

Uprising Belonging to All



The Republic of Macedonia is a multicultural society. While the majority of societies in the modern globalized world can be described as such, multiculturalism in Macedonia has deep roots. Different nationalities and cultures contributed to the political thinking and struggle that eventually lead to emergence of the Macedonian state.

Present day Macedonia owes its statehood to three political acts in of the 20th century: the Ilinden Uprising of 1903 that started on August 2, the declaration of the Macedonian state by the Anti-fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia on August 2, 1944 and the declaration of independence in 1991. All the political declarations made on those occasions as well as the Constitution reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country. As this summer we will again

celebrate the 2nd of August, the day of Saint Elijah, as one of the most glorious days in the modern history of Macedonia, let us remember how Macedonian statesmen have addressed the issues of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity.

The 1903 uprising against the Ottoman Empire established the Krusevo Republic following the liberation of the town of Krusevo. On August 2, 1903, Macedonian freedom fighters started an insurrection and established the first, although short-lived, republic in the Balkans. The regional staff of the rebels set up a local authority with representative executive and legislative bodies. It lasted for only ten days but it brought out the manifesto that summoned all citizens of Macedonia regardless of religion and ethnicity to a struggle against tyranny.

On August 2, 1944, The Anti-Fascist Assembly of The National Liberation



of Macedonia (*ASNOM*) proclaimed Macedonia as a nation-state of the ethnic Macedonians as part of Federal Yugoslavia and proclaimed the Macedonian language as official. The citizens of Macedonia regardless of their ethnic affiliation were guaranteed all civil rights, including the right to their mother tongue and freedom of religious belief and practice. Thus Macedonia became a state for the first time as part of the Yugoslav Federation.

After the break-up of Yugoslavia, Macedonia declared independence on 8 September 1991, but this day was symbolically called the 'third Saint Elijah's day', its significance being on the par with the events of August 2 of 1903 and 1944. When Macedonia became an independent state, different ethnic groups composing its population were given constitutive powers reflected in the Preamble to the Constitution. And it has been political practice that governing coalitions include political parties which represent different ethnicities.

KRUSHEVO MANIFESTO

The proclamation of the Krushevo Republic represents the highest accomplishment and the most important legal act of the 1902 uprising. Macedonian political thought from the beginning of the century remains relevant in today's multicultural society. The Manifesto



identified the fight for freedom as the goal of the uprising and stressed that this goal unites all the insurgents and their supporters "regardless of faith, nationality, sex or conviction" and appealed particularly to the Muslim population near Krusevo and across Macedonia: "We have raised no gun against you. That would be to our shame. We do not raise our guns against the peaceful, hard-working and honest Turkish man who feeds himself, as we do, by blood and sweat – he is our brother. We have lived together with him, and want to so live again..." The Manifesto went on to summon all citizens of Macedonia to a struggle against tyranny: "Come brothers, Moslems, come and fight against your and our enemies! Come, under the flag of autonomous Macedonia! Macedonia is our mother and she calls for our help. Come and help break the chains of slavery and free ourselves from misery and suffering so that streams of blood and tears are dried up!"

