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Modern Greece and the Diaspora Greeks in the United States

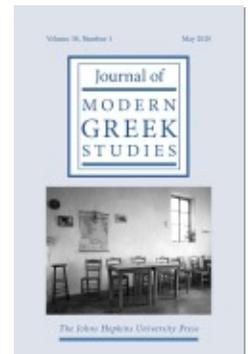
by George Kaloudis (review)

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disputed by Antoniou, who does not provide evidence or a different interpretation, and who mishandles the testimonies and thus the methods of oral history more generally. Antoniou claims that in the case of “the organized resistance, the line between selfless and selfish resistance is more often than not hard to distinguish” (143) and he concludes that this episode “highlights the gray zones of human behavior that undermine the established academic narrative of the genocide” (153–154). Yet when it comes to the Holocaust, one must always remember that the conduct of the camps’ inmates, and the Jewish councils’ “choiceless choices,” have nothing to do with the supposedly more or less “human behavior” of persecutors. This is a chapter of bad oral history, and of bad history *tout court*.

In her epilogue, Fleming claims that “Holocaust in Greece—as opposed to other European national contexts—was shaped by specifically *Greek* conditions” (369). In historiographic terms this assumption is quite debatable. Fleming seems to share Antoniou’s understanding of the “gray zones” when she concludes that the book’s many chapters “have opened up a grey area, an uncomfortable zone that brings to the treatment of the Holocaust in Greece the multidimensional historical analysis that the Holocaust has. . . been getting in other national contexts” (369). The trivialization of the gray zone, which from a certain political and methodological point of view is indeed a very “comfortable zone,” does not do justice to those well researched chapters that the present volume does contain.

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Fleming, K. E. 2008. *Greece: A Jewish History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

George Kaloudis, *Modern Greece and the Diaspora Greeks in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018. Pp. 233. Cloth \$100.

George Kaloudis examines the contemporaneous narratives of the history of Modern Greece and Greek immigrants in the United States, a group that he characterizes as a diaspora. At times, Kaloudis breaks from these strict contours by outlining some important events and themes related to Greeks living in other

parts of the world. The book's temporal boundaries are vast, stretching from the fifteenth century up to the present. This swath of time is divided into four periods, each considered in a separate chapter.

Chapter One outlines the first period of Greek migration, from the fifteenth century to 1830. In very large part, this chapter is about the Greek Revolution and how its influencers were not confined to Greece's proper borders. A brief section outlines the earliest arrivals of Greeks in the United States. As Kaloudis notes, this dates back to 1768 when a Scottish physician brought approximately 500 Greeks to Florida. The settlement was plagued by poor conditions and hardships. Other Greeks noted by Kaloudis were primarily educated young men who attended institutions of higher learning in America.

Chapter Two examines the years 1830 to 1939. This period coincides with a large "population hemorrhage" from Greece, particularly in the early twentieth century (42). The most popular landing place for these migrants was the United States. Kaloudis outlines how chain migration acted to funnel families and co-villagers to America. An interesting point developed in this chapter is that Greek governments viewed overseas communities "as a tool in pursuance of the 'nationalist, irredentist, expansionist struggle inspired by the Great Idea'" (58). For Greek immigrants themselves, emigration from Greece had more modest intentions. Early Greek migrants did not frame their migration in hopes of contributing to some national narrative (either for Greece or to help build America), but rather rationally calculated that working in America could help improve their lot at home. Their decision to emigrate was typically meant to be temporary and transactional, centered on the goal of living more comfortably in Greece.

Chapter Three looks at the years 1940 to 1970. One of the important hallmarks of this period, Kaloudis notes, "was how many Greeks were displaced and immigrated to the United States and elsewhere either because of war and national crises, or because of political reasons" (114). While the chapter outlines some notable immigration statistics during the stated temporal contours, it primarily focuses on major historical events related to the Greek state. The chapter also touches on the important theme of return migration. In a brief statistical summary, the book notes that, in 1980, Greek migrants returning to Greece reached 390,000. As early as 1974, the total number of Greeks returning to Greece had risen equal to the number of those leaving. In 1975, Greece experienced a net return of migrants, an important turning point in the country's history.

Finally, Chapter Four covers the period from the mid-1970s to the present. It shows that migration from Greece slowed following the military dictatorship

of 1967 to 1974. Kaloudis once again revisits, albeit in somewhat vague terms, the theme of return migration since the 1970s. The chapter (and book) concludes with remarks on how Greeks in America could be a bridge for better relations between the United States and Greece. Because of what Kaloudis calls a “mixture” of identities, it is understandable that Greeks in America will sometimes advocate for American domestic and foreign policy interests while also doing the same for Greece (193).

The book, like all others, has strengths and limitations. The method of examining Greece and Greeks in America provides an interesting perspective on how migrations are typically connected to two spaces. Too often, a migrant’s place of origin is treated superficially, but Kaloudis illuminates the social, political, and economic ecosystems that informed the worldview of Greek immigrants in America. Overall, this was an effective strategy to show the connective forces that exist between Greece and American Greek communities.

There are three aspects of this book that may leave readers hoping for more. The first is that it offers a particular view of Greeks in America that is largely drawn from the perspective of institutions. This leads to a top-down vantage point of Greeks in America. One does not, for example, learn much about the everyday life or spaces that confronted migrants in America. Second, the author does not engage with the term diaspora, despite having it appear in the title. It would have been interesting to know how the author sees the Greeks of America fitting into this term, for which a loose definition is provided in the footnotes. Treatment of various generations’ place within the diaspora would have also been enlightening. Third, the author offers some analytical remarks in the last few pages of the book, and I was left wanting more—perhaps a similar section in each chapter. Readers may feel that there is too little of the author’s analytical voice.

Modern Greece and the Diaspora Greeks in the United States is an excellent read for an introduction to the history of the modern Greek state and its various waves of emigration to the United States. It is likely most useful as a teaching tool at the undergraduate level. Its chapters could offer undergraduates a solid foundation regarding thematic signposts related to Greece and Greek migration. The book is also accessible enough to be useful for an advanced popular audience. In short, I would recommend this text for anyone looking for an entry point into scholarship on the political, economic, and migration history of Modern Greece and Greek communities in America.

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