

# THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF REFUGEE INCORPORATION AFTER POPULATION TRANSFERS: TOWARD A COMPARISON OF THE GREEK AND GERMAN EXPERIENCES

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The proliferation of often violent ethnic conflicts in Eastern and Southeastern Europe since the end of the Cold War has prompted some scholars and journalists to advocate compulsory population exchanges as means of settling such disputes. In particular, Yugoslavia's brutal disintegration and descent into war prompted many to question the validity of preserving multinational regimes in the face of nationalist challenges. The logic behind such positions is straightforward: if groups can no longer live together, it is preferable to facilitate their separation along territorial and demographic lines, rather than risk suffering the potentially horrendous consequences associated with trying to force their continued coexistence. In the words of Chaim Kaufmann, a leading proponent of partition and "engineered ethnic unmixing:"

Stable resolutions of ethnic civil wars are possible only when the opposing groups are demographically separated into defensible enclaves.... [T]o save lives threatened by genocide, the international community must abandon attempts to restore war-torn multi-ethnic states. Instead it must facilitate and protect population movements to create true national homelands.

Kaufmann and others cite the 1923 Greek-Turkish exchange of populations and the post-World War II compulsory transfer of ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe as examples of the type of solutions the international community ought to emulate. They argue that in both cases, compulsory population transfers led to interstate peace and the successful incorporation of the expellees. Hence, the Greek-Turkish and German examples might serve as "blueprints" for contemporary decision-makers grappling with similar kinds of conflicts.

Advocates of population transfers imply that refugees produced by population transfers are simply inserted into the correct national slots like so many matched pegs. They exhibit little interest in probing the domestic consequences of such policies and instead accept nationalist interpretations of these events as constituting moments of national renewal and unification. This is problematic, for even a cursory examination of the Greek and German cases reveals that the incorporation of "kin" groups into receiving societies is a complicated and contingent proposition. The transfer of substantial numbers of refugees inevitably places serious burdens on receiving states and these burdens upset existing social and political structures. Where such structures are already under stress -- as they often are in post-conflict situations -- the result may be further instability.

Indeed, the protracted incorporation of refugees in interwar Greece deepened pre-exchange political cleavages and contributed to the breakdown of the country's democratic regime. The support of disaffected urban refugees was also a key source of strength for the Greek Left during the years of Axis Occupation (1941-1944) and Civil War (1946-1949). It was only after the defeat of the Greek Communists in the Civil War and the subsequent entrenchment of a staunchly conservative, anticommunist social order that Greece's "refugee problem" ceased to be a source of political instability.

Most contemporary observers argued that the incorporation of a vast number of destitute refugees would also hinder West Germany's post-war reconstruction. And while the immediate post-war years were indeed problematic, West Germany fared relatively better than Greece with regard to its incorporation of refugees. This difference in outcomes naturally leads one to ask why this was the case. The answer I present in this paper is relatively straightforward: the difference in outcomes was due in large part to West Germany's atypical post-World War II settlement and extremely rapid political and economic reconstruction. West

Germany benefited from the convergence of a unique set of circumstances, including the Allied occupation, Marshall Plan aid, European economic integration, and prudent statesmanship of its mainstream politicians. These factors helped Germany to diffuse its refugee problem before it could develop to the extent that it had in Greece. However, the fact that such a unique constellation of factors were needed to bring about a relatively successful outcome in the German case illustrate how difficult it is to incorporate refugees produced by population transfers.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. I begin by briefly summarizing the events leading up to the decisions made in Lausanne and Potsdam and comment on the mechanics of the resulting population transfers. I then assess the impact of these population transfers in Greece and West Germany, paying particular attention to the politicization of divisions between refugees and locals. I note that in both cases, shared nationality gave way to pronounced cultural differences and sharp boundaries separating the two groups. The refugees' dire economic condition, alienation, and demands for compensation fueled their discontent and compelled them to seek redress through political mobilization. Differing historical circumstances and variations in the structure of each country's political, economic, and legal institutions shaped the refugees' political action, leading to further instability in Greece and the comparatively more rapid, if still complicated, incorporation of refugees in Germany. The paper's conclusion summarizes the lessons drawn from the foregoing comparison of the Greek and German cases and relates them to contemporary debates regarding the efficacy of population transfers.

#### LAUSANNE AND POTSDAM: SANCTIONING THE "UNMIXING OF PEOPLES"

The Greek and German refugee experiences had their roots in internationally sanctioned mass population transfers. In each case, the transfers were aimed at eliminating national minorities from neighboring states, thereby improving the chances of establishing durable postwar settlements. The compulsory exchange of the Muslim population of Greece and the Greek Orthodox Christian population of Turkey was effected on the basis of the Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations, signed by Greece and Turkey at the Lausanne Conference on January 30, 1923. The Convention came on the heels of Greece's defeat by Turkish nationalist forces in 1922. Greece had been granted jurisdiction over the city of Smyrna (Izmir) and its hinterland under the Treaty of Sèvres, signed on August 10, 1920. After consolidating its control over Smyrna, the Greek army advanced into the Anatolian interior and was routed by Kemal Ataturk's forces and forced to retreat. Turkish forces pushed the Greeks back to the coast and into Smyrna and Ataturk entered the city in September 1922. By late 1922, Fridtjof Nansen, the League of Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees, reported that approximately 900,000 refugees from Asia Minor had entered Greece in the weeks following the fall of Smyrna. The Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek-Turkish Populations acknowledged and extended the unofficial uprooting of the preceding months. Under the terms of the Convention, a compulsory exchange of the approximately 150,000 remaining Turkish nationals of Greek Orthodox religion in Turkey and approximately 350,000 Greek nationals of the Muslim religion remaining in Greece would commence immediately. The Convention barred the return of all those who had fled either country since the Balkan Wars (1912-1913).

It is important to note that many of the 'unmixed' on both sides did not want to leave their homes, and that many of those who did flee wanted desperately to return once the war had ended. The Convention's sponsors purposefully ignored the wishes of both these groups and proposed instead the "rationalization" of demographic patterns in the Near East. As such, the Convention set an important precedent in modern diplomatic conduct. The compulsory and permanent nature of the uprooting ensured that state interests would be given priority over the rights of local populations.

The decision to forcibly remove ethnic German minorities from Eastern Europe at the close of the World War II grew out of a similar logic. In the words of Alfred M. de Zayas:

The very wide adherence to the principle of population transfers among leaders of the Western democracies was attributable in part to a rather optimistic appraisal of the results of the Greek-Turkish population exchange.... While a few leading politicians deplored the transfers, a majority gradually exhibited a peculiar euphoria over the conceptual simplicity of the solution.

Zayas bases this conclusion on a reading of public statements by leading Western politicians in the months leading up to the end of World War II. For instance, in a speech before the British Parliament in 1944, Churchill maintained that expulsion is the method which so far as we have been able to see, will be most satisfactory and lasting. There will be no mixture of populations to cause endless trouble, as has been the case in Alsace Lorraine. A clean sweep will be made. I am not alarmed by the prospect of the disentanglement of the populations, nor even by these large transferences which are more possible in modern conditions than ever before (emphasis added).

Similarly, Roosevelt believed that the Allies “should make some arrangements to move the Prussians out of East Prussia the same way the Greeks were moved out of Turkey after the last war.”

- During the fall of 1944, Soviet troops pushed eastward through Poland toward Berlin, prompting a flood of ethnic German civilians to flee ahead of their advance. Thousands of others were forcibly expelled from Poland and Czechoslovakia in the course of “wild” expulsions. At the Potsdam Conference (17 July - 2 August 1945), the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union formally agreed to place former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line under Polish administration and consented to Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary’s calls for the expulsion of their German minorities. Section XIII of the Potsdam Protocol stipulated that the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union would recognize that the transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, will have to be undertaken. They agree that any transfers that take place should be effected in an orderly and humane manner.

On 20 November 1945, the Allied Control Council for Germany approved a schedule for the transfer of 6.5 million ethnic Germans from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. By April 1947, 10.5 million refugees were registered in the four Allied occupation zones with the majority concentrated in Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, and Bavaria -- rural, agricultural provinces in the American zone. While there is no consensus as to precisely how many died during the course of the expulsions, Ahonen suggests that up to 1.5 million persons may have died en route to Germany. Regardless of the precise casualty figure, there is no gainsaying that the uprooting was extremely costly in terms of the suffering inflicted upon the expellees.

#### Cultural Differences and Social Exclusion, Greece, 1923-1928

The flight of the refugees from Turkey signaled the end of the Megali Idea: the Greek nationalist dream of retaking Constantinople and creating a Greater Greece patterned after the Byzantine Empire. As a result of the exchange of populations, the vast majorities of Greeks inhabited the same country and were bound by the borders of a single state. Consequently, cultural and linguistic differences that had been blurred by distance and submerged in the fiction of a homogeneous “imagined community” were revealed.

- It soon became evident that the arriving Greeks of Asia Minor, Thrace, and the coasts of the Black Sea were quite different from the Greeks of “Old Greece.” Many of the refugees had little or no consciousness of being Greek. League of Nations officials on the scene noted that the refugees displayed a bewildering variety of languages, dialects, customs, and loyalties. These cultural differences were seized upon by native Greeks who saw the refugees as a threat to their economic interests and the purity of the Greek nation. Locals referred to the refugees as “Tourkosporoi” (Turkish seed) and “giaourtovaftesmeni” (baptized in yogurt).

Indeed, the 'Greekness' of the refugees was essentially denied at the time by a large proportion of the locals. In Mavrogordatos's words, "[t]he invidious distinction between refugees and natives provided the basis for the most salient cleavage in inter-war Greek society, which truly dominated the politics of the period.... [T]he distinction was then often characterized as *fyletike*, which...should be translated as 'ethnic'."

- The refugees assisted in the crafting of boundaries separating their world from that of the natives. As Hirschon has noted, the refugees drew from the ideational resources of their pre-exchange heritage to craft a positive identity that contrasted their cosmopolitanism, religious devotion, and worldliness to the locals' parochialism and backwardness. This positive self-identity influenced the refugees' perceptions of local institutions and norms, including those in the sphere of politics. Many of the more influential and prominent refugees had fled from cosmopolitan centers such as Constantinople (Istanbul) and Smyrna (Izmir), where their engagement in commercial activities had exposed them to liberal and republican ideologies. These refugees viewed Greece's hereditary monarchy as a throwback to an unenlightened world.

- The boundaries separating refugees (*prosphyges*) and the "Old Greeks" (*Palioelladites*) were particularly pronounced in urban centers such as Athens and Thessaloniki. Between 1920 and 1928 the combined population of Greece's five largest cities increased from 12.6 percent to 21.3 percent of the country's total population. This seemingly "uncontrolled" urban expansion caught many of the inhabitants of Old Greece by surprise. Henry Morgenthau described the impact of the refugees' arrival in stark terms:

[Athens] had been almost somnolent before this irruption [sic]. It had been living the staid life of an orderly capital, where business had grown into established channels and where life had settled into an easy and familiar routine. Overnight all this was changed. Now the streets thronged with new faces. Strange dialects of Greek assailed the ear. The eye was caught by outlandish peasant costumes from interior Asia Minor. Sidewalks were crowded. Avenues that had been pleasantly ample were now filled with peddlers' carts of refugees who were now trying to make a living by selling a few strings of beads.... The great rock of the Acropolis...looked down upon as strange a sight as it had seen since the days when Phidias was adorning the Parthenon at its summit.

The urban refugees' alienation was compounded by their lack of adequate housing and meager job prospects. Consequently, cultural differences were reinforced by economic and material hardships. In Pentzopoulos's vivid words, "[t]he [material] conditions prevailing among the newcomers further widened the gap between the two communities. The poverty, the unhealthy makeshift tin barracks, the hungry faces were stumbling blocks to any impulsive fraternization; many natives were genuinely repelled by this misery."

- The experiences of refugees settled in rural areas were relatively better. About 90 percent of the approximately 670,000 rural refugees were settled in the "New Lands" of Macedonia and Thrace. More than 50 per cent of this cohort was given the land, homes, livestock and tools of exchanged Turks and Bulgarians. The other half benefited from Venizelos's drastic land reform policies, which resulted in the summary expropriation of large estates in Macedonia and Thrace. Furthermore, the rural refugees did not have to face the enmity of the Old Greeks in quite the manner that their urban counterparts did. The New Lands still possessed sizable minority populations despite the unmixing that had marked the years since the Balkan Wars. Consequently, the rural refugees were deemed to be a "Hellenizing force," which would finally tip the demographic scales in Greece's favor. The presence of other ethnic groups (Jews, Vlachs, Roma, Slav-Macedonians, Pomacks, Chams) affirmed the Greekness of the rural refugees and blunted conflicts between themselves and native Greeks in the region. However, as Karakasidou has noted, even in the New Lands, locals distinguished themselves from the recently arrived refugees.

## GERMANY: 1945-1948

As in the Greek case, the expulsion of German minorities from Eastern Europe ended the irredentist phase of German nationalism. Germans were suddenly confronted with putative members of the Volk whose dialects, manners, and cultural patterns often differed markedly from their own. The refugees “were strangers to the West, and both they and their neighbors began to discover that the concept of a ‘Greater Germany’ was more of a myth than a goal that could be realized.”

- The sheer number of refugees overwhelmed the local inhabitants and led to serious shortages in housing, foodstuffs, clothing, heating material, household equipment and other commodities. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were forced to live in barracks, camps, dance halls, temporary relief shelters, and hastily converted schools. The strain on resources, coupled with the refugees’ poverty and cultural heterogeneity gave rise to growing disaffection among the local population. Locals saw the refugees as “destitute outsiders who brought nothing and took much.... They had no connection to the community, and in the meager living conditions of the first post-war years, became a burden.” Refugees were branded “Polacks” and deemed to be shiftless and lazy. Their very status as Germans was often rejected on the grounds that they failed to conform to distinctly local ways of life. In the words of one disgruntled native:

The influx of refugees brings the danger that our People (Volk) loses its genuine and original character and is mixed up with a character foreign to our land and our customs.... It is no exaggeration to say that popular life in the villages of the Heide [the northern plains] is the healthiest and happiest conceivable with regard to religion as well as culturally, economically, and socially, but now the ax is being laid to the roots of the old tree.

Among the natives, negative opinions of the newcomers clearly prevailed and became more pronounced over time. The refugees “were regarded as a latent threat to the natives’ world, to the traditional ways of doing things, ways that had not been questioned by anyone for a long time, if ever.”

- The locals’ enmity was mirrored in the refugees’ recognition of their displacement and loss of material, social, and professional foundations. Their distress was neatly captured in a survey carried out in March 1945 by the British occupying forces. The survey recorded that 72 percent of the refugees polled stated that their relationship with the native population was “bad.” Refugee respondents noted that their relationship with locals was marred by the natives’ selfishness and penchant for treating them as “a lower class of being.” The results of another poll taken four years later revealed that eighty-five percent of those questioned would have preferred to return to their homelands if permission to do so were granted.

Reports from observers in Germany at the time tend to corroborate the refugees’ view that they were being mistreated. Journalists and others on the scene noted that refugees were usually given the most uncongenial jobs for which they often neither had training nor aptitude. Refugees were also the first to be fired when workers had to be laid off; unfortunately, for many of them this was an all too common experience, particularly during the first few years of the postwar period.

- The refugees’ disillusionment propelled them to form groups founded on their shared experience. These Homeland Provincial Societies (Landsmannschaften) helped foster a more positive refugee self-image. The Societies rendered some material aid, arranged social gatherings, and broached refugee issues in meetings with political officials. Perhaps more importantly, they also provided the refugees with a sense of agency and voice which enabled them to advance their interests as a distinct group with specific goals and requirements, most notably a desire for equality and the right of return. These sentiments were manifested in a number of newspapers and other publications written, distributed, and read by the refugees.

- In short, as in the Greek case, a distinct refugee consciousness surfaced among the German expellees. The refugees differentiated themselves from the local population and advanced a unique set of grievances based on their interests and needs. The establishment of refugee organizations would soon be followed by more explicitly political mobilization.

#### THE POLITICS OF REFUGEE INCORPORATION: GREECE, 1928-1950

The task of settling approximately 1.5 million refugees after ten years of intermittent war and political crisis mobilized international assistance, which culminated in the establishment of the League of Nations sponsored Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC), in November 1923. The Commission answered calls for humanitarian assistance in the years immediately following the disaster in Asia Minor. It also succeeded in settling many refugees in rural areas. By 1930 -- the year of the Commission's dissolution -- 145,758 families had been settled on farms in Macedonia and Thrace.

- Despite the work of the RSC, the bulk of the refugees, both urban and rural, remained lodged at the bottom of Greek society. Refugees continued to be shunted into exclusively refugee villages and urban neighborhoods and derided by locals for their cultural heterogeneity. Many locals also took issue with the refugees' affiliation with the Liberal Party (Komma Fileleftheron) and its leader Eletherios Venizelos.

The origins of "refugee Venizelism" stretched back to the beginning of the First World War. Venizelos's pro-Entente, pro-war platform was considered to be in accord with the interests of the Asia Minor Greeks, who feared the increasingly hostile nature of Turkish nationalism. Conversely, Antivenizelist neutrality stood for inaction, and the abandonment of "unredeemed Greeks." The Asia Minor catastrophe coincided with Antivenizelist rule and solidified the refugees' association with Venizelos and the Liberal Party.

- The Venizelist parties recognized the importance of the refugee vote and worked to integrate the newcomers into their organizations. Refugees were deemed to be an integral part of the Venizelist camp and refugee candidates ran on the Liberal Party's ticket in local and national elections. Refugee associations and newspapers, such as *Prosfygikos Kosmos* (Refugee World), also became an important part of the broad network of Venizelist partisan organizations.

- The Venizelists' embrace of the refugees evoked even greater hostility to the newcomers from conservative Antivenizelists. Antivenizelists went so far as to demand the exclusion or segregation of the refugees from the political process. For instance, they initially refused to accept the refugees' right to vote and, having lost that argument, insisted on the institution of separate refugee electoral colleges, similar to those created for Moslems and Jews. Although the demand was rejected, it deepened divisions between refugees and natives.

- The conservative backlash against the refugees reached its pinnacle in the election of 1928: Antivenizelists accused the refugees of depriving the native majority of its legitimate political power and used the mainstream press to heighten awareness of the refugee "menace." Native supporters of Venizelos were characterized as unthinking dupes who had lost sight of their interests as natives.

- Venizelos's decisive victory in 1928 forced some conservative politicians to reconsider their strategy toward the refugees. Venizelos's brokering of the Ankara Convention in June 1930 also gave conservatives a convenient pretext for changing tactics and aggressively courting the refugee vote. Under the terms of the Convention, Greece and Turkey agreed to drop all claims for refugee compensation. This was meant to inculcate a spirit of friendship and goodwill between the two states. The debate over the ratification of the Ankara Convention led to a partial split among refugee politicians: while most refugee deputies submitted to Liberal Party discipline, a sizable minority denounced the Convention as a sell-out and severed their ties to the party. The People's Party sought to capitalize on this by forcefully attacking the Convention and siding

with the refugees on the issue of compensation. By 1933 a broad range of conservative, pro-Royalist parties had fused under the banner of the “United Opposition,” whose rallying cry was 25 percent compensation for “our refugee brothers!”

- This strategy proved to be effective. The Venizelists lost 20 out of 21 seats in Athens by less than 2000 votes. Following the election, however, the United Opposition failed to honor its 25 percent promise and the Right quickly reverted to its more customary anti-refugee rhetoric and policies. This was manifested in the government’s redrawing of electoral districts in Athens and Thessaloniki to diminish the weight of the refugee vote in those cities.
- Anti-refugee sentiment picked-up after the election and reached a near fever pitch following the failed Venizelist coup of March 1935. Conservatives used the situation to purge the armed forces and civil service of Venizelists. They also restored the monarchy and sent Venizelos into exile in Paris, where he died on March 18, 1936. The declining fortunes of the Liberal Party caused many of the more radical refugees to abandon mainstream politics altogether. Consequently, increasing numbers of them turned to the more radical Communist Party of Greece (KKE).
- Communist Party organizers recognized the unique opportunity made available to them by the decline of the Liberals and set about re-working their platform to make it more palatable to refugee voters. The KKE’s traditional opposition to Venizelist irredentism had limited its popularity with refugee voters in the past. The KKE had also alienated the refugees by taking the side of “native” workers in the cities and ethnic minorities in the countryside. Indeed, the party had denounced the settlement of refugees in Macedonia and Thrace as a scheme designed to forcibly alter the ethnic composition of the New Lands. After the Venizelists’ failed 1935 coup, the KKE dropped its policy for an independent Macedonia and began to address itself as the unabashed party of the refugees. The refugees were courted as a coherent group, without concern for their internal differentiation or class distribution. The dire economic conditions, which wracked Greece throughout the 1930s, prompted many poor, indebted urban refugees to shift their allegiance to the KKE.
- The growing popularity of the KKE among the refugees and other sectors of the population manifested itself in the results of the December 1935 election. The voting resulted in a hung parliament, with the Venizelists winning 143 seats to the Antivenizelists 141. The KKE-dominated Popular Front (Laiko Metopo) held the balance of power with its 15 seats. News of both the Populists’ and Liberals’ negotiations with the Communists prompted a strong reaction from the staunchly anticommunist armed forces. The Minister of War, General George Papagos, warned the two main parties that the army would not tolerate any coalition with the Communists. Shortly after the death of caretaker Prime Minister, Konstantinos Demertzis, the King appointed the staunch anticommunist General Ioannis Metaxas as his replacement.
- Metaxas used mounting incidences of labor unrest in Greece’s towns and cities as a pretext for suspending parliament, restricting freedom of the press, and declaring martial law. A military dictatorship was formally established on August 4, 1936. Metaxas declared that only a strong, extra-parliamentary government could save Greece from political ruin. The dictatorship was ostensibly instituted to preserve the state from both Communism and party faction. Metaxas’ “collectivist nationalism” aimed at eliminating societal conflicts and inculcating a sense of “national mindedness.” In so doing it eliminated Greece’s democratic regime and the civil and political rights of the country’s citizens. This drove the KKE and many of its remaining supporters, refugees and natives alike, underground.
- The Axis occupation of Greece and subsequent Civil War transformed the country dramatically. Poor urban refugees formed an important part of the communist insurgency. The victory of the Right after almost four years of fratricidal civil war ushered in a fundamentalist anti-communism that pervaded the post-war

period. While a majority of urban refugees continued to support parties of the Left through the 1950s and 1960s, they no longer held the kind of political leverage that they enjoyed during the interwar period. Mass emigration to Northern Europe, North America and Australia reduced their numbers and the ideological divisions fostered by the Civil War shifted the support of many refugees to the parties of the Center and Right. Furthermore, the conservative orientation of the postwar Greek political regime worked to limit the power of the organized Left and its adherents. In short, the refugees “ceased to constitute a single, politically cohesive...social group” and the “refugee problem” no longer threatened the stability of the regime.

#### GERMANY: 1949-1960

As in Greece, the German refugees’ discontent was channeled into the local political party system. Most refugees believed that native politicians simply did not comprehend their plight or take their demands seriously enough. Initially, there was very little that they could do to improve matters. Fearing that the refugees might destabilize an already tense situation, the American, British, and French occupying forces expressly refused to license any political group or party dedicated primarily to the advancement of refugee interests. The Allies feared that the refugees “might provide a reservoir of votes for parties that would combine social radicalism with a foreign policy prepared to take large risks to win backs homes they had left behind in the East.” Consequently, local residency requirements were used to prevent refugees from participating politically at the state (Land) level up until 1948.

- The pace of refugee organizing accelerated after the passage of West Germany’s currency reform in 1948. The currency reform hurt refugees and other have-not groups disproportionately and led to heightened levels of discontent. The refugees pressed for greater political participation and by 1949 succeeded in organizing a cross-zone political movement made up of delegates from all types of refugee groups. The ratification of West Germany’s Basic Law in May 1949 guaranteed freedom of association for all German citizens and soon thereafter the nascent national movement along with many of the refugee Homeland Provincial Societies grouped themselves under the banner of the United East German Provincial Societies (Vereinigte Ostdeutsche Landsmannschaften).

After the first federal elections of September 1949, the American Military Government formally delegated its responsibility for licensing political parties to the new Bonn government. This sparked the creation of the first and most important refugee party in West Germany: the Block of Expellees and Victims of Injustice (Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten -- BHE). The BHE appealed to refugees and other victims of the war and military occupation and promised to address their material and social hardships. The party also affirmed the refugees’ “right to self-determination” and championed calls for the return of lost homelands. In short, “a massive organized system of expellee pressure groups began to make itself felt.”

- The amalgamation of the refugee groups at the national level was precisely what the Western Allies had hoped to avoid. There was a genuine fear that the refugees’ desire to regain lost homelands could seriously hinder Germany’s postwar reconstruction and European stability, more generally. In a 1949 report, the United States High Commissioner for Germany noted that:

Unfavorable conditions of refugee life are beginning to have serious political repercussions within Germany and may vitally and adversely affect the international political situation.... The repeal of the United States Military Government law requiring licenses of political parties [has] opened the way for...more vociferous and definite demands on the part of the refugees for political expression.

In the same year, the British Military governor wrote a memorandum to Britain’s Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, warning Bevin that the loss of self-respect which these people [the refugees] have undergone and the discontent which their mode of life engenders lays them open to the temptations of nationalist agitation and

provides ready made material for the first unscrupulous leader that comes to power. Paradoxically enough, though the refugees as a class owe their miseries in large measure to the policy of the Soviet Union in Germany and Eastern Europe, the conditions in which they live make them easy prey to communist blandishments.

The Allies fears were heightened after the BHE campaigned and won 23 percent of the votes cast in the July 1950 state (Land) election in Schleswig-Holstein. The BHE emerged as the second largest party in the state, after the German Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands -- SPD). Its fifteen seats in the state legislature ensured that no government in Schleswig-Holstein could be formed without its support. Indeed, it eventually formed a coalition government with the CDU. The BHE went on to win seats in Wurttemberg-Baden, Hesse, and Bavaria's state legislatures.

- In the second federal election of 1953, the BHE secured 27 seats in the Bundestag, giving the party a prominent place on the national stage. And yet, the 1953 election also marked the peak of the party's success. In the subsequent federal election of 1957, the BHE failed to secure any seats in the Bundestag. In the space of four short years, the threat of radical refugee politics that seemed so real in the years immediately following the end of the war had all but receded. This paradoxical turn of events was due to a number of remarkable factors that together made West Germany's post-war reconstruction atypical.

First, it is important to note that after assuming responsibility for the handling of the refugee problem in 1949, the Bonn government took steps to quicken the incorporation process. A Ministry for Expellees (Ministerium für Vertriebene) was established and charged with coordinating all governmental refugee assistance organizations and programs. These organizations helped the refugees deal with housing needs, employment, and general social welfare. The 1949 Refugee Settlement Act eased refugees' demands for housing by providing special inducements, such as tax exemptions, to individuals selling or leasing land to refugees. A refugee bank was also established to re-finance loans granted to refugees by local banks and, in 1952, the Equalization of Burdens Act was passed in an effort to provide restitution to refugees.

While these measures were important, they did little to palliate the refugees, as is evinced by the economic plight of the refugees as late as 1951 and the success of the BHE in the 1953 election. Arguably, the single most important factor contributing to the relatively rapid incorporation of Germany's refugee population was the aptly termed "economic miracle" (Wirtschaftswunder) that lifted the country from the mid-1950s onwards. Foreign intervention greatly facilitated West Germany's rapid economic recovery. Marshall Plan aid freed indigenous investment capital, which was used to reinvigorate Germany's ailing industries. As a result, industrial production tripled between 1949 and 1959. This rapid expansion led to a sharp drop in unemployment, as more and more workers were drawn into Germany's factories. Indeed, unemployment fell from about 9 percent in 1949 to a mere 1 percent ten years later, despite an overall increase in the active labor force from 13.6 to 19.6 million.

Furthermore, the corporatist social compact the Allies also helped forge played an important role in diffusing potential conflicts between labor and management. This was particularly important with regard to wages, as workers effectively agreed to practice wage restraint in return for jobs and security. Finally, moves aimed at ensuring West Germany's quick entry into the revamped capitalist global economy helped propel the economic miracle forward by shifting the focus of the economy towards exports. Early moves toward European economic integration also played an important role in this regard. The cumulative affect of Germany's economic reconstruction was astonishing. By 1953, the average living standard in West Germany was higher than it had been in 1938; by 1961, Germany had become the world's third largest industrial producer.

- West Germany's economic recovery allowed Bonn to compensate the refugees for their wartime losses. The growth of German heavy industry, building trades, and manufacturing also eased tensions caused by high levels of refugee unemployment. In short, Germany's economic recovery allowed it to turn its expellee liability into a prime asset. The phenomenal Wirtschaftswunder made possible by the influx of dollars rested no less on the availability of skilled workers who had...been unemployed. At once two important ends were achieved -- rapid economic recovery and the integration of millions of expellees.

Another key to Germany's diffusion of its refugee crisis lay in its mainstream political parties' co-opting of the BHE. The CDU and SPD lured prominent refugee politicians away from the BHE, and refugee voters turned to the more mainstream parties after they accepted the refugees' demands for equal treatment. The CDU/CSU also created a special body responsible for formulating refugee policy for the Christian Democrats. On the foreign policy front, the CDU, SPD, and Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei -- FDP) all exhibited varying degrees of support for the refugees' calls for the eventual unification of Germany and the return of their "lost homelands." In its 1952 Action Program, the SPD stated that settlement of German territorial and border questions must await a peace treaty. This settlement must not be prejudiced by prior agreements between governments of individual parts of Germany and the Occupation Powers. Detachment of lands that belonged to Germany in 1937 has not created a new law but a new injustice. The Social Democratic Party of Germany does not recognize this state of affairs either in the East or in the West (emphasis added).

In short, West Germany's mainstream parties purposefully kept alive the refugees' dream of return, knowing full well that such a return was highly unlikely given the exigencies of Cold War geopolitics. This strategy succeeded in diffusing more radical refugee politics. However, as Ahonen has convincingly argued, it also constrained the mainstream parties' options toward their Eastern Bloc neighbors throughout the early years of the Cold War. Hence, while the threat of refugee radicalism no longer threatened the stability of the regime, the refugees continued to influence West German politics well into the 1950s and 60s, particularly in the area of foreign policy.

## CONCLUSION

Proponents of mass population transfers suggest that the process of matching peoples, territories, and states provides the surest means of settling ethno-nationalist disputes. The analysis presented in this paper problematizes this assumption by illustrating that the incorporation of refugees produced by engineered ethnic unmixing is fraught with risks and uncertainties. As noted, refugees created by such flows do not necessarily identify with the nation-state in which they are inserted: in both Greece and Germany, refugees formed distinct identities that drew in large part on their status as outsiders. Their identity was not given; rather, it was constructed according to their material conditions, cultural dispositions, dialects, and relationships with local populations. In short, one of the assumptions upon which partition and unmixing is based -- i.e. that there are mutually exclusive identities that can be mapped onto coherent political entities -- is false.

- The politicization of divisions between locals and refugees was also considered in this paper. In Greece, the refugees' arrival onto the political scene "posed a social challenge that strained the tolerance of the natives [and] changed the face of party politics beyond recognition." The refugees' impact on the existing social order contributed to the profound changes that swept Greek politics and society in the interwar period. The refugees' turn to radical politics following Venizelos's death and the decline of the Liberal Party lifted the fortunes of the Greek Left and contributed to the polarization of Greek society which culminated in the Civil War of 1946-1949.

Many feared that the influx of refugees into West Germany at the close of World War II would lead to a similar outcome. As noted above, a unique set of circumstances, including the Allied occupation, the Marshall Plan, and, most importantly, Germany's economic miracle, converged and allowed the Federal Republic to diffuse its refugee crisis before it could develop to the extent that it had in Greece. However, Germany's success was not a foregone conclusion; indeed, many felt that it had all the makings of a monumental disaster. It is worth pausing to consider what might have transpired if Germany had not benefited from Marshall Plan aid and other forms of foreign technical and material assistance that poured into the country as foreign powers worked to establish it as a bulwark against Soviet Communism. West Germany's ability to move the refugees into the labor market and out of refugee camps quickly was key to its success. But how many countries can reasonably hope for similar levels of foreign assistance? The failure of the international community to honor its commitments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and elsewhere would suggest that outcomes resembling the Greek case are more likely in any future post-transfer situations.

In sum, proponents of population transfers must consider the consequences of their preferred solutions on receiving states. The difficulties raised by the partition of territories and forced transfer of peoples does not end once refugees are inserted into "national homelands." Rather, the stability of these states may be imperiled and this, in turn, is likely to hamper economic reconstruction and democratization efforts. The Greek and German cases suggest that engineered ethnic unmixing is likely to create as many problems as it seeks to solve. Hence, its utility is suspect.