

POLITICAL THOUGHT

YEAR 18, NUMBER 60, NOVEMBER, SKOPJE 2020

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IS EASTERN EUROPE THE FUTURE OF AMERICA?

THE MACEDONIAN
CULTURAL SPACE
WITHIN THE
EUROPEAN ONE

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FROM THE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM TO PARTY PLURALISM: THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MACEDONIAN PARTY SYSTEM IN THE MIRROR OF THE IDEOLOGICAL PROFILES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE FIRST REGISTERED PARTIES

POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to shed some light on the ideological profile and programme of some of the parties that were the first to be registered, based on a defined set of criteria.

The objective of the present analysis is to determine the main features of the Macedonian party system, starting from the time of the one-party system, against the background of the political circumstances in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia (SRM) on the eve of the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), until the introduction of political and party pluralism with the adoption of the Constitution of the independent Republic of Macedonia in November 1991.

In the SRM of the late 1980s, just before the processes of political pluralisation began, the sole political entity to hold the monopoly over politics and the institutions was the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), i.e. its units in the Federal Republics of the SFRY. In the SRM, political power was in the hands of the League of Communists of Macedonia (LCM), which was part of the LCY. The events in the most liberal Republic of the SFRY had a special impact on the processes of pluralisation: in Slovenia, alternative political movements and organisations had been forming already in the early 1980s, inspired by the wave of liberalisation and democratisation that had seized the Eastern European countries, especially Hungary and Poland. What was happening in Slovenia at that time and would spill over to the other Republics of the SFRY is referred to as the “Slovenian syndrome”. The impact of this “syndrome” on further accelerating the democratisation processes in the SRM was huge.

In the late 1980ies and early 1990ies, when no procedure for registering parties as legal entities existed, various initiatives that pursued political goals were established. Most of them called themselves “movements”, such as the Movement for All-Macedonian Action, or “leagues”, such as the League for Democracy. Those political associations are likely to have deliberately chosen to avoid the use of the word “party”, fearing negative reactions from the socialist institutions, since the sole legitimate political entity was still the League of Communists of Macedonia. In the other Republics of the SFRY, the processes towards political pluralism and democratic openness developed similarly.

The process of political pluralisation and the transformation of the party system in the SRM were initiated by the adoption of the following legislative decrees:

- › the Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on Citizen Organisations and Associations on 13 April 1990;¹

¹ *Law on Changes and Amendments to the Law on Citizen Organisations and Associations*, Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, XLVI, No. 12, Skopje, 13.4.1990, p. 237-239.

- › the Amendments to the Constitution of the SRM of 1974 on 21 September 1990,² and
- › the Law on Elections and the Dismissal of Members of Parliament and Committee Members on 21 September 1990.³

By means of legal transformation of the political conditions, the necessary institutional foundation for establishing party pluralism was created. Now that the legal⁴ and political conditions were provided, 23 political parties were founded during the year 1990, with their positions representing the entire ideological and political array, from the left to the right.

Apart from ideological diversity, from the very beginning of Macedonia's process of becoming independent, the main feature of the party system was explicit ethnic differentiation, leading to the formation of purely mono-ethnic political parties.

Table No 1: LIST OF POLITICAL PARTIES FOUNDED IN 1990⁵

No	Party	Founding date
1	Movement for All-Macedonian Action	4.2.1990
2	League for Democracy	11.2.1990
3	Party of Macedonian Workers' Unity	4.3.1990
4	Social Democratic Party of Macedonia	18.3.1990
5	Peoples' Party of Macedonia	12.4.1990
6	Party for Democratic Prosperity	15.4.1990
7	Democratic Union – Peasants' Party	15.4.1990
8	National Democratic Party	23.4.1990
9	Christian Democratic Party of Macedonia	9.6.1990
10	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE)	17.6.1990
11	Labour Party	24.6.1990
12	League of Communists of Macedonia – Party for Democratic Change	3.7.1990
13	Young Democratic Progressive Party	12.7.1990
14	Socialist Party of Macedonia	13.7.1990
15	Human Rights Party	20.7.1990
16	Party of Yugoslavs in Macedonia	26.5.1990

2 Decree to promulgate Amendments LVII - LXXXI to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Amendments to the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, XLVI, No. 28, Skopje, 21.9.1990, p. 506-511.

3 Law on Elections and the Dismissal of Members of Parliament and Committee Members, Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, XLVI, No. 28, Skopje, 21.9.1990, p. 513-519.

4 The chronological order shows that introducing political pluralism into the SRM did not start from amendments to the Constitution, but from a change in legislation. The basic principle of subordination of lower to higher legal provisions was not respected, i.e. instead of the law being brought into compliance with the constitution, the constitution was amended to comply with the previously adopted legal amendments, with which the monopoly of the ruling LCM was abolished and founding additional parties was allowed. However, during that time, Macedonia was haunted by an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear, whereas conflicts in the other parts of the SFRY were getting more dramatic while the state was falling apart. In the Eastern Bloc, meanwhile, the process of democratic changes and velvet revolutions was in full swing. The order of legislative changes in Macedonia might well have been influenced by those events.

5 Cane Mojanoski, *Letopis na makedonskata demokratija*, Pakung, Skopje, 2000, p. 16-17.

17	Party for the Full Emancipation of the Roma	12.8.1990
18	Political Party of the Unemployed	12.9.1990
19	Agrarian Labour Party	15.9.1990
20	Democratic Union of Turks	22.9.1990
21	Union of Reform Forces of Macedonia	5.9.1990
22	Democratic Union of Education Workers	15.11.1990
23	Balkan Federation – Balkans Without Borders	15.12.1990

THE IDEOLOGICAL PROFILE AND PROGRAMME OF THE FIRST REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

In the following, I would like to analyse the ideological postulates and programmes of the following six out of the 23 registered parties:

- › the Movement for All-Macedonian Action (MAAK)
- › the League for Democracy (LD);
- › the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP);
- › the Party of Yugoslavs in Macedonia (SJM);
- › the League of Communists of Macedonia – Party for Democratic Change (SKM-PDP); and
- › the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE).

The choice of these six political entities derives from the goal to define their programmatic and ideological postulates based on the following aspects:

- › MAAK and LD were the first two parties to register;
- › PDP is an example of the parties of the ethnic communities;
- › SJM is an example of the parties that advocated a continuation of the status quo;
- › today, SDSM (successor party of the SKM-PDP) and VMRO-DPMNE are the two largest parties in the Republic of North Macedonia.

These characteristics will allow us to paint a comprehensive picture of the Macedonian party system in the early 1990s.

The ideological and programmatic postulates of the parties to be analysed are best defined by their attitude with regard to the following five key issues:

- › the status of the SRM;
- › the setup of the state;
- › inter-ethnic relations;
- › the economic system in the state; and
- › international relations.

The programmes of the six parties contain a wide range of topics, while not all of them are equally elaborated. The five issues listed above are, however, the most important under the viewpoint that the parties' approaches at them allow us to quite accurately determine their positions towards the processes of democratic transformation – the goal projected against the background of the socialist one-party system that was the status quo inherited from the SFRY.

1.1. The Movement for All-Macedonian Action (MAAK)

The founding assembly of the Movement for All-Macedonian Action (MAAK) was held on 4.2.1990 in Skopje, going down in recent Macedonian history as the first political party founded under the circumstances of political pluralism.

The party was officially registered on 12.6.1990.

In its statute, the party defines itself as **“a movement and a patriotic party of all Macedonians and all citizens of Macedonia, regardless of their social, national and religious affiliation.”**⁶

Concerning the status of the SRM, MAAK was committed to **“a free, independent and sovereign state of Macedonia”** with **“all features of a legitimate and independent state”**. They argued that their position was legitimate because it was based on **“every people's inalienable right to self-determination”**, according to which **“the Macedonian people may not be hurled into a game with the purpose to create a new Yugoslavia”**. Therefore, the only possible solution, according to MAAK, was **“for the sovereign and independent states that the peoples of Yugoslavia will establish to be in some way mutually associated”**.

With regard to Macedonia's setup, MAAK **was not content with only the “part of Vardar Macedonia” becoming a state of its own**. Namely, they claimed that the **Treaty of Bucharest, which sanctioned the split-up of Macedonia, “bringing national catastrophe and division upon Macedonia”, was illegitimate, because it was signed by Macedonia's occupants. Therefore, MAAK was committed to taking this issue before the “competent UN institutions”. The party also pledged to defend the rights of the Macedonians “from Aegean and Pirin Macedonia”.**

MAAK advocated for the SRM to be set up as a **“parliamentary republic”** in which **“political pluralism”** would be implemented, and the principle of **“separation of**

⁶ Vlado Timovski, Svetlo Stefanovski, *Političke partii vo Makedonija, Politička programa na Dviženjeto za semakedonska akcija - MAAK*, 1990, Skopje, p. 79 – 101.

powers” would be inaugurated. Those principles should be laid at the core of the **“new Constitution”** of the new independent Macedonian state.

With regard to inter-ethnic relations, MAAK saw the SRM mainly as a **“state that expresses the sovereignty of the Macedonian people”**. However, the ethnic minorities within the state of the Macedonian people should enjoy **“all rights according to the international conventions”**. Therefore, in MAAK’s view, the SRM, which was a multi-religions state, would have to commit to religious tolerance, i.e., be **“equally attentive towards Christianity and Islam”**. However, in opposition to that attitude, **MAAK expressed concern with regard to “demographic occupation” and a “mechanical influx” of non-Macedonians and committed itself to stopping those processes.**

According to MAAK, the economic system would be based on the **“equality of all forms of property”** in order to establish **“market economy”** (as opposed to the system of planned economy in place at the time) and a **“free market of goods, labour and capital”**, as well as **“legal protection of private property”**. MAAK wanted to see those commitments included in Macedonia’s new Constitution.

In their first programme, MAAK envisioned the **SRM’s foreign policy to be independent**. Their commitment was due to the fact that they considered **“Macedonia’s interests to fall on deaf ears” with Yugoslavia’s foreign policy institutions**, which could also be regarded as one more reason for Macedonia to become an independent state. Apart from their commitment to an independent foreign policy, MAAK also advocated fostering the SRM’s regional cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Based on the commitments included in their programme, MAAK can be defined as a **national party of the Macedonian people, with a conservative ideological orientation, committed to establishing an independent and sovereign Macedonian state, political pluralism, stable inter-ethnic relations, and market economy.**

The League for Democracy (LD)

The founding assembly of LD was held on 11.2.1990 in Skopje, seven days after MAAK was founded. However, LD was included in the official party index on 8.6.1990, or four days before MAAK was registered. **Hence, according to the date of its founding assembly, LD was the second political party to be founded, but the first political party to be entered in the party index.**

LD defined itself as a **pro-democratic political party**, as opposed to the socialist/communist system in place at the time.⁷

⁷ Vlado Timovski, Svetlo Stefanovski, *Političkete partii vo Makedonija, Politička programa na Ligata za demokratija*, 1990, Skopje, p. 49-56.

On the issue of the status of the SRM, LD declared that it would **“direct all its efforts at maintaining Yugoslavia’s territorial integrity and its unity as a state”**. Should the SFRY fall apart as a state, however, according to LD, **“Macedonia should proclaim neutrality”** and request the **“United Europe to guarantee its borders”**.

With regard to the state’s setup, LD’s basic position was that **“the communists have done a lot of harm”**, which was why the party advocated for the introduction of a **“representative democracy”** and **political pluralism**. In compliance with its commitment, the LD declared it would **“rid the name of the Macedonian state of the attribute “Socialist”, so that it would be called Republic of Macedonia”**.

As for the issue of inter-ethnic relations, LD started from the fact that the SRM would have to be organised as a state for all citizens, regardless of their ethnic background. Nevertheless, the party promised that it would advocate for **“recognising all rights of the minorities according to the international conventions that are in force, but no more than that”**. The words **“no more than that”** in LD’s political programme point at the conclusion that some of the requests of the ethnic minorities at the time, concerning certain rights and freedoms, were not acceptable, i.e., to the detriment of the Macedonian people.

Regarding inter-ethnic relations, **LD, as well as MAAK, were concerned with the issue of a “demographic explosion” of the minority communities, and both parties considered that they could lead to inter-ethnic tensions. Those tensions, in turn, must be prevented by a “reasonable population policy” that should primarily include privileges for “every working woman who wants to have more children”**.

With regard to the economic system, LD advocated the position that it should be based on **“private property”**, i.e. on establishing market economy instead of planned economy. According to the party, this process should be initiated by privatising public property at the market price. In the same vein, LD also wanted to initiate **“denationalisation”**, i.e. return citizens their property that had been nationalised by the SRM.

LD did not have any special position on international relations, which was probably due to the fact that this party was in favour of preserving the SFRY and its institutions, including the ones responsible for international relations, which were common to all Republics.

Hence, LD can be defined as a citizens’ party whose ideological position was in the political centre, committed to preserving the SFRY with Macedonia as its part, but organised as a parliamentary democracy instead of the one-party system, and to establishing market economy instead of planned economy.

The Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP)

The founding assembly of PDP took place on 15.4.1990.

This party went down in Macedonian political history as the first registered political party that a majority of the Albanians in the country tended to favour.

In its programme, the **PDP described itself as “a modern political party which addresses the citizens and peoples of Macedonia, being committed to the development and fortification of democracy, which are basic values of European civilisation”.**⁸

A direct statement on the status of the SRM cannot be found in PDP's programme, but the party indirectly tended towards an independent state, under the condition that **“all communities that live in this territory decide on the future of Macedonia and Yugoslavia”, while “any other solution is unacceptable”.**

The setup of the state was described in PDP's initial programme as Macedonia being “a common state of all peoples, i.e. Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Muslims, Vlachs, Roma, and others”. According to this definition, PDP saw the Macedonian state organised as a **parliamentary democracy**, in which the citizens would vote for their representatives in general direct elections. In their opinion, **the highest power should be concentrated in the institution “state presidency” to be headed by five representatives, elected by the citizens.**

Inter-ethnic relations played a significant role in PDP's first election programme: they **advocated for “national equality of all peoples in Macedonia”, which would be entirely free to express their ethnic identity, to maintain and foster their language and culture, to receive education on all levels in their native language, as well as to use and to receive information in their native language when communicating with all levels of the state administration. According to PDP, all peoples should also be free to use their national symbols and toponyms, i.e. refer to places in their own language.**

In the area of economy, according to PDP, **public property should be abolished and private property and market economy introduced.**

⁸ Vlado Timovski, Svetlo Stefanovski, *Političkite partii vo Makedonija, Politička programa na Partijata za demokratski prosperitet*, 1990, Skopje, p. 166-176.

With regard to international relations, PDP was in favour of the idea of **“European integration of Macedonia and the Balkans, as well as the abolition of the required visa for entering European countries”**.

Based on the above-mentioned, **PDP can be described as a party of Macedonian Albanians, positioned in the political centre, favouring the idea of an independent state. They envisioned Macedonia as a parliamentary democracy in which all ethnic communities have equal rights, with a market economy and a strategic orientation towards integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures.**

The Party of Yugoslavs in Macedonia (SJM)

SJM was founded on 26.6.1990 in Skopje.

SJM will be remembered as the party that wanted to keep up the constitutional and political system of Yugoslavia, considering all other proposals (confederation or independence) as inappropriate and **wrong**.⁹

As for its status, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia should continue to be a part of Yugoslavia, a federal state of six Republics. SJM considered **“every other solution anachronistic”** and **“extremely harmful and dangerous”**, basing its commitment to Yugoslavia on the fact that **“the idea of Yugoslavia is the cornerstone for the actions of every citizen, as well as of every federal entity within it”**.

With regard to the setup of the future state, SJM advocated for introducing political pluralism in Yugoslavia, without, however, further elaborating on the issue. **Equality of all forms of property** should be introduced in the area of economy.

In SJM’s view, the SFRY was the best possible guarantee for further progress in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations.

The party considered Macedonia’s international relations and interests to be identical with Yugoslavia’s interests. Therefore, they did not develop any special foreign policy priorities. However, **the party did express a positive attitude towards the concept of European integration of Yugoslavia.**

Based on the above-mentioned, we can conclude that **SJM, a party with a leftist ideology and orientation, was in favour of preserving the status quo, i.e. for**

⁹ Vlado Timovski, Svetlo Stefanovski, *Političkite partii vo Makedonija, Politička programa na Strankata na Jugoslovenite na Makedonija*, 1990, Skopje, p. 39-48.

Macedonia to remain within the SFRY. However, the party was also in favour of a moderate democratisation of the state's setup and the economic system.

The League of Communists of Macedonia – Party for Democratic Change (SKM-PDP)

SKM-PDP was registered on 3.7.1990, when it, according to formal and legal aspects, seized to be the entity with the monopoly over political power and the institutions, and reconstituted itself as a political party which was a part of the party system in a pluralistic and democratic Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

According to its programme and ideology, **SKM-PDP was determined to accept and endorse the principles of “democratic socialism”, “radically renouncing the communist-Bolshevik party model, the doctrine of impenetrability and the monopoly position within society”**.¹⁰

With regard to defining the status of the SRM, SKM-PDP declared itself **“in favour of Yugoslavia as a democratic community of peoples with equal rights”**, which they described as **“reasonable”**. However, should this not be possible, the party offered two further options:

for Macedonia to be part of a confederation in the framework of the community of the Yugoslav peoples, or **for Macedonia to be organised as an independent sate**”, under the condition that **“the other Yugoslav peoples are also in favour of this option”**.

As for the setup of the state, SKM-PDP advocated for the SRM to be organised as a **parliamentary democracy**, in which the government would be constituted as a result of general, free and democratic elections, and in which the principle of **separation of powers** into a legislative, executive and judicial branch would be inaugurated. The government and the president of the republic would be in charge of the executive power. The president should be elected by the parliament. This new state setup should be incorporated in the new Constitution.

Considering the issue of inter-ethnic relations, SKM-PDP was **the only political party at the time to include a separate Declaration on Inter-ethnic Relations** in their programme. The declaration represented an **appeal to all Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and other ethnic communities to unite in order to take the overall democratic and inter-ethnic relations within the state a step further**.

¹⁰ Vlado Timovski, Svetlo Stefanovski, *Političkete partii vo Makedonija, Politička programa na SKM-Partija za demokratska preobrazba*, 1990, Skopje, p. 6-38.

In their Declaration, SKM-PDP drafted their views with regard to inter-ethnic relations, defining the SRM as a **“state of equal citizens”**, in which **“inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations would thrive, based on the principle of tolerance.”** For SKM-PDP, **“every citizen has the right to free ethnic determination and expression”**, as well as **“equality before the law, regardless of their ethnic affiliation”**.

Apart from that, SKM-PDP advocated for the members of minority ethnic communities to have the right to endorse their identity, to use their native language, to develop their culture, to establish cultural institutions, to be educated in their native language, etc. The state, in turn, should guarantee the realisation of those rights.

The economic system, according to SKM-PDP, should be a **market economy**, as opposed to the current planned economy, with private property being equal among all types of property.

In the sphere of international relations, SKM-PDP was in favour of the concept of **European integration, under the slogan “Europe, our home”**. In their view, the process of integration was **“of national, political and economic interest for Macedonia”**. Hence, the party promised to draft a separate **“development strategy for including the state in European integration processes”**.

Hence, we can summarise that **SKM-PDP was a centre-left social democratic party. Its main commitment was to a democratic Macedonian state in the framework of a democratic Yugoslavia. At the same time, the party endorsed political pluralism, actively promoted progress in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations, was committed to the principles of market economy, as well as explicitly supported European integration processes.**

VMRO – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE)

The founding assembly of VMRO-DPMNE was held on 17.6.1990 in Skopje, and the party was included in the party index on 3.8.1990.

According to its programme and ideology, the party determined itself as a **“national party of the Macedonian people”**¹¹ with an anti-communists conservative orientation.

¹¹ Vlado Timovski, Svetlo Stefanovski, *Političkite partii vo Makedonija, Politička programa na VMRO-Demokratska partija za makedonsko nacionalno edinstvo*, 1990, Skopje, p. 134-147.

The status of the SR Macedonia was a key issue within the programme of VMRO-DPMNE, with their position being that **“Macedonia should be established as an independent state”**. Similar to MAAK, VMRO-DPMNE also went one step further, stating that **“the Macedonian people must not content itself with the Treaty of Bucharest that divided Macedonia in 1913”**. Therefore, **“the processes of European integration should be greeted and supported, since borders will thereby disappear, which could lead to the opportunity of not only spiritual, but also national and territorial unification.”**

VMRO-DPMNE's position on the future of Yugoslavia was that it could only continue to exist as a confederation of sovereign, independent states.

The party's answer to the question about how the state should be organised was that the SRM should be a **“parliamentary democracy, following the example of Western states”**, a system that should be stipulated in the Constitution. VMRO-DPMNE did not further elaborate on this issue in their programme.

With regard to inter-ethnic relations, they considered Macedonia to be a **“state for all, and, accordingly, ethnic minorities should enjoy all the rights prescribed by international conventions.”**

According to VMRO-DPMNE, the economic system should be organised as a **market economy**, with private property sharing equal status with all other forms of property.

In the party's view, the medium term goal of international relations should be **European integration**. VMRO-DPMNE advocated for the state to **independently start adapting its constitutional and political system to European standards**. However, achieving this goal would largely depend on the **“democratisation of Macedonia, which can only happen by means of a change of government”**. With regard to this issue, the party also advocated for the SRM to lead its own foreign policy which would not depend on Yugoslavia, and which would culminate in the development of a network of Macedonian diplomatic and consular services throughout the world.

From the above-mentioned, we can conclude that **VMRO-DPMNE defined itself as a centre-right national party of the Macedonian people with a conservative ideology. The main aim of the party was to establish an independent Macedonian state, set up as a parliamentary democracy with a market economy, which would join the process of European integration and foster inter-ethnic relations.**

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the programmes and ideological standpoints of the selected political parties holds information that contributes to uncovering the main features of the party system during the last days of socialism in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

With regard to the issue of the status of the SRM, the political parties can be split into four groups:

1. The parties that considered that the best way to end the crisis of Yugoslavia would be to establish an independent state. Later, given favourable circumstances, some form of loose association among all independent states originating from Yugoslavia could be created. The parties in this group are MAAK and VMRO-DPMNE.
2. The parties that opposed the current situation in Yugoslavia and suggested three options for ending the crisis: (1) to carry out a reform of the SFRY, with the Republics strongly united in cooperation; (2) to create a confederation, in which a weaker form of cooperation among the Republics would be realised, in case the first option would be impossible, or (3) to establish an independent state, in case the leaderships of the six Yugoslav Republics would fail to reach any agreement. LD and SKM-PDP constitute this group.
3. The party that had no explicit suggestions on the issue of the SRM'S status with regard to Yugoslavia, i.e. PDP.
4. The political party that was committed to sustaining the Yugoslav state in its current form and considered that any other solution would weaken the union of the Republics, which would be dangerous and detrimental to the SRM's future, i.e. SJM.

On the issue of the state's setup, all parties were committed to discontinuing the socialist rule in the SRM, which should be organised as a parliamentary democracy instead, except for SJM, which did not further elaborate on that issue, since it was in favour of keeping up the existing order. With regard to the issue of the state's setup, the parties can be divided into two groups:

The parties that further elaborated on the issue, including SKM-PDP and PDP. SKP-PDP had a defined concept of the separation of powers into a legislative, executive and judicial branch. It advocated for a unicameral parliament to be in charge of the legislative branch, as well as a bicameral executive branch, with the power in the hands of the government and the state president. The latter should, in turn, be elected by the parliament. The PDP further developed the concept of separation of powers. In their view, a unicameral parliament should hold the legislative power, while the executive power should be concentrated in the hands of a "state presidency", consisting of five representatives to be elected by the citizens.

The parties that did not further elaborate on the issue, including MAAK, LD and VMRO-DPMNE. Their position was that the state should be organised in the same way as the European democracies, but they did not describe how to realise that aim.

With regard to inter-ethnic relations, all parties declared that they were in favour of developing and fostering minority rights. However, with regard to the importance they attached to this issue, the parties can be split into three groups:

The parties that described the issue in detail: PDP and SKM-PDP. For PDP, inter-ethnic relations were a central issue which took up a key position in their programme. Their main commitment was to organising the state as a community of equal peoples. SKM-PDP, meanwhile, presented a special Declaration on Inter-ethnic Relations, included in their party programme. Thereby, the party demonstrated its commitment to progress in the area, not only on a symbolic, but also on an actual level. The Macedonian people and all other ethnic communities should foster inter-ethnic relations by building a democratic Macedonian state together.

The parties that did not go into detail in their description of the issue, i.e. VMRO-DPMNE and SJM. They declared a general commitment to fostering the overall inter-ethnic relations.

The parties that marginalised the importance of inter-ethnic relations, represented by MAAK and LD. The significance of the issue was depreciated by the use of the phrase “all rights of the minorities according the international conventions that are in force, but no more than that”. In addition, the programmes of these parties also included paragraphs on preventing a mechanical influx of non-Macedonian population as a potential threat to the ethnic balance in the country.

As it was the case with the state’s setup, out of the six parties analysed, only SJM was in favour of a moderate transformation of the current system of planned economy in Yugoslavia and in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. Meanwhile, all other parties (MAAK, LD, PDP, SKM-PDP and VMRO-DPMNE) advocated for the introduction of market economy, the equality of private property among all types of property, as well as for opening the state to the free flow of persons, ideas, and capital.

With regard to international relations, the parties can, again, be divided into two groups:

- 1. The parties that did not deal with the issue**, i.e. LD and SJM. They probably did not tackle the topic because international relations lay within the responsibility of the institutions of Yugoslavia which these two parties wanted to maintain.
- 2. The parties that commented on the question**, i.e. MAAK, PDP, SKM-PDP and VMRO-DPMNE. These parties mainly endorsed the idea of European integration as being in the strategic interest of the country.

As for their ideologies, **the selected parties represent the entire range of the political spectrum. Nevertheless, most of them positioned themselves near the political centre. From left to right, SJM took up a position to the left, followed by SKM-PDP, which defined itself as a centre-left social-democratic party. LD and PDP can be determined as centre parties, while MAAK and VMRO-DPMNE were conservative parties to the right of the centre. However, this categorisation is fairly general, since there was some oscillation within the parties with regard to the analysed issues.** LD, for example, had a rather nationalist position with regard to the issue of inter-ethnic relations, although it would be generally defined as a centre party. The other parties analysed in this paper also show similar exceptions to their general positions with regard to certain issues.

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