

UDK 314.117(497.17)"1948/1961"  
314.117:323.15(=18)(497.17)"1948/1961"  
314.117:323.15(=512.161)(497.17)"1948/1961"  
DOI <https://doi.org/10.31212/minorities.2024.28.ili.55-98>

Borče Ilievski\*

THE ALBANIAN AND TURKISH MINORITIES  
IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA  
(POPULATION NUMBERS, STRUCTURE  
AND MIGRATIONS)

**Abstract:** In this text, the total population number, but especially the migrations of the Albanian and Turkish populations are being analyzed based on numerous statistical data, archival documents, and literature. Those minorities represented the biggest part of the minority population of the People's Republic of Macedonia, as well as the largest part of the Muslim population. A reference is made to several statistical and demographic data related to the change in national/ethnic identity of the Turks, Albanians, and Macedonian Muslims during the censuses conducted in 1948, 1953, and 1961. The migration process of the above-mentioned Muslim communities is being followed using several examples, as well as the immigration process of Albanians to Macedonia who originally lived in the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija and other parts of Yugoslavia.

**Keywords:** Albanian minority, Turkish minority, population censuses, People's Republic of Macedonia, migrations

---

\* Faculty of Philosophy – "Ss Cyril and Methodius", Skopje, borce@fzf.ukim.edu.mk

The change in the population structure of the People's Republic of Macedonia was related to the numerous political, economic, and social factors that determined the character of the Macedonian ethno-demographic development. In this period, numerous migrations also had visible impact on the ethnic composition of the general population. The total population in the People's Republic of Macedonia between the 1948 and 1961 censuses grew from 1.152.986 to 1.406.003 inhabitants, representing an increase of 253.013 inhabitants during the period of 13 years, marking a total population recorded increase of 22%.<sup>1</sup>

The first census in Yugoslavia was conducted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1948 and was named "short census" by the census enumerators, mainly because its aim was to collect data about the Yugoslav population number and structure. Since the last pre-war census after the period of 17 years, the changes in ethnic structure that occurred were not well-known, and the implementation of the ratings using the usual statistical methods in such conditions was almost impossible. During all Yugoslav pre-war population censuses the question on the ethnic identity in accordance to the free will of the citizens was asked.<sup>2</sup> That also

---

1 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948. godine. Knjiga IX. Stanovništvo po narodnosti*, (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1954), 437–450; *Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u 1961. godini. Nacionalni sastav stanovništva FNRJ: podaci po naseljima i opštinama. Knjiga III*, (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku 1994), 241–267.

2 Snježana Mrdjen, "Narodnost u popisima. Promjenljiva i nestalna kategorija", *Stanovništvo* 1-4/2002, 79; Vladimir Ortakovski, *Minorities in the Balkans*, (Skopje: 2-ri Avgust, 1998), 327 – 328.

was in accordance with the Constitution of the P.R. of Macedonia from 1946, whose article 12 stated: "Ethnic minorities have the right and protection of their cultural development and the right of free use of their language".<sup>3</sup>

### *Political circumstances and the ethnic identity*

According to the 1948 census results conducted on the territory of P.R. of Macedonia there were 1.152.986 citizens, out of which 789,648 Macedonians (68.5%); second in representation were the Albanians<sup>4</sup> 197.389 in total (17.1%), while the number of Turks amounted to 95.940 (8.32%).<sup>5</sup> After the official announcement of the results by the Federal Bureau of Statistics, a suspicion concerning the total number of Albanians in Yugoslavia arose. That number was 750.431 or 4.8% of the total population in the country.<sup>6</sup> The census enumerators stated that a significant

---

3 *Службен весник на Народна Република Македонија*, бр. 1 година III, 1. јануари 1947. година, 2.

4 In the official documents and publications from this period the term *Shiptar* was used. In the text we use the term *Albanian*.

5 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 14; Vladimir Simeunović, *Stanovništvo Jugoslavije i socijalističkih republika 1921 – 1961: ukupno stanovništvo, polna i starosna struktura*, (Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1964), 31.

6 The total number of the Albanians and Turks during the interwar period can be discussed precisely on the basis of the censuses conducted in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia in 1921 and 1931. The Albanians were the only non South Slavic minority in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia that had continuous demographic growth during the period between the wars. (Borče Ilievski, "The Albanian population in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: Demographic and statistical analysis", *Istorija 20 veka* 1/2023, 19 – 44). In *Vardar Mace-*

number of Turks from Macedonia and the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija declared themselves Albanian, which increased the total number of Albanians, making it larger than it probably should have been.<sup>7</sup>

Although the 1948 population census gives us a more objective idea on the number of Turks and Albanians in P.R. of Macedonia, taking into consideration the following two censuses, the statements of the enumerators could be considered relatively correct, especially those regarding ethnicity in towns of Tetovo and Gostivar.<sup>8</sup> In 1948 part of

---

donia in 1921, 110.609 people were recorded as “Arnauts” by their mother tongue, i.e. ¼ of the Albanians in the Kingdom of SCS. In 1931 their number on the territory of Vardar Macedonia increased to 129.640 inhabitants, i.e. 13.81% of the total population.

Despite the emigration during the Balkan wars, Turks did not decrease in number or reduce their ethnic compactness. In 1921 in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia there were 150.332 Turks, out of which 148.019 (98.46%) were living on that territory that became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia after the Balkan wars. In Vardar Macedonia there were 118.758 Turks. Ten years later, in 1931, the total number of Turks dropped to 132.924 inhabitants. Censuses data from 1921 and 1931 show that Turkish minority took the 5th place of the population minority number in the whole Kingdom. (*Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921. год*, (Сарајево: Општа Државна Статистика, 1932), 88-123; *Die Gliederung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen Jugoslawien nach Muttersprache und Konfession nach den unveröffentlichten Angaben der Zählung von 1931*, (Wien, 1943), 308-351).

7 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, XIII.

8 According to the 1921 census results in Gostivar, 3.747 people whose mother tongue was Turkish were recorded, representing 77.5% of the urban population. In the neighboring Tetovo in 1921 the population that was speaking Turkish as mother tongue was the majority among the Muslims. Out of 15.119 inhabitants 8.193 (54.2%) were Muslims and 6.900 (45.6%)

the urban Turkish population, especially those living in the previously mentioned towns, declared themselves Albanian. Analysis taken by the Union of Communists showed that this part of the population were Muslims who were learning Turkish language as “the language of the bazaar” and who actually blended within the Turkish population because of the religious influence. As it was said in the Communist Party analysis, this population stayed “ethnically labile” and after the liberation most of them declared themselves Albanians (Shiptar according to the official statistics back then) probably because the relations with Albania during this period were still very friendly. This population declared itself Albanian considering the fact that this was the way to gain greater protection and benefits in comparison to declaring itself Turkish in time when Turkey was seen as unpopular among the Yugoslav populace and not considered a friendly country.<sup>9</sup>

But the following census from 1953 already showed a big deviation in the number of Albanians as well as in the number

---

Orthodox. Among the Muslim population 6.432 (42.5%) citizens were recorded as Turks by mother tongue. Those speaking Albanian as mother tongue made up 1.298 (8.6%) people of the urban population. (*Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921. год*, 119). Also, very interesting are the observations made by the Bulgarian authorities during the First World War. According to the statistics from 1916 some 4.000 Albanians lived in Gostivar “who were becoming Turks and wanted to speak Turkish”. (Димитар Г. Гаджанов, “Мюсюманското население в новоосвободените земи”, *Научна експедиција Македонија и Поморавието, 1916 г.* съст. Петър Хр. Петров, (София: Универзитетско издателство “Свети Климент Охридски”, 1993), 257).

9 Državen Arhiv na Republika Severna Makedonija (DARSM), 1.427.27.56/269-287.

of Turks in comparison to the previous one. The total number of Turks from 95.940 (8.32%) in 1948 increased to 203.938 (15.63%) in 1953. At the same time, a significant decrease in the number of Albanians was recorded in Macedonia. In 1948 the total number of Albanians dropped from 197.389 to 162.524 which is a decrease of 35.000 people excluding the natural population growth. During 1961, 183.108 Albanians and 131.481 Turks lived in the P.R. of Macedonia. These numbers showed an increase in the total number of Albanians in comparison to the previous census results and a significant decrease of 35.53% in the total number of Turks. How did this statistical and demographic conundrum occur?

Due to the newly created political circumstances which differed from those of the previous 1948 census, the state-Party commissions found that the total number of Albanians in the P.R. of Macedonia dropped between 1948 and 1953, since Albanians were declaring themselves Turks. After the Resolution of the Information Bureau had been adopted, the relations with Albania worsened. On the other hand, after signing the Balkan Pact, Turkey became an ally of Yugoslavia. It is stated that there also was an increase in religious fanaticism among part of the Muslim Albanians, due to series of laws that changed social relations, such as the Law on the Ban of Wearing Hijab and Chador.<sup>10</sup>

The census results showed that in 1953 the number of Turks in the P.R. Macedonia increased by 108.000 in just five years which is a fantastic increase of 112%. The statistical analysis unequivocally confirms that in certain areas such as Skopje, Kumanovo and Pelagonija, some Albanians declared

---

10 DARSM, 1.427.72.1/6

themselves Turks.<sup>11</sup> This is especially noticeable in those villages where data on the ethnic origin of the inhabitants can be compared in detail. Apart from the Albanians, this tendency, in a stronger manner, is also noticed in the areas populated with Macedonian Muslims (the so-called Torbeši).<sup>12</sup> According to the final results of the 1948 census, 37.096 Macedonian Muslims declared themselves Macedonians.<sup>13</sup> Such ethnic self-identification among this population would not happen again in subsequent censuses. In the following census in 1953, the largest number of this population declared itself Turkish, which would be one of the reasons for such a drastic increase in the number of Turks. Out of 860.699 Macedonians registered in the P.R. of Macedonia in 1953, 10.623 were Muslims<sup>14</sup>, i.e. at least 30.000 Macedonian Muslims declared themselves Turks during this census.<sup>15</sup>

- 
- 11 Unlike the mentioned regions of Kičevo, Struga as well as the villages in the Polog region, the number of the Albanians who declared themselves Turks during the 1953 census was the smallest.
  - 12 The 1931 census in Vardar Macedonia recorded 40.440 Muslims who spoke Serbo-Croatian as their mother tongue. (Борче Илиевски, *Демографските карактеристики на Вардарска Македонија меѓу двете светски војни (анализа на југословенските пописи од 1921. и 1931. година*, (Скопје: Филозофски факултет, 2017), 145).
  - 13 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 17. An exception could be found in the villages of Boletin, Vele Brdo, Janče and Trebište where the Macedonian Muslims were recorded as Albanians. (*Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 438-439).
  - 14 Bogoljub Kočović, *Etnički i demografski razvoj Jugoslavije od 1921. do 1991. godine (po svim zvaničnim, a u nekim slučajevima i korigovanim popisima)*. *Sveska II*, (Paris: Bibliotheque Dialogue, 1998), 296.
  - 15 The largest part of this population would declare itself Turkish on the following censuses as well.

For a better understanding of the census results, i.e. the inconsistency in ethnic self-identification among the Muslim population, we will also give the examples of the towns of Tetovo and Gostivar, mostly inhabited by Albanian and Turkish ethnic population. In 1948, in the town of Tetovo, 57.80% of the inhabitants declared themselves Albanian. In 1953, their share of the total population in the city decreased to 35.49%, and in 1961 to 25.38%. At the same time, the share of Turks of the total city population increased from 1.75% in 1948<sup>16</sup>, to 22.12% in 1953 and to 23.12% in 1961.<sup>17</sup>

Tetovo	Macedonians	%	Albanians	%	Turks	%	Others	%	Total
1948	5.992	34.72	9.975	57.80	302	1.75	990	5.73	17.259
1953	7.575	37.48	7.155	35.49	4.470	22.12	1.009	4.99	20.209
1961	11.361	44.85	6.435	25.38	5.864	23.05	1.697	6.69	25.357

Source: *Население на Република Македонија според изјаснување за национална припадност. Пописи на населението од 1948. до 1994, податоци по општини и население места според административно – територијална поделба од 1996. година. Книга IX, (Скопје: Државен Завод за Статистика, 2002).*

16 *Коначни rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948, 450.*

17 *Население на Република Македонија според изјаснување за национална припадност. Пописи на населението од 1948. до 1994, податоци по општини и население места според административно – територијална поделба од 1996. година. Книга IX, (Скопје: Државен Завод за Статистика, 2002), 276.*



A similar situation in the ethnic structure is noted in Gostivar, where the Muslim population fluctuated in its ethnic self-identification. In 1953, Albanians represented majority of the town's population with 45.35% of the total population, but their share already dropped to 22.70% in 1961, despite the high birth rate of this population. Therefore, in the period 1953-1961, the number of Turks in the town increased from 20% to 34%, making it evident that part of the Albanian population declared themselves Turkish due to the previously mentioned reasons.<sup>18</sup>

Gostivar	Macedonians	%	Albanians	%	Turks	%	Others	%	Total
1948	1.911	24.40	5.333	68.09	53	0.67	535	6.83	7.832
1953	2.637	27.73	4.313	45.35	1.924	20.24	635	6.68	9.509
1961	5.092	39.82	2.902	22.70	4.349	34.01	444	3.47	12.787

Source: *Население на Република Македонија според изјаснување за национална припадност. Пописи на населението од 1948. до 1994, податоци по општини и население места според административно – територијална поделба од 1996. година. Книга IX, (Скопје: Државен Завод за Статистика, 2002).*

Among the Muslim population in the region of Skopje, we also notice a large change in the ethnic identity in

18 *Kopačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 450; *Население на Република Македонија според изјаснување за национална припадност*, 78.

the 1948, 1953 and 1961 censuses.<sup>19</sup> A large number of Albanians and Macedonian Muslims (Torbeši) living in the area declared themselves Turks in 1953 and this continued in 1961, with reduced numbers. In certain villages inhabited by Albanians, almost all residents declared themselves Turks, while in others only a small portion of them.<sup>20</sup> The same situation happened in the neighboring villages. In 56 villages around Skopje, inhabited only by Albanian population, some 14,000 inhabitants declared themselves Turks. In these villages, in the next census in 1961, the number of Albanians who declared themselves Turks

---

19 This trend among the Muslim population in Skopje region continued during the 1965 census, that actually aimed to record the demographic changes that had occurred in Skopje and its surrounding after the catastrophic earthquake in 1963. (*Попис на населението во Скопје, 1. ноември 1965. година*, (Скопје: Градско собрание на град Скопје, 1967), 161).

20 The same example would apply to the village of Rašče located in the Skopski Derven area, representing one of the biggest villages where Albanians lived. In 1921 in Rašče and in the neighboring village Kopanica lived 1,822 inhabitants, out of which 1,789 were recorded as Albanians by mother tongue. (*Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921. год*, 116-117). In 1948 in the village lived 1,474 people out of which 448 Albanians (officially recorded as “Shiptars”) and 25 Roma people. (*Копачни резултати пописа становништва од 15. марта 1948*, 440). But in 1953 out of 1,590 inhabitants, 575 declared themselves Albanians and 976 Turks. During the 1961 census larger part of the population declared themselves Albanian (884 in total), and 552 inhabitants declared themselves Turkish. Four years later, in 1965, 1,262 inhabitants from the village declared themselves Albanians, while the total number of those who declared themselves Turks drastically dropped to 255 people. (*Попис на населението во Скопје, 1. ноември 1965. година*, 109).

would be around 11.000.<sup>21</sup> Of course, this change in ethnic composition was directly related to the tendency of some Albanians to emigrate to Turkey.

Such a process was also noted in the villages near Skopje, inhabited by Macedonian Muslims, so called Torbeši. South of Skopje, in six villages in the area known as Torbešija where Macedonian Muslims lived, there was a total of 4.607 inhabitants<sup>22</sup> in 1948, out of which 60 inhabitants declared themselves Turks, while the rest were Macedonian. In 1953, out of 4.716 inhabitants in those villages, 4.408 inhabitants declared themselves Turks, i.e. 93% of the total population. Only 273 people<sup>23</sup> declared themselves Macedonians. The same continued to happen during the following censuses. Unlike the villages with Albanian population, where the number of Turks decreased as the process of emigration to Turkey subsided, in the villages with Macedonian Muslims–Torbeši, the situation was opposite. Emigration from the mentioned villages to Turkey during the fifties was massive.<sup>24</sup> In 1961, a total of 2.585 inhabitants lived

---

21 *Naselenie po narodnost i naselbi vo SRM (spored administrativno – teritorijalnata podelba od 9-II-1962. godina*, (Skopje: Zavod za statistika, 1964), 46 – 52.

22 This refers to the villages of Dražilovo, Dolno Količani, Elovo, Pagaruša, Umovo and Cvetovo. About the origin of the population cf. Јован Ф. Трифуноски, *Слив Маркове Реке, антропогеографска испитивања*, (Скопје: Филозофски факултет на Универзитет Скопје, 1958).

23 *Попис на населението во Скопје, 1. ноември 1965. година*, 114 - 116.

24 There was also a large number of those who emigrated to Turkey during the period between the two world wars. According to the field research of Trifunovski in the 1920s and 1930s 74 families only from the villages of Umovo and Cvetovo emigrated to Turkey, which represen-

in those villages, out of which 2.571 inhabitants, i.e. 99%, declared themselves Turks.<sup>25</sup> Regardless of their origin, Macedonian Muslims' ethnic identification with Turkey was unquestionable.<sup>26</sup>

The statistical and demographic conundrum regarding the increase of the number of Turks in Socialist Republic of Macedonia during the period 1948-1953 and the simultaneous decrease in the number of Albanians and Macedonian Muslims causes doubts among certain researchers as to the relevance of these censuses data. The Yugoslav anthropologist and geographer Jovan F. Trifunoski believes that the censuses conducted in Yugoslavia "do not give us a completely true picture of the ethnicity because among the Muslim population in the F. R. of Macedonia—among Albanians, Torbeši, Turks and Roma people—there are individuals and groups that are not clearly ethnically defined. There were inhabitants who spoke Albanian language and who declared themselves Turks du-

---

ted a massive emigration since those were small villages numbering only a couple of hundred inhabitants. (Трифуноски, *Слив Маркове Реке, антропогеографска испитивања*, 180, 184).

25 *Naselenie po narodniost i naselbi vo SRM*, 46 – 52.

26 Some authors who analyzed the problem of the changes in the Muslim population ethnicity who wanted to immigrate to Turkey took also into consideration the social and the psychological aspect. The emigration of the relatives, friends and neighbors was the main reason for the later reaction and the opinion among the people that they would remain alone, so they would always decide to emigrate too. (Глигор Тодоровски, *Демографските процеси и промени во Македонија од почетокот на Првата балканска војна до осамостојувањето на Македонија со посебен осврт на исламизираните Македонци*, (Скопје: Институт за национална историја, 2000), 320).

ring the census. There were also Roma who declared themselves Albanians or Turks.<sup>27</sup>

The excellent expert in Yugoslav statistics, Bogoljub Kočović, compares and corrects the data from the Yugoslav censuses from 1921 to 1981. According to his analysis, the total number of Albanians in the P. R. of Macedonia in 1948 was around 180.000, i.e. 17.000 people less than the official data illustrate, in 1953 there were 225.000, i.e. 63.000 people more than the official data and in 1961, there were 261.000 Albanians, i.e. 78.000 more than we can see from the officially published data.<sup>28</sup> Kočović also adjusted the number of Turks in Macedonia, stating that in 1948, instead of the official number of 95.940 Turks, their real number was 102.000 people. He stated that the number of Turks in 1953 was 90.000 instead of the official data of almost 204.000 Turks. He applies the similar procedure to the 1961 census giving possibly the more precise number of 75.000 Turks instead of the official census data of 131.481 Turks.<sup>29</sup> Although these statistical corrections lacked additional explanation of the above mentioned Yugoslav censuses, we believe that the correc-

---

27 Jovan F. Trifunovski, *Albansko stanovništvo u Socijalističkoj Republici Makedoniji: antropogeografska i etnografska istraživanja*, (Beograd: Književne novine, 1988), 102 – 103.

28 Kočović, *Etnički i demografski razvoj Jugoslavije od 1921. do 1991. godine. Sveska II*, 351.

29 According to Kočović's corrections Albanians made up 15.6% in 1948, 17.2% in 1953 and 18.5% of the total population in the P.R. of Macedonia in 1961. Also, according to Kočović's estimates the share of Turks in the population was: 8.8% in 1948, 6.9% in 1953 and 5.3% in 1961 (Kočović, *Etnički i demografski razvoj Jugoslavije od 1921. do 1991. godine, sveska II*, 350).

tions and estimates of Kočović are much closer to the real ethnic structure of the total number of Albanians and Turks in the P. R. of Macedonia in the 1948-1961 period, in comparison to the officially published census data.

A situation similar to one in the P.R. of Macedonia prevailed in some parts of the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija, where 1.311 Turks were recorded in the census conducted in 1948, most of whom were in the region of Gnjilane and Kamenica.<sup>30</sup> However, the following census in 1953 recorded a huge increase in the number of inhabitants who declared themselves Turks. Their number in the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija amounted to 34.583 inhabitants (4.28%) of the total population of this area.<sup>31</sup> As in Macedonia, the reason for such drastic increase in the total number of Turks could be found in the fact that part of the Muslim population consisting of Albanians and South Slavs, declared themselves Turkish in 1953. The security services of the time kept track of the propaganda that was spreading among the Albanians and other Muslims living in the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija, especially the propaganda carried out by imams just before the 1953 census, which aimed to persuade Muslims to declare themselves Turks.<sup>32</sup>

---

30 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 334-347.

31 <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G1953/Pdf/G19534001.pdf> (visited on June 10, 2024).

32 Some imams were saying if the Muslims did not declare themselves Turks they would not be allowed to emigrate and apparently, they would be turned into Christians and Serbs. Under this influence in many villages people declared themselves Turks. (Zoran Janjetović,

For example, in the municipality of Kačanik in 1948, only ten inhabitants declared themselves Turks<sup>33</sup>, which made up 0.17% of the total number of inhabitants of this municipality. However, in 1953, as many as 1.700 residents of the municipality of Kačanik declared themselves Turks<sup>34</sup> that are 25.34% of the total population of the municipality.<sup>35</sup> The most interesting example in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija regarding change in ethnic identity of a part of Muslim population in the censuses in 1948 and 1953 is the County of Gora<sup>36</sup> that encompasses two geographical units, Gora populated by South Slavic Muslims-Gorani and Opolje populated by Albanians.<sup>37</sup> In

---

*Konfrontacija i integracija. Nacionalne manjine u Srbiji 1944 – 1964*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2022), 517-518).

33 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 345.

34 <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G1953/Pdf/G19534001.pdf>, (visited on June 10, 2024).

35 In 1921 only five inhabitants from the Kačanik region spoke Turkish as mother tongue. (*Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921. год*, 115). In 1931 only four native speakers of Turkish were recorded. (Kočović, *Etnički i demografski razvoj Jugoslavije od 1921. do 1991. godine. Sveska I*, 233). In both censuses mentioned above, 95% of the inhabitants in the Kačanik region were recorded as Albanian native speakers. The censuses of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia clearly show the linguistic and ethnic structure of the population from this region, making it clear that a part of the Albanian population declared themselves Turkish.

36 Милисав Лутовац, *Гора и Опоље. Насеља и рорекло становништва, књига 35* (Београд: Српска академија наука и уметности, 1955).

37 In 1921 12.817 inhabitants were recorded in the County of Gora, out of which 12.812 were Muslims. By the irmother tongue, 6.224 were Serbs or Croats and 6.375 Albanians. Only 218 people said Turkish was their mother tongue. (*Дефинитивни резултати по-*

1948, there was not a single resident registered as a Turk.<sup>38</sup> In 1953, 7.367 Turks, 9.319 Albanians, 2.725 undetermined Yugoslavs and 448 Serbs were registered in Gora.<sup>39</sup> Undoubtedly, similar to Torbeši in the P. R. Macedonia, the largest number of the South Slavic Muslims in Gora declared themselves Turks in the 1953 census. A similar tendency is noticed in parts of Sandžak, e.g. in the town of Novi Pazar. In 1948 only eight Turks were recorded in the town<sup>40</sup>, while in 1953 their number increased to 4.280, which made up 30.34% of the town's inhabitants.<sup>41</sup> A total number of 11.009 Turks (21.87% of the population) were recorded in the entire Deževo district.

---

*писа становништва 1921. год*, 106-107). Out of 14.127 inhabitants in the Gora County in 1931, only 12 were recorded as Turks by their mother tongue. (Kočović, *Etnički i demografski razvoj Jugoslavije od 1921. do 1991. godine. Sveska I*, 231).

38 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 345. In the County of Gora in 1948 20.340 people lived, out of which 12.048 Albanians, 6.697 undefined Muslims and 1.375 Serbs. (*Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 344).

39 <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G1953/Pdf/G19534001.pdf>, (visited on June 10, 2024).

40 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948*, 316. Out of 11.185 inhabitants in the town of Novi Pazar in 1921, 9.295 were Muslims and only 126 were recorded as Turks by mother tongue. (*Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921. год*, 110-111). In 1931 in the Deževo District in which Novi Pazar was the center, out of 42.159 inhabitants only 4 were recorded as Turks by their mother tongue (Kočović, *Etnički i demografski razvoj Jugoslavije od 1921. do 1991. godine, sveska I*, 154). It is also clear that part of the South Slavic Muslims in 1953 declared themselves as Turks.

41 <https://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G1953/Pdf/G19534001.pdf>, (visited on June 10, 2024).



The reasons for the change in ethnic self-identification among the Muslim population living in the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija and in some parts of Sandžak are the same as the change in ethnic self-identification among the Muslims living in the P.R. of Macedonia. There was a tendency of those people to easily join the process of emigration to Turkey, in which identification as a Turk was mandatory.<sup>42</sup>

*Emigration of the Turkish  
and the other Muslim population to Turkey*

Exactly during the time when the census of 1953 was being conducted, the process of emigration of Turkish and other Muslim population from the P.R. of Macedonia to Turkey began. The emigration actually represented a continuation of the process that had started before, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire or a continuation of the migration waves that had occurred during the Balkan wars. It is difficult to give the exact number of people who immigrated to Asia Minor, but the most massive migrations were happening immediately after the end of the Balkan wars until the mid-1920s, when there was a short-term migration reduction, lasting until the end of the 1920s, after which this process began to intensify again.<sup>43</sup>

---

42 Радмила Радић, “Исељавање становништва са југословенског простора средином педесетих година”, *Историјски записи* 1-2/1999, 155–167.

43 About the emigration of Turkish and other Muslim population from Vardar Macedonia, as well as from the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the period after the Balkan wars and during

In the Communist Party analysis and reports that analyzed the migration issue of the Turkish population, it is stated that this process could be divided into two periods: 1) the period until 1952, when a release from citizenship was not granted to persons of Turkish ethnicity. Several requests for emigration were submitted, but none of those requests were positively resolved<sup>44</sup> and 2) the period after 1952, when the release from citizenship was allowed which actually marked the beginning of emigration.<sup>45</sup> The emigration process of Turkish and other Muslim population from the P.R. of Macedonia actually started after the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister Fuat Köprülü to

---

the 1920s and 1930s cf. Zoran Janjetović, *Deca careva pastočad kraljeva. Nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2005), 67-72; Safet Bandžović, “Iseljnička politika balkanskih država i pitanje muslimana (1878 – 1941)”, *Almanah* 29–30/2001; Vladan Jovanović, *Slike jedne neuspele integracije: Kosovo, Makedonija, Srbija, Jugoslavija*, (Beograd: Peščanik, 2014), 95-130; Vladan Jovanović, “In Search of Homeland? Muslim Migration from Yugoslavia to Turkey 1918 – 1941”, *Tokovi istorije* 1-2/2008, 56-67; Božica Slavković Mirić, “A contribution to the research of emigration from Kosovo and Metohija between the two world wars”, *Journal of European and Balkan Perspective* 1/2020, 69-76.

44 During 1948 some ten families requested release from citizenship. Such requests had been sent in the following years too, but all of them were declined. At the beginning of 1952 seven requests were positively resolved which was encouragement for the others to apply for release from citizenship. In 1952 the requests of 35 families were positively resolved, which included release from citizenship of more than 150 individuals. (DARSM, 1.427.125.5. Informacija za iseluvanje na pripadnicite na turskoto nacionalno malcinstvo od teritorijata na Narodna Republika Makedonija).

45 DARSM, 1.427.49.3. Analiza za iseljvanjeto na turskoto naselenie.

Yugoslavia. After this visit, there was a significant improvement in bilateral relations between the two countries, which resulted in the signing of the Ankara Agreement in February 1953. The process of migration intensified after President Tito's visit to Turkey in April 1954.<sup>46</sup>

By the end of 1953, the requests for release from Yugoslav citizenship of 922 families (total of 2.404 persons) from the P.R. of Macedonia were accepted. Most of the requests for release from citizenship in this initial period of migration came from Skopje and the surrounding area. Among this population there were farmers, craftsmen and a small number of workers. If we analyze the social status of the emigrants during the initial years of emigration in 1952/1953, it can be concluded that most of them were common folk, who thought that they would be able to continue their craft in Turkey. After the liberation, with the measures taken by the authorities to introduce the so-called socialist economy, the merchants were prevented from engaging in free trade. Most of them had to put aside part of their earnings, so they could continue their trade in Turkey. The case was similar with the craftsmen in the beginning of the 1950s, where the crafts still prospered as the industry in Turkey was quite poorly developed.<sup>47</sup>

---

46 Edvin Pezo, "Komparativna analiza jugoslovensko-turske konvencije iz 1938. i 'džentlenskog sporazuma' iz 1953. Pregovori oko iseljavanja muslimana iz Jugoslavije u Tursku", *Tokovi istorije* 2/2013, 117; Edvin Pezo, "Emigration and policy in Yugoslavia: Dynamics and Constraints within the process of Muslim Emigration to Turkey during the 1950s", *European History Quarterly* 2/2018, 291-294.

47 According to the social composition, the emigrants to Turkey at the end of 1953 were: 232 workers, 215 craftsmen, 202 farmers, 84

Emigration to Turkey intensified in 1954, especially after the statement of Lazar Koliševski<sup>48</sup> for the newspaper “Nova Makedonija” of March 28, 1954. In his interview, Koliševski emphasizes that he did not agree with the term emigration, because during this process there was no coercion on the population that wanted to leave Yugoslavia. Talking about the reasons why this population requested release from Yugoslav citizenship in order to emigrate to Turkey, Koliševski said: “As for the reasons for which a release from citizenship is requested, I can say that these are quite understandable. First of all, there are family ties, religious desires under the influence of the reactionary forces to go to Turkey, and finally the extent to which part of the Turkish minority has adopted our community as their own, because that minority is still a Turkish member of a certain nation, and if the feeling for this socialist community of ours would be greater, the tendencies to leave it would be lesser.”<sup>49</sup>

The emigration was also discussed in the Federal Assembly of Yugoslavia, i.e. the MP from Kosovo and Metohija, Hivzi Sulejmani asked whether the Federal Government agreed with Koliševski’s views on emigration, and the answer to that was that Koliševski’s views did not contradict the Fe-

---

clerks, 24 students and pupils and 8 of other professions. These were only the professions of the heads of the families, because the total number of migrants in 1953 was much larger. (DARSM, 1.427.60.7).

48 Lazar Koliševski (1914-2000) was the Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of Macedonia between 1945 and 1953. From 1953 until 1962 he was the President of the Assembly of the P.R. of Macedonia. From 1963 until 1980 he held several offices on federal level.

49 *Нова Македонија*, March 28, 1954.

deral Government's policy.<sup>50</sup> Among other things, MP Sulejmani in his petition to the President of the Federal Assembly, Moša Pijade, asked whether people indeed emigrated for family or for political reasons. He also asked whether the residents were moving out due to discrimination, employment, or dismissal from work, and whether the local authorities had made mistakes that alienated people from socialism and from Yugoslavia. In a letter to the Federal Executive Council the authorities of the P. R. of Macedonia disputed those claims and under pressure Sulejmani withdrew his petition in which the mentioned statements were presented.<sup>51</sup>

The reasons for the massive emigration of part of Turkish and other Muslim population from the P.R. of Macedonia could be found in those statements mentioned in the petition to the Federal Assembly, but the actual reasons were manifold. As we mentioned before, the emigration from the 1950s was just the continuation of the process that had started with the Balkan wars. Economic reasons were also very important. The urban strata (merchants and craftsmen) were affected by the series of restrictions of the socialist economy. The collectivization, the mandatory sales of agricultural products to the authorities under the market value, prohibition of goat-keeping affected villagers from all nationalities, but for Turks these measures were the main

---

50 Arhiv na Makedonskata Akademija na Nauki i Umetnosti (AMANU), holding Lazar Koliševski, k. 43, folder – 2, Pismo od Narodniot poslanik vo Sojuznoto veće Hivzi Sulejmani od Priština March 30, 1954.

51 Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 514; Zoran Janjetović, "Emigration of Kosovo Albanians into Turkey during the 1950s", *Tokovi istorije* 3/2022, 103-104.

reasons for emigration. The religious factor also had a great influence on the emigration process, and in some cases, it was even more salient than the economic or political ones. Restrictions on religious life were not accepted by a large number of Muslims, especially since part of this population still considered Turkey to be the cradle of Islam.<sup>52</sup> There was also propaganda, especially among the rural population, which was sometimes spread by imams and sometimes by local officials or clerks. In the village of Cvetovo (inhabited by Macedonian Muslims – Torbeši) and in the neighboring village of Elovo, also inhabited by Torbeši, the member of the municipal board, Ibrahim Muarem, publicly stated: “If you don’t emigrate now, then each of you who stays will be Christianized (baptized).”<sup>53</sup>

The statistical data regarding the number of inhabitants who declared themselves atheist (without religion) during the 1953 census show that the religious factor also played a significant role. Out of 203.938 Turks only 3.567 (1.75%) declared themselves atheists “without religion”. The same was the case with the Albanians – out of 162.524 Albanians 2.857 (1.76%) had been recorded as “having no religion”.<sup>54</sup> This census data also show that Albanians and Turks in the P.R. of Macedonia were strongly linked to Islam.<sup>55</sup>

---

52 Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 517.

53 DARSM, Oddelenie Skopje, 6.13.28.237/639. The same attitudes were publicly presented among the Albanian population from Kosovo and Metohija – that they should move out to Turkey to join their Muslim brethren. (Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 515-516).

54 Kočović, *Etnički i demografski razvoj Jugoslavije*, II/296.

55 Among Macedonians 15.13% were recorded as having no religion, among Serbs 30.15%, while among Montenegrins as much as

The conservatism and traditionalism of part of the Muslim population contributed to massive emigration, not only for those who were Turks by origin, but also for that part of the population that directly connected religion to Turkish ethnic identity, undoubtedly the proof of the centuries-long influence and reign of the Ottoman Empire in these lands. To be sure, those reasons were manifold, but religion-connected reasons and the then political situation were those that influenced the massiveness of emigration the most.<sup>56</sup>

In the mid-1950s, the emigration process of the Turkish population intensified, especially the emigration of those living in eastern Macedonia, Povardarje region and some other regions where they were living in compact communities. Those who had obtained release from citizenship mostly moved immediately after receiving the certificate.<sup>57</sup> The statistics here speak best about the massiveness. Thus, 17.396 individuals emigrated in 1954; the peak was reached in 1955 with 38.045 requests for release from citizenship and for emigration; in 1956 the emigration process began to slightly wane, with 28.816 emigrants; in 1958 the number declined further still and there were

---

67.61%. In the Province of Kosovo and Metohija 2.35% of Albanians were recorded as "having no religion". (*Isto*, 292).

56 Глигор Тодоровски, "Демографските процеси во Македонија предизвикани од иселувањето на Турци во педесетите години", *Гласник на ИНИ* 41/1-2, 1997, 64; Салим Кадри Керими, *Иселувањето на Турците од Македонија во Турција по Втората светска војна*, (Скопје: Академски печат, 2021), 217-224; Драган Кљакиќ, *Времето на Колишевски*, (Скопје: Матица Македонска, 1994), 249.

57 DARSM, 1.427.60.7

23.626 citizenship releases recorded; 6.362 more emigrants were registered by the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 1959, making the total of 143.800 people.<sup>58</sup> Until 1953 those people mostly came from the areas where Turkish ethnic communities had been living, such as Skopje, Bitola, Valandovo, Vinica, Delčevo, Kičevo, Kumanovo, Negotino, Prilep, Radoviš, Sveti Nikole, Strumica, Veles, Štip.<sup>59</sup>

The emigration also caused certain structural changes in a number of social fields, which was especially obvious among the Turkish population. Since the individual influence in the society resulted from the power of the Communist Party, the membership in the CPM also meant inclusion in and influence on social trends. However, when it came to the membership in the Party, certain passivity within the Albanian and Turkish minorities was noted. Thus, in 1948 Albanians made up 17.1% of the P.R. of Macedonia's population, but only 5.62% of members of the CPM. By 1958 tiny increase in membership, to 6.23% was recorded. A decrease from 3.45% in 1948 to 2.14% in 1958 among the Turks was also noted. To be sure, the decrease was due to the emigration in the 1950s.<sup>60</sup>

---

58 DARSМ, 1.427.128.5/23-39. Informacija za iseluvanjeto na pripadnicite na turskoto nacionalno malcinstvo od teritorijata na Narodna Republika Makedonija.

59 Верица Јанеска, *Современите меѓународни миграции, емиграцијата од Република Македонија и социо-економскиот развој*, (Скопје: Економски Институт, 2001), 167.

60 Славко Милосавлевски, Мирче Томовски, *Албанците во Република Македонија 1945-1995, легислатива, политичка документација, статистика*, (Скопје: Студентски збор, 1997), 63. In the analysis of the Union of Communists it is stated that after 1953 the most members of the Union of Communist of Yugoslavia



A similar situation was registered in the field of education. During the 1951/1952 school year, 16% of all pupils in Macedonia were Albanians and 7.5% were Turks. Over the course of the decade, there had been a certain decline, especially in the number of Turkish pupils. In the 1960/1961 school year, 13% of the elementary school students were Albanians and 2.7% Turks. As a result of the emigration the number of students of Turkish ethnicity decreased from 12.493 in 1951 to 6.410 in 1961.<sup>61</sup>

Perhaps the best example of massive emigration that affected the Turkish population could be found in two eastern Macedonian areas, Ovče Pole and the Kočane Vally, where the Turks made up a significant share of the population until the mid-1950s. Until the Balkan wars, the Turks represented the majority in Ovče Pole. Despite the withdrawal of part of the Turkish population with the Ottoman army in 1912, Turks still remained the majority in the area in 1913.<sup>62</sup> However, as a result of the continuous process of emigration

---

of Turkish ethnic background became “passive” in this period. Part of them applied for emigration. An interesting example is the village GornoVranovci in the region of Veles in which Macedonian Muslims Torbeši lived. In the village with 3.700 inhabitants acted the Party organization had 73 members. When the process of emigration started “the whole organization fell apart as if it had never existed”. (DARSM, 1.427.60.7).

61 Милосавлевски, Томовски, *Албанците во Република Македонија 1945-1995*, 337.

62 According to the data from the population census organized by the authorities of the Kingdom of Serbia in the spring of 1913, in the Sveti Nikole region there were 1.336 Turkish homes, i.e. 51.3% and 1.270 Bulgarian homes, i.e. 48.7%. (Милош Јагодић, *Нови крајеви Србије*, (Београд: Филозофски факултет, 2013), 118).

in the 1920s and 1930s of the 20th century, changes in the ethnic structure in these areas were occurred.<sup>63</sup> In both areas, the intensive process of emigration of the Turkish population to Turkey began in 1954. Thus, in 1953, just before the beginning of the migration, 6.569 Turks lived in Ovče Pole, i.e. Sveti Nikole region, while during the following census their number decreased to 817 inhabitants.<sup>64</sup>

Jovan Trifunoski, who conducted field research in the second half of the 1950s, in his anthropogeographical studies closely analyzed and provided a very clear review of the emigration process. We could pick up the example of the large village of Karatmanovo<sup>65</sup> located in Ovče Pole, in which 130 Turkish households or 765 Turks lived in 1953. During the period between 1954 and 1958, 105 households emigrated from the village to Turkey.<sup>66</sup> In the next census, only 76 Turks were registered in the village.<sup>67</sup> Another interesting example

---

63 In 1921 in Kočani region Turks, i.e. the population whose mother tongue was Turkish, made up 26.2% of the population, while in Ovče Pole, i.e. the Sveti Nikole region they accounted for 34.5%. (*Дефинитивни резултати пописа становништва 1921. год, 92-93*).

64 *Население на Република Македонија според изјаснување за национална припадност, 170-172; 246-251.*

65 This was one of the rare Turkish villages in Ovče Pole where after 1912 there was no emigration to Asia Minor. 542 people lived in the village in 1913. (Мил. Ант. Вујичић, *Речник места у Ослобођеној области Старе Србије. По службеним податцима*, (Београд: Државна Штампариија Краљевине Србије, 1914), 32).

66 Jovan F. Trifunoski, "Ovčepoljska kotlina", *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena*, 42/1964, 713. Half of the remained 25 families in 1958 had already sold their properties and prepared themselves to emigrate to Turkey.

67 *Население на Република Македонија според изјаснување за национална припадност, 171.*

could be that of the village of Džumajilija, where all 66 Turkish households emigrated to Turkey between 1954 and 1958. Macedonians and Albanians settled in their place.<sup>68</sup>

The same thing happened in the region of Kočani. Small part of the local Turks retreated together with the Ottoman army during the First Balkan War. The emigration continued in the period between the two world wars, but reached its peak in the mid- and late 1950s. In the period between 1954 and 1959, some 850 Turkish households emigrated from the region of Kočani.<sup>69</sup> The example of the largest village in the Blatec area is typical. Before the Balkan wars, a mixed Muslim (Turkish) and Christian population lived there. In 1913, 2.285 inhabitants were registered in the village.<sup>70</sup> In 1948, before the beginning of the emigration of the Turkish population, there had been 1.837 Turks and 1.071 Macedonians there.<sup>71</sup> The first mass emigration of Turks from the village happened in the mid-twenties, when some 25 households emigrated. When the emigration started in 1955, Blatec had 400 Turkish households; by the middle of 1959 only 60 Turkish households remained, out of which 40 families had already sold their properties and were preparing to emigrate too.<sup>72</sup>

---

68 Trifunoski, "Ovčepoljska kotlina", 714.

69 Јован Ф. Трифуноски, *Кочанска котлина: сеоска насеља и становништво*, (Скопје: б.и, 1970), 53-143. 6.051 Turks, i.e. 15% of the population lived in the County of Kočani in 1948. (*Коначни резултати пописа становништва од 15. марта 1948*, 442).

70 Вујичић, *Речник места*, 29.

71 *Коначни резултати пописа становништва од 15. марта 1948*, 442.

72 Трифуноски, *Кочанска котлина*, 109-111.

Regarding the migratory movements of the 1950s, we will adduce the example of the Skopje region, because the Muslim population was not ethnically homogeneous in this area, as it was in neighboring Ovče Pole. Emigration of the Turks, Macedonian Muslims (Torbeši) and Albanians took place with different intensity and dynamics in each of the mentioned communities, which will later result in different consequences for them.

The most massive emigration of Turks from the Skopje region actually occurred in several Skopje villages.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, we will give the typical example of the villages of Dolno Konjari and Sredno Konjari inhabited by Turkish population, where the speed and massiveness of the emigration process was the same as in the neighboring Turkish villages in Ovče Pole. Before the beginning of the mass immigration to Turkey 1.957 inhabitants lived in the two villages in 1953, 1.931 out of them were Turks.<sup>74</sup> Similarly to other parts of Macedonia, in 1953-1954 the inhabitants of Dolno and Sredno Konjari began to apply for release from Yugoslav citizenship in order to be able to emigrate to Turkey. During 1953 and 1954, 92 families living in these villages applied for release from Yugoslav citizenship, and by the end of 1954, 49 households had already received their release from citizenship.<sup>75</sup> Several hun-

---

73 Until the mid-1950s Turks lived in the villages of Dolno and Gorno Konjari, Tekija, Čojlija and Adzalari (Miladinovci). In the remaining settlements their number was insignificant.

74 *Naselenie po narodnost i naselbi vo SRM*, 51-52.

75 DARSMS, Oddelenie Skopje, 6.13.33.86/481-483. During the following years, requests for release from Yugoslav citizenship and emigration from the local Turkish population continued. As a re-

dred households from Sandžak, Kosovo and southern Serbia moved in and replace the emigrated Turks.

The emigration of Macedonian Muslims (Torbeši) in the mid-1950s was also massive. As we know, during the 1953 census most of them declared themselves Turks. We will give the example of the Skopje village of Umovo, which is an excellent illustrative example of the demographic consequences that migration left on some micro-communities. The first requests for release from Yugoslav citizenship by the inhabitants of Umovo were announced on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January 1954.<sup>76</sup> By the end of January 1954, another eight families from Umovo, including 30 adult members, requested release from Yugoslav citizenship.<sup>77</sup> Requests for release from Yugoslav citizenship and emigration from Umovo continued in the following period. According to the newspaper "Nova Makedonija", from the beginning of 1954 until the middle of 1957, 84 families, including 364 adult inhabitants from Umovo applied for release from Yugoslav citizenship. If we keep tracking the emigration process by years, 24 families requested release from citizenship during 1954; 23 families in 1955; in 1956 the number of requests was the highest – 31 families and 6 families by June 30, 1957. Due to emigration, the number

---

sult of the emigration, considerable part of the land in the villages remained uncultivated. For this reason, in October 1959, the local Council of the People's Board of the Skopje district adopted a decision to raise an investment loan worth almost 82 million dinars for the purchase of the land from the Turkish population, which in less than a decade had almost completely emigrated from the villages. (DARSM, Oddelenie Skopje, 6.8.15.15/122-126).

76 *Нова Македонија*, dated the 5th of January, 1954.

77 *Нова Македонија*, dated the 22d, 25th, 26th, 29th of January, 1954.

of the inhabitants in Umovo decreased rapidly. From 825 inhabitants in 1953, the number dropped drastically to 64 inhabitants in 1961 and to just 14 inhabitants in 1965.<sup>78</sup>

Emigration also affected part of the villages in the Skopje region inhabited by Albanians, but it did not happen with such intensity and consequences as among the Turkish and Torbeši population. Examples of the Albanian emigration in the 1950s would be the villages of Nerezi and Grušino.<sup>79</sup> In 1948, 1.334 inhabitants lived in Dolno and Gorno Nerezi. Regarding the ethnic composition, 882 inhabitants (66.11%) declared themselves Albanians (“Shiptars”, according to the census terminology of the time), 428 (32.08%) as Macedonians, 23 as Turks and 10 were inhabitants of other ethnicities.<sup>80</sup> However, when analyzing the census of 1953 big changes are observed. Due to the general political situation (which was previously explained), as well as due to the process of emigration to Turkey, which would also include the Albanian population from Nerezi, a large number of Albanians declared themselves Turks. This tendency would continue to be re-

---

78 *Попис на населението во Скопје, 1. ноември 1965. година*, 117.

Due to emigration of the almost whole population from the village, the primary school was closed. DARSM, 1.159.103.16, Rešenje za ukinuvanje na Osnovnoto učilište vo selo Umovo 23.04.1962. In certain regions, especially in eastern Macedonia very few Turkish students remained, and in some places finding teachers for these schools was very hard. For this reason it was suggested that children should attend classes in Macedonian, but with extra lessons for learning the Turkish language. (DARSM, 1.427.84.86).

79 In Nerezi Albanians and Macedonians lived, but in Grušino only Albanians.

80 *Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948. godine*.

corded during 1961 and 1965 censuses. In 1953, 1.577 inhabitants were recorded in Dolno and Gorno Nerezi, that is, 18.21% more than in the previous census. In 1953, 920 inhabitants (58.33%) declared themselves Turks, 498 (31.57%) Macedonians, 123 (7.79%) Albanians.<sup>81</sup>

At the end of 1953 the first request for release from Yugoslav citizenship was submitted by the Nerezi's wishing to immigrate to Turkey.<sup>82</sup> During 1954 the trend of requesting release from Yugoslav citizenship continued and four families from Dolno and Gorno Nerezi applied at the Secretariat of Internal Affairs. The process peaked in 1956. Only in February five families including 41 adults requested release from citizenship. This whole year there were 17 families from Dolno and Gorno Nerezi who requested releases. The following year a decrease in the total number of the requests for release from the Yugoslav citizenship was noted in other parts of the Skopje County as well as in Macedonia in general. By the end of June, after the requests had been published in "Nova Makedonija" newspaper, five more families from Dolno and Gorno Nerezi requested their release from citizenship. In the period from December 1953 until June 1957 34 Albanian families from Dolno and Gorno Nerezi requested release from Yugoslav citizenship with the intention of moving to Turkey.<sup>83</sup> In 1953 some 160 families lived in Dolno and Gorno

---

81 *Naselenie po narodnost i naselbi vo SRM*, 49.

82 *Нова Македонија*, dated 10th of December 1953.

83 *Нова Македонија*, dated 11th of March 1954; 18th of April 1954; 6th of June 1954; 1st of November 1954; 18th of February 1955; 15th of March 1955; 20th of September 1955; 30th of September 1955; 21st of February 1956; 23rd of February 1956; 13th of March

Nerezi, meaning 20% of this population requested release from citizenship. We do not have official data as to the total number of households that actually emigrated.<sup>84</sup>

Similar situation could be noticed in the village of Grušino, located in the northeastern part of the Skopje valley.<sup>85</sup> This village had been inhabited by Albanians who declared themselves belonging to different ethnic minorities in the post-war censuses. In the year of 1948, 615 individuals lived in the village, out of whom 611 declared themselves Albanians. When the emigration process to Turkey began in 1953, 724 inhabitants lived in the village, out of whom 423 declared themselves Albanians and 292 Turks. In 1961 there were 728 villagers, out of which 606 declared themselves Turks, and only 121 Albanians.<sup>86</sup> This change in the local ethnic make-up was the consequence

---

1956; 18th of May 1956; 28th of June 1956; 20th of July 1956; 5th of November 1956; 8th of November 1956; 11th of December 1956; 21st of December 1956; 27th of January 1957; 24th of April 1957; 6th of May 1957.

84 Nerezi is one of the villages near Skopje from where a large number of Albanians requested release from Yugoslav citizenship. In other Albanian villages the number was smaller. In the neighbouring village of Krušopek in 1953 there were 114 Albanian homes, out of whom five families emigrated to Turkey. (Јован Трифуновски, *Сеоска насеља Скопске котлине: развитак села порекло становништва привредне одлике*, (Скопје: Републички фонд за научна работа, 1969), 102).

85 According to the antropo-geographical researches of Jovan Trifunovski the ancestors of the local Albanians immigrated from northern Albania to Grušino around 1780. Those families belonged to the north Albanian clans of Berisha, Sopi, Krasniqi and Shala. (*Isto*, 26-28).

86 *Naselenie po narodnost i naselbi*, 52.



of the Albanians' emigration to Turkey, that had begun in this village in the mid-1950s. The first requests for release from Yugoslav citizenship were submitted by three families from Grušino in 1954.<sup>87</sup> In the following years, after the exact procedure for release from the citizenship had been established, several families emigrated to Turkey. According to the review of the Local Municipal Office, by September 1957 eight families with 82 members emigrated to Turkey. In 1953 11% of the village population emigrated. Those emigrants settled in Istanbul and Bursa.<sup>88</sup> Despite the fact that this emigration process was very intensive in the mid-1950s it did not leave consequences similar to those in the neighboring villages which were inhabited by Turks. There was no change in ethnic make-up in Grušino, and there was an increase in the number of inhabitants since the beginning of the 1960s.

*Emigration movement from the  
Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija and Sandžak*

During the 1950s as the emigration of the population from P.R. of Macedonia was in progress there was also massive immigration of Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija and from the regions of Preševo and Bujanovac as well as of Bosnian Muslims from the Sandžak region to Macedonia. This migration was the most noticeable and had the largest scope in the area around Skopje. In fact, the immigration of the population to Macedonia from the

---

87 DARSМ, Oddelenie Skopje, 6.29.11.02/26.

88 Трифуноски, *Сеоска насеља Скопске котлине*, 28.

other parts of Yugoslavia was a function of the emigration of the local population to Turkey. Namely, the people who wanted to move out to Turkey could not obtain their release from Yugoslav citizenship by applying in Serbia or in Montenegro. This was the main reason for people to immigrate to the P.R. of Macedonia, where they could acquire the “republican” citizenship of Macedonia and request and obtain release from Yugoslav citizenship after some time. Later on, this process enabled them to acquire Turkish citizenship and move to Turkey.

Although it had been happening before, the emigration from the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija<sup>89</sup> was particularly massive in the 1950s, primarily due to economic ties and better road connections of Skopje with this region. Almost 90% of the immigrants from Kosovo and Metohija in the 1951-1956 period settled in Skopje and its surroundings. During that period 14.207 immigrants were registered in the city, with 980 more in Skopje’s surroundings. The largest number of immigrants was recorded in the 1950s. These settlers were mostly living in the city center, from where a number of Turks had previously moved out. The rest of the new settlers, mainly the poorer, settled on the city’s periphery, living in substandard conditions.<sup>90</sup> However, not all of the immigrants co-

---

89 About the social and political circumstances of the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija in the 1950s, cf. Миомир Гаталовић, *Косово и Метохија у државној политици Југославије 1958 – 1965*, (Београд: Институт за савремену историју, Друштво историчара Србије, 2015).

90 AMANU, holding Lazar Koliševski, 43/2, Izveštaj za pripadnicite na malcinskoto naselenie (muslimansko) dojdeno od Kosovo, San-

ming from other Yugoslav republics were administratively registered during this short period.

The Secretariat of Internal Affairs estimated 25.000 people, including those from Kosovo and Metohija and Sandžak, had immigrated to Macedonia's smaller towns and villages and then emigrated to Turkey until the middle of 1956. Some 14.500 people from Skopje and its vicinity received release from citizenship during that period, which means the city was burdened with additional 10.000 new residents.<sup>91</sup> According to the analysis conducted by the Union of Communists in the mid-1950s, it was deemed that mass immigration to Macedonia, and especially to Skopje, represented a serious problem. The reason for such massive immigration to Macedonia was also the new possibility to buy the abandoned properties of the emigrated Turks. Firstly, some people immigrated individually, bringing their families later on. Because of this, a series of negative consequences occurred, such as economic and health problems as well as the increase in the number of the unemployed.<sup>92</sup>

The statistics also confirm the Party analysis. According to the published data of the 1965 census conducted in Skopje and the neighboring municipalities, it is evident that during the migration wave to Turkey in the 1950s, the immigration of the population from other Yugoslav repu-

---

džak, Crna Gora i Bosna i Hercegovina vo NR. Makedonija od 1951-1956 godina.

91 AMANU, holding Lazar Koliševski, 43/2, Pregled na doseleni lica vo Skopje od 1953.

92 DARSM, 1.427.84.85/454-455, Analiza za iseluvanje na turskoto malcinstvo od teritorijata na Skopskata okolija.

blics (especially from the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija) to the city and its surroundings increased. Thus, in the 1953-1957 period, 3.600 persons immigrated from Kosovo and Metohija, while in the 1946-1952 period, 1.289 people immigrated.<sup>93</sup> This example clearly shows that the number of those who immigrated from Kosovo and Metohija increased as the number of those who emigrated to Turkey increased too, increasing subsequently the number of the Albanian new settlers in Skopje. Actually, what increased the most was the number of Albanians who immigrated into Macedonia.

Part of the immigrants stayed to live in the city or in the nearby villages, but for the other part of Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija and southern region of Serbia, as well as for the Muslims from Sanžak, this was just a stop from where they could emigrate to Turkey after passing the administrative procedure. All of this was causing series of problems to the local authorities, that kept asking for help and instructions from the republican authorities. Typical was the example of the villages of Dolno Konjari and Sredno Konjari. After 1954, 150 families from Montenegro - mostly from the area of Berane (Ivangrad at the time) - and from Serbia - mostly from the regions of Novi Pazar, Bujanovac and Kosovo and Metohija (especially from the villages near Gnjilane) - immigrated into the villages of Dolno Konjari and Sredno Konjari.<sup>94</sup> The local authorities informed the Secretariat of Internal Affairs about the newly settled population in those two villages

---

93 *Попис на населението во Скопје*, 148.

94 DARSМ, Oddelenie Skopje, 6.29.11/390-395.

and said: "it could be certainly concluded that all newly arrived people had come with the purpose of emigrating to Turkey after receiving the citizenship of the P.R. of Macedonia and obtaining the other necessary documents. Most of them already had letters of guarantee from Turkey, and the smaller part of the population obtained permissions from the Turkish Consulate and moved to Turkey. The rest were trying to obtain documents for migration in many different ways. The main obstacle was getting the proof of nationality. If they received such a document, emigration would be easier. Please inform us if there are legal possibilities for them to obtain the document where they could change their ethnic self-identification. If so, please let us know how that could be realized."<sup>95</sup>

Apart from Skopje and its surroundings, the Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija and the Muslims from Sandžak also settled in the interior parts of Macedonia, primarily in those areas from which the Turks had moved out. Such migration was recorded in the area of Veles (Titov Veles back then), Prilep and Ovče Pole. We will adduce several examples of villages in the area of Ovče Pole from where Turks moved out in large numbers in the mid-1950s. After that, Macedonian villagers from the underdeveloped area of Kriva Palanka or Kratovo, as well as Vlachs, moved into their places. In several villages in this region migration of Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija and Preševo and Muslims from Sandžak was also recor-

---

95 DARSМ, Oddelenie Skopje, 6.29.11/389. We could see why there was this tendency among Muslims to declare themselves as Turks during 1953 and 1961 censuses.

ded. During the 1954-1958 period some 200 Albanian families immigrated to these villages. Those were Albanians from Gnjilane, Prizren, Uroševac, Kačanik, Peć, Kosovska Mitrovica. The Bosnian Muslims from Sandžak region were mainly coming from Pljevlja, Novi Pazar, Prijepolje, whereas Muslims from Bosnia and Hercegovina were coming from the region of Foča.<sup>96</sup>

Some authors who studied these migrations in detail and on the spot, such as Trifunoski on the example of Albanians in Ovče Pole, saw the main causes for them in the poor economic conditions<sup>97</sup>, underdevelopment of the area from where this migrated population came<sup>98</sup> and also the tendency of part of the population from Kosovo and Metohija and Sandžak to move to Turkey after coming to Macedonia. All of this was also confirmed by their ethnic

---

96 Trifunoski, "Ovčepoljska kotlina", 647-648.

97 Undoubtly there were also economic factors that were the reason why Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija immigrated to Macedonia and then some of them move to Turkey. At the Conference of the Socialist Union held in Uroševac in April 1954, at time when there was significant immigration from Kosovo and Metohija to Macedonia, in the presence of the member of the Executive Council of Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija, one of the participants said: "The Government imposed large taxes and we, the Shiptars, do not have the same rights as Serbs. Is there a single Serb without a job? There is not. Is there a Shiptar with a job? No, there is not. We are being called ballists and we are not allowed to work...". (Janjetović, *Konfrontacija i integracija*, 516). Some of the reasons for migration should be sought in this opinion among the Albanian population in Kosovo and Metohija.

98 This researcher states: "This migration must be characterized as a population movement from underdeveloped Yugoslav areas to some more developed regions".

self-identification in 1961 on the first census conducted after the immigration to Macedonia, when the majority of the immigrants declared themselves Turks.<sup>99</sup>

By the end of the 1950s the emigration to Turkey would abate with a tendency of constant decrease in number of emigrants. Population censuses in Macedonia in the following period showed constant tendency of decrease in the number of Turks and increase in the number of Albanians. Coupled with political changes, such demographic movements would have a significant impact on the gradual political and social transformation of Macedonia.

### *Conclusion*

The population censuses in the People's Republic of Macedonia conducted in 1948, 1953 and 1961 recorded major changes in the ethnic identity of the Muslim communities (Albanians, Turks and Macedonian Muslims

---

99 Interesting is the example of the village of Milino in the area of Ovče Pole in which only Turkish population lived until 1954. Although the largest part of Turks moved out by the end of 1950s and some 100 Albanian families from the regions of Preševo and Gnjilane as well as Bosniak families from the region of Pljevlja, Novi Pazar and Prijepolje came to live in the village in the 1954-1958 period (Trifunovski, "Ovčepoljska Kotlina", 672-673) the census results from 1961 give totally different village ethnic structure. Only 99 inhabitants declared themselves Muslims [Bosniaks in the then parlance] and 125 Albanians. 16 Montenegrins were also registered, although 45 families from Pljevlja region moved to the village. Most of the inhabitants declared themselves Turks. (*Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u 1961. godini. Nacionalni sastav stanovništva FNRJ*, 247).

(Torbeši)). Several historical, political and cultural factors influenced the ethnic identification of these population communities. The above-mentioned censuses do not fully show the real ethnic make-up of the Republic. According to the final data of the 1948 census, 1.152.986 people lived on the territory of the P. R. of Macedonia, out of which 789.648 or 68.5% of the total declared themselves Macedonians. The second-largest group were the Albanians counting 197.389 (17.1% of the total population) and third third largest were the Turks, with 95.940 people (8.32%). In comparison with this census, in the next one from 1953 a change was noted regarding the number of members the Albanian and Turkish minority. The number of Turks increased from 95.940 (8.32%) in 1948 to 203.938 (15.63%) in 1953. At the same time there was a significant decrease in the number of the Albanians in Macedonia. The number of 197.389 in 1948 decreased to 162.524 people, meaning a total decrease of some 35.000 people without the natural population growth included. In 1961, 183.108 Albanians and 131.481 Turks were registered in Macedonia. This change in the ethnic identity of the Muslim population in Macedonia was caused mainly by the migration process that had started in the first half of the 1950s, i.e. by the emigration of the Turks and other Muslims to Turkey.

This migratory process, that started much earlier in other Balkans territories, continued in Macedonia after the Balkan wars. It is estimated that in few decades some 200.000 people immigrated to Turkey, which of course represents a massive migration movement. The reasons were political, economic, social and religious. From 1953 the number of the Turkish population continually decrea-



sed, even though part of the Muslim population (Albanians and Macedonian Muslims) declared themselves Turks.

This movement initiated a new migration process in Macedonia, i.e. immigration of people from Kosovo, southern Serbia and Sandžak to Macedonia. The immigrants settled mostly on the lands of the emigrated Turks. Part of them came to Macedonia only to emigrate to Turkey in a very short time. These immigrations left a mark on ethnic structure in some regions in Macedonia. Demographic movements also impacted political and social changes in the following decades.

### **Sources and literature:**

Arhiv na Makedononskata Akademija na Naukite i Umetnostite: holding Lazar Koliševski.

Državen Arhiv na Republika Severna Makedonija: holding 427, Centralen komitet na KPM/SKM; holding 159, Izvršen Sovet.

Državen Arhiv na Republika Severna Makedonija: Oddelenie – Skopje: holding Naroden odbor na Skopska okolija

*Die Gliederung der Bevölkerung des ehemaligen Jugoslawien nach Muttersprache und Konfession nach den unveröffentlichten Angaben der Zählung von 1931.* Wien, 1943.

*Definitivni rezultati popisa stanovništva 1921. godine.* Sarajevo: Opšta državna statistika, 1932. (Cyrillic)

*Konačni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 15. marta 1948. godine. Knjiga IX. Stanovništvo po narodnosti.* Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1954.

*Naselenie po narodniosk i naselbi vo SRM (spored administrativno – teritorijalnata podelba od 9-II-1962 godina.* Skopje: Zavod za statistika, 1964.

*Naselenieto na Republika Makedonija spored izjasnuvanje za nacionalna pripadnost, Popisi na naselenieto od 1948. do 1994, podatoci po opštini i naseleni mesta spored administrativno – teritorijlnata podelba od 1996. godina. Kniga IX. Skopje: Državen zavod za statistika, 2002. (Cyrillic)*

*Popis na naselenieto vo Skopje, 1. noemvri 1965. godina. Skopje: Gradsko sobranie na grad Skopje, 1967. (Cyrillic)*

*Popis stanovništva, domaćinstava i stanova u 1961. godini. Nacionalni sastav stanovništva FNRJ, podaci po naseljima i opštinama. Knjiga III. Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1994.*

*Služben vesnik na Narodna Republika Makedonija, 1946.*

Bandžović, Safet. “Iseljenička politika balkanskih država i pitanje muslimana (1878 – 1941)”. *Almanah* 29-30/2001, 187 – 234.

Gadzanov, Dimitar G. “Mjssljumanskoto naselenie v novoosvobodeni-te zemi”. *Nauchna ekspedicija Makedonija i Pomoraviето, 1916 g. S"st. Per"r Hr. Petrov, 231-279. Sofija: Univerzitetsko izdatelstvo “Sveti Kliment Ohridski”, 1993. (Cyrillic)*

Gatalović, Miomir. *Kosovo i Metohija u državnoj politici Jugoslavije 1958 – 1965. Beograd: Institut za savremenu istoriju, Društvo istoričara Srbije, 2015. (Cyrillic)*

Ilievski, Borče. *Demografskite karakteristiki na Vardarska Makedonija megu dvete svetski vojni (analiza na jugoslovenskite popisi od 1921 i 1931 godina). Skopje: Filozofski fakultet, 2017. (Cyrillic)*

Ilievski, Borče. “The Albanian population in the Kingdom of Yougoslavia: Demographic and statistical analysis”. *Istorija 20 veka* 1/2023, 19-44.

Ilievski, Borče. “The Ethno-Demographic Changes in 1950 s in the Peoples Republic of Macedonia: The Emigration Process of the Turkish and Muslim Population”. *Macedonian Historical Review* 1/2010, 167-182.

Jagodić, Miloš. *Novi krajevi Srbije (1912 – 1915). Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, 2013. (Cyrillic)*

Janevska, Verica. *Sovremenite megjunarodni migracii, emigracijata od Republika Makedonija socio-ekonomskiot razvoj. Skopje: Ekonomski institut, 2001. (Cyrillic)*

Janjetović, Zoran. *Konfrontacija i integracija. Nacionalne manjine u Srbiji 1944 – 1964. Beograd: Institut za Noviju Istoriju Srbije, 2022.*

- Janjetović, Zoran. *Deca careva pastočad kraljeva. Nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941*. Beograd: Institut za Noviju Istoriju Srbije, 2005.
- Janjetović, Zoran. "Emigration of Kosovo Albanians into Turkey during 1950s", *Tokovi istorije* 3/2022, 93-118.
- Jovanović, Vladan. *Slike jedne neuspele integracije: Kosovo, Makedonija, Srbija, Jugoslavija*. Beograd: Peščanik, 2014.
- Jovanović, Vladan. "In Search of Homeland? Muslim Migration from Yugoslavia to Turkey 1918 – 1941", *Tokovi istorije* 1-2/2008, 56-67.
- Kerimi, Kadri Salim. *Iseluvanje na Turcite od Makedonija vo Turcija po Vtorata svetska vojna*. Skopje: Akademski pečat, 2021. (Cyrillic)
- Kljakić, Dragan. *Vremeto na Koliševski*. Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1994. (Cyrillic)
- Kočović, Bogoljub. *Etnički i demografski razvoj Jugoslavije od 1921. do 1991 godine, (po svim zvaničnim, a u nekim slučajevima i koregrovanim popisima)*. Sveska II. Paris: Bibliotheque Dialogue, 1998.
- Lita, Qerim. "Shpengulja e Shqiptare nga Maqedonija (1953-1959)". *Studime Albanologjike* 1/2009, 75-106.
- Lutovac, Milisav. *Gora i Opolje antropogeografska ispitivanja*. Beograd: Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, 1955. (Cyrillic)
- Milosavljevski, Slavko. Tomovski, Mirče. *Albancite vo Republika Makedonija 1945 – 1995 legislativa politička dokumentacija statistika*. Skopje: Studentski zbor, 1997. (Cyrillic)
- Mrdjen, Snježana. "Narodnost u popisima. Promjenljiva i nestalna kategorija", *Stanovništvo* 1-4/2002, 77-103.
- Ortakovski, Vladimir. *Minorities in the Balkan*. Skopje: 2-ri Avgust, 1998.
- Pezo, Edvin. "Komparativna analiza jugoslovensko – turske konvencije iz 1938. i 'džentlmenskog sporazuma' iz 1953. Pregovori oko iseljavanje muslimana iz Jugoslavije u Tursku". *Tokovi istorije* 2/2013, 97-120.
- Pezo, Edvin. "Emigration and policy in Yugoslavia: Dynamics and Constraints within the process of Muslim Emigration to Turkey during the 1950s". *European History Quarterly* XLVIII, 2/2018, 283-313.
- Radić, Radmila, "Iseljavanje stanovništva sa jugoslovenskog prostora sredinom pedesetih godina", *Istorijski zapisi* 1-2/1999, 143-173. (Cyrillic)

- Simeunović, Vladimir. *Stanovništvo Jugoslavije i socijalističkih republika 1921 – 1961: ukupno stanovništvo, polna i starosna struktura*. Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku, 1964.
- Slavković Mirić, Božica. "A contribution to the research of emigration from Kosovo and Metohija between the two world wars". *Journal of European and Balkan Perspective* 1/2020, 69-79.
- Todorovski, Gligor. *Demografskite procesi i promeni vo Makedonija od početokot na Prvata balkanska vojna do osamostojuvaweto na Makedonija so poseben osvrt na islamiziranite Makedonci*. Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 2000. (Cyrillic)
- Todorovski, Gligor. "Demografskite procesi vo Makedonija preizvikani od iseluvanje to na Turci vo pedesetite godini", *Glasnik na Institut za nacionalna istorija* 1-2/1997, 55-70.
- Trifunoski, F. Jovan. *Albansko stanovništvo u Socijalističkoj Republici Makedoniji: antropogeografska i etnografska istraživanja*. Beograd: Književne novine, 1988.
- Trifunoski, F. Jovan. *Kočanska kotlina: seoska naselja i stanovništvo*. Skopje: b. I, 1970.
- Trifunoski, F. Jovan. "Ovčepoljska kotlina". *Zbornik za narodni život i običaje Južnih Slavena* 42/1964, 585-762.
- Trifunoski, F. Jovan. *Seoska naselja Skopske kotline: razvitak sela, poreklo stanovništva, privredne odlike*. Skopje: Republički fond za naučna rabota, 1964. (Cyrillic)
- Trifunoski, F. Jovan. *Sliv Markove Reke: antropogeografska promatranja*. Skopje: Filozofski fakultet na Univerzitet Skopje, 1958. (Cyrillic)
- Vujičić, Ant. Mil. *Rečnik mesta u oslobođenoj oblasti Stare Srbije. Po službenim podacima*. Beograd: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, 1914. (Cyrillic)
- Nova Makedonija* (Cyrillic)