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## **ON TEMPE’S SISTER CITY RELATIONSHIP WITH SKOPJE SINCE 1971: NOTES ON MACEDONIAN-NORTH AMERICAN CITIZEN-DIPLOMACY**

In December 1970, the Tempe, AZ City Council approved an invitation to the City of Skopje in Macedonia, Yugoslavia, to launch a sister cities partnership. On 2 March 1971, Mayor Dale Shumway wrote to his counterpart in Skopje—addressing his letter to “The Honorable Mayor” – extending the overture, with a “scrapbook” providing some information on the City of Tempe, sent by mail.<sup>1</sup>

The response from Skopje came by telegram in early June. The President of the Skopje City Assembly, Dragoljub Stavrev, reported that the Assembly had agreed to partner with Tempe—*se zbratimuva*—in their meeting of May 19<sup>th</sup> 1971. Stavrev also congratulated Tempe on the centennial they were celebrating in 1971, and sent several gifts. In the very next month, July 1971, Stavrev led a high-level delegation from Skopje to Tempe, where they stayed for four days. In addition to Stavrev and his chief of protocol Nestor Dzikov, the delegation included the Rector of Skopje’s public university, Kiril Penušliski, and the Director of

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<sup>1</sup> The main archival source for this paper is the record created and maintained by Virginia Thompson, former city clerk for Tempe, which she donated to the Tempe Historical Museum. I am grateful to staff at the Museum for facilitating my access, especially Joshua Roffler. Thanks also to all the participants and leaders of the Sister City relationship who shared their reflections and offered commentaries on this paper, including Dick Neuheisel, Debbie Duncan, Sue Lofgren, Simon Sazdov, Dobrin Nedelkov, Milčo Mančevski, Danica Sazdova and Elena Stavreva. I also appreciate feedback from participants in the 10<sup>th</sup> Macedonian-North American Conference on Macedonian Studies. All errors are the author’s responsibility.

Skopje's Steelworks and Mines, Petar Ivanovski.<sup>2</sup> They were accompanied by a television documentary crew. The visit went well: in the following summer (1972) a group of Tempe high school students, including Mayor Shumway's daughter, traveled to Skopje for an extended homestay with Macedonian families. Between 1972 and 2019, over 350 Tempe and Skopje high school students—as well as a range of adults including educators, city employees and young professionals—spent time in the other city, 6400 miles away.

This story of long-distance citizen-diplomacy prompts a variety of possible questions. Why Tempe? Why Yugoslavia, why Macedonia and why Skopje? And not just why, but how did this relationship get launched, and how did it persist? What impact has it had for participants, and for their communities? What lessons, if any, does the history of this particular relationship hold for the would-be civic activists of today? Is this a case-study on how to think globally and act locally? And finally, how does the way we tell the story, and the sources that we mobilize, affect the reach of the case-study? What are the different publics beyond the citizens of Tempe and Skopje for whom the story might resonate or inspire?

### **Drivers – structure, event and the structure of the conjuncture**

My interest in this question stems from my own relationship with Skopje and Tempe. I first studied Macedonian at Arizona State University's Critical Languages Institute in Tempe in 1991. Thanks largely to a Social Science Research Council grant, in support of which my Macedonian Professor Evica Konečni wrote a recommendation, I then lived in Skopje in the period 1992-93, conducting archival and ethnographic research for my doctorate in anthropology. I have returned to Skopje multiple times in connection with other research on history and

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<sup>2</sup> "Ceremonies join Tempe, Skopje." Daren J. Krupa, *Arizona Republic*, 12 July 1971, 4.

democratic activism, the longest stay being for 6 months as a Fulbright scholar in 2012-13. In July 2017, I moved to Tempe to take a job at ASU, and in November 2017 I joined the board of Tempe Sister Cities, at the initiative of the Skopje coordinator Dobrin Nedelkov and the invitation of the President Dick Neuheisel. I coordinated Tempe Sister Cities' first leadership summit for youth delegates in Summer 2018, and in February 2019, with the encouragement of the incumbent, Debbie Duncan, I was elected to serve as Tempe Sister Cities' historian.

Having trained as an anthropologist, I now hold a position in ASU's School of Politics and Global Studies. I am particularly interested in bringing together the perspectives and methods of *microhistory*, *oral history* and *community history* in research that is both academically rigorous and also public-facing; that is, research that advances scholarly knowledge and understanding while also being accessible and relevant for wider audiences. As well as the records compiled by Virginia Thompson, referenced in the first footnote, I have also drawn here on oral histories with key individuals, some of which are available in other databases, others which I have conducted myself. I seek here to combine that granular material with perspectives on historical narrative and agency, especially at pivotal moments which appear to mark significant innovation or change.

Following this line of interest, I focus in particular on the visit of the Skopje delegation in 1971 to Tempe as a moment in history that we can examine in with three different lenses. First, we can celebrate it—as Tempe Sister Cities has consistently—as a foundational moment for a kind of citizen-diplomacy. The primary Tempe-based actor in this regard is Richard Neuheisel, lawyer and Tempe councilman, whose energy and drive launched the relationship; and for whom it launched a forty-nine year career of civic engagement and advocacy in which TSC has grown to make relationships with 10 cities spanning all five continents. This is a story which can act as confirmation of the *bon mot* attributed to Margaret Mead; “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has” (Lutkehaus 2018: 261).

Second, we can treat this visit as the subject of the kind of analysis that social anthropologist Max Gluckman modeled in his classic study, “Analysis of a social situation in Zululand” (Gluckman 1940). This was an event-focused analysis that revealed the deep structure of power relations at work when British and Zulu guests interacted at the ceremonial opening of a new bridge in colonial South Africa. In the Tempe-Skopje case, the timing and conduct of the Stavrev delegation’s visit offers a snapshot of broader US and Yugoslav foreign policy, as well as domestic politics. Both countries were coming to terms with the aftermath of student-led social unrest in 1968, and with conservative backlash against civic and youth protests. In both cases, national leaders—Nixon in the United States, Tito in Yugoslavia—were seeking to sidestep or transcend domestic frictions by investing in their international relationships; Nixon made the first visit by a US President to Yugoslavia (in late September 1970), which was followed by a visit by Tito to Washington in October 1971. Conventional wisdom—and contemporary commentary—argues that the spontaneous citizen-voluntarism was a defining feature of U.S. public life, in contrast to the planned or orchestrated nature of citizen-state relations in communist countries. So the Skopje visit to Tempe offers the opportunity to investigate how closely this instance of ostensibly locally initiated “track-two diplomacy” was in fact tied to and driven by the imperatives of “track-one diplomacy.”

And third, given the “firstness” of the meetings of the US and Yugoslav heads of state, as well as the “firstness” of Tempe’s outreach, we can examine Stavrev’s visit as a case of “first encounter” familiar to anthropologists – where two societies with limited former relationships, come into contact, finding a way to overcome language and (in this case) ideological barriers. As a small city in the Southwest United States (with 63,000 inhabitants in 1971), Tempe had little international exposure. Skopje, by contrast, had been a locus for international intervention and collaboration in the years following 1963, when it was hit by a major earthquake. The city’s population had doubled in size in the intervening eight years, from around 160,000 before the earthquake, to 314,000 by

1971. But Macedonia remained far behind the northern republics economically: when Yugoslavia established a federal fund, FADURK, to promote economic growth in the underdeveloped areas, the Republic of Macedonia was one of the areas targeted (Ramet 2006: 276-277). And the influx of migrants from rural areas, drawn by the post-earthquake building boom that was still ongoing in 1971, gave Skopje a rustic, provincial feel, as these “peasant-urbanites” (Simić 1971) maintained many of their habits and practices. Skopje was thus easily caricatured—by North American visitors, as well as by other Yugoslavs—as backward, welfare recipient, in a mode familiar to the invidious and often racialized stereotypes of backwardness that had been so prevalent among conservatives in the United States during the Civil Rights movement.

So it is through these three lenses — as a story of the triumph and legacy of **individual initiative**; as a story of **entangled Cold War diplomacy**; and as a story of **cross-cultural encounter** in which the virtues of patience, empathy and respect appear to have prevailed, — that I continue.

### **Story 1: “No-one had had the guts before”**

Dick Neuheisel grew up in Wisconsin, and was an ROTC student at the University of Wisconsin, where he also took his law degree. Following military service, he moved to Arizona in 1963, and to Tempe in 1964. Newspapers indicate he worked at ASU’s College of Business Administration in January 1964, passed the Arizona Bar in August 1964, and was head of South Tempe’s Residents’ Association in August 1966. In April 1968, he was elected councilman in Tempe; from a field of fifteen candidates, Neuheisel was one of four elected along with Arthur Livingston, Robert Svob, and Joseph L. Dwight. Dale Shumway came in fifth. Elmer Bradley, the builder/property developer, was elected Mayor in the same election. As the youngest member (at age 32), Neuheisel swiftly formed a close working relationship with the experienced city clerk, Virginia Thompson. Neuheisel and Thompson were authorized to investigate possible sister cities.

Although Elmer Bradley was defeated by Dale Shumway as Mayor in the election of May 1970, Neuheisel and Thompson continued their work. The archive of the work of those early years (preserved at Tempe's Historical Museum, after a bequest by Virginia Thompson) indicates contact with Richard Oakland, who was director of the Town Affiliation Association. Tempe joined the association on August 6 1970, and the Tempe City Council authorized Dick Neuheisel to attend the next meeting of the association, held in San Diego, 26-29 August 1970. In Dick Neuheisel's recollection in multiple interviews, that conference provided the key impetus for Tempe to focus its search for a sister city in Eastern Europe. He recalls a conversation with U.S. assistant secretary of state for educational and cultural affairs, John Richardson Jr. encouraging Tempe to seek a partnership with a city in Yugoslavia (TAA newsletter, November-December 1971; and oral history interview with Dick Neuheisel, July 2018). He recalls asking Richardson why no other U.S. city had taken up the challenge to be the first to partner with an Eastern European country, to which Richardson responded "no one has had the guts."

Neuheisel returned from the San Diego meeting, and—by his account, corroborated by others who speak for his drive, energy, and capacity to mobilize others—embarked on a swift campaign to turn this idea into reality. Following the City Council vote to invite Skopje, taken in December 1970, Neuheisel and Thompson, together with Councilman Harry Mitchell (who had joined the council in May 1970) cofounded Tempe Sister Cities as a corporation. The new organization, with Neuheisel as President, took on the leading role in preparing the "pitch" to Skopje, which comprised the compilation of a "scrapbook" which provided an introduction to the city of Tempe. This scrapbook was then sent by mail to Skopje, along with a letter from Mayor Dale Shumway addressed to "the Honorable Mayor of Skopje" on March 2 1971. The primary work of assembling the scrapbook fell to Virginia Thompson, the city clerk: it seems likely that it drew on research and writing undertaken in preparation for Tempe's centennial celebrations in the same year, marking 100 years since the city's incorporation in 1871.

When asked how they settled on Skopje as the partner to approach, Neuheisel's memory is uncertain. He recalls that they considered cities in other Republics—including Zagreb, in Croatia—but formed the impression (based either on dated information or, he suggests, an error in transcribing numbers) that Skopje was similar in size to Tempe. After sending the invitation to Skopje, Tempe waited. Neuheisel maintained contact with the State Department, informing them of Tempe's approach to Skopje. The archival record suggests, though, that Tempe did not consult closely with professional diplomats or seek their advice. This seems clear from a letter dated March 3, sent by Raymond Lee, who was Assistant Director for Program implementation at State. He reported that he had briefed Yugoslav representatives regarding Tempe's interest and as a result—after the packet had already gone out to Skopje—he was able to provide Neuheisel with the name of the Mayor of Skopje, Dragoljub Stavrev.

Stavrev responded to Tempe's overture in May 1971. In a telegram that exhibits courtesy, enthusiasm and regard for protocol, he expressed congratulations on Tempe's centenary, and regrets that he was not able to attend. Stavrev then followed this telegram with a letter that arrived in early June, with the news that at their meeting on May 19, Skopje's city council had voted to accept Tempe's invitation to accept what, using the European idiom, he calls "twinning"—*zbratumina*. He also sent, very quickly, gifts to Tempe, that arrived before the end of June. These included a fine cut crystal bowl and a reproduction, roughly 2 feet by 3 feet in size, of a 1371 Macedonian fresco, with the title "The Peacebringers."



*Skopje Mayor Dragoljub Stavrev presents his city's gift, a reproduction of the 1371 fresco "The Peacebringers" to Arizona Governor Jack Williams and Mrs. Dale Shumway, wife of Tempe's mayor, during the inaugural visit from Skopje's delegation to Tempe in July 1971. Photo courtesy of Tempe Historical Museum*

Stavrev's response from Skopje maintained, or even accelerated, the tempo which Neuheisel had set in Tempe. Between August 1970 and March 1971, in a span of just 7 months, Neuheisel had created a civic organization, secured a city council vote, produced and dispatched a set of materials to make the case, and mobilized State Department assistance to support Tempe's case. Between April and July 1971—just 3 months—Stavrev and his team presumably secured whatever authorization was needed from Yugoslav federal authorities in Belgrade, secured Skopje's city assembly approval, sent carefully chosen gifts and arranged a high level delegation visit to Tempe in July. As noted above, Stavrev made the trip, along with the Rector of the University of Kiril and Methodi; Kiril Penušliski, and the head of Mining and Metallurgy, Petar Ivanovski.



Their itinerary—perhaps already set, before Tempe’s invitation added a Phoenix stop—included New York, Washington DC, and Toronto (a city with its own significant Macedonian population, where Rector Penušliski was scheduled to give academic presentations). The film crew accompanying the delegation included Dimitar Kostovski, editor of the information and documentary section, and cameraman Ljubomir Vaglenarov. Slobodan Čašule, the Macedonian journalist, was also listed to as being on the visit.

The itinerary for the visit gives a snapshot of the scale and informality of Tempe at this time. The delegation had an aerial tour of the state; a visit to the Grand Canyon, to Lake Havasu (where London Bridge was under construction), and to a native American community in Tempe. The main welcoming dinner was at Howard Johnson’s restaurant on Apache Avenue, just South of the Arizona State University campus. (Tempeans above 70 recall the location nostalgically as a major meeting point, and perhaps the closest thing to “fine dining” that Tempe boasted at this time). There was horse-riding; another reception at Big Surf; and a lunch on July 12 hosted by ASU President John Schwada, which included faculty leaders in zoology (with particular interest in research possibilities at Lake Ohrid) and civil engineering (acknowledging global recognition of Skopje’s importance for seismology, and innovations in earthquake-resistant architecture). The visit ended with the city council and Sister Cities presenting Stavrev’s delegation with gifts of a Navajo rug, a 1200 year old Saldo Hohokam bowl, and an abstract painting by a contemporary Arizona artist.

It is clear, both from Neuheisel’s recollections and from the subsequent pathway of the Tempe-Skopje relationship, that the visit laid the groundwork for personal rapport, especially between Neuheisel and Stavrev. The record suggests that both men invested substantial energy into forging close ties during and after the visit. In Neuheisel’s case, this included his wholehearted efforts to make up for the loss of Rector Penušliski’s baggage on the trip. Penušliski had to cancel his Toronto lectures as a result, as his notes were in the bags that were lost: the

archival record contains both Neuheisel's pursuit of compensation from the airline, and Penušliski's expressions of gratitude for his efforts.

Neuheisel also sought to build on the potential for ASU and its faculty to contribute to the relationship. He was a lecturer at this time; the University archives report his following up in August 1971 with President Schwada, enlisting economics professor Marvin Jackson as chair of the "university subcommittee of the Tempe Sister City Corporation;" securing from President Schwada a letter of introduction for Jackson to UKiM, and leveraging Jackson's Fulbright-funded travel to Eastern Europe in 1971-2 to have him visit Stavrev to discuss next steps.

Jackson's 1971 visit was followed by Neuheisel leading a delegation in 1972 that included the first "youth ambassadors"—Tempe high school students, who spent 5 weeks with host families in Skopje). In Spring 1973, ASU Vice President V. Alonzo Metcalf met with Rector Stefan Gaber in Skopje and worked out details for a cooperative exchange. From that year onward, along with the high school exchange, UKiM graduate students and faculty traveled to Tempe regularly, and ASU students and faculty to Skopje less regularly, for the next 35 years.

For Dragoljub Stavrev, four years Neuheisel's senior, born in 1932, the Tempe relationship was one small component of a glittering political career. From a conversation with his widow in the summer of 2018, I learned that at the fifty-year jubilee of the University of Skopje faculty of law, he was awarded the prize as the most outstanding graduate. He had collected accolades all along; as an undergraduate, he was editor of the influential magazine—somewhat akin to a Law Review in a US institution—*Studentski Zbor* in 1954-55.<sup>3</sup> He thrived in the communist party, occupying a leadership role in the youth organization after graduation, and then serving as head of the commission responsible for the reconstruction of Skopje after the 1963 earthquake. After his time as head of Skopje's assembly (1969-1974), he served on the Executive

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<sup>3</sup> Oral history interview with Zoran Kostov, conducted in Skopje, Fall 2012. Kostov was a later editor of *Studentski Zbor*, and recalled the intergenerational solidarity that Stavrev expressed.

Committee of the National Party (1974-78), then served as President of the executive council of the Macedonian Assembly (effectively, Prime Minister) from 1982-86, and as President of the Republic of Macedonia from 1986-1988. All of these appointments were within the single-party system of Yugoslavia, where voting was confined to the leadership. Stavrev took part in the very first popular election in Macedonia, as the political system was challenged in the late 1980s. He stood as candidate for Macedonia's representative on the Yugoslav Presidency in 1989, losing to the younger, populist candidate, Vasil Tupurkovski.

Dick Neuheisel's career in politics went less well. He challenged the incumbent, Dale Shumway, in the Mayoral election in 1972. Neuheisel won the 4-person primary comfortably, and as late as early April was tipped to win; he was a savvy and energetic campaigner. A week before the election the *Arizona Republic* published an article reporting on evidence that campaigning had impacted Neuheisel's teaching at ASU. An engineering student had complained to the *State Press*, the student newspaper, that Neuheisel was frequently late to class and unresponsive. Following the lead, the *Republic* reporter Charles Kelly discovered that Neuheisel had been refused merit raises for several years, and review for promotion to associate professor had been delayed.<sup>4</sup> On this basis, the *Arizona Republic* published a highly critical editorial in the Saturday edition a week before the election, which concluded that "his failure to fulfill basic obligations in one position of public trust is not a good omen for his performance in another office which so heavily influences the welfare of citizen's in the Valley's fastest growing city." Neuheisel led in initial returns, and in shades of the infamous "Dewey Wins!" headline, the *Arizona Republic* published a story in an early edition that he had won.<sup>5</sup> But the full count gave Shumway the election, on the first count, by 20 votes on approximately 10,000 ballots, a turnout

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<sup>4</sup> "ASU Skips Promotion for Prof running for mayor of Tempe" Charles Kelly, *Arizona Republic*, Friday April 28 1972: 15; "Neuheisel Breaks Faith". *Arizona Republic*. Saturday April 29 1972: 6.

<sup>5</sup> "Neuheisel Wins in Tempe," Charles B. Kelly. *Arizona Republic* Wednesday May 10 1972: 7.

of around 48%. Neuheisel sought a recount and then pursued legal complaints before eventually conceding—in the end, he lost by 7 votes. By running for Mayor, he sacrificed his Council seat. He also ended his connection with ASU before running again as for Mayor in 1974. Although endorsed by Shumway, Neuheisel lost the April election to the sitting vice-mayor, Bill LoPiano by a count of 4,591 to 3,360.<sup>6</sup>

Neuheisel did not run again for council or for mayor. He threw his energies into his legal career and to the Sister Cities movement, expanding Tempe's activities and also winning election as President of Sister Cities International in 1981. In conventional politics, he threw his support behind his ally on the Tempe Council, Harry Mitchell. Mitchell was a teacher at Tempe High School, and worked closely with Neuheisel and Virginia Thompson to establish Tempe Sister Cities. Mitchell was elected Tempe Mayor in 1978, winning re-election 6 times before stepping down in 1994. He was elected as Democrat to the State Senate in 1998 and to the US Congress in 2006, losing in 2010.

### **Cold War and Domestic Politics**

As told in Tempe, the Sister City relationship with Skopje owes its existence to Dick Neuheisel's enthusiasm and investment. In a short interview conducted in July 2018, he attributed his international outlook to the influence of his high school teachers in Wisconsin. It seems clear he had political ambitions as well—in his own words, he wanted to do more as a city council member than just maintain the status quo, and settle issues related to garbage collection, zoning and the like. The idea of creating a brand for Tempe; of responding to the challenge set out in San Diego, by Assistant Secretary of State Richardson; and playing host to international visitors, and expanding his own social networks, were all clearly personally important. It also seems clear that Neuheisel and

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<sup>6</sup> "Tempe candidate's record attacked;" Arizona Republic, Thursday March 21 1974: B8;

Stavrev established rapport—they were both, by all accounts, warm, thoughtful people with big ideas, who saw the future in expansive terms. In his write-up from his 1971 visit to Skopje, Marvin Jackson reports that Stavrev reiterated that the ASU- UKiM relationship could be the cornerstone of the Sister City Program, and suggested that as well as people, the cities begin exchanging films and TV tapes. It was likely on the impetus of Stavrev that Skopje University Rector Stefan Gaber visited Tempe in November 1973, to sign an agreement on graduate student exchange.<sup>7</sup>

But the exchange also had other forces working in its favor besides charismatic, energetic leaders. Dick Neuheisel has consistently emphasized the importance of his conversation with John Richardson Jr, the State Department representative, in San Diego. After his retirement, Richardson recorded an extensive oral history interview, reporting on his role as a Cold Warrior in the 1950s and 1960s, working closely with the CIA. After initial contact with Hungarian emigres after 1956—and a far-fetched plan to parachute bazookas into Hungary to help take out Russian tanks—he transferred his energies to the exercise of “soft power”—medical aid to Poland, and the establishment of Radio Free Europe with CIA funds.<sup>8</sup>

Eisenhower’s “People to People” initiative, launched in 1956—the origin of the citizen-diplomacy movement that would expand to include the sister cities idea—can be viewed as marking a similar progression. Whatever President Eisenhower’s beliefs and rhetoric about peace and understanding, it is clear that US intelligence agencies saw civic voluntarism as a resource that could be tapped—and arguably, weaponized. Guy Coriden, another State Department representative with whom Dick Neuheisel corresponded regularly, had also worked for the

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<sup>7</sup> Records related to Arizona State University’s engagement with Skopje in the 1970s are in ASU’s archives. The most detailed record of the communications between 1971 and 1975 are in MSS-125 (Office of the President) Box 21 Folder 9:320. Additional materials are in Box 38 Folder 7:1000 Miscellaneous; and in MSS 98 (University records) Box 81, Folder 3.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Richardson,%20John%20Jr.toc.pdf>; accessed March 2019.

CIA in the 1950s, before transitioning to the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in 1962. In an oral history interview, he recalled that "The Bureau was starting into a Soviet and Eastern European program and they didn't have anybody on board, I was told, who knew much about the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I was presumed to since I had worked on them in CIA. I was a Deputy Director and headed up that Soviet and Eastern European program."<sup>9</sup>

The archival trail assembled and deposited at the Tempe History Museum by Virginia Thompson has no counterpart on the Macedonian side. The relationship is still managed directly by Skopje City employees; the current staff have preserved records from the 2000s (although original faxes—part of that record—have now faded to illegibility), but report that they did not inherit any archival record from their predecessors. Reconstructing the Yugoslav, and Macedonian side of the origin story, then, must rely on other traces.

The scrapbook deposited by Virginia Thompson in the Tempe Historical museum does include a photograph of the Mayor of Maribor (in Slovenia) in the Neuheisels' home in Spring 1971—while Skopje's decision-making was going on. This recorded event—which did not trigger any specific memory for Dick Neuheisel in our interview—can be interpreted in different ways. It may point to competition among Yugoslav Mayors or city councilors to embark on citizen-diplomacy; it may indicate that Tito or the central communist party, initiated a "charm offensive" toward the United States at this time; or it may, of course, simply be coincidence. The timing of the Tempe-Skopje courtship—apparently compressed into the period August 1970 to March 1971—aligns with track-one efforts between Tito and Nixon. Nixon was the first American President to visit post-war Yugoslavia (September 30, 1970 – that is, a month after Richardson advocated for a Yugoslav sister city relationship in San Diego). Also in preparation at this point was the switch in U.S. policy toward China, which included Kissinger's secret

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Coriden,%20Guy%20E.%20Jr.toc.pdf>; accessed March 2019.

visit to Beijing in July 1971, and ended with the U.S. leading the call to expel the Taiwan government, transforming the security council. Tito then visited Nixon in October 1971: both Tempe Mayor Shumway and Councilman Neuheisel were part of the reception dinner in Washington DC; Mrs. Shumway also attended.<sup>10</sup>

In a conversation in summer 2018, Elena Stavreva, Dragoljub Stavrev's widow, did not recall the factors that drove her husband to embrace the overture from Tempe, persuade the City Assembly to accept it, and then quickly orchestrate the delegation visit to the United States.<sup>11</sup> She did recall that during the work of Skopje's post-earthquake reconstruction, Stavrev got to know U.S. Diplomat Lawrence Eagleburger well. Eagleburger was at that time stationed in Belgrade, and earned the nickname "Lawrence of Macedonia" for his role coordinating U.S. assistance to the city, as part of the larger international efforts. He was working directly for Henry Kissinger in 1969. Mrs. Stavreva believed that he may have played a role in steering Skopje's candidacy as a Yugoslav sister city.

Yugoslav and U.S. authorities were also dealing with the aftermath of the civic unrest of 1968. Part of Neuheisel's rhetoric around the Sister City partnership, and especially the focus on youth exchange, was an emphasis on the value for intergenerational relations, of providing youth with an opportunity to show and develop their responsibility and leadership.

The decision to participate in exchange with a communist country attracted suspicion and criticism; one example is a letter from Tempe resident Dorothy Capps, who wrote to Shumway after his visit to Washington, to state "To be a part of anything honoring the Communist enemy of our nation while they are even now trying to bring about our

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<sup>10</sup> "Tempe mayor and wife attend lunch for Tito," Republic Washington Bureau, Arizona Republic, 29 October 1971: 4. Dick Neuheisel recalled his own presence at the lunch in an oral history interview conducted summer 2018.

<sup>11</sup> My conversation with Elena Stavreva was arranged by Simon Sazdov, an alumnus of the exchange program who is now a professor of English at UKiM.

destruction, casts an unpatriotic shadow on our lovely town of Tempe.”<sup>12</sup> The selection of Skopje, so recently in world news as a site of international collaboration, and as a place requiring assistance, was perhaps intended to avert or defuse such criticism.

The domestic politics of Macedonia at this point in time are less well documented. In an unpublished paper, Macedonian historian Irena Stefoska has explored the particular significance in the period 1968-1972 of *Fokus*, a critical journal of the arts that was launched by a group of young intellectuals and artists based in Skopje (Stefoska n.d.). They did so, according to Stefoska's research, with the financial support of the City Council: the funding was approved by Stavrev, and the main editor, Aljoshka Rusi, became a member of the Youth Presidency. Through her analysis of the critical commentaries of the ruling elites that Fokus offered, Stefoska suggests we can see this period as a precursor to the “coup” at the youth newspaper *Mlad Borec* in the late 1980s, whereby a party-sponsored journal became a vehicle for political change. In the case of *Fokus*, the experiment was cut short in January 1972, when the last print run was destroyed—presumably in the orders of the Skopje authorities.

1968 was also the year of less well-known acts of defiance of the status quo in Macedonia. There were riots in Tetovo, linked to concerns among Albanians about their rights in federal Yugoslavia. In the course of her research in the late 1990s on urban Muslim identity in Macedonia, Burcu Akan established that the police crackdown in 1968 played a part in the political awakening of the more radical Albanian politicians who gained prominence after the breakup of Yugoslavia (Akan 2003). There were also clashes between police and citizens in the village of Vevčani—in that case prompted by a sense that ideals of local self-government and collective organization were under threat from the entanglement of the party in decision-making. In the Vevčani case, the flashpoint was an attempt by Struga authorities to appropriate medical equipment from the

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from Dorothy Capps to Mayor Shumway, dated October 27 1971. TSC Scrapbook “History 1968-73). Tempe History Museum, Catalogue # 2008.62.41. Collection from Virginia Thompson: Location 3E8-B.



community, to use elsewhere. Finally, the late 1960s also mark a critical power struggle in Macedonia between Krste Crvenkovski, generally perceived as more liberal and supportive of efforts to reform federal Yugoslavia, and Lazar Koliševski, considered more “hardline” communist.

Emphasizing these political and politicized aspects of the Sister City relationship, of course, rubs against the rhetoric of “people-to-people” diplomacy pioneered by President Eisenhower, and embraced by civic leaders like Dick Neuheisel. I do not mean to suggest that Neuheisel, or Stavrev, or both, were pawns in a larger game being played out by national leaders. However, these elements of larger history—international and domestic—are clearly part of the origin story of the Tempe-Skopje connection. They show that the alignment of personalities, programs and interests at the national level was either actively supportive (in the United States) or at least non-obstructive (in Yugoslavia); and also that the background and expertise of key decision-makers contributed to the local success. Again, this is not to discount the importance of the time and energy invested by civic leaders in Tempe—it would not have happened without that. But it does serve as reminder that under other circumstances, that time and energy might not yield the same outcome.

The third frame of interpretation—focusing on the dynamics of the initial delegation’s visit, and also the experience of individual participants in the subsequent exchanges—offers a way to sidestep the potential friction between the focus on individual initiative and political context. It offers an opportunity to lift up a chorus of voices and perspectives: to treat this protracted encounter between communities as a site of learning and growth which escapes, eludes or exceeds the expectations or aspirations which informed the program’s creation. It is in these stories that the proof of concept can be tested; and which inform observers or analysts on the substance and sustainability of initiatives like this, as well as their broader impact.

With regard to the initial 1971 delegation visit by Dragoljub Stavrev and the Skopje delegation, for example, the newspaper coverage, combined with Virginia Thompson's careful archival work, reveals how much has changed in the past fifty years. International communication and contact is much swifter and less costly than in 1971; and the range of opportunities open to Tempe or Skopje teenagers much wider. Quite apart from anything else, the mere fact that Tempe Sister Cities expanded to include other cities changed the status of the Skopje partnership; people involved in the Skopje program report a sense of disappointment or reduced standing when the Neuheisel and Mitchell children went to Regensburg, Tempe's new sister city, instead of Skopje.<sup>13</sup>

However, that does not alter the life-changing impact of participation for Macedonian teenagers. Simon Sazdov—whose mother worked as chief of protocol in the Mayor's office in Skopje from 1972 until the mid 1990s—recalls, for example an encounter in Tempe that significantly expanded his horizons. One evening he and his Tempe host, or “brother,” were out in his host's car. They had parked and were talking; a police cruiser pulled up next to them, and the officer asked his host—in the driver's seat—if everything was OK. He responded yes. The officer then looked over at Simon—who was younger and smaller than his Tempe counterpart—and asked him the same question. Simon remembers this moment as a kind of revelation, that in the United States at least, police officers took seriously a duty of care toward all.

Milčo Mančevski, who took part in the exchange in 1977, recalls a different kind of cultural learning. He took on the role of head of the communist party section at his high school in part because his predecessor let him know it would put him in line to be chosen for the

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<sup>13</sup> The reported sense of grievance appears to derive from a misunderstanding. On the Tempe side, leaders in the Sister Cities organization were sensitive to any perceptions that their children had an advantage in selection, and in at least one case, avoided charges of nepotism by choosing to have one son travel to Regensburg as part of a school exchange trip, rather than as a TSC delegate (Mark Mitchell, personal communication). In Macedonia, the offspring of city employees involved in administering the exchange were often viewed as the best representatives of the city, and selected for that reason.

exchange—a dimension of the process that the Tempe association chose not to foreground when they spoke to the press, for obvious reasons. In an interview in 1981, Dick Neuheisel recalled Mančevski having a “chip on his shoulder,” and offering a lot of criticism of the US capitalist system.<sup>14</sup> Mančevski wrote up an account of his stay for the Youth Magazine *Politika Zdravo!* which appeared in the March 1978 issue, under the headline “Yugoslavia is in Asia.” Mančevski devoted particular attention to the cultural differences he witnessed between high school life in Yugoslavia and the United States. His sense was that American high schools offered credit for a wide range of activities (including for example guitar, cooking, and billiards) but that the level of general education was lower: besides meeting counterparts who did not know Yugoslavia’s geographical location (hence the title), he was also surprised that some of them had no idea who Ernest Hemingway was. He also noted that the kinds of generalized sociability and socialization that were so much a part of growing up in Skopje—including the Italian-style korzo in the city center, where you can count on running into most of your schoolmates—American kids and families seemed more closed off and insular. He reserved time to dwell on the cultural novelty of “pom-pom girls” for Yugoslav ideals of gender equality.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> ‘Lawyer to head sister city group’ Bruce Trethewy, *Tempe Daily News*, 28 August 1981.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Jugoslavija je u Aziji’ Milčo Mančevski, *Politika Zdravo!*, 49, 30 March 1978.



*Photograph of Milčo Mančevski (right) with his Tempe hot family, published in Politika Zdravo! 1972. Reproduced with permission from Milčo Mančevski's personal archive.*

Mančevski's published commentary, as well as his own recollection of himself, are in line with Neuheisel's assessment of his attitude. It is a reminder of the asymmetry in the relationship. Skopje's standing within Macedonia, a constituent Republic within Yugoslavia, was different from Tempe's status relative to Phoenix, and to Arizona. Skopje had already twinned with cities elsewhere in Europe, including Bradford in the United Kingdom; although the city was in the throes of reconstruction in the wake of the 1963 earthquake, that event had also focused the world's attention and energy. The documentary film *Skopje '63* was seen and reviewed around the world. And the country and its citizens also laid claim to deep cultural roots, manifested in the choice of a reproduction of a 600-year old fresco painting as a gift to Tempe on its centenary celebration. Skopje's high school delegates were rich in what sociologists, following Pierre Bourdieu, term cultural and social capital.

Although their material conditions—and in particular the square footage of their homes—were relatively modest, this reflected not poverty or backwardness, but rather a different set of priorities and investments. These were, as observed above, viewed as dangerous or polluting to some citizens of Arizona; in particular, it turned out, members of heritage communities who perceived Tito’s regime as illegitimate, and who feared that rapprochement with Yugoslavia heralded amnesia about the violence of Tito’s partisans against its domestic enemies during the Yugoslav civil war.

Mančevski—as Neuheisel proudly noted in that 1981 article—changed his attitude. Back in Skopje, he began attending events held at the U.S. cultural center in Skopje. At one of these, he met a film professor from the University of Illinois in Carbondale; he applied and was accepted for undergraduate study there, and went on to a successful career as an independent film-maker. Simon Sazdov, meanwhile, pursued graduate study in English, and is now a professor in English at the University of Kiril and Methodi in Skopje. They are two examples of the enduring impact of the program on participants; both proudly Macedonian and also cosmopolitan in their outlook.

In 2018, Dick Neuheisel delivered the closing address to that year’s 57 high school delegates from Tempe and nine of its eleven sister cities. In his 49<sup>th</sup> year as President of the Association, Neuheisel reiterated the mission of the program—to build relationships, one handshake at a time. As the first of these relationships—with Skopje—approaches fifty years old, Neuheisel’s continued, prominent role in the organization underlies a continuous pull toward the first narrative frame outlined here—of individual enterprise and energy.

What this paper represents is an initial attempt to open up the broader significance of the Tempe-Skopje relationship, the forces that made it possible, and the experiences that have sustained it. By introducing discussion of the particular opportunities and incentives posed by international and domestic politics, and recalling some of the points of cross-cultural misunderstanding or revelation that participants have experienced, the goal is to highlight the value of microhistory as a

means to comprehend larger themes in US-Yugoslav relations during the Cold War.

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