The following letter in response to Mark Mazower (June 29, op-ed) seeks to challenge the fiction that Greece and Turkey decided to "swap" populations. The outcome of the First World War resulted in the collapse of the Ottoman and other empires. As a result there were changes of borders and newly independent countries came into existence. As a result of the Ottoman collapse, the Greek Orthodox populations of Asia Minor saw an opportunity to fulfill their centuries long dream of escaping the Ottoman Turkish tyranny.

During the First World War, the Sublime Porte instigated a policy of genocide and racial-religious extermination against the Greeks, Armenians, and Assyrians. American diplomats such as Ambassador Henry Morgenthau and Consul General George Horton did much to publicize the Turkish slaughter. In the aftermath of the Ottoman defeat, the Great Powers supported Greece's claims in Asia Minor which was not imperialistic (unlike the claims of the Europeans) but based on the realities that various cities in Asia Minor had majority Greek populations and that Greece had both historical and religious connections to this region.

The rise of Mustafa Kemal led to the final genocide of the Greeks of Asia Minor. Kemal himself was assisted with arms by Britain, France, Italy, and Soviet Russia while the Greeks were denied the right to defend themselves. The systematic destruction and burning of Smyrna, the extermination of the Pontian Greeks and other massacres throughout Asia Minor are historical facts that have proven inconvenient for pro-Turkish policymakers and "scholars". Greece had no desire to remove the
Turks living in Macedonia, but did so in order to make room for the one million plus Greek Orthodox refugees forcibly evicted by the Turks in the final victorious campaign to create a racially pure Turkish Republic.

The actions of Greece and Turkey are not by any means comparable. Turkish actions were based on genocide, while Greek actions were based initially on a justified course of liberating oppressed Greek populations in Asia Minor, while subsequently accepting the insidious fate forced upon them by the politics of the period. Greece had no desire to "swap" anyone.

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