

Charles C. Moskos, Jr. *Greek Americans, Struggle and Success*. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980) 162 pp., \$9.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper.

Charles Moskos is a Greek American sociologist involved in teaching one of the few courses dealing with the subject of his book, *Greek Americans*. His book is a broad overview of this ethnic group, with both an historical and sociological perspective. The topic is interesting, for the Greeks are one of the few "New Immigrant" groups to achieve rapid upward mobility without vanishing into the melting pot. Since the success of most southern and eastern European groups has been marked by a slow and uneven upward climb, the Greeks offer an instructive contrast.

Moskos notes that success was not achieved without struggle, for the Greeks faced nativist prejudice; the most violent episode was the expulsion of several thousand Greek laborers from South Omaha, Nebraska, in 1909. There were also struggles within the Greek community, often focused on the central institution of Greek American culture, the Greek Orthodox Church. In early years the contention between royalist and liberal backers led to constant fighting. Despite prejudice and internal strife the group began its social ascent by the 1920s, becoming solidly middle class after World War II.

The Greek Americans presents a varied look at contemporary Greek American culture ranging from literature to generational differences. The culture has retained a basic respect for elders, while ties with *koumbaroi*, godparents or best men at weddings, have declined. Moskos also brings out other cultural values and transformations in American society.

However, the organization of the book leaves much to be desired. A key question raised is the reason for Greek success. Moskos quickly notes that Greeks went into small business rather than work for wages. Yet the reader must wait until almost the end of the book to find out the reason for this was that Greek peasants, unlike many other peasants, were involved in a market economy which gave them skills in selling, buying, and negotiation which served them in America. Other questions raised are never answered; for example, he notes that politically the group is conservative, while most Greek American politicians are liberal. Further, the book moves between sensitive discussions of Greek American culture and listings of Greeks who have "made it." What is offered is an informative but not definitive study of an interesting ethnic group.

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