

THE POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS AND BEHAVIOIRS OF THE PONTOS REFUGEES IN
GREECE IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD (1923- 1936) FOLLOWING THE EXCHANGE
OF POPULATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY OF 1923.

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The Political Affiliations and Behaviors of the Pontos Refugees in Greece in the Interwar Period (1923-1936) following the Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey of 1923.

Yunanistan ile Türkiye arasında 1923 yılında gerçekleşen Nüfus Mübadelesi sonrasında, iki dünya savaşı arası dönemde (1923- 1936) Yunanistan'daki Pontuslu Rum Göçmenlerin Siyasi Bağları ve Davranışları.

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Abstract

The following thesis aims to explore the political behaviors and affiliations of the refugees of Pontic descent in Greece of the Interwar period, following the Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey in 1923. The main issues which I will attempt to explore, involve the refugees' political ideologies and orientations upon arrival to Greece and their slow transformation throughout the period, the political parties they favored and why, their treatment by the state, the parties, and the authorities of Greece, how that came also to mould their political consciousness, and finally, the Pontos refugees' overall process of political and social integration and assimilation and the dominant factors influencing their political choices and behavior. As such, the research undertaken is of an exploratory nature. In this attempt, I have mostly used secondary sources, which consist mainly of other academic research and publications, which nonetheless contain also an ample amount of primary sources, such as newspaper articles and excerpts from the various newspapers of the interwar period, personal testimonies of refugees, eye-witnesses to events of the time, as well as public statements, declarations and speeches made by leading political figures of the time, either in parliament or to the general public.

ÖZET

İşbu tezin amacı, Yunanistan ile Türkiye arasında 1923 yılındaki Nüfus mübadelesinden sonra, Yunanistan'daki Pontus kökenli göçmenlerin siyasi davranışları ve bağlarını araştırmaktır. Araştırmaya çalışacağım temel konular, göçmenlerin Yunanistan'a varışları esnasındaki siyasi ideolojileri ve oryantasyonları ve bu kişilerin bu dönem boyunca yaşadıkları ağır dönüşümünü, bu kişilerin fayda sağladığı siyasi partiler ve bunun nedenlerini Yunanistan'ın Devleti, partileri ve Makamları tarafından gördükleri muameleyi, bunun şekillendirdiği siyasi bilinci ve son olarak Pontuslu göçmenlerin siyasi ve sosyal entegrasyonunun ve birleşmesinin genel süreci ile bunların siyasi seçimlerini ve davranışlarını etkileyen belli başlı faktörleri kapsamaktadır. Böylelikle, işbu araştırmanın doğası açıklayıcıdır. Bu çaba dahilinde, temelde ikinci kaynaklar kullandım; ki bu kaynaklar özellikle başka akademik araştırmalar ve yayınları kapsamaktadır ve aslında bu kaynaklarda birçok birincil kaynak mevcuttur, örneğin, 1930'lu yılların çeşitli gazetelerinden makale ve alıntılar, göçmenlerin şahsi tanıklıkları, dönemin olaylarını yaşayan şahitler ve ayrıca gerek Parlamento içinde gerekse geniş kitle nezdinde gerçekleşen ve dönemin siyasi liderlerinin kamu beyanları, ilanları ve konuşmalarındır.

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INTRODUCTION

Following the end of the Greco- Turkish war and the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne, around 1.500.000 refugees from Asia Minor, Pontos, Eastern Thrace, and other lands as well came pouring into Greece. The years between 1922, following the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the arrival of the refugees, and 1936, that is, the Metaxa dictatorship, constitute a most important, most volatile, most chaotic but ultimately most productive period in Greek history. Apart from the pressing problems created by the arrival of such a large mass of people, almost all in the most terrible state, the political and geopolitical instability of the time, and the rise of new political agents and orientations, all combine to make this period both very interesting, in terms of the social, demographic and political metamorphosis undergone by Greece, and also extremely complex, for, as we shall see, within the borders of the state, fragmented and disorganized as it was, many microcosms sprouted, so that in fact one finds themselves exploring many different and often paradoxical worlds.

In the following thesis, I will attempt to explore the political orientations and affiliations of the Pontos refugees throughout the interwar period. In this attempt, I will also explore the interwar period itself, the refugee experience, and the various political, social, economic, and regional-ethnic factors and dynamics which together came to influence and determine the Pontos refugee populations' consequent political course.

As this study is of an exploratory nature, I do not begin by proposing to prove or disprove any pre-existing hypothesis or theory concerning the Pontos refugees' political affiliations and activity. Instead, I will attempt through a study of the period and of the Pontos refugee populations to discern and interpret, in as much as possible, the political patterns they

followed, the causes and sources of their political behavior, and how these were reflected in, impacted and were impacted by the political scene of the interwar period and the existing parties and dominant ideologies of the time.

For this purpose, mainly secondary sources have been used, which include historical studies on the refugees at large, the Pontos refugees in particular, and Greece throughout the interwar period. However, these studies contain a great deal of primary sources, which include both first-hand accounts of the period, including personal testimonies of refugees themselves, which are great in volume, and, alternatively, excerpts from newspapers of the time, particularly those with distinct party affiliations. In addition, where possible, excerpts from public declarations, pre-electoral speeches, etc., have been used. Again, as will be seen further down, of these primary sources the most revealing and most helpful are, firstly, the refugees' own accounts, which provide both a more detailed narrative of the general refugee experience and also an insight into the refugees' mentality and psychology, and secondly, the newspapers of the time, which accordingly reveal the dominant mentalities, ideologies, and antipathic voices and dynamics of the period.

As has been observed by many researchers, in terms of numerical data, that is, complete lists of electoral results in each refugee settlement, complete lists of refugee settlements, number of inhabitants in each settlement and their region of origin, etc., these statistics are extremely difficult to obtain; due to a number of factors, such as the refugees' constant migration within the country throughout the period, their lack of stable professions, in some cases, the language barrier, etc., these figures were constantly changing. Thus, though statistical data has been employed in this exploration, neither do I attempt to present a complete and detailed account of the whereabouts of each and every Pontos refugee settlement or group of Pontos refugees, or the precise lists of electoral results in each of these. Instead, in as much detail as space allows, I will examine the dominant political affiliations

and trends among the Pontos refugees, focusing on areas with particularly high concentrations of Pontians, both urban and rural.

As stated, the interwar period itself was a highly volatile and significant period in Greek history. There are several factors which all combine to make it so. The beginning of the interwar period marked the end of more than a decade of wars; following the end of the Asia Minor Catastrophe, a generation of soldiers finally returned to an economically destitute and socially explosive Greece. The country was exhausted from its military campaigns, the constant coups and national divisions, culminating in the National Schism, and the extreme poverty of the majority of the population. This was compounded by the arrival of the great mass of refugees, themselves destitute, suffering from the shock and trauma of war and severely in need of every support from the depleted state. The period was marked by polarity and cleavage; in the slow and laborious process of assimilation and assertion of the various groups and voices within the country, both old and new, social and political cleavages emerged and solidified, whose causes were to be found as much within the developments of the period itself, as in grudges and conflicts relating to the past. These new social classes, interest groups, and even ethnic groups resulted from developments such as the rise of industry and massive industrialization in Greece, which gave rise to the labour movement, the shift in demographics following the population exchanges, the incorporation of the New Lands, such as Macedonia and Thrace, to the country, the redistribution of land in those areas, etc. These groups and the emerging ideologies and movements in the country were compounded by international developments, such as the international economic crisis, the rise of fascism, Greece's relation with neighboring countries, etc. By extension, the period is characterized by the emergence of social and political extremes; political ideologies both from the extreme left and the extreme right begin to emerge and gain ground in Greece during this period.

Politically, the period was marked, very generally, by three main issues: the regime and its legitimacy, the polarity between the two dominant political factions of the period, and the role of the military. All three are of course linked, so that each political faction or party throughout the period is equated- often inaccurately- with a particular regime, and the military accordingly is too divided between the two factions with their leading parties and their chosen regime. Again, in very general terms, as we will see,

Greek interwar politics were dominated by the polarization between the two major political camps or blocs: Venizelism and Antivenizelism. Each was identified with a particular constitutional regime: the former with the Republic, the latter with the monarchy. Nevertheless, the correspondence was not perfect, nor free of ambiguity. (Mavrogordatos, p. 25).

As we will see, the two factions, particularly when the social and political polarization was extremely heightened, became autocratic, unconstitutional, and contained voices and groups which increasingly betrayed extremist political tendencies; ironically, they came as such very much to resemble each other, particularly in the methods each employed to neutralize or defeat the other. This factional civil war was exacerbated by the constant intrusion of the army, which contained amongst the most extreme supporters of either regime or faction, and thus transferred the same antagonism and animosity into their own ranks. Invoking the need for strong leadership, national unity and the imposition of order as an excuse to pull one coup after another, they attempted to redirect the country's development by force in accordance to their interests and convictions.

It is clear, and has been observed by several researchers, that these divisions and polarities were all symptomatic of a deeper crisis at work within the Greek nation and psyche at the time; that being, a huge national identity crisis. This is confirmed by the emergence of

extremism in the social and political ideologies of the period, as by the strikingly similar methods by which these attempt to assert themselves. The effects of the end of irredentism and the Greek presence in Asia Minor cannot be over-stated, and affected the Greek 'natives' as well as the refugees:

It does not require great insight for one to discern that the foundations of the nation's existence changed completely. (.....) The transition to pacifist policies was easy for the Greeks. However, the sudden end of the constant Greek presence in Asia Minor, the sudden loss of the eastern dimension in the historical consciousness of the intellectuals, the collapse of the foundations upon which foreign policy was based, the means and for many people even the country's right to exist, caused a new identity crisis. This was compounded by the presence of the refugees. (Hering, p. 1006)

As a result, as we shall see, one of the greatest divisions of the period, a direct confirmation of the national identity crisis at work, was that which developed between the natives and the refugees.

In effect, the great differences between the natives and the refugees reflected the great contrast of the respective states, environments, and circumstances they grew out of; "the Ottoman Greeks had evolved as a community in a sociopolitical and cultural world sharply different from that of the metropolitan Greeks" (Giannuli, p. 277). The defining features of their communities were the Orthodox faith, their particular regional-ethnic traditions and the communal structure of the millet system, within the context of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multilingual empire. Unlike the metropolitan Greeks, they possessed a more cosmopolitan view of the world, and a stronger sense of the ecumenical character of Orthodoxy and the Rum identity, whose foundation and reference point was Byzantine tradition. In contrast, the

small Greek nation-state had been structured and evolved based upon European models and ideologies. While, as many refugees later attested, within the “more linear and far more egalitarian makeup of the Ottoman Greek millet” (Giannuli, p.277), class consciousness and class struggle were concepts virtually unknown, as were class divisions, in Greece, already by 1910 there had developed distinct social classes and class conflict. A dynamic labour movement was already underway prior to the refugees’ arrival, and, as we will see, the rise to power of the Liberals themselves was in many ways a response to the emergence of new and distinct social classes and interest groups, which the existing political elite of the time failed to properly address or represent. In this strain, “in the pursuit of Western ways of modernization, mainland Greeks neglected their more recent Byzantine heritage and sought to restore the secular ideals of the distant pre-Christian classical past” (Giannuli, 277) to the disappointment and distaste of the refugees. As a result, both refugees and natives projected upon each other a highly negative image: the cosmopolitan refugees regarded the natives as “culturally anachronistic”, while the natives viewed the refugees as “narrow minded, parochial, and unsophisticated people” (Giannuli, 277). The consequent effects of these great differences in the mentality, socio-political context, communal structure and reference for identity between the refugees and the natives, which effectively constituted the difference between two worlds, too came to be absorbed in and expressed through the factional polarity which dominated Greek interwar politics.

Thus, throughout the entire period, social, political and national identity were in a state of flux. From this perspective, it is possible to view the refugees' political and social activities and loyalties as part of a broader, massive effort towards adjustment and assimilation in their new home. This proved to be a most erratic process, fraught both with practical difficulties and social obstacles, owing both to the particular and complex refugee psychology and to the approach shown them by their native compatriots. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of

this study to examine the psychological, sociological, and anthropological aspects of the refugee experience, despite the fact that, in order to understand fully the refugees' political behavior and choices, and their general evolution, it is necessary to have some understanding of these things. However, in terms of the refugees' political behavior, regional and ethnic traits "are of limited use, if we do not take into account the role played by international and domestic political circumstances" (Marantides, p. 76). What reference will thus be made to such factors as refugee psychology or the effect, large or small, of particular ethnic traits among the refugees at large and the Pontos refugees in particular, will only be in conjecture to their political behavior.

In general terms the refugees were caught between a dynamic desire to move forward, to reconstruct their lives as best they could in their new home, using whatever resources possible, adjust to and fully embrace- and be embraced by- their new home, and their nostalgia for their homelands and the terrible trauma of the experiences of war and becoming refugees. As we will see, both these factors were extremely powerful in the refugee psyche, on the one hand constituting them highly 'flamable' material, dynamic participants in both political and social developments, and on the other hand, socially segregated and thus easily reverting to nostalgia for their homes in Anatolia, to the point of making very limited efforts to become integrated in Greece. It has been noted that, in many cases, refugees refused even to accept compensation money due to exchangees, refusing to believe that they would not one day be restored to their homelands in Anatolia; similarly, "In some cases this dream of returning was so powerful that Pontian farmers refused to collect agricultural supplies provided for them" (Vergeti, p.385). This nostalgia for their lost homelands united them through the phenomenon of collective memory:

For the Asia Minor refugees as a whole, memories and the use of memory were undoubtedly of great importance, though probably to a different degree for

each person (...) in attempting to build a new life out of the chaos which surrounded them, many reacted by reliving aspects of their past and emphasizing the element of continuity (...) narratives of life in Asia Minor, filtered through the subjective memories of many people, ultimately constituted a collective memory, a substantial aspect of the cultural character of Kokkinia (...) also, this collective memory provided a reference point for their identity, as it defined the cultural characteristics, the critical points which differentiated them from others. (Hirschon, p. 62).

Symptoms of the paradox out of which the refugees attempted to re-assert their identity are evident in many of their activities and social metamorphoses at the time. They manifested either as regional and ideological prejudices among the refugees themselves, often taking on a political character, or collective attempts to assert their historical identity and experience, to incorporate it in the national narrative, in spite of- or rather because of- native prejudice. This was attempted in a number of ways. For example, whereas in Anatolia, regional dialects had been looked down upon, and the sophisticated Greek tongue was the *katharevousa*, taught in schools, once the refugees arrived in Greece, despite the obvious distaste of the native population, regional dialects began to become the object of study and preservation. The creation of probably hundreds of refugee organizations and research centers also attests to this- the clear cultural effort to preserve what they could of their origins, assert their identity, and establish a sense of continuity. Apart from formal expressions of this, social symptoms appeared as well. In many mixed refugee settlements, that is, settlements consisting of refugees from various different regions in Anatolia, such as could be found in Athens and Salonica, one observes a growing emphasis on regional identity and the emergence of

regional stereotypes.

Refugees and Natives by Political Allegiance				
(estimated in percentages)				
Elections	Antivenizelism	Venizelism	Agrarianism	Communism
<u>Refugees</u>				
1928	1	91	3	5
1932	2	71	14	14
1933	16	67	3	16
1936	11	70	3	16
<u>Natives</u>				
1928	37 (41)	60 (57)	2 (1)	1 (1)
1932	39 (44)	52 (48)	5 (4)	3 (3)
1933	49 (54)	47 (41)	2 (2)	3 (2)
1936	53 (57)	42 (38)	0 (1)	3 (3)

(Mavrogordatos, p.187)

In terms of how this impacted their political behavior, as we will see, the lines which separate the psychological, the social, and the political in the interwar years were often very blurry, so that factors unrelated to political policies or platforms often had a great influence upon the refugees' political loyalties. Generally speaking, the refugees' psychological dimensions and identity discourses too became absorbed in the factional polarity which defined the period, and were also absorbed in the class struggle within the country. It is important to note, that “in interwar Greece, the refugees constituted the only compact voting bloc of nationwide importance which could be compared to a Dutch *zuil* or an Austrian *lager*. Moreover, this bloc was clearly the arbiter of interwar elections” (Mavrogordatos, p. 184). As such, they were the recipients of Venizelist patronage and Antivenizelist rancor.

Naturally, the Pontos refugees were not exempt from the general identity crisis which characterized their fellow refugees and native compatriots. The Pontic identity too underwent transformations, up till very recently. In Pontos, prior to the population exchange, regional characteristics were not projected nor celebrated; the intellectual upper and middle urban classes of the Pontians too favoured the *katharevousa*. Once they found themselves in Greece, these same intellectuals began creating societies, clubs and research centers dedicated to recording the regional dialect, regional music, dances, customs and history. The most notable amongst these was the CPM (Committee of Pontic Studies), founded in 1927, and presided over by one-time Metropolitan of Trebizond Chrysanthos. Similarly, the term 'Pontian' itself underwent a transformation. Originally, it was used and understood in its present form only by Pontian intellectuals, members and founders of such societies and research centers as we have mentioned. When used by the general population of Pontos refugees, it was understood as referring only to Pontians from Asia Minor Pontos, that is, not including the Pontians of the Caucasus or south Russia (despite the fact that in many cases they had moved there from Asia Minor Pontos only a generation ago); these populations were referred to as 'Ponto-Caucasians', or simply, 'Caucasians'. Initially, even Pontians from Asia Minor did not view themselves as a homogenous, single group; they tended to distinguish themselves based on which specific cities or rural areas of Pontos they were from. Refugees from the city of Matsouka were 'Matsouklides', refugees from Kromni were 'Krometes', refugees from Samsounda were 'Samsoulides', and so on. These differentiations reflected the distinct and particular historical identity and inheritance of each city and region of Pontos; for example, refugees from Sinope differentiated themselves on account of their speaking demotic Greek, rather than the Pontic dialect, and often even considered themselves Ionians, rather than Pontians. As time passed, however, these fine distinctions faded and the various particular Pontic identities came to be incorporated in the broader Pontic identity. This consequently can

easily lead to inaccurate generalizations; though, initially, the term 'Bafralis' referred to a refugee from Bafra, in western Asia Minor Pontos, due to the high concentration of Turcophone Pontos Rum in that region, gradually it came to refer to all Turcophone Pontians, and was used in a derogatory way. Similarly, as the majority of Turcophone Pontos Rum lived in western Asia Minor Pontos, it is easily overlooked that Turcophone Pontians also lived in areas of the Caucasus and south Russia. Refugees from Tsalka, of central Ukraine, referred to as 'Tsalkalides', were also Turcophone. Greek speaking Pontos refugees differentiated themselves from Turcophone Pontos refugees, claiming that a 'Bafralis' was not a Pontian. The Caucasians were also differentiated against, not only on account of their Russian influences, but also due to their suspected 'bolshevism'.

Again, it is beyond the scope of this study to explore in depth the evolution of the Pontic identity over time; it is sufficient to note that the Pontians were not a homogenous group, and varied in terms of geographical region of origin, the particular historical tradition of each, and the dominant influences of each. Thus, for the purposes of this examination, we will examine the three major groups of Pontos Rum; the first, the populations residing in western Asia Minor Pontos, in their majority rural peasantry (with the exception of those living in coastal cities like Samsounda or the inland city of Bafra), with a significant Turcophone population; the second, those living in the eastern part of Pontos, mainly Trebizond and its hinterland; and thirdly, the Pontos Rum of south Russia and the Caucasus. It is between these groups, due to historical circumstance, that the variances amongst the Pontians were the greatest:

the greatest cultural distance existed between the western Pontos Rum and the Caucasus Greeks (.....) the Caucasus Greeks and Greeks of southern Russia, the majority of which were Greek speaking- and Turkish- speaking- were influenced by Russian developments and the ideological currents which shook

Russia. Their particular cultural characteristic was command of the Russian language. In addition, they had undergone a different political experience, which was related to Russian circumstances. They had come into contact with socialist ideas very early. The incorporation of these groups in the socialist and revolutionary parties (.....) gave them certain ideological and political characteristics unknown to the remaining groups which are included in the general population which today we refer to in its entirety as 'Pontians' (.....) on the other hand, the Turcophone western Pontos refugees- amongst which there existed also Greek-speaking communities- had a completely different historical experience (.....) they had formed a formidable andartiko movement and were fully aware what the Soviet aid which had been extended to Turkish nationalists in the period 1919-1922 had cost them (....) between these two groups of western Pontos Rum and the Caucasians there existed a substantial variety of Greek-speaking groups, which mostly lived in Pontos and on the level of historical experience related more to the western Pontic version. (Agtzides, p.307).

In the course of this examination, we will first examine the arrival of the refugees to Greece, their circumstances and the measures taken to support and accomodate them by the Greek state and international organizations. By extension, we will thus also examine the general state of Greece at the time, and the first efforts towards social and political integration and organization of the refugees. Next, we will examine in greater detail the history of the period, as well as the various political parties and ideologies of the time. Finally, we will examine the refugees' political loyalties, activities and behavior, before proceeding to examine seperately the dominant political strains amongst the major groups of Pontos refugees, as they have been presented above.

CHAPTER 1

GREECE IN 1922-23 AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE REFUGEES: FIRST EFFORTS TOWARDS ACCOMODATION AND ASSIMILATION

1.1 THE EXCHANGE OF POPULATIONS AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE REFUGEES

Researchers have divided the major periods of refugee influx into four categories, three of which interest us; the first, between 1821 and 1905, the second, between 1905 and 1922, the third, 1922- 1950, and finally, 1950 to the present. Throughout the first period, refugees from islands like Chios, Psara, and Crete moved towards the Cyclades and mainland Greece. This also included waves of refugees from Asia Minor, notably Smyrna. The Kapodistrias government apparently attempted to provide shelter and treatment for them, and around 700 huts were built around Nauplio. What figures are provided for these populations include 60.000 Cretan refugees throughout the Revolution, in addition to substantial numbers from most of the Aegean islands. Later, throughout 1866-69, 50.000 more refugees from Chios and Crete arrived and settled in the areas of Athens and the Cycladic islands. The last great wave of refugees of this period were also Cretans, throughout 1878 and 1897. Apart from some attempts made by the Greek state to treat and accomodate these refugees, it is noted that a substantial portion of the aid provided them came from private sectors and individuals, such as the American businessman and philhellene Samuel G. Howe. All in all, whatever refugee settlements were established in the 19th century were of comparatively little importance and “did not affect the evolution of the network of settlements in the country” (Karamouzi, p. 21).

In the second period, refugee settlement became linked to the parallel need to fully assimilate and incorporate the New Lands into the country. This led to the usual solution of

establishing refugees in areas recently incorporated into the state. In 1906, new waves of refugees, 33.000 in number, began to arrive from eastern Rumelia, and were established in newly acquired Thessaly. Though some stone lodgings were set up for them, as well as land to work, it proved uncultivable, and before long, malnutrition and malaria had decimated the population. Some even opted to return to Rumelia. Throughout the Balkan Wars and until 1922, the number of refugees arriving from nearly all neighboring countries swelled enormously; “the migratory movement of Greeks from Turkey was almost continuous from the First Balkan War (...) with peaks in 1914-1915 and following the Greek military disaster in the fall of 1922 and spring of 1923” (Ladas, p.440). This prompted the creation of the Ministry of Welfare in 1917, which later became the Ministry of Health and Welfare. It is estimated that between 1912 and 1921, over 500.000 refugees had already come to Greece, from eastern Rumelia, Asia Minor, Thrace, Pontos and the Caucasus. Most were settled in rural areas of Macedonia and Thrace. Despite the efforts of the state to accommodate them, however, as will be seen again, the quality of the shelter provided was terrible, and the refugees remained quite destitute, despite their own efforts to improve their circumstances.

Within this period in time do the first Caucasians arrive in Greece as well, (along with many refugees from Pontos), as early as 1917, though the great bulk of Caucasians arrived in 1920. It must be noted, that “the time difference between the settlement of the first Pontian Greeks and other Greeks of Asia Minor is due to the fact that waves of immigration from the Pontos to Greece began before 1922” (Vergeti, p.383). According to Agtzides, “The initial mass arrival of Pontos refugees in Greece can be divided into three waves” (p.224). Prior to 1922, the two major waves were in 1916 to 1918, and 1919 to 1920. Of these the majority were Caucasians. They settled mainly, in accordance with Kazantzakis' plans, in Macedonia and Thrace, in particular “in Kilkis, the city and the surrounding villages, in Ptolemaida and its surrounding villages, in villages of Kozani, in Elassona, in Tirnavo, in Eleftheria in

Salonica, in Langada, Kavala, and others. Their main port of entrance to Greece were the refugee settlements which formed at Eleftheria (...) and Kalamaria” (Athanasiaides-Mixailides, p. 24). According to Eleni Kazantzaki, wife of the famous author, systematic settlement and basic treatment for the Caucasians existed initially, implemented by Venizelos, however, his departure from office left the Caucasians without support from successive governments. Like most refugees, they had nothing but the clothes on their backs, most were suffering from various illnesses and hyper-exhaustion. Upon arriving at Kalamaria, in Salonica, they were placed in military barracks abandoned by Entente powers, where illness was rife and the mortality rates high. According to the newspaper 'Efimeris ton Balkanion', in an article published December 15th, 1920, the Caucasians in Kalamaria were not procured either food or water, albeit for a few days following complaints and public outcries, and that the so-called refugee hospitals were in very bad shape and the mortality rate so high that “doctors barely managed to certify the deaths” (Ioannidou, Rodriguez, p. 21). It was largely due to such impossible circumstances that most Caucasians sought to settle in the rural areas of Macedonia and Thrace.

However, despite their destitute state, the Caucasians characteristically did not take long to attempt to organize themselves and make systematic efforts to improve their situation. On October 30, 1922, the Caucasians, following a general meeting, elected a central committee consisting of twelve members, whose aim would be “the protection of all present and future Caucasian immigrants” (Athanasiaides-Mixailides, p. 24) and who had a number of responsibilities. In a similarly characteristic gesture, in 1921, around 60 Caucasian university students formed the ‘Association of Caucasian Students’, which requested books and the requisite materials to continue their studies despite the interruption of lessons at the university. Such movements toward self-organization and structure will be seen again further down from the Caucasians.

The third great wave of Pontos refugees began in 1922; “the year 1922 was the fateful year for Ottoman Greeks in Turkey. It signalled the abrupt end of a 2,500 year physical, economic and cultural presence in the Black Sea area, Asia Minor, and Eastern Thrace” (Giannuli, p.272). The frenzied flight of hundreds of thousands to the coasts, hoping to be evacuated by the Greek navy, and the difficulties faced by the Greek state in carrying out this evacuation,

prompted serious incidents in which the refugees were mistreated and discriminated against by both the Greek authorities and individual Greeks (.....) Examples abound in the case of the Pontian Greeks. In May 1922, at the time when the Greek army was already retreating from Central Turkey and the exodus of the Pontian Greeks was rapidly increasing, incidents of misconduct by Greek consular authorities in Constantinople were reported to the Greek government by the Central Committee of Pontian Associations. (Giannuli, p. 274).

It is estimated that the “Greek emigrants from Turkey from 1912 to 1923 (.....) reach the total number of 1,100.000” (Ladas, p.442).

Prior to 1923, the idea of an exchange of populations, albeit on a smaller scale, was not novel either to Greece or Turkey, as it was not to a number of Balkan states. As early as 1914, the Greek state and the Ottoman Empire had proposed a small and optional exchange of populations along sensitive border areas, which nonetheless was never carried out due to the outbreak of the war. Another pre-1923 attempt at population exchange, which had been only partially carried out, was between Greece and Bulgaria, dictated by the 1919 Peace Treaty of Neuilly; this “convention for the reciprocal and voluntary emigration of national minorities (...) was intended to make it easier for the Bulgarian minority in Greece and the Greek

minority in Bulgaria to exercise their right of leaving the country of origin and emigrating to the other country” (Ladas, p.3). The Convention for the Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey, however, while containing many of the aspects of previous exchanges, (such as the supervision of international organizations and adherence to international law),

did not cease to be unprecedented in the history of international relations due to the size, range and proportions of the inhuman transaction which it established and the political realism which characterized it (...) moreover, the groundbreaking element of the convention was that, in contrast to previous attempts, it dictated that the exchange was obligatory and not voluntary.

(Zaikos, p. 32).

The obligatory Convention for the Exchange of Populations between Greece and Turkey was contained within The Treaty of Lausanne, which was the result of a peace conference lasting between November 20th, 1922, and July 24th, 1923. The Convention itself was signed on January 30th, 1923, though it was ratified on August 23rd and August 25th in Turkey and Greece respectively. According to the Convention, the criteria for exchange was religion, rather than ethnicity, so that effectively the exchange was between the Orthodox Christian populations of Turkey, and the Muslim populations of Greece. This was mainly because “religion was a safe criterion less as a demarcation between the followers of two faiths than as a sharp dividing line between two ethnic and to a certain extent political entities (...) the Greek Orthodox religion was an ethnic entity within the Turkish Empire (...) as such, it was the best criterion for defining the Greek national minority in Turkey” (Ladas, p. 379.) Those exempt from the population exchange included: the Orthodox Rum inhabitants of Istanbul (those who had moved there before 1918) and the Muslim populations of western Thrace. To these must be added the Orthodox Rum inhabitants of the islands of Imbros and Tenedos (Gökcaada and Bozcaada). About a month after the exchange began to be

implemented, a Mixed Committee was created in order to supervise the exchange; this committee was to be comprised of four Turks, four Greeks, and three members elected from the LoN council, from countries which had not participated in WW1. The Mixed Committee's first meeting took place on September 17th in Athens. Concerning the property of the exchangees, according to the Convention, they were allowed to take what moveable property they could with them, and immovable property was to be compensated on either side by the state. As we will see, the issue of refugee compensation proved to be one of great friction and was consequently used as a political weapon by members of the Greek government.

Originally, the idea for an exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey had been suggested by Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, who had been charged with the issue of providing relief for the refugees. Nansen envisioned a small and optional exchange, similar to the exchange between Greece and Bulgaria. The suggestion was accepted by the Ankara government, and by Venizelos, head of the Greek delegation to the Lausanne Conference, who believed that the task of accommodating the refugees in Greece would be more feasible if they could be housed in properties abandoned by exchanged Muslims who had departed for Turkey. Similarly, in a statement prepared by Dr. Nansen, the Great Powers reluctantly supported an exchange, believing “that to unmix the populations of the Near East will tend to secure the true pacification of the Near East and because they believe an exchange of populations is the quickest and most efficacious way of dealing with the grave economic results which must result from the great movement of populations which has already occurred” (Ladas, p. 338). Nansen believed that, despite the extraordinary difficulty in carrying such an exchange out, it would benefit both countries to transfer their respective populations to areas which had been abandoned in either country, thus making use of large areas of cultivable land and helping the refugees and the countries in question recover economically. As to whether the exchange would be compulsory, it was decided that,

undesirable though a compulsory exchange might be, the only way to ensure the convention's aims were for it to be so- a voluntary exchange would take far longer, and would also result in only a partial exchange.

Despite the rationale behind it and the political necessity which dictated it, the Convention met with great opposition and great public disapproval. As Penztopoulos states:

For the first time in history the international community accepted the forcible uprooting of hundreds thousands of peaceful and law abiding citizens. The Convention was considered as a regression from the inalienable principles of human rights and to a certain extent it was actually a reversal of the professed axioms of the Allies. For the benefit of historical justice, however, one should state that the representatives at the Conference were fully aware of the severe and painful character of the agreement which they endorsed with great reluctance and reservations. (p.62)

Both the Muslims of Greece and the refugees from Turkey were wildly opposed to it; a most revealing statement, amongst many, was made at a demonstration in Katerini in 1923, by the city's Muslim population, addressed to the consuls of Britain, France, Italy and the U.S., stating:

Be informed that the Muslims of the province of Katerini, having assembled today, the 23rd of January in the city of Katerini in a mass protest rally against (...) the exchange of populations (...) indignantly protest against the decision for a population exchange and declare their unwavering desire never to abandon their homeland and the graves of their fathers, consider this decision cruel and unjust, and for the thousandth time express their endless gratitude to the Greek administration. (Tzanakaris, p. 98).

Such statements (coming from Muslim communities all over Greece) were combined with mass refugee protests in Athens and Salonica. On January 8th, 1923, an enormous protest rally was carried out by refugees in Athens, from Western Asia Minor, Eastern Thrace, and Pontos; even several thousand Armenians and Circassians took part. According to accounts of the time,

At 3 p.m. the refugee masses began to fill Omonia Square and the surrounding streets (...) the presence of the refugee groups with their black banners, symbols of their grief and misery (...) the march through Stadiou and Panepistimiou streets (...) the names of the lost homelands, as they are imprinted on the black banners, 'Asia Minor', and 'Thrace' and 'Pontos' constituted a study in pain capable of shaking any soul (Tzanakaris, p.93).

Stopping at the embassy of every great European power and Japan, they submitted a statement which dictated:

Concerning the exchange of a population of one million, two hundred thousand Greeks of Turkey and three hundred thousand Muslims of Greece, decided on at the Lausanne Conference, it is in violation of internationally held ethics and morals, and the most sacred human rights, freedom and property, and this exchange constitutes a new indirect method of expatriation and property expropriation, and no state has the right to exchange populations against their will. (Tzanakaris, p.94).

Regardless, however, "in the Commission itself the necessity of compulsory exchange was reluctantly admitted by all the delegations" (Ladas, p. 343).

As we have seen, even before the Exchange of Populations, the majority of the Greek refugees from Turkey had already reached Greece- according to article 3 of the Convention,

all who had left before October 18th, 1912, were included in the exchange. Their total number ran to around 1.500.000 people: “the Greek census of 1928 counted 1.221.849 refugees (...) According to the same census, the native population was close to five million (4.982.835)” (Mavrogordatos, p. 186). The census also divides those who arrived before 1922 and after, and includes refugees from three countries (Turkey, Bulgaria, and Russia). Statistics concerning the number of Pontos Rum refugees differ according to different researchers. According to the census, which concurs with the estimates of Pelagides and Marantzides, the Pontos refugees are numbered at 182.169, not including the refugees from Russia and the Caucasus. Amongst these, 130.000 settled in Macedonia. However, according to Lampsides, Vergeti, and Agtzides, refugees of Pontic descent (including Russians and Caucasians) run to around 400.000. Apart from the inclusion of the Caucasians and south Russian refugees in the general Pontic refugee population, the number of Pontos refugees rises also should one consider that “a considerable number of Pontians from the Caucasus appeared in the 1928 census as refugees from Asia Minor and Thrace (...) in short, a figure of 400,000 Pontian refugees from Asia Minor and from the Soviet Union in the 1920s would not be an exaggeration” (Vergeti, 383).

Refugees by Origin, 1982

<u>Country and region</u>	<u>Pre-1922 Disaster</u>	<u>After 1922 Disaster</u>	<u>Total</u>
<i>Turkey</i>	86,422	1,017,794	1,104,216
Asia Minor	37,728	589,226	626,954
Eastern Thrace	27,057	229,578	256,635
Pontos	17,528	164,641	182,169
Const/ople	4,109	34,349	38,458
<i>Russia</i>	37,635	20,891	58,526
Caucasus	32,421	14,670	47,091
Russia	5,214	6,221	11,435

<i>Bulgaria</i>	20,977	28,050	49,027
<i>Other</i>	6,858	3,222	10,080
TOTAL:	151,892	1,069,957	1,221,849

(Mavrogordatos, p.187)

Thus, as has often been stated, the Convention for the Exchange of Populations really only affected a proportion of the refugees, mainly those in Cappadocea and Pontos; in Greece, “the Convention for the Exchange of Populations included: the 1.150.000 Greeks who reached the country (.....) between August 1922 and March 1923, that is, before it began officially to be implemented, and (.....) the rest, around 250.000, who were scattered in various parts of Asia Minor, and especially Pontos, and whose arrival was imminent” (Pelagides, p. 59). The hasty transportation of the refugees, particularly from Turkey, was precipitated by the fact that,

the condition of the Greeks remaining in Turkey was most precarious. In the ports of the Black Sea and of Cilicia they were reduced to a state of extreme misery (....) they were made to travel barefoot and starving in the depth of winter for many miles to reach the ports specified for their departure, and then were ordered back again, where all their property had vanished in the meantime. (Ladas, p. 429).

The ports of entry for Greece of arriving exchangees were Salonica, Volo, Kavala, Candia and Rethymno. On arrival, the refugees passed either through the quarantines of Kalamaria or Eleftheria in Salonica, or the island of Makronisos. Stories of these quarantines, of their dilapidated state and the illnesses and diseases which raged there, also abound, particularly in the case of Makronisos. The large majority of refugees to pass through Makronisos in fact was from Pontos, and it is indicative, as in the case of the Caucasians in Kalamaria, that the mortality rate in the quarantines ran to 40.000 in 1923.

Attempting to draw a clear picture of Greece in the years of 1922- 1923 is extremely difficult. The country was in a state of chaos. Accounts of the time report a huge rise in crime, poor living conditions for a good proportion of the native population, and even structural issues concerning the distribution of water to certain areas:

Full of open wounds after its extended military ventures, the country had to face enormous problems concerning the state of its native populations, who (especially the lower classes) veritably lived on the poverty line (.....) in the working- class neighborhoods of Athens, on the eve of the arrival of the refugees, thousands of poor lived in terrible circumstances (....) the few communal water taps were used by tens of families, so that the lines were endless and the womens' fights Homeric (.....) one can easily understand that contagious diseases befell especially the poorer stratum of the population (....) the 1920 study continues to portray a sad reality (.....) the most widespread illness is of course tuberculosis, the 'indoor illness', an illness directly connected to the wretched living circumstances of the poor in dark slums, which the sun never warmed (....) in rural areas also, living conditions were judged to be extreme. There the spread of tuberculosis was limited, however the other great scourge of Greek society, malaria, decimated the rural populations.' (Katsapis, p. 135).

Opinions concerning the quality of the efforts of the Greek state to accommodate the refugees differ, according to different researchers. Some stress aspects of refugee accommodation which were set into motion immediately before their arrival, or had been in operation from before, to the patterns in refugee accommodation which all point towards certain clear plans and policies by which accommodation was organized, and judge, despite the obvious obstacles involved, that refugee accommodation was more or less successful. Others, though

allowing for the fact that the accommodation and assimilation of the refugees was an enormous feat, observe also that it was only marginally successful, both on a socio-political level as on a material level. It is argued that, due to the sudden and mass influx of the 1922- 1924 refugees, the state, having experienced no prior refugee wave to compete with this, was in no position to draw a clear, organized, operational, long- term plan for the accommodation or assimilation of the refugees, and that what accommodation was provided, as well as treatment and sustenance, was haphazard and arbitrary at least, betraying an inability to cope with and coordinate the situation. Ultimately, it seems that both approaches are valid- on the one hand, the Greek state, international NGOs, and the RSC did take immediate action (or as swift as possible) to relieve and establish the great refugee masses, and indeed the methods they employed betrayed patterns which, in the general chaos, seemed clearly to reflect political and economic interests and demographic balances. On the other hand, even what efforts were made did not suffice to relieve the refugee populations, and the hasty and haphazard way the refugee settlements and lodgings were built resulted in their being unsuitable for habitation, even dangerous. Blamed for the poor quality of refugee settlements and homes was, apart from the Greek state with its chronic antagonisms, disorganization, and amnesia, also the RSC, which reportedly squandered a good portion of the funds intended for the refugees. As Giannuli states,

the permanent refugee settlement under the auspices of the RSC was the last opportunity to restore the Ottoman Greeks' previous occupational, economic, and social status. Unfortunately, this last chance was also lost. Forced by the urgency and tragic dimensions of the refugee problem, the RSC pursued the speedy settlement and assimilation of the collective community at the expense of the welfare of individual refugees.' (p. 283).

The long term effects of the refugees' collective downward social mobility will be seen later, in conjecture to refugee political radicalization.

Attempting to paint a picture of the arrived refugees the first few months- in some cases years- after their arrival is equally challenging. According to Dimitris Fotiades, “within a few weeks, the refugees flooded Greece. Rivers of wretchedness, seas of pain. Churches, warehouses, squares, vacant lots, bursting with human rags” (Tzanakaris, p.49). Henry Morgenthau, appointed President of the RSC, described thus the arrival of a ship carrying refugees: “I went down to the quay and saw a shipload of refugees land. A more tragic sight could hardly be imagined (...) they came ashore in rags, hungry, sick, covered with vermin, hollow-eyed, exhaling the horrible odor of human filth- bowed with despair....” (Pentzopoulos, p. 96). A similar account is given by the Head of Salonica prefecture, G. Paraskevopoulos:

As the transfer of refugees from Customs continued, the Mufti of Salonica arrived at the Head of the Prefecture's office, complaining that many refugees, without waiting for anything or anyone, 'arbitrarily occupy' Muslims homes. The Head of the Prefecture assured him that he would allow no arbitrary seizure of Turkish property (...) then began to dictate to his secretary an appeal 'to the ladies and young ladies of the city of Salonica': “The arrival in thousands to our city of our refugee brothers gives it the image of the catastrophe and calamity of the Greek cities and regions of Asia Minor. The state fulfilled and is fulfilling its duty, as provider of basic primary needs for these miserable people. But their deprivation, their nakedness, their wretchedness is such, as compells each philanthrope to become a provider, so as to soften the pain of these innocent victims. It is sufficient to visit the settlements Harmenkoy, Kalamaria, Neapolis and Lebet, where thousands of

women and children have gathered, to understand their unimaginable misery. They lack blankets, clothes, cooking supplies. They have nothing. Needless to say that each family, apart from their material ruin, mourns husband or children or brother or parents either killed or imprisoned (.....) Extend to every family whatever is possible. A blanket, clothes, underclothes and whatever can be spared by each family and household. (Tzanakaris, p. 23).

As an immediate and extreme measure for the accomodation of the refugees, Plastiras' Revolutionary Committee issued a decree on November 11th, 1922, which ordered the seizure of property for the temporary housing of the refugees. As a result, “warehouses, hospitals, monasteres and all other kinds of real estate” (Katsapis, p. 137) were seized. Descriptions of Athens-Pireaus at the time portray refugees huddled in all and any buildings, from places of worship to town squares, in tents across the Theseio and the Acropolis, in the Athens Opera House, even in universities and schools. There were a number of international organizations which, as stated, also came swiftly to the aid of the refugees, some having been in operation even before 1922; these included the American Red Cross, the famous Near East Relief, the international Red Cross, the American Womens' Hospital, the British Red Cross, and various missions from Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, and even the Vatican. Most of these organizations did not remain longer than 1923, when the project for accomodation and treatment was taken over by the RSC, however, in the period between 1922 and 1923, they “played a crucial role in sustaining the lives of hundreds of thousands of refugees and in helping the Greek government cope with the crisis” (Giannuli, p.281). They distributed blankets, food, and medicine, administered treatment, established hospitals all over the country (with the support of the Greek state), also set up the quarantines at Makronisos and Kalamaria, cared for tens of thousands of orphans, and “through their medical services (...) contributed to halting the spread of contagious epidemics and significantly reduced the death

rate among the refugee populations” (Giannuli, p.281). Despite its limited means and general state of crisis, the Greek state also set up organizations aimed toward the relief and accomodation of the refugees:

the first serious effort towards the housing of urban refugees was made by the Refugee Relief Fund. The RRF was founded in autumn, 1922, its supervision was undertaken by the businessman Epameinondas Xarilaos and the purpose of its creation was the handling of urban settlements. The Fund's statute dictated the management of funds gathered by donations, grants, and bequests, and until its dissolution in 1925, built refugee settlements, mainly in large urban centers, but in smaller ones as well, such as Volos or Edessa ' (Katsapis, p. 152).

Various other Greek independent organizations, including the Greek Red Cross, also contributed to the relief effort for the refugees. In addition to this, state seizure of property had spread also to private property, even in cases where these homes were inhabited- the ensuing friction between the natives who were forced to cede their homes, even if temporarily, and the incoming, miserable refugees, contributed to the general animosity between the two.

Despite these efforts, the Greek state soon realized that, of its own devices, accomodation of the refugees was impossible. The state of the country had assumed the proportions of a massive humanitarian crisis, and as a result, in February, 1923, the state appealed to the League of Nations, initially seeking a loan for the accomodation of the refugees. As a result, the League of Nations sent a committee of three experts to evaluate the Greek refugee situation, and in July, 1923, following the report of the committee, it was proposed before the League of Nations to grant Greece's request, and create an international

organization whose purpose would be to carry out the accommodation of the refugees. In September, 1923, the Refugee Settlement Commission was created;

the Geneva protocol for the creation of an autonomous organization aimed towards the accommodation of the refugees (RSC) was ratified by a legislative decree on October 13th, 1923. With a second legislative decree on December 17th, 1923, issues concerning the staffing and organization of its services are regulated. In accordance with that decree, all responsibility and jurisdiction of the Ministry of Welfare and Ministry of Agriculture, regarding accommodation of the refugees, passed to the RSC. (Pelagides, p. 78).

The RSC wound up becoming a very extended organization, with settlement offices in every part of the country: “the RSC was a rationally developed organization, whose services increased as its action spread. Thus, in 1924 it employed 784 employees, while in 1929 more than 2.000” (Katsapis, p. 141). However, its base was in Athens and its central committee constituted of four members- the President, who of necessity had to be a U.S. citizen, one member nominated by the League of Nations council, and two Greeks, nominated by the Greek government; “By order, Henry Morgenthau (from December 1923 to December 1924), Charles Howland (from February 1925 to September 1926) and Charles Eddy (from October 1926 till the dissolution of the RSC in 1930) served as Presidents of the RSC” (Katsapis, p. 141).

1.2 RURAL AND URBAN REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS

1.2.1 Rural Settlement of the refugees

As stated, the two major problems faced by the refugees, the most immediate problems, were those of shelter and medical treatment; as the issues of accommodation and self-sufficiency, that is, profession, were linked, the professional assimilation of the refugees was

considered of paramount importance as well: “it was argued that this would help the newcomers to move out of their demoralizing refugee status into economic self- sufficiency” (Giannuli, p.282). As stated, refugee settlement consisted of two major categories: urban and rural settlements. Each was arranged and decided upon based upon a parallel evaluation of their political sensitivity and potential productivity in their given regions. The examination of the criteria which determined both will give us a further glimpse of state of Greece at the time.

Already, we have seen that though most refugees entered Greece through either Athens or Salonica, many continued inland, judging the state of urban settlements unbearable. This was compatible with the RSC's plan to settle as many refugees in rural areas as possible, particularly in the New Lands; in the vast rural areas of Macedonia and Thrace, large expanses of cropland, much of it abandoned by Muslims and other ethnicities, were now left uncultivated. As the RSC, and the state itself, judged that the best way to boost the country's economy was through agricultural production, settling refugees in rural areas both solved the problem of their settlement and immediately set about repairing the Greek economy.

The issues of where exactly, based on what criteria, the rural refugees were placed were also manifold and reflect more of the domestic balances which the state aimed to maintain. First amongst the basic criteria, of course, involved practical demands of survival; access to wells or running water, good climate, etc. Secondary criteria included, tellingly, regions and natural environments similar to those they had come from, and their particular fields of expertise : “according to this logic, tobacco cultivators from the peripheries of Smyrna and Nikomedia were settled in eastern Macedonia and Thrace, sericulturists in estates of Soufli and Edessa, while refugees specialized in the cultivation of sultana raisins settled in Crete” (Katsapis, p. 148). Finally, wherever possible, the refugees made up independent settlements, far from native villages, usually consisting of members of the same community or

coming from the same region. This was a phenomenon which prevailed in urban settlements as well, the refugees' extreme clannishness, which again, suited the RSC's designs. Relations between natives and refugees were hostile, to say the least, as will be examined in greater depth further. Maintaining distances, in as much as possible, reduced the chances of conflict between the refugees and natives, particularly over land distribution; alternatively,

one more factor which influenced the decision to settle refugees from the same area was what Morgenthau referred to as 'community instinct'. The refugees' wish to coexist with their fellow villagers, and in general people originating from the same region, was self-evident, at the same time, however, it helped the refugees psychologically, in terms of accepting the new reality, transforming, in their imaginations, a 'space' to a 'place' (recalling Hirschon's apt observation) by projecting a familiar environment (the lost land of origin) onto an unfamiliar space (.....) at the same time, it helped the refugees face the difficulties of life in Greece collectively. (Katsapis, p. 148)

A particularly revealing case which demonstrated aspects of the authorities' approach to rural settlement was that of the Caucasian refugees. As we've stated, the Caucasians arrived to Greece before the 1922 refugees, having taken a different route; they first docked at Kalamaria, and some stayed on there, despite the chronically bad conditions, however, most opted to continue, to the vast rural areas of eastern and western Macedonia and Thrace. Particularly in Macedonia, their relations with the native populations were strained:

the natives of the countryside would compete with the refugees attempting to encroach upon exchangeable properties. Often the refugees were attacked by organized groups of natives, who tried to expel them from their lands. A characteristic description is given concerning the village of Rodolivos of

Drama, where fanatical natives threatened that: "we will kill, we will expel the refugees with guns, knives and clubs." The conflicts were numerous, as were racist slogans, which were often the cause of attacks. (Agtzides, p. 229).

We've mentioned, that particularly in the New Lands, the 'natives' included many ethnicities, particularly Arvanites, Vlachs, Slavs, Bulgars, Pomacks, and still, Muslim populations. Despite the fact that when the Caucasians arrived, the Convention had not yet been signed, nonetheless large areas of land had already been abandoned by Muslims and Bulgars, and the consequent fights over land distribution were common and intense. It has been reported that the Caucasians were in fact deliberately sent to the properties of Bulgars in order to "hasten their departure" (Athnasiades- Mixailides, p. 38). Bearing in mind the state's policy of homogenizing new regions and border areas by repopulating them with refugees, the choice of the Caucasians in particular to be sent to these areas was no accident- it had been reported, even after the arrival of the 1922 refugees, that despite being surrounded by Greek refugees, mainly of Pontic origin, the Slavophones and Bulgars of Macedonia and Thrace showed no signs of assimilation, and continued to speak their tongues and live separately. It was concluded that this was owing to the fact that these rural Pontos refugee populations, many of them Turcophone (or if Greek speaking, spoke the Pontic Greek dialect) could hardly be an influence for integration, especially linguistically. It was thus decided, that the unofficial task of assimilation should be allotted to the Caucasians, on the basis of the particular heritage they carried with them:

on the 16th of January, 1925, the Inspector of the primary schools of Kozani, M. Slavaros, in a document (...) to the General Administration of Salonica, requests: "the settlement of refugees possessing 'higher culture', as the already settled Pontos refugees and Turcophones could not contribute to the

assimilation of the Slavophones, as they themselves do not speak Greek.”

(Athanasiaides- Mihailides, p. 36).

As many Caucasian Greeks have attested, Russia was in many ways an ideal environment for the development of semi- assimilated communities. The Caucasians had managed for generations to maintain their ethnic character whilst coexisting comparatively harmoniously, for a time, with various other ethnic and national groups, and shared in the refugees' generally more cosmopolitan outlook, as opposed to the natives. Finally, the Caucasians (in their majority well- educated) did not only possess a higher culture, but a higher agrarian culture, and general expertise, which also set them apart from their fellow refugees. The Caucasians were most productive and able regarding the construction of their own settlements. Plans for the creation of roads were laid out; water reservoirs were built (solving early on the refugees' chronic problem of lack of water) as were various other buildings and public works. Similarly, in areas settled by Caucasians, the number of cattle-farms had risen, and local livestock and agricultural and dairy products were reported to be of excellent quality. In addition, “the settlement of rural refugees gave impetus to the cooperative idea in agricultural Greece” (Ladas, p.670) which the Caucasians in particular promoted and organized, having brought with them experience of such things from the Caucasus, where they had also been organized in agricultural cooperatives. By 1929,

almost one-fourth of the rural associations in existence in Greece (...) were formed by refugee associations (...) these organizations were mostly associations for lending, buying, and selling with limited liability (...) at the end of 1927 there were already 656 refugee associations in Macedonia, with a total membership of 44, 815, and 234 in Thrace, with 13, 258 members.

(Ladas, p.671).

Into the category of rural refugees fall, as we have seen, the Turkish- speaking western Pontos refugees as well. In terms of their numbers in Greece, it is difficult to know for certain, however, Marantzides estimates them to have constituted 1/5% of the Pontos refugee population; “this estimation is supported, firstly, by the fact that of the 795 settlements of Pontos refugees which were examined by the Center for Asia Minor Studies, 612 Greek- speaking settlements were found, and 183 Turkish- speaking (23%), a proportion which must have been close to the linguistic reality of Pontos” (Marantzides, p. 87). They were settled all over Macedonia, and particularly in Serres, Kilkis, Drama, Kozani, Kavala, Pieria, and Salonica. As with all the refugees, life for the Turkish- speaking Pontos Rum populations in rural settlements was marked by hardship. Usually their homes were of poor construction, extremely small, the supplies doled to them by the state ancient and inappropriate, and treatment was scarce and found with difficulty. In addition, conflict broke out between the Turcophone Pontos refugees and the natives as well, concerning the allotment of land. In most cases, the Turkish- speaking refugee settlements consisted exclusively of Turkish speaking Pontos refugees, however, there existed cases where they were settled with other Greek- speaking Pontos refugees, or refugees from other regions, or even natives.

Settlement of the rural refugees, while certainly not as chaotic as that of the urban refugees, still betrayed signs of disorganization and dubious effectiveness. Cases were recorded where refugees with urban professional backgrounds were nonetheless shipped to the countryside, where they proved most unproductive and remained destitute. Similarly, refugees with rural backgrounds were settled in cities. There were also cases recorded where it seemed no consideration was made even concerning the existence of basic criteria, such as cultivable land or water sources, to the despair of the refugees: “Many of the locations which were provided for settlement proved unfit to sustain a population, lacking the necessary natural and economic resources. Thus, the refugees often abandoned them, seeking better

chances in other cities or provinces of Greece. Many will not physically survive this process” (Gikas, p. 273). Again, despite the overall plans of the RSC, in terms of their practical implementation, both it and the Greek state were judged by the refugees to be extremely faulty:

Under pressure from the size of the refugee population, the RSC was forced to make arbitrary decisions about the professional and financial future of many refugees (...) eyewitness accounts reveal the drama of permanent settlement from the refugees’ perspective (...) while some were content with their rural or urban assignment, others found themselves misplaced and dislocated.

(Giannuli, p.283).

1.2.2 Urban settlement of the refugees

Urban settlement of the refugees was a much more complicated and miserable affair, partly due to the priority given by the state and the RSC to rural settlement, and partly also simply due to the circumstances of an urban environment. It is most revealing, that another factor which urged the RSC and the Greek government to channel as many refugees into the countryside as possible (apart from the fact that, per head, rural settlement was cheaper) was the fear that, in the large and tumultuous urban centers of the country, where conditions were tragic for a good proportion of the population, and the city's inhabitants were exposed to various political ideas, failure to accommodate the huge destitute mass of refugees would quickly result in their political radicalization:

the fact remains that the refugees constituted a potential ‘social bomb’ and the authorities were well aware of this. The President of the Greek RSC himself, Ch.P. Howland, clarified that the motives for accommodation were as much humanitarian as political, stressing that “the children are dying of need and the

men are becoming anarchical....relief from desperation of this degree constitutes a political necessity as much as a humanitarian duty". (Gikas, p. 275).

Indeed, this was a fear not unfounded. Apart from the influence of communist Russia, especially in Macedonia and Thrace, the very circumstances of the refugees would have been more than enough to push them towards political radicalism:

the material circumstances of the refugees are considered in a large part to be the original cause, the basis for the political radicalism in their ranks. Indeed, we could say that the following question constitutes the 'classic approach' to the whole issue for a large part of the relevant bibliography: "what kind of social stability can one expect, when the working classes, economically exhausted by the high rents, dying or suffering of a series of illnesses in wretched shacks, easily become victims of seductive revolutionary teachings?" (Gikas, p. 247).

According to sources, around 53% of the refugees settled in urban areas, as opposed to around 47% which settled in rural areas. These proportions appear odd, contradictory to the state's plan, unless one makes the following distinction, that "the small urban centers, like Kilkis, Kavala or Serres" were "regions which were recorded as 'urban' but in essence were semi-rural, as they served as commercial centers for rural areas" (Katsapis, p.152). Naturally, the three cities with the highest proportions of refugees were Athens, with 129.380 (according to statistics taken in 1928), Piraeus, with 101.185, and Salonica, with 117. 041. Within Athens and Piraeus,

the refugees settled in 12 main and 34 smaller urban settlements, along the perimeter of the city (...) the best known and largest settlements were those of

Byrona, Kaisariani, Nea Ionia, Kokkinia, Korydallos, Aigaleo, Peristeri, and Nea Chalkidona (....) in the area of Salonica (....) certain urban settlements were created within the city. Some of these are (....) the settlements of Byzantium, Toumba, Kalamaria, and Nea Varna. (Karamouzi, p. 26.)

To these must be added, the settlement of Pangrati in Athens- in fact, the very first urban refugee settlement- Nea Smyrni, and Nikaia, the 'Germanika'. Large concentrations of Pontos refugees were to be found, in urban settlements, as stated, mostly in semi- rural cities of northern Greece, particularly in Drama, Kilkis, and Kozani, but a strong concentration also existed in Athens (in mixed refugee settlements), and in Salonica, in Toumba and particularly in Kalamaria, of which over 50% of the population was of Pontic origin.

As with rural settlement, the factors which affected the creation of the urban refugee settlements were manifold, and ranged from political to economic to social issues. The overall defining factor of urban refugee accommodation was the urgency of the need for shelter and treatment; accounts from refugees in Kalamaria, temporarily settled in military barracks and makeshift tents till their slot came for accommodation, describe harrowing circumstances, diseases, misery and high mortality rates. Two articles from the 'Efimeris ton Balkanion', dated September 11th, 1922 and February 18th, 1928, respectively, are most revealing:

Refugees have come and continue to come and yet no measures are taken concerning the issue of their accommodation. Winter approaches threateningly and the danger of many refugees remaining homeless inevitably emerges. Kalamaria, upon which hang all the hopes of those responsible, besides being unfit, also cannot provide enough housing. Why, then, do those responsible not attend to this now, and do what we know from experience that they will do at the last minute, making a mess of everything and everyone? Are they afraid

they might displease partisan friends and *kotsabashides*? (Ioannidou-Rodrigeuz, p. 53-55).

The fact that six years later, after the creation of the RSC and the implementation of the accomodation program, the following column appeared in the same newspaper is again, most revealing:

The Pan-Refugee Union of Kalamaria published the following statement to the inhabitants of Kalamaria, inviting them to its meeting tomorrow. No government, since the day we became refugees till today, thought to attend to the improvement of our circumstances and to secure humane housing. Turkish property, with which they have so long fooled us, evaporates day by day and enters the caskets of the refugee fathers and (...) the National Bank to be exchanged for scraps of paper called bonds. Already the issue of housing is in the worst state as those old shacks where we were stuffed like sardines are near to collapsing, so that the day when we will have to live outdoors is not far. The few homes which were erected for our accomodation, were only built so that certain enterpreneurs could get rich, and so those who were forced to live in them should suffer. (Ioannidou- Rodrigeuz, p. 53-55).

Similar aspects of wretchedness were reported from Athens. As stated, the location of urban settlements was in some cases planned, in others merely sprouted and was allowed to develop: “when the Commission assembled for the first time in Saloniki in November, 1923, it found a situation which could not be altered, a beginning of the settlement of the refugees which it was wise to continue rather than to upset” (Ladas, p.639). The fact that certain patterns emerge whether the location was the result of design or not reveals much concerning

the degree of social polarization which characterized Greek society at the time. As we have seen, most settlements orbited the inner city, so that

the Greek city after the arrival of the refugees consisted of the historical center, the realm of power of the native urban population, and the 'other city': “a (...) rootless, fluid city....it was inhabited by immigrants, rural poor....., hundreds of thousands of refugees....all around, and at the same time spilling into the city, there were new villages next to other older villages, mahallas, neighborhoods, new cities next to the old city, an entire world which had hardly any contact with or organic co-habitation with the old center (.....) here in the 'other' city, there are clouds of flies, dust, mud, the roads are non-existent, water scarce (...) very little work, and only temporary, public transportation also non- existent...” (Gerolimbou, p. 33).

Reports of lack of structural and public works, even in basic things like the procurement of water and public transportation, were to continue even after 1930 from the refugees. In part, this division between refugee settlements and areas inhabited by natives was a manifestation of the general hostility between natives and refugees; another factor, however, was again the idea that by grouping the refugees together, they would develop a sense of continuity and communal feeling necessary for their adjustment to their new circumstances. This proved indeed to be the case- communal bonds helped maintain a sense of continuity and aided the collective and gradual assimilation of the refugees. It is most telling, that a number of refugee settlements, urban and rural, bear somehow the name of the homeland of the majority of the inhabitants- such as Nea Ionia, Oinoi, Nea Smyrni, etc.

Two other factors also had a hand in the urban settlement of the refugees, one of a political, the other of an economic nature. As will be seen again further down, in many cases,

the parties of the interwar period have been accused of approaching the refugees as merely a voting bloc which could tip the balance in elections. This accusation was particularly aimed at the Liberals, the beneficiaries of the majority of the refugee vote. However, apart from attempting to consolidate the support of the refugees, governments also employed demographic tactics to manipulate the electoral system:

often in research we run into the claim that the geographical distribution of the refugees was done according to a plan, whose aim was the shift of balances on the electoral map. D. Petzopoulos, for example, notes that “instead of attempting to influence the political result in a region by changing its geographical boundaries to those of the electoral periphery, they achieved the same result by changing the density of the region's population and raising the Liberal element in politically critical prefectures”. (Gikas, p. 276).

Secondly, the issue of professional activity also defined the location and creation of urban settlements, though in some more than others. It has been noted by researchers that, due to the absence of precise accounts of all the refugees' professions in their homelands, it is very difficult to estimate exactly how many experienced what has been referred to as the refugees' downward social mobility. It must be noted, that a very small minority of refugees did exist which managed, having salvaged some greater part of their property, to be exempt from this- in the case of the Pontos refugees in particular, there

were a very few members of the upper class who, because of exchanges with Greece, had part of their property in Greece (...) the latter group included both families from the eastern Pontos who had fled from persecution to the southern Soviet Union, and also some families who migrated directly from that area. In urban areas these privileged groups bought their own homes. (Vergeti, p. 386).

For the crushing majority, however, especially in urban settlements “downward social mobility must have been a blow for most, above all those who had previously been self-sufficient and now lived in a state of vegetation, doing odd jobs.” (Hering, p.1020). The refugees' professional activities varied, in accordance to a number of factors: constant migration, (in search of work or family), the inability to continue the same professions in Greece as they had in their homelands, lacking the requisite facilities and capital, etc. Most refugees held temporary jobs, odd jobs, and changed jobs constantly, prepared to do any kind of work. It must be stated, that due to their circumstances, and also due to the fact that the war had decimated the male refugee populations before they arrived in Greece, making for a staggeringly high proportion of elderly, women, and children amongst them, a large number of workers and professionally active members of families were either minors or women, both of all ages. Reportedly, working conditions for the women, a large proportion of which worked in the textile industry, were terrible; according to a 1929 article in ‘The Radical’: “entire families, from the youngest to grandmothers, all worked in the factories, especially the adults, who reached the point of bringing with them their toddlers and babies, in their cradles, keeping them close so they would not need to rise from the loom” (Gikas, p.327). Ultimately, apart from the high levels of unemployment amongst the refugees, most refugees turned to trade and industry: in 1928, 54.82% of the country's workers were refugees, and 18.43% were active in trade.

The state and the RSC's decision to filter the urban refugees, in as much as possible, to the industrial sector, was based firstly, on their hope that the urban refugees could boost domestic industry the same way the rural refugees could boost agricultural production, and secondly, (and more importantly) on the basis of the refugees' own industrial and manual skills. The refugees, as has often been noted, brought with them skills and products from Anatolia virtually unknown in Greece, or less developed there. Particularly in the fields of

carpet making, textiles, cotton manufacture, and even chocolate and confectionary production, the refugees had great expertise, and consequently, it was in these fields that Greek industry indeed expanded rapidly:

Carpet manufacture was a field virtually unknown in Greece before the arrival of the refugees. Its development in Greece constituted a hopeful aspect of the refugee problem and indicated from the beginning that the refugees, with their work ethic, their new ideas, their experience in commercial transactions (....) were bound to become one of the most important sources of capital in the country. (Vogiatzoglou, p. 149).

A characteristic example of the prospects of industrialization defining the creation and location of a settlement is Nea Ionia; originally Nea Pisidia, it became a center for carpet making and textiles. According to Papa Ioakim (Ioakim Pesmatzoglou), the leader and priest of refugees from Sparta, in Pisidia of Asia Minor:

once carpet making was established, our female compatriots began arriving from the islands. It was then that we began to be concerned by the issue of their housing. A five- member committee met with the Minister of Welfare Apostolo Doxiadi and the Treasurer of the Ministry of Welfare Epameinonda Xarilao, who, being himself an entrepreneur, showed lively interest in our settlement as soon as he heard of carpet- making. The experts of carpet manufacture discussed the benefits and prospects of our art for an hour (.....) after we'd discussed it for half an hour (.....) we went outside so they could come to a decision. Afterwards, they called us back in and announced to us that they would try to build us a settlement near Athens, in the location of the

Podarades, as there running water existing for the intended development of carpet manufacture. (Vogiatzoglou, p. 147).

The settlement was inaugurated on July 27th, 1923, and present, besides the refugees, were N. Plastiras, Prime Minister Gonatas, Ministers Doxiadis and Sideris, and then U.S. Ambassador to Greece, Henry Morgenthau.

As stated, urban settlements were accused very early on of being unfit for habitation and haphazardly assembled. According to sources, both the Greek state and the RSC were aware of this. Blame was put upon mismanagement of funds, or more accurately, the RSC's foolishly and sloppily entrusting building works to corrupt contractors who built ramshackle settlements; "the consequences of the (...) defects in the construction of the refugee settlements did not take long to occur. Thus, already by 1929, there were reports which warned that "due to the coming winter a great number of the constructed or under- construction buildings are in danger of collapsing" (Gikas, p. 266). In an attempt to establish temporary lodgings while waiting for the state and the RSC to accommodate them, the refugees occupied, semi- illegally, vacant lots where they erected whole shantytowns. Certain areas became congested with refugees, and the high levels of concentration of scores of people in small, limited spaces, in combination with the absence of basic utilities, and running water, led to the spread of infections and diseases, again spiking the country's mortality rate. According to reports, referring specifically to the refugee settlement Kokkinia, there were not enough hospitals, and the number of patients as opposed to the number of beds was wildly disproportionate. Similarly, in Nea Ionia:

The refugees, in droves, huddled in tents and makeshift shacks. Ragged, starving, and with wounded pride they tried to structure a new life, within the inhospitable, suspicious and often openly offensive atmosphere which

surrounded them. Lice, eye infections, malaria, tuberculosis and typhus decimated the population. Hospitals were nonexistent, electricity and water distribution systems were unknown, lavatories and drainage systems were also nonexistent, slaughterhouses were set up outdoors and in the summertime, mosquitos, flies, dust and the stench of waste and filth rendered life within the settlement unsustainable (.....) in the winter, the mud and the cold are also unbearable. The mortality rates, as well as contagious diseases, amongst the refugees were very high and according to Norwegian explorer Nansen 20% of the refugees in the whole of Greece died within the first year, while for every three deaths, there was but one birth. (Vogiatzoglou, p.245).

The refugees' situation was made worse by the joint issues of rent and the compensation owed the exchangees. As has been noted by various researchers,

the RSC was in no way a charitable organization. The funds it invested for the accomodation of the refugees were to be returned (at least in part) in the form of rent. That meant that from the first moment they set foot on Greek soil, the majority of refugees was already deeply in debt, and the threat of eviction was to follow them many years after the so- called 'accomodation'. (Gikas, p. 271).

On the other hand, refugee compensation seemed extremely difficult for the Greek state to grant, which prompted the outcries and exasperation of the refugees. A letter written by the 'Greek Citizens from Turkey', in 1935, expresses a degree of this exasperation concerning the issue of compensation:

“it is indicative of the hard-heartedness of the state (....) the series of laws regulating a not so complicated matter and the subjection of it to continuous procedures.” The amount of compensation which the refugees ultimately

received did not exceed 25% of the original amount. As St. Pelagides notes, "the remaining 75% remains, till today, outstanding". (Gikas, p. 272).

The issue of refugee compensation took on political proportions before long; "these compensations constituted an object of political exploitation and electoral bargains between the two urban political factions for a long time, trapping the refugee vote in (.....) inter-war partisanship" (Gikas, p. 271).

In order to understand this, and other issues falling within the socio-political polarization of interwar Greece, it is now necessary to have a deeper look into the history of the period and its socio-political breakdown. Against this backdrop the political affiliations and behavior of the refugees will be more easily understandable.

CHAPTER 2

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GREECE IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD (1922- 1936), THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE PERIOD, AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE REFUGEES

2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERWAR GREECE (1922- 1936)

By 1922- 23, following the Asia Minor Catastrophe, Colonel Plastiras and a number of other Venizelist officers had seized control of the government with a coup d'etat, establishing a temporary Revolutionary Committee to govern the country. Amongst the Committee's first acts was the infamous Trail of the Six, in which six out of eight high ranking officers of the Greek army stood trial for high treason, that is, responsibility for the Catastrophe. The ultimate condemnation of these men, despite huge and furious opposition from royalists and antivenizelists, would remain a point of friction between the two factions, poisoning attempts

at cooperation between them and ultimately contributing to the factional polarity which defined the period.

Following the Trail of the Six, pressure was mounting on the Revolutionary Committee for an immediate declaration of the Republic, against the backdrop of huge social unrest, violent public demonstrations and riots, in which Venizelists (Republicans) clashed with Antivenizelists (Royalists). Several Liberals, including Venizelos from abroad, were wildly opposed to the option of a coup of the Liberals', followed by an open declaration of the Republic, as well as to the slightly less drastic suggestion of holding a double plebiscite, as under these emergency circumstances, any plebiscite would be a farce. Ultimately, it was decided that the upcoming elections would be to form a National Assembly, which in due course would name the date for the plebiscite. Amongst those pressuring the Committee for the establishment of the Republican regime were the military, some Liberals and antiroyalists, but above all, the refugees; nascent refugee organizations of the time were amongst the most vocal anti-royalists.

Following large and violent Royalist demonstrations, in which there were several casualties and many injured, on December 16th, 1923, elections were held, according to the plurality system. Given that the antivenizelist parties abstained from elections, the Liberals won a huge victory, with the Democratic Union of Alexandros Papanastasiou coming in second. As pressure continued for the National Assembly to declare the Republic outright, on December 19th, former Prime Minister Gonatas advised King George to flee the country.

On January 11th, 1924, Venizelos returned to Greece, as, technically, he remained the leader of the Liberals and thus Prime Minister. Concerning the regime issue, he insisted on a double plebiscite. In the consequent parliamentary sessions, confronted with huge opposition from extreme Liberals and Venizelists, Venizelos experienced heart problems and resigned.

He was replaced by prominent Liberal Georgios Kafantaris, who won a vote of confidence from the Assembly and pressed ahead with a double plebiscite. In doing so, he lost the support of the Democratic Union, the refugees, extreme Liberals, and a part of the military, which now threatened another coup unless the Republic was declared immediately. In reaction to this, Kafantaris resigned, to be succeeded by Alexandros Papanastasiou.

Consequently, Papanastasiou formed a new government and the Liberals dissolved. It is at this point that two of the minor Venizelist parties of the interwar period were formed. On March 21st, 1924, Kafantaris formed the Progressive Liberals, and Andreas Mixalakopoulos the Conservative Liberals. The remaining Liberals elected as their leader Themistocles Sophoulis.

On March 25th, 1924, the national holiday, the National Assembly convened to vote on the regime issue. The entire parliament voted an end both to the dynasty and the monarchy. Only Kafantaris and the Progressive Liberals abstained from the vote. Following this, on April 13th, 1.084.064 people voted in the plebiscite. 69.99% voted against the monarchy, and 30.11% in favour. The Second Hellenic Republic was declared.

Elections for the Constituent Assembly, 16 December 1923		
<u>Parties</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>% of Seats</u>
<i>Antivenizelism</i>	7	1.76
Independent Antivenizelists	7	1.76
<i>Venizelism</i>	377	94.72
Liberal Party	250	62.81
Republican Liberals and Republican Union	120	30.15
Independent Republicans	7	1.76
<i>Agrarian Party</i>	3	0.75
<i>Communist Party</i>	-	-
<i>Other</i>	11	2.76
<i>Muslims</i>	3	0.75
<i>Jews</i>	3	0.75
<i>Miscellaneous Independents</i>	4	1.00
<i>Socialist</i>	1	0.25
TOTAL:	398	100.00
Total Votes Cast: 694,548		

From the brief history so far of the period, we note the following; as will be examined in greater detail further, the refugees were fanatically opposed to the monarchy and in favour of the Republic, even against the wishes of Venizelos himself. This remained one of the defining features of the refugees' political affiliations for the whole of the period. Regardless of all other considerations, the refugees were staunch Republicans. In addition we note that, despite the fact that they had just arrived to Greece, they actively participated in the political scene; 12-13% of the Liberals' MPs were refugees, representing (somewhat disproportionately) 20% of the population. In contrast, no refugees were accepted in antivenizelist parties, nor did any support them. The abstaining antivenizelists considered the

results of the plebiscite invalid, suspecting the Venizelists had somehow rigged the plebiscite, or presented false results. The more extreme antivenizelists would not forgive the Venizelists or the refugees for their part in ‘imposing’ the ‘illegal’ Republic.

For the remainder of 1924, Papanastasiou was succeeded as Prime Minister by Themistocles Sophoulis and then Andreas Mixalakopoulos- in his brief term, Sophoulis managed to solve some of the country's fiscal issues and continued the Liberals' agrarian reforms. On June 25th, 1925, almost immediately after Mixalakopoulos formed his new government, General Pangalos seized power with a coup. All parties, with the exception of the Democratic Union, strongly opposed him and refused to cooperate with him. After a year of small disasters, at home and abroad, on August 23rd, 1926, Pangalos was deposed by General Kondyles, leader of the National Democratic Party (Venizelist at the time).

The departure of Pangalos left a power vacuum in the country, and with it, a strong sense that the republican regime was in jeopardy from military factors they could not always control. It became clear that in order to have a functional government, the two factions, Venizelists and Antivenizelists, would have to cooperate. Elections were held on November 7th, 1926, with the proportional representation system, and as the Venizelist faction won by a very narrow margin, both coalitions were more or less evenly represented in parliament, so that the resulting government was deemed the Ecumenical Government.

Elections for the Chamber of Deputies, 7 November 1926				
<i><u>Parties</u></i>	<i><u>Votes</u></i>	<i><u>% of Votes</u></i>	<i><u>Seats</u></i>	<i><u>% of Seats</u></i>
<i>Antivenizelism</i>	403,232	41.95	127	44.41
People's Party	194,479	20.23	60	20.98
Free Opinion Party	151,660	15.78	52	18.18
Other Venizelists	83,033	5.94	15	5.25

<i>Venizelism</i>	450,020	46.82	143	50.00
Union of Liberals	304,727	31.70	108	37.76
Farmer-Labour Party	62,260	6.48	17	5.95
Other Venizelists	83,033	8.64	18	6.29
<i>Agrarian Party</i>	28,318	2.95	4	1.40
<i>Communist Party</i>	41,982	4.37	10	3.49
<i>Other</i>	37,674	3.91	2	0.70
Jewish Political Union	5,825	0.60	2	0.70
Misc. Minor Parties and Independents	31,849	3.31	-	-
TOTAL:	961,266	100.00	286	100.00
Invalid votes: 3,912 (0.41% of votes cast)				
Total votes cast: 965,138 (61.38% of registered voters)				
Registered voters: 1,572,469				

(Mavrogordatos, p.35)

Despite the fact that distrust lingered between the two factions, the government made a great effort to be non-partisan, and the two factions managed to cooperate and the factional polarity decreased somewhat. The government's main aims were the drafting of a new constitution, to be passed by parliament, and to fix the country's economic problems. As Minister of Finance, Kafantaris attempted in a number of ways to stabilize the economy, from budget cuts to increasingly higher taxes. By the 1928, the government reported a national surplus, however, the measures taken to achieve this mainly burdened the rural and lower urban strata of society. In response to this, though the government never implemented a

pro-labour program, it did attempt to support small land owners and refugees. The Liberals set forward the demand for the creation of the Agrarian Bank.

In 1928, Venizelos returned to Greece. In the meantime, Kafantaris had taken up leadership of the Liberals (the Progressive Liberals, much more so than Sophoulis' small Liberal party, were seen as successors to Venizelos' Liberal Party.) Almost immediately upon his arrival, Venizelos was presented with complaints against Kafantaris from old members of the party. Venizelos, in turn, forgetting about his own support of Kafantaris in the interest of maintaining party unity, also condemned many of his policies. On May 22nd, 1928, Kafantaris resigned from the post of Prime Minister and also from the leadership of the Liberals, to reform his Progressives, who kept their distances from the Liberals. Characteristically, Venizelos soon also forgot about his vow never to enter active politics again, took over leadership of the Liberals, formed a government, and called for elections.

The Liberals' pre-election campaign was effectively, and aimed to be, the dynamic continuation of their 1910-14 program. Venizelos admitted that the state did not have the funds for large scale plans, nor could they cut taxes; the only real investments there were funds enough for, were the building of roads and irrigation works. Even these works were promoted mainly because they were specifically aimed to boost agriculture, which was at the center of the Liberals' economic policies. Their agrarian program also included better terms for loans to farmers and the promotion of agrarian education. To the refugees, Venizelos was in fact quite honest and matter of fact- famously, he declared "I cannot promise miracles, but I will do everything in my power" (Petrides, p. 335). No further compensation money or any other kind of government support were promised other than acceleration of the pace of accommodation.

Election for the Chamber of Deputies, 19 August 1928				
<i>Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>% of valid votes</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>% of Seats</i>
<i>Antivenizelism</i>	336,057	33.03	24	9.60
People's Party	243,543	23.94	19	7.60
Free Opinion Party	53,958	5.30	1	0.40
Independent Royalists	38,556	3.79	4	1.60
<i>Venizelism</i>	646,485	63.55	226	90.40
Liberal Party	477,502	46.94	178	71.20
Farmer-Labour Party	68,278	6.71	20	8.00
National Republican Party	27,603	2.71	9	3.60
Progressive Party	25,729	2.53	3	1.20
Conservative Republican Party	15,852	1.56	5	2.00
Progressive Union	13,452	1.32	5	2.00
Independent Republicans	18,069	1.78	6	2.40
<i>Agrarian Party</i>	17,042	1.68	-	-
<i>Communist Party</i>	14,325	1.41	-	-
<i>Other</i>	3,372	0.33	-	-
National Union (Pangalos)	1,958	0.19	-	-
Misc. Independents	1,414	0.14	-	-
TOTAL:	1,017,281	100.00	250	100.00
Invalid ballots: 4.153 (0.41% of votes cast)				
Total votes cast: 1,021,434				

(Mavrogordatos, p.38)

The elections of 1928 (conducted with the plurality system) resulted in a landslide victory of the Liberals', winning them 178 out of 260 seats in parliament. The Venizelists all together won 226 seats, 90,40% , whereas the Antivenizelists won a total of 24 seats, 9.60%.

It is necessary to note the large difference between the electoral results of 1926 and 1928, especially where electoral support for the Liberals was concerned. Particularly regarding the refugees, whereas in 1926, at the last minute Kondyles was obliged to pay the refugees a part of their compensation in order to garner votes, in 1928, after Venizelos' clearly stating that his means were limited and no compensation money could be promised, the refugees almost unanimously voted the Liberals! It is in this contrast perhaps that one can measure the refugees' devotion specifically to the figure of Venizelos. As stated, Sophoulis was hardly considered a worthy 'successor' to the Liberal leadership, and ultimately no one could really see either him or Kafantaris as leader of the Liberal party. Seeing as other factors were not withstanding in the 1928 elections which could significantly influence the refugees' preferences, such as the regime issue, there can be no other interpretation for the Liberals' renewed popularity than the return of their leader.

The government between 1928 and 1932 was, as is often noted, the only one of the interwar period to serve its full term in office. Initially, both major parties- the Liberals and the People's Party- seemed to want to cooperate. The P.P. swore on the Republican constitution; possibly, being so much in the minority, the P.P. was aware that they really had no choice, though note is made of the fact that the moderate leadership of the P.P. was genuinely in favour of the Republic. Regardless, the existence of several highly vocal royalists in Antivenizelist ranks troubled Venizelos, so that he and the Liberals kept pushing leader of the P.P. Tsaldaris for written, documented assurances that he fully supported the republican regime, which Tsaldaris (in a document drafted by Kafantaris and Papanastasiou) duly signed. It was feared that the moderate, cooperative Tsaldaris would prove incapable of containing

the more extreme members of his party, despite the fact that he made great efforts to do so, stressing domestic unity in all his speeches and in general trying to be a constructive opposition government, which even Venizelos acknowledged in his public speeches. The P.P. supported the government's program in 1928-29, approved the government's foreign policies (for the most part), economic policies, and agrarian policies. It also advocated boosting domestic industry and supported the government during the country's economic crisis. In fact, it appears as though Tsaldaris and the P.P. proved so accommodating throughout the Liberals' term that Venizelos had no choice but to revert to the stirring of old passions in order to attack the P.P. Possibly he did so because he was never fully convinced, despite Tsaldaris' assurances, that the P.P. unanimously accepted the Republic; otherwise, it may have been a way to maintain unity within his own party. Whatever the case, despite the fact that such individuals as Vlachos, editor of the largest antivenizelist newspaper 'Kathimerini', and various other crazed Royalists, reveal Venizelos to be less than paranoid, still, there is no denying that his confrontational approach only made the socio-political polarity worse in the long run.

As stated, the Venizelists considered the years between 1928 and 1932 to be the dynamic extension of Venizelos' first term- others make note of the conservative turn of the party. Laws and measures restricting unions and syndicates- especially those who distanced themselves from the Liberals' patronage or were considered 'radicals'- had in fact been in operation as early as 1917. It appears that what the Liberals referred to as or considered 'pro-labour policy' was effectively aimed at bringing the labour movement under firmer state control. The Liberals were displeased whenever workers' strikes disturbed the interests of large groups of consumers or the procedures of the authorities. Despite the Liberals' anti-Communist stance, it has been argued that the Liberals were actually harder on unions and syndicates than on propagators of communism. The infamous Idionym Law of 1929, which

will be examined in greater depth further down, was aimed directly at unions and syndicates and their leaders. Venizelos was often criticized for not maintaining a harsher stance against the Communist Party (KKE).

This may be interpreted, both Venizelos' stance towards the labour movement and the KKE, by the general observation that, throughout his term, Venizelos seemed to aim for the entire country to operate like a perfectly tuned and synchronized machine, a kind of national powerhouse. Modernization and increased productivity were the cornerstones of the Liberals' policies. Venizelos wanted the entire operation tightly under his control. Thus he perceived the labour movement as sabotaging productivity levels. Parallel to this, as, again, will be seen in greater detail further down, the Liberals' characteristic methods of gaining and maintaining supporters were clientalism and government patronage. Thus, the fact that unions and syndicates deviated from these routes in their political and professional expression and activity was anathema for the Liberals. As to why Venizelos was less harsh on the KKE, there are a number of possible reasons. It must be stated, that unions and syndicates connected to the KKE were most loathed of all by the Liberals. However, ultimately, the labour movement, for the better part of the interwar period, kept its distances from the KKE, therefore there were few unions or syndicates connected to it. Secondly, the option of exiling communists or other suspected 'radicals' was a convenient and effective method of curbing the spread of radicalism, and one which was liberally applied throughout the entire interwar period, as will be seen in greater detail further down.

Despite the conflict between the government and the labour unions and syndicates, however, the Liberals did manage to improve labour laws somewhat; this involved laws concerning Sundays off, the eight-hour workday, paid leave, guaranteed salaries. Modernization of the legal system was also achieved, aimed at greater effectiveness and more control over the periphery by assigning greater authorities to lower-level officials in rural

posts. Regarding economic policies, the Liberals aimed to balance the state budget, re-establish the trust of foreign investors in the national currency. In addition, they aimed to invest in public works, and support agriculture and the country's rapid industrialization with lower taxes on businesses and factory owners, and state commissions from domestic producers. Unfortunately, in order to enable these measures, again, large indirect taxes were forced on the large strata of the lower and working classes. The state itself only very rarely and reluctantly would sponsor loans to any business or industry- the only industry to receive considerable state support throughout the term was carpet-making, which, as we have seen, consisted almost totally of refugees.

Measures were taken to boost agricultural production as well; as we will see again further, many of these measures echoed the demands of the Caucasian refugees, such as the creation of prototype plantations, the education of producers and farmers in modernized agricultural methods, the creation of irrigation systems, and the enabling of farmers to take out short-term loans. Some progress was made in these directions; 300.000 hectares of cultivable land were cleared, the highway system was expanded, and the Agrarian Bank was created. Most of these measures, however, in the long run, just as the support of industry had in the urban centers, resulted in the heavy taxation and deep debt of the rural population. Ultimately, agricultural productivity remained low.

Similarly, echoing the Caucasians' demands, measures were taken in the direction of educational reforms, also an extension of the Liberals' general reform program. Primary education was steered toward technical skills, and secondary education, toward technical and vocational schools. Provisions were made for basic agricultural education in public schools, and middle schools could be converted to agricultural schools. In addition, there were programs introduced which promoted literacy amongst illiterate adults, women, and the mentally impaired.

Amongst the Liberals' successes throughout their term was considered their re-establishing friendly relations with neighboring countries, above all with the Ankara Convention with Turkey in 1930. Though the Ankara Convention is considered a great diplomatic achievement for Venizelos, domestically it was the principle cause of the breaking point between the refugees and Venizelos and the Liberals. The Convention, apart from establishing friendly diplomatic relations between the two countries, also cleared all compensation debt for exchangeable properties between the two. That meant, not only that no more compensation for their exchanged property would be given, but in addition, for the refugees, “the signing of the Convention (...) between Greece and Turkey in 1930 ratified the end of any hope of return of the refugees to their homelands in Asia Minor” (Katsapis, p. 167).

Objections to this from the refugees were huge, though here too the refugees did not share one common position. In broad terms, one can discern three main strains of opinion amongst the refugees regarding the Ankara Convention and its attendant economic implications: the first consisted of those who staunchly opposed it, who held that the Greek state was obliged to pay full refugee compensation; the second, those who attempted to appreciate that, however loathsome the Convention might seem for the refugees, the Greek state did not possess the economic means to compensate the refugees in full; and finally, the large mass of refugees, who, in general terms, feared even greater compromise of all refugee rights. Fierce opposition was shown by various refugee organizations, particularly POADA, who, in the wake of the 1929 senatorial elections, attempted to convince the refugees to abstain- something which would result in a decline of the Liberals. In response, Venizelos, addressing the refugees at large, declared that if in the upcoming elections, he should not gain the majority, he would step down from government, which would leave the refugees to the mercy of the P.P. Despite the message broadcasted by POADA, other smaller but numerous

refugee organizations hastened to defend Venizelos, partly on the pragmatic pretext that the Greek economy could not afford full compensation, but also for the sake of maintaining Liberal hegemony in government:

We are aware that if he (Venizelos) refuses for now to compensate us as we would wish, he does not do so out of hatred or meanness, but due to his inability to do so, as now he has come, he is attempting to save what he can of what (...) other governments left him throughout the period of his absence, and with that accommodate us. Do not even listen to the message of the supposedly highest committee, which consists of refugee exploiters (...) the senatorial elections could possibly affect the position of the government (...). Support the great effort for the reconstruction of our Greek homeland! Take your ballots and vote! (Anastasiadou, p. 323).

Refugee M.P.s were no less divided than the refugee organizations on the issue of the Convention. As stated, initially, the reaction of all refugee MPs was strong opposition, as they themselves had had considerable property in their homelands. Others,

such as A. Bakalbasis, I. Apostolou, D. Euthimiades, G. Tilikides, in a memo would maintain that the Convention for the Exchange of Populations of Lausanne could not be changed by these two countries alone, particularly when done in violation of the rights of those it concerned and that waving the differences in accounts "does not imply in the least the lessening of the state's obligations towards refugee beneficiaries." Leon Iasonides also agreed with this opinion, reminding his colleagues that in the past he had "scientifically" advocated that "Greece's obligation in its entirety remains". (Anastasiadou, p. 327).

This would be a rare case where Iasonides, solidly Liberal, would side with his leftist Caucasian compatriots. Amongst the refugee MPs, however, to oppose the Convention, the most vocal, Tsigdemoglou, threatened to take his case to the LoN. In retaliation, though he was in fact a Liberal, Tsigdemoglu was threatened with the Idionym law, but was ultimately granted amnesty.

The antivenizelists were also opposed to it, firstly because they felt that Greece sustained greater damage by the clearing of compensation debt for exchangees, and secondly, because they hoped, for their own reasons, that the refugees would one day leave the country and re-establish their communities in Anatolia. Papanastasiou, Kafantaris, Mixalakopoulos and Kondyles were also strongly opposed to it, however, ultimately, only 19 MPs amongst those parties voted against it, including Kafantaris and Kondyles. Venizelos maintained staunchly that the state had no further obligations towards the refugees concerning compensation, and repeated the impossibility of doing so, which, if attempted, would result in even more debt for the refugees. The reality of this could not be denied, and ultimately composed the defining factor for many refugee MPs, who opted to invest unencumbered economically in the development of settlements, rather than seek economic destruction bidding for compensation which could not be paid. In the meantime, countless demonstrations were held in opposition, along with hundreds of letters sent not only to Venizelos, but to the Turkish state as well.

The effects of the signing of the Convention were great, and went beyond the practical issues it concerned to acquire a symbolic character, for both refugees and natives. Even amongst the Liberals, there were those who regarded it as a turn towards materialism and the abandonment of 'higher ideals', for which Venizelos lambasted them in parliament for propagating war as a 'higher ideal.' Above all, the Liberals lost a huge amount of refugee support as a result of the Convention. Despite the fact that, following the signing of the

Convention, Venizelos, aware of the damage he had sustained from it domestically, invested in refugee accommodation with renewed energy, after 1933, over 10% of the refugees voted for antivenizelist parties.

Initially, the international economic crisis did not hit Greece so hard; despite the fact that unemployment had doubled between 1928 and 1932, there were no ground shaking consequences. The Greek economy began to suffer when the British pound abandoned the gold standard. Venizelos tried to maintain it as long as possible, however, after huge losses, he too was forced to abandon it. On May 31st, 1932, Venizelos was forced to default on the national debt. The antivenizelist press used this to the extreme to chip at the government's credibility. Taxes were increased even further to deal with the crisis, contributing to the Liberals' growing unpopularity. Politically, the Liberals sustained major damage from the economic crisis, also partly because, as elections approached, it became charged with old factional divisions, promoted by the press and the extreme members of the parties, which Venizelos himself brought back to the fore, in order, ironically, to garner votes. The situation for the Liberals became worse when a number of government scandals were revealed. The government and the regime were fast losing all credibility. Venizelos' inflexible stance made things worse. The Liberals were also being condemned by other Venizelist parties, such as the Farmer- Labour Party (the successor to the Democratic Union under Papanastasiou) and the Progressive Liberals. It was suggested that a committee be formed to investigate the scandals, but Venizelos roundly rejected the idea. Despite his pro-democratic, pro-republican rhetoric, and the fact that, in the past, both he and the Liberals had been equated to republicanism and democratic procedures, in practice Venizelos seemed increasingly not to respect democratic procedures or the parliament and gradually became more autocratic.

As elections approached, Venizelos seemed to try everything in order to neutralize his opponent. His primary aims were to ensure the antivenizelist faction would lose in the

elections, and to change the constitution and create a governmental system with more centralized control and greater executive powers. He re-introduced a system of proportional representation for the elections, obviously meant to avert a majority of the P.P. Under pressure from foreign economic obligations and increasing dissatisfaction from the population, Venizelos resigned. All parties with the exception of the Farmer Labour party abstained from sessions for the formation of a new government; when Venizelos tried to pass article 48 of the Weimar Republic, even Papanastasiou, brief PM of the new government, walked out of parliament.

Elections for the Chamber of Deputies, 25 September 1932				
<i>Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>% of valid votes</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>% of valid Seats</i>
<i>Antivenizelism</i>	415,786	35.49	98	39.20
Popular Party	395,974	33.80	95	38.00
Free Opinion Party	18,591	1.95	3	1.02
Ind. Antivenizelists	1,221	0.10	-	-
<i>Venizelism</i>	617,911	52.74	131	52.40
Liberal Party	398,779	34.04	98	39.20
Progressive Party	97,836	8.35	15	6.00
Farmer-Labour Party	69,057	5.89	8	3.20
National Radical Party	44,789	3.82	6	2.40
Conservative Republican Party	7,145	0.61	2	0.80
Ind. Venizelists	305	0.03	2	0.80
<i>Agrarian Party</i>	72,311	6.17	11	4.40
<i>Communist Party</i>	58,223	4.97	10	4.00
<i>Other</i>	7,406	0.63	-	-
Minor Parties	1,511	0.13	-	-
Misc. Independents	5,895	0.50	-	-

TOTAL:	1,717,637	100.00	250	100.00
Invalid ballots: 4,346 (0.37% of votes cast)				
Total votes cast: 1,175,983				

(Mavrogordatos, p.42)

In the elections of September 26th, 1932, those who benefitted most were the minor Venizelist parties, to the detriment of the Liberals. The Liberals lost, though neither they nor the P.P. won a majority. Consequently, the only choice each had was to form coalition governments with the smaller Venizelist parties. Neither was willing to do so, and after Venizelos rejected an offer by Tsaldaris to form a Liberal- P.P. coalition government, the P.P. formed one with Metaxas with his Free-Opinion Party and Kondyles and his National Radical Party (which had defected to the Antivenizelist faction). The Venizelist parties promised their parliamentary support.

It has been observed that a last chance for the two factions to cooperate here presented itself, however, personal animosities between leading figures of either faction- such as Kondyles and Plastiras- ultimately rendered parliamentary cooperation impossible, and on January 13th, 1933, on various insignificant charges, the Liberals withdrew their vote of confidence in the government. The Farmer- Labour Party under Papanastasiou followed suit.

Venizelos now had to form a government, (his last), which could not but be a coalition government, with the balance in parliament hanging between the Farmer-Labour Party and the National Radical Party. This was intolerable for Venizelos, thus he again called for elections. He reverted to the plurality system of elections (hoping to repeat the triumph of 1928). Unfortunately, in part due to the electoral system, the Venizelist 'National Coalition' lost votes. The Antivenizelist 'United Opposition' won a total of 136 seats, whereas the National Coalition achieved 110.

The results of these elections beg particular examination. In contrast to 1932, the minor Venizelist parties lost votes; in fact, of all the minor parties, only Kondyles fared comparatively well. This is possible because, in 1932, the minor Venizelist parties had operated as a republican alternative to the Liberals, with whom the refugees particularly, as we have seen, were disillusioned. In other words, the minor Venizelist parties and the KKE absorbed a good proportion of the refugees' protest votes. Even the P.P., amazingly, received, for the first time, a small percentage of refugee votes, seeing as many of the obstacles which had divided the two had been cleared away. The P.P. began to attract refugee votes once they had officially accepted the Republic, and had begun to include refugees in their pre-electoral programs and party ranks; that is, once the P.P. had begun to accept and assimilate them, a role which the Liberals had previously monopolized.

Elections for the Chamber of Deputies, 5 March 1933

<u>Parties</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>% of Votes</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>% of Seats</u>
<i>Antivenizelism</i> (United Opposition)	527,700	46.19	136	58.84
Popular Party	434,550	38.07	118	47.58
Free Opinion Party	25,758	2.26	6	2.42
National Radical Party	46,692	4.09	11	4.44
Agrarians	20,200	1.77	1	0.40
<i>Venizelism</i> (National Coalition)	528,656	46.32	110	44.36
Liberal Party	379,968	33.29	80	32.26
Progressive Party	77,254	6.77	10	4.03
Farmer-Labour Party	47,460	4.16	13	5.24
Agrarians (Mylonas)	14,302	1.25	5	2.02
Conservative Republican				

Party	9,672	0.85	2	0.81
<i>Agrarian Party</i>	22,985	2.01	2	0.81
<i>Communist Party</i>	52,656	4.53	-	-
<i>Other</i>	10,834	0.95	-	-
TOTAL	1,142,331	100.00	248	100.00
Invalid ballots: 5,612 (0.49% of votes cast)				
Total votes cast: 1,146,943				

(Mavrogordatos, p.45)

In 1933, however, as the minor Venizelist parties joined the Liberals in coalition, they could no longer operate as alternatives to the Liberals. Those amongst the refugees reluctant to support either faction abstained- it has been recorded that a large number of refugees abstained from the 1933 elections. Only in the Liberal strongholds, the New Lands inhabited by refugees, and in urban areas such as Salonica and Piraeus, did the Venizelists maintain a majority. Plastiras was recruited at the last minute to attempt to attract the refugee vote, however, his arch-rival, Kondyles, actually fared better amongst the refugees, partly on account of his promising them more compensation in his pre-electoral speeches.

Alternatively, as will be examined in greater depth further down, the KKE absorbed a larger number of refugee votes. Despite the refugees' staunch support of republicanism, and despite the fact that the Liberals had tried to implement some pro-labour policies throughout their term, ultimately they had encouraged refugee radicalization rather than averted it. Even hauling aside the effects of the Idionym Law, and the systematic exile of suspected communists, Venizelos' methods for boosting production, agricultural and industrial, effectively favoured businessmen and factory owners, at the expense of the population. Again, despite the fact that Venizelos envisioned a strong welfare state, and aimed at equal distribution of wealth among the various social strata, his policies resulted in favouring the governments' prosperous supporters, by levying heavy taxes on the lower and working

classes, and the rural peasantry. One cannot but recall the condemnations of the KKE toward the 'bourgeois' parties, which propagated that Greek society was not divided between Venizelists and Antivenizelists, but between the ruling minority which exploited the working classes. As Giannis Pasalides, independent Liberal MP and Caucasian refugee, said in 1925: “This is a class struggle between the people and the plutocracy, not a conflict between natives and refugees. Therefore, if this situation in parliament continues, then it is certain that the natives and the refugees will join and rise up against all us refugee fathers” (Athanasiaides-Mixailidis, p. 38).

Following the results of the elections, Plastiras pulled a military coup. Despite the fact that he was strongly dissuaded from doing so by a number of high ranking officers, Plastiras took over the Ministry of Defense, ordered the arrest of Tsaldaris and other P.P. members, and declared a state of emergency. He also enforced censorship of the antivenizelist press, forbade public gatherings, etc. He declared that the Republic was bankrupt and that there was no government capable of dealing with the growing threats of anarchy, violence, and communism. Venizelos was suspected of involvement, and though in fact he had attempted to talk Plastiras out of it, his opposition to the coup was minimal. He suggested that a temporary military government be formed, which would pass power to the winning faction, as a way to placate Plastiras. The point on which all parties were agreed was that no more public violence should be allowed. Already, in the streets of Athens, the military and police had put down two anti-coup demonstrations, at which there were two casualties and many injured. The transitional military government was thus formed, headed by General Othonaios, and Venizelos resigned. On March 10th, 1933, the military government passed power to a coalition government headed by Tsaldaris, and which consisted of the P.P., the Free-Opinion Party, and the National Radical Party.

Plastiras' coup ultimately had very far-reaching effects, and set the mood for the remaining three tumultuous years of the interwar period. The polarity and hostility between the two factions had never quite faded, but rather had remained dormant, so long as old grudges were not stirred. Ultimately, there were as many figures in each faction which were in favour of bridging the polarity as there were staunch extremists, including leading figures such as Tsaldaris, Kafantaris, Papanastasiou, etc. However, it is at this point that the more extreme agents, particularly in the disgruntled military, began to prevail. This clear ideological shift to political and social extremism is also noted in several leading figures of either faction, significantly Venizelos. As several researchers have noted, this ideological shift reflected influences from Europe, specifically, fascist Italy and Germany. Many more extreme figures of this period have argued that their actions- coups, dictatorships, etc- were justified by the growing need to unify the nation, quell social unrest, and prepare for the possible war which was coming. It has been less noted that the social unrest was symptomatic exactly of the extremism growing in either faction, the increased absence of democratic procedures, and the increased hostility of each faction for the other. It must be noted also, that the factional war taking place in the country in effect did not arise from any great difference in the political program of either major party. The P.P. had supported most of the Liberals' policies while they had been in power, and even after the P.P. formed a government in 1933, Tsaldaris mainly continued the Liberals' policies, which had begun in some way to pay off. This suggests, despite the fact that the political scene of the time was heavily ladled with emotion and symbolism, that the factional war was not one ultimately over political ideology, but control. As we have seen and will see again presently, often the points of rupture between the two factions regarded issues such as the re-instatement of military or governmental officials who had been reposted or discharged by the opposing faction. Even the re-emergence of the regime issue in these years must be seen in part as such, as a battle for control and dominance,

in the government, the civil service, and the military, of one or another faction. The means by which this was to be achieved- under the guise of promoting 'national unity'- were increasingly extreme and strikingly similar coming from both factions.

Once the Tsaldaris government came to power, arrests of suspected coup conspirators began. Despite Tsaldaris' comparatively moderate approach to the issue, neither he nor Othonaios wished to grant them amnesty. Similarly, Tsaldaris did not accuse Venizelos of being involved, but did condemn the Liberals for having failed to stop the coup. Metaxas and a number of Free-Opinion MPs, in contrast, declared that Venizelos should stand trial for his involvement.

Not long after, on June 6th, 1933, an assassination attempt against Venizelos took place. His wife and driver were injured, and a number of his personal guard were killed; Venizelos himself only miraculously escaped. As though society were not already in enough turmoil, this sent widespread alarm and panic through the country. The situation did not improve as investigations into the case proceeded- Tsaldaris proved incapable of containing the more extreme members of his party. The government was accused of sabotaging the investigation; the police helped perpetrators escape, anyone who made any serious headway into the case was transferred to a rural post. The Venizelists abstained from parliamentary sessions for three months in protest.

At around the same time, the municipal elections in the Salonica prefecture proved another source of conflict. It was argued that any election results would be null, as the exclusion of the city's Jewish population to separate voting colleges was unconstitutional. As we have seen, the city of Salonica had traditionally been one of the Liberals' strongholds, however, the 1933 election results had shown a significant drop in Liberal supporters (though they maintained a majority). Amongst the Jews of Salonica, only a very small proportion

voted for the Liberals- the majority voted the P.P., with a significant proportion going to the KKE. With the changing of the electoral law and the inclusion of the Jews in universal voting colleges, the political balance in the city might shift so that the Liberals constituted the minority. Thus, regional Liberal party organizations and extremist groups such as the E.E.E. began an anti-Semitic campaign, led mainly by the city's refugee populations in the settlements of Kalamaria and Toumba. Venizelos, (though not the other Venizelists) adopted a similar line, declaring that it was unacceptable that a minority should decide the fates of the nation. Ultimately, the Liberals won the elections, and the Jews, most of whom voted for the P.P., were further threatened by extreme Liberals.

Another issue which caused rupture between the two factions, of a political nature, was the signing of the Balkan Convention on February 9th, 1934. As stated, Tsaldaris intended to continue the Liberals' policies, including their foreign policy. As an extension of the Ankara Convention, Greece and Turkey also signed a treaty on the inviolability of the borders in Embros. Yugoslavia then wanted to combine that treaty with their own, regarding the inviolability of borders with Rumania, to form a pan-Balkan treaty. Bulgaria was invited to join should they so wish.

The Venizelists, Metaxas, and even Mixalakopoulos were all against this. Venizelos argued against it as well, advising that the positions of Bulgaria and Italy must be determined before anything was signed. This was due to a (secret) clause included in the treaty, according to which if any non-Balkan state should attack a signer state, all others were also obliged to ally against that state. Ultimately, Bulgaria proved unresponsive, and the treaty was signed, however, the political cost was great for the government and exacerbated factional animosity.

Following the Salonica elections, the leaders of the Venizelists, including groups of Agrarians, gathered to discuss ways of averting further attacks from the P.P. Kafandaris

suggested the formation of a military defense unit, to which Papanastasiou objected, saying, prophetically, that such groups had a tendency to pull coups themselves. Venizelos, however, took to the idea, and throughout 1934 independent groups within the military joined with his defense unit. Venizelos found himself in command of two military organizations and only barely held Plastiras back from attempting another coup in 1934. Nevertheless, a coup was decided upon secretly, should the government fail to grant the Liberals' demands. Venizelos was under pressure from members of his own party to stop seeking cooperation with the P.P.; he still maintained that he feared the government would attempt to remain in power by force, and that he was alarmed at the direction the country was proceeding in. He wished to purge the government entirely of antivenizelists and royalists.

On March 1st, 1935, Venizelos pulled his coup. The excuse was the announcement of the date for the senate elections. The coup was badly organized and lacked proper leadership; it has been characterized a farce. Worse, it managed to achieve exactly what it aimed to avert. The government declared a state of emergency. Kondyles took over actions against coup conspirators. Venizelos fled to Italy, never to return. Alexandros Zaimis, as President of the Republic, thought he could calm the public by declaring that the regime was not in danger, however, the coup had given hardliners and extremists in the antivenizelist faction all the cause they needed. Tsaldaris also found himself up against fanatical opposition to a more moderate line from extreme members in parliament, who demanded the immediate execution of all those involved in the coup. Those who proposed more moderate measures were reposted or fired.

Meanwhile, the streets were in a state of chaos. On March 2nd, a demonstration of antivenizelists marched to parliament, carrying a stuffed dummy depicting Venizelos at the noose. On April 1st, extreme antivenizelists held a demonstration again in front of parliament, at which Metaxas and Rallis were also present, demanding the execution of coup conspirators

and the resignation of the government. Metaxas had mercilessly attacked the government, its credibility, the credibility of the courts, and declared Tsaldaris and Kondyles should also stand trial, for allowing the coup to happen. The antivenizelist press made things worse, in particular Vlachos, whose articles and ideology were clearly inspired in part by fascist Germany. Under all this pressure, it was impossible for Tsaldaris to maintain a moderate approach. He attempted to placate the extreme members of his faction by limiting social freedoms further, including freedom of speech. The government wanted to maintain a state of emergency for as long as possible, at least until the trails of suspected coup conspirators were over, and thus, kept post-poning elections. The state of emergency was ultimately lifted only after pressure from the Free- Opinion Party and the Venizelists, who objected to the measures limiting social freedoms. Meanwhile, Venizelist purges continued; judges were re-assigned to isolated rural areas, all clubs and syndicates were dissolved and banned, and even Venizelists in the university were replaced. Cretans in particular were targeted. The leaders of the Venizelist parties, objecting to the continuing purges, urged Tsaldaris at least to reinstate civilians who had been acquitted by the courts; when Tsaldaris refused, the Venizelists abstained from the elections.

In the opposite faction, Metaxas made a far more ominous move, when he adopted the restoration of the monarchy as one of his pre-electoral platforms. The Free-Opinion Party joined with independent antivenizelists and royalists to form the Union of Royalists. Tsaldaris tried to stop him, as he still supported the Republic and did not wish to see the Liberals belatedly justified, however, as a large proportion of P.P. members were also pushing strongly for restoration, Tsaldaris, typically attempting to compromise, promised the possibility of a plebiscite on the issue following elections. Kondyles agreed to this, though he condemned the extreme and violent actions of Metaxas, bearing in mind the refugees who constituted a large proportion of his supporters. The Union of Royalists did not address the refugees.

The elections of June 9th, 1935, were held according to the plurality system, and resulted in a victory of the P.P. with 254 seats. The Union of Royalists won 7 seats, and Kondyles and the National Radical Party got 33 seats. It has been noted that though the percentage of voters who abstained was not ultimately so great, the number of blank ballots

(Mavrogordatos, p.50)

Elections for the Constituent Assembly, 9 June 1935				
<i>Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>% of votes</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>% of Seats</i>
<i>Antivenizelism</i>	892,068	86.68	300	100.00
Government Coalition	669,434	65.04	281	93.67
Union of Royalists	152,285	14.80	4	1.33
Macedonian Union	29,664	2.88	-	-
Mixed Ticket	25,349	2.46	9	3.00
Other Antivenizelists	15,336	1.49	6	2.00
<i>Venizelism</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Agrarian Party</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>Communist Party</i>	98,699	9.59	-	-
<i>Other</i>	38,429	3.73	-	-
National Party	5,636	0.55	-	-
National Union	2,590	0.25	-	-
Misc. Independents	30,203	2.93	-	-
TOTAL	1,029,196	100.00	300	100.00
Invalid ballots: 61,166 (5.61% of votes cast)				
Total votes cast: 1,090,362				

had never before been so high. It is possible that many people were bullied into going to their electoral colleges to vote but ultimately dropped a blank ballot.

Following the completion of elections, the regime issue was brought forward again. Tsaldaris was now called upon to do good on his pre-electoral promise and assign a date for

the plebiscite; fuming, he tried to put it off for as long as possible, rejecting Metaxas' suggestion that the government declare itself officially in favour of the monarchy. His own party was badly split, with half the P.P. MPs speaking in favour of the Republic, and the other half speaking against it. Several Cretan and refugee P.P. MPs- including a couple from the New Lands- left the party, demonstrating thus again the refugees' inflexible position in favouring the Republic. In contrast, Kondyles declared, in a joint document with the Free-Opinion Party, in favour of the monarchy, and advised the King, upon his return, neither to call for elections nor to seek cooperation with the Liberals. Kondyles was in fact preparing a coup; again, any attempts to stop him resulted in officers being reposted. Meanwhile, the government could no longer guarantee the safety of republicans. On September 20th, 1935, the police, the army, and bands of royalists broke up a gathering at which Sophoulis was to speak. On October 2nd, Kafantaris, Papanastasiou, Papandreou, and Mylonas together objected to the King against such tactics, and warned of the catastrophic consequences of his return. The police then broke up a gathering of anti-royalist lawyers and tore apart the offices of the Farmer-Labour Party and the newspaper 'Patris'.

Ultimately, international events caught up with domestic developments and forced Tsaldaris' hand. Mussolini had invaded Ethiopia, and the threat of war, especially as Greece was an LoN member, spread in the country. Under this new pressure, Tsaldaris wished to be done with the plebiscite as soon as possible, and set the date for November 3rd.

On October 10th, 1935, Tsaldaris was kidnapped on his way to parliament by Generals Papagos and Reppas, who demanded of him that he reinstate the monarchy immediately with a coup. When Tsaldaris refused, they sprang their own coup and took control of the state; the government stepped down, a 'revolutionary committee' was formed under the two generals, which formed a government under Kondyles, and declared again a state of emergency. The majority of the P.P. were against this, and walked out of parliament. The Republic was

abolished, and the constitution of 1911 was temporarily reinstated. The plebiscite would be conducted on November 3rd as planned, merely to confirm the *fait accompli*. In the meantime, Kondyles would govern in the King's stead. The Venizelist parties' reactions to this were not very powerful- those, like Papanastasiou and Papandreou, who did attempt to seriously oppose it, were displaced to Mykonos.

The plebiscite of November 3rd, 1935, according to researchers, was not properly conducted- measures were taken to intimidate voters and manipulate the electoral process, so that the ultimate results- 97,6% in favour of the monarchy, 2,1% against- were equally unbelievable and absurd. Nevertheless, the monarchy was reinstated, and though displaced politicians were allowed to return, the leaders of the anti-royalist, republican parties refused to recognize the results as valid.

On November 25th, 1935, King George returned to Greece, with declarations that he would ensure justice and equal rights to all Greeks. Kondyles officially stepped down (though he continued to govern), and Tsaldaris awaited the order to form a new government. He, and even Metaxas (who believed the country should be preparing for war) also sought cooperation with the Venizelists. In contrast, Sophoulis refused to meet with the King, restating the Liberals' terms for accepting the 'illegal' restoration, while the remaining Venizelist leaders refused to enter into negotiations with him altogether. Kondyles, despite having officially stepped down, was far too loath to give in to the Liberals' demands, and to ease tensions, the King formed a transitional government under moderate antivenizelist Demertzis, consisting of various prominent public figures. Demertzis managed to come to an understanding with Sophoulis, who finally accepted the restoration, and the King scheduled elections for January 26th, 1936.

Elections for the Chamber of Deputies, 26 January 1936				
<i>Parties</i>	<i>Votes</i>	<i>% of votes</i>	<i>Seats</i>	<i>% of Seats</i>
<i>Antivenizelism</i>	606,297	47.59	143	47.67
People's Party	281,597	22.10	72	24.00
General People's Radical Union	253,384	19.28	60	20.00
Free Opinion Party	50,137	3.94	7	2.33
Reformist National Party	17,822	1.40	4	1.33
Other Antivenizelists	3,357	0.26	-	-
<i>Venizelism</i>	562,698	44.17	141	47.00
Liberal Party	474,651	37.26	126	42.00
Republican Coalition	66,026	5.18	11	3.67
Other Venizelists	22,021	1.73	4	1.33
<i>Agrarian Party</i>	13,006	1.02	1	0.33
<i>Communist Party</i>	73,411	5.76	15	5.00
<i>Other</i>	18,590	1.46	-	-
National Unity Party	12,429	0.98	-	-
Minor Parties	1,949	0.15	-	-
Misc. Independents	4,212	0.33	-	-
TOTAL	1,274,002	100.00	300	100.00
Invalid ballots: 4,083 (0.32% of votes cast)				
Total votes cast: 1,278,085				

(Mavrogordatos, p.52)

Ironically, the elections of 1936, held under the proportional representation system, were the only ones of the interwar period which were perfectly carried out, and in which all parties participated. In addition, the parties which won the elections never managed to form a government, wracked by factional antipathies, divisions, and refusals to cooperate with other parties, thus forcing the King to maintain Demertzis in power till his death, and immediately

replace him with Metaxas. Three coalitions were formed: the General People's Radical Union, which consisted of the National Radical Party, the National Popular Party (a group of P.P. hardliners who had defected from the party, under Theotokis) and independent Royalists; the Republican Coalition, made up of the Progressive Liberals, the Farmer Labour Party, and the Democratic Party under Georgios Papandreou, and finally, the Popular Front, consisting of the KKE and splinter groups of the Agrarian Party. The Liberals, the Free-Opinion Party, and the P.P. all ran separately, as did a number of other minor parties. The results showed the antivenizelists to have won by a tiny margin, winning 143 seats, as opposed to 141 seats won by Venizelists. More accurately, the Liberals won 126 seats, the P.P. 72, the General People's Radical Union altogether won 60 seats, the KKE 15, the Free-Opinion Party 7, and the Republican Coalition another 11. There is much that one might say concerning these results- firstly, it has been observed that the trend of Liberals losing protest votes to the P.P. and minor Venizelist parties is here non-existent- despite everything, even the increasing proportion of KKE supporters, the Liberals still maintained their majority, particularly in the longtime Venizelist strongholds of the New Lands, Salonica, and Athens and Piraeus. The huge difference in the electoral results of the Republican Coalition and the Liberals confirm the inability of the smaller republican parties to attract votes away from the Liberals. Similarly, the increase of voters for the KKE is noteworthy, however, it was not a repeat of their 1935 success, when protest votes from abstaining Venizelists could not but go to the KKE.

As stated, neither faction could form a government without the KKE, and other variations of coalitions between leading parties all proved out of the question, as past grudges made cooperation impossible. Thus, the Demertzis government remained in power. The next step was taken when the King, alarmed at the rumours that the Liberals were considering

forming a coalition government, finally, with the KKE, made Metaxas Minister of Defense and Armed Forces. On March 14th, 1936, Metaxas also took over the Ministry of Aviation.

It was in this year, strikingly, that a number of the leading figures from both factions left their last breath. Kondyles had died on January 31st, and Venizelos, on March 18th from a stroke. Demertzis followed on April 13th, and on May 17th, Tsaldaris too died of a heart attack. The King, immediately following the death of Demertzis, appointed Metaxas Prime Minister. The two major parties, the P.P. and the Liberals, gave him their vote of confidence, regardless if they had spoken against this move of the king's in parliament. The final vote numbered 241 votes of confidence in Metaxas, as opposed to 16 against, and 4 abstentions. Those who voted against him, ineffectual though they were, were the Farmer-Labour Party, the Democratic Party, the Agrarians, and the KKE.

In a final act of the interwar period, Metaxas was given the excuse to impose his dictatorship on August 4th, 1936, by the workers' strikes of that year, which, amazingly, were the largest of the period. On April 29th, 1936, the tobacco workers of Salonica began their longest strike, which rapidly spread to all workers in the country. By May 6th the strikers numbered 30.000, and by May 9th, 150.000 people gathered at Eleftheria Square to protest against police violence throughout the strike. Violent clashes between police and strikers resumed, resulting in 10 casualties (all workers) and many injured. As a result, the strike spread to Athens and Piraeus, in support of the Salonica strikers and in protest against police brutality. According to the account of a refugee witness of the events in Kokkinia,

....after the events in Salonica, on May 9th, 1936, a demonstration suddenly began in the 'Germanika' and (.....) reached Agiou Nikolaou square. There the police hit them with clubs and guns, causing the people of Kokkinia to bleed. A week later, a strike was called in Athens and Piraeus as a sign of support after

the events in Salonica. The biggest gathering in Piraeus was in Agiou Nikolaou square. Thousands of people filled the square and the surrounding streets (...) that day the Piraeus police hid in the station (...) they didn't just sit there with their arms crossed, though. They called and requested that the army be sent to break up the demonstration (.....) the soldiers, rather than follow their orders, joined the workers and the people. (Gikas, p. 345).

According to some researchers, the KKE attempted to take credit for mobilizing the masses, however, the strikers were independent, for the most part, of the party; others have argued that the role of the KKE was critical to the organization and cooperation of all the many unions involved, which included both the GSEE and the EGSEE, which was under KKE control. Whatever the case, a communist take-over was now seriously feared, and when the GSEE and EGSEE announced a 24 hour strike on August 4th, Metaxas leaped at the opportunity and declared the dictatorship, allegedly to avert a communist revolution.

In closing, what is most striking about the period is how much its beginning mirrored its end. Just as in 1923, when the antivenizelists had suspected the results of the double plebiscite on the regime to have been falsified, and the consequent Republic 'illegal', so did the Venizelists refuse to recognize the 1935 plebiscite as valid and objected to the imposition of the 'illegal' restoration. Even the fact that the beginning and end of the period were both marked by workers' strikes on an unprecedented level in the country is striking. The structure which is observed, that is, the imposition of one or another regime or faction against the backdrop of rising social unrest and radicalism, appears ultimately to have been the defining image of the interwar period.

2.2 MINOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE REFUGEES

As has been stated, though the minor parties of the period did not play so decisive a role as the two major parties, the Liberals and the Popular Party, nor did they manage to attract as many voters (or refugee voters) as the Liberals, their role throughout the period is certainly not negligible. Unfortunately, it is too much to include here a deeper examination of these parties, therefore only a small space may be afforded to examine the refugees' relations to them. Beginning with the smaller Venizelist parties, the Progressive Liberals and the Conservative Liberals, particularly in conjecture to the refugees, there is not much to be said; both fall generally into the category of Venizelist alternatives to the Liberals. As we have seen, despite the fact that in several major issues the Progressives seemed closer to refugee sensibilities and republican ideals- such as the Ankara Convention and opposition to Metaxas- electoral results show that ultimately the two parties were indeed seen either as an alternative to the Liberals or their satellite.

The Democratic Union, later Farmer-Labour Party headed by Papanastasiou, deviated rather more than the Progressives and the Conservatives from the Liberals, constituting the Venizelist 'left', and again, in many ways its program seemed at times more compatible with the refugees' sensibilities and demands than the Liberals', particularly in the case of Caucasian refugees; influenced by socialist ideas from his time abroad, Papanastasiou and his party line were those generally adopted by Greek socialists and social democrats of the time. They advocated the bridging of the social polarity between refugees and natives which had developed. Amongst their priorities were the boosting of agriculture, through the creation of agricultural cooperatives and modernized production methods, the establishment of protective labour laws, the abolishment of the death penalty, educational reform, womens' suffrage, etc. However, despite this program, it has been observed by researchers that the DU did not manage to endear itself to workers or peasants; possible reasons for this were the fact that it

failed to establish cooperation with unions and syndicates, outlawed civil servants' right to go on strike, and were also extremely anti-communist. As we have seen, in 1923, the DU was rewarded for its stance concerning the regime issue, however, in '26, their proportions had dropped from 120 seats in parliament to 17. In 1928, their rise in votes- earning them 20 seats- was recorded mainly in areas where they and the Liberals' candidates were listed on the same ballots (notably Drama, Kavala, Serres and Rodopi). The results of '36, where the whole of the Republican Coalition got 7 seats, confirm that the DU- Farmer-Labour Party, while perhaps deviating more than the Progressives and the Conservatives from the Liberals' platform, was still regarded by the refugees as a Venizelist satellite.

The same cannot be said of Kondyles and the National Democratic Party (later National Radical Party). The party's line seems very much to have been a reflection of its temperamental and changeable leader, and was the only party to defect from the extreme end of one faction to the extreme end of another (in this way peculiarly demonstrating how similar, ultimately, the extreme agents of each faction were). He was amongst the most vocal for an outright declaration of the Republic in '23; as such, he became an MP for the Democratic Union, but clashed with them too, and left to form his own National Democratic Party. In his demagogical speeches, he supported the refugees and workers, and managed to combine pro-labour, pro- refugee rhetoric with nationalist overtones. He managed throughout the interwar period- even following his defection to anti-venizelism- to command a large amount of refugee support, particularly in Drama and Kavala. Naturally, he was fanatically anti-communist. His party was known to cooperate with the police and militia groups (consisting in large part of workers) to terrorize syndicates, workers, the public; they would attack Athens Labour Center meetings and extract 'protection' money from small shop owners. The fact that the Liberals sought, despite their many differences, to cooperate with Kondyles is indicative of the influence he wielded, both among the refugees and the military.

As we have seen, the refugees' main reasons for supporting him were his staunch republicanism and (initial) Venizelism, the fact that he paid the refugees a portion of their compensation money, and his furious opposition to the Ankara Convention. It is also possible that his militant, nationalist rhetoric itself attracted a number of refugees. The areas in which Kondyles enjoyed particular refugee support include large rural areas as well as urban centers like Athens and Salonica, and were- particularly Drama and Kavala- densely populated with Pontos refugees. Nationalism was thus existent in the countryside as much as in cities. This may be partly due to the fact that the New Lands in general were populated by various ethnic-minority groups, which, as we have seen and will see again, on various pretexts often clashed with the refugees, and also the existence of communist supporters in those areas, in particular the Caucasian and south Russian refugees, who constituted another source of intercommunal clashes.

Finally, amongst the smaller parties, the Agrarian Party also managed to attract a proportion of the refugee vote. Having emerged out of the agrarian movement of 1920, it was founded in 1922 by Spiros Xasiotis, and was structurally based on agricultural cooperatives. From the beginning, like the KKE (though each maintained their distances from the other) the Agrarians were divided- one wing of the party intended for it to represent the interests of peasants and farmers within a democratic, constitutional framework, whilst the other held a more radical approach, and wished to impose a new social and political order. The party as a whole maintained that control of the state should be in the hands of the farmers, which constituted the largest group of the working class; this was to be achieved through parliamentary means. It rejected capitalism, communism, the nationalization of land, and supported the redistribution of large estates to landless peasants and refugees. Interestingly, unlike other parties, it also supported full compensation to these estates' previous owners, as, unlike the KKE, the party considered private property sacred. In addition, the Agrarians also

argued for the decentralization of power and greater regional autonomy and self-administration. It maintained a pacifist line in terms of foreign policy and advocated educational reforms.

Unlike the KKE and the Venizelists, the Agrarians had run in the 1923 elections, and managed to win 3 seats. Interestingly, much of the party's support originally came from Old Greece, particularly Attica. The arrival of the refugees, however, and the consequent land redistribution in the New Lands, coupled with the creation of a great many new agricultural cooperatives by the refugees, caused the base of the party's electoral support to shift to the north. In 1924, the Agrarian Confederation of Greece was founded, which only accepted as members refugee cooperatives or cooperatives of landless peasants, the great bulk of which resided in Macedonia, Thessaly and Thrace. The Confederation demanded the total expropriation of church property, state-owned land, and the distribution of these to landless peasants and refugees. The members of the Confederation itself were not linked to any one party, and debated whether to support the KKE, the republican parties, or the Agrarians, however, the most vocal were those of Macedonia and Thessaly, which supported the Agrarian Party.

In 1926, the party managed to get four seats in parliament; its highest percentages were in Serres (around 23%), Preveza and Arta (19%), in Florina (18%) and 10% in Larissa and Euboia (Hering, p. 1121). Due to the electoral system, however, in the elections of 1928, though the party's number of votes rose (35% of the Muslim populations of Eastern Thrace voted the Agrarians) the party failed to get any seats in parliament. The party dissolved shortly afterwards, to be reformed "in May of 1929 at the United Panhellenic Congress of the Agrarian movement in Salonica" (Hering, p. 1173). Though the party's base had now shifted solidly to the north, agricultural cooperatives remained the basis of its structure.

The newly recreated Agrarian Party, however, was to be short-lived. Initially, the radical wing, which had gained ground in the preceding years, pulled the party toward a leftist, anticapitalist position. Tellingly, such voices were found mainly in Karditsa, Salonica, Drama and Kilkis, where large proportions of Caucasian and south Russian refugees lived. The conflict between radical and moderate voices within the party was exacerbated when Ioannis Sofianopoulos, who initially held a more moderate position, joined the party. The 'moderate' line, whose supporters, including Sofianopoulos, derived mostly from Old Greece, condemned the radical wing for their socialist leanings, while the radicals in their turn accused them of fascist tendencies. On December 17th, 1930, the party again dissolved. One faction- the 'moderates'- followed Sofianopoulos, while the 'radicals' followed Xasiotis and Mylonas.

Researchers have noted that in fact, the accusation that Sofianopoulos and a number of other moderates among the Agrarians, had fascist leanings, was not entirely incorrect. In contrast to Xasiotis and Mylonas, Sofianopoulos envisioned a powerful welfare state, a kind of "democratically- based oligarchy" (Hering, p. 1174). Like many of his contemporaries, Sofianopoulos felt the country sorely lacked strong leadership, and was influenced in part by fascist Italy and Germany.

In the elections of 1933, the two Agrarian parties ran separately; the Agrarians of Sofianopoulos managed to win only 1 seat (with the antivenizelist coalition), and the Agrarians under Mylonas, with the Venizelist coalition, won 5. Researchers have attributed Sofianopoulos' failure, shorn of support from the New Lands, to the fact that consequently the party remained isolated. The Agrarians with Mylonas had their greatest victories in Thessaly (where they even beat the Liberals) with 22.8%, in Ipiros with (17, 4% in Ioannina), and in Macedonia and Thrace, where it came in third in Serres and second in Drama. It is again observed that these were areas congested with landless peasants and refugees, who, as we

have seen, by 1933 were heavily burdened by taxes, debt, and hostile treatment from the authorities, which pushed them slowly towards radicalization. Excluded from the KKE on account of their conviction that private property was sacred, they were thus absorbed by the Agrarians.

As the Agrarians joined the Venizelists in abstaining from the 1935 elections, ironically, the KKE then managed to absorb a large proportion of the votes which would otherwise have gone to them. By 1936, despite the parties' anti-royalist positions, as well as their objections to Metaxas, they did not manage to earn more than 1 seat in the elections. This may possibly be interpreted by the rise at the same time of KKE members, despite, as we shall see, the Comintern's accusations towards the KKE that they had failed to win voters over from the Agrarians.

From a brief exploration of the Agrarian party, it is clear that in many ways, like the other minor Venizelist parties, it echoed many of the refugees' demands (particularly the Caucasians), and appeared on many levels more compatible with their political positions. As we have seen, the Caucasians too strongly supported the creation of agricultural cooperatives and had commenced to form their own as soon as they arrived. Other common demands included the Caucasians' demands that church property be redistributed and demands for educational reforms promoting agricultural education. Accordingly, as we have seen, the areas in the New Lands, particularly Macedonia, where it received its greatest support were areas inhabited by refugees, specifically large concentrations of Pontos refugees. Among the Party's earliest members and leading figures was Kostas Gavrilides, a refugee from the south Caucasus (Kars), who came to Greece in 1920 and joined in the party in 1923. He would consequently follow Mylonas' Agrarian splinter party, and was elected MP of Salonica in 1932, and mayor of Kilkis in 1936. Factors which limited the growth of the party and resulted in its attracting less voters were, firstly, the rival influence of the Liberals and particularly,

after 1933, the KKE, which also managed to attract a steadily larger proportion of refugee votes. In addition, the fragmentation within the party would, as it had with the KKE, ultimately weakened it, so that it could not provide a viable alternative to the Liberals. While the Agrarians managed to attract more support from the refugees in general and the Pontos refugees in particular than the minor Venizelist parties, it did not manage to provide the alternative to Venizelism which the KKE ultimately came to offer.

2.3 THE LIBERAL PARTY, THE POPULAR PARTY AND THE REFUGEES

As we know, both the Liberals and the Popular Party preceded the interwar period- the Liberals were formed in 1910, whereas the Popular Party was formed in 1920, having grown out of preceding antivenizelist, 'old' parties. As such, their mutual animosity and the development of their party line had its sources in the pre- interwar period. For the first decade of the 20th century, the Greek political scene and the country at large were in a state of stagnation. The established political elite of the time, though desirous of change, appeared not to have any clear idea or plan as to how this could be achieved, nor in what direction to take the country. One possible reason for this was the fact that, as can be seen by the positive reaction of a proportion of the population to the 1909 Goudi military coup, the government and political elite, otherwise referred to as a 'state bourgeoisie', were detached from and failed to address or represent various professional groups and their interests, including farmers, workers, merchants, etc. We must note in passing, that it is precisely these groups, particularly the merchants, entrepreneurs and businessmen- the 'commercial bourgeoisie'- which the Liberals addressed first and who became their staunchest supporters. It has been argued in fact that the 1909 coup was the coming to a head of the clashing interests and desire for government power and representation of these two bourgeois factions, the established state bourgeoisie, and the commercial bourgeoisie; in other words, the 1909 coup was a 'bourgeois' revolution, which: “involved a bitter struggle for supremacy between two bourgeois factions:

the established state bourgeoisie (together with the landowners), represented by the Old Parties, and the rising commercial, shipping and industrial bourgeoisie as a whole, represented by the Liberals” (Mavrogordatos, p.125). Other researchers have rejected this, on the basis that the coup was conducted by military officers, not any party, and motivated in a large part by their individual ambitions. However, it is undeniable that the existing parties, and the existing constitution (whose trade and maritime laws were extremely dated), did not in any way support the interests of the new and rapidly growing social and professional- and political- groups which were developing.

The Liberals and Venizelos came to address these very problems, and presented a program which boasted all the elements lacking from the old parties. They presented themselves as the agents of new political ideas, aimed to modernize the governmental system and revise the constitution; in order to stabilize the governmental system, they aimed to address the demands and interests of the middle and working classes. They advocated reforms in trade laws and the legal system in general, which due to its being so anachronistic did not promote economic development. Venizelos condemned the 'plutocracy', the corrupt government administration, the absence of plans for the development of economic and fiscal policies, labour laws, laws protecting farmers, and (ironically), high indirect taxes upon the majority of the population. In short, the Liberals presented a dynamic platform characterized by modernization and greater efficiency, aimed toward higher levels of productivity and development in all spheres. It is necessary to note that Venizelos and the Liberals openly presented themselves as an alternative to the established political elite- they did not intend to be absorbed by the existing governmental structures or balances, but set themselves apart from the pre-existing parties.

The antivenizelist parties were generally more conservative than the Liberals, however, apart from this common and uniting trait, none appeared, as we have seen, to have a

workable program for the governance of the country. Despite the fact that they recognized the need for change, they were strongly opposed to Venizelos' program, due to its rapid pace of reforms, their extent, and the general ideal promoted by the Liberals, of a modernized, urban society. They were believers in the idea of organic change of a country, did not believe the future of the country could be imposed by some plan or blueprint. They trusted established, time-honored political methods, and distrusted Venizelos' constitutional reforms aimed towards greater and more centralized state powers. Possibly this is why they were perceived by the Liberals as reactionaries. Venizelos' modernizing agenda was much more entrepreneurial and economically progressive than the antivenizelists, who, alarmed by the Liberals' swift ascendance to power, envisioned a 'small but honorable' Greece, directly opposed to Venizelos modernizing vision:

the Antivenizelist counter-offensive was essentially a struggle of the pre-capitalist economy against Liberal capital and the sociopolitical bloc of 1909. Going further, Elefantos suggests that the two antagonistic bourgeois factions corresponded to "two different forms of distribution of the national surplus". In his view, Venizelism corresponded to profit maximization through intensive and rationalized use of the productive forces- essentially an entrepreneurial vision. It represented an effort to develop domestic capitalism and above all to industrialize. In contrast, antivenizelism corresponded to mere pursuit of immediate gain, through the appropriation of the agricultural surplus and the accumulation of land rent. (Mavrogordatos, 129).

By extension, the Antivenizelists inevitably became trapped in traditionalism and were inevitably pushed to the Right of Venizelism; this “essentially involved the establishment of a traditionalist military- bureaucratic regime under the monarchy” (Mavrogordatos, p. 130.) It goes without saying that, regarding the irredentist cause, in

contrast to Venizelos, who adopted as dynamic and pro-active an approach to the irredentist cause as in all else (driven in part by economic considerations), the antivenizelists adopted Dragoumis' 'gradualist' approach.

The mutual animosity of the Liberals and antivenizelists came to a head during WW1, at which point the country was quite literally divided, with Venizelos heading a government in Salonica and the King another in Athens. Following the Liberals' defeat in 1920 and the Asia Minor Catastrophe, the interwar period began with the polarity between the Popular Party and the Liberals at its peak. It was now further burdened with the weight of the Catastrophe and all its political, social and economic implications.

As we have seen, the Liberals considered their 1928-32 term the dynamic continuation of their 1910-14 term. However, of course, their program and their ideological orientations, and the party's character, changed in the interwar period. A huge factor in this change was the end of irredentism. Apart from what this meant, for the nation at large and the refugees in particular, for the Liberals, it meant that what had come to be the central objective of their party was gone, and had somehow to be replaced. In terms of foreign policy, as we have seen, this meant adopting a new, pacifist, internationalist approach, seeking to re-establish friendly relations and diplomatic ties with neighboring countries. Domestically, as we have seen, it meant propagating international peace and cooperation as the new ideal, in schools and in general, and putting a definitive end to all irredentist aspirations.

For the refugees, this meant the end of any hope of re-establishing their communities in Anatolia. Despite the enormous emotional burden of this, it helped to a point to clear away factors holding them back, practically and emotionally, so that they more easily embraced the Liberals' general objective of national reconstruction. This was at the center of the Liberals' interwar program- to reconstruct the country by setting it back on track, in production terms,

economic terms and political terms. It was a renewed version of their old progressive, forward-looking, rational character. In many ways, this mentality suited the refugees- as has frequently been noted, the refugees' process of integration and adjustment, both practically and ideologically, was managed due to the 'remarkable energy of the refugees themselves' (Mazower, 364). The refugee mentality was also forward-looking, progressive, and the Liberals' goal of reconstruction provided a suitable objective. The Liberals were no longer led by the

expansionist and somewhat messianic nationalism of the preceding decades, expressed by the bourgeoisie class, but a defensive nationalism, which mobilized the whole of Greek society, driven towards reconstruction and economic development (.....) In Greece, the refugees facilitated this process, as agents of development, despite the fact that their assimilation did not fail to provoke reactions. (Dritsa, p.221).

By 1923, the antivenizelists, mainly the People's Party, were in total disarray and humiliation. Their leaders were executed, they bore the blame for the Asia Minor Catastrophe, and were despised by the better part of the population. In addition, as we have seen, the events of '23- the coup, the Trail of the Six, the elections and the plebiscite- were considered by the P.P. to be invalid, arbitrary, imposed. All these factors contributed to hostility towards the Liberals and especially the refugees. Tsaldaris was elected leader of the P.P. mainly because his moderate position helped unify divergent voices in the party.

It is impossible to know how many P.P. members or antivenizelists in general were royalists by conviction and how many simply adopted it as a party line. Similarly, it is impossible to draw up an accurate ratio of royalists to republicans in the P.P.- these balances changed constantly throughout the interwar period. What is undeniable is that the P.P.

contained both. Amongst the royalists in the P.P., the opinion remained that a constitutional monarchy best suited the country and the Greek temperament. They believed that a King ensured stability, continuity, and was above partisan politics. Though, in practice, even during the period in question, this proved not to be true, the royalists still wanted another plebiscite. This generated fears that the extreme members of the party might defect to the Free-Opinion Party. Demertzis, for example, believed that Tsaldaris was too stiff on the plebiscite issue, and though he desired the cooperation of the two factions, he attacked the army and the refugees, denouncing the Republic to be a republic of military officers and refugees, and who first proposed the idea of separate refugee electoral colleges. Others accused Tsaldaris of being too lenient with the Liberals. However, the fact that Tsaldaris' moderate approach paid off in government kept extreme party members in check, at least during periods when the factional polarity slackened and the P.P. was not baited by the Venizelists.

Despite the existence of such voices, however, it would be inaccurate to sum up the P.P.'s political platform throughout this period as nothing but a rejection of the Republic, or a string of rejections of the Venizelists' policies. The P.P. too had changed in the interwar period. Firstly, the party no longer represent a mere 'plutocracy', a social and political 'elite', but had widespread support from the working classes, the petty bourgeoisie, and the peasantry, and tried to take them into consideration in the program. The P.P.'s immediate aim was to re-establish the parliamentary democracy. As Minister of the Interior in the Ecumenical Government, Tsaldaris discovered that the results of the 1923 plebiscite had been destroyed, confirming the P.P.'s suspicions that the plebiscite had been rigged. However, neither he nor the P.P. rose to the bait- believing the country must first deal with more immediate problems, like the economy, they judged that the regime was not an urgent issue. They actively participated in revising the constitution and recognized it. This helped attract non-royalist conservatives and made factional cooperation easier.

In keeping with their traditional party character, the P.P. aimed towards stability, to provide a counter-balance to and limit the negative side effects of the Liberals' rapid modernization process. Tsaldaris set priority on agriculture, aimed to increase exports, and develop the market economy in rural areas. In contrast to the Liberals, the P.P. promoted austerity measures in dealing with the economic situation, so as to ensure that small land-owning peasants and refugees would not be burdened by heavy taxes. Unlike many Venizelists and antivenizelists, both Tsaldaris and Venizelos recognized the emergence of distinct socio-economic classes and class consciousness in the country. Though the P.P. maintained the same hard line against unions, syndicates, and strikers as the Liberals, as well as the practice of exiling undesirables, Tsaldaris was moderate and tried to be understanding towards workers and strikers.

As we have seen, the refugees, with the exception of a tiny minority amongst the south Russian and Caucasian refugees, in their staggering majority were supporters of the Liberals: “...90% of refugee voters, throughout the decade of 1920, were still solidly Venizelist” (Hering, p. 1047). Refugee support for the Liberals of course predated the interwar period—“the integration of this (...) group into the political structures of the Greek state can be considered to have started (...) in the Ottoman Empire (...) however, it was their coming to Greece that, in effect, brought them into contact with interwar Greek political life as well as with the clash between the Liberals (Venizelists) and the monarchist People’s Party” (Marantzides, p. 65). The significance of the Asia Minor campaign and the Catastrophe for the forging of the refugees' support of Venizelos and the Liberals cannot be overstated. In addition to this, another factor, separate to the Catastrophe, also led them immediately to embrace the Liberals:

a factor which is often overlooked or under-estimated by the historiographical approaches which focus mostly on the influence of the 'charisma' of Venizelos,

is that the refugee populations constituted politically conscious societies of which the majority held democratic, progressive convictions. Therefore it was natural for them to lean towards an anti- monarchical and anti-conservative faction. (Gikas, p. 297).

One may recall that a large proportion of refugees, in their Asia Minor homelands, had been merchants, bankers, workers, businessmen of high standing and innovative entrepreneurs- exactly the professions best represented and addressed by the Liberals.

Hence, as early as their arrival in 1922-23, the refugees' political convictions and party loyalty had been set. The Liberals were supported not merely for their own platform, but also as a reaction to the monarchy and all parties which supported it. It is to this rancor against the King and the antivenizelists, in fact, that one may attribute the refugees' first political movements in Greece, that is, their fanatical denunciation of the monarchy and the demand that the Republic be declared outright. As we have seen, and will see again, in a large part the P.P.'s and antivenizelists' negative stance towards the refugees, though too predating the interwar period, was strengthened by the fact that the refugees had been the most vocal supporters of the 'illegal' Republic, and it was due to their inclusion in the political system that the electoral balance shifted enough as to put the antivenizelists in the minority. The refugees' devotion to republicanism, as we have seen, appeared to outweigh even their adoration of Venizelos, with whom up to a point the republic was equated. Though loyalty to Venizelos was an undeniably powerful factor in the refugees' interwar political choices, even this loyalty was not absolute, as was proven in 1932- however, the refugees' support of the Republic remained steady and unwavering.

As we have seen, in the years preceding Venizelos' dramatic return in 1928, the refugees continued to vote Venizelist, though their loyalty to the faction slackened when the

regime was not an issue, Venizelos was absent, and their living circumstances and accommodation remained incomplete and wretched. As stated, it is in the big difference between the Liberals' performance in 1926 and their triumph in 1928 that one can measure the force and power of the figure of Venizelos in particular on the refugees:

Despite everything, Venizelos remained the living symbol and providential instrument of the stillborn 'Greece of Two Continents and Five Seas' created on the paper of the Treaty of Sevres. After the disaster, this glorious and benevolent father or rather grandfather figure not only was seen as the ultimate guarantor of refugee safety and survival, the ultimate protector against native hostility, but also provided an object of symbolic compensation for misery and discrimination. (Mavrogordatos, p. 206).

As we know, it has been observed that overmuch importance has been placed upon the symbolic bond between Venizelos and the refugees, and as we have also seen, this bond waned throughout the interwar period (though it never went out) on various pretexts related more to their present than to the pre- 1923 era. However, certainly, it cannot be denied that both Venizelos and the Liberals, especially in contrast to the P.P., constituted both, for the refugees, a symbolic leadership and their only channel for integration. Particularly in terms of political integration, the tiny refugee 'elite' was immediately absorbed by the Liberal party:

One can hardly over-emphasize the role of Venizelism as an agent for the integration of the refugees in the Greek political system. Both on the local and the national level, they were immediately recognized as an integral and even privileged part of the Venizelist camp, and of the L.P. in particular, entitled to representation on party tickets and in both local and national government.

Refugee associations became an integral part of the web of Venizelist partisan

organizations. Initially excluded from native patron-client networks, the refugees rapidly developed their own networks or political machines, headed by refugee or pro- refugee politicians and enjoying access to top Venizelist leaders, including Venizelos himself. Therefore, the refugees justifiably saw the Venizelist Republic as 'their' regime, and the L.P. in particular as 'their' party. (Mavrogordatos, p. 202).

This last observation has been countered by other researchers, who point out that in the 1928 elections, over 60% of the natives also voted the Liberals, and that it is inaccurate to consider the Liberal party the 'refugees' party'. The refugee associations and organizations, which, as stated, are beyond count, and the role played by refugee politicians, or *prosfygopateres*, refugee fathers, remains highly debated. Some researchers refer to them as effective and beneficial organizations which aided the refugees, and to the refugee fathers as having greatly supported the refugee populations. Others have condemned both as trapping the refugees in the political position of dependence upon the government, which employed clientalist approaches, through the refugee organizations and refugee fathers, to ensure the refugee vote. Similarly, the refugee organizations have been accused of being unsuccessful, usually, when appealing to the government with the refugees' demands- in general, the usefulness of refugee organizations or associations seems to have been comparatively limited. In effect, they helped maintain the Liberals' control over the refugees:

the networks of clientalist relation were maintained and perpetuated in time, because the short-term and long-term benefits which it afforded the urban political system of power of the particular period overshadowed possible long-term consequences. Besides, one of the primary factors which contributed to the Venizelists' remaining in power throughout the interwar period was exactly

this state of political patronage which it had in various ways imposed upon the refugee population. (Gikas, p.291).

Though, in practical terms, to a large extent, such condemnations against the refugee fathers, refugee organizations, and the Liberals' use of them as a political tool, are not inaccurate, such condemnations- usually originating from the leftist parties- fail to appreciate that the creation of these organizations and the support of refugee fathers was reflective of more than simply the refugees' surrender to Venizelist exploitation or clientalist politics. Rather, it was a reflection of the social and communal traditions they were accustomed to; within the Ottoman Empire, "the millet system (...) provided them with the opportunity to exercise personal initiative and responsibility in the affairs of their communities" (Giannuli, p.277). The initiatives taken towards self- organization by the refugees, through refugee organizations, and the faith placed in prominent refugee figures well-known in the homeland, were characteristic of their general attempt to transplant the "social proto-nuclei" (Giannuli, p.278) of their homeland communities to their new home. It is most interesting to note the example of Leon Iasonidis, MP for the Liberals and refugee from Trebizond, who had belonged, before 1922, to the short-lived National Assembly of the Independent state of Pontos.

As we have seen, and will see in further detail again, as time progressed, the refugees' support of the Liberals waned, as did the bond between Venizelos and the refugee population. In addition, refugee partisan organizations increasingly had to compete with the labour unions, whose members swelled with refugees throughout the period. However, despite the refugee 'separatism' which developed throughout the period, the Liberals maintained their majority with the refugees, right up to the 1936 elections. There can be no denying that the Liberal party was the most supported and identified with by the refugees throughout the interwar years.

In contrast, the refugees' relation to the P.P., from the very first years of the interwar period, was one of distrust, animosity, and exclusion. As with the Liberals, the refugees' relations with the P.P. had been sealed before 1922. The antivenizelists' 'gradualist' approach towards irredentism, their indifference towards the Greeks of Anatolia, the chronic distaste and prejudice of Greeks from the Greek Kingdom toward those in the Ottoman Empire (and other countries), and their stubborn lack of initiative in the face of these populations' sufferings, particularly throughout WW1, caused the Anatolian Greeks very early on to reject them in favour of the Liberals. These animosities too came to a head after the 1920 elections, and the P.P.'s stance during the Catastrophe. Apart from being seen as responsible for the Catastrophe itself, which on its own was enough to engender hatred towards the King and the antivenizelists, it soon circulated that the antivenizelist government of the time had not only failed to protect and evacuate the refugees, but had attempted to actively discourage their evacuation; one may recall the famous exchange between young Georgios Papandreou and governor of Smyrna Aristides Stergiades, on the eve of the city's destruction, when Papandreou inquired why the people were not being instructed to evacuate, and Stergiades famously replied, "Better that they stay here and be slaughtered by Kemal because, if they go to Athens, they will overthrow everything" (Mavrogordatos, p. 182).

Thus, by 1923 already, the refugees' and antivenizelists' mutual animosity was firmly established. As we have seen, the consequent political line towards the refugees from the P.P., which included voices demanding their segregation to separate voting colleges and their exclusion from the Greek political scene, were owing to the refugees' furious rejection of the monarchy and their forceful demand that the Republic be imposed, without even a plebiscite. The fact that, as we have seen, the refugees tipped the electoral balance decidedly in the Liberals' favour and, as far as the P.P. was concerned, were the key agents, with the military, who imposed the 'illegal' Republic, contributed to the P.P. and their supporters perceiving

them as an 'alien' body, unsuitable and undesirable arbiters of the country's fate. Hence, as we have seen, not only did they suggest the electoral segregation of the refugees, but excluded them completely from P.P. party ranks and, until 1932, did not address their needs anywhere in their party platforms. Minor exceptions to this included the more moderate P.P. leadership, such as Tsaldaris, however, he was increasingly drowned out almost completely by the more extreme and vocal members of the party and the faction. As late as 1936, the statement of one antivenizelist in the newspaper 'Elliniko Mellon' is most revealing, requesting:

“the total electoral decentralization of the refugees, so that they will elect refugee parliament members.....and not alter the natives' electoral results. We duly defend the natives and do not attack the refugees, who, when they have become equal to us regarding the military and taxation, may then vote for the Antichrist forever after." The 'Antichrist', is none other, of course, than Venizelos! (Gikas, p. 315).

It is difficult, in the examination of the refugees in the interwar period, to discern where the political causes for social conflict end and where the social conflicts which influence political loyalties begin. The refugees' and antivenizelists mutual animosity was as much political as it was social, and developed into one of the biggest and most significant cleavages of the time; that being, the natives vs. the refugees. The mutual shock between the natives and refugees upon first contact with each other cannot be overstated. The peculiar Greek ideal espoused by the antivenizelists, as it developed over time, was one of order, harmony, tradition, conservatism, bourgeois respectability, purism, etc. The refugees represented the exact opposite- chaos, noise, poverty, disorder, the destruction of established balances and traditions, the seizure of their homes, sensual and boisterous temperaments, ethically loose women. The natives perceived the refugees as totally, bafflingly alien, and thus as a threat- partly because they felt their established social order to be in danger, and partly

due to the practical implications of having to share the political and professional spheres of the country with them. As has been seen, the refugees proved apt competitors in business, either as entrepreneurs or (more often) as small-time shop- owners and workers- the nascent Greek labour movement often accused factory owners and the state of using refugees to break workers' strikes. On a broader level, the natives, as stated, themselves destitute, felt that the refugees were a drain on national resources; despite the fact that, according to estimates, the refugees ultimately gave more to the state than they received, nonetheless they were perceived as leeches by the native population, which famously declared on numerous occasions that it could not continue to house and feed and support these wretched refugees forever. To put it quite bluntly, the natives perceived the refugees as social and political pariahs, and their approach to them, researchers have said, bordered on racism.

The refugees, for the natives, were associated with filth, high concentrations of people, disease, shanty towns which threatened the harmonious flow of daily life in urban centers, poverty, prostitution and loose morals, leftists and all sorts of marginal, radical, suspect agents, crime, rebetiko music (which in later years Metaxas duly censored) and all the chaotic, Bacchalic elements one could muster;

Referring to the cultural differences between natives and refugees, one inhabitant of Kokkinia noted: "The behaviour of the refugee element was very different from that of the native element. It was more lyrical, more open, more social.....the refugee home, however poor it might have been, was always hospitable.....when someone worked as an employee somewhere in Athens or Piraeus, especially the woman, what with the mentality of the time, avoided saying, when asked, that they lived in Kokkinia. Because the word Kokkinia was synonymous with crooks, cut-throats, hobos, the unethical; the women were very gullible concerning their modesty. The joy and hospitality which

they showed strangers was wrongly interpreted, as carrying sexual undertones. The native could not understand the expression (...) of religious feeling, especially during Christmas, or Easter..." On the same topic, another refugee noted: "The natives saw new things, which they were ignorant of, as the way of life of the poor people here was somewhat closed, isolated, untrusting (.....) diametrically opposite." (Gikas, p. 315).

The questionability of their 'Greekness' was also an issue of heated debate, and affected both how the refugees were perceived and how they came to perceive themselves. With their linguistic peculiarities, speaking odd, incomprehensible dialects of Greek, even Turkish, their strange customs, alien outfits, bizarre music and rich, unfamiliar cuisine, the refugees, for the most part, resembled their fellow Greeks very little, and must truly have seemed to them to be coming from another world. Perhaps it was in part in reaction to this that we see the rise of regional stereotypes amongst the refugees, as a peculiar, joint assertion of their origins, and their thoroughly Greek character. In addition, this may have contributed, as we will see again further, to the rise of nationalism amongst them. These were all reactions to native accusations of their 'un-Greekness', which went as far as to involve slurs against the refugees, such as 'tourkosporoi' (sperm of Turks), 'giaourtovaptismenoi', 'baptized in yogurt' (a clear reference to the large quantities of yogurt used in Anatolian recipes), 'oglokratia', the 'oligrachy of the 'oglou', (a reference to the refugees last names, many of which ended in 'oglu') and many other similar terms all aimed at denying the refugees' Greekness.

In contrast to this, "it must be pointed out that the evidence of frequent discrimination against refugees should not be interpreted as a uniform pattern of native response. A significant number (...) express their gratitude for the warm welcome and support they received on arrival to Greece" (Giannuli, p.279). As Pentzopoulos states, when the refugees arrived in the country, "morally broken and psychologically traumatized, the indigenous

population deeply sympathized with them, for they knew that the homeless victims were the libation to the altar of the Great Idea” (p. 201). Despite, however, the compassion of a proportion of the native population, it appears that in areas with particularly high concentrations of refugees, animosity and conflict prevailed to such an extent as to overwhelm more sympathetic approaches.

As we have seen before, the entire interwar period was very heavily ladled with symbolism and emotion, including the political sphere, more so than the actual, practical policies and problems of the time merited. This explosive relation between Venizelist refugees and antivenizelist natives seems disproportionate to the party line of the more moderate heads of either leading party (with the exception at times of Venizelos himself). Tsaldaris, as we have seen, as early as 1926, attempted to take the refugees into consideration in his economic and fiscal policies, wishing to relieve them of heavy taxation. He also proposed measures to support small landowning refugee peasants. By 1932, when the issue of the regime no longer divided refugees and the republican heads of the P.P. and the party included more measures addressing the refugees in their pre-electoral platform, refugees were included in P.P. voting ballots. The extreme prejudice and mutual loathing which thus characterized refugee-native relations must not be seen as a reflection of the political reality but as a social phenomenon, in part derived from and in part influencing the political arena, and the histrionic tones of the more extreme members of each party and faction, which were unfortunately given credibility whenever the many cleavages and polarities in the country reached their peak.

In their majority, the Pontos refugees fell into this category, that is, staunch supporters of the Liberals. In the elections of 1923, in Salonica alone, included on the Liberals' ballots were five Pontians, including three Asia Minor Pontians (Georgios Kosmides, Theodoros Andreadis, and Leonidas Iasonides) and two Caucasians (Dimitris Efthimiades and Ioannis

Pasalides.) Electoral results throughout the interwar period show that in Piraeus, where the majority of Pontos refugees settled in the Athens- Piraeus urban center, the Liberals maintained their majority throughout the period, despite the spread of radicalism, and in Salonica, particularly in settlements made up in their majority of Pontos refugees (such as Agia Triada, Kalamaria and Toumba), the Liberals too maintained a majority, even despite the rise there as well of communism as well as fascism. Even among the Caucasian and Turcophone western Pontos refugees in the rural areas of Macedonia and Thrace, and in such cities as Drama and Kilkis, the Liberals managed despite the increased influence of KKE supporters amongst the Caucasian and south Russian refugees to win the support of the majority of those refugees. In short, the Pontians were supporters and MPs of the Liberals, for all the reasons heretofore mentioned, common to all the refugees.

CHAPTER 3

THE DOMINANT POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES, PARTY AFFILIATIONS AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR OF THE PONTOS REFUGEES

3.1 ETHNIC AND REGIONAL TRAITS AND IDENTITY OF THE PONTOS REFUGEES AND THEIR EFFECT UPON THE PONTOS REFUGEES' POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS

In this last chapter, we will proceed to explore the political behaviors and affiliations of the Pontos refugees, which as stated deviated from the mainstream Venizelism of the majority. As we will see, these alternative political orientations spanned both ends of the political spectrum, including both communist and fascist parties. However, before so proceeding, it is necessary first to explore, as succinctly as possible, the dominant ethnic and regional traits among the Pontians, and how these affected, if they did, the Pontians' political orientations and behavior.

The difficulties in examining such ethnic and regional traits are manifold, but arise mainly from the fact that, as we have seen, the Pontians were not a homogenous group. Though gradually the term 'Pontian' came to refer to all refugees from Asia Minor Pontos and, eventually, the Caucasus and south Russia, initially, the Pontians maintained distinct identities and historical traditions particular to their cities, towns, villages, and immediate community. Thus, a thorough and accurate examination of the Pontians' ethnic or regional characteristics would effectively require the examination of the particular history and historical tradition of each of these communities. The Pontians' firm adherence to these traditions, as the cornerstones of their identity, was singular, again, even among the refugees. Ultimately, it is the slow eclipse of the subtler variations of particular regional traits and historical traditions of the Pontian communities, within the context of the Greek nation- state, which makes reference to general 'Pontic' regional traits less inaccurate.

Nonetheless, as seen in accounts given as early as the interwar period, certain dominant traits which set the Pontians apart from their fellow refugees could be discerned. According to a description provided by Ladas,

Entering the Pontos, a district with its own individual note, we find, according as we go west or east, towards the coast or into the interior, the most dissimilar specimens, from the rough, heavy, and dull- witted type to the subtlest of Greeks. The mountainous provinces and the high plateau of the Pontos breed a race of men of austere morals, who have retained all the combative ardour and the warlike virtues of their ancestor, the mediaeval hero Digenis Akritas. The women are pleasing, gifted with courage and vigour, and work even harder in the fields than in their homes. The Pontians of these parts are regarded as the truest of the Hellenes. Their imposing height, the purity of their features and language, give proof of their descent. They speak a Greek rich in vowel

sounds, while classical expressions and Homeric phrases are common in their speech. The refugees from the Caucasus are closely related to them, but display different characteristics. The descendants of Pontians who emigrated into the Russian Caucasus during the 19th century, they are of two quite different origins. Those from the Kars district are industrious, energetic, and supple-minded; the rest come from the Chalka area (Tiflis) and are less civilized than the others. (p.647).

Another description is provided by Hirschon: “the Pontians, who spoke their archaic dialect and had a particular tradition in music, song and dance, were considered conservative, hard-working and proud (...) and were considered stubborn by nature” (Hirschon, p.74). Finally, Agtzides provides an interesting description, derived from inmates at the concentration camps at Akronauplia to which those charged with violating the Idionym Law of 1929 were interned: “the Pontians were called 'nation', due to the particularly intense regional character of their customs and dances, and particularly the Pontic dialect” (p. 313).

The descriptions provided above help to some extent to isolate some of the Pontians' dominant characteristics, as they manifested and prevailed within the Greek context. Among the refugees, though all exhibited strong regional characteristics and took pride in their particular regional traditions, the Pontians displayed the greatest degree of communal unity and the strongest sense of their unique identity. This was possibly made more acute by their particularly strong and singular tradition in music and dance, and the use of the Pontic dialect. Close family ties were connected to this; for all the refugees, and the Pontians in particular, the nuclear family and the immediate community were in a large part the foundation for identity, in combination with region and religion. Accordingly, the Pontians, and particularly the Turcophone Pontians, were extremely religious, as we will see again further down, even more so than other refugees.

Understandably, these differences among the Pontians and their fellow refugees were owing to the distinct historical tradition of the region of Pontos. The combined factors of its remote geographical position (far from the center of the empire, and thus often beyond the reach of the control of central authorities), its rough, mountainous terrain, and the constant conflict which prevailed in that area engendered in its inhabitants both endurance and remarkable devotion to what they considered the foundations of their unique identity, the community, the Orthodox faith, and the Byzantine tradition. It also, as many researchers have observed, maintained in them the 'war-like virtues', necessary for survival, which are evident as much in the existence of armed bands of bandits in the Pontos, which later formed an andartiko movement, as in their music and dances. Above all, despite the great zeal which they exhibited in the preservation of and adherence to their families, communities, traditions and faith, the Pontians as a whole were known to be very independent, headstrong people.

The Caucasians, as we have seen and will see again, though too of Pontic descent (the migrations from the Ottoman Empire to Russia of Pontic Greeks were continuous till 1922), having evolved, in some cases for generations in a political context and geographical region removed from and extremely different from the Asia Minor Pontians, exhibited characteristics which, as we have seen, are reflective more of Russian currents and influences than those of the Ottoman Empire; more to the point, the differences in the Caucasian and south Russian Pontians' historical experiences and tradition seem to have encouraged characteristics in them, which the circumstances of Asia Minor Pontos did not allow their compatriots the margins for. Like their Pontian compatriots in Asia Minor, the Caucasians and south Russian Pontians were extremely family oriented and community oriented, and maintained their strong adherence to their singular traditions and cultural characteristics. Despite efforts made towards their assimilation by the Russian authorities, such as the changing of names to sound more Russian, and imposition of the Russian language, the Caucasians and south Russians

resisted these efforts and maintained their unique sense of identity. In contrast, however, to the Asia Minor Pontians, they were accustomed, as we have seen, to greater degrees of administrative autonomy and lived more peacefully in multi-ethnic, semi-assimilated communities. Finally, as opposed to the Asia Minor Pontians, and indeed, all refugees from Turkey, the Caucasians, active participants in Russian developments, had come into contact with ideas such as class struggle and class consciousness, before their arrival to Greece. It is most important to note that the Caucasians' leftist convictions, and the merging of these convictions with their particular ethnic-regional traits, predated their becoming refugees. Their leftism developed more naturally and organically than the refugees' in Greece of the interwar years, having been espoused within the circumstances and structures of the region out of which it grew, and was not the result of their consequent, abrupt refugee status and downward social mobility in Greece, though, as we have seen and will see again, their circumstances in Greece certainly encouraged their pre-existing leftist leanings. This rendered them both more adaptable to the Greek social and political reality, and by extension, more politically progressive than the other refugees, and more capable of understanding and evaluating the Greek political scene.

In terms of how these traits and traditions influenced the Pontian refugees' political behavior and choices, in some cases the influence was direct and evident, the result usually of the application of their pre-existing political orientations in the Greek context. Indeed, as has been often noted, it is strange that more refugees did not join other minor parties instead of the Liberals, seeing as their platforms were often more compatible with refugee sensibilities and the social status, should one forget the 'symbolic' bond which bound the refugees to Venizelos. The refugees' support of the Agrarian Party, particularly the Caucasians', was indicative of and owing to its compatibility with many of their pre-existing political convictions, community structures and sensibilities, the result both of their historical and

geographic circumstances in their homelands and the regional traits which had accompanied them. Similarly, refugee support of the KKE too indicated that certain key Pontic traits- such as strong community feeling and solidarity within the community- were not incompatible with either the party or communist ideology, but rather came to work in its favour. The same proved true of religion:

the fact that they supported the Communist Party and at the same time remained devoted to religion seems to create a contradiction, which too, can be explained (...) the dogma of equality which was clearly expressed in the Communist Party's program resonated strongly with these bereft and disappointed people (...) as the same ideals pervaded the Christian dogma. (Hirschon, p.34).

In other cases, however, regional-ethnic traits, for all the refugees, had an indirect effect on their political choices, the result of their social effects within the nation- state context and the refugees' efforts towards integration in Greece. As we have seen, the Pontians maintained their particularly strong sense of unique regional identity, conspicuous even among the other refugees. This was maintained, as we have seen, mainly through their cultural traditions, in music, dance, and theatre, the Pontic dialect, (or the Turkish language), and their strong community feeling. They transplanted and maintained, for a long time after their arrival, the 'social proto-nuclei' of their communities in their homelands, particularly the Turcophone Pontians. This was maintained despite the fact that "there were Pontians scattered throughout Greece. More than any other special cultural attribute, the Pontian dialect was harmed by this dispersal of the population" (Vergeti, p.387). These particularly vivid cultural traits, however, while serving to maintain a sense of unity and identity among the Pontians, served to divide them from the natives, even more than other refugees: "in the case of Pontic Greeks, cultural attributes were more conspicuous than those of other Asia Minor groups (...)

native- born Greeks called them ‘a-ooti’ from the pronoun ‘ootos’ which is pronounced ‘a-ootos’ in the Pontian dialect” (Vergeti, p. 385). In other words, given the distaste with which the natives received the varied and unfamiliar refugee cultural and regional characteristics, the Pontians found themselves more common targets of native prejudice than most other refugees. This was most true of the Turcophone Pontians, in which case the Turkish language served both to unify the Turcophone communities, and to further divide them from the natives and all other refugees.

Ultimately, the Pontians’ and all the refugees’ ethnic and regional traits, within Greece, came to demarcate their cultural ‘otherness’ as opposed to the natives, and thus for the most part operated politically and socially as forces of exclusion. Accordingly, “many first generation Ottoman Greeks never gained a new identity. In their new country they were called ‘refugees’ and they themselves accepted the term as denoting their misplacement in mainland Greece” (Giannuli, p.284). As Penztopoulos stated, referring to what he deemed the ‘refugee consciousness’, “The persons who arrived in Greece were aware of their status as displaced persons (...) this awareness created in turn a psychological attitude, a manner of behavior, a particular mentality characterized by an array of antithetical forces” (p.201). Continuing, he states that

chronologically speaking, the “refugee consciousness” passed through three phases (...) during the first phase (...) having no permanent homes, lacking the means to support themselves, the immigrants deeply and genuinely felt their refugee status (...) after a few years, the psychologically stronger and more energetic refugees (...) adjusted to their new environment and accepted their transplantation to Greece. (p. 202).

It is most interesting to note his description of the ‘first phase’, particularly in comparison to statements made by several refugees themselves: “They considered themselves an exiled people (...) their passive attitude towards life, their bewilderment at the fatal blow that had befallen them, their mourning for the past and uncertainty about the future were sincere and understandable” (p.201). This description is strikingly similar to the one given by a refugee in 1928, published in ‘The Radical’:

It is known, that we refugees, in the first years of our arrival, imbued with the opium of fatalism and bringing with us as our only provision our religious-social superstitions and unbridled adoration for charismatic persona, ruins, thus, as we were, faced with the immediate needs for our preservation were strangers towards the labor movement and often persecutors and enemies! (...) But these last two years, the refugees, proletariats through and through, under the weight of reality entered the labor unions en masse and played a pivotal role. (Gikas, p.331).

The account given above seems to correspond to Pentzopoulos’ ‘phases’ of the refugee consciousness, or identity- the fact that, after a point, the evolution of the refugee consciousness, or perhaps the progression of the refugee consciousness, operates parallel to their radicalization, confirms what we will see again below- that the subsiding of the ‘refugee’ consciousness or identity, was analogous to the rise of class consciousness and identity, indicating increased assimilation of the refugees in the structures of the Greek state. As we have seen, and will see again further down, the leftists among both natives and refugees were the first to advocate unity between the two, on the basis of common class struggle, and against the common foe of capitalist exploiters in the country, refugees and natives. In addition, communism spread among the refugees on account of practical factors relating exclusively to their present. The ethnic- regional identity and consciousness of the refugees subsided, or

rather, instead of operate as a divisive force, as in previous years, came to combine with their class-consciousness, so that they had common ground to unite with rather than clash with fellow working-class natives. If Venizelism operated, in the first years of the refugees' arrival, as the 'principle vehicle towards integration' of these populations, in consequent years, particularly following their 1928-1932 term, the Idionym Law, and the Ankara Convention, the Liberals and Venizelists demonstrated that they had failed as such, were not successful in representing or addressing the refugees' practical needs and demands. Thus, slowly, the left, and the KKE, came to replace the Liberals as the 'vehicle' towards social and political integration, addressing the refugees as members of socio-economic classes common among refugees and natives, rather than the cultural or ethnic 'other' within Greek society. Again, it is in this shift, the subsiding of the ethnic- regional factor as the determinant of identity and the rise of the socio-economic factor as the determinant of identity, that one can measure the deeper integration of the refugees in the Greek state's socio-political context.

For the first decade, at least, after their arrival, however, and while refugee radicalism was not particularly widespread, the refugee identity, which characterized the first generation of refugees and came to encompass the refugees' ethnic and regional identity and traits as well, served, socially and politically, both to marginalize the refugees and, as communities, to sustain them. The effects of this increased social marginalization, and the consequent issue of the refugees' 'un-Greekness', undoubtedly had some influence, as we will see, on some Pontians' turn to nationalism and the extreme right, as a reaction.

One may speculate that certain ethnic and regional traits among the Pontians- particularly the Asia Minor Pontians- too contributed to and precipitated the rise of nationalism among them. As we will see, such traits include the Pontians' particularly intense regional identity, their conservatism, their respect for bourgeois values (the triptych 'homeland, religion, family', which serves till today to denote conservative, bourgeois

values), etc. It is certain that these traits were not incompatible with nationalism, and in some cases did operate as the basis for the refugees' turn towards nationalism. However, as we will see, on closer examination, these traits seem to have been of secondary importance in the refugees' nationalist leanings; more powerful factors were the economic competition which prevailed between non-Greek natives and refugees, the intense prejudice of the native Greek population toward the refugees, the refugees' wretched circumstances, and the Liberals' own nationalist, fascist, and anti-Semitic leanings as the interwar period progressed. It is important to remember that nationalist tendencies among the Pontian refugees were not, as we will see, a deviation from their support of the Liberals; as Mavrogordatos states, "the intense nationalism which characterizes the recently unredeemed Greeks of the New Countries, natives and refugees, constitutes an unbreakable bond with Venizelism" (Marantzides, p.66). In other words, it appears that nationalist tendencies in the Pontians were not inevitable, "cannot be attributed only or mainly to a pre-existing ethnic culture that supposedly led automatically to a certain type of political behavior" (Marantzides, p.76), but manifested as such only within the Greek nation-state context and its attendant social and ethnic balances. By extension, one may say that nationalist and fascist tendencies in the Pontians were not the product of elements within the Pontic identity, but the refugee Pontic identity, within the context of the Greek nation state. In the paradoxical limbo all the refugees found themselves in, in terms of their refugee identity and national identity, nationalism became a defensive reaction to the natives' exclusion of the refugees from the 'pure' Greek national identity, and a part of their effort both to maintain their regional identity, by incorporating it in their broader Greek national identity, and also by so doing to facilitate their own acceptance of Greece as their homeland. From this perspective, nationalism among the Pontian refugees can be viewed as a negative side-effect of their efforts toward assimilation in Greece. This is confirmed by two additional observations- firstly, a considerable proportion of nationalist

supporters among the refugees were also of Cappadocean descent, which boasted its own distinct regional identity quite different from that of the Pontians'. As the only other ethnic-regional group among the refugees which too included a large proportion of Turkish-speakers, and was thus, again, more vulnerable for that reason to native prejudice, the Cappadoceans too reacted to this discrimination with a turn to nationalism. Secondly, the nationalists' activities were condemned by a number of other Pontian refugees who themselves harbored a very strong sense of Pontic ethnic-regional identity, including high-standing Liberals. These individuals, however, were economically sufficiently well-off not to have been included in the refugees' general downward social mobility; spared the wretched circumstances, and consequent misery and frustration of other refugees, they were not subject to the same prejudice nor social marginalization the majority of the refugees were, and thus were less susceptible to, and did not resort to, political extremism.

3.2 NATIONALISM AND NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PONTOS REFUGEES

As we have seen, nationalism has been noted amongst various Pontos refugee settlements in the New Lands, either as supporters of the Liberals or the National Radical Party. Salonica in particular was the center of nationalist organizations and unions. The causes for this have to a point already been explored- the joint effects of native prejudice and the presence- and competition- of non- Greek natives, who in rural areas fought the refugees over exchangeable properties and redistributed lands, and in Salonica in particular, fought over general economic and political dominance over the city. The arrival of the refugees had as powerful an impact upon the Jewish community as on the rest of the country, and as we've seen, the Jews' reaction to them mirrored those of the Antivenizelists; they were immediately perceived as a further threat to Jewish economic dominance in Salonica, already encroached upon by the Venizelists, with whom the refugees were immediately equated. It has been noted

often that the Muslim populations of Greece, as well as the Jews, were astounded by the refugees when they arrived and found them to be quite as alien as the Greek natives did, in many cases not even Greek-speaking. The natives did not fail to notice this juxtaposition of minorities and refugees, which was consequently used to the refugees' disadvantage: "the M.P. of Spetses Pericles Bourboulis would say in 1934 to the refugee M.P.s that the Jews of Salonica "are more Greek than you" (Agtzides, p. 232). Ultimately, relations between the refugees and Jews reflected the relations between refugees and natives at large, or more accurately, (with the exception of both the refugee and Jewish leftists,) Venizelists and Antivenizelists. As Mavrogordatos put it,

A key aspect in the overall cleavage between refugees and natives assumed, in the parts of the New Lands, the specific form of a bitter conflict between Greek refugees and non- Greek natives. It was a conflict over land between rural refugees and Slavo- Macedonians. It was a conflict over control of economic life in Thessaloniki between urban refugees and Jews. In this confrontation, which now involved vital interests of the Greek state and was heavily loaded with nationalist fervor, Antivenizelism essentially became the vehicle of native defensive reaction, as elsewhere. (p. 231).

The fact that, as we have seen, the majority of the refugees belonging to nationalist unions and organizations were of Pontic or even Cappadocean descent, confirms that, apart from the strong regional character of these populations, it was these two groups whose linguistic barriers were the greatest amongst the refugees (to which the Turcophone refugees at large belonged) making them more likely to suffer native prejudice.

It is stressed, by researchers, that the phenomenon of nationalism was owing in a large part to the circumstances of Salonica itself-

the particular development of organizations with these kinds of orientations in the city must not be considered accidental: a dynamic labour movement was active in this city, particularly tobacco workers, there existed the large Greek Jewish community, and a great mass of Greek refugees also settled there, facing various obstacles in (economic and cultural) adjustment. (Tsironis, p. 202).

About 86% of the Jews in Greece lived in Salonica- they consisted of two major groups: the first, the minority, could trace their ancestry back to the tiny and ancient Jewish community in Greece, (who, interestingly, differentiated themselves to a degree from the second group) and the second, were the Sephardic Jews who had fled from Spain in the 16th century. They maintained a strong ethnic identity and culture in Salonica, and continued to speak Ladino till the community dwindled in WW2. According to researchers, they constituted the single largest ethnic group in Salonica before the union of Macedonia to Greece, and dominated the economic and commercial life of the city. Like the refugees, though approached as a compact group, the Jews were also very heterogeneous, partly because “the Jewish community encompassed the entire spectrum of a fairly industrialized urban class structure, from bourgeois to proletarian and lumpenproletarian. Jewish bankers, industrialists, and merchants largely controlled the city’s economic life, while the majority of the workers was also Jewish” (Mavrogordatos, p. 254). Like the refugees, the Jews’ class differences would be reflected in their political affiliations.

The interwar period was of course not the first time the Jews had faced anti-Semitism; it first emerged following the union of Macedonia to Greece, in 1912, which had various other adverse effects for the Jews, mainly of an economic nature. In fact, observing the consequent fate of the Jewish community, one may see 1912 as the beginning of its end. In 1917, the Great Fire of Salonica destroyed the old center of the city, which consisted mainly of Jewish

neighborhoods and their offices and warehouses. Most of them moved to the city's surrounding suburbs, where (again) they were provided with miserable accommodation from the state. These would become the first Jewish ghettos to appear in Salonica since the Jews had first settled there. These ghettos consequently became centers of the labour movement and communism. It must be stated, that even as late as 1923, when the state had to take on the enormous task of refugee accommodation, victims of the Great Fire remained, both Jews and Greeks, in large numbers, also still waiting to be sufficiently accommodated.

As with the refugees, the Jews' political affiliations in a large part were a reflection of their economic circumstances and living standards. Accordingly, they mirrored, in their own way, the political and social currents of the time:

the profound class cleavage between the Jewish bourgeoisie and the Jewish proletariat was reflected in the extreme polarization between a conservative, bourgeois, religious and Zionist Right, and a distinctly working class socialist and communist Left, which had its strongholds in the Jewish suburbs. Between the two, a smaller party of Moderates was also distinctly bourgeois.

(Mavrogordatos, p. 255).

Concerning their political loyalties towards the Greek major parties, the Jews were, but for a tiny minority, definitely Antivenizelist. The reasons for this should be comparatively obvious. Despite the minor Venizelist parties' support of minority rights, the Liberals had bad relations with them, and as we have seen, reached the point of being openly hostile to them. In addition, like the refugees, the Liberals represented an economic threat to the established economic hegemony the Jews had heretofore enjoyed in Salonica. The Liberals' policies of assimilation, particularly in Macedonia and Thrace, confirm its general approach towards minorities, one which aimed either for total assimilation or the minorities' departure. With the

exception of the Moderates, who were advocates of assimilation, this approach was highly resented by Salonica Jews. In their majority (just over 50%), the Salonica Jews were Zionists. This loyalty to an as-yet nonexistent Jewish state must be seen not only as the expression of general Jewish desire for a homeland, but also as a reaction against the political and economic hegemony of Venizelism. It must be stated, that the Jews sided with the Antivenizelists during WW1, and their contribution to the Antivenizelist faction helped in large part to tip the balance in their favour, resulting in the defeat of the Liberals in the crucial 1920 elections and the consequent Asia Minor disaster. It was in reaction to this that, in 1923, the Venizelists established separate electoral colleges for the Jewish population.

Naturally, the Antivenizelists' approach to the Jewish community and the minorities at large was one which sought to maximize on whatever losses Venizelists sustained; thus, they attempted to absorb minority votes. One notes the analogous incompatibility of the Antivenizelists' vision of Greece and their own nationalist overtones with minority identity and sympathies, however, it appears that the overriding factor which united them was their opposition to Venizelism. In addition, one observes that, in fact, the peculiar national visions espoused by Zionists and Antivenizelists, though referring to different nations, actually resembled each other more, in their conservative outlook, than the Zionists and the Venizelists. Accordingly, the large Zionist percentage of the Jewish population politically supported the Antivenizelists, as opposed to the few Venizelist Moderates.

Unlike Jewish support for Antivenizelism which in many ways was merely a reaction to the Liberals, the Jews' support of the Left was large, dynamic, and had firm foundations. As early as 1909, the Jewish workers had been organized in unions and subsequently played a large part in the creation of the KKE. Accordingly, the KKE was the only party of the interwar period which bestowed significant importance to minority issues and minority rights, and adopted a clear policy towards them. As one can see from the 1926 electoral results in

Salonica, “38% of the Jewish electoral body voted for the coalition of the United Front and consequently the Jewish voters constituted 59% of that party’s electoral strength” (Dodos, p. 166). Even more revealing are the percentages in the various Jewish areas: in the Jewish city center, the ‘United Front’ (KKE) received 35.6%, whereas the ‘Jewish Political Union’, the one and only Jewish party ever to run in Greek elections, received 60,9%. The Liberals received 0.4 %, and the P.P. 0.3%. However, in the Jewish area of Agia Paraskevi, where living conditions were worse, the United Front received 63.3%, whereas the J.P.U. received 33.6% (Liberals and the P.P. received 0.1% and 0.3% respectively). In other areas dominated by the Jewish community, the United Front and the J.P.U. are more or less evenly matched. The low Jewish support of the P.P. was the result of those votes all turning to the J.P.U. - this confirms that Jewish support of Antivenizelism was really just a choice of the lesser of two evils. Provided a viable alternative, Jewish Antivenizelist support quickly vanished.

The roots of the conflict between (Jewish) natives and (Greek) refugees were economic, and directly linked to the needs and living circumstances of both. This can be seen in the first unions bearing nationalist characteristics and overtones which were created in Salonica, which were officially professional and labour unions. As we have seen, originally, the nascent Greek labour movement and workers’ unions were initially embraced by Venizelism, in an effort to keep them under government control. In this strain, in 1917 the Salonica Labour Center was founded, the largest and most significant syndicalist organization (a corresponding Labour Center of Athens was founded around the same time). In 1923, in accordance with the same philosophy, the National Labour Center of Salonica was founded, by members of ‘nationalist’ labour unions; this can be seen both in the Center’s alleged aims and in the character of the unions which belonged to it. A large number of them were comprised of refugees, and apart from protection and support of its members, its “articles of association placed as its aim the education of organized “nationalist” workers through the

appropriate lectures, gatherings, speeches, discussions, publications, etc., and their enlightenment regarding nationalism. It also aimed “to unify all the professional unions and the protection of these from all communist influence” (Tsironis, p. 182). It has been observed, that the Center’s anti-communist stance was so intense that political debates were forbidden, lest they open the door for the expression of pro- socialist or communist ideas.

Parallel to the creation of the Center, in 1925, another organization with clear nationalist tendencies emerged; in addition to nationalist tendencies, this organization also had a strong regional character, and was exclusively comprised of refugees. The National Labour and Professional Association of Pontians, founded at the Union of Pontians of Samsun and the Hinterland, aimed to support workers, professionals, and refugees of Pontic descent; this involved helping refugees find employment, the provision of suitable accommodation within the city of Salonica, and the nationalist education of its members. Judging national feeling and republican, bourgeois, national values to be at risk by the growing influence of the Left, the Association aimed to “rekindle” national feeling in its members, to promote republican ideals, and consolidate bourgeois values. Here, we see again, that nation, republicanism, and the bourgeois class (if not the Liberals) are equated, much like the Pontians’ regional identity was equated with Greek national identity.

The foundations set by these initial unions and associations were the basis, consequently, of the creation of other, supportive unions, whose nationalist and anti-communist character was taken to the extreme, even resulting in the creation of the only openly fascist party of the interwar period. Best known amongst these was the E.E.E., the ‘National Union ‘Greece’ (Ethniki Enosis ‘I Ellas’). Founded in 1927, its aims involved the support of members, economically and professionally. This involved the creation of a club for members, unemployment offices, economic support of members, especially those who were unemployed, the promotion of goods and services produced or provided by members of the

union, and the increase of the unions' membership. In contrast to the union's aims, which are all of an economic and professional nature, its criteria for membership betrayed its ideological foundations: members were required to be of Greek nationality, Orthodox Christian, and over 18 years old:

The point which merits attention is the fact that eligible for membership were only those of Christian Orthodox faith and Greek citizens. That is, all citizens of other faiths or identifying with some other national or ethnic group were excluded. Of course, as we are examining Salonica, it is immediately understood that the group excluded from membership in the National Union was mainly the Jews of the city. This should not be a surprise, as, under economically precarious circumstances, intense competition had developed between Greek merchants and the local Jewish community. (Tsironis, p.187).

The Union's objective to promote goods and services produced or provided by its members confirms this, as did the 1926 address of the National Macedonian Organization to all Greeks, calling them to boy-cot Jewish goods and services. In addition, the Jews were equated with communism, due to the huge support it enjoyed in the Jewish ghetto-suburbs of the city; the emerging issue of an independent Macedonia and Thrace, promoted by the Comintern and accepted, however reluctantly, by the KKE, made the Jews the targets of anti-communist attacks as well anti-Semitism.

In 1929, Georgios Kosmides (of Asia Minor Pontic descent) became president of the Union; as we have seen, Kosmides was a Liberal, and in fact was amongst the first refugee M.P.s elected in 1923. Upon becoming president, one of Kosmides' first acts to call for an emergency General Meeting, on December 1st, 1929, at which changes were made to the Union's articles of association. In addition to mutual support of members in all ways, the

Union included as its duty the promotion and strengthening of national feeling, which it felt was threatened by the onslaught of communism; this was to be achieved by unity amongst them, public appearances en masse, and opposition, through legal means, towards leftist ideology, or any which threatened the Union's republican, nationalist, and bourgeois values.

Though, in terms of the Union's primary, economic aims, these changes were not particularly significant, yet it appears that they had a powerful effect upon it, giving it clear and articulated ideological and political orientation. As we have seen, initially the E.E.E. did not openly align itself with any political faction or ideology- following 1929, it openly began to wage war against all those who threatened the values and convictions of its members. In this, it was greatly aided by the newspaper 'Macedonia', which regularly published severely anti-Semitic articles and propaganda and played a huge role in enhancing anti- Semitic feeling in Salonica. In addition, by 1929, the E.E.E. had grown- in total, it had 12 offices all over the country, and 3.000 members, which soon swelled to 27 offices, with 7.000 members, 3.000 of which were in Salonica. As can be imagined, it was almost completely constituted of refugees; particularly in Salonica, its staunchest supporters were in the settlements of Kalamaria and Toumba, both of which, as we have seen, in their staggering majority consisted of Pontos refugees. Thus, though unofficially, the E.E.E. had a strong regional character as well, distinctly Pontic.

Consequently, inter-communal conflict heightened in Salonica. On June 29th, 1931, the Campbell Fire incident occurred, when around 1000 to 2000 E.E.E. members from Sedes, Toumba, and Kalamaria attacked and set fire to the Jewish settlement Campbell, which "according to a document sent by the Jewish Community of Salonica to the mayor of the city, a few months before the events in June, (...) 'was inhabited by 225 of the poorest Jewish families and deserving of every sympathy (...) as its inhabitants were in miserable circumstances'" (Tsironis, p. 192). Allegedly, E.E.E. members attacked the settlement

because the Jewish athletic organization of the city, Maccabi, had reportedly agreed to the creation of an independent Macedonia at a meeting of the Macedonian Committee in Sofia, in 1930.

On August 22nd, 1931, those held responsible for the Campbell Fire- which included Kosmides, the E.E.E.'s secretary Nikolaos Fardis, as well as the editor of 'Macedonia'- were put on trial. Of the refugees which had participated, almost all were Pontians, of Toumba and Kalamaria; it is worth it to note, that especial blame was placed upon the refugees of Kalamaria, as it was observed that they had the most to gain, in terms of expanding their own settlement, from the burning of Campbell. Ultimately, though all those on trial were ultimately acquitted, opinions in parliament concerning the E.E.E. and its' activities were divided. The strongest attack against the E.E.E. came from Papanastasiou, who fiercely denounced them as nothing but gangs, taking the law into their own hands, and accused the Liberals of using them as a political weapon. This was confirmed, not only by the general distrust and animosity which existed between the Liberals and all minorities, especially the Jews, but also by the stance held by the Liberals on the issue- not only did they defend the E.E.E.'s aims and 'values', but appeared to be disposed to simply forget about the whole Campbell episode. Notably, Leonidas Iasonides also condemned the E.E.E.

Following the Campbell Fire, E.E.E. membership rose significantly, in all areas of the country. In an attempt to mimic the march on Rome of Mussolini in 1922, who Kosmides apparently admired, in 1933, around 3000 members, including the students and youth group, travelled to Athens, and marched through its streets to the statue of the Unknown Soldier to pay their respects. Most notably, the march was accompanied by the Athens Municipality marching band, and members of the government and parliament participated. Fascist slogans were openly expressed.

Anti-Semitism reached its peak not long after, almost immediately prior to the assassination attempt on Venizelos, triggered by the municipal elections in Salonica, at which it was proposed that the Jews cease to be segregated to separate electoral colleges. As we have seen, Venizelos and the Liberals feared they would lose their majority (particularly given their increased unpopularity amongst the Jewish population after the Campbell fires), and thus spurned the party's Salonica members and offices, with the support of the E.E.E., to commence another rabid anti-Semitic campaign. Refugees once again played a leading role in this, now encouraged openly by Venizelos. However, following the elections, the Liberals' victory and the withdrawal of the proposal to abolish the Jews' separate electoral colleges, E.E.E. popularity began to wane. Plastiras' failed coup in 1933 led to fragmentation within the Union's leadership, resulting in the defection of some of its key components, and Kosmides' proceeding to create the National Socialist Party, *Ethniki Enosis Ellas*. The party managed to attract very little support, and effectively waned until it was outlawed by Metaxas.

The reasons behind the E.E.E. Party's unpopularity, despite the Union's large membership, likely lie in the fact that, on a political level, the refugees were far too attached to Venizelism, republicanism, and the Liberals to turn to the E.E.E.: "the staggering majority of the refugees was not disposed to let go of their pre-existing party loyalties and adopt the nationalist-socialist experiments of the new political formation. For that reason, they immediately turned their backs on any attempt to gain it electoral support" (Tsironis, p. 199).

In closing, it is necessary to note that what is most revealing concerning the rise of the E.E.E. and its ideological foundations is timing. The years during which E.E.E. activity and anti-Semitic, nationalist, and even fascist tendencies were at their peak, coincide, as we have seen, with the increasingly extreme and fascist influences emerging both in the P.P. and the Liberals. Thus, the spread of such ideas and tendencies among the refugees who joined or

participated in the E.E.E. may be interpreted in part as a reflection of the times, and anti-Semitic, nationalist leanings not as a deviation from Venizelism but an extreme manifestation of it, exacerbated by Venizelos himself. This is confirmed by the similarly militant support which Venizelos and Plastiras received from the Turcophone western Pontos refugee populations, which participated in the coups of 1933 and 1935. In addition, it was in these years that the KKE had begun to attract notable support, particularly from refugees. Thus, the rise of fascist tendencies may be considered a parallel reaction to this, indicating that the country was steadily being pulled towards extremes on both ends of the political spectrum. This is confirmed by the rise in support of the National Radical Party at around the same time, particularly in areas in the New Lands where high concentrations of Pontos refugees were settled (those, in other words, who were immediately impacted by the KKE's support of the creation of independent Macedonia and Thrace) and where refugee support of the KKE (among the Caucasians and south Russians) was highest.

3.3 COMMUNISM, THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE PONTOS REFUGEES

As we have seen, the possibility of refugee radicalization and defection to extreme leftist parties- particularly the KKE- was most feared by the two major factions, their supporters, and the authorities in general. As we have also seen, this was not an unfounded fear, as the refugees' circumstances and their professions- in their majority either labour or agriculture- were such as could easily result in their radicalization. However, as we have also noted in passing, the KKE (Communist Party of Greece) did not initially have great success winning over the refugees, in their majority. This has been attributed to a number of factors, such as sectarian interparty divisions and clashes, which were to cripple its progress and growth for the whole of the period, and the party's tendency to adopt unquestioningly the decrees of the Communist International, which were often incompatible with or completely irrelevant to Greek reality.

Despite the fact that a minority amongst the refugees supported or joined SEKE (later the KKE), this minority increasingly became the majority within the party, particularly as the interwar period progressed, and constituted a large part of its central committee. Amongst the refugees of KKE, the majority were Pontos refugees, either from the Caucasus or more often from south Russia. As we have noted, in contrast to the Asia Minor Pontos refugees, the Caucasian and south Russian Pontians had been exposed to leftist and communist ideas and had espoused such political ideologies before their arrival to Greece; Caucasian and south Russian Greeks had been politically active in Russia, and had participated as much in the December Menshevik revolution of 1917, as in the October Bolshevik revolution:

the elder amongst them had already served in the Russian Army, and some of them had participated in the 1905 revolution, and were influenced by the ideological currents of Russia (.....) amongst the Greeks of the Caucasus throughout the pre-revolutionary period there were structured groups of socialist revolutionaries, Bolshevik and Menshevik. (Athanasidiades- Mixailides, p.47).

The Caucasian and south Russian Pontians thus did not constitute an ideologically homogenous group in themselves either; their political orientations ranged from republicans (Liberals) to socialist- democrats to extreme communists:

The activities and influence of the socialists on the one hand, such as Ioannis Pasaides- who had been forced, as a Menshevik, to flee the Caucasus after the Bolsheviks' victory- and the rising infiltration of KKE by the Caucasian refugees on the other, mainly through the Pontian 'KUTVides', probably created one of the first political clashes between bolsheviks and mensheviks, within the group of Greek refugees from the Caucasus. (Agtzides, p. 310).

Consequently, the majority of the Caucasians, particularly in the first decade of the interwar period, supported (in their majority) the Liberals (Pasalides himself ran as an independent MP for the Liberals) the Agrarian Party (most notable member of which was Kostas Gavrilides, another Caucasian refugee) or the Farmer- Labour Party. The Caucasian and south Russian KKE members, as stated, were in their majority Stalinists, graduates of the infamous Communist University of Toilers of the East, or KUTV; founded in Moscow in 1921 by the Comintern, its purpose was to train communists who consequently went abroad to recruit members in countries from the Balkans to China. Throughout the first decade of the interwar period, these 'Kutvides', almost all Pontians, were most active agents of the KKE and had managed by 1927 to establish cells all over Macedonia and particularly Kilkis. Examples which fall into this category include Andronikos Haitas, born in Soghum, who participated in the October Revolution and became a member of SEKE in 1923, Kostas Eutixiades (Korkozov), from south Russia, who also joined the October revolution and was sent to Greece by the Comintern after graduating from KUTV in 1925, and Nikos Zaxariades, a refugee from Eastern Thrace, who attended KUTV in 1923 and in 1924, upon arrival to Greece, became secretary for OKNE, the KKE youth group.

As we have seen, the foundations for the labour movement were to be found in Venizelos' first term in office. Within the context of the Liberals' modernizing and pro- labour stance, Venizelos aimed towards the drafting of protective labour laws, the creation of labour centers, the abolition of guilds and the creation of the GSEE (General Confederation of Greek Workers). The Labour Centers of Athens and Salonica were established during the Liberals' first term, with the government's initiative. Though relations between the government and the workers and farmers were strained, the labour movements' major split with Venizelism occurred throughout WW1 and the Asia Minor Catastrophe, during which time SEKE- the

Socialist Labour Party of Greece, precursor to the KKE- adopted the Comintern's anti-war position. Researchers have noted that around 1922, the labour movement had stagnated:

In 1923, an announcement by the Labour Center of Pireaus to all labour unions of the city was published in 'The Radical'; it noted that "the LC of Pireaus, after a brilliant stage (...) which constituted a significant period in the history of our land's labour movement, had become paralyzed and almost dissolved in the past two years." (Gikas, p. 321).

In 1922, SEKE held an Extraordinary Congress, at which it was decided that the Comintern's decisions were binding for the party. The party maintained that the bourgeois urban classes were in a state of crisis made worse by the arrival of the refugees, and hoped to take advantage of the highly turbulent state of the country at the time, to channel it towards revolutionary objectives. However, they failed to attract supporters, both because they alienated anyone who deviated dogmatically from the party line, and also because their proposed policies were unrealistic, beyond the state's and the party's capabilities. Attempts to replace the GSEE leadership with their own members, and infiltrate agricultural cooperatives (intending to turn them into party cells), were relatively unsuccessful. The party itself was deeply divided; its 'right' wing argued that the Comintern's decrees should be adapted to domestic circumstances, whereas the 'left' wing managed early on to isolate the party by refusing to cooperate with unions or syndicates not under party control. In addition, the entire party refused to cooperate with any of the 'bourgeois' parties. On September 19th, 1923, a new Central Committee was elected, which held a middle ground between the left and right wings. It continued, however, to view the Republic as an 'immediate objective' on the way to their long-term goal of a communist revolution, and rejected 'democratic doctrines'. As such, by alienating the two 'bourgeois' factions, under-estimating the degree to which they dominated

the country at the time, SEKE failed to attract much support, and in critical urban centers such as Salonica and Piraeus, their proportions dropped to 1/4 of their results in 1920.

The arrival of the refugees contributed to this, which in turn contributed to the initially hostile relations between them and the party. As we have stated, for the most part, the refugees knew almost nothing of either class struggle or the labor movement; according to one refugee, “in those years, people in their majority- and this can be said with certainty- were totally ignorant of the (...) the labor movements’ struggles, which had already begun, in Piraeus” (Gikas, p.322). Similarly, another refugee stated, in 1934: “at that time, the workers’ consciousness was not what it is today. Class consciousness was not developed to such a degree in the Asia Minor element, enough so as to constitute a factor for struggle” (Gikas, p. 323). The natives' labor unions reported having suffered a great blow from the refugees' filtering into the labour force; pushed by circumstances, they were willing to work any amount of hours, under any circumstances, no matter how puny their wages, so that they “had an adverse effect on working conditions and on the bargaining power of labor” (Mavrogordatos, p. 145). Secondly, the refugees were opposed by SEKE on account of their Venizelism; at times, the party's statements reached the point of resembling antivenizelist attacks on the refugees, considering them responsible for the shift in the electoral balance which benefitted the Venizelists, and considering the Republic 'their' Republic, whose MPs "were elected by refugees, the wives of refugees, the children of refugees, the informers, the breakers of strikes. With those votes and against the will of the working masses of Greece, they will once again govern the country" (Hering, p. 1127).

The Caucasians' political activities and decisions can best be examined when one looks at the series of Conventions held by them throughout the interwar period. In 1922-23, the Caucasians, who had begun to organize themselves immediately upon arrival and formed the 'Caucasian Society', were trying to determine what their political stance would be within

the given political context. As researchers have observed, in contrast to the other refugees, the Caucasians' political choices and demands were entirely relevant to the present, and in no way reflected loyalties and sensibilities based on issues of the past. On September 23rd, 1923, at the 'Convention of Caucasian Refugees', Pasaides made the following statement: "here, almost all the political parties have not developed as parties of principles, but take on a personal character. It is very difficult for us to choose one with which to cooperate" (Athanasiaides- Mixailides, p.50). Ultimately, it was decided that they support the Liberals, "not so that refugees may be allowed as candidates, but based upon articulated, programmed agreements with the relevant authorities" (Athanasiaides-Mixailides, p. 50).

In February, 1924, the KKE central committee again convened and began taking extreme measures to ensure the dogmatic unity of the party. It declared that any criticism of the central committee was dangerous, threw members of its 'right' and 'left' wings out the party, and dissolved the committee of Piraeus, replacing it with more trusted cadres. All members, under threat of being thrown out of the party, were forced to attend lessons on communist ideology. This resulted in the creation of various minor communist-socialist splinter groups, most notably the 'Marxist Archive', which advocated the necessity of 'educating' the masses before a revolution could be attempted. Again, the party was equally condemnatory towards the monarchy and the Venizelist (republican)/ antivenizelist (royalist) polarity and rejected any possibility of cooperation with the Venizelists.

The party's 3rd Extraordinary Council, held between November 26th and December 3rd, 1924, was amongst the most significant, as it was there that the party officially became a part of the Communist International. It accepted the 21 terms and all decisions of the Comintern, and from SEKE became the KKE (Greek section of the Communist International.) The 'bolshevization' of the party ensued and the party reorganized itself, adopting a cell-based structure. These cells were to be responsible for attracting voters and for the education and

supervision of new recruits. Factory cells were to form the backbone of the party, while refugees were to form their own cells in their settlements. Though the party criticized itself for its political marginalization, yet they continued to maintain (taking their cues from the Comintern) that fascism and socialist-democratic convictions were merely two sides of the same coin which served capitalist interests. Thus, it continued to alienate all non-communist republican parties, referring to them as 'socialist- fascists'.

Amongst other things, the KKE was also forced to accept the Comintern's position concerning Macedonia and Thrace. Under pressure from Bulgarian communists, in December 1922, the Comintern advocated the creation of 'autonomous and independent' Macedonia and Thrace; this position was confirmed at the 5th Conference of the Communist International in 1929, when it officially adopted the Balkan Communist Federation's position and demanded that Macedonia and Thrace become two independent states. As such, they were also opposed to the 'Hellenization' of these areas as a result of the population exchanges.

Despite the fact that the KKE adopted this position, it did so most reluctantly, as is often overlooked; at the 5th International Conference, the party pointed out that the demographic balance in Macedonia and Thrace had shifted following the settlement of the refugees. Nonetheless, the party was severely attacked for adopting this position; it was believed that they served the interests of Bulgarian communists, that KKE was nothing but an agent of the Comintern, whose decrees it swallowed unquestioningly, and persecutions of KKE members were to follow, involving the imprisonment of party officials and members on charges of high treason. In 1925, Pangalos duly banned the party.

This position of course was most loathed of all by the refugees, and contributed to the KKE's unpopularity with them. The party's approach towards the refugees, judging them to be 'revolutionary' material and deviating from their antagonistic tones of 1923, aimed to win

them over, by appealing to their class consciousness; as certain key leftist Caucasians also stated, the true division in politics and society responsible for the refugees' troubles was that between rich and poor, proletariat and bourgeoisie, and the two major bourgeois parties pitted natives and refugees against each other, so as to trap them between their party antagonisms and politically neutralize them. The KKE emphasized that the refugee worker and the native worker had more in common than the refugee worker and the refugee entrepreneur, the first and foremost being, that the former was consistently exploited by the latter, and must therefore join in the common struggle against such exploitation. In addition, the KKE, more than any other party, condemned those responsible for the terrible circumstances of the refugees, extensively and graphically reported all the refugees' problems and demanded that the state take the appropriate measures for their quality accommodation. Such reports and articles, particularly in the 'Radical', referred to the refugees as 'our refugee brothers' and were widely circulated. However, they appeared to have little effect. As stated, the refugees' stance towards communism had already been determined, not only by the actions of Soviet Russia during the Asia Minor Catastrophe, but also on account of the stance held on the matter by the KKE- in accordance to the dictates of the Comintern, the Greek communists had denounced the Asia Minor campaign as an imperialist venture and were staunchly opposed to it. In addition, the party stated (rather inaccurately) that: "those who exploit the refugee vote are motivated by claiming compensation from the Turks. The refugees should not demand compensation from the working masses of Turkey. They do not live any better than the working masses of Greece" (Gikas, p. 352). Consequently, in the elections of 1926, the KKE managed to receive only 41.902 votes (4,3%), and out of 279 seats in parliament won 10. Results were higher in Kavala, due to the large proportion of tobacco workers there, and in Salonica, thanks to the votes of the Jewish population. In Athens- Piraeus, the results were especially low.

However, the first signs of the refugees' discontent with the government and ruling parties began at this point to emerge. This can be seen in the Caucasians' second Convention in 1926, at which the main issues of debate were education and 'agrarian organization', in particular, the creation of farmers' unions, the creation of agricultural schools and the inclusion of agricultural studies in the school curriculum. Agrarian reforms and the distribution of free land to all, natives and refugees, were advocated, along with the seizure of Church property and estates still held by the few remaining large landowners. By the Conventions of 1927 and 1928, the Caucasians condemned the government for the slow pace of reforms, and for failing to meet the demands put to them, especially concerning the seizure of Church property and the creation of schools, reiterating their requests for " the swift distribution of land" and "the establishment (...) in the rural periphery of agricultural schools." (Athanasiaides-Mixailides, p.52).

Following the elections, fractional infighting within the KKE continued. The party secretary, Pouliopoulos, a Trotskyist, condemned the party's autocratic leadership, the failed policies of previous years, the party's isolation and its inability to adapt the Comintern's decrees to Greek reality. He proposed that the number of party members be limited to a tiny, educated elite, and that the petty bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletariat be distanced from the party. Though he managed to attract supporters in Piraeus, he was denounced as a 'liquidationist' by the party leadership, and particularly by the 'Kutvides' in the party. Again, in the middle remained a small group which condemned Pouliopoulos, but was opposed to the alienation of even more members. On September 25th, 1927, Pouliopoulos and around 100 other party members (mainly from Piraeus) were thrown out of the party by the Stalinists, despite the objections of the other party members. Consequently, those who had previously held a middle position also left the party, and they and the Liquidationists formed a KKE splinter opposition party.

In the elections of 1928, the KKE fared even more poorly than in '26; its support dropped to 24.000 votes (2.3%). Only amongst the Jews of Salonica did their percentage rise- even in Kavala a decrease was noted. What support there was came mainly from rural areas, rather than the major urban centers.

Between December 10th and 15th, 1928, the KKE held its 4th party congress. A new central committee was elected, headed by General Secretary Andronikos Haitas. Haitas, believing that circumstances did not favour a proletariat revolution, put a priority on the bureaucratic organization of the party and recruiting more party members. In contrast, the syndicalist members of the party believed that the strikes and protests of the labour movement could be directed towards a mass political protest; thus, they advocated more party activity and presence in the unions and syndicates, aiming to draw the workers away from the 'socialist- fascist' unions and the GSEE. This included refugee workers, who by 1930, had become one of the largest groups in the labour force. The syndicalists' approach was favoured in the central committee's 3rd plenary session in January 1930, and the party began, with fliers, bulletins, speeches, distribution of 'The Radical', etc, to try to organize the labour movement into a mass political strike. This was done, despite the manifold obstacles and mutual prejudices involved, mainly within the refugees' actual working places, the factories. According to accounts, at the entrances of factories and along the streets the refugee workers took from their settlements to the factories, volunteers and party members handed out countless fliers, notices, and copies of 'The Radical':

the distribution of propaganda material, briefing the workers on current developments in the syndicalist movement (.....) was often done by groups of workers who, after they had assumed their 'posts' along the central roads by which the workers went to their work places, spoke to them, listened to their

problems and concerns, advocated the importance of organized struggle.

(Gikas, p.339).

The GSEE and other smaller labour unions invested heavily in informing the refugees that they were becoming the objects of capitalist exploitation. They also took steps to relieve workers- especially strikers- on a material level, providing financial support to families whose members were striking or had been imprisoned.

Unfortunately, despite these measures the party continued its alienation of and condemnation of all non- communist, 'socialist- fascist' parties, which included the various communist splinter parties as well. They also maintained their (the Comintern's) position on the issue of independent Macedonia and Thrace, and continued to throw undesirables out of the party, so that by March 1930, the party had shrunk to only 1500 members, 170 in Athens and only 70 in Piraeus. When Haitas declared, on December 13th, 1930, that he was against a communist coup, divisions within the party reached a breaking point and in October, 1931, the Comintern was forced to step in. It criticized the party for wasting energy on 'fractional infighting' and failing to check the growing influence of the Agrarian Party, the Marxist Archive and the 'socialist- fascists'. The objective of a 'mass political strike' was deemed irrelevant to the immediate issues in society, particularly as the 'united front' of workers, farmers and refugees had not been won over. The Comintern thus ordered further 'bolshevization' of the party, an end to internal divisions, the improvement of the party's organizational structures and the increase of rural activity. A new central committee was formed, all graduates of KUTV, and Nikos Zaxariades was elected new General Secretary.

In the elections of 1932, the party managed its biggest success yet, winning 58.223 votes (10 seats in parliament). In Athens- Pireaus, their numbers rose significantly (8,38%) and in Salonica, to 11, 8%. Its highest percentages were in Kavala (22,5%) and among the

Jews of Salonica (21%), followed by the major cities of Thessaly, Larissa and Volos (17,8%) and Drama (8.4%). As we have seen, the elections of 1932 were the first in which the refugees voted other parties in protest against the Liberals. The KKE won many new supporters in the economically exhausted and overtaxed lower classes. The gradual turn of the refugees away from Venizelism towards the KKE was the result of various factors, some involving their disillusionment with Venizelos and the Liberals and some having developed as a result of the activities of the KKE itself. In universities and cafeterias, students, the younger generation of refugees whose more immediate memories involved strikes rather than war, came into contact with OKNE and KKE members, and gradually, their cells grew. In addition, the efforts of party members to approach workers had begun to pay off- according to the testimony of Kotis Kehagias:

They would go to the factories in thousands and, following the crowd, we sold 'The Radical'. We were chased by security, they would catch us, beat us, put us through the passions of Christ, and the people, on account of the great love they had for us, would help us get free....We had touched the workers' vein (.....) and thus the people had come to like us; this didn't occur in one day or two, it 3-4 years of this constant work. Every day." (Gikas, p.339).

Finally, Venizelos' disastrous Idionym Law ultimately worked very much against him. The Law itself was very vague and easily lent itself to arbitrary use; it punished:

the application of ideas whose clear purpose is, through violent means, to overturn the existing social order, or the detachment of a part of the whole of Greek territory." Whoever committed the offense of 'proselytism' in favour of such ideas or caused 'riots or clashes' in the course of the labour movements'

activities faced the same penalty: imprisonment for up to six months, and deportation for up to two years. (Hering, p. 1036).

As we have seen, what is clear is that the Law was aimed against the labour movement (primarily), communists and 'autonomists' on the issue of Macedonia and Thrace. Between 1929, when the Law was first implemented, till 1936 (the P.P. maintained the Law) 2.444 people had been convicted, and were either imprisoned or exiled. Initially, the majority of those convicted were workers, however, after 1931, large proportions of the rural population were convicted as well. It was throughout this period that various infamous concentration camps were created for those convicted, including, ironically, Makronisos, the one-time quarantine for arriving exchangees, Akronauplia, Folegandro, and others;

The account of Markos Vafiades, of Pontic descent, concerning the (.....) refugees of Kilkis he met there during his imprisonment (September 1929) is interesting: "Throughout the time I was in prison, we reached 120 communist prisoners because, after awhile, after Kilkis, after events there they brought in around 70 comrades, members of the party and the youth group, most of them Caucasians (.....) and, mainly through them, Kilkis became red." (....) the Pontians would soon become a distinct group amongst the political prisoners. At the communist Concentration Camp of Akronauplia, they were organized into a separate regional- ethnic group (.....) these groups were characterized by various names according to their behavior or the customs they brought from their homelands: "the Pontians were called 'nation', due to the particularly intense regional character of their customs and dances, and particularly the Pontic dialect." (Agtzides, p. 313).

To further negatively dispose the refugees, to the KKE's advantage, the trials of those arrested for breaking the Idionym Law were observed by large audiences. The courtroom would be “transformed into a popular platform (....) from which the communists presented and defended their ideas and actions. With their stance they managed to earn the respect of a large proportion of workers.” (Gikas, p. 355).

As with the other refugees, following 1929, the Caucasians' abandonment of the Liberals and turn towards the KKE was largely precipitated by the government's increasingly severe anti-communist witch-hunt and the application of the Idionym Law, which usually involved violence and sometimes resulted in casualties. As stated, communal spirit among the Caucasians was very strong, so that an attack on one member of the community prompted the counter- attack of the entire village or settlement. Relations with the authorities, especially as the Caucasians were (inaccurately) considered to be all 'Bolsheviks', became increasingly hostile, and the Caucasians demonstrated great solidarity amongst each other, in defiance of the authorities, either acting collectively in protest or concealing hunted individuals. An indicative case is described in the village of Metallico, in Kilkis: “Indeed, the Caucasians of Metallico, Kilkis, had been members of KKE before 1931. That year, the gendarmes arrested one of their fellow villagers, the communist Stephanos Alametides. Then, the whole village, with shovels, pitchforks, and pieces of wood clashed with the gendarmes” (Athanasiaides-Mixailides, p. 52.). Similarly, in 1930, in the village of Metamorphosi, (again in Kilkis), when a sergeant and two gendarmes came searching for one of their fellow villagers, for whom they had an arrest warrant, the entire village rose up in protest against them. In 1932 and '33, the conflict between the Caucasian peasants and the authorities would intensify. On December 18th, 1932, the inhabitants of the village Pontokomi (which already bore the nickname the 'small soviet' of Kozani) unanimously refused to pay their taxes when the Agrarian Bank's tax collectors came. Again, they came to blows with the gendarmes, who arrested a few of them;

after a mass demonstration demanding their release, which was granted, the refugees still refused to pay their taxes. Shortly afterward, on Christmas of that year, the villagers put on a performance of the forbidden play 'Lazar- agas'; written in the Pontic dialect in 1905 by Georgios Fotiades; a direct offshoot of his experiences in the 1905 Russian revolution, the play had first been put on in 1928 in Kilkis, starring Kostas Gavrilides. In both cases, the resulting funds were to go to charitable or community causes: in 1928, they had been donated to the Kilkis hospital which was in danger of shutting down, and in Pontokomi, the earnings were to go to the community's educational funds. As a result, the gendarmes again found themselves up against the whole village when dispatched with arrest warrants. According to accounts, after the immediate release of their fellow villagers was denied, the village clashed with the gendarmes and managed to disarm them. Once their fellow villagers were freed, the weapons were returned, and the gendarmes began to strike them, resulting in many wounded. Ultimately, 23 people were condemned to exile or imprisoned. The incident was covered by the 'Radical' and was widely circulated.

In addition, as we have seen, strong familial ties also contributed to the rise of communism and KKE membership among the Caucasians and refugees in general:

Gr. Tsiligarides thus described his father's joining the KKE: "in 1924, it set up offices in Chalkida and hung the Russian flag with its hammer and sickle. We were kids of 14 and 15 and were happy to see it..... finally, my father joined the party, as did most young people and students. On Easter, we would go from house to house calling 'Christ has risen' and whenever we dared we called 'Lenin has risen". (Agtzides, p310).

Ultimately, however, it seems that poverty and the steady indifference and exploitation of the government constituted the source of the refugees', and Caucasian refugees', support for the KKE. The account of Apostolos Athanasiades is characteristic:

My father Lavrentis (Lavros) complained that the government's support was meager, almost non-existent. But they were hard workers. With some bonds the state gave them they built houses and from there on started working in agriculture, which nevertheless never sufficed to give them a decent living standard. Very soon they got a glimpse of the government's character, which was negatively disposed towards them, and persecuted them whenever someone couldn't pay taxes. They would watch as the collector and the gendarme would come from Ptolemaida and confiscate sacks of poor debtors' wheat. Harsh treatment and approach, which they hadn't felt even when they lived in the homeland (Kars) (...) These people who came here with an independent spirit from the Caucasus couldn't stand to be tortured, to be the target of the police. That's why they went 'left' (...) these people believed that if the communist regime was established they might be able to secure a more humane life. (Athanasiades- Mixailides, p. 55).

In contrast to the minor Venizelist parties, in the elections of 1933, the KKE noted another increase in votes (10.000). This came primarily from the increase of party support in Macedonia and Thrace- the party's percentages in Athens- Piraeus remained more or less the same as in 1932. Undoubtedly, this was partly owing to the fact that the coalition of the smaller Venizelist parties with the Liberals resulted in their being neutralized as an alternative to the Liberals, thus filtering all the refugees' protest votes to the KKE. However, it also confirms that refugee radicalization was genuinely in effect, particularly in the rural areas- more and more farmers' strikes were occurring, and more Caucasians were openly joining

OKNE, which, under the direction of Mixalis Soumelides, formed many new cells all over Kozani.

Bolstered by their triumph in these two years, in January, 1934, the KKE once again made the proletariat revolution their immediate objective, believing it was imminent; maintaining their refusal to cooperate with the- increasingly fascist- ruling bourgeois parties, it called its members to join against the agrarians, the reformists, and the socialist- fascists, in another attempt to channel the exasperation of the masses towards revolution. The party did acknowledge, however, that major proportions of the proletariat and the rural peasantry had yet to be won over. Thus it turned its focus to the farmers, and met with notable success- in the Municipal elections of February 11th, 1934, both Kavala and Serres elected KKE mayors (both, Caucasian refugees, were exiled before long) and in the community election of March 12th, 8 members of the community councils of Xanthi and Kaisariani were members of the KKE. The party now held a majority in 8 community councils in Larissa, 5 in Kavala, 4 in Lamia, Volos and Serres, and 2 in Karditsa.

The KKE was equally opposed to the Liberals' 1933 and 1935 coups, as to the government's enforcement of a state of emergency. Deviating from their previous line of alienating all non- KKE unions and syndicates, on September 9th, 1934, the KKE and the party- controlled rival EGSEE (United General Confederation of Greek Workers) sent out an open invitation to the GSEE, the Agrarian Party, independent syndicates and the GSEBE ('General Confederation of Workers of Northern Greece), calling them to set aside their differences, support social freedoms, demand the dissolution of parliament, and oppose coups and fascism. The agreement was reached but never implemented.

Between June 25th and August 20th, 1935, the Communist International held its 7th International Congress. It decided that all anti- fascist parties should cooperate. The KKE

found it difficult to adopt this, but finally began to distinguish between 'republican' parties and fascist parties, and on September 16th, sent an open invitation to all republican parties to join in opposition to the restoration of the monarchy. Unfortunately, given the past relations between these parties and the KKE, the response was minimal. Despite the fact that the KKE was now less dismissive towards republican parties, effectively their mentality remained the same and they viewed cooperation with them as simply the lesser of two evils. The KKE did, however, recognize that, under the present circumstances, with the population tired of coups and tired of attempts at violent take-overs, the masses would not take favourably to a communist take-over. They abandoned their goal of revolution and aimed instead to develop a 'popular front' with the republican parties. This too, as we have seen, was not met with enthusiasm by the republican parties, which were reluctant to form a coalition with the KKE, even Sofianopoulos and Gavrilides of the Agrarian parties.

Despite the fact that in the election of 1935, the KKE won no seats due to the electoral system, they won their greatest victory of the interwar period, with 98.699 votes (9.59%). As we have seen, this increase is certainly owing to the Venizelists' abstaining, thus making the KKE the only viable alternative to the antivenizelist faction. Another important development which helped to raise the number of KKE refugee members was its change of policy concerning the creation of independent Macedonia and Thrace:

at the KKE's 6th Convention, in December, 1935, after observing that 'the ethnic composition of the Greek part of Macedonia has changed', it approved the decision of the KKE's central committee of June 11th, 1935, which replaced the old slogan 'united and independent Macedonia and Thrace' with 'full equality for minorities'. "In the part of Macedonia which lies in Greece" the decision was explain, "Greek refugee populations have settled. The population in the Greek part of Macedonia is today in its majority Greek.

Therefore the Leninist-Stalinist principle of self- determination demands the changing of the old slogan in accordance with today's circumstances."

(Athanasiaades- Mixailides, p.72).

Consequently, though their number of votes fell in 1936 (73,411 votes, 5.76%), they won 15 seats in parliament, and in fact, the party membership had actually increased, making it the 4th party after the Liberals.

As we have seen, the Venizelist parties and the KKE's attempts at cooperation, throughout the brief interval till the Metaxas dictatorship, failed, and despite the fact that the party both refused to give Metaxas its vote of confidence and participated in (if not headed) the mass strikes of 1936, it did not manage to successfully oppose or avert the dictatorship. In closing, it is indicative, however, to note the following; despite the KKE's political failure in opposing the monarchy or replacing the Liberals as the recipients of the majority of the refugee vote during the interwar period, such developments or electoral results are misleading in ascertaining the true extent of the spread of communism, particular among the refugees. As Gikas, states, "Alongside the communists, many refugee workers, friends or relatives of KKE members who participated in the class- labor struggle, also joined in (...) without being themselves recruited members of the party" (p.343). As one refugee stated: "many of us, including me, I am not ashamed to say it...we were not organized. I didn't stop helping, did not thinking about it, and felt that I belonged to that group...I was not recruited until 1939-1940" (Gikas, p. 343). It seems, for all the refugees, that what had operated as their 'social proto-nuclei' came to become the channels for the spread of class ideology and communist ideology. What was achieved by the KKE within the interwar period, was the laying of foundations for the refugees' eventual turn en mass to the KKE and EAM, during WW2. With the outbreak of WW2, "the villages and towns in which the first resistance movements of

EAM took place, coincide to a great extent with the pre-war electoral map of the KKE” (Athanasziades- Mixailides).

3.4 THE POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS AND BEHAVIOR OF THE TURCOPHONE PONTOS RUM OF WESTERN ASIA MINOR PONTOS

Finally, let us now turn to examine the last remaining distinct group of Pontos refugees, the Turcophone Pontians, and examine their political loyalties and behaviors. As we have seen, the majority of the Turcophone Pontos refugees were from western Asia Minor Pontos, though a tiny minority of Turcophone Caucasians, existed as well, the Tsalkalides, from the village of Tsalka in the Caucasus. These populations, known as Urum, originated from Asia Minor Pontos and emigrated to the Caucasus in the 19th century. On arrival to Greece, they came mainly to be settled around Florina, in the village of Limnoxori. According to accounts, these settlements were also populated by Vlachs, however, the two groups coexisted harmoniously for decades. Little else is known of this group, or of their political affiliations. It is just as plausible, as Caucasians, that they would support the Liberals as the Agrarian Party or KKE.

In terms of their political behavior, “the electoral and political behavior of the Turkish-speaking Pontians in interwar Greece was identical with that of the rest of the refugees” (Maratnzides, p.66). What makes their case particular, apart from the linguistic factor, (or rather because of it) is the intensity with which they demonstrated the dominant refugee traits, and the peculiar course their sense of refugee identity took.

It has been noted that by many, particularly their fellow Greek-speaking Pontian compatriots, the Turcophone western Pontians were perceived as being somewhat backward, even retarded. However, despite the manifold effects of their extreme social segregation, the Turcophone western Pontians showed signs of formal organization and activity as early as

1924: ‘The *andartes* of western Pontos would create, in Athens in 1924, as refugees, the ‘Brotherhood of Pontic Fighters’ (Agtzides, p. 195). The Brotherhood’s first documents were in both Greek and Turkish, and its aims included: “the creation amongst us of close solidarity and mutual support.....ensuring our capacity to improve our work and living circumstances, the support of those among us who lack employment...” (Agtzides, p.195).

In many ways, the lives of the Turcophone Pontos refugees were quite unspectacular, and they developed closed communities, distanced from the political waves and tumults of the urban centers, and to a degree isolated. As stated, these groups were often the object of attacks from the natives on account of their being Turkish- speaking, and derision from the Pontic Greek speaking populations, which openly differentiated themselves from them. Again, the linguistic factor was to operate for the Turcophone Pontos Rum in a divisive way, excluding them even from the circles of refugees of their own region. It was not the first time being Turkish-speaking was looked down upon by the government or the ruling parties. However, prejudice and exclusion took on a different dimension in the Greek mainland, or rather, greater proportions, and from all angles, seeing as being Turcophone was no longer, as it had been in the past, merely an unfortunate inevitability but a social and cultural stigma. This too, apart from their traditional clannishness, also contributed to their consequent isolation. Note is made of the fact that until the third generation, within these populations there was a degree of inbreeding.

Apart from the social exclusion which it afforded them, which was to be expected, the effects of becoming refugees, and the peculiar refugee identity, gave the Turkish language another dimension for these populations, heretofore non-existent. Like all the refugees, the Turcophone Pontos Rum sought a sense of continuity and collective assertion of their identity once within Greece. The peculiarity of the Turkish language, while serving to divide them from other refugees or Pontians, as we saw, served also to strengthen the bonds between

them. The Turkish language thus became also the peculiar vehicle by which they experienced their distinct inheritance and identity, and experienced also “nostalgia as collective memory” (Marantzides, p. 92).

Just as in the 19th century, when the state's reaction to the Turkish language spoken by these populations was decisively fought through education, (considered even by those most sympathetic to the refugees, including Venizelists, to be the only 'cure' for their use of Turkish), so in Greece schools were systematically set up in a large number of Turcophone refugee villages, Pontic or otherwise. According to accounts, the teachers of these schools were particularly strict concerning the use of Greek in and out of the classroom. On the part of the Turcophone Pontos refugees, their way of coming to terms with their linguistic peculiarity was to demonstrate great religious devotion, outdoing even their fellow refugees, who too were known to be on the whole far more pious than the natives. In this, again, we see reflections of their behavior before their arrival to Greece- religion became the main medium by which all other things, on a communal level as well, were experienced. Apart from repeating the forms of religious adherence, from the personal to the communal level, as they had done for generations, these populations also employed material objects to establish a sense of continuity in their communities and collective psyches:

In many cases, in fact, the refugees had managed to bring with them the bell of the church of their village, or some icons, symbols not only of religious faith but of communal continuity. However, as M. Droutsas observes, "the practice of immediately building churches is certainly a sign of religiousness, but also the preservation of certain old structures when the role of the church was not merely symbolic. The church, especially the courtyard, became the place where everyone gathered to discuss matters which concerned the new community

each Sunday after Mass, under the supervision of the president of the community" (Marantzides, p. 97).

It is interesting to note, that in some ways, as Hirschon has observed, the Orthodox faith itself lent itself as a vehicle for reproducing memory:

Tradition and memory are interrelated elements which characterize the religious expression of Orthodoxy. Therefore, in a broad sense religion strengthened these collective memories, providing a framework which promoted the process of memory. This occurs because the religion attributes to memory inherent value and clearly bases many ritual acts on it (....) During Holy Communion there are memorial prayers, recalling older generations of orthodox Christians and every day is in the honor of particular saints. The past is incorporated into the present and the segmentation of time is repealed. (p.61).

Certainly, such a process as this would have manifested most strongly for the Turcophone Pontos refugees, given their obvious devotion to religion, but also, in their obvious repetition of this process beyond the limits of religion; to communal life, and to political consciousness, so that in fact perhaps the most telling characteristic of these populations was their ability to preserve a more or less unchanging way of life for so long. Of course, beyond the effects which such adherence to religion might have developed in them collectively and subconsciously, devotion to religion did not cease to operate as a counter-balance to the Turkish language, nor should identity discourses be dismissed as a factor:

the excessive emphasis on this aspect of the identity of the Turcophone Pontians may be understood if one consider the analysis of Tajfel regarding the zeal of lower social stratum, insecure about their identity, to project those

characteristics of theirs which they believe will aid their efforts to improve their position in the environment in which they live. Thus, it should not surprise us if the fanatical religiosity of the Turcophone Pontians was a result of the need to publicly demonstrate, ostentatiously, their devotion to what they and their environment believed to be their essential national characteristic, that is, to the Orthodox Christian faith. (Marantzides, p. 98).

Much in the same way that, after a point, the lines between religious and communal behavior blurred, so too after a point did the boundaries between political, communal, and even religious behavior become blurred. The Turcophone Pontos refugees' political loyalties were overwhelmingly Venizelist, more so than amongst other refugees. In fact, the entire electoral process for them appeared to resemble a communal event:

their adoration towards the figure of Venizelos often took on a public character with many ritualistic elements. In the refugee villages of Kozani, Serres, and Drama they all went to vote together, forming a large procession led by someone who held high on a piece of wood a large picture of Venizelos. The procession grew in size, as, passing through refugee villages, the voters of each were incorporated into it (...) as much in the electoral periphery of Kozani in western Macedonia as in that of Drama in eastern Macedonia, regions in which some electoral data is accessible, the Turcophone Pontians voted Venizelists throughout the whole period of 1924-1936, at percentages which steadily exceeded 65%. (Marantzides, p. 101).

This electoral practice amongst the turcophone Pontos Rum is strongly reminiscent of religious rituals, as it is a common feature of Christian feast days and saint days to commemorate the saint in a procession which passed through the village or city, headed by a

large icon (usually considered sacred) of the saint, carried either by laymen or priests. The electoral procession appears, as such, merely to replace the saint with Venizelos, and prayers with votes.

In contrast to other refugees, the Turcophone Pontians did not begin, as the interwar period progressed, to turn towards the left nor did their support of the Liberals weaken. This is partly owing to the fact that they would not forgive Soviet Russia's part in supplying the Turkish army during the Asia Minor Catastrophe, but was compounded by the KKE's supporting, however reluctantly, the creation of autonomous Macedonia. However, another obvious reason why the Turcophone refugees did not become radicalized was that their circumstances in their settlements were drastically different from those in urban centers or Greek-speaking settlements, and appeared not to have participated very much in the labour movement which had come to include a large proportion of their fellow refugees. Due to their comparative isolation and the maintenance of their former way of life, in as much as possible, they did not have the same incentives for radicalization, or the development of class consciousness, as their refugee compatriots. Thus, it appears they maintained their distinct ethnic- regional identity intact for longer, and their political affiliations were more heavily influenced by it than other refugees', even- particularly- after the interwar period. On the other hand, they evaded the development of working class consciousness which characterized their fellow refugees. It would be misguided, however, to assume thus that they remained in a static state-this is demonstrated by their swift and immediate action in the defense of the country with the outbreak of WW2.

Ultimately, WW2 provided the framework for these populations to express their loyalty to the nation, and lurch toward their own course of assimilation, by developing another *andartiko*, this time in the Macedonian hills. Again, one observes the transfer of old

practices, whose sources were not ultimately political, to new political and identity frameworks. Most telling is the following account:

after the end of the meeting (of the armed Pontian andartes for the creation of a resistance organization), Papaomiros put a record of Venizelos on the phonograph (...) the record of the General Leader of the andartiko groups of Pontos Antonios Hatzieleftheriou, the great Anton Pasa, and then the National Anthem. (Marantzides, p 106).

CONCLUSION

In closing, let us attempt to summarize our analysis and isolate the Pontos refugees' main political orientations and behavior and their sources.

As we have seen, despite the various causes for rupture between them and the refugees, the Liberals maintained the majority of the refugees' support throughout the whole of the interwar period. This is true as much of the Caucasian Pontians as of the Asia Minor Pontos refugees.

This is owing, firstly, to the refugees' pre- 1922 political affiliations. This includes both their progressive, liberal political orientations- as we've seen, the refugees were decidedly pro-republican and antiroyalist- and their attachment to Venizelos, their champion and visionary of a Greece which extended to their homelands. Secondly, in conjecture to causes following 1922, of all parties, the Liberals sought to include the refugees in the party and government, took them into consideration in their policies, attempted to relieve the refugees, and in general, in stark contrast to the antivenizelist faction, did not demonstrate or perpetuate anti- refugee prejudice, nor attempted to socially and politically segregate them. In short, the Liberals, and more generally the Venizelists, operated as the main medium for the social, economic and political integration of the refugees, their only medium, at first. The Liberal party was the most compatible with refugee convictions, mentality and sensibilities, and its approach towards them was the most inclusive. The importance of this inclusive, welcoming approach towards of the refugees, in becoming their main vehicle for integration and absorbing the majority of the refugees' votes, is indicative also of the refugees' own strong desire to be integrated, to be socially and politically active, and most importantly, to be afforded a position from which they could have some effect or control over their consequent fates and circumstances within their new country.

This changed somewhat, as we have seen, both due to the gradually less offensive attitude of other parties towards the refugees, and a number of factors which led to the refugees' disillusionment with the Liberals themselves. First and foremost amongst these was the Ankara Convention. The effects of the signing of the Convention on the refugees were twofold, of an economic nature and an emotional, perhaps symbolic nature. Apart from the fact that it put a definitive end to the possibility of their ever re-establishing their communities in Anatolia, it also meant the end to any hope of economic relief through the distribution of compensation for exchangeable properties. The refugees were already economically exhausted and over taxed by the Liberal government; the fact that, on top of these economic burdens and the refugees' deprivation, it was Venizelos himself who supported the Convention despite their opposition, damaged the emotional bond between him and the refugees irreparably.

As stated, the refugees' economic and professional situation also made them exasperated with the Liberals. Apart from the heavy indirect taxes they were obliged to pay, and the deep debt both urban and especially rural refugees were in, on account of the Liberals' economic policies, the refugees' working conditions- particularly those who worked in industry- were terrible, and there were constant complaints of the foul treatment the workers received from employers and factory owners, the primary recipients of economic support from the Liberal government. The Liberals' offensive stance towards the labour movement, their inability to impose proper labour laws, and their support of and from the more affluent businessmen and factory owners, most loathed by the refugees and workers at large, also cost them much refugee support.

Parallel to this, the Liberals lost a great deal of support on account of their constant restriction of social freedoms, and the application of the Idionym Law. This in combination with the Liberals' fierce anti-communist witch-hunt. As the majority of refugees were

workers, and a large proportion of KKE members and leadership were refugees, the Law hit them on both counts. They resented the Law's arbitrary application, the constant imprisonment of their fellow workers or villagers, and the bad treatment they received from the tax collectors, the police, the gendarmes and the authorities in general. In fact, their resentment towards the government on account of these reached the point of making them more sympathetic to communist and socialist ideology, thus precipitating the refugees' radicalization.

Ultimately, it seems that the refugees' support of the Liberals was a direct political reflection of their 'refugee consciousness' - this is confirmed by the succinct summation provided by Penztopoulos, which isolates the factors which gained the Liberals refugee support as being two: "(1) their progressive outlook which led them to identify themselves with the Liberals, and (2) their deep devotion to Venizelos, a sentimental reason which defied all class distinctions" (p. 177). Together, these two factors operated as the joint poles of the refugee consciousness and identity: attachment to the past and the sensibilities of the past, embodied by the figure of Venizelos, and their desire to move on, move forward, towards assimilation. The Liberals, as we have seen, were provided the chance to become truly the vehicle for refugee integration within the Greek political system. To a point they were not unsuccessful. However, as we have seen, they failed to rise to the refugees' expectations, not because these were extraordinary, but because, though the Liberals might have addressed the refugee consciousness and psyche, they clashed with the refugees' emerging class consciousness. As we have seen, in this respect, radicalization and the emergence of class consciousness came to replace the Liberals as the refugees' vehicle, toward social and political integration, not because this course of political evolution is inevitable for the inclusion of regional- ethnic groups into class- structured nation- state societies, but rather because radicalization was reflective of the refugees' slow abandonment of past experiences

and sensibilities as the arbiters of their political affiliations, and the rise as such of their immediate circumstances, their evaluation of their present situation within the Greek context. Indeed, as we have seen, despite the authorities' and the RSC's efforts to avoid refugee radicalization on account of their downward social mobility, the refugees' turn to the left was almost inevitable given the inadequacy of the accommodation program, in combination with the Liberals' anti- worker stance.

Consequently, as we have seen, to a large extent the reasons for the refugees' turn to the left and the KKE were the same reasons for their disillusionment with the Liberals. However, those in themselves do not exhaust the causes of refugee radicalization. As we know, the KKE was initially extremely unpopular with the majority of the refugees. The exceptions to this were mainly the south Russian Pontos refugees, who had been strongly influenced- in many cases, were a clear product of- the communist and socialist influences of Russia. The reasons for the refugees' anti-communist stance were, firstly, the position held by the KKE and the Comintern on the Asia Minor campaign, their rejection of it as an imperialist venture and strong opposition to it. Following 1922, the refugees' devotion to republicanism, and by extension their Venizelism, inevitably also pitted them against communism. This was exacerbated by the Greek labour movement's initially offensive attitude towards the refugees, believing them to be sabotaging the labour unions' and syndicates' bargaining position with the government by breaking strikes and accepting whatever wages and circumstances their employers subjected them to. By extension, the KKE also alienated them, not simply because it did so with all who deviated from their party line, but also because, like the antivenizelists, they believed the refugees, as arbiters of elections, benefitted the Venizelists to the detriment of the KKE, thus sabotaging the growth of the party. Finally, the fact that the KKE adopted the Comintern's position in favour of the creation of independent Macedonia and Thrace earned them the refugees' hatred.

As stated, the original causes behind the refugees' turn to the left coincide with their reasons for abandoning the Liberals. The Liberal government's failings confirmed KKE slogans and gave the party credibility among the refugees. This was encouraged by the propaganda efforts made by the party, involving their attempts to approach workers and refugees on a personal level, the distribution of propaganda material such as fliers and the 'Radical', and the development of party activity in factories and universities. In addition, the party, along with the labour unions and syndicates, made efforts to provide economic support to party members, strikers, workers, and families whose members had been exiled or imprisoned. It made a deep impression that often those who attempted to protect workers and farmers were leftists, leftist sympathizers, or the unions. Despite its sectarian infighting and habit of alienating anyone who deviated from their party line, the KKE managed what the Farmer-Labour Party did not- to connect with the workers and farmers and earn their trust.

As the interwar period progressed, the KKE began to receive more supporters after it abandoned its policy of alienating socialists and republicans, began finally to distinguish between fascist parties and republican parties, and sought the latter's support and cooperation. In connection to this, its supporters also probably grew due to the anti-royalist, anti-coup, anti-fascist reactions of the population, particularly the refugees. Though the KKE's attempts to cooperate with republican parties failed, and despite the fact that the majority of the refugees still voted the Liberals in 1936, there can be no denying that the KKE's consistent opposition to the monarchy, to the abolition of the Republic, and finally to Metaxas, earned them a great deal of refugee support, much more than the Republican Coalition.

Finally, one of the major obstacles between the refugees and the KKE was swept away when the party abandoned its policy of supporting the creation of independent Macedonia and Thrace, on the pretext that following the refugees' settlement in these areas, the demographic

balance there had shifted. The old slogan was replaced merely with the demand for equal rights to minorities.

As we have seen, the relations between the refugees and the antivenizelist parties, in particular the Popular Party, were of distrust and animosity throughout the period. As with the Venizelists and leftists, the refugees' opposition to the P.P. predated 1922. The refugees considered the P.P. and the antivenizelists responsible for the Asia Minor Catastrophe, and in addition, their failure to properly protect and evacuate the refugees in their flight from Asia Minor. The extent of the refugees' hatred of the antivenizelists on these counts can be measured by their fanatical opposition to the monarchy the minute they arrived in Greece.

The favour was returned by the antivenizelists; the parties and their supporters marginalized and alienated the refugees. On a political level, this was again on account of the refugees' becoming arbiters of the elections, and the 1923 plebiscite, thus imposing the Republic and a Venizelist government. This was the reason for the antivenizelists demand that refugees, like the Jews, be segregated to separate electoral colleges. On a social and economic level, this was due to the resentment of the native population, who were forced to cede seized and exchangeable properties and lands to the refugees, and in general were forced to share the country's limited resources with them. The refugees were perceived by the natives, the P.P. and the antivenizelists as an alien body which drained 'their' country's resources. In effect, as the refugees became absorbed in the factional polarity in the country, whose social manifestation was primarily the animosity between natives and refugees, antagonism developed between the two on all levels. This was made worse by the wildly anti-refugee antivenizelist press.

Unlike the KKE, as the period progressed, neither the Popular Party nor the antivenizelist faction- with the exception of the National Radical Party- managed to attract

any greater proportions of the refugee vote. Following the antivenizelists' coming to power in 1933, though the Liberals had been socially oppressive themselves, the antivenizelists proved worse. This was partly because the three years during which the P.P. was in power were particularly unstable, so that after every other failed coup, a state of emergency was again declared, but also because to the Venizelists' anti-communist purges, the antivenizelists added purges of Venizelists, particularly Cretans and refugees. As we have seen, the P.P. also opposed the labour movement and maintained the Idionym Law.

It is true, and important to note, that there did exist a very tiny minority of refugee Popular Party members, and refugee P.P. supporters. They are the result, apart from refugee protest votes against the Liberals, of the meager efforts made by the moderate leadership of the P.P.- in particular Tsaldaris- to include the refugees in the party and address the refugee populations with policies aimed to relieve them. Tsaldaris' support of the Republic also earned support in this way. The existence, however puny, of a proportion of refugee antivenizelist supporters may again be seen partly as indication of the refugees' desire for political and social integration. As with the KKE, once the P.P. stopped alienating them, or alienated them less, on various pretexts, the refugees were disposed to give them credence and re-evaluate their pre-existing (Venizelist) sympathies. However, this observation applies, as stated, only for a tiny minority of the refugees. For the most part, the mutual distrust and animosity between the refugees and the antivenizelists could not be overcome, and endured till the end of the interwar period.

The exception to this, that is, the refugees' support of the National Radical Party, the only party of the antivenizelist faction to receive considerable refugee support, must be seen as linked to the rise of nationalism among the refugees, particularly the Pontos refugees. As we have seen, there were refugee nationalists who supported the Liberals as well. The reasons for the rise of nationalism, and even fascism, among the refugees were manifold; firstly, as we

have seen, they were a result of the refugees' relations with non-Greek natives. This took on the form of competition between the two groups on a social and economic level, for economic dominance in urban centers (Salonica) and exchangeable or seized properties in rural areas. The competition to secure economic and social hegemony in these areas was absorbed politically in the Venizelist- antivenizelist polarity; Venizelism, as we've seen, became the refugees' vehicle for political integration, assertion and dominance, whilst the antivenizelists became the minority's vehicle for political defense against this. In addition, the refugees' anticommunist stance, which included opposition to 'autonomists' on the issue of Macedonia and Thrace, also served to flare both nationalist feeling as well as anti-Semitic feeling, as a large proportion of Salonica Jews- those who did not support the Popular Party- supported the KKE. As we have seen, the areas where nationalism principally flared were in areas of Macedonia where the concentration either of Jews or communists was particularly high. Finally, a large factor in the rise of anti-Semitic, nationalist, and even fascist ideology among the refugees was the rise of these factors also in the Liberal Party, in the government, and the leading politicians of both factions (notably, Venizelos himself). Refugee nationalism was urged by the Venizelists' and antivenizelists' factional war, and became a political tool which the Liberals both allowed and made use of. As we have seen, Venizelos himself reached the point of encouraging the actions of the E.E.E. and openly adopted an almost anti-Semitic approach himself.

Ironically, it must be noted that the support received by the nationalist unions, and refugee nationalist unions (particularly in Salonica) was also on account of their provisions for and economic and professional support of members. Thus, just as with refugee support for communism, a powerful factor for refugee political extremism was their wretched circumstances. Hence, the support won by Kondyles and the National Radical Party on account of their both distributing and promising to distribute sorely needed refugee

compensation money. In general, the reasons for the refugees' support for Kondyles are the same as those for which refugee nationalism grew. Kondyles was wildly opposed to communism and the KKE, and thus the 'autonomists', and had also strongly opposed the Ankara Convention. As stated, he directly addressed the workers, refugees, and lower classes in his public statements. Thus, he provided a dynamic non-communist alternative to the Liberals.

The Pontians, for the most part, with the exception of cases such as we've examined, exhibited the same general political behavior and orientations as their fellow refugees; as we have seen, regional and ethnic traits among them played some part in determining their political affiliations, but only indirectly. As the period progressed, their immediate circumstances and experience within the Greek context had a much greater effect upon their political choices and behavior, a process which, as we have seen, ran parallel to their radicalization, and constitutes the measure for their change in perspective and increased assimilation within Greece.

As many researchers have noted, the various social, political, and regional identities which underwent transformation throughout the interwar period only came to solidify by WW2, against the backdrop of the threat of occupation:

The Second World War proved to be a decisive factor in changing social relations between native-born Greeks and refugees. The common struggle and subsequent political realignments helped reduce antagonism considerably. The split between locally-born Greeks and refugees was replaced in the 1940s by the split between left and right and Asia Minor Greeks took sides independently of their place of origin. (Vergeti, p.386).

Throughout the war, the role of the refugees was considerable, either as leading members of the resistance movement EAM, of the KKE, whose familial and community bonds and connections would provide a basis for and precipitate the spread of both EAM and the KKE, or as anti-communist resistance groups, independent of EAM; led by the old andartes of western Pontos, these groups waged their own andartiko with the invading forces.

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