CONTESTED IDENTITY: MACEDONIANS IN CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
October, 1997

THESIS
305.891819094 NAJ
30001004896058
Najdovski, Ico (Chris)
Contested identity :
Macedonians in contemporary
Australia

Abstract

As argued in this thesis, a Macedonian-Australian identity is an elusive and evolving category. Nonetheless, the various Macedonian-Australian institutions and organisations, as well as the activities that they perform, described in this thesis, give definition and shape to a distinctive Macedonian identity. The thesis argues that Macedonian identity is not fixed, but is the product of lived experience and engagement with the issues that confront them in the modern context. This identity is not a static fusion of discrete 'traditional' and 'modern' identities, which come together to constitute another (composite) self-contained identity. Rather, the Macedonian-Australian identity is viewed as representing dynamic processes of 'negotiation' between various cross-cutting trajectories, that are constructed in response to changing social and cultural circumstances. The thesis describes these processes as they are enacted in the Australian context, including the contestation of Macedonian identity that was part of what has come to be known as 'the Greek-Macedonian debate'. The thesis argues that Macedonians draw on their historic heritage and culture, as well as on elements that are part of their lives in Australia, in order to construct an evolving identity unlike any other. The thesis also poses some important questions about the future development of a tolerant and democratic multicultural policy for Australia.

CONTENTS

Abstract
Acknowledgements

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION 6

CHAPTER TWO:
THE PROBLEM OF CONTESTED IDENTITY 17

The Macedonian Land 18
A Brief Outline of Macedonian History 19
Macedonia under the Romans 20
Saints Cyril and Methodious 21
Macedonia Under the Turks 22
The Division of Macedonia 24
Assimilation and Colonisation in Divided Macedonia 26
Aegean Macedonia
Vardar Macedonia
Pirin Macedonia
The Creation of the Socialist Republic of Macedonian in 1944 30
The Macedonian Language 33
The Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia 39
The Independent Republic of Macedonia 42

CHAPTER THREE:
THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF MACEDONIAN LIFE IN AUSTRALIA 45

Macedonian Migration to Australia 45
Constructing and Locating Community Relationships 51
Macedonian Family Life 60
Macedonian Leaders and Community Structures 75
The Macedonian Orthodox Church 83

CHAPTER FOUR:
MACEDONIAN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES 91

Macedonian Theatre in Australia 91
The Australian-Macedonian Theatre "Blagoja Neskovski"
The Australian-Macedonian Drama Group
Macedonian Theatre Group "Boomerang"
The Macedonian Women's Choir 114
The Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee 115
The Macedonian Press 118

Australian Macedonian Weekly
Today-Denes
Cultural and Artistic Associations 125
Macedonian Soccer Clubs 126
Macedonian Organisations and Identity 129

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE MACEDONIANS DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA 131

What is Multiculturalism? 131
The Macedonian Language - Wollongong Study 1986 135
The Demonstration at La Trobe University 140
The 5 February 1988 Demonstration 143
The Reaction of the Academics 147
The Greek Bicentennial 'Gift' 150
Macedonian Independence and 'The Name Problem' 156
The 1992 Demonstration 160
Australia's 'Recognition' of Macedonia and and The Problem of the 'Slav' Prefix 167
The Violence of March 1994 172
The Reactions of the Greek and Macedonian Communities 177

CHAPTER SIX:
THE CRISIS OF 1994 187

The Wollongong Demonstration 188
The Canberra Rally 189
The Demonstration in Sydney 190
The 'Anti-Discrimination March' in Melbourne 191
The Media 195
The Role of Victoria's Premier Jeff Kennett 199
Jeff Kennett's Renaming of the Macedonian Language 203
The Issue of Australian Passports 210

CHAPTER SEVEN:
CONCLUSION 213

BIBLIOGRAPHY 217

OTHER SOURCES 223

Acknowledgements

I have incurred a great many debts in the course of researching this thesis. I would like to acknowledge the help of all those who provided me with the opportunities that made this thesis possible. In particular, I would like to thank my supervisors Professor Robert Pascoe and Professor Ron Adams, as well as Dr Fred Klarberg, from Victoria University, for their support and guidance during an arduous and demanding process that a thesis such as this inevitably entails. I would also like to thank the many people from the Macedonian community of Australia who shared most generously with me their lives and provided me with the opportunities to observe and participate in so many of the activities that are described in this thesis. I want to acknowledge the help of Dr Chris Popov, Dr Mile Terzievski, Roseta Stoikovska, Michael Radin, the Very Reverent Spase Stefanovski, Risto Altin, Tanas Krlevski, Margarita Vasileva, Silvana Pavlovska, Krste Naumovski and the management committee members of the many Macedonian organisations. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Erik Lloga for so generously sharing ideas with me, and to his family for their hospitality and patient support. Last but not least, I want to acknowledge the very great support that I have received from my wife, Suzana Najdovska, my children, Valentina, Robert and Petra, and my parents, Vasil and Pera, who supported me more than they will ever know.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

As argued in this thesis, a 'Macedonian-Australian' identity is, in many respects, an elusive category. Nonetheless, the various Macedonian-Australian institutions and organisations described in this thesis do give definition and shape to a disinctive identity. As Homi Bhabha has indicated, such an identity is not fixed, but is the product of lived experience and cultural engagement, or as he puts it, 'whether antagonistic or affiliative' such identities 'are produced performatively' and should not be 'hastily read as the reflection of a pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition' (Bhabha 1994:2). From this viewpoint, it would be a mistake to regard Macedonian-Australian identity as static, in terms of a static or fixed cultural model and in terms of viewing it as a fusion of discrete 'traditional ' and 'modern' identities, which come together to constitute another (composite) self-contained identity. Rather, such identities should be seen as representing dynamic processes of negotiation between various cross-cutting social and cultural trajectories, and are constructed in response to changing social and cultural circumstances. The identities that are produced in this process are always positioned in specific contexts and are, in Stuart Hall's terms (1988), 'positionalities'. It is these processes that are implicated in the construction of the sense of self (Adams 1995; see also Hall 1988:44-6). In the ongoing construction of narratives of self and selfhood, produced in interaction with given social and cultural contexts, particular positionalities will be enunciated. These enunciated positionalities represent choices, in the sense that they emphasise or

privilege particular positionalities vis-à-vis other possible positionalities. But, such choices are always placed in context. As Stuart Hall has observed, in this context,

> [E]very identity is placed, positioned, in a culture, a language, a history. Every statement comes from somewhere, from somebody in particular. It insists on specificity, on conjuncture. But it is not necessarily armour-plated against other identities (Hall 1988:44-6).

Thus, following Homi Bhabha and Stuart Hall, we might say that that the Macedonian-Australian identity is 'placed' or 'positioned' within a culture, a history, which represents a dynamic process of choices made within specific social and cultural contexts and times. As this thesis documents, 'Macedonian-Australians' are engaged in an ongoing process of constructing and defending a distinctive cultural identity unlike any other. In accord with this, we would have to say that the Macedonian-Australian identity is constructed in engagement with both the culture at 'home' and the culture(s) of Australia. Finally, as this thesis documents, we would have to say that the Macedonian-Australian identity, conceived as positionality, is enunciated performatively, that is, through discrete and concrete actions performed by specific individuals and groups and are, therefore, em***bodied*** (Berger & Luckman 1966). Accordingly, Macedonian-Australian identity or positionality is enunciated performatively in the form of identifiable actions and activities, performed by concrete individuals and groups of people. And it is these *performative enunciations*, to use Bhabha's term, that this thesis documents.

The significance of the experience of the Macedonians in Australia that this thesis describes needs to be seen as placed 'in context', that is, within a particular history, time and conjuncture. It shares common ground with many other communities, such as the position that confronts other diaspora communities, for example, the Kurds, the Ukrainians and others, who share an additional feature, namely, the fact that their 'homes' are newly emerging nations in west Asia and Europe. The common ground that is shared by members of all of these and other communities, with that of the Macedonian community in Australia is the particular position they occupy between the place of origin and their place in their adopted home. They belong simultaneously in and are part of both, and yet they are faced with a set of issues and challenges that are peripheral, or at least, not central to both, a situation that Homi Bhabha has called 'the third space' (Bhabha 1994).

One of the key themes that this thesis documents is the importance of Macedonian culture and history for Macedonians in Australia as a key reference point; a source of cultural and emotional capital as well as being a 'location' of belonging, as a community of assent and descent. It is this key position that Macedonia, now the independent Republic of Macedonia, occupies in the lives of Macedonians that remains a tangible link with place and history. It is also implicated as the main ingredient in the construction of a Macedonian-Australian identity, which is being constructed as part of the ongoing process of place-making and in attempting to accommodate the range of challenges, contradictions and pressures that constitute modern social life. For example, the Macedonian community is subject to modern (some writers refer to them as post modern) forces, that, as Anthony Giddens (1991)

points out, have disembedding effects, in the sense of enabling individuals to be simultaneously somewhere and nowhere: that is, to belong and not to belong fully in any one place and culture. In this context, a Macedonian identity and link with place and history is a means of resisting obliteration and homogenisation that is a key feature of contemporary life.

Given the importance of Macedonia, and all that it stands for culturally and symbolically for Macedonians, the Macedonian identity construction in Australia is also bound up closely with Macedonia's history and struggles for independence and survival. In the modern era there has been a consistent effort by Macedonians to obtain independence from foreign rule, which has been formally achieved, in one part of the Macedonians' historic 'home', namely in the part that was formerly part of Yugoslavia as recently as 1991. Although this makes Macedonia one of the newest nations in the world, according to historians, it also remains one of the oldest.

It is worth noting that a key feature of the Macedonian 'nation' are its diaspora communities, in both the neighbouring countries in the Balkans as well as elsewhere. It also needs to be noted that although peoples are recognised by international conventions as having cultural and linguistic rights and the right to maintain and develop their identity, for a variety of complex historical and political reasons Macedonians have been denied, until very recently, statehood or territorial independence. One of the ironies of late twentieth century history is that, as the world shrinks and human culture becomes more globalised, the claims of these minorities become more pressing and visible.

In accord with Stuart Hall, we might say that the Macedonian community in Australia speaks from a specific context and history, which is 'positioned'. And it is in this context that all of those who formed part of this study need to be seen. It is against this background that 'the roots' of the Macedonian-speaking community in Australia need to be seen, that is, in the complex social and cultural history of the Balkans, which is characterised by struggle, poverty and centuries of conflict and territorial disputes.

The category of 'Macedonian' is, therefore, a complex and multilayered one, which is subject to contestation, even by many of those who unquestionably identify themselves as Macedonians. This is an additional dimension to the external contestation that the name Macedonia, for example, has been subjected to by others, such as the Greek government. What this indicates is that there are two simultaneous processes taking place. On the one hand, there is the contestation, in the main externally imposed, of Macedonian identity and Macedonian as a category, the ultimate object of which has to be considered to be the obliteration of such a category. On the other, there is an intense process taking place within the Macedonian community[1], which is full of tension and contestation in terms of defending and representing Macedonians as a category by examining, excavating and searching its past and drawing on it for a variety of purposes aimed at meeting the pressures imposed by present circumstances. It is in the 'space' created by these simultaneous

[1] For example, such as the debates concerning Macedonian identity in its historical context that is the subject of discussion and contestation between the two main groups within the Macedonian community, namely, Macedonians, who are the primary interest of this thesis, and the "Panmakedoniki", essentially residents of northern Greece (Aegean Macedonia) who are Greek-speaking.

and ongoing processes that Macedonian identity is constructed, defined and reconstructed in response to a specific set of contextual factors. For an understanding of the dynamics of identity construction among the Macedonians in Australia, it is necessary to consider the history of the Macedonian people, both in their places of origin and in Australia. And it is this that I now turn to and discuss.

The arrival of the Macedonian-speaking people in Australia dates back to the nineteenth century, as this thesis documents. A Macedonian-Australian identity, as a community identity, expressed in terms of community organisations and structures that give shape and form to it, belongs to the period after the Second World War. The first Macedonian organisation was established in 1946, and was followed by the development of religious, sporting and other cultural organisations.

The Macedonian community also evolved in a culturally diverse Australia, within which it has a history of development. An important part of this history of the Macedonian community is its attempts to develop the structures and organisations that were necessary for community life. This engagement with internal community development and the Macedonian community's relatively small size, compared to the Greek and Italian communities, also meant that its part in the development of multiculturalism, such as the 'ethnic rights' movement of the 1960s and 1970s, was also of necessity limited. The model of multicultural Australia was, in the main, shaped by the larger and more vocal ethnic communities, such as the Greek and Italian communities, whose powerful position is reflected in the development of multicultural Australia. The positioning of these communities, as this thesis illustrates, was (and

remains) such that they wield enormous power. This power, for example, in the case of the Greek community is derived from the political power they can exert by their numerical size and the privileged positions that they occupy in giving shape to conceptions and definitions of ethnicity.

The privileged position of larger 'ethnic' groups, such as the Greek community, have also meant that they have had a virtual monopoly in defining the category Macedonia and Macedonians, within Greek terms. That is, Macedonia and Macedonians, to a great extent, came to be seen as inextricably bound up with Greek identity and history. This issue, as we shall see in Chapters 5 and 6, also meant that in seeking to assert and defend their identity, Macedonians in Australia had to struggle in a double sense. On the one hand, they were pursuing a specific issue concerning the recognition of Macedonia as an independent nation as well as having to challenge the misconceptions about their identity that were placed by the Greek community over time, and which, when challenged by Macedonians, resulted in massive Greek pressures and public campaigns to deny Macedonians recognition as a separate community with a culture and identity in their own right.

The representation of the Macedonian community and its recognition as a separate Macedonian identity could only occur after a long process of consolidation during which a group of community 'leaders' emerged. Two generations of community leaders can be identified in the period between the 1940s and the 1990s. These represent two distinct groups of elites distinguished by their different styles, social background, role and choices of political strategy. The leaders of the 1950s, 1960s and

1970's were primarily concerned with the development of the Macedonian community structures and organisations, which provided the basis for communal life and the maintenance of cultural traditions and Macedonian identity. In short, that generation looked to strengthen the community largely for the purposes of maintaining the integrity of the culture and through their work, established a firm basis for the community's ongoing presence in Australia. The 'leaders' of the 1980s and the 1990s represented a new generation of people who were now ready to participate in, and engage with, the broader community in asserting and, as it turned out, in defending a distinctive Macedonian identity. It is against this complex background of evolution that the conflicts that emerged between the Greek and Macedonian communities in 1994 (in what is commonly referred to as 'the Greek-Macedonia dispute'), need to be seen. In Chapters 5 and 6, we document these events and discuss their implications for the Macedonian community and their broader repercussions for Australia as a tolerant multicultural society.

The series of events that took place in 1994, such as the major public demonstrations and episodes of violence throughout Australia and the one sided (pro-Greek) stance of the Victorian Government (which has no foreign affairs power) to intervene in a dispute with international, as well as national dimensions, are also examined for the importance that they have had for the Macedonian community in providing a context for the positionalities adopted by the Macedonian community. As indicated, the Macedonian community is also marked by internal diversity but, as argued below, the Greek/Macedonian dispute also served internal Macedonian community purposes, such as the drawing together of a community of people whose central concern had

now become the defence of their Macedonian identity against what had become potent and identifiable groups.

These more recent political developments in the Macedonian community in Australia reflect only one aspect of the complex nature of the ongoing processes of community development and identity construction and reconstruction within the community. The community, which fosters its identity in a range of cultural, educational and religious organisations, has a cultural depth and structure which require specific analysis, and which this thesis addresses. The broad aim of this thesis is to describe, analyse and discuss the ways in which Macedonians have sought to construct, assert and defend a Macedonian identity as a distinct community of people, through a specific set of activities.

This thesis is positioned within the constructionist theories of identity formation, which argue that identities are socially constructed within specific contexts and histories. The processes of identity construction, according to these theories (Hall 1996; Bhabha 1994) are ongoing negotiated processes in response to concrete and specific conditions and issues. Positioned in this way, identities are in a constant process of change. From this viewpoint, identities are always placed in context and can only be understood in relation to them. Thus, what may appear to be essentialist conceptions of Macedonian identity, especially as reflected in the contestations of Macedonian identity even by Macedonians themselves, need to be seen in conjunction with and against, for example, Greek assertions and claims, which deny their existence as a community with a distinct Macedonian history and culture. An example

of this is the issue of 'ownership' of the name Macedonia. The Macedonians maintain they are ethnic 'Macedonians', while Greeks claim that they are not, and refer to them as 'Skopians'. In this context, and in the face of essentialist Greek arguments which lay claim to all things Macedonian as Greek, Macedonians too invoke essentialist claims as strategies in defence of their existence as a separate entity. This position is, as I argue in this thesis, compatible with a constructionist approach to identity development, since such essentialist arguments form part of the 'repertoire' of arguments that groups, such as the Macedonians, invoke in defence of their identity and right to exist. This issue is also part of the discussion that is taken up in relation to Macedonian identity in the chapters that follow.

In the discussion that follows I consider a number of key issues that are part of the Macedonian identity, which provide a link between Macedonians in Australia with Macedonians in Macedonia and elsewhere, as part of a community with a shared historic and cultural heritage, and which is invoked in defence of their identity. For example, Macedonia's history and its effects on subsequent Macedonian identity are central to an understanding of the self-reflexive processes involved in Macedonian constructions and reconstructions of their identity. These include: the effect of the 1913 division of Macedonia on its people; the impact of the First and Second World Wars and the Greek Civil War on the Macedonians; as well as more recent events, such as the declaration of an independent and sovereign Republic of Macedonia and her struggles for recognition and acceptance as a nation by the United Nations and the European Union.

Allied to these issues are other considerations, such as: whether ethnic Macedonians, within Australia, consider themselves as Macedonians, and the role of language in this consideration; and the impact of concerted efforts by a range of powerful institutions on the construction of distinctive Macedonian identity in Australia. In the context of such issues, the 'Macedonian-Australian' question which this thesis addresses is of more general interest to those concerned with the position of contested minorities in countries of immigration.

As argued in this thesis, a 'Macedonian-Australian' identity is, in many respects, an elusive category. Nonetheless, the various Macedonian-Australian institutions and organisations described in this thesis give definition and shape to a distinctive identity. As Homi Bhabha has indicated, such identity is not fixed but is constructed within the interstitial spaces that constitute the space between place, time and historic moment. Macedonian identity is thus positioned in the present. This *present* is, however, a complex category, which St Augustine once described as the present that contains the presence of things present, the presence of things past and the presence of things yet to come (Le Goff 1992: xii).

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROBLEM OF CONTESTED IDENTITY

As outlined in the Introduction, this thesis is concerned with the ways in which Macedonian-Australians have sought to construct and defend a distinctive cultural identity. To understand the motivation and the way in which they have done this, it is necessary to consider the European 'homeland' with which members of the community continue to identify. This Chapter deals with the history of Macedonian people, their land and the struggle for ethnic identity, and recognition by Macedonia's neighbouring Balkan nations (Hill 1989; Simpson 1994; Shea 1992; Society for Macedonian Studies Centre of Macedonians Abroad 1983). It outlines the cultural, geographical, linguistic, political and economic customs of Macedonia with which Macedonian-Australians remain familiar, and with which they retain a deep sense of connectedness despite the distance of space and the passage of time.

With its high mountain ranges, fertile valleys and plains, and myriad of rivers and streams, Macedonia occupies the centre of not only the Balkan peninsula but also the Balkan imagination. 'Macedonian-Australians' continue to identify with a country which goes back to the classical period. Though ancient Macedonia ceased to exist following the Roman occupation of 168 BC, a Macedonian identity continued right up to the ninth century, when Cyril and Methodious gave it a new voice with the creation of the Macedonian alphabet. Even the systematic program of assimilation under the Ottoman Turks, beginning in the fourteenth century, failed to obliterate the sense of being 'Macedonian'. Given this rich historical context of cultural resilience,

it is understandable why Macedonian-Australians have remained confident of maintaining a distinct identity despite, at times, concerted efforts to undermine it.

The Macedonian Land

Located in the centre of the Balkan peninsula, the historic land of Macedonia is now incorporated within the modern national boundaries of Greece, Bulgaria, the Republic of Macedonia and Albania (Danforth 1995). The territory of Macedonia is inhabited by many ethnic groups such as Macedonians, Greeks, Albanians, Bulgarians and Vlachs (Hill 1988). We take as our definition of 'Macedonian', any person who considers himself or herself to be a member of the ethnic Macedonian group with its own language, culture and traditions. Foremost among these is language, the Macedonian language codified in the mid-nineteenth century.

Macedonia, in the historical and ethno-graphical sense of the word, extends in the north to the mountain massifs of Sar, Skopska Crna Gora, Rujen, Kozjak, and German, with Mts Osogovo and Rila in the north-west, while the River Bistrica, Mt Olympus and the shores of the Aegean Sea right up to the Mesta estuary form its southern limits. It is bordered by Mts Korab, Jablanica, Mokra, and Pindus in the west, and the River Mesta and Western Rhodope range in the east. The territory of Macedonia covers more than 67 000 sq. km (Barker 1950:9; Balevski 1981:5; Shea 1992:33; Danforth 1995:44; International Affairs Agency, 1995:8). Today, approximately 50 per cent of Macedonian territory lies within the borders of modern Greece as its northernmost province, whereas almost 40 per cent now forms the

Republic of Macedonia. About 10 per cent now comprises the small Pirin District in the southwestern corner of Bulgaria and 1 per cent or more than 30 villages are given to modern Albania (Radin and Popov 1989:1-2).

The Macedonian land is covered by high mountains and mountain ranges separated by gentle fertile valleys and plains, linked by many rivers and streams. Having a number of natural and artificial lakes, Macedonia is also known as the land of lakes. Possessing an important economic and political position in an area of military-strategic significance, Macedonia has been the subject of major interest and conquest by its neighbours and Big Powers (Radin 1988:19).

A Brief Outline of Macedonian History

According to Macedonian sources, Macedonia as a geographical, ethnic and historical entity originates from the classical period (Danforth, 1995). The existence of Macedonia and its people goes back to the seventh century BC. In ancient times Macedonia reached its peak during the reign of King Philip II (359-336) and his son Alexander the Great (336-323). After the collapse of Alexander's empire, Macedonia fell first (in 168 BC) under the Roman Empire and later under Byzantine, Bulgarian and Turkish rule (Radin and Popov 1989:i).

Macedonia under the Romans

In 168 BC Macedonia was occupied by the Romans who ruled Macedonia until 324 AD. During Roman rule, the Macedonian population remained, more or less, unchanged. For Rome, Macedonia was an intersection on the way to the eastern end of its empire and the Middle East. For this reason the well known road 'Via Egnatia' was built. It was this position of being a crossroads of civilisations that enabled, for example, Christianity to spread among Macedonians.

The Macedonians were among the first people of the Mediterranean to accept Christianity, where St Paul was engaged in successful missionary activity. By the fourth century Macedonia was almost wholly Christianised.

During the fourth and fifth centuries, Macedonia was attacked by several tribes who did not significantly alter the ethnic character of Macedonia. However, the Slav tribes began to invade Macedonia during the sixth and seventh centuries AD and settled throughout much of present day Macedonia. More extreme Macedonian nationalists believe that the Macedonians of today are not Slavs, but are the direct descendants of the ancient Macedonians, who were not Greeks. They claim that 'Slavism' is a destructive doctrine that aims to eradicate 'Macedonism' completely, by denying a substantial part of Macedonia's history, namely, that of antiquity.

Macedonia has also been under foreign domination at different times by the Bulgarians (almost 200 years), Serbians (about 100 years), and, for the most lengthy

period, the Turks (over 500 years). As a result of such wars, and because of its desirable geographical and political position on the Balkan Peninsula, Macedonia was partitioned amongst Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece after the Balkan Wars in 1913 (The Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts 1993:17-20).

Saints Cyril and Methodius

The most significant event in the history of Macedonia, occurring in the first half of the ninth century, was the creation of the Macedonian alphabet (then called Glagolitic) and the subsequent emergence of the first Macedonian literature.The creation of the Macedonian alphabet was the work of the two legendary missionary Macedonian brothers, Cyril and Methodious. Both were able administrators and brilliant diplomats before taking up their missionary labours. The Macedonian language has functioned as the principal literary, liturgical and colloquial language of Macedonia ever since (Balevski 1981).

During the second half of the ninth century, St Clement of Ohrid (835-916) started his religious and cultural activities establishing, together with Naum, the 'Ohrid Literary School'. Under the spiritual guidance of St Clement about 3,500 pupils were educated, many of whom became priests in the Macedonian churches.

St Clement is regarded by Macedonians as one of the most active apostles, teachers and orators. It is he who is credited with the honour of inventing the 'Cyrillic' alphabet. In 893, St. Clement was made Archbishop of Ohrid, an archbishopric which

lasted until 1767, when it was abolished by the Turks. It was reestablished as the Macedonian Orthodox Church in 1967.

Macedonia under the Turks

After the Bulgarian and Serbian rule in Macedonia, at the end of the 14th century, Macedonia was colonised by the Ottoman Turks. The Turkish armies sacked and destroyed many towns and villages, subjecting the population to looting and violence. Many women, men and children were sold into slavery in Asia Minor. The Turks carried out a systematic program of settlement from Asia Minor, trying to assimilate the Macedonians and convert them to Islam. The Turkish occupation of Macedonia had already lasted four hundred years before the Macedonian people found an opportunity to assert their national independence. The monasteries and the churches remained the leading centres of education and culture. Indeed the church remained one of the few institutions that, although weakened and under threat of complete obliteration through much of the period of Ottoman rule, maintained a continuity between the past and the Macedonian 'national reawakening' that came to the fore at the end of the last century. Indeed, it is hard to see how without the church, which was a key institution, any of the cultural and material heritage of the Macedonians could have survived during such a long and particularly brutal part of history. It is also important to note that the church has also been one of the main institutions in Australia around which much of the life of the Macedonians has revolved. This issue is taken up in later parts of this thesis.

Following the period of the Eastern Crises (with Macedonia remaining under Ottoman rule, according to the decision of the 1878 Congress of Berlin), the focus of the national struggle was transferred to the political level. The principal demand was the autonomy for Macedonia, as a first step towards full state independence. It was during this period that armed struggle and insurrections of the Macedonians against Ottoman domination began.

The 'Ilinden uprising' (so called because it started on St. Elijah's Day) was a turning point in the national and revolutionary struggle of the Macedonian people. It began on August 2, 1903, and soon spread over the whole of Macedonia. The Ilinden uprising was organised by VMRO (IMRO-Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation) and its leader Gotse Delchev (Institute for National History 1972:184-185; Radin 1993:95-96). The Krushevo Republic was established in the liberated town of Krushevo. The uprising was crushed after three months and both sides, the Turks and the Macedonians, were dissatisfied with the European proposals for resolving the conflict, such as the proposed reforms that the Ottoman empire grant Macedonia autonomy within her dominion. These proposals did not eventuate and indeed the conflict intensified thereafter.

Like so much else, the Macedonians' struggle against Ottoman rule was also subject to contestation. For example, at that time, Greek nationalists claimed that the Ilinden Uprising was an example of the patriotism and sacrifices of the Greeks of Macedonia, and they also claimed that it was the greatest moment in the modern history of the Macedonian Greeks. It was carried out, they claimed, by the entire Greek nation

united, which fought to preserve the Greekness of Macedonia. This claim is still being made by sections of the Greek community, such as the Society for Macedonian Studies-Centre of Macedonians Abroad (1983:15-16), which claims that the conflict which occurred during that period was a clash between the 'unionists' who were seeking integration of Macedonia with Bulgaria, and the 'autonomists' who advocated the creation of an autonomous Macedonian State (ie. as an integral part of the Bulgarian state). In other words, it is claimed that it was not a conflict by Macedonians asserting their distinct national identity and their rights to independence, but a conflict between two groups of Bulgarian 'unionists' and Bulgarian 'autonomists' (Martis 1984:100).

The Division of Macedonia

Macedonia was under the Turkish Empire from 1371 until 1912, when it was divided between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. The First Balkan War began in October 1912, with Montenegro, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria aligned against the Turks. The Second Balkan War, which took place only a few months later, in 1913, was between the victors fighting over the spoils. The Serbs, who had achieved autonomy from the Ottoman empire in 1829, planned to expand their territory southwards, westwards and northwards, claiming Macedonia right down to Salonika on ethnic grounds, asserting that the Macedonians were Serbs. The Greeks, for their part, based their claim to Macedonia on both historical and ethnic grounds, whereas Bulgaria claimed that the Macedonians were Bulgarians.

The majority of the population of Macedonia before the Balkan Wars were ethnic Macedonians, whereas the Greeks, Albanians and the Vlachs were minorities. The principal problem in Macedonia (the most disputed area in the Balkan peninsula) was the national allegiance of the Macedonians. Each of the aforementioned states claimed that the territory of Macedonia was inhabited by people who shared their nationality.

As a result of such conflicting claims and the confusion that this created, the Macedonians found themselves the objects of intensive propaganda designed to convince them that they were of one or another nationality. Each of the three states involved sponsored the formation of national societies within Macedonia and they waged a bitter campaign for predominance. When traditional methods of political propaganda failed, terror was freely employed. In fact the battle over Macedonia was fought mainly over its strategic position, which would give its owners control of the Balkan peninsula, as well as increase the size of their territories.

The consequences of the Balkan Wars were very serious for Macedonia. It was once again under foreign domination: Aegean Macedonia was given to Greece, Vardar Macedonia to Serbia, Pirin Macedonia to Bulgaria, and a small area was given to Albania. The partition of Macedonia was confirmed, against the will of the Macedonians, by the Peace of Bucharest signed on August 10, 1913 (Radin 1993:150; International Affairs Agency Research Centre 1995:12).

After the Wars, a long process of denationalisation and assimilation of the Macedonian population was established, even though the Macedonians hoped to gain

their own independence and form their own state (Institute for National History 1972:332-335; Radin 1993:168). The Great Powers – Great Britain, France, Austro-Hungary and Italy –insisted on forming an independent Albanian state, because they wanted to retain their interests and influence in that particular important strategic region. Yet, this was not the case with Macedonia.

Assimilation and Colonisation in Divided Macedonia

Aegean Macedonia

The population of Aegean Macedonia consists of ethnic Macedonians, who refer to themselves as 'tukasni' (locals), and Greeks who are called 'refugees' (prosfiges); descendants of Greeks who were settled in Macedonia after the Balkan Wars and the First World War (Milanko 1995).

Before World War I, the Macedonians were the largest ethnic group in Aegean Macedonia. According to 1903 Polish statistical sources and the 1905 Turkish census, more than one million Macedonians lived on the entire territory of Macedonia and only 70 thousand Greeks. But between 1913 and 1926 major population shifts significantly changed the demographic make-up of the region. Many Greek teachers, priests, civil servants and military personnel moved north and settled there (Barker 1950:12).

In November 1919, Greece and Bulgaria signed a convention (later extended several times) which forced thousands of Macedonians out of their homeland. After the defeat of Greece in the Greek-Turkish War of 1920-1922, 320 000 Macedonians were moved out and 640 000 Greeks moved in (Kiselinovski 1987:24; The Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts 1993:71).

The Greek authorities carried out a wide-ranging policy of discrimination and denationalisation after 1913. They have never recognised the existence of the Macedonian nation, its language, culture and social and cultural institutions. Officially they insist that Macedonians are Greeks and that Macedonia is a Greek territory. Sometimes the Greeks call Macedonians Bulgarians, Slavophones, or Slavs, depending on the current trends in Greek politics.

The population 'exchanges' and 'resettlements' did not bring about the complete denationalisation and Hellenisation of Aegean Macedonia. Under the Metaxas dictatorship in Greece (1936-1941), conditions for the Macedonians deteriorated markedly. The use of the Macedonian language was forbidden and the Macedonians were forced to attend night school to learn Greek. During the 1950s, the entire Macedonian population was required to swear that they would renounce their 'mother language' and, from then on speak only Greek. The Greek newspaper *Eleniki Phoni* of August 8, 1959 published in Lerin (Florina) stated the following announcement:

> Tomorrow the inhabitants of Atropos [Atropos is the Greek name of an old Macedonian village known to the people of the Lerin district for centuries as Krapeshina] will swear before God and the people in an official ceremony that hence forward they will promise not to speak the Slav dialect, which in the

> hands of Slav propagandists, has become a weapon pointed at the national consciousness of the Macedonians. The proud people of Atropos will take an oath to speak Greek only, so that in this way they may stress their Greek origin and their Greek consciousness.

The oath that the Macedonians swore was published in the Athens newspaper *Sphera* on September 1, 1959, and reads as follows:

> I do promise before God, the people, and the official state authorities, that from this day on I shell cease to speak the Slav dialect which gives ground for misunderstandings to the enemies of our country and that I will speak always and everywhere the official language of our fatherland, the Greek language, in which the Holy Gospel is written.

The policies of denationalisation of the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia and denying the existence of Macedonian nation continue to this day (Sidiropoulos 1996). The ongoing 'row' between the Macedonians and the Greeks will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

Vardar Macedonia

Until the end of the Second World War, Vardar Macedonia was under the control of Serbia. The Macedonians had no rights to speak Macedonian, to attend their own churches and maintain their culture and traditions. They were renamed Southern Serbians and the Vardar region renamed Southern Serbia. The Serbian officials claimed that the Macedonians did not exist and the population of Vardar Macedonia was only Serbian (Kiselinovski 1987:24-25).

The end of the Second World War marked a turning point in Macedonian history. As a sixth republic of the Yugoslav Federation, a part of Macedonia came into existence as a political entity for the first time in modern history. In that federation the Macedonians enjoyed full rights as a separate nation, with Macedonian, the oldest recorded Slavic language, given official status and Skopje recognised as its capital city. On September 8, 1991, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia seceded from Yugoslavia and became an independent and sovereign state. The proclamation of the Republic of Macedonia is still denied by Greece and Serbia and to some extent Bulgaria.

Pirin Macedonia

In the part belonging to Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia), Macedonians had no rights as a nation until the Second World War, after which they were granted full rights of a national minority. The results of the census of 1956, which was conducted by the Bulgarian state, showed that Pirin Macedonia had about 200 000 Macedonians out of 281 000 inhabitants. As time went by Macedonians in Bulgaria were stripped of all their rights. Under the regime of Todor Zivkov, the existence of Macedonians was denied and public expressions of Macedonian identity were prohibited. Macedonians were called Bulgarians and Bulgaria claimed the entire territory of Macedonia. The situation of denial of Macedonian cultural rights and expressions of identity continue to be dealt with harshly by the Bulgarian authorities. For example, Amnesty International reported that on "... 24 April 1993, dozens of Macedonians, many of the members of OMO 'Ilinden', were ill-treated by police officers in Lozenitsa and

Spatovo after attempting to visit Rozhen Monastery" (Amnesty International 22 April 1994). Because of the continuing denial of the existence of the Macedonian community or the under-reporting of the size of the community, Macedonians in Bulgaria have requested the European Parliament to put pressure on the Bulgarian government to conduct a census in order to determine the true size of the Macedonians in that country (SBS Radio 3EA 10 October 1997)

The Creation of the Socialist Republic of Macedonian in 1944

Until 1944 the existence of a Macedonian nation was denied by its occupiers: Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece. However, in 1944 Bulgaria and the newly created Yugoslavia agreed to recognise the existence of a separate Macedonian nationality. Yugoslavia did so because, without recognition of a separate Macedonian nation, it would not succeeded in its plans for the future. Tito's ambitions were to unify all Macedonians, including those in Bulgaria and Greece, under his or Yugoslav leadership. With the unification of all Macedonians, Tito wanted to bind them more closely to Yugoslavia (former Serbia), which had ruled over the Macedonians and had sought to assimilate them through a concerted pre-Second World War Serbianisation policy.

With this move, Serbia (the strongest Yugoslav republic) hoped that the recognition of a separate Macedonian nation would also weaken Bulgaria's claim on Vardar Macedonia. On the other hand, it was in the interests of Bulgaria, which had been defeated in that part of Macedonia during the Second World War, to recognise a

separate Macedonian nation, which for the time being would serve as an obstacle to the further assimilation of Macedonians by the Serb and the Greek states. After 1944 the Bulgarian communists openly supported the idea of the cession of Pirin Macedonia to constitute a Socialist Federal Republic of Macedonia within the future Balkan Federation. However, the unification of Pirin and Vardar Macedonia was vetoed by Russia in 1948.

The Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia did not succeed in liberating themselves either in the Second World War or during the Civil War in Greece of 1946-1949. As had happened after the Balkan and First World Wars, the Big Powers proceeded to divide up Europe in their own interests. This was in spite of the commitment to the self-determination of peoples as expressed in the Atlantic Charter of 1941. Thus, Macedonia, once again, was divided by the Big Powers.

After the Second World War, one part of Macedonia (Vardar Macedonia) became a separate Republic within the Federal Socialist Republics of Yugoslavia, and the Macedonians were recognised as a distinct nationality. The Macedonian language was proclaimed an official language toward the end of the war during the first session of the Antifascist Assembly of Macedonia held on August 2, 1944, in Prohor Pcinjski monastery. The official codification of Macedonian as an internationally recognised language took place soon after the liberation of Macedonia with the adoption of the alphabet and standardised orthography.

According to Kofos (1989:243), a Greek nationalist historian, the creation of a Macedonian nation was a 'mutation' experiment, so that the name 'Macedonian' first began to be used to denote a specific ethnic or national group. The Greeks claim that the idea of creating a Macedonian nation was obvious: Tito and its Communist Party wanted to weaken Serbia, reverse the Bulgarian leanings of the Slavs of Vardar Macedonia, and lay the basis for the creation of a United Macedonia that would incorporate Aegean Macedonia and Pirin Macedonia. United Macedonia was proposed to become one of the states of the Yugoslav Federation.

The process of creating an artificial nation after the Second World war, according to Greek extremists, was supported with the creation of a new language and a new church. The new language, according to the former Northern Greek Minister, Nicholas Martis, "... was a local idiom composed mainly of western Bulgarian words with additions of Greek, Albanian, Turkish and Vlach". This language was submitted to 'scientific' elaboration and it was named the 'Macedonian' language (Martis 1984:86).

The third major element for creating a new nation, that is, a separate state, was an independent church. Martis (1984:91) has argued that the Yugoslav Government in 1968 invented and proclaimed the Independent Macedonian Church, despite the existence of the Serbian Patriarchate and its opposition. Having secured the three ingredients of the new 'nation' – own state, language and church – as Martis says, 'there began the struggle for the creation of an historical substratum'.

The Macedonian Language

"By an irony of history, the people whose ancestors gave to the Slavs their first literary language, were the last to have their modern language recognised as a separate Slavonic language, distinct from the neighbouring Serbian and Bulgarian" (de Bray 1980:137).

As the overview of the past history of the Macedonian language indicates, it is worth reiterating that the Macedonian language is currently officially the language of Republic of Macedonia. It is recognised throughout the world (excluding Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia) as the language of Macedonians. In addition, Macedonian remains the spoken language of Pirin Macedonia (Bulgaria), Aegean Macedonia (Greece) and of some 30 villages in Albania.

The Macedonians in medieval times were under Bulgarian, Serbian and Byzantine rule. At the end of the 14th century they were swallowed up by the Turks. They remained under the Ottoman empire till the beginning of this century. In 1912 the Macedonians were split up between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. Although the Macedonians were divided they managed to preserve their distinctive dialects and to develop (since 1944) the modern Macedonian literary language.

From the point of view of the external historical circumstances of the development of Macedonian, one can distinguish three basic phases. The first was the period from the beginning of the nineteenth century up to the Second Balkan War, when Macedonia

served as a battlefield on which the neighbouring countries waged a constant struggle for cultural and political domination. However, they did not succeed to impose their literary languages and there remained room for the use of the local Macedonian dialects. This period is often referred to by Macedonian historians as Macedonian 'national renaissance'. At this time a small group of Macedonian intellectuals began to form organisations and to publish newspapers and journals asserting the existence of a unique Macedonian language, culture and nation. The most prominent figures of the Macedonian cultural revival were Grigor Prlichev, Gorgi Pulevski, the brothers Konstantin and Dimitar Miladinov and Krste Petkov Misirkov. The latter is recognised as the founder of the modern Macedonian literary language and orthography. As President of the St Petersburg Society (Macedonian), he contributed extensively to numerous political periodicals. Misirkov's most famous work was *On Macedonian Matters*, published in 1903 in Sofia in which he writes in the central Macedonian dialect (Bitola, Prilep and Veles). He proposed the central dialect to be a Macedonian literary language (Misirkov 1978:54).

The second phase, the period after the Balkan Wars, was marked by the partition of Macedonian territory among the participants and the promulgation of theories that denied the Macedonian existence, language and culture. Officially, the occupiers prohibited the use of the Macedonian language in various areas of public life and at the same time they imposed their own languages on the Macedonians.

In the part of Macedonia that went to Serbia (Vardar Macedonia), the Macedonians had no cultural and political rights as a separate nation until the end of the Second

World War. The Macedonian language was prohibited, the Macedonians were renamed Southern Serbians, and Macedonia was known as Southern Serbia. It was to be this geographical entity known as Vardar Macedonia which became the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

Acording to Pribichevich (1982:204), the Macedonian language was forbidden in Aegean Macedonia and the Macedonians were not allowed to identify as Macedonians. At one stage, in 1925, the Macedonian language was briefly considered by the Greek education system for possible use in schools that catered for Macedonian students. However, this was never implemented and was to become an ongoing source of conflict between the Greek authorities and the Macedonians who demanded respect for their language and cultural rights. It was these conflicts, which centred around the issues of the cultural, social and human rights of the Macedonians, that provided the context for Macedonian 'migration', especially to Australia.

In the Greek ruled part of Macedonia, according to Tanas Krlevski, President of the 'Children Refugees' in Melbourne, the names of the Macedonian people were changed by adding the suffixes '*-os*', '*- es*' or '*poulos*' to their existing names (Najd*os*, Najd*es*), in place of Macedonian endings such as '*-ski*', '*-ska*', '*-ev*', '*-eva*' or '*-ov*' (Najdovski, Najdovska, Popov, Popova). The names of places in Aegean Macedonia were also changed by the Greek state, such as the name of the village Krapeshina, in the Lerin (Florina) district, was changed to Atropos. Kiselinovski reports that it was forbidden to use the Macedonian language in Greece "and

punishments were incurred of a different kinds [sic], such as spitting in their mouth [sic], or brutal beatings..." (1987:20-24).

The Macedonians complained to the Paris Peace Conference in 1920 about systematic discrimination against them by Greece, which resulted in the Conference recommending that Greek educational authorities prepare a primer intended for use among children of Macedonian background. The primer that was prepared was called ABECEDAR, and was published in Athens in 1925. The ABECEDAR was an elementary book, which was written in the Latin alphabet. However, the book never reached the Macedonian children and, after the departure of the representatives of the League of Nations, all copies were destroyed (Aleksowski 1992:7). Macedonians continued to be punished for speaking Macedonian. Some of these punishments included: forced eating of salted fish, monetary fines, imprisonment, the drinking of castor oil, the plucking of moustaches, piercing the tongue with a needle, cutting off part of the ears. (Kiselinovski 1987:20-24) About 5000 Macedonians were imprisoned for using Macedonian. Nurigiani, an Italian writer and scholar on Balkan affairs, states that the Greek government wanted every Macedonian in Aegean Macedonia to swear on oath not to use his native tongue (1967:108).

Although less well documented, the situation of Pirin Macedonia was not substantially different from that of Macedonians in Greece (Pirin Macedonia). Macedonians had no human rights until the Second World War. After the war they were granted full rights as a national minority. In subsequent years, the Macedonians were stripped of all these rights. Even today, the Bulgarian government does not recognise the

existence of ethnic groups, other than Bulgarians, within the borders of Bulgaria. Macedonians are called Bulgarians and Bulgaria has claims to the entire territory of Macedonia, including the Vardar and Aegean Macedonian regions (Aleksowski, 1992:6).

After the Greek Civil War, Macedonians were driven out of the Aegean part of Macedonia, and they were 'replaced' by people of other than Macedonian origin. Some of these 'displaced' Macedonians were 'resettled' in Bulgaria, where they became subject to assimilation and were denied the right to call themselves Macedonians, and were generally referred to as Bulgarians, Serbians or natives, whenever they demanded recognition as a distinct people (Macedonian Review 1986:335)

An example of this attitude against the Macedonians and their language, also arose some years ago in Melbourne. A Bulgarian priest was involved in a controversy at a local church whose congregation was made up of Macedonians. The priest had refused to accept them as Macedonians. According to Risto Simov, one of the church attenders, the priest continually insulted the Macedonian worshipers saying that there was no such place as Macedonia, no such people as Macedonian people and no such language as Macedonian (Simov 10 May, 1995).

One part of Macedonia, Mala Prespa, belongs to Albania. Teaching of the Macedonian language was authorised in several villages in the first years of primary

schools and it continued until the collapse of the communist regime. The present situation is unknown (Lloga 28 August, 1997).

In the third phase, after the Second World War, the Macedonian literary language was declared the official state language of the Republic of Macedonia. The Macedonian language was based on the west-central Macedonian dialect, for two important reasons. Firstly, this dialect was chosen because it was the most distinct form of Macedonian language that distinguished it from both Serbian and Bulgarian. Secondly, it was spoken by the majority of Macedonians (Palmer & King, 1971:155). In his study, Friedman (1985) pointed out that the Macedonian literary language was also the dialect that Krste Misirkov had suggested, in 1903, as the basis for a Macedonian literary language. However, as he also points out, those charged with the responsibility of codifying and developing the standard literary Macedonian, in 1944, were working without a full knowledge of Misirkov's work, principally because most of the copies of his publication *On Macedonian Matters* had been confiscated and destroyed by the Bulgarians (1985:91). According to Danforth (1995:67) and Friedman (1985:35), "the decision to establish Macedonian as the official language of the Republic of Macedonia in 1944, therefore, confirmed what was the *de facto* practice. It did not create a language out from the air, rather it granted recognition to a literary language whose modern development began in the nineteenth century."

In addition, it is clear that whatever may have been the situation in 1944, in the fifty years since then the Macedonian literary language has experienced such enormous growth and sophistication as a fully developed modern literary language, that it is now

recognised as a distinct language throughout the world. The modern literary Macedonian is the principal language of communication capable of rendering all meanings that are required of a language in the modern world. This is also attested to by the interest of international and Macedonian scholars, many of whom publish their work in the Macedonian language, such as through the Department of Macedonian at the University of Skopje and the Misirkov Institute for Macedonian Language Studies, in Skopje.

The Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia

For an understanding of the history of the Macedonians in Australia, including their efforts at developing community organisations and in constructing and defending a distinct Macedonian identity, which as we have seen thus far has been the subject of contestation throughout, we need to look at the importance of the making and the unmaking of Yugoslavia, for Macedonians both in Macedonia and in Australia, in this process.

The history of the making of Yugoslavia in the early part of this century is both complex and well beyond the scope of this thesis[2]. Suffice it to say that there were two distinct periods in this making of Yugoslavia: the first phase began with the conclusion of WWI, otherwise known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (or 'First' Yugoslavia) and ended with the German-Italian-Bulgarian occupation at the

[2] For a detailed history of the making of Yugoslavia, see Barbara Jelavich's two volume publication, *A History of the Balkans*.

beginning of WWII. During this period, Vardar Macedonia was incorporated within the Yugoslav Kingdom as part of Serbia, and Macedonian identity and the Macedonians' rights to give expression to their culture and distinct cultural heritage, were denied (Jelavich 1983).

The second period in the making of Yugoslavia had its beginning during WWII when the foundations of the new state were laid out, and it was to come to an end with the outbreak of war, in June 1991, with the declarations of Croatian and Slovenian independence (Jelavich 1983; Glenny 1992). During this phase, which was to last for almost fifty years (also referred to as Tito's Yugoslavia), Macedonia was granted an autonomous status, that of a republic, as one of the eight entities within the federation. During this period, Vardar Macedonia saw the flourishing of Macedonian cultural production and expression, within 'carefully defined limits', and of the partial fulfilment of the long desired aspiration for the attainment of a Macedonian national 'home' (Jelavich 1983; Pribichevich 1982; Burg 1983). This period was also marked by Macedonian migration abroad, either as guest workers to Western Europe (a small proportion) or as outright migrants, mostly to Australia. This 'wave' of Macedonian migration was the direct result of the underdeveloped state of the Macedonian economy and the widespread poverty and hardship that prevailed. Most of the Macedonians who migrated during this period, the 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's, were drawn from both towns and villages, representing a population who had not had the benefit of a high level of education and were 'selected' for migration, at that time, to provide Australia with the manual labour that it required for its developing manufacturing industry (Collins 1979:105-130).

This migration also represented one of the largest outward migration waves by Macedonians seen in the modern era, which was both a necessity for survival and an important source of economic support for Macedonia, in the form of remittances from migrants to their relatives and family members who were left behind. In spite of the massive social and economic challenges that faced Macedonia within post WWII Yugoslavia, it nevertheless prospered to an unprecedented degree, largely due to its own efforts and the opportunities that the federation provided for trade.

As Glenny (1992) shows, the tensions within Yugoslavia, particularly those of the nationalist elements within Croatia and Serbia, as well as the entrenched economic problems of Yugoslavia, were such that the federation eventually disintegrated with catastrophic effects for many of Yugoslavia's former fellow citizens. Macedonia seceded peacefully from the Yugoslav federation in 1991 and was able to avoid the bloody conflicts that took place in Bosnia and Croatia. The unmaking of Yugoslavia is now complete, save for the tragic consequences that need attending to, such as the need to maintain an international force, for example, in Bosnia.

Tragic as the events in the former Yugoslavia have been, in the case of Macedonia they also provided the opportunity for the realisation of the independent Republic of Macedonia, which marks the culmination of a long period for self-determination. It is this period that I discuss in the section that follows, for this period also represents a source of pride and achievement not only for Macedonians at 'home' but also those that comprise the considerable Macedonian diaspora.

The Independent Republic of Macedonia

Within the context of the break up of Yugoslavia, the 1991 Macedonian secession represented a watershed for Macedonians and their affirmation of their cultural identity. As in almost everything else in their long struggle for independence and recognition as a distinct group, the Macedonians were yet again confronted with contestation. In the first instance, the contestation came from the Serb nationalists, who began to openly challenge Macedonian identity and independence, by reviving past references to Macedonia as Southern Serbia (Seselj 1991). Macedonians in Macedonia, as well as the Macedonian diaspora, rallied to defend Macedonia and, with it, their own identity from what appeared to be a direct threat by Serbia. What is perhaps significant to note is that Seselj delivered his claims on Macedonia, not only in Serbia but also in Australia (Seselj 1991). For most Macedonians, their history, and, perhaps more importantly, the past memories of being under the 'First Yugoslavia' were rekindled, and they gave expression to that specific experience by demonstrating their objections to it through the public statements that they issued. The memories of living under pre-WWII Serbia are widespread among older generation Macedonians who recall the difficult situation that existed then.

A further source of contestation of Macedonian identity has had to do with Macedonia's struggle for international recognition as an independent and sovereign nation. Since its proclamation as an independent state, Macedonia has had a struggle to gain international recognition under the name 'Republic of Macedonia' mainly

because of Greece's objections to the name Macedonia, which, as discussed in subsequent chapters, was to have major repercussions for the Macedonian community in Australia and its right to have its Macedonian identity respected in their new 'home'. The reality of Macedonia's neighbours' refusal to recognise a Macedonian state and their continued denial of the existence of a separate and distinct Macedonian nation added further to the broadly shared view that Macedonia was indeed threatened from all sides, as was the Macedonian identity.

Yet another source of contestation has been presented by the internal situation of Macedonia, which contains a number of other populations, the largest of whom are the Albanians, one fifth of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia (Lazarov 1993). Macedonia was faced with the real prospect of internal dissent and conflict that might threaten its existence. The continuing conflict in former Yugoslavia seemed to make this prospect all the more real and likely.

As the discussion above suggests, Macedonian identity, at almost every stage, has been the subject of contestation. The struggles to defend a distinct Macedonian identity from 'external' threats of obliteration and erasure are a key part of the process of Macedonian identity construction. These threats and pressures, both real and imagined, also have repercussions for identity construction by setting in motion internal dynamics whose abiding aim is to strengthen and defend Macedonian identity, against any and all threats. It is these dynamics that create the perception that Macedonian identity is an essentialist construct, which appears, at least in general

public discourse, to be the unfolding of a fixed identity, whose roots are set in the predetermined tablet of tradition.

But given the immense diversity of views among Macedonians and the passionate debates that are part of the community's life in Australia, nothing could be further from the truth. Macedonians are involved in the construction of their identity to fit the specific circumstances that confront them. In the process they use essentialist arguments as a strategy in defence of their distinct identity, particularly in circumstances in which other people invoke such essentialist arguments, both as a means of defence of their identity and as a strategy to obliterate Macedonian identity. It is in this context that Macedonian history and the past is invoked for a purpose, which is both specific and related to present circumstances. At the same time, in addition to their centuries long history in Europe, Macedonians also draw on their history in Australia and their experiences since their arrival. It is the history of Macedonians in Australia that we now turn to in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF MACEDONIAN LIFE IN AUSTRALIA

Macedonian Migration to Australia

The first Macedonian emigrants began leaving their homeland in the second half of the 19th century. They were mainly isolated individuals who left Macedonia temporarily to earn some money for subsequent use back home (WAMEAC 1985:8; Radin 1988:3; Karovski 1983:4). Others migrated for political reasons, associated with the national suppression they experienced during Turkish domination, followed by their occupation and assimilation during the Balkan Wars at the hands of Greeks, Serbians and Bulgarians. It is difficult to state precisely when the first Macedonian migrants reached Australia, though according to Miovski, Macedonians had arrived by 1891 (Miovski 1971:31). This Chapter describes the ways in which Macedonian migrants to Australia drew from their 'traditional' background to maintain a distinctive Macedonian lifestyle in Australia, and indicates how 'traditions' were modified and adapted and a distinct Macedonian-Australian identity was constructed with the decision to view Australia as a place of permanent settlement.

The Macedonians who went abroad to work, with the intention of returning home, were called *pechalbari* (or itinerant workers) and the work they undertook *pechalba* or *pechalbarstvo*. The word 'pechalba' is described by Peter Hill (1989:10) as in widespread Macedonian usage; it means 'working away from home'. Miller (1988:5) states that the migration in Macedonia at the beginning was regarded as a temporary

departure of young males to earn money for subsequent use back home. Initially, the *pechalbars* intended to go to work in the neighbouring countries in spring and to return to their homeland before the winter. They were mainly seasonal workers and moved from place to place in search of profitable employment. Oral tradition has it that the first Macedonians had arrived in Australia at the very beginning of this century, following the harsh repression by the Turks after the Ilinden Uprising. These first Macedonians (*pechalbars*) traced their way to North America to work in the USA and Canada. The number of Macedonian *pechalbars* in Australia increased when the USA Government restricted the flow of new immigrants in the 1920's. Then the Macedonian *pechalbars* made their way to Australia (Radin 1988:5; Hill 1989:10).

Many Macedonian poets have been inspired by the *pechalbary* and have written literature about the difficulties the pechalbars encountered during their stay abroad. The *pechalbary* also are a theme that comprises a separate genre of Macedonian folklore, such as songs, which reflect the sadness that comes with seperation and the disruptions of life (Herman 1979:79). The following is typical *pechalbary* song that is widely sung by Macedonians:

Tug'inata pusta da ostane
Tug'inata pusta da ostane
Taja od libeto me razdeli
Sto go ljubev vreme tri godini,
Abre vie mladi pecalbari
Neli go vidovte moeto libe
Od pechalba doma da si ide
Na treta godina pismo prati
I mi pisi nema da se vrati
Ne se vraka druga si zalubil
I za nea toj si se ozenil.

[Foreign lands should be damned,
foreign lands should be damned
because they separated me from my loved
one, whom I loved for three years,
hey, you young *pechalbars*
have you seen my loved one
coming home from *pechalba*
after three years he sent me a letter
saying that he is not coming back
he has fallen in love with some one else,
whom he has married.]

Radin (1988:5) has stated that the Macedonian *pechalbars* who arrived in Australia before the First World War represent the 'first wave' of Macedonian immigrants. In the main, they immigrated from Aegean Macedonia and were from rural backgrounds. Because formal education in Macedonia was not permitted, these early Macedonians had very limited education and training and had to work either on farms or in steel factories. According to Price, in Australia in 1921 there were about 50 Macedonians (1963:11-23). After the First World War, nearly 1500 Macedonians emigrated to Australia from the Bitola, Ohrid, Lerin and Kostur districts (Price 1963:11-23). According to Radin (1988:5), in the 1930s, there were about one thousand Macedonians in Australia, of whom 90 percent were from Aegean Macedonia.

The *pechalbars* tended to share a house together where their living conditions were often substandard. House rules and codes about *pechalbars'* responsibilities developed. In the houses, cooking and other household chores were often performed by the *pechalbars* on a rotating basis. The ten or more *pechalbars* who lived in the house clearly understood and performed their duties under this rotation system.

One of the *pechalbars* who migrated to Australia in 1936, from the village Lagen in vicinity of Lerin, Aegean Macedonia, recalls:

> We lived in a wooden house: 13 pechalbars, six single and seven married. Every morning, one of us would get up before the others and would prepare a breakfast for us. After work, the rotating man prepared supper and saw to it that all the men had their fair share. He then washed the dishes after all had eaten and swept the floor (Stoikov 1996).

This house was in Gippsland. Later Stoikov served in the Australian Army during the Second World War, and subsequently became a prominent community leader.

In the evenings *pechalbars* from the same village often shared friendships, memories and moments of light-heartedness. They also followed and celebrated religious holidays and namedays. They sang patriotic songs and danced *ora* (the Macedonian circle dance). The *pechalbars* often discussed the history of Macedonia and the struggle of the Macedonians in the past. This oral culture kept alive their sense of themselves and their group identity.

When the *pechalbars* established themselves in a more secure environment, they then began to encourage their families, relatives and friends to join them in Australia. This was the way in which chain migration was established. This is referred to as the 'second wave' of Macedonian immigration to Australia. As unskilled immigrants the Macedonians mainly undertook gardening, tobacco-growing and dairy farming tasks.

The *pechalba*, or migration, continued after the Second World War, a period which is characterised particularly by the arrival of the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia following the Greek Civil War. During the war, more then 50 000 Macedonians left Macedonia and settled in Europe, many of whom subsequently arrived in Australia, helped by the Red Cross. Some of the fares were paid by the *pechalbars* who were already in Australia. The large number of informal loans at that time suggests a high level of mutual trust. They had so much trust in each other that no formal agreements or receipts were ever demanded on loans.

Initially, several Macedonian families lived in the same house, sharing facilities with relatives who had sponsored them. This period is considered the 'third wave' of Macedonian migration to Australia (Hill 1989:32-33).

The 'fourth wave' of Macedonian migration, during the 1960s, is, according to Radin, characterised by changes of its origin. This time the immigrants were predominantly from the Republic of Macedonia, which was by then a sixth constituent state of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The arrivals from Macedonia in the 1960's were mainly economic immigrants with very little education, who settled predominantly in urban industrial areas. By the 1970s, according to Radin, immigration from Aegean Macedonia had dried up, "ostensibly due to a normalisation in the political and socio-economic conditions in Greece over the past decade and a half." (Radin 1988: 6-7).

The 'fifth wave' of Macedonian migration to Australia occurred during the 1970s and the 1980s. At the beginning of 1970s, the Australian government changed its immigration policies with migration from the United Kingdom no longer accorded the priority that it had until the 1960s. This period saw new arrivals from Macedonia and new resettlement patterns in Melbourne. It is exceedingly difficult to determine the precise number of Macedonian immigrants in Australia because they arrived in Australia with Turkish, Greek, Serbian (since 1945 Yugoslavian) or Bulgarian passports. Unofficially, according to Macedonian community leaders, the number of Macedonians today is just over 300 000. The majority of this number are

Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia and Aegean Macedonia, whereas, very few are from Pirin Macedonia and Mala Prespa.

During the 1990s, there have been very few Macedonians who have migrated to Australia as permanent residents. By 1996, the Macedonians coming to Australia were mainly visitors, with permission to stay no longer than six months. However, according to the informants interviewed as part of this research, many visitors tend to extend their stay in Australia because of family ties and the 'pull' factors that are part of such relationships among families that are separated by vast distances. The family ties are such that the emotional bonds tend to affect the visitors' period of stay in Australia, often to a point that makes it very difficult to return to Macedonia. In the course of interviews, there were many stories told about Macedonians who became illegal migrants because of their desire to be with family and close relations. The story of separations that is so much part of Macedonian history, culture and 'traditions' is also a part of the human drama of the Macedonian community in Australia. I was told of people who wished to remain with their families (defined as extended families in the Macedonian tradition, and not as nuclear families as defined in Australia for the purposes of migration) and, in terms of Australian law became 'illegal' by overstaying. Again, I was also told that some Macedonians had married in Australia in accord with the Macedonian 'tradition' of 'arranged' marriages and had applied to stay. These people also found themselves 'under suspicion', in the terms of Immigration Department rules, which regard with suspicion marriages between visitors and Australian citizens or residents as designed purely for the purpose of gaining residential status. This situation, namely the scrutiny by the Immigration

Department of such marriages, I was told, takes no account of the Macedonian traditions of family and marriage, which is usually arranged by families and is regarded as a private affair. The intrusion of the state in this area seemed to many informants culturally inappropriate and insensitive.

Many Macedonians, separated for years, seek out their relatives and make every attempt to maintain or to reestablish ruptured ties and relations. In the course of this study, I was told of many Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia who paid two to three thousand dollars to travel agencies and other 'middle men' to obtain tourist visas from the Australian Embassy in Belgrade, purely because of the widespread view that age and other factors may have prevented them from being granted a visa. Although it is illegal, some travel agencies in Macedonia accept bribes, assuring their clients that they can supply them with tourist visas, which might be had for a nominal amount of money from the Australian Embassy. This situation prompted the Australian ambassador in Belgrade to announce in June 1996 that travel agencies in Macedonia could not supply people with visas, and he called on Macedonians not to pay any money for visas because visas to visit Australia are provided for Macedonians on the same basis as they are to applicants from rest of the world.

Constructing and Locating Community Relationships

During the early settlement period, the majority of the Macedonian migrants were male, who came with the intention of working for several years and then returning to their homeland with their savings. Many of the Macedonians found the lifestyle in

Australia desirable and brought their families. As Hill (1988:686) has indicated, during the late 1960s and 1970s, in one house there were 10 single men or two or three families. The owner of the house was a married man, who brought his family to Australia, or who married here. They would live together until the house was paid off. Often one could find a husband and wife and three or four children living in one room, whereas the rest of the rooms were let to single men. In Macedonia, it was common practice to share the few rooms of the house with an extended family (Karovski 1983:31; Hill 1989:36). Married *pechalbars*, after a few years in Australia, adapted to the Australian social environment and began to encourage their wives to come and join them. Unmarried *pechalbars* chose to write to their families, asking them to select and dispatch acceptable girls, as prospective brides. The future brides were expected to be chaste virgins and to come from families with a good reputation in the village or town. In relation to this, there is a Macedonian proverb which says: '[E]ven when you choose a dog or a cat they must be from a good stock'. When the choice was made, the father of the bride would advise his daughter to be obedient to her future husband, otherwise he would not accept her when she returned in his house.

The selected brides still remember making their trip to Australia with a mixture of happiness and fear. The brides were quite happy to leave their poor villages and go to live in a 'lucky country'. At the same time, they were also afraid of marrying men they did not know, usually fellow villagers not known to them personally. As Danica Stojcevska, from Bitola district, recalled:

> I was the older sister in our family. My father came and told me that a proposal came from the next door neighbours to marry their son who was in Australia. I

> did not want to go to Australia and marry a man who was unknown to me. My father repeated the proposal once again and it was the final decision. According to Macedonian culture at that time, I could not change his decision. When I arrived in Melbourne, I was holding his [her future husband's] photograph and he was holding my photograph in order to recognise each other. I was astonished when I saw him. My prospective husband was not the same person who was on the photograph. I was not happy at all and I began to cry. I did not want to introduce myself and did not let him to say even hello to me. Our fortune ended at Melbourne's airport. After a while, I found another man whom I married and I still live with him.

Another informant, Mrs Lazorovska, recalls that she did not know her husband. She only knew his family and relatives:

> My husband's family in Macedonia sent a '*stroynik*' (matchmaker), a mutual friend, to ask my parents if they would like me to marry to a good man in Australia. Firstly, we sent him a photo of me to see if he liked me and in return he sent me a letter and a photo of him. It was a lovely letter and he didn't look bad on the half photo that he sent me. We decided to proceed with the marriage arrangement. One week before my departure, his family and friends came to my house with music to take me and my '*cheiz*' [dowry] to their home. That is called a '*prvice*', a big celebration by both families.
>
> After spending a week at his parents' house I left to come to Australia to meet my husband for the first time. When I first saw him I liked him straight away but I had no idea he was so tall. The photo he sent me showed only half of him. Our marriage took place soon after arrival. The wedding lasted only one day. Simple food was prepared for the reception by guests and relatives of my husband. We danced to the music of a gramophone. The next day, my husband went to work. We did not have a honeymoon because we did not know about it.

Many of the selected brides came to Australia against their will. They were sorry to have to leave their families, relatives and friends behind, were afraid of the prospect of living in intimacy with men they had not seen for decade, or had never met. They came because of the cultural pressures that required them to do so. However, some of

the selected brides simply refused to come, breaching the Macedonian tradition of obedience to one's elders.

The coming of women disrupted the bachelor households and the *pechalbarski* way of life. The overcrowded houses were unsuitable residences for newly married couples. One *pechalbar*'s story is typical. He left the house and with his wife found another weatherboard house in Footscray. He remained close to his fellow *pechalbars*, but by taking a wife and moving into another house, he removed himself from both the *pechalbars* and the bachelor rank. Bachelors lose their separate identity because wives connect them to the previous generation and the wife's family, who become relatives by marriage.

The relationship through marriage of a son or daughter is referred to as *svat/svate* and *svàka* in Macedonian (as explained in Hill 1989:43). Both sides are called *svatovi* and they consider themselves to be equal relatives connected by blood. This particularity of Macedonian culture is fundamental to an understanding of building of a Macedonian-Australian community, and the development of community relationships.

The extended Macedonian family is called a *soy*. When a celebration takes place in Australia, all members of the *soy* are obligated to attend the gathering, and even more importantly, if there is a burial, people are expected to attend regardless of where they live in Australia (Hill 1989:43).

For many new arrivals, the first impression of Australia, was disappointing. They were used to living in clean and open spaces, in their villages in Macedonia, whereas in Australia they were greeted by smoke, noise, wooden houses and concrete streets. A selected bride recalled: "Most houses looked the same to me, only the numbers were different".

As a result of chain migration, the Macedonians established themselves in specific areas in the main cities of Australia, in which they formed large Macedonian communities. Before the 1970s, Macedonians used to live in the inner suburbs of Melbourne, Geelong, Sydney, Perth, and Adelaide. Fifteen years ago, they began to shift to the outer suburbs, building new and bigger houses. Today, the Macedonians in Melbourne are mainly concentrated in northern suburbs of Melbourne, such as Preston, Reservoir, Lalor, Thomastown and Mill Park and in western suburbs in Sunshine, St Albans, Keilor Downs, Taylors Lakes and East Keilor. Macedonians are typically known for their lifestyle because people from particular villages move in small groups, and then, one by one, families tend to gather in one area in Australia. The reason for settling in specific areas is the support the Macedonians get from one another, thereby alleviating some of the trauma of migration to a foreign unfamiliar country. They have also settled in suburbs that have traditionally been industrial and have provided them relatively cheap housing and access to employment.

As immigrants with little knowledge of the new country and no knowledge of the English language, Macedonians tended to have at least one neighbour of Macedonian origin as a source of help, as one of the interviewees explained:

I was 25 years old when I first arrived in Australia, to visit my sister. My first impression of Melbourne as we drove from Melbourne Airport towards Lalor, was the small size of the houses and the architecture. I asked my sister where Melbourne was. Are we still outside of Melbourne? This is Melbourne, she said. But how can you tell me this is Melbourne? I asked. Where are the big buildings? I could not believe my eyes, that such a big city had houses that were similar to those in my village.

The most difficult thing for me, at the beginning, was the language. I felt like a new born baby. I arrived in Melbourne on a Friday morning and began to work in a chicken factory the next Monday. My job was unbearable. It started from 4 o'clock in the morning and finished at 6 o'clock in the evening. Everything was new and strange to me. Every morning at 5 o'clock, I could hear a big airoplane flying over the factory and I wished that I could catch its tail so it could fly me back home to my country. In the factory, there was noone of my age around me, and I felt very isolated and lonely. As time went by I started to understand a little English, but I still could not respond. It took me more than a year when I began to construct broken sentences in English. They were incorrect, because I tried to translate them directly from Macedonian into English. When I started to attend evening English classes, I enriched my vocabulary and then everything was different (Bogoevski, R 1996).

A new migrant from Thomastown summed up her first impressions of her new home:

It was August 1977 when I first left my country, Macedonia, to come to Australia. I was only ten years old, but I remember that day as if it was yesterday. My reason for coming to Australia was to join my father. He had been in Australia for eight years without us and he finally decided that he wanted us to join him. So, my mother, my eight year old brother and I packed our bags and came to be with my father. It was hard leaving my relatives and my friends. I remember we all cried very much all the way to the airport. When we arrived in Melbourne we were greeted by my father and many of our relatives from Melbourne. It was a very happy reunion for all of us. The first week was a happy one and it was very exciting, as we saw many new places, tasted new foods and visited new relatives. But then everything went wrong. My brother and I started school and my father and mother went to work. We hated school because we had no friends and we didn't understand a word of English. The kids were mean and always made fun of us because of that. I found myself very lonely and left out, as my brother was my only friend in the school. Every night, I would cry myself to sleep with one wish, to go back to Macedonia. My father worked night shift so he could take and pick us up from school. My mother worked during the day so she could be with us in the

> evenings. They both had very hard jobs. My father worked in a meat factory and lifted bulls all night. Whereas my mother worked in a porcelain factory, among all the dust. She too hated her work and the long hours away from us.

Through migration, many Macedonians, such as those interviewed above, 'reconstituted' traditional village communities in Australia. For example, there are now in Melbourne, Victoria, some 120 families that have migrated from the village of Opticari (in the vicinity of Bitola, Macedonia) and have continued to maintain both their 'traditions', such as the celebration of the village patron saint day, St Atanas (St Athanasios day, 15 May) and their links with their kith and kin in the original village in Macedonia. These traditions and links are particularly important as they provide a connectedness with place and a continuity with traditions across time and space, thus providing a sense of belonging in a world that is increasingly defined, as the above interviews suggest, by displacement and fragmentation.

As I have witnessed on numerous occasions, it is not uncommon for over five hundred people to gather at such 'village' gatherings, which celebrate patron saint days as well as the other important Macedonian festivities and religious days, such as Orthodox Easter and Christmas. Some Macedonian 'village' communities, such as Opticari, also organise a special day, usually in October, during which only members of the village, normally blood relations, are allowed to attend. In addition, Macedonians have also established different social structures in the form of organisations, which serve as community-wide meeting places that bring together Macedonians, regardless of which part of Macedonia they originate from. These serve as meeting places and a variety of other purposes, such as cultural centres and places where Macedonians can speak in

their own language and relate to one another in a place designated as belonging to the community collectively. Centres, such as churches and community centres, are to be found in the areas and suburbs of most capital cities in Australia where Macedonians live, usually within easy access. They are, above all, meeting places in which members of the Macedonian community participate in shared activities, rituals and celebrations, such as Ilinden (St Elijah's day) or the 8th of September, Macedonia's independence day from Yugoslavia.

Most gatherings by Macedonians are marked with Macedonian songs and dances, perpetuating the rich Macedonian folk traditions that evoke the imagery of place and the memories of connectedness with people, history and events that have shaped Macedonian life and sense of identity. They also represent important occasions during which the young are invited to participate and share in the enactment of Macedonian 'traditions' and to share in comm-*unity* with others: the experience of being Macedonian and the sense of continuity it provides with a past that connects it with the present and expresses, in symbolic and concrete terms, hope and aspirations for a better future.

Many young Macedonians also get to meet future partners in such community places, which are regarded as 'safe' from the more unknown, puzzling and frightening places that many hear or read about in media reports dealing with drugs and crime. Even into the 1990's, it is a Macedonian tradition for girls to get married early. Although parents in Macedonia and Australia no longer arrange marriages as readily as they used to or still do in the villages, tradition requires that the wife must be a good *domakinka* (that

is a 'home maker', literally, someone who makes the home). A *domakinka* is a highly valued honour that is held in high esteem, suggesting good character, honesty, integrity, hard work and dependability. A woman who is a *domakinka* is considered, in the Macedonian context, a pillar of the family and the community, indispensable for passing on the positive virtues of their culture. Community meeting places provide opportunities not only for selecting future partners from families of *domakini* (a good family, one that is respected for integrity and honesty) but in affirming one's place and identity within the community, in terms of its specific cultural terms and its values and rules.

In addition, it is worth noting that community centres, which have acted as focal points for young and old, have also given rise to other developments that are now becoming part of the Macedonian community's contribution to the wider Australian community. Macedonian folkloric groups, such as the Macedonian Women's Choir, artistic, cultural and other performers, as well as poets and other writers, have been nurtured or have had their beginnings in such centres and community gatherings. Many of the artistic creations of the Macedonians are reflections of their experiences, which express the changes that the community is undergoing. These are also available to the Macedonian community as moments for reflection in terms of gaining insights into how they are managing in rapidly changing circumstances. And finally, it is important to note that many of the Macedonian community centres also provide a place that offers support for members of the community, in the form of welfare assistance, advice and referral, as well as being an important source of information

that has increasingly become a point of distribution for information about the range of government and community services.

Macedonian Family Life

Macedonian families in Australia, in the main, continue to maintain 'traditional' relationships and roles, such as the division of roles between husband and wife. The husband is regarded as the 'traditional' head of the family and the children are expected to respect their elders. It is also not uncommon for many families to have more than one generation, such as children, parents and grandparents, living in the same house. Macedonians still take pride in self reliance as far as caring for the elderly is concerned, although this is beginning to change under the pressures of modern life and the demands of work and careers.

By tradition, the head of the Macedonian family is expected to be in control of the family's work and leisure activities, income and expanses, to represent the family in outside contacts and to take responsibility for the discipline and good behaviour of family members. In the past, the head of the family, the father or grandfather, also arranged marriages for their daughters or sons. The girl's father was expected to provide his daughter with an acceptable dowry and the boy's father had to show that his son was able to provide for a prosperous future. Before marriage, there was not much emphasis placed on romantic love (Bogoevska 1996).

Although traditions are changing, as in the case of arranged marriages, many Macedonian traditions continue to be maintained in Australia. For example, Macedonian husbands and fathers do not leave their wives and daughters alone. They are strictly chaperoned, especially the young. Macedonian fathers tend to have authority over their children, although their wives go out to work, in the same way as other people do. Petrovska (1996:22-25) states that 76.7 per cent of the respondents in her survey answered that the husband is the head of the family, whereas 20 per cent of the women surveyed thought that the husband and the wife are equal. Only 3.3 per cent of Macedonian women think that the wife can be the primary authority in the family.

The majority of Macedonian women support the old traditions, saying that the family 'where a hen sings' is not a family. Some of the respondents in Petrovska's study support the idea of the man being the head of the family although they think that sometimes they know more than their husbands. She concludes that Macedonian women themselves appear to follow a family model in which the man is the main authority in the house. The daughters are brought up under strict supervision and are expected to perform their domestic duties, leaving the running of their private lives to the greater 'wisdom' of their male relatives. They are expected to show respect for their parents and may be severely punished if the disobey them. This situation is, however, begining to change. Young people living in Australia are questioning the authority of the father and male relatives. A female Macedonian university student sums up her situation this way:

> I do not understand my father's attitudes. He wants to control everything in our house. I am not allowed to have a boyfriend and restrictions apply when I go out. My younger brother always supervised me. I am sick and tired of having these restrictions and I am thinking of leaving home and living with my girlfriend in a flat.

Another Macedonian girl recalled:

> I was seventeen years old and naturally I had a boyfriend. My father was very patriarchal and did not want to know that his daughter had a boyfriend. It was really hell for me. I loved my boyfriend very much, but I was not allowed to see him. To make that possible, I was waiting till midnight when my father was asleep, and then I would see my boyfriend. It was simply ridiculous.

Opportunities for meeting other young people, especially of the opposite sex, are provided by schools. They are extremely important for the Macedonian girls, because their social activities out of school tend to be focussed on meetings with friends in each others' homes. In contrast to girls, from other 'ethnic' backgrounds, who are believed to have far more freedom and are much more likely to meet their friends outside their home, such as at the cinema, the beach or just 'hanging around' at some popular local venue, Macedonian girls tend to be much more restricted. Within the Macedonian community there was and still is a fear of provoking gossip, which can have an impact on the reputation of the whole family, which is regarded as paramount.

To Valentina Ilievska

> ... gossip is the most important thing. Within the Macedonian community, it is very common. It is one thing I hate. That's why you've got to watch what you do. You've got to watch what you wear and how you act.

Vesna Dimovska described the impact that fear of gossip had on her,

> We've got a few Macedonian people who come to our school. We know them as family friends as well. After school, usually my school mates from non-Macedonian background came with me and we talked. I always looked around and hoped that there were no Macedonians looking. I was keeping to my limits, making sure I did not get too close. There had to be a distance between us so they would think that we were just friends.

Among Macedonian people, gossip is an important social control mechanism reinforcing parents' expression of concern about their daughters being seen unchaperoned with a young man. Girls show considerable understanding of parental concern to avoid gossip even while they feel it is based on outdated attitudes which, as the Macedonian girls frequently point out, no longer apply in Macedonia itself. This places young Macedonian girls in a difficult position. They do not want to hurt their parents whom they loved and respected all their life and whose support they need in starting a new life in a new country. But, on the other hand, if they obey their wishes and do not speak to boys, even on the bus, train or tram, on the way to school, then other Australians will think that they are very odd. Many Macedonian girls are forced to adopt two sets of behaviour: one for school and one for home.

If a girl does well at school and wants to go on to university, she often faces greater problems. For while Macedonian parents are very anxious for their sons to enter professional careers, it is sometimes seen as a waste of time and money for a girl to go to university because, when she marries, her education would be wasted. Worse still, higher education may lessen the girl's chances of making a good marriage, as there

will be fewer boys of the same educational standard to choose from, and it might make a girl more likely to reject her parents' traditional ideas and customs.

The difference in the treatment of boys and girls is very firmly established. A Macedonian meat worker from Sunshine, who arrived in Australia in 1975, and has worked in meat factories in Laverton and Melbourne ever since, described the situation as follows:

> I would like to give my daughter equality, but I believe that the male is a leader of the family. I have allowed my son fairly much freedom since he was sixteen. I brought my daughter up in such a way that she does not want to leave home. It is a bit wrong bringing them differently, but if the daughter goes out she is in more danger than the son: she might bring you home a baby.

In the 1990s, Macedonian families especially if they are from a village, as most are, have been making many adjustments to Australian society. Most still preserve their family unity and patriarchalism, but it is very difficult to maintain, especially as the children through the schools become more 'Australianised'. The adjustments affect all members of the family, some more than others.

Apart from the tendencies of the Macedonian family to preserve and maintain a patriarchal way of life, their second priority in Australia is buying their own house. Although Macedonians find that saving for a deposit on a house a much more difficult task than they expected, the majority of Macedonian immigrants today possess their own house. Unlike their English speaking counterpart who can live in a rented flat, Macedonians prefer to get a loan from the bank and to buy their own houses. Most of the money they earn goes into repayments of the house. It is not very common for

Macedonians to buy and run businesses, probably due to the fact that many of them have not had experience of business and there is no Macedonian 'tradition' of involvement in business. The Macedonians' expectations include a house with a large garden, in which they can grow vegetables and plant fruit trees.

They also use the backyard as a playground for their children. In a Macedonian village, children are generally known to roam all over the village, playing wherever they want with few restrictions on their activities. When they migrate to Australia they are quite likely to be put in the care of strangers at kindergarten or in schools and to be accompanied by friends of different nationalities and races. They certainly cannot wander freely about the streets, but most children adjust to new the conditions of urban living.

Adapting to the new environment can cause concerns for both parents. Macedonian parents interviewed were very concerned about the amount of drinking and drug-taking among some Australian youths and are critical of the irresponsible way many young people behave. Macedonian parents supervise their children very closely, trying to restrict their social activities. They are really hurt when their children abandon Macedonian culture and tradition and adopt to Australian culture. In fact, most children pick up the new language and customs more quickly than their parents, creating a power gap that gives them degrees of freedom beyond parental control. This also produces a role reversal, such as children becoming a conduit for information. For parents, this represents a loss of a measure of control affecting the relationship of trust between parents and children. Very often one can see two Macedonian girls on

their way to a local shop, followed by one of their mothers about one hundred metres behind. Many children start to resent their parents' old fashioned ways and want to make friends and fit into their new school and social environments as quickly as possible.

What follows are some examples where Macedonian parents maintaining traditional Macedonian values contributed to several difficulties and clashes with their children which forced some adolescents to leave their parents' homes.

Vera was 19 years old and the eldest child of three. A number of difficulties contributed to Vera leaving her parents, who live in St Albans. Her father retained the strict rules from the "old country" of what a 17 year-old should do, and imposed what Vera saw as unacceptable, unfair restrictions on her. Her mother could not help at all, because she was subordinated to her husband. Vera left her parents' home when she asked her father to let her go to St Albans swimming pool. Her father said okay. However, he did not trust his daughter and followed her car to the pool and found out that his daughter was accompanied by her boyfriend. He approached Vera and ordered her to go straight home. Vera ignored his order. Her father was outraged by her disobedience, threatening her with physical punishment at home. This episode of 'embarrassment' in front of the other people in the swimming pool led Vera to leave her home. Vera did not return home that night, which caused great distress in the family. Her mother tried desperately to find out where she was from Vera's girlfriends. They did not know about Vera's decision. After three days of not having her daughter at home, her father began to search for information too. However, he

could not find out about his daughter. They eventualy reported the case to the Victorian Police. Unfortunately the Police did not have any records about their daughter. Then the parents began to go from one Macedonian house to another in order to gain some information. They thought she had disappeared, or even worse, had been killed. Eventually Vera rang her mother to tell her that she had found other accommodation with her girlfriend in a flat in Sunshine. Vera told her mother that she did not want to see her father and to talk to him in the future. Her father was deeply hurt when he heard that his daughter did want to see him and to talk to him. He tried desperately to talk to her but she refused to do so. He was crying and begging Vera to return home, but to no avail. To this day she has not returned home and, as she said, in interview, she is now happier than in the past.

Vera's example and the traumatic experience of her family, while illustrating some of the intergenerational conflicts that are universal, also provides insight into the stresses that are experienced by individuals and families as a consequence of dramatic cultural change, brought about by the experiences of migration. What Vera's case also reveals are the tensions that are unleashed by the differences in experience and perceptions about the importance placed on what her parents considered traditional rights and responsibilities, and what Vera saw as her rights and responsibilities. Vera and her family now live apart and do not mix with other Macedonian families in the way they did in the past. The Macedonians gossip that the daughter of Ordan and Velika adopted a different culture, left the parents' home and 'degraded' her family. From the Macedonian perspective, it is a humiliation for a Macedonian family if one of their children leaves home without the parents' permission. In this case the consequences

for Vera's family have been serious. They are now doubly isolated: from the general Australian community, as well as from their own. They are now faced with the challenge of negotiating a new identity, as a means of coping with their social and cultural circumstances. Vera's case is by no means an isolated example of an issue that is of great concern and importance to Macedonians in Australia. They are caught between the aspiration of maintaining a Macedonian 'traditional' way of life, and the necessity to adapt to changing social and cultural circumstances. An important issue here, that I want to return to later in this chapter, is the issue of 'tradition'. The great emphasis placed on 'tradition' by Vera's parents appears to be greatly emphasised, compared to the degrees of freedom accorded to other young people. Many Macedonian parents (Vera's parents included) invoke Macedonian 'traditions' in their Australian context as a means of appealing to young people to abide by a set of practices and standards of behaviour that are under challenge. It is this great emphasis on 'tradition' and 'traditional' values that I want to examine later in this Chapter.

For the present, let us consider another example that occurred in Thomastown. In this case the father was described as an 'authoritarian' man who worked hard and enjoyed relaxing in the company of friends and family, Macedonian style. What happened is recounted by Boris:

> Trouble began when I developed a desire for peer group activities. I wanted to play billiards at the pub, and to attend disco and dances, at the local youth club. My father was against it and he would not let me go to any of these. My everyday life was to be spent at home, straight after school, evenings had to be spent in study or with the family, and I had to get a job during school holidays holidays. Also, I had to go with my family on all visits to homes or family celebrations, almost every weekend. More importantly, my father was only giving me pocket money. I could not stand his dictatorship any longer,

> because I felt degraded to beg my father for money. When I was 16, I began a completely different way of life. Looking for more money, I broke into several homes taking small sums of money as well as videos and televisions. In this way, I managed to stay away from home for several days before being apprehended and convicted. For the next three and a half years I was doing the same thing: breaking-in and larceny, convictions.
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> From what I was doing my father was ashamed and very often he was threatening to send me back to Macedonia or to disown me as his son.
>
> When I was 20, I began to settle down and I began to think about my future. I married an Australian girl and live with my two children. My parents did not acknowledge the existence of my marriage and had no hopes for my future (Petkovski 1996).

However, not all Macedonian children rebel against their parents. Many continue to respect and obey their parents and value their Macedonian culture and traditions. They believe that their future will continue to be in a largely Macedonian environment, as the following comments by Marija Stojkovska suggest:

> When I was at school I was aware of the way in which my friends planned for Saturday nights and I was not able to participate in this because of the way I was brought up. Although there were times when I regretted not being able to participate, most of the time I did not want to go to the venues or functions. At university, there were still some limitations which applied to occasions when I wanted to go out without my family, although I also frequently went out with my family to visit other families or to attend functions such as weddings, engagements, etc.
>
> My parents did not disapprove of my going out with friends, but they did want to know who I was going with, where I going and what I was going to do. My friends needed to be known and trusted by my family. All friends were welcome to visit and I could invite all my non-Macedonian friends home, it is just when it came to my going out that it was a different story. My father was more secure when friends were visiting me because he did not like the idea of his daughter not being at home (Stojkovska 1996).

Banchevska (1974:187) has stated that "immigrant adolescents are at a serious disadvantage in all respects". She calls immigrant adolescents the 'forgotten people'

because at that time the adolescents need support, encouragement and the guidance of their family. I agree with Banchevska's account that the immigrant adolescents deserve more patience from their parents, as well as from the government. Uprooted from their environment, without skills and language, when searching for their identity and their place in the new society, they are forced to breach either family or wider societal rules.

Adapting to a new environment is generally difficult for teenage girls and boys. However, it is even more difficult for their parents. I was informed repeatedly during my research that within the Macedonian community nervous breakdowns and mental disorders occur very often. These are due not only to the inability to cope with the difficulties of obtaining a satisfying job and failing to repay their housing loan, but also because of the uncertainties associated with maintaining a way of life that was in accord with Macedonian 'traditional' values and behaviour standards required by the community and necessary for having a sense of belonging. Physical isolation, such as being dispersed in the suburbs of Australian cities, is one factor that deepens this sense of isolation and disconnection from a 'traditional' Macedonian way of life. For example, Tkalcevich (1980) noted, in the case of women, that Macedonian wives are disappointed and feel isolated from community social life due to the fact that they felt unable to communicate and interact in accord with the general social customs and values (Tkalcevich 1980:16-17).

In Macedonia village women lived within an extended family. The house was shared with parents-in-law and, usually, relatives and next door neighbours would be in and

out all day. It was unlikely for a woman to be left alone at home for more than an hour or two. Home duties involved bringing up the children and the production of the family's food and clothing. They baked an assortment of breads and pastries and produced large quantities of butter and cheese. The winter months were a time dedicated to spinning wool, sewing, mending and weaving. Their duties also included stock-breeding, raising chickens, lambs and calves. They also worked in the nearby fields, where they planted and harvested crops, such as wheat, hay, tomatoes, peppers and potatoes. The fields were cultivated by hand using hoes and reaping hooks; the men alone used ploughs and scythes (Petroff 1986:129).

The parents-in-law were always around to give advice and to help the young mother with her children. The children only went to the local school or played soccer in the yard or the village fields.

According to interviewees, in Australia, many Macedonian women live in houses by themselves, with their husbands away at work all day and their children away at school. If they work, their jobs tend to be in the meat and textile factories. Those Macedonian women who are in the workforce carry a double burden. Apart from the work that they do in the factory, they also have to do all the housework, unless they get some help from their older daughters, because the husbands take almost no responsibility for the general running of the house. According to Macedonian 'traditions', the housework belongs only to women.

Another great problem for the Macedonian women in Australia is finding someone to look after their children, while they are at work. The child minding centres and kindergartens do not have many vacancies and there is little provision for care of children under two years old. These institutions are also very expensive for them. Many Macedonian women are reluctant to leave their children all day in the care of someone they do not know. In some extreme cases, Macedonian women are forced to leave there children at home alone or in the care of older children, as there is often no one they can ask for help. Jadranka from Sunshine experienced difficulties after migration to Australia. She arrived in Australia with her husband Misè and their two children, in 1988. As she explained:

> In the first year we lived with my brother-in-law and after that we bought a house for ourselves. We had just enough money for a deposit on a house, which qualified us for a loan. The mortgage was $80 000 so both myself and my husband had to work and we took on overtime to earn enough money for the house repayments. At that time our children were aged 6 and 3 years old. We wanted to find someone to look after our children, but unfortunately we were unable to find anyone. We were forced to leave our children every morning in their new and strange house by themselves and to go off to work. I was crying every morning. I could not separate them from me. My sons knew that my husband and I were going to leave them alone for the whole day. It was going like that until I found an afternoon job. Even today we work the same shifts - my husband works from 6 am to 3 pm and I work from 4 pm to midnight in order to have one of the parents with the children.

These accounts point to the significant transformations faced by the Macedonian family in Australia. Although a Macedonian family might make every effort to preserve the 'traditional' way of life, the interviews indicate that the family is clearly exposed to major changes.

It is evident that the Macedonian family strives to retain a traditional, patriarchal way of life. However, in the wider Australian society the Macedonian family has no other choice but to accept change and to adapt. There is, however, resistance to to change, in the form of insistence on 'tradition' and 'traditional' Macedonian life style. The making of Macedonian 'tradition' and 'traditional' values, in relation to a variety of issues confronting Macedonians in urban industrial settings, but which were absent in the Macedonian village they came from, demonstrates how the past, as memory, is adapted in the present to serve present needs. The present needs include the need to maintain a degree of control over one's life and to resist loss of identity, as well as the desire to maintain a degree of continuinity between the past and present, and to construct a future that retains a Macedonian 'authenticity' within a changing context. The pressures for change come with changes in social class, with levels of education, with the employment of women, and so on. The traditional male authority, for example, is under challenge in Australia as women have better paid jobs and achieve higher levels of education. The Macedonian tradition which has the man as the head of the family continues to have influence for older generations, but for young people this no longer holds true. We now find that the reality is that husbands and the wives tend towards greater equality. Young women, mainly the second generation, know that they live in a country that affords them greater opportunities than the village did. Petrovska (1996:27) states that 70 per cent of the Macedonians she surveyed, thought that male authority has declined slightly and not significantly; while 26.7 per cent do not think that it has declined at all. Only 3.3 per cent considered that male authority had declined considerably.

What Petrovska's findings suggest is that within the Macedonian community there are both 'traditional' and 'modern' elements, intertwined in the material structure of the family and in social consciousness. She also suggests that although the influence of the new, the 'traditional' and 'modern', is evident and tangible in a different social and cultural environment, these elements may gradually unite, and she points to the existence of traditional elements brought by Macedonian immigrants which are "preserved in the new context" (Petrovska 1996:21).

As suggested in the Introduction, I view the situation of Macedonians differently from Petrovska. Consistent with Stuart Hall's proposition, it is not possible to view the 'traditional' and the 'modern' as separate 'entities' which, Petrovska suggests, may gradually unite. I regard both as being part of Macedonian lived experience, inseparably intertwined, forming a tapestry of responses and adaptations to present challenges and pressures to adapt. Unlike Petrovska, I would argue that 'traditional' elements, to the extent that they survive, are not preservations from the past, but, rather, new and *re*membered, reconstructed, reinterpreted and transplanted versions of a *re*collected past, which is increasingly at variance with an inaccessible past and with changes taking place. 'Tradition' and 'traditional' Macedonian lifestyle in Macedonia proper as interpreted in Australia need to be considered in terms of the Australian context and why it is that something that might once have been an assumed way of life has now become central to the construction of self and community.

Macedonian Leaders and Community Structures

We have observed that *pechalbari* were the first Macedonians in Australia. In the beginning they did not intend to stay permanently here. When the *pechalbary* began to think of living in Australia for good, they commenced to bring out their families.

With the arrival of families, the Macedonians began to visit each other and to meet in Australian pubs, parks, shows, where they could speak their own language. It was through these interactions that the first Macedonian clubs and organisations were born in the period between the two World Wars. The responsibility that the Macedonians felt toward their country was two-fold. On the one hand, cultural responsibility entailed striving to preserve all that was typically Macedonian for fear that such cultural attributes would either disappear or be significantly altered by what was seen as a policy of gradual assimilation by the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian authorities who ruled over them. The task of maintaining Macedonian culture thus became something that the Macedonian *pechalbars* felt obliged to defend. On the other hand, the *pechalbars* felt a sense of political responsibility towards their people. In their Australian environment, they sought to provide a voice denied to them under the assimilation and denationalisation policies imposed on the Macedonian people by the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian states. The general aim was to work gradually towards achieving independence for Macedonia and defending their culture and traditions.

To achieve these goals, both cultural and political, as well as to provide mutual support while adapting to life in their new country of residence, Macedonians

developed many organisations which became part of the thriving community life in Australia. They developed such a variety of organisations, that Macedonians sometimes joke that when two Macedonians get together three organisations will be formed.

The first Macedonian organisation was formed in Perth on September 18, 1941, under the name of 'Edinstvo' (Unity). Following this example, other organisations were formed in Australia, in places where there were concentrations of Macedonian immigrants. On August 25, 1946, the many Macedonian organisations joined together and created 'The Macedonian-Australian Peoples League' (Makedonsko-Avstraliski Naroden Sojuz) (WAMEAC 1985:9).

According to Hill (1989:69), it was in fact in 1936 that the first Macedonian organisation 'Todor Aleksandrov' was formed in Melbourne as a branch of the *Macedonian Patriotic Organisation* (MPO), which organised the first Macedonian picnic in the same year. The founder of the 'Todor Aleksandrov' branch was Risto Avramov from Nered, near Lerin, Aegean Macedonia (Tamis 1994:266). This pro-Bulgarian organisation, which was short-lived, operated from a small cafe owned by Tanas Nanov who was also from Nered. However, this organisation was not considered to be Macedonian because it was pro-Bulgarian and was controlled by the Bulgarian government. Its intention was to deny the Macedonian language and to prove that the Macedonians were indeed Bulgarians, according to Risto Altin, a prominent Macedonian activist. He was one of the members of the 'Todor Aleksandrov' organisation in 1937, but who quickly left when he discovered what its

aims were. Attempts were made to establish other branches of the same organisation elsewhere in Australia, but these efforts were unsuccessful (Altin 1996 a).

Tamis (1994:267) states that a pro-Bulgarian organisation was also established in Manjimup, Western Australia, in 1941, by 'Macedoslavs' named *Sloboda* (Freedom). In the same year in Geraldton, W.A., another organisation called *Nova Macedonia* (New Macedonia) was formed by market gardeners. Unlike 'Teodor Aleksandrof', these two organisations were pro-Macedonian and they were formed in order to establish the Macedonians as a distinct nationality (Novackov 1995).

Tamis, in his account of *The Immigration and Settlement of Macedonian Greeks in Australia* (1994), has argued against the existence of Macedonians and Macedonian organisations in Australia. According to him, in 1942, an organisation called All-Slav Unity League was formed in Victoria. Its headquarters were at 52 Young Street, Fitzroy, where the first Macedonian Orthodox Church 'St. George' was built in 1959, and still operates. The founders of this organisation were members of the Macedonian, Slovak, Croat, Russian and Czech communities. However, Tamis states that the existence of this political organisation was fragile because its objectives "were never actually defined" (Tamis 1994).

Risto Altin, who was one of the Macedonian pioneers in Australia and a founder of the All-Slav Unity League clearly disputes this view. He states that the organisation "... was established by members of all Slav communities in Australia, which supported the communist movement in Europe during the Second World War. We

[the Macedonians] participated in that organisation hoping that the correct stand of the Comintern will help the Macedonians to liberate our country and would establish an independent and sovereign country". Risto Altin and Dane Trpkov played an active role by participating in many community activities and taking part in congresses and meetings organised by the All-Slav Unity League. Risto, who was born in 1919, arrived in Australia in February 1937, having left Macedonia to escape the terror of General Metaxas against the Macedonian population.

After leaving the MPO as a pro-Bulgarian organisation, Risto joined an organisation called 'Progressive Youth', where he was able to learn English. In 1941, he and his compatriots Efto Trajanovski and Tome Gergov organised a dance in the Syrian church in Victoria Parade, East Melbourne, in order to collect money for the Russian soldiers who were fighting against Germany. Risto Altin was one of the founders of the first organisation in Melbourne, called 'Goce Delchev', which was formed in 1941. Later on, this organisation became the Macedonian People's League (MPL), which was to unite all Macedonians across Australia. As part of its efforts to establish the institutions for community life, according to Altin, it was decided to set up a Church in Young Street in Fitzroy. On 14th May 1956, a Church Committee was elected, with Vasil Mojanov as the first President. Risto Altin was one of the initiators.

Risto Altin today lives in Preston, Melbourne and is in his eighties. As he says, he has devoted his life to the defence of culture and identity, as well as to Macedonia's

liberation. Despite his age, Risto today is still active within the Macedonian community (Altin 1996b).

Vasil Mojanov, from Aegean Macedonia, was another of the Macedonian pioneers in Australia. He was born in the village Lagen, Lerin, on 16th December 1913 and left Macedonia in 1937 when General Metaxas declared that the Macedonians were not allowed to use their native language, even in their homes. In the beginning he worked on farms in order to save money to pay back the fare from Macedonia to Australia. He took part in the Second World War against the Japanese, where he gained experience and knowledge in organising public and political life. During the War he became a member of the Macedonian Australian People's League, which was formed in 1946. Mojanov's good relations with the leaders of the Anglican Church and a number of prominent politicians in Victoria, contributed to the establishment of the first Macedonian Orthodox Church of 'St. George' overseas. He was the first president of the Secret Committee of St. George, which was elected in 1956, and then became president of the 'Makedonija' Football Club. (Chapkovski 1992:98-101).

Danè Trpkov was another Macedonian activist in Australia. He was born in the village of Gorno Nevoljani/Lerin, Aegean Macedonia and arrived in Australia on 17 January 1939. After his arrival he worked in the Victorian 'bush' for some time. He did not like the 'bush' life and he made his way to Melbourne. In Melbourne, after a period of unemployment and stuggle, he was able to find work, which enabled him to save and, in due course, to buy a restaurant called Olympia, in Flinders Street, Melbourne. The

restaurant, like so many places, was a meeting place that Macedonians used to frequent and socialise (Chapovski 1992).

As their delegate from Melbourne, representing local Macedonians, Risto Altin participated in the United Slav Congress which was held on 1-3 September 1944, in Sydney. Another participant of the Macedonian community at the Congress was Stevo Stoev, a baker from Newcastle. Apart from the Macedonian community representatives, the United Slav Congress included representatives from the Russian, Croat, Polish, Bulgarian, Slovak and Czech communities. At that meeting United Slav Congress had decided to send regular help to their 'mother countries' during the battle against fascism. The body also adopted a resolution to publish a monthly journal in Sydney, the Slavonic Review, whose aims were to support USSR foreign policy (Altin 1996 b).

Adopting the resolutions of the Congress, The Macedonian Australian People's League, the body of the Macedonians in Australia (1946-1957), organised meetings Australia-wide in 1946 in order to raise money for the building of a hospital in Skopje. Kirè Angelkov from Western Australia was elected organiser and he was the one who travelled from state to state in order to establish communications, collect money for the hospital and prepare the ground for next United Slav Congress. After his journey, Angelkov initiated and formed, in 1946, an organisation called *Makedonski Naroden Sojuz za Avstralia* (Macedonian People's League of Australia), representing all Macedonian groups in Australia. This organisation aimed to defend and promote the political aspirations of the Macedonians for national recognition. The

activities of the organisation strengthened especially after the establishment of the People's Republic of Macedonia as a sixth constituent unit of Yugoslavia and during the Civil War in Greece (Altin 1996 b).

With the rapid increase in the level of Macedonian migration after the Second World War, Macedonians wanted to have their own clubs and halls. The initiative was taken in 1947 by the Macedonians of New South Wales who built a Macedonian hall "in Crabbes Creek on a block of land donated by the Pazov family from Statica/Kostur" (Hill 1989:688). The hall was originally designed as a church hall, but the structure of the building was not in keeping with Church canon. The Church services were conducted by a Russian priest from Brisbane (Hill 1989).

The second Macedonian hall was built in Perth, in May 1949, but, following a division within the Macedonian community, the hall was subsequently sold. The idea of having a Macedonian hall in Perth was revived in 1954, but it could not be realised because the local Council refused to give them permission for the construction. In 1966, the foundation stone of the Macedonian Community Centre in Perth was laid and the building was completed in 1968 (Hill 1989:74).

The Macedonians of Adelaide, South Australia, established the first Macedonian organisation in 1947. The initiative was taken by the Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia led by Kosta Radin and a group of young Macedonian immigrants who created the Macedonian Community of Adelaide. The South Australia community hall

was built in 1967 largely with voluntary labour, in Crittenden Road, Findon, South Australia (Hill 1989).

Following the activities of the Macedonians Australia wide, the Macedonians of Melbourne built a community hall in Epping which was officially opened in 1981 under the auspices of the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria. The hall is known as the Macedonian Social Club 'Goce Delchev'. The objects of the Macedonian Social Club are to establish, maintain and conduct a non-political, non-sectarian Club with all usual privileges and to organise dances on Saturday and Sunday evenings. The Club also provides facilities for bingo, billiards, chess, fashion-parades and shows such as wrestling, kick-boxing and karate. Friday nights were reserved for disco, mainly for Macedonian youth. The Club currently has about 2000 members. To become a member of the Club a person must be over 18 years, to be a Macedonian or born of Macedonian parents (Kalinchev 1996).

Another Macedonian Social Club was built in Melbourne and officially opened in 1989 in Sunshine. This Club is the biggest in Australia and cost more then $1.5 million. Its capacity is about 1000 seats and mainly there are organised dances, plays, multicultural festivals, weddings and christenings and (most importantly) public meetings. In both Macedonian centres, Epping and Sunshine, there is no restriction on hiring the facilities. They may be hired by anyone and from any nationality (Kalinchev 1996).

The Macedonian Orthodox Church

In the long history of Macedonian culture, Orthodoxy has always played a central role. For Macedonians in Australia, the Church is a symbol of their spiritual and cultural heritage as well as their national self-determination. Australia for Orthodox Macedonians was and still is a haven of religious freedom. Prior to the Second World War the Macedonians did not have their own churches in Australia. For their spiritual needs and social rituals they attended mainly Syrian, Russian and Greek Orthodox churches.

The first Macedonian Orthodox church in Australia was set up after the Second World war by a group of Macedonians in Melbourne, including Risto Altin, Stojan Srbinov, Dane Trpkov, Vancho Nedelkovski and Done and Atanas Filipov. The foundation- stone for the Macedonian Orthodox Church of St George was laid by the mayor of Fitzroy, Alderman Blackman, and blessed by the priest of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Melbourne, Father George Haydar, on 2 August 1959. The church was consecrated and officially opened on Ilinden, August 2 1960 (the Macedonian National Day), by His Grace the Bishop of Zletovo-Strumica diocese of Macedonia, the Metropolitan Secretary and Bishop's deputy Father Nestor Popovski, and Father Gorgi Angelovski who was to become the first priest of the church (Altin 1996c).

On the consecration and in the evening of the same day there was a massive Macedonian presence. The Macedonian worshippers present at the ceremony were

happy saying that they could freely say that they were Macedonians, and nobody could deny that (Nedelkovski 1996). The opening of the first Macedonian church in Australia marked the beginning of the cohesive socio-religious life of the Macedonians in Australia. On the other hand, the church marked the beginning of a strong and extraordinary public campaign against the Macedonians by the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian Churches in Australia. The Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian newspapers were filled with acrimonious propaganda against the Macedonians and their very existence. In their attacks they denied all that was Macedonian, using phrases such as 'pseudo-Macedonians', 'pseudo-bishops', 'pseudo-Macedonian church', and so on (Nedelkovski 1996).

The consecration of the first Macedonian church in Melbourne spread quickly among the Macedonians in Australia. The news also reached the Macedonians in America, Canada and the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. After two years of the official opening of St. George in Melbourne, the Macedonians in USA opened the second Macedonian church abroad. Following the pioneering event in Melbourne, other Macedonians in Australia started to build their Macedonian churches.

Three decades later in Australia there were 19 churches and three monasteries. In Victoria there were 6 churches and 2 monasteries, in NSW 8 churches and 1 monastery, in Western Australia 2 churches, in Queensland 2 and in South Australia 1 church. This network of churches gave a structure and cohesion to Macedonian life in Australia (Nedelkovski 1996).

In 1962, an initiative was undertaken in Perth for organising a Macedonian Church Community by Trpche Pejov, Tome Mijovski, Kosta Angelkov, Kosta Kapinkov and others. On 9th February, the church of 'St. Nichola' was consecrated by the then Metropolitan of Australia and Canada, Bishop Kiril. Another church in Perth was built and consecrated in 1978 with the same name (Nedelkovski 1996).

The next churches were built in New South Wales. Bishops Kiril and Methodious, together with the priest Metodija Gogov in 1969 consecrated in Queanbeyan (NSW) the church of 'St. Elijah'.

In Newcastle the Macedonians began the first church services in March 1970 in the church of 'Holy Mother of God', whereas in Adelaide church life commenced in 1969 when Father Gorgi Kacarski arrived from Skopje, the capital city of the Republic of Macedonia. According to Kosta Radin, a new church of 'St. Naum' was built and consecrated on 29th April 1984, by the then-Metropolitan of Australia, Bishop Timotey. By the mid 1990s the church had about seven hundred regular worshipers (Radin 1996). On 27th August 1972, the church of 'St. Demetrius' was consecrated in Wollongong by the Metropolitan Dositej and Father Metodi Gogov (Radin 1996).

In Sydney organised church life began in 1969 when a church was bought in Rosebery for $30 000. The first founders of the Church community were Mihail Velovski, Vasil Boskov, Jovan Pizarkov and Ilo Malkov. In 1976 the church was rebuilt and was named 'Saints Cyril and Metodius'. It was consecrated by Archbishop Dositej in 1977. The church of 'St. Petka' in Rockdale, Sydney, was established in 1977 and

was consecrated a year later by Archbishop Dositej and Bishop Kiril. The third Macedonian church in Sydney, called 'St. Nichola', was consecrated on 8th February, 1987. In 1983 the church of 'St. Clement of Ohrid' was consecrated in Port Kembla by the then-Metropolitan of Australia, Timotey. Bishop Timotey consecrated on 18th December 1989 another church in Canberra with the same name 'St. Clement of Ohrid' (Nedelkovski 1996).

In Queensland two Macedonian churches were built: one in Brisbane and one in the Gold Coast. Church life in Brisbane began in 1980 whereas in the Gold Coast in 1995. In Brisbane in 1982 the church of the 'Holy Mother' was consecrated by Metropolitan Timotey (Nedelkovski 1996).

In the meantime, the number of churches in Victoria continued to increase during the 1970s. 'St Elijah' in Footscray was the second Macedonian church in Melbourne, consecrated on 26 December 1974. In 1985 the Community laid the foundation stone of the monastery of 'St Naum of Ohrid' in Rocklyn, near Daylesford, Victoria, which was blessed by the deputy-Bishop Rade Atanasovski (Veljanovski and Bozinovski 1996).

In February 1974 the church Community of 'St Nikola' was established in Preston. The founder was one of the Macedonian church pioneers in Australia, the Macedonian emigrant Gorgi Pisevski. According to Pisevski, who is an Honoured President of the church of 'St Nikola', the Community emerged from the Cultural Association 'Cyril and Metodius'. The members of the Initiative Committee

comprised the president Gorgi Pisevski, born in Lazaropole, Nikola Vasilevski from Rula, Gorgi Petrov from Gevgelija and Mile Panov from Skopje. The Church of 'St Nikola' was consecrated in 1978 by the Archbishop Dositej and Metropolitan Kiril (Veljanovski and Bozinovski 1996).

In February 1995 the wooden construction of the church of 'St Nikola' in Preston was destroyed by fire. The fire, which was treated as suspicious by the Arson Squad, left the Macedonian Orthodox community devastated. It is believed that the fire was lit deliberately when the relations between the Greek and Macedonian communities became strained. Some of the members of the Church Committee believe that the Greek lobby was responsible for the fire. However, the Macedonian Orthodox community of Preston led by the Honoured President Gorgi Pisevski began to build a new brick church. The Macedonians donated money for the church and helped with labour too. The church was built in a very short time, almost six months, and was consecrated in May 1996 by the Bishops Peter and Stefan and the Secretary of the Macedonian Holy Synod, Protogeacon Ratomir Grozdanovski. On the consecration day there were present more then 10 000 worshippers who donated about $100 000 (Gashtevski 1996).

In 1982 an initiative for organised church life began in Springvale led by Janko Georgievski. The church of 'St. Demetrious' was consecrated by the then-Metropolitan of Australia, Timotey, in 1986. In 1996 the church of 'St. Demetrius' was renovated and consecrated by the Bishop of Australia and New Zealand, Peter (Gashtevski 1996).

In 1994 the Macedonian community of Melbourne's western suburbs led by Ico Najdovski, Vlado Trpcevski, Trajce Atanasovski, Zdravko Talevski and Tode Milenkovski undertook an initiative for organised church life. A letter was sent to the Macedonian Holy Synod to accept the initiative and to confirm that the Macedonian Holy Synod would send a priest to serve the worshippers. The Macedonian Holy Synod responded positively, sending a letter of approval on 2/2/95. However, the initiative was opposed by the priest of 'St Elijah' of Footscray and the Bishop's Deputy, Father Jovica Simonovski and the church Committee. This seems improbable, but, according to Vlado Trpcevski, the Bishop's Deputy opposed the opening of the new church because of the problem that the operation of yet another church in the Western suburbs of Melbourne would create, such as a potential drop in the income of the present priest (Trpchevski 1996).

Although the Bishop's Deputy was against the opening of another church, the Macedonian Orthodox community of St. Albans and districts put considerable pressure on the Australian and New Zealand Metropolitan Peter to support the initiative and consecrate the church of 'St. Mary', located on Lot 4 Sydenham Road, Sydenham. The church of 'St. Mary' was consecrated on 13 October 1996 by the Bishop for Australia and New Zealand Peter, with co-servicing of all priests from Victoria. Bishop Peter still had not appointed a priest for the new church by the end of1996 (Vlado Trpchevski 1996).

The building of 'St. John the Baptist' in Geelong began in 1971 when a sizeable number of immigrants from the Republic of Macedonia settled in the area. It was Jovan Angelkovski and Mile Stojanovski who took the initiative for establishing a regular church life in Geelong. Some of the other activists who helped build the church were Tome Dimovski, Cvetko and Venta Pachovski, Dimitar Angelovski, Ilija Nikolovski and Luba Ilievska. The church of 'St. John, the Baptist' was consecrated in 1978 by the Metropolitan Kiril (Trpchevski 1996).

Currently in Australia there are 17 priests who conduct religious services every Sunday morning and on other holy days. Like churches in Macedonia, the liturgy is conducted in Macedonian. However, during private ceremonies, such as the baptism of children of second and third generation, Macedonians prefer to have the service in English. There is only one priest in Australia who is fluent in English and can conduct the liturgies either in English or in Macedonian. The other priests cannot conduct services in English.

Some churches in Melbourne such as 'St. George - St. Mary' in Epping, 'St. Nikola' in Preston and 'St. Elijah' in Footscray, and in Sydney 'St. Petka' in Rockdale, 'St. Kiril and Metodius' in Rosebery and 'St. Nikola' in Cabramatta, are attended by approximately 200 worshippers for each Liturgy. The other churches are attended by 50-100 worshippers in accord with the number of the Macedonians in the areas where the churches operate. For the special holy days such as Easter and Christmas some churches are attended by as many as 10 000 worshippers, according to interviewees. It is believed that the Macedonian Orthodox community of Australia is about 250 000 -

300 000, and many Macedonians believe that the health of the entire Macedonian community is fundamentally dependent upon the strength of the Macedonian Churches in the community.

The Macedonians of Australia consider that their Church has been throughout history, and still is, a 'Guardian' of the Macedonian people, their traditions, customs, culture and identity. In fact, initially all Macedonian assets in Australia belonged to the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The first Ethnic Schools, Cultural and Artistic Associations, the first Soccer Clubs, Social Clubs, Monasteries and investment houses were formed under the auspices of the Macedonian Orthodox Church (Stefanovski 1996).

In 1995, the Aegean Macedonian Council of Melbourne and Victoria bought a house in Preston for use as a gathering place for Macedonians, as well as for holding formal meetings. Through such acquisitions, as well as through the extensive church and religious organisations, the Macedonian community has clearly signalled its commitment to an ongoing presence in Australia. As this Chapter has argued, such a presence has been premised on the construction within the community of a distinct Macedonian-Australian identity. In addition, these organisations have been important repositories of memory and heritage and have provided settings or locations for reflection, examination and affirmation of positionalities, as well as being important organisations for cultural development and expressions that have emerged from the diasporic experience of Macedonians in the Australia context. It is these organisations, cultural developments and expressions that are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

MACEDONIAN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

In this Chapter I describe and discuss the Macedonian community organisations and their activities as part of the Macedonian community's attempts to maintain and to develop responses to the issues that form part of their diasporic experience. In particular, I describe and discuss the Macedonian theatre, the Macedonian Women's Choir, the Macedonian Human Rights Committee, Macedonian newspapers, the Macedonian church and the Macedonian soccer clubs. A key aspect of this experience, which is central to the developments that are discussed, is the close relationship and links that the Australian-Macedonian community has retained with their Macedonian home and culture. At the same time, what the various organisations and the activities that they are engaged in demonstrate is the Macedonian community's attempt to come to terms with the changing nature of communal life under the pressures of modern living in the context of the ongoing struggle to define and defend a unique identity.

Macedonian theatre in Australia

The Macedonian Theatre in Australia plays an important role in the life of the Macedonian community. Its role is complex and evolving. This is evident in the changing themes adopted and the interweaving of cultural influences from Macedonia and from the Macedonian diasporic experience in Australia. In one sense,

Macedonian theatre might be seen as continuing a Macedonian 'tradition' of cultural expression through the choice of distinctive Macedonian themes that resonate with its history, memory and cultural references of community and family life. In another sense, the choice of topics, such as the play *Dogodi-Pogodi,* which employs an Australian TV quiz format and themes, are distinctly Australian, and both contrasts the past – portrayed as known 'traditional' practices – and points to the emergence of new 'traditions' that are part of the experience of life in a modern urban society like Australia. The Macedonian theatre, in the main, speaks to the Macedonian community, although, as the following description clearly shows, it also increasingly seeks to speak to and engage with a wider multicultural audience, as it has grown in confidence from its Macedonian community 'roots' into a theatre that is tackling broader themes of change and uncertainty shared by many migrant communities in Australia. The affirmation of Macedonian cultural and ethnic identity is, however, the central thread that runs through the Macedonian theatre. At present, there are three Macedonian theatre groups in Australia: the Australian Macedonian Theatre 'Blagoja Neskovski', based in Wollongong, NSW; the Australian Macedonian Drama Group, Melbourne; and the Australian Macedonian Theatre, "Boomerang", Melbourne.

The Australian-Macedonian Theatre *Blagoja Neskovski*

According to Olga Nikolovska, the current president of the group, the Australian Macedonian Theatre (AMT) *Blagoja Neskovski* was established in 1983, at Illawarra, Wollongong, NSW. The initiator of this drama group was Blagoja (Bill) Neskovski, who was born in the village Opticari, in the vicinity of Bitola, Republic of Macedonia.

Bill died in November 1989, aged 25. In 1983, its establishment year, this amateur theatre group did not present any productions as it was still struggling financially. When it began, the group performed plays written in Macedonia, by writers from Macedonia. The first play, *Chorbadzi Theodos* (Master Theodos), written by Vasil Iljovski, was staged in 1984, in Cringila, Wollongong. It deals with the life of the Macedonians under the Turkish Empire at the beginning of this century. The best known plays from Macedonia performed by AMT *Blagoja Neskovski* in Australia are: *Chorbadzi Theodos* (Master Theodos), *Pechalbary* (Fortune Seekers), *Svadba* (Wedding), *Burite kraj Vardar* (Gailstorms by Vardar) and *Begalka* (the Eloper).

During the early years, the group staged a number of plays written by Macedonian authors from Macedonia and, since 1989, it has begun to stage plays written by Australian-Macedonian writers. The play *Cole praj kompo* (Conqueror Cole) was the first 'Australian' work performed by the group. Written by Bill Neskovski, a young Australian-Macedonian writer, the play deals with the tension of living with and between two different cultures: Macedonian culture and the modern Anglo-Australian dominated culture of Australia.

The father Cole, who had suffered a leg injury in the Port Kembla steelworks and awaiting the outcome of a compensation case, dreams of a triumphant return to his Macedonian home-town. The case is won and Cole and his long-suffering wife return to Macedonia but, paradoxically, expatriates are not 'welcome' there. Cole's dream is shattered by this realisation of what he has become. The play's sub-themes are equally strong. Cole's son Alex breaks with his family over disagreements about his career -

his family want him to become a lawyer while he wants to become a welfare worker, challenging the old Macedonian 'tradition' of following the desires of one's parents. He becomes a welfare worker. Cole's daughter Nada has a child out of wedlock and wants to marry the child's father, Jimmy. Jimmy who is wary of marriage, engages an upfront lawyer and litigation follows.

The play is full of confrontations between the individualism that is part of modern Australia and the communalism of Macedonian village life, as well as the tensions that are part of the disintegration of old 'traditions' and taboos and the Macedonians' retraditionalisation into a social and cultural lifestyle that is new and uncertain, full of bewildering conflicts and contradictions, particularly for the older Macedonians. The generational changes and the issues that are confronting the Macedonian community are presented for all to see.

Generational change, cultural change and the pressures of modern life are the subject of Neskovski's second play, *Recimu zbogum na minatoto* (Say Goodbye to the Past), which was performed by the AMT *Blagoja Neskovski.* The play deals with Ilinka and Dimce, who are 65-year old Macedonians who had migrated to Australia with their children, Sasho and Elena, 25 years earlier. The parents are opposed to what they see as their children's 'Australianisation', the abandonment of their Macedonian ways, which is expressed in the ongoing daily conflicts between the parents and their children. The parents strongly oppose the acceptance and use of the English language by their children and the way the Australians live. They insist on their children maintaining a distinct and separate Macedonian way of life, in keeping with their past.

Their children, however, want to live a modern life and reject their parents' stand on maintaining a strict adherence to Macedonian culture, traditions and language. The play provides no solutions as such, but raises many questions about the challeges, tensions and contradictions that confront Macedonian parents and children in their new home and all that comprises the new context in which they live and have to deal with.

The problems of modern living are the subject of another play staged by the AMT *Blagoja Neskovski*, titled *Dobrovolen Zatvor* (The Voluntary Prison), which was written by Olga Nikolovska. The play explores the social-economic situation of the Macedonian community in Australian society, such as their rapid transformation from rural workers in Macedonia into industrial labour in Australia and the health problems associated it. It also deals with the problems that Macedonia faces with regard to its recognition as an independent state, and how the Macedonians in Australia have been affected by the (non)recognition of the Republic of Macedonia, such as the challenges that this has posed for their recognition and acceptance as a community with a distinct Macedonian identity and culture. Through the story of the family of Tome and Marija, *Dobrovolen Zarvor* also explores the problems of Macedonian youth, such as the use of drugs and alcohol abuse. The play is significant in many respects. For example, it is a broad display of the Macedonian 'condition' in Australia and gives the Macedonian community a rare and confronting opportunity to see themselves on stage as if they were looking at themeselves in a mirror. The intense interest that *Dobrovolen Zatvor* generated in the Macedonian community in Australia is best illustrated by the fact that it was attended by more then 4 000 members of the community (Nikolovska 1995).

The Australian-Macedonian Drama Group

According to one of its former members, Silvana Pavlovska, the Australian-Macedonian Drama Group (AMDG) was formed in 1983 when a group of students from the Macedonian Student Association heard of a play titled *Nasite* (Our People), which was written by Jim Thomev. The young students had decided to stage Jim Thomev's play, Our People, and, in order to make things easier and to involve as many people as possible, it was decided to put on short sketches interspersed with song and music, at various intervals. In the beginning, the organisers of this new theatre were faced with a number of problems, such as the absence of a widespread 'tradition' of formal theatrical forms and staging among Macedonians, in Australia as well as in Macedonia. According to informants who were interviewed as part of this research (eg. Pavlovska 1996), attracting and developing a Macedonian audience to theatre as a genre was a major preoccupation for the organisers of this play, which was also the first to be staged anywhere in Australia. Lack of sponsorship or financial means necessitated the holding of rehearsals in a private house and reliance on volunteers, the majority of whom were teachers and students (Pavlovska 1996). The first public performance, titled *Makedoncite vo Avstralija* (The Macedonians in Australia), was staged in May 1984 at Preston Town Hall, in Melbourne, and consisted of five plays, which depicted the efforts of Macedonians to settle into and adjust to the demands of life in Australia. Following each play, there were interludes of Macedonian folk music, folk songs and folkloric dances. The organisers had included a repertoire of such Macedonian traditional folklore in order to give the

audience something they were familiar with, and to link it with and make attractive a new artistic form of expression that they were now being exposed to.

It is interesting to note here the way in which the play's producers quite consciously sought to develop a new 'tradition', not by displacing an existing 'tradition' but by using it to both make a link between them and to add another performative genre, as an enlargement of the repertoire available to the Macedonian community. Perhaps even more interestingly, we have an example of the way in which an existing performative culture, such as folk music, songs and dances, which, while being important and affirming the enduring links of Macedonians with their past, were no longer sufficient to enable all Macedonians, especially the younger educated generation, to express themselves in and to converse with their 'new' multicultural context.

Another point of interest is the subject matter of the cycle of the five plays. All of them deal with everyday experiences drawn from the lives of Macedonians in Australia, depicting the contradictions and conflicts that are part of the changes that the Macedonian community is confronted with. For example, the first play, *Vlade,* deals with the inter-generational and cross-cultural conflicts between Vlade, a young Macedonian school student, and his parents. The second play *Stram, Ces i Red* (Humility, Respect and Custom), deals with a similar subject, namely, a school teacher who provides an example of a 'traditional' Macedonian moral lesson, based on the experience of humility, respect and custom. The students discover the impracticality of such an easy judgment in the context in which they live and it is

exposed as hypocritical. The third play, *Kume-Krlè Trts* (Godfather Krle-Trts), describes the role of the godfather and the Macedonian naming customs. The godfather names the children with unusual names such as Tikvar (Pumpkin), Teneke (Tin Can), Tevekelia (Lout) and Torlak (Unkempt). The play represents a lighthearted and funny portrayal of the custom and the consequences that flow from the naming for the young people concerned. *Zdrav-Ziv* (Alive and Healthy), the fourth play in the cycle, deals with the paradoxical, but not uncommon, situation of role reversal between a young boy who acts as an interpreter at a Medical Center and his hot-tempered grandfather who suffers from anxiety. The play deals with the problem of maintaining a 'tradition' of respect for one's elders and the situation that makes this difficult. The fifth play, titled *Strojnici i Magesnici* (Matchmakers and Witchcrafts), deals with the role of a *stroinik* (a matchmaker), a traditional Macedonian way of arranging marriages. The *stroinik* attempts to convince a young girl to marry a boy that she has never met, as soon as possible. The attempt fails completely, however, exposing the absurdity of the practice in the new context and the distress that it causes to the respective families.

The blend of humor, which was a key ingredient for the success of the AMDG, and the familiar folklore gave the plays a special appeal and accessibility that accounts for their success with the audience. According to Stojanovski (1995:29), 'the mixture of folklore and drama was successful, there was no clash of mode or style'. The combination of lively music and comic drama, which proved to be very popular, prompted the organisers to stage a second show, *Sekakvi svirki, sekakvi svadbi* (Much Ado About Marriage), in early 1985 at Collingwood Education Centre, Melbourne.

The second show was similar in style to the first. This time the plays focused on Macedonian marriage customs and the problems associated with maintaining the 'tradition' in Australia. The AMDG adopted and used the format of the popular TV program "Perfect Match" for the play *Pogodi-Dogodi* (The Macedonian Perfect Match). This play was one of the best remembered performances offered by the group. The writer of the play, Stefo Stojanovski, interpreted its success as being linked to the central preoccupations of Macedonian families in Australia, of whom their children would be married to and when to marry them off (Stojanovski, 1995:29). The other plays of the second production were *Zlatni zeni* (Golden Women), *Daleku od ucen sin* (Keep away from an educated son), *Vo bizniso* (In the business) and *Pip Pip Ooray.*

The third set of plays, *Preku nivjeto i* fabrikite (Over the fields and Factories), was staged in late 1985, also at Collingwood Education Centre. Unlike the previous productions, which dealt with issues that related to Macedonians in Australia, the first two plays of this production dealt with themes drawn from Macedonian history. *Makedonecot* (The Macedonian) deals with the tragic history of Macedonia, and the second play, *Kucinjata lajat* (The Dogs Are Barking), presents, in symbolic form, the demands of national allegiance and the sacrifices that it entails. The other two plays deal with issues arising out of the Macedonians' experience in Australia. *Zimi vas* (I Swear By You) deals with the oppression of women, and *Do koga* (Until When) is a sentimental tragi-comedy about an elderly Macedonian couple ageing in Australia.

In 1986, the AMDG staged its fourth production, which consisted of three plays: *Krvta ne se praj voda* (Blood is Thicker than Water), *Aramijata* (The Thief) and *Intimi* (Intimacies). The first play, *Blood is Thicker than Water*, which was written by Jim Thomev, is a five act play and was the longest single play staged until that time. The play deals with the tensions that are part of the changes that are taking place in the Macedonian community and the dilemmas associated with change. Act 1 begins in the family living room showing Kosta and his grandfather, Kosta, having a spirited discussion over a few glasses of brandy (*rakija*). Risto, young Kosta's father, comes home from work and admonishes them. He is in despair because of the disgrace that his eldest son Giorgi has brought on the family by "living in sin" with an Italian girl - Silvana. Young Kosta informs his father that Silvana is pregnant and that the couple are planning to get married. Risto is outraged. His wife tries to reason with him, but makes the situation worse by unwittingly telling Risto that his younger brother, Ilo, has sent his children to a Macedonian school. Risto threatens to disown "his mad son", Giorgi, and also to give Ilo a good talking to for sending his kids to a school which will turn them into communists. In Act 2, Ilo is having a quiet evening in the back garden with his wife Tsila. Risto calls in and a discussion follows. Ilo defends his action of sending his son to a Macedonian school, while Risto insists that it is wrong. The situation appears to take a more critical dimension when Risto's son Giorgi decides to marry Silvana 3 months after the baby is born, and announces that the marriage will take place on the same day as the christening of the young child. The uncles approve, the grandparents are delighted, Risto is scandalised. In Act 3, the grandmother, Kosteica, reveals to the women in the family that she and grandfather Kosta had eloped, and that their eldest son Risto, was born 3 months after the

wedding. In Act 4, the baby has just been born and the proud parents, Giorgi and Silvana, in keeping with tradition, name him Risto. Risto, the recalcitrant 'new' grandfather, is outraged. Under pressure from the whole family, however, Risto reluctantly 'accepts' the situation. The onslaught on his 'mistaken' notions of morality and his adherence to a very narrow concept of ethnic identity they all find irrelevant in multicultural Australia finally reconciles him to the situation. The final act presents the wedding and christening, as well as the celebration that follows. The play concludes with a serene song of reconciliation, seemingly reconciling all discord and pain. The song speaks of the 'tragedy' of the Macedonian people and their ongoing capacity for survival.

The second play, *Aramiata* (The Thief), is a one act play written by Tom Petsinis. This play deals with five Macedonian men who come together in a cafe in Melbourne one Easter Saturday night. An old man, a youth and a middle-aged businessman are playing cards, irritating the owner, who is eager to go home to join his family for the traditional midnight meal. At this point a man in his mid-thirties enters the cafe. All are attracted by the man's hand, which is wrapped in a bloody handkerchief. The man reveals that he had taken his family's rent-money from his wife's bag and that he had lost it all in a lottery syndicate. The other four offer their advice about how he should approach his life. The man finally relates an imaginary reconciliation and forgiveness. The others are visibly affected. Moved by the man's words, the businessman discretely slips a roll of money into the thief's pocket as he is helped out of the door by the youth and the old man. The proprietor has seen the act of generosity and

questions the businessman about it. They leave together and go off to enjoy the traditional dinner.

The third play in the presentation, *Intimi* (Intimacies), was also a one-act play and was written by Stefo Stojanovski. It deals with three generations of Macedonian women in Australia. They reflect on their condition of ill health and discuss the illnesses they have had, the illnesses they wish they did not have and some illnesses that they wish they had so as to escape from their condition and the burdens of life. The play discusses subjects such as cultural taboos, a story of a faith healer, an acupuncturist, gossip, a gamut of other folk beliefs and cures, as well as a smattering of everybody's version of "common sense" - all in the waiting room of a modern doctor's surgery.

The fifth collection of plays, titled *Staro novo* (The Old and The New), which consists of three works, was staged in 1987. *Sushata* (The Drought), the longer of the three plays, is a tragedy written by Tom Petsinis. The story revolves around the theme of a Macedonian returning home and the complications that arise as a result of the misunderstandings out of the migration experience between two brothers, one a migrant to/from Australia and the other who had never migrated. The return has tragic consequences for the 'returnee', who is killed by his older brother. The play has a dense and allusive text, which is recited by a chorus of women. The play evokes the sadness and contradictions of the migration experience and the gulf that develops between those at home and those who have migrated. The play proved very popular, both for its innovative approach to drama and for its content, which broke new ground in exploring a subject that was of a broader interest in a society that was home to a

diversity of ethnic groups. The play received high praise and, in 1994, it was also presented in English to a wider Australian audience by Melbourne's Playbox Theatre Company. This was the first time that a Macedonian play, which had emerged from within the Macedonian community, had received 'mainstream' recognition and represented a new level of achievement, not only for the author but, in a more general sense, also for the Macedonian community in Australia. The other two shorter plays that were presented were *Gospo ic ne spie* (God Does Not Sleep at All), which was written by Jim Thomev, and *Zlaten tatko* (Golden Father), by Stefo Stojanovski.

Theatre as a 'new' medium of expression, particularly for young Australian-Macedonians, had by this stage become an important avenue of discourse on a range of issues that could not have been broached in any other way. The various plays also spoke to an audience about issues that were part of their daily lives but which could be immensely difficult to confront because of their being so private and deeply conflicting. The theatre provided an avenue, at a remove, for discussing problems, contradictions and conflicts, which were central to Macedonian identity. It provided a means for examining the past and the problematic present. In an important sense, it provided a 'mirror' to the Macedonian community of not only who they were, but also of what they had become, or were in the process of becoming. As the examples of plays that were presented show, the Macedonians' experience in Australia were the overwhelming themes of the theatre. This was an example of the social and cultural home that the Macedonians were now a part of and the unavoidable conflictual, problematic, ambivalent and evolving dimensions of the context that they found themselves in. The unifying theme or thread that runs through the plays and the

various performances is the examination of Macedonian identity, an identity in transition, between who they were and who they had become or were becoming.

The interest in the Macedonian theatre has grown to such an extent that since 1988 the drama group has staged its annual productions at the Agora Theatre at La Trobe University, Bundoora. And it was at that venue that the sixth theatre production, titled *Aide da se vidime* (See You Soon), was staged in May 1988. This 'show' consisted of three comedies and another 'new' kind of play, a 'mystery', which was written by Dorothy Siouclis, the AMDG's first female writer.

The first play, *Domakinkata* (The Housekeeper) by Dorothy Siouclis, deals with Mara, who is a *domakinka.* In the Macedonian context, a *domakinka* is a highly valued status for women as the 'pillar' of home and family. Mara, the main character, is an impeccable and highly respected *domakinka* in Lalor, in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. But two unexpected and embarrassing incidents occur in the course of one week, which threaten to shatter Mara's good standing in the local Macedonian community. The second play, *Familija na tuginci* (Family of Strangers), also written by Dorothy Siouclis, deals with a patriarchal Macedonian family, through the eyes of a young man, Alec. Alec's family never goes out. At the age of twenty he feels restricted and frustrated with life. Late one night he tries to explain all this to his long-suffering sister, and proposes that they leave home to build a better future, away from the family's restrictions. The play explores the tensions between the generation of Alec's father and the 'solid' Macedonian values connected with what he regards as 'Macedonian tradition', and those of Alec's generation who find them too restrictive

and in need of change. Alec's parents interrupt the children's attempt to physically and metaphorically 'escape' from home and their conflicted condition, and order his sister back to her room (her 'prison' according to Alec). Alec then unleashes his full fury at them for their 'shameful' behavior and storms out. Alone, the parents worry that this quarrelling might threaten something they have kept secret for 20 years. Alec returns unexpectedly, accuses his father of not wanting him, and is devastated when old Giorgi reveals to him that he is not his biological father. The two other plays were *Boksiranje* (Boxing), by Zlatomir Jovanovski, and a new *Pogodi-Dogodi-2* (Macedonian Perfect Match II) written by Stefo Stojanovski.

Kazi, kazi ne lazi (Tell No Tales) was the seventh production by the same theatrical group. It consisted of three plays: *Rekol-kazal* (Gossip), *Mitre Lovdzijata* (Mitre the Hunter) and *Toi sto znai* (He Who Knows). It was staged at the Agora Theatre, La Trobe University, in 1989. In the first play, *Rekol-kazal* (Gossip), a tram is travelling along Gertrude and Smith Streets in Melbourne. After work or shopping, regular passengers get on to take the daily trip home. Some of the 'regulars' know each other and use the trip to catch up on gossip. Mara, one of the characters in the play, is on the tram. She is joined by Sevda and Zora. They talk about health, overtime and family prosperity, and indulge in gossip about other people's problems, such as marital scandals. The second play, *Mitre lovdzijata* (Mitre the Hunter), contained four scenes. The first scene is in the village where Mitre has hunted and killed a rabbit. Sotir, a fellow villager, buys the rabbit from Mitre and asks him to take it to his wife to prepare. Mitre then sells the same rabbit, first to Janko and then to Doichin. The story deals with Mitre's less than honourable behaviour and the ethics

of swindle and cheating. The story is a moral tale, affirming the importance of integrity and honesty, the values embedded in Macedonian customs, which are being eroded by the changes that individuals are exposed to in Australia.

The third play, *Toi sho znai* (He Who Knows), deals with a similar theme through the symbolic metaphor of clothes. Two young people are engaged in emptying out their wardrobes and sifting through their clothes. They throw out what they consider useless clothes and keep only what they intend to wear. The play is a powerful exposition of the careful examination of Macedonian values and traditions and their suitability and usefulness in contemporary Australian conditions. Questions of identity are embedded in the pragmatic assessment of the value of past cultural beliefs, customs and practices from the perspective of the present.

The ninth performance that was staged by the AMDG, in September 1990, followed a similar format and range of subjects relevant to the experience of Macedonians in Australia. The production was named *Se so vreme* (All In Time) and consisted of four plays. The first, *Se sobrale* (They Were Gathered), by Stefo Stojanovski, is a monologue play that deals with the effects of migration from the point of view of people left behind in places of origin. It is a story of separation, sense of loss, grief and disintegration of a sense of belonging and community, as well as of attempts to build links with a past. The second play, *Tamu nekade po High Street* (There, Somewhere Along High Street), by Mise Aftarovski, revolves around Todor and Trajanka (husband and wife), who constantly misinterpret each other and then make mountains out of mole hills. The play explores a common theme in the daily lives of

Macedonians in Australia, by centering around issues of change and the misunderstandings that can arise out of the different and divergent experiences of people who are living with change and transition. The third play, *Branko's bavca* (Branko's Garden), by Stefo Stojanovski, is a Macedonian version of the popular Australian TV gardening program, *Burke's Backyard.* Through humor, it examines the widespread sub-culture of the suburban Macedonian 'farmer' with all its contradictions and idiosyncracies, as well as allusions to the vegetable gardens that Branko might have attended to had he stayed in Macedonia. The fourth play, *Pismoto* (The Letter), which was written Dorothy Siouclis, deals with two generations of women: Anna who represents the culture of today, and her grandmother who represents the Macedonian culture of the past. Although they represent two generations, both women realise that they share a common condition, patriarchy, and that they both desire the same thing – a more considerate and thoughtful partner.

Skroi mi prikazna (Weave Me a Tale), was the tenth production of the drama group and was staged in September 1991. It contained fourteen scenes based on a collection of Macedonian folk-tales from the past. The author of these folk-tales was the Macedonian 'Lafontaine', Marko Cepenkov, who lived in Macedonia during the last century. The folk-tales evoke and illustrate the creativity of the suppressed, a metaphor for the Macedonian people, and their colourful language, spiritual life, customs, traditions and beliefs, as well as their unique outlook on life and the world.

In September 1992, AMDG had its eleventh production, which was titled *Joomboosh* (Noisy Celebration). The play has four acts and was written by Niko Rendevski-

Todorov, Dorothy Siouclis and Stefo Stojanovski. It features more than 20 characters and held six performances, all at the Agora Theatre. Act 1, titled *Preparation,* depicts the preparation for the journey of Macedonians to Macedonia Park in Kinglake, just outside Melbourne. The journey is undertaken at least once each summer, to attend one of the large Macedonian style picnics set amongst the gums of the Australian bush. Part and parcel of going on this type of picnic, which has assumed a ritual character, is the preparation of huge amounts of traditional Macedonian food the night before and the getting up very early on the appointed Sunday morning to ensure that everything that is required for the day is ready. Act 2, *The Journey,* is about the journey to Kinglake. Vehicles travel down Plenty Road, through the suburbs of Melbourne, to the township of Kinglake. Families ar shown enjoying each other's company and discussing the meeting up with friends that is awaiting them at journey's end. However, almost every family makes it quite clear that they expect all family members to behave in an 'appropriate' respectful manner so that they will not be embarrassed or "talked about" by other people at or after the picnic. Act 3, *Arrival,* deals with the mundane, such as getting a good "spot" to park your car and finding relatives and friends before the crowd becomes too great and too scattered over the many hectares of the picnic ground, as well as the more serious but subtle considerations, such as finding a suitable location for 'displaying' the food and finery to best advantage. Once family members have been rounded up, each family settles down to sharing (and comparing) the food that has been brought. Over-catering is obligatory. An integral part of the day is the enjoyment of the lively traditional Macedonian music, as well the dancing. In act four, titled *After Lunch,* the play depicts people relaxing and catching up with friends and the latest gossip. Characters

are shown in all their diversity, such as armchair politicians making small talk, while the children play soccer. The scene is interspersed with memories that the characters evoke through their rememberance of their youth back in Macedonia when life was simple, and the hardship and sadness of migration and separation that they express in communal songs.

The AMDG celebrated its 10th anniversary by staging its eleventh show, *Mazni, Prazni i Razni* (Love Macedonian Style), in 1993. It is a play in three acts: Act 1: *Pogodi-Dogodi - za mladi* (Macedonian Perfect Match - For the Young), Act 2: *Pogodi-Dogodi - za stari* (Macedonian Perfect Match - For the Elderly), and Act 3: *Na Erobik* (At Aerobics). The play is a humorous adaptation of the TV quiz show to the situation of Macedonians, with hilarious effect. In 1994, at the height of the 'Greek-Macedonian dispute', which is discussed in the following two chapters, the AMDG staged the play *Parite se otepuvacka* (Money is Murder). It was written by Risto Krlè and was completed in 1937. The play is based on a true story recounted to Krle by a villager. The first half of the play is set in 1903 after the failed Ilinden uprising against Turkish rule. It was a time of social upheaval and great difficulty. Many men had left the impossible conditions in Macedonia to work in foreign lands as *Pechalbari* hoping to bring back earnings to support their families. This often took many years and even decades. Some never returned. The story is about the hardship of migration, the *pechalbar* life, the sadness of separation and a timely reminder of the Macedonians' past and present situation, which parallels that of the *pechalbary* in general. The story ends in tragedy when the main character, the *pechalbar* son, is killed by his father who has not recognised him after his unannounced return.

The AMDG, as we have seen, has been very important in introducing the Macedonian community to theatre as a genre. It has also played an important part in being a forum for exposing and discussing issues that affect the Macedonian community. In this regard it has been an important location for the affirmation of and giving definition to an Australian-Macedonian cultural identity in Australia. It has also been an important means for raising the profile of the Macedonian community with a distinct culture, identity and language throughout Australia. The plays deal, in the main, with the life of Macedonians in Australia, and make use of the colloquial language that they speak. Since the first production, the group has gone on to present different genres of theatre, such as comedy, farce, tragedy and social commentary. It has performed the work of six local Macedonian writers and one overseas writer. The theatre experience has included poetry readings and a choral group, as well as providing a stage for the maintenace of folk traditions, such as songs and dances. The productions have promoted the development of talented Macedonian artists, including writers, producers and poets. The theatre has served an important function as an outlet of expression for young Macedonians for whom the contradictions of living with the culture of Macedonia and Australia and the problematic nature of their location have been most acutely felt.

The drama group places great importance on serving its community. The group is made up of Macedonians from all walks of life and with backgrounds from all parts of Macedonia. It is a democratic organisation open to all. It holds annual elections and each member is entitled to vote for candidates for the various committee positions.

People involved in the drama group also carry out all of the tasks associated with the theatre, ranging from writing to ticketing.

The Australian-Macedonian Drama Group was the first theatrical group to cater for the Macedonian-Australians in Victoria and is continuing its work. In its 15 years of existence, it has performed over 30 original plays and has attracted a large audience of Macedonians and members of the broader Australian community. The AMDG has encouraged Australian-Macedonian writers, performers, designers and other theatre workers to move into 'mainstream' theatre. The group has undertaken a number of bilingual projects and aims to involve other ethnic communities in its work.

Two of the Group's plays were chosen by the Anthill Theatre Company for their staged readings in 1988. One play was performed in Geelong in 1988, as part of the Australian bicentennial celebrations. The Group performed at the Melbourne Moomba festival on two occasions: in 1985, it performed in the Drama Festival and in 1990 it was given the responsibility of preparing the depiction of the Macedonian Community's float. The Group won the Governor's award for the best float with its depiction of a traditional Macedonian wedding.

The Group sees the encouragement of new talents as one of its greatest achievements. It involves as many people as possible in artistic, technical and organisational fields. It has 93 financial members and over 150 people have taken part, sixty as actors, since 1984. The Group has been a catalyst for a number of people and has helped them to project themselves into 'mainstream' theatre. Two of its writers, Jim Thomev and

Mirjana Lozanovska, have received Literature Board Fellowships. Jim has also been used as a script consultant for Trout films. Mirjana Lozanovska has worked as a designer for the Church Theatre Company. The group has received financial assistance from the Victorian Ministry of the Arts and from the Australia Council. In 1988, the AMDG also received the inaugural award of the Macedonian Businessmen's Professional Association, for the most outstanding achievement in the Macedonian community. Videotapes of two of their productions have also been broadcast in the Republic of Macedonia and SBS Channel 0-28 produced a report on the Group for a current affairs program, in 1984 (Stojanovski 1995).

The Macedonian Theatre Group 'Boomerang'

The Macedonian Theatre Group (MTG) 'Boomerang' was founded in Melbourne by Vic Stoikov, Mise Avtarovski and Jovan Naumovski on August 2, 1991 and was officially registered on October 17th, 1991 (Stoikov 1996). Since 1991, the MTG 'Boomerang' has completed seven productions around Australia and in the Republic of Macedonia. The following is a list of their productions:

Melburn-Sydnej za inaet (Melbourne-Sydney Just for Spite) - November and December 1991;

Dont Beri Galje (Don't Worry) - May and June 1992;

Kaming za Avstralija (Coming to Australia) - December 1992 and January 1993;

Dont Bery Galje 2 (Don't Worry 2) - October 1993 and January 1994;

Kengurite Doagaat (The Kangaroos are Coming) - May 1994;

Paca se Vraka (Paca is Coming Back) - December 1994 and January 1995;

Hava Ju Tumoro (How Are You Tomorrow?) - January 1996.

Most of the plays were written and directed by Mise Avtarovski and Jovan Naumovski, and the performances have been attended by over 20.000 people, mainly from Macedonian background. 'Boomerang' video tapes are seen world-wide and have been shown on Macedonian television stations in Macedonia, Canada, the United States and Australia.

The MTG is the first Macedonian Theatre Group from Melbourne to perform outside Melbourne. In 1994 it visited Macedonia, at the invitation of the Macedonian Ministry of Culture, to participate in the 'Vojdan Chernodrinski Drama Festival'. On that occasion the group presented the play *Kengurite Doagaat* (The Kangaroos are Coming) (Stoikov 1996).

While each of the plays is distinctive in its set of characters, its thematic elements and its style, they also share a number of common elements. Each, in its own way, attempts to deal with the experience of people of Macedonian background trying to come to terms with life in Australia. The emotional tug of the "Motherland" is a constant factor, which Macedonians share with other migrant groups. The plays also deal with the constant struggle to maintain and perpetuate the Macedonian language, cultural traditions and religion, and to represent community identity and to seek cohesion.

The Macedonian Women's Choir

The Macedonian Women Choir was established in 1984, in Melbourne, essentially as a musical offshoot of the Macedonian Drama Group. There are currently 13 women in the group, some of whom were born in Macedonia and some who were born in Australia, but of Macedonian descent. The choir sings traditional Macedonian folk songs in a 'cappella' style, or sometimes accompanied by 'tarabuka' or the 'tapan' (Macedonian drums). The group released its first CD, '*Pletenka'* (Braid), in 1994, on the Newmarket label, and has had songs included in the ABC Music Deli CD 'In the Can'. The latter was released in 1992. The same song was also released on a CD, which was produced by the organisers of the Melbourne a 'cappella' Festival.

The group is an important part of the Macedonian community in Melbourne and is unique in a community where music and musical expression is dominated by male musicians, and is also an attempt to take Macedonian music to a wider audience.

Performances have ranged from the Maleny Folk Festival, The Port Fairy Folk Festival, International Women's Day events, the Brunswick Music Festival, a Macedonian Folk Festival in Perth and the Composing Women's Festival to outdoor events such as singing in a canoe on the Yarra, singing on a tram through the city, as well as a variety of other venues.

The songs of the Macedonian Women's Choir have featured in radio programs in Melbourne, the BBC in London, on radio programs in the Republic of Macedonia as well as a current project which involves filming the choir performing for Republic of Macedonia television.

The choir was also approached to take part in a 6 part SBS television production, early in 1997, featuring musicians from all over the world who are living in Australia. The Macedonian women's choir has also been on ABC television (Poulentzas 1996).

The Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee

The Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee, according to its president Popov (1996), was formed in March 1990 in Adelaide, and comprises the Macedonian Human Rights Committees of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia, which were also its founding members. The role of the federal body is to coordinate the activities of the Macedonian human rights movement in Australia in pursuit of the organisation's principal goals which are as follows:

- To support and adhere to the principles of human rights freedoms as set out in major international and European human rights covenants and protocols;
- To provide information to Australian-Macedonians about human rights developments across the world;

- To monitor the human rights situation as it affects ethnic Macedonians in all parts of ethnic Macedonia and beyond;
- To provide information, advice, assistance and support to individuals and organisations of ethnic Macedonians in all parts of ethnic Macedonia and beyond, concerning their human rights and fundamental freedoms as Macedonians.

The committee at its inception, in keeping with the major preoccupation of its constituent state committees, which were all formed in the 1980s, focussed primarily on the achievement of basic human rights for the 300 000 (some sources suggest that in Greece there are about 1 000 000 ethnic Macedonians) strong Macedonian minority in Greece. Such a focus was considered appropriate as it was felt that Macedonians in Greece had been subjected to the most extreme measures of forced assimilation and Hellenisation in the wake of the tripartite division of Macedonia and the Macedonians between Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia in 1913, and as such were in need of special attention in order to preserve their identity. However, soon after its formation, the committee's activities were reoriented to encompass more energetic support for the struggle for attainment of Macedonian human rights in Bulgaria, and Albania - where the Macedonian population has been endangered by measures of denationalisation similar to those practised in Greece. The situation in Albania has improved in the wake of the fall of the Stalinist regime of Hoxha, and in Serbia where the ethnic identity of Macedonians has been endangered by the rise of Milosevic's nationalist regime. An explicit commitment was also made to defend and extend the rights of Macedonians within Australia's multicultural framework.

The committee's constituent state committees, along with Canadian Macedonian Human Rights Committee, played a major role in financing and providing delegates for the international Macedonian human rights delegations which in 1989 visited the United Nations in Geneva and the European Parliament and Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and attended the CSCE Human Dimension Human Rights Conferences in Copenhagen and Moscow in 1990-91, the Helsinki Follow-Up Conference in Helsinki in 1992 and the UN World Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1993. In the past five years it has played an active role in the international campaign for the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia. In Australia its primary focus in the past 2-3 years has been a campaign to overturn – in Macedonian eyes – the discriminatory and offensive decisions of the former ALP Federal Government of 14 March 1994 to rename Macedonians in this country 'Slav-Macedonians' and the Victorian Government which on 21 July 1994 renamed the Macedonian language 'Macedonian (Slavonic)'. In relation to the latter, the Australian-Macedonian Human Rights Committee along with the Macedonian Council Of Australia lodged a complaint under the Racial Discrimination Act against the Victorian Government with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and is presently waiting for a date to be set for a public hearing.

The office bearers in 1996 were as follows: President - Dr Chris Popov (Victoria), Vice-President - Michael Radin (South Australia) and Secretary - Alex Trajanon (Victoria).

The current president, Chris Popov was born in Melbourne in 1953 to Macedonian parents from the region of Lerin, Aegean Macedonia. He presently works at the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in Melbourne. He completed his Bachelor of Arts at Monash University in 1979 and obtained his Ph.D. in History from Sofia University 'Kliment Ohridski', Bulgaria, in 1984. His thesis was entitled, 'The Military Coup in Chile and Pinochet's regime (1973-76)'. He is active in Macedonian community circles in Melbourne and Australia. In the late 1980s he was president of the Australian Macedonian Progressive Society. From 1989-91 he was a member of Macedonian human rights delegations which attended international human rights conferences in Copenhagen and Moscow and visited major European institutions in Brussels, Geneva and Strasbourg. He has co-authored the following publications with Michael Radin: *Contemporary Greek Government Policy on the Macedonian Issue and Discriminatory Practices in Breach of International Law* (Melbourne, 1989), *Macedonia: A Brief Overview of its History and People* (Adelaide, 1989) and *The Way for Macedonian Human Rights: Report of the Europe 89 Delegation* (Adelaide, 1989). He is a regular contributor to the Macedonian ethnic press in Australia and has also contributed to the Melbourne *Age* (Popov 1996).

The Macedonian Press

The Macedonians of Australia began to publish Macedonian newspapers and magazines after the Second World War in order to promote the aims and objectives and activities of their organisations as well as aspirations and achievements of the Macedonian community as a whole. More importantly, the role of the Macedonian

Press during the last five decades has been to affirm the Macedonian culture, language, religion and history in the Australian society. The Macedonian press also expresses the cultural and political activities and the progress of the Republic of Macedonia, Aegean Macedonia and Pirin Macedonia. The press also serve to a certain degree as a barrier against foreign propaganda directed towards the Macedonian immigrants.

The first Macedonian newspaper in Australia was published in 1946. It was called *Makedonska iskra* (Macedonian Spark) and was published continually for ten years in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne. Although in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia the standard Cyrillic script was in use, the *Macedonian Spark* in Australia was written in the Roman script. The editors, Ilo Malkov, Stojan Srbinov, Dane Trpkov, Vancho Nedelkovski and Kiril Angelkov, had purposely chosen the Roman script because most of the readers at that time were from Aegean Macedonia and could not read the Cyrillic script. This newspaper, which was an organ of the Macedonian Australian People's League, reached its peak of 5000 copies in the first half of the 1950s (Nikolovski-Katin 1993:15-17, Radin and Thomev 1989:208-209).

Since 1946, 54 Macedonian newspapers, including the following major newspapers, have been published in Australia:

- *Makedonska iskra* (Macedonian Spark) (1946-1957) - Perth;
- *Ilindensko vostanie* (Ilinden Uprising) (1951-1952) - Melbourne;
- *Makedonski glas* (Macedonian Voice) (1957-1958) - Sydney;

- *Hristijanski bilten* (Christian Bulletin) (1959) - Melbourne;
- *Vo odbrana na makedonskiot jazik* (In Defence of the Macedonian Language) (1960) - Melbourne;
- *Naroden glas* (People's Voice) (1962-1963) - Melbourne;
- *Makedonski ilindenski vesnik* (Macedonian Ilinden Newspaper) published in Melbourne between 1965-1967;
- *Makedonski vesnik* (Macedonian Newspaper) published in Melbourne from 1966 to 1975;
- *Makedonska vistina* (Macedonian Truth) published fortnightly in Melbourne between 1970 and 1972, and edited by Boris Trajkov;
- *Mesecni novini* (Monthly News) published in Perth in 1971-1974;
- *Ilindenski vesnik* (Ilinden's Newspaper) published as an organ of the Macedonian-Australian Cultural Association 'Ilinden' from Rockdale, Sydney, from 1975-1980;
- *Izgrev* (Sunrise) edited by Stojan Borisov Markovski, and published monthly from 1983-1989;
- *Makedonija - Sedmicen glasnik* (Macedonia - Weekly Herald) published in Melbourne since 1982, and edited by Marika and Panko Stamkovski.
- *Iskra* (Spark) published in Adelaide in 1983/84, and edited by Majkl Radin and Branko Georgievski;
- *Kopnez* (Longing) edited by Blagoja Bozinovski and published monthly in Newcastle between 1984 and 1986;

- *Avstralisko Makedonski Nedelnik* (Australian Macedonian Weekly) published in Melbourne since 1987 and edited by Jim Thomev, Aleksandar Georgievski and Zlatko Blaer;
- *Denes-Today* published in Melbourne since 1992, and edited by Bozin and Igor Pavlovski.

I will focus upon the two leading contemporary weekly newspapers in Australia, *Australian Macedonian Weekly* (Avstralisko Makedonski Nedelnik) and *Today-Denes*. Both papers are published in Melbourne and distributed nationally and internationally in USA, Canada and Western Europe.

The Australian-Macedonian Weekly

The first edition of *Australian Macedonian Weekly* was published on 6 May 1987, under the editorship of Jim Thomev, and was distributed free of charge for some years. In May 1991 the *Australian Macedonian Weekly* continued to be published under editorships of Aleksandar and Pavlina Georgievski, both from Skopje. They ran the newspaper for two years and in 1993 they sold it to Zlatko Blaer and Ljupco Stankovski.

Since the first issue, the *Australian Macedonian Weekly*, has been published in tabloid format 29cm with 43cm and the length of the issues runs to around 40 pages. At the beginning the material featured in the *Australian Macedonian Weekly* comprised equal amounts of the Macedonian and English languages. The use of English was due

to the fact that many Macedonians, especially amongst the younger generation, were not literate in the Macedonian language. Another reason was that Macedonians from Greece were generally better acquainted with written English than with written Macedonian. The current editors, Zlatko Blaer and Ljupco Stankovski, have reduced the amount of information provided in the English language and have made Macedonian the predominant language of the newspaper.

Under the editorship of Jim Thomev the *Australian Macedonian Weekly* catered to a readership characterised by its relative youth, bilingualism and biculturalism, and an awareness of important domestic and international issues (Radin and Thomev 1989:211). When Jim Thomev edited the newspaper, it had the following structure: 'Letters to the Editor', 'Political Analysis', 'News from the Community, 'Culture and History', 'Education and Language', 'Literature', 'Our Garden', 'Human Rights', 'Changes in the Community', 'Macedonian Home', 'Economy', 'Business', 'Health', 'Personal Announcements', 'Macedonian Youth' and 'Sport'. The print run has oscillated from five to ten thousand.

Since Zlatko Blaer and Ljupco Stankovski have edited the *Australian Macedonian*, they have increased the number of the pages and the circulation is constantly about five thousand issues. The newspaper is published every Tuesday and the structure of the newspaper is as follows: 'Editorial', 'News', 'From Different Angle', 'Reactions', 'News in English', 'Religion', 'The Macedonian Community', 'Radio and TV Program', 'News Items', 'Entertainment', 'Health', 'Panorama' and 'Sport'.

The political orientation of *Australian Macedonian* is more leftist and moderate, supporting the current Macedonian Government which is left oriented. In an Australian context, the paper embraces the policy of multiculturalism, and defends the recognition, retention and development of Macedonian culture as an integral part of Australian society. *Australian Macedonian Weekly*, due to its correspondents and the editor Ljupco Stankovski, who are in Macedonia, is able to publish the latest political and other events from the Republic of Macedonia, Aegean Macedonia and Pirin Macedonia.

One of the regular features in *Australian Macedonian Weekly* is the news from the Macedonian community Australia-wide. It publishes texts and photographs from functions such as an annual church, village and association ball, a theatrical performance by the Macedonian Drama Groups, and the activities of such groups as the Macedonian Community Councils and Macedonian Human Rights Committee. Macedonian community news is sent to the *Australian Macedonian Weekly* complete with photographs by organisations and authors themselves.

Australian Macedonian Weekly has regular sports writers. Lupco Stankovski is a correspondent from the Republic of Macedonia while Stefan Georgievski writes about the sport events exclusively in Australia. On average, 8 pages are devoted to sport, with soccer the dominant sport. The writers also cover tennis, basket-ball, volley-ball, water-polo and boxing.

'Today-Denes' Newspaper

The first issue of the newspaper *Today-Denes*, edited by Bozin and Igor Pavlovski, appeared on August 2, 1992, in Thomastown. Initially it was published on 24 pages in black and white in the Macedonian language in Cyrillic script and in English. It is a weekly newspaper distributed in Victoria, NSW, Western Australia and South Australia and elsewhere in the world where Macedonians live. The circulation is about 5 000 copies and it costs two dollars per copy. On the front page of the newspaper there is a slogan which reads 'Australia's biggest selling Macedonian newspaper'.

Today-Denes is closely linked with the opposition in the Republic of Macedonia namely the VMRO-DPMNE Party, Democratic Party and MAAK Party. Late in 1996 the newspaper contained articles in favour of the Opposition such as: 'Our comment on the aftermath of the local elections '96', 'Elections prove that the majority are not with the ruling Government' and 'The Winner is the Opposition' (*Today-Denes,* 10 December 1996).

Currently *Today-Denes* consists of between 36 and 40 pages containing news items mostly of a political and controversial nature as well as information on topics such as the 'Macedonian Community in Australia', 'News from Macedonia', 'Reactions', 'Culture and History', 'Religion', 'The New Generation', 'Advertisements', 'TV and Radio Program' and 'Sport Articles'. This newspaper has a correspondent in the Republic of Macedonia who writes about the events in the Republic.

This newspaper is aimed at a male readership ranging from 35 years onwards, as it does not cover women's issues and lacks articles containing humour and entertainment. Furthermore, because it contains articles of a political nature, mainly from the Republic of Macedonia, it is very dry in content. The newspaper also lacks coverage on the Australian perspective.

Cultural and Artistic Associations

Macedonian folklore is the most precious and loved part of the Macedonians' rich and long history. It is part of the cultural traditions of Macedonian people and it is transmitted from generation to generation largely through songs and dances. Macedonians in Australia have continuously revived the 'original' Macedonian tradition. For instance, in Melbourne there are 15 cultural and artistic associations dedicated to preserving and cultivating Macedonian folkloric heritage. In this area the Macedonian community in Melbourne is a leader with no other community in Australia that has the same participation rate.

By participating in non-Macedonian festivals, the Macedonians have tried to introduce Macedonian folklore into a wider Australian way of life. The Macedonian costumes, which are based on designs thousands of years old, and dances, it is felt, should be part of the Australian culture. The first Macedonian cultural association in Australia was formed in 1962 under the auspices of the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria called "Svetlost" (Andonovski 1996).

The biggest Macedonian Cultural and Artistic associations in Australia are 'Jane Sandanski' from St Albans, Melbourne, which has more then 300 dancers, singers and members of their bands, and 'Nikola Karev' from Deer Park, Melbourne, which has 250 dancers. The other groups have approximately 200 dancers (Atanasovski 1996).

The *Federation of Macedonian - Kulturno Umetnicki Drustva* (FOM-KUD) (Federation of Macedonian Cultural and Artistic Associations) is a coordinating body for all Macedonian dancing groups and organiser for their performances when the groups represent the Macedonian Community. The FOM-KUD participates regularly in the Moomba Parade in Melbourne. In 1991 they won the first award and in 1995 the FOM-KUD was the biggest ethnic group in terms of the number of the participants, who created the biggest '*oro*' (line dance) in the world. Besides the members of the Macedonian community, the '*oro*' was joined by almost every participant in the Moomba Parade. The groups have participated in numerous festivals and competitions where they have received recognition and prizes, and each year the Republic of Macedonia invites one of the groups to participate on the '*Ilindenski denovi*' (Ilinden Days) in Bitola (Kolevski 1996).

Macedonian Soccer Clubs

For Macedonians in Australia soccer is the sport par excellence. Soccer grounds are a place where thousands of Macedonians meet, not only to enjoy the sport, but to

discuss the current economic, political and cultural standing of the Macedonian community in Australia (Najdovski 1995:33).

In the field of soccer, Macedonian soccer teams score good results Australia wide, and Macedonian names have figured in the state and national soccer teams over several decades. It can be stated without hesitation that Macedonian soccer teams have contributed significantly to the growing popularity of soccer in this country since 1946, when the first Macedonian soccer club in Australia, 'Makedonia', was formed in Melbourne.

After the Greek Civil War, a new wave of Macedonians arrived in Australia who regularly supported the soccer club 'Makedonia'. In 1967 the soccer club 'Makedonia' from Melbourne became a member of the National Soccer League. 'Macedonia' was relegated from the National Soccer League for the first time in 1993.

The achievements of Preston 'Makedonia' since its formation include the following:

- First Division Runners-Up
- First Division Champions
- Second Division Champions
- First Division Champions
- Premier League Runners-Up
- Premier League Champions

- N.S.L. Southern Division Runners-Up 1985 N.S.L. Cup Runners-Up
- N.S.L Cup Runners-Up
- Dockerty Cup Winners
- Gold Cup Winners
- Premier League Champions.

Indeed, 'Makedonia' was and still is an ambassador for Macedonian culture and identity in Australia.

"Altona Gate Vardar" is the second largest Macedonian soccer club in Melbourne. This club was founded in 1979 in order to draw Macedonian supporters from the Western suburbs and since 1989 it has played in the Victorian Premier League. In 1995 and 1996 Vardar won the Victorian Premier League Championship. It also won the league championship for the third time in 1997. In that season the club has fielded 9 junior teams, one youth and two senior teams (Skubevski 1996).

The third largest Macedonian soccer team in Victoria is 'Lalor Sloga United', which has played in the Victorian State League since 1994. It has two senior teams and nine junior teams. This club was founded in 1974 by Gavril Josevski, who was born in Mala Prespa, in Albania.

Sydenham Park 'Makedonia' is another Macedonian soccer club in the Melbourne's western suburbs. This club was established in 1985 and currently has 12 junior and

two senior teams. It has 300 financial members. In 1996 Sydenham Park 'Macedonia' was promoted to the Second Amateur League of Victoria (Kolevski 1996).

The other Macedonian soccer clubs in Melbourne are: 'Pelister' (Coburg), 'Vesela Makedonia' (Springvale), 'Slivica' (St Albans), 'Vardar' (Footscray), 'Ilinden' (Altona), 'Beranci' (Whittlesea), and 'Makedonia' in Geelong, which won 1996 Championship of the Fourth Victorian Soccer League.

Macedonian Organisations and Identity

The Macedonian community in Australia, as the above outline and mapping of the various, theatre, cultural and sporting organisations clearly demonstrates, has developed a wide network of community structures that constitute the framework and substance of a distinct Macedonian identity unlike any other. It is clear that this identity is constructed and reconstructed in order to better meet and respond to the demands of modern social and cultural life in Ausatralia. As we have seen, Macedonian identity is not a fixed identity, but rather an evolving category, which draws freely from the repository of its historical and cultural heritage in order to construct new positionalities in response to the challenges to its identity and in order to defend its rights and its unique identity in its various and complex relations with a diverse set of social circumstances. It is important to note that Macedonian identity is articulated and constructed as part of an ongoing 'dialogue', that is, in a dialectic relationship with both internal and external organisations and cultural and social others, for example, in the wider Australian society. One important feature of the

Macedonian reality both in Australia and overseas is the fact that its identity has been contested by powerful neighbours and other fellow Australians, such as the Greek government following Macedonia's independence from former Yugoslavia, and from the Greek community in Australia following the Australian-Macedonian community's objections to the denial of their right to self-identification as Macedonians. The next two Chapters explore this contestation of the Macedonians' right to self-identification and the ramifications of the events that took place on the future of Australia's multicultural policies and the pursuit of democratic citizenship.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MACEDONIANS DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA

What is Multiculturalism?

Chapter Two outlined the ways in which Macedonian-Australians have drawn from their 'traditions' and rich cultural heritage to construct a distinct cultural identity in Australia. The forging of such an identity and presence in Australia has occurred within a changing social and political context that saw the gradual dismantling of assimilationist policies, such as the 'White Australia' policy of the 1950s, to the eventual adoption, in the 1970s, of multicultural policies by the Whitlam government, which were later institutionalised by the Fraser administration (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope, Morrissey 1988; Office of Multicultural Affairs 1987). Since the 1970s, 'multiculturalism' has been the official policy of all governments in Australia. As this Chapter argues, the policy of multiculturalism, which was developed as a response to the ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity present in Australia, has been touted as a framework and strategy for building tolerance among the diverse communities that constitute Australian society. The rhetoric of multiculturalism has also served to provide 'space' for the expression of different identities within the framework of a liberal democratic society, by and towards the culturally different (Bhabha 1990), such as the Macedonians. However, it will also be shown that on numerous occasions powerful institutions in Australian society have in effect 'conspired' to deny to the Macedonian community the very right which multiculturalism promises. The various events described in this Chapter are examples that illustrate the Macedonian

community's attempts to defend their identity and their rights in the face of challenges to it from both the Greek Australian community and from the Australian and Victorian governments. The bringing of academics from all over the world to La Trobe University by the Greek community in 1988, for example, constituted a challenge to the Macedonian identity and presence. Similarly, bringing ancient Macedonian monuments for the Bicentennial year as part of Greek culture was viewed by many as undermining Macedonian existence. The Australian government took a very long time to recognise the Republic of Macedonia due to the constant pressure from the Greek lobby. When the Government recognised the new Republic it imposed conditions on the name and language. The Macedonian community was disappointed and offended when the Federal Government named their country the 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' and renamed the community as 'Slav Macedonian', and the Victorian Government referred to the Macedonian language as 'Macedonian (Slavonic)'. As described in this Chapter, these decisions led to massive demonstrations all over the country, followed by burning of churches, social clubs and houses.

Over the last two decades "multiculturalism" has been one of the most important developments in Australian society. Essentially, the issue of multiculturalism is about what kind of society Australia is and wants to be in the face of the demographic and cultural changes that the post WWII migration programs brought about. As stated by the Castles et al. (1988), the 'fair go' principle was not present in Australian society until 1972 when the term 'White Australia' was changed with the establishment of 'multiculturalism'.

The Multicultural policies that were established by the Whitlam, Fraser and the Hawke administrations were introduced in order to eliminate the problems of discrimination on the basis of race, religion and culture (Advisory Council on Multicultural Affairs, 1988). Multiculturalism is fundamentally about the rights of the individuals or ethnic groups to have a right to equality of treatment, to be able to express and celebrate their culture and identity, and to be able to exercise their rights in conditions of freedom from discrimination and differential treatment. The National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia, which Prime Minister Hawke launched in 1989, also stated that the exercise of ethnic rights was to take place '... within carefully defined limits' (Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1989: vii). It was never made clear as to what these limits were to be, although they have been variously interpreted as meaning respect for existing institutions and an established Australian 'way of life' (Jayasuriya 1991). A summary interpretation was provided by the former Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, who delivered a paper at the Second Congress of the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA) in 1988, in which he sought to clarify what multiculturalism stood for:

> Firstly, it does not stand for separatism, for separate development of different ethnic groups in Australia. It does not stand for different ethnic groups living in their own suburbs or, in European terms, it does not involve a 'Ghetto Mentality'. It does not stand for ethnic communities making their ethnic origin and background 'more important' than their membership of Australian society. Multiculturalism does not 'condone' old frictions or enmities being imported into Australia. ...Multiculturalism does not involve making old loyalties more important than loyalty to Australia and to the Australian Constitution...

Further on, the former Prime Minister stated:

> Multiculturalism does involve all members of Australian society conducting political activity within our normal political and parliamentary framework. Multiculturalism does involve all Australians, regardless of ethnic or cultural background, being afforded equal opportunity to participate in the political, economic and social life of Australia.

Nevertheless, the evidence and statements presented during the consultations on the National Agenda, indicate that there were tensions associated with the acceptance of the policy of multiculturalism by all sections of the Australian community. These are most evident in the difficulties related to community and race relations in Australia. The Blainey 'debate' of 1983 and 1984, and later the Howard 'immigration debate' of 1988 and 1989, not to mention the more recent Hanson 'phenomenon', indicate the continuing tensions and the ambivalence associated with the policy of multiculturalism, as well as the complex set of issues that have posed a challenge for Australia under the transformative influences and pressures that it has been subject to.

In spite of these difficulties, challenges and ambivalences towards the policy of multiculturalism from some sections of the community, Australian governments have affirmed and reaffirmed their commitments to it in a variety of ways, such as public statements and the adoption of Access and Equity programs (Morrissey & Mitchell 1994). The policy was also found to be useful as an adjunct to foreign affairs and to the promotion of international trade by demonstrating that Australia had indeed broken with its racist past, particularly the 'White Australia' policy. Despite the clear statements of commitment to, and support for, the policy of multiculturalism by every government in Australia, there is clear evidence that during the 'Greek-Macedonian dispute' both the Australian and Victorian government, have blatantly 'violated' the

basic principles of the stated policy of multiculturalism, such as the violation of the expected even-handed treatment of the two communities, which included the according of the same degree of respect to both groups, as members of Australian multicultural society. As the 'Greek-Macedonian dispute', which is described in the remainder of this Chapter, illustrates, Australian society was not only divided in two parts, but Australia's multicultural policy and the rhetoric that surrounded it were also seriously damaged.

The Macedonian Language - Wollongong Study 1986

During the 1980s, there was a widespread recognition of the presence of languages other than English (LOTE), largely driven by the ethnic communities and educationists. At the same time, in the 1980s, the Australian government decided to deregulate and internationalise the economy, so as to exploit the competitive advantages that a globalised economy appeared to offer. In this context, the Commonwealth government began to recognise that LOTE represented an important 'resource' that could be exploited for business and trade purposes, especially with countries whose national languages were not English. The argument was put that Australia's LOTE policy derived from an understanding that such languages are significant tools for advancing the nation's trade, investment and geo-political interests (Lo Bianco 1986). The National Policy on Languages that was adopted by the Australian government thus had two broad aims: on the one hand to provide for the social justice demands by the ethnic communities for language maintenance and

development, consistent with Australia's multicultural policies, and on the other, the government's desire to harness LOTE for business and trade purposes.

When the National Language Policy Report was published by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts in October 1984, it reflected these two themes or objectives. And it was these two divergent objectives that were to become more pronounced in due course. An economically rationalist government in Canberra saw LOTE as a means of enhancing business and trade, and this led, in 1991, to the redrafting of the policy to reflect the government's economic priorities at the expense of social justice and equity objectives (Dawkins 1991). For ethnic communities, which had been one of the prime driving forces in the adoption of the 1984 policy, this represented a significant dilution of the government's commitments and was seen widely as an abandonement of the commitment to provide opportunities for the ethnic communities to maintain their languages and to develop them in their new home. As the economic crisis deepened and economic rationalism became the dominant government ideology in Canberra (Pusey 1989), issues of social justice and equity, as well as multiculturalism, began to be defined in economic terms (see *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* 1989). At the same time, the government increased its rhetoric of commitment to multiculturalism with the launch of the National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia and the establishment of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. The latter developments were a direct outcome of the 'ethnic politics' that opposed the recommendations of the Report of the Committee to Advise on Australia's Immigration Policies (1988), commonly referred to as the Fitzgerald Report.

The outcome of the the first National Policy on Languages then had been the wide recognition accorded to ethnic languages, which were recognised as having equal worth. One of the then 'community' languages that was recognised, in 1985, was the Macedonian language. According to the Macedonian Community Council of Victoria, there were 350 000 ethnic Macedonians who spoke Macedonian. Considering the high number of Macedonian speakers in Australia, the Federal Government sponsored and encouraged the Macedonian community to maintain its mother tongue through the education system of Australia.

In May 1985, the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs commissioned a study on the maintenance of languages other than English. The initial intention for this project had been that it undertake a survey of five language groups, in Sydney and Melbourne. However, funding limitations reduced the the scope of the study to a survey of two languages, Macedonian and German, in the Wollongong-Shellharbour region. Ostensibly, Macedonian was chosen, because the language was complicated and was only standardised in 1945. A further reason was that Macedonian language was spoken by a large population who had arrived in Australia in the 1970s. The Macedonian community viewed the 1984 Report of the commissioned survey as an important development that held the promise of safeguarding their mother tongue, which historically had been under threat and was a critical vehicle for maintaining Macedonian culture, religion and the social cohesion amongst Macedonian immigrants in Australia. The Wollongong study also showed that both groups, Macedonians and Germans, agreed that the English language was a '*sine qua non*' for

communication and access to education and employment. The participants' statements confirmed that the English language was essential for their future lives.

Although the government had asserted, in 1985, that the National Language Policy Report was introduced to satisfy the needs of ethnic groups, the Wollongong study, and especially the reduction from five to two in the number of languages surveyed, also made it clear that the 1984 Report was a political rather than a pedagogical document. Despite the Government's rhetoric that all languages were of equal value, for example, under the policy of multiculturalism, this proved not to be the case. Needless to say, the English language remained the only language whose status was not questioned, nor was it considered in the same category as other 'community languages'. By the time the new policy on languages (*Australia's language*) had been launched by the then Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, in August 1991, a clear division had emerged between the various community languages. These comprised two categories: the 'business languages', such as Japanese, Korean and Chinese, which were unashamedly described as 'priority languages' justified on economic grounds, and 'ethnic' or 'community languages', which were of lesser importance. Macedonian was clearly in the latter category and today, in common with many other 'ethnic' languages, is finding it extremely difficult to survive and is struggling to maintain itself. This has had a significant impact on young Macedonians' ability to maintain their language.

In spite of this situation, in Victoria, for example, the Macedonian language is taught at a number of primary and secondary schools, within the framework of Victorian

School of Languages, relying heavily on the support and commitment of the Macedonian community for its maintenance. From the Macedonian perspective, the community yet again has had to draw on its resources and resilience to resist obliteration, albeit, on this occasion, by the differential treatment accorded to them and by the Australian government's failure to provide for a recognised need. The latter might be viewed as constituting a form of discrimination by omission.

The Macedonian language classes that are held in Victoria are naturally in the areas in which Macedonians are concentrated. Clyne (1985:16-18) stated that the highest Macedonian-speaking concentrations are in Melbourne's adjacent northern suburbs, from Fitzroy and Collingwood to Whittlesea. The highest concentration of Macedonian is 14.7 per cent in Whittlesea, 5.75 per cent in Preston, 4.36 per cent in Northcote and 2.60 per cent in Altona (the percentage applies to a language which has more than 3 500 speakers of the total population of the Local Government Area).

Given the resource limitations as well as the status of the Macedonian language as an 'ethnic' category language, there has been an appreciable decline in the second and third generation Macedonians who are able to speak Macedonian. For many of the second-generation Macedonians, for example, English became their predominant language as they progressed from primary to secondary educational institutions, in the English language. The challenge for the Macedonian community is clearly how to maintain its distinct Macedonian identity in circumstances of gradual assimilation, which, as the decline in language seems to illustrate, is an ongoing and at times subtle process.

The Demonstration at La Trobe University

Knowing that Yugoslavia was going to disintegrate in the second half of the 1980s, Greece launched a very strong position denying the existence of the then Socialist Republic of Macedonia and its people. Their lobbying also was activated in the emigre-communities particularly in countries where Macedonians were a recognisable ethnic group.

In Australia, according to Macedonian community leaders, the Macedonians exceed 350 000 in number, regardless of which part of Macedonia they came from. Living peacefully in Australia since the beginning of the twentieth century under the name 'Macedonian', the first provocation from the Greek lobby in Australia was launched in 1987. According to the former president of the Federation of Macedonian Associations of Victoria, Krste Naumovski, the so-called Australian Institute for Macedonian Studies (AIMS) at La Trobe University, in early February 1988 organised a Congress whose aim, according to the widest circulating Greek newspaper in Melbourne, 'Neos Kosmos', in its 30th edition (published in November 1987), was to demonstrate the 'Greekness of Macedonia' and that Macedonia was Greek, had always been Greek, with only Greeks having the right to use the word 'Macedonian'. The organisers of the Congress claimed that it was a purely scientific and academic exercise rather than a political one, that is, in supporting Greek claims to the categories 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian'.

To publicise the Congress widely in Australia, the organisers had invited high profile and distinguished guests, such as politicians and academics from the USA, Belgium, Greece as well as from Australia. Among the guests at the opening of the Congress on 4 February 1988, were the Australian Minister for Social Security, Brian Howe, the Speaker of the Australian Parliament, Joan Child, and the Victorian Minister for Ethnic Affairs, Peter Spyker. They were joined by Greece's Minister for Northern Greece, Stelios Papathemelis. The Congress was financially assisted by both the Commonwealth and the Victorian governments, as well as being 'proudly' sponsored by Medibank Private. There were no representatives from Macedonia itself and the Macedonian community of Australia.

The Macedonian community of Australia, perceiving an unprovoked threat to their identity and a violation of rights, such as the right of self-identification, by the Greek Australian community's actions, began to organise in defence of their rights and their distinct identity. Macedonians from all states were drawn together and formed a united front so as to be able to speak with one voice in declaring their stand as Macedonians whose identity is separate from that of the Greek or any other community. They wanted to be known as Macedonians and to be recognised as such, as well as to be allowed to freely maintain their identity, in accord with the accepted practice of self-identification, without the unwarranted intrusion of the Greek or any other community.

In addition, the Australian Diocese of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, and its affiliated churches in all Australian states, speaking on behalf of the entire

Macedonian community of Australia, informed the Australian public about their opposition to the holding of the "International Congress of Macedonian Studies", which was organised by the AIMS (*Australian Macedonian Weekly* 5 February, 1988). The Diocese denounced the organisers of the 'Congress' and the Greek community for organising a Congress which was to consider the past, present and future of another community, in this case the Macedonian. They stressed their objection to the holding of the 'Congress', which was its denial of the existence of the Macedonian community, including, its culture, traditions and history. Moreover, the Diocese considered the organising and holding of the congress as being aimed at creating barriers that would prevent the teaching of the Macedonian language in Australian educational institutions, as well as inflaming anti-Macedonian sentiments by introducing unresolved Balkan conflicts into Australia.

The Macedonian community of Victoria, led by the Federation of the Macedonian Associations of Victoria (FOMAV), had a series of meetings with the aim of organising a demonstration against the 'discriminatory Congress' (as the Congress was referred to by the Macedonians). On 21 December 1987, at Chris Win Reception Center, a meeting was held where representatives from all Macedonian organisations of Melbourne and Victoria made a decision to hold a demonstration on 5 February 1988, to coincide with the opening of the Congress. A resolution was passed condemning the Congress and copies were sent to all politicians. At the meeting, sub-committees were elected which were responsible for:

- the preparation of banners, placards and special leaflets;

- appropriated arrangements with the various authorities viz La Trobe University, Preston City Council, Victoria Police and Melbourne City Council;
- to liaise with and make representations through both written and electronic media, promoting the Macedonian case; and
- to organise the welcoming of interstate visitors and visitors from Canada.

The 5 February 1988 Demonstration

Friday, 5 February 1988, was a significant occasion for all Macedonians in Australia. Macedonians from all parts of Macedonia, especially from Aegean Macedonia which is still under Greek occupation, joined all other Macedonians, regardless of place of origin, and demonstrated by their presence, at that place and at that time, not only their opposition to the Congress, but also their sense of belonging to a 'community' defined by its unique and distinct identity as Macedonians in Australia.

That day, as the President of the FOMAV organisation noted, was the climax of weeks of active preparation by Macedonians, led by the peak Macedonian community organisation of Victoria, FOMAV. The main protest, a march from Bundoora Park to the Agora Theatre at La Trobe University, involved, according to the organisers, more than 9 000 Macedonians. The then-leading Macedonian newspaper, *The Australian Macedonian Weekly,* reported that the protesters who were present, were young and old, men, women and children, from all parts of Macedonia. Above their heads they carried red and yellow placards proclaiming that 'Macedonians are not Greek', 'Don't

destroy multiculturalism', 'Macedonia for Macedonians', and so on (*Macedonian Australian Weekly,* 12 February 1988).

Macedonian community leaders from all parts of Australia came to Melbourne to support the Demonstration on behalf of their communities. For example, there were representatives from Canberra, Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane and other places in Australia, as well as from Canada. The mass gathering, which represented the first such meeting for the Macedonian community in Australia, was addressed by many speakers including the former Victorian Football League (VFL) umpire Don Jolley, and Mark Brown, an eminent Macedonian from Canada. The President of FOMAV, Krste Naumovski, who addressed the demonstrators declared:

> ... We, the Macedonians, want to peacefully co-exist with all groups which honour the laws of multicultural Australia and are determined to struggle against oppressive groups who insult the dignity and deny the identity of groups because of political conflict in the place of origin. We want the Greek people to see that the propaganda of their government and their extremist representatives are creating needless conflict between our groups in our new homeland, Australia.

A resolution, which was passed by the mass gathering, was sent to all politicians in Australia, including Prime Minister Hawke, condemning the holding of the Congress. The Resolution stressed that:

> ...We, Macedonians in Australia, numbering over 150 000 in total, have come to this continent, together with numerous other migrant groups of varied backgrounds, to build a new home for ourselves and our descendants, and at the same time, to participate in the building of a contemporary Australia along democratic, multicultural principles ... [T]he negation of Macedonians, or in this instance, the attempt to Hellenise the Macedonian community, which is one of the basic purposes of this Congress, we, Australian Macedonians,

> regard as a direct contravention of multicultural policies in Australia. At the same time, it offends the basic principles of good community relations in this country, which are adhered to by the entire Australian community, and in particular, espoused by its Parliamentary representatives.

Moreover, the resolution endorsed by the Macedonians at that gathering emphasised their anger and dissatisfaction with the Federal Government for breaching its own definition of Multiculturalism and its principles, which had been widely accepted and supported by the ethnic communities in Australia, through the Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia (FECCA). For example, FECCA defined Australian multicultural society in the following terms:

> ... A multicultural society is one where a variety of different cultural groups coexist harmoniously, free to maintain their distinctive religious, linguistic or social customs, equal as individuals in their access to resources and services appropriate to them and their needs, to civil and political rights, and sharing with the rest of society particular concerns of values. All of the groups would stress tolerance of cultural, linguistic and religious differences which would be complimentary to the loyalties, the individual shares with other Australians and forms his or her identity as an Australian in the Australian ethnos (FECCA 1984).

The Macedonian community demonstration concluded peacefully. This was attested to by the fact that the organisers were thanked by the Victoria Police for the peaceful way in which the demonstration had been conducted and for the way that the participants had conducted themselves, in a situation that could potentially have been confrontational. The Melbourne *Sun* newspaper reported that the Police estimated that about 3 000 Macedonians were present at the Demonstration (*Sun,* 6 February 1988).

According to the editor of the *Macedonian Australian Weekly*, Jim Thomev, the demonstration was highly successful in achieving its main goals of informing the Australian public and the Australian government about the issues involved and the strength of feeling, as well as the position, of the entire Macedonian community in Australia on this issue and the attempts to deny Macedonian identity (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 7 February 1988).

Congratulations were sent from the leaders of FOMAV to all Macedonians who helped in the organising of the demonstration. They conceded that the 'heroes' of the demonstration were the Macedonians collectivelly, for courageously and energetically defending their rights and identity in 'multicultural' Australia.

In addition to the ethnic media, such as the Macedonian language radio and newspapers, the demonstration was covered by all the mainstream media, such as the *Age* and *Sun*, which featured news stories and articles. All television stations covered the demonstration, as did five radio stations. For the Macedonian community in Australia, this represented the first time that it had received such massive attention by the vast majority of Australian media, particularly by mainstream electronic and print media. This demonstration, more than any previous event, made the Macedonian issue part of the mainstream debate. In a sense, then, the demonstration also signalled the 'maturing' of the Macedonian community, from a community that had been (in the main) concerned with the construction of a place for itself, through 'internal' organisation, to a community that was now ready for and seeking engagement with

the broader Australian community, such as the place of ethnicity and ethnic identity in Australia polity that had, at least rhetorically, defined itself as multicultural.

The Reaction of Academics

The organisers of the Congress had invited several prominent academics from USA, Canada and Belgium. Some of them, at least, were not aware of the nature and purpose of the Congress and they were most annoyed when they discovered that the Congress had a distinct pro-Greek political agenda. The *Australian Macedonian Weekly* of 19 February 1988 published an interview conducted with two academics who had been invited to participate in the Congress, Loring Dantforth, Associate Professor of Anthropology (at Bates College, USA), whose interests were modern Greek culture, modern Greek literature, religion and folklore and Dr Riki van Boeschoten, a researcher and official language interpreter in the European Union. Professor Danforth expressed his astonishment at the degree to which the Congress was politicised, according to the reported interview. He drew attention to the fact that several politicians from Greece who were present at the Congress delivered papers that were political in nature. As an anthropologist, he condemned the 1988 Congress and its organisers for being political rather then scientific. He clarified the reasons for his attendance, which were, ostensibly, to present a paper on the religious rituals practised in Greece. According to the reported interview, Professor Danforth, expressed his belief that the Congress was aimed at preventing the Macedonian community from being able to use the name 'Macedonian' to describe their language and their identity. He emphasised his firm conviction that all peoples have the right to

express their own ethnic identity, to speak their language and to name their ethnic identity as they wished.

According to the same reported interview, Dr Riki van Boeschoten had been invited to the Congress to present a paper on Macedonia. In the interview she expressed her sense of amazement at the nature of the Congress. She also expressed her deep sense of outrage at what she saw as a deception based on the fact that she had been asked to attend an academic conference, which had turned out to be political, that, as she pointed out, was biased and seemed to be intended to 'prove' the Greekness of Macedonia. Dr van Boeschoten's claims are borne out by the address of the Minister for Northern Greece, who declared that the congress will prove that "... Macedonia was, is and will always be Greek" (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 19 February 1988).

Approximately one month before the Congress took place, and in the context of the growing public debate about this contested Greek event, the Institute of Macedonian Studies in Melbourne, sought to clarify its role. In the Greek magazine *Makedoniki Zoi* (January, 1987), it explained that the role of the Institute was to counter Slavic propaganda, to restrain and check the penetration of the Macedonian question and, more importantly, to stop the 'Macedonian language' in the Australian educational institutions. At the same time, the president of the Institute of Macedonian Studies, Anasthasios Tamis, denied the political character of the Institution, saying that the "Institute has clear objectives that are both national and cultural, not political" (*Makedoniki Zoi*, January 1988).

The above 'clarification' by the Institute of Macedonian Studies was challenged and condemned by Jim Thomev, the editor of the *Australian Macedonian Weekly*, who described that organisation as 'a racially defamatory' body (*Post-Times*, 2 February 1988). Soon after an open letter was sent by the Committee of Progressive Macedonians and Greeks in Australia to the Greek community and to the Institute of Macedonian Studies stressing that the latter represented a structure which had been established for political purposes, that is, to aid the cause of the Hellenism and the Hellenisation of Macedonian culture and identity (Popov 1996).

The Committee of Progressive Macedonians and Greeks also took issue with the naming of the impending Congress, titled 'The first International Congress of *Macedonian* Studies' (my emphasis), for being deliberately misleading and political in nature. They then accused the organisers of the congress of attempting, in reality, to promote the political ends of the Greek government and sections of the Greek Community, by seeking to influence Australian governments, leading members of Australian society and the Australian public in general, against the Macedonians. The clear implication of the statement was that by appropriating the name Macedonia, as a Greek 'possession', the organisers of the Congress were effectively denying a separate Macedonian identity in Australia, and were also attempting to remove the possibility of Macedonians themselves being able to claim their own name (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 29 January 1988).

The Greek Bicentennial 'Gift'

The Australian Bicentenial year was also significant for the Macedonian community, in addition to its significance for Australian society in general. In particular, it was significant for the events that took place that year, such as those that surrounded the congress in Melbourne and the Macedonian demonstration, described above, as well as for the so-called 'Greek Bicentennial Gift', which became yet another focus of contestation between the Greek and Macedonian communities in Australia.

In November 1988, the Greek government planned to exhibit in Australia a number of archaeological finds under the name 'Finds from Ancient Macedonia', as part of Australia's Bicentennial celebrations. The exhibition created a storm of controversy. According to the *Australia Macedonian Weekly* (2 November 1988), the Australian government had apparently asked the Greek government to drop the word 'Macedonia' from the title of the exhibition. Indeed, it appears to have taken seven years of 'discussions' with Greek authorities, including Prime Minister to Prime Minister negotiations, which almost created an atmosphere of diplomatic crisis. According to the same report in the *Australian Macedonian Weekly*, the then Australian ambassador in Greece, Kevin Gates, had interceded with the Greek government on behalf of the Australian government to have the word 'Macedonia' dropped from the title, because it would offend the Macedonian community and would add to the already existing tensions between the Greek and Macedonian communities, in Australia. In asking for the term 'Macedonia' to be removed from the exhibition title, the Australian officials were trying to avoid the prospect of the

exhibition becoming a focus for demonstrations of the kind which had occurred on 5 February 1988 at Latrobe University (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 2 November 1988).

The request by the Australian Government for the word 'Macedonia' to be dropped from the title of the exhibition, was met with angry speeches in the Greek Parliament, as well as threats of cancelling the exhibition altogether. The Greek Parliament also sent a message to the Greek community in Australia to "raise their voices against the anti-Hellenic ploy... that insults history and truth". This produced a crisis in diplomatic relations between Greece and Australia. The tensions calmed down after late night telephone calls between the Prime Ministers of the two countries, who 'managed' to resolve the issue (The *Age,* 19 November 1988).

The threats by Greece to 'mobilise' Greeks in Australia, if the exhibition did not go ahead on Greek terms, was described in the Australian media as an astonishing example of interference in Australia's internal affairs. According to media reports, ambassador Gates, in his confidential report on the controversy, claimed that the exhibition could only damage the standing of Greek-Australians in the Australian community, which would give comfort to those who are opponents of Australia's multicultural policies (The *Age,* 19 November 1988).

Meanwhile, things were also 'hotting up' in Australia's ethnic community. The Macedonian community strongly objected to the use by Greeks of the title 'Ancient Macedonia' for the Greek archaelogical exhibition, which was eventually brought to

Australia. This title too was seen by the Macedonian community to form part of the by-now much discussed Greek position, which sought to deny Macedonians their cultural identity, in Greece as well as in Australia. The initial stand of the Federal Government to insist on a change of name for the exhibition was welcomed by the Macedonian community. However, when the Australian Government appeared to bow to Greek pressure, by giving a green light for the exhibition, the Macedonians were outraged, and summed up the situation by saying that the Greeks, once again, proved that they were 'David' to Australia's 'Goliath' (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 2 March 1988).

At a meeting held on 1 November 1988, organised by the Federation of Macedonian Associations of Victoria (FOMAV), which was called to discuss the Greek archaeological exhibition, the Macedonians expressed their opposition by stressing that the Australian Government was squandering $950 000 of tax-payers money in support of an exhibition that had political overtones, which were aimed at the Macedonian people.

To the Macedonians the acceptance by the Australian Government of the 'Greek bicentennial gift' was a moral and political scandal. The Greek Government, by displaying the exhibition titled 'Ancient Macedonia', the Macedonians argued, attempted to impose on Australians the completely unacceptable view that 'Macedonians are Greeks' and that the Macedonian language, culture, history and identity, were and continued to remain exclusively Greek 'property'. The Greek President, Mr Christos Sartzetakis, who came to Australia to officially open the

exhibition, expressed the view that all respected historical sources described Macedonians as one of the many Greek tribes and Macedonia as a country exclusively Greek. The President Christos Sartzetakis, by declaring that Macedonia had always been an integral part of Greece, added to the already inflamed ethnic tensions between the Greek and Macedonian communities (*The Age*, 26 November 1988).

In response to further activities by the Greek government to deny the Macedonians their basic human right to call themselves Macedonians, the Macedonians of Victoria, for example, led by its highest coordinating body, FOMAV, scheduled a 24-hour protest vigil to coincide with the opening of the exhibition on 24 November 1988, at the Museum of Victoria. FOMAV stressed that the vigil was aimed at showing Australians the tragic nature of the Macedonian experience since Greece took control of the region called Aegean Macedonia and the Greek government's attempts to portray Macedonians and their historic and cultural heritage as Greek.

During the opening ceremony for the 'Ancient Macedonia' exhibition, the Macedonians of Melbourne and Victoria protested against such a 'propaganda' exercise in Australia. According to Krste Naumovski, former president of FOMAV, over two thousand Macedonians came to protest in front of the Museum of Victoria. They held a candlelight vigil and ate the traditional 'mourning' food of boiled wheat, reserved for funerals, to remember the Macedonians who had lost their lives at the hands of past Greek administrations. The protesters claimed that the Greek government refused to recognise their ethnic identity as distinct and independent of Greece (Naumovski 1996).

While the Macedonians were protesting at the opening ceremony, many Greeks, who had come to support the exhibition, spilled over the lawns in front of the Museum all the way to the Museum Station to catch a glimpse of the Greek President who formally opened the exhibition. Speaking in Greek, the President said "Macedonia is, was and will always remain Greek" (The *Sun,* 25 November 1988).

Over the years, the Greek Government had made it plain that it did not like the way Australia allowed the Macedonians in Australia to call themselves 'Macedonians'. The Greek government wanted them to be referred to as 'Slav-Macedonians', in spite the fact that there had been a 'tradition', or *de facto* convention, of self-identification by ethnic groups that had been part of Australia's tolerant approach to cultural diversity, which was reflected in the policy of multiculturalism.

It is interesting to note that it was in 1988 that the Greek Government, for the first time began to use officially, the word 'Macedonia(n)'. In fact, in that year, the Minister for Northern Greece became the Minister for Macedonia. In February 1988, an attempt was made by the Minister for Northern Greece, on a visit to Australia, to persuade the then Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, to alter a section of the *Encyclopedia of Australia's People* (edited by J. Jupp, 1988), which dealt with Australian Macedonians (The *Age,* 29 August 1988).

As the dispute over the name Macedonia, which had been intensified by events, such as the 'Greek Bicentennial Gift', became part of 'mainstream' discussions, it also

drew in people who were not ethnically either Macedonian or Greek. Many people attempted to grapple with the issues that had been highlighted as part of the 'Greek-Macedonia' debate. For example, on 1 December 1988, Graham Witt from Diamond Creek wrote to the editor of *The Age,* to express his concerns about the situation that had developed:

> I am neither Greek nor Macedonian, but, as a folklorist specialising in Macedonian traditional music, dance and song, I may be able to throw some light on the present controversy between Macedonians and Greeks in Australia. Quite simply, Macedonians are not Greek, just as Welsh and Scots are not English.
>
> A useful indicator of ethnicity is language. Macedonian is nothing like Greek, so those who would call the Macedonian people Greek need to assert, for various reasons, that it is a dialect of either Serbian or Bulgarian. It is as different from either of those as Swedish is from Danish or Catalan from Spanish.
>
> Although Macedonian traditional music shows substantial regional variation, it has common features which distinguish it from the music of the neighbouring peoples. The same is true of dance, song, costume and rituals.
>
> Australia has a fine record as a country where all ethnic groups are free to assert their identities, whereas Greece denies this right to the Macedonians trapped there by the territorial juggling of the super powers.
>
> It is therefore very disturbing to witness Australian and Victorian government support for the Greek propaganda exercises at the state museum. Furthermore, while the Greek President should feel welcome here, his anti-Macedonian propaganda is an abuse of that welcome.
>
> That our leaders see fit to allow him to continue this unchecked raises fears as to whether the ethnic identity of one group in our community is to be sacrificed to win the votes of a numerically- superior group.

What the 'Greek Bicentennial Gift' controversy highlighted was the complexity of the issues involved and the deep opposing divisions that had developed between the Greek and Macedonian communities and the centrality that an issue, such as the name

'Macedonia', had assumed in this debate. As Bourdieu (paraphrased by Danforth 1995: 154) on 'the magical power of naming', points out, '... the power to name is one of the elementary forms of political power precisely because it involves the power to bring into existence that which is being named.' In the case of Macedonians and Greeks, the name 'Macedonia' had become a high level struggle over the exercise of political power to name that had spilled over into the public domain and public discourse.

Macedonian Independence and 'The Name Problem'

The name 'Macedonia' has been an issue of contestation for a long time, in the context of modern Balkan and international politics. As early as 1897, William Gladstone had been moved to ask, "Why not Macedonia for the Macedonians as well as Bulgaria for the Bulgarians and Serbia for the Serbians?" (Radin 1993).

The events that took place in Australia in 1988, demonstrate that the name 'Macedonia' continued to be contested, or to represent a 'problem'. Greeks and Macedonians have been at odds, at least since 1913, when Macedonia was divided among Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. The issue of the name 'Macedonia' was dormant between 1945 and 1991, because the Balkan states had developed mutually beneficial relationships, such as trade and commercial dealings. But, as Martis (1984:11) has pointed out, the friendship was always threatened by the creation of the then Socialist Republic of Macedonia, one of the six constituent republics of former Yugoslavia.

The Macedonian issue was 'resurrected' again, however, in September 1991, when Macedonia became an independent and sovereign state, under the name 'Republic of Macedonia', after the break up of former Yugoslavia. Greece objected to the use of the name 'Macedonia' as the name of the newly independent state, claiming that the name belonged exclusively to Greece. The Greek government also claimed that the Republic of Macedonia had usurped the name, which insulted all Greeks, and that an independent Macedonia on its northern border would have territorial designs on Greek Macedonia. Officially, the Greek government refused to accept any name for the Republic which included the word 'Macedonia'. It refused to accept Macedonia either as a noun or as an adjectival modifier. This position was made quite clear by the-then Greek Minister for Macedonia and Thrace, Panagiotis Hadzinikolau, who made plain the depth of feeling about the issue by stating that "[I]f the problem of the name continues there cannot be peace" (*Herald- Sun,* 4 January 1992).

The Macedonians, on the other hand, insisted on being recognised under their own name and to have their state accepted under their constitutional name - Republic of Macedonia. The Macedonian state accepts that there is a region in Greece, which is named 'Macedonia', but Macedonians insist that this is not a sufficient reason to deny them the right of calling themselves by their own name Macedonians or to name their country Macedonia. Their position is that Macedonia is a separate independent sovereign nation, with its own distinctive culture and history, and they have consistently refused to discuss the possibility of a compromise with Greece on the issue of the name. This, then, came to constitute a diplomatic and political 'impasse'

that made the name 'Macedonia' an international issue whose full resolution is yet to come.

The Greek government, for its part, offered to recognise the Macedonian state on condition that it change its name to something (anything) other than 'Macedonia'. It proposed a variety of names during Macedonia's campaign to gain international recognition as an independent state, which were unacceptable to them. Among the names suggested by Greece were 'Dardania', 'Paeonia', and 'Illyria', all names that were used in antiquity, as well as 'the Central Balkan Republic', 'South Slavia', and 'South Serbia', representing names that would negate the existence of the Republic of Macedonia and Macedonians as a distinct people with a distinct Macedonian identity also. At present, Greece refers to the Republic of Macedonia as 'the Slav Republic of Skopje', or 'Skopian Macedonia', and commonly refers to the language spoken in the Republic of Macedonia, not as 'Macedonian' but a derivation of Bulgarian. They claim it is "a homemade linguistic goulash liberally peppered with words Serbs, Czechs, Poles and Russians would all recognise" (The *Australian*, 16 June 1992).

During the heated campaign for international recognition of the new Republic, the Macedonians gained sympathy and support from people who were neither Macedonians nor Greeks. With regard to Greece's exclusive claim on the name 'Macedonia', the issue, though very serious for all concerned, on occasion bordered on the absurd. This was expressed particularly well in a letter that was published in the *Macedonian Australian Weekly* (22 March 1994), hypothetically addressed to the-then President of the Republic of Georgia, Chevarnadze:

Mr Chevarnadze, I would like to voice to you the strongest possible protest from the citizens of the United States of America over the name you have chosen for your Republic. There is no doubt that Georgia is, always was, and always will be American.
By calling your Republic 'Georgia' you and your government are implying that you have territorial ambitions against us. This is a threat the people of the USA take very seriously and we are launching a campaign at the United Nations...

... Mr Chevarnadze, much of this ethnic hatred need not ever manifest itself. All that is needed to avoid ethnic conflict is the agreement by your government to call your homeland FSROG (pronounced ef-s rog) which stands for Former Soviet Republic of Georgia. Think about it Mr Chevarnadze, from now to the end of recorded history your people could be known as FSROG-ians, with no territorial threats against us and the assurance that the name 'Georgia' will rightfully remain American.

... If you still have reservations about the name FSROG then may I be so bold as to suggest some proven names of International standing, all of which are currently available: Rhodesia, Palestine, Ceylon, Hong Kong and New Holland ...
Yours sincerely

Bill Clinton

In the dispute between Greece and Macedonia over the name of the new state, third parties suggested other names, such as 'Northern Macedonia', 'Upper Macedonia', 'Central Macedonia', 'Vardar Macedonia', but all of them were rejected because they were not acceptable to either the Republic of Macedonia or Greece. As Danforth (1995:155) states, the proposed names represent attempts to qualify the name of the republic in order to undercut its claim to embody Macedonia in either its temporal or its spatial entity.

The 1992 Demonstration

In July 1992, the European Community (EC), which had been subjected to immense political pressure by Greece, announced its position with regard to the recognition of Macedonia. In essence, the EC stated that the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia depended on the Republic changing its adopted constitutional name. On 12 July 1992, at exactly 12 noon, hundreds of thousands of Macedonians, all over the world, gathered to raise their voices in protest against the European Community's decision. The world-wide Macedonian protest took place in the capital city of the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, and in many cities in the countries in which Macedonians live.

The Melbourne demonstration was organised by the United Macedonians of Victoria, the Macedonian Human Rights Committee of Melbourne and Victoria, the Federation of Macedonian Association of Victoria (FOMAV), the Association of the Children Refugees from Aegean Macedonia, the Australian-Macedonian Students Association 'Misla', the Macedonian Teachers Association and the VMRO-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity of Victoria. Similar protests were held in other Australian cities, for example, in Sydney, Perth, Adelaide and Wollongong.

In Melbourne, the protest was held in front of the Victorian Parliament, where thousands of Macedonians and their supporters gathered. The Macedonians expressed their anger and frustration at what they saw as a threat to their identity and a violation of their collective rights as a people, namely, as Macedonians. According to The *Age*

(22 June 1992), more than 20 000 people had rallied to show their support for the Republic of Macedonia, a figure that was also confirmed by the Victorian Police. According to the organisers of the demonstration, this figure was an underestimate, and they claimed that there were more than 40 000 Macedonians who attended the rally. The *Age* newspaper described the demonstration as a sea of red and gold Macedonian flags and banners that covered Spring Street outside Parliament and stretched half a block down Bourke Street during the height of the emotional but peaceful rally. The demonstrators carried above their heads red and yellow banners and placards with various slogans on them, such as 'Shame Europe Shame!', 'Macedonia for the Macedonians!', 'The Macedonians are not Greeks!', 'Recognise Macedonia, now!', 'We'll never change our name!', 'Keating, you need our votes!', 'Australia, recognise Macedonia!', 'We are born with the name "Macedonian" and we will live with it!', 'We want recognition!', and so on.

Aco Talevski, one of the organisers of the demonstration, confirmed that the main purpose of the rally had been to protest against the decision by the EC not to recognise the Republic's independence unless it changed its name. Talevski, along with many others in the Macedonian community, thought the EC's position and conditions for Macedonia's recognition unjust and hypocritical, in view of the fact that the Macedonians have an internationally recognised language and culture, and cannot be anything else other than Macedonians. Jim Thomev, a Macedonian human rights activist and a speaker at the Melbourne's rally, expressed similar views and added that the rally was to assert and give expression to Macedonian identity. He also

called on Australia to play a conciliatory role by recognising Macedonia as an independent Republic.

At the demonstration, the Macedonian community of Australia made an appeal to all democratic forces throughout the world and all other oppressed nations and peoples to join them in solidarity, in defence of their name and their identity. The Macedonians also condemned what they saw as Greece's lies and misrepresentations about the Macedonian people and called on the EC and USA to recognise the Republic under its constitutional name. As Australian citizens, they also demanded that Australia take a pro-active role and grant full and unconditional recognition to the Republic of Macedonia, under its rightful name. The Macedonians urged the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, Gareth Evans, not to wait for the EC before granting Macedonia recognition (Popov 1996).

The presence of the Macedonian Orthodox priests who led the demonstration gave the event a solemnity and a powerful presence. It also emphasised the unity of the Macedonians on the issue of their name and identity. This was reflected in the 'carefully selected words' of the Very Reverent Spase Stefanovski who addressed the gathering on behalf of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and its Holy Synod. In his speech he affirmed the support and loyalty of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and, on the question of the name, stressed that '... if we lose the name we are going to lose our identity as well.'

The calls for intervention by the Australian government and politicians in the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia and the resolution of the issue of the name, received a mixed response. Most Australian politicians did not support the demands of the Macedonian community. According to the leaders of the Macedonian community, the major reason for this was the fact that the Macedonian community is numerically smaller in size than the Greek community in Australia. They saw the lack of support for the defence of their name and for the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia as a purely pragmatic political response by politicians who did not wish to offend the powerful Greek community whose votes can be crucial at election time.

Some politicians did, however, support the Macedonian community. One such person was Peter Batchelor, a representative for the electorate of Thomastown and a Labor Party Member of the Victorian Parliament. He was present at the demonstration and, as he pointed out, he had come to support the Macedonians in their simple demand for the recognition of their name and their state. He acknowledged that the demonstration was one of the biggest that he had seen in Victoria in recent times. He urged the EC to recognise the new Republic, ending his speech in Macedonian: 'Da zivee Makedonia' (Long live Macedonia). Support for the Macedonian's demands also came from a number of other sections of the Australian commmunity, such as the Council of Australian Ethnic Churches, from the Croatian community and from the Turkish community.

The Greek community also held similar rallies, expressing their opposition to the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia under a name that included the word

'Macedonia'. In February and March of 1992, the Greek community held rallies in cities throughout Europe, America and Australia, demanding that the EC decline recognition of the Republic of Macedonia, consistent with the Greek demand for the dropping of the word 'Macedonia' from the name of the new state. The Greek protesters carried blue and white flags and banners, which proclaimed the Greekness of Macedonia and that Macedonia and everything associated with it were exclusively Greek. Demetri Dollis, a Labor MP for Richmond, Victoria, accused the 'Slav-Macedonians' of falsifying history to gain recognition and the 'Slav-Macedonian' community in Australia for spreading an ugly campaign against all those who do not agree with their claims (The *Age*, 22 February 1992).

During this time, the external pressures from both the Macedonian and Greek communities on the Australian federal and state governments were constant. In addition, there was internal pressure on the Federal and state governments by MP's who represented electorates with either Macedonian or Greek voters. For example, in addition to Peter Batchelor, Colin Hollis, MP for Throsby, New South Wales, in addressing the estimated 15 000 Macedonian protesters assembled at a rally in Wollongong Mall, declared that he felt 'embarrassed and ashamed' at the prolonging of the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia by the Australian government. Hollis criticised it by stating that 'it was disgraceful the way the Australian Government was dragging its heels on recognising Macedonia. I am particularly concerned that many of my constituents are being placed at a disadvantage by the non-recognition by not having consular facilities available' (*Today-Denes*, 28 December 1993). Paul Matters, the New South Wales South Coast Labour Council Secretary, also criticised the

Australian government and told the protesters, at the Wollongong rally, that the 'Greek influence' in the Australian Labor Party had stopped the Federal government from public declaration.

By 1992, the 'Greek-Macedonia debate' had become a major public issue that could not be ignored by the Australian Labor government, nor by the state governments. The issues that were the source of the ongoing contest and conflict between the Greek and Macedonian communities were now posed in clear and unambiguous terms. The choices that had to be made were demanding clear cut answers, that is, in complete yes or no terms. The Australian government, as well as state governments, such as in Victoria, which is home to a large section of both communities, had to decide whether to take sides and had to way up the options available to them and their implications.

In the end, Australia opted to follow the EC position. The Macedonians and sections of the Australian media saw this as a clear pro-Greek position. They interpreted it as a 'capitulation' by the Australian government to the strong Greek pressure, because it did not want to lose the large Greek vote, which, traditionally, had favoured the Labor Party. Moreover, the Macedonian community saw the decision by the Federal government as a clear victory for pragmatic politics at the expense of a moral stand on what they regarded as a matter of justice and fairness. The Victorian government followed the Federal government position.

In the context of Victorian state politics, the issue, regardless of its merits for the Greek and Macedonian communities, provided an opportunity for the Victorian

Liberal Party led coalition to seek to exploit it in order to attract the Greek vote away from the Labor Party, with an eye on the election that was due later that year. The Greek community rally in Melbourne, on 22 February 1992, was attended and addressed by the Leader of the Victorian Liberal Party, Jeffrey Kennett, as well as by several prominent Liberal Party politicians, such as Senator Jim Short and the Victorian Liberal MP, Phil Honeywood.

According to Victor Bivell, a Macedonian activist from Sydney,

> ... the two major parties adopted these cynical stands because they know that the Greek community is well ahead in every meaningful comparison. It [the Greek community] has 11 Labor Party branches, the Macedonians [have] none; the Greek community, in 1992, had at least three [f]ederal members [of Parliament], the Macedonian community [had] none; the Greek community had several State politicians, the Macedonian [community had] none." (*Today-Denes*, 21 September 1993).

Bivell asserted that similar comparisons also applied at the social level, which in turn influenced the political decision on the 'Macedonia' issue. For example, SBS Television broadcasts over 150 hours of Greek language programs per year compared to between two and three hours in Macedonian. The Greek community has its own Greek language weekly news report on SBS television. There is none in Macedonian. The Greek community has news reporters, presenters and many other full-time staff employed by the SBS. Vic Bivell also stated that the Greek community have a high public profile in Australia. Everyone knows who they are. The Macedonians have no such profile and most people think they are a hybrid sort of Greek (*Today-Denes*, 21 September 1993).

The clear outcome of the Macedonian and Greek demonstrations had been that, although the Federal and State governments as well as the major political parties had 'declared' their stands on the 'Greek-Macedonia debate', the issue at its centre, the name 'Macedonia', has remained unresolved, at least as far as the Macedonians are concerned. The state of Macedonia continued to struggle for recognition under their own constitutional name. Moreover, the Macedonian-Australian community now found itself under additional pressure, such as the Victorian Liberal Party's pro-Greek stand, which, in their view, was not only unjust but compromised their right to their identity as Macedonians. The disappointment and frustration, as well as dismay, that these events produced in the Macedonian community were readily expressed in the community. The disappointment with the political parties was also readily discernible. For example, Chris Popov, another Macedonian activist, suggested, at the time, that in future the Macedonians would have to stand as independent candidates in state and federal elections, in order for the Macedonian voice to be heard throughout the community (Popov, 1996).

Australia's 'Recognition' of Macedonia and the Problem of the "Slav" Prefix

The 'recognition' of the Republic of Macedonia was announced by the Australian government on 15 February 1994 (Press Release, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans, 15 February 1994). The reason for the almost three year delay in 'recognition', as we have seen, was due to the highly contested nature of the name

Macedonia by the large Greek community, which, traditionally, had voted Labor. As part of the campaign against the 'recognition' of the new state, the Greek community had threatened to withdraw its support from the Labor Party and to support the Liberal Party or Independents in future elections. In spite of the immense pressures from the Greek community, the Australian government had followed the example of some fifty other countries that had 'recognised' Macedonia, among them the United States of America, Russia and China. In part, this decision by the Australian government was also made because of the pressures brought on it by Labor politicians who represented electorates that contained large Macedonian constituencies, such as those of Thomastown in Victoria and Wollongong in NSW.

In the context of the pressures that were brought to bear on the Australian government, Australia had 'recognised' the Republic of Macedonia, under the name: 'the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM), which was an interim name that was adopted as a compromise by the EC and the international community, pending the final resolution of the issue at some future time. Australia's decision to 'recognise' Macedonia was, according to the Macedonian community, a compromise, because the Australian government had applied a number of conditions on the opening of a Macedonian Consulate in Australia. For example, the 'recognition' was not full and unconditional and was at a consular and not at an ambassadorial level. The conditions that were part of the recognition included a ban on the flying of the Macedonian flag in front of the Consulate and that the consulate be referred to as the 'Consulate of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (Press Release, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans, 15 February 1994).

Australia's decision to 'recognise' Macedonia and, more specifically, the conditions that were applied, drew an angry response from the Macedonian community in Australia. They saw the decision as a violation of Macedonia's right to be called by its own constitutional name and as a challenge to their own right to identify as Macedonians. The Greek community, on the other hand, objected to the 'recognition' of the new state by Australia, on the grounds that it included the term Macedonia, and responded by organising and holding mass demonstrations, which, as discribed in the next section, sparked a series of violent acts in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney.

According to the President of the Macedonian Community Council of Melbourne and Victoria, Mile Terzievski, in an attempt to appease Labor MPs of Greek background and to relieve the pressure from the Greek community, which was unhappy with Australia's 'recognition' of Macedonia, on 14 March 1994, the Federal Government announced, without consultation with the Macedonian community, that the term 'Slav-Macedonian' would be used by government departments and agencies to describe the Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia. In a further elaboration of this decision, it was stated that "groups or individuals who do not live in or originate from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, but do identify with or associate with such groups or individuals' should be referred to officially as 'organisations and individuals associated with 'Slav-Macedonians''. Therefore, by an administrative fiat, the Federal Government indicated that it would consider Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia as 'Slav-Macedonians', for birthplace or nationality questions, whereas Macedonians from parts of ethno-geographic Macedonia within

Greece, Bulgaria, Albania and Serbia as people who were officially declared as individuals without identity by being accorded 'associated' status (Terzievski 1996).

In support of the Government's stand on the Macedonian issue a Federal Parliament Research Report was released in June 1994 named '*Background to the Macedonian Question*'. The fifteen page federal Report, written by Dr Michael Underdown, a research specialist with the Parliamentary Research Service, makes reference to many aspects of the Macedonian issue, including a historical background of the dispute, from ancient through to modern times. It also provides a brief summary of the claims and counter-claims of the Greeks and Macedonians, as well as outlining the position of the Australian Government (Underdown 1994). The Report states that the Ancient Macedonians 'did not regard themselves as Greeks', but that they were 'closely related in both language and culture'. The historical documentation refers to the reigns of Philip II and Alexander the Great, under the title 'the Pre-Roman' period, instead of the term Hellenistic. The Report also refers to a 'Slav Domination' of the Byzantine Empire, in the 6th Century. The account cites the creation of the 'IMRO' (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation) stating that it was formed in 1893 and that the nationalist movement wanted to establish an independent state uniting Vardar, Pirin and Aegean Macedonia. In a separate section, the document accepts that the Macedonian language is a distinct language, dating from the 6th Century.

The report also mentions the Macedonian minority in Greece and notes that although the Albanian minority in the Republic of Macedonia is represented in Parliament, this is in contrast with the situation in Greece, in which the Rainbow Party, representing

the Macedonian minority, was banned by the Greek Supreme Court. It may be worth noting that the European Parliament recognised the Rainbow Party under its Macedonian name.

Finally, the Report discusses the nature of the dispute in Australia and cites articles by Dr Peter Hill, from Hamburg University, to explain Greek nationalism, as well as referring to the use by the Republic of Macedonia of the 16-ray Sun of Vergina (Kutlesh). It states that 'symbols are not the proprietary right of a single country, and uses the Southern Cross, which appears on many nations' flags south of the equator'. The report also states that the Sun appears not only on the Macedonian flag, but also on the flag of Uruguay.

On the whole, the report was welcomed by the Macedonian community in Australia, it being believed that this was the first time that a document emanating from the federal government had attempted to provide a balanced report on the Macedonian question, in the 'Greek-Macedonia dispute'. On the other hand, the report was condemned by the Greek community, principally because it recognised the existence of the Macedonians as a distinct ethnic group with a distinct language and history. The Greek Pan-Macedonian Association and the Australian Hellenic Council, for example, condemned the report for what they claimed was its lack of balance, simplicity and historical inaccuracy. In a letter to the Director of the Parliamentary Research Service, these associations called for the document to be withdrawn from circulation (Stoikovska 1995).

On this occasion, as in previous ones, such as the 1988 and 1992 demonstrations, the respective positions of the Greek and Macedonian communities in Australia were as divided as they had been all along. It could also be argued that the Australian government's attempts to 'clarify' the situation were adding to the divisions and a compromise seemed as far away as it had ever been. The insertion of the adjectival prefix 'Slav' as a definer and qualifier of Macedonians in official government reports and correspondence, by the Federal government, introduced a hitherto unprecedented intrusion into an area that had not been the subject of government intervention in the past. The tensions that existed between the Greek and Macedonian communities continued and were to give rise to a series of events and acts of violence, as the following section demonstrates.

The Violence of March 1994

When the Federal Government recognised Macedonia, under the name 'the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', ethnic tensions between the Macedonian and Greek communities reached a new level. Two weeks after the 'recognition' of Macedonia, three Macedonian churches were burnt down in Melbourne, in suspicious circumstances, and six shots were fired through the shopfront window and door of the Australian Macedonian Welfare Council in Reservoir, Victoria (*Herald Sun*, 22 February 1994; *Age*, 5 March 1994; *Australian*, 8 March 1994; and *Herald-Sun*, 20 April 1994). The Coordinator of the Welfare Council was astonished by the violence and called on the leaders of the Greek and Macedonian communities to leave the

hatred in their country of origin and to build a society that is tolerant of differences (*Age*, 24 February 1994).

In another incident, on 22 February 1994, two bombs exploded in front of two houses inhabited by Macedonians in the Melbourne suburb of Caulfield. The families escaped serious injury when the bombs exploded but the fires caused extensive damage to the dwellings. In a further escalation of the tensions, two Greek churches were sprayed with graffiti in Footscray. According to a news report on SBS Television (7 March 1994), the walls of the Greek churches were covered in anti-Greek slogans, with 'Macedonia' written under them. The attackers had also thrown two petrol bombs through a window but the bombs failed to ignite. On the same day, 'Molotov cocktails' also caused damage to a Greek coffee shop in St Albans, which according to its owner, had its window smashed by bricks, and the cost of the damage was estimated at $3000 (The *Age*, 8 March 1994).

After these acts of violence, the President of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne appealed for peace between the Greek and Macedonian communities. He said that the vandalism was not good and it was not going to solve the problem by burning churches in Australia.

On 6 March 1994, there was another violent incident. On this occasion Greek and Croatian soccer fans clashed, after a game between the Greek soccer club 'Hellas' and the Croatian soccer club 'Croatia'. According to the news reports, the clash had started after Greek fans had held up Serbian flags and Croatian supporters had

retorted by displaying Macedonian flags, which depicts the 16-ray Sun of Vergina that had been one of the issues at the centre of the 'Greek-Macedonia dispute'. In the clash there were two injuries and 10 arrests (*Herald-Sun*, 7 March 1994). What was interesting about this incident was the fact that it was not a clash between Macedonians and Greeks, but rather a clash between two groups that had sided with opposing sides in the Yugoslav conflict between Croatia and Serbia. It is also interesting to note the way in which the Macedonian flag was invoked in another context.

On the same day as the Greek and Croatian fans clashed in Melbourne, violence also flared up in Canberra between members of the Greek and Macedonian communities in the form of attacks on several properties, including the memorial to HMAS Canberra. The 'Greek-Macedonia dispute', at this point, seemed to have reached a level that proved intolerable to the communities involved. The degeneration into open conflict, by members of both communities, was condemned by the-then Prime Minister, Paul Keating, who appeared on SBS Television news that night. The Prime Minister called upon both communities to respect Australian traditions of tolerance and mutual understanding (SBS TV, 16 March 1994).

When the Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett, returned from a visit to Greece, on 17 April 1994, he openly supported Greece's opposition to the international 'recognition' of the Republic of Macedonia. While he was speaking, the Cretan Brotherhood Hall, in Melbourne, had been set alight causing extensive damage to the building (estimated at $200 000). Speaking on SBS television, after yet another suspected

arson attack, the then President of the Macedonian Council of Melbourne and Victoria, Roseta Stoikovska, dissociated the Macedonian community from the violent attack and urged that all confrontations be avoided. She also placed the responsibilty for the increase in tensions on the Premier of Victoria, stating that it was not her responsibility to clean up every time Mr Kennett opened his mouth (SBS TV, 17 April 1994) The Premier responded that he was not going to be prevented from speaking on the issue that he felt strongly about.

In its editorial titled 'End Ethnic Violence', the *Age* newspaper called on the leaders of the Macedonian and Greek communities to sit down and to put an end to the violence between the two communities. In the same editorial, the *Age* criticised the Premier of Victoria, Jeffrey Kennett, for becoming involved in the dispute and openly siding with the Greek community, but suggested that it was ridiculous to blame the Premier for the violence that had occurred. The *Age* believed that the responsibility rested solely on those people who committed the violent acts and suggested that the fire bombing of churches, community centres and the provocative actions of a small group of soccer supporters, threatened the harmony which characterised multiculturalism in Australia (The *Age*, 8 March 1994).

The escalation of vandalism and arson attacks on Macedonian and Greek properties and the rapid increase of tensions between Melbourne's Macedonian and Greek communities, as the *Age* had suggested, was beginning to have a broader impact on the delicate balance that had been established in ethnic affairs and on the policy of multiculturalism that Australia had been pursuing for more than a decade. To prevent

further conflict, the then Chairperson of the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, Professor Trang Thomas, held secret meetings with Greek and Macedonian community leaders separately. In spite of the difficulties associated with the use or non use of the name Macedonia at the meetings, the leaders of the respective communities were able to meet under the auspices of the Ethnic Affairs Commisssion. At the conclusion of these meetings, a statement was signed by all parties wherein they agreed to disagree over Australia's 'recognition' of the Republic of Macedonia. All parties condemned the use of violence and called on both communities to discuss their differences peacefully. The participants at these meetings also issued a message to other ethnic groups not to become involved in the 'Greek-Macedonia dispute' (*SBS Television*, 20 March 1994).

Professor Jerzy Zubrzycki, one of the architects of Australia's multicultural policy, expressed his concern about a possible backlash against multiculturalism. He called upon all ethnic groups to maintain their ethnic and religious differences within the framework of Australian core values and English-style institutions that bound the community together. He also drew attention to the fact that Australia's multicultural experiment was still the envy of the world (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 12 April 1994). From an international perspective, the events that had taken place in Australia in the 'Greek-Macedonia dispute' were on a much smaller scale than many 'disputes' in other parts of the world, and the country was able to boast a proud record of having doubled its population through immigration in 30 years, without the tensions that have accompanied population resettlement programs in other parts of the world. The events that had taken place, thus, were something of a shock. The ethnic tensions

between the two communities, also fuelled the 'debate' about multiculturalism, especially among people who opposed Australia's multicultural policies. The critics of multiculturalism, criticised the policy and portrayed it as being a recipe for social fragmentation that undermined Australian society.

The Reactions of the Greek and Macedonian Communities

The 'recognition' of Macedonia by the Australian Government, on 14 February 1994, as we have seen, triggered a series of events that reflected the entrenched and opposed positions of the Macedonian and Greek communities over the name 'Macedonia' and the right of Macedonians to call themselves by their self-selected name. The violence and vandalism that accompanied these highly charged contestations, as well as their spread across Australia, over the naming of Macedonians and the 'recognition' of Macedonia, had a number of implications. The violence, which was reported widely in the Australian media, became a focus of 'mainstream' debate. One consequence of this was the questioning of the policy of multiculturalism that Australia had committed itself to since the early 1970's, during the Whitlam administration. The critics, opponents and sceptics of Australia's multicultural policies, such as Professor Geoffrey Blainey, the President of the Returned Servicemen's League, Bruce Ruxton, and Australians Against Further Immigration, saw the violence and activities of Macedonians and Greeks as a concrete example of the fragmentation of the 'unity' of Australia. On the other hand, the supporters of multiculturalism, such as Jerzy Zubrzicky, the *Age*, the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, viewed them as 'damaging' of the perceptions of

ethnic communities in the wider Australian context and as a potential threat to the acceptance of the policy of multiculturalism.

The Macedonian and Greek communities were surprised and concerned at the escalation of their 'dispute' into violent acts. As the tensions between the two communities spread from Victoria to New South Wales and the ACT, the leaders of the two communities dissociated themselves from all acts of violence, which they condemned and called for peaceful dialogue and resolutions to the 'dispute'. The President of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne, George Fountas, for example, suggested that 'the problem will not be solved in Australia by burning churches and other provocations. We strongly condemn such activities'. The-then President of the Macedonian Community Council of Melbourne and Victoria, Rozeta Stoikovska, commented that '[T]his whole thing is starting to have an unnecessary and uncomfortable life of its own. It's being taken over by elements outside both communities' (The *Age*, 8 March 1994).

The conditions imposed by the Australian government, on the 'recognition' of the Republic of Macedonia, continued to be an issue of contestation and challenge between the Greek and Macedonian communities in Australia. As we have seen, the Greek community continued to oppose the 'recognition' of Macedonia on the grounds that Macedonia and everything associated with it was Greek. For example, letters had been sent to the Australian government by various Greek organisations, including the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, the Pan-Macedonian Association of Melbourne and Victoria, the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria and the Hellenic

Youth Federation (*Leaflet issued by the Australian Institute of Macedonian Studies, 22* February 1994).

The Greek community also organised a number of demonstrations in support of its claims on the name 'Macedonia' and its opposition to the 'recognition' of the Republic of Macedonia. For example, on 27 February 1994, the Greek community held a peaceful rally in front of the Parliament of Victoria to protest against the federal government's decision to 'recognise' the Republic of Macedonia. What was significant about this event, as had been the case with several other events like it, was the fact that Australian political parties and governments sought to deal with the 'debate' in ways that appeared to add rather than to resolve the issues at hand. In the case of the rally, which was held in Melbourne on 27 February 1994, the one-sided intervention by the Premier of Victoria, Jeffrey Kennett, on the Greek side of the 'debate', served to aggravate the divisions between the two communities. As the Premier was also the Victorian Minister for Ethnic Affairs, his stand (also supported by other prominent Liberal Party politicians, such as John Hewson and Andrew Peacock), amounted to a refusal of the Macedonians' claims and, at the same time, compromised the rights of the Macedonians to have equal access to the Minister of Ethnic Affairs, at least in terms of having their views represented and heard. The actions of the Premier also meant that the neutrality and credibility of his office and its ability to play a part in the resolution of the 'dispute' were undermined.

The Premier's stand and the support of prominent members of the Liberal Party for the Greek case in the 'dispute', also had consequences. According to media

commentators, such as the *Age*, 'the Greek-Macedonia dispute' had now become a contest by the Liberal Party to attract the 'Greek vote'. As we have seen, the stand of the Victorian Premier posed a challenge for the Labor government in Canberra in that the Labor Party stood to lose the 'Greek vote', which had traditionally been pro-Labor. The Macedonian community viewed the 'recognition' of Macedonia by the Australian government and the conditions attached to it within this context, that is, as an attempt by the Labor government to retain the 'Greek vote'. They regarded the 'recognition' as a 'compromise', which was produced by the intense pressures that were brought to bear upon it by the Liberal Party and by the Greek community through their actions.

One particular action taken by the Greek community, which illustrates the political power that the 'Greek vote', concerned the naming of the Macedonians in Australia and their language by attaching to it the prefix 'Slav'. At a meeting, on 10 March 1994, between government representatives and Greek community leaders, at Parliament House, Canberra, the Australian government had agreed to 'instruct' all departments and to 'encourage' statutory bodies, such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), to apply the name 'Slav-Macedonians' to people with links to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). According to the reports of the meeting, the Australian government had also agreed that they (the government) would not allow the new state to open an embassy or a consulate in Australia, or to establish diplomatic relations with Australia, if they (the Republic Of Macedonia) do not call themselves the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and do not omit the Sun of Vergina from

their flag. The President of the (Greek) Pan-Macedonian Association of Melbourne and Victoria, Stergios Liousas, summed up the outcome of this meeting as absolutely satisfactory for the Greek community representatives (*Neos Kosmos,* 14 March 1994).

The effect of this decision by the Australian government on the Macedonians in Australia is reflected in the reactions that followed its announcement. The Macedonian community viewed this development as a major breach of their right to self-identification and as a one sided, pro-Greek, imposition on them. One of the immediate consequences was the unifying effect that it had on the Macedonians. They began to organise in order to defend their name and identity and to seek to have this decision reversed. The decision by the Australian government was interpreted by the Macedonians, as well as by other sections of Australian society, as being against the 'established' principles that Australia's multicultural policy was based on, namely, the right of self-identification by ethnic groups. Jim Thomev, Vice-President of the Macedonian Human Rights Committee of Melbourne and Victoria, criticised the Australian government for this unwarranted imposition by stating that '[T]he decision to call our people Slav-Macedonians was a contravention of human rights and a breach of the Racial Discrimination Act (1975)' (The *Age*, 13 March 1994).

Representatives from Macedonian Community Councils from all States sought a meeting with the Prime Minister and government representatives to discuss the issue of imposing the 'Slav' prefix on Macedonians, their country of origin and their language. They met with the then Prime Minister, Paul Keating, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans, and the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic

Affairs, Senator Nick Bolkus, on 14 March 1994, in Canberra. In the event, the position adopted by the Australian government remained unchanged and the Macedonian community leaders accused the government of 'violating' the rights of the Macedonians and of 'selling out' to the Greek demands.

The then President of the Macedonian Community Council of Victoria, Roseta Stoikovska, said that the leaders warned the Prime Minister, at the meeting that they would take legal action against the government's official 'Slav' term in the High Court and at international level. In response to the warning by the Macedonian Council, Senator Evans protested that the term 'Slav-Macedonian' was not intended to have offensive connotations and that it was a geographical and not an ethnic identifier for people from the 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'. The leaders of the Macedonian community, however, rejected this explanation and believed that the term, which they regard as offensive, was lifted directly from the Greek political lexicon that had consistently used the term 'Slav-Macedonian' and 'Slavophones' to deny the identity of Macedonians from the Republic of Macedonia, and for the purposes of denationalisation of the Macedonians in Greece. What made matters worse was the fact that the Macedonians regarded the introduction of the term in official government discourse as part of the agreement that had been struck at the meeting held on 10 March 1994 between the Prime Minister, Paul Keating, Senator Evans and Senator Bolkus and Greek community representatives (*Herald-Sun,* 15 March 1994).

The Australian government contended that it chose to issue the 'Slav-Macedonian' directive in order to defuse community tensions, which arose in the wake of the 'recognition' of Macedonia, and to 'rescue' multiculturalism from the siege that it had come under as a result of the violence associated with the Greek-Macedonian issue. The Macedonians, in turn, disputed this explanation by Senator Evans and insisted that it was the government that had laid siege to multiculturalism by breaching its most fundamental principle: the right of ethnic groups to self-identification.

The Macedonians reject the term 'Slav' as a racist imposition, because, according to them, it and its variants 'Slavic' and 'Slavonic' are generic terms, which describe a broad racial and linguistic category. They stated their complete rejection to the term, vowing that Macedonians would never accept the term 'Slav-Macedonian', as an ethnic descriptor, and that they would resolutely fight against its use until it is removed by the government (Terzievski 1996). Many Macedonians and Macedonian organisations wrote to the Australian government in protest against the 'Slav' prefix and asked that its be dropped. For example, the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee (AMHRC), writing on behalf of the Macedonian community, wrote to the Prime Minister, Paul Keating, protesting against the government's adoption of the term 'Slav', asking that the government reverse its decision and abandon the conditions that it had imposed on the 'recognition' of the Republic of Macedonia. The AMHRC called on the Australian government to uphold and respect the most fundamental principles of Australia's multiculturalism - self identification, tolerance and understanding. They also drew attention to the fact that the labelling (by the

Australian government) of Macedonians as 'Slav' represented a departure from these principles and amounted to discrimination against Macedonians living in Australia.

The Macedonian Council of Sydney, which represents approximately 70 Macedonian organisations, reminded the Federal government that, as citizens of multicultural Australia, they were very well aware of their human rights and that they would not allow themselves to be treated as second class citizens. The Council asked Senator Evans to make a public apology to the Australian Macedonian community for his discriminatory labelling of Macedonians as 'Slav-Macedonians'. They also claimed that they would not hesitate to take appropriate measures to defend the right to self-identification, democracy and multiculturalism (Avramovski 1995)

The then President of the Macedonian Community Council of Melbourne and Victoria, Ms Rozeta Stoikovska, reported that many Macedonians had contacted her, many in tears, about the 'Slav' prefix, maintaining that they are only Macedonians and objected to having their name changed. She urged the Macedonian community to remain calm and reminded them that if the Macedonians had survived over 500 years of the Ottoman rule, surely they could survive a few weeks of pressure from the Greek community in Melbourne (Stoikovska 1996).

Given the high level of opposition to the term 'Slav' and its adoption by the Australian government's directive, the Macedonians held meetings across Australia in defence of their identity and their basic human rights. These meetings resulted in the formation of the Macedonian Council of Australia, which represented the

Macedonians of Australia. On 27 March 1994, the Council held a meeting in Melbourne and released an open letter to the Macedonian community calling for a nationwide campaign of 'civil disobedience' against the government's decision. It also called on Macedonians to express their determined opposition to the government's decision through a peaceful protest. In their letter, the Council condemned the government's decision as being politically motivated, as representing a complete capitulation by the Federal government to the interests of the powerful and entrenched Greek lobby, and accused senior government Ministers of 'a lame and dishonest attempt at even-handedness', alleging that official Australian and Greek government policies on the Macedonian issue had come to 'coincide exactly' (Stoikovska 1996).

The Macedonian Council of Australia advised all Macedonians not to comply with the Government directive, and to insist on the use of terms 'Macedonian' and 'Macedonia' in their dealings with government agencies. If denied entitlements or services as a result of that, the Council urged Macedonians to initiate appeal and complaint procedures with relevant federal bodies. The Council also urged the Macedonian community to reject violence as a solution, and asked them to show a 'cultured and civilised face to those who are sadly destined to wreak upon injustice' (Terzievski 1996)

The adoption of the prefix 'Slav' in relation to the Macedonian community also drew a response from the Macedonian government. The Republic of Macedonia sent a strong diplomatic protest to the Australian Government, on 15 March 1994, over its

decision to change the name of the Macedonian community in Australia. The Macedonian government demanded an explanation from Canberra over its decision to officially refer to the Macedonians in Australia as 'Slav' Macedonians.

The Australian government's directive was not followed, however, by everyone. Although most state governments and their departments followed it, the government of Western Australia recognised Macedonia under its constitutional name. The Aboriginal governing body also announced publicly that it recognised the Republic of Macedonia under its rightful name. In addition, there were a number of state and federal government politicians who opposed the directive.

In conclusion, the adoption of the prefix 'Slav' by the Australian government, had been an attempt at 'compromise' in the 'Greek-Macedonia dispute'. As we have seen, however, this action not only did not provide a solution to the contest between the two communities in the dispute but added to the problem. The Macedonian community's strong objection to this unwelcome and unwarranted intrusion in an area that had not been subject to government intervention before, was expressed in clear and unequivocal terms. One concrete outcome of this decision by the government was the creation of the Macedonian Council of Australia, which became the umbrella body that was to represent and speak on behalf of the Macedonians across Australia. The scene was thus set for the crisis that followed in 1994, which is discussed in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CRISIS OF 1994

The introduction of the 'Slav' prefix in the 'Greek-Macedonia debate', as we have seen, had by April 1994 become a focal issue for the Macedonian community in Australia, precisely because it had simultaneously cut across the Macedonians' definitions of who they are, what Berger and Luckmann (1991: 126) refer to as 'machineries of universe-maintenance', and the exercise of power by what they saw as powerful forces arrayed against them. What the Macedonians had come to understand through the experience of the 'Greek-Macedonia dispute" thus far was that, in Berger and Luckmann's words,

> [T]he historical outcome of each clash of gods was determined by those who wielded the better weapons rather than those who had better arguments ... [H]e who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definition of reality. (1991: 127)

The Macedonian community had attempted to have the decision to label them as 'Slav' reversed by appeals to the federal government to respect and defend a fundamental principle of Australia's multicultural policy - the right to self-identification by ethnic groups, by writing letters and by calling for peaceful 'civil disobedience', such as not complying with the government directive to call themselves 'Slav Macedonians', especially, in dealings with government departments. Given the depth of anger and frustration in the Macedonian community over the federal government's decision, the leaders of the Macedonian community decided to take the issue to the public at large by demonstrating on the streets of Australia's

cities in which Macedonians live. This Chapter describes the events that took place as part of what could be termed the 'crisis of 1994', and goes on to describe some of the ways in which the media dealt with the events, by drawing on the reports and comments made at that time.

The Wollongong Demonstration

The first demonstration by the Macedonian community, which was organised by the Macedonian Assembly of Illawarra, was held on 10 April 1994 in Wollongong. Approximately 10 000 Macedonians protested in front of the Cringila Community Cooperative where the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Senator Nick Bolkus, was invited to officially open the new building. As the Macedonian community had understood from the various government announcements, the 'Slav' prefix was entirely the responsibility of the Senator, who became a target of the demonstration. The Macedonians accused Bolkus, who is of Greek descent, of having an obvious conflict of interest (*Today-Denes*, 19 April 1994). A confrontation followed between the Senator and the demonstrators. Some newspapers reported that Senator Bolkus and the local MP Colin Hollis were abused, spat upon and punched. Following this event, the Senator was quoted as saying, "I did not expect such a reaction in Wollongong, as it is known, the Slav-Macedonians Australia wide, consent the solution of the Federal Government" (*Macedonian Weekly Herald*, 13-20 April, 1994). A local Macedonian leader, however, disputed this version of the events and said that there were no punches, no rocks, no injures and no arrests (*SBS Television*, 10 April 1994). The police also confirmed that there was no evidence of

punching (*SBS Television*, 10 April 1994). The federal member for Throsby, Colin Hollis, however, condemned the Macedonian community for its "violent" behaviour. According to him, it was a real hell, passing through the throwing bottles and eggs, having the windows broken and the front and back doors of the Cringila Community Cooperative smashed. Ironically, Colin Hollis had been the only Labor politician in the Australian Parliament who had objected to the name 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', during the 'recognition' of the new state, and to the directive to label Macedonians as 'Slav-Macedonians'.

The Canberra Rally

The demonstration that took place in front of Parliament House, Canberra, on 1 June 1994, was organised by the Macedonian Orthodox Community of Canberra and the Macedonian Council of NSW. Although it took place during a working day, an estimated 3,000-5,000 Macedonians attended the demonstration. The angry demonstrators called on the Labor Government to change its decision on the 'Slav' prefix and requested a meeting with members of government to discuss the issue. In spite of the short notice, the government met with a four member Macedonian delegation and discussed the term 'Slav-Macedonian'. The leaders of the Macedonian community of the ACT expressed their objections to Senator Gareth Evans and Senator Nick Bolkus, and stressed that no one has the right to change the Macedonian identity in Australia. They also stressed their total rejection of the government's directive and called on the government not to breach the very fundamental principles of its multicultural policy (Trpchevski 1996).

The Demonstration in Sydney

The demonstration, which was held in Sydney on June 12, 1994, was organised by the Macedonian Community Council of Sydney in conjunction with the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The *Daily Telegraph Mirror* (13 June 1994) reported that more than 30,000 Macedonians marched through the streets of Sydney chanting 'Shame Labor, shame'. The same paper also reported that there were about a hundred protesters at the head of demonstration who shouted: 'Kill Bolkus, kill'. From my observation of the demonstration, which I attended, the most significant aspect of it was the anger that was evident in the faces of the demonstrators. The anger against the federal government decision to label them 'Slav' Macedonians was the key feature of the demonstration. The demonstrators also demanded the resignation of Senator Nick Bolkus, the then Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

Senator Bolkus condemned the behaviour of the Macedonians at the demonstration as 'un-Australian' and described it as counterproductive in terms of advancing their cause. He called on the leaders of the Macedonian community to act within the limits of Australian democracy. The Macedonians, in turn, rejected Senator Bolkus' statement and blamed him for the demonstrations and the angry behaviour that had followed. Victor Bivell, an organiser of the Sydney demonstration, made specific reference to Senator Bolkus, during his address to the demonstrators:

> ...This is a disgrace. We do not want Greek ministers. We want Australian ministers. Senator Bolkus has tried to blame the Macedonians for the unrest

> this prefix has caused. Do not kid yourself Senator Bolkus. If you want to know the reason for all this unrest, take a look at your mirror, look at your own directive, look at your own behaviour, look at how your brought disgrace to ethnic affairs in this country.
>
> Senator Bolkus has cynically tried to turn the unrest to his own advantage. In the media and elsewhere, he has tried to paint the Macedonians as the aggressors. This is because he cannot accept the truth, he cannot accept the message that the real issues are his own racist directive, and his own conflict of interest as a minister of Greek origin ... The truth is obvious. Senator Bolkus cares more for Greek votes than ethnic peace in this country.

The speakers of the rally also called on New South Wales Ethnic Affairs Minister, Michael Photios, to resign and on the Premier of Victoria, Jeffrey Kennett, either to resign or to act as a Premier for all Victorians. Paul Matters, Secretary of the South Coast Labour Council, supported the Macedonians' demands for evenhandedness by Senator Bolkus, by stating that 'we do not want Greek Ethnic Affairs Ministers. We want Australian Ethnic Affairs Ministers...' (the *Daily Telegraph Mirror*, 13 June 1994). The rally in Sydney concluded with the unanimous endorsement of a resolution that called on the federal Labor government to immediately withdraw its 'Slav' directive.

The 'Anti-Discrimination March' in Melbourne

The Macedonian Community Council of Melbourne and Victoria, which is the peak coordinating body of the Macedonian community organisations in Victoria, held a meeting on 27 May 1994, regarding the "Slav" prefix. The meeting was held at the Macedonian Community Centre "Goce Delcev" in Epping. According to the President of the Council, Mile Terzievski, the meeting was attended by approximately two

thousand Macedonians. They passed a unanimous resolution rejecting the directive of the Federal Government to rename the Macedonians. They also agreed to hold a peaceful demonstration on 30 July 1994, in Melbourne. This date was significant for the Macedonian community in that it was the nearest day to Ilinden (St Elijah's day), 2 August, which is both a day of significant religious importance, as well as being the Macedonian national day, the day of the Macedonian uprising against the Turks in 1903.

The Melbourne demonstration of July 30 1994 was one of the largest that the Macedonian community had organised. An estimated 55,000 Macedonians gathered outside Victoria's Parliament to protest against the federal government's use of the term 'Slav' in relation to Macedonians. The scene was like a river of red and yellow Macedonian flags that stretched down Melbourne's Bourke Street. The protesters observed in peace the playing of the Australian national anthem and sang, in full voice, the Macedonian national anthem. The protesters had marched through Melbourne's streets led by a massive cloth construction of the 16-point yellow Macedonian Star.

The president of the Macedonian Community Council, Mile Terzievski, in addressing the crowd, condemned the 'Slav' prefix as an insult to Macedonians and a threat to multiculturalism. All the speakers that addressed the rally called on the federal, the Victorian and the NSW governments to refer to them only as Macedonians. They also called on the Victorian Premier, Jeffrey Kennett, to drop his divisive pro-Greek stance. The rally demanded that the Victorian government stop the pressure on

Macedonian schools to adopt the 'Slav-Macedonian' tag and to cease the cutting of resources from the Macedonian language teaching program. They also asked that the Victorian government allow the Macedonian language to be taught in the state school system. Several speakers also accused SBS radio and television of being anti-Macedonian.

The demonstration, which was called an 'Anti-Discrimination March', adopted a unanimous resolution, addressed to the federal and all state governments, in which the Macedonian community expressed its complete opposition to, and rejection of, the government's decision to change their centuries old national name. The resolution also stated,

> ... [T]he Decision you [the Government] have made is a dangerous game, and is an unprecedented attack on the Macedonian Community, which, in Australia, has identified itself as such for decades, regardless of which part of Macedonia they came from. (*3ZZZ, Multicultural Radio Station*, 5 November 1994)

As in previous demonstrations across Australia, the Macedonians had stated once again that the government's stand towards Macedonians was unjust and confirmed the Macedonian community's view that their position was a reflection of their decision to satisfy the Greek community's demands in return for the 'Greek vote' that the government needed in the forthcoming elections. At the conclusion of the resolution that was adopted at the Melbourne demonstration, the Macedonians strongly demanded that the Government not change their ethnic name, and withdraw its directive to Australian government institutions. The Macedonian community was

supported in its demands by Peter Batchelor, Victorian Shadow Minister for Transport and by Paul Metters, Secretary of the NSW South Coast Labour Council, Wollongong. The Macedonian Orthodox Church of Australia, which has traditionally maintained a low profile in public affairs, also supported the Macedonians. On that occasion, Bishop Timothy gave permission to all the priests from Victoria to participate in the demonstration. The then Deputy Bishop, the Very Reverend Spase Stefanovski, made a speech in defence of the Macedonian name on behalf of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which was warmly welcomed by those assembled at the rally.

The Macedonian community also held similar demonstrations in Adelaide and Perth, which also echoed the same sentiments as those expressed in Sydney, Wollongong and Melbourne and made the same calls to governments to respect the rights of the Macedonians to self-identification and to defend the principles of multiculturalism that underpin Australia's tolerant and democratic approach to cultural and ethnic diversity.

With regard to the success or otherwise of the various demonstrations and protests that were organised by the Macedonian community around the issue of the 'Slav' prefix, it is difficult to be definitive. Looking back, three years after the events of 1994, the "Slav" prefix directive remains in place in Australia. The Macedonian language has also been renamed in Victoria. At the beginning of 1996 the Labor Party lost the election to the Liberal-National Party Coalition. Although the Prime Minister John Howard sent a letter to the Macedonian Community of Queanbeyan regarding

the official opening of a Macedonian Church and Community Centre, the Australian government has not made any attempts to remove the prefix. In his letter to the Macedonians in Queanbeyan, the Prime Minister did not use the 'Slav' prefix. As the *Australian Macedonian Weekly* (27 August 1996) commented, as far as the current Australian Prime Minister is concerned, Macedonians are only Macedonians, without prefixes and suffixes.

The Media

The Macedonian weekly newspaper *Today-Denes*, 9 August 1994 reported that there was suspicion that the massive 'Anti-Discrimination March' was ignored by the Australian media. Firstly, all television networks and newspapers in English broadcast or reported 'sterile' information about the aims and the number of participants on the demonstration. With the exception of the *Canberra Times*, the leading newspapers did not pay a great deal of attention and the given space was small. Despite the number of the participants the event was not given either time or prominence on television. Further, the editor stated that a source asserted that on the eve of the demonstration a Greek delegation visited all media organisations and 'demanded not to inflame the tensions'. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is difficult to explain why newspapers and TV channels gave so little attention to the March. The *Age* and *Herald-Sun* wrote only a few sentences which appeared to understate the number of participants at the rally (the organisers claimed 55,000 people had attended) and to understate its importance.

While the demonstration was understated in the Australian media, the Macedonian media covered it extensively. The leading Macedonian weekly newspaper had four pages dedicated on the 'Anti-Discrimination March', including the front page. The article was entitled, 'Our name is Macedonians'.

Today-Denes, also published articles such as "The Macedonian against the new God Fathers", "Macedonian protest draws big crowd" etc. The big rally took place on the Macedonian radio programs such as SBS, 3ZZZ, 3CR etc. The radio stations spent most of their time broadcasting about the big rally.

In previous editions, the *Australian Macedonian Weekly* and *Today-Denes* published articles reporting on the reactions of Macedonians Australia wide to the 'Slav' prefix. There were many articles that sought to capture the mood and themes evident in the Macedonian community's reactions to the events that took place and the issues involved. Typical examples were articles that appeared under such headings as 'Australia engaged in blackmail', 'Australia discriminates against Macedonians', 'Immoral support to fanaticism and bigotry', 'We expect respect' and 'Greeks are Turkic-Slavic mixture'.

One article published in the *Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 22 March 1994, was entitled 'How about "Pavlos Keatakis?'. The article was a humorous, though serious, example of the absurdity of the position adopted by the Australian government with regard to the renaming of Macedonians. The author of the article expressed his deep concern about the renaming of the Macedonians in Australia by stating that the

Australian government deplored a suppression of identity by the Chinese against Tibetans, by Iraqis against Kurds and so on, and yet it failed to apply the same principle to the case of the Macedonians. The author, explained that the Greek Government had changed his surname from Merakovski to Merakis and addressing himself to the-then Prime Minister, Paul Keating, stated: 'I am sure that you would not wish to be re-christened Pavlos Keatakis'. The names 'Keatakis' and 'Kenetopolous' (referring to the Prime Minister and the Victorian Premier, Jeffrey Kennett, respectively) were frequently used among members of the Macedonian community, especially during soccer games and political meetings. Some Macedonians simply referred to them as 'Former British Australians' with Greek surnames.

Another article written by a D. Wilson, from Lower Templestowe, which was published in the *Australian Macedonian Weekly* (22 March 1994), titled the 'Former British Colony of Australia', stressed that Macedonians and Greeks are 'as different as chalk and cheese'. Further, the author stated that while the Macedonian language is a Slav language, there is no justification for calling the Macedonians 'Slav-Macedonians'. As a WorkCover employee she was dealing with members of different migrant groups where she learnt the differences between the Macedonian and Greek communities. At the end of the text she asked the Labor Government to think about renaming Australia the 'Former British Colony of Australia' (FBCA). Another letter was published in the same edition by a Lea Williams who complained about the stand of the Labor government. The author accused the government of bowing to pressure

from the Greek community because they are numerically a bigger community than the Macedonians.

Overall the Macedonian community was greatly disturbed but not surprised by the approach to the 'Macedonian issue' taken by Australian media. They continue to believe that the media censured the critical statements made by members of the Macedonian community, while at the same time glorifying the discriminatory statements and distorted views of history given by certain members of the Greek community. Moreover, the Macedonians have been bitterly disturbed with the continuing use, by some Australian media, of terms, such as 'Slavs', 'Slavic Macedonians', 'Yugoslav Macedonians', or 'The FYROM community', when referring to the Macedonians. According to the Macedonian Council of Victoria, it has been made clear to the Australian media, on several occasions, that the Macedonian community of Australia does not accept prefixes to their ethnic name. The use of the above-mentioned prefixes, the Macedonians claim, is nothing more than a politically motivated interference with their identity for which there is no justifiable moral or historical basis.

An exception to the rule is the position adopted by the SBS, which ignored the federal government directive to refer to people from the Republic of Macedonia as 'Slav-Macedonians'. SBS's code of practice specifically states that 'SBS does not impose labels on ethnic groups, but uses the groups' self identification'. The SBS Constitution rejects the imposition by any one group on the right of any other group to decide how they wish to be identified.

The Role of Victoria's Premier Jeff Kennett

Having taken sides in the dispute between the Macedonian and Greek communities of Australia the Premier of Victoria became a central figure in Australia in 1994. His siding with the numerically much stronger and traditionally Labor-voting Australian-Greek community began in 1992 when he, as Opposition Leader, first publicly backed the Greeks in the dispute.

Two years later he addressed a vast rally of Greek Australians held on 28 February 1994 outside the Victorian Parliament. The Premier spoke of the broken promises of the Australian Labor Government concerning the question of the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia. He told the rally that the Federal government had betrayed the Greek community by recognising the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Victoria's Premier advised the protesters to make sure that the Labor Party understood that it had lost the support of the Greek community (*Herald-Sun*, 28 February 1994).

One may ask, why the Premier of Victoria intervened when Australia's foreign relations are a federal matter. According to the *Herald-Sun*, 20 April 1994, Victoria has a massive Greek population of about 250,000. The number of Greek voters would appear to have triggered the Premier to step in the Macedonian dispute. As a veteran of nine years as Opposition Leader and two lost elections, the Victorian Premier took the opportunity to swing Greek voters who traditionally voted Labor. He was supported by two other senior Liberals, the South Australian Premier Dean Brown

and John Hewson, the-then Federal Opposition Leader. It is widely believed by Macedonians that the leadership of the Liberal Party set a deliberate strategy to woo the Greek vote over Macedonia.

The first reaction came from Senator Evans, saying that 'the Premier knows, the Greek community leaders know, that the Australian Government fully understands and sympathises with the feelings of Greek people on the Macedonian issue'. The Foreign Minister described Jeff Kennett as a political opportunist. From the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, one could see that the battle between the two leading Australian Parties over the very sensitive Macedonian issue was political (*Herald-Sun*, 28 February 1994).

The next attack was from Nick Bolkus, who was Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, saying that Mr Kennett was a social pyromaniac who unnecessarily divided Australia by supporting the Greek community. Senator Bolkus called the Premier "little Lucifer". In his statement Senator Bolkus admitted that Jeff Kennett and the Premier of South Australia were more interested in buying Greek votes than the interests of Australia. However, it is clear that both the Liberal Party and the-then Labor Government had, for electoral reasons, decided to side with the Greek Australian community against the smaller and less powerful Macedonian one.

In this case the Australian media completely stood on the side of the Macedonian community of Australia. Articles such as 'Kennett under Fire', 'Bolkus attacks 'divisive' Kennett', 'The Macedonian Maze', 'Hewson fuelling ethnic tensions',

'Kennett offers to meet Clinton over Macedonia', 'Levelling the levendis' and 'Kennett stirs up troubled waters by taking sides with Greece' flooded the Australian press. At the forefront was the leading Australian newspaper '*The Age*'.

The Macedonians and the Labor Party were outraged at the Premier's stance on the Macedonian issue, whereas the Greeks highly admired his support. A Greek representative for the Pan-Macedonian Association of Melbourne admitted that Jeff Kennett's support may have been related to vote-grabbing. He also confirmed that that is what politics is all about. On the other side, a representative of the Macedonian Council of Melbourne and Victoria condemned the actions of the Premier as short-sighted in the extreme. According to the Macedonian activist the Liberals had forsaken community harmony to clamour over Greek votes (*Herald-Sun*, 20 April 1994; the *Australian*, 20 April, 1994).

Criticism of Jeff Kennett came from the Director of the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies at the Australian National University, Dr James Jupp, who criticised him for joining the debate. He stated that foreign policy is not a state responsibility and neither is immigration.

The Premier reached the peak of his politicisation of the issue when he went to visit Greece in April 1994 and offered his mediation services to the President of the United States Bill Clinton over Macedonia. Supporting the Greek side Jeff Kennett had lost sight of the fact that he was dealing not only with a local ethnic quarrel but also with one of the most potentially tragic theatres in contemporary world politics.

Peter Hill, a prominent Professor of Slavonic Studies at the University of Hamburg in Germany, wrote an article titled 'Levelling the levendis' (levendis means a Greek hero). Professor Hill stated that Jeff Kennett was declared an honorary *Levendis* in Greece because of his support for Greece in its struggle against the Republic of Macedonia. Professor Hill stated that "if Kennett's policy on the Macedonian issue is not entirely opportunistic, he must have fallen into the nationalist trap of not distinguishing historical myths from objective history" (the *Age*, 20 April 1994).

In the Editorial of the *Age*, 14 April 1994, titled 'Visiting Greece', the editor noted that the Premier 'should be embarrassed by the rapturous reception he is receiving in Greece over his support for that country in its diplomatic war with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'. The editor further stated that foreign policy is a matter for the Federal Government, not something about which state premiers should express an opinion. According to the editor the visit of Greece by the State Premier was seen as Jeff Kennett representing Australia. It was an embarrassment for Australia for her diplomatic relations to be dropped down on a state level. During his visit Jeff Kennett also met the Prime Minister of Greece, Andreas Papandreou, and he was welcomed there more as a Prime Minister than a Premier.

In his partisanship, Jeff Kennett proved that foreign policy may be made on behalf of particular Australian ethnic communities, rather than of Australia. Constitutionally, the state premiers have no authority whatsoever to present Australia's foreign policy positions on the world stage. In addition, the Premier of Victoria made an

unprecedented mistake when he 'dived in' the Macedonian issue and Australia's foreign policy. In Australia his attempt was judged as political opportunism. He breached his own Government's policy that, 'culturally, no citizen should be disadvantaged because of their ethnicity. Rather, respect and tolerance of cultural diversity should be promoted'. The Premier was entitled to his views on Greece, as an individual, but he was not just an individual, he was the Premier of Victoria as well as the Minister for Ethnic Affairs. Obviously, without taking any notice of breaching Australia's multiculturalism, the Premier sought to grab the Greek votes, regardless of the longer term consequences of his actions.

Jeff Kennett's Renaming of the Macedonian Language

On 15 March 1994, Premier Kennett took the unprecedented step of officially renaming the Macedonian language in the State of Victoria. He directed all government agencies and State government schools to refer to the language spoken in the Republic of Macedonia as 'Macedonian (Slavonic)'. The decision was made in order to be consistent with the Federal government's decision to use the term 'Slav Macedonian' and to avoid additional confusion in Victoria.

The Premier's Parliamentary Secretary for Ethnic Affairs, Phil Honeywood, stated that the move on renaming the Macedonian language was done after extensive research. He claimed that the Macedonian language is described as 'Slavonic' in the Encyclopedia Britannica and further claimed that the Macedonian language at

Macquarie University is taught in the Slavonic Studies Department, as well as at La Trobe University and Monash University (*Neos Kosmos*, 1 August 1994).

The statement of Phil Honeywood was condemned by the Macedonian Human Rights Committee of Melbourne and Victoria, which accused the Premier Jeff Kennett of further attempting to garner Greek votes by applying denationalising terminology of Greek nationalism. According to the Committee, the Victorian government was prepared to go to any lengths to secure the Greek vote, even if it meant completely violating basic principles of multiculturalism.

The Macedonian Human Rights Committee stated that there is only one Macedonian language and it is the language used by Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia and Macedonians in those parts of ethnic Macedonia which now forms part of the modern states of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania. In addition, the United Nations and its agencies have been producing publications in Macedonian for decades without any doubt as to its standing as a separate and unique language (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 21 March 1995).

The decision made by the State Government outraged the Macedonian community Australia-wide and drew criticism from the then Federal Labor Government and linguistic experts. The Federal Government denied the claims by the Premier, Jeff Kennett, that the Decree to rename the Macedonian language was consistent with the Federal Government's directive. The Labor Government described the Premier's

claim as a complete misrepresentation of national policy on Macedonia, which made no reference to the language issue (*Australian Macedonian Weekly,* 21 March 1995).

The President of the Macedonian Community Council, Mile Terzievski, was furious about the decision. He claimed that the decision would be challenged before the Equal Opportunity Board. The Council was extremely disappointed and strongly opposed the decision. The President of the Council pointed out that the Macedonian Community was the only one which had been discriminated against. As the President stated, "no one else in the world has done this [to rename the language]. It is offensive because it does not describe the way it is. Imagine calling English 'English (Germanic)', or Irish 'Irish (Celtic)'" (The *Age*, 15 March 1995).

The Macedonian Teachers' Association of Victoria condemned the Premier's decision and immediately, in cooperation with the Macedonian Council of Melbourne and Victoria, organised a number of public meetings in Melbourne in order to protect the Macedonian community and its language. The Macedonian Teachers, employed with the Ministry of Education, called upon the Macedonians of Victoria to reject the decision. The teachers, for instance, instructed the parents and their children to refuse any school paper where the language is changed. They also gave instruction to the parents and the students to go and strongly complain to school principals if they followed the State Government decision (Terzievski 1996).

During meetings and in the Macedonian media, some outraged Macedonians called upon the Macedonian Teachers Association to boycott school classes and withdraw

the Macedonian students from schools. In their appeal they accused the teachers of being traitors for accepting to teach a language for which they are not qualified (Macedonian Slavonic).

However, the teachers did not bow to the pressure from this angry group of Macedonians because, as they announced, the aim of renaming the Language was to reorganise the Macedonian community and there was an abundance of school classes where Macedonian was taught. However, many Macedonians believed that such action would destroy the Macedonian Language in those state government schools where the Macedonian Language was taught as it is internationally recognised.

Criticism regarding the Decree of the State Government over the Slavonic move came from the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA). The association described the Decree as a political delineation which had no basis in linguistic description. Christopher Candlin, a professor of linguistics and the then president of the ALAA, wrote to the Macedonian Teachers Association of Victoria regarding the directive from the State Government. Professor Candlin stated that there is no such language as 'Macedonian (Slavonic)'. Such a term has no status whatsoever in linguistics, nor does it have any tradition. In his view, the term 'Macedonian (Slavonic)' was a political designation which has no basis in linguistics description (Letter to the Macedonian Teachers' Association of Victoria, 22 November 1994).

The decision to redesignate Macedonian as 'Macedonian (Slavonic)' also drew criticism from the National Assessment Framework for Languages at Senior

Secondary Level (NASALS). The manager of NAFLaSSL, Winifred Sarre, expressed her concerns that the Premier of Victoria issued a directive that the examination in Macedonian for the Victorian Certificate of education be called Macedonian (Slavonic). The Manager of NAFLaSSL was disturbed by the directive because the Macedonian language was examined nationally as part of the NAFLaSSL scheme, an agreement between the members of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Certification Authorities, to which Victoria was a signatory. Further, the Manager stated that the names which designate all languages in the scheme had been internationally used and recognised by linguists, and taught in educational institutions around the world. Therefore, the name Macedonian would be used by NAFLaSSL to refer to the internationally recognised Macedonian language (Letter to Macedonian Teachers' Association of Victoria, 31 October 1994).

The Macedonian Teachers Association of Victoria organises in December of every year a VCE Graduation evening for Macedonian students. At the 1995 Graduation evening, among the other distinguished guests, the Victorian Parliamentary Secretary for Ethnic Affairs, Mr Phil Honeywood, was invited to attend. The Secretary declined the invitation due to the fact that the students received certificates for Macedonian and not for 'Macedonian (Slavonic)', which was not in accordance with State Government Policy and the NAFLaSSL (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 12 December 1995). Whilst Mr Honeywood attends many functions in his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary and also as Chairperson of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on LOTE, attending a Macedonian language function now was conditional upon the Macedonian community imposing on its language a politically imposed

name. Such treatment was out of line with multiculturalism which is based on mutual respect.

In response to the Premier's initial assertion that the name change was introduced to avoid confusion between the Greek-Macedonian language taught at Latrobe and Macedonian, the Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University, Professor Michael Osborne, confirmed that there was no language course offered by that university called, 'the Greek-Macedonian dialect' (Letter to the Macedonian Teachers' Association of Victoria). Further, he stated that the School of European Studies included a Department of Hellenic Studies, teaching Modern and Ancient Greek.

The head of linguistics at Monash University, Professor Michael Clyne, described the move as disturbing and nonsensical. In a letter to the Macedonian Teachers' Association, dated October 12, 1994, Professor Clyne stated that 'it is not the prerogative of an Australian state Premier to change the name of a language from the name by which linguists and international bodies designate it'. In addition, Professor Clyne claimed that the redesignation of Macedonian language as it was required by the Premier was without parallel in any other receiving country and negated some of the basic understandings of Australian multiculturalism (Letter to Macedonian Teachers' Association of Victoria, 12 October 1994).

The *Australian Macedonian Weekly*, on 21 of March 1995, published a contradictory article entitled 'How Kennett learnt and ... 'forgot' to speak Macedonian'. On the front page the author of the text (supported with a picture) stated that on 19 December

1981, as a Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Jeff Kennett officially opened the new Macedonian Social Club 'Goce Delchev' in Epping. Many of the participants at that special event can recall how with much enthusiasm Mr Kennett addressed the crowd in Macedonian: 'Good evening Macedonians'. In his speech he congratulated the Macedonians on their success before formally opening the social club. According the writer, the-then shadow Minister exchanged the Victorian flag for a Macedonian one, which had the 16-ray Sun, as part of the official opening. When Kennett became Premier of Victoria, many Macedonians thought that the right man had come to power. In the meantime the Premier had learnt to speak Greek and had forgotten to speak Macedonian, the language that he had once spoken without prefixes. In conclusion, the author noted that the Premier forgot the fact that when he addressed the crowd he did not say 'Good evening Slavo Macedonians'.

The Age published a number of letters to the editor on the issue. One was from Robert Gruener from Hawthorn, a person who is neither Macedonian nor Greek. He described the Premier as 'illustrious' and the directive 'nonsensical'. He stated that there was no justification and that his action merely served as a provocative measure in what had been a cynical campaign to gain the support of the Greek vote. The author claimed that the Macedonian language was spoken on both sides of the Greek border and was not Greek or Serb-Croat. The term, according to him, was of particular offence as it merely sought to undermine the very culture and identity of Macedonians. In conclusion, he referred to it as a cheap political exercise illustrating the Premier's complete lack of understanding and total insensitivity to this matter (The *Age*, 19 March, 1995).

The decision to rename the Macedonian language by the Premier was made with collaboration of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Melbourne and Victoria (PAMV). Representatives from PAMV, John Paganis and Nick Lambros, met with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Ethnic Affairs, Phil Honeywood, on 27 May 1994. At the meeting the Greek delegation discussed with Honeywood his Government's intentions in relation to the naming of the language spoken by members of the Macedonian community, as the Federal Government's Slav Macedonian directive had failed to address the issue (*Vergina*, August 1994).

Many Macedonians of Australia totally rejected the introduction of the prefix, which was seen as yet another discriminatory imposition without consultation. Although the Macedonian language was renamed officially by the Victorian Government, after massive parental and professional protest, the Board of Studies did not implement the 'Slavonic' directive.

The Issue of Australian Passports

In December 1994 the Federal Labor government issued information and sent letters to all Australian citizens of Macedonian origin who possessed Australian passports with the international code MKD as a country of birth offering to exchange them for passports without the code, free of charge, if the holders of the passports agreed. The information was issued because many Australians of Macedonian origin were refused entry into Greece due to the passport code, naming the country of birth as MKD

which stands for Macedonia. The MKD code was introduced in Australian passports at the beginning of 1994 as country of birth code name for those Australian citizens born in the Republic of Macedonia.

To counter the problems that Macedonians were having with entering Greece, the Department of Foreign Affairs gave them three options to help alleviate the problems while travelling through Greece. The options included retaining the existing passport with the MKD code, getting a new passport and leaving country of birth code blank, or including the temporary name of FYROM as the preferred code (Benson 1995).

On 15 February 1995 Mary Kiriakidis said on SBS Television that the change of the country code '... is not going to help the situation because even if the Macedonians did get a new passport, even if it says nothing like they were born nowhere, when they come to enter the country [Greece], they have got to say where they were born so we are back to square one'. In fact, Mary Kiriakidis who had travelled to Greece in 1994 with her friends found that they were refused entry at the Greek border because of the MKD code on their passports. Mary Kiriakidis was appalled at the way Australian citizens were being treated differently in Greece. Furthermore, she said that they went to Greece to stay for 3 months,

> We were not there for any political reasons, we were just normal, tax-paying, hard-working people and to be treated in such a way is an abomination to say the least. I thought we, as Australian passport holders, had the same rights as all Australians. I did not realise that Australians with passports that say Greece had different rights to Australians who have passports that say MKD (Kiriakidis 1995)

Another Australian citizen of Macedonian origin, Jim Merakov, confirmed that he was also refused entry into Greece in 1994, and reported the matter to both the Australian Embassy in Athens and the Foreign Affairs Minister, Senator Gareth Evans. Jim Merakov said that his passport did not contain the MKD code, but it did name the Aegean village where he was born. He believes he was refused entry into Greece because of his birthplace and his entry visa for the Republic of Macedonia.

The Macedonian Community Council of Melbourne and Victoria condemned the offer from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and released a statement to the Macedonian community Australia-wide to reject the offer and continue to use the MKD code. The Council urged the Australian government to refuse entry to Greek citizens who wanted to visit Australia. This offer was rejected by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as not appropriate (Terzievski 1996). The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade officially confirmed on SBS radio in January 1995 that many Australian citizens of Macedonian origin were refused entry to Greece because of the passport code naming the country of birth as MKD (Macedonia).

The move by the government to make the offer of changing the passports was bitterly opposed by Liberal Senator Michael Baume. He claimed that it was another scandal in Australia which was discriminating. The Senator condemned the Federal Labor government for bowing to Greek pressure and threats (*Australian Macedonian Weekly*, 3 January 1995).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

As argued throughout this thesis, Macedonian identity is an evolving category. The various organisations, the activities they engage in and the spaces they provide for cultural reflection, assessment and production, constitute an organised material and symbolic system that gives definition to a distinct Macedonian identity. The identity that emerges from the investigation of the various community structures, including the struggles to 'maintain', construct and defend the Macedonian identity, is both flexible and adaptable, and retains strong links with the community's Macedonian 'roots'. Through these links, as this thesis has shown, Macedonians are able to draw on their experiences in Australia, as well as those links with Macedonia, so as to fashion an identity that is unlike any other. Consistent with Homi Bhabha's view, the Macedonian identity that emerges through this ongoing process is not a fixed one, nor is it a simple fusion of the old and new traditions that come to constitute a composite identity. Macedonian identity, as the discussion in this thesis makes clear, needs to be seen as an evolving identity whose object is the attainment of recognition and completion. But as Hall (1996) has argued, the project of identity construction remains incomplete and contingent. As we have seen, in relation to the contestation of Macedonians' identity, identities are not 'armour plated' against other identities. What this thesis illustrates is that contestation too becomes a productive process that is implicated in identity development, in making it possible to define oneself against an other, as different.

What the evidence which is contained in this thesis suggests is that the past as memory and history remains a potent part of Macedonian identity. This past is crucial in the ongoing struggle to construct and defend a distinct identity in Australia. But the Macedonian community uses this past in ways that enable it to anchor itself in the present and to meet the challenges that confront it. In a world in which 'all that is solid melts into air' (to use Marx' famous statement), the struggle that Macedonians are engaged in, which is about defending and constructing a distinct identity, represents a struggle against obliteration, homogenisation and assimilation. In this sense the defence of a distinct Macedonian identity, as evidenced in the 'Greek-Macedonia dispute', needs to be seen as a resistance to powerful modern forces that are actively engaged in obliterations of difference.

The Macedonian experience of identity construction and defence of its identity in Australia is also an example of the complex nature of engagement of 'ethnic' communities in the life of their 'adopted'/diasporic home. What the experience, which is documented here, means to them, and (through the public nature of its performance, which is for all to see) to other 'ethnic' groups, is worth further exploration. For example, what lessons were drawn not only by the Macedonians and Greeks, but also by other groups and governments, is worth exploring. Most immediately, it is worth examining what the 'Greek-Macedonian dispute' means for the future of Australia's multicultural policies, that is, in terms of how Australia accommodates and deals with the disparate, different, conflictual and dissonant voices of its citizens, regardless of cultural background and the trajectories of identity

construction that they follow in their dialectic engagement with issues that confront them in the present.

The discussion and analysis that constitutes this thesis also suggests that the issue of identity construction is multidimensional. The strong links between home and diaspora (even when distant), by geography and time, as in the case of Macedonians, cannot be treated lightly. The concept of home, which as William Safran (1991) points out, is one of the key criteria that defines diaspora communities and is central to identity construction processes. The case of the Macedonians outlined in this thesis also suggests that the defence of identity is an integral part of identity construction and, as Stuart Hall has suggested, it can be understood in the specific context in and against which it is enacted.

In a globalised world in which transport and communications technologies make it possible to maintain close links with a community that is geographically located across nation state boundaries and geographical spaces, it is no longer possible to maintain the fiction of one nation state as the sole, or even the main, influence in the lives of its citizens. What the 'Greek-Macedonian dispute' illustrates is the diverse influences over the lives of people and the blurring of the boundaries between nation states as cultural locales of identification, which represent 'homelands', and issues that affect them as citizens of Australia. For example, where does one draw the dividing line between the struggles of Macedonia for recognition and the struggles of the Macedonian community for recognition and respect of their rights to construct a distinct identity, consistent with Australia's 'tradition' of tolerance established

through the multicultural policies and the practices that have evolved out of Australia's history of resettlement of generations of migrants from diverse and different cultures? As the discussion on the intervention by the Australian and Victorian governments as well as the intervention by other politicians into the 'Greek-Macedonian dispute' demonstrates, the issues are far from clear. Moreover, pragmatic 'solutions', such as those adopted by the Victorian and federal governments in their adoption of the 'Slav' and 'Slavonic' prefix, illustrate how the situation can be exacerbated by an approach that ignores the complexity of the issues involved and their multidimensionality, not to mention the sensitive nature of cultural symbols and the rights of self-definition that have become a core feature of an Australian 'tradition'.

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