The Anglo-Australian Sweet Company: A Sweet Cypriot-Australian Success Story
A Contribution to a New Approach to the History of the Greek Communities of Australia

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Editor’s note: The tragic death of Mr. Ganzis meant that the final corrections to this paper had to be made by the editor. I hope that I have made the changes — few in number — that he would have made himself. There may be omissions from the bibliographical details, but none I think would prevent the interested reader finding the book or paper named.

Mr. Ganzis hoped that this paper would be the first of a series on the part played by Greek and Greek Cypriot migrants in the formation and maintenance of the Greek community and in the development of South Australia, and I so much enjoyed reading it (as I had enjoyed his presentation at the conference) that I suggested to him that he should eventually write the history of Greek Cypriot migration to this State. It is to be regretted that he is no longer with us to carry out any of these tasks, which would have been labours of love for him. The present paper is a fitting reminder of his scholarship and dedication.
The society from which Greek and Cypriot migrants came to Australia was not as homogeneous as might appear from a superficial consideration of their common heritage of faith, language and culture, and the multifaceted nature of Greek society was to manifest itself in Australia when conditions here enabled these differences to surface.

Many pre-World War II migrants became involved in business activities, some of which developed into substantial commercial and industrial concerns. Communities were formed around these successful families, strengthened by regional organisations and the Greek Orthodox Community. One such family was the Loizou-Petrou family: George Loizou (later Lewis), who arrived in Adelaide in 1927, founded his own chocolate manufacturing and retailing company, which was to become the Anglo-Australian Sweet Company. He was joined by his nephew Harry Petrou (later Peters) in 1936, then by other members of their immediate family in 1948. The present paper studies the part played in South Australian business and social life by this extended Cypriot family in the context of Greek community formation, maintenance and fragmentation.

When George Loizou (1905–1984) emigrated in 1927, he left behind him his family and the British Colony of Cyprus liberated from direct Ottoman Turkish rule in 1878.

Turkish influence was still palpable in Cyprus when he grew up. The Turkish conquerors and colonisers and the converts to Islam over the period 1571 to 1878 had altered the demographic balance and ethno-cultural structure of the island so that it was then about 18% Moslem/Turkish and about 80% Greek Orthodox Christian (Hunt, 1994a:227). This was the “unhappiest and least prosperous [period] for Cyprus” (Hunt, 1994a:253–54). Institutionalised discrimination based on religion in combination with a high degree of local autonomy reinforced a sense of being Greek and Orthodox (Hunt, 1994a:228–32). Localism was strengthened further by the lack of effective
communications and the nature of the terrain. Many Greek Cypriots had sought refuge abroad (Hunt, 1994a:228–34).

George Loizou grew up at a time when an increasingly intense nationalist dimension was added to the distinctive Hellenic Orthodox ethos and culture (Anthias, 1992:34; Kitromilides, 1979:20). Through education, the Orthodox Church (“the guardian of spiritual and national unity”), ensured that Greek nationalism was both militant and conservative (Kitromilides, 1979:11). In the decades before and after the British occupation in 1878, Cypriot schools were staffed by teachers from Greece and Greek Cypriots trained as teachers in Greece. Thus George Loizou was exposed to the promotion of Greek nationalist sentiments (Kitromilides, 1979:21–23). The parallel rise of Turkish nationalism produced an “eventual collision of the two opposing nationalist movements in the case of the bi-national society of Cyprus” (Kitromilides, 1979:5).

Greek Cypriot society at the time of George Loizou’s departure was one where the influences of the Orthodox Church, of Greek language and culture, of the Greek national ideal and of the common historical experience seemed paramount and gave an impression of substantial social cohesion. Yet rapidly emerging social divisions based on class differences were cutting across the older social divisions based on a patron-client system. The diverse and centrifugal forces of regionalism and localism were too powerful. It was not possible to overcome “the centrifugal forces which parties reflected and strengthened in a markedly unhomogeneous society” (Petropulos, 1968:15). The new force of Greek nationalism could not overcome geographical barriers, localism and sectionalism produced by the high degree of autonomy allowed to the communities and regions, the absence of uniformity of administration and the traditional inefficiency and corruption of the Ottoman state (Petropulos, 1968:20). The legacy left by the Ottoman Empire was a society divided into myriad families and communities, accustomed to promoting their interests by influencing authorities who were inefficient and corrupt because there was no effective system of law and administration (Panousis, 2003:106; Simerini, 2003). Greek
society was composed of “myriad cohesive families” competing with each other using networks of friends and patronage (Close, 2003:63–71; Lee, 1959:149). The British did not try to bridge divisions between these networks.

During George Loizou’s childhood, Cyprus experienced all the pains of transition from one regime to another. The political tensions, the social and ethnic divisions combined with extremes of wealth and poverty were to leave their mark on the young man. He was aware of the many privileges of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot ruling elite. When the British removed some privileges, such as tax exemptions, the Greek ruling elite became keen supporters of enosis or union with Greece (Panteli, 1984:53–58). British officials sought to assuage the concerns of Moslem Cypriots on this score (Panteli, 1984:68–72) by creating a form of representative government in 1881, which perpetuated and institutionalised a system of communal division (Hunt, 1994b:259–62, 267–68).

The British did bring about some notable economic and social advances such as the expansion of commerce and the provision of schools and hospitals. However, there was little progress in agriculture. Expectations for a substantial and immediate improvement in the standard of living for all were dashed. Taxation levels were high. Living standards were low and poverty was made worse by the extortions of moneylenders and the not infrequent natural disasters. People were driven to the cities where workers were exploited (Panteli, 1984:108–109). Recommendations to break up the oligarchic power of the professional lawyers/politicians, wholesale merchants and moneylenders who controlled the Legislative Council, the ecclesiastical decisions, the schools and the village councils through a patron-client system were largely ignored (Panteli, 1984:110). Under these circumstances it was not surprising that the Communist Party of Cyprus, later known as the Progressive Party of the Working People (AKEL), was established in 1925 (Panteli, 1984:111–12). In 1927 the authorities began their crackdown on the left wing of politics.

These economic woes underpinned the growing Greek nationalist


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movement, leading to political disturbances. The British reassured the Moslems that their interests would receive full consideration (Panteli, 1984:100). The Turkish Cypriots sought to exploit their relationship with the British, demanding concessions and measures to protect Moslem interests (Panteli, 1984:104–105).

The brothers George and Constantinos Loizou had moved to Larnaca from Livadia to establish a general store in rented premises in order to improve their standard of living. Ownership of property in urban areas was limited to relatively few people. However, the growing political disturbances and the increasingly negative economic climate with diminishing opportunities for advancement convinced George Loizou that only by migrating could he hope to prosper. He left the business to his brother and used some of the money from his share of the business to pay for his fare to Adelaide, having chosen to migrate to Adelaide because of his association with a compatriot, George Nicolaides, who had become established there in the small-scale confection making industry (Petrou, 2000).

George Nicolaides was born at Livadia on 6 January 1891. Unable to complete his secondary education because of his family’s poverty, Nicolaides worked for the Limassol Steamship Company. In 1908 he migrated to Egypt where he found work at the Aswan Dam. There he met the Vidalis and Sigalas families with whom his future would be closely linked. When Letho Vidalis, his very close friend, decided in 1912 to migrate to Australia, Nicolaides chose to follow him. He knew that Vidalis’s uncle, James Sigalas, had already become established in manufacturing confectionery in Melbourne. Nicolaides arrived in Melbourne on 5 June 1913 and worked in this business. In 1914 he moved to Adelaide where he worked for James Sigalas at “Sigalas’s” in Rundle Street (Kanarakis, 2003:35–73). He was manager of Sigalas’s between 1922 and 1928 and was involved in a number of initiatives for the Greek community (Kanarakis, 2003:115–21). His brother-in-law, Letho Vidalis, replaced him as manager in 1928. Nicolaides then tried to start a business of his own in 1929, but this failed and he became bankrupt (Kanarakis, 2003:139–41).


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When George Loizou arrived in Adelaide in 1927, he was offered a job at the Sigalas Milk Bar. While working there between 1927 and 1931 he learned much about the business and chocolate and confectionery manufacturing. He was not paid very much, but with the knowledge he acquired he was able to start his own business. By 1932 he was renting a milk bar that also manufactured chocolate and confectionery in Bank Street, opposite the Adelaide railway station. The business had belonged to Nicolaides who sold it to Loizou to relieve himself of some of his debt. Loizou was aware that this venture in self-employment was risky; many small businesses at the time were failing because of the Great Depression.

In the 1920s South Australian governments had adopted policies of immigration, investment in infrastructure, mechanisation in agriculture and expansion in the automobile industry, with an eye to increased overseas exports and, hopefully, a growing domestic market in order to correct the imbalances caused by the war (Lonie, 1973:61). This rapid economic development together with a boom in urban construction brought about a shift of labour from the primary to the manufacturing industries (Broomhill, 1978:4–6).

South Australia's economic and financial fragility was exposed by a dependence on continuing high prices for staple exports (wool and wheat) and the high inflow of British capital. Both began to falter by 1927 when South Australia found itself on the brink of a serious economic recession that deepened into the Great Depression of the 1930s (Broomhill, 1978:2–3). Unemployment reached its peak in South Australia in 1932 when 35.4% of trade unionists were out of work and 40% of males in work received less than the basic wage of £3 per week (Broomhill, 1978:11–19).

The effects of the Depression were all-pervasive as increasingly people turned to government relief and private charity to eke out an existence. Government relief was meagre and the existing welfare machinery could not cope (Broomhill, 1978:79). “Foreigners” received assistance only if any funds were still available after meeting the needs of Australians. Men seeking charity were humiliated. The
level of suicides rose (Broomhill, 1978:41).

Hopes that the election of the State ALP Hill government in 1930 would lead to some improvement in relief were to be dashed (Broomhill, 1978:80). The value of relief was reduced and more stringent regulations for eligibility were implemented. South Australia provided the least amount of relief in Australia. The unemployed and their families were always hungry, as the rations did nothing more than sustain life.

When these circumstances are taken into consideration, George Loizou’s decision to undertake a business venture reflected a strong conviction that he would be able to succeed where many others, including George Nicolaides, had failed. It is against this background that the Anglo-Australian Sweet Company’s success must be measured.

Loizou’s decision to set up a business of his own in 1932 was all the more courageous in that he did not have members of his extended family around him to help until 1936. His small capital came from his savings and his share of the Larnaca business. He also had to deal with a strong xenophobia and the pressure to conform to Australian norms. Many changed or anglicised their names. George Loizou changed his surname to Lewis. He chose a very patriotic sounding name for his business, “The Anglo-Australian Sweet Company”. This later became Lewis Confectionery. He married an Australian woman, Jean Churchett, who assisted him substantially. Moreover, he remained in the background, confining his activities to manufacturing, while having Australian girls in the shop selling the produce.

Loizou’s business acumen, instinct, flair and hard work were rewarded by success in business. He introduced innovations in chocolate making, which was labour intensive because chocolates, especially those with soft centres, were hand made. He took a bold gamble and invested in confection-making machinery, the first of its kind in South Australia. This machinery was set up in the window of the Bank Street shop. Many people at that time used the local railway network to go into the city for business, work, shopping or entertainment and many
used Bank Street as a conduit to Hindley and Rundle Streets, the commercial and entertainment centre of the capital. On Friday evenings in particular when fresh confectionery manufacturing was in full swing, passers-by and purchasers would line up in Bank Street to observe the process. So popular did it become that for some time police had to come to keep people off the roadway and to ensure orderly behaviour in the queues that stretched in two directions, one to North Terrace and the other to Hindley Street.

During the 1930s and the early 1940s the company was involved in manufacturing, wholesale distribution and retailing. In this period there were over a hundred different lines including chocolates with different centres, toffees, caramels and marshmallows. The company had its own cardboard packages with photographs of sweets and chocolates and the company’s details. These could be assembled quickly. There were two sizes, half and one pound boxes. In addition to these there were paper bags of three or four different sizes also printed with the company’s details.

By 1936 South Australia was emerging from the Depression; definite signs of economic recovery were accompanied by a growth of population through migration. George Loizou’s business underwent rapid growth. The Bank Street site was extended towards the rear to occupy space beneath the wings of the old Theatre Royal in Hindley Street in order to cope with the expansion of production, especially during the early years of World War II. The retail shop in Bank Street and the factory production at the rear functioned together until 1942. In that year George Lewis shifted manufacturing to the rear of his own house at 104 Magill Road, Norwood; the retail business in Bank Street was maintained until 1973.

In the retail side of the business George Lewis traded exclusively under his own label. However, he was also involved in the wholesale business and was prepared to distribute his own products to various retail outlets or to manufacture on a wholesale basis for various retail outlets under their own labels.

As part of South Australia’s centenary celebrations, a group of
THE ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN SWEET COMPANY

businessmen published a memorial album, *Progressive Adelaide — As it stands today*, which invited all to “Come To South Australia’s Great 100th Birthday Party”. Its aim, besides promoting the Centenary Celebrations, was to draw attention to “a wide variety of attractions for the tourist” (*Progressive Adelaide*, 1936:np). In this large publication “Geo Lewis, Manufacturing Confectioner Bank Street, Adelaide” took out a whole page advertisement, a bold move for a young company. Apart from a photograph of Geo. Lewis, there were also a number of other photographs designed to create the impression that this manufacturer was modern, dynamic and forward-looking. The central photograph displayed the wide range of confectionery and chocolates produced by the company. Lewis stressed the fact that his sweets were fresh and pure, that they were produced daily on the premises. To highlight this point Lewis included two other photographs showing the manufacture of the sweets and their packaging by cleanly dressed workers. Furthermore, he made a point of the presentation of his goods in theatre and gift boxes as well as packages.

To attract the interest of confectionery shops, the company offered sweets at “incomparable wholesale prices” with the added attraction of free delivery to the suburbs in one of the company’s vans. Commercial travellers were employed to visit shops in all districts on a regular basis. For those in the trade who wished to avail themselves of his company’s manufacturing expertise for the manufacture of sweets under their own labels, Lewis, bold, innovative and prepared to use modern marketing techniques, was prepared to offer a special deal that included quality as well as quantity at an economical price with guaranteed prompt delivery and regular service.

The milk bar section of the business was fitted out in the Art Deco style of the period with the spareness and clean flowing lines that characterised that fashion. Nut sundaes and ice cream sodas went for five pence while milk drinks were sold for four pence. His major local competitors, Haigh, Tandy, Hoadley, Allen and Menz, did not take out advertisements (*Progressive Adelaide*, 1936) and all these


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companies today, except Haigh’s, have been taken over by multinational companies.

The Greek community that George Lewis encountered when he arrived in Adelaide in 1927 was small and noted for its divisions. Along with the common core values (Eastern Orthodoxy, Greek language and culture and a common historical experience), the Greek and Greek Cypriot migrants to Australia brought with them as cultural baggage a factor that has often been underestimated in research studies on Greek migrant communities: the vertical division of Greeks into myriad families and their networks of relatives, friends and patrons which overlapped horizontal hierarchical social class divisions.

In order to be able to associate with others who shared common characteristics so different from the host society, the small numbers of Greek migrants had been prepared to put on hold differences stemming from their various origins; they had no choice but to rely on the few Greek organisations such as the Orthodox Church and Greek community structures. The need to associate with fellow Greeks was strong especially in the light of the hostility and discrimination perceived and experienced within Australian society (Tsounis, 1975: 33–35).

The relatively stable pre-World War II Greek communities “were mainly the result of chain migration, a movement of relatives and friends and compatriots who came to join their successful sponsors” of the catering or shopkeeping class, the petite bourgeoisie. Their coalescence into a community was helped by the fact they had originated from a comparatively limited number of localities and this was reflected in the small number of regional associations that existed in the pre-World War II period (Price, 1963:134–35). In these small-scale businesses family members could participate as workers. The role of families from these limited sources of migration was paramount in the Greek community and destructive centrifugal tendencies were avoided because the settlements were essentially communities in which one or more regional or district groups pre-
dominated (Tsounis, 1975:20–21). They formed the backbone of the communities, but they would simultaneously become the leading elements in the formation of regional associations or fraternities when the opportunity arose for the creation of such organisations. In pre-World War II Adelaide there were one Community and two pan-Hellenic organisations and a Kastellorizan fraternity (Tsounis, 1975:31). The arrival of more Greek migrants, mainly males from a wider range of places of origin, in the pre-World War II period did not dramatically affect this picture. As most of the Greek migrants from diverse origins had not yet established patterns of chain migration, they were absorbed into and strengthened the existing institutions (Tsounis, 1975:23–24).

Initially, the small number of Greeks in Adelaide constituted an obstacle to the formation of an organised Greek community. This began to change with the decline of the Greek community in Port Pirie and the growth of the Adelaide community. Differences between the local priest and members of the community over community and church organisation were also an obstacle because the former preferred a parish-oriented approach. However, in 1935 Archbishop Timotheos Evangelinidis, by accepting the idea of a single Greek Orthodox Community in each State capital, with the right and responsibility to serve Greeks in the countryside, promoted closer cooperation between the Orthodox Church and community interests. This was deemed to be a more rational use of limited resources for the Metropolis and it suited the Greek community in Adelaide that wanted to create a state-wide organisation. It did not please the Greeks of Port Pirie (Tsounis, 1990:7–9).

Greek communities in Australia in their pursuit of a greater degree of social cohesion promoted the core values of Greek language, Greek Orthodoxy and Greek customs and traditions, such as the solidarity of Greek family life (Smolicz, 1983:3–8). Moreover, they were aware that the survival of the diaspora Greeks could only be accomplished by living in communities separate from the Australian mainstream and by sharing and passing down through education their common


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historical experience and an interest in and concern for Greece’s national causes. They were very conscious of the fact that in order to communicate with their own folk they had to cooperate, to found institutions and to provide for themselves services not available or expected from Australian society. The revitalisation of their communities, they knew, depended on an almost continuous immigration. Their exclusion from different spheres and levels of Australian society because of a cultural gap, the lack of English language or other skills, and low socio-economic status also forced them to construct an alternative social and cultural environment (Tsounis, 1975:19–20). However, the rather loose-knit nature of such communities owed much to the deep-seated differences stemming from their diverse origins in the Greek world.

In the meantime in Cyprus the economic crisis intensifi ed and the political climate had become tenser. The impact of the Great Depression was very deeply felt, but the government, to meet a growing deficit, decided to increase taxation (Panteli, 1984:132–33). Of the three quarters of the Cypriot population engaged in agriculture, 70% were chronically in debt to usurers and merchants who dragged the debtors through the courts, enriching advocates. On top of this the Cypriots had to endure excessive and unfair taxation and exploitation by the privileged classes whose interests were represented in the Legislative Council (Panteli, 1984:127–29).

Greek religious authorities and their enosist supporters used the schools for the glorifi cation of Greece and to appoint their supporters to the most desirable positions. A similar situation prevailed among the Turkish Cypriots. In an attempt to contain nationalist propaganda, the colonial government in 1929 took control of all education and removed patronage from the hands of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot elite (Panteli, 1984:130–31).

In 1931 considerable ill feeling prevailed in Cyprus. The general discontent and exasperation came to a head when the colonial authorities arbitrarily introduced new customs tariffs. Extremist elements called for the overthrow of British rule and this led to the outbreak of
major violence in the island in October 1931 (Panteli, 1984:134–36). The people easily equated their demand for economic improvement with the push for liberties (Panteli, 1984:147–48). Rather than address the causes of the outbreak, the British chose to implement repressive measures. The Legislative Council was abolished (16 November 1931) and the Governor was empowered to rule by decree (Panteli, 1984:152). Manifestations of national feeling were prosecuted (Panteli, 1984:154).

Greek Cypriot peasants were born in debt, lived in debt and died in debt. Their lives were made miserable by the pressure of creditors. Indeed in the inter-war period 18,000 mortgaged properties were sold and 19,500 judgments were given for the forced sale of non-mortgaged properties. Former owners were now landless and were obliged either to work at very low wages, to emigrate or to starve. Those who were being crushed by the burden of debts cared much less for nationalist aspirations than did the educated minority or Cypriots living abroad (Panteli, 1984:156–65).

Relations between the Greek and Turkish elements of Cyprus in the interwar period were generally cordial. The “Old Turkish Party” in Cyprus did not want the non-Moslem majority to impose its will on them and saw the disproportionate influence allocated to the Moslems as a “bulwark against racial and religious oppression” (Georghallides, 1985:87–88). Nevertheless, the activities of extremist nationalist leaders on both sides caused some concern.

It was against this background of growing political turbulence and economic uncertainty of the 1920s that Haralambos Psaras, son of Petrou, later known as Harry Peters, was born on 25 December 1921 in the village of Livadia, about three kilometres north of Larnaca, Cyprus. His parents (Petros Psaras and Eleni Loizou, a sister of George and Constantinos) were small-scale farmers who, in an effort to improve their circumstances, had decided to move to Larnaca at

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1 Information on the life of Harry Peters comes from interviews with him conducted by the author (Petrou, 2000).


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about the time when Harry was ready to attend school (1927) and when George Loizou had decided to migrate.

Harry completed his primary schooling in the 1933/34 school year. Until 1931 his education was very Greek oriented. Greek was the language of instruction, Greek history was taught, the Greek flag was displayed prominently and they sang the Greek national anthem. After the troubles of 1931, the British authorities exercised tighter control over the curriculum and activities in the schools. While Greek was still the language of instruction, no Greek history was taught and the singing of the Greek national anthem was forbidden; it was replaced by the British national anthem, God Save the King (in Greek).

After completing his primary schooling Harry worked for his uncle Constantinos Loizou. Harry’s decision to work for his uncle meant being separated from his own family as his parents had decided to return to Livadia to live and to cultivate their smallholdings.

Given the political uncertainties and the adverse economic climate in Cyprus, it was not surprising that Constantinos (Costa) Loizou was finding it difficult to make ends meet in the general store. As a result of correspondence between George and Costa, the latter decided to sell the business and migrate to Adelaide to join his brother. It was perhaps the very growth of his own business and the need to expand his activities that led George Loizou to call his brother to South Australia. The fact that the Larnaca business was not doing very well made Costa’s decision easier.

Initially, Costa was a paid employee of the company (1936–1945). In the post-World War II period responsibility for running the business was shared with George as the financial manager and Costa as the factory manager. George retained the position of financial manager until his death in 1984, although he had divested himself of hands-on management because of his various other business and social interests.

For Harry Petrou the opportunity to migrate with his uncle proved alluring as prospects in Cyprus did not seem good. By going to South
Australia he would be remaining within the embrace of a closely-knit family unit and he would have an assured job. To stay in Cyprus meant uncertainty, as Harry’s own immediate family did not have many resources. (Indeed the family came to depend on Harry’s remittances from Adelaide.) George Lewis paid Harry’s fare to Australia, while Costa paid his own and his immediate family’s fares.2

So at the age of fifteen, Haralambos (Harry) Petrou accompanied his uncle Costa, his aunt Maria and his young cousin Stavros to Adelaide. The ship on which they travelled arrived at Outer Harbour on 14 November 1936.

George Lewis decided that Harry would become an apprentice confectioner. His apprenticeship commenced in late 1936 and continued throughout the rest of the decade and into the early 1940s. Harry lived with his Uncle George who, with Harry’s approval, arranged for remittances to be sent to Harry’s father in Cyprus. The remittances came from Harry’s pay, which in 1937 was about three pounds per week. In 1938 Harry’s brother, Paraskevas Petrou, also arrived in Adelaide. Both stayed with their Uncle George at 104 Magill Road, Norwood. The Petrou surname was changed to Peters.

With the outbreak of World War II and Australia’s involvement in it, George Lewis’s confectionery manufacturing establishment was classified as an essential industry supplying confectionery to the armed services. As a British subject Harry was eligible for military service, but he could have been given exemption as a worker in an essential service. However, in 1943 he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and served until 1946. His service pay was two guineas per week.

George Lewis, however, continued to send money to Harry’s parents in Cyprus and Harry maintained close communications with them. Between 1943 and 1947 he sent letters for his family to his brother

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2 On 19 September 1936, Harry was issued with a restricted British Passport (Passport No. 3391, M.P. No. 361427). This British Passport was valid only for Australia, Egypt and Cyprus. Moreover, it was valid for Egypt only for transit purposes en route to Australia.
Paraskevas in Adelaide who re-posted them to Cyprus. Harry’s relatives in Cyprus were never aware during the war that Harry had enlisted. Letters to and from Cyprus during the war were censored heavily.

Harry Peters’ initial training in the RAAF took place at Parafield Airport to the north of Adelaide. He was then posted to Wedge Island (60 nautical miles from Port Lincoln between Eyre and York Peninsulas) where he worked with Radio Direction Finding Equipment. In 1944 he was posted to New Guinea where he served at a number of airstrips over the period 1944–1946.

Whatever their misgivings about British rule, Cypriots were staunch supporters of the Allied cause in World War II. Conscription was not imposed on the colony, but thousands of Cypriot volunteers fought under British command during the Greek campaign while others served in the Greek armed forces. Greek Cypriots in the Greek and British armed forces participated with distinction in the Battle of Crete alongside British, Australian and New Zealand troops. The Cyprus Regiment lost over two thousand men in Crete, with most taken prisoner (Panteli, 1984:174–75).

The participation of Greeks in the war on the side of the Allies, their early successes and their sacrifices for Australian troops, helped the Greeks in Australia to acquire an acceptance and an acclaim that they had never previously experienced. This was to be reinforced by the Greek community’s support of the war effort. George Loizou was actively involved in various committees of the Greek Community of South Australia Inc in the 1930s (Tsounis, 1990:146). During World War II he was a member of the fundraising committee of the Community (1941–1946) that raised money for philanthropic and charitable purposes not confined solely to the needs of the Community. With the German occupation of Greece, the Community became involved in activities in support of the Allies by collecting and donating funds for the war effort and raising funds for the victims of the war (Tsounis, 1990:147). These initiatives continued throughout the war years.

The Greeks of South Australia increased their participation in
business during the war; their growing prosperity led to increased revenues for the Community and the removal of its debts.

Once the Greek Orthodox Community of SA Inc became established in Adelaide, the “community embarked on a process of segmentation along regional and other sectional or group interest lines” (Tsounis, 1975:31). Thus began the process of the centrifugal fragmentation of Greek society in Australia, reflecting the reality of the worlds from which they had emigrated and their preference for associating with their own kind. Other fraternities emerged during and after World War II. Greek people moved freely between the Greek community and their regional fraternity as each organisation offered different services and met different needs. While some regional organisations collapsed, others such as the Rhodian Society “Colossus” (1944) and the Cypriot Community “Kypros” (1948) put down more substantial roots (Tsounis, 1990:23–27). George Lewis was a leading founding member of the Cypriot Community, commended for bringing out many relatives from Cyprus (Golden Anniversary, 1998:34–35).

Further underscoring this point is the importance of the individuals who initiated a process of chain migration, bringing out relatives and friends. Chain migration, so characteristic of the Greeks, was, as C. A. Price pointed out, “the product not just of distress in southern Europe and prosperity in Australia but of the careers of those individuals who first arrived” (Price, 1963:133).

The Community and its Orthodox Church met the religious and educational needs of all members of the Greek community and provided a focus for national celebrations and opportunities for participation in a social, political and cultural life that was denied them in the broader Australian community; the fraternity provided the social context within which people from the same region could associate more comfortably. There was considerable overlapping in the membership and leadership of all types of organisations, so that they interlinked in a loose-knit manner. “Despite the segmentation and diversity of ethnic communities, some measure of cooperation and unity was achieved. Such cooperation and unity stemmed from the general


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acceptance of the importance of the Greek Orthodox Communities” (Tsounis, 1975:32).

Harry Peters had to face a new world when he returned to Adelaide for his demobilisation from the RAAF. Harry’s father had died before the end of the war when he was only 52 years old. His death set in train the moves, initiated by the family in Australia, to bring out the whole family.

Between 1947 and 1951 there occurred a wave of Cypriot migration to Australia, after the forced interruption during World War II. A number of these migrants came to Adelaide as a result of chain migration largely from the Aradippou region and the Karpasi Peninsula to augment the already existing small community of 105 (Kanarakis, 2003:169). Among these were members of the Loizou-Petrou families from the Livadia region very close to Aradippou.

On 22 July 1947 Harry Peters took out a new British Passport of the Commonwealth of Australia (No. A 261028 M.P. No. 361472). His new passport was valid for the British Empire and for all foreign countries. He returned to Cyprus with a friend, Kyriakos Nikias, who later became godfather to Harry’s first son Evan. He arrived at Limassol, Cyprus on 10 September. Harry was to stay 14 months on Cyprus. His primary purpose was to arrange the migration of the rest of the family. He then had to arrange a marriage for himself or rather to meet the young woman who was deemed suitable by his family and whose parents were in agreement with the proposed arrangement.

Harry experienced considerable frustration and exasperation in his dealings with a bureaucracy which insisted on extensive paperwork being completed before they could migrate to Australia. All members of the family required certificates of good social conduct from the police, declaring that they had no criminal record. This was obtained from the police at Larnaca, and Harry then had to take the certificates to Nicosia. Likewise, birth certificates had to be obtained and the marital status of all parties confirmed, with the married couples providing marriage certificates.
More than twelve months passed before Harry was able to complete all the forms to the satisfaction of the bureaucracy, and obtain all the passports and visas and make the travel arrangements. It was only once these processes were completed that he had sufficient time to find a bride for himself.

Augousta Salousti\(^3\) was chosen as his partner. She was born on 27 July 1929 at Livadia. Her father was George Salousti who had married Angeliki Papalexandrou in whose family there were many priests (Salousti, 2000). Augousta's father was a cheese maker who had his establishment in the family home. The whole family assisted in the production of haloumi (a Cypriot cheese), milk, butter, ricotta and yoghurt. Her father sold the dairy products locally, but he also exported butter and haloumi to Beirut. His feta was also sold in Aradippou where it was canned in the period 1936–37 to 1941–42.

Augousta spent only 5 years at school. Her parents removed her because she was the only girl in her class at the school and this had horrified her mother. She was taught English but not any Greek history at school as the British colonial authorities had forbidden this. Augousta's social life was very restricted, being confined to the home and the Church. She was not allowed to go to Larnaca to sell milk; her brothers did this.

On 20 May 1948 she was betrothed to Harry and on 13 June 1948 they were married. Her uncle, Rev. Fr. Gabriel, married them. At the wedding there were nine koumbari (sponsors), some of whom are now in Australia while others remained in Cyprus. They had many sponsors in order to share the costs. Augousta's name and photograph were incorporated into Harry Peters’ passport. A visa was issued on 14 October 1948. Likewise, Harry had to arrange for a transit visa from the Consul of the Netherlands at Limassol to travel through Indonesia. (The consul crossed out the printed phrase “The Netherlands Indies” and substituted the title of the newly created Indonesia.)

\(^3\) Information on the life of Augousta Peters comes from interviews with her conducted by the author (Salousti, 2000).
A number of factors determined how they would travel to Australia. As one grandfather absolutely refused to travel by sea and as the Egyptian nationalist movement had disrupted shipping between Cyprus and Egypt, arrangements were made to travel by plane. A pilot, who allegedly had “confiscated” a decommissioned DC 3, was prepared to charter the plane for the flight to Australia. George Lewis covered the costs involved for the members of his extended family. On the flight there were to be thirteen family members and seventeen others. At the last moment, the grandfather who had refused adamantly to travel by sea decided equally adamantly that he was not going to leave Cyprus at all. He remained in Cyprus. Nevertheless, the plane left Cyprus on 18 October 1948 even though one of the passengers, Stella Petrou Christopher, was pregnant and near her term for delivery. There were many delays and setbacks before they arrived at Sydney ten days later, on 28 October. At Sydney the Australian aviation authorities declared the plane unairworthy and it was prohibited from carrying passengers.

Now the whole family had to travel to Adelaide by train, passing through Albury/Wodonga where they had to change trains from the standard gauge to broad gauge. They were obliged to spend a day in Melbourne before taking the Overlander from Melbourne to Adelaide. After arriving in Adelaide, they all went to stay at Waterloo Corner, Salisbury where George Lewis had purchased a sizeable property (200 acres) with a large house on it. George Lewis continued to live at Norwood.

Those living at the Waterloo Corner, Salisbury property in 1949 were: Harry’s mother Helen Loizou-Petrou (widow) along with her unmarried children Paraskevas (Fred) Peters and Anastasia Petrou, Harry Peters and Augousta Salousti-Peters and baby Evan, George Christopher and Stella Petrou-Christopher (Harry’s sister) and their baby Peter (12 months old) and Christodoulos Natar and Christina Loizou-Natar and their children George (10 years) and Helen (8 years). Helen Loizou-Petrou and Christina Loizou-Natar were sisters of George and Constantinos Loizou (Lewis).
In 1950 Harry’s family moved to rented premises at 109 Wright Street, Adelaide. In the early 1950s they moved to 53a Gurrs Road, Beulah Park where Harry and Augousta still live.

When Harry and Augousta established their home in South Australia the State had emerged from the Depression and World War II with great hopes for future prosperity. Haunted by his experience of the Depression and the need for economic recovery and development following the dislocations caused by World War II (Crocker, 1983:142), the Premier, Tom Playford, was determined to promote the diversification of the State’s economy with a growing emphasis on manufacturing (Wanna, 1981:27–28; Rich, 1996:101).

South Australia was ideally placed to take advantage of the decentralisation policies that had been implemented during World War II for strategic purposes (Crocker, 1983:43). Playford’s policies set about exploiting the existence of industrial sites and strategic industries and used a high tariff wall to protect local manufacturing in order to promote manufacturing industries (Jaensch, 1986:249–53). The Housing Trust of South Australia built large housing estates that catered particularly for migrants with the object of keeping down labour costs relative to other states (Marsden, 1996:108). Special deals were offered for the supply of electricity, gas, water and cheap sites for factories (Muirden, 1986:270–82).

The economy, despite fluctuations, was going through a period of rapid expansion as was shown in the growth of its population (Hugo, 1996:31–36). The Federal Labor and later the Liberal-Country Coalition governments deliberately encouraged migration; the Playford government did much to attract migrants to South Australia with the offer of more and cheaper accommodation than elsewhere and price controls on rent as well as the offer of work.

Greek migrants did not benefit from the very large pool of public housing because they preferred to stay close to the inner western and eastern suburbs where their compatriots lived and to be near to their jobs in factories. This placed considerable upward pressure on private rental costs despite the existence of rental controls.
George Lewis had diversified his business interests, which now included real estate, and by 1954 he had handed the day-to-day management of the company to his brother Costa. He was a founding member of the Cypriot Community of South Australia, serving at one time as its president. He was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Community, serving as its president between 1948 and 1950 (Tsounis, 1990:31). He persuaded the Community to purchase the corner block (West Terrace/Franklin Street) adjacent to the old Church of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. The Olympic Hall was to be erected on this site in 1957 (Tsounis, 1900:39) and for many years it was an important source of income for the Community.

The fragility and vulnerability of the Greek community were exposed in the post-World War II period. Mass migration from Greece, Cyprus and Egypt began in the 1950s and lasted until the early 1970s. This process was revolutionary in many ways: the exponential growth of the Greek population (Tsounis, 1975:27, 29; Bureau of Immigration, 1991:43–44; Ganzis, 1999:76–92); the almost overwhelming demand for services to meet the migrants’ needs placing unbearable burdens on the existing structures; the diversity of the sources of origin of these immigrants in comparison to the pre-World War II period so that Greeks in Australia while becoming more representative of the population of Greece were being thrust together in a manner that made social cohesion tenuous and fragile; the politico-ideological tensions among the migrants and also with the older settlers as a consequence of the Greek Civil War (1946–1949) and the persecutions of the 1940s and 1950s. The Greek Cypriot struggle for liberation from British colonial rule and self-determination (1955–1959), which meant enosis for many Greek Cypriots, and the persecution of the Greek minority in Constantinople together with the massive destruction and vandalisation of Orthodox churches (7 September 1955) galvanised most Greek migrants in support of Greece’s national issues and deepened political tensions.

The centralised Greek community was structurally inadequate.
to respond positively, constructively and effectively to this situation; it lacked the professional expertise and personnel to confront the myriad problems that presented themselves. Their common characteristics were insufficient to hold the Greeks together as a very cohesive community and their greater numbers opened the way for them to establish myriad regional organisations and to make possible the formation of other communities around the churches of the Archdiocese that would be more responsive to the needs of their local communities.

The great influx of immigrants in the post-war period not only intensified the process of segmentation of the community but also shattered its earlier structures so that various segments did not, as in the pre-war period, converge towards and interlink with the Greek Orthodox Communities (Tsounis, 1975:35–36). Inevitably, the demand for the creation of new institutions to meet the needs of the new circumstances created an explosive climate challenging the hegemony of pre-war Greeks who had controlled the Greek communities.

This opened an opportunity for the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia to break free of the restrictions and controls of the Greek communities. The attempt to impose the Greek-American organisational structure through the creation of a hierarchical parish system was not entirely successful, though churches created after 1975 mainly fall into this pattern. Over the period 1959–1975, the peak period of migration and the coalescence of new migration chains, the churches that adhered to the Archdiocese had their own community and parish structures, thus maintaining a degree of autonomy. Nevertheless, the split or schism that occurred in 1959 reflected the growing pattern of diversity with the proliferation of Greek organisations.

Hundreds of fraternities (village and regional) were created and these established their own places for meetings, thus contributing along with other institutions to the amorphous mass that constituted Greek society in South Australia (Tsounis, 1975:37–43). While these

associations met certain social needs of the migrants, they did not seem to attract the interest of second and subsequent generations. When the split occurred between the Greek Orthodox Community of SA Inc and the Archdiocese of Australia, George Lewis left the Community and sided with the Archdiocese and the members of his extended family followed his lead. He was involved in establishing the Greek Orthodox Church of the Prophet Elias in Norwood in 1959.

Harry Peters continued to work for his uncle George and was involved in the running of the retail outlet until its closure in 1973. He then moved to work at the factory in Norwood. Between 1946 and 1973 the company aimed at the same market as Menz, Tandy, Allen and Hoadley, that is the lower to middle range of the market.

In 1973 Lewis Confectionery gave up the retail side of the business and concentrated on manufacturing and distributing their own products as well as manufacturing sweets for other companies such as Allen. By 1980 the company ceased manufacturing chocolates with various centres, as these sweets were labour intensive and the cost of labour began to outstrip the cost of the ingredients. Indeed, automation in sweets manufacturing also meant specialisation, with the production of a narrower range of goods.

George Lewis’s wife, Jean, died in 1974 and George died in 1984. As they had no children, the estate was divided among his relatives with Harry Peters inheriting the confectionery making business.

With the abandonment of some lines, the company had also to consider changing the products to meet a changing market. A growing health consciousness in the community convinced the Peters family to introduce carob-based sweets as a chocolate substitute. The company today produces over one hundred and fifty different lines including products for other companies which package these sweets under other names. Distributors or middlemen who order the sweets for the packing organisations deliver them to the packers. These middlemen, who determine the needs of the market, have sizeable warehouses from which to distribute goods to various outlets. Since
the beginning of the 1990s Lewis Confectionery has also been dealing directly with supermarket chains selling under the label Lewis Wholesome Foods.

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