

# INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

With the Constitution of 1991 in Macedonia were confirmed: the sovereignty, the independence, the territorial integrity, the democratic establishment, and the unitarity of the state. With the Constitution was established that the sovereignty derives from the citizens and belongs to the citizens.

With it, the representatives of the nationalities were guaranteed development of their own identity and of their national specifics. Also, was guaranteed the protection of the ethnic, cultural, language and religious identities.

However, the parties of the nationalities and the ethnic groups were not satisfied with the Constitution and requested its change. Especially with own proposals for changes came out the parties of the Albanians in Macedonia. Not finding understanding for their requests in the institutions of the system, they assumed non-institutional solutions in order to draw the attention. In January 1992 the Albanians in Macedonia had organized a referendum at which they declared themselves for forming of "*political and territorial autonomy of the Albanians in Macedonia*".

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## Census of the population in R. Macedonia

	1991	1994
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 033 964</b>	<b>2 075 196</b>
Macedonians	1 328 187	1 378 687
Albanians	441 987	478 967
Turks	77 080	81 615
Roma	52 103	47 408
Vlachs	7 763	8 574
Serbs	42 775	39 866
Others	84 068	40 079

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## CONSTITUTION OF REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA 1991

### Article 7

The Macedonian language, written using its Cyrillic alphabet is the official language in Republic of Macedonia.

In the units of the local self-government in which as a majority live the members of the nationalities, in official use, besides the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet, are the language and the alphabet of the nationalities, in accordance with the law.

### Article 48

Members of nationalities have the right freely to express, foster and develop their identity and national attributes. The Republic guarantees the protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the nationalities. Members of the nationalities have the right to establish institutions for culture and art, as well as science and other associations for the expression, fostering, and development of their identity.

Members of the nationalities have the right to instruction in their language in primary and secondary education, as determined by law. In schools where education is carried out in the language of a nationality, the Macedonian language is also studied.

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## Petition of citizens

Yesterday in the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia was delivered a petition by citizens from Tetovo and the surrounding villages. Among other issues, in the petition is said that they oppose the Referendum for political autonomy of Western Macedonia, that is prepared by some Albanian chauvinists, enemies of the Macedonian state, which, abusing of democracy, wish to create "dark days for all of Macedonia".

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## Referendum of the Albanians in Macedonia

The President of the illegitimate assembly for political and territorial autonomy of the Albanians in Macedonia, Gulijaz Fejzulai had pointed out that the announcing of the Referendum is because of the fact that after the first multiparty democratic elections, the Albanian people had not received their legitimate rights, because it was prevented by the Macedonian government. That is why on the 27<sup>th</sup> of last month was formed the assembly which enables the Albanians to freely express their will.

*Daily newspaper "Nova Makedonija", 15.01.1992*



## How were the inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia developing?

In addition, the Turks, the Vlachs, the Serbs, and Romas in Macedonia had formed their own political parties and strived for bigger affirmation of their national and cultural rights.

In Macedonia was created a political climate for separation of the ethnical communities on political grounds. Besides, the voters always opted for the political option that comes from their own ethnical community.



*Are the parties choosing our friends?*



*Macedonians and Albanians in front of the village shop*

### 5 Which are the requests of PDP, NDP and of the fraction Thachi- Xaferi?

- Status of people for the Albanians in Macedonia and their nation-building position; constituting of Macedonia as a multinational country.
- Federalization of Macedonia; Assembly with two houses; decentralization.
- Discontent with the position in all degrees of education.
- Forming of an integrated education system in Albanian language.
- Albanian university in Tetovo; for this academic year with instruction at six faculties.
- Discontent with the participation in the state administration, in the superiors' compound in ARM, MVR (Ministry of Internal Affairs) and in diplomacy.
- Insufficient cultural, scientific, intellectual, information space.
- Non-representation of the Albanians in the cultural manifestations and festivals.
- Request for autonomy and abandoning of the institutions of the system.
- Historical political agreement between the Macedonians and the Albanians.

### What does the Democratic Party of the Serbs request?

- It is requested from the Assembly, the Government, and the President a change of the Constitution of Macedonia in order to resolve the legal status of the Serbs in Macedonia and their equality with the other nationalities
- Change of the election laws in order to enable the Serbs to have their representative in the Assembly.
- Forming of church municipalities in seven regions in Macedonia and religious service in Serbian language and forming of a diocese of a metropolitan in Skopje by the Serbian Orthodox Church.
- Forming of a theater, cultural and educational society in Serbian language.
- Forming of secondary schools for the children of the Serbs.
- Governmental help for printing of a weekly newspaper.
- TV and radio programs in Serbian language.
- Serbian reading-room and libraries in Kumanovo and Skopje.
- Forming of a fond for protection of the monuments of culture and the historical events of the Serbian people in these areas and especially protection of the monument Zebrenjak.

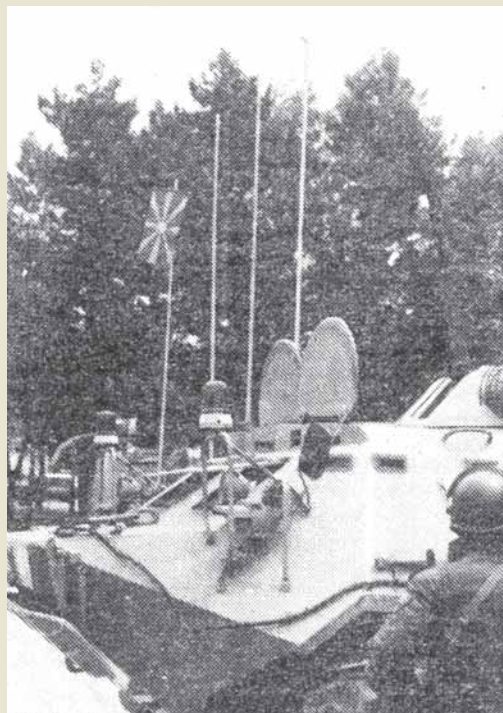
### What will the Democratic Party of the Turks initiate?

- Change of the election laws in order to enable the Turkish nationality to have its representative in the Assembly.
- Solving of the present problems in the education of the children of Turkish nationality – elementary, secondary (increasing of the number of grades, improvement of the teaching conditions in the schools).
- Expanding of the cultural, scientific and informative conditions for materialization of the national identity of the Turks in Macedonia (expanding of the radio and TV programs, transformation of "Birlik" into a daily newspaper..).
- Representation of Turkish personnel in the state institutions and at managerial positions in the public enterprises

*Magazine "Puls", 04.11.1994*

The Government of Republic of Macedonia rejected the requests of the Albanian parties for forming of a university. As a result of that, in December 1994 was opened, in secret, the University in the village in Mala Rechica near Tetovo.

In 1997 because of the usage of the Albanian national flag (which in the same time is the flag of Republic of Albania) in front of the premises of the municipal assemblies in Gostivar and Tetovo the police of Republic of Macedonia had intervened. During this, there were human victims and arrests of the participants in the events.



*Police intervention in Gostivar*

## Gostivar events

*Zoran Verushevski, spokesperson of MOI (Ministry of Internal Affairs):*

MOI of Republic of Macedonia yesterday, in the morning hours, had undertaken activities for removal of the illegally placed flags in front of the Councils of the municipalities Gostivar and Tetovo. The sole act of bringing down of the flags had passed without bigger incidents. In the morning, around 8 o'clock, a bigger group of citizens in front of the Council of the municipality Gostivar had acted aggressively against the members of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, during which three police officers were heavily injured.

PDP condemns the acting and the entrance of the police forces in the seats of the municipalities Tetovo and Gostivar as being inconsiderate and provocative and condemns the vandal behavior manifested by them when they brought down the flags in these two municipalities.

*Daily newspaper "Nova Makedonija", 10.07.1997*

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## The Embassy of USA on the Gostivar events

The Embassy of USA expresses deep regret for the victims and the injured that resulted from the Gostivar events. We use this opportunity to repeat the statement of the spokesperson of the State Department of 9<sup>th</sup> of March 1997, in which it is said that USA strongly maintains the territorial integrity and democratic development of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which represents the basic elements for the stability in the region. We are calling upon all the citizens and political parties to work within the existent legal and political structures and to solve the issues of interest through peaceful and democratic means.

*Magazine "Puls", 11<sup>th</sup> of June 1997*

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## FELLOW-VILLAGERS

... Ramadani says that in this area everyone is migrant worker, everyone was somewhere in the world and had gained habits for cultural behavior, and so, primitivism and provocations are not characteristic for these people. On the contrary, when we watch the rude disputes in the Assembly, we are simply embarrassed by the level of some of the discussions and the culture of some of the members of parliament. The separations and the index-pointing should stop, the separation of **they and us**. That leads nowhere; it just makes tensions in the relations and torments the common people that have a bunch of everyday problems. Now, for instance, for us in Kamenjane (Tetovo area) a big problem is the oil for the agricultural machinery.

... Stojanovski says that the democracy and the parties had made the inter-ethnic relations very tensed, however, until now at least in Dolno Sedlarci (Tetovo region) and the surrounding villages there never were inter-ethnic conflicts. The villages live separately, and the lives of the Macedonians and the Albanians unfold separately too.

... Arifi and Zilali say that we should continue attending each other's weddings, celebrations, as we did before, we must keep the friendly relations. I believe, Arifi says, that the political parties do not choose friends, we choose our own friends and we are the ones to decide with whom and how we are going to live.

... As the Macedonians in Chelopek say, the inhabitants of the Albanian minority must first understand that they live in the state Macedonia and that official language is the Macedonian language, and than that this state is also theirs, although they didn't vote at the Referendum, had not voted for the Constitution and did not participate in the census of the population. That, as they told us, in biggest measure estranged the relations and had brought to the present very tensed situation in Western Macedonia.

*Daily newspaper "Nova Makedonija", 03.05.1992*

## One Isamid and one Vasko

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Fifteen questions for one, and the same one for the other. The answers are different, but full with life and simplicity. This text represents a short course in cohabitation relieved from the big politics and the great politicians. The main word is given to one Isamid and one Vasko. They are completely anonymous people, they do not know each other, and the interviews are made in different space and time.

Ø **Are there Macedonians in your company?**

**Isamid:** No, at the moment I am in Tetovo and I feel separation. The Albanians are separated from the Macedonians and there is no exchange of opinions.

Ø **Are there Albanians in your company?**

**Vasko:** In my company, we have one Albanian. Actually, he is my childhood friend, his name is Iso and we don't have taboo topics.

Ø **How would you react if tomorrow your daughter would marry a Macedonian?**

**Isamid:** My children would have unlimited rights, but they will be raised in such manner not to mix the nation. I would like my grandchildren to remain to be Albanians, but always to respect the others and to love their neighbors. Still, we can not interfere with love, because I have been also in love with a Macedonian woman, and my father was powerless to do anything against our love.

Ø **How would you react if tomorrow your daughter would marry an Albanian?**

**Vasko:** How would I react? I would not have anything against it, but my children will be raised to think as they should. Through this upbringing, they will be able to assess by themselves if something should or should not happen. The changing of religions brings to complicating of the relations in the family...

Ø **Do you go for a visit at your neighbors Macedonians during Easter?**

**Isamid:** No. I congratulate all the Macedonians that I know when I meet them at the street, in the neighborhood. Even once, I congratulated some Macedonians in a train, while we were traveling...

Ø **Do you go for a visit at your neighbors Albanians during Ramadan or Bayram?**

**Vasko:** Yes, I go to visit my friend Iso during these holidays. I go out of respect, as he comes at my place during Easter.

Ø **What do you think about Christianity?**

**Isamid:** Religion has universal values. Amongst any people there are good and bad people. The bad people do not respect the system of religious laws and that is not good. Otherwise, Islam and Christianity have many things in common.

Ø **What do you think about Islam?**

**Vasko:** Every faith has its good and bad sides. I do not know and I do not want to answer to this question more than this.

Ø **What innerves you about Macedonians?**

**Isamid:** As a nation nothing, but as government that does not know how and does not manage to solve the problems...well, they innerve me. I am innerved also by certain Macedonian media, which through some Bolsheviks create national nervousness for me.

Ø **What innerves you about Albanians?**

**Vasko:** There are some things in which they exaggerate. Most of all political. You know, if there is supposed to remain some kind of cohabitation, there must be some limits of good behavior, until where to go and why. I am innerved also that whenever you meet some Albanian, it looks as political. He regards you like that and vice versa.

Ø **How would you define cohabitation?**

**Isamid:** You want in Montenegrin (language)? Until I watch out for you from me, I would watch myself from you.

**Vasko:** All the people in one country have the same rights. At this moment, all the nationalities in Macedonia have the necessary rights as in all the democratic countries of the world.

Isamid and Vasko will meet through the pages of this newspaper. They will be able to see how distant and how close they are. I wonder, will they ever wish to see each other, to talk, to become friends, to help each other in trouble? If they do that, this "short course in cohabitation" will have an effect. On the contrary, everything will remain the same! What do you think, which option will they choose?



1. Why did the Albanians in Macedonia organize their own referendum?
2. How did the Gostivar events reflect on the inter-ethnic relations?
3. What is common in the requests of the parties of the nationalities? (doc. 7)
4. How did the political events reflect on everyday life? (doc. 8 and 9)



Make an interview with your parents on the topic: *The inter-ethnic relations before and after 1990*. Indicate the similarities and the differences.