatolia] ended with disaster, as the Balkan Wars’ territorial ‘boom’ was succeeded by the Anatolian ‘bust.’”<sup>8</sup> In the present project, this work will be used to supplement introductory information about the war, as Dr. Kalyvas does a thorough job of broadly describing the political context of the war, like Greece’s National Schism, along with the general history of the war. As a political scientist, however, Dr. Kalyvas fails to give attention to the Greek genocide in his discussion of the war, the population exchange, nor the aftermath of the war. However, Dr. Kalyvas gives the best account on the intimate impacts of the population exchange.<sup>9</sup> This section alone has made a tremendous impact on the present report’s section describing the impact of this war on Modern Greece.

And finally, there is Greek historian Vasileios Meichanetsidis, author of *The Genocide of the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, 1913–1923: A Comprehensive Overview*. In this article, Meichanetsidis “aims at providing an understanding of the genocide and a sense of the Ottoman projects of destruction that included Armenians, Assyrians/Arameans and Greeks... in an attempt at a total restructuring of Ottoman society and the creation of a Turkish Muslim national state.”<sup>10</sup> Although this article does not paint a positive picture of the new Turkish state, as it actually does the contrary, I argue that Meichanetsidis takes a nationalist approach because the ideas of nation building within confined political boundaries are present. Furthermore, this article certainly uses the Rational Actor Model by making the Young Turks and the late Ottoman

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<sup>8</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 74.

<sup>9</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 74.

<sup>10</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 104.

Empire historical actors in their own right while creating a “Turkey for Turks.”<sup>11</sup> At the same time, Meichanetsidis highlights the various levels of government and state sponsored organizations, such as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), who contribute to the creation of an ethnically and religiously homogeneous state, which resembles the Model of Organizational Process.<sup>12</sup> This source completely reshaped my understanding of the war by placing it within the context of the Greek Genocide. Without this article, my narrative would have separated the Greek Genocide and the Greco-Turkish War, when in reality the war was truly a continuation of the genocidal process.

This paper aims to take a social and transnational approach to history similar to Hirschon’s. The focus of this paper will be on the Greek refugee experience and their impact on Greece, not governments or politicians; however, these factors must inevitably be included as well. Like Hirschon, I plan to use statistical evidence and personal testimonies to support my narrative. Furthermore, like Hirschon, this narrative is fundamentally a transnational history, focusing on the region of Anatolia/Asia Minor, the Aegean Sea, and Greece. However, unlike Hirschon, I side more with Meichanetsidis when it comes to the impact of the Greek Genocide. My approach will place the Greek migrant experience within the greater context of the Greek Genocide, which ultimately would continue throughout the Greco-Turkish War; they are interconnected, not isolated conflicts.

### **The Greek Genocide: 1800-1919**

When discussing the Greco-Turkish War of 1919, it is important to note that the war was an increasingly violent continuation of the Greek Genocide which had been occurring for over a

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<sup>11</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 110.

<sup>12</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 113.

century. In an effort to provide this critical context, this section will briefly explain the Greek Genocide in two phases: before and during WWI.<sup>13</sup> The Greek Genocide has its roots in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth century alone, estimates show that “450,000 Ottoman Christians perished... through military “punitive actions” for alleged “rebellion” against the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>14</sup> By the turn of the century, the Ottoman Empire’s CUP instituted a “Reign of Terror” on the Christian populations.<sup>15</sup> Meichanetsidis writes that “Jews and Christians who were financially able were forced to pay the £40 prescribed for exemption, and those who were unable to pay were practically reduced to military servitude,” where they were forced to commit heinous atrocities against Christian populations.<sup>16</sup> Yet for CUP, their persuasion tactics were ineffective; they decided that the “Ottomanization” process must be done by force. They ultimately decided on the eve of WWI, that the “Christian elements ought to be exterminated.”<sup>17</sup>

The eruption of WWI marked a major turning point in the Greek Genocide, as the Turkish movement inside the Ottoman Empire began to take political control. The Young Turks worked with the CUP in order to create a “Turkey for Turks,” their official policy slogan.<sup>18</sup> This horrific mindset, in combination with the CUP’s increasing desire to Ottomanize the population, led to the worst chapter in the Greek Genocide up to that point in time. By May of 1915, “the Ottoman parliament adopted the Dispatchment and Settlement Law... authorizing the internal

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<sup>13</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 117.

<sup>14</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 117.

<sup>15</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 118.

<sup>16</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 118-119.

<sup>17</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 114.

<sup>18</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 110.



displacement through deportation of the empire's Armenian and Greek populations."<sup>19</sup> Following this law came the "Special Organization for the elimination of the evacuated populations," which began to create concentration camps by summer. Throughout the duration of WWI, "persecutions and massacres continued unabated and reached even greater numbers than in previous years;" no Greek man, woman, or child was spared.<sup>20</sup> By the end of the war, the Greek population had been ravaged and "more than 500,000... were expelled from their homes and deported to the interior, with much loss of life."<sup>21</sup> Sadly, the worst of their fears and hardship had yet to come.

### **War Time Migration: 1919-1923**

With the authorization from the Supreme Allied War Council, the victors of WWI, the Greek Army landed in Smyrna to put a stop to the genocide on May 15, 1919.<sup>22</sup> As previously mentioned, the Treaty of Sèvres formalized this presence.<sup>23</sup> With the Greek arrival came a new wave of "intercommunal violence between Christians and Muslims," which also served as a spark for the "emergence of Turkish nationalism."<sup>24</sup> Under Mustafa Kemal, the Young Turks "turn[ed] against both the remnants of the Empire and the Greek army, as well as the Anatolian Christian population."<sup>25</sup> The rise of Turkish Nationalism marked the turning point to the most

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<sup>19</sup> Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks," 123.

<sup>20</sup> Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks," 127.

<sup>21</sup> Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks," 128.

<sup>22</sup> Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks," 129.

<sup>23</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 71.

<sup>24</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 72.

<sup>25</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 72.

atrocious chapter of the Greek Genocide, which would continue in an even harsher fashion under Kemal than the Ottomans. I argue that the war time's pressures and the continuation of the Greek Genocide that led to the largest, forced migration of Christian Greeks from Anatolia to Greece.

To begin, it can be assumed that the pressures of war itself, separate from the Greek Genocide, very well could have caused a significant number of Anatolian Greeks to flee and or migrate to Greece. As seen today with the Syrian Refugee Crisis, when a war erupts and is fought within highly populated cities and towns, a large percentage of the population is bound to flee for their lives. This same logic can be applied to the Greco-Turkish War. As the Greeks marched through eastern Anatolia, and when the Turks marched back during the 1922 Great Offensive, it is inevitable that hundreds of Greeks fled the region due to these wartime pressures.

In addition to those who fled from Anatolia due to the war itself, I argue that the vast majority of those who migrated fled as a result of the Greek Genocide during the war. The Greek Genocide would intensify in two phases: with the initial outbreak of war and the August 1922 Great Offensive. In the month after the Greeks landed in Smyrna, reports of an intensified genocide began to arise. For example, in June, "more than 3,000 Greek men, women, and children in Aydin were massacred by the Turks, and the town was almost completely destroyed by fire."<sup>26</sup> If one recalls Anastasia Pavlidis' oral history from the introduction, they can quickly discover that fires were a critical aspect of the Greek Genocide. In the province of Bafra alone, not only was the population cut in half, but every single Greek settlement was deliberately burned to the ground.<sup>27</sup> Yet fires were not the only factor pushing the Greek population out of Anatolia. Outright massacres across Asia Minor began to be reported in "ever-increasing

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<sup>26</sup> Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks," 129.

<sup>27</sup> Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks," 129.

numbers” as the Greek offensive continued in 1920, leading to even greater migration.<sup>28</sup> Yet as previously discussed, their worst horrors waited.

Experts in the field, like Renée Hirschon, explain that the vast majority of Greeks fled during the Great Offensive of 1922.<sup>29</sup> But why? I argue that when the Young Turks launched their Great Offensive from August to September of 1922, they amplified the Greek Genocide; in part for their initial intentions of creating an ethnically homogenous Turkish state, yet to also “settle their scores” against the Greeks. Furthermore, in addition to the Greek Genocide, many Greeks fled for their lives upon hearing the news of Greek defeat and atrocities.<sup>30</sup> When the Greek army was forced to retreat, the Turks had free reign to do what they wanted over the newly conquered Greeks; this usually meant continued burnings and massacres. Dr. James L. Park describes the Smyrna massacre from on board a U.S. destroyer:

“All through the night, the roaring of the fire that took in the greater part of the city... the continuous wail of the 200,000 people on the quay that seemed to be doomed to be swallowed up in the flames when the fire would finally break through the waterfront, people throwing themselves into the sea to be drowned, to swim to the nearest ships, or to give up halfway out from exhaustion, the crash of falling buildings, the shots on the quay, homicidal and suicidal, all combined to make the night one long, horrible fiendish nightmare.”

Smyrna may be the most well documented example, but as discussed, fires and massacres were happening across Asia Minor before, during, and especially after the 1922 Great Offensive.

Although the Greeks had been defeated, because no formal treaty would be signed until July of 1923, the genocidal war and Greek flight would continue. As noted by Gülfem K. Iren,

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<sup>28</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 120.

<sup>29</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Renée Hirschon, “Lausanne Convention,” In *Immigration and Asylum: from 1900 to the Present*, ed. Matthew J Gibney, Randall Hansen (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 376.

an eyewitness to the Smyrna massacre, she watched as the “local Muslims settled their scores” against the Greeks whose army had committed atrocities while on the offensive.<sup>31</sup> She watched as the Turks took Greek men “in a column, their hands tied behind, and then shot them in the mountains. Every evening. Not just a day or two but for months and months.”<sup>32</sup> With the increased number of atrocities, Greek cities burning across Anatolia, and a lack of the Greek army to defend the population, it is perfectly clear as to why roughly 1.2 out of the 1.4 million Greeks who flooded into Greece had fled during this war time period.

### **Post War Migration: May 1923-1924**

The major post war migration of Greeks out of Asia Minor occurred as a result of the 1923 Lausanne Convention. Effective in May of 1923, this convention agreed that “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.”<sup>33</sup> Although Article II of the agreement excluded the “Greek inhabitants of Constantinople,” numbering about 90,000,<sup>34</sup> and the “Moslem inhabitants of Western Thrace,” most would ultimately end up fleeing out of fear of additional persecution. This agreement was egregiously inhumane. Not only would it legally allow the genocidal process to continue in Turkey, but it completely dehumanized the Greek and Turkish populations; no longer people, they merely became numbers to be “exchanged.” The Greek and Turkish populations were forced to take

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<sup>31</sup> Leyla Neyzi, “Remembering Smyrna/Izmir: Shared History, Shared Trauma,” *History & Memory* 20, no. 2 (2008): 114-116.

<sup>32</sup> Neyzi, “Remembering Smyrna/Izmir,” 123.

<sup>33</sup> Greece and Turkey - Convention concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations and Protocol, Article 1.

<sup>34</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 147.

little more than their lives and the clothes on their back to a foreign country, simply because of their religion. To the convention, however, it did not matter if the Greeks had been living in Asia Minor “since at least 1000 B.C;” the victors of war deserved the ethnically homogeneous state they desired.<sup>35</sup> Although exact statistics do not exist, taking estimates from Renée Hirschon,<sup>36, 37</sup> it can be determined that roughly 200,000 Greeks were expelled from their homes due to the Lausanne Convention after May of 1923. Although this is an extremely large number of people to be inhumanely “exchanged” like a commodity, it must be reiterated that the violent, genocidal war period saw the expulsion of a million more Greeks than this compulsory exchange.

### **Results of Mass Migration**

The first major result of this forced population exchange was the massive population gain. Before the war began in 1919, the Greek state only had a population of roughly “4.5 million” people.<sup>38</sup> Granted that roughly 1.4 million Greeks were involved in this mass migration, this means the Greek state had a population influx of roughly 31 percent by the end of 1924. This enormous influx of refugees with nowhere to go but makeshift refugee camps, cramped public spaces, and vacant buildings led to immense hardship.<sup>39</sup> These refugees, living in abhorrent conditions with little government and international support from the Red Cross, died at extremely high rates. According to estimates by Hirschon, there were roughly “6,000 deaths per

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<sup>35</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 235.

<sup>36</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Hirschon, “Lausanne Convention,” 377.

<sup>38</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 14.

<sup>39</sup> Renée Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The social life of Asia Minor refugees in Piraeus*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 36.

month in the first nine months after the influx” of Greeks.<sup>40</sup> Using official League of Nations reports from 1926, Hirschon is able to determine that “from 1923 to 1925 the proportion of deaths to births was 3 to 1; in some parts of the country about 20 percent of the refugees died within a year.”<sup>41</sup>

In the years during and following this great forced migration of Greeks, these refugees took it upon themselves to create new cities and municipalities across the nation. With the help of Greece’s new “resettlement policy,”<sup>42</sup> over “2,000 new villages were created.”<sup>43</sup> In memory of their lost homelands in Asia Minor, “a considerable number of these new settlements were named after the refugees’ places of origin.”<sup>44</sup> For example, Athens alone saw the creation of three new refugee municipalities named after their original homes in Asia Minor: “Nea Smyrni, Nea Philadelphia and Nea Ionia.”<sup>45</sup> To return to Anastasia Pavlidis, her village is named for the same reason. Residing nearby Thessaloniki, a major refugee city itself, Anastasia Pavlidis lives in Neos Milotopos, meaning “New Milotopos.” Her village was founded by refugees of the Asia Minor Disaster and is inhabited by their descendants. It must be noted, however, that life in the

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<sup>40</sup> Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe*, 37.

<sup>41</sup> Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe*, 37.

<sup>42</sup> Ayttek Soner Alpan, “But the Memory Remains: History, Memory and the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange,” *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 9 (2013): 225, <https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.295>.

<sup>43</sup> Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe*, 40.

<sup>44</sup> Alpan, “But the Memory Remains,” 225.

<sup>45</sup> Alpan, “But the Memory Remains,” 225.

new cities and municipalities was challenging; from the very start, “these new housing schemes were [severely] overcrowded.”<sup>46</sup>

Moving away from the harsh living conditions these refugees had to endure, their impact on national politics must be analyzed. The government that was in power during and following the Asia Minor Catastrophe were the Royalists under King Constantine I.<sup>47</sup> As agreed upon by political scientist and historian Kalyvas<sup>48</sup> and Yildirim,<sup>49</sup> the refugee population heavily blamed the Royalists for their abhorrent plight and the loss of their homelands. Additionally, the Royalist camp openly “attacked the refugees” in political speeches, causing greater resentment.<sup>50</sup> As a result, these refugees would bolster the numbers of the Republican camp led by Eleftherios Venizelos. Ultimately, the Greek refugees would play a critical role in the 1924 elections, which would result in the abolition of the monarchy and the birth of modern Greek democracy.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, the Greek refugees would have an astoundingly positive impact on the Greek economy. Despite the initial economic drawbacks due to the cost of settlement and aid for the refugees, “the refugee population provided a hugely increased market and labour force.”<sup>52</sup> Even more importantly, this abundant labor force was from skilled occupations. As calculated by

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<sup>46</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 16.

<sup>47</sup> Onur Yildirim, “The 1923 Population Exchange, Refugees and National Historiographies in Greece and Turkey,” *East European Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (2006): 48, <https://www.proquest.com/openview/b2df76a66b8bcd63b52a8cf8fcdca91e/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=47966>.

<sup>48</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 73.

<sup>49</sup> Yildirim, “The 1923 Population Exchange,” 48.

<sup>50</sup> Yildirim, “The 1923 Population Exchange,” 48.

<sup>51</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 77.

<sup>52</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 17.

Meichanetsidis, in 1912, Greeks accounted for 52% of physicians, 52% of architects, 49% of pharmacists, 37% of engineers, and 29% of lawyers in Turkey.<sup>53</sup> Because these Greeks were forcibly expelled from Turkey, Greece inherited these skilled laborers. Furthermore, the refugee crisis also allowed Greece to redirect its “energies and aspirations within rather than outside its borders,” resulting in “investment in public infrastructure and spurred economic growth.”<sup>54</sup>

Lastly and most importantly, the national memory of Greece has been completely altered because of this war and the forced migration of 1.4 million people. For one, this war is not known as the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 in Greece, nor is it known as the Turkish War of Independence, as it is in Turkey. This war and its aftermath are known as the “Asia Minor Catastrophe.”<sup>55</sup> The memory of lost loved ones is felt around Greece, even for those who do not have descendants from Anatolia; the feeling of loss has been ingrained into Greece’s national memory. Even more so, those who are the descendants of refugees have a yearning for their “lost homelands” that Greeks had been living in for over a millennia.<sup>56</sup> The memory that this event was a great catastrophe can be seen anywhere in Greece, but especially in cities founded by refugees. This national memory has been visualized through the use of countless monuments and memorials across Greece. For example, in Nea Philadelphia, the city has erected a large monument titled, *Μνημείο Μικρασιατών!* (Monument of Asia Minor!) dedicated to the families who were forced to flee the bloody, genocidal war.<sup>57</sup> Other monuments memorialize the burning

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<sup>53</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 108-109.

<sup>54</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 77-79.

<sup>55</sup> Kalyvas, *Modern Greece*, 73.

<sup>56</sup> Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean*, 9.

<sup>57</sup> See Figure 1, *Μνημείο Μικρασιατών!*



of Smyrna, such the memorial titled *Μικρά Ασία Χαίρε* (Hail Asia Minor) in the Municipality of Ampelokipi, which has become central to the national memory of the war.<sup>58</sup> Even Anastasia Pavlidis's refugee village of Neos Milotopos memorializes the burning of the Greek Orthodox Churches in Asia Minor, most likely referencing Smyrna, in a monument titled *Μνημείο Μικρασιατικής Καταστροφής* (Memorial of the Asia Minor Disaster).<sup>59</sup>

## Conclusion

In 1913, there were more than two million Christian Greeks residing in Anatolia.<sup>60</sup> By the end of Greco-Turkish War and the subsequent exchange from the Lausanne Convention, 1.4 million human beings had been forced into Greece and another “264,000” had been murdered by the Turkish state.<sup>61</sup> This genocidal war was extremely messy, as, unfortunately, the Greek forces committed many atrocities against the Muslim population during their offensive. The murdering of civilians on the basis of religion on both sides of the conflict make the Greco-Turkish War one of the greatest tragedies of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, due to the scope of this paper, only the Greek population was analyzed. Inherently, this silences the experiences of the Muslim population who were also forcibly exchanged and persecuted.

The compulsory migration of approximately 1.4 million Christian Greeks from Asia Minor during and following the Greco-Turkish War of 1919 has fundamentally reshaped Greece as a nation. For one, contemporary political sphere of Greece today, both the political parties and the system of government, originate in the post population exchange period. Furthermore, the

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<sup>58</sup> See Figure 2, *Μικρά Ασία Χαίρε*.

<sup>59</sup> See Figure 3, *Μνημείο Μικρασιατικής Καταστροφής*.

<sup>60</sup> Meichanetsidis, “The Genocide of the Greeks,” 149.

<sup>61</sup> Rudolph J. Rummel, “Turkey’s Genocidal Purges,” in *Statistics of Democide* (Germany: LIT Verlag, 1997), 85.

Greek newcomers would ultimately reshape Greece's culture, reviving the long lost "Byzantine traditions" throughout Greece.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, the national memory of the "Asia Minor Catastrophe" and their "lost homelands" has contributed to the nation's contemporary hostile view of Turkey, despite the shared cultural and historical experiences of both peoples.<sup>63</sup> And lastly, the genocidal process has been completed; "in 1913, there were more than 2 million Greeks in Turkey. Today, there are fewer than 3,000."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe*, 18.

<sup>63</sup> Hirschon, "Lausanne Convention," 378.

<sup>64</sup> Meichanetsidis, "The Genocide of the Greeks," 149.

Figure 1

*Μνημείο Μικρασιατών!*



Source: ΜΙΚΡΑΣΙΑΤΙΚΑ, *Μνημείο Μικρασιατών!* 2011, Nea Philadelphia, Greece,

<https://mikrasiatwn.wordpress.com/2011/06/20/%CE%BC%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE>

[%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF-](https://mikrasiatwn.wordpress.com/2011/06/20/%CE%BC%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE)

[%CE%BC%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%83%CE%B9%CE%B1%CF%84%CF](https://mikrasiatwn.wordpress.com/2011/06/20/%CE%BC%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE)

[%8E%CE%BD-%CE%BD%CE%AD%CE%B1%CF%82-](https://mikrasiatwn.wordpress.com/2011/06/20/%CE%BC%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE)

[%CF%86%CE%B9%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%B4%CE%AD%CE%BB%CF%86%CE%B5%CE](https://mikrasiatwn.wordpress.com/2011/06/20/%CE%BC%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE)

[E%B9/.](https://mikrasiatwn.wordpress.com/2011/06/20/%CE%BC%CE%BD%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE)

Figure 2

*Μικρά Ασία Χαίρε*

Source: Filaktos, *Μικρά Ασία Χαίρε*, Menemenis, Greece, [http://filaktos.gr/?dt\\_portfolio=%ce%ba%ce%b1%cf%81%ce%b8%ce%b1%ce%af%ce%b1-%ce%ba%ce%ad%ce%b1%cf%82](http://filaktos.gr/?dt_portfolio=%ce%ba%ce%b1%cf%81%ce%b8%ce%b1%ce%af%ce%b1-%ce%ba%ce%ad%ce%b1%cf%82).

Figure 3

*Μνημείο Μικρασιατική καταστροφή*

Source: Karatzovacom, *Μνημείο Μικρασιατική καταστροφή*, 2011, Neos Milotopos, Greece,

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/125950992@N02/48752614538/in/album-72157710893416697>.

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