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TURKEY, GREECE, AND THE BALKAN STATES: RECORDS OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 1930-1944



The documents in this collection on Turkey, Greece, and the Balkans are sourced from the Central Files of the General Records of the Department of State. The records are under the jurisdiction of the Legislative and Diplomatic Branch of the Civil Archives, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Contained here is the Greco-Turkish Convention signed at Ankara, 10 June 1930. Most of the archive is in French and Turkish.

Date Range: 1930-1944

Content: 11,685 images

Source Library: U.S. National Archives

Detailed Description:

The historical background to this archive has deep roots in the nineteenth century. It may be framed in the larger context of the “Near Eastern Question,” the long decline of the Ottoman Empire, and the rivalries of the Great Powers in the eastern Mediterranean. The Greco–Turkish War of 1897 that began with clashes across the Greco–Turkish border, which at the time ran between Thessaly and Ottoman-held Macedonia, ended in a victory for Turkey. Also part of this history are the First Balkan War and the Second Balkan War, which preceded the outbreak of the Great War of 1914-1918. The Conference at Lausanne of 1923 was one of many peace settlements following the war.

After more than two months of complex negotiations, Turkey and Greece concluded the first phase of the peace conference at Lausanne by signing, on 30 January 1923, the Convention on the Exchange of Greek and Turkish nationals in their respective countries. The signing of this agreement marked a turning point for both nations. With the Exchange, both countries experienced a major transformation in their populations and found themselves confronting a huge issue --a refugee problem of massive size. Nearly one year after the conclusion of the Lausanne Conference and in accordance with the Exchange Convention, some 700,000 people were reduced to refugee status; the agreement also confirmed the refugee status of an additional one million people displaced since the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. For

Greece and Turkey, the decade of 1923-1933 was an era of national reconstruction; and the thousands of homeless refugees were at the center of this reconstruction.

The repercussions of the 1930 Greek-Turkish rapprochement aimed to settle some of the problems that Greece and Turkey had to deal with after the Lausanne Treaty. Against this background the interwar era witnessed the rise of a nationalist state in Turkey, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe.