

figure for any geographical level in Australia using census data. In addition the components of population change for an intercensal period do not add to the total population change due to intercensal discrepancy.

<sup>3</sup> G Ward, *op. cit.*, p.15.

<sup>4</sup> Balance of Brisbane Statistical Division (BSD) comprises the Local Authorities of Logan, Pine Rivers, Redcliffe, Ipswich, Redland & Parts of Caboolture, Morton, Beaudesert and Albert.

<sup>5</sup> Maher & McKay, *op. cit.*, p.55.

## ETHNIC ALP BRANCHES — THE BALKANISATION OF LABOR

### ■ Ernest Healy

Multiculturalism, as formulated in the 1977 Galbally Report proposals, was an integral component of the Fraser Government's pluralistic reaction to the universalistic thrust of the Whitlam years. It came to mean the primacy of ethnic identity and organisations over a broader notion of community.<sup>1</sup> Ethnic leaders were posited as virtually the only legitimate intermediaries between government and the migrant population. As such, elements of the migrant intelligentsia were further legitimised as key definers of migrant 'communities' and 'migrant needs'. Significantly, class questions were no longer seen as relevant to issues of culture and ethnicity.<sup>2</sup> Consistent with Labor's retreat from class concerns during the 1980s, this concept of multiculturalism was subsequently taken up by the Hawke Government.<sup>3</sup> Since the Fraser era, both the left and right wings of Labor have adopted this perspective.

One manifestation of this embrace of multiculturalism has been a tolerance towards, and at times an encouragement of ethnic branches within the Labor Party. The implications of this development for the Victorian branch of the Party are the subject of this article.

Ethnicity has penetrated both the party factions within the Victorian Labor Party and the more traditional party alignments with the trade union movement. For some of Labor's Victorian factional power brokers, the ethnic factor now appears to be crucial to securing the numbers in internal party elections and factional struggles. This is especially noteworthy for Victoria's socialist left. This preoccupation can be distinguished from that of Victorian Labor parliamentary leaders who tend to see ethnicity in more general electoral terms as a key factor in appealing for votes. As a result of these attitudes, ethnic branches made up almost exclusively of members of particular ethnic communities now operate freely in the Victorian ALP.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The ethnic factor is not a new development in Victorian Labor. The Irish element was an important factor before 1955. Many party branches, particularly in inner Melbourne, were dominated by Irish Catholics or Catholics of Irish descent. However, these branches did not consider themselves as Irish or Catholic.<sup>4</sup> Many of the best ALP leaders, including Prime Minister Scullin and Victorian Senator

Pat Kennelly, emerged from this environment. They saw themselves not in ethnic terms, but as thoroughly and authentically Australian.

The ALP split of 1955 was in one sense a de-ethnicisation. The Irish-Catholic element was forcibly removed. Some of the party's best-known leaders were lost to what was to be called the anti-Communist Democratic Labor Party or DLP.

Subsequently, the Victorian ALP took on a bigoted and Anglo-Protestant stance. Irish-descended Catholics were not readily welcomed by party branches. Neither, for that matter, were immigrants of non-Anglo background. Many office holders in the party were members of the Masonic Lodge.<sup>5</sup> Freemasons of this period were frequently anti-Catholic, and were generally anti-Communist, despite frequent claims to the contrary by the DLP. Freemasonry could not by itself produce a party capable of winning elections. Nor could the left under State Secretary Bill Hartley which substantially replaced Masonic control of the party in 1965. The left, however, proved even more anti-Catholic than their Masonic predecessors.

In 1970, the Victorian State Conference suspended from the party its state Upper House leader Jack Galbally over his remarks favouring state aid for Catholic schools. This action led to Federal intervention later the same year. This removed the Victorian Central Executive and replaced it with a new form of organisation that seemed to be more democratic. These reforms involved a proportional representation voting system in internal party elections. Federal intervention in Victoria was an essential pre-requisite for Labor's federal victory under Gough Whitlam in 1972.

The success of Whitlam federally led to changes in attitudes towards ethnic minorities that were to have significant repercussions in Victorian Labor. Whitlam's Immigration Minister, Al Grassby, nurtured an ethnic pluralist policy orientation, under which ethnic groups would be encouraged to maintain their cultures in Australia. In Victoria, the party now welcomed immigrants as party members. Non-Anglo immigrants were now a large part of Labor's vote in its safest seats, and some began to join the Party. In time, some ethnic constituencies within the Party would have an impact on its organisation out of all proportion to their numbers in the general community.

Grassby may have helped create the climate for multiculturalism in the party. However, he was not responsible for the present level of ethnic influence. This can be explained in part by the Victorian factional system. Factions — parties within a party — became institutionalised after 1970. The use of proportional representation in party elections ensured their continued existence. It is the desire for numbers that led to the creation of the first ethnic branches by the Socialist Left faction in 1975.

#### THE PRESENT SITUATION

The first ethnic branches were created in the suburb of Northcote. They were the Westgarth branch, which was Greek, and the Croxton branch, which was Italian. Both branches exist to this day. Ethnic branches are little known, and most have had little impact on the party as a whole. The Party does not keep accurate ethnic branch records. Indeed, some Greek branches do not appear as such on the official party records. This is notable given that the Greek branches have been the most

influential, at least as judged by the number of Greek-ethnic candidates selected for winnable parliamentary seats.<sup>6</sup> Currently there is a predominance of Greek and Italian branches, with at least fourteen of the former and seven of the latter. There are also two Kurdish branches, three Arabic, one Macedonian, two Turkish, and one Timorese. Although there is also one Spanish speaking branch, a concerted effort is presently under way to mobilise people of Spanish speaking backgrounds with a view to forming at least another four branches. A staffer in the office of Brian Howe is contributing to the recruitment of new Spanish-speaking members, particularly in the electorates of Holt and Melbourne Ports.

A recent tactic has been the revitalisation of moribund branches by particular ethnic groups, as with the recent influx of Maronite-Christian Lebanese and Filipinos into the Coburg East branch by the Labor Unity faction, and of Muslim-Lebanese into the hitherto Greek Westgarth branch by the socialist Left faction. These branches are in the Batman federal electorate. Much of this activity took place at branch meetings in early November 1993.

Ethnic branch influence now virtually requires the Party to select ethnic parliamentary candidates, particularly in seats in its inner Melbourne heartland. The outcome is not necessarily favourable for the party if better candidates are forced aside on ethnic grounds. For example, in the federal electorate of Wills the party preselected Greek welfare worker Bill Kardamitsis for the 1992 by-election after the resignation of the previous member Bob Hawke. In the ballot for preselection Kardamitsis narrowly defeated Phillip Bain, Socialist Left

candidate and Ministerial adviser to Deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe. Greek membership in the Wills electorate, particularly in the Wills Central branch, with an entirely Greek membership of about 200, voted *en bloc* for Kardamitsis. They provided him with his numbers. Significantly, many Greeks in the Socialist Left faction preferred to vote for a Greek from a rival faction (Kardamitsis is a member of the right-wing Labor Unity faction). Kardamitsis subsequently lost the by-election to popular local Australian Rules footballer Phil Cleary.

In November 1993 Phillip Bain, together with some others, resigned from the Socialist Left faction and joined the Right-wing Labor Unity faction. This was accompanied by the recruitment of new members into Labor Unity branches in the Batman electorate, predominantly of Filipinos into the Preston branch. In any future pre-selection for Batman, Bain, who is now likely to be the Labor Unity candidate, could expect support from these Filipinos, as well as from Maronite-Christian Lebanese, and some Greeks in the Batman North branch who also defected to Labor Unity. The mainly Greek mainstream Left were caught off-guard by these defections. As a counter-measure about two hundred and forty membership applications were hastily submitted to the Victorian ALP head office, mainly of Muslim-Lebanese, Italians and Greeks.

Local branch involvement in the preselection of ALP candidates, under a party rule change approved in 1991, has given even more power to ethnic leaders within the party factions. It also means that branch 'stacking', the recruitment of members solely for preselection purposes, has been encouraged. Certain Labor Unity power

brokers are behind attempts to remove Andrew Theophanous, Greek-Cypriot federal ALP Socialist Left member for Calwell in a plebiscite for his electorate. Large-scale recruitment of Turks, traditional enemies of the Greeks, has been taking place in the Calwell electorate, particularly in the largely Turkish Coolaroo branch. Up to seventy Turks have been subject to an inquiry by the party's Administrative Committee to determine their eligibility for membership. This was countered by a recruitment of Kurds, a significant minority ethnic group within the Turkish population, as well as a number of Greeks. Theophanous may be safe in the 1994 pre-selections for the federal election due in early 1996 because of a deal done centrally between the main Right and Left Victorian ALP factions. However, there is a possibility that this deal may not hold because of ill-feeling in the Left at alleged Labor Unity branch 'stacking'.<sup>7</sup>

Greek success in the preselection of candidates is largely due to Greek influence within the Socialist Left faction. The virtual breakaway of the left-wing Pledge group from the Socialist Left has probably increased Greek strength within that faction. The Socialist Left executive is significantly influenced by an alliance between a Greek sub-faction led by Theo Theophanous, state upper house member and brother of Dr Andrew Theophanous, and another sub-faction led by Senator Kim Carr. The strength of Greeks within the Socialist Left ensures that Greek parliamentary strength (presently at four in Victoria) will be maintained.

At the municipal level, ethnic branches frequently do 'deals' to ensure selection of ethnic candidates. One of the reasons for this is that

Labor branches are involved at municipal, state, and federal levels of party activity. The recruitment of ethnic minorities as factional power resources at the municipal level is linked to successful power brokering in state politics. Ethnic branch involvement in municipal politics is, therefore, important to understanding ethnic influence within the Party at the state level.

#### THE VICTORIAN ETHNIC AFFAIRS COMMISSION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNIC MINORITY IDENTITY

Historically, the Labor Party has exhibited an ambivalence about whether to identify itself as a class based party, or a populist party for 'all the people'. During the 1980s, however, Labor leaders appear to have abandoned these previously competing bases of party identity in favour of a form of liberal pluralism. Here, class or citizenship inspired bases for mobilising voters have given way to pursuit of minority group interests. Multiculturalism appears to have been especially significant for Labor in its efforts to legitimise its pluralistic redefinition of Australian society in the 1980s. In this context, multicultural rhetoric frequently represented 'ethnic communities' as an immutable social 'fact'. However, the organisation and consolidation of such 'communities' was actively facilitated by Labor Governments at the state and federal levels. One agency which facilitated this process was the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission (VEAC). It was important in the secondment of ethnic elites, the creation of ethnic 'communities' in Victoria, and, indirectly, to the increased influence of ethnic cells within Labor Party factions. The Commission was established by the

**Table 1: Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission annual grants made to Victorian groups**

| 1983/84                     |                |            | 1987/88              |                |            | 1989/90              |                |            | 1991/92              |                |            |
|-----------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|
| Group <sup>1</sup>          | \$             | %          | Group <sup>1</sup>   | \$             | %          | Group <sup>1</sup>   | \$             | %          | Group <sup>1</sup>   | \$             | %          |
| Greek                       | 48,000         | 14.7       | Italian              | 89,000         | 20.1       | Italian              | 117,750        | 20.1       | Italian              | 133,675        | 28.6       |
| Polish                      | 35,000         | 10.7       | Greek                | 51,000         | 11.9       | Greek                | 88,750         | 15.1       | Greek                | 79,250         | 16.9       |
| Italian                     | 33,500         | 10.2       | Indo-Chinese         | 33,700         | 7.8        | Vietnamese           | 31,500         | 5.4        | Jewish               | 22,000         | 4.7        |
| Turkish                     | 29,500         | 9.0        | Turkish              | 28,500         | 6.6        | Yugoslavian          | 27,000         | 4.6        | Polish               | 17,500         | 3.7        |
| Vietnamese                  | 25,450         | 7.8        | Maltese              | 20,000         | 4.8        | Spanish <sup>2</sup> | 22,250         | 3.8        | Spanish <sup>2</sup> | 13,650         | 2.9        |
| Yugoslavian                 | 25,000         | 7.6        | Yugoslavian          | 19,500         | 4.5        | Polish               | 21,000         | 3.6        | Arab                 | 13,000         | 2.8        |
| Indo-Chinese                | 18,000         | 5.5        | Spanish <sup>2</sup> | 16,300         | 3.8        | Macedonian           | 21,000         | 3.6        | Islamic              | 11,250         | 2.4        |
| Spanish <sup>2</sup>        | 13,500         | 4.1        | Vietnamese           | 16,500         | 3.8        | Jewish               | 20,000         | 3.4        | Chinese              | 10,500         | 2.2        |
| Arab sp.                    | 13,200         | 4.0        | Jewish               | 15,000         | 3.5        | Indo-Chinese         | 20,000         | 3.4        | Indo-Chinese         | 10,000         | 2.1        |
| Filipino                    | 13,000         | 4.0        | Dutch                | 11,000         | 2.5        | Turkish              | 19,000         | 3.2        | Macedonian           | 9,500          | 2.0        |
| Maltese                     | 6,000          | 1.8        | Islamic              | 10,500         | 2.4        | Dutch                | 18,750         | 3.2        | Turkish              | 9,400          | 2.0        |
| Croat                       | 5,500          | 1.7        | Polish               | 10,300         | 2.4        | Maltese              | 14,000         | 2.4        | Vietnamese           | 8,750          | 1.9        |
| Macedonian                  | 4,400          | 1.3        | Lebanese             | 10,000         | 2.3        | Chinese              | 13,750         | 2.3        | Ukraine              | 8,000          | 1.7        |
| Dutch                       | 4,400          | 1.3        | Chinese              | 7,000          | 1.6        | Ukraine              | 10,500         | 1.8        | Cambodian            | 6,300          | 1.3        |
| Chinese                     | 4,000          | 1.2        | Filipino             | 7,000          | 1.6        | Arab                 | 8,750          | 1.5        | Filipino             | 6,300          | 1.3        |
| Jewish                      | 3,500          | 1.1        | Macedonian           | 6,750          | 1.6        | Slovene              | 6,000          | 1.0        | Hungarian            | 6,000          | 1.3        |
| Latvian                     | 3,500          | 1.1        | Arab                 | 6,500          | 1.5        | Croat                | 4,500          | 0.8        | Yugoslavian          | 6,000          | 1.3        |
| Slovene                     | 3,000          | 1.0        | Croat                | 5,000          | 1.2        | Serb                 | 4,000          | 0.7        | Dutch                | 5,500          | 1.2        |
|                             |                |            | Slovene              | 5,000          | 1.2        | Filipino             | 2,750          | 0.5        | Serb                 | 5,500          | 1.2        |
|                             |                |            |                      |                |            | Islamic              | 2,000          | 0.3        |                      |                |            |
| <b>Subtotal<sup>3</sup></b> | <b>327,065</b> | <b>100</b> |                      | <b>429,750</b> | <b>100</b> |                      | <b>585,250</b> | <b>100</b> |                      | <b>468,150</b> | <b>100</b> |
| Total grants                | 500,000        |            |                      | 587,625        |            |                      | 749,000        |            |                      | 700,000        |            |

Source: Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission Annual Reports <sup>1</sup> Group as defined by nationality, ethnicity, religion or language.

<sup>2</sup> Spanish group is the sum of grants given to Central American, Latin American, South American and Spanish speaking organisations.

<sup>3</sup> Subtotal includes other small grants not listed but excludes grants not made on an ethnic basis.

Cain Labor Government in the early 1980s. It provided a source of funds for ethnic organisations at a time when general provision by the state and the public sphere were being wound back. In this political climate, such grants contributed to the formation and consolidation of ethnic organisation and minority identity.

Table 1 shows the amounts distributed to various ethnic organisations through VEAC grants for the years 1983/84, 1987/88, 1989/90, and 1991/92. It is clear that grants to Greek and Italian organisations account for an increasing proportion of VEAC grants relative to all other groups. Grants to Greek and Italian organisations, while significant throughout, had by 1991/92 come to account for more than 45 per cent of VEAC grants funding. This level of funding far exceeded the share of the Greek and Italian-born in Victoria relative to the rest of the state's overseas-born population. In 1991, the Italian-born in Victoria accounted for approximately 9.5 per cent of the Victorian overseas-born population, but received over 28 per cent of VEAC grants. In the same year, the Greeks, though representing about 6 per cent of the Victorian overseas-born population, received nearly 17 per cent of grants.<sup>8</sup> While these 'communities' declined relative to the rest of the Victorian overseas-born population during the 1980s and early 1990s, and also declined in absolute terms, their share of grants actually increased significantly.<sup>9</sup>

This is not to argue that the allocation of VEAC grants has been determined by any single, politically motivated criterion. Nevertheless, it seems likely that there is a relationship between VEAC grants funding and factional interests within the Victorian

Labor Party. Given that only 'organised' ethnic groups can obtain grants, VEAC funding has helped consolidate and mobilise ethnic group identity. This especially appears to be the case with the ethnic groups central to factional dealings within the Victorian ALP.

#### IMPLICATIONS

It is possible that the pluralising multicultural strategy, inherited by Labor from the Fraser period will limit the potential in Victoria for a community-wide, citizen oriented strategy, as opposed to a narrow sectarian-based politics. Traditionally, Labor has been the party representing collectivist values in Australian politics. However, it may be doubtful if the Labor Party can survive as a mass party if narrow sectional interests are permitted to predominate over solidaristic principles, and when minority interests are encouraged to exercise a power in excess of their numerical strength within the population. The alignment of ethnic with political differences, such as the recruitment of Christian Lebanese by the right faction and Muslim Lebanese by the left, has the potential to exacerbate imported ethnic antagonisms. Labor Party leaders advocate in public a consensus-based multicultural identity for the Party and the nation, but is this likely to be the outcome if, at the same time, these leaders tolerate the mobilisation of ethnic groups for the purposes of short-term factional gain?

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> Jakubowicz, A., Morrissey, M., and Palser, J., *Ethnicity, Class, and Social Policy in Australia*, Kensington, Social Welfare Research Centre, 1984.
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

- <sup>4</sup> Allan, L. 'Irish Ethnicity and the Democratic Labour Party', *Politics*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1988, pp. 28-34.
- <sup>5</sup> Murray, R. *The Split*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1970, p. 223.
- <sup>6</sup> Pandazopoulos - Dandenong North. Andrianopoulos - Mill Park. Theophanous - Jika (upper house). Dollis - Richmond.
- <sup>7</sup> In the event of a contested pre-selection the local electorate plebiscite result is combined with a vote of the party's Public Office Selection Committee (or POSC, also called the Central Panel) in determining the pre-selected candidate. The POSC and the local plebiscite are

each worth fifty per cent in preselections. In such an event Dr Theophanous may need over fifty per cent of the local plebiscite vote in order to counter the present slight Labor Unity majority on the POSC.

<sup>8</sup> ABS, 1991 Census data.

<sup>9</sup> It should also be noted that some more recently arrived ethnic 'communities' were relatively successful in receiving grants. Grants to Vietnamese and Spanish speaking organisations illustrate this. It can also be seen that certain 'communities', like the Turks, have become markedly less successful.

## IDENTITY IN AN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITY

### ■ Andrew Markus

Naive assumptions concerning the rapidity of attitude change amongst immigrants — and the lack of change amongst the native born — which characterised the assimilationist era continue to surface in public debates over multiculturalism. Participants in these debates often fail to acknowledge the ethnic diversity which now characterises many parts of the country, and its impact in such communities. This paper explores some aspects of self-concepts and attitudes to Australia in one area of high migrant settlement, the Melbourne local government area of Springvale.

At the 1991 census Springvale's population was over 89,000, of whom 54.2 per cent were born in Australia, 8 per cent in the other main English speaking countries, and 35.6 per cent in NES countries. Springvale not only has a diverse population but is also a location of recent migrant settlement. Of the overseas-born population 47.8

per cent arrived since 1980 (50.7 per cent in the survey here reported). The population born in Vietnam increased from 1,212 in 1981 to 6,574 in 1991 and now comprises the largest of the overseas birthplace groups at 7.3 per cent of the total; 6.2 per cent of the population speak Vietnamese in the home, 4.7 per cent Chinese languages, 3.8 per cent Greek, 3.8 per cent Italian, 2.5 per cent Spanish, and 2.2 per cent Khmer.

The survey discussed in this paper, some results of which were reported in the second issue of *People and Place*, was carried out in December 1992. The questionnaire, which included more than fifty questions, was administered to groups of school children (most aged 14 to 16 years), householders, and to people within organisations such as employees of the Springvale Council and community centres. It was not a random sample and there were more female than male respondents. But the objective of reaching a large, diverse population was met: 981