



**THE ALBANIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY
NON-PAPER**

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Serious crisis as a modus operandi and legacy of the system in the former Yugoslavia has prevailed in Macedonia since February 12, 2001. It is necessary to analyze the background of the crisis, the motives that incited it, and its anticipated objectives. A failure to explain the conflict adequately will only reactivate the crisis, or deepen it, until it becomes uncontrollable.

The position of the Democratic Party of Albanians in Macedonia (DPA) is that the crisis is an interethnic one, because it raises issues that have to do with the position of Albanians in the social system. The crisis in Macedonia is not a spillover from Kosova, as many observers initially surmised, and credit for this should be given to the Albanian political factors in Kosova, Albania, and Macedonia who condemned violence as a means of expressing political dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, this does not change the inherently ethnic character of the conflict.

Why did similar crises, emerging from ethnic antagonism, happen in the former Yugoslavia and in Macedonia? Historically, interethnic conflict becomes inevitable whenever the dissolution of a multiethnic state occurs. For example, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires brought interethnic conflict into the open, resulting in bloody wars and other forms of strife. Even today, after the breakup of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, interethnic conflicts, whether resolved or impending, surface very conspicuously.

These issues are as raw and exposed in Macedonia as they were when Yugoslavia began to dissolve at the beginning of the 1990s. The DPA strives not to demonize this phenomenon, but to understand it fully in all of its complexity and to offer acceptable solutions—one that are as democratic as possible—and always bearing in mind the rights that were inherited from the former system, as well as international standards and conventions.

We see an interethnic contest between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians regarding the following two issues: the concept of the state and the representation of Albanians in state institutions. The concept of the state as it is put forth in the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia can be characterized in every way as an ethnocentric one, which is incompatible with the multiethnic reality of Macedonia. This concept was imposed by the Macedonian majority in the parliament in a vote on the Constitution of the new state on November 17, 1991.

Albanian MPs en bloc did not vote for this Constitution, because it did not incorporate the inherited rights of Albanians from the former Yugoslav system and the democratic aspirations of the new, historic moment, marked by the falling of the Berlin Wall. The Constitution of 1991 carries within itself the spirit of reductionism that characterized the 1980s and which reached its peak in 1989. It includes amendments that narrowed the constitutional standing of Albanians and the kind of nationalism that would lead to the break-up of the former Yugoslavia.





In a multiethnic state, crucial documents such as the Constitution are customarily created through consensus and not through ethnic majority imposition, which automatically creates interethnic antagonism and, in extreme cases, disloyalty among citizens towards the system.

In Macedonia, disloyalty was allowed to take root and, on February 12, 2001, Albanian dissatisfaction took an extreme direction, resulting in armed opposition towards the system and an interethnic war.

The second major issue that should be considered when analyzing the factors that triggered the current conflict in Macedonia is the marginalization of the Albanian population, not only in terms of employment in state institutions, where they number only a shockingly low, three percent of the workforce, but also in terms of the monies allocated to the municipal budgets for social, educational, and health services in Albanian majority areas.

The Institute of Statistics in Macedonia actually possesses all of the data on the economic lives of Albanians in Macedonia. Nevertheless, an unbiased, objective analysis of the situation should be made by independent experts.

The third major issue that we want to emphasize is the fate of political prisoners and the treatment of people who were previously persecuted as suspicious elements under the Communist system. They number at least 50,000, and yet Macedonia has never taken the circumstances of these victims of Communist rigidity seriously.

A truly democratic state should have a program for the integration of these individuals into society, accompanied by a special amnesty law.

I think that the genesis of Albanian disloyalty towards the system in Macedonia is the result of the aforementioned issues, and this makes the search for external origins both fruitless and dangerous.



The prevailing opinion in Macedonia during the crisis—the result of both prejudices and stereotypes and of strategic imperatives—was that the conflict in Macedonia was emanating from Kosova, where NATO had yet to secure a lasting peace.

For a time, this opinion persisted, even though the leading Kosovar Albanian politicians condemned the use of violence as a means of political expression, affirmed the political integrity and unity of Macedonia, and appealed for a nonviolent resolution of the Macedonian-Albanian conflict.

This is not to discount the fact that both patriotic volunteers and armed insurgents entered Macedonia from Kosova in a show of solidarity.

The same thing happened when Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosova were under attack from then Serbian dictator and now indicted war criminal, Slobodan Milosevic.

But it cannot be emphasized enough that the conflict in Macedonia is homegrown and that the inequities and injustices to which the Albanian citizens of Macedonia are subjected have spawned the current crisis.

The Actions Taken by the Democratic Party of Albanians in Macedonia (DPA) During the Crisis

The Democratic Party of Albanians in Macedonia has taken the following steps in relation to the current crisis:

1. Focused on analyzing the roots of the crisis and also exposing interpretations that were either wrong or malicious.
2. Condemned violence as a means of expressing civic or political dissatisfaction.
3. Supported the territorial integrity and unity of Macedonia and rejected ideas about secession, federalism, and confederation.
4. Prevented ethnic polarization and the expansion of the ethnic confrontation.
5. Remained within the system, even though it was either marginalized or ignored in the government's decision-making processes.
6. Engaged in protecting the interests and the lives of the citizens who became victims of the conflict.

All of the relevant domestic and international factors have credited the DPA with preventing conflict and praised it for preserving human values throughout the crisis.

How to Resolve the Crisis:

Bearing in mind the ethnic character of the crisis and defining the sources of ethnic dissatisfaction according to three major categories: **constitutional, proportional representation in state institutions, and integration and socialization of those who show alarming signs of disloyalty**, the DPA is deeply convinced that the so-called “Yugoslav fever” in Macedonia can be overcome only if concrete dialogue is initiated with a mandate and proper deadline.

The dialogue should be held among legitimate Albanian representatives and Macedonian State authorities, and it should be mediated by representatives of international organizations, such as the European Union, NATO, and the OSCE.

The wars in the former Yugoslavia would have never ended if there had been no international mediators at Dayton and Rambouillet.

Bearing in mind that the issues that must be resolved in Macedonia do not put the integrity and unity of the state at risk, we believe that international mediation would be useful for long-term stabilization of the state—not only in terms of the economy and security, but also in the field of interethnic relations.

Those that want to explore the crisis in depth will offer similar solutions for the well-being of Macedonia and its citizens.

Those that are motivated by opportunism and adherence to ethnic stereotypes will try to avoid a mandated dialogue and will be held accountable for the escalation of the crisis.

Dialogue is the only way out of the crisis, while refusing dialogue will only lead to more violence.





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