Aspects of the Post-War II Greek Australian Community

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RÉSUMÉ

Près de 250 000 personnes ont émigré de la Grèce en Australie depuis 1947, la plupart dans la période entre 1953 et 1972. Cet article a comme but de discuter le développement de la communauté grecque de l'Australie de l'après guerre et des thèmes importants, tels l'histoire de l'émigration grecque vers l'Australie, les expériences des immigrants Grecs et leurs problèmes d'établisssement, leurs structures d'organisation, la structure diachronique de leurs organisations, les media et le différend opposant l' Eglise à la Communauté. On aborde aussi brièvement la contribution de la communauté à la société multiculturelle australienne, les mythes et la réalité entourant la communauté grecque de l'Australie et les perspectives futures possibles.

ABSTRACT

Almost 250 000 people migrated from Greece to Australia since 1947, most of them between 1953 and 1972. This article aims to discuss the development and relevant issues of the Post-War II Greek Australian community such as the story of the Post-War II migration from Greece to Australia, experiences of Greek migrants and problems of settling, their ways of organisation, the diachronic structure of their organisations, the Greek language media and the Church-Community dispute. It also briefly discusses the contribution of the community to the Australian multicultural society, the myths and reality surrounding the Greek Australian community and the possible future prospects.

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This article aims to discuss the development and relevant issues of the Post-War II Greek- Australian community[1], the story of the Post-War II migration from Greece to Australia, the experiences of Greek migrants and their problems of settling in, their ways of organisation, the diachronic structure of their organisations, their present situation and future prospects. Post-War II immigration changed the face of Australia which in 1939 had a British homogeneous population of 97% (British-born or of British stock) (Stoller, 151). In 1945 Australia had a population of seven million when its Federal Government decided that a minor British outpost in the Antipodes was, in terms of future defence needs, very weak and vulnerable. Australian politicians of both the then Australian Labor Party Government and the Liberal-Country Party Opposition, came to the conclusion that, both for future defence and development considerations, Australia needed a growing population and that such population growth could only be secured through an aggressive immigration policy. This policy was encapsulated in the phrase coined then: *"populate or perish"*. This aggressive immigration policy brought more than two million new settlers to Australian shores in the next 20 years - almost half of them non-British Europeans. Natural increase and immigration contributed to an average annual population increase of 2.1% between 1947 and 1963, half of it through immigration and to a "youngish" population as, in 1963, settlers constituted 20% of the whole population in the age group 20-44 years, and only 5% of them were "over 60 years of age" (Ibid, 154). This immigration wave continued after the Liberal-Country Party coalition Government of 1949 took over for an uninterrupted reign of 23 years and, to some extent, is still continuing. Over the last five decades, this long immigration wave has brought to Australia nearly a quarter of a million of Greek migrants.

Before the war there was a relatively well-established Greek community in Australia. The first Greeks in Australia were seven sailors who were transported as convicts in August 1829 (Gilchrist, 1992). As fighters in the Greek revolution, they stopped an English vessel to search for possible military materials being transported to the

Ottomans and the Egyptians. Soon afterwards, they were arrested by an English navy ship, faced a British naval court in Malta on charges of piracy and were convicted to death. Shortly thereafter their sentences were commuted and they were sent to Australia as convicts. They were assigned to work for various private persons or public works and later were pardoned. In 1835 five of them left Australia to return to Greece. Very few Greeks arrived between 1835 and 1851. After 1851 some more sailors were occasionally jumping ship to join in the Gold rushes of the Eastern Australian colonies. In the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s several dozen Greeks passed from the Australian colonies, some staying for short times and others establishing themselves in the fish and chips, cafes and similar small shop businesses. In the 1890s there were about 200 Greeks in Victoria and 255 in New South Wales and the first organised community life started. The Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria was established in 1897, the Community of Sydney and NSW in 1898, the Greek Orthodox Community of Queensland in 1921, the Greek Orthodox Community of Western Australia (Perth) in 1923 and, in 1930, the Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia (Adelaide).

In 1947 the Greek-Australian community numbered 12 292 members who had been born in Greece. Most of these early migrants were coming from the maritime communities of Ithaca, Kythira and Kastellorizo, but after 1922 there were also migrants from Asia Minor, Macedonia and other parts of Greece. In the next 25 years, up to 1947, this number increased more than thirteen fold. In 1954 the number of Greek-born persons was 25 862; in the Australian census of 1961 this figure had risen to 77 333 and in the census of 1971 to 160 200 persons, which was the highest ever recorded number of Greek-born persons in Australia. After 1971 the number of Greek-born persons decreased gradually over the years through a rapid decline of new immigration of Greeks to Australia, repatriation of some settlers, and dying off of old settlers. Thus, their numbers were 150 600 in the Australian census of 1981, 136 194 in the one of 1991 and 126 520 in the census of 1996. Of course the number of Greek-born persons, as we will see further on in this discussion, is only

one of the many demographic components of the Greek Australian community. The community also includes Greek persons from other overseas countries of the Greek Diaspora as well as their Australian-born children and grand-children.

Most of the post-war Greek migrants who came to Australia from Greece did not initially consider their migration as permanent. (Kouris, 1998, 45). They wanted stable employment for a while, to earn some money, to make some small capital and later - perhaps after a period of five to eight years - to return home. About 37% of the pre-Second World War Greek migrants had returned to Greece. Of the post-World War II migrants, some made an effort to return 'while the children were still young'. The repatriation of families with grown-up children attending High School or working was extremely difficult in terms of language and adapting to new conditions. It is estimated that about 28 per cent of the post-World War II Greek migrants to Australia returned to Greece permanently (Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission article in Kapardis and Tamis, 1988, 183), although some remigrated again after some time. The great majority, however, remained in Australia.

The migration period changed the conditions at home and the Greek migrants themselves. It also changed their conditions in the "reception country". The changed conditions at home and inflation in real estate made their economic life more difficult. Now they needed a steady employment to cope with a new set of obligations in the host country. They had purchased their houses and were paying them off. The need to pay off their houses, cars and furniture, the uncertainties of returning, the difficulties of finding steady employment, of readapting themselves, of adapting and educating their children, the re-migration to Australia of some who had returned to Greece, and the difficulties they faced in settling there caused reservations to the majority of migrants on the repatriation issue.

The Mass Greek Migration of the Period 1947 -1972

A major part of the structure of the Greek community in Australia had been completed by 1940. The Communities, the Metropolis, the

Consulates and several regional, cultural, sporting and political associations had been already formed in the 1910s, 20s and 30s. There was a Greek press of three weekly newspapers. The oldest was the Sydney *Ethnikon Vima* (renamed from the newspaper *Afstralia* in 1922). Afstralia was the first Greek language newspaper in Australia published by Efstratios Venlis in Melbourne in 1913 but had subsequently moved to Sydney. *Hellenic Herald,* the second oldest, was published in Sydney in 1926. The third was the ultra-conservative and nationalistic Greek newspaper Phos, established by Ioannis Panagiotopoulos in Melbourne in 1936. A few other pre-war newspapers were only short-lived ventures. Phos was discontinued after the death of its founding owner, Panagiotopoulos, in 1973, whereas the other two still continue publication today after successive changes of management. After 1957, with the publication of the Melbourne Neos Kosmos, many others followed, some published only for short periods of time.

In the second part of the 1940s, also due to the post-war shortage in shipping, there was not much Greek immigration. The main movement was the family reunions of family members who had been stranded in Greece during the war years. In 1952 a Greek-Australian Immigration agreement was signed and in 1953 Greece and Australia exchanged ambassadorial representations. A mass migration followed soon after. The coming of tens of thousands of new migrants radically changed the structure of the Greek-Australian community in the next few years. Up to 1947 Greeks comprised mainly a community of shopkeepers and small businessmen - cafes, restaurants, fish and chips and fruit shops, spread in all major cities and country townships, in most parts of habitable Australia. As noted by Price (1975, 6), in 1947, 58% of the Greeks in Australia were employers or self-employed and 43% of them were living outside the large Australian urban centres. Most of them had survived the difficult years of the Great economic depression of the 1930s and made good money during the economic upturn of the Second World War years. The remainder were an ethnic proletariat who worked in the small businesses of their compatriots up to 12 hours daily for six days every week, for their upkeep and a meagre remuneration.

On the other hand, the tens of thousands of post-1952 new Greek migrants came as new industrial workers to work in the developing post-war manufacturing sector of the eastern States, to work in jobs Australians generally did not want. They were expected to make the difficult adaptation from the Greek agricultural life to the discipline required by the factory mode of production. Consequently, many faced severe health problems and maladjustment. Most of the post-War II Greek migrants settled in the large cities, found employment in city factories and changed the structure of the Greek-Australian community. In 1971, in a much larger Greek-Australian community compared to that of 1947, the percentage of self-employed Greeks was only 17%. The rest were industrial workers or employees. Only 7% of the Greeks in Australia were, in 1971, living outside the large Australian urban centres. (Ibid.)

The Sydney newspaper *Hellenic Herald* and its manager Alexander G. Grivas, a staunch supporter of the Greek Community institution, expressed the view on the need for a change in the role of the Communities in Australia, as early as 1948. He was critical of the way Community Council members were wasting their time and exhausting their efforts in trivial church roles and jobs, such as assisting the priests, minding the candles and making the Sunday collections. He believed the lay element should play a decisive role and both the Metropolis and the Communities should plan for the future of Australian Hellenism by creating Hellenic centres and building a strong infrastructure for the new coming migrants and the needs of the Australian-born generations. Those views are equally interesting even today, more than 50 years after the cataclysmic experience of mass migration:

> The assimilating influence of the Australian environment acts so fast so that a systematic and intensive effort is demanded from us to make certain that our young men and women retain the particular characteristics of the Greek race. The building of some churches and (after hours) schools are not enough to satisfy the needs of our youth. We need respectful community centres, libraries, night schools, sporting grounds (15/7/1948).

Alexander Grivas argued that Greeks in Australia, despite the difficulties they confronted, had achieved considerable progress. He was

against the fragmentation of small associations which inhibited a unity of aims and efforts and believed that some from the then second-generation young professionals would take up positions before long as members of Parliament, judges and would distinguish themselves in fields of trade and industry:

If, he argued, the Greeks of Australia achieved during the war financial success for themselves, now it is time to prove that they should not preoccupy themselves with the establishment of small associations and organisations so that to waste their time with petty political and community discussions, but to think maturely and wisely about their future. We, of the older generation, have a wealth of experience. Let us make it available for guiding ourselves, the new migrants and our young generation. Let us move collectively and we will achieve unimaginable benefits... (AGG, 29/7/1948).

And on another occasion:

Finally to take care that all of us take an interest for the promotion of our Community organisations, as the conditions of today are vety different to those when our Communities had been established in 1900 and afterwards (AGG, 27/9/1948).

These views, although often reiterated in the 1950s, were soon forgotten; even after his violent death in January 1963 at the age of 73, in the maelstrom of the new events which were to trouble the Greek community for many subsequent decades. They were the Church-Communities disputes of 1958, 1959, 1962 and in the years and decades which followed, and the subsequent developments with the imposition of the dictatorship of the military Junta in Greece between 1967 and 1974 and the negative effects in the unity and aims of the Greek-Australian community.

Already, from 1953, letters by the Greek Consul General in Sydney were drawing the attention of the Community Council of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria to the fact that measures should be taken against the infiltration of the communist ideology to the unemployed Greek migrants in the migrant hosstel of Bonegilla. The latter, was an ex-military camp about 300 kilometres North East of Melbourne, where newly arrived migrants used to spend several months of unemployment and loneliness in rather

much-depressed conditions and environment. The Consul General also drew the Executive Committee's attention to the need of "ascertaining the socio-political convictions of priests and teachers hired by the Community" (Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria, Executive Committee minutes of 25/5 and 26/10/1953).

From 1947 to 1972 the official policy of Australia was the quick assimilation of the "New Australians" - as was the euphemistic terminology of the period. The migrant had to learn by himself or herself to swim and keep afloat or be condemned to become a misfit, unable to cope. If they didn't like it they were free to return to their country of origin when they had enough money to pay their return fares. The repatriation difficulties notwithstanding, the initial stages of migrant settlement in Australia presented many problems: linguistic difficulties, periodic unemployment, the lack of housing - often two and three families living in the same house-, the problems of children adjusting to their schools, the generation gap between parents and children which was exacerbated by the linguistic and cultural gap, and the negative influence these had, especially in the isolation of migrant mothers.

Relatives, friends and fellow countrymen from the same geographical region often helped to ease the adjustment of the new migrants, but the community agencies had difficulties making a positive contribution because of scarcity of resources, insufficient staff and lack of experience and appropriate know-how. Community organisations were making gallant efforts to help newcomers but the assistance they could offer to community members was minimal: visiting sick compatriots in hospitals, fund-raising appeals for the repatriation of destitute persons, some meals for unemployed compatriots, some assistance for the fees of the children of poor families in the after hours schools of the Community. The phenomenon of mass migration was so huge and took place so fast that it was very difficult for the community organisations to adapt themselves to the new needs. The Australian Greek Welfare Society of Melbourne was founded only in 1972, just at the beginning of the end of the mass migration from Greece.

The Post-1958 Church - Communities Dispute

A question which profoundly divided the Greek-Australian community after 1958 was the Church issue. A Church-Community dispute had also divided deeply the Greek-Australian community between 1924 and 1928, during the period of the first appointed Metropolitan Christophoros Knitis, by the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The appointment was a failure and the Patriarchate had recalled Knitis in 1928 and did not appoint a new Metropolitan till 1931 when it appointed Timotheos Evangelinidis, who arrived in Australia in July 1932. By then a reconciliation with the Communities had been achieved, mainly through the efforts of Archimandrite Theophylaktos Papathanassopoulos who acted as the Patriarchal representative in Australia during the previous four years. In the 1920s and 1930s, however, the Metropolis was very weak and for its financial survival depended on the co-operation of the Communities. By the 1950s, however, it had become economically viable and strong enough to challenge the power of the Communities. The Ecumenical Patriarchate in the 1950s seems to have pressured the Metropolitan Theophylaktos Papathanassopoulos of Australia and New Zealand, (he assumed his duties as Metropolitan in June 1948), to restrict the role of the Communities in Australia. The Metropolitan Theophylaktos, (a wise and sensible clergyman who came to Australia as an archimandrite in 1928 and who had lived closely through the frequent times of tension between the Church and the Communities, most of the time as the parish priest of Evangelismos of the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria, [1932 -1947], and had learned a lot from it), seems to have tried to pass through the smouldering discontent as smoothly as he could. Nevertheless, a tension in the relations between the Metropolis and the Communities is apparent after 1956 and further deteriorated after 1958, following the sudden death of Theophylaktos in a car accident.

In June 1958 a Greek Orthodox Communities Congress took place in Sydney with the view of establishing a Federation of the Greek Communities of Australia. This was against the Church policy which advocated weak Communities dominated by the Church, and

Theophylaktos -much to Grivas's outrage- did not attend to bless the Congress. Nevertheless, the Federation of the Communities was formed but soon after the death of Theophylaktos, relations with the Church deteriorated. The Patriarchal Exarch Athenagoras-the Archbishop of Thyateira (England)-who arrived in Australia early in August 1958 for Theophylaktos's funeral and to fill in the vacancy temporarily till the appointment and the arrival of the new Metropolitan, was critical of the mild handling of the situation by Theophylaktos and warned the leaders of the Communities about the coming changes without mincing his words. As the ex-president of the Community of Melbourne and founding member of the Federation of Greek Communities in Australia, Dimitrios A. Elefantis wrote in 1977, in the Special Issue commemorating the 80 years of the Community of Melbourne and Victoria, in his article *"A Testimony on the dispute between the Church and the Communities":*

(Athenagoras Kavadas, the Archbishop of Thyateira and Patriarchal Representative who came to Australia in 1958 for Theophylaktos's funeral and subsequently the Patriarchal Exarch in Australia), at a meeting in the presence of the Ambassador Mr G. Christodoulou and the Consul General Mr N. Zapheiriou and representatives of the Greek-Australian Press told us (the representatives of the Communities) "I did not come to negotiate, nor to unite you, but to dissolve you". At the funeral of the late Theophylaktos, when Stamatiadis (the president of the Federation of Greek Communities in Australia) was laying a wreath the archbishop Athenagoras cried out to him in an intense tone: "you are not representing all the Communities". And he told us that "the new Metropolitan will come and he will put into practice the new order'. Before his departure he created the first church outside the Community system, the Church of Saint John in Carlton (Melbourne, run by the archimandrite Ierotheos Kourtessis).

D. Elefantis in the Greek Orthodox Community of Melbourne and Victoria publication: *80 Years. 80th Anniversary Album,* 1977, 47.

The new Metropolitan Ezekiel Tsoukalas arrived from the United States early in 1959 and soon the Metropolis was elevated to Archdiocese. The new Archbishop came into conflict with the older and larger Communities of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, in his plans to refuse expansion of the older Communities with the enlargement of the Greek-Australian community as a result of the mass immigration, by refusing the appointment of new priests and retai-

ning the power to transfer or recall those already appointed. He opted instead to approve the establishment of new smaller Communities with their own churches to committees enjoying the confidence of the Archdiocese. Later, after the departure of Ezekiel and the arrival of the new Archbishop, Stylianos Harkianakis, in 1975, the Community system was repudiated by the Archdiocese and the emphasis was placed on the Parish system whereby church properties were owned by the Archdiocese and parish Councils were appointed and dismissed by the Archdiocesean authorities. In February 1985 a *Federation of Communities of Melbourne and Victoria* was formed. Very soon after this the Archdiocese created a rival body of its own, the *Greek-Orthodox Communities and Parishes Union.* In essence, the Church - Communities dispute centred on the question of the role of the elected lay element in the running of the property and the affairs of the Community and their role to act as representatives of the Greek-Australian community. It seemed the Archdiocese wished to have the foremost role in the representation of the Greek-Australian community, without rival groups and undesirable representatives. No federation of Communities, smaller Communities and representation of the appointed parish councils meant smaller representation and smaller voice of the laity, or no representation and no independent voice at all.

Between 1960 and 1962 the Communities of Adelaide, Newcastle, Wollongong and Melbourne moved out of the Archdiocese, becoming independent, and the dispute widened. The Community of Sydney followed much later. The Community of Melbourne negotiated a settlement with the Patriarchate and returned to the Archdiocese in 1970. The other Communities and some who joined the group of the independent Greek churches later are still outside the Archdiocese. A meeting took place in Athens in 1992 called by the then Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Virginia Tsouderou, and attended by representatives of the Patriarchate, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and the independent Communities to negotiate a settlement. An agreement was reached but was never implemented.

The developments of 1958, 1959, 1962, 1967 and those of subsequent decades served often to polarise the relations of the main com-

munity organisations. The conflict of the Archdiocese-Communities seems to have prevented the development of the Greek Orthodox Community institution in the way perhaps Grivas would have liked. The older Communities disagreed with the Archdiocese, they entrenched themselves in their own set-up, opened their own churches in their own old system - a Community with its churches and afternoon schools. In essence, however, they simply opposed themselves to the new Archdiocesean Communities and Parishes system - the "Greek-American system", as they called it, where the main role in the Greek community is played by the Archdiocese and its representatives. Eventually, the Communities moved further from this narrow church-centred model of Community but very slowly and without abandoning, even outside the Archdiocese, their traditional Church role. The fragmentation of the Greek-Australian community forces did not stop, as Grivas wished it; on the contrary, it increased more with the multitude of the new small associations derived from the settlers' regional provinces and towns in Greece.

The military Dictatorship of 1967-1974 intensified the conflict and the divisions. The historical Communities of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide, the newly created *Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Greece,* some newspapers, some workers and youth associations and the Greek students' association turned against the Dictatorship. The Archdiocese, the Consulates, and a part of the Greek-Australian Press and the Greek-Australian establishment supported the "National Government" of the Greek Junta. A large portion of the Greek-Australian community who wanted to keep out of political trouble, if in case they ever wanted to return or visit Greece, remained indifferent and crowded the functions of the small regional brotherhoods in their picnics, their BBQs, the soccer matches and their various other activities. This should not be taken to mean that the mass of the community did not take an interest about happenings in Greece or in their immediate environment. When occasions arose, such as the visits of Mikis Theodorakis in March 1972 and Andreas Papandreou in March 1974, thousands of Greek people crowded the various halls where concerts were performed and political speeches made. In 1965, during

the period of the constitutional crisis in Greece, it is estimated that some 6 000 Athenian newspapers were sold in Melbourne weekly. (Jupp, 1966, 40) Greeks were also participating strongly during the industrial strikes of the 60s and 70s, the May day and other workers' demonstrations and the anti-Vietnam rallies. What is meant is that the mass of people did not follow fanatically either the Archdiocese or the Communities and that, under the circumstances, they were not encouraged to create and participate in a panhellenic mass organisation, but were left alone in their small regional associations. After the fall of the dictatorship in Greece, the progress of the philosophy of multiculturalism in Australia and the bitter, emotional experiences of the Cyprus and the Macedonian questions, a loose convergence of the different community organisations occurred, but the fragmentation for settlers of the first generation remained.

The Period of Multicultural Developments 1973-1996

The period 1973-1996 is characterised by the Australian multicultural development and the coming of age of the various post-World War II Greek community cultural and political groups as well as the communities and groups of other ethnic minorities. Many factors contributed to this process. One important factor was the coming to power of the Gough Whitlam Federal Labor Government in December 1972.

By 1973 migration of Greeks to Australia had been reduced drastically while many others in the 1970s were returning to Greece. Most of the new Greek settlers in the 1970s were 6 000 Greek-Cypriot refugees after 1974, some teachers among them, who contributed to the teaching of the Greek language at all levels. Greeks who decided to stay in Australia had, in many respects, settled in by 1973. They had become Australian citizens and acquired voting rights, had purchased their houses and developed their families and their organisations. Some were successful businessmen, a few had become trade union officials, and others had been involved in Local Government and Australian party politics. They were ready to demand their rights as well as to make a contribution to their local and wider Australian community.

One of the first policies of the Whitlam Government was to recognise the rights of the non-English speaking migrants and to cater for their social and emotional needs in their major languages by setting up interpreting, translating and advisory services and multilingual radio programs. These programs were supported and expanded further by the Malcolm Fraser Coalition Government after 1976. Although up to 1972 there was no official sanction condoning the discrimination of migrants who had settled, there were still remnants of the White Australian Policy aimed against Asian immigration and often there were individuals with racist tendencies who used derogatory names and terms against foreign speakers in public places, at places of work and, especially, in the school environment (that is, Australian children using derogatory terms against migrant children). Ministers of Immigration made sure that some active Greek and other migrant leftists were refused Australian citizenship. The Whitlam Government contributed to the recognition and acceptance of cultural diversity and the correction of some of the previous injustices.

Already, before 1972, there had been some pressure for the recognition of the need for the teaching of the Greek language. The few schools of the older Greek Communities had increased in all major cities, especially in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide and, according to the historian Michael Tsounis, there were, by 1973, about 300 Greek Community and parish schools teaching Greek to some 25 000 students. (Michael Tsounis, 1973, 38-40). In the 1970s the Greek language was introduced into the curriculum of several State schools of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide and some university programs. In 1968 the University of New England, a country university in Armidale, a rural town in the State of New South Wales, was the first to introduce Modern Greek into its language programe. In 1972 the South Australian Institute of Advanced Education introduced Greek and after community donations and collections of money, Modern Greek was introduced at the University of Sydney in 1973 (after a significant donation by Sir Nicholas Laurantus, an old businessman from Kythira) and at the University of Melbourne in 1974. In 1975, a Federal Government grant enabled the creation of an Interpreters

and Translators' Course at RMIT (Melbourne) which included Greek as one of its languages. Later, Greek was introduced at Prahran College which subsequently became Victoria College. In the early 1980s Greek was introduced for a short period of three years at the University of Western Australia in Perth and, in the late 1980s, at Flinders University in Adelaide, at two more universities in Sydney and, in total, at six universities and Colleges of Advanced Education in Melbourne. Since the early 1990s, however, some of these programs have been abolished or reduced drastically.

In the 1980s the institution of Greek-run day schools had been introduced by the Communities and the Archdiocese, subsidised, like other private schools in Australia, by the Federal and the State Governments. The first such school was created by the archimandrite Ierotheos Kourtessis of the St. John's Community of North Carlton in 1978. Some of these schools faced difficult economic and organisational problems and were forced into bankruptcy and closure. Others, however, survived the initial difficulties and today -in 1999- eight of them are in operation, three in Melbourne, three in Sydney, one in Adelaide and one in Perth.

During the 1970s, 1980s and the 1990s, the Greek community contributed to the brightening of the Australian cultural and social life with new restaurants, its soccer teams, the organising of cultural festivals such as, among others, *Greek week* and subsequently, the festival Antipodes in Melbourne, the Festival *Glendi* in Adelaide, *Dimitria,* etc. With Mr Alfredos Kouris as their chairman, a group of businessmen in Melbourne campaigned for and contributed to the extension of shopping hours in the evenings and Saturdays and the liberalising of the restrictive legislation concerning hours and places of liquor sale and consumption. Some Greek businessmen enriched life with the importation of new products such as olives and olive oil, or the manufacturing of new foodstuffs such as tarama, yoghurt, etc. Some businessmen and professionals contributed to the development and support of Greek-Australian soccer teams, like Sir Arthur George in Sydney and Thesseas Marmaras and Savas Papasavas in Melbourne, or to the founding of University chairs of Greek like Sir Nicholas

Laurantus in the University of Sydney and Zissis Dardalis in La Trobe University, in Melbourne.

After 1973 there was a flourishing development of theatrical and musical groups, musical events and song competitions. Song-writing and composition, the forming of musical bands and song-playing and dancing at various community functions and tavernas contributed to a revival and development in the local Greek-Australian scene of the Greek cultural tradition in demotic, popular and rebetica songs and the familiarisation and participation in this cultural development of many members of the Australian-born generations. During this period some good writers, poets and playwrights made their presence felt, by publishing works, either in Greek or in English. Some of them achieved important prizes and recognition. Among them are Dimitris Tsaloumas, Nikos Ninolakis, Dimitris Tzoumakas, Yannis Vasilakakos, Stylianos Harkianakis, Vasso Kalamara, Nikos Nomikos, Dina Amanatidou, Erma Vasileiou, Coula Teo, Sophia Kathariou in Greek, Antigone Kefala, Aristidis Paradissis, Zeny Giles, Angelo Loukakis, George Papaellinas, Fotini Epanomitis in English, to mention only some of them.

Greek cultural life has been sustained and often enriched with the post-war strengthening of the Greek press-newspapers and, occasionally, cultural periodicals and magazines in Greek, but also often with some pages in English, mostly printed in Melbourne and Sydney. The Greek press has been complemented by the radio and television programs of the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) established in 1980 by the Malcolm Fraser Government and, lately, with additional private and community programs. The Greek press in the 1990s has been through a period of adaptation and stabilisation. There are fewer newspapers circulating in the late 1990s in comparison to the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Two good-quality Melbourne magazines of the mid-1980s became discontinued. Perhaps the remaining newspapers, which have improved in quality, now have more readers as there are more pensioners with more free time, but overall, the number of readers seems to be decreasing with the aging and increased death rates of the first generation. At the moment, there are seven major newspa-

pers issued, three in Melbourne and four in Sydney, owned by five different proprietors.

Greek-Australian Community of the 2000s: Reality and Myths

The Present Demographic Picture of the Greek Australian Community

The Greek-Australian Community of today is quite different to that of the 1950s and 1960s. Despite the perpetuation of various myths during the last three decades concerning the size and the numbers of the community, the demographic changes are apparent. One of these myths reiterated often in the rhetoric of some Greek politicians visiting Australia or some leading personnalities of Greek Australia is the exuberant claim that the numbers of Greek-Australians are over 700 000 (Papageorgopoulos 1981, 27), (Kouris 1998, 9) or close to "800 000 souls", (Harkianakis in *Kathimerini*, 1993, 8). Australian censuses suggest that the total number of persons of Greek background in Australia is around 362 000. This can be seen by an examination of the 1996 Census data, taking into account the numbers of persons who, in the specific census questions, stated themselves as Greek-born, those who stated that they speak Greek at home, and those who stated their religion as 'Greek-Orthodox'.

Using the data of the 1996 census, I prepared tables A, B, and C below which indicate: Table A the number of Greek-born immigrants (at the time of the census 126 520 Greek-born persons were living in Australia), Table B, the number of persons who stated that they speak Greek at home (269 770), and Table C, the numbers of persons who stated their religion as Greek-Orthodox (361 052).

The Greek-Australian Community in numbers according to the 1996 Australian Census data

Table A: **Persons born in Greece**

State	0-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-64	65 +	Total
Victoria	88	149	664	22 146	28 389	10 247	61 683
New South Wales	93	119	500	13 646	18 817	7 980	41 155
South Australia	16	36	103	3 882	5 547	3 023	12 607
West Australia	6	10	49	1 035	1 335	1 020	3455
Queensland	18	21	81	1 412	1 706	1 229	4 467
Tasmania	0	3	13	231	291	84	622
Northern Territory	14	20	80	592	329	881	123
Australian Capital Ter/ty	9	6	25	464	655	249	1 408
Total	244	364	1515	43408	57069	23920	126520

Table B: **Greek speaking persons**

State	0-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-64	65 +	Total
Victoria	4 756	5 398	13 372	59 079	29 857	11 871	124 333
New South Wales	3 783	3 965	10 330	43 294	21 450	10 144	92 966
South Australia	1 196	1 363	2 798	12 968	6 230	3 472	28 027
West Australia	160	207	589	2 529	1 328	992	5 805
Queensland	482	528	1 136	5 388	2 369	1 752	11 655
Tasmania	59	51	175	634	306	93	1 318
Northern Territory	183	213	476	1 394	385	116	2 767
Australian Capital Ter/ty	137	116	321	1 358	706	261	2 899
Total	10 756	11 841	29 197	126644	62631	28701	269770

Table C: **Greek Orthodox persons**

State	0-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-64	65 +	Total
Victoria	8 793	8 420	18 167	73 912	32 467	13 927	155 686
New South Wales	7 563	7 216	15 798	58 351	25 187	13 035	127 150
South Australia	2 317	2 224	4 056	16 287	6 795	4 024	35 703
West Australia	576	734	1 633	5 871	2 209	1 672	12 695
Queensland	1 328	1 325	2 583	9 352	3 482	2 595	20 665
Tasmania	108	91	258	836	353	162	1 808
Northern Territory	267	270	583	1 630	420	133	3 303
Australian Capital Ter/ty	259	215	530	1 878	808	352	4 042
Total	21211	20495	43608	168117	71721	35900	361052

Source: Prepared on data available by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, "1996 Census of population and housing, Ethnicity Thematic Profile", 1997.

The 126 520 persons indicated by table A are 9 674 less than the number of 136 194 Greek-born persons recorded in the census of 1991, a fact which is indicative of the aging and the gradually reduced numbers of the first generation of Greek migrants in Australia. As mentioned above, approximately 250 000 have migrated to Australia from Greece during the last five decades and about 28% are estimated to have repatriated, most during the decade of the 1970s. Between 1949 and 1990, 179 461 Greeks have been naturalised (became Australian citizens) (Murphy, 1993, 178) and in the census of 1971 there was the highest-recorded number of Greek-born persons (160 200).

Table B also contains the data of table A, and table C -given that more than 90 per cent of the Greeks in Australia are Greek-Orthodox- contains, to a large extent, the data of both A and B, plus those persons from Greek background who have lost the knowledge of the Greek language.

The number of 361 052 from table C offers a reliable indication of the numbers of the Greek-Australian community. To these figures, however, we must add persons of Greek background who are not Orthodox, or did not state their religion, or persons coming from mixed marriages or persons who have one parent or grandparent coming from Greece and who wish to identify themselves with some aspect of the Greek culture. According to the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, in 1981, there were some 58 256 second-generation Greeks living in Victoria. 47 442 of these were Australian-born with both parents born in Greece. The rest (10,814-appr. 14%) had one parent born in Greece.

Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, "Greeks in Australia: Policies, Directions, and Initiatives" in Kapardis and Tamis, 1988, p. 186.

Members of the Greek-Australian community must be considered those who speak the Greek language or otherwise identify themselves with some aspect of the Greek culture. If we take these factors into consideration we could estimate the numbers of Greeks in Australia (Greek Orthodox plus any others) in the vicinity of 400 000 persons

which is approximately 2.1% of the total Australian population. These tables, based on the census data, are the most reliable documentation of the numbers and categories of Greek-Australian persons, rather than the speculative figures and undocumented assertions quoted above.

At the end of the 1970s, due to automation and the gradual disappearance of light industry in Australia and the advancement of the post-industrial society, many of the migrant industrial jobs of the 1950s and the 1960s disappeared and many members of the old, first generation of Greek migrants became unemployed or early retirees. Despite these developments, however, and in contrast to the pre-war situation, the great majority of Greek-Australians live in the main Australian urban centres. According to the data supplied by the 1991 Census, 91.43 per cent of the Greek-Australian community (Greek Orthodox) lived in the eight Australian State and Territory capitals: 148 917 (41.65% of the total Greek-Australian population) lived in Melbourne, 114 201 (31.95%) lived in Sydney, 31 578 (8.83%) in Adelaide, 12 874 (3.60%) in Brisbane, 11 095 (3.1%) in Perth, 4 152 (1,16%) in Canberra, 2 655 (0,74%) in Darwin and 1 420 (0,4%) in Hobart.

Despite their concentration, however, most Greek-Australians in the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, moved from the inner to outer suburbs of the large Australian cities and thus, inevitably, a gradual dispersal, isolation and assimilation took place, along with the growing up in the 1980s and 1990s of a new Australian-born generation which joined the workforce. The consequences were less cohesion and more difficulties in efficiently and economically organising Greek language classes, church facilities, services for the elderly and less flexibility of the various associations to organise efficiently and economically the successful attendance of their functions.

This concentration, in conjunction with the vitality of the Greek element and the single member electorates with a majority preferential vote system for the Lower Houses of the Australian Parliaments, explain the relatively large number of Greek- background Members of

Parliament (MPs) in the Australian Federal and the various State Parliaments (in all, 17 at the moment of writing 8 of them from Melbourne, Victoria), as well as the large Greek rallies on the Macedonian question in February 1992 and February 1994, in which over 70 000 people marched each time. It would be useful to critically examine some of the myths of the Greek-Australian community which blur the real picture.

Besides the undocumented assertion for 700 000 Greeks in Australia, there is the myth of a large political influence of the Greek-Australian community. Despite the 17 Greek-background MPs of the various parliaments, the political influence of the community is in no way proportionate. As in every political system, Members of Parliament represent their constituencies from which they are elected and to which they are answerable and also represent and promote the policies of their parties. Although it is an advantage to have MPs of Greek background, the influence of the community does not depend on their numbers but on the favourable reception of its issues by the mainstream mass media and the Australian community at large. It is often easier for a mainstream politician to push a certain policy favourable to the Greek-Australian community rather than for an MP of Greek background. Once an ethnic issue becomes forcefully opposed and controversial, it is easier to be brushed aside and ignored. Although some Australian politicians appear pro-Greek at community gatherings and BBQs, the teaching of the Greek language in Australian State schools and the issue of Multiculturalism are assigned a low weight when they are moved from words to political action. The treatment of the Cyprus issue by the Australian Government - except for the stationing of a small police contingent in Cyprus with the UN peace-keeping force - is not much different to that of Britain or the United States. More importantly, it is also largely ignored by the mainstream media.

The assertion about the aging of the Greek-Australian community needs to be analysed and explained. The assertion is usually reiterated by people who attend many Greek artistic functions and lectures in

the three larger Greek-Australian communities of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide and which are often attended mainly by members of the first generation who are mostly over 50 years of age. From table A above we can work out that 80 989 persons (that is 64.01% of the persons who migrated from Greece to Australia), were aged 50 and over in 1996. Those 65 and over were 23 920, that is 18.9 per cent of the total. Certainly these figures indicate that a large percentage of the members of the first generation is now getting on in years. From table C, however, which also includes the Australian-born generations and all Greek Orthodox persons, we derive a different picture: in this table, we see 253 431 persons (that is 70.19% of all Australian Greek-Orthodox persons) were, in 1996, aged 49 and under. In this group, 39 500 were 65 and over, that is, 9.94 per cent of the 361 052, which represents almost the total of the Greek-Australian community. The conclusion is that although the Greek-Australian community has a high percentage of aging people, and very soon it will have a much higher one, the large majority of those who are aging, (twice as much of the percentage for the total), belong to the first generation of Greek migrants. Thus, due to the rapid decline of new Greek immigration after 1972, the majority of the first generation is now aging and the whole community is going through a transitional period. It should be stressed that most of these aged people have offered much in the building of the diverse structure of today's community and to Australia's economic development and they belong mostly to the working migrant class of Australia, often facing the problems of poverty, loneliness and homesickness.

The often-reiterated assertion that Melbourne is the third Greek-speaking city in the world, after Athens and Salonica, seems untrue. In the census of 1991 Melbourne had 148 917 Greek Orthodox persons and 127 664 who stated that they speak Greek at home, a number which is lower than the population of Patra or Nicosia. The Hellenism of Melbourne is important; it is perhaps the largest Greek-speaking community outside Greece and Cyprus, with an impressive Greek linguistic and cultural life, good-quality newspapers and radio programs in the Greek language, but the numbers indicate that it is not the third largest Greek-speaking city in the world.

A different myth is the assertion that the Greek-Australian community could become something similar to the Greek community in Egypt and that Melbourne could be the new Hellenic Alexandria of the South. The assertion is unrealistic. Although the State of Victoria alone with its 155 686 persons of Greek background has a larger population of Greek origin than Egypt ever had, things are quite different. In Egypt, members of the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s thriving Greek community, (especially members of the middle and upper class), had, as a result of the Capitulations regime accorded to European communities there, more legal and financial privileges and rights than local Egyptians. (Kitroeff, 1989, 3) Besides, they were not far from Greece and behaved almost as Greeks of a large urban Greek province. They had, to a large extent (as in previous times what the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire had): their own space and role, their own districts, their schools, churches and hospitals. The Greek language in Egypt was a prestigious European language, the knowledge of which could secure to its speakers skills for employment, communication and creative activities.

In Australia the picture of the Greek-Australian community, as in the past in the United States and perhaps still today in Canada, is dominated by the activities of the first generation. The first generation played a critical role in establishing the structure of the community. It is they who established the churches, most of the Greek-owned companies, the newspapers and radio and television programs. They also developed some well-known writers and poets who write in the Greek language. In contrast to the situation in Egypt, in Australia, Greek is the language of one of many ethnic groups which, despite the recognition and respect attached to it for its contribution to Western Civilisation and thought, could not, by itself, without the good knowledge of English, offer the speaker skills for employment and security. The Greek community in Australia, although is concentrated in the main urban centres, is dispersed in the various outer suburbs and its members are relatively isolated, having to travel long distances in order to attend important mass functions. Cavafy in Egypt and many other writers of that community were Greeks born in the Greek Diaspora and writing in Greek, whereas the writers of the second

Greek-Australian generation, in contrast to the first generation, write in English. Although many members of the second and third generation, through their attendance of State, community or private schools, have a relatively good knowledge of the Greek language, as time passes, the great majority use Greek for communication between themselves whereas English is used for their professional and creative activities. These characteristics render obvious the difference between the pre-1939 Greek community in Egypt and the Greek-Australian community of the 2 000s and the fact that the latter is now passing through an intense transitional phase.

Also, the often-reiterated argument that the influence of the Greek Orthodox Church will contribute to the retention and salvation of the Greek language in Australia does not seem to hold water. As the case of the Greek-American experience has shown, the Church, even with some gradual losses of its adherents, can survive very well with English as its communication medium. In actual fact, in Australia the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is also preparing itself for the next phase. In many churches, especially in parishes with many second and third generation young families, for obvious communication purposes, a part of the liturgy and the sermon are delivered today in the English language. The Church's argument is that if it does not communicate with the Australian-born generations in the language they understand and use best, it will lose them. In reality - as in the USA - any future Church difficulties will come from mixed marriages and the gradual moving away of individuals from its congregations, not from the loss of the Greek language. C. Nicolopoulos, in an article of his in the Melbourne Greek newspaper *Neos Kosmos* (9/3/1998, p.1) based on statistics provided by the Archdiocese office in Melbourne, shows that between 1993 and 1997 mixed marriages of members of the Greek-Australian community of Melbourne had increased from 36% to 47.2%. This percentage could be even higher in some of the smaller communities of the smaller Australian States. This does not also include marriages taking place outside the Church. Thus the Greek-Australian community, which is largely two generations younger than the Greek-American community, seems to be gradually following the path of the latter.

Questions of Language and Culture Maintenance and the Future of the Greek Australian Community

Today, the community situation is different in numbers and sizes to the one of the 1940s, but from the point of view of problematisation and dilemmas, it is not very different to the one which was problematising Grivas in 1948. In 1948, just before the onset of mass migration, Grivas had in front of him a transitional period and was writing for his readers who were pre-war arrivals. Many of those, like him, had lived in Australia for many decades and were already old and successful business people and community leaders. Others were less fortunate, old workers or failed businessmen who still carried the wounds and the scars of the Great Depression. Similarly, today, according to the data of the 1996 Census, the first generation, those who chose Australia as the country of their settlement in the 1950s and 1960s are, in the majority,(80 989 from the 126 520 persons of the first generation), over 50 years of age, a percentage of 64.01%. A few are successful and well-off, most others are only old working-class people, some lonely men and women, weak, nostalgic or disenchanted.

As mass immigration from Greece declined rapidly after 1972, we must assume, that the majority of first-generation persons who, in 1996, were under their 50th year, had come to Australia young and had stayed in Australia for 25 and more years. We can also assume that at least a part of their education and their formative experiences have taken place in Australia. This means that at this moment a great change is happening in the ways of thinking, the attitudes and the priorities of the majority of the members of the Greek-Australian community. The Greek community of Australia is basically similar to that of America of two generations ago. It is not similar to what used to be the Greek communities of Egypt, Constantinople, the Middle East, or even to those of the previous Soviet Union where they had the environmental need and priority to reproduce themselves on a Greek-centred basis.

In Australia, as in the United States and, to a large extent, in Canada, the English language and culture act assimilatively and steam-rolleringly and with a speed of drastic changes from generation

to generation. Students of social change should not be fooled by the beautified rhetoric of some politicians about Multiculturalism. Multiculturalism, although is a sound philosophical ideology, is, in the Australia of the late 1990s, gradually being undermined through the abolition or the actual lack of implementation of necessary political programs.

Multiculturalism was put forward and advanced by Australian politicians in the 1970s to replace the failed policies of assimilation of the 1950s and 1960s. In the long run, the aim was the assimilation of ethnic minorities, but Multiculturalism would have helped achieve this with a minimum of conflict and with less discontent and political and social alienation. SBS and migrant services would have helped the members of the first generation to cope and be content with the quality of their lives in Australia, whilst the teaching of ethnic languages which concerned the subsequent generations were, overall, assigned a low priority. The present Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, is reputed for avoiding the mention of the word 'Multiculturalism'. As soon as Mr. Bob Car was re-elected as Premier of New South Wales in 1999, one of his first acts was to change the name of the 'Department of Multicultural Affairs' to 'Department of Citizenship' and the Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett, although spending time at Greek sporting events and making superficial multicultural declarations at socio-cultural events and activities, avoids devoting sufficient resources to the teaching of Modern Greek in Government schools. Indeed, during his premiership since 1992, the teaching of Modern Greek has suffered a hardly retrievable set-back in that the number of secondary Modern Greek teachers in the State system was decreased from 80 to 35 between 1992 and 1998, the number of primary teachers from 36 to 27, and the number of schools offering Modern Greek and teaching programs were halved.

Multiculturalism concerns human dignity and the protection of human rights and to Greek-Australians who form one of Australia's largest ethnic communities. It is one of the few options that they have. Multiculturalism must be supported financially and seek its strengthening through the active participation of all ethnic communities. But one might ask, what has been left from active Multiculturalism in

today's Australia? In reality, the languages of various ethnic groups are fast disappearing from the Education systems of the Australian States through the neglect and eventual abolition of their teaching. They are also fast disappearing from the homes of migrant settlers in the various suburbs of the large Australian cities and, consequently, from the lips of the second and subsequent generations. About half a dozen efforts of publishing new Greek- language newspapers in the last fifteen years have failed. Doesn't this mean that the overall number of Greek readers is diminishing, year by year? Doesn't this mean that the Greek community, along with others, is losing the opportunity to have some of its younger and more active members learn Greek, to become professional teachers and thus to contribute to the teaching of the language and Greek civilisation in the every day school life and to the shaping of the future of the Australian multicultural society?

Still, Multiculturalism has created in Australia a more understanding and caring society. Australia had, in the pre-1970 decades, some difficult racist outbursts and the White Australia Policy which was aimed at Asian migration, but overall, there was not the kind of violence which was evident in early periods of American History. Since the 1970s, however, there has developed in Australia an encouraging climate of tolerance towards social and cultural differences which is a characteristic of the philosophy of Multiculturalism and a sign of a high cultural level of the wider society. In the year 2000 the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) remains, established in 1978, broadcasting radio and television programs regularly in the languages of the ethnic minorities, despite active governmental efforts to amalgamate it with the ABC, (the National Australian Broadcasting Commission), in 1981 and 1986. It should not be forgotten, howe-ver, that SBS is a concession of the Australian governments to the cultural and communication needs of the first generation of migrants in order to adapt them more easily and to make their life in Australia more pleasant. The survival of SBS is, to a large extent, due also to the pressure of the Greek-Australian community, along with that of other ethnic groups. Thus, the survival of SBS, its national importance and the means it is allocated should form in the future a vital concern of the organised Greek-Australian community.

Perhaps, the thoughts of Grivas of 1948 and the questions which were not put and the answers which were not given in 1958 must now intensely concern the various leaders of the Greek-Australian community. It seems that both the Church and the Communities lost a historic opportunity in 1958 by not trying to reach a common understanding. It was much more difficult later for this to happen when they took their separate ways. At this transitional period, there are some urgent questions needed to be discussed: What will become of the Church-Communities (their people) dispute in the future? What will become of the multitude of Greek associations in Australia?

It would have been better if a compromise was to be found in the decades-old dispute between the Archdiocese and the Communities. The Communities believe they have the right to retain their traditional structure and their historical ties with their churches which are controlled by the elected members of the laity and not by a single Archbishop, a centralised Archdiocese and their appointed councils. Undeniably, their members are the only ones who have the legal right to decide for themselves democratically about their future structure and cannot be forced or expected to give up part of their historical tradition without discussion, without negotiations and without guarantees as to what will follow and how they will be affected by the changes of an agreement. Some politicians and academics[2] who have supported the handing over of the Community churches to the Archdiocese should bear in mind that the Communities initially were established by their members with the object of providing church services to their community; they were run democratically and always operated within the rights guaranteed by the Australian legal system. On the other hand, in a multicultural society and in a country and a society which has developed in a tradition of absolute religious tolerance and no official religion, there are a number of Greek-Australians who are adherers of other creeds or who are agnostic or atheists. It is the duty of the Greek-Australian Communities to cater for those Greek-Australians too. The fulfilment of this duty may not be very high in the context of the present priorities of the Communities, but it can hardly be fulfilled with organisations not separating the religious element from their aims and frequently quarrelling about Church issues. This dis-

pute could have been settled in 1958 or in the 1960s if there had been more understanding of the situation on the part of the Archdiocese and the Ecumenical Patriarchate on the one hand and from the Federation of the Greek Communities on the other, and if the issue had not been allowed to become polarised.

Perhaps in the future small regional brotherhoods will not have the emotional usefulness they had in the 1960s and the 1970s or the numbers they used to have in the past or still have today, excepting those which will be able to develop some special association with the particular regions of origin of their founders. That will be very useful in strengthening the ties of the Australian-born generations with the land of their ancestors. Even so, although some would have some importance for their socialisation function, inevitably, their significance will be weakening with time at a time of mobility, of an increasing number of intermarriages and passing of the older generation.

The crucial question for the Greek-Australian community, of course, remains: what will be the attitude of the Greek-Australian second and subsequent generations concerning their cultural identity, in the next two or three decades? As aforementioned, the Australian-born generations already comprise the community's largest majority and thus, its present and future in Australia. People of the second generation are often distinguishing themselves in the professions and in business, but, although best-qualified, have not yet shown the passion and the energy which characterised members of the first generation in the past in organising and running the organisations of the community. The survival and the quality of the community in the future will depend very much on such energies and identification of the individuals with its institutions. Usually, the language is the first identity element to be lost on the way to assimilation. Still, however, other cultural elements may retain people's sense of special identity for many decades after the loss of language. Thus the loss of language does not necessarily indicate an expiry date for the identification of the individual with the particular community, but the apparent commencement of an expiratory period which, with the existence of interest, strengthening of other cultural ties and supportive policies, can be

extended. Trips to Greece and Cyprus contribute greatly in the strengthening of the cultural ties but this might not be equally feasible for persons of the third generation who no longer have known cousins and other close relatives there. Of course the production of balanced bilingual persons could contribute more than anything else, in the long term, in retaining the ties both with Greece and within the community. These are some of the major issues which ought to preoccupy the leaders of the community and, as time passes, will come more and more to the centre of future discussions.

ENDNOTES

1. The term 'Greek Australian community' designates the existence of people of Greek background in Australia (Paroikia). By Communities is meant the formally organised Communities in Australia, with their memberships, constitutions and legal structures.

2. Mr Grigoris Niotis in 1998 as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for the Greeks Abroad suggested that the Australian Communities outside the Archdiocese should hand over their churches to the Archdiocese. Professor Anastasios Tamis in some of his recent writings seems to hold a similar line of argument about the thought of the Communities handing over their churches to the Archdiocese. My view is that the churches are part of the traditional and legal framework of the Greek-Australian Communities concerned. Any change has to be discussed, negotiated, agreed and finally approved by the General Meetings of their members, according to the constitutions of the Communities.

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