

## **Politics and Greek Education in South Australia**

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The first intimation that a child of Greek descent in Australia is likely to get about its community's involvement in politics beyond that internal to the Greek community is the presence of non-Greek non-Orthodox "political personalities" at Greek Orthodox Church services on days special to the Greek ethnos such as 25 March, Greece's National Day, when officially Greeks celebrate the first stage of their liberation from centuries of Ottoman Turkish occupation.

Before World War II and in the first two decades after the war a considerable degree of deference and respect was shown to these people who were comparatively minor officials or politicians. In the pre-World War II period the leaders of the Greek community of South Australia perceived their community's situation to be precarious. In Kalgoorlie in the 1930s the Greeks, terrified by racial mob violence, had been driven into the bush where they cowered for several days until reassured by the local authorities (Price, 1963: 209). Pressures to assimilate were paramount (Price, 1963: Chap. VI).

Greece, as Britain's only ally successful against an Axis power (Italy) at the outset of World War II, had inadvertently raised the status of Greeks in Australia. Much of this more positive attitude towards Greek settlers was dissipated following the Greek Civil War (1946–49), which was portrayed in the Australian press as a battle between the free nations of the west and communism.

Australia itself was going through the throes of its own red scare in the late 1940s and the 1950s (Cain & Farrell, 1984: Chap.5). Nations labelled red or suspect because of the political ideology of some of their

citizens tended to cast a dark shadow over their fellow nationals in Australia. The leaders of the Greek community of South Australia were determined to reassure all authorities in Australia that the Greeks here were loyal and law-abiding. The Greeks in Adelaide felt very vulnerable as their community was very small and their political influence was almost negligible (Tsounis, 1975:25).

In the next two decades this situation was to change dramatically with a very substantial increase in the number of Greeks through mass migration. Their right to dual citizenship led to an exceptionally high rate of naturalisation. Their acquisition of the right to vote together with their concentration initially in a few electorates gave them a political significance that they had not previously experienced (Tsounis, 1971:579; Bureau of Immigration, 1991:43–44). The “personalities” invited to special occasions were now more influential politically, particularly following the more democratic redistribution of the electorates in this State in the early 1970s. Most of the post-World War II Greek migrants in South Australia, influenced by their unfortunate experiences in Greece in the 1940s and in the 1950s and by their socio-economic status as manual workers in factories, hospitals and public utilities, were Australian Labor Party supporters.

Before their political enfranchisement, the growing number of Greeks in this State, faced with pressures for assimilation and largely ignored by the broader Australian community and Greece, had turned inwards and had taken initiatives and measures designed to protect their Greekness, their Hellenism (Smith, 1986:23–30).

The role of the Greek Orthodox Church was crucial. The Greek communities formed initially around their church. Orthodoxy and its associated religious celebrations and festivities were central to village life in Greece. Its influence was all-pervasive. For Greeks abroad it was inconceivable to have a Greek community without the Orthodox Church at its centre. The established church in Greece played a significant and conservative political role. Abroad it was also to play a significant role in the internal politics of the Greek community in South Australia.

Community and church were closely interwoven. In the 1950s, however, there existed a palpable tension between the two that led by the end of that decade to open conflict and division between sections of the Greek community and the hierarchy of the Greek Orthodox Church in Australia. In South Australia the Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Inc created its own ecclesiastical organisation in opposition to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. This latter organisation was under the aegis of the Oecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and was recognised by the government of Greece. The churches under the control of the Greek Orthodox Community of SA Inc, which had no such recognition, were organised as the Autocephalous Greek Orthodox Church.

This ecclesiastical schism with its deep socio-political underpinning had political repercussions beyond the limits of the broader Greek community. The split had its impact on politics in South Australia. The Greek Community of SA Inc became clearly identified with the left of politics in South Australia and, in particular, with the Australian Labor Party. Rightly or wrongly the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia became identified with the political Right in the minds of the supporters of the Greek Orthodox Community of SA Inc. Extensive analyses of this internecine conflict and its repercussions can be found in the works of Dr Michael Tsounis and Professor A. Tamis (Tsounis, 1971 and Tamis, 1997 & 2000).

Before the early 1970s Greek language maintenance had been the almost exclusive responsibility of Greek community (ethnic) schools founded and supported financially by the various Greek communities. The financial burden and the pressure on human resources were becoming overwhelming with the very rapid growth of student numbers in these classes conducted after normal school hours. The quality of teaching in terms of qualifications and skills was rapidly becoming attenuated.

In May 1971 the Australian Greek University Association (AGUA) of the University of Adelaide had organised a Hellenic Students' Convention. One of the organisers of this convention in Adelaide was a young law student, Nick Bolkus, who today is a senior Australian Labor

Party Senator and former Minister in Federal Labor Governments. He forwarded a number of resolutions to the State Minister for Education, Mr Hugh Hudson, concerning the education of migrant children, among which were the need to improve the teaching of English to migrant children, the need to remove discriminatory practices and the need to promote the teaching of Modern Greek at secondary and tertiary education levels. The Minister's reply was deemed to be unsatisfactory. Bolkus asserted that "children of Greek parentage were not getting a fair deal from the State and Federal governments" (Bolkus, 1971:3–4). Bolkus was closely associated with the Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Inc.

The students at the convention were concerned about the disadvantages confronting students of Greek descent in the State school system and the lack of services to facilitate communication with their parents who had very limited knowledge of English. Another related issue discussed at this convention was the shortage of adequately educated teachers in the community schools for the maintenance and promotion of Greek language and culture.

Two students of Greek descent at the University of Adelaide and members of AGUA who had attended this convention (Cosmos Christo and George Giannopoulos) approached N. Ganzis, a lecturer in History at the Adelaide College of Advanced Education, and asked for his assistance on two issues: improving communications between the Greek parents and the school and promoting the education of teachers of Modern Greek. They believed that his experience with the Education Department of South Australia and his Greek origin placed him ideally in a position to make a positive contribution.

However, N. Ganzis' contacts with the Greek communities were almost non-existent, as was his knowledge of the Greek language. Nevertheless, he offered to assist in any way he could. With the cooperation of these two university students N. Ganzis approached the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Inc and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia with a very concrete proposal.

He offered to head a deputation representative of both organisations

to approach the Primary Division of the State Education Department with a proposal that a directive be sent from the Education Department to the headmasters of Primary Schools which had large concentrations of children of Greek descent, to request the appointment of primary school teachers of Greek descent who had a functioning knowledge of the Greek language. The rationale behind this proposal was that these teachers would provide a focus for Greek parents in their communication with the school. The school would not have to rely on children to interpret when the parents wished to discuss a range of issues affecting their children. Besides facilitating better parent-teacher relationships, these teachers could also act as role models for the children of Greek descent who could now be openly proud of their descent as they had teachers who were Greeks like themselves. Moreover, this proposal would not lead to any increase of costs for the Education Department. A second proposal aimed at the introduction of a systematic programme of teaching Modern Greek in the primary school system. Mr A.E. Wood, the Deputy Director of Primary Education, provided a list of schools whose student population had ten percent or more children of Greek descent (Wood, 1971).

The Greek communities in South Australia had been split over a number of issues since 1959 (Kellis, 1984:59–60; Tsounis, 1975:55). As the need was great, however, the proposal was agreed to by the two major organisations. Representatives from both groups, including clerics, together with a sub-committee of AGUA, formed the deputation. This was quite a dramatic move as the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia saw the clerics of the Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Inc as uncanonical (Makarios, 1972). N. Ganzis led this large and united deputation to lobby Mr A.E. Wood, the Deputy Director of Primary Education (Ganzis, 1976:7). There was resistance to the idea of Modern Greek being taught systematically in State primary schools. Even the proposal for issuing a directive for the appointment of teachers of Greek descent which was not too radical and would not have added to the financial burden of the Education Department met with some opposition (Ganzis, 1976:13–17). However, the Primary Schools Headmasters' Association

was more positive and responsive. Those headmasters who had schools with large concentrations of children of Greek descent were especially keen to implement this proposal (Wood, 1971). In 1972 a number of such appointments and transfers were made and the schools that acquired such teachers were to report later a distinct improvement in contact and communication between the schools and Greek parents. A number of such schools were also to report a diminution of behavioural problems from children of Greek descent.

In response to lobbying from the Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Inc for assistance in the preparation of qualified teachers of Modern Greek, the Dunstan State ALP government had approached the University of Adelaide with a proposal for the appointment of a lecturer in Modern Greek language within the Classics Department where Ancient Greek was being taught (Tsamantanis, 1972). The Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Inc continued to increase pressure on the State Government for assistance “to sustain Greek language and culture” (*Advertiser*, 1973:6).

The ALP had been pressing the University of Adelaide to come to a decision on the issue (Adel. Uni. Minutes, 1972a). A number of reasons, including fears of intrusion into the “University’s freedom”, were put forward by the University’s Education Committee that were tantamount to a rejection of the ALP proposal. Despite protestations of interest in introducing Modern Greek, there was resistance to the idea. The University’s Education Committee proposed that the State government’s interest in producing teachers of Modern Greek could be met more economically from graduates of the University of Sydney, which had recently decided to introduce a programme of Modern Greek language and literature (Adel. Uni. Minutes, 1972b:1). Finally, the University of Adelaide agreed to the introduction of Modern Greek, but under conditions that were economically prohibitive at that time. The University authorities insisted that this was adequately funded to provide a Chair and lectureship, together with ancillary and special library staff and language laboratory services and accommodation, and it was recognised as being

extra to the submissions made by the University, and without prejudice to them or to existing activities either during the 1973–1975 triennium or later (Adel. Uni. Minutes, 1972c).

However, circumstances and attitudes were changing. The Federal ALP, elected to government at the end of 1972, and the Dunstan State ALP government were moving rapidly towards embracing a policy of multiculturalism that was to promote language maintenance for ethnic communities. The electoral influence of migrant communities was now widely recognised. In South Australia this changing mood was being reflected in the responses of government agencies and instrumentalities. The Public Examinations Board, when approached by the AGUA sub-committee led by N. Ganzis, indicated that it was keen to have the discipline introduced as an examinable subject for matriculation (Morris, 1972). The Education Department, particularly the Secondary Division, supported the training of teachers so that Modern Greek could be introduced as soon as possible. Because initiatives were being taken to have Modern Greek introduced at the Adelaide Teachers College, the Education Department indicated that it was prepared to release appropriate teaching personnel on full pay for them to acquire the initial basic skills (Educ. Dept. Correspondence, 1972–73).

When Mr Ganzis learned of the conditions being proposed by the University of Adelaide for the teaching of Modern Greek and the State government's reluctance to concur, he suggested to the sub-committee of AGUA that the Adelaide Teachers College might be interested in taking on this role, especially as it wished to broaden its teaching base because it was to become the Adelaide College of Advanced Education (ACAE). N. Ganzis approached the College's Principal, Mr K.R. Gilding, who supported the idea of teaching Modern Greek. Mr Gilding contacted the Greek community leaders, who responded positively to the introduction of Modern Greek at the College (Gilding Correspondence, 1972–73). A deputation consisting of N. Ganzis, J. Kiosoglous representing the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and N. Manos representing the Greek Orthodox Community of SA Inc, called on the Minister for

Education, Mr Hugh Hudson, who accepted the proposal immediately as it helped the ALP fulfil its obligation to provide teachers for the Greek communities (Ganzis, 1973).

Mr Ganzis, who was requested to prepare a budget for the Board of Advanced Education's (BAE) triennium funding for 1973–75 covering the needs for teaching and ancillary staff, office equipment and stationery as well as funding for the library, submitted a request for the appointment of three teaching personnel and a specialist typist in Modern Greek in addition to library and other needs of a language department at tertiary level. Mr L.A. Braddock, the Chairman of the BAE, considered the budget estimates to be excessive, but he finally accepted them as a result of political pressure from the ALP governments at both State and Federal levels. L.A. Braddock mentioned to K. Gilding that N. Ganzis must have considerable political clout because of the pressure exerted (Gilding Correspondence, 1973). Primary and secondary school teachers were released from the Education Department for the intensive course that began in September 1973. The teaching of Modern Greek at secondary level began in 1974. The teachers were required to continue their further education in language and literature to complete four years of study (Educ. Dept. Correspondence, 1973). The numbers studying Modern Greek at all levels rose very rapidly throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, when a decline became evident. This decline continued throughout the 1990s with a consequent pressure to close or reduce programmes in schools and at the tertiary level (Ganzis, 1999a: 162–64).

The initial success of this cooperative endeavour between the two major Greek organisations led to an attempt in 1974 to establish a professional consultative committee that would help organise the professional and entrepreneurial expertise of the Greek communities for the benefit of all organisations. Its purpose would have been exclusively advisory and advice and support would only have been provided after initiatives by the association or organisation to request assistance. This apparently innocuous and neutral initiative disintegrated at a meeting in Waymouth Street where the bitterness of the divisions between the two major Greek

organisations surfaced with accusations and recriminations and calls for the rule of democracy. It was in this year that the Greek Junta fell after seven years of authoritarian rule.

The introduction of interpreting and translating courses at the ACAE helped to promote further the study of Modern Greek. The official recognition of a need for such services surfaced with the establishment of the Migrant Task Force set up by A.J. Grassby, the Minister for Immigration in the Whitlam Federal ALP government. N. Ganzis appeared as a witness before a sub-committee of the Task Force. The Task Force presented its first report on South Australia in September 1973. It identified three languages for which interpreting and translating services were needed: Greek, Italian and Serbo-Croat (Migrant Task Force, 1973:4–8). A report by the Department of Immigration, based on research regarding the provision of interpreting/translating services carried out in 1972–73, stated “that deficiencies in the existing provisions in the community at large are fairly widespread and that special action to alleviate the position is required” (Immigration Dept. Report, 1973:1–2). More and better-trained and qualified interpreters and translators were required. The Committee on Overseas Professional Qualifications (COPQ) published a paper on training interpreters and translators and on the various standards required. COPQ acknowledged the tertiary level programme proposed by the Adelaide College of Advanced Education (COPQ, 1974:15).

N. Ganzis had prepared the ACAE proposal submitted to COPQ and had been commissioned to produce a survey of existing interpreting and translating courses in Australia. This report formed the basis of a submission to the BAE for the funding of interpreting/translating courses at the ACAE (Ganzis, 1974). The BAE was not convinced of the need for such courses in South Australia. To increase pressure on the BAE, the issue of interpreting/translating needs and training had to have wide public support. Social welfare organisations and associations sponsored a conference on interpreter/translator services in June 1975. A steering committee, of which N. Ganzis was a member, was established to implement the resolutions of the conference. The key resolutions aimed at

establishing courses for the training of interpreters and translators, Level III (Degree level), at the Adelaide C.A.E. and Level II (Certificate level), within the Department of Further Education (now TAFE). Apart from publicising the need for such services in interviews on radio and television programmes, through press reports and lobbying politicians, the steering committee was assisted in its publicity campaign by the support of community organisations such as the Campbelltown Community Consultative Council as well as SACOSS, the South Australian Council of Social Services. Support was also forthcoming from social workers in the Commonwealth Department of Social Security (Steiner, 1975).

The steering committee organised a second conference on 27 February 1976 and reported that the only practical achievement had been the establishment of short-term courses by the Department of Further Education on an *ad hoc* basis. The steering committee's brief was renewed and the lobbying continued until 1977 when the submission of the ACAE was successful and an Associate Diploma in Interpreting and Translating in Modern Greek and Italian (a two year course) began in 1978. This was later converted to a Level III three-year Bachelor of Arts (Interpreting/Translating) course. The community support for this campaign was much broader than the Greek Community as it involved the Italian community as well as social welfare professional organisations (Interpreting/Translating, 1977: Appendix C, 3). Once again it was the acknowledgement of the electoral and political influence of ethnic communities in conjunction with a favourable economic climate that brought about the introduction of such courses.

Prior to the introduction of the interpreting/translating course at the ACAE, the College, in cooperation with the Commonwealth Department of Social Security in Adelaide and the Prahran College of Advanced Education in Victoria, undertook the supervision and partial training of three interpreters/translators for the Department of Social Security. Prahran handled the language side through special leave for these students in the employ of the Department, while ACAE handled the cultural and ethical aspects of the Prahran course. N. Ganzis, who supervised

this programme and taught certain aspects associated with the history of the countries of origin and the processes of migration and settlement, gained valuable experience that helped in the formulation of the submission to the BAE for interpreting/translating courses at TAFE and Adelaide College of Advanced Education levels.

Despite these advances in the teaching of Modern Greek at tertiary level, there were certain students who were being disadvantaged. Students at Adelaide and Flinders Universities who wished to study this subject at the ACAE had to enrol at the College separately and their studies at the College were not recognised by the universities and could not be incorporated in their university degrees. Nevertheless, many university students undertook such College studies as an overload. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the Colleges of Advanced Education were not permitted to offer post-graduate degrees, though the ACAE arranged for university students and others who were not enrolled in a College degree course to get a post-graduate diploma based on course work only. Pressure was placed on the ACAE to exclude students enrolled at universities or who wanted to study only Modern Greek at an advanced level, because funding for the colleges of advanced education was based on the number of students enrolled in degree courses. These developments had a negative impact on both the university students who wanted to study Modern Greek and those members of the Greek community who wished to advance their knowledge of the language, as well as on the Modern Greek Department and the Modern Greek sector of the interpreting/translating course. The ACAE Administration issued instructions that these students were no longer to be admitted. The argument was that the universities were being paid for these students and the College was not receiving any funding for teaching them. Likewise, no funding was available for students enrolled in single subjects. For these reasons Modern Greek in South Australia was not on a par with other languages.

These issues were discussed by the Modern Greek Language Teachers Association (MGLTA), which called a meeting of interested persons in June 1980 for the purpose of electing a representative committee that

would work for the introduction of Modern Greek to a university in South Australia (MGLTA, 1980). This meeting was held at the Adelaide College of the Arts and Education (ACA&E) formed by the merger of ACAE and the Torrens CAE. The central argument of the MGLTA was that many of the better matriculants in Modern Greek did not carry on their studies at university level and that this was due to a lack of opportunity.

The Head of the Modern Greek Studies Department at the ACA&E, Dr Paul Tuffin, gave qualified support for the undertaking, indicating that a full department would be needed for post-graduate studies to be viable at a university. He stressed that close cooperation would be needed between the College and a university for two tertiary level programmes to succeed. Moreover, he did not feel optimistic about the chances for success, given the adverse economic climate prevailing in education at that time (Tuffin, 1980).

The Committee was elected with Dr Alex Diamantis, Chief Examiner in Modern Greek and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Chemistry of the University of Adelaide, as President and N. Ganzis as Secretary. The Secretary was responsible for the compilation and printing of a memorandum that would present the case for the introduction of Modern Greek to a university in South Australia. Its aim was two-fold: to convince the universities that the introduction of Modern Greek was viable and worthwhile and to convince the politicians to provide the financial support for a Chair of Modern Greek together with teaching and other personnel for the undertaking of post-graduate studies. Dr Tuffin provided a report on the quality of Modern Greek literature that included the Nobel Laureate for Literature, George Seferis. N. Ganzis and Dr Tuffin provided the statistical argument to show that there existed a solid base upon which a Department of Modern Greek could rely for future students. The main thrust of the statistical argument was that in the Greek ethnic schools and, since the inception of Modern Greek studies, in the public education sector in the early 1970s, the numbers studying Modern Greek had been growing significantly and consistently at all levels. There were a number of university students studying Modern Greek at the College. A survey

of students of Greek background at both Adelaide and Flinders universities and matriculant students indicated that a very high proportion supported the idea of introducing Modern Greek to a university and that many of these would be interested in pursuing such studies (Ganzis, 1980).

To convince the university authorities in South Australia that the study of Modern Greek had international status and prestige, N. Ganzis assembled data indicating which universities around the world and in Australia had full programmes of Modern Greek studies. There were Modern Greek courses at the Universities of Los Angeles, Chicago, Columbia and Princeton in the U.S.A. A new Chair of Modern Greek had been established at Harvard University. In Canada there were courses at McGill and Toronto Universities. In the United Kingdom there were courses at Oxford, Cambridge, London, Birmingham and Edinburgh as well as elsewhere. Greek courses were taught on the European continent with many western European nations teaching full programmes at two or more universities. In Australia Modern Greek was being taught at New England, Sydney and Melbourne Universities (Ganzis, 1993:301). Such widespread interest in this discipline served to reinforce the argument for the intrinsic value of Modern Greek language and literature.

At the time that the Committee, with the full support of the two major community organisations, approached South Australia's two universities with its submission for the introduction of Modern Greek (Correspondence, May 1981), it became known that the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC, 1981) and the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (Aust. Inst., 1980:63–69) had requested universities throughout Australia to make submissions for the teaching of community languages, that is, those languages other than English that were widely used in the broader Australian community.

To strengthen its case for funding from the Institute, the Committee organised a deputation of community representatives with N. Ganzis as its spokesperson to call on the South Australian Premier, the Hon. David Tonkin, and members of his cabinet to gain the State Liberal government's political support for the funding. It was hoped that Dr Tonkin would have

some influence with the Fraser Liberal–National Coalition government in Canberra. The Premier undertook to communicate his support of the Committee’s proposal for Commonwealth funding for a Modern Greek programme at a university in South Australia (Correspondence, Aug. 1981).

The proposal had the strong support of the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia (TEASA, 1981). Dr G. Ramsey, the Principal of the South Australian College of Advanced Education (SACAE), supported the initiative and suggested close cooperation between the university granted the funding and the SACAE (SACAE, 1981). The University of Adelaide, however, had serious reservations about the viability of such a discipline and continued to be as negative as it had been in the early 1970s even though the proposal aimed at the establishment of a complete department. The University of Adelaide’s refusal seemed all the more strange as most of the demands they had put forward in the early 1970s would have been met. Maybe they were so precious about their “independence” that they were inherently opposed to the idea of a university responding to community needs, even though that community contributed to the university’s funding through taxation. Maybe the reasons go even deeper. It was suggested that perhaps Flinders University might be interested (Notes, 1981).

Flinders University was indeed interested, and a submission was prepared for the funds set aside to promote community languages. The submission was for a Chair and full department costing \$636,900 for the period 1981–86 inclusive (Flinders, 1981). When the Greek Consul-General in Adelaide learned about the submission, he persuaded the Hellenic Republic to make a gesture of goodwill by offering US\$3,000 towards the Chair should the submission be successful (Camilos, 1981).

The Committee was not informed of the failure of the Flinders submission until January 1982, even though a Ministerial News Release had been distributed in Canberra before Christmas 1981 (Fife, 1982). The Greek communities in South Australia took this as a slight. There was a strong consensus of opinion in South Australia that the allocation of funding to Victoria for the expansion of Modern Greek to yet another

University on the eve of State elections there smacked too much of political pork-barrelling (Grahame, 1982). Despite this setback the Committee determined to continue its efforts for the introduction of Modern Greek at Flinders. N. Ganzis sought specific information from Flinders University regarding costs for the establishment of a Chair and the minimum establishment acceptable to the University for the introduction of Modern Greek (Ganzis, 1982).

The Committee's secretary called a meeting of the Greek communities' representatives to renew its mandate and to inform them that the SACAE would no longer accept single unit enrolments in Modern Greek because it did not receive any funding for these students. The impact would be a dramatic reduction in the number of university students studying Modern Greek at the College (Gilding, 1982). Attempts were made to lobby SACAE to make allowance for university students who wished to study Modern Greek, but no promises were forthcoming (Ramsey, 1982). The communities' representatives made it clear that they were in no position to support financially the establishment of a Chair of Modern Greek, though they supported the secretary's motion that the Committee be empowered to approach the Labor Opposition at both State and Federal levels to determine ALP policy on issues related to the maintenance of Modern Greek (Committee, 1982).

The S.A. State ALP declared its support for Modern Greek (Arnold, 1982). The Federal ALP had, as part of its national platform, recorded its strong support for the teaching of ethnic languages (Dawkins, 1982). The Committee wanted a more specific commitment from the ALP. To convince the Labor Party to support the introduction of Modern Greek to Flinders University, the secretary of the Committee organised a petition. The editor of the local Greek newspaper, Bill Konstas, and Senator Nick Bolkus supported this initiative, which had to be completed before the impending Federal election. Senator Bolkus undertook to lobby Mr J. Dawkins for a specific commitment (Minutes, 1982). More than 4,000 signatures were gathered in support of this cause within a few weeks. This support in conjunction with the lobbying efforts of Senator Nick Bolkus

and Mr Mick Young, MHR for Port Adelaide and strategist for the ALP electoral campaign of 1983, led to a formal commitment by the Federal ALP on 29 October 1982 to fund a Chair of Modern Greek at Flinders University together with the support of the S.A. State government and the Greek communities of South Australia (Press Release, 1982).

The ALP victory in the Federal election of March 1983 meant for many that it would only be a matter of time before the Labor Party honoured its pledge. N. Ganzis, the secretary of the committee, sent a letter of congratulations to Senator the Hon Susan Ryan, the new Federal Minister for Education, together with a reminder of the ALP's pledge concerning the introduction of Modern Greek to Flinders University (Correspondence, April 1983). Moreover, both State and Federal ALP parliamentarians were urged to lobby the new Minister for the fulfilment of the pledge (Correspondence, April/May 1983). Senator Ryan's response to a question by Senator Crowley in the Senate on this issue was disappointing. The Minister for Education stated that the proposal to establish a Chair of Modern Greek at Flinders University had been included in Flinders University's submission for the triennium 1985–87 and would be an issue to be discussed between Flinders University and the CTEC. The government would consider the CTEC's "advice in the light of its pre-election undertaking when the Commission reports in April 1984" (Hansard, 1983:628). Because the Minister did not communicate this decision to the Committee, which learned about it through the press (*Nea Ellada*, 1983:3), N. Ganzis forwarded a strongly worded letter of complaint about the content of the reply as well as the perceived slight to the Greek communities of South Australia (Correspondence, June 1983). Senator Bolkus urged the Minister to take a personal interest in the matter of fulfilling a pre-election promise. He pointed out that it was not satisfactory to say now that a decision would be made within the context of overall national objectives and in line with funding principles. He would not accept this answer and he was sure that the constituency to which it was given would not accept it (Bolkus, 1983). While still insisting that the normal channel of triennial budgeting was the best way to implement the pledge, the

Minister agreed to meet community representatives in order to restore good relations (Ryan, 1983). Senator Ryan assured the Greek communities of Labor's commitment to the pledge (*Greek News*, 1984:3, 5).

At the State level, the Hon. Chris Sumner, Minister for Ethnic Affairs in the Bannon Labor government, assured the Legislative Council that the State ALP continued to support the establishment of the Chair (*The News*, 1984). State and Federal parliamentarians were kept informed of developments and were urged by N. Ganzis to maintain pressure on the Federal Minister for a rapid decision (Correspondence, 1984).

The real cause of the delay emerged when Senator Susan Ryan issued the *Guidelines to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission for the 1985–87 Triennium*. Special provision was to be made for the Chair of Modern Greek at Flinders University "within the overall recurrent funds available in accordance with an undertaking given in 1982". Indeed, recommendation 7.4 of the *Guidelines* stated that the SA Minister of Education should approach his Federal counterpart to negotiate the immediate introduction of Modern Greek at Flinders and Adelaide Universities (*Guidelines*, 1984). The Universities Council and the CTEC wanted special funding above and beyond the recurrent funding already committed for the 1985–87 triennium, because funding for programmes already submitted and approved would be adversely affected (Hancock, 1984).

In the negotiations that followed between the Federal government, the State government and the Committee representatives, the Greek communities' representatives were informed that the Federal government would provide \$250,000, the SA State government would provide \$50,000 as a one-off contribution and the Greek communities of South Australia would be required to provide \$40,000 as a one-off expenditure for the Library (Arnold, 1984). None of this had been mentioned when the promise had been made in the pre-election period.

The CTEC and the Universities Council then suggested that as the State government and the Greek communities had guaranteed funding sufficient for 1985, the CTEC would not be required to provide any funds

for that year. This proposal angered both the State ALP and the Greek communities. The attitude of the CTEC was that it did not even want to part with \$100,000 in 1986 and \$150,000 in 1987, as “the Government’s broader intake objectives should have priority” (Hansard, 1985). Thus the CTEC proposed that the 1986 and 1987 funds should be conditional on the State and the Greek communities meeting the costs in 1985. The Hawke ALP government backed down rather than face the potential political backlash created by the CTEC’s bureaucratic delays as N. Ganzis threatened to expose the whole charade publicly (Ganzis, 1985). Consequently, a supplementary report was published that indicated that the Minister had accepted CTEC advice to make funds available for 1986 and 1987. The hidden agenda all along had been the CTEC’s and Universities Council’s resentment of political interference in higher education that would disrupt already established and agreed upon priorities (Supplementary Report, 1985:58).

On 16 August 1985 the Minister for Education, Senator the Hon. Susan Ryan, and the Special Minister of State, Mr Mick Young, announced that the ALP government would provide earmarked funds for the establishment of a Chair of Modern Greek at Flinders University (News Release, 1985). Two problems now confronted the Committee: finding an appropriate candidate for the inaugural position of Professor and raising the communities’ commitment of \$40,000.

Dr A. Diamantis, Mr Nick Ganzis, Ms Koula Kossiavelos representing Greek Australian University Students, Mr John Kiosoglous representing the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and Mr Nick Niarchos, President of the Greek Orthodox Community of South Australia Inc, constituted the group responsible for raising the funds. The Greek Community of South Australia Inc donated \$5,000. Other Greek associations and brotherhoods and individuals contributed much smaller amounts. Despite the high level of publicity and a radio telethon only \$13,000 was raised. Most of the Greek bodies and associations approached did not even bother to reply to the appeal for funds. Fortunately, Mr C. Karabetsis, the Consul-General for Greece, saved the day. He persuaded the Greek

government to add sufficient funds to its already pledged US\$3,000 to ensure that the amount committed by the Greek communities was attained. That is, the Hellenic Republic provided a total of Aust \$27,000.

Flinders University undertook the responsibility for advertising the Chair of Modern Greek in association with the Committee. Advertisements were placed in appropriate journals and newspapers both here in Australia and abroad. Personal approaches by N. Ganzis, who was on sabbatical leave in Greece in 1986, to people like Professor George Savidis of the University of Thessaloniki, to Professor Mitsakis of the University of Athens and to Professor Kostas Dimadis of the University of Amsterdam for recommendations produced no positive results. There was a dearth of qualified people prepared to go to the antipodes. It was not until the middle of 1988 that a Flinders University Chair Appointment Committee was able to approve the appointment of Dr D. Dimiroulis, a lecturer in Modern Greek at Sydney University, as the inaugural Professor of Modern Greek. The first courses in Modern Greek at Flinders University began in the 1989 academic year.

With the establishment and teaching of Modern Greek in Greek ethnic/community schools, in State primary schools, in State secondary schools, in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese College of St. George and at tertiary level, first at the College of Advanced Education and then at Flinders University, it seemed that the Greek communities in South Australia had succeeded in getting the political and financial support of both the State and Federal governments of different political persuasions to ensure the maintenance and promotion of Hellenism here. One of the cornerstones of Greek ethnic identity seemed to be firmly in place.

Undermining this apparent success, however, were structural problems that could not be resolved by political will. Migration from Greece and Cyprus had virtually dried up. Without the infusion of greater numbers, it was a moot point whether the Greek communities could attain the critical mass needed for the communities and hence the Greek programmes to become self-sustaining. The numbers of migrant settlers had declined almost to zero and there had occurred an increase in repatriation

to Greece. The numbers of mixed marriages of the second and subsequent generations were and still are increasing and the birth rate of second and subsequent generations has been declining to that of the Australian norm so that existing numbers are barely being sustained (Ganzis, 1999b:78–80). No systematic or institutional efforts have been initiated to attract students of non-Greek background to undertake the study of Modern Greek.

The statistics for enrolments in Modern Greek at all levels are gloomy. The number of State schools teaching Modern Greek has been declining and there seems to be no organised and coordinated community effort to staunch the haemorrhaging (Ganzis, 1995–96). The enrolments of students in community schools have also been declining (Ganzis, 1999a:164).

The Greek communities need to undertake serious planning to ensure the viability of Greek studies well into the future. This must include an in-depth analysis of the demographic distribution and concentration of those of Greek descent and the production of a plan that the State Education Department can be persuaded to adopt, so that parents who wish their children to undertake Greek studies in a long-term and systematic manner from the primary school stage to the end of their secondary education can send their children to schools where such programmes are available. This will require effective political lobbying. Adopting a new approach encouraging children of non-Greek descent to take up the study of Greek would facilitate this lobbying. Indeed, for many children of Greek descent Greek may not be their mother tongue in the same sense as it was for the children of Greek migrants. It would also be beneficial to work in cooperation with other interested parties for the promotion of languages other than English. The politicians must be convinced to implement serious educational policies that have a multicultural and multilingual orientation. Australia's essentially monocultural and monolingual education systems are disadvantageous to the country and to future generations of Australians.

The Head of Modern Greek at Flinders University, Associate Professor Michael Tsianikas, has undertaken many initiatives to arouse community

interest in the future of Modern Greek at Flinders University, which has been under threat throughout the 1990s (Ganzis, 1999a:167). Indeed, his efforts have produced positive results in that enrolments seem to have stabilised and the University authorities are aware of the political backing of the communities. However, Professor Faith Trent, Head of the Flinders University Faculty of Education, Humanities, Law and Theology, pointed out recently that all languages other than English are under threat because of low enrolments. A comment in a newspaper article attributed to Professor Trent indicated that “only funding from the Greek Government enabled Flinders University to keep teaching Modern Greek” (*Advertiser*, 2000:38). While such an assertion is debatable, it remains true to point out that there are no guarantees for the continuation of Modern Greek at Flinders University. Considerable effort is required to change government and university educational policies so that languages other than English are given the status they deserve. They should be central and part of the mainstream educational prerequisites for an Australia that lays claim to being the clever country.

The major lesson from all the endeavours to maintain and promote Greek language and culture is that political success in achieving one’s objectives can be overturned. Negative circumstances created by a changing socio-political climate and by distorted perceptions of economic progress enable those in authority to change what appear to be basic social policies, including the achievement of social justice through the support of such policies as multiculturalism. The hard won achievements in Greek language and culture in the 1970s and 1980s are under threat in South Australia. To maintain them and to build on them require the same determination and will that were demonstrated to achieve them.

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