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Review of Lina Venturas and Lambros Balsiotis (eds), Το έθνος πέραν των συνόρων: «Ομογενειακές» πολιτικές του ελληνικού κράτους [The nation beyond borders: the 'diaspora' policies of the Greek state]

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**Lina Venturas and Lambros  
Baltsiotis (eds)**

*Το έθνος πέραν των συνόρων:  
«Ομογενειακές» πολιτικές του  
ελληνικού κράτους*

[The nation beyond borders: the  
'diaspora' policies of the Greek  
state]

**Vivliorama: Athens, 2013. 510 pp**

**Michalis Tsapogas**

PhD in law

Despite the appearance of "nation" as the first noun in its title, this volume is really mostly about the "state". The omnipresent modern Greek state has invented or discovered "Hellenic" communities beyond its borders, choosing to either acknowledge or neglect them, patronise or suffocate them, support or exploit them. This nation beyond the borders of the state, similar to the nation within the state's borders, exists *because of* and *for* the state, thus totally reversing the Greek constitutional provision which calls for all powers "to exist for the benefit of the nation". As clearly stated by the editors in their introduction, this volume aspires to incorporate available research on the Greek case within the framework of the very extensive, international, theoretical and comparative relevant literature on diaspora policies. They also persistently emphasise the fact that neither the diaspora policies implemented by the Greek state, nor any of the diaspora phenomena investigated in the volume's chapters, are unique. Similar policies have been implemented the world over for all sorts of emigrants, the unredeemed, and co-ethnics and compatriots "belonging" to this or that nation. What might be unique in the Greek case is the total absence of any effort to

bring together multidisciplinary academic approaches: instead, what prevails is the redundant rhetoric of a supposed inherent proclivity to migrate, the trait of a race "of many devices" that "wandered full many ways".<sup>1</sup>

Inevitably, no single volume can completely cover the multifaceted territorial dispersion of the Greek people over the last three centuries or the diverse policies implemented by the Greek state on account of these Hellenes abroad. Specific regions, such as western Europe, or specific policies, such as those pertaining to military conscription, could easily be the sole topics of other publishing endeavours. What can be said about the contributions in this volume is that there is a clear attempt to systematically organise the existing research in a conventional chronological order. It should be noted, however, that several themes, topics and symbols appear and reappear throughout the volume: legal concepts (such as that of citizenship), economics (such as the attraction of diaspora capital investments), ideologies (such as educational policies) or diplomacy (such as the patronising interventions of Athens in diaspora communities).

The volume, part of a series published by the Minority Groups Research Centre (KEMO), is divided into four parts: The first deals with the formation of the modern Greek state and its relations with the Hellenic communities in bordering countries; communities easily perceived as objects of irredentist aspirations. Christos Papastylianos' contribution examines the constitutional framework pertaining to Greeks outside Greece's borders, determining the distinctions between the indigenous, "unredeemed" and emigrants. He further documents the transition from a postrevolutionary haphazardness to a more orderly legal state, where political participation could only be achieved through citizenship. In contrast to the analysis of formal

institutions, Lina Louvi investigates the real contribution of diaspora capital investments to the development of the young modern Greek state, both through official government channels and behind the scenes.

Other chapters of the first part include Elias Skoulidas' analysis of the attempts made by Athenian diplomats to infiltrate the regions of Epirus and Albania during the nineteenth century. Similar attempts of infiltration through educational projects were made in Bulgaria (another neighbouring country) during the same period, and these are analysed in the next chapter by Maria Kotzabassi. Moving into the twentieth century, Vasilis Koutsoukos presents the Greek state's demographic engineering in some areas of Thrace during the joint allied occupation of 1920. Finally, Lena Korma investigates the policies of the Greek state towards Asia Minor refugees who settled outside Greece following the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922).

The second part of the volume focuses on more distant Greek communities, surveying their organisational structures, as well as the interventions of Greek diplomats in their respective associations. Despina Papadopoulou documents the early attempts of the Greek state to exploit the presence of Greek communities in France as a means of influencing European public opinion and further advancing state diplomatic agendas. Similar attempts to control Greek communities in the USA in the early twentieth century are analysed by Yannis Papadopoulos, who in particular examines the role of the Greek Orthodox church. Lastly, Katerina Trimi-Kyrou sheds light on the economic and educational aspects of state policies pertaining to the Greeks in Egypt.

The third part follows the transformation of diaspora policies during the Cold War; a period of

significant change, during which national planning was heavily influenced by wider international developments. Egypt is once again the subject of Angelos Dalachanis' chapter, where the Greek community was fatally caught between the instability of the international post-war era and the inconsistencies of the Greek state. In a more general study, Lina Venturas documents the history of state policies for Greeks abroad with a special emphasis on those implemented during and after the civil war. She also analyses the efforts made by the Athens government to convince both its western allies of the strategic importance of diaspora Hellenism, and the Greek communities abroad of the significance of maintaining ideological ties to their ancestral homeland. A more specific account of such policies is investigated by Elpida Vogli, who writes about the government's decision to proclaim 1951 as the year of diaspora Hellenism. Lastly, George Mavrommatis extends the analysis of Greek citizenship by linking the fate of the Turkish community in Thrace with that of the Greeks of Istanbul.

The fourth part of the volume deals with more contemporary cases of Greek communities in the east and respective current policies and administrative practices. Lambros Baltiotis' contribution, focusing on the case of the Orthodox Christians of Antakya (Antioch) in Turkey, demonstrates how the criteria of nationality and belonging are uncertain and can fluctuate.

Eleni Sideri introduces us to the Greek-speaking communities of the Caucasus, a prime example of a minority "discovered" after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and an opportune field for the implementation of Greek state cultural and linguistic policies.

In the second section of the fourth part, Lena Divani deconstructs the continuous policy of

radio programming produced by the Greek state for communities abroad, providing insight on how this policy was used to influence both the organisational structures and the ideologies of the diaspora. In the final chapter, Dimitris Christopoulos further investigates the constitutional framework pertaining to the potential political participation of the Greek diaspora in Greek political life: the systematic postponement of granting voting rights to those nationals living outside of Greece's borders clearly demonstrates the vast distance between the catchy promises of allegiance and the realist policies regarding the composition of the electorate.

An overview of the contents of this volume leads one to the hypothesis that the fate of the Greek nation beyond the state's borders bears great resemblance to the fate of other ethnic groups or individuals trapped within Greek borders. Policies pertaining to the real or imaginary ties with distant Greek diaspora communities are nothing more than the mirror images of the exclusionary policies for domestic minorities or recent immigrants. In the end, it's all about defining the Greek nation. Upon this realisation, the reason this volume was included as part of the KEMO series becomes crystal clear.

## NOTE

- 1 Opening line of *The Odyssey*: "Tell me, O Muse, of the man of many devices, who wandered full many ways after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy." *Homer. The Odyssey*, 2 vols, trans AT Murray (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1919).

### Paraskevi Golia

*Υμνώντας το έθνος. Ο ρόλος των σχολικών γιορτών στην εθνική και πολιτική διαπαιδαγώγηση 1924–2010*

**[Praising the nation: The role of national day school commemorations in national and political-education policy, 1924–2010]**

**Thessaloniki: Epikentro, 2011. 445 pp.**

### Zeta Papandreou

PhD in history didactics

In this book, Paraskevi Golia makes an extremely important contribution to the study of the history of education in Greece as well as of the ways governmental practices internalise the dominant ideology. One of the book's stronger points is the originality of the research, spanning an extensive time period, in which primary sources, such as government circulars to schools on how to celebrate national days, are studied for the first time, from the educational reform of 1924, through to the Metaxas dictatorship, the period from 1940 to 1949, the post-civil war period from 1950 to 1966, the 1967–1974 dictatorship and the post-1974 democratic system. At the same time, it systematically deconstructs the associated rituals, while analysing Likert-type graded scale questionnaires regarding the views of sixth-grade students and primary-school teachers on the role of school celebrations.

As the author points out, "the research is based on a dialogue between the sociology of education, history and anthropology with semiotics" (29). From the anthropological perspective, participatory observation plays the dominant role in