

# *The Donald W. Treadgold Papers*

*In Russian, East European,  
and Central Asian Studies*

## **Macedonia's Child-Grandfathers: The Transnational Politics of Memory, Exile, and Return, 1948-1998**

**Keith Brown**

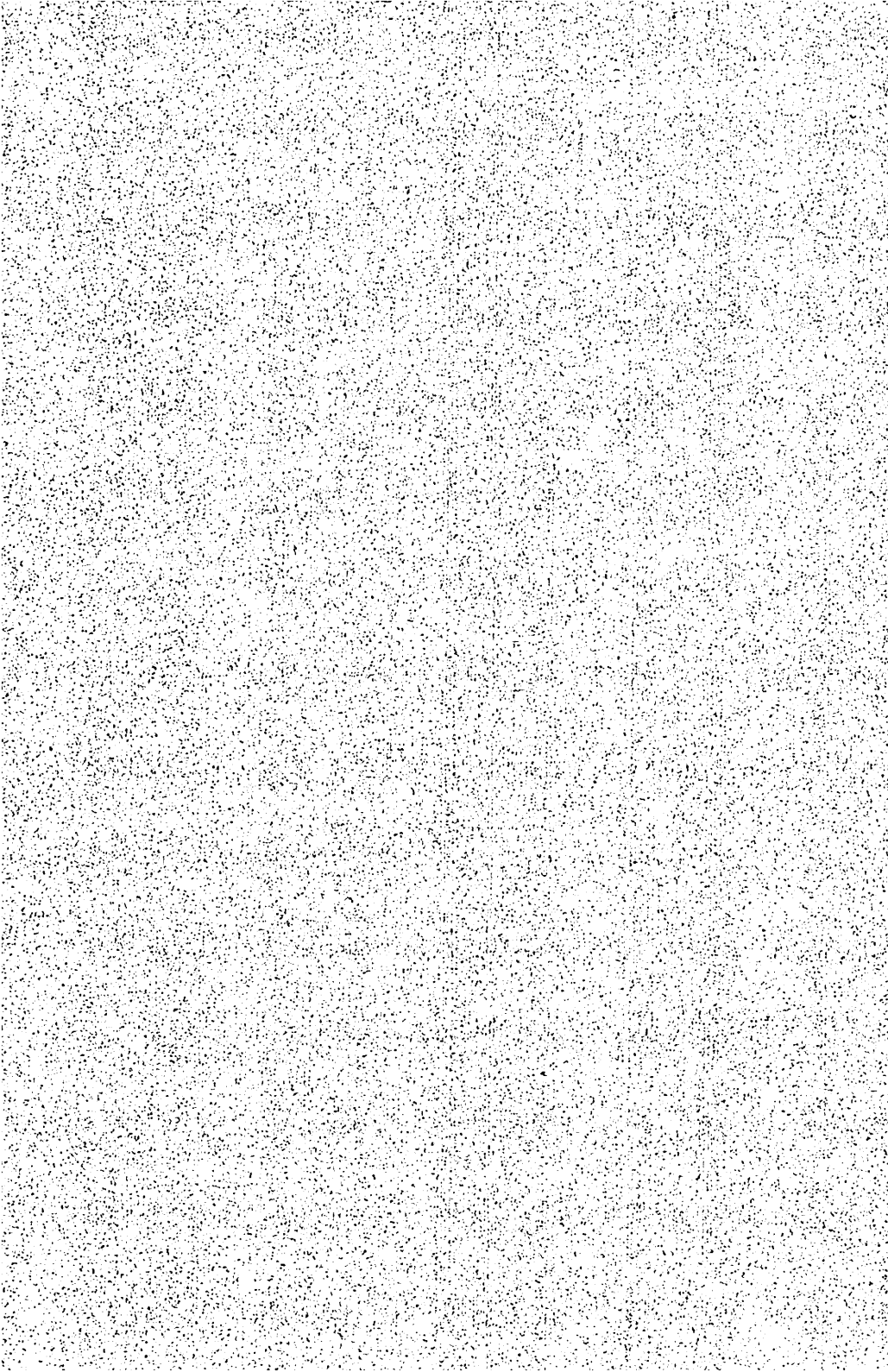
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## About this series

The *Donald W. Treadgold Papers* publication series was created to honor a great teacher and great scholar. Donald W. Treadgold was professor of history and international studies at the University of Washington from 1949 to 1993. During that time, he wrote seven books, one of which — *Twentieth Century Russia* — went into eight editions. He was twice editor of *Slavic Review*, the organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, and received the AAASS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Slavic Studies, as well as the AAASS Award for Distinguished Service. Professor Treadgold molded several generations of Russian historians and contributed enormously to the field of Russian history. He was, in other ways as well, an inspiration to all who knew him.

The *Treadgold Papers* series was created in 1993 on the occasion of Professor Treadgold's retirement, on the initiative of Professor Daniel Waugh. Professor Treadgold passed away in December 1994. The series is dedicated to the memory of a great man, publishing papers in those areas which were close to his heart.

Glennys Young, Editor  
Sabrina P. Ramet, Editor (1994-2001)

## About the author of this issue

**Keith Brown** holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Chicago and is an assistant research professor at the Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. His first book, *The Past in Question*, examines changing images of the Ilinden Uprising of 1903 in the twentieth-century history of Macedonian national identity

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## Introduction

On June 1998, the Second World Congress of Child-Refugees was held in Skopje in the Republic of Macedonia. Organized by non-governmental organizations in Macedonia, Canada, Australia, and other Eastern European countries, the meeting brought together members of a dispersed community created 50 years earlier, when in the course of the Greek Civil War around 28,000 children left their homes in Northern Greece for Yugoslavia and other East European countries. For many who shared this experience and now live scattered around the world, 1948 represents a defining moment, the personal consequences of which they still feel today. They are people who identify themselves as Macedonians and as *deca begalci*—child-refugees. Now older, ranging in age from 52 to 66 in 1998, most have married and had children and grandchildren, to whom they have often passed on their sense of concern with this episode in history. The 50th anniversary of what some call the “Exodus” has profound significance for this community. For many, a particularly prominent issue is their right to return to their birthplaces in Greece. They are also united by a concern that as their generation ages and eventually dies the events which mean so much to them will be forgotten.

The meeting of the *deca begalci* in Skopje in 1998 was thus both a commemoration and a reunion; it was also an assertion of collective identity which continues to claim certain rights today. The organizers expressed pride in keeping alive memories that are not championed by any state, but instead remain threatening or embarrassing for current governments. As at a previous meeting held in Skopje in 1988, the Congress included cultural performances and exhibitions, as well as some scholarly activities and social gatherings. A key component of both meetings, though, was an attempt by attendees to visit their family homes in Northern Greece. On both occasions Greek officials prevented some from crossing the border, consistent with a state policy that considers these proud bearers of Macedonian identity as unwelcome aliens in their country of origin.

In these meetings and in the activities of those who organized and attend them, personal and political issues were intertwined. The process by which the movement of 28,000 children 50 years ago led to a meeting of a transnational community of *deca begalci* in Skopje a full 50 years later—when, as one skeptical Macedonian told me, many of these children are now grandfathers—is obviously a complex one, in which the interests of states and individuals, and the structure of international politics play important roles. In this essay, I attempt to lay out the key conditions and contexts which have led to the shaping of the *deca begalci* community in its current form. To do so I draw on interviews conducted between 1992 and 2000 with a number of people who are members or potential members of this community. I also draw on interviews with a broader set of citizens from the Republic of Macedonia, archival sources pertaining to various forced migrants from Northern Greece, and the relative wealth of primary and secondary materials dealing with the history of the *deca begalci* that have been published in the Republic of Macedonia and elsewhere since the early 1990s.

This essay is intended primarily to be a detailed account of how the politics of memory interact across spatial and temporal boundaries. A key component of this history is the determination of individuals and families to preserve their links with blood relatives and also with fellow villagers in the face of state-level efforts to block such links. This commitment to the social dimensions of community is buttressed by a more general program to preserve the legacy of village life and the common experience of exile and loss. What also emerges as vital is the role of citizen groups in various countries and, in particular, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Through various activities including advocacy and publishing, they have represented this transnational constituency.

This essay also seeks to contribute to theoretical literature exploring how experiences of forced migration shape the construction of political identity. In this regard, the *deca begalci* constitute an unusual case. Mostly displaced from villages at a young age, they had little opportunity before 1948 to absorb the worldviews of their birth communities or develop conscious political ideas of their own. In many cases they spent their formative years living with their own age cohort and under the tutelage of staunch internationalists, and enjoyed considerable educational and employment opportunities. Exile was therefore seen by some as a blessing and leftist Greeks were viewed as allies. The idealization of home and the perception of Greece as hostile power were

phenomena that developed only over time, connected to issues of gender, age, and citizenship.

Attention to these details is important because the *deca begalci* are sometimes depicted as if they were a homogeneous and easily demarcated group. While that may have been how initial groups of bewildered children were seen by those who greeted them in their new, temporary homes throughout Eastern Europe, that image was quickly fragmented. The oldest among the boys, for example, were in some cases sent back to Greece within a year to swell the ranks of the Democratic Army. Some stayed in children's homes through adolescence; others were reunited with their families, either back in Greece or in the Republic of Macedonia, or farther afield in Australia or North America. Those who arrived in different parts of Eastern Europe at different times had very different experiences; where and with whom they spent their formative years was influenced by the divisive impact of the Tito-Stalin split. What may have seemed arbitrary differences in destination in 1948 took on major significance as these children-in-exile grew up, were educated, and became adults in wholly different circumstances from those faced by previous generations –often without representatives of former generations to guide them.

In this inquiry, then, a central focus is the relationship between politics, culture and identity. The community of *deca begalci* of 1998 includes men and women who grew up under various communist regimes, as well as others who were brought up in capitalist countries that cherish multicultural ideals (such as Canada or Australia). It also includes those who were separated from their parents for only one or two years, and others who spent 20 or more years trying to track down their relatives. Some have Canadian passports, some Polish, and some, still classified as “stateless persons,” have no passports at all. Some trace their origins to villages that are now ruined and abandoned, others to villages now home to people who speak a different language and treat them as foreigners if they are ever able to visit. Some chose spouses from the countries where they grew up, who have no connection to their birthplace; others married distant kin, or partners from villages close to their own. To what extent do people from such diverse backgrounds and who have made such different choices in their lives have a shared sense of community? How has it been maintained, and what role has politics played in shaping it? This paper explores such questions to illuminate its core concern: what forces in the past and present

sustain a community of child-refugees in their fifties and sixties, half a century after the event which defined them as individuals?

### *Theoretical perspectives on forced migration*

Although traditionally considered as the study of small-scale, stable communities, anthropology has provided a number of studies of groups displaced by war. Peter Loizos' harrowing account of Greek Cypriot refugees, for example, was published in 1981, and anticipated many later developments in the field.<sup>1</sup> In a new foreword to Renee Hirschon's 1989 study of an urban community of refugees from Asia Minor in Athens, Michael Herzfeld suggested that it offered important comparative insights in the wake of late twentieth-century crises in Rwanda and Bosnia.<sup>2</sup> As Herzfeld indicates, Hirschon's particular concern with space and place foreshadowed developments in the discipline, which led to a number of volumes that explored the presumptive "rootedness" of culture and introduced discussions of mobility through the alternative imagery of "routes."<sup>3</sup> The significance of collective or individual memory in the maintenance of identity and especially the role of narratives about loss and nostalgia has also been investigated. Jewish experiences have constituted one focus for such work, but anthropologists have also extensively documented the importance of oral and written accounts of the past for others caught up in state violence, notably Palestinians and Sri Lankan Tamils.<sup>4</sup>

One of the most influential recent anthropological works on refugees is Liisa Malkki's study of Rwandan refugee communities in Tanzania.<sup>5</sup> There, she elaborates the important argument that different experiences of exile may lead to different ideas about identity and especially to the formation of distinct modes of historical consciousness. In the Tanzanian context, she argues, there was a significant divergence between the degrees of attention paid to and significance attached to the past. While refugees in camps, sequestered from the local population, appeared to cling onto the legacy of the homeland and embraced the category of refugee as indexing their dreams of return, those who had made their lives in larger cities were more committed to leaving their experiences behind and making a new life. To do so, they often actively resisted categorization as refugees, seeing it as a first step in their being returned to the camps or to the country they had fled. Instead, they sought means by which they could assure their

residency status in the towns and paid particular attention to the acquisition of identification documents which categorized them as non-refugees.

Similar concerns inform works on the Palestinian case, where George Bisharat and Julie Peteet have traced independently distinctions in identity politics between long-term camp residents and those who reside in towns or cities. In this case, a longer time has elapsed since the original displacement, which leads both to refine Malkki's categorical distinctions. Both indicate the persistence of stereotypical ideas linking individual characteristics to specific places of origin, while also highlighting shared dimensions of subsequent experience which generate narratives that are, in Peteet's words, "consistent.... though certainly not interchangeable."<sup>6</sup> She suggests that the term "refugee" was for an extended period rejected by Palestinians in Lebanon, who preferred the term "returners." Only after 1982, she argues, did they embrace the term "refugee" as a strategic necessity in order to bargain with international agencies and governments for recognition of their rights.<sup>7</sup>

Writing about the West Bank, Bisharat charts a similar transformation, arguing that "Refugee status.... has been, alternately, a brand of disrepute, a strategy for survival, a badge of entitlement, and a moral claim."<sup>8</sup> While "return" remains a powerful uniting ideology, it no longer indexes commitment to a physical homecoming—most homes have been destroyed—but refers instead to a "'Palestine' conceived abstractly," standing for an ideal future existence free of Israeli rule.<sup>9</sup>

In her study of Italian exiles from Yugoslav Istria, Pamela Ballinger suggests that this transformation may not always be clearly marked. She argues that members of this community nourish multiple dreams of return, all of which she describes as forms of redemption, in the following terms:

Previous winners and present losers, the Istrian Italians hope for eventual redemption: redemption at the symbolic level (the recognition of the *esuli's* "forgotten history"), in memory (Istria living again in the hearts of these survivors), and in pragmatic terms (actual return of properties in Istria). Demands for legal and historical justice rest upon the moral quality of exile accounts *qua* biblical epics, which tell a tale about the betrayal and sacrifice of Istria's Italians, innocent victims who paid the price for fascist Italy's sins just as Christ paid for those of mankind.<sup>10</sup>

As Ballinger suggests, members of long-term exile communities often appear to slide easily between emphasizing individual innocence and expressing collective entitlement. In this regard their rhetoric reinforces those whereby new immigrants have historically been constructed as the equivalent, in a national sense, of newborn infants.<sup>11</sup> Political activism prior to the moment of displacement is by this formulation either forgotten or denied, as the community is retrospectively classified as living quietly on territory that was unquestionably theirs by right. Those driven from their homes are neither willing nor witting agents, and in this regard they can be conceptualized as children vulnerable to larger historical processes or the particular animus of some alien aggressor. Such narratives of belonging and attachment thus present the inhabitants of the past as bearing no blame for what befell them; their individual circumstances are sharply distinguished from those whose actions may have prompted their expulsion. By contrast, flight is often perceived as a moment which burns into people's consciousness and makes them aware of the necessity for collective action to restore their former fortunes. Will, it seems, is born in motion.

What these various accounts indicate is the recurrence of both narrative motifs and sociological dimensions in different refugee movements. From Cyprus, Palestine, and Istria anthropologists have recorded people cherishing the key to their old house as a talisman that betokens faith in return.<sup>12</sup> Spatial concentration, either in a camp or a specific quarter of a town or city, seems also to encourage the preservation of social memory through the reuse of familiar place-names and continuing patterns of sociability and intermarriage.<sup>13</sup> What also emerges, though, is the diversity of experience, even within small communities. In Cyprus, for example, Loizos notes that the hardest hit by displacement were those who had invested most in the village, such as farmers or married couples (especially women) who had worked and saved for years to build a house which was now lost. Young unmarried men and those men whose livelihood had oriented them towards a wider world of business adjusted more quickly.<sup>14</sup> Ballinger likewise emphasizes the importance of gender and age in shaping reactions to their exile; young people in particular reported a sense that greater opportunities opened for them.<sup>15</sup>

All of these cases deal with entire populations displaced by war, the ultimate fate of the village communities from which the child-refugees left Macedonia in early 1948. The children's initial circumstances, though, were different; they did not leave with

relatives and families as fugitives, but with other children into the care of larger organizations. No rhetorical work was required to construct them as innocent children with no sense of larger issues, since in most cases that was precisely what they were, subjects to parental and official will. Any sense of loss or separation they felt at that time, similarly, could not be gainsaid as the product of ideology, nor is there any evidence that they defined themselves strategically or instrumentally. Thus they did not leave imagining themselves as refugees, nor can one point to a specific moment afterwards at which they became refugees. Yet in retrospect, they represent archetypal refugees. Their unquestionable status as individuals wholly lacking agency served crucially in their later categorization as emblematic victims in the broader narrative of Macedonia's fate, written by higher political interests.

A final revealing case to compare and contrast with that of the children who left Macedonia in 1948 is the flight of children from Cuba in the early 1960s under the auspices of Operation Pedro Pan. After Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, rumors circulated among middle-class Cubans that children would be kidnapped and sent to Russia for indoctrination or that the new communist régime would impose strict control over child-rearing. Parents who had family in the USA sought to send their children out of the country to join them; the scale of the movement increased when the US government set up assistance programs for the children, including camps where those without relatives could be housed while they awaited placement in foster-homes. Between 1960 and 1962, a total of over 14,000 children left Cuba, mostly for Florida. Now adults, they recall the traumas of separation, first from their parents and homeland, and later from the camps where they were in the care of Cubans. Repressed grief, reportedly, haunts many who are now in therapy; some were driven by their own experiences to form an organization to help new Cuban child-refugees.<sup>16</sup>

While the Cuban children faced extended separation from familiar places, people and their culture, the child-refugees from Macedonia in 1948 were caught up in different circumstances. For many, that initial flight was only the first of a series of journeys. They were not faced with a simple distinction between an old and a new "home," but found themselves adapting to multiple challenges. More often than not, they found it necessary to speak three or more languages and come to terms with a situation where their parents, siblings, and fellow-villagers were scattered across different countries and even continents. Faced with various suspicious or

resistant authorities and no prospect of return, they and their families planned where they might be reunited and have the best prospects for security. The immediate trauma of separation or loss, then, cannot be easily isolated and identified. For children growing up and continuously encountering consequences of the past, it is hard to identify when the mistreatment has ended, and healing can begin.

Other examples could be given of forced migrations which have some elements in common with that of children and adults from Northern Greece in the late 1940s. Spanish Republican émigrés in France, for example, who survived active service and the concentration camps (where many were killed) during Second World War, also felt betrayed by the machinations of the Great Powers.<sup>17</sup> When 30,000 refugees came to the US from Hungary in 1956, one-third were between the ages of 15 and 19, and many were unaccompanied.<sup>18</sup> More recently, Yugoslav refugees found themselves parceled out to different host countries, from Pakistan to the USA, and many resolved not to try to return to houses and neighborhoods destroyed by war.<sup>19</sup> Yet the Macedonian case, with its bitter disputes over the children's identities, their parents' loyalties, and a nation's future, had its own particular trajectory. Each refugee, of course, has a different story, but the tales of the child-refugees are given consistency and shape by the unique political and historical circumstances which, over the course of half a century, drove their continuing existence.

### *The historical context: Macedonia and the Greek Civil War*

The departure of many thousands of children from Northern Greece during 1948 is an undisputed fact. What remains less clear is the exact number of children who left and the decision-making process involved. As early as 1947, according to historian Milan Ristic, the initiative was under discussion among Greek communist leaders.<sup>20</sup> In the spring of 1948, Comintern countries at the Belgrade Youth Conference pledged to provide refuge for children caught in the war-zone that Northern Greece and (especially) North-Western Greece had become in the course of the Greek Civil War. At the same time, Greek government initiatives began to evacuate non-combatants from the region. Queen Frederika reportedly took particular interest in relocating

Macedonian children in camps to protect them from what rightists labeled “Slavo-communism.”<sup>21</sup>

Historical debates over the motivations of different actors also provoke polemical discussion over the ethnic identity and political loyalty of the families from which the children came. The issue of the *deca begalci* has thus been mobilized in larger conflicts over the name and territory of Macedonia.<sup>22</sup> The extreme positions have been charted by Loring Danforth, who contrasted a “Greek” with a “Macedonian” view. The former refers to the abduction, or *paidomazoma*, of 28,000 Greek children from their parents to be brainwashed in communist Eastern Europe. The latter argues that 28,000 Aegean Macedonian children were evacuated and settled in Eastern Europe to save them from Greek governmental attacks on their villages.<sup>23</sup> Danforth does not interrogate the historical development of either of these positions, suggesting a timeless and one-dimensional opposition. Yet intersecting with this national polarization is the issue of traditional leftist and rightist politics. Tsoucalas points out that the idea of “children-snatching” is a symbol of foreign oppression, evoking the oft-recalled *devshirme* by which Christian children were recruited into the Ottoman army and bureaucracy.<sup>24</sup> The historical parallel, which casts Greek national history as a sequence of suffering at the hands of powerful others—in the case of 1948, what was termed “Slavo-communism”—is particularly attractive to what has been called the “counter-modern” tendencies of the political right in Greece.<sup>25</sup> A leftist interpretation of the Civil War, by contrast, would stress the level of violence employed by the “Monarcho-fascists” of the Athens government against its civilian population, extending to the use of U.S.-supplied napalm, and present the evacuation as motivated by humanitarian impulses.<sup>26</sup>

Awareness of the overarching significance of the ideological dimensions of the conflict is an important corrective to the tendency to imagine the Greek Civil War as purely about the future of what has been variously called the Slavophone, Slav-speaking, or Slavo-Macedonian population of Northern Greece. This aspect was not insignificant, as various sources have indicated and only grew in importance as the Democratic Army was confined to the rural areas of North-Western Greece and the proportion of people—both men and women—from this community in its ranks increased.<sup>27</sup> At various points in time media and education in communist-controlled territory was conducted in the newly codified Macedonian language, as well as in Greek. But the uneasy relationship between

the party and this population was always in thrall to broader doctrinal and pragmatic questions dictated by the rhythms of international relations.

The interdependence of the Macedonian question and broader politics was immediately obvious in the aftermath of the Second World War. Within the new federal Yugoslavia, the communist government was aware of the strength of animosity that Serbian colonization and Bulgarian occupation had kindled among the Slavic population in the southern part of the country. They recognized the existence of a Macedonian Republic and supported the codification of the Macedonian literary language. Tito had offered logistical and material aid to the Democratic Army in Northern Greece and clearly had hopes of either pushing his country's territory to the sea or of seeing a friendly régime grant access to the port of Thessaloniki. Yugoslavia was also in negotiation with Bulgaria to bring about an expanded federation in which inhabitants of Pirin Macedonia, the westernmost region of Bulgaria, would be more closely tied to Yugoslav Macedonia. Yugoslavia thus conducted an aggressive foreign policy in the region, in which the promotion and export of Macedonian identity was a key component.

After the Tito-Stalin split in June 1948, though, the policy that Yugoslavia had pushed so enthusiastically became a potential threat to the integrity of the country. Macedonian identity had been deployed as a lever by which to expand Yugoslav territory and influence; now it appeared that more powerful forces had hold of it, and could use it to break up the new federal country. Intellectuals in Yugoslav Macedonia had codified a new Macedonian literary language that was distinctly different from Bulgarian; now, an alternative Macedonian language which was much closer to Bulgarian was sponsored by Soviet-leaning communist parties in the other East European states in their education of the child-refugees.<sup>28</sup> Within Yugoslav Macedonia, until the normalization of relations with the Soviet Union in 1956 and even beyond, Tito and his allies waged a relentless war against those elements of the Macedonian population who saw their identity and future in different terms, whether strictly pro-Soviet or staunchly autonomist, from those set by Belgrade.

This brief background highlights some of the historical factors which make the easy identification of a single "Macedonian" position problematic. It also illustrates the pivotal significance of 1948 for subsequent events in the region. The high-level split

between Stalin and Tito quickly translated into local power struggles. In Greece, pro-Yugoslav elements in the Greek Democratic Army waged their own internal battle with those loyal to Stalin and the broader communist cause. The victory of the latter faction in early 1949 assured Tito's disengagement from the war.<sup>29</sup> He finally closed the Yugoslav-Greek border in July 1949, and the total defeat of the Democratic Army quickly followed after a last stand on Mt. Grammos.<sup>30</sup>

Until 1948, supporters of the Democratic Army had moved with comparative freedom between locations in Northern Greece, Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Evidence presented by Greece to the United Nations in 1947 and 1948 indicated a high degree of cooperation between communist partisan forces in the Balkan countries. The Greek case included eyewitness accounts of a camp at Rubik in Albania, a military school in Bulkes at Voivodina which was operational from May 1946, and an "Aegean Bureau" in Bitola.<sup>31</sup> Channels across the border were used by active units to bring supplies into Greece and to bring out wounded partisans. When the children left Macedonia in early 1948, tensions were already simmering between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Even so, they were transported efficiently by truck, train and boat to widely dispersed destinations in different countries.

The ostracism of Yugoslavia changed this and turned the political refugees and exiles into pawns in larger struggles. When adults from the camp at Bulkes returned to fight in Greece in May 1948, the children there were initially resettled in other children's homes in Yugoslavia, but the Greek communist party, perhaps mindful of worsening Yugoslav-Soviet relations, insisted that they be relocated to Czechoslovakia.<sup>32</sup> When veterans of the war retreated across the frontier to Albania in 1949, a significant number of them were resettled in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (where no children's camps had been established) and access to Yugoslavia (where their own children might be in camps) was much more difficult. Within Yugoslavia, the status of refugees from Greece changed dramatically as the prospects of speedy return evaporated. Although ostensibly bound to Yugoslav Macedonians by shared nationality, they represented an immediate burden in a country itself still feeling the effects of bitter warfare. To Tito's government they posed a potential threat. From his own participatory experience, Tito was mindful of Soviet tactics of fomenting unrest, and, at the same time, he was compelled to pursue a policy of accommodation and appeasement towards the new Greek

government. Among the adult refugees from Northern Greece might be Soviet-oriented agitators or irredentists still fixated on taking back their homeland, and their contact with the general population therefore demanded control. They came to be referred to as *Egejci*, or Aegeans, and faced restrictions on their movement and residence, as well as on contact with friends and relatives in other countries.

When parents parted with their children in 1948, all this lay in the future. Temporary separation was hardly a new phenomenon; men had been leaving their villages for at least half a century as migrant laborers, planning to return after sojourns in Australia or North America.<sup>33</sup> But the scale of physical and social disruption in 1948-49 was new. Many villages were not just physically destroyed, but also abandoned by their inhabitants and either left to decay over time, or resettled with new migrants from elsewhere in Greece. Parents and relatives that the children had usually left behind, and who constituted the social community that they would call “home,” themselves fled into a world in which national borders stood like barriers. Although the Red Cross intervened to try and repatriate children or reunite them with their parents, its efforts were defeated by the lack of reliable information and the obstructionism of some of the new régimes. What was meant to be a temporary solution to particular circumstances became, in retrospect, for many of those affected by it, a defining moment in their personal history.

### *Counting the children*

Not all the children who were taken, though, grew up to become potential members of the community of *deca begalci*. Particularly striking is the fact that although many nationalities were represented at the Congresses in 1988 and 1998, there were no Greek citizens. Yet since 1948, many of those concerned with the fate of the child-refugees referred to all or some of them as Greek. The Greek government in particular called for their immediate repatriation to rescue them from an indoctrination process that, it was feared, would “turn them” into Slavs. In this view, the children were considered a vital part of the organic whole that constituted the Greek nation. Their resettlement abroad was represented to international bodies as genocide and vigorous attempts were made to enlist US support for this position, which presented the children as wrenched from the hands of their Greek parents and forced to live in unnatural collective camps where they

were taught nothing but communist doctrine through the medium of Slavic languages.

A variety of reports by international observers challenged this overly stark image. Interviews indicated cases where parents were happy to see their children depart to relative safety, while in a camp in Bulgaria, a British journalist reported that the children had no chance of learning any language but Greek.<sup>34</sup> The East European countries added the counter-argument that the children's interests were better served in their new homes than their old—a claim that some international observers upheld. The camps where some children were housed were reported to be clean and efficient, with medical and educational facilities. The Greek case was also damaged by evidence of either sloppiness or deliberate fraud in the compilation of 18,000 parental petitions for children's repatriation submitted to the Red Cross. A small percentage of the alleged petitioners were found to be co-residing with their children in Eastern Europe, or even in Australia.<sup>35</sup> By 1951, evidence from Yugoslavia appeared to indicate that of 9,000 children still in the country at that time, over 8,000 were in fact living with their parents, thus fatally undermining Greek accusations of deliberate separation.<sup>36</sup>

The Greek position also ignored evidence compiled by UN investigations, which found that some parents had been willing to see their children leave. The pattern they described was that Slavic-speaking villages sympathetic to or actively supporting the Democratic Army were more likely to participate willingly.<sup>37</sup> By the Spring of 1951, petitions from parents in Greece for the repatriation of their children from abroad had been filed for only 40 per cent of the total number of children, indicating that some children had parents (most likely government supporters) who remained in Greece, but a majority did not (most likely because their parents too were refugees).<sup>38</sup> Greek-speaking, pro-Government villages reportedly permitted their children to depart only under duress. The few children who did return relatively quickly to Greece, especially from Yugoslavia, and larger number that followed over the years most likely rejoined families that survived the war in their own villages and had good relations with the Greek government.<sup>39</sup>

With regard to the total number of child-refugees, then, the number of 28,000 that is generally agreed upon should be seen as sociologically meaningful for only a relatively short period of time.

It was derived in part from statistics compiled in 1949 by the Committee for the Assistance of Children (EVOP), an organization set up by the Greek Communist Party. EVOP gave the following statistics for children in camps at that time:

**Figure 1**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>
Yugoslavia	11,000
Romania	5,000
Czechoslovakia	3,000
Poland	2,500
Hungary	2,500
Bulgaria	2,500
East Germany	700
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,200</b>

In the following year, the Greek Communist Party compiled figures for the political refugee community in Eastern Europe outside Yugoslavia. It was reported that a total of 55,881 former Greek citizens lived in the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and East Germany. This number was composed of 23,028 men, 15,324 women and 17,529 children.<sup>40</sup> The figures for children in this survey were as follows:

**Figure 2**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Difference from EVOP Figure</b>
Romania	5,132	+132
Czechoslovakia	4,148	+1,148
Poland	3,590	+1,090
Hungary	2,859	+359
Bulgaria	672	-1,828
East Germany	1,128	+428
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,529</b>	<b>+1,329</b>

The individual differences between the two sets of numbers reflect some of the movements that took place between 1949 and 1950. Part of the overall increase can be accounted for by the transfer of the children from Bulkes, mentioned earlier; after spending some time in other Yugoslav camps, most eventually made their way to Czechoslovakia.<sup>41</sup> With regard to other specific countries, Martinova-Buckova reports that most of the children in Bulgarian camps in 1949 were in Hungary by 1950.<sup>42</sup> In Hungary, by contrast, some of the older children brought there in April 1948 had been recruited into the Democratic Army and returned to the front in Greece to fight in the final battles around Grammos. Nakovski gives a detailed account of the different times that groups arrived in Poland, where some older children were again sent back to fight at the front.<sup>43</sup>

What the figures also reveal, though, is the unavailability of hard and fast numbers. Caution is further demanded when trying to assess how the children, and the wider refugee population of which they were a part, can be classified by national consciousness. A survey of the East European political refugee community, from which the figures above were taken, also provided a breakdown by nationality between “Greeks” and “Macedonians.” Of the total 55,881 refugees in East European countries (not including Yugoslavia), only 22,822 were adjudged to be Macedonian. The 1,128 children in East Germany were all Greek; in the Soviet Union (where there were no children) out of 11,980 refugees, 2,954 were Macedonians. For the other countries listed above, this leaves a total of 42,773 refugees, of whom 19,868 were classified as Macedonian. Writing only about the children in Poland, Petar Nakovski states that in 1951 the division was roughly even between Greeks and Macedonians.<sup>44</sup> Lazar Minkov states that of 3,000 children in Hungary, 1,750 were of Macedonian descent (mostly from villages around Florina and Kastoria) while 1,250 (from the regions of Grevena and Epirus) were Greek; Martinova-Buckova indicates that of a total population of 4,727 in camps in Romania in June 1949, 2,177 were Macedonian and 2,079 were Greek.<sup>45</sup> These breakdowns, departing again as they do from the numbers given for 1949 or 1950, remind us again of the fluidity of the period. The autobiographical accounts offered by today’s *deca begalci* offer confirmation of the extent to which they were shuttled around. But they also clearly indicate that among the notional 28,000 *deca begalci* were children who could be classified as members of either national group.

How precisely the different authors and bureaucrats of the time distinguished between these two groups is not clear. Those children who were not in camps, as was the case for a majority in Yugoslavia, generally carried the same national or ethnic designator as their parents or families. For children in the camps, though, (in many cases unaware of their own surnames) important criteria were language and village origin. Some children in the camps had little or no knowledge of Greek. This was especially the case for those whose villages were traditionally Slavic-speaking, and whose memories did not extend back beyond 1941, when Bulgaria had informally annexed much of the territory of Thrace and extended its influence further into Greek Macedonia.<sup>46</sup> Others knew Greek, but might have spoken Macedonian in their homes and already had begun to learn it in the schools set up in free Greece. Yet they were in camps alongside children from villages settled by refugees from Asia Minor in the 1920s who grew up speaking Greek.<sup>47</sup> In the quest by camp organizers to respect communist doctrine on the question of nationality, children identified as Slavic Macedonians would be taught both Macedonian as well as Greek, while those from Greek-speaking villages would generally study only the latter language. Such distinctions gave children in the camps the potential to think of themselves as different from one another.<sup>48</sup>

The figure of 28,000 *deca begalci*, then, demands some awareness of the variations in experience that it conceals. Some of these children occupied the status for only a short time, returning quickly to their homes in Greece after the War. For at least a third of the total number, especially those in Yugoslavia and to a lesser extent in Poland, the period of separation from parents was very brief. Although the episode is appropriated both by Greek and Macedonian national traditions that lay claim to the entire group, documentary evidence makes clear that among the children were Greek and Macedonian speakers, and that they came from villages and families who ranged in political affiliation. Their parents might have been fervent Stalinists, Macedonian patriots, or Greek leftists: they might have sent their children away out of ideological commitment, of fear or necessity, or have believed such a choice was simply in the best interests of the child. The 28,000 *deca begalci*, then, which seem so united in modern recollection, in fact embarked on very different experiences from an early stage of their lives as exiles.<sup>49</sup>

It is perhaps the very divergence of experience subsequent to 1948, then, that makes the moment of creation of the *deca begalci* so central in the historical consciousness of those who most actively seek to preserve the status of the group. For many people now in their late 50s or older, the vivid recollection of the journey from their homes across the border marks a break between two lives. Kica Kolbe, in a reflexive account of the Aegean Macedonian experience, makes reference to the enduring significance through people's adult lives of the places in which they grew up and first created their mental maps of the world.<sup>50</sup> For all but the very youngest child-refugees, those first impressions of the world were formed in the villages of Northern Greece, in communities of longstanding. Many have never returned; those that have often confronted only the ruins of their former homes. In either case, the epochal, cataclysmic qualities that the journey has in their memories are further heightened.

Almost any narrative that one hears from someone who identifies him or herself as a child-refugee, then, is structured as an account of displacement, starting with the point of origin. The six oral histories in *From War to Whittlesea*, for example, begin with the following sentences:

My village Bapchor is in the bosom of Vicho Planina.

My village Lagen in the Lerin district was very beautiful.

Lagen is a mountain village, and it used to have over 150 villages.

My village Neret is a mountain village about 17 kilometers from Lerin.

My village is set in a beautiful natural environment close to the border of the Republic of Macedonia.

Our village was burnt to the ground in 1949 by the fascists.<sup>51</sup>

The significance attached to the place of origin is apparent also in the very short biographical accounts provided from interviews conducted during the festivities at the 1988 meeting in Skopje and published in the account of the meeting.<sup>52</sup> The salience of place among the child-refugees has also driven the research and publication of a variety of monographs detailing the fate of particular villages.<sup>53</sup>

This concern with place of origin is not unique to the *deca begalci* among Macedonians. Peter Vasiliadis, with regard to the Macedonian migrant community in Canada, notes the central salience of place of origin in any social interaction there.<sup>54</sup> It is also a feature of conversation in the contemporary Republic of Macedonia, where Skopje's second- or third-generation residents still often trace descent to their ancestral villages. However, it has additional significance for the *deca begalci* in the present. Some of them, notably activists, see the determination to preserve the memory of place as a vital part of a campaign against forgetting. It should be noted that in the cases given above, place-names are given in Macedonian. Most of these toponyms now, though, have no official status in Greece, where villages and towns have been extensively renamed as part of a more or less continuous campaign to eradicate traces of Slavic heritage. Additionally, in many cases, those who assert their place of origin are painfully aware that there no longer is any such space. Bapchor, for example, a village from which 230 children left in 1948 was destroyed and never rebuilt; Donevski's monograph includes photographs from each decade since 1948, showing the gradual decay of the signs of human habitation. Its former existence is recalled only in the memories of its former inhabitants and in Donevski's publication. The patterning of *deca begalci* narratives that name a place of origin and include at least some details of life there is thus part of a project of active remembering, advanced by individuals.

Narratives also describe the process of flight. They emphasize, for example, that groups left together from the villages, often escorted by young women. They describe the difficulty of the journey, which usually began on foot and, especially for those from the region of Kastoria or Kostur, took several days to reach the Yugoslav frontier. They stress the various novelties that they encountered, such as travel by truck or train, and often also make reference to the procedures to which they were subject when they reached their destinations, which included showering, having their heads shaved, and treatment for trachoma. What is also recalled by many is the fact that in their new homes, they were assigned numbers, which they wore on their wrists or around their necks.<sup>55</sup> All of these processes can be categorized as the re-birth of these children, who had lived up until then in a close community where they were identified by association with their families, into a world of modern accounting and bureaucracy where they were objects for the projects of states or organizations. It was this shift—from the well-known and comfortable environs of their birthplaces, to an unfamiliar and

bewildering new life after an extended period of transit—that could be argued to be centrally important in drawing a sharp distinction between life in the village, invested with the qualities of domestic intimacy and a “normal” life, and that of the camp or other new location.<sup>56</sup>

Liisa Malkki, in her study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania, stresses that refugee narratives often focus on the most pivotal moment of all—between flight, arrival, and exile—that is represented by the physical crossing of the national border.<sup>57</sup> This is often marked by the meeting of the refugees with the representatives of the state into which they are fleeing in the shape of border guards. This element is not uniformly highlighted in child-refugee narratives. This may be in part because their movement was relatively planned and controlled with the cooperation of the state that they were entering. Indeed, most of the *deca begalci* narratives present their initial passage as relatively smooth; it appears that trucks were often waiting for them at the frontier crossing, and transfers onto trains were straightforward. One of those interviewed in the documentary project *Next Year in Lerin* recalled border guards initially refusing a group of children access, but then yielding to entreaties and looking the other way while they crossed ahead of schedule.<sup>58</sup> For the children in a group, though, the anxieties of making the crossing were borne by those leading their group. In addition, as some frankly recall, the details of the journey are blurry. In the words of Tanas Lazarov, “It is all before me like some strange fantasy.”<sup>59</sup> For many, however, details have been filled in and become concrete in the course of subsequent research and exchange with others who went through similar experiences. Lazarov for example, goes on to say “Years later the older children of the group used to tell us that we the little ones cried all the time because of hunger, tiredness and sleeplessness.”<sup>60</sup> It is a characteristic of those who have spent more time and energy researching the period that their narratives are fuller and more detailed. In Skopje, for example, a former child-refugee from B’mbok, near Kastoria, related his memory of their column being strafed by aircraft en route to the border. A key group of people in terms of the transmission of detailed accounts of the particulars of flight are also the *majki*, the young women who were entrusted with the care of groups of children, often from their own village.<sup>61</sup>

The particular details of departure and resettlement in 1948 are preserved by those most concerned to preserve the legacy of the *deca begalci*. As Kolbe indicates, activists’ sustained emphasis

on this period strikes some in the Republic and in the wider world as what she calls the “Aegean syndrome” – an apparent obsession with a period from the past that has little or no broader significance. Her response is to suggest that the focus is motivated precisely for this reason: that the personal experiences of those caught up in the events of 1948 have not come to constitute a core narrative that has been endorsed by any more powerful sponsor. This sense that their own histories are treated as marginal or irrelevant in the collective imagination of the broader communities of which they are a part is a key dimension of what unites the community that identifies itself with the legacy of the *deca begalci* 50 years later.<sup>62</sup>

Such a core symbol is demanded because the subsequent experiences of the group have been so varied. Striking in conversations with people who live elsewhere and trace their descent to Aegean Macedonia today is the variation in their sentiments and experiences. What also emerges is a range of explanations of the course of history. Much of what they offer cannot be proven by documentation and could best be classified as conjecture or speculation. Nonetheless there is a surprising degree of consistency in their accounts which is broadly compatible with better-known and documented historical events of the period.

One way to try to understand the extent of the community’s history would be to chart the major movements of the refugees and the development of political relations between the countries in which they found themselves. This would be a sociological approach. Here, though, the argument regarding the particular development of historical consciousness and political activism among the child-refugees will be developed from a personal narrative offered by one of the individuals most committed to their memory.

### *One man’s story*

Gjorgji Donevski has already been mentioned as the author of a village-based monograph on Bapèor, where he traces his roots. He was secretary of the first child-refugee association at its formation in Skopje and has since been elected its President. He was instrumental in organizing the 1988 and 1998 meetings in Skopje. His account of activism will be dealt with in a later part of this paper. Here, though, is an account of his own experiences as a child-refugee in Yugoslavia:<sup>63</sup>

340 children left from Bapèor, from March 1948 on. They left in 14 groups; the biggest groups also included children from D'mbeni. For every 20 children there was a mother, or *majka*. They came on foot to the border, then they were taken in trucks from Bitola to Prilep.

He was 12 when they left the village in May 1948. They were taken first to a monastery at Slepèe, near Prilep, then to Matka, near Skopje, where they stayed two or three months. Then he was in a group taken to the coast of Croatia, where they were housed in homes (which were formerly the villas of capitalists that the communists had confiscated) or in motels or hotels by the sea.

The children were sent to different schools, depending on their age, and their professors were Greeks or Croats. He went to an industrial school for automechanics near Zagreb.

They learned fast. Their knowledge of the Greek language, he said, helped them out as they recognized unfamiliar words by their linguistic roots —the example he gave was that they knew what geography was before it was explained to them. He finished three years of schooling in only two years.

He was then brought to Skopje in 1952. They were still housed in homes, or *domovi*, at this time and it was, he said, hard to live without relatives. He was supposed to work in the trade that he had been taught. Instead, he went to school to study health. Putting his new education to use, he became a sanitary inspector — and then went on to study further, the pedagogical faculty where he trained to teach Yugoslav literature and the Macedonian language. He attained Yugoslav citizenship and served in the military in 1958.

Gjorgji had two sisters and two brothers. His sisters were both older. One was already married in the village, but her husband was killed in the Civil War. She went with a group of children, therefore, as one of the *majki*. His other sister went by the same route, and they both were located initially in Romania. There one of his older sister's children died of typhus. She married another veteran from Aegean Macedonia. His younger sister finished school and worked in an industrial plant in Romania.

In 1948, his two brothers were aged 16 and 20. Both were partisans at that time. His younger brother kept getting sent home from the front on the grounds that he was too young, but eventually they allowed him to stay as a water-carrier. He was wounded once by a grenade, but went back to the front afterwards. They were in the Democratic Army forces to the very end and left through Albania. They thus both ended up in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. His

older brother had been married to a young partisan woman from Bapchor who was killed in the war. In Tashkent, he got married to a woman from a village close to Bapchor. His younger brother married an Uzbek woman who he met, in Gjorgji's words, "on the streets." His parents also fled Greece through Albania as they were also pro-partisan. They ended up in Poland.

Gjorgji knew none of this in 1954, when he put in a request through the Red Cross to try and find his parents and siblings. He learned that his parents were in Poland in 1955 and immediately wrote to them. He received in response a letter from his mother who knew the locations of all the others through the Democratic Army Organization. In their correspondence, which started at this time, his parents sent him luxury items, like razor blades and a comb in the letters, because he didn't have any money.

Initially, the family planned to be united in Tashkent, where the two older brothers appeared to represent the best-situated members of the family. Gjorgji's parents went there from Poland, and in 1955 Gjorgji had made plans to leave too when he finished his training in health. He set out one day to go to the Russian consulate in Belgrade by train. En route, however, at Mitrovica in Kosovo, he was taken off the train in a police check and spent a night in jail. The next morning, they put him on a train back to Skopje. The reason, he deduced, for this action was that the King of Greece had been on a visit to Yugoslavia, and the police were worried that an Aegean Macedonian might try something.

This apparently chance event had significant consequences for the family. Gjorgji got married that same year in Skopje to a young woman from Bapchor. She had been in a camp in Bela Crkva with her sister while her mother had come later (directly to Skopje) and reclaimed her daughters. They were distant kin of Gjorgji's, and when, it appears, the *dom* in which he had been living in Skopje would no longer house him—perhaps as a result of his decision to seek further education instead of working in the trade for which he had been prepared—he moved to lodge with them. He and his future wife were quickly involved, but she was too young to marry. When the police saw them walking hand-in-hand, they asked what was going on, to which they replied always that they were relatives. By 1956-7, in his words, he was *familjaren*—their first child had been born. He now conceived, it appears, a potential place where the family could unite.

A commission was formed to help people gather their families - but they had problems, in doing so, because it was thought that some of the East Europeans were *agents provocateurs* who might harm Yugoslavia.<sup>64</sup> Nonetheless,

in 1958 his younger sister came to join him in Skopje from Romania. She was also now married to a man from Bapchor. His older sister followed in 1959. The other members of the family, though, took a different path, perhaps enforced by the suspicious attitude of the Yugoslav authorities towards returnees with political backgrounds. Gjorgji's maternal aunt was in Sofia, and at this time Bulgarian policy was to try to persuade Aegean Macedonians to make their homes there. Refugees who opted to go to Bulgaria were reportedly given apartments and generally offered good conditions, and so Gjorgji's mother, father, and two brothers from Tashkent went there.

Members of the family could now, at least when international politics allowed, visit one another. The economic status of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria at this time and their different travel régimes made it easier for Gjorgji and his sisters to make the trip. They would visit the rest of the family in Sofia every month and marveled then at the better economic conditions that they enjoyed in Yugoslavia compared to Bulgaria. They continued to work towards reuniting the whole family by filling out applications and assembling documents. His younger brother was able to come, finally, from Sofia to Skopje in 1975. He was followed by his older brother and their parents in 1976. They were, he said, among the last Macedonians to "return." After almost thirty years of separation, the family was united in Skopje.

### *Analysis and context: political dimensions.*

The account given by Donevski appears to confirm analyses offered by other Aegean Macedonians who stress the ongoing impact that politics, especially the internecine quarrels and suspicions of the communist countries, have had on their lives. It also illustrates the determination with which people fought to overcome obstacles that politics put in the way of their being able to put their families back together. For much of the period, their efforts were thwarted, but (as Donevski's account indicates) at particular times windows of opportunity were opened, and people sought to take advantage of them. Never knowing what other opportunities might be presented or how long an opportunity would remain open, individuals and families were often faced with dilemmas and sought to make the best choice on the basis of severely limited information. This account and others reveal first, the extent to which people thought first not of political ideologies, but of their most immediate kin and second, that their relationships

with the states –which at times appeared to embrace them in the abstract, but at other times virtually criminalized them as individuals—were never straightforward.

Donevski's own experience as a former camp resident in Yugoslavia is somewhat typical. The children's homes that were initially set up in Croatia, Slovenia, and Vojvodina still housed around 2,000 children in 1950-51, but they too were gradually phased out. Some groups of children were relocated from the northern parts of Yugoslavia to the Republic of Macedonia in 1952 and 1953, either to join their parents or move to a new camp at Valandavo. This was the case described by some of those interviewed during the First Congress of 1988, including Aleksander Petličkov, from the Florina village of Buf, and Velika Šulevska, who went from Bela Crkva in Vojvodina to Valandavo in 1952.<sup>65</sup> Also in this period, many of the families that had initially been relocated to the formerly German villages of Djakovo and Kruševlje in Vojvodina were able to move south to take up residence in the Republic of Macedonia, mostly either in Bitola or Skopje.

The experience of camp life is recalled in various ways. What most people stress is the good treatment they experienced, which in some cases they contrasted with memories from the village. This was especially the case for those who recalled, from before the Second World War, the kinds of measures taken against those who spoke any Slavic dialects in Northern Greece. Tanas Lazarov, for example, one of the contributors to *From War to Whittlesea*, recalls playing truant from school for fear of being beaten for not speaking Greek; so too Stojan Kiselinovski, a historian in Skopje who was in a camp in Romania that he remembers fondly, also recalls being beaten by a teacher as a child in his village for speaking in Macedonian.<sup>66</sup>

Mara Kalincev, another child-refugee now in Australia, recalls of camp life that "We were never beaten with sticks like we were in the village."<sup>67</sup> In broader contrast to the harsh conditions of wartime in Northern Greece, some like Fania Delianova described the order of the camp as "Sheer joy."<sup>68</sup> In general, former *deca begalci* expressed appreciation for the generosity of the states in which they were located, which provided them with food, shelter, and education. Many stress that had they stayed in Greece, they might well have never even entered high school; whereas in exile a majority of the child-refugees not only graduated, but went on to further study. They often express particular appreciation for the fact that they were able to study through the medium of the

Macedonian language, in one form or another, which would certainly not have been possible in Greece.<sup>69</sup>

It seems clear from most of these accounts that the camps, often located out in the countryside, were, for children at least, havens of security in a world where they did not have other resources. Although on their initial arrival they were categorized by numbers rather than by name, as noted above, nonetheless the presence of other children from their own village and nearby and the frequent presence of *majki*, known from the old country, must have mitigated the sense of alienation, displacement, and loss.<sup>70</sup> In the early years, too, few of these children could probably have imagined that they had embarked on lifelong exiles; most probably believed, if they pondered the issue at all, that the time in camp represented a temporary separation from home. Leaving this community as young adults not to return home, but to try to make their ways in an alien community is often recalled as difficult, as it was for Donevski, originally, in Skopje. Stojan Kiselinovski, who was in a camp in Romania and went on to study at a university there, remembered wistfully how the loneliest times were the vacations, when fellow Romanian students would return home. He reported that the Greek refugee community, organized through the Communist Party, sought to provide at least some social network for the children. This was more possible in Romania than a location like Poland where, according to various accounts, the polarization between Greek and Macedonian elements in the refugee population was more pronounced.<sup>71</sup>

Where Donevski's account further resonates with broader accounts of trends is in his account of the pivotal importance for the family of two periods, the late 1950s and the mid 1970s. According to other analyses offered in interviews with people of Aegean descent in Skopje, from around 1955 on the Republic of Macedonia began to encourage Aegean Macedonians in Eastern Europe to come to live in the Republic. Those who were at that time still housed in camps and other locations elsewhere in the federal Yugoslavia were also, at this time, urged to settle in the Republic. It is clear that the Aegean population, and especially the former *deca begalci*, were recognized at this time as a considerable human resource. The children had mostly finished high school and often had completed some form of higher education and would therefore be seen as likely to make a positive contribution to society and the economy; up until this time, it might be argued, they might have been perceived more as a burden.

There were also, though, more ideological reasons for the attempt by Tito's Yugoslavia to gather the Aegean Macedonians. Following Stalin's death in 1953 and Krushchev's visit to Belgrade in 1955, relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union had certainly improved from the state of near-war in 1949. Tito's statement of support for the Hungarian Uprising of 1956 and his denouncement of Soviet action in Czechoslovakia would both temporarily raise tensions again, but the unrelenting hostility had ended. In the period before Stalin's death, though, and in the Aegean Macedonian communities outside Yugoslavia, considerable efforts had been taken to foster a style of Macedonian identity that was anti-Yugoslav. In various children's homes and schools, an alternative Macedonian alphabet closer to the Bulgarian had been used after 1948. According to historian Stojan Kiselinoski, party-sponsored Macedonian language education during the Civil War used a grammar by Krum Kjeleski and an alphabet drawn up by Kostas Shaperas: the result was a standard close to the literary language codified in Yugoslav Macedonia. After the Tito-Stalin split, under the auspices of intellectuals like Atanas (or T.) Pejkov, the alphabet, grammar, and lexicon were all derived more closely from Bulgarian.<sup>72</sup> In the same period, under the control of the Greek Communist Party, a pro-autonomist, anti-federalist line was promoted which presented Tito as the betrayer of the Macedonian cause. This message was also reinforced in the way that children in camps were told of the poor conditions in Yugoslav Macedonia. This was recalled, for example, by a former camp resident from Hungary.<sup>73</sup> Another who was in Poland recalled that after the end of the Civil War in Greece, "We were now told we weren't Macedonian but Bulgarian. Very soon after, I think the Greek Government made an agreement with the Polish Government that we were to be called Greeks."<sup>74</sup>

Whether or not the exact details of recall and interpretation are correct, such reports give a sense of the different ways in which the Macedonians in exile threatened the very fabric of Yugoslavia. Macedonia remained a potential weak link in the Federation at that time, and various authors have noted that Tito's approach to the phenomenon of Macedonian nationalism was rather different to that adopted in, for example, Serbia or Croatia.<sup>75</sup> This is not to suggest that all expressions of patriotism were encouraged. In fact, as a U.S. State Department report from the 1950s indicates, a vigorous internal struggle was waged between the federalists and the autonomists. As part of their campaign, the victorious federalists cast autonomists as pro-Bulgarian. Prominent figures from the

Macedonian struggle in the past, including Pavel Šatev, one of the most notorious survivors of the terrorist activism of the Ilinden period, and Metodi Andonov-Èento, the first leader of the Anti-Fascist council of Macedonia, were jailed in the late 1940s for alleged pro-Bulgarian, anti-Yugoslav sympathies.<sup>76</sup>

Tito could not afford to maintain rule by outright repression, especially when alternative foci for Macedonian solidarity could be found in causes like that of the displaced Aegeans.<sup>77</sup> The Yugoslav Government was also undoubtedly aware of the strong impulse in the Aegean refugee population to reunite families. The government had already demonstrated their preparedness to try and bring members of the group into Yugoslavia in arguing for the repatriation of over 2,500 children in Eastern Europe not to Greece, but to Yugoslavia, where their parents were in 1950.<sup>78</sup> In the late 1950s, Tito's government reportedly mounted a vigorous propaganda counter-offensive to stories that the Aegeans lived in slavery in Yugoslavia. Apartments, employment and health care were offered to those Macedonians abroad who were willing to take up residence in Yugoslavia. By such means, the state implicitly acknowledged that while committed to reuniting their families, former Aegean Macedonians made their own cost-benefit analyses as to which location offered the best prospects for their futures.

According to one oral source, when they did return at this time they were settled in cities like Gostivar and Debar in Western Macedonia to offset Albanian majorities in such towns. Indirect support for such an analysis is provided by lists of signatures held in the Archives of Macedonia, which were compiled as part of a dossier submitted to the Conference on European Security and Cooperation held in Moscow in September 1991. There were 440 signatories in Tetovo, and among their former residences they list Tashkent (in the USSR), Poland, and Bulgaria. Of 74 signatories resident in Kichevo, another Western Macedonian town, five indicate they came via Poland, 11 from the Soviet Union, 10 from Czechoslovakia and two from Hungary.<sup>79</sup> This was also the period in which Donevski's two sisters returned from Romania, and his own attempt to leave for Tashkent was thwarted.<sup>80</sup>

According to one interviewee, a great number of Aegean Macedonians were admitted to the Republic in the late 1970s and early 1980s—the period in which Donevski's brothers and parents finally made the trip. As in the 1950s, apartments and jobs were offered as incentives to them, but apparently under some form of a

probation system, only on the basis of good conduct for a year. The timing of the shift in Yugoslav policy and the significant acceptance rate of this opportunity by the Aegean Macedonians was also explained. In the period leading up to 1968, it was reportedly difficult for Aegean Macedonians from Eastern Europe to enter Yugoslav Macedonia. Only a select few were admitted, and those who were allowed in often spent time in prison as a first step to "clean out their heads." In this regard, Aleksander Rankoviæ, the head of the Yugoslav secret service until his fall from grace in 1967, appears to have played a central role. He was particularly nervous about the possible impact of anti-Yugoslav *agents provocateurs* within the country, and during his regime prisons like the notorious Goli Otok were filled with political figures thought to pose a threat to the regime. According to the analysis offered by Ivo Banac, Macedonian autonomism, pro-Bulgarianism, and lingering pro-Soviet cominformism continued to be seen by Yugoslav authorities as congruent and threatening to the state, and Aegean Macedonians who had spent time elsewhere in Eastern Europe would inevitably be highly suspect.<sup>81</sup>

But as Donevski also described, Bulgaria made particular efforts at this time to court the expatriate Macedonian community. Tito became aware that Bulgaria's campaign was proving effective and feared that Yugoslavia would lose its authority to speak on the Macedonian issue. He therefore relaxed his policy. The opportunity to come to the Republic of Macedonia and settle permanently there came in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a particular boon to the refugee communities from Northern Greece. In many cases they had not been granted citizenship for the countries where they had lived for three decades and had continued to nurse hopes of return to Greece. But such hopes were dashed by legislation passed in Greece during this period, which allegedly included a law of usufruct granting ownership of land to anyone who had worked or occupied it for 30 years and in 1982 the law on the return of political exiles that has become a *cause célèbre* for the *deca begalci* of the present.<sup>82</sup> Reportedly, the Aegean Macedonian refugee communities effectively faced an ultimatum in which they had to select a new citizenship for themselves and for the families that, in many cases, they now had. In such a situation, many chose the Yugoslav option.

What is also striking from Donevski's account of his family's career is the number of his siblings who married other people with roots in Aegean Macedonia. His two oldest siblings had both initially married within the village; their spouses had both died, and both then chose partners with origins in nearby villages, but whom they met in exile. His own wife who he met in Skopje was from Bapchor, as was his younger sister's husband, whom she married in Romania.

Like the commitment to reuniting existing families, this pattern of marrying with fellow exiles is also shared in refugee communities elsewhere, from different places of origin. According to the oral history offered by a man from the village of Požarsko (close to the Yugoslav-Greek border) whose family settled initially in Erdjelija (a village near Sveti Nikola) his sisters were married in 1951 and 1953 or 1954. In both cases, they were courted by former partisans from the same region, who came from Skopje to Erdjelija precisely to look for wives. Their choice was influenced by the status that family of the two sisters had had in the village.

Various anthropological studies of agricultural communities in the Balkans have stressed the importance attached to family reputation and status in determining marriage choices. Interviews conducted by Andrei Simic during the 1970s in Belgrade among recent migrants to the city also indicated a preference among young men for a partner who was in some sense a known quantity.<sup>83</sup> Marriages, then, were rarely the product of individual acquaintance between a young man and woman, but were generally more embedded in broader social relationships. It was doubtless an additional dimension of the hardship felt by child-refugees separated from their families; they were also separated from the networks that would, under normal circumstances, be the foundation of their social lives, and most likely furnish their marriage-partners. Such a view can be rendered as "traditional" or "conservative" and could be articulated in ways that confirmed this sense. Donevski's own statement regarding his brother's Uzbek wife, for example, that they met "on the streets," indicates a certain negative moral judgment.

Such cultural conventions, shared by refugees in Macedonia and by those among whom they now lived, ironically served to maintain distinctions between them. A veteran who I interviewed in 1992 and who had married a girl from Skopje back in the 1950s,

related to me some of the suspicion with which his suit was treated by her relatives. Who was this young man, after all? What was known about his family? Within the refugee community, though, the ties of kinship and familiarity within village communities and between neighboring villages ensured that knowledge built up over years in the old country continued to circulate and retained its currency. If they were refugees, who had no land of their own and little in the way of property and were treated with suspicion by the authorities of their new countries, they nonetheless kept their name and their knowledge of the station that had once occupied.

The impact of the patterns in intermarriage created by these circumstances cannot be ignored in a consideration of the sense of community that the *deca begalci* have even today. In the petition mentioned above, for example, and signed by 2,582 people who identify themselves either as Aegean Macedonians or more specifically as *deca begalci*, there were 51 individual signatories in Bitola, all born in Aegean Macedonia. Included in that number were seven couples where both husband and wife were from the same village, and seven more married couples. Thus 28 out of 51 individuals had preserved a form of endogamy. A former child-refugee who had been in Romania, narrated with some disgust how the Greek Communist Party had encouraged marriage between older Greek veterans and young Macedonian women; he presented this as a deliberate policy to prevent Macedonian language and sentiment from being passed on to subsequent generations. His own personal life has apparently been shaped by his determination to oppose such a development: he married a fellow Macedonian child-refugee, and has brought up two children to be proud of their heritage, and hostile towards the Greek state.<sup>84</sup>

Gjorgji Donevski's life history, then, illuminates key aspects of the experiences of *deca begalci* and Aegean Macedonians more generally in Europe through the late 1970s, and offers considerable illumination into the processes by which the community of Aegean Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia, which he numbers at around 100,000, was formed and maintained. It is important to stress that the efforts of the first generation of refugees to "pass the torch" have been successful. Kica Kolbe's book *Egejci* is one tangible proof of the legacy handed down: there she writes of still experiencing the stigma of the term *Egejc* in popular discourse in the Republic of Macedonia, applied to people who trace descent to Greece. She also describes in detail the recent death of her father, who crossed the frontier as a child, and expresses outrage on his

behalf that he was never able to return to his birthplace and pay tribute to his own mother.<sup>85</sup> So too, people in their twenties and thirties, one or both of whose parents are Aegean Macedonian by origin, often express some pride in that heritage, even if they have grown up in the Republic and are otherwise indistinguishable from peers whose roots lie there.

### *Aegeans further afield*

In the Republic of Macedonia today, then, the Aegean legacy remains vital to a significant number of citizens. It has also remained alive among another body of people displaced from the region in which they locate their roots. Their activism and engagement in keeping alive the heritage of the *deca begalci* has been of equal, or possibly greater importance to that of those in the Republic.

Alongside the gradual process by which refugees have returned to Greece or made their homes in Yugoslavia, a further scattering has taken place since the Second World War, which owed much to pre-existing patterns of long-distance migration from Aegean Macedonia. Since the early part of the twentieth century rural Greece, especially the mountain villages around Kastoria and Florina, had been a major source of labor migration abroad.<sup>86</sup> Australia, Canada, and the USA were the destinations for what were called in Macedonian *peàalbari*, mostly unmarried and married men who would undertake hard labor for a few years, living frugally, to either send or bring back to their villages' remittances. At various points in the course of the twentieth century, but especially in the wake of destructive wars, members of this transnational community had made the decision to remain abroad, and establish a family life there; more often than not, though, they sought to marry within their village community. The Civil War had once disrupted the pattern; men who had left their families in the village had been cut off from them, while even those whose nuclear families were with them in the new world felt keenly the loss of contact with relatives and neighbors (whose children they often imagined their own might marry). After the war, then, these outposts of village communities sought to renew their ties with home. Generally having access to resources far in excess of those available for those working closer to home, these expatriate villagers were able to act as sponsors to kin or clients wishing to migrate. When the Red Cross began to try and put the refugee children in Eastern Europe in touch with parents

or kin who could provide better conditions for living, the new world turned out to be where many of them would reach adulthood.

Australia and the other transoceanic countries could be reached by a number of routes. Some child-refugees, like Aleksander Petlièkov, mentioned above, went to Canada from the Republic of Macedonia in 1957.<sup>87</sup> It is likely his trajectory was influenced by the fact that there was already a substantial community from Buf, his home village, in Toronto.<sup>88</sup> Nume Bogdanov, from Bapèor, was in Tulges in Romania until 1955, when he went to Australia to join his mother and father.<sup>89</sup> Stase Manov also spent a year at the camp in Tulges, then took technical training in Romania until 1955, when he moved to Skopje to join his relatives. He then emigrated to Australia in 1957.<sup>90</sup> Milèo Stefanovski, from Drenièevo, was a child-refugee in Czechoslovakia, returned to his own village in Greece in 1954, and then went to join his uncle in Sydney in 1956.<sup>91</sup> Of the people whose life histories are collected in *From War to Whittlesea*, one reached Australia directly from Romania in 1956; his father was there as a *peàlbar*, and had put in his first request through the Red Cross in 1952. Another man also joined his father in Australia in 1956 from Poland, with much less delay. One woman rejoined her parents in the Republic of Macedonia from Hungary, was married there, and then emigrated in 1969 at the age of 28 with her husband. Another woman returned to her mother in Greece from Yugoslavia, and then was adopted by a childless aunt in Australia in 1955. In her account of former Yugoslav communities in Australia, Dona Kolar-Panov relates a story of four sisters who were sent as children, respectively, to Hungary, Romania, the USSR, and Poland. The father of the family was a *peàlbar* in Australia: the sisters' mother managed to join him during the Greek Civil War. They tracked down the first sister in Hungary and with the help of the Red Cross got her out of Hungary just before the Soviet invasion of 1956. The sister in Poland married and emigrated to Toronto. The third sister migrated to the Republic of Macedonia in the 1970s: the fourth remained in Poland until 1984, when she finally received permission to visit Skopje. The sisters in Canada and Australia traveled to Skopje for the first reunion of the siblings.<sup>92</sup>

Like their counterparts in Eastern Europe, the child-refugees in Australia and Canada appear, in the first generation at least, to have favored endogamy and to have carried with them certain precepts and values from their former homes. They have done so, however, in contexts where fellow Aegeans represent a substantial proportion of their immediate communities. These former

*pechalbar* communities represented enclaves in which all were in some sense exiles or refugees in a strange land, and the child-refugees appear to have faced an easier path to integration, at least in those parts of the community united by pro-Macedonian sentiments.<sup>93</sup> Marriages continued to concern the community as a whole; an account written in 1966 states that 90 out of 92 marriages took place within the Macedonian community.<sup>94</sup> In his autobiography, Tanas Lazarov states that his future wife's cousin and her uncle, as well as his own mother, played a role in introducing them.<sup>95</sup> Vasil Delianov and Fania Delianova emphasize different aspects of their meeting. She narrates that they both worked in a factory and were both poor: although still not 16, she was anxious to marry because she was living with her aunt, whose husband had three sons by another marriage. She also emphasizes the assistance given to them in dealing with Australian bureaucracy by a man from her village who had been in Australia since the 1920s. Delianov, by contrast, states that he "knew her history" from an aunt; in particular, he knew her father had been executed by the Greeks and felt sympathetic towards her as a result.<sup>96</sup> Both were new arrivals, with few economic or personal resources and both had lost one parent. Such marriages nonetheless still involved the wider community in one way or another.<sup>97</sup>

A further key dimension of cultural continuity, more apparent in the transoceanic context than in the former Yugoslavia, is the importance attached to the Orthodox church. When a large group of refugee villagers from Požarsko reached Erdjelija, in newly socialist Macedonia, they were told this was the village where they would live; the older folk in the group were shocked and asked how this could be a village when there was no church. The attachment that Macedonian villagers had to their church was noted by Brailsford, writing at the beginning of the twentieth-century when some European observers were baffled as to the stolidity of the peasant population, in the face of depredations by soldiers and brigands. Brailsford saw the church, and in particular the graveyard, where the Orthodox faith called for various observances in honor of deceased kin, as major loci of sentiment.<sup>98</sup> Although those who left as children might most vividly recall the fields or orchards in which they played, or the particular smell of their mother's kitchen, older refugees—including the children, as they grew older—would recall the weight of obligations to past generations that they had been forced to abandon.

Displaced to communist-controlled camps in Eastern Europe, there was little in the way of religious education for the child-refugees. But in their narratives now, religious imagery of one form or another plays a key part. The church in Australia in particular plays a key social function for the Macedonian community; its significance is attested by the struggles that are waged between churches and congregations described as Greek and Macedonian.<sup>99</sup> But more pervasively, and increasingly with time, the Aegean Macedonian community reveals its concern with religious rites, especially burial. In one impassioned phrase to describe the tragedy of the forced migration, an activist told me: "The graves of our people are scattered throughout the world, from Tashkent to Poland." A key theme in Kica Kolbe's recent memoir is her father's increasing concern as his own death approached with his failure to pay proper respect to the remains of his mother, who had died as the family fled the village fifty years ago.<sup>100</sup> Pero Bicevski's literary works on the Aegean experience, which draw on real events, include one novel built around a young man's pledge to his father to bury his remains in their own village's graveyard.<sup>101</sup> Peter Hill records the tragedy of one child-refugee's father evacuated to Poland and then able to rejoin his children in Czechoslovakia in 1954. Reportedly, he was driven by a wish to have his bones lie in the soil of Macedonia; aware that return was impossible to Greece, he devoted time and energy to gaining permission to live in Yugoslavia. On the very day word arrived that they could leave, he died.<sup>102</sup>

All of these examples demonstrate the tenacity with which people from Aegean Macedonia, faced with a variety of challenges in their lives, have clung to markers of stability and security. As stated, much of this is tied up with a specific sense of place. It is worth recalling again that the regions from which most of the *deca begalci* came were mountainous and rural; although efforts had been made, notoriously by the Metaxas regime in the 1930s, to inculcate a sense of national belonging, many of those who fled in 1948 had had little contact with the Greek state. For many, too, had their lives been like those of their parents, they would have grown up to work the land, or be housewives. The men might have had short spells of hard physical labor abroad and few would have received much education beyond the most basic or any kind of professional training. They would have sought good matches for their children, and hoped to pass into their hands property and resources greater than those that they had inherited from their own parents. Their

early years, then, were likely as not spent in a milieu where family, property, and moral community were considered paramount.

The cultural influence of early childhood appears to have proved largely impervious to the impact of subsequent developments, at least among a portion of this population.<sup>103</sup> That is not to say, though, that those developments have left no trace. On the contrary, an added dimension of solidarity observable in the narratives of the *deca begalci* is that they are critical of the attempts by states and other agencies to make their fate into a political issue. Among the personalities who attract criticism in this regard is Queen Frederika who, in the words of Vasil Delianov, for example, “wanted to show the world she loved us by telling everyone the communists took away her children” at the same time as Royalist forces were bombarding the villages of Northern Greece.<sup>104</sup> Other people note the Greek Communist Party’s changes in tactic which kept a firm grip on the management of the camps in Eastern Europe, and which brought in different versions of history after the Tito-Stalin split.

Given such critical awareness of the nationalizing projects of Greece, and the ideological aspirations of the Eastern Bloc, one might imagine that those who then found themselves living in Yugoslav Macedonia would feel themselves more in tune with the politics and society of that country, or that those in Australia or North America would embrace the greater personal freedoms that those countries claim to offer citizens. However, narratives reveal that often, a skeptical attitude towards politics has been retained. In Yugoslav Macedonia, to non-Aegean Macedonians, such a position might appear contradictory. The prevailing wisdom is that the *Egejci*, as they are called, were the recipients of special treatment from the Yugoslav regime—that, in some sense, attempts were made to “buy” their loyalty. This is certainly a view expressed in some communities in Northern Greece, where relatives of refugees even today will state that Tito served as “godfather” for the migrants, and rechristened them.<sup>105</sup>

In fact, within the Aegean Macedonian community sharp criticism is reserved for Tito. To some extent this echoes Cominform propaganda against Yugoslavia of the late 1940s and early 1950s, which accused the country of betraying the Greek revolution. But it is also grounded on historical knowledge of international relations, including for example the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and the United States, which led to the U.S.-Yugoslav Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (which ran from

1951 to 1957) and concrete aid for Tito's regime.<sup>106</sup> One informant put Tito's reward at that time at \$6 million and said with some venom that Yugoslavia thus made money out of the Civil War and "on the back of our tragedy (*na grbot na našata tragedija*)."<sup>107</sup> People also stressed the clampdowns imposed at various points from Belgrade, generally anxious not to jeopardize relations with Greece. Donevski's arrest in 1955 was one example of this; other long-time residents of the Republic confirmed that as refugees, they were under travel restrictions, and several made reference to encounters with police, who clearly kept a close watch on them. So too, several made reference to the particular animus that Aleksander Rankoviæ, head of the secret police, seemed to harbor towards *Egejci* as potential provocateurs. One man recalled that in certain periods it was politically dangerous even to mention "*Egejska Makedonija*."<sup>108</sup>

Somehow, though, in the style he also perfected in the international arena, Tito managed to play both sides. He was not without allies altogether in the displaced community; especially among those that were settled from the start in Yugoslavia, there were political and military leaders who shared his vision. These people were dubbed by the other Aegean Macedonians "*Titovci*," and it is acknowledged that they enjoyed better relations with the regime. In an interview with an Aegean Macedonian who came to Yugoslavia from Romania in the 1970s and who was relating the discrimination that they faced from the local population which made it difficult to find work, I challenged the generalization and invoked the case of Vasil Tupurkovski, a leading politician with Aegean descent who was a prominent political figure both in Yugoslavia and now in the Republic of Macedonia. His family, I was told, belonged to this category of "*Titovci*," and represented a very different experience from that of the majority, especially those who came to the Republic later.

The migrant populations in Australia and North America also include members with sharply divided views of Tito and the Yugoslav legacy. As communities founded over an extended period and for much of that time the object of little or no attention from their host governments, they have retained or even developed further internecine disagreements and disputes. The question of who is Greek, Macedonian, or Bulgarian plays out in ways that appear to owe much to the bitter memories created in the course of vicious conflict in the region during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; communities from Aegean Macedonia are at the forefront of such disputes, the time at which a critical mass of their personnel

left the region apparently playing a major role in shaping their position. What they share with Aegean Macedonians in the Republic, though, is a general tendency to distinguish between their own senses of loyalty or commitment (which they present as what Clifford Geertz described as “primordial sentiments” –the loyalties taken as given, rooted in the natural order of things) and that of their rivals, who they accuse of being influenced by material gain or ideological falsehood.<sup>109</sup> Danforth’s work on Australia illustrates this particular tendency well.<sup>110</sup> There is, then, in these communities a sense that politics is always dirty; it is, one could argue, the aggregate experience of Aegean Macedonians, who have at times since the Second World War been subjected to so many different ideological constructions of their community, that has served to make members of this community, wherever they find themselves now, suspicious of attempts to enroll them in other people’s causes.

### *The birth and growth of activism*

The history of the *deca begalci* since their collective baptism in 1948, then, is one in which memory of place, importance of family, maintenance of lifestyles, and distrust of politics play important parts, because International relations and governmental doctrine have continuously disrupted their personal lives after being uprooted from their homes, they have subsequently often been compelled to adapt and adjust to changing political circumstances. One might expect that a consequence of this would be a resolute withdrawal into the personal and family realm of life. Drawing on the work of Pitirim Sorokin, Riki Van Boeschoten outlines how war and upheaval can drive people to focus entirely on self-preservation at the expense of wider loyalties or commitments, and yet also, in different circumstances, provoke people to struggle to preserve a sense of community.<sup>111</sup>

In the village of Ziakas, Van Boeschoten argues, the latter impulse won out. And at the end of the 1990s, it appears that a number of people who identify themselves as *deca begalci*, or descendants of the first generation of *deca begalci*, in a variety of different countries around the world, were actively involved in publicizing the experiences of the group as a whole and also in making claims regarding the collective and individual rights of its members as citizens of the modern world. The activism of determined and articulate adults is apparent in their role in

producing some of the publications that have already been cited, and thus in creating a historical record regarding various dimensions of their experience. In the same period, various organizations have been established which seek to intervene more directly in the politics of nation-states and in the international sphere. How *deca begalci* activism took shape, and the ways in which it has become political, constitute the foci of this second section of this essay.

### *Early roots in diaspora*

As noted earlier, the *deca begalci* were not the first residents of villages in the North of Greece to leave their homes, and then be prevented from returning by circumstances beyond their control. The custom of *peèalba* had already been well-established, by which, in most cases, men would leave their families behind to work as unskilled industrial laborers in the USA, or, later, as agricultural laborers in Australia. Wars at home—notably, of course, those between 1912-18 and 1941-1949—disrupted transcontinental traffic, and when travel routes opened again, it was often the case that instead of returning, men would instead arrange for their families to join them in the new world.

The historical shift from “sojourner” to “settler” society is described in the Toronto case by Lillian Petroff.<sup>112</sup> She pays extensive attention there to the ways in which people organized themselves through village-based societies, and through the Orthodox church. Sustained by contributions from individual members, these organizations provided some degree of welfare and insurance against catastrophe, as well as serving to maintain community values and orientations.

The national politics of the region during the twentieth century often prevented or interfered with larger associations, and also had the potential to disrupt even locally-oriented activities in migrant communities. The various tensions between Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Greece, in particular, over “Macedonia” were reflected in rivalries and hostilities in the diaspora; particularly important was the demographic balance, in any Macedonian community, of people who had arrived at different times. In the USA, for example, the leadership of the Macedonian Patriotic Organization (MPO) consistently had a strong anti-Yugoslav and pro-Bulgarian orientation. In Canada (especially in Toronto), a relatively more significant number of later migrants appears to have expressed a

more clearly articulated and distinct Macedonian identity that is emphatically not Bulgarian. In Australia, according to the analysis provided by Danforth, the major bone of contention with regard to Macedonians is whether or not they are “really” Greeks.

Many of the *deca begalci* who made their way to Canada or Australia soon after their exodus from Greece never had Yugoslav citizenship. Although at various points, and for political reasons, Tito would reassert the claim that Yugoslavia would protect the rights of Macedonians in neighboring countries, formal links between Yugoslav Macedonia and Macedonian-speaking populations in Greece, Bulgaria, and Albania were never made. According to Kolar-Panov’s account, though, a decision made in Skopje in the 1960s led directly to the creation of the first United Macedonian Club in Western Australia in 1969, which brought together migrants from Northern Greece and those from what was then Yugoslavia. Until then, she suggests, the community with Greek origins had viewed Yugoslavia with suspicion. The formation of this club, though, at least provided a forum through which links could be made and ideas shared. That it came at a time when an extreme right-wing régime held sway in Athens may have contributed to the warming of relations between these two formerly separate groups.<sup>113</sup>

With regard to the 1970s, Kolar-Panov points to the significance of technological innovation in the creation of links between far-flung communities and places. After the end of Colonel’s regime in Greece, it became possible for Aegean Macedonians to visit their birthplace; when they did so, they often took with them a video camera to record images and interviews, which they would then edit into what she calls “video letters” and show at group screenings. The expense of the equipment was often shared by several families, all of whom would expect to see footage of their village; this increased the symbolic value attached to the recordings, as did the fact that Greek authorities continued to oppose the making of such tapes. Many were confiscated; any that made it out to Australia thus acquired an additional aura.<sup>114</sup>

When tapes were viewed in Australia, she suggests, they provided a focus for emotional release for people who, for the first time, saw with their own eyes the ravages of time and abandonment on places they may well have remembered as lively, bustling social worlds. In this regard, she suggests, the experience of watching was very different for those who still nourished their own recollections of their villages—among whom would be the older of the *deca*

*begalci*—than for subsequent generations, or for viewers who were from the Republic of Macedonia, and who did not have the same experience of forced displacement.<sup>115</sup>

Kolar-Panov's argument, that seeing images of their old villages is an intensely emotional experience for migrants from Aegean Macedonia, seems uncontroversial. Even more compelling, according to anecdotal evidence at least, is the experience of "being there" for those who have returned since their departure. Stase Manov reported to Peter Hill that he had not returned, wondering whether a visit might be too traumatic and cause "irresistible nostalgia."<sup>116</sup> Returnees to Bapchor are reportedly "struck with trembling" when confronted with the overgrown ruins and the locked and crumbling church.<sup>117</sup> Videos or visits fill a commemorative void: parents usually imagined the children would return soon, and so did not give them mementos to carry. When whole villages were abandoned, too, it was usually under circumstances that drove people to carry food and other essentials, rather than items which might remind them of their homes. Thus, it seems, very little in terms of the material culture of memory—keepsakes, family photographs, treasured items—survived from villages which were abandoned.

The shock of reacquaintance, then—whether experienced during a visit, or on viewing a video recording, or even photographs—was considerable and heightened by the lapse of time before it was economically or politically possible. The availability of technology by which images could be reproduced and disseminated also created shared points of reference. It seems clear, then, that a number of forces coincided in the 1970s to create the potential for the mobilization of *deca begalci* as a "community of suffering."<sup>118</sup> In the first case, the original child-refugees were by the mid-1970s a group of adults between their late twenties and mid forties.<sup>119</sup> Having faced different challenges in attaining adulthood, marrying, and gaining employment, they were now of an age where they had the opportunity to lift their eyes from the immediate horizons of necessity. Given the educational opportunities that they had been given, many were professionally or less formally interested in the processes of history; it was natural that some should turn to an investigation of their own origins. Near-universal literacy among the *deca begalci* ensured one possible means of dissemination of information; the new technology in Canada and Australia was another. And despite the continuing ambivalence of various regimes towards the existence of the Macedonian question, the relative

recession of political tensions in South-Eastern Europe made research, travel and contact with *other deca begalci* more feasible than at any time before then.

### *In the new homeland: Activism in Yugoslav Macedonia*

In the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as stated earlier, the position of *Egejci* remained problematic in the 1970s. However, this did not prevent certain initiatives from being taken to document and commemorate the Aegean legacy. For the most part these were in what could be called the “parapolitical” realm.<sup>120</sup> Cultural and folkloric groups were set up, like the St. George Society with a Bapchor connection in 1972. It was in the early 1980s, though, that these efforts were better documented: notably in a report issued by the Office of Security of the Republic of Greece in Thessaloniki in February 1982.<sup>121</sup>

The report details, for example, that during the summer of 1981 meetings were held at the Yugoslav Macedonian village of Trnovo and in Skopje of what the report calls “political émigrés” from various Aegean villages. One meeting in Trnovo was also attended by residents of Greece. The report states “At these meetings efforts were made by the Skopje delegates to preserve the link between people living on both sides of the Greek border and to preserve the feeling of ‘a united Macedonian territory and a united nation’.”<sup>122</sup> The report also claimed an increase in publication by “Skopje” on the theme of the Macedonian Question, “in order to maintain this current topic as a ‘minority’ problem and to solve it within the framework of the U.N.”<sup>123</sup> As well as such state-directed activity, the authors of the document noted how much contact there was between Yugoslav Macedonian citizens and residents of Northern Greece in commercial and cultural realms; markets in Florina attracted people from north of the border, and musicians and musical recordings also crossed into Greece.

Sources from within the Republic also indicate that it was in the 1980s, when more of the former child-refugees and other Aegean exiles had taken up residence in Yugoslav Macedonia, that organized and collective initiatives to mobilize opinion regarding the Aegean issue gathered momentum. Two academics, Kole Mangov and Vasil Jotevski, reportedly attempted as early as 1982-84 to form an Association for Aegean Macedonians in Skopje which would give this group a voice within Yugoslavia. Their intention, it appears, was to try and consolidate energies which were more

localized, and often concerned with cultural manifestations, and create an organization which could wield political influence.

### *The convergence of activism*

In the same period, activism in Canada and Australia also began to take on transnational aspects. Canada has been a site of Macedonian settlement since the early years of the twentieth century, and those who settled there founded associations first based on villages, and later on broader ideas of national community. The Macedonian Political Organization, formed in 1922, and renamed the Macedonian Patriotic Organization in 1952, always had members in Toronto, though its headquarters is in the USA. In the late 1950s, a new organization called United Macedonians was formed, based in Canada. Both were umbrella organizations, whose immediate concerns were often the welfare of members. MPO, in part because of its historical heritage, is perceived as pro-Bulgarian, whereas United Macedonians has retained stronger links with the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the principle of a distinct Macedonian ethno-national identity recognized by Yugoslavia in 1944. Both have members who trace their roots to villages in Northern Greece.

According to interviews published in a work by Tanas Vrazhinovski in 1993 a vital spark to Aegean-centered activism was provided by two transnational connections.<sup>124</sup> In 1984, a number of members of the Macedonian community in Toronto received copies of a Manifesto issued by The Movement for Human and National (*ethnika*, in the Greek original) Rights for the Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia. From their Central Committee in Thessaloniki, and dated August 26 1984, it was addressed to the Greek Government and to representatives of the International Community. Included were demands for recognition of the existence of a minority, education in Macedonian, and freedom of expression, as well as the following:

Voted legislation to be passed in the Greek Parliament for the free return of the Macedonians from abroad to their native land so they can participate freely and actively with their abilities and specialties in the economic, cultural and social life of the land and to be able to give their individual capabilities for the recovery and progress of Greece.<sup>125</sup>

At around the same time, a human rights activist from Australia, Stojan Srbinov, reportedly visited Toronto.<sup>126</sup> This prompted the creation of the Macedonian-Canadian Committee for Human Rights in Toronto, which conducted various activities from the mid-1980s onwards. Among these was the dispatch of delegations to international meetings to publicize the existence and plight of Macedonians in Greece and Bulgaria.

As the clause cited above indicates, much of this activism dealt with issues of individual rights to citizenship for people who claimed Macedonian identity for themselves, had been born within the territory of Greece and lived much of their lives abroad. The *deca begalci* constituted an important sub-section of this scattered population. The issue of citizenship for many of those in Eastern Europe had been held in abeyance until the 1970s and 1980s; many had not been granted citizenship in their host country, preserving the illusion that their sojourn was temporary, and that they would in due course return to Greece. A critical blow to any such prospect was dealt by the passage in Greece of two legal acts on 29 December 1982 and in April 1985. The first, No. 106841, was intended to bring closure to the lingering effects of the Civil War, by granting citizenship to and recognizing the right of return of political exiles. However, its language included a clause which limited these rights to those who were Greek by origin or birth — *Ellines to yenos*.<sup>127</sup> The phrase has been translated into Macedonian as *po rod* and has been interpreted as specifically excluding those who identify themselves as ethnically Macedonian.<sup>128</sup> The second act, passed in April 1985, similarly limited the return of property previously confiscated by the Greek government only to those who could demonstrate that they were Greek by origin or birth.

The passage of these acts seems to have provided a catalyst for individual outrage, that led swiftly to collective action. It prompted individuals like Toli Radovski of Gdansk, Poland to write directly to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Athens in October 1983, to petition to have his citizenship restored—a request that was never answered.<sup>129</sup> Although certainly not the only group who were directly affected by the Greek government's legislation, *deca begalci* were among its most vocal opponents from the start. The fact that they had never as individual adults willfully taken any definable illegal action that could be used to justify the denial of citizenship made their case a particularly powerful symbol of the injustice of the situation that the legislation created, as well as driving individuals among them to take on leadership roles.<sup>130</sup> By

1989, the Association of Macedonians in Poland was holding its first meeting, and addressing letters to institutions in Greece and elsewhere in the world on behalf of its members' collective concerns. Toli Radovski was one of the Association's vice-presidents.

These acts also, in combination with other Greek policies, contributed to the creation of solidarity between formerly diverse sets of activists on the Macedonian question. In the same time period that these acts were passed, other measures taken by the Greek state which appeared to be directed against the portion of the population of Northern Greece who had cultural or linguistic affinities with Macedonian institutions or individuals abroad. Ten Macedonians in Poland who sought visas to visit Greece after 1982 had their requests rejected; the only cases of success reported by the Association for Macedonians in Poland were in 1980 and 1981.<sup>131</sup> Recognition of degrees issued by the University in Skopje, for example, was discontinued— a policy recommended in the Office of Security report cited earlier.<sup>132</sup> The same report recommended active measures to be taken against the use of the Macedonian language in the Florina region, including positive discrimination in favor of non-Macedonian speakers for state employment. The package of measures, as Anastasia Karakasidou suggested in her provocative 1993 article in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, promoted adversarial attitudes among newly-politicized local Macedonians.<sup>133</sup> Those attitudes spread in turn to communities abroad, both in Eastern Europe and in the transoceanic diaspora, where members who either retained ties with kin in the region or who envisaged return themselves were outraged at developments in the region they thought of as home. When associations had already been formed, as in Toronto, where the newspaper *Macedonian Voice* had begun organizing meetings in 1978, the new legislation in Greece provided them with a clear issue on which to focus.<sup>134</sup>

In the 1980s, of course, the world was still divided into political camps, and citizens of different countries were not always free to travel or associate with counterparts elsewhere. Strikingly, Poland appears to have offered a more fertile ground for associations among Aegean Macedonians than Yugoslavia, where even after Tito's death control was still exerted by the central government over sensitive forms of national expression.<sup>135</sup> According to Vrazhinovski, in the early 1980s any association of Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia was still banned on the grounds that it could jeopardize Yugoslav-Greek relations.<sup>136</sup> Nonetheless,

Skopje was the venue for the different strands of activism around the world to be brought together at the end of June 1988, when the city played host to the "First World Meeting of the Child-Refugees from the Aegean Part of Macedonia." Several of the short life-histories published in the record of the meeting, entitled *Den na Razdelenite*, have already been cited. The publication also describes how the idea for the meeting was formed at a gathering of child-refugees held at the beginning of 1984 in Toronto, Canada. Kin-ties appear to have been significant: Vane Plukovski, a Skopje resident, was visiting his brother Gjorgji, when Elena Pandzarovska proposed the idea of a world meeting.<sup>137</sup> Vane Plukovski returned to Skopje, where he became the President of an initial council for child-refugees. Other members included Petre Nakovski, who had lived in Poland from 1949-62 and whose work has already been cited; Kole Mangov, a lawyer who had reportedly tried to create an association earlier in the 1980s; and Gjorgji Donevski, whose account of his earlier life was presented in the first section. The council worked together with activists in Australia and Canada to plan the meeting for the summer of 1988.<sup>138</sup>

### *Governmental non-cooperation*

The account in *Den Na Razdelenite* indicates that central Yugoslav and Republican communist authorities sought to control the meeting's agenda and form. Although political and economic liberalization in the country were well under way, nationalism remained a sensitive issue for the régime, which continued to employ obstructive tactics. The initial council was promised support from other state organizations, but this was not forthcoming; instead, in 1987 an attempt was made by the Macedonian presidency to create a new council in which none of the original members were to play a part. By some means, the activists managed to negotiate to maintain five places on a new national council, filled by the four men named above and Naso Bekjarovski.<sup>139</sup>

Still as the date of the event came nearer, the problems multiplied. Pressure was exerted especially by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Budimir Lonchar; the Collective Presidency discussed the event three times. Ambassadors abroad were given no instructions to facilitate visa applications for would-be attendees, and in fact may have been ordered to obstruct them. The Macedonian representative for the presidency, Lazar Mojsov, at

least in the account published in *Den Na Razdelenite*, did not exert all the efforts he might have to assist the success of the meeting.<sup>140</sup> Even when it was clear that it would go ahead, Yugoslav authorities continued to try and downplay the event; although it was covered in Macedonian media, it was not reported in the rest of Yugoslavia. And Lonchar reportedly attempted to prevent what had always been conceived as a central symbolic part of the proceedings: the unveiling and dedication of a monument to the exodus in Skopje. The Yugoslav authorities, it appears, were specifically concerned that the event remain within the bounds it was proposed and have only a humanitarian character, not a political one. The presidency stressed its concern on this score in a letter on 18 May to the Macedonian presidency, in which it stated that there should therefore be no official foreign or domestic governmental delegations involved.

Nonetheless, the meeting went ahead, and the monument was unveiled in the park of the “woman-warrior” (*žena borec*) in Skopje. It was designed by one of the original committee members, Naso Bekjarovski, an academic and sculptor, and depicts one of the *majki*, carrying one infant, with two others following her (Figure 3). The visitors from abroad, whose numbers were estimated at around 3,000, and the other attendees were treated to a program of speeches and photographic exhibits. They also visited symbolic sites in the Republic, including the tomb of Goce Delèev in Skopje’s old town and the monument to the Ilinden Uprising of 1903 in the mountain town of Kruševo. Some attended celebrations organized by former child-refugees who had settled in significant numbers in Tri Èešmi, a village near Štip. A commemorative three-day mountain hike was organized by a Bitola-based club, retracing one route that might have been taken from the Greek-Macedonian border to the Treska lake outside Skopje, which was also the venue for a collective picnic to close the meeting.

Politics was thus part of the meeting, as the delegates clearly sought to weave their own past into the broader tapestry of national history of the Republic. It came to the surface most clearly when some of the attendees sought to visit Northern Greece. One busload of Australian and Canadian passport-holders had visited Pirin Macedonia in Bulgaria, and then sought to cross into Greece. They were refused access by Greek border officials, as were others seeking to enter Greece directly from the Republic of Macedonia. These border incidents aroused further frustration and resentment in Australian, US, and Canadian citizens and further strengthened a

Figure 3: *Žena Borec* - Naso Bekjarovski



The caption reads: "Homeland –the yearning of the persecuted."

Source: *Združenie na decata begalci od egejskiot del na Makedonija*, Skopje, courtesy of Gjorgji Donevski

sense of solidarity with citizens of the Republic and from Eastern Europe, who had directly faced the problem of return earlier.<sup>141</sup>

### *The formation of associations in Macedonia*

After the meeting, some of its organizers built on the momentum it had created and formed a new association. Named the Republican Association of Child-Refugees from the Aegean Part of Macedonia (henceforth ZDB), its founding meeting was held on 23 December 1989, when multiparty elections still lay eleven months in the future. 128 people attended. Most were first-generation *deca begalci*; among the subjects discussed was a proposal to allow membership to all Macedonian citizens, not just *deca begalci*. This, though, was defeated. One of the attendees was critical of the limited pre-publicity effort made for the meeting, which, she believed, had restricted attendance. The meeting nonetheless represented a constitutive assembly, which elected a presidency of seventeen members. Ten of them traced origins to villages in the Kostur or Kastoria region and three to villages close to Lerin or Florina.<sup>142</sup>

The ZDB's charter laid out an extensive set of issues. At its heart was a concern to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms; and also, specifically, to defend the property rights of Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia. Later correspondence indicates a concern to secure for members and others "spiritual" contact with their birthplaces and to sponsor investigation into the causes of the "Exodus" of 1948 and of continuing discrimination. Georgi Dimirovski was the first president, and Gjorgji Donevski was secretary.

The ZDB had a strong base in Skopje. It was soon complemented by other, locally-based groups in the Republic. In 1990, an organization for the defense of human rights was formed in Radovish, near Shtip, under the presidency of Angel Radev. Bitola was the base for the Association of Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia, under the leadership of Aleksander Popovski. It is not clear what circumstances led to this proliferation of potentially conflicting organizations, which paralleled the multiplication of new political parties in the Republic. Correspondence preserved in the National Archives in Skopje suggests generally cordial and cooperative relations in the first years of operation of these groups; Popovski, for example, was present at

the inaugural meeting of the Association, and the organization in Radovish seems to have been set up in consultation with Skopje.

The early years of activism in the Republic appear, from the archival record, to have been profoundly influenced by the declaration of independence by the Republic of Macedonia. This raised several issues. Of some concern was the levying of a \$1000 fee for the granting of Macedonian citizenship to applicants from outside the former Yugoslavia; clearly, this most affected Aegean Macedonians who had been part of the East European diaspora, or had otherwise never acquired Yugoslav citizenship, and the association was asked to lobby on behalf of some individuals. The presidency also sought to establish contacts with potentially powerful allies in politics and business in Macedonia and abroad; the archives record meetings with Vasil Tupurkovski (a prominent Yugoslav-era politician), and John Bitov, a Macedonian-Canadian businessman, both of whom traced descent to Aegean Macedonia. More generally, the association already began to focus on the issue of rights of Aegean Macedonians, organizing delegations to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe meeting in Moscow in September 1991, and also to the European Commission for Human Rights in Strasbourg.

In both, the association found itself working along parallel lines with organizations set up elsewhere. Mention was made earlier of the Association of Macedonians in Poland, which published an English language pamphlet entitled "What has Europe forgotten about" in 1992, detailing some of the problems that the Greek government posed to Macedonians in Poland and elsewhere.<sup>143</sup> In Australia, following the meeting in Skopje, different regional committees were consolidated in March 1990. A new umbrella organization, the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee Inc., was set up to coordinate Australia-wide campaigns to "assist and advance, through various means, the struggle for basic human and civil rights and fundamental freedoms of the Macedonians living in Greece (including Aegean Macedonia), Bulgaria (including Pirin Macedonia), Albania (including Prespa Macedonia), and in other parts of the Balkans, and beyond, including the diasporan communities."<sup>144</sup> A "First Gathering of the Child-Refugees from the Aegean Part of Macedonia" was held on January 10-12 1992, in Melbourne, and issued a declaration which called for recognition of their rights to Greek citizenship and property in Greece.<sup>145</sup>

Some of those involved in this transnational activism saw in the break-up of Yugoslavia the potential to reopen issues that had been kept under tight rein for over forty years. Former *deca begalci* were at the forefront of campaigns which sought to pressure the new government and the international community to address what they referred to as “the Macedonian question.” Working from a model of history which presented the Ottoman administrative districts around Uskub (modern Skopje), Selanik (modern Thessaloniki) and Manastir (modern Bitola) as a viable sovereign territory, they argued that the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 had split this unit between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece in the approximate ratio 10:40:50, with some small part also being handed to the newly formed Albania. It was to unify this divided whole, they argued, that Macedonians had fought during World War II and the Greek Civil War, only to be betrayed again by Great Power diplomacy. Now, they argued, was the time for borders to be rewritten.

It seems clear that in this first flush of enthusiasm, some of the members of the various organizations in which Aegean Macedonians were a dominant force embraced positions that could be perceived as irredentist. They had ties, for example, to the Macedonian Patriotic Organization in the USA, always hostile to Yugoslavia and the way in which national borders were drawn after the First World War. Some members’ political affiliations within the Republic also reflected their orientation towards parties that thought not just within the “Yugoslav box,” but in the broader terms of reference that Macedonia could have. The two largest parties in domestic politics in the early 1990s, and still today, are the Social Democratic Alliance, (henceforth SDSM), and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization/ Democratic Party of Macedonian National Unity (henceforth VMRO-DPMNE).<sup>146</sup> While SDSM’s ranks were filled with former Yugoslav politicians, VMRO-DPMNE foreswore Yugoslavia all together. Extremists in the party published materials which blurred the distinction between claiming spiritual unity with brethren in Aegean Macedonia and calling for reunification. Although the party won the largest number of seats in the Republic of Macedonia’s first democratic elections, their refusal or inability to create any coalition prevented them from governing. In opposition their extremism, at least in the early 1990s, grew more vociferous.

How much influence the former *deca begalci*, as individuals or through their various associations, had on the political development of the former Republic of Macedonia is debatable. At first glance, one might assume that it was significant: they and their descendants do constitute a potential voting bloc of some significance. For the most part, they are highly educated; those who returned to Macedonia from other East European countries, as well as having strong technical or professional training, are also usually at least bilingual. Many have also maintained personal or family connections either in Greece, in the countries they temporarily resided in, or with relatives in the transoceanic countries. For a republic anxious to build connections and partnerships with other countries as it takes its place in the world of sovereign nations, it might be thought that this section of the population could and would play a leading role.

However, it also quickly became apparent that their specific concerns posed a particular problem in relations with Greece, an influential neighbor. It was in this early period of sovereign independence that the Republic of Macedonia, while avoiding direct embroilment with the wars of Yugoslav succession, found itself in collision with Greece. The historical sensitivity of successive Greek governments over the “Macedonian question” was triggered by the new Republic’s constitution, which initially expressed a commitment to pay attention to the plight of Macedonians in other countries, its selection of a device associated with ancient Macedonia for its flag, and even its name.

There is little evidence that influence from any “Aegean lobby” played a decisive role in any of these processes. The Macedonian constitution was drawn up by a team of lawyers and law professors. It is true that at least one member of the constitutional commission was also a prominent member of the ZDB, Kole Mangov. In an interview in 1995, though, he affirmed what contemporary media accounts stressed: that the choice of flag device came after suggestions were invited from citizens and associations. Mangov asserts in the interview “The Commission received numerous suggestions for the state symbol. As far as I can remember it, perhaps 90 per cent had in their base the sun” – in other words, discounting the notion that any particular lobby was influential.<sup>147</sup> Certainly contemporary media and rumor in Skopje

in 1992 did not hint at any such agenda driving the choice of device, which can be plausibly explained as driven by domestic concerns.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, broader consensus in the Republic supported “Macedonia” as the obvious choice of name. The constitutional provision was defended initially as standard phrasing, reflecting that a state would care for its citizens abroad; however, what the dispute revealed was the slippage in the constitution’s language between Macedonian as civic and as ethnic designator.

This was also, of course, the issue that arose in some of the ZDB’s early correspondence regarding the rights to citizenship of Macedonians living abroad. In so far as the *deca begalci* had a shared vision, then, it was closer to that of the opposition party, VMRO-DPMNE. The opposition party’s agenda in the early 1990s seemed to erode, by one means or another, the distinction between civic and ethnic, whereas the SDSM appeared more willing to govern without eradicating the ambiguity, on similar principles as those which had been employed in Yugoslavia. Any influence that the “Aegean lobby” had on government policy, then, in these early years, was akin to that of the opposition. Its members operated from an adversarial position and urged greater activity in a sensitive area, at a time when the SDSM government was struggling with other equally or more pressing issues. Initial euphoria among Aegean Macedonians at the independence of the Republic of Macedonia was quickly tempered by the recognition that neither the new government, nor the international community were about to engage on any radical action on behalf of a transnational community who appeared to be defined only by experiences shared almost half a century ago. The flow of correspondence from the ZDB in its early years of existence, to various international organizations, appears from the archival record to have gone largely unanswered and unacknowledged. So too, it is hard to trace significant concessions, symbolic or practical, to Aegean Macedonians by the social democratic government.<sup>149</sup>

### *Diverse origins*

Even more significantly, though, it should be recognized that unity among this community, either in Macedonia or abroad, was slow to emerge. Soon after its creation the ZDB experienced internecine fighting. In June 1991, President Georgi Dimirovski’s resignation was sought because of his inactivity in the position. Kole

Mangov, one of the prominent figures in organizing the first meeting and the association, became president of a different and new non-governmental human-rights organization, named *Dostoinistvo*, or "Dignity," and as early as 1993 appears to have committed more of his energies to that than to the Association. Regional separation continued among the Republic's various Aegean-oriented organizations until the mid 1990s. The reasons for differences have not been documented, but chance remarks and observations offer some clues as to their basis.

When the association in Skopje collected over two thousand signatures to provide backing for its petitions to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Moscow in 1991, they asked people to provide their age and place of birth. The results show that the Aegean communities in different parts of the Republic have very different backgrounds and demographic profiles.<sup>150</sup> In Bitola, for example, a majority of the population with ties to Aegean Macedonia are not child refugees; most also, it appears, are from villages in the Florina region. All of those who signed the petition, 51 in total, were first generation exiles or refugees and were born in Aegean Macedonia. The border between Florina and Bitola has been closed entirely from time to time; none of the documented occasions on which those from Aegean Macedonia have specifically been targeted have occurred there. During a short visit to the village of Buf (modern Akritas) in 1997, I encountered a group of Macedonians from Bitola, one of whom had been born in the village, and was making his first trip "home." Akritas is still inhabited, and the group was able to converse, at least briefly, with people who could update them on the geography of land-ownership and house-renovation.

In Štip, a larger percentage of the Aegean population is from the region around Edhessa (called Vodensko, in Macedonian). Anecdotal data indicates that at least some of the villages from which these people trace descent are still inhabited, and there are contacts between present and former residents who may be related. In nearby Radoviš, many of those who signed the petition were born in Radoviš and were therefore second generation members of the community. There were also signatories born in Bulgaria, Perth, and the Soviet Union. These groups, then, are differentiable by age profile and point of origin.

With regard to the community in Skopje, the variety is still more striking. It appears for example that a majority of those who

trace origin to villages around Kastoria—the Kostursko region in Macedonian—and who now live in Macedonia, are in Skopje. It was in this region where the destruction of Macedonian villages as lived spaces appears to have been most widespread. In one evocative description, one can find there “...abandoned houses, their windows like empty eye-sockets and their roofs fallen in. They are ghost-houses, their bare red mud-brick walls still standing to remind visitors of the ravages of civil strife.”<sup>151</sup> This fate inspired the production of various community ethnographies in the Republic of Macedonia, usually written by members of the communities that fled.<sup>152</sup> Refugees from villages matching Koliopoulos’ account are arguably the most radical and involved of the *deca begalci*, and the Aegean community as a whole. Often nursing particular animosity toward the policies of the Greek state during the twentieth century—and sometimes, though by no means always, willing to extend their hostility to “the Greek people”—people whose ancestral homes lie in ruins provide the more radical element in the Aegean population in the Republic of Macedonia. It is they who are often most critical of Macedonian governmental policy, and who advocate the broadest set of measures to correct the perceived injustices of the past. Where others in exile retain links with relatives in Greece who might pay the price of any worsening of relations between the neighboring countries that extensive activism might cause, those with no such ties perhaps feel less constrained.

### *Disputed agendas*

Beyond any simple division by origin, though, lie more profound philosophical issues that potentially divide activists among the *deca begalci*: the relationship between individual and collective rights and the responsibility of states and citizens in the contemporary world. Some devote considerable energy to making the argument that Aegean Macedonians represent, with respect to Greece, an identifiable minority that has been the target of discrimination. Others are more concerned to point to the evidence that individuals have had their rights violated by the Greek State. Some seek to lobby the Macedonian government to keep the Aegean issue on the agenda in any and all discussions with Greece; others see their plight as falling under the remit of international organizations, and bypass their own state. Obviously the two discourses are connected, but

different groups and individuals adopt different priorities.

For the ZDB, as for the Association of Macedonians in Poland, and Kica Kolbe's father in Egejci, permission to visit the "old country" is a major focus of attention. The refusal of the Greek government to allow certain Canadian and Australian citizens to cross the frontier to visit their villages during the 1988 World Gathering in Skopje highlighted the issue. The basis for the Greek position appears to be that sovereign states bestow official names on settlements within their territory, and that documents which do not bear these official names are not valid. Many of the villages in North-Western Greece from which people, including the *deca begalci*, fled during and after the Civil War have been renamed since then; Buf, for example, is now Akritas, and Kotori is now Idrousa. As a matter of principle, or else out of unawareness of the change, many of those who left and became citizens of other states have passports which bear the former, Slavic names of their birthplaces. This both allows Greek border officials or visa-granting consular officers to identify them as originating in Aegean Macedonia, and also provides the government representatives with a pretext for refusing to recognize the validity of the travel document.<sup>153</sup>

For Macedonians who still live in Aegean Macedonia, the insistence of Greek régimes of the past on renaming their villages can be a source of humor.<sup>154</sup> Many continue, in various informal settings, to use the "original" names, most obviously when they are talking in their local dialect of Macedonian. Those outside Aegean Macedonia, though, often invest the inscription of what they frequently consider the "real" name of their village in official documentation with symbolic significance, and they are usually unwilling to countenance its replacement with a name that seems to them wholly alien. After all, they may argue, they were born before the Greek name of the village was even thought of; to say they were born in a village bearing the Greek name is therefore simply not true. Those in the Republic of Macedonia apparently in the past faced an additional problem: despite a policy designed not to antagonize Greece, Macedonian passport officials were nonetheless unwilling to translate village names into their modern Greek version.

Opinion varies among Aegean Macedonians in Skopje as to how this problem might be resolved. Some berate the Macedonian government for refusing to acknowledge the principle that a state names its own territory; they call, in other words, for passports to carry the new, Greek names of the villages. A less radical strand of

pragmatism has in fact been implemented. The Macedonian government is now willing to issue passports which simply say "Greece" under "place of birth." For some individuals, this change has permitted them to cross the frontier, but some still cannot obtain a visa even with this replacement. Others again see this policy as a surrender of a principled position and retain the Slavic name of their villages in their passports, even though aware that this may (and often does) prevent them from being able to visit the place which used to bear that name, now bears another, but which they still see as "theirs."<sup>155</sup>

The naming of villages in passports thus illustrates some of the paradoxes and schisms which beset the cause of individuals and organizations concerned with Aegean Macedonia. Two former *deca begalci* might take radically different positions, which can be distinguished in ideal-typical terms: one purely principled and collective-minded, the other purely pragmatic and individually-centered. For someone in the first position, the name of the village in the passport is itself a part of history that he (or she) is charged with bearing. He does not recognize the right of Greece to rename the village, nor to exclude anyone who was born there from visiting it. He persists in trying to obtain a visa or cross the frontier without shifting his own position, and urges others to do the same. When he fails, he seeks to enlist the intervention of a larger agency to support his right to enter. Most likely, on the grounds of consistency, if he does not recognize the rights of the Greek state, he is also suspicious of the commitment to the principle of the state of which he is a citizen. His appeal may therefore be directed to organizations which he believes are beyond politics, and which deal with absolute questions of justice. He is likely to frame his appeal not as individual, but as coming from a group of which he is merely one member; he seeks rights not for himself alone, but for all who adhere to the same principles that he does. He anticipates that if the right of return is recognized for all of them, then this will be a first step for the recognition of other rights, including potentially the restitution of confiscated property.

For someone purely pragmatic and individually-centered, a different course presents itself. If his primary concern is to visit his village, and he has been refused access with the documents he has, he may be willing to see its name effaced from his passport. Alternatively, it may be that he pursues personal connections that he has in order to receive special treatment: that is, he may seek a solution to his own dilemma without challenging the principle from which it derives. In this respect he acknowledges, tacitly, the enduring power

of states and their bureaucracy to shape the choices of citizens but seeks personal success by subversion, rather than confrontation.<sup>156</sup> Insofar as he has further goals that he seeks to realize, he is likely to delegate them to the state of which he is a member, rather than devote energy to any collective enterprise. Indeed, with regard to international organizations, he is likely to be skeptical of their claims to disinterestedness.

Clearly, two such individuals would find themselves pitted against each other. For the principled approach that holds out for collective redress, every individual who maneuvers successfully as an individual compromises the claim that a united group with a shared grievance exists. Conversely, for the pragmatic operator, the energies of the idealist may make it more difficult for him to negotiate effectively. That conflict can be traced between activists at the head of organizations and others who have refused to join. However the line between these two positions in fact runs within individuals. As time passes, it seems, the stakes continue to rise, especially for the former *deca begalci* who are now approaching retirement, and whose efforts for the past decade can be realized so little. Even leaders whose long-term sights remain set on far-ranging restitution for all try to get individual permission to return to the villages they remember, if only once. Conversely, those who are skeptical of the strategies of various new organizations remain aware that causes of collective grievance exist.

### *Consolidation and Proliferation*

The organizational structure of the *deca begalci* has also undergone changes since the initial profusion of potentially dueling rivals. As noted above, an umbrella association of Macedonian human rights organizations was created in Australia in 1990. By January 1997, when the third Australian Reunion of Refugee Children from Aegean Macedonia was held, the associations of refugee children had also consolidated their efforts. By their own record, former *deca begalci* in Australia at this point numbered 550.<sup>157</sup> In Canada, a profusion of organizations remains in existence, of which one of the largest is the Macedonian Human Rights Movement of Canada, based in Toronto. The smaller Association for Refugee Children from Aegean Macedonia is based in Scarborough. In 1998 Risto Cackirovski was president, who had also been involved in planning the 1988 Skopje meeting.

In the Republic, a major consolidation of effort occurred in February 1995, when the Aegean-focused organizations in Strumica, Radovish, and Shtip together with the association for the child-refugees in Skopje (ZDB) and the Forum for Human Rights in Skopje signed an agreement for cooperation. They agreed a common platform to pursue the cause of human rights, especially with regard to "properties and citizens from parts of Macedonia which were in the possession of other states."<sup>158</sup> The Bitola-based Association of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia, still under the presidency of Aleksander Popovski in the late 1990s, was not part of the gathering. It appears to have made stronger, specific links with overseas organizations and has what is described as a "close working relationship" with the Australian Macedonian Human Rights Committee Inc.

Different strands of activism continue to be developed by these organizations. The consortium of associations pledged a common commitment to the publication of a newspaper, entitled *Nezaborav* (Against Forgetting), the first issue of which had appeared on June 17 1993. On its masthead, the paper states that it continues the tradition of *Glas na Egejcite*, the newspaper published in the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia between 1950 and 1954 and dedicated to the exiles and refugees from Northern Greece. *Nezaborav* is printed in the Macedonian language, and its overall editor is Gjorgji Donevski. It covers human rights issues with a clear focus on contemporary Greece. It also contains book reviews, historical documents, songs, memoirs, and obituaries of prominent figures, again with a major focus on Aegean Macedonia. A section of the paper documents the consortium's activities and those of related organizations. A major focus of energy on this count was the organization of the Second World Congress of Child-Refugees, which was held in Skopje on 15-19 June 1998, and which in many respects followed the form of the first meeting held in 1988. There was a historical symposium, a photographic exhibit, an organized hike following in the footsteps of the refugees, and a program of songs, dances and outings to sites of national interest. All of these were reported in the September 1998 issue, which also stressed that the whole meeting was not political, but cultural and "human" in orientation.

Figure 4: *Zbeg* - Kole Manev



Source: The Organizational Committee of the Second World Reunion of Refugee Children from the Aegean Part of Macedonia, courtesy of Gjorgji Donevski

### *Engaging the state: Macedonia and beyond*

Notable on this occasion was the greater success of the organizers in enlisting attendance, support, and cooperation from the sovereign Republic of Macedonia. President Kiro Gligorov opened the proceedings and a commemorative postage stamp was issued by the Macedonian post office, which bore the image of Kole Manev's painting "Flight" or *Zbeg* (See Figure 4). The event was also attended by foreign anthropologists and at least one filmmaker, Jill Daniels, whose *Next Year in Lerin* was produced the following year, and includes footage from the meeting. In these respects, the meeting continued the work "against forgetting" of the consortium which is also pursued through the publication of numerous works on particular villages and on the experiences of refugees in various countries, many of which were cited in the first part of this report. Obviously, there were political dimensions to the meeting. They

were, however, muted. Good relations with the Macedonian government appear to have been maintained, and it appears that excessive provocation of Greece was carefully avoided. At least one retrospective on the 1988 meeting, published in *Nezaborav*, offered an account of a man's successful visit to his place of birth in Greece; the closure of the border to some would-be visitors was not emphasized. And nowhere in the literature was the symbol of the sixteen-pointed star or sun of Vergina used, which was a focal point of an early dispute between Greece and the Republic. The emblem of the meeting was abstract and novel, including a representation of the globe and text indicating that a 50-year anniversary was being commemorated, but offering little purchase to anyone looking for signs of deliberate antagonism. Although the meeting did yield a declaration which stressed that the child-refugees had been robbed of their inheritance, property, and citizenship (through no fault or illegal act of their own), it was couched in positive language. Greece was referred to as once having been the cradle of European Civilization, and the force of the exhortation was that Europe and Greece should live up to ideals of conduct.

The Bitola-based association represents a rather different and more radical course. Its emblem is built around the disputed star/sun, and while the consortium was preparing for its gathering, Bitola was the forum for a profoundly political initiative. On 5 October 1997 the city was host to the human rights organizations *Vinožito* (Rainbow) from Greece, OMO Ilinden from Bulgaria, and two others from Albania. From that meeting a memorandum was issued which addressed issues in both Bulgaria and Greece. In November 1997 a wider meeting was held in Tetovo, at which the same groups were represented and joined by other minority organizations from within the Republic of Macedonia, representing Vlachs, Serbs, Roma, and Bosniaks, and from organizations in Albania representing Egyptians, and from Greece representing the Turkish minority. From the meeting emerged a declaration on the situation of national minorities in the Balkan countries.<sup>159</sup> The Bitola-based organization has thus followed a different strategy of internationalization, which draws out connections between the Aegean Macedonian case and that of other groups in the region. The wording of the organization's various statements is similarly more direct: Greek policy is referred to as genocide, and the demands made are couched in the language of collective rights.<sup>160</sup>

Rhetoric that is aimed specifically against Greece is also to be found in documents and statements made by Aegean associations

abroad. An announcement of the Third Australian Reunion of Refugee Children from Aegean Macedonia, held in Adelaide in January 1997, features extensive use of the 16-pointed star. In reports published on the internet by Bill Nicholov of the Macedonian Human Rights Movement of Canada, it was anticipated that the Greek government would seek to deny access to former child-refugees who sought to visit their birthplaces. In a press release on 14 June 1998, it was asserted, with regard to the *deca begalci*, that the "Greek government stripped them of their citizenship and has denied them entry into Greece even to visit relatives or to attend funerals."<sup>161</sup> In fact, out of a group of "several hundred," thirty were denied access, most of whom were heavily involved in the activity of the various associations that have been described here.

The conflicts between the different associations should not, perhaps, be overstated. In many respects, their long-term agendas are very similar. However, the different emphases of different groups serve as a reminder of different individual experiences of exile and loss. People in this imagined transnational community perceive the situation in very different ways. Some seem wholly wrapped up in the histories of their particular villages, and are overtly concerned to rectify what they may present as historical injustice perpetrated uniquely against them by an anonymous state. Others retain links with their former homes, perhaps through relatives. They are more likely to have a sense of the practical difficulties of implementing any broad policy of recompense and perhaps more likely to recognize how unlikely would be any such far-reaching change. Some have done what others displaced by forces beyond their control have often done and committed their energies to their new homes. Finally, some see in their experience parallels with the fate of other aggrieved groups, and have sought to cooperate with them.

These differences have not been eroded since the second gathering in 1998. What may have altered is the relative strength of these different perspectives within the community of *deca begalci*. One important influence on the politics of the associations has been the change in government in the Republic of Macedonia, where the Social Democratic Alliance lost power in the parliamentary elections of 1998, and in the presidential election in 1999. The Republic of Macedonia was subsequently governed by a coalition between VMRO-DPMNE (elements of which espoused irredentism in the early 1990s), a new political party (the Democratic Alternative)

headed by Vasil Tupurkovski, and a predominantly Albanian party (the Democratic Party of Albanians) headed by Arben Xhaferi.<sup>162</sup>

Although many Western analysts considered that the nationalist platform of VMRO-DPMNE posed a threat to the country's stability, events after the election confirmed the party's shift towards greater flexibility and pragmatism. Having boycotted the second round of elections in 1994, VMRO-DPMNE had had no part in government from 1994-1998, when the initial concessions were made to Greece over national symbols, and the pathway opened to co-operation between the two countries. Although sharply critical of the government's climb-down at the time, in 1995, VMRO-DPMNE in government, if anything, increased the pace and scale of high-level contact with the Republic's southern neighbor. Greek commercial investment in the Republic of Macedonia became more extensive, and government representatives from the two countries and Albania met in the Prespa region pledging common commitment to resolution of lingering issues.

The new coalition government, though, did not take any concrete steps that would benefit the Aegean lobby in the Republic. As a result, in 2000 there appeared to be equal or greater resentment of the new government than the old among Aegean activists. According to one member of the ZDB in Skopje, the association was contemplating enlisting international condemnation of their own government for paying insufficient heed to the demands of citizen groups. Others from the Aegean community found such proposals absurd and suggested they reflected a certain failure of imagination in the association's leadership. There is no doubt, though, that VMRO-DPMNE's apparent unwillingness to take up the issue of the dispossessed *deca begalci* cost them the support of those who, perhaps unrealistically, expected the party to deliver on rhetoric that it embraced early in its life. Some even went so far as to suggest that government refusal to address their grievances made them "second-class citizens." Unable to visit Greece, they were denied the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of the countries' apparent rapprochement; some even asserted that again, as in the 1940s and the 1970s, they were sacrificed on the altar of geopolitical expediency.<sup>163</sup>

### *The politics of solidarity*

The extent and appeal of this judgment is hard to establish. Activists in the Republic claim astonishingly high numbers for

citizens who have some connection by descent with Aegean Macedonia. The highest asserted number I heard was 200,000. 60,000 of these, according to the same source, have some descent from the original *deca begalci*, and therefore might appear to have a stake in some resolution of the issue of citizenship and property rights.<sup>164</sup> Yet even those who make such claims acknowledge that the numbers of those who have been rigorously excluded from at least visiting Greece are, by comparison, very small (less than a hundred), both in 1988 and 1998. Certainly a principle is in question: as one activist put it “How can we call this Europe if I can’t travel to Greece?” But it appears that despite efforts to organize and coordinate the potential Aegean community as an electoral bloc in order to compel the Macedonian government to take more active steps to uphold the rights of this small section of the population, such solidarity is illusory and fleeting. In a similar vein, those individuals in the Republic who have Aegean origins and who have attained positions of some influence and power cannot be seen as consistently acting as if that were a major motivating force. The cultural and political landscape of Macedonia is fractured along many lines; although the potential rift between *Egejci* and *Vardarci* can be glimpsed in jokes, anecdotes and stereotypes, and was certainly salient at times in the past, it has not become an organizing schism. Vasil Tupurkovski’s political success in 1998, for example, does not appear to have owed anything to any organized bloc voting by *Egejci*, nor does it appear that he owes particular political debts to the community.

The transnational community of Aegean Macedonians is also a less substantial force than one might expect. The long separation from each other and very different experiences of communities in scattered countries has created divergent priorities. Although significant exercises in cooperation, the meetings of 1988 and 1998 were in fact attended by much smaller numbers than might be imagined—*Nezaborav* reports for 1998 that there were a total of 3,500 participants, including those from the Republic itself.

The disparity between the total numbers asserted for Aegean Macedonians, in particular *deca begalci* and their descendants living outside Greece, and the numbers of active association members and meeting participants might be read in many ways. Obviously, none of the original *deca begalci* (however many they were, and whatever nationality they would later embrace) has lived in a social or political vacuum since then. Different individuals, though, have invested the emotional and practical

energies of adulthood in different ways. Many made marital and professional choices on the basis of where they found themselves; some may have deliberately sought to make ties beyond the refugee communities of which they were initially often a part. They may also have sought citizenship in their new homes, and adopted what might, to draw on language used in a different context by Lillian Petroff, be called a “settler” worldview; they concentrated on making their lives meaningful in the new contexts in which they found themselves. They did not abandon all thought of their past; however, they were more prone to see it as past. Others, by contrast, sought more actively to preserve in exile a sense of community that was owed to their origins. Reflecting what could be termed a “sojourner” position, they relied on solidarities and loyalties inherited from previous generations; their place of origin thereby remained a significant presence in their lives, and the prospect of return was never surrendered.<sup>165</sup>

Again, the lines between these two forms of Aegean consciousness are not absolute, and do not necessarily separate individuals from one another. However, one way to interpret the relations between today’s activists and the larger potential community that they claim to represent is that they seek to evoke and mobilize a “sojourner” mentality. They invite others to share with them a commitment to the paramount importance of return and reclaiming their inheritance. The most radical are also those who interpret these terms in their most literal sense; at times, it appears that they seek to erase the passage of years, and call for a restoration of how things were when they left. The slippage is perhaps most apparent in the insistence on preserving for themselves the term *deca begalci*—child-refugees, when, as individuals who have made lives for themselves in new countries and are parents or grandparents, they are demonstrably neither.

Such activists are disappointed, both in their inability to enlist aid from the states of which they are now citizens and international organizations, and in the opposition or lack of enthusiasm that they see, even within the community they consider that they represent. For most, though, perhaps especially those who grew up in societies where citizen activism promised little, this activism may be misplaced, dangerous, or simply futile. This is not to say that they are oblivious to their own heritage, or in denial of their origins. It is rather a view that perceives flexibility and accommodation as the means by which present and future prosperity and security can be obtained. Those who hold such a

view, as suggested in the first section of this report, are united by their skepticism towards attempts to harness their energies for political purposes; ironically, perhaps, that very characteristic disables current efforts to galvanize them into action in support of principles that they might nonetheless acknowledge as valid.

## *Conclusion*

Over half a century separates the community of *deca begalci* from the villages which produced its members. They are now between their early fifties and mid-sixties. Some live within easy driving distances of their places of birth, others half a world away in new communities that they helped to build. For the majority, any return is made difficult by bureaucracy, while for some it is impossible. Those that make the journey often find it emotionally traumatic to realize how much distance has opened between the physical remains of their former homes and what they remember of them. Greece is now a full member of the European Community, and, while not wealthy, a majority of its rural population now enjoy levels of livelihood and security almost unthinkable in the late 1940s. Those among the *deca begalci* who identify themselves as Macedonian have been excluded from any share in this prosperity; their family property has either passed into the hands of others, including sometimes relatives, or lies derelict. Though brief visits may be cathartic, they can also fuel resentment over all the forms of loss that remain beyond recompense.

In this regard, the temporal dimensions of *deca begalci* activism are significant. In the first place, the first-generation survivors have reached an age when their thoughts turn to the proximity of death and what legacies will remain. Some activists note bitterly that time is on the side of those states for whom their existence remains threatening or embarrassing. The prospect of eternal exile now appears more certain than it did when they were still working to secure any kind of future for themselves and their families and could cherish the distant hope of eventual return or restitution. The collapse of East European societies, including Yugoslavia, is a second important dimension to the growth of *deca begalci* activism. Although Macedonia escaped violence in the first ten years of its independent existence, the economic standing of its population has been ravaged by the wars over Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, which prompted international sanctions against and

ultimately assault on Serbia, Macedonia's most significant trade partner. In early 2001, tensions between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians reminded citizens and observers of the uncertainty over the country's future.

Symbolic and material senses of loss thus conspire for the *deca begalci*, especially those who have invested energy and hard-earned resources in the Republic of Macedonia. Although those who now make their homes in Canada or Australia might not experience the same sense of relative economic deprivation, they participate fully in the parallel argument of human rights which in this case constitutes a further dimension of refugee solidarity. Again, Greece's membership of the European Union seems especially galling to Macedonian activists, who charge the international community with hypocrisy in turning a blind eye to the country's treatment of its minorities, while imposing all manner of conditions on other Balkan nations before their membership in the EU can even be discussed.

In Greece, discussion of the *deca begalci* issue emerged only relatively recently. An article in news magazine's English language supplement in 1993, at a time when tensions ran high over the "Macedonian question," accused "Skopje" of orchestrating propaganda designed to turn international opinion against Greece by manipulating the image of the child-refugee.<sup>166</sup> The article lamented Greek scholarly silence on the issue. Since then, a careful study of the historical period of the exodus, whether "*paidomazoma*," "genocide," or "rescue," has been published in Greek, assessing the arguments of the different protagonists at the time.<sup>167</sup> Less attention, though, has been devoted to analyzing what happened to the children over the next fifty years and illuminating the roots of the transnational citizen activism in which some of them now participate.

This essay has sought to contribute to a better understanding of the processes by which refugee children in 1948 became *deca begalci* in 1998. The evidence it assembles, when read in a deconstructionist spirit, challenges two common-sense models by which some link the past and the present. First, it demonstrates the inadequacy of the assumption that behind contemporary *deca begalci* activism lie the machinations of the Yugoslav or Macedonian state in their socialist or post-socialist guises. From the 1950s onward, political leaders in the Republic actively sought to exclude the "Aegean question" from the national agenda. What state support

or encouragement the exile community received was never consistent or reliable and was frozen whenever expediency demanded. After the closure of the newspaper *Glas na Egejcite* in 1956, it was not until the 1980s that Macedonians from Greece in the Republic were permitted to form an association or engage in any activities beyond the strictly local and cultural. Ironic as it may appear, even the post-socialist party that seemed most hawkish in opposition, VMRO-DPMNE, reinvented itself as pragmatic and center-right to win the 1998 elections and then build close commercial relations with Greece.

Investigation of the half-century since 1948 also dispels any illusion that there is any straightforward continuity, biological or otherwise, between the flight of 1948 and the meeting of 1998. As individuals, today's activists all left Greece during the Civil War, but they are now part of a community constituted along very different lines. Of the 28,000 children who were separated from home and family, over a quarter came to be identified as Greek, and have played no role in more recent activities. A further quarter or more were reunited with one or both parents within three years in Eastern Europe. Many have little involvement in the activist movement. But a critical mass of *deca begalci*, many drawn from those whose experiences of rootlessness were most extended, campaigns to make their cause visible. Although they have built homes and families of their own in Europe, Australia, and North America, they have not forgotten their common experience of ongoing dislocation and dispossession and are united in their determination to bring an end to discrimination against some of their number by the Greek state.

What was an unwitting aggregation of passive historical objects has thus been transformed into conscious collectivity of active historical subjects. The rhetoric employed by today's activists disguise this transformation by blurring the distinction between 1948 and 1998. The reasons for so doing are tactical, as they seek to highlight their status as innocent victims who deserve recompense. They are also shaped by the dominant logic within which claims to territory or any other "limited good" in South-Eastern Europe are often framed, which opposes "natural" to "ideological" processes. The distinction is particularly powerful in nationalist thinking, as various scholars have indicated.<sup>168</sup> It drives invidious arguments that mark some nations as the "false" products of deliberate state sponsorship or manipulation, and others as the "real" outcome of unconscious popular sentiment, thereby

obscuring the central fact observed most famously by Benedict Anderson that organized human agency is a vital component in the creation and maintenance of any and all communities.<sup>169</sup>

The community of *deca begalci* which has evolved over fifty years and three continents is no exception. What emerges clearly is the power of perceived injustice to generate solidarity, and the enduring salience of “home” for individuals and groups. Although its members trace their origins to an event that occurred fifty years ago, they are not simply a group of embittered people obsessed with the past. Among their number are articulate and passionate advocates of principles that remain in jeopardy at the end of the twentieth century. Their calls for a “right of return” are perhaps weakened by their reluctance to disaggregate the diverse claims that they represent, and it is clear that their staunch commitment to Macedonian national identity embroils their particular campaign in a set of other complex issues. Yet the common-sense core of their complaints against the Greek state—that individuals should enjoy freedom of movement and cultural identity should not be the basis of discrimination—is hard to refute.

Their case thus raises issues of growing concern in a world where forced displacement is widespread, yet still imagined as a transient phenomenon. As stated earlier, the first-generation *deca begalci* have now reached or are approaching retirement. Some speculate that the clear prospect of their imminent deaths fuels Greek governmental determination to yield nothing, confident that the issue will die with them. Whether such cynicism is justified or not, the fact remains that a state with membership in a democratic, prosperous, and secure European Union remains unwilling to address the grievances of a group of people born on its territory and exiled for reasons beyond their control. Despite the peaceful and legal activities of educated, committed citizens from a number of countries, international organizations have also been unable to intervene effectively in this case. The history of the *deca begalci*, then, provokes the question of what lies ahead for the millions of refugees at large today, in far more precarious conditions. If their experience is indicative, it suggests that even as the conditions for transnational activism exist and information and people travel more quickly around the world than ever, nation-states still exercise enormous control over individuals. For exiles and refugees, return may remain a powerful symbol of unity even though it remains beyond the horizon of possibility.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Peter Loizos, *The Heart Grown Bitter: A Chronicle of Cypriot War Refugees* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Herzfeld, "Foreword," in Renee Hirschon, *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor refugees in Piraeus* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn, 1998), pp. xii–xv.

<sup>3</sup> See for example S. Lavie and Ted Swedenburg, eds., *Displacement, Diaspora and Geographies of Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds., *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997); Karen Fog Olwig and Kirsten Hastrup, eds., *Siting Culture: The Shifting Anthropological Object* (London: Routledge, 1997); James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Boyarin, ed., *Space, Time and the Politics of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Joelle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria 1937-1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); B. Parmenter, *Giving Voice to Stones: Place and Identity in Palestinian Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Ann-Belinda Steen Preis, "Seeking Place: Capsized Identities and Contracted Belonging among Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees," Olwig and Hastrup, eds., *Siting Culture*, pp. 86–100.

<sup>5</sup> Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> George E. Bisharat, "Exile to Compatriot: Transformations in the Social Identity of Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank," Gupta and Ferguson, eds., *Culture, Power, Place*, pp. 203–233; Jule Peteet, "Post Partition Palestinian Identities and the Moral Community," *Social Analysis*, Vol.42, No. 1 (March 1998), pp. 63–87. See p. 76.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>8</sup> Bisharat, "Exile to Compatriot", p. 227.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 224.

<sup>10</sup> Pamela Ballinger, *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 184.

<sup>11</sup> Henry David, "Involuntary International Migration," *International Migration Review* Vol.7, Nos. 3-4 (1969): cited in Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Loizos, *Heart Grown Bitter*, pp. 144-5; Ballinger, *History in Exile*, p. 168; Bisharat, "Exile to Compatriot", p. 214. In Loizos' account, it is an exile from 1922 Smyrna who shows his key to a more recent refugee, mocking the latter's hopes of return.

<sup>13</sup> Hirschon, *Heirs*, pp. 168-9; Loizos, *Heart Grown Bitter* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 167-171, 183; Bisharat, "Exile to Compatriot," pp. 213-5, 223.

<sup>14</sup> Loizos, *Heart Grown Bitter*, pp. 157-163.

<sup>15</sup> Ballinger, *History in Exile*, pp. 198-201.

<sup>16</sup> Victor Andres Triay, *Fleeing Castro: Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Children's Program* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998), pp. 8, 59-69, 98, 105.

<sup>17</sup> Louis Stern, *Beyond Death and Exile: The Spanish Republicans in France 1939-1955* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979).

<sup>18</sup> US Department of Health, Education and Welfare Social and Rehabilitation Service, *Cuba's Children in Exile* (Washington, DC: US Government, 1967).

<sup>19</sup> Julie Mertus et al., eds., *The Suitcase: Refugee Voices from Bosnia and Croatia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> Milan Ristovic, *A Long Journey Home: Greek Refugee Children in Yugoslavia 1948-1960* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 2000), p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Here and elsewhere, the term "camp" is used to describe any form of communal residence that children or refugees inhabited. Some were tent camps; in other cases, authorities used existing resources, including resort hotels on the Dalmatian coast or villas and houses left empty by the expulsion, imprisonment, or execution of those accused of anti-Yugoslav sentiment. Many of the Aegean Macedonians spent more than a year in the Sombor region of Vojvodina formerly inhabited by ethnic Germans.

<sup>22</sup> The "Macedonian Question" has generated a copious literature. Informative works include: Loring Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia: Civil Conflict, Politics of Mutation, National Identity* (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1993); and John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*, pp. 42 and 54.

<sup>24</sup> Constantine Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1969), p. 111.

<sup>25</sup> James D. Faubion. *Modern Greek Lessons: a Primer in Historical Constructivism* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> The leftist position might also invert rightist claims and level accusations of “children-snatching” against Queen Frederika of Greece, under whose auspices camps were set up for children in Greece. See Loring Danforth, “Afterword”, in K.S. Brown and Y. Hamilakis, eds., *The Usable Past: Greek Metahistories* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2003).

<sup>27</sup> See Dominique Eudes, *The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece 1943-1949* (New York: Monthly Press, 1972); Anastasia Karakasidou, “Fellow Travelers, Separate Roads: The KKE and the Macedonian Question,” *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No.4 (1993), pp. 453–477.

<sup>28</sup> The politics of Macedonian language-use and codification in Eastern Europe have been the subject of research by Macedonian scholars. See Stojan Kiselinovski, *Statusot na Makedonskiot Jazik vo Makedonija (1913-1987)* (Skopje: Misl, 1987), pp. 99--104; Risto Kirjazovski, *Makedonskata Politièka Emigracija od Egejskiot del na Makedonija vo Istoènoevropskite Zemi po Vtorata Svetska Vojna* (Skopje: Kultura, 1989), pp. 226–232.

<sup>29</sup> For more on the relations of the Greek Communist Party and the split between Tito and Stalin, see Elizabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London: Royal Institute for International Affairs, 1950) and Dimitrios G. Kousoulas, *The Price of Freedom: Greece in World Affairs 1939-1953* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1953), p. 178ff. A clear index of the Soviet victory over pro-Yugoslav elements within the Greek Democratic Army was the removal of General Markos from authority on grounds of “ill-health.” Markos, a seasoned military commander with ties to the Yugoslav partisans, was replaced as field commander by Zahariadis, an ideologue loyal to Moscow. It has been argued that Zahariadis’ decision to abandon Markos’s guerilla tactics and his determination to wage conventional warfare hastened the demise of the Democratic Army’s struggle.

<sup>30</sup> Lorraine Lees notes that Tito’s gesture of closing the frontier received immediate reward from the US, who granted Yugoslavia a

license to purchase a steel blooming mill at around the same time (Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia, and the Cold War* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p. 67. In the same year, the US used its veto to prevent a steel mill from being given to Greece by the Germans as part of war reparations (Tsoucoulas, *Greek Tragedy*, p. 129).

<sup>31</sup> Greek Under Secretariat for Press and Information, *The Conspiracy Against Greece* (Athens, 1947), pp. 91, 104–106, 135–6, and 142. The camp at Bulkes was the most notorious of these training grounds, established after the Varkiza agreement of 1946, and home to over 3,000 men, women, and children. Dominique Eudes describes it as an attempt at utopian communal living that became a nightmare for its inhabitants. See Eudes, *Kapetanios*, pp. 288ff.

<sup>32</sup> Fana Martinova-Buckova, *I nie sme deca na majkata zemja* (Skopje: Združenie na decata-begalci od Egejskiot del na Makedonija, 1998). p. 36. Around 2,000 children were affected.

<sup>33</sup> See for example Basil Gounaris, “Emigration from Macedonia in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol.7, No.1 (1989), pp. 133–151; Christo M. Mandatzis, “Emigration from the District of Kastoria 1922–30,” *Balkan Studies*, Vol.37, No.1 (1996), pp. 107–131.

<sup>34</sup>For the report on a visit to a camp in Bulgaria see Kenneth Matthews, *Memories of a Mountain War. Greece 1946–1949* (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 180–182.

<sup>35</sup> Ristic, *Long Journey*, p. 103.

<sup>36</sup> Howard Jones, “The Diplomacy of Restraint: The United States’s Efforts to Repatriate Greek Children Evacuated During the Civil War of 1946–1949,” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 3, No.1(1985), pp. 65–86. See p. 82; Ristic, *Long Journey*, p. 106. In a similar vein, Petre Nakovski’s detailed account of the *deca*

*begalci* in Poland indicates that by the end of 1950, almost half had been reunited with parents. See Petre Nakovski, *Makedonski Deca vo Polska (1948-1968)* (Skopje: Mlad Borec, 1987), p. 110. A further group were already orphans. As described below, a more extensive reunification of families occurred in 1955.

<sup>37</sup> Lars Barenetzen, "The '*paidomazoma*' and the Queen's Camps," Lars Baerentzen, John O. Iatrides and Ole L. Smith, eds., *Studies in the History of the Greek Civil War 1945-1949* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1987), pp. 135, 136–8 and Jones, "Diplomacy of Restraint," p. 72.

<sup>38</sup> Jones, "Diplomacy of Restraint," p. 83.

<sup>39</sup> Yugoslav cooperation with the Greek repatriation effort is described by Ristovic, who also documents cases where children refused to go (Ristovic, *Long Journey*, p. 109). The numbers for early returns are detailed by Martinova-Buckova, who reports that 470 children returned from Yugoslavia to Greece in five groups between November 1950 and March 1952. See Martinova-Buckova, *I Nie Sme Deca*, p. 92. She indicates that some at least were Macedonian rather than Greek-speaking. In his oral history, Tanas Lazarov, from the village of Neret, indicates that at the time of departure, those children whose fathers had been recruited by the Greek Government Army stayed behind, while those who left were those without fathers in the village or whose fathers had gone abroad. (Macedonian Welfare Workers' Network of Victoria, *From War to Whittlesea: Oral Histories of Macedonian Child Refugees* (Five Dock NSW, Australia: Politecon, 1999), pp. 53. (Henceforth MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*). Yugoslavia's cooperation with the Greek government over repatriation prompted accusations from The Committee for the Assistance of Children (EVOP), a Greek Communist organization, of bargaining with the "monarcho-fascists" (Ristovic, *Long Journey*, p. 100). According to Yugoslav diplomatic correspondence, some of those who returned caused the Greek government some embarrassment by comparing their prior experience in Yugoslavia favorably to that in Greece (Ibid., pp. 113–114).

<sup>40</sup> Lazar Minkov, *Makedonskata Emigracija od Egejskiot del na Makedonija vo Ungaria* (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 2000), p. 173; also Martinova-Buckova, *I Nie Sme Deca*, p. 35; Kirjazovski, *Makedonskata Politièka Emigracija*, pp.155–156. Kirjazovski also provides figures for 1980-1981 of a little over 30,000 for the total exile population in Eastern Europe outside Yugoslavia.

<sup>41</sup> See fn. 32.

<sup>42</sup> Martinova-Buckova, *I Nie Sme Deca*, p. 42.

<sup>43</sup> Nakovski *Makedonski Deca*, p. 78.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>45</sup> Minkov, *Makedonskata Emigracija*, p. 59; Martinova-Buckova, *I Nie Sme Deca*, p. 44. Included in Martinova-Buckova's numbers here are the young women who accompanied the children and who were later referred to as *majki*, or mothers. Elsewhere she lists by village 3,760 children and 184 teachers from particular villages in the administrative region of Kastoria, who were brought to Romania in 1948 (*Ibid.*, p. 54).

<sup>46</sup> After allying with Germany, Bulgaria received a substantial portion of Yugoslav Macedonia, as well as Thrace, to administer. Italy controlled Western parts of Yugoslav Macedonia and Epirus, while Germany retained control of Thessaloniki and Greek Macedonia. As the war proceeded, Germany turned over more administrative and policing functions in the Balkans to Bulgaria, but retained control over resources. See Marin Pundeff, "Bulgaria," Joseph Held, ed., *The Columbia History of Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 94–95.

<sup>47</sup> Although some Macedonians in Northern Greece today identify the Asia Minor refugees settled in Macedonia in the 1920s as right-wing, some played a prominent role in the Greek communist movement: General Markos himself was from Smyrna. One of the

witnesses called by the Greek Government in its charges against its Northern neighbors, Defkalion Filippidis, claimed that a large proportion of the Macedonian ELAS brigade which marched across the border into Yugoslavia in October 1944 were Asia Minor refugees (Greek Undersecretariat, *Conspiracy*, p. 121).

<sup>48</sup> Some oral accounts report that Greeks too learned Macedonian.

<sup>49</sup> As Danforth argues, it is possible to locate people who identify all the children as either Greek or Macedonian (Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*, pp. 42, 54). Accounts published by activists in Macedonia and elsewhere are more nuanced, and generally agree in declaring that 20,000 of the children were Macedonian and 8,000 Greek. (Association for Macedonians in Poland, *What Has Europe Forgotten About* (Gdansk, 1992), p. 38. (Henceforth, AMP, *What Has Europe Forgotten*). Donevski, personal communication; Kiselinovski, personal communication). This figure is broadly consistent with the various figures given above, assuming first that it is meaningful to distinguish Greek and Macedonian, and second taking those in Yugoslavia (11,000-12,000 in 1949, and 9,000-10,000 in 1950) to be almost all Macedonian, and those elsewhere in Eastern Europe (16,000-17,000) to be divided between Greek and Macedonian in the approximate ratio 50:50.

<sup>50</sup> Kica Kolbe, *Egejci* (Skopje: Kultura, 1999).

<sup>51</sup> MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*, pp. 19, 32, 46, 49, 65, and 80.

<sup>52</sup> Fidanka Tanaskova et al, eds., *Den na Razdelenite* (Skopje: Nova Makedonija/ Zrduženie na Decata Begalci od Egejskiot del na Makedonija, 1993).

<sup>53</sup> Gjorgji Donevski, *Bapèor* (Skopje: Zdrúženie na Decata-Begalci od Egejskiot del na Makedonija, 1996); Nikola Kièevski, *Trsje i Trsjani* (Skopje: Zdrúženie na Decata-Begalci od Egejskiot del na Makedonija, 1998); Lazo Pop-Janevski, *Kostursko selo D'mbeni* (Skopje: Aurora, 1996).

<sup>54</sup> Peter Vasiliadis, *Whose Are You? Identity and Ethnicity Among the Toronto Macedonians* (New York: AMS Press, 1989), p. 145.

<sup>55</sup> Petre Nakovski notes that children who had numbers when they arrived at the Polish border had them taken away; he suggests that the memories of Nazi practices of numbering the inmates of concentration camps were too vivid. See Nakovski, *Makedonski deca*, p. 78. The comparison between the movement of the children and the Holocaust remains a powerful rhetorical resource, which also crops up in Tanas Lazarov's account. See MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*, p. 53. The invocation or denial of the comparison, unsurprisingly enough, demonstrates some correspondence with people's views of their fate; one interviewee, for example, who sees his past in positive terms, was at pains to distinguish the use of numbers in the two different situations. Another stressed that the numbers had the pragmatic function of identifying children with specific needs to their caregivers.

<sup>56</sup> This categorical order structures even those narratives which acknowledge that life in the villages of Northern Greece in the early 1940s was hardly, in truth, idyllic. The longer-term sociological significance of uprooting is addressed by Nakovski, who argues that family structure was transformed in exile, as industrial conditions of life advanced the greater equality of men and women (Nakovski, *Makedonski Deca*, p. 216).

<sup>57</sup> Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, p. 108.

<sup>58</sup> *Next Year in Lerin*, dir. Jill Daniels, High Ground Films, 1999, film.

<sup>59</sup> MWWNV, *From War to Whittlesea*, p. 52.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.

<sup>61</sup> The actual crossing of the border is also recalled more saliently by those who fled Greece with their families or as part of a community. A Skopje resident from the village of Pozharsko (now Loutraki), for

example, related how a group of around 100 families crossed the frontier, and how they lost their possessions in route to their new home.

<sup>62</sup> Kolbe, *Egejci*, pp. 32ff. The ambiguous role played by the most obvious potential state sponsor, the Republic of Macedonia, is discussed further below. It should be emphasized that while narrative marginalization can provide fuel for a strong sense of identity, it can also contribute to the erasure of memory. What Kolbe suggests is that in such cases, one might argue, the “stakes” are raised: while the society at large might accuse a group concerned with its heritage as “obsessed,” they in turn may perceive that judgment as part of the process of forgetting or dismissal that they seek to oppose.

<sup>63</sup> This account is based on the author’s interview with Mr. Donevski conducted in April 2000 in Skopje. I took notes but did not tape record the interview.

<sup>64</sup> I have not been able to ascertain the nature or mission of this Yugoslav “commission.”

<sup>65</sup> Tanaskova et al., eds., *Den na Razdelenite*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>66</sup> MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*, p. 51; Kiselinski, personal communication.

<sup>67</sup> MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*, p. 68.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>69</sup> A sense of the greater opportunities available outside the village was also expressed to Riki Van Boeschoten in her work in the village of Ziakas in Northern Greece. One respondent recalled eagerness to go to one of the so-called “Queen’s camps,” and their own agency in bringing about the journey. See Riki Van Boeschoten, “The Impossible Return: Coping With Separation and the Reconstruction

of Memory in the Wake of the Civil War,” Mark Mazower, ed., *After the War was Over: Reconstructing the Family, Nation and State in Greece, 1943–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 132. There, of course, the education provided would have been in Greek.

<sup>70</sup> See fn.55, above.

<sup>71</sup>Nakovski describes cases of mistreatment by Greek teachers of Macedonian children in Poland and tensions between Macedonians and the Greek leaders of the party. See Nakovski, *Makedonski Deca*, pp. 24, 139. Ristovic provides detailed accounts of tensions within Yugoslavia in 1949, when anti-Yugoslav Greek teachers were purged or expelled and some children protested. In this case, it appears, there was some solidarity between these teachers, who were in some sense surrogate parents, and their charges. The authorities acted to dismantle this by launching a campaign to segregate Macedonian from Greek children; see Ristovic, *Long Journey*, pp. 55–64. It is possible that the better Greek-Macedonian relations that appear to have endured in Romania, at least until the late 1970s, and Hungary owed something to the fact that Macedonians did not, as in Poland or other Slavic-speaking countries, have such a relatively easy time linguistically extending social networks into the broader population. They therefore relied more on the Greek exile community.

<sup>72</sup> Kiselinovski, *Statusot*, pp. 97–104; Kirjazovski, *Makedonskata Politichka Emigracija*, pp. 23off. Kiselinovski argues that Macedonians in Eastern Europe resisted this imposition, and their activism was instrumental in the return in Eastern Europe to the use of the Macedonian literary language, codified in Yugoslav Macedonia, after 1956. Kirjazovski grants a key role to the “Ilinden” organization, which existed between 1952 and 1956, and a new organization, “Egejska Zora” (Aegean Dawn) formed in Poland in 1956.

<sup>73</sup> MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*, p. 73.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>75</sup> See for example Stephen E. Palmer and Robert R. King, *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question* (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1971); Pedro Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1963-1983* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984); Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

<sup>76</sup> US Department of State, *Macedonian Nationalism and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia*. (Washington D.C.: State FD, 1954), pp. 103-107.

<sup>77</sup> The Yugoslav Secret Police were nonetheless active in waging war on those who preached a doctrine of non-Yugoslav Macedonian identity. They were the likely perpetrators, for example, of the murder of Blagoj Shambevski in Munich on 1 August 1974. He had led the Macedonian Liberation Committee, which was superseded by the Movement for the Liberation and Unification of Macedonia. Peter Hill describes the latter organization as "Stalinist . . . inasmuch as it represented the policy of the communist movement before the Tito-Stalin break in 1948 which was to establish a unified Macedonian state within a Yugoslavian or Balkan federation." Peter Hill, *The Macedonians in Australia* (Carlisle, Western Australia: Hesperian Press, 1989), p. 67.

<sup>78</sup> Baerentzen, "*Paidomazoma*", pp. 151.

<sup>79</sup> Archive of Macedonia 1/1111/7.

<sup>80</sup> In at least one case, this attempt to attract Aegean refugees to the Republic of Macedonia appears to have brought people from an unexpected source: Greece itself. I was told by one man now in his fifties, who vehemently denies that he is a child-refugee, of how he and his mother crossed the border in 1954 legally as visitors. They did not return, however, but stayed in Skopje, in time becoming Yugoslav Macedonian citizens. His father had fled in 1949, and other former village residents were already in Yugoslavia; in this case, it perhaps seemed to this family that their prospects were better in this new home. In the same period, though, the boy's uncle,

who had been in the partisans, returned from exile to Greece. So too, many children from the camps were returned as detailed in footnote 39, above. Among the villages that saw returns in this time were Kotori, in the district of Florina, and Pozharsko, in the district of Edhessa.

<sup>81</sup>Ivo Banac, *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist splits in Yugoslav Communism* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 189. Prisoners in Goli Otok included famous figures from the Macedonian political and cultural past such as Pavel Shatev, mentioned above, and Venko Markovski, who had been centrally involved in the creation of the Macedonian literary language after World War II and who wrote a memoir of his time on the island. See Venko Markovski, *Goli Otok: The Island of Death* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1984). I first heard of Goli Otok in the early 1990s, from Aegean Macedonians living in Skopje.

<sup>82</sup> These issues are covered more fully below.

<sup>83</sup> Andrei Simic, *The Peasant Urbanites: A Study of Rural-Urban Mobility in Serbia* (New York & London: Seminar Press, 1973), pp. 144–5.

<sup>84</sup> It should be stressed that he acknowledges no quarrel with individual Greeks; in the camps, he says, Macedonian and Greek children enjoyed amicable relations.

<sup>85</sup> Kolbe, *Egejci*, pp. 91–92.

<sup>86</sup> See for example Gounaris, “Emigration from Macedonia”; Mandatzis, “Emigration from the District of Kastoria.”

<sup>87</sup> Tanaskova, ed., *Den na Razdelenite*, p. 63.

<sup>88</sup> See Lillian Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers: The Macedonian Community in Toronto to 1940* (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1995).

<sup>89</sup> Tanaskova, ed., *Den na Razdelenite*, p. 68.

<sup>90</sup> Hill, *Macedonians*, p. 56. Stase's brother, Kole Manev, is a well known artist and director in Skopje and made a documentary film about the child-refugees entitled simply *Tulges*, Vardar Film, 1977.

<sup>91</sup> *Nezaborav* (Skopje), March 1998, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> Dona Kolar-Panov, *Video, War, and the Diasporic Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 59–60.

<sup>93</sup> The migrant communities did experience schism, some of which are described by Hill, *Macedonians*, pp. 85–126, and in Loring Danforth, "Ecclesiastical Nationalism and the Macedonian Question in the Australian Diaspora," in Victor Roudometof, ed., *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2000), pp. 25–54. See also Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*. In many cases, of course, *deca begalci* joined relatives with some standing in transoceanic communities, a rather different situation from that they faced as either camp residents in a strange country or as members of families themselves stigmatized as refugees of uncertain political persuasion.

<sup>94</sup> J. Mapstone, "The Greek Macedonians of Shepparton," (Canberra: Australian National University Ph.D. Thesis, 1966), pp. vi., cited in Hill, *Macedonians*, p. 44.

<sup>95</sup> MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*, p. 62.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>97</sup> The strong legacies of the past could also serve to divide people in Australia as well as bring them together; Tanas Lazarov, for example, from Neret, describes it as having been a divided village and states: "Even today people from our village speak of who is from which section of the village" (MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*, p.

51). In his account of the Macedonian conflict in Australia, Loring Danforth spoke to various people who identified themselves as *deca begalci*, and who had made their ways to Australia via various routes. He also suggests a correlation between time spent in Eastern European countries as part of the refugee community and Macedonian national consciousness (Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*, p. 89).

<sup>98</sup> Henry N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future* (London: Methuen, 1906), pp. 59–60.

<sup>99</sup> For a discussion of the embroilment of different churches and their congregations in the politics of nationalism, see Danforth, “Ecclesiastical Nationalism.”

<sup>100</sup> Kolbe, *Egejci*.

<sup>101</sup> Pero Bièevski, *Našite Kosti (Our Bones)* (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1993).

<sup>102</sup> Hill, *Macedonians*, p. 31.

<sup>103</sup> This partly contradicts Nakovski’s judgment, noted above, regarding an attitudinal shift in gender relations. See Nakovski, *Makedonski Deca*, p. 216.

<sup>104</sup> MWWNV, *War to Whittlesea*, p. 23. For other stories regarding the so-called “Queen’s camps” which played a large role in the lives of children and families that remained in or returned to Greece, see Baerentzen, “*Pedhomazema*,” and also Eftihia Voutira and Aigli Brouskou, “Borrowed Children: Child Indoctrination in the Greek Civil War and its Impact on Child Welfare Policies,” Catherine Panter-Brick and Malcolm Smith, eds., *Nobody’s Children* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>105</sup> K.S. Brown, "Whose Will Be Done? Nation and Generation in a Macedonian Family," *Social Analysis*, Vol.42, No.1 (March 1998), pp. 110–131. See p. 121.

<sup>106</sup> See Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat*.

<sup>107</sup> It is also suggested that the Yugoslav régime received compensation for granting citizenship to those whose exile still posed a potential embarrassment to Greece in the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>108</sup> Peter Hill suggests that Aleksander Rankovic's hostility toward Macedonian autonomy also delayed the autocephaly of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. His fall from grace in 1966 permitted the Church to proclaim itself autocephalous in 1967 (Hill, *Macedonians*, p. 86).

<sup>109</sup> Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

<sup>110</sup> Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*.

<sup>111</sup> Van Boeschoten, "Impossible Return," pp. 128–9.

<sup>112</sup> Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*.

<sup>113</sup> Kolar-Panov, *Diasporic Imagination*, p. 78ff. Peter Hill traces a longer history of common activity that included the activism of the Macedonian Australian People's League from 1947 until 1960. He grants greater agency to the governments of Greece and Yugoslavia in fracturing this cooperation. (See Hill, *Macedonians*, pp. 61–67).

<sup>114</sup> Kolar-Panov, *Diasporic Imagination*, pp. 57–8.

<sup>115</sup> The role played by video in this context is rather different from that in other diaspora communities, such as the Sri Lankan case

described in Steen Preis, "Seeking Place," and the Prespa Albanian case documented in Jane Sugarman, *Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). In both cases wedding rituals are recorded so that distant kin can at least view the proceedings and thus participate in ongoing processes of life. Such videos also circulate in the Macedonian diaspora; the tapes of village returns, though, remind their audiences of a social life stilled, rather than reassuring them of its perpetuation.

<sup>116</sup> Hill, *Macedonians*, p. 58.

<sup>117</sup> Reportedly, the church is kept locked at the insistence of the local Greek bishop, because it contains "Bulgarian inscriptions." This assertion is consistent with claims made by nationally-minded citizens in the Republic of Macedonia and in Greece during the early 1990s, which generally attribute to the "other" deliberate concealment of documents, artifacts and other symbols of meaning that would conclusively prove the non-Greekness (or Greekness) of Macedonian territory and history. The speaker acknowledges that the language in this case (which of course he has never read, and possibly not even seen as a child) cannot be called literary Macedonian, which was codified only during the late 1940s.

<sup>118</sup> The phrase was made famous in Victor Turner, *Schism and Continuity in an African Society: a Study of Ndembu Village Life* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1957).

<sup>119</sup> In 1948, their ages reportedly ranged from two to 15. Although under normal circumstances no child too young to walk would have gone, some of the young women who, as *majki*, escorted them were themselves mothers of infants and carried their own children with them.

<sup>120</sup> The notion of the "parapolitical" was introduced in David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1965), to describe the realm of activities apparently conducted with another purpose, but which implicitly challenge state legitimacy. In this case, the celebration of the Aegean legacy can be

taken both as a challenge to Greek sovereignty over the area and as a rejection of the way in which the Republic of Macedonia defined its borders.

<sup>121</sup> A translation of the report was published in Aegean Macedonian Association of Australia, *Human Rights Abuses Against Macedonians in Greece* (Kingsgrove, NSW: Aegean Macedonian Association of Australia, 1993). (Henceforth AMAA, *Human Rights Abuses*). The AMAA document was subsequently published by Politecon Press in 1994. In their publicity, Politecon refer to themselves as “a publisher of quality books on the ethnic Macedonians of northern Greece, focusing on their culture, history and need for human rights.”

<sup>122</sup> AMAA, *Human Rights Abuses*, p. 16.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Tanas Vražinovski, *Macedonian-Canadian Committee for Human Rights in Toronto* (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1993).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>127</sup> AMP, *What Has Europe Forgotten*, p. 7; Kirjazovski, *Makedonskata Politichka Emigracija*, pp. 162. See also Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*, p. 122.

<sup>128</sup> I am using “ethnically Macedonian” here to refer to anyone who identifies themselves as a member of the Macedonian *narod*. As has been documented elsewhere, the term *narod* can be translated as nation or people. For a clear discussion see Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 23–36.

<sup>129</sup> AMP, *What has Europe Forgotten*, p. 15.

<sup>130</sup> The Greek legislation thus marked a decisive point at which the *moral* status of the *deca begalci* as archetypal refugees and victims in the past, described earlier, became a key resource in a set of *political* claims about the present and future.

<sup>131</sup> AMP, *What has Europe Forgotten*, p. 27.

<sup>132</sup> AMAA, *Human Rights Abuses*, p. 19.

<sup>133</sup> Anastasia Karakasidou, "Politicizing Culture: Negating Ethnic Identity in Greek Macedonia," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* Vol.11, No.1, (1993), pp. 1–28.

<sup>134</sup> On the growth of activism in Canada, see Tanaskova, ed., *Den na Razdelenite*, pp. 29–30.

<sup>135</sup> The case of Aegean activism appears to confirm Warren Zimmerman's argument that despite earlier attempts at liberalization of the state; Yugoslavia lagged behind certain other Eastern European countries, including Poland, by the 1980s. See Warren Zimmerman, "Migration and Security in Yugoslavia," Myron Weiner, ed., *International Migration and Security* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993).

<sup>136</sup> Vražinovski, *Macedonian-Canadian Committee*.

<sup>137</sup> Tanaskova, *Den na Razdelenite*, p. 9. The credit given to Elena Pandzarovska is striking in what is otherwise a movement dominated by male actors.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9. A long list of participants is provided, as follows: Vane Plukoski, President; Petre Nakovski, Vice President; Mito Miovski, Secretary; Krsto Kiradžiev, Ilija Ainovski, Kole Mangov, Peter Kalinovski, Nikola Dumurdžanov, Mihailo Dièevski, Naso

Bekjarovski, Gjorgji Donevski, Dr. Hristo Trpovski, Nikola Bundovski, Pande Konstatinovski, and “others.”

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., pp. 10–11. Obviously, Yugoslav Macedonian intervention had less impact on the make-up of delegations from Canada and Australia. On the new council, the president was Goga Nikolovski and the secretary Boge Sotirovski.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>141</sup> The various activities of 1988 and of the refugee organizations draw attention to potentially separable demands, including the individual right of visitation, the issue of property restoration and the human rights of ethnic Macedonians in Greece. The activist leadership of the *deca begalci* seem determined not to prioritize among these demands, but to keep them packaged together.

<sup>142</sup> These details are taken from the minutes of the founding meeting, which is in the National Archives of Macedonia in the Aegean Fund (1.1111.2.4/7-19).

<sup>143</sup> The document was distributed in mimeographed form in 1992. It has subsequently been republished by Politecon Publications under the title *What Europe Has Forgotten: The Struggle of the Aegean Macedonians* (Five Dock, NSW: Politecon, 1995).

<sup>144</sup> Text from <<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~amhrmhm/about.htm>>. The site indicates that the Committee has links to a sibling body, the Canadian Macedonian Human Rights Committee, based in Toronto, and had (in 2000) close working ties to the Bitola-based Association of Macedonians from the Aegean Part of Macedonia.

<sup>145</sup> The Declaration was published as No author, “Declaration of the First Gathering of the Child Refugees from the Aegean Part of Macedonia 10-12 January 1992, Melbourne, Australia,” *Macedonian Review* Vol. 22, No. 1 (1992), pp. 91-94. It includes a condemnation of the “senseless adventurism” of the Serbian

leadership, a call for the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia's Independence, and a halt to the call-up of Macedonians to serve in the Yugoslav National Army.

<sup>146</sup> Both parties drew support largely from the ethnic Macedonian population of the Republic. The party with the next-largest representation in the first Assembly after 1991 was the Party of Democratic Prosperity, or PDP, supported by Macedonia's large ethnic Albanian minority.

<sup>147</sup> Interview online at <<http://www.hri.org/news/agencies/mils/95-09-28.mils.html#12>>. Originally published in *Fokus* (22 September 1995).

<sup>148</sup> For a discussion of the flag's selection, see K.S. Brown, "Seeing Stars: Character and Identity in the Landscapes of Modern Macedonia," *Antiquity* Vol. 68, No.261 (December 1994), pp. 784–796.

<sup>149</sup> The Aegean dimension of the Republic's history was not wholly unregistered in public discourse. Strikingly, when there were protests by Macedonian residents of a Skopje suburb against the construction of homes for Bosnian Muslims who had fled violence in their neighborhood, the Minister of the Interior, Ljubomir Frckoski, drew a rhetorical parallel between the plight of these new refugees and that of the Aegean Macedonians who crossed the border at the end of the Greek Civil War.

<sup>150</sup> The list is in the National Archives in Skopje. A.M. Fund 1111, Box 7.

<sup>151</sup> John Koliopoulos, "The War over the Identity and Numbers of Greece's Slav Macedonians," in Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis, eds., *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity since 1912* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), p. 53.

<sup>152</sup> See fn.53.

<sup>153</sup> Human rights observers who accompanied the group seeking to cross the border in 1998 reportedly told those who were refused access to Greece because of the terms used in their passports that Greek state action did not constitute a violation of their human rights. By contrast, Greece was in violation of human rights conventions when its officials refused access to others who did not have the original Slavic names for their villages in their passports, but who appear to be on some “blacklist” (Danforth, personal communication).

<sup>154</sup> Riki Van Boeschoten, “The Political Dimension of Switching Languages,” paper presented at International Symposium on “*Contact and Conflict*,” Brussels, 28-31 May 1997.

<sup>155</sup> The first two of these three views were encountered in different interviews in Skopje. The first, that the Macedonian government should recognize international convention, came from an Aegean Macedonian who refuses to be counted as a child-refugee. The second came from a leading activist and child-refugee who had once been denied access and tried again with “Greece” as his place of birth. The last position is similar to that espoused by Kole Mangov in his various writings on the issue of the flag. He denies the validity of any Greek claims on the flag or symbol and suggests that any compromise on such issues is wrong, as it implicitly invests Greek claims with some legitimacy.

<sup>156</sup> In this regard, the individual demonstrates some of the attitudes described in James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

<sup>157</sup> <<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~macadeas/refchildam.htm>>. This compares with a conservative estimate by Peter Hill of the total first generation immigrant Aegean Macedonian population in Australia as 50,000, which would include those who identify themselves as Greek. See Hill, *Macedonians*, p. 123.

<sup>158</sup> Martinova-Buckova, *I Nie Sme Deca*, p. 240.

<sup>159</sup> Bosniaks are Muslims with origins in Bosnia: over 50,000 settled in Macedonia in the early 1990s. Egyptians are people traditionally identified as Roma who distinguish themselves from the Roma population at large. For more on the community see Gerhardt Duijzings, "The Making of Egyptians in Kosovo and Macedonia," in Cora Govers and Hans Vermeulen, eds., *The Politics of Ethnic Consciousness* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). These meetings were not attended by representative organizations from Macedonia's large Albanian minority, nor from the small number of self-identified Bulgarians in Macedonia.

<sup>160</sup> It is notable that in this meeting that the organizers stress the non-exclusive bases on which these associations are organized: they report that any Bulgarian, Albanian, or Greek may join. This was, of course, an issue raised in the organizing meeting of the ZDB, which Aleksander Popovski attended, but after which he played little or no further part in the Skopje-based initiative. Similar language has been used by "Dignity," the Skopje-based organization headed by Kole Mangov. As an individual, Mangov remained involved, at least nominally, in the organization of the 1998 meeting. In a long list of 144 individuals on the "organizing council" of the meeting, most of the "usual suspects" are listed, including Mangov, Gjorgji Donevski, and Naso Bekjarovski from Skopje; Gjorgji Plukovski and Risto Èaèkirovski from Toronto; and Gjorgji Belhimov from Radoviš. Although some individuals from Bitola are listed, Aleksander Popovski is conspicuous by his absence. See *Nezaborav* (Skopje) Vol. 4, No.13 (December 1997), p. 2. The recognition of common ground with other exile or refugee communities in the Balkans was noted in various conversations with former *deca begalci*. With regard to the problem of return, for example, one man compared the situation to that facing Bosnians: if the state does not recognize and guarantee one's right to land, then there can be no security. Other parallels suggest themselves; for example, in the Macedonian and the Bosnian case, individuals constructed models of their own villages. See AMP, *What Europe Has Forgotten*, p. 53; Mertus et al, eds., *The Suitcase*, pp. 90–91, and 159ff.

<sup>161</sup> <<http://www.geocities.com/~makedonija/aegeannews/1998/arcam.html>>

<sup>162</sup> Xhaferi's party had by 1998 supplanted in electoral significance the Party for Democratic Prosperity, from which it emerged as a splinter movement. By late 2000 the coalition had fractured, as the Democratic Alternative joined the opposition.

<sup>163</sup> I heard the "second-class citizen" claim in several interviews. It is also made in Kolbe, *Egejci*, p. 41. Its use by the lobby groups within the ethnic Macedonian population, though, is overshadowed by its profile in claims made by ethnic Albanians in Macedonia for greater recognition. See K.S. Brown, "In the Realm of the Double-headed Eagle: Parapolitics in Macedonia 1994-1999," in Jane K. Cowan, ed., *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

<sup>164</sup> An even more ambitious number for *deca begalci* worldwide was made in a document submitted by the Macedonian-Canadian Human Rights Committee to the Canadian Macedonian Federation in April 1991, cited in Vražinovski, *Macedonian-Canadian Committee*, p. 88. There, it was stated that:

The Greek nationalistic concept [sic]...forcibly dispersed 30,000 helpless children to other countries who at present are heads of 30,000 families numbering at least 150,000 family members. Today, the names of all these innocent individuals are kept in computerized files by the notorious Greek secret police, denying them the right to return to their birthplace even as visitors.

This represents a case where the different experiences of the original 28,000 children after their initial flight are elided, and the extent of intermarriage between them ignored, to inflate the scale of injustice.

<sup>165</sup> Lillian Petroff's historical account of Macedonian migration to Toronto charts an evolution from "sojourner" to "settler" mentality. The categories are used differently here to index the enduring poles of an ongoing dynamic relationship between attitudes towards the finality of exile and loss.

<sup>166</sup> Yiannis D. Stefanidis, "From Cold War Polemics to Nationalist Propaganda: The Former 'Refugee' Children from Greece and the

Yugoslav Connection,” in *Makedoniki Zoi* Vol. 326 (July 1993), English supplement, pp. 1–5.

<sup>167</sup> Irene Lagani, To ‘paidomazoma’ kai oi Ellinogiougkoslavikes Scheseis 1949-1953 (Athens: I. Sideris, 1996).

<sup>168</sup> Danforth, *Macedonian Conflict*, pp. 30-37; Brown, “Whose Will,” pp. 120–125. See also Ladislav Holy, *The Little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: National Identity and the Post-communist Social Transformation* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>169</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York, Verso, 1983), p. 18.

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