Compensation Schemes Following Forced Migration Movements in the Twentieth Century: A Comparative Perspective on the Ottoman Greeks, Greek Muslims, East Germans, Palestinians, and Iraqi Jews

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Abstract

This article compares the policies of compensation implemented after five cases of forced migration in the 20th century. Compensation for property left behind was discussed in all these cases, but only implemented in some. One might think that compensation may have been easier when "abandoned" property was available and some form of "exchange" was engineered, but the relative failure of the Greek, Turkish, Palestinian, and Israeli cases and the relative success of the German ones suggest that the opposite may be true. This may be due to compensation systems being based on the principle of redistributory justice, rather than restoration of pre-conflict levels of wealth. Moreover, I argue that unilateral compensation schemes worked better than multilateral ones. However, in the long run, the most important factor impacting refugees' successful integration does not seem to be compensation, but the granting of citizenship, civil rights, and economic development.

Keywords

refugee compensation – forced migration – population exchange – – Germany – Israel – Palestine – Turkey – Greece – –

In early 1914, a British report about the situation in Erzurum in northeastern Anatolia explained why Armenians whose land had been stolen from them during the massacres of the 1890s did not want to apply for monetary compensation:

> All Turkish schemes for tinkering with the land question are indeed based on a principle unacceptable to the Armenians, that of monetary compensation. The Armenians wish for the actual land taken from them to be restored to its past owners and nothing less. (...) to accept money in lieu would in their view be to admit the legality of its transfer.[1]

We can safely assume that the Armenians mentioned here neither got their land back nor were ever compensated for it. The report, which was written about a year before the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, points to the different meanings of restitution and compensation in contexts of mass violence and ethnic cleansing: Victims of ethnic cleansing often prefer return and restitution over permanent displacement because they understand that compensation payments not only fail to make good for losses suffered, but, worse still, are a form of legitimization for past violence and dispossession. Hence, com-

[1] FO 371/2137/E 59383, September 1914. The report was written in the context of ongoing negotiations concerning a special inspectorate for Eastern Anatolia, which should have been established in 1914. For a discussion of the context, see Morack, Ellinor, *The Dowry of the State? The Politics of Abandoned Property and Nation-Building in Turkey, 1921–1945*, vol. 9 of *Bamberger Orientstudien* (Bamberg: Bamberg University Press, 2017).

pensation usually only becomes an issue once return is denied or its impossibility is acknowledged.[2]

In this article, I compare policies of compensation following the forced migration and denied return of five groups. These are, in chronological order of their year(s) of displacement: the Greeks of Anatolia (1922–23), the Muslims of mainland Greece and Crete (1923–26), the Germans of central and south-eastern Europe (1945–48), the Palestinians (1948–49), and the Jews of Iraq (1952– 53), who form a special case among the bigger group of Jewish immigrants from Arabic-speaking countries. As far as I can see, a comparison with this temporal and spacial scope has not been attempted yet. One reason for this may be that only Greece and Turkey performed a "population exchange," while Germany, Israel and the Arab states simply received refugees.

Greece and Turkey, having been part of the same "population exchange," are often studied together. Yet, even though scholars of forced migration often mention the fact that the Greek-Turkish population exchange was considered a precedence for the great forced migrations of the 1940s (former eastern Germany, Poland-Ukraine-Lithuania, India-Pakistan, and Palestine), they usually don't study European migrations in comparison with those outside of Europe.[3] The case of the German refugees is very well-studied, often in great detail, but hardly compared at all.[4] The Palestinian case, being unre-

[2] The research literature dealing with questions of compensation for the Palestinian refugees is almost exclusively written by Israeli scholars, while Palestinian and other Arab scholars usually study return. In this, both groups follow the preferences of their respective governments. My own perspective is that of a historian looking at compensation policies from a comparative point of view. I do not intend to make recommendations for a future peace agreement between Israel and Palestine.

[3] A case in point is Peter Gatrell, who mentions the Germans, but does not discuss them in detail in his book about 20th century refugeedom: Gatrell, Peter, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015). Gatrell has written a separate book about refugeedom in Eastern Europe: Gatrell, Peter, *The Unsettling of Europe: The Great Migration, 1945 to the Present* (London: Penguin Books, 2020).

[4] The one exception is Phillip Ther's study of the expellees' trajectories in East Germany and Poland: Ther, Phillip, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen 1945–1956*, Band 127 of *Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998). The research literature on German refugees is almost exclusively written in German. For an English account focusing on Silesians, see Demshuk, Andrew, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press,

solved, continues to be studied by scholars of law and human rights, mostly with regard to a future peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, and much less from a historical perspective.[5] If compared at all, the pending question of property compensation for the Palestinians is studied by political scientists and legal experts who compare it to late 20th century policies, but not to those implemented in the first half of the century.[6] In this article, by contrast, I refine myself to a historical perspective, studying the 1920s to 1960s.

My intention is neither to compare the circumstances leading to forced migrations and ethnic cleansing, nor to look into questions of guilt and responsibility. Rather, I am interested in the question how policies of compensation have played out in different settings and to what extent they have helped to improve the situation of forced migrants. As for the Palestinians and the *Mizrahi* (Oriental) Jews, the answer is obvious because they have never received any compensation at all. For the urban Asia Minor Greeks, even older studies have agreed on the overall failure of compensation schemes for them.[7] For east Germans, scholars have long thought that compensation and settlement worked rather well, but more recent studies are painting a different pic-

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2012).

5 See, for instance, Brynen, Rex and Roula El-Rifai, eds., *Compensation to Palestinian Refugees and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace* (New York: Pluto Press, 2013); Benvenisti, Eyal, and Eyal Zamir, "Private Claims to Property Rights in the Future Israeli-Palestinian Settlement," *American Journal of International Law* 89, no. 2 (1995): 295–340, doi:10.2307/2204205.

6 Leckie, Scott, ed., *Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Post-Conflict United Nations and Other Peace Operations: A Comparative Survey and Proposal for Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Niebergall, Heike and Norbert Wühler, "Implementation of an Agreed Solution for Palestinian Refugee Claims: Learning from the Experience of Other Claims Mechanisms," in *Compensation to Palestinian Refugees and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace*, ed. Rex Brynen and Roula El-Rifai (New York: Pluto Press, 2013), 177–203.

7 Rather optimistic studies of the Greek case were published in the 1930s: Eddy, C.B, *Greece and the Greek Refugees* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931), also Ladas, Stephan, *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey* (New York: MacMillan, 1932). By the 1950s, it was obvious that their optimism had been unfounded: Pentzopoulos, Dimitri, *The Balkan Exchange of Minorities and its Impact upon Greece* (Paris: Moutonon, 1962).

ture.[8] Detailed research on Turkey only started in the 1990s and suggests that here, too, compensation policies were less successful than previously thought.[9]

Claims mechanisms are messy, highly bureaucratic processes in which high numbers of cases have to be processed and expectations are high.[10] In the cases studied here, these expectations always ended in disappointment among the recipients of compensation. That said, it seems that those groups who did not receive any compensation were even worse off than those who did. Moreover, as I hope to show, the compensation schemes implemented in Greece, Turkey and Germany were—either de jure or facto—unilateral. The case of Israel and the *Mizrahis* suggests that an "accounting logic" (Shenhav), in which compensation payments are made dependent on prior payment by the other side, helps states to evade payment, leaving immigrants with nothing. It also seems that, even in the absence of compensation policies (Jordan, Israel) or with only very insufficient ones (Turkey, Greece), it was citizenship of the receiving state that eventually allowed second- and third-generation refugees to integrate.

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8 The literature is too vast to be listed here. Revisionist works include, but are not limited to: Hoffmann, Dierk and Michael Schwartz, eds., *Geglückte Integration? Spezifika und Vergleichbarkeiten der Vertriebenen-Eingliederung in der SBZ/DDR* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999); Kittel, Manfred, *Stiefkinder des Wirtschaftswunders? Die deutschen Ostvertriebenen und die Politik des Lastenausgleichs (1952 bis 1975)* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2020).

9 Arı, Kemal *Büyük Mübadele: Türkiye'ye Zorunlu Göç, 1923-1925*, vol. 17 of *Türkiye araştirmalari* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2007, 1st ed. 1995); Hirschon, Renée, *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2003); Pekin, Müfide ed., *Yeniden Kurulan Yaşamlar. 1923 Türk-Yunan Zorunlu Nüfus Mübadelesi* (Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005); Yıldırım, Onur, *Diplomacy and Displacement: Reconsidering the Turco-Greek Exchange of Populations, 1922-1934* (New York, London: Routledge, 2006); Morack, Ellinor, *The Dowry of the State? The Politics of Abandoned Property and Nation-Building in Turkey, 1921–1945*, vol. 9 of *Bamberger Orientstudien* (Bamberg: Bamberg University Press, 2017).

10 Niebergall, Heike and Norbert Wühler, "Implementation of an Agreed Solution for Palestinian Refugee Claims: Learning from the Experience of Other Claims Mechanisms," in *Compensation to Palestinian Refugees and the Search for Israeli-Palestinian Peace*, ed. Rex Brynen and Roula El-Rifai (New York: Pluto Press, 2013), 177–203, 178.

The Greek-Turkish Case: Forced and Compulsory Migration

The Greek-Turkish population exchange, i.e., the ethnic cleansing of the Asia Minor and Pontic Greeks at the end of the Greco-Turkish war of 1919–22, and the subsequent compulsory migration of mainland Greek and Cretan Muslims to Turkey in 1923–24, has often been cited as a precedent for future forced migrations of the 20th century.[11] This is because the Lausanne Convention, unlike many 19th century contracts drawn up in post-Ottoman contexts, projected not only one, but a pair of *mutual* forced migrations which were also, unlike in previous 20th century treaties, described as *compulsory*.[12] Mutuality was relatively new but not unheard of in 1923. Compulsory character, however, was a novelty.

Both the 1913 Ottoman-Bulgarian exchange agreement drawn up at the end of the Second Balkan War and that between Greece and Bulgaria of 1919 stipulated that populations would be "exchanged." Both were drawn up in post-conflict settings where large numbers of people had already been forced to leave their homes, and both made provisions for those populations that would not return, making them eligible for compensation. This means that, in theory, the people affected by the 1913 and 1919 treaties had a choice between return and compensation.[13]

The novelty of the Lausanne convention of 1923 was therefore threefold: 1) the mutual character of the migrations was not yet a *fait accompli*: the Ottoman Greeks had already been forced out or were being forced out while

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[11] Schwartz, Michael, *Vertriebene und "Umsiedlerpolitik": Integrationskonflikte in den deutschen Nachkriegs-Gesellschaften und die Assimilationsstrategien in der SBZ/DDR 1945-1961. Veröffentlichungen zur SBZ-/DDR-Forschung im Institut für Zeitgeschichte*, vol. 61 of *Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte* (München: Oldenbourg, 2009), 318; Özsu, Umut, *Formalizing Displacement: International Law and Population Transfers*, *History and Theory of International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 123.

[12] Schwartz, Michael, *Ethnische "Säuberungen" in der Moderne: Globale Wechselwirkungen nationalistischer und rassistischer Gewaltpolitik im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Band 95 of *Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte* (München, Germany: Oldenbourg Verlag, 310.

[13] For a detailed discussion of these early "exchanges", see Ladas, *Exchange*.

the negotiations were going on, while the Greek Muslims were still in place and largely unaffected by mass violence. 2) The *de facto* forced character of the Greeks' forced migration was thus complemented by *de jure* compulsory character: return was explicitly denied. This dealt a heavy blow to many Asia Minor refugees, who had hoped to return to their homes not least because they had already done so once before, at the end of the World War.[14] 3) The compulsory character was extended to a second group that had not been forced out by war: those Muslims in mainland Greece and Crete who were still in place.[15] Two groups were later exempted after prolongued negotiations at the Mixed Commission. These were the Albanian-speaking, Muslim Chams of Epirus, and the Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox people of southern Turkey.[16] Unlike previous treaties, which had merely legalized *de facto* forced migrations, the Lausanne convention, apart from doing just that for the Ottoman Greeks' case, also *caused* a huge involuntary migration: that of the Greek Muslims to Turkey. The Muslim population of Crete, which was Greek-speaking, included descendents of formerly enslaved Africans. .[17] All "exchangees" were automatically naturalized by state receiving them.The Convention explicitly stated that those who were subject to the exchange would not be allowed to return, and that exceptions were only possible with government approval.[18] This rule was strictly followed in Turkey: the council of ministers dealt with such trifles as

[14] See Aktar, Ayhan, "Türk-Yunan Nüfus Mübadelesi'nin İlk Yılı: Eylül 1922- Eylül 1923," in *Yeniden Kurulan Yaşamlar. 1923 Türk-Yunan Zorunlu Nüfus Mübadelesi*, ed. Müfide Pekin (Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005), 41–84; Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*, 83.

[15] Especially the rural parts of Crete had repeatedly been the scene of ethnicized violence leading to Muslim emigration from the island since the late 19th century. Ferguson, Michael, "Enslaved and Emancipated Africans on Crete," in *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: Histories of Trans-Saharan Africans in Nineteenth Century Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Mediterranean*, ed. Terence Walz and Kenneth M. Cuno (Cairo, New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010), 171–96.

[16] See Baltsiotis, Lambros, "The Muslim Chams of Northwestern Greece," *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey* no. 12 (2011), doi:10.4000/ejts.4444. (retrieved 23 November 2022); Frank, Matthew, *Making Minorities History: Population Transfer in Twentieth-Century Europe* (eng) (Oxford: Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2017), 79. For Arabic-speaking Orthodox: Kolluoğlu, Biray, "Excesses of Nationalism: Greco-Turkish Population Exchange," *Nations and Nationalism* 19, no. 3 (2013): 532–50, doi:10.1111/nana.12028 (retrieved 23 November 2022).

[17] See Ferguson, "Enslaved".

[18] Exchange Convention, Art. 1, 2.

an exchangee woman from Çatalca who wished to live with her Italian husband in Istanbul, and even with visitor visas for an exchangee football team visiting Istanbul in 1931.[19]

It is probably the uprooting of hundreds of thousands of people *who were still in place* that caused many negotiators at Lausanne to feel deeply disturbed about the convention. Lord Curzon's famous description of the exchange as a "thoroughly bad and vicious solution" is but one of many that at once decried the population exchange as cruel and legitimized it for supposedly helping to bring about peace. As Aslı Iğsız has argued, it is this peculiar idea of doing bad things for the greater good that has informed liberal humanitarianism – and wrought havoc on millions and millions of people – ever since.[20]

Yet there was a second point that contributed to the later notion that a "population exchange" was somehow a legitimate, relatively non-violent and reasonable instrument of international law, namely the stipulation of the Lausanne Convention that all those "exchanged" were eligible for equal value compensation for the property they left behind. This part of the convention was negotiated rather superficially, with the details being left to future negotiations in the Mixed Commission, a body that was soon created out of Turkish, Greek, and neutral members in 1923, remaining in operation until 1934.[21] According to the convention, local sub-commissions would be formed and tasked with the liquidation of all the immovable property owned by exchangees. Following this liquidation, all exchangees were to be provided with documents showing the value of their movable and immovable property *prior* to their departure. The receiving state would then provide them with property of equal value. The total values involved would be regularly calculated on both sides of the Aegean, and eventually, the state ending up with more would pay the other

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19 Kararname no. 1876, 21 October 1931. CA 30.0.18.01.01.24.71.018, kararname 19670, 27 April 1932, CA 30.0.18.01.01.27.30.007.

20 Iğsız, Aslı, *Humanism in Ruins: Entangled legacies of the Greek-Turkish population exchange* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2018). 4.

21 Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*, 157–164.

in gold currency. How exactly appraisals would be performed was left to be worked out by the Mixed Commission.[22]

These lofty provisions concerning property values were a fantasy from the very start: when the convention was signed in January 1923, most Ottoman Greeks had already left Turkish territory, and their property had either been confiscated by the Turkish state or seized by local power holders or Muslim refugees.[23] The owners were therefore unable to liquidate their property and bring the resulting documents with them. Even most of the Greek Muslims were unable to do so: their transfer migration started already in 1923, being largely completed by 1924. It was thus simply not possible to perform an individual appraisal of their immovable property (according to rules that were still to be worked out) prior to their departure.[24] Instead, the Mixed Commission attempted to retrospectively liquidate exchangee property by asking exchangees to fill in forms in the receiving countries.[25] There were also several attempts at appraising property in selected areas of Greece and Turkey, which invariably ended in disputes between the Greek and Turkish representatives. Apart from creating large quantities of paperwork for the Mixed Commission, all attempts at appraising and liquidating exchangee property individually came to nothing, and even the idea of lump sump appraisal was abandoned: eventually, with the 1930 Agreement of Ankara, Greece and Turkey agreed to simply transfer ownership rights to Muslim exchangee property to the Greek government and that

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22 Exchange Convention, arts. 9-14.

23 Arı, Kemal, "Yunan işgalinden sonra İzmir'de „Emval-i Metruke" ve „Fuzuli İşgal" Sorunu," *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi* 15, no. 5 (1989): 1–15; Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*, Morack, *Dowry.*

24 We have only scattered evidence for pre-departure appraisals in Greece. The documents produced by these commissions, which were staffed with Greek civil servants, seem to have been viewed with suspicion by Turkish authorities. See Morack, *Dowry*, 300. For an eyewitness account of a commission's work in Salonica, see Tesal, Reşat D., *Selânik'ten İstanbul'a: Bir ömrün hikâyesi* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1998), 66–68.

25 On these forms and the data recorded in them, see Şenışık, Pınar, *Migration and Material World of the Cretan Muslims. A Profile from Rethymno through the Liquidation of Property Cocuments in the Early Twentieth Century* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2018); Morack, Ellinor, "Claiming 'Imagined Property': Tasfiye Talebnames and the Lost Material World of Migrants after the Greek-Turkish Population Exchange of 1923–24," *Diyâr* 1, no. 1 (2020): 129–52.

of Greek Orthodox exchangee property to Turkey.[26] There was no talk of appraisal anymore. Instead, most of the agreement dealt with issues connected to those groups that had been allowed to stay, namely the Greeks of Constantinople/Istanbul and the Muslims of Thrace, as well as the "non-exchangeable" Muslims who had left Greece prior to 1912.[27]

It has been argued that first the Lausanne convention and later the Ankara Agreement were important steps towards an (albeit temporary) improvement of relations between Greece and Turkey.[28] On the other hand, it may well be that the agreement was not the reason, but rather the result of improved relations between the two states: the rise of Fascist Italian (and later also Bulgarian) irredentism was creating a strong incentive for better relations between Greece and Turkey.[29]

Apart from the sheer magnitute of the task at hand, which made it unlikely to be completed quickly, the idea of equal value compensation for property left behind in another state created a paradox between both states' foreign interests on the one hand and their domestic financial ones on the other: In terms of foreign affairs, the agreement created an incentive for both states to claim that the property left behind in the respective other country (by "their" people) was more valuable than that in their own – and indeed, this is what Turkey claimed thoughout the 1920s. However, back at home, such claims had the potential to backfire in domestic policy insofar as exchangees might demand higher compensation from their own government. Theoretically, this difference would have been balanced with the gold currency that was eventually to be paid by the other country – a payment that never came. In practice, however, the question of total values and that of compensation to refugees were treated as separate issues, with the settlement and compensation policies in

[26] For a detailed discussions of the work of the Mixed Commission, see Ladas, *Exchange*.

[27] Art. 1 of the Ankara Agreement: http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/LNTSer/1930/277.html. For the story of the non-exchangees, see Morack, *Dowry*, 312–323.

[28] Demirozu, D., "The Greek-Turkish Rapprochement of 1930 and the Repercussions of the Ankara Convention in Turkey," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 19, no. 3 (2008): 309–24.

[29] Öztan, Ramazan H., "Settlement Law of 1934: Turkish Nationalism in the Age of Revisionism," *Journal of Migration History* 6 (2020): 82–103, 85.

both countries having little to do with the ongoing negotiations at the Mixed Commission: Despite the existence of a multilateral treaty, exchangee settlement and compensation were actually performed unilaterally. By 1930, this had worked well enough for both governments to abandon the idea of a balancing of accounts.[30]

Settlement and Compensation Policies in Greece

The sheer number of refugees coming to Greece was of catastrophic proportions: within weeks, the country received 1,2 million refugees equalling a fourth of her pre-war population. In other words, one in five people in post-1922 Greece was a refugee, many of whom would probably have starved if it hadn't been for large-scale relief operations such as that of Near East Relief.[31] In early 1923, Greece asked the League of Nations for assistance in obtaining a loan for refugee settlement. Thanks to that assistance, the virtually bankrupt state was able to secure loans from British and American banks in 1924 and 1927, respectively.[32] In order to settle the refugees, the government of Greece and the League of Nations created the Refugee Settlement Commission (RSC), an international, non-governmental organization controlled by the League. The Greek government put the loans it received and 500,000 hectares of settlement land at the RSC's disposal; repayment was put into the hands of the International Financial Commission, a consortium of debtor banks that had already administered Greece's foreign debt since 1897.[33] In order to come up

30 See Morack, *Dowry*.

31 Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*, 132–33.

32 Pentzopoulos,*The Balkan Exchange*, 78; Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*,164.

33 Much like the Ottoman *Administration de la Dette Publique* before it, the IDC administered several (and in fact: the same) taxes collected in Macedonia, such as the salt monopoly of New Greece and duties collected at several ports. On the IFC, see Kontogiorgi, Elisabeth, "Economic Consequences following Refugee Settlement in Greek Macedonia, 1923-1932," in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*, ed. Renée Hirschon (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), 63–78, 64.

with enough settlement land (the land owned by exchangeable Muslims was not sufficient), Greece engineered a comprehensive land reform in Greek Macedonia, whose rural parts were quite underdeveloped.[34] Greece expropriated church property, local Albanians, and French, British and Italian nationals in the area. The latter were compensated at much higher rates than Greek nationals; Greece had to use a substantial part of one of the loans to do so.[35] In the following years, the RSC financed large-scale infrastructure projects and provided loans for refugee-farmers. The foreign loans and the institutions distributing them in Greece helped to significantly strengthen the country's banking system.[36] Most rural refugees were settled in Macedonia, much fewer numbers in Western Thrace or elsewhere. Refugee settlement was an important part of Hellenization in areas home to large non-Greek (Albanian, Slavic, and Turkish-speaking) communities. The refugees had to buy the land from the RSC and were only given title upon re-paying their loans.[37] Many did not manage to do so until 1944, when the remaining debts were cancelled.[38]

Most Asia Minor refugees were unable to benefit from the agricultural settlement program because they were city-dwellers. In cities, the RSC only invested in projects promising to generate revenue such as the carpet and silk industries; it also constructed and mortgaged homes for refugees. Some urban refugees received loans from the National Bank helping small businesses and artisans.[39] Large numbers of urban refugees, however, were reduced to severe

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34 The main reason for this underdevelopment was the lack of security in the countryside, which caused capital owners to shy away from investment in rural areas. Ottoman Macedonia therefore was an area of emigration rather than immigration in the late 19th century. Elisabeth Kontogiorgi, *Population Exchange in Greek Macedonia: The Rural Settlement of Refugees 1922-1930*, *Oxford historical monographs* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2010), 15–19.

35 Kontogiorgi, *Population Exchange*, 128.

36 On the international financial and banking aspect of Greece's refugee loans, see Brégianni, Catherine, "Echange de populations, organisation d'espace et savoir-faire des institutions internationales: Le reseau de la Banque Agricole de Grece et l'office autonome pour le'etablissement des refugies a la Grece du Nord pendant les annees vingt et trente," in *Politiques économiques des institutions internationales/ Economic Policies of International Institutions*, ed. Catherine Brégianni and Roser Cussó (Paris, 2019), 10–54.

37 Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*, 170.

38 Pentzopoulos, *Balkan*, 234.

39 Ladas, *Exchange*, 673–675.

poverty and became a new underclass. Housing, too, was a huge problem: by 1957, 37,000 refugees were still living in temporary shelters.[40] The different trajectory of rural and urban refugees translated into political affiliations: while those refugees who received land and aid from the state tended to support the liberal and nationalist policies of Venizelism, those who were disappointed by the state mostly leaned toward the Left.[41] With the impact of the World Economic Crisis, many small-scale refugee farmers who produced such cash-crops as tobacco also shifted to the Left.[42]

The compensation of Asia Minor refugees in Greece was performed through the issuing of bonds secured with the "abandoned" property of exchangeable Muslims. Greece created commissions comprised of government officials and refugee representatives who reviewed the applications for compensation. Accepted claims were paid partly in cash (20 percent) and partly in bonds (80 percent, with 8, later 6 percent interest). Progress, however, was slow, and many refugees were deeply disappointed by the scheme. This disappointment contributed to the emergence of a specific refugee identity among the Asia Minor Greeks in Greece, and to many of the urban ones embracing communism.[43] Even after World War Two, many refugees were still waiting for compensation, for full ownership rights to their houses and for an improvement of their overall situation.[44] As elsewhere, integration was slow and seems to have picked up only with the second generation. It is also noteworthy that many of those *Gastarbeiter* ("guest workers," i.e., labor migrants) who went from Greece's underdeveloped areas to the FRG in the 1950s and 1960s had a

40 Pentzopoulos, *Balkan*, 226.
41 Kontogiorgi, *Population Exchange*, 188–9.
42 Kontogiorgi, *Population Exchange*, 190.
43 Gatrell, *Making*, 69.
44 Pentzopoulos, 226–7.

refugee background.[45] As late as the 1980s, a strong sense of community existed among elderly Asia Minor refugees in Piraeus.[46]

Settlement and Compensation Policies in Turkey

Turkey received "only" about 400,000 exchangees in a country of 12 million, and these numbers as well as the assumption of an "abundance of land" have led earlier scholarship to assume that the settlement and compensation of exchangees in Turkey was relatively easy.[47] Today we know that Turkey's experience, too, was not an easy one: the country, unlike Greece, had been at war almost incessantly since 1911, and had already received large numbers of destitute refugees during and after the Balkan Wars and World War I. Worse still, almost all parts of the country had been theatres of war, and homes, infrastructure and agricultural land had been ruined either during the Great War or in the course of the Civil War of 1918–22. Also, unlike Greece, Turkey was not able to obtain international loans to shoulder the burden of refugee settlement.[48]

The government of Turkey—which, by October 1923, became a republic—created a ministry in charge of settling refugees, which was, however, downgraded to a directorate in 1925. The incoming exchangees were sent almost exclusively to areas where large numbers of Orthodox Greeks had lived, i.e., to Eastern Thrace, to Western Anatolia, to the province of Konya in central Anatolia, and to the Black Sea region.[49] The province of Adana, which had been home to a large Armenian population, also received about 20,000 ex-

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45 Adamopoulou, Maria, "West Side Stories: the Greek Gastarbeiter's migration to the Federal Republic of Germany and their return to the homeland (1960-1989)" (PhD thesis, European University Institute, 2022), accessed January 5, 2023, https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/73949/Adamopoulou_2022_HEC.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y.

46 Hirschon, Renée, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe. The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

47 Ladas, *Exchange,* 708.

48 Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*, 175.

49 For numbers, see Arı, *Büyük Mübadele*, Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*.

changees, while only 1100 were sent to Erzincan in Eastern Anatolia.[50] During a first, rather chaotic period, people were simply shown to houses and land, but not yet given property rights. During a second one, they were given preliminary property rights *(tefviz),* often, but not always, for those houses they were already living in. These rights were turned into permanent ones starting in 1928, with a procedure known as *temlik*.[51]

The settlement authorities wanted the exchangees to produce their own livelihoods as quickly as possible, ideally with the means left behind by the Ottoman Greeks. These means, however, had been seized, either by the state or by the local population, which included many previously arrived refugees. As a result, conflicts over housing and land were ubiquitous, continuing well into the 1930s.[52] Another problem was the mis-matching of professions and occupations: many Orthodox Greeks had lived and worked as craftsmen and artisans in small towns and cities; their expulsion left Turkey in dire need of craftsmanship for decades to come.[53] The incoming exchangees, on the other hand, were mostly peasants who were, worse still, not always familiar with the crops grown in their settlement areas. Once actual compensation started, a second problem emerged: owners were not necessarily thecultivators of the land. In those areas characterized by commercial agriculture, tenancy, sharecropping and agricultural labor were common, and tenants had been both Muslim and Christian. The distribution of such land among exchangees therefore often resulted in conflicts with the tenants.[54] Turkey passed legislation allowing the distribution of property controlled by the state (i.e., especially Armenian-owned "abandoned" property) but did not attempt to perform a comprehensive land reform.[55]

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50 İpek, Nedim, *Mübadele ve Samsun* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2001), 70.

51 On the legal terminology and its implications, see Morack, *Dowry*.

52 See Morack, *Dowry*, Yildirim, *Diplomacy*.

53 On the lack of craftsmen and artisans, see Koraltürk, Murat, Türk-Yunan Nüfus Mübadelesinin İktisadi Sonuçları *Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Ekonominin Türkleştirilmesi*, by Murat Koraltürk (İstanbul: İletişim, 2011), 51–92.

54 For a discussion of such cases, see Morack, *Dowry,* 258–9.

55 See Morack, Ellinor, "Refugees, Locals, and 'the' State: Property Compensation in the Province of Izmir Following the Greco-Turkish Population Exchange of 1923," in *Law*

In theory, the compensation policies of the Turkish state were strictly restorative: the idea was to give people property corresponding to what they had left behind – if they were able to prove it. This, however, was often not the case, and even those who could produce documents supporting their claims got only parts of what they had hoped for. Most exchangee families were compensated with a bare minimum of land and a small house, a standard known as "default settlement" *(iskan-i adi)*.[56] The amounts of land differed in accordance with fertility of the soil, but seem to have been tailored to self-sufficiency.[57] In urban areas, and especially in İzmir, soaring housing prices resulted in a great discrepancy between the values recorded in the exchangees' documents and the houses they wanted – and were often already living in. When claims and actual values didn"t match, the houses in question were mortgaged, and the exchangees had to re-pay their debts over several years.[58]

We still know precious little about the actual trajectories of most exchangees. What little we have in the way of oral history points to great disparities between upper-class exchangees who were able to use their connections and were given valuable real estate on the one hand and disappointment and hardship among the masses on the other.[59] There seems to have been substantial follow-up migration from rural, hardly developed settlement areas to more prosperous ones, most notably to Western Anatolia.[60] As one former exchangee

and Legality in the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey, ed. Kent Schull, M. S. Saraçoğlu and Robert Zens (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 179–200.

56 On settlement and compensation policies, see Morack, *Dowry*.

57 Kemal Arı gives the numbers as between 50 and 75 *dönüm* of first class land, between 75 and 100 *dönüm* of second-class land, and 100 to 140 *dönüm* of third class land for a family of five. (One dönüm roughly corresponds to 0,1 hectare). Arı, Kemal, "Türkiye'de Mübadele Dönemi Toprak Mülkiyeti ve Tarımda Değişim," in *75 Yılda Köylerden Şehirlere*, ed. Ayşe Hacımirzaoğlu (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), 97–114. This was not bad, however, it has to be kept in mind that chemical fertilizer was hardly affordable at the time, making extensive agriculture necessary. Also, irrigation may not always have been possible. I would like to thank my colleagues Sadık Müfit Bilge, Hakan Yücel, Ece Zerman and Onur İnal for answering my questions in this matter.

58 Morack, *Dowry*.

59 Reşat D. Tesal, the son of a former deputy from Salonica, experienced the exchange as a child. He later recalled that all his relatives were able to receive valuable real estate as compensation for their losses thanks to his father's help. Tesal, Reşat D., *Selânik'ten İstanbul'a: Bir ömrün hikâyesi* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1998).

60 Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*, 268, FN 104.

put it: “The land was worthless (...) We could not stay. We escaped.”[61] In this respect, it is important to note that Greek Orthodox had formed a substantial part of the working class of Western Anatolia – both in rural and in urban areas – until 1922.[62] How exactly their labor was replaced is a question still pending further investigation, but it seems that exchangees, along with internal migrants, were filling that gap.[63] What we do know is that at least some exchangees – in this case, Grecophones from Crete – who described their previous circumstances as rather well-to-do, were “agricultural laborers” *(rençper)* in 1925.[64] Moreover, oral history accounts like that above suggest that at least some exchangees may have preferred laboring in commercial agriculture to the hardships of peasant life in a remote village.

Cultural and Social Integration

In many cases, exchangees “inherited” the economic conflicts that Greek Orthodox people had had with their Muslim neighbors. The difference between them was that the Young Turk regime (1908–1918) usually regarded Orthodox populations as a fifth column, pursuing policies of violence and forced migration against them.[65] By contrast, the Turkish nation-state state regarded Muslim exchangees as full citizens who were entitled to protection from crime and

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61 Köker, Tolga, “Lessons in Refugeehood: The Experience of Forced Migrants in Turkey,” in *Crossing the Aegean: An Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey*, ed. Renée Hirschon (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2003), 193–208, 201.

62 See Morack, Ellinor, “Turkifying Poverty or: the Phantom Pain of İzmir's Lost Christian Working Class, 1924–26,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 55, no. 4 (2019): 499–518.

63 Yıldırım, too, mentions that many exchangees moved on, in this case due to conflicts with locals that left them homeless: Yıldırım, *Diplomacy*, 146.

64 See Morack, “Claiming”.

65 This especially goes for the Orthodox populations of Thrace, north-Western Anatolia, and Western Anatolia from 1913 onwards. See Erol, Emre, *The Ottoman Crisis in Western Anatolia: Turkey's Belle Epoque and the Transition to a Modern Nation State* (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2016); Gingeras, Ryan, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912–1923* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

violence, enjoyed active and passive suffrage, and – provided they managed to obtain the necessary education – had access to careers in public service and the military. As for discriminatory practices, we know that the Greek-speaking Cretan Muslims were often denounced as "half infidels" *(yarı gavur)*, and that intermarriage between locals and newcomers took some time.[66] With regard to the Cretan exchangees of African descent, we can only speculate that they were doubly discriminated against as Greek-speakers and Black people.[67]

There is very little evidence of exchangee self-organization and pressure groups, and only from the 1920s.[68] Scholarly interest in the exchange has only started to emerge in the late 1990s, following an improvement in foreign relations between Greece and Turkey. Today, several non-governmental organizations of third-generation exchangees do exist. Their members, many of them retirees, engage in nostalgic and rather friendly contact with their counterparts in Greece.[69]

The German Refugees and Expellees, 1945–1970s

Towards the end of WWII, in the winter of 1944–1945, millions of Germans from Eastern Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia fled westward, trying to escape the advancing Soviet army. The evacuation treks soon deteriorated into dangerous, haphazard flight movements during which an estimated 600–800,000

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66 Özsoy, İskender *Mübadele'nin Öksüz Çocukları* (Istanbul: Bağlam, 2007), 45.

67 Racism against Black people or people of color was not institutionalized, neither in the Ottoman Empire nor in Modern Turkey, but often overlapped with slavery, which was only (officially) abolished in 1875. The topic of informal and everyday racism in republican times is still greatly understudied. For a discussion of stereotyping starting from Turkish cinema in the 1950s, see Altay, Tunay, "Is there really no anti-Black Racism in Turkey?", Bianet, 4 July 2020, https://m.bianet.org/english/people/226799-is-there-really-no-anti-black-racism-in-turkey.

68 Morack, *Dowry*.

69 For a critique of this nostalgic form of remembering, see Iğsız, Aslı, "Polyphony and Geographic Kinship in Anatolia: Framing the Turkish-Greek Compulsory Population Exchange," in *The Politics of Public Memory in Turkey.*, ed. Esra Özyürek (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 162–87.

refugees died – from the cold, from exhaustion, or because the treks came under attack or were trapped between the lines.[70] The refugees' flight continued up to the western shores of the Oder and Neiße rivers, which came to delineate the post-war border between Germany and Poland. From there, they went or were sent to places all over present-day Germany.

The Potsdam Conference, which convened in July 1945, did not formally approve of these forced migrations. However, we do know that, much like in Lausanne twenty years earlier, most negotiators agreed that an "unmixing of peoples" in Eastern Europe was necessary in order to bring peace to Europe.[71] De facto, the territorial changes negotiated at the conference – most importantly, the moving westward of Poland – sealed the fate not only of the already uprooted German refugees, but also of Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Poles, who were subsequently forced to migrate. Their migration and compensation was regulated with a series of bilateral treaties between Poland on the one hand and the Soviet republics of Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine on the other.[72] 3 million more ethnic Germans who were still in place were expelled. The new Polish state was Polonized by the forced transfer of Ukranians and Lithuanians to the Soviet Union and the settlement of Poles in their place.[73]

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70 The number of German refugee deaths was over-estimated for a long time, with estimations of as much as 2 million deaths being common. 600,000 and 800,000 are the numbers of confirmed deaths that Kirchlicher Suchdienst and Bundesarchiv counted in 1965 and 1974, respectively. Haar, Ingo, "Die deutschen "Vertreibungsverluste"– Forschungsstand, Kontexte und Probleme," in *Ursprünge, Arten und Folgen des Konstrukts "Bevölkerung" vor, im und nach dem "Dritten Reich". Zur Geschichte der deutschen Bevölkerungswissenschaft*, ed. Rainer Mackensen, Jürgen Reulecke and Josef Ehmer (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 363–81.

71 Gatrell, *Making*, 92.

72 These treaties included detailed stipulations concerning property compensation: See Zielinski, Konrad, "To Pacify, Populate and Polonise: Territorial Transformations and the Displacement of Ethnic Minorities in Communist Poland, 1944–49," in *Warlands: Population resettlement and state reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50*, ed. Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 188–209. 192.

73 Ochman, Ewa, "Population Displacement and Regional Reconstruction in Postwar Poland: the Case of Upper Silesia," in *Warlands: Population resettlement and state reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945-50,* ed. Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 210–28.

By 1947, about 10 million German refugees *(Flüchtlinge)* had found shelter in the four Allied occupation zones. Their numbers were further swelled by the subsequent expulsion of ethnic Germans from Czechoslovakia and south-eastern Europe (mainly Yugoslavia), who (in West Germany) became known as expellees (*Vertriebene)*. In total, between 12 and 14 million ethnic Germans were forced to migrate to present-day Germany. Most arrived with all but nothing, and to a country that lay in ruins. Germany, unlike Greece, Turkey and Israel, had not expelled any significant number of people at the end of the war, and therefore no houses of outgoing populations could be used for the incoming ones.[74] The only shelter that was easily available was in the camps previously used for POWs and forced laborers and spare rooms in private homes that were now confiscated for that purpose.

It should be noted that the only 500,00 German Jews living in pre-war Germany were not counterparts to the incoming German refugees: Virtually all their homes were appropriated by "Aryan" Germans either prior to 1939 or in the course of the Shoah. Moreover, the surviving German Jews mostly went to the USA or Israel, not to the homelands of the German refugees in what now became Poland and the Soviet Union.[75]

The story of the German refugees is special in several respects. First of all, few people outside of Germany were inclined to feel sorry for them: their own country – Nazi Germany – had attacked and occupied most of Europe, exploiting and colonizing the occupied countries, starving millions – especially in Russia – and deporting millions of others as forced laborers.[76] From 1941 onwards, Nazi Germany committed the *Shoah*, killing six million Euro-

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75 Of the about 300,000 displaced persons (i.e., survivors) who were in Germany in 1945, about two thirds went to Palestine and later Israel. Emigration to the USA surged once immigration rules there were changed in the late 1940s: see Kangisser Cohen, Sharon, "Choosing a Heim: Survivors of the Holocaust and Jewish Immigration," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 46, no. 2 (2013): 32–54, accessed November 23, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42751137, 33. The total number of Jews who returned to Germany for good probably was lower than 20,000, with only 12,000 deciding to live in West Germany, and even fewer in the GDR: https://www.bpb.de/themen/holocaust/gerettete-geschichten/149156/juden-in-europa-nach-dem-zweiten-weltkrieg-1945-bis-1989-90/.

pean Jews, and the *Porajmos*, the genocide of the European Sinti and Roma, and killed hundreds of thousands of other people because of their political activities or sexual orientation.[77] As for non-civilian loss of life, the Soviet Union alone lost 20 million soldiers fighting Nazi Germany. In the face of all this destruction induced by Germany, pity for German refugees, even if most of them were women and children, was in short supply. It is also worth noting that, at the end of the war and up to the early 1950s, the deplorable living conditions of the refugees were far from unusual: Germany and eastern Europe were full of uprooted people (known as "displaced persons" or DPs), including (Jewish and other) survivors of concentration camps, former forced laborers, and surviving Jews fleeing from repeated antisemitic violence at home.[78]

Like the Greek and Turkish "exchangees," the Germans were technically not refugees: they simply kept their German citizenship and continued to live in Germany – either east or west. They were therefore not refugees as defined in the 1951 protocol of the United Nations.[79] In the wider sense of the term, however, they were: they had lost everything and were no longer allowed to return home.[80] Their treatment was not regulated in any bilateral

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76 On the economic side of the Nazi war, see Tooze, J. A., *The Wages of Destruction: The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy* (New York, NY: Viking, 2007); Kay, Alex J., *Exploitation, Resettlement, Mass Murder: Political and Economic Planning for German Occupation Policy in the Soviet Union, 1940-1941*, *War and Genocide* (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2013). On the plight of the Soviet civilian population, see Hass, Jeffrey K., *Wartime Suffering and Survival: The Human Condition under Siege in the Blockade of Leningrad, 1941-1944*, *Oxford scholarship online* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021).

77 Again, the research literature is too vast to be listed here. A few examplary titles in English are: Longerich, Peter, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews,* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); on homosexuals and other sexual minorities: Schwartz, Michael, *Homosexuelle im Nationalsozialismus. Neue Forschungsperspektiven zu Lebenssituationen von lesbischen, schwulen, bi-, trans- und intersexuellen Menschen 1933 bis 1945* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

78 Gatrell, *Making*, 122.

79 The convention defines as a refugee as a stateless person or a person who, "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted" (...) "is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." The tension here stems from the difference between country and state. 1951 Convention to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1 (2). https://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b66c2aa10.pdf. (retrieved 7 February 2022).

80 In this point, I agree with Peter Gatrell, who also uses a wider definition of refugeedom. See Gatrell, *Making*, 7.

treaty, but depended on the decisions first of the occupying powers and then of the two German governments and their local agencies, whose policies differed substantially: Most refugees initially arrived to the Soviet-occupied zone, which, by 1949, became the German Democratic Republic (henceforth: GDR). By 1947/48, there were four million refugees in the GDR. The relative number of refugees there resembled that in post-1922 Greece: By 1950, one in four citizens of the GDR (25 percent) was a refugee. Subsequent migration to the Federal Republic of Germany (henceforth: FRG) in Western Germany brought this number down to one in five, or 20 percent, by 1961.[81] Western Germany had 8 million *Ostvertriebene*, which by 1950 amounted to 16 percent of the total population.[82]

The country, and especially the industrial centers, lay in ruins due to years of Allied bombings, and refugees therefore mostly went to rural areas, where housing, food and employment were easier to find than in the cities.[83] The numbers are impressive: In 1949, 46.9 percent of Mecklenburg's population were refugees, in Brandenburg, it was 27.4, in Schleswig-Holstein 23.2. Most refugees found employment as agricultural laborers and as dependents in farmers' households, often replacing forced laborers who had returned home.[84] Most were at the mercy of the local population, which was often hostile, especially when refugees had a confessional identity (Protestant or Catholic) different from that of the locals.[85]

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81 Amos, Heike, *Die Vertriebenenpolitik der SED 1949 bis 1990*, *Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer* (Berlin/Boston: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2009).

82 Kittel, Manfred, *Stiefkinder des Wirtschaftswunders? Die deutschen Ostvertriebenen und die Politik des Lastenausgleichs (1952 bis 1975)* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2020), 11.

83 Bauerkämper, Arnd, "Die vorgetäuschte Integration. Die Auswirkungen der Bodenreform und Flüchtlingssiedlung auf die berufliche Eingliederung von Vertriebenen in die Landwirtschaft in Deutschland 1945-1960," in *Geglückte Integration? Spezifika und Vergleichbarkeiten der Vertriebenen-Eingliederung in der SBZ/DDR*, ed. Dierk Hoffmann and Michael Schwartz (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), 193–214, 195.

84 Bauerkämper, "Vorgetäuschte", 196.

85 Most German refugees and expellees were Protestants, the only notable exception being the usually Catholic Silesians.

Initially, the situation was devastating in both East and West Germany. Refugees lacked the most basic necessities, and even those who had been well-to-do back home found themselves reduced to severe poverty.[86] Their plight was impossible to ignore, but so was the fact that, in the face of Germany's crushing defeat and sole responsibility for the war and the death, suffering and devastation it had brought about Europe – and had not paid for – demanding compensation for them from Poland or the Soviet Union was out of the question.

Apart from the refugees' plight, however, the political situation soon differed very much from one country to the other: The GDR soon started to euphemistically call refugees (and expellees) "Umsiedler" (resettlers), grudgingly accepting the Oder-Neiße line and suppressing any demands for return or restitution.[87] In West Germany, by contrast, the newcomers were able to form associations lobbying for refugees' interests and even a political party that, in the 1950s, joined several states' and one federal government.[88] These pressure groups refused to accept the new eastern border—a position shared across the political spectrum in West Germany.[89] This was possible because the Potsdam Conference had left a final settlement of Germany's borders to future negotiations for a peace treaty.[90] By the 1970s, however, Willy Brandt's politics of

[86] Wille, Manfred, "SED und "Umsiedler" – Vertriebenenpolitik der Einheitspartei im ersten Nachkriegsjahrzehnt," in *Geglückte Integration? Spezifika und Vergleichbarkeiten der Vertriebenen-Eingliederung in der SBZ/DDR*, ed. Dierk Hoffmann and Michael Schwartz (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1999), 91–104, 92.

[87] Ibid., 99.

[88] This was the BHG, *Block der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* (Bloc of those Expelled from their Homeland and the Disenfranchised), later renamed *Gesamtdeutscher Block*. See Stöss, Richard, "Der Gesamtdeutsche Block/BHG," in *Parteien-Handbuch: Die Parteien der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1980*, ed. Richard Stöss, vol. v.38 of *Schriften des Zentralinstituts Für Sozialwiss. Forschung der FU Berlin* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag fur Sozialwissenschaften GmbH, 1986), 1424–59.

[89] On the relationship between refugee associations and the social democrat party, see Müller, Matthias, *Die SPD und die Vertriebenenverbände 1949–1977: Eintracht, Entfremdung, Zwietracht*, vol. 8 of *Politik und Geschichte* (Berlin, Münster: Lit, 2012).

[90] The 2+4 Treaty formally signed by the four Allies, the GDR and FRG in 1990 is a peace treaty in all but name. In it, Germany formally accepted the Oder-Neiße Line and gained full sovereignty. (The FRG had already accepted the Oder-Neiße border in the Warsaw treaty of 1970, but West Germany had continued to print maps showing the German territories of 1937). The question of German war reparations, however, was intentionally left untouched. See Geiger, Tim, Jürgen Lillteicher and Hermann Wentker, eds., *Zwei plus*

rapproachment with Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the GDR *(Ostpolitik)* led to an alienation of refugee groups and their political agenda. The Christian Democrat governments of the 1980s never revoked that policy, and the *Vertriebenenverbände* lost much of their impact on German politics.[91]

Refugee Policies and Land Reform in the GDR

Initially, the Soviet Occupied Zone (henceforth: SOZ) was quite successful in terms of emergency relief efforts and in putting roofs over the refugees' heads. In the late 1940s, the SOZ offered clothing donations and cheap loans for refugees who wanted to start a business. Up to 1952, economic support for refugees was actually better than in the FRG.[92] The SOZ/GDR was also quicker at dissolving refugee camps by finding permanent housing for refugees than the FRG.[93] Special administrations for refugee aid were established both in form of a central office in Berlin, as sub-divisions of the state ministries, and on district level.[94] By 1948, the year when it decided to accept the Oder-Neiße line, however, the SED (Socialist Union Party) decided that help specifically addressing *Umsiedler* had to end. The refugee problem was officially treated as having been solved, and any future help had to take place within the general framework of social policies in the GDR (which, like the FRG, was founded in 1949.) In the following decades, the GDR either ignored or suppressed the expression of refugee identities.[95] On the economic side, the GDR, but not the FRG, was impacted by reparation payments, which were

Vier: Die internationale Gründungsgeschichte der Berliner Republik Helmut Altrichter et al., vol. 123 of *Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (München, Wien: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2021).

91 See Demshuk, Andrew, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 264–5.

92 Philipp Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene: Gesellschaft und Vertriebenenpolitik in der SBZ/DDR und in Polen 1945–1956*, Band 127 of *Kritische Studien zur Geschichtswissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 250.

93 Ther, *Deutsche*, 252.

94 Ibid., 149.

95 Amos, *Die Vertriebenenpolitik*.

partly made by dismantling and transporting industrial facilities to the Soviet Union.[96]

Already in 1945, the SOZ became the scene of an ambitious land reform. All landed property comprising more than 100 ha was expropriated without compensation, and the land was broken up into up to 210,000 smaller farms.[97] The reform was especially important in the area east of the Elbe river, where most of the land had hitherto been owned by a small class of big (and usually aristocratic) landowners, the so-called *Junkers*. When the reform was implemented in 1945, not only the local landless population, but also refugees, provided they were not former big landowners or Nazis, became eligible for new farms However, few refugees were actually able to benefit or only got small, uneconomical farms.[98] This was due to power relations on the ground: the actual implementation of the reform was laid into the hands of local commissions comprised of landless or near-landless locals, who lost no time securing the best pieces for themselves and, when it came to lending tools and machinery to refugee farmers, were more willing to help their friends than the newcomers.[99] The land reform of the 1940s was followed by forced collectivization in the 1950s and 1960s. All farmers – refugees or not – were forced to join agricultural cooperatives.

Whether rural or urban, many refugees could not benefit at all: By the late 1940s and early 1950s, they were significantly overrepresented among recipients of welfare, as well as among the working poor, in the SOZ.[100] In the

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96 Fisch, Jörg, *Reparationen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Mit 29 Tabellen* (München: Beck, 1992).

97 See Bauerkämper, Arnd, ed., *"Junkerland in Bauernhand"?: Durchführung, Auswirkungen und Stellenwert der Bodenreform in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone*, vol. 20 of *Historische Mitteilungen Beiheft* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996).

98 Ibid., Ther, *Deutsche*, 253.

99 Marquardt, Sabine, "Die Bodenreformkommissionen in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern als Vehikel der politischen Transformation," in *Sozialismus auf dem platten Land: Tradition und Transformation in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern von 1945 bis 1952*, ed. Damian van Melis (Schwerin: Thomas Helms Verlag, 1999), 239–60, 239.

100 By 1950, 51,6 percent of welfare recipients in Sachsen-Anhalt were refugees. This can partly be explained by the high ratio of refugees who were unfit for work. Boldorf, "Fürsorgeunterstützung," 233.

political and cultural realm, the SED followed a policy of denial and suppression, hoping in vain hat refugee identity would fade with the passing of time.[101] The last programs for refugee aid ended in 1953.[102] Up to the mid-1960s, and especially in rural areas, many refugees remained a part of the poorest segment of society, while those living in cities were more likely to experience social mobility.[103] For later decades, we can only assume that the SED's overall policy of (forced) collectivization and mechanization in agriculture (which started in 1952 and was completed by 1960), large-scale housing construction and almost full employment (also for most women) and improvements in real wages up to the 1970s, translated into improvements in the living conditions not only of the general population, but also of refugees.[104] What we do know is that income distribution in the GDR became more egalitarian from the 1950s onwards, and, despite some increase in inequality in the 1970s, remained much more egalitarian than in the FRG up to 1990.[105] Moreover, by 1990, 92 percent of women aged 25–65 were employed, most of them in full-time jobs.[106]

Compensation in West Germany

In the Western occupation zones, too, refugees were housed in barracks where several families were sharing kitchens, bathrooms and often even rooms – but in West Germany, this form of accomodation lasted longer than in the east. West Germany had, by 1950, 8 million *Ostvertriebene*, which corresponded to

101 See Amos, *Vertriebenenpolitik*.
102 Ther, *Deutsche*, 251.
103 Ibid., 253.
104 Both real wages and access to higher education improved significantly up to the 1970s. After that, however, access to higher education stagnated, while real wages actually declined between 1970 and 1990. Wirth, Heike and Bernhard Schimpf-Neimanns, "Bestandsaufnahme und Nutzungsmöglichkeiten amtlicher Mikrodaten der DDR für Sekundäranalysen zur Bildungs- und Einkommensungleichheit", 20–21, 42.
105 See Schimpf, Neimanns and Wirth, "Bestandsaufnahme,"42.
106 Ibid., 38. Due to previous full-time work, female retirees in East Germany tend to have much higher pensions than their peers in West Germany.

16 percent of the population. In preparation for a compensation scheme for them, the west Germans studied the case of Finland, where help for the Karelians was accomplished by an ambitious land reform.[107] A similar land reform, however, was anathema in West Germany, not least because that going on in East Germany at the time was detested among landowners.[108] The general situation of refugees certainly improved—if not immediately—due to West Germany's inclusion in the Marshall Plan and the resulting positive economic development in the 1950–60s. Unlike the GDR, West Germany did not pay reparations for war-time damage, but it agreed to make lump-sum compensation payments to Western European countries. Israel was paid 3 billion DM, mostly in goods.[109]

The law that West Germany eventually came up with, was called "Lastenausgleichsgesetz" (burden-sharing bill). The law, which was debated in the *Bundestag* for three years, addressed not only the plight of the *Ostvertriebene*, but also that of people who had lost everything to the Allied bombings *(Bombengeschädigte/Ausgebombte)*, another 7 to 8 million people. It functioned like a special tax imposed on those who were still wealthy.[110] The *Lastenausgleichsgesetz* obliged owners of real estate, businesses and financial capital to pay, for forty years, 1.8 percent of the 1948 value of those assets as an

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107 Kittel, *Stiefkinder*, 12.

108 Ibid.,14.

109 The FRG also paid 450 million to the Jewish Claims Conference, as agreed in 1952. So-called "global agreements" about lump-sum payments for war-time damage were made with 12 Western European countries between 1959 and 1964: the FRG agreed to pay 951 million DM, with payments ranging from 1 million DM (to Sweden) to 400 million (to France). Bundesfinanzministerium, "Entschädigung von NS-Unrecht. Regelungen zur Wiedergutmachung," https://web.archive.org/web/20141102085709/http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/Content/DE/Downloads/Broschueren_Bestellservice/2012-11-08-entschaedigung-ns-unrecht.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2.

110 According to Kittel, the only case studied in preparation for the bill was that of the Karelians in post-1945 Finnland. Whether the German *Lastenausgleich* resembled "refugee taxes" imposed on local populations in post-genocide Armenia and in post-1948 Pakistan remains to be studied. See Gatrell, 59, 157. Talin Suciyan mentions a "Tax for the Fatherland" collected by Istanbul's Armenian community to help Genocide survivors: Suciyan, Talin, *The Armenians in Modern Turkey: Post-Genocide Society, Politics and History* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris 2016), 46.

annual contribution to a special fund. Out of this fund, pensions as well as compensations for lost property were paid.

Upon first glance, the *Lastenausgleich* looks impressive: it is the only scheme discussed here that was built on the principle of redistributory justice. While it is true that this principle was followed, and that many people did receive payments—though usually not as high as they had wished for—Kittel points out that the system had two major flaws: First, about half of the contributions to the fund actually came from public budgets – which were financed with taxes on the general population, including the beneficiaries themselves. Second, inflation was not factored in: Contributions to the fund remained the same despite considerable inflation and increasing property values. Since the pensions paid out of the fund had to be adjusted to inflation, less and less money was available for compensation payments. Apart from compensation for property, there was also extra money paid to people who had been uprooted *(Entwurzelungszuschlag)*.[111]

Kittel suggests that, in 1949–52, the lawmakers could not anticipate the soon-to-come *Wirtschaftswunder*, the "economic miracle" that West Germany experienced from 1955 onwards. They designed the law when negotiations for compensation payments to Israel, as well as those of Germany's foreign debt, were ongoing: all they knew was that "the whole thing would get very expensive."[112] With inflation not factored in, the wealthy shared less of the burden every year, and people from the lost areas in the East continued to be substantially poorer than those whose homes had remained intact, even 25 years later.

Numerous studies focusing on social and psychological aspects of the refugees' experience show that their full integration took much longer than previously assumed: it was only the second generation that became fully integrated into West German society. Memory books devoted to lost villages and towns *(Heimatbücher)* were produced by the hundreds.[113] Lost homelands and

[111] Kittel, *Stiefkinder*, 20.

[112] "Sicher war einstweilen nur, dass das Ganze sehr teuer werden würde." Ibid., 17.

[113] See Kessler, Wolfgang, *Ost- und südostdeutsche Heimatbücher und Ortsmonographien nach 1945: Eine Bibliographie zur historischen Landeskunde der Vertreibungsgebiete*

the experience of their loss also made their way both into "high" literature and into more popular literary texts.[114] Refugee associations, many of them with a focus on cultural heritage preservation, continue to exist even today but have lost much of their political impact since the 1970s.

The Palestinian Refugees of 1948

Writing on the Palestinian right to return, Susan Akram has pointed out that "in every part of the globe, the right of refugees to return to their homes and lands of origin, is incorporated in peace treaties, implemented individually or through massrepatriation, and recognized by all states."[115]

This statement is problematic for its lack of historical contextualization: It is true that a right to return was encompassed in post-war settlements in 1990s Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and also in the 2000s in South Sudan and Iraq.[116] Yet, historically speaking, 1948 belongs to a different context. The Palestinian *Nakba*—the Catastrophe—clearly took place at a time when return was not the norm: not for the surviving Jews who, upon their return, were often driven out of their homes in eastern Europe, not for the ethnic Germans expelled to Germany, not for Poles, Ukrainians and Lithuanians, and not for the Muslims and Hindus displaced from India and Pakistan, respectively. The Palestinian *Nakba* clearly is part of this "mid-century maelstrom" (Peter Gatrell). Yet, unlike all the others displaced in the 1940s, the Palestinians were given a UN General Assembly resolution insisting on their right to return—a

(Berlin, Boston: K. G. Saur, 1979).

114 For the impact of flight and expulsion on Germany literary texts, see Brechensbauer, Katharina, *Heimatbücher: Umsiedlung, Flucht und Vertreibung in literarischen Texten nach 1945* (Hannover: Wehrhahn-Verlag, 2020).

115 Akram, Susan, "Myths and Realities of the Palestinian Refugee Problem: Reframing the Right of Return," in *International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Rights-Based approach to Middle East Peace*, ed. Susan Akram (New York: Routledge, 2011), 13–44, 28.

116 For Bosnia, see Toal, Gerard and Carl T. Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and its Reversal* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011). On the difficult implementation of return policies across the world, see Leckie, *Housing.*

right that was never enforced. The unresolvedness of their plight makes their case at once historical and contemporary. In this article, I study it from a historical perspective.

Of the groups discussed here, the Palestinian refugees of 1948-49 are the only ones whose descendants continue to have refugee status today.[117] About 850,000 people who at that time represented two thirds of Palestine's non-Jewish population, were forced out of Palestine shortly before and during the war between the Arab states and Israel that erupted following Israel's declaration of independence in the same year.[118] Most ended up in the West Bank, in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, i.e., in other parts of historical Bilad al-Sham or Greater Syria.[119] Much like the Germans, Greeks and Muslims discussed above, the Palestinians were forced out because they did not fit into the nation-state that was being created in their homeland: Israel's leaders were anxious to create a Jewish majority in Israel and therefore refused to let the refugees return. Those 160,000 Palestinians who had dared to stay were granted Israeli citizenship in 1949, but, until 1966, remained subject to martial law and discriminatory practices. According to Hillel Cohen, about 25,000 of them were internal refugees from other parts of Israel. Cohen also points out that about 20,000 1948 refugees (whom the Israeli authorities referred to as "infiltrators") were able to quietly return and obtain citizenship until 1953.[120]

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117 My discussion is limited to that of the Palestinians forced out of what would become Israel in 1948–49, I do not study the case of those forced to leave their homes in the occupied territories since.

118 Benny Morris has shown that Israeli violence started already before the outbreak of war: Morris, Benny, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, vol. 18 of *Cambridge Middle East studies* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). The book is a revised edition of his groundbreaking monograph published in 1989.

119 So, according to some refugees, they basically went to other parts of the same country: Gabiam, Nell, *The politics of suffering: Syria's Palestinian refugee camps*, *Public Cultures of the Middle East and North Africa* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2016), 19 -- 20.

120 Cohen, Hillel, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948-1967* Haim Watzman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 96,

To this day, the Palestinian minority in Israel suffers from economic marginalization.[121]

Much like Turkey and Greece, Israel created a "custodian office" that was supposed to manage "abandoned" land in the actual owners' name. Unlike Greece and Turkey, however, that office did not later transfer the land to private hands: About half of the Palestinian land was sold to the Jewish National Fund, the agency in charge of providing land to agricultural communes *(kibbutzim)* and settlements *(moshavim)*.[122] Oriental Jews were usually not members of *kibbutzim* or *moshavim* and thus benefitted less than *Ashkenazim* (Jews of European descent).

The International Dimension

Already in December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly issued Resolution 194 (III), which stated that

> [Palestinian] refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss or damage to property which, under principles of international law or equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible.[123]

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121 Lewin-Epstein, Noah, *The Arab Minority in Israel's Economy: Patterns of Ethnic Inequality,* (Milton: Routledge, 2019).

122 Metzer, Jacob, "Jewish land - Israel lands: Ethno-nationality and land regime in Zionism and in Israel, 1907-1967," in *Land Rights, Ethno-Nationality, and Sovereignty in History*, ed. Stanley M. Engermann and Jacob Metzer, vol. 25 of *Routledge explorations in economic history* (London: Routledge, 2004), 87–110.

123 Fischbach, Michael R., "The United Nations and Palestinian Refugee Property Compensation," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no. 2 (2002): 34–50, 35–36.

Resolution 194 (III) enshrined a right to return for the Palestinians – yet, crucially, not in a peace treaty, but in a resolution merely *calling* Israel to let the refugees return – which Israel simply refused to do. It is also noteworthy that the resolution's text was changed later on, with the General Assembly voting to drop the phrase "and wishing to live at peace."[124] Unsurprisingly, Israel has refused to let the Palestinians return, with or without such intentions.

Instead, Israel's prime minister David Ben Gurion declared in 1949 that Israel was willing to compensate non-returning Palestinians, though only for cultivated land, and that it demanded compensation for abandoned Jewish land in the West Bank and Gaza in return.[125] This "accounting logic" (Shenhav, 606) was later extended to include people, and the idea to "exchange" the Palestinians (which had already been discussed in Mandate-period Palestine) against Jews re-emerged.[126] The problem, however, was who to exchange them with, and what to do with "excess" Palestinians whose number far exceeded that of Jews willing to immigrate to Israel. Israeli politicians knew that even all Arab Jews together would not match the displaced Palestinians. Anxious that they might have to let those "excess" Palestinians return, they were cautious about an exchange of populations.[127]

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124 Akram, "Myths", 30. Mallison and Mallison, however, suggest that the phrase was only dropped with regard to the 1967 refugees, and thus to occupied territory rather than Israel proper – an important difference. Thomas W. Mallison, Thomas W., and Sally V. Mallison, "The Right of Return," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 9, no. 3 (1980): 125–36.

125 Fischbach, "United," 36.

126 Some form of exchange between Palestinians and Jews – though within Palestine – had already been discussed by a British commission studying the possibility of a territorial division of British Mandate Palestine in 1937. See Katz, Yossi, "Transfer of Population as a Solution to International Disputes: Population Exchanges between Greece and Turkey as a Model for Plans to Solve the Jewish-Arab Dispute in Palestine during the 1930s," *Political Geography* 11, no. 1 (1992): 55–72, doi:10.1016/0962-6298(92)90019-P.

127 Shenhav, Yehouda, "The Jews of Iraq, Zionist Ideology, and the Property of the Palestinian Refugees of 1948: An Anomaly of National Accounting," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 4 (1999): 605–30, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743800057111, 615.

The Immigration of Iraqi Jews to Israel

The Zionist movement had been pursuing the immigration of Arabic-speaking Jews from other Arab countries to Palestine already prior to the foundation of Israel – with negligible success.[128] Unlike the Jews of Europe, those of the Near East had no reason to leave, and were usually not interested in political Zionism.[129] This situation changed with the establishment of Israel and the Arab-Israeli war, which resulted in a surge in Arab nationalism and anti-Jewish sentiment: by 1949, the Iraqi government contemplated the idea to expel the country's Jews, who at that time numbered about 120,000. In the same year, the British suggested that Iraq use Jewish property to settle Palestinian refugees.[130] Iraq, however, was interested in seizing Jewish property, but not in settling Palestinians. Eventually, in 1951, the issue was "solved" to the satisfaction of both governments and to the disadvantage of both Palestinians and Iraqi Jews: The former were not settled in Iraq, while the latter had to leave their homeland, waive their right to return, and leave all their property behind. After the Yemeni Jews, the Iraqis became the second of several *Mizrahi* (Eastern/Oriental) Jewish communities who were forced to leave their homelands – in return for a life as Israel's new, racialized underclass.[131] In the following two decades, the *Mizrahi* Jews effectively replaced the cheap labor of those 60 percent of the Palestinian population who had not owned land in pre-1948 Pales-

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128 Shenhav, "Jews," 609.

129 The Jews of Turkey are an exception in this respect. Rising anti-semitism in the 1930s and Turkey's notorious "Wealth Tax" of 1942 had disproportionally affected Jews, ruining many. Following 1948 and a large pogrom against non-Muslims in 1955, thousands of Turkish Jews immigrated to Israel. Numbering about 26,000 today, the Turkish Jewish community nevertheless forms the second-largest in the Near East outside of Israel (the largest being that of Iran).

130 Shenhav, "Jews".

131 Between 1948 and 1956, 360,000 Jews from Europe and 450,000 from the Near and Middle East immigrated to Israel. Despite being a numerical majority, the *Mizrahis* were (and still are) politically and economically marginalized in Israel. See Roby, Bryan K., *The Mizrahi Era of Rebellion: Israel's Forgotten Civil Rights Struggle, 1948-1966*, *Contemporary issues in the Middle East series* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2015).

tine.[132] Living in unsanitary camps and working in menial jobs, many continued to hope for return for a long time.[133] The two governments had de facto exchanged property, but not people, thus evading the question of compensation payments to those affected by forced migration.[134] As for compensation for the *Mizrahi* Jews, they repeatedly demanded that the Israeli government compensate them out of confiscated Palestinian property in Israel. The Israeli government, however, feared that compensation payments to individual *Mizrahi* Jews would cause a "flood of private claims from tens of thousands of Arab refugees."[135] The *Mizrahi* Jews were effectively taken hostage for Israel's policy regarding Palestinian property.[136] Neither collective nor individual compensation was ever paid to them.

Despite their Israeli citizenship, they suffered from massive racist, social and educational discrimination which eventually led to large-scale riots in 1959.[137] The *Mizrahim* maintained a distinct identity which they often expressed through music heavily influenced by Greek *Rembetiko* – the music of the Asia Minor refugees.[138] Their native language put them in a precarious position in Israel: while multilingualism was and is common in Israel, Arabic was considered the enemy's language. Mizrahis were therefore under more pressure than other ethnic groups to abandon their native language and embrace Hebrew.[139] The situation has markedly improved since the 1970s, when a *Mizrahi* Black Panther party was formed and mixed marriages with *Ashkenazim* started to become common. To this day, however, *Mizrahi* Jews in Israel

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132 In 1949, the British ambassador to Iraq had pointed this out to the Iraqi prime minister: "Israel, the ambassador explained, would welcome the arrival of cheap Jewish labor and would demand that in return the Arab states assimilate Palestinian refugees." Shenhav, "Jews," 610.

133 Bashkin, Orit, *Impossible Exodus: Iraqi Jews in Israel*, *Stanford studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic societies and cultures* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2017).

134 Shenhav, "Jews," 615.

135 Foreign Ministry of Israel (130) 2387/4, 16 October 1951, cited in Shenhav, "Jews,"620.

136 Ibid., 621.

137 Roby, *Mizrahi Era*, Bashkin, *Impossible*, 129 –30.

138 See Erez, Oded, "Becoming Mediterranean: Greek Popular Music and Ethno-Class Politics in Israel, 1952-1982" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2016), https://escholarship.org/content/qt3mq0x9w4/qt3mq0x9w4.pdf.

139 Bashkin, *Impossible*, 14.

tend to have significantly lower education levels and incomes than *Ashkenazim*.[140]

The Palestinians

As mentioned above, the Israeli government refused to let Palestinians return, but paid lip service to its own obligation to compensate displaced Palestinians – only to then never pay. This was done by pointing to Jewish property in Gaza and the West Bank, and later to that of Iraqi Jews—an argument that the Israeli government is making even today.[141]

The refugees of 1948 ended up in other parts of Palestine (Gaza, which was occupied by Egypt, and in the West Bank, which was under Jordanian occupation), in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. The receiving countries, pointing to the right of return enshrined in resolution 194 (III), and to UN approval of the creation of Israel, argued that the UN ought to care for the refugees.[142] This the UN did. In 1948, they created a first office to take of care of them, in 1949, the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestinian Refugees), which continues to operate to this day. The most important activity of the UNRWA was (and still is) to run refugee camps, hospitals, schools and provide food rations, for which 910,000 people were registered in 1949/50.[143] The focus was on everyday consumption needs, not on investment and development, which only came into focus later.[144]

Unlike all other groups discussed here, most of the Palestinian refugees of 1948 remained stateless. The one country that did grant citizenship to them

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140 On the situation today, see Ibid., 228–29.

141 Zaken, Danny, "Should Jewish Refugees from Arab Countries be Compensated?," https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2019/12/israel-arab-countries-iran-iraq-jews-property-refugees.html (retrieved February 28, 2022).

142 Gatrell, *Making*, 133.

143 Ibid., 130.

144 Ibid., 130–31.

was Jordan, while Lebanon naturalized only the Christian Palestinians.[145] During peace talks between Syria and Israel in 1949, short-term Prime Minister Husni Za'im offered to settle up to 250,000 Palestinian refugees in the fertile Jazira region—provided that Israel paid compensation and the USA helped with settlement costs.[146] The negotiations, however, came to nothing, and the refugees in Syria remained stateless. Apart from citizenship, the situation differed from country to country and often changed with political circumstances: The refugees living in the West Bank (under Jordanian occupation up to 1967) were not allowed to own land.[147] Syria stipulated in 1956 that Palestinians be treated "exactly like Syrians" while at the same time "strictly" opposing their resettlement in Syria. Palestinians in Syria were allowed to own property, but not arable land—a humiliation for people who were used to growing their own food.[148] By 1965, the Arab league passed a document known as Casablanca Protocol, which stipulated that Palestinians ought to be treated the same as nationals of the Arab states—with regard to such issues as right of residence, right of free movement between states, and employment.[149] The actual implementation, however, differs from country to country: Palestinians are mostly treated as foreigners and, in the case of Lebanon, banned from certain professions as well as from secondary education. In moments of political crisis and tension, Palestinians have been expelled by several Arab states and have generally been pushed around for decades—often as work migrants in oil-rich places like the Gulf, Libya, and Iraq.[150]

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145 Gatrell, *Making*, 136.

146 Husni Al-Za'im had led a coup in March 1949 that was probably supported to some degree by Israel and the United States. He was toppled and executed only months later. See Shlaim, Avi, "Husni Za'im and the Plan to Resettle Palestinian Refugees in Syria," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, no. 4 (1986).

147 Gatrell, *Making*, 134.

148 On the ban on owning land, see Gabiam, *Politics*, 24. Gatrell, by contrast, mentions that Syria allocated land to 100,000 Palestinians – possibly later, in Baathist times. Gatrell, *Making*, 133. On the humiliation of not being able to grow one's own food, see Gatrell, *Making*, 132.

149 Akram, "Myths," 23.

150 Ibid.

The Issue of Compensation for Palestinian Refugees

Compensation for Palestinian refugees has never been paid. One reason for this probably is that neither Israel, nor the Arab states, nor the refugees were interested in it: The refugees themselves have always preferred to press for return, and many first-generation refugees even actively avoided to get settled down.[151] The Arab states and groups such as BDS (Boycott, Disinvestment, Sanctions) still demand that Israel recognize the Palestinians' right of return, while Israel, and Israel's supporters, point out that the "return" of several million descendants (who still "enjoy" refugee status) would constitute a threat to the existence of the Israeli state.[152] The Palestinians, in turn, argue that Israel itself frames Jewish immigration to Israel as "return" and ought therefore not deny it to Palestinians after less than 100 years.[153] I think that both sides have a point here: the idea of "return" after 2000 years is a rather far-fetched one—but so is that of "return" after 70 or 80 years for anyone below that age. On the other hand, there are several historical examples of large-scale refugee settlement having been used for the purpose of ethnic cleansing or upsetting local communities.[154] The question, therefore, is to what extent "return" is merely symbolic or actually meant to result in physical movement of people. Based on a survey conducted in 2003 among 1,500 Palestinians each in Gaza, the

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151 Gatrell, *Making*, 133.

152 In 2004, 4,3 million 1948 Palestinian refugees were registered with the UNRWA. The total number of 1948 refugees was given as 6,8 million. Akram, "Myths," 18. Today, Israel has a population of about 9 million, of which slightly less than 2 million are Palestinians. https://www.cbs.gov.il/he/mediarelease/DocLib/2019/134/11_19_134b.pdf. The Gaza strip has 1,9 million, of which 1,4 million are refugees. The West Bank has 2,3 Palestinians, of which 750,000 are registered as refugees (the year of their displacement is not given). https://worldpopulationreview.com/territories/west-bank-population.

153 Akram, "Myths," 32.

154 For instance, the Young Turks used Balkan War refugees against local Christians in Western Anatolia 1913, see Gingeras, Ryan, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912–1923* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 39. In the 1930s, the settlement of Aromanians in the Romanian part of Dobruja led to tensions between them and local Muslims and Slavic-speakers. See Öztan, "Settlement Law," 95.

West Bank, Jordan and Lebanon, it was estimated that about 784,000 Palestinians living in those areas were wishing to move to a sovereign Palestinian state alongside Israel, while about 374,000 wished to move to Israel. The latter group, however, did not wish to become Israeli citizens.[155] In the poll, only the option "move to Israel" did not include some form of compensation, all others (move to a Palestinian state, move to Israeli territory to be swapped with Palestine, stay in other countries, go to others states) did. Seventy-one percent of the respondents said they would like to stay in the area (outside of Israel) and receive fair compensation.[156] While the mood may have changed in the past twenty years, these numbers still suggest that few Palestinians would actually like to live in the State of Israel, and that many would accept compensation instead of return.

In 1949, the UN set up the Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) whose three main members were officials from the USA, France, and Turkey. The UNCCP was heavily dominated by the United States, which were not at all interested in Palestinian repatriation. In 1949, a sub-commission known as "Clapp Commission" was formed that studied the possibility not of return, but of settling and economically integrating the refugees in Syria and Iraq. The chairman, Mr. Clapp, suggested in his report that it was "not helpful" to link the questions of Jewish and Palestinian property and that collective, rather than individual, compensation should be performed. Both suggestions were ignored.[157] Instead, the UNCCP established a "Refugee Office" in 1951. The members included two experts with previous experience in the Greek-Turkish population exchange (and thus with a case of migration without

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155 "Results of PSR refugees' Polls in the West Bank/Gaza Strip, Jordan and Lebanon on Refugees' Preferences and Behavior in a Palestinian-Israeli Permanent Refugee Agreement, January-June 2003," https://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/493, first seen in Shindler, Colin, *A History of Modern Israel,* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), xxxvii.

156 The survey suggests that, in 2003, about half the respondents wished to move either to the Palestinian territories or to Israeli land that would be swapped with a future Palestinian state.

157 Fischbach, "United Nations," 38.

return): Mr. Andersen from Denmark and Mr. Tevfik Erim from Turkey.[158] The office came up with a global estimate of the values involved in 1951. In 1952, another report suggested that the Palestinian land in question should be sold to Israel and the Jewish National Fund, and the money be used to compensate Palestinian refugees. Both Israel and the Palestinians objected.[159]

In the following years, it became clear that the conflict would not be solved anytime soon, so the UNCCP instead started to compile data for a future solution to the problem. It conducted another, much more detailed survey of refugee land, coming up with an almost complete set of data in 1964.[160] It also studied the question how many Palestinians had actually owned land in Palestine, finding that 43,6 percent of the pre-war population had done so—meaning that the majority had not.[161] Among the refugees, the figure was 39.6, with an additional 1.9 percent who were not registered with the UNRWA. Given the high number of refugees who had not owned land (or who had not been able to register the land in their names), the commission also studied schemes for compensating them, such as payments for "hardship" and "reintegration cost"—though it was not clear whether those would be paid to individuals or to governments. Eventually, the whole endeavor came to nothing.[162]

As for social and cultural effects, the Palestinians are probably the best-studied example of a community that developed a rich culture of loss, mourning, and yearning for their homeland. Palestinian families often kept the keys to their houses, and the memories of life in pre-1948 Palestine have been recorded in countless artistic works.

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158 Tevfik Erim was at that point permanent representative of Turkey at the United Nations. He was the father of Kenan Evrim, a famous Turkish archeologist.

159 Fischbach, "United," 40.

160 Ibid., 43.

161 This, however, was a result of landowners appropriating land from peasants who had been owning it informally: Nadan, Amos, "The Route from Informal Peasant Landownership to Formal Tenancy and Eviction in Palestine, 1800s–1947," *Continuity and Change* 36, no. 2 (2021): 233–56, doi:10.1017/S026841602100014X. Another factor was indebtedness, which resulted in many peasants losing their land to absentee landowners: Ben-Bassat, Yuval, "In Search of Justice: Petitions sent from Palestine to Istanbul from the 1870's Onwards," *Turcica* 41 (2009): 89–114.

162 Ibid., 42.

Conclusion

Upon first glance, it might seem futile to compare refugee compensation in settings belonging to different times and to very different countries: As countries with overwhelmingly agricultural economies, Greece and Turkey in the 1920s were certainly in a much different situation from highly industrialized Germany after 1945, but also from Israel after 1948. Yet, I believe that several crucial points can be observed anyway.

First of all, it is striking that even Greece and Turkey, two countries officially engaged in "exchange," actually compensated their refugees unilaterally. Greece compensated with vouchers and to a limited degree with money, but failed to properly implement the scheme. The only country that actually paid money to the refugees on a larger scale was West Germany, where a unilateral scheme of distributory justice was established. Despite its lack of inflation adjustment, the German *Lastenausgleich* actually secured pension and compensation payments to refugees. Though insufficient in the eyes of most refugees, the payments nevertheless stick out as the only ones that actually took place.

The only country that really attempted a large-scale land reform targeting all big landowners was East Germany. As we have seen, refugees were not able to benefit much from the reform because, as in many other cases, locals secured the best pieces of the cake for themselves. The *Mizrahi* Jews in Israel, too, did not benefit from Palestinian land, which was instead given to *Ashkenazi*-dominated *kibbutzim*. In the Arab countries and Palestine, the illusion of return has blocked any serious consideration of proper settlement and compensation. In the Israeli and Palestinian case, one may argue that the accounting logic, which has blocked any form of compensation, has neither helped the *Mizrahis* nor the Palestinians. The former, however, due to their Israeli citizen-

ship, have slowly recovered, while most Palestinians (with the exception of those with Jordanian citizenship or other foreign passports) remain in limbo. Paradoxically, the Palestinians, the only group granted a right to return by the UN, are the one group that can not even visit today: Greeks, Turks and Germans today travel freely to their ancestors' homelands, and even some Israelis (excluding those from Syria and Lebanon) do so today. One can only speculate that compensation (or at least, citizenship) for the Palestinians in Syria and Lebanon might have helped to normalize relations between both countries and Israel.

There is another point that can only be sketched here because it requiress more research: This is the suspicious repetition of older patterns of work migration by forced migration movements.[163] Today's Germany already was a major destination for work migrants from the German east in the nineteenth century, and later for forced worked migration during WWII.[164] The return of forced workers left a huge gap that was only temporarily filled by German refugees. (From the 1950s, the country started to attract labor from other parts of Europe and the Near East, including Greece and Turkey). Western Anatolia, too, attracted labor in the nineteenth century—often from the new Balkan states, including Greece, and Ottoman Macedonia. The limited data from Turkey suggest that the exodus of the Ottoman Greeks left a lack of both skilled and unskilled labor in Western Anatolia—which seems to have partly been filled with Muslim refugee labor from the very area—Greek Macedonia

[163] I owe this insight into possible overlaps or connections between forced and work migration to the work of Isa Blumi (for Ottoman Greater Syria) and Anna Mirkova (for the Bulgarian Principality and Eastern Rumelia): Blumi, Isa, *Ottoman Refugees, 1878-1939: Migration in a Post-Imperial World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); Mirkova, Anna M., *Muslim Land, Christian Labor: Transforming Ottoman Imperial Subjects into Bulgarian National Citizens, 1878-1939* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2017).

[164] Especially Berlin and the Ruhr area were major destinations for work migration from what is today Poland. The one exception here is Upper Silesia, which in itself was an industrial center. For the trajectory of the Silesians, see Demshuk, *Lost*.

—where work migrants had come from before. In Palestine, the gap left behind by the Palestinians was filled with *Mizrahis*.[165]

There is also, in the cases of the Asia Minor Greeks and the Palestinians, a suspicious pattern of forced migration being followed by work migration: Perhaps not coincidentally, Greek *Gastarbeiter* who went to Germany were from underdeveloped areas and often had a refugee background—there is even a pejorative slang word in Greece for "Laz-Germans" (Λαζογερμανός) indicating a *Gastarbeiter* of Black Sea descent.[166] A similar pattern did not exist in Turkey, whose "Almancıs" were and are mostly from central and eastern Anatolia, areas not known for exchangee settlement. It is the Palestinians, who also ended up in economically undeveloped areas, who became a source of cheap labor. This goes both for those Palestinians working in Israel or Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and for those who migrated to find work in the oil industries of various Arab countries.

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[165] The Mizrahi situation improved after 1967 – at a point when labor migration from the occupied territories to Israel became both possible and common. Today, the labor of Palestinians from Gaza in southern Israel has largely been replaced by that of migrants from the Horn of Africa.

[166] I would like to thank Ileana Moroni for pointing this out to me.