

Anastasios Myrodis Tamis, *The Immigration and Settlement of Macedonian Greeks in Australia*, La Trobe University Press, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, 1994, pp. xii+387+12pp. of plates.

Books in Greek and in other languages about the modern Greek diaspora are of enormous importance, in terms of both quality and quantity. However, they have tended to focus on specific periods and specific places where Greek immigrants have settled and organised themselves, as well as being somewhat restricted in their scientific (chiefly sociological) and methodological approach to the subject. Thus a large proportion of such literature is devoted, for instance, to the Greek immigrant presence in North America, while relatively little has been written about the historical development of the modern Greek diaspora on the other side of the world, in Australia, at least up to the Second World War. At the same time, writers have tended to avoid investigating the phenomenon of modern Greek emigration from the more particular point of view of the immigrants' specific geographical origins — an approach that might have a certain *de facto* legitimacy. It is only recently that, in association with the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle, the present writer has launched an effort to reconsider the phenomenon of emigration, from Macedonia at least, in its economic, social, political, and historical context from as narrow a point of view as possible — i.e. that of the immigrants' original community or slightly broader geographical and administrative area.

It is precisely into this gap that one may put Anastasios Tamis' new book, *The Immigration and Settlement of Macedonian Greeks in Australia*. His aim is to follow the paths and the tracks of both the pioneering and the later Macedonian Greek immigrants to Australia; to describe their struggle to get back on their feet economically and socially while becoming assimilated into their new homeland; and to explore the causes of the disputes that arise amongst them and between them and the other Greeks.

A Professor of Sociolinguistics and Dean of the Department of Hellenic Studies at the University of Melbourne, Anastasios Tamis now teaches at La Trobe University. One of the founder members of the Institute for Macedonian Studies, he plays a very active part in the cultural and educational affairs and the ethnic issues of Australia's Greeks in general, and Macedonian Greeks in particular. He has published some important articles, chiefly in the field of sociolinguistics, both in Australia and in Europe, and is also the author and/or editor of a considerable number of works about the Greeks of Australia. These include: 'The State of Modern Greek as Spoken in Victoria' (Univ. of Melbourne Ph. D. thesis, 1986), *Greeks in Australia* (co-edited with

A. Kapardis, Melbourne 1986), *Macedonian Hellenism* (editor, Melbourne 1990), *The Emergence of the Orthodox Church in Australia (1892-1949)* (Melbourne 1992), 'The State of Modern Greek in Australia' in *The Australian People* (edited by J. Jupp, Melbourne 1988, pp. 527-31).

In addition to a foreword, an introduction and the necessary acknowledgements, the book comprises five chapters: 'Macedonia and Macedonians', 'Immigration and Settlement of Greeks in Australia', 'Settlement of Macedonian Greeks in Australia', 'Settlement of Macedoslavs in Australia', and 'Final Remarks, Conclusions, and Implications'.

In Chapter One (pp. 1-11), the author sets out to familiarise his readers with some of the terms ('Macedonia', 'Macedonians', etc.) that are used in the book and also to give an account, from ancient times to the modern day, of the geographical and historical area from which the immigrants in question originated. In this connection he discusses in detail the tradition of emigration from (mainly Western) Macedonia to the northern Balkans, the Danube countries, and Central Europe throughout the period between the early fifteenth century and 1912-13. It was a tradition that increased in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and reached a peak early in the twentieth century with the Ilinden Uprising, at which point Macedonian immigrants began to flood into North America.

The fundamental difference between those who emigrated to Europe and North America and those who went to Australia lay in the whole process of their departure. Most of the first group were escaping from the troubled political and wretched economic situation in their homeland with the intention of returning some day, once they had achieved their real aim of some measure of financial security. The steady flow to Australia, on the other hand, was made up of earlier immigrants who, for various reasons, had every intention of settling there for good. One might call them conscious immigrants.

The migration of Greeks to the Antipodes and their settlement there (Chapter Two, pp. 13-106) took the form of three waves. i) Before the First World War it was sporadic and made up of pioneering immigrants who initially did not intend to settle permanently. ii) Between 1918 and 1951, the Australian immigration authorities erected linguistic, racial, and financial barriers as a means of controlling the numbers and types of foreigners entering the country, in pursuance of the so-called White Australia Policy; but this did not hold back the flood of pre-war Macedonian immigrants and the immigrants-cum-refugees who came surging in after the Greek Civil War. iii) In the final period (1952-74), the situation changed radically as the Australian governments adopted a new policy introducing programmes designed to at-

tract immigrants and turning the country into a multi-ethnic, multicultural mosaic.

These chronological divisions show, amongst other things, that the model of Greek immigration and settlement in Australia was determined as much by the (economic, cultural, and other) developments in their new homeland as by the corresponding changes taking place in Greece, and followed a parallel course to that of the movement of other south European immigrant groups. The earliest Greek immigrants, who were adventurers and gold-diggers for the most part, set forth from the Aegean and the Ionian islands (Kythira, Ithaki, Kastellorizo) and made for Victoria and New South Wales between 1851 and 1880.

Until the arrival of the first Macedonian Greek immigrants, the organised Greek Orthodox communities in Australia were very few in number and very small in size. The most important ones were in New South Wales, Victoria (Melbourne), Brisbane, and Perth.

The first efforts to install Greek consular representatives on the fifth continent were made in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The first official consuls, Australian citizens of British extraction, were quickly succeeded by Greek immigrants, who were outstanding members of their communities, well established financially, and highly respected by their associates in Australia's British community. The first Greek career diplomat to be appointed as Greece's Consul General in Australia was Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, who assumed his post in May 1926 at a time when the then Greek government was anxious to promote trade with Australia. By and large, the Greek consuls, both honorary and career diplomats, played an important part in the whole process of those early immigrants' arrival, settling, and rehabilitation in their new homeland. They opposed the restrictive measures imposed by the Australian authorities, took steps to set up a reception programme for Greek immigrants, chiefly for refugees from Asia Minor, and they managed to support the Greek communities and promote their contacts and exchanges with their Australian surroundings. The only dark clouds in this respect were the active involvement of some of them (mainly the first honorary consuls) in the intracomunal clashes and the rift between the communities and the Church; their occasionally authoritarian attitude; and their tendency to involve the Greek Foreign Ministry in the Australian Greek communities' affairs.

The earliest references to the presence of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia date from 1895, when priests sent by the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Alexandria and the Church of Greece were travelling around to serve, occasionally and sporadically, the devotional and ceremonial needs of

the still few Greek settlers. There was terrible strife at the level of communal and ecclesiastical organisation and activity between 1924, when the Oecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople established the Greek Orthodox Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand, and 1931, when peace was restored. Personal and party rivalries over the right to authority and control in the communities seriously undermined the Greeks' position in Australia, shattered their cohesion, and brought their political and legal status to the brink of disaster.

During the first twenty-five years of Macedonian presence in Australia (1924-49), the Macedonian Greeks were relatively uninvolved in the general affairs of the Greek communities. They were content to concentrate on their personal struggle for survival and their own families' welfare. The very few Macedonian immigrants (Chapter Three, pp. 107-263) who were on the continent of Australia around the beginning of the twentieth century had probably come via Constantinople, France, or America. The first large-scale influx of Macedonians, essentially the first Greeks from mainland Greece, took place in 1924, when some 250 inhabitants of the west Macedonian areas of Florina, Kastoria, and Kozani landed at Perth, Melbourne, and Sydney. The next wave came in 1928. In the process of successive immigration, these first-comers had something of a magnetic effect, attracting new immigrants from their own original localities.

The suspicion and hostility with which the new British-Australian community treated them (almost to the point of mental and physical violence sometimes), the far from open-armed welcome they received from the established, chiefly insular, Greek immigrants, the employment restrictions imposed by the Australian Agricultural Bank to protect the interests of the British labour force, the widespread recession, ignorance of the language, and lack of specialised training forced most of these newcomers to seek employment as a free and mobile agricultural workforce in the outback. As loggers, or as labourers on farms, sugarcane plantations, vegetable and fruit farms, pioneering tobacco plantations, poultry farms, or as miners, they managed to win the recognition and respect of the Australian community through their diligence and resilience in the adverse conditions they endured until they were able to set up the first businesses of their own. Until the early 1950s, the Macedonian immigrants' social and professional rehabilitation and integration were determined chiefly by their ties with 'home', their contact with the Australian outback, whither they went in search of work, and above all their efforts to avoid a clash of interests with the British Australians by opting for occupations approved by the host community.

The influx of Macedonian immigrants to Australia varied little from 1924 to 1974, despite the severely restrictive measures that the immigration authorities introduced from time to time. As before the war, so too after it, the rate remained high as the first immigrants from Eastern and Central Macedonia began to arrive. Taking advantage of the more favourable economic situation and the more tolerant policy of the Australian governments, the post-war Macedonian Greek immigrants joined forces with their pre-war relatives and fellow villagers. They developed a stable model of urban settlement and either engaged in the same trades as Macedonian and other Greek immigrants or, more commonly, worked as labourers on building sites, and in metal works, foundries, and quarries, or else in somewhat lighter occupations. A desire to improve their living conditions and their relations with the British Australian community prompted many of them to adopt an Australian way of life and to take a positive attitude to integration; though they still maintained their cultural differences, their ethnic identity, and their cultural presence.

Until about 1935 the early Greek Macedonian immigrants resolutely withstood urbanisation. But following the economic recovery in Australia and the more tolerant attitude of the Australian authorities, their hitherto simple, patriarchal mode of rural communal life began to change. Particularly after 1946 and the arrival of their families from Greece, there was a marked increase in the number of Macedonian associations and societies with educational, social, cultural, and charitable aims, addressed both to their own members and to the people 'back home'. The associations were a reflex response to their members' serial immigration, and reflected the powerful family ties that bound their members from the time they left Greece; unbreakable ties that determined the economic, religious, social, and political functioning of the communities. They also reflected, in their very names, their members' common geographical origin, the economic situation in their native communities (whether they were mountain or lowland villages, for instance), and also the political and social situation there (whether the inhabitants were refugees or local-born). The native communities were also an arena of personal and political rivalry and conflict, usually at the leadership level, between progressive leftist and conservative members. The strife between Slavonic-speakers and Greek-speakers in the mixed associations resulted in a rift between them, a rift, indeed, which assumed extremely hostile proportions after the War. It was not until the 1970s and '80s that the Australian Macedonians achieved a measure of success in establishing an interstate corporate organisation, the Panmacedonian League of Australia, and corresponding regional organisa-

tions, such as the Panmacedonian League of Victoria, the Panmacedonian League of Melbourne, etc. Even these, however, have not entirely escaped ideological and political conflicts and organisational problems.

The Greek Macedonian immigrants involved themselves as little as possible in the discord between the communities and the Church. They tended to regard the Church as a social and communal symbol with a negligible role in the process of their settling down and making good. It is only with respect to the developments connected with the Macedonian Question in Australia that the Greek Orthodox Church of Australia has played an important part in the Macedonians' eyes. Upholding the sacred canons and its own principle of the universality of Orthodox Christianity above and beyond linguistic, cultural, and ethnic differences, the Church has sought to approach the Slavonic-speaking Macedonians along general lines, while nonetheless refusing to recognise the uncanonical 'Macedonian Orthodox Church' and its Australian branch.

The Greek Macedonian press played a major part in the immigrants' efforts to keep in touch with each other and to pass on news from 'back home'. The Greek Macedonian communities' sports associations and clubs also had a socialising function. However, financial and organisational problems, not to mention the ever-present personal and political rivalries, made it all but impossible for them to achieve a meaningful presence within Macedonian Australian society or Australian society in general.

Since 1974, the flow of Greek Macedonian immigrants to Australia has dwindled considerably. This does not necessarily imply, of course, that the Macedonian Greeks in Australia are becoming more and more assimilated. On the contrary, their existing associations and institutions are still very much alive and kicking both in the context of the broader Greek immigrant presence in Australia and with respect to the confrontation between the Greek Macedonians and the Macedonian Slav community.

The first signs of the Macedonian Question appeared in the mid-1930s, mainly in the form of disputes over the leadership and control of the first Macedonian communities between their Slavonic-speaking and Greek-speaking members. After the War, the issue flared up, mainly because the repercussions of the relevant developments in the Balkans reached Australia distorted by the memories and the experiences of the post-war Macedonian immigrants.

Until 1960, the vast majority of Macedonians who had settled in Australia hailed from Greek Macedonia (Chapter Four, pp. 264-335). Yugoslav Macedonians arrived chiefly after 1961. Their initially peaceful and harmonious

co-existence in their new socio-economic situation came to an end in the late 1920s, owing to the developments in Europe over the Macedonian Question. From the early '30s until the Second World War, pro-Bulgarian Macedonian settlers and immigrants from Bulgaria proper, having failed to gain control of the existing Macedonian associations (in Perth, Melbourne, and elsewhere), set up pro-Bulgarian Macedonian associations of their own, most of which were heavily influenced by or dependent on similar Bulgarian organisations in North America. Later on, after 1950, the remaining pro-Bulgarian Macedonians rallied round the Australian branch of the Autocephalous Bulgarian Orthodox Church, in an effort to survive the machinations and predatory desires of those who had turned to the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia after the War.

Bulgaria's disappointing stance (as far as the Bulgaro-Macedonian leaders in Australia were concerned) during the Second World War; the birth of the Federal Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Macedonia and the new state-approved policy for consolidating a 'Macedonian national ideology'; the arrival, after 1950, of thousands of Slav Communists from Greek Macedonia who sympathised with the policy of the Yugoslav Socialist Republic of Macedonia; the enervating dissension within traditional Slav Macedonian organisations; personal rivalries and wrangling over power; all these factors conspired to upset the equilibrium that had obtained hitherto. In that multicultural environment, and thanks to the tolerant, liberal official policy towards Australia's various ethnic groups, the confrontation over the Macedonian Question grew increasingly heated.

After 1950, the architects of the 'Macedonian national ideology' in Australia devised four models of propaganda activity, proclaiming: a semi-autonomous Greek Macedonia; a Macedonia that would include both the Greek and the Bulgarian part of the geographical region directly annexed to Yugoslavia; an independent Greek Macedonian state; and a Messianic Macedonia. Though old, the machinery for diffusing the new ideology had long been successful in the past, was completely attuned to what was going on 'back home' in the Balkans, and embraced the struggle for a nation, a language, a Church, and a history. At the same time, the Macedonians were presenting themselves to Australian society as a tiny, oppressed people, but law-abiding, unyielding in the defence of their national ideals, and committed to the protection of human rights.

In the last chapter (pp. 336-360), Dr Tamis draws some final conclusions and offers comments on the mechanisms and pattern of Macedonian immigration to and settling in Australia more or less as outlined above. His basic con-

clusion in this summing up is that certain abiding factors (their locality of origin and the concomitant mentality, where they chose to settle in Australia, their political and socio-economic behaviour during integration) have always set the Macedonian Greeks apart from the rest of the Greek immigrant community and make it impossible to treat them as a unified group of settlers.

Since the issue of language — i.e. the rift between the Slavonic-speaking and the Greek-speaking members of the Macedonian communities — has assumed immense proportions in Australia, Dr Tamis ventures some linguistic observations on Macedonian Greek as one of the northern Greek dialects. He also investigates the extent to which the Macedonian immigrants use Greek amongst themselves as an indication of how far they have become integrated or preserved their ethnic identity and cultural difference.

The book is supplemented by a lengthy bibliography and a list of the new archival material on which the writer was able to draw (pp. 361-367); as also by three appendixes (pp. 368-374), the first containing extracts from sources relating to Macedonia and the Macedonian Question, the second describing the method and format of his interviews with first-generation immigrants from Macedonia and the rest of Greece, and the third consisting of a point-by-point refutation of the distorted data presented in the Australian writer Peter Hill's recent book *The Macedonians in Australia*.

The author's active involvement on the Greeks' behalf in the developments relating to the Macedonian Question in Australia has prevented him, as he himself admits, from maintaining a rigorously objective stance in his presentation and handling of the subject. This is apparent, for instance, in what he says at the end of the final chapter, about the recent international developments concerning the name and the recognition of the new state that has been created on Greece's northern border since the break-up of Yugoslavia, and also in the first and third appendixes. All the same, the more or less committed stance of the book in no way affects the quality and credibility of the material and the data it contains.

The author's arrangement and presentation of his material in sections based on the geographical areas in which Macedonian immigrants have settled in Australia was no doubt unavoidable, since it was precisely these geographical foci on that massive, unique continent that produced considerable individual variations in the process of settlement and integration. His approach is also justified by the process of serial emigration which brought emigrants from specific areas of Greece to specific areas of Australia. But it must be said that it does make for a repetitive narrative, going over the same ground at close intervals, producing chronological and spatial leaps, lengthy depar-



tures from the regular flow of the narrative, and fragmenting the information. The reader is confused and finds it hard to follow the train of events and the sequence of the various stages of Macedonian presence and activity in Australia. The confused effect is no doubt due to the material that was available to the author and used by him: the interviews he recorded over many years of research and the questionnaires he asked a considerable number of immigrants to fill in (cf. appendix 2). Not only does it determine the structure of the book, such material also makes for a lively narrative and abundant and profound data, so important and precious for resolving the mysteries of the past, particularly when isolated individual cases act *de facto* as a mirror for collective experiences in the host country. A lack of consistency in the footnotes is another, minor, drawback.

None of these criticisms, however, in any way reduces the book's intrinsic value. The abundant information, the originality of the material, the critical approach to the various issues, and the writer's need to demonstrate the real relationships underlying the phenomena and events of this particular aspect of the Greek diaspora, all make this book a truly valuable contribution to the study of the history of the Macedonian Question and the Greek diaspora in general, as also the evolution of the Macedonian Question outside the Balkans.

*Museum of the Macedonian Struggle*

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