

IRI Election Observation Mission

Macedonia

October 30, 1994

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I. SUMMARY

The October 1994 elections marked the first national elections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) since that nation declared its independence in September 1991. Many of the problems IRI observers found in the electoral process were rooted in Macedonia's transition from a constituent member of the federal Yugoslav state to a sovereign nation. In addition to the challenges of transforming economic and political structures inherited from the communist era, Macedonia faces the challenge of creating entirely new state structures.

The International Republican Institute (IRI) sponsored an eight-member election observation mission to watch the second round of parliamentary elections on October 30, 1994. The first round of parliamentary and presidential elections occurred on October 16, 1994. IRI received funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to conduct this mission. IRI's election observation delegation sought to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) to lend support to a larger international effort to ensure an open and fully participatory democratic electoral process in Macedonia;
- 2) to evaluate the administration of the elections; and,
- 3) to recommend ways the electoral process could be improved in future elections.

Prior to election day, IRI observers met with election officials, political party representatives, and members of the media at the national and local levels to evaluate the pre-election environment and the results of the first round. On election day, IRI delegates observed the process of casting and counting ballots in four different regions of Macedonia. The delegation reconvened in Skopje on Monday, October 31, to issue a preliminary statement that summarized their initial findings for the media and general public. This comprehensive report contains the delegation's final conclusions and recommendations. It will be distributed by IRI to Macedonia's election authorities, government officials, and political parties, as well as U.S. government officials, Members of the United States Congress, and media representatives in both Macedonia and the United States.

The IRI observers characterize the October, 30, 1994 elections in Macedonia as an important step forward in Macedonia's democratic transition. Observers found that polling station workers were well organized, committed to and well informed about procedures and, in most instances, had posted sample ballots and other information to help voters understand the process. Voters and domestic observers showed respect and appreciation for the efforts of polling site workers. Although IRI observers were aware that certain political parties called for a boycott of the second round, voter

The provisional name of this country, used for its designation as a member of the United Nations, is the "Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" (FYROM). The term "Macedonia" is used in this report in lieu of FYROM for convenience.

participation appeared to be enthusiastic and in sufficient numbers to yield a legitimate electoral result.

Although IRI observers detected no problems of sufficient severity to undermine the electoral process, they did note certain problems that should be addressed before the next elections.

- 1) The number of constituents represented by members of the *Sobranie* (national assembly or parliament) varied widely from voting district to voting district. In the extreme, these variations could dilute the legitimate voting power of voters in large districts.
- 2) There were numerous complaints from polling station workers as well as voters that voting lists were inaccurate and not up to date in many cases.
- 3) Although written instructions were provided to polling station workers about the types of identification that were necessary for people not on the voting lists to qualify to vote, confusion still surrounded voter eligibility standards. Some persons who believed themselves eligible to vote were unable to produce acceptable documentation and were not allowed to vote because of what they alleged were delays in the government processing of citizenship documents.

Macedonia's democratic development depends not only on the process of elections, but also on long-term reform and institutional development. In addition to a new election law, new legislation is needed on the realignment of electoral districts, on campaign finance and disclosure, and on an independent and privately-owned media. The active participation of all political parties in governance and in future elections also will be critical components of the further consolidation of democratic institutions in Macedonia. Finally, a key element of Macedonia's stability will be the strengthening of a political culture that embraces tolerance and pluralism, as well as an electoral process in which all citizens of Macedonia believe they have a common stake.

IRI Program Summary

IRI was one of the first foreign NGOs to initiate a program in Macedonia in the immediate aftermath of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. Based on its election observation mission in 1990 as well as a subsequent political assessment mission, IRI initiated a two-tier program that first focused on providing election law experts to help government officials and political parties enhance their understanding of voting practices and election law. IRI then sponsored political party roundtable meetings in 1992 that helped pro-reform party leaders reach a consensus on meaningful election reform issues. As a result of IRI's program, political parties were able to incorporate specific proposals into draft legislation.

In 1993, IRI refocused its efforts on development of local party organizations to help them lay a solid foundation for the 1994 parliamentary election campaign. Between November 1993 and

September 1994, IRI held eight seminars utilizing volunteer political experts from the United States. These missions trained local party activists across Macedonia on the fundamental techniques of grassroots organization, providing advice on communication strategies, coalition-building techniques, organizational methodology, and voter contact. As in 1990, IRI organized a team of distinguished experts to observe the October 1994 elections.

In 1995, IRI began a new phase of its program that focuses on strengthening the parliamentary system. IRI has held workshops to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Macedonia's national legislature. Assisting MPs, professional staff, and political party members in working closely with their parliamentary group, IRI training will investigate issues concerning the committee system, constituent services, and communication strategies.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Macedonia has been occupied throughout its history by Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians, and Turks. With the creation of Yugoslavia at the end of World War I, the Macedonian Slavs within the newly formed country were not accorded the status of a national minority. At the end of World War II, Tito's communist regime created six different republics within a federal structure, including Macedonia, that deliberately promoted distinct ethnic nationalities in order to satisfy nationalist aspirations, maintain a balance of power among Yugoslavia's various groups, and discourage Serbian domination of the country's political life. Tito granted official recognition to a separate Macedonian Orthodox Church as well as a distinct Macedonian language.

The first round of free elections in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia were held in November 1990. In an unexpectedly strong showing, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) won the largest plurality (31 percent) and garnered 37 seats in parliament. The League of Communists of Macedonia, later renamed the Social Democratic Alliance, finished a close second with 26 percent of the vote and 31 parliamentary seats. The parliament then chose Kiro Gligorov of the Social Democratic Alliance to be President.

As tension increased between Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia, and Croatia in early 1991, Macedonia at first favored maintaining its association with the Yugoslav state and even attempted to mediate between the federal presidency and the breakaway republics. But when Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia declared independence and appealed for international recognition, Macedonia was faced with the choice of either following suit or being swallowed by Serbia. The tide turned on September 8, 1991, when a popular referendum was held on the question, "Do you support a sovereign and independent state of Macedonia, with the right to join a future union of sovereign states of Yugoslavia?" Although most ethnic Albanians in Macedonia boycotted the referendum, the total voter turnout was about 71 percent, and 96 percent voted for independence. On November 17, 1991, the parliament adopted a constitution and declared the Republic of Macedonia a sovereign, independent, democratic, and social state. In 1992, a four-party governing coalition was formed by the Social Democrats, the Liberals, the Socialists, and the Party for Democratic Prosperity, the ethnic Albanian party. By 1994, the parliament was stymied by its inability to muster a quorum on important votes.

In addition to the economic problems associated with the transition from communism, Macedonia has faced the additional problem of creating institutions to perform national functions previously provided by federal authorities in Belgrade. Economic instability has been exacerbated by the U.N. sanctions against Serbia which, prior to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, accounted for about 60 percent of the Macedonian export market and served as an important conduit to other trading partners. According to a report submitted by Macedonia to the U.N. Security Council, compliance with the sanctions has cost Macedonia \$1.8 billion.

Macedonia also has yet to receive full diplomatic recognition from the United States and Greece. Objections raised by Greece to recognition of Macedonia include 1) use of the name "Macedonia," which the Greeks claim descends from the legacy of Hellenic culture; 2) the adoption of national symbols that the Greeks similarly believe to be a part of their own heritage; and 3) Greek suspicions that latent irredentism persists to this day in Macedonia for the territories of northern Greece. These concerns have led Greece to impose an embargo blocking the shipment of goods across Greece to Macedonia and cutting off Macedonia's access to Greece's Aegean Sea port of Thessaloniki.

The demise of communism also has released long-dormant tensions between ethnic Albanian and Slavic citizens of Macedonia. As a significant minority population, the Albanians consistently have made accusations about economic discrimination, human rights abuses, cultural repression, and an inequitable political process orchestrated by the majority Slavic population. This internal ethnic issue is complicated by the "Kosovo scenario," which is viewed potentially as the next flashpoint in the Balkans. Such a scenario envisions civil war erupting in the Serbian-controlled province of Kosovo, in which approximately two million ethnic Albanians currently reside. Civil unrest in Kosovo could draw Macedonia's ethnic Albanians into the fray and quickly escalate into a cross-border conflict. Although the Albanians are the largest minority in Macedonia, the presence of other ethnic groups is a constant reminder of the fluid nature of Macedonia's borders through the centuries.

According to the EU-sponsored census, the current population of Macedonia is 66.93 percent Macedonian (i.e. Slavic), 22.55 percent Albanian, 3.88 percent Turks, 2.27 percent Romanians, and 2.04 percent Serbian.

III. ELECTION BACKGROUND

National Framework

When IRI delegates observed the first multi-party elections in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia on November 11, 1990, they noted that "The electoral process provided the citizens of Macedonia an opportunity to choose representation from a wide range of candidates in an equitable campaign environment." The election law used in the 1990 elections, however, had many shortcomings. Repeated attempts to pass a new law for parliamentary elections in the intervening four years were unsuccessful and the October 1994 parliamentary elections, consequently, were conducted under the old law. A new Law on the Election of the President was adopted, establishing presidential election by direct vote, as well as a new Law on Political Parties.

A substantive draft of proposed changes to the 1990 election law was submitted to the President in July 1993. After receiving input from domestic electoral authorities and international organizations, including IRI, a revised version of the electoral law was submitted to the parliament in the summer of 1994. In addition to addressing the administrative deficiencies of the 1990 election law, the proposal contained several significant changes. For example, the draft added a proportional component by expanding the 120 seats in the current parliament (all elected in single-mandate districts) by an additional 20 seats elected nationwide on a proportional basis. The measure did not pass because the Party for Democratic Prosperity and other opposition parties boycotted scheduled votes on the election law, leaving an insufficient number of deputies for a parliamentary quorum.

The 1990 law established three administrative tiers in Macedonia's electoral process. The highest level is the Republic Vote Counting Commission (RVCC), followed by 120 District Vote Counting Commissions (DVCC), and approximately 2,700 polling stations directly responsible for administering the election. The RVCC was comprised of members of the Supreme Court, who were prevented by law from belonging to any party organization, and political party representatives. The DVCC commissions, corresponding to the country's 120 single-mandate electoral districts, also were selected from a combination of municipal judges and political party representatives. Polling station commissions were formed by town assemblies.

Political Parties

Although between 50 and 60 political parties could be identified in Macedonia before the elections, the major political organizations running candidates in the October 1994 can be narrowed down significantly. The Alliance of Macedonia was an electoral coalition formed from three of the four parties in the governing coalition: the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM), the Socialist Party (SP), and the Liberal Party (LP). The SDSM is the organizational heir of the League of Communists of Macedonia, and the Socialists trace their history back to the traditions of democratic socialism established in the early 1900s. The Liberals were considered to be the major political force in the center of Macedonia's political spectrum.

The main opposition party was the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian Unity (VMRO-DPMNE), which takes its name from a famous turn-of-the-century nationalist organization that fought for Macedonian independence. When the party was resurrected in the post-communist period, it again embraced a nationalist agenda. The newest party to sponsor candidates was the Democratic Party (DP), formed a year before the elections by Petar Goshev, former head of the SDSM and Macedonian Communist Party. The DP showed its support for Macedonia's nascent business community by calling for the implementation of a voucher privatization plan and lower taxes.

The Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) is the largest party representing ethnic Albanians in Macedonia. Similar to other ethnic minority parties in Eastern Europe, the PDP has remained competitive in the political sphere thus far because of its ability to mobilize its entire constituency in elections.

The First Round

In the first round of the 1994 parliamentary elections, 1,766 candidates representing 37 political parties plus 284 independent candidates' names were placed on the ballot for election held on October 16, 1994. Only ten candidates surpassed the requirement of receiving over 50 percent to win a seat in the first round (eight candidates from the Alliance and two from the Party for Democratic Prosperity). In the remaining 110 districts, the two candidates who received the most votes in the first round competed in the second round. Candidates competing in the second round represented 20 different parties and coalitions. The first round results were annulled in 21 polling stations in nine different electoral districts for a variety of irregularities. In the second round, six additional polling station results were annulled, with a third round of voting held in those stations in November 1994.

The irregularities noted in the first round by a delegation from the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) included omissions in voter lists, late delivery or non-delivery of invitations, voters unaware of where to vote, and redefinition of constituency boundaries without notification. In the two-week period between the first and second rounds, the Government addressed some of the issues raised in the CSCE statement. In particular, the Government focused on the distribution and production of invitations and the training of the polling station staff. Additions and corrections in the voter registry lists between the first and second rounds were made at the local level rather than by central authorities in Skopje because the election law required that the national registry be sealed eight days before the election and not reopened. Election commissions were replaced at the 21 polling sites where first round results were invalidated regardless of the cause for invalidation.

In 1990, 176 of the 2,076 polling places (about 5%) were required to repeat their balloting.

The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) declared that correction of these problems for the second round was not sufficient, and that nothing short of annulling the entire first round was acceptable. VMRO-DPMNE organized a protest rally held on October 19 in Skopje's central square at which a reported crowd of 7-10,000 people protested the first round and called for a boycott of the second round. It was, however, difficult to determine how many of those present were active participants in the protest and how many were passive spectators. VMRO-DPMNE was joined by the Democratic Party (DP) and the Movement for All-Macedonian Action (MAAK) in its call to boycott the second round. Although candidate names could not legally be removed from the ballot at that point in the process, these parties asked their candidates to abstain from actively campaigning in the second round and, if elected, to refuse office. The parties also asked their local organizations to organize "In Remembrance of Democracy" protest rallies in cities and towns on October 30 and to encourage citizens to sign petitions as a kind of parallel ballot. VMRO-DPMNE eventually claimed that 400,000 people signed these lists, an assertion that IRI observers were not in a position to verify.

In addition to numerous allegations of undelivered invitations to vote, intimidation of voters, and manipulation of voter registries, the central complaint of the boycotting parties was that the existence of 125,173 "gray voters" not on registration lists should have prevented Gligorov from winning the presidency on the first ballot. According to the election law, a presidential candidate must receive more than 50 percent of the vote to win in the first round. When the voter registries were closed eight days before the election, the number of eligible voters was established at 1,360,729. On election day, the addition of 125,173 voters not on the registration lists, but still entitled to vote because they possessed an acceptable form of identification, pushed the total number of voters to 1,486,202. If this figure is used to calculate turnout, rather than the original figure of 1,360,729, then the 713,529 votes received by Gligorov would equal 48.01 percent of total votes cast rather than the 52.40 percent majority calculated by the RVCC. The Supreme Court of Macedonia received a complaint from Ljupco Georgievski at 2:00 pm on October 19, 1994 protesting Gligorov's victory on the basis of this turnout issue. The Court rejected Georgievski's complaint within the legally defined 48 hours.

Representatives of the Alliance for Macedonia attributed the discrepancy in eligible voters to the poor quality of the voter registry lists and claimed that 80 percent of the 125,173 voters were not new names, but rather were names already on a permanent list at a different polling station. The remaining 20 percent were new names distributed across Macedonia, which amounted to less than one percent of the total presidential vote. An Alliance representative added that the problem was that previous elections "took place in another country" and the process of issuing new citizenship

The Alliance for Macedonia is an electoral coalition formed in September 1994 from three members of the Government coalition: the Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM), the Socialist Party (SP), and the Liberal Party (LP).

documents changed the pool of voters from 1990 to 1994. The Alliance also claimed to have suffered the most from technical problems cited by the CSCE in the first round.

IV. ELECTION OBSERVATIONS

Second Round Boycott

IRI observers saw "In Remembrance of Democracy" boycotts organized by VMRO-DPMNE, DP, and MAAK in the central squares of nearly every major city they visited. Observers were struck by the fact that the litany of complaints at the local level parroted the charges from national party leaders point by point, demonstrating a clear ability for communication between national and local party structures. These charges included:

- 1) the selective issuance of invitations to vote;
- 2) multiple voting by individual voters with multiple invitations;
- 3) invitations to vote issued for deceased people;
- 4) deceased voters marked as having cast ballots on voter lists;
- 5) no public access to voter registration lists prior to election day;
- 6) the intentional deletion or omission of certain voters from registration lists;
- 7) ballots given to voters with the candidates already marked;

IRI observers also heard allegations from the boycotting parties that were specific to their area. In Struga, they complained about the forceful removal of VMRO-DPMNE election observers from some voting stations and, in one village (Draslatsa), more people voted than the total population of the village. The Democratic Party (DP) in Bitola believed that the Alliance had both cajoled and intimidated voters -- by buying uniforms for local soccer teams two days before the election to enhance support and by threatening people with eviction from their homes if they didn't vote. In Gevgelija, VMRO-DPMNE alleged that former police officers, who were Alliance members, threatened to beat people in the village of Negotsci, burn their houses, and expel them from the region. In addition, they claimed that about 400 gypsies, who rely on state welfare, were granted extra assistance just before the elections.

When IRI observers visited the boycott rally in Radovis at 3:30 p.m., approximately 500 people had lit candles "to honor the memory of democracy" and signed the petition protesting the first round. Both the VMRO-DPMNE and DP candidates were present in the town square for the protest. The DP in Bitola readily admitted to IRI observers that they were breaking the pre-election moratorium on campaigning. The Democratic Party wanted to demonstrate resistance to an "irresponsible state," and the boycott was their way of showing that they weren't fighting for political power but viewed the boycott as an opportunity to fight for a more democratic system. After their

encounters with local representatives of the boycotting parties, IRI observers believed they lacked an appreciation of the often incremental nature of being in opposition. In other words, these parties did not readily accept the premise that, in a democracy, it can sometimes take several election cycles for a party to overcome its minority status.

Comments made to observers by local members of the Alliance for Macedonia coalition also mirrored those made by national party leaders in Skopje. Representatives of the Social Democratic Party (SDSM) in Bitola told IRI observers that they believed the absence of annulled first-round elections in any of the region's nine constituency districts spoke for the integrity of the process and the willingness of voters to comply with the rules. SDSM members viewed the boycott as a way for the opposition leadership to save face for their failure to win more seats in the first round. The Alliance representatives in Kumanova also thought the objections of VMRO-DPMNE and other parties were motivated solely by political factors. The group was quite confident that the Alliance program they had presented had been overwhelmingly accepted by voters. Their goal had been to get an absolute majority of seats in the National Assembly to produce a parliament capable of functioning without the interruption of frequent no-confidence votes and insufficient quorums.

The Alliance in Struga pointed out that, in the first round, the opposition candidate won in three of the voting stations in District #65 (stations 17, 18 and 21). Stoyan Kovaciski, the Alliance candidate in Struga, said that "VMRO made no complaints until after the results showed them losing -- they made no complaints at the voting sites." The Alliance representatives in Struga viewed the first round of parliamentary elections primarily as a "referendum" on the work of President Gligorov and the Alliance parties. In addition, they observed that VMRO-DPMNE and the Democratic Party could have improved their chances by forming a coalition, due to the single-mandate rather than proportional system of voting.

The Alliance representative in Gevgelija admitted to problems in the first round, but argued that technical problems in the elections hurt their candidates as much as the opposition candidates. For example, in Gevgelija Constituency District #14, Boris Kostacev won 5,131 votes (44 percent) in the first round, or about 200-300 votes less than what he needed to win 50 percent. According to the Alliance, the President of the District Vote Counting Commission (DVCC) was a VMRO-DPMNE member, and VMRO-DPMNE had one to three observers in each polling station in the first round, therefore making it difficult to believe that large-scale fraud could have occurred.

Local representatives of the ethnic-Albanian Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) had a different perspective on the first round results and subsequent boycott. In Kumanova, the PDP thought that the boycott would do them more harm than good because "with fewer choices, everyone will vote for the Alliance." Regarding the first round results in Struga, the PDP blamed VMRO-DPMNE's poor showing on their tactics, asserting that VMRO-DPMNE had been successful in past elections only because of their attacks on the Albanian minority. They implied that such tactics would have less impact in this election when compared to the broader program offered by the Alliance.

District Apportionment

Article 18 of the election law states that constituency districts shall be formed in a way that ensures "approximately the same number of voters elect one representative." The law provides no other specific criteria in creating district boundaries beyond this provision. Although the 120 constituency districts had an average of 11,500 voters, the number of voters in individual districts ranged in size from a high of 18,267 in District #32 in Kocani to a low of 5,837 in District #63 in Resen.

The issue of apportionment was complicated further by the absence of a reliable census and the confusion created by changes in citizenship, i.e., from Yugoslavian to Macedonian citizenship). Another key issue in drawing district boundaries concerned the availability of reliable census data. Data from the 1991 census was not considered credible because Albanian leaders, charging procedural irregularities, instructed their supporters to boycott that census. These leaders then capitalized on the uncertainty of their precise numbers and claimed ethnic Albanians totalled some 30-40 percent of the population. With financial assistance, advice, and monitoring provided by the European Union and the Council of Europe, Macedonia conducted a new census in June and July of 1994. Although the census results were not released until November 1994, partial results were leaked prior to the October 1994 elections and revealed that ethnic Albanians comprised roughly 22 percent of the total population. Albanian forces declared the census illegitimate, claiming that not enough Albanians were employed in collecting and processing the data. Whether legitimate or not, the 1994 census figures were not available in time to readjust constituency district boundaries for the October elections.

According to IRI observers deployed to Kumanova, the PDP's biggest complaint in the October 1994 elections was the inequitable size of constituency districts. They declared that decisions on district boundaries had been designed to ensure 70 percent Macedonian and 30 percent Albanian voters. The PDP claimed that the 29,000 Albanian voters in Kumanova are represented by one seat in parliament, but 35,000 Macedonian voters are represented by seven seats. The PDP in Kumanova also were disappointed that a new election law had not been passed, especially one that would have included a proportional component.

Local PDP officials in Struga also claimed that population totals in voting districts varied dramatically. For example, Struga has a population of 60,000 and three seats in parliament. Although Bitola's population is twice as large, it has 12 seats in Parliament, or four times as many as Struga. Similarly, Tetova, which is predominately ethnic Albanian, has a population of 180,000 people, but has only nine seats. The PDP in Struga claimed that these disparities result from the government's policy of undercounting the ethnic Albanian population. The PDP chairman in Struga also stated that there was no rational principle established to assign locations of polling stations, leading to confusion on election day as many people went to incorrect sites.

The PDP, however, was not the only party to complain about the census and district apportionment. The VMRO-DPMNE branch in Gevgelija, for example, made the accusation that official results from the census were not produced before the election because they would have improved the quality of the voter registration lists.

Citizenship and Identification

All citizens of Macedonia over the age of 18 were eligible to vote without regard to sex, nationality, or ethnic background. Individuals with pending citizenship application were not permitted to vote. Any citizen over the age of 18 also was eligible to be a candidate for public office.

If a voter's name did not appear on a voter registration list, he or she could still vote with appropriate identification that confirmed his or her citizenship. In discussions with IRI observers in Skopje, the Chairman of the RVCC listed three acceptable forms of identification: a certificate of citizenship, a passport, or an identification card issued after April 1994. Although most election authorities followed these guidelines, IRI observers found some inconsistencies. For example, although the DVCC chairman in Kumonova did repeat the three acceptable forms of identification as described by the RVCC chairman, he also listed three additional forms:

- 1) a certificate from the village that the person was on the general register list;
- 2) a certificate from the Ministry of Interior that the person was eligible to vote; or
- 3) a certificate of citizenship from old Yugoslavia with a specific notation for Macedonia.

In other cases, voters did not need any identification if the commission members personally knew the voter. For instance, in Trnovo-Magarevo, some voters who lacked proper identification but were recognized by a commission member were allowed to vote while others were turned away. In some cases, the invitation to vote was all that was required for identification. In Gevgelija, for example, IRI observers saw voters presenting their invitations and receiving ballots, with the invitation used as the sole means of identification. In Prilep, a man arrived with an invitation but no identification and was not allowed to vote, although commission members said they would have provided a ballot if they had known the man. In the village of Vev_ani outside Debar, however, IRI observers saw one woman who was turned away who had lived in the village for many years. She was told that she needed to go to the town hall and return with a birth certificate.

The PDP expressed concern with the quality of the voting lists. In Kumanova, the PDP estimated that 20 percent of the ethnic Albanian population was not registered. The PDP chairman

in Struga also noted that large numbers of people were not included on the voter registration lists and, although he did not allege any intentional discrimination, he asserted that this occurred with greater frequency in the Albanian areas. The PDP also claimed that there were serious procedural problems in the way ethnic Albanians received their citizenship papers.

The Alliance chairman in Struga acknowledged that there were technical problems in the voting registries in the first round, but maintained that these problems were not directed by the party but rather were administrative errors. For example, Stoyan Kovaciski, the Alliance candidate in Struga, explained that half of his family members were left off the list of voters and, therefore, were unable to vote for him.

Invitations to Vote

The problems of citizenship and identification were complicated by the "invitation to vote." The invitations were issued by election authorities to inform the voter of an upcoming election and provide the location of the polling station. Voters often presented their invitations when entering a polling station to aid workers in locating their names on voter registries. Although there was no legal requirement that such invitations be distributed to citizens, the invitations were considered popularly as a critical component of the process. The invitations had been used in the Tito era as a get-out-the-vote mechanism sponsored by the state (to help achieve the high voter turnout thought desirable in most communist elections) and therefore had become an expected component of the electoral process.

Because the invitations had an unofficial status similar to an admission ticket to polling stations and sometimes even was accepted in lieu of proper identification, the problem identified by IRI observers was that many people believed they were disenfranchised when they did not receive an invitation to vote. For example, the VMRO-DPMNE branch in Gevgelija complained that 960 of its members did not receive their invitations, including the President, Vice President and their families, and that there was an orchestrated effort to keep them from voting.

Media Access and Campaign Content

IRI observers were not in Macedonia for a sufficient period of time to make an adequate assessment of the media environment during the campaign period, but they did hear isolated charges of media bias. Although media objectivity remains a controversial issue in many western democracies, the status of media institutions in Macedonia as "socially-owned" enterprises is problematic. The government of Macedonia has control over the three national television frequencies and, through the *Nova Makedonia* publishing house, controls access to newsprint for the small, independent print media. This situation opens the door to accusations of undue government influence on media access and content.

The PDP representatives in Kumanova complained that there was no time allotted for them on local radio or TV. Even though they have 31 seats on the city council, they received no invitation

from the local media to participate in campaign debates. IRI observers also heard journalists declare that the government subtly influenced the editorial content of newspapers and magazines through financial control.

The problem was that no central law provided rules governing equal access to the state media, nor was there any law on the independent media. In a report published on the Macedonian media's coverage of the election campaign, the European Institute for the Media found "signs of a continuing patriarchal attitude of the Macedonian state towards the media."

Article 32 of the election law requires that citizens, parties, and organizations supporting candidates observe "mutually determined" rules in order to protect a candidate's dignity, reputation, and integrity. The law, however, does not provide specific guidance as to how such rules are determined or how this provision might be monitored or enforced.

The law also imposed a 48-hour moratorium on campaigning prior to election day. IRI observers found that this moratorium was respected largely by party organizations and candidates, although there were isolated violations. According to the DVCC in Kumanova, for example, the Democratic Party (DP) violated the ban in the first round by putting up posters during the moratorium period and, subsequently, was punished with a 25,000 dinar fine. Many individuals expressed concern about the boycotts, which they believed constituted a direct and major violation of the moratorium. Of the boycott demonstrations IRI observed on election day, none were shut down by police or election officials.

Campaign Finance

Article 70 of the election law states that 33 percent of the total state budget for the elections will be used to cover campaign costs incurred by parties and candidates based on the number of votes they receive. In practice, only winning candidates and parties are partially reimbursed for campaign expenses after the election. The law, therefore, does not guarantee equal access to state financial resources during the campaign but rather serves to reward winners after elections are held. Parties are able to accept contributions from state sources, private donors, and other domestic sources, although contributions from foreign sources are prohibited. Financial assistance cannot go to individual candidates running on a party slate, but must be channelled through the party's financial apparatus.

In Kumanova, IRI observers found the contrast in terms of material resources between the offices of the Alliance and those of the Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP) was as dramatic as the mood of their representatives. PDP members thought that the organization of the second round of elections hadn't improved compared to the first and that other parties had greater financial resources to "buy the vote" because of their connections in the government. IRI observers similarly noted an obvious disparity in material resources between the local Alliance and VMRO-DPMNE headquarters in Gevgelija.

Ballot Secrecy and Security

IRI observers in Kumanova noted that the clear ballot box, while making it easy to verify that the box was empty at the beginning of the day, also could allow people to see how individual voters had cast their ballots, especially when the box was located directly in front of the election commission. The problem could have been rectified if voters had been provided envelopes to conceal their marked ballots. In Gevgelija, an IRI observer remarked that the "voting booth" frequently amounted to nothing more than a folded piece of cardboard, which did not afford the voter an adequate level of privacy.

In general, observers found that certain culturally acceptable practices from the communist-era elections (when the sanctity of the secret ballot was an irrelevant concept) had reappeared in the post-communist period. IRI observers in Kumanova saw several married couples enter the voting booth together. In Gevgelija, observers saw a man pick up ballots for himself and his wife. At one site, which happened to have a large Albanian population, it appeared that a man stood behind the voting booth to "help" voters with their ballots, although it was impossible to determine whether he was providing technical advice on how to mark ballots or encouraging voters to support specific candidates.

IRI observers had minor concerns about ballot security. For example, according to the DVCC in Gevgelija (District #14), stamped ballots were distributed the day before the election to presidents of polling stations, who were then responsible for their overnight security before bringing them to the polling station on election day. IRI observers were concerned that ballots that had been stamped and validated before election day at a central location rather than at individual polling stations.

In Struga, opposition parties complained that official election ballots were printed at the offices of *Nova Makedonia*, the state-owned publishing house, without any outside monitoring. A representative of the PDP in Kumanova noted that, of the 38 polling sites, the farthest was 20 kilometers away from the DVCC and some polling stations didn't deliver their ballots until three or four days after the election, although the election law required they be returned within 18 hours after the polls closed.

DVCC members for constituency District #43 in Kumanova expressed their concern to IRI observers that VMRO-DPMNE and the DP would try to prevent citizens from voting possibly by damaging the voting materials, tearing ballots, or breaking ballot boxes. They reported that after a polling site closed in the first round that "people entered it to do harm"). One polling site was

In other electoral systems, ballots are validated immediately before they're given to voters, adding another layer of security.

annulled in the first round because of a fight that damaged the ballot box. Despite all of these concerns, the commission members felt confident that they were well-prepared to protect the voting sites from disruption in the second round.

Poll Workers and Domestic Observers

IRI observers found domestic observers representing the Alliance for Macedonia in nearly every polling station. VMRO-DPMNE claimed it fielded 450 observers in the first round, but observers were not sent out in the second round because of the boycott. At a polling station in the village of Vladevci, IRI observers found that the permanent chairman of the polling station was a member of VMRO. Although VMRO boycotted the second round, the chairman nonetheless felt obligated to fulfill his official responsibility for the elections. Observers also ran across a few observers representing independent candidates. IRI observers in Gevgelija were the only ones to encounter domestic observers from the Association for Civic Initiative (ACI), a non-partisan poll-watching organization. The election commissions and the observers seemed to be fairly comfortable with one another, and IRI did not see any tension between observers and polling station workers.

Counting Process

IRI observers found the counting process fairly uniform across Macedonia, despite the fact that central electoral authorities had not issued specific instructions providing exact procedures for tabulating ballots. Observers commonly found that, after the unused ballots were counted, the ballot box was opened and the ballots were separated into a different stack for each candidate. Any ballots that were mismarked were declared invalid and removed from the count. The polling station chairman also verified that the number of ballots in the box did not exceed the number of voters marked as having voted on the registration list. Once the results were tabulated, they were recorded in a protocol and delivered to the DVCC along with both used and unused ballots.

IRI observers in Gevgelija were present in the DVCC as polling station commissioners were brought in one-by-one to present the results of their respective polling stations. The DVCC president read aloud the results so that observers and DVCC members alike could record the results. When the DVCC had totalled the results from all polling stations, the results were usually then sent by fax or telephoned to the RVCC in Skopje.

If more ballots were found in the box than the number of voters checked off on the voter registry as having voted, then the entire process was annulled, the polling station commission was dismissed, and a new round of voting was called explicitly for that polling station and staffed by an entirely new commission staff. If fewer ballots were found in the box than there were voters, the results were not annulled thereby preventing a single voter from sabotaging the results by pocketing a ballot.

In general, observers thought that compliance with voting and counting procedures in all locations was performed in a very professional and orderly manner. The election officials were knowledgeable about the election laws and understood the election procedures. Domestic observers understood their role and were present at many voting locations. Those individuals involved exhibited enthusiasm and pride in their participation in the voting process.

Appeals Process

The Supreme Court of Macedonia received 118 first round complaints, of which 115 were for parliamentary races and three for the presidential race. At the time of its meeting with IRI observers, the Supreme Court had processed 86 of these complaints and rejected them as baseless; five complaints had been recognized as legitimate; 22 complaints were rejected because they were submitted by political parties, which were prohibited by law from filing complaints; and five complaints remained under consideration. The Court characterized the complaints it received according to the following categories: certification of candidacies, public accessibility to voter registries, distribution of invitations, shifts in the boundaries of electoral constituencies, campaigning and other political activities occurring at polling stations, and the presentation of proper identification by voters at polling stations.

IRI observers in Radovis, Bitola, and Struga found that when the complaints filed locally by opposition parties in the first election were not satisfactorily resolved, they often were not forwarded to the Supreme Court. The VMRO-DPMNE members in Struga told IRI observers that all of their complaints had been rejected by the local election commission and the court. They charged that the government had packed the courts with their own supporters and that the electoral commission was composed entirely of "former communists" who were "suppressing democracy." The DP candidate in Gevgelija, Slobodanka Sulceva, said the DVCC delayed its response to her complaint and, when they did render a decision, returned it to her parents' residence, rather directly to her, in a further effort to delay. The DVCC claimed the issues raised in her complaint were not within their jurisdiction and should be referred to the Supreme Court, but by then the deadline for filing complaints with the Court had passed.

In a meeting with the chairman of the Bitola DVCC, the president of the commission was unable to give IRI observers a clear description of the process for filing complaints at the local and national levels. According to the DVCC president, the individual polling stations had the greatest responsibility because they were involved most directly in the voting process and "provide all of the paperwork." The DVCC in Gevgelija pointed out that complaints from domestic observers could be recorded directly on the polling station protocol, while voters could complain directly to the DVCC. With 26 polling stations in District #14, the DVCC received only two complaints from observers and none from voters in the first round.

The PDP officials in Kumanova said that they complained to no effect in elections four years ago. This time they decided not to complain because all six of the Albanian candidates in this district made it to the second round. There were 13,000 votes in the first round for these six

candidates and PDP representatives believed they could get 20,000 votes in round two, giving them at least one seat in parliament.

Repeat Voting

IRI observers visited two polling stations in which the first round results had been annulled. In polling station #2 in Strumica, the first round was annulled because four ballots from another constituency district had been mixed in with its own ballots. Although the four ballots were not marked, voters had deposited them in the ballot box. Members of the polling station commission felt the DVCC had done a good job of notifying voters of the repeated round of balloting, with daily announcements on the radio, and that there would not be a significant drop in turnout from the first round. In polling station #1 in Strumica, the first round was annulled because the commission allowed someone residing in a different constituency district to vote. While observers were in polling station #1, they noticed that one man was turned away because he was not a resident of that polling station district.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE 1 **Election Boycott:**

IRI observers were dismayed by the decision of some political parties to boycott the second round of parliamentary elections on October 30, 1994. Although some of the claims made by these parties had validity, IRI observers believe that other claims were the result of either administrative errors or had limited impact. By mounting a boycott, some opposition parties failed to win any seats in parliament and thereby precluded their ability to improve the process for future elections through legislative action.

Recommendation:

Once parties and candidates make a commitment to participate in the political process, they should maintain that commitment to the fullest extent possible. If they believe the process provides inadequate safeguards, they should first seek to change the system internally rather than stepping outside its boundaries. IRI observers encourage all parties to participate in the 1995 local elections in Macedonia. It is the vigorous competition of a multi-party system that ultimately ensures an equitable process.

ISSUE 2 **District Boundaries:**

IRI observers were concerned about the disparity in population between districts. The large deviation of numbers of voters between different districts inevitably leads to accusations that such discrepancies were orchestrated to disenfranchise certain groups.

Recommendation:

A comprehensive law should be passed governing the process by which reapportionment is carried out that includes criteria for defining districts, as well as an opportunity for public scrutiny and challenge. District apportionment should be based on the best census data that is available at the time. The law also should assign a specific state agency responsibility for drawing district boundaries.

ISSUE 3 **Voter Identification:**

The issuance of new citizenship documents led to inherent problems and confusion in the identification of eligible voters. Some lifelong citizens were disenfranchised because they lacked new identification documents, and others were not allowed to vote because they had citizenship applications pending. The perception of bias can be as damaging to public confidence as actual bias; some ethnic minority groups suspected the identification requirements may have been an organized conspiracy to have them disenfranchised.

Recommendation:

In future elections, government authorities must expedite the issuance of new citizenship papers, accelerate the review process for pending applications, and conduct education campaigns clearly identifying the documentation required by voters at the polls. Rules should preclude the use of the "invitation" as a means of identification, and the consistent and universal application of that rule must be ensured without exception.

ISSUE 4 Voter Registration Lists:

Inaccuracies in voter registry lists caused by administrative errors, shifting eligibility requirements, and changes in residence undermined confidence in the system and led some to suspect fraud. The provision allowing voters with proper identification to vote when they were omitted from the voter registry list should have minimized concerns that people were purposely omitted from the lists.

Recommendation:

All necessary means should be undertaken to ensure that the lists are accurate to reinforce voter confidence in the system. Lists should be made available for public scrutiny and new voter information should be incorporated before elections. Lists should again be revised immediately after elections to include those voters inadvertently excluded.

ISSUE 5 Invitations to Vote:

The invitation to vote provides each citizen with the number and location of his or her polling station as well as the date of the elections, thus serving as an important reminder. The invitation also can be helpful to polling station workers in locating the voter's name on the voter registry. Although the invitations are not required by law,

their regular use has made them a standard part of the Macedonian electoral process. The problem is that invitations sometimes were accepted in lieu of proper voter identification. In addition, the wide discrepancies in the distribution of the invitations, combined with their de-facto acceptance as identification, cast doubt on the integrity of the process.

Recommendation:

Serious consideration should be given to eliminating invitations in the next elections in light of the inherent administrative problems in such a process. If other adequate methods of informing voters of pending elections cannot be found to replace the invitations, then the process of producing and distributing invitations must be made a formal and well-regulated exercise mandated by law. In this case, polling station commissions should be prevented by law from accepting invitations in lieu of proper forms of identification.

ISSUE 6 Media Access:

Although media bias remains an issue in many well-developed democracies, the ownership structure of many media organizations in Macedonia opens an avenue for government influence that, regardless of whether it is exploited, will continue to raise concerns of undue influence.

Recommendation:

New laws governing both the media should be passed that guarantee their independence. Furthermore, both domestic and internationally sponsored programs designed to enhance the skills of journalists and secure the financial independence of the media should be given the highest priority.

ISSUE 7 Campaign Content:

According to the election law, citizens, parties, and organizations supporting candidates must observe "mutually determined" rules in order to protect a candidate's dignity, reputation, and integrity. The law, however, does not specify how these rules might be determined, codified, or enforced.

Recommendation:

Efforts to place the content of political discourse within the parameters of narrowly defined legal standards should be avoided. The codification of politically acceptable speech could be susceptible to abuse and, ultimately, have a negative impact on the free and open discussion essential to the democratic process. Such a mutually determined code in other democracies more often falls within the purview of professional standards and societal ethics, rather than specific laws. Ultimately, candidates, parties, the media, and voters must hold one another accountable to the highest standard.

ISSUE 8 Campaign Finance and Disclosure:

Accusations of unfair use of state resources for campaign purposes by party organizations were difficult to prove because there was no requirement to publicly disclose campaign financial records. Furthermore, the current distribution system for public campaign funds reinforces the status quo and discourages competition. In other words, by supporting only winning parties, the system makes it more difficult for challengers to mount effective campaigns and thereby diminishes the element of competition that is so essential to a democratic political process.

Recommendation:

Parties and candidates who have their campaign expenditures wholly or partially reimbursed with public funds should be required to provide complete information on how such funds are spent as well as on other sources of funding. Minimum criteria should be established for parties and candidates that receive public funds (such as the number of party members or a threshold of votes received in previous elections).

ISSUE 9 Appeals Process:

Although appeals were handled expeditiously, the time constraints are too restrictive to allow aggrieved parties sufficient opportunity to compile evidence and develop a well-documented case.

Recommendation:

The complaint and appeals process should be broadened to allow greater time to file cases. All interested organizations, including political parties, should have an ample opportunity to file complaints.

ISSUE 10 Election Law:

In addition to the issues outlined above, other procedural gaps in the current election law need to be corrected in a new law.

Recommendation:

A new election law should be passed before the next round of elections that includes the following components: 1) specific rules by which decisions would be made regarding the procedures for counting ballots to guarantee a uniform process; 2) the sanctity of a secret ballot should be protected by providing better voting booths; 3) instructions should be issued on the precise criteria that will invalidate a ballot; and 4) the threat of annulling elections for minor infractions should be limited, and all such authority for annulment should be placed within the courts.

ISSUE 11 Run-off Elections:

Parliamentary elections in only 10 of the 120 districts were decided in the first round of voting that occurred in October 1994. In other words, run-off elections were the norm rather than the exception. Even though a period of two weeks between first and second rounds was provided by law, delays in tabulating first round results meant that the run-off candidates were not formally confirmed until a few days before the second round of voting. IRI observers believed that this time period was inadequate to allow candidates and parties to communicate their message to voters, highlight themselves against a single opponent, or form new political alliances.

Recommendation:

Consideration should be given to extending the time between first and second rounds of parliamentary elections to allow run-off candidates sufficient time to campaign.

APPENDIX I: Election Results

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The first round of voting was annulled in polling stations in nine constituencies. While other districts held the second round on October 30, those stations repeated first round voting, and a second round for the entire constituency district was held two weeks later. First round voting was repeated in the following districts.

<u>Opstina</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Polling Station</u>
Kocani	32	8
Kumanovo	46	35
Radovis	61	7, 24, 3, 15, 25
Resen	63	2, 3, 5, 10, 16
Strumica	68	2, 7
Tito Veles	83	3
Gazi Baba	93	73, 74
Skopje 108		27, 29, 30
Skopje 109		124

According to the Macedonian Republican Vote Counting Commission (RVCC), the results of the first round of presidential elections were as follows:

Candidate	Total Votes Received	Percentage of Votes
Kiro Gligorov	715,774	52.60%
Ljubisha Georgievski	191,210	14.49%

Voter turnout for the first round of voting in the presidential and parliamentary elections on October 16 was 77.76 percent. Turnout for the second round of voting for parliamentary elections on October 30 was 53.15 percent.

INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE

The distribution of parliamentary seats after the first and second rounds in October 1994 are presented in the table below. The seats held by the same parties after the November 1990 elections and immediately prior to the October 1994 elections, after a significant number of deputies had changed party affiliation, are list for purposes of comparison.

Party	October 1994	Sept. 1994	Nov. 1990
Alliance for Macedonia	95		
Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM)	58	28	31
Liberal Party (LP)	29	18	11
Socialist Party of Macedonia (SP)	8		
Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization-Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPNME)	0	31	38
Party for Democratic Prosperity (PDP)	10	19	17
People's Democratic Party (NDP)	4	3	5
Democratic Party of Macedonia (DPM)	1	na	na
Social Democratic Party of Macedonia (SDPM)	1	na	na
Party for Total Emancipation of Romanies in Macedonia (PCER)	1	1	1
Democratic Party of Turks in Macedonia (DPT) and Party for Democratic Action-Islamic Way	1	na	na

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Independents	7	4	3
Democratic Party (DP)	0	3	na

APPENDIX II: Map

APPENDIX III: Observation Team Meetings and Deployments

The IRI delegation held the following meetings in Skopje during October 1994.

- USAID Country Representative: Ms. Linda Gregory
- VMRO-DPMNE: Ljupco Georgievski
- Supreme Court: Mr. Toma Pomepuljkov, President
- Eko Independent Press
- Alliance of Macedonia: Jane Meljosky (SDSM)
- Chief of Mission, USIS: Victor Comres
- Political Officer, USIS: Bob Sorenson
- Secretary of the Standing Poll Commission for Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of Citizens of the Assembly: Vjekoslav Angelovski
- Republic Vote Counting Committee (RVCC): Petar Najdenev, Chairman
- Nova Macedonia Newspaper: Sanya Vasec
- Liberal Party: Ace Kocevski
- Macedonian Orthodox Church: Archbishop Mihail

The IRI observers then split into four deployment teams to observe the process of casting and counting ballots on election day.

The first team of IRI Observers deployed to the city of Kumanova located in the northern portion of Macedonia close to the border with Serbia, and worked their way back to the capital city of Skopje during the course of election day. The second IRI team deployed to the city of Bitola, located in south-central Macedonia, and traveled to the cities of Prilep, Brod, and Kicevo on election day. The third team of IRI Observers deployed to Struga, located on the northern shore of Lake Ohrid, and from there covered the western portion of Macedonia on election day (including the cities of Debar, Gostivar and Tetova), which has significant ethnic Albanian populations. The fourth IRI Observer team deployed to the city of Gevgelija, situated along the Greek border in the southeastern corner of Macedonia, and traveled to the cities of Strumica, Radovis, and Stip on election day.

APPENDIX IV: Election Law

APPENDIX V: Sample Ballot

APPENDIX VI: Invitation to Vote

APPENDIX VII: Boycott Flyer

APPENDIX VIII: Political Parties of Macedonia

Political Parties of Macedonia

Since Macedonia's first multi-party elections in 1990, the country's political parties have splintered along both ethnic and ideological lines. During the elections in 1990, Macedonians could choose among approximately twenty organizations. Ethnically, these groups ranged from the slavic Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) to the Albanian Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) and to various Gypsy, Turkish, Vlach, Serbian and other minority representatives. Ideologically, Macedonians could choose among "reformed" or "unreformed" communists/socialists, a party calling for the integration of former Yugoslavia on a confederative basis, or parties based on agrarian, human rights, labor and other interests.

Approximately sixty organizations competed in the October 16, 1994, parliamentary elections. The increase in the number of parties was not due to an expansion in the number of interests or constituencies that were being represented. Rather, the increase merely illustrated the fact that organizations that formed in 1990 had since broken apart for various reasons. For example, the PDP, which at one time represented most Albanians in the country, broke apart in 1993 due to disputes in the party's leadership. As a result, the NDP and "PDP-Thaqi" formed to compete with the now much weaker PDP. The following is a description of Macedonia's major political organizations:

The Alliance for Macedonia

Formed in September 1994, this coalition captured an overwhelming majority of the vote (80%) in the parliamentary elections. Comprised of the SDSM, the Socialist Party and the Liberals, this bloc not only possesses the most resources, but has significant experience in local and national governmental affairs.

Social Democratic Alliance of Macedonia (SDSM)

Although they now call themselves socialists, the SDSM is one of the primary heirs to the Communist Party in Macedonia. Their experience, name recognition and control of the country's resources has kept them at the top of the nation's political ladder. During the 1994 elections, the party won 58 seats in the Parliament, by far the largest portion of any competing organization. Thus, they maintain a disproportionately large share of the most significant posts in the country, including the President (Kiro Gligorov) and the Prime Minister (Branko Crvenkovski).

Officially, the SDSM platform calls for speedy social and economic reform, including a vigorous program of privatization. The party rejects nationalism and has been hesitantly cautious in approaching the subject of a more formal political affiliation with Serbia and Montenegro. It also rejects the notion of joining in a confederation with other former Yugoslav nations. The preeminence of the party leadership has made it vulnerable to charges of black-marketing, racketeering, conflicts of interest in dubious import-export deals.

Socialist Party (SP)

The Socialists trace their history back to the European tradition of democratic-socialism that emerged in the early 20th Century. The party supports a civic state as an equal part of Yugoslavia, the Balkans, and Europe. The party describes itself as anti-nationalist and describes their country as a nation-state of the Macedonian people -- a common multi-ethnic, religiously tolerant homeland of all its citizens.

After the 1990 elections, the party had five seats in parliament and shared a sixth with the Romany (Gypsy) party, thus achieving the five percent of the vote required for parliamentary status. During the 1994 elections they won three additional seats. The Socialists hold one deputy chairmanship in the Assembly and one ministerial portfolio. The chairman of the Socialist Party is Kiro Popovski.

Liberal Party (LP)

Once considered the most centrist of all major political organizations in Macedonia, the Liberal Party (LP) made many reconsider this label when it formed an eleventh-hour coalition with the SDSM and the SP in forming the Alliance for Macedonia in last October's election. Although the LP was linked with the SDSM in the previous government, the two parties had numerous differences. In joining Alliance for Macedonia, some believe the LP was willing to compromise their platform tenets order to ensure political viability. Their payoff for participating in this new coalition was high -- the party increased its representation in parliament from 17 to 29 members and currently holds the chairmanship of the Assembly (Stojan Andov), as well as the ministries of foreign affairs, economy, and health.

The Liberals maintain a five-part platform: 1) free and equal political and economic empowerment of the individual; 2) establishment of civic society; 3) Europeanization and global modernization and integration; 4) private market economics; and 5) the establishment of a single social/cultural community based on the opening of borders and the broad application of national rights among all Macedonians, both in the country and abroad. The LP maintains a healthy distance from nationalist positions.

Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP)

The Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) is the largest Albanian party in Macedonia. For the last three years, the PDP has taken on the difficult task of being both a voice of Albanian interests and a member of two governing coalitions. The party's second role in the government has tarnished the party's image and credibility within the Albanian constituency and caused continual dissention within its own ranks. More radical Albanian parties call the PDP traitors and accuse the PDP leadership of selling out Albanians in return for ministry positions.

Similar to other ethnic minority parties in Eastern Europe, the PDP was once highly competitive due to its ability to mobilize its entire constituency. As factions began to break off of the PDP, their ability to maintain pressure disappeared. The PDP held 25 seats in the previous Sobranie, but lost many of its seats last October to breakaway organizations like the NDP and the radical PDP-"Thaqi" party. Currently the PDP holds ten seats in the Sobranie. Shortly after their landslide victory last October, the Alliance for Macedonia invited the PDP to join their governing coalition. Although it was understood that the PDP would not play a major role in the government's decision-making process, the Albanian party nevertheless accepted. Future governmental involvement by the PDP came into doubt in early 1995 as rising ethnic tension once again began to polarize the parties. For the time being, the PDP remains a partner with the Alliance.

Formally, the party calls for a market economy, privatization, freedom of religion, the territorial integrity of Macedonia and equality of all "national collectives" (particularly in terms of language, education and the use of different alphabets). On the other hand, the PDP calls for the complete integration of Albanians in Europe and alludes to the need for constituent autonomy within Macedonia. It acquiesced to a referendum on political and territorial autonomy for Albanians in the country and opposed the 1991 census and the adoption of the Macedonian constitution.

Party of Democratic Prosperity- National Democratic Party (PDP-NDP or "NDP")

A slightly more radical version of the PDP. Like the PDP, though, the "NDP" has been plagued by fractures within its ranks during the last year. It holds four seats in the Assembly. The NDP platform most notably calls for political autonomy for Macedonia's Albanian minority. The President of the party is Iljaz Halami.

Party for the Full Emancipation of Romanies (PCERM)

PCERM currently maintains a single seat in the Assembly. The party is ethnically based and supports the economic, social and educational welfare of Romany populations in Macedonia. Charged frequently with contradictory positions on issues, the party at one time called for continued association with Yugoslavia while seeking the creation of an autonomous Romanistan. Politically, the PCERM has steered a middle course between the ruling government and the opposition nationalist parties. Generally moderate in its approach to issues, its major concern seems to be bringing Romany populations into the mainstream of Macedonian political life, and the integration into the overall society. The leader of the PCERM is Faik Abdi. Abdi claims a membership of 36,000 members, but states that the number will increase dramatically as Macedonia's 220,000 Romanies become more politically conscious.

Democratic Party of Turks (DPT)

The DPT, led by Erdogan Sarac, was formed in 1992 as a successor to the Democratic Union of Turks. While stressing the Turkish community's traditions of tolerance and peacefulness, it has focused on ethnic prejudices confronting Macedonia's Turkish minority such as education and the

use of the Turkish language. The party has cited discrimination against Turks in the country as a major problem, likening it to genocide on at least one occasion, and suggested that Turks relocate to Turkey if conditions do not improve. The party shares one seat in Parliament with the Party for democratic Action.

Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party for Macedonian Unity (VMRO-DPMNE)

In one year, VMRO-DPMNE went from being the largest parliamentary party in Macedonia to the largest party in Macedonia without a single representative in parliament. VMRO-DPMNE won one-third of the seats in Macedonia's 1990 parliamentary elections and for three years played the role of a vociferous opposition to the SDSM, LP and SP. As a party that ran on a nationalist and a somewhat anti-Albanian platform, VMRO-DPMNE looked poised to capture more seats in last year's election as ethnic tensions in Macedonia were rising to unprecedented levels. After the party failed to gain a single seat in the first round of the October 1994 parliamentary elections, VMRO-DPMNE, along with the Democratic Party, decided to boycott the second round, thus ensuring their complete isolation from the parliamentary decision-making process. Perhaps looking back to their early-20th century role as a subversive independence movement, VMRO-DPMNE claimed that the last day of the 1994 parliamentary campaign marked the first day of their campaign "of civil disobedience."

VMRO-DPMNE sees the Republic of Macedonia as a state of the Macedonian people, but with guarantees for the civil rights of all national minorities and ethnic groups as prescribed in international conventions. VMRO-DPMNE calls for the creation of a confederative Macedonia that guarantees comprehensive Macedonian sovereignty, including the protection of Macedonians living outside of its current borders. The VMRO-DPMNE platform also calls for negotiations with bordering states, including Serbia, to establish a Balkan confederation. The party leader is Ljupco Georgievski, who served briefly as Macedonia's Vice President and was defeated by Kiro Gligorov in last October's Presidential election.

Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization - Democratic Party (VMRO-DP)

A breakaway of the VMRO-DPMNE, this party is slightly to the right of the other VMRO in terms of its stand on Albanian rights and irredentist claims on Bulgarian territory. Their single representative in the previous parliament generally tended to vote with VMRO-DPMNE. They have no representation in the current parliament.

Macedonian Democratic Party (DP)

Formed a year before the October 1994 elections by Petar Goshev (former head of the SDSM and the Macedonian Communist Party), the Democratic Party (DP) had the potential to pose an interesting challenge last October, but like VMRO-DPMNE, came away without a single parliamentary seat. Although this is definitely an organization with rising support (they claim to

have a following of 10,000), Goshev's questionable credibility as an "outsider" has proven to be a liability. The party platform calls for the institution of a voucher privatization plan, as well as lower taxes.

Movement for All-Macedonian Action (MAAK)

As one of the first alternative movements to arise in 1990, the Movement for All-Macedonian Action (MAAK) assumed a Slavic-nationalist agenda. Its platform openly defined the Albanian population as a minority in a state of the Macedonian people and seemed to stress the confrontational elements of the relationship between the two ethnic groups. Inclined toward agrarian policy, the party has supported an independent Macedonia and opposed any return to a confederative Yugoslav entity. The party opposed the entry of U.S. troops in 1993, calling instead for Macedonia to be demilitarized. Initially considered a major political force, MAAK failed to reach the parliamentary threshold in both 1990 and 1994.

Labor Party (RP)

The Labor Party (RP) has now failed to reach the parliamentary threshold in two consecutive elections and appears ready to break apart or be swallowed into a larger party. Led by Krste Jankoski, the RP has a moderate agenda emphasizing fairness to workers and opposing unprincipled privatization and "neo-liberal" privatization schemes that the RP believes will result in a Latin American-like socio-economic structure. The party supports civic society with minority rights in a Macedonia that is the equal homeland of all citizens and communities regardless of whether they live in Macedonia or abroad.

Democratic Party of Serbs (DPS)

Drawing support mostly from the small Serbian minority, this small party has always attracted controversy. Questions regarding illegal funding from Belgrade and supposed aims at eventual "Slav unification" make them a constant target of scrutiny. They are unrepresented in Parliament.