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Author(s): MARIA GEORGIADOU

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CONSTANTIN CARATHÉODORY’S CORRESPONDENCE WITH HENRY MORGENTHAU, SR. ON THE INTEGRATION OF GREEK REFUGEES AFTER THE GRECO-TURKISH WAR OF 1919-1922

MARIA GEORGIADOU

The defeat of the Greek Army in 1922 by nationalist Turkish forces in the Greco-Turkish War in 1919-1922 caused an initial forced migration of Greeks fleeing from Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 specified the first compulsory exchange of populations ratified by an international organisation. It was a special Convention between Venizelos and Mustafa İsmet Pasha (İnönü), signed on 30 January 1923, concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations. This “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” was to take place as from the 1st May 1923 (Article 1). The Greek inhabitants of Constantinople and the Moslem inhabitants of Western Thrace were exempted (Article 2) (Die Lausanner-Vereinbarung). However this Convention only put the formal seal of approval on what had already been ‘accomplished’ by the demographics of war. A total of about 1.2 million Greeks left Asia Minor between 1920 and 1923, and 355,000 Muslims migrated to Turkey in the exchange. Greece had less than five million inhabitants at the time. Macedonia and Thrace absorbed the vast majority of the refugees: more than 650,000 people of which 150,000 were settled in towns. Thessaloniki was from the very start the main pole of attraction for the urban refugees. (Hastaoglou 1997: 498).

The Greek state was unprepared to deal with the large-scale problem of the refugee resettlement and appealed to the League of Nations. The League of Nations sent Dr. Fridtjof Nansen to study the problem of the Greek

1 Independent researcher.
refugees from Asia Minor. Nansen had been appointed in 1921 by the League of Nations as High Commissioner for Refugees. He reported that they could be effectually aided only by helping the Greek Government to raise a foreign loan for this purpose. In 1923 (Geneva Protocol, 29 September 1923) the League of Nations created the [Greek] Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC), to deal with the permanent settlement of the refugees, and administer the two foreign loans of 1924 and 1927. The RSC was mainly responsible for the rural settlement, while the Ministry of Social Welfare dealt with the urban settlement. This Commission was to have four members—one American, one British, and two Greeks, the American to be the chairman. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., was offered the post of the chairman and accepted it.

An immigrant to the United States from Mannheim, Germany in 1866, Henry Morgenthau (1856–1946), was an American banker, diplomat, and philanthropist. He practiced law in New York City and, being an ardent supporter of Woodrow Wilson, he became finance chairman of the Democratic National Committee in 1912. He was American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the years 1913-1916 and, after the outbreak of World War I, he was entrusted with the duty of acting there for Great Britain, France, Italy, Russia, and other nations. He came to the aid of imprisoned Allied personnel after the Ottoman Empire had sided with the Central Powers and took the initiative to notify the US-government and the whole world of the need for help to Armenians, whom the Ottoman government aimed at systematically deport or destroy. Earlier, he had secured the sum of $50,000 from the American Jewish Committee in New York which saved the lives of many Jewish settlers in Palestine. In 1916 he returned to the United States to aid President Woodrow Wilson’s election campaign as finance chairman again. Morgenthau attended the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, acting as technical consultant on Middle Eastern and East European problems. He was co-founder of the Armenian Relief Committee, a charitable organisation preceding the Near East Relief, an organisation whose philanthropic work in Athens was aimed at supporting and educating orphans from Asia Minor who had reached Greece after the disaster. Henry Morgenthau, Sr., was a member of the executive committee and the national board of trustees of the Near East Relief. After the war, President Wilson had sent him in a half-official mission to Poland as chairman of a special committee to investigate anti-Semitic acts of violence there. He was a delegate to the founding conference of the International Red Cross in 1919. A year later he was appointed but not confirmed as Ambassador to
Mexico. He became Chairman of the Refugee Settlement Commission for Greece in 1923 and a decade later technical delegate to the World Monetary and Economic Conference in London (The Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Sr.). The Greek Refugee Settlement Commission ceased to exist on 31 December 1930. Until then it had resettled 650,000 Greeks, who proved ‘to be a blessing’ to Greece, as Morgenthau rightly established (Morgenthau 1929: 302). The Venizelists’ success in integrating the refugees was also to be seen at the parliamentary level. 36 refugees were elected deputies (out of 286 MPs) in the 1926 elections. Of the 31 who declared a party affiliation, 28 belonged to the Venizelist camp. Out of the 30 refugee deputies (250 MPs) 28 belonged to the Liberal Party in the 1928 elections (Pentzopoulos 1962: 185).

In 1926, when the population exchange was almost over, the mathematician Constantin Carathéodory, who on commission of the Greek Government had organised the Ionian University in Smyrna, travelled to Thrace and Macedonia and at the end of his trip he wrote a report which he submitted to Henry Morgenthau, Sr. Carathéodory had met Henry Morgenthau, Sr., at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and was well acquainted with the Greek members of the Refugee Settlement Commission in 1924, Pericles Argyropoulos and Stephanos Deltas, both operatives of Venizelism.

Below we present Carathéodory’s writings on the topic in English translation. The writings are kept in the Papers of Henry Morgenthau, in the subject file 1868-1936. This file contains reports, copies of correspondence, various documents, clippings, printed matter, notes and notebooks, transcripts and galleys of writings of others, charts, organisational minutes, and miscellaneous other material, organised alphabetically by subject and chronologically. The Carathéodory writings in this file comprise the following English translations of Carathéodory’s texts: “Urban Refugees” (four typewritten pages); “The Urban Refugees in Macedonia and Thrace”; Chapters I, II, and IV, dated July 1926 (22 typewritten pages); and “Influence of the Refugees on Greek Life” (four typewritten pages).

Urban refugees

In answer to the question that has been formulated viz: “By what means has a completely destitute refugee of 1922, been able to secure, first: a lively hood and second: (as in many cases) a certain productive capital”.

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Such an answer could not be given in a few words, depending as it is on two main factors: the individual capacity of the refugee of which individual examples could only be given and certain general reasons which must be developed with some detail.

One must consider the economical and social factors of the country which admitted the refugees.

Greece was a country rather scarcely populated its agriculture not considerable, although this lack of development was partly made up by the peculiarity and the quality of its products.

On the other hand navigation and commerce were very prosperous. The wealth of the country was materially increased by the cooperation of many Greeks living in the seaports of the Mediterranean. For a long period, taxes were very low. The standard of living of the Greeks has always been very simple, frugality and simplicity were the keynotes of the people as a whole. The Royal families from King Otto down to King Constantine always conformed their private life to this standard. The result of all these facts was, that in the higher as well as in the lower classes, the people did not work very hard, and there was room in Greece for more people, more work, more activity.

This was the state of things up to the Balkan wars. After these, an increase in the territorial possessions of Greece took place: rich tobacco-growing provinces like Macedonia, wealthy cities like Salonica, prosperous and beautiful islands like Samos, Crete and Chios were incorporated in the mother country.

One cannot say that this new state of things had any effect on Greek mind or life because it lasted only a year or two.

Like in all other things the Great War brought a general upheaval of social and economic conditions. For Greece the war ended in 1922, and as a consequence the refugees found the country in practically the same condition as outlined above.

The next question to be developed in parallel to what has been said of the state of things in Greece, is that of the Greeks (i.e. the future refugees) in Turkey. I shall not give such a description, and I refer to my report on the Urban Refugees of Macedonia and Thrace where the question is treated in detail.

It is clear that people accustomed to hard work under adverse circumstances, such as a suspicious and ill-disposed government, keen and able competition from many sides, etc. did not hesitate to accept work no matter what the hardships, nor how low the wage provided it was a living one. The result
was that, willing, energetic and comparatively cheap labor being provided, businessmen did not hesitate in organizing new industries and enterprises. The mutual interaction of the fact that new industries sprang up and the one that refugees were gainfully employed in them created new opportunities for the refugees to create work and activity for themselves.

As regards welfare and progress of the various social groups among the refugees, I shall once more refer to the report on Macedonia and Thrace, as well as to Mr. Howland’s look on the refugees (Chap. XXII).

What one gets out of these readings is that: Dividing the refugees into two groups:

1. Lower classes of unskilled workers, able to work in country or city.
2. Artisans and small tradesmen. One sees that as a general rule the condition of the first group is much better than that of the second.

In the coming laborer group, a workman changes his occupation several times, until able to find something relatively permanent and remunerative.

As regards people belonging to the better classes it can be said that in their cases individual capacity is the more important factor. Between two equally skilled persons you will find that one has achieved a much better position than the one he had in his old country while the other is far from being here what he was there.

For bankers, men in industry and business etc. see Mr. Howland’s book: page 189 (Ch. XXII).

The Urban Refugees in Macedonia and Thrace

Chapter I

I give in the following pages a sketch of the state of the urban refugees living in the cities of Macedonia and Thrace.

I consider that it is my duty to devote this first chapter to the recollection of some facts, whose influence on the establishment of the refugees in general and on the urban refugees in particular, has been and continues to be predominant. They were facts already known, but which must be recalled before going any further.

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The persons who will read this book know that this name of ‘urban refugees’ by which the State and the RSC officially designate the refugees who are spread all over the cities, does not often correspond to the profession which the refugees had exercised in their original country, not to the existence they led there. The confusion in which the refugees arrived in Greece, a confusion which lasted a long time and was maintained in the somewhat hap-hazard groups which they formed, explains the presence of a large number of cultivators in the urban settlements and of urban refugees in the agricultural settlements. Sometimes this mixing up was due to the refugees themselves who had no other means in hand, in order to acquire and ensure shelter for themselves, and consequently disregarded, in their hurry, the kind of establishment to which they were thus directed. Finally, it also happened that the Colonisation services, in their desire to assist the agricultural element, have many a time pushed towards the fields people who, without having ever been in their own country cultivators, seemed susceptible of becoming acclimatised cultivators.

A remark is necessary at this juncture:

With the gradual settling down of the refugees, we attested a very marked movement, among the urban refugees who have thus strayed into the fields, of return to the cities. On the contrary, it is very rare for a cultivator who has found shelter in an urban settlement to consent to return to the fields. In Turkey the Greeks were essentially urban. It is on this point that the Colonization service has to take many precautions, every time that it decides to create a new urban centre, in order to prevent one part of the cultivators of the district to return towards that urban centre.

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In Turkey, the Greeks formed many social classes, and it is necessary to review them rapidly, as we will meet them again in Greece; it will be interesting to follow how far each one of these classes has been able to adopt itself to the environment to which it has been transported, and how far some of these classes have been able to create resources for themselves sufficient to allow them to beat the current of bad fortune which had obset them.

1. There was in the first place a numerous class of cultivators established, in their order of importance, in the plains of Eastern Thrace (cereals); in
the region of Smyrna, of Aidin and Aivali (vine-trees, fig-trees and clive
trees); on the uplands of the Black Sea (the Pontus) (tobacco, fruit-trees,
and small vegetables); finally, in the region of Brussa (sericulture).

2. In the big cities and the important centres the Greeks were:
A. Retail dealers and small traders,
B. Artisans and workmen,
C. Servants in houses, gardeners, office- or shop-boys, coachmen, patrons
   of shipping and embarkations, they in general leaned their services to
   others.
D. Merchants, ship owners, bankers, industrials. Let us also include, under
   this heading the class of all those who exercised a liberal profession.
   On all these scopes of action they were only followed in a very small
   measure – by the Armenians and the Jews.

3. In the secondary localities there dwelt a numerous class of small proprietors
   who had in their possession some property which they exploited, but
   which they often left to the care of their family, who in their turn often
   engaged agriculturists, for the hard labours of Turkish nationality. They
   visited themselves the neighbouring cities, where they served to feed und
   support the inhabitants under the heading C. The Greeks of the sea-coast
   employed themselves as mariners on board of these sail-boats, which one
   could see, in hundred, in the Golden Horn or in the Golf of Smyrna, and
   they transported the products of the agriculturists which they fetched all
   along the coasts of the Aegean, the Propontis and the Black Sea.

   The essential feature, in this national composition, was the very strong
   urban element, the comparative weakness of the agricultural element and the
   tendency of the urban class towards the life of the bourgeoisie. Between the
   class of bourgeois and of workman the only difference existing was that of
   the extent of their possessions. Moreover the men who carried on all the hard
   labours, the street porters etc. were generally Turks or rather Kurds.

   It is necessary to recall that all this population was spread over a vast
   territory, where it responded to the requirements of many millions of Turks
   who, either through tradition or natural bent, left the professions of which we
   have spoken above, to the Greeks and the Jews.1

   [1. The number of Greeks in Turkey was greatly diminished, especially
      that of men, in consequence of the wars, the massacres and the miseries which
      accompanied their Exodus from Turkey].
Estimating the total number of Greeks who left Turkey in one and a half-million, and keeping in view the fact that the Greeks from Thrace, these from the environment of Constantinople, these from Bulgaria, from Russia and from some distant Asiatic countries came later than the others and in a condition much less pitiful, we can say that the population which was thrown on the parts of Greece, in the space of a few weeks, in such a state as to require immediately food and shelter, was one million souls.

How was Greece been able to resist such tremendous pressure without succumbing? Where did she find the means and the strength to overcome such difficulties as might perhaps have bent even a Great Power? At this point, it is interesting to inquire at the root of the matter. We shall then see that the success - the relative success, as all things are relative - is due, in a large measure, to the coincidence of certain circumstances which have seconded and assisted the efforts of the Greek Government and the Greek people.

This immigration, of the Greeks of Turkey into Greece, was not the first one in history. It had been preceded by another, which had lasted many years. Between the years 1913 and 1915, i.e. since the end of the Balkan wars and up to the moment where Turkey declared herself the ally of the Germans, the Turks had put into affect a plan of gradual expulsion of the Greeks from Turkey, and obliged the Greeks to go to Greece. [During the war, they were drawn up, generally, into the famous ‘amélé tabourou’, battalions of workmen, where they were killed by fatigue, cold, hunger and bad treatment].

In 1918, after the armistice, in a discussion at the Senate, in Constantinople, they estimated at 600,000 the number of Greeks who disappeared in this way. If to this figure are added the victims of the Kémalist period, the total number of Greek victims reaches one million souls].

Eastern Thrace, a part of the coast of the Propontis and Asia Minor were evacuated, forcibly, by the Greeks who had occupied these countries. All this population arrived in Greece at the same time as a great number of Greeks from the Caucasus, who had the inspiration, following the extension of the Greek territory, to come and settle in Greece. The establishment of these peoples had cost to the Hellenic Government considerable sums of money and had moreover contributed to the creation of a class of administrative servants - of all degrees - who had acquired a precious knowledge of the handling of the moving refugee masses, of their most essential needs, and the measures
to be taken in the first urgency, and the order in which such measures were to be applied.

It is to this nucleus of specialists, if the simile can be used, that the Government appealed, reinforcing them by new recruits who, properly directed, have escaped from committing the mistakes and experiments which are otherwise inevitable, when such a huge enterprise is faced for the first time.

The War which during the years 1918-1922 had been the instrument of the greater portion of the military and civil authorities in Greece sojourning in the territories from which the refugees came - according to the date of the occupation of the territory, the small voyages of Greeks from Turkey to Greece, and, of Greeks from Greece to Turkey - voyages that were very common at the war-period, had all created new ties among the two kinds of Greek population, and strong attachments between them. The refugees in coming to Greece felt that they were coming home, and the agents charged with their welcome were used to their particular way of thinking and to their mode of existence.

The expropriations of the large agricultural estates, on which is founded the entire edifice of the agricultural establishment, had begun before the Smyrna catastrophe. The arrival of the refugees simply accelerated the carrying out of measures already decided upon, and on which legislative decrees have been issued.

Thus the establishment of the refugees was effected without causing a sentiment of hostility on the part of the proprietors towards the newcomers.

The refugees came from a country which was exhausted, to a country where there were large resources and where considerable capital remained unemployed because of the lack of industrial hands. The Greek industries, as well as the refugees have profited equally from this circumstance.

The enrichment of the Greeks of Greece had caused them to abandon their previous careers, and the tide of civil servants who heretofore have pressed for posts, had turned away, in other channels. The well educated refugees, who were in great need, found in this field, an immediate source of employment.

The departure of the exchangeable Turks put at the disposition of the State many thousands of Turkish dwellings and of hectares of cultivated lands. The number of Turks and Bulgarians that left Macedonia since 1918
are estimated at 600,000. The 900,000 refugees who came in the place of the exchangeables, were evidently crowded in Macedonia. But to the houses abandoned by the Turks were added those built by the State and the R.S.C. and to the lands that had been cultivated up to that time, were added the lands reclaimed and broken up by the refugees themselves.

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The circumstances which I have enumerated and which have all contributed to overcome, more or less the difficulties which the question of the establishment of the refugees presented, should not diminish, in the least, the importance of two factors whose influence on the solution of the problem has been paramount.

The first of these factors is the sentiment of national unity, which was displayed by the Greeks of the free Greek State. As soon as the army foretold what the fate of the Greek population in Turkey would be after the defeat of the Greek forces, Greece requisitioned all its merchant fleet for the transportation of the refugees, all the immovable properties in the Greek territory for their temporary shelter, all the large agricultural estates for their agrarian establishment. What specially strikes the attention of the onlooker at this stage of Greek history is the spontaneity, the unanimous effort displayed by the Greek nation, and the marvellous way in which such heroic measures seemed only natural, logical and in conformity to the promptings of a high ideal that had guided the nations since long ages. (Up to this time the State had spent for the refugees:

In 1922-23 Drs. 274 millions
In 1923-24 " 252 "
In 1924-25 " 319 "
In 1925-26 " 525 "

TOTAL 1,370 "

An admirable hygienic service extended its sphere to the heart of the most remote provinces. It utilised 1300 large medicine-cases and saved thousands of lives from a sure death to which they were otherwise doomed.
The Near East Relief - I here give at random an instance of one of its many activities - sustained during many months 40,000 refugees at Constantinople, at the cost of 7,200,000 drs. per month.

I will only refer by more to the ‘Save the Children’s Fund’ and the ‘American Women’s Hospital’.

If I were to enter into details I would diverge from the scope of this essay. Moreover I have already mentioned that this first chapter is nothing else but an introduction dedicated to the remembrance of a few known facts.

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I often ask myself in what manner could the Greek Nation express its gratitude for the sacrifices which the American people made for it, and then I see this dream:

Facing the Acropolis and on the hill of the Areopagus, on the rocky Pnyx, there where the Greek Word was rendered immortal, but where - among so many immortal voices that echoed on that spot - none carried so far and wide as that of Greek-speaking Jew from Tarsus, there I see a statue of St. Paul rising against the Greek sky. It is to be the work of a Greek sculptor and the completed monument is in such perfect harmony with the lines of Nature and Art which surround it that it seems to dominate the whole. The apostle is represented with his face turned towards the West and his keen sight pierces the unknown and follows, in the Future, the history of an unknown People. His arm, extended over the city, invites the West to the accomplishment of a task, and his mouth, opened into speech, calls in urgent appeal destined to re-echo after two thousand years, under the form of the most touching faith and the highest Christian charity.

Providence has willed that the Greeks, inheritors of a sacred tradition that mingles with their history, should be able to offer to the New World a token of their gratitude to it for the assistance they have received.

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The last declivities and slopes of the Southern chains of the Balkan peninsula, together with the plains that extend between these heights and the sea constitute the new mother country of the refugees. In this vast domain
—chiefly agricultural—the refugees have in reality taken possession of the country; they cultivate it and make its value rise; in the near future, with the application of the new system of the administrative councils, the local government will pass into their hands.

The impression which the traveller in Macedonia gets from the results of Colonisation there, are as vivid as they are profound.

The villages seem to have sprung up by hundreds, as if by enchantment, and they have changed the entire aspect of the country up to the frontiers. Rich cultivations cover all the available ground, i.e. all that was not swamp or rock. When stopping at a station or halting at a café, the first words interchanged convince the traveller that the agricultural matters are these that are of primary interest to the inhabitants.

Due honour should be attributed to the Greek State and the RSC for the just point of view from which they faced the fact, from the very beginning, that the success of the establishment of the refugees depended on the identification of this work with that of the agrarian colonisation of Thrace and Macedonia. Also that the best method, to come to the assistance of the urban refugees dispersed in these two provinces, was apart from the question of giving shelter to the urbans to render—as soon as possible—the agriculturists independent.

Chapter II (pages 17 to 23)

Of the two essential factors which constitute the assistance to be given to a refugee, namely of Work and Shelter, the second is much easier to carry out than the first. Given a fixed amount of money, one can tell beforehand the exact number of families that can be given shelter with this amount.

But on the contrary, who can guarantee that the work that one can procure for a refugee—whatever the amount spent in order to succeed in preparing it for him—will bear the same characteristics of permanence and that in six months one will not be induced to occupy himself with the same individual or the same family?

The solution of the second problem generally depends solely on the initiative of the person interested himself. No State service, no charitable institution can assure for him what his own efforts will allow him to discover and attain. I will not dwell longer on a self-evident principle.
This explains the reason for which the assistance given to the urban refugees—wherever it was made possible to assist them—has taken the form of a care for their shelter. It is because this task is by far the easier to accomplish. Assistance by giving them employment has been hitherto excluded.

The reader is now invited to refer to the picture we have traced above of the different classes of Greeks from Turkey: we still try, as far as possible, to follow these classes to Greece and to meet them again in their new environment.

Let us leave aside the class of paragraph 1, that of the cultivators, about 500,000 in Macedonia and 50,000 in Thrace, who have up to the present been directed towards the agricultural establishments in these two provinces.

Let us leave aside also the class of paragraph 2, Class D, that is, the class of free professions, of merchants or industrials, heads of families. A number of these have been able to save some capital and continue their business; others have obtained credits from their old correspondents. Many have entered into the Service of the State. Finally, there are many who have not been able, so far, to recover. But it is in this class which, endowed with a high culture, possessing a circle of professional acquaintances, and being people of character, that one can find the greater number of individuals who can live on their own resources, and who are capable, if it should be necessary, to change profession with success.

There remain the classes A, B, C and 3.

Let us, in the beginning, make some general observations:
1. All the real urban refugees have concentrated in the cities. Until now (I underline this statement) those whom the colonisation service has attempted to transform into cultivators, by forcing them—in some measure—to occupy themselves with the cultivation of the land, have left or are leaving a calling for which they were not made.
2. All these urbans have, in the beginning, attempted to exercise their ancient calling; those who abandoned their calling did so forced by necessity.

By the term “real urban” we must first understand the refugees class A and B: the retail dealers, small traders, the artisans or craftsmen.

The State has done a great deal for them. After having given them provisional establishment—in warehouses, schools, requisitioned houses etc.—in which they found shelter until the houses specially built for them
by the State should be ready, and after having dealt out, for a long time, assistance to the refugees in kind and money, it built for them or assisted them to build themselves, besides the dwellings in which they live, those wooden—and sometimes of more durable material—shops, which form entire markets covering a part of the quays or the burnt down quarters of the city, where they exercise their professions.

There have naturally glided into this class many persons who had no right to belong there, many inadmissible individuals belonging to the very lowest steps of the social ladder even in their native cities, individuals who had never had in their own place either a calling or a trade. These, instead of cultivating the soil—an occupation which might have employed the greater number of this substratum—have preferred to get a booth and the outfit necessary for the simplest retail business in drinks, or else a restaurant of the order where old newspapers are used for the wash-dishes instead of soap and water and where the unchanged menu is composed of fried lamb’s liver, of hard boiled eggs and of fresh onions. Besides, out of this class has grown a swarm of organ players, open-air barbers etc. All this was inevitable.

But let us return to the true professionals.

Among these there are some who earn their living without too much difficulty; the greater part succeed in gaining their bread with great pains, and many are really to be pitied.

Whatever they do, the fact remains that they are too many. There are too many grocers, too many shoe-makers, too many haberdashers, too many tailors. The supply is abundant and the demand limited.

The lot of the artisan who is out of work is still more to be pitied than that of the retail dealer who has no clientele. A good shoemaker cannot change his calling at the age of 50 years. A grocer can attempt to sell other products, he is more or less prepared for it.

It is true that the country is passing through a crisis, of which I will speak at greater length later on. In Salonica, the crisis is especially evident in the step which has been noted in all the works of construction.

When construction stops, everything stops. Nothing is truer than this. In Salonica, which was burnt down during the Great War, it was forbidden, for a long time, to erect new buildings. When the new plan of the city was approved and the laws forbidding construction were cancelled, the people began to build intensively. Two thousand large buildings were constructed
in 1924 and 1925; the daily wages of the head mason rose to 110 drs. All the classes then lived well; the well-paid mason and workman, nourished in his turn the artisan and small retail dealer. To-day, when the capitalists who had consented to make advances to proprietors—lose, even if they had loaned on the basis of a 25% interest—and this because of the depreciation in the value of the drachma, the building business has fallen to the fifth rank, and the head mason is now only paid at 65 drs. per day. The mason continues to meet his urgent demands—with difficulty. But it is the artisan and the small retail dealer, to whom went the mason's savings, that now suffer, more cruelly, the consequences of the change.

For the moment, the work goes on and the stoppage of work does not attain proportions that inspire serious fears. But what will happen if the slowing up of business continues? and if the fears of well-known and responsible persons, such as—to give an example—Mr. Patrikios, mayor of Salonica, Mr. Demetracopoulos, president of the league of refugee organisations were realised, if the question of the daily bread were to become alarming? It would no longer be a part of the class of artisans and retail dealers who would suffer from this crisis, but the entire class, all its members.

Supposing, then, that an individual belonging to these classes can change his calling, in what might the professional loans, advanced by the Bank to persons whom it considers as able to return them, serve such an individual in case of the complete stagnation of business? That can one do for him, unless it be to give him, now and then, a small assistance which will be lost as he will use it in order to meet the most pressing needs of his family?

This is not a solution. We must look for one elsewhere.

These classes, which cannot be assisted directly, will receive indirectly assistance from the support which will be given to the class of workmen, i.e. to the class of refugees who lend the use of their arms. Let us refer, for the last time, to the list in the preceding chapter. As in all the cities where refugees live, the working-class of Salonica has been recruited from the urbens which in the list appear under the letter D. and no. 3. In it are also included, as we have already said, a not to be ignored number of ex-cultivators who have broken their relations with the soil.

It has been decided to carry out a series of extensive works in Macedonia: the drying of swamps, the regularisation of the flow of waters and of cataracts, the construction of roads, the embellishment of the principal cities for which
plans are seen on the walls of the mayoralty. These works, of which some are already in progress (the rebuilding of Salonica) others just attempted (the drying of the Ardzjan and Amatovo lakes which will give, in one and a half year, 20,000 hectares to agriculture) and still others in the stage of simple projects, as yet, are all retarded because of the lack of the necessary credits. Indeed, it is a matter of many millions.

If the Government wishes to face seriously the fact that, side by side with the works that it is considering to carry out in Macedonia; there still remains the solution of the problem of the urban refugees who until the full completion of the agricultural renaissance of the country is effected and ensures their existence, that is to say until two or three good crops shall have put the peasant at his ease, will require assistance, it will then decide, surely, that its interest lies in pushing the execution of these works and starting them without delay, even if they should cost to the State somewhat more; on condition, however, that those who shall execute the works will undertake the obligation to employ no other but indigenous workers, that is to say refugee workmen.

One sees that it is a question of gaining time. When the Salonica plain, more vast and more fertile than that of Thessaly, will have attained - through the carrying out of these large works and the complete establishment of these cultivators—its full yield, it will suffice to nourish the entire population of a city which is not void of other resources.†

[†They estimate at 150,000 hectares the extent of the cultivable land which will be reclaimed by the drying up of the Yénidjé Lake].

One can not repeat too often: the salvation of the urbans—I speak of Salonica and the cities of Macedonia, I do not speak of Athens—will come, it as well as that of the agriculturists, from the Earth.††

[††On the other hand, the return to the fields of the cultivators and especially the semi cultivators, who have hitherto preferred to stay in the cities, demands largely on the success of the exploitation of the agricultural possibilities of the province.]

It would be absurd to ignore the importance which will be brought to bear on their fate by other factors as e.g. by the establishment of factories, small and large, industries and the development of industries in general. But these constitute progress which is difficult in realising.

And yet, the presence in our cities, of an entire population capable of working at low wages, should have—it seems—stimulated immensely the
activity of the enterprising spirit of the industrials of our country. We do not speak of the State, for we know, alas, how incapable is the State—in our country as well as others—to direct successfully such affairs. Well, it should be confessed: with the exception of the carpet industry and some minor branches of industry, the development which industries in general have shown since the arrival of the refugees is, in proportion to the available working-hands offered, even in Athens and Piraeus far below what it should be. It is even worth noting that even in what has been done up to the present in this respect, the first impetus was given by the refugees themselves. Capital did not make its appearance in the beginning; when the refugees’ isolated efforts have made evident the success of such enterprises, then capitalists decided to attempt an enterprise of like nature on a larger scale.

I could not give the explanation of this phenomenon. The abundant offer of working hands and consequently the low wages constitute but one of the factors of the development of industries in a country. Does Greece lack the other factors to such an extent that the occurrence of an event which has just solved completely the question of the working-hands is not sufficient to ensure, in a permanent way, its industrial production? And among these other factors, which are those that are deficient and in what measure? We possess in Greece—we are proud to count on them—the crude materials and the capital and in the place of coal we have the lignite and the common pit-coal.

Our technical services are equal to any requirements that may arise. It is, therefore, elsewhere that one must look for the factors that are missing and it is to this end that I consider necessary to say a few words on the financial position of the country as it is been by the Salonica Chamber of Commerce.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

I had not revisited Thrace and Macedonia since 1920 and I have undertaken this study without any preconceived idea. As I advanced in my work certain conclusions imposed themselves on my mind with the force and the reality which are infallibly characteristic of truth. This study appeared to me to be without any meaning, useless and mutilated, if I did not condense, now that I am at the end, the convictions to which it led me, in two or three pages.
The Greeks were of old a very numerous people which was decimated by the wars it was obliged to engage in because of its geographical position. The result of this history was that they retained their hold, in compact masses, along the coasts of the European and Asiatic territory which they had, since very ancient times occupied, and in the cities which they had built and their environments. But question of dissolution in the continuity between the different groups soon arose, sometimes of greater and sometimes of lesser importance.

The Greek patriots deplored the fact that Hellenism found itself in the difficult situation of being unable to unite the different broken drunks to the mother-country as they had the right to aspire to such a unity, being large enough to constitute of themselves a part of a Great Greece—with without incorporating foreign elements.

However, the genius of a great man, seconded by the impetus of the Nation, came very near to the fulfilment of this great task. But at the decisive moment, the energy of the people failed and the Greeks missed their faith in their fortune and their destiny.

The catastrophe which followed this event—more important according to Lloyd George, than the taking of Constantinople in 1453—has had as its consequence to throw the entire Greek race within the Greek boundaries and to lead to the unity of Hellenism through its extermination. It is permitted here to look for a consolation in the midst of so many misfortunes; we shall find it in the thought that, heretofore, the minorities in Greece constitute so very slight a portion of the Greek population that they can no longer serve as a pretext to whomsoever would attempt to call into doubt the Greek character of the smallest bit of territory.

Greece has no longer any children, that she must free, outside her territory. Smyrna, Philadelphia and the Seven Churches will be Greek only in memory, just as the city of Syracuse and Agrigente were of old. It is not of course the small islet formed by the Greeks of Constantinople, which might justify our claims to a city, separated on all sides from our frontiers by foreign populations.

These truths are cruel; more cruel perhaps for these, who utter them than for those who hear them. But they are only the expression of the necessity imposed by the events, and whose consequences must be submitted to; they show to the Greek people and to its Government the path in which they will,
from now on, have to walk and from which they cannot deviate, for a long
time to come, on pains of death. This path is the path of peace, of work and
of recovery.

Well, if there exists one reason for which I congratulate myself for
having undertaken this voyage, it is that it allowed me to see for myself,
how far the work which is carried on in the northern part of Greece is in
accord with the conclusions to which the hard logic of facts led me. Were
you to visit Macedonia and Thrace, you will not meet in the Colonisation
bureaus and the refugees surrounding them, but one and only care: how to
render the country responsive to its new destination, that is, how to ensure the
existence and perhaps even the prosperity of this million of new residents of
Greece who have come to increase the number of the old inhabitants of the
two provinces. From far one can estimate the sums that should still be spent
in order to support the agrarians, to dry the swamps, to regulate the flow of
waters; it is only on going near, on the spot, that one learns to appreciate the
enthusiasm and the faith which predominate in this work and the confidence,
I would even say the blind faith, in a long future of tranquillity and peace,
which is taken for granted by those who collaborate in this great task.

But it is not only this arduous task which they have before them, nor yet
the idea that they have no longer any claim to defend beyond their national
boundaries that inspire these people with an immense desire for peace. United
on a sudden on a free soil, in a compact homogeneous mass, after having lived
during many ages in dispersion, they know that they have much to forget and
much to learn, that they must undergo a complete re-education which alone
will permit them to adapt themselves to the new conditions of their existence.

Many moral and material forces have been abolished and there are
others that must be developed. But every disturbance would be fatal to such
a development.

These things are easily forgotten when one is found in the turmoil of the
city of Athens and they would hardly furnish enough subject-matter during a
drive from Kifissia to Phaleron; and yet the same questions become realities
when one finds himself transported to the New Provinces of Greece. One
feels then a bitter regret at the thought that one half of the nation ignores or
only partially knows this immense effort that the other half of the nation is
putting forth, especially as the beneficial reaction of this effort will, sooner or
later, be felt by the first as well as the second.
It would be surprisingly interesting to make known to the foreign world the results obtained by the Greek Colonisation, results due entirely to the protection which the League of Nations has accorded to this country at one of the most critical stages of its history. Public opinion would judge the work accomplished as being worthy of the patronage of the League and the sympathies of this Assembly of the Nations would be deepened towards a people who, through the accomplishment of this task, undertook a veritable pacifist campaign. This Assembly would perhaps wish to make its voice heard, in case certain neighbours of Greece, inspired by the same greedy appetites which caused the world to rise up against them in 1914, should oblige the refugees to ask themselves whether they will not be constrained to defend with their firearms this corner of land, where at the risk of so many sacrifices they have been allowed to rest their tired heads. To such a Work and such workers there should be given special guaranties of an international order.

Freed from this anxiety, the Greek Government could follow up the accomplishment of its program. Greece would then be the first country to furnish a striking proof of the efficacy of the principles which have inspired the constitution of the League of Nations, principles admirably summed up by an inscription found on a monument in one of the ancient Hanseatic cities: ‘Concordia domi pax foris’.

July 1926.
Influence of the refugees on Greek life
(from an article about to be published in a Greek work)

Nearly six years separate me from 1922. Even at the first moment, the opinion that the Asia Minor Disaster could have from a certain point of view a salutary influence on things in Greece had come to the mind of many observers. In any way it was impossible at that time to try to establish by what means and in what direction this influence would make itself felt. Notwithstanding a certain confidence in the future the real facts were exceedingly sad. The loss of hundreds of thousands of Greek lives, the destruction of ancient national centers standing for centuries, the huge material losses, a heavy burden on the shoulders of the Greek state and the problem of the future of the refugee Population crowding the Hellenic territory, prevented from giving to such an idea a more concrete form than that of a nebulous hope. For a time the only side of the Refugee question which presented positive elements of appreciation was the one that interested the refugees themselves and the work that was carried on in Greece for their establishment. Six years after the disaster we begin to see more clearly the other side of the question, i.e. the influence exerted on the whole of the national life, that means on the history of the nation, the violent and unprecedented uprooting of the Hellenism of Turkey. We will rapidly try to condense what can be said on the subject.

1) As a first consequence we had a concentration of the bulk of the nation in a single country and the day by day growing confidence, that the profits to result from such a concentration will outweigh in some decades the human and material losses sustained by populations which although having preserved entire the national spirit, lived not on an independent territory and hence could not contribute to the national progress by the integral moral and material powers.

For three thousand years subsists a special impulse which moves Hellenism from the West Coasts to the Aegean Sea towards the East where, on the other hand Greek colonies and conquests in spite of their power have more than once been submerged either violently or by the effect of time under the wave of Asiatic elements.

For the first time this new destruction of the branches has for a consequence to reinforce the principal trunk which tomorrow undoubtedly will once more extend, in the same directions and under more favorable circumstances.
2) The fact that the Asia Minor catastrophe had as a consequence the thorough hellenization of provinces whose national composition was an object of contestations and brought to the height of a universally recognised international principle the absence of minorities in Greece is another result which reduces in a certain degree the other painful sides of the national tragedy.

3 & 4) Let us take up some more special points. The agricultural and urban settlement of a million and a half of refugees, partly completed and partly still carried daily on has required from all those who set their task on it, a steady amount of work, study and experimentation. Perhaps in a higher degree than in large countries in the same length of time, necessity created the means, and Greece can boast today for the number as well as for the quality of specially trained men, who occupying Government posts of working privately, have given themselves to the development of agriculture, creating dwellings, and to professions connected with these two fundamental factors of national wealth and prosperity.

5) The reader understands how many things must be left unsaid in this short survey, but we cannot refrain from recognising after the aforementioned activities whatever is connected with the rapid and efficient welfare work for whole population completely destitute. Such remarkably good work has been done not only by the larger bodies as the Greek Red Cross, and the Patriotic Institution of Assistance, but also by secondary organizations. The help given to the sufferers of Corinth’s earthquake shows the level of higher civilization attained by the country in this field.

The above (and we repeat that we limited ourselves to some illustrative examples) will, we think amply prove that the catastrophe of the outside Hellenism, whilst cruel and unprecedented in modern times has at least contributed to the development, and the regulation of national forces in independent Greece. As after the Roman Conquest and the fall of Constantinople the Greek nation guided by higher instinct found the means of drawing as many elements of resistance as possible from the selfsame unfavorable conditions under which it labored. So today we witness the first steps which although made under the power of catastrophe, will guide once more the nation to a future worthy of its past.
Concluding remarks

When he was writing about the refugees, Carathéodory was a professor of mathematics in Munich—neither a statesman nor a diplomat. His writings exude optimism for the future of integrated Greeks and the Greek people more generally. Through them, he was informing Morgenthau about progress on the work that the latter had started in 1923. In his report, Carathéodory hinted at the end of the Great Idea with the phrase "Smyrna, Philadephia and the Seven Churches will be Greek only in memory". In his paper on the refugees' influence on Greek life, however, Carathéodory judged that the country had recovered from the disaster to a great extent and he even implied a revival of the Great Idea.

The various papers that have been presented in this article give a new insight on the complex question of the integration of Greek refugees in Greece itself and the interactions and tensions between them and the local population. This point has not yet been adequately studied from this point of view.

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