



# RESTLESS NATIONALISM

LJ. D. ERCKOSKI

Ljubomir Danailov Frchkoski

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*For the Publisher*  
Ana Kostovska, manager

*Editor*  
Gordana Vojneska

*Editor of the issue*  
Iskra Geshoska

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*English translation*  
Darko Putilov

*Macedonian proof-reading*  
Boban Karapejovski

*Cover design*  
Viktor Mihajlov

*Computer preparation*  
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Ljubomir Danailov Frchkoski

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**THE WOUND IS A PLACE WHERE  
THE LIGHT ENTERS YOU**





# **PART I**

## **SEARCH FOR DIFFERENCE**



# INTRODUCTION

The construct of the Macedonian nationalism, which I call restless, would be elaborated or, to put it better, deconstructed starting from its contemporariness, from the rose of its exhibitive epiphenomena, towards its roots and causes, backwards, in forms of flashbacks, from the forms it has taken, back to the causes that have made it assume the forms it has today.

I would place the special accent on its “différence” and “différance” (J. Derrida) vis-à-vis other nations in the region, and also its relations with them. These relations are more constitutive for its formation than with other nationalisms.

That amoroso rose of the Macedonian nationalism was the moment when the Macedonian state became fully independent in 1991, previously being a republic within the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

I am aware that the use of the term “restless” for any nationalism is not suitable to some extent, because nationalism is basically a schizophrenic condition of affection in individuals that express it collectively. In this regard, it is always “restless” to some extent. However, the Macedonian nationalism is especially made restless in a way that I consider constitutive for it, while I am able consequently to show and deliver this in the concluding part.

In this regard, the use of the said attribute is justified in this case. Moreover, its connection with other regional nationa-



lisms – that started in a trauma still going on to some extent – has become the foundations, which it has been built on. In a fascinating manner, this trauma “is internalized” in the way how the Macedonian ethnic nationalism sees itself and struggles for visibility in the world.

I consider such methodological approach suitable from another aspect as well. The key to knowing the character of every historical creation, including nationalism, is the finale, the crescendo, the form in which it finally shows to be relatively stabilized and so goes to new, post-phases. These are phases when certain initial development lines end up, so that others can begin. We talk about phases when the established nationalism decides “to cast a glance backward” and to exploit history by creating “archives.” Reading history always represents a political decision turned backward, while having consequences for the present and the future. Such decision always implies political ideology and political motivation in its assumptions. Explicitly or implicitly, this relates to a political decision on how to use a historical material, what would be defined as important from such files, what would be marginalized, glorified or made a myth, and what would be suppressed and concealed. Such decision is always considered “to have already been made.” On the other hand, we need that material in its instrumental totality (the public and the suppressed) in order to read the symptoms of the contemporary forms in which nationalism appears. That material makes the responsibility of the political elites for the choice these elites make in their relations to history, the present, and the future.

For my approach to the topic of restless nationalism of the Macedonians, of major importance will be the archeology of suppressed fears, absent places, decentered centers, forbidden history, collective amnesias, absent centers of the historical material (let me just refer you to the importance of the text written by Jacques Derrida in 1966 “Archive Fever”). It would be interesting to follow and analyze the Macedonian case: how the search for deep historical roots of the East European awakened nations has been transformed into “creating those roots”; how national myths organize a given community over thesis of external and internal threats, over the notion of fear (Zygmunt Bauman);

how “the others” want to steal “our national cause”; about our taking pleasure in being a Macedonian, each to his own...

The basic analytic tool would be the specifics of the ideology of the Macedonian nationalism as a moment of “jouissance,” in a context of taking pleasure or enjoying in being its follower. It deals with the very thing that gives form to the manners in which the principles of public law are violated, the permissions and bans in our community, the very thing that makes us “the very Macedonians.” It involves the fantasies of the Macedonians that “explain” to them why they cannot afford the fulfillment of their own whole, their unification, the harmonic One of their national existence. It deals with the collective drive; and the pleasure with the constant unfulfilment of the desires to unite on one hand, and with constant coveting and repeating them on the other hand.

Of great importance for the analysis is the sad phase of the creation of the Macedonian nationalism in the process of partisanship and pluralization of the political discourse (whose historical part has become sensitive). A hot turning point is a failure or incapacity to define a relationship toward the communist phase (period), which coincided with the formation of the first state of the Macedonians. This has become, as sociologists would say, a symptomatic case where all characteristics of a given phenomenon are demonstratively recoiled. Why does this represent an important aspect for analysis? It is because the attempt to erase parts of the constitutive history of a given nation from the collective and personal memory of the persons belonging to it has concrete political implications. This, in turn, makes the nation incapable of rationalization, communication, unable to make historical thinking and so damages its self-perception. The lack of objective social explanation of historical phases and periods, of social circumstances that created and brokered them, and of the subjective forces that led them, causes stress and series of irrational gestures! Suppression and hiding reality in the post-communist period misrepresent such reality and so make it susceptible to irrational political mythology and life in fragments. Fragments, sequences of fear, hatred, self-underestimation projected into aggression, vain symbolisms; in a word, general

stupidity of prohibition of thinking and infantilization of social life.

By the way, this process is always accompanied by organized repression and manipulation of the political element in it.

In this regard, this text tries to consider the self-perception of the Macedonians.

# 1. INDEPENDENCE PROCESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The presentation of the process of gaining independence of the Republic of Macedonia is **an act** of disrupting, going through a complex problem-related series of political decisions and events that changed the symbolic self-perceptions of the Macedonians and opened their own self-construction in a new and accelerated manner. It was opened as a scandal. What seemed a finished thing and being in transition to a higher phase of self-realization, has been changed into a fundamental self-reexamination. All of this, in the early 1990s, seemed different.

Hence, regardless of the suggestion in the title, the topic would not be followed in chronological and photographic manner but in a problem-related manner. Chronology of events would be a side argumentation material.

Namely, in the opinion of the author, the basic and critical points in context of the process of independence of the Republic of Macedonia had to go through solving the following political relations and issues:

- Break-up with Yugoslavia (Serbia) and learning about own geostrategy in the region, a cross-land country geostrategy;
- New positioning toward the Albanians in the country and the “Albanian question” in the region;
- Fighting about identity-related issues: with Greece about the name, and with Bulgaria about the language and the autochthonousness of the nation;



- Learning about the attitude of the international politics toward small countries and initial experience with international organizations and multilateral diplomacy, which is very important for small countries;
- Making allies with the global superpowers – USA, an ambivalent attitude toward Russia, and the very ambivalent attitude of the European Union;
- Identity-related dilemmas in the context of creating a political Macedonian nation made up of citizens with different ethnic background. Pace and dilemmas in the majority-minority relations in terms of such Macedonian nation;
- Finally, as it has been shown traumatic as well – the opportunity to be free, in a liberal and democratic country, leaning on its citizens.

The attempt to make such cross-section, although very limiting, has a problem with the necessary compactness and perhaps with the simplification of some dramatic political events and abundance of simple factography. I think this would be a smaller handicap than the risk on the other side: diluting by a chronology that does not take into consideration the basic contours of our contemporary politics and political decisions that constituted the independent Macedonian state.

In context of recognizing new countries under international law, the so-called declarative theory is traditionally used, which involves reducing the factor of recognition to a declaration; namely, a statement on the four conditions required for existence and independent functioning of countries: existence of a territory (not necessary also to be categorically defined by international borderlines); population (regardless of the size); sovereign authority; and willingness to respect international law norms mostly of the *jus cogens* type (overriding principles of international law, from which no derogation is ever permitted); and one additional condition – to show capacity for independence or to conduct by itself the rights and obligations originating from entering into the international legal transactions system. The international legal subjectivity of states is assessed in the context

of this real and process capacity (as lawyers would say) to fulfill their domestic and international authority.

Up to this point there was no dispute concerning the independence of Macedonia; however, a side objection to the independence was made by introduction of “the problem” with the name of the country, which was abused by Greece (exploiting the context of the dissolution of SFRY and the fear of the international community to have another destabilization point in the southern Balkans, in Macedonia). Greece was able to sell this issue as “a threat to the security” in the region and to global peace. By this, this issue became part of the agenda of the Security Council of the United Nations, not only as an issue relating to the admission of a candidate country but also as an issue of potential threat to the global peace.

Dramatization or abuse of the crisis arising from the Yugoslav dissolution, in context of the UN membership of Macedonia, led to the active and flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations in context of the issue of procedure of admitting new members (Article 4 of the Charter, in connection with Article 2, paragraph 7, of this Charter).

Briefly, the violation of the UN Charter consisted of treating the issue of the name of the country (the UN theory and practice treated until then this issue solely as an issue relating to the internal sovereignty of the UN member countries) as “additional” condition for Macedonia to become UN member. This instance of introducing additional conditions for UN membership is a gross precedent executed only in the case of Macedonia, while today it is mentioned and studied in the international law textbooks at some American and European universities. Such precedent is, even more, evident per se, when taking into due consideration that in two previous cases the International Court of Justice had provided a legal opinion on request from the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly (1948; 1950-1952). This legal opinion states that conditions mentioned in Article 4 of the UN Charter on admitting new members are defined in fixed manner and are only those that had been listed (i.e., they may not be expanded with new ones) and that they may not be interpreted in a manner

that would imply their extended meaning. This has cemented the meaning of procedure on admitting new UN members; hence, the Macedonian case indeed represents a clear violent disrespect of the UN Charter by the very UN bodies and institutions.

In agreement with the Security Council, the UN Secretary-General made attempts to mitigate and “delay” this violation of the UN Charter (admitting a new member under provisional designation, or which is referred to as, in this case, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) by introduction of procedure of mediation and solving the name issue of Macedonia (UN resolution 817). However, this has shown to be an only delay or postponement of the ambiguity, but not an exit from the legal dead-end street. As is known, this mediation procedure has lasted even to this time, without prospects for solving this imposed confusion. Options for getting out of this legal maze are not subject of this work and here I intend to finish the presentation of the international law difficulties Macedonia has had in the context of its international subjectivity as an independent state.

A great many countries (132) recognize the constitutional name of Macedonia (USA, Russia, and China, among other), while the EU follows the UN-imposed principle and refers to the country as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Macedonia has conducted this rare and difficult battle in a courageous manner (if we can use this term) and the results have been increasingly evident. However, this was not the major problem in winning the country’s independence.

From that aspect, I would like to propose a change in the analysis angle and would continue by citing the dominant political climate in Macedonia during the period of dissolution of the former Yugoslav federation, seen (as an example of a cross-section) in the so-called Gligorov-Izetbegovic plan (to save Yugoslavia as a country).

In context of the meetings involving the presidents of the republics of former Yugoslavia in order to find the way out from the impending dissolution of the federation, one of the most serious ideas (if we can speak at all about such things, given the then context) was the plan for overcoming the crisis proposed by the presidents of Macedonia and Bosnia. I personally witnessed those

meetings as adviser to President Gligorov at such talks; from all the materials in my possession such as minutes of the meetings and ideas that were contested, one thing is imposed as conclusion: at those meetings, there was never a dominant willingness to overcome the crisis or to have a serious solution. The Slovenians (rather deliberately) and the Croats (less clearly, because they were in a way at risk from the dissolution having at that time a big Serbian minority in the republic) attended these talks as proof to the European countries that they were making efforts to avoid and even prevent the pending Yugoslav war, and thus to facilitate the processes of their recognition as new and independent countries. Still they refused to believe and so did not want to help deliver a semi-solution in the form of some complicated confederation. The Serbs again tried to show themselves to the international community they were making their best efforts to save Yugoslavia; actually, they intended to remap the internal borders in Yugoslavia by using the federal army (such concept in Serbia was the outcome of a consensus reached between their Academy of Sciences and Arts-SANU, national intellectual clubs, and the brutal political structure of Slobodan Milosevic).

These two deaf and blind options went one beside the other at the setting of the meetings. Only Bosnia felt vulnerable and was in a state of sad confusion. Although outside of the main strike by the Serbs, Macedonia was also in a state of confusion with regard to losing “the community” through which it was created as state and uncertain about the security arrangements and the future as an independent country.

By means of the concept of seriously proposing options about certain types of confederation and overcoming the crisis, Macedonia actually was desperately fighting for consolidation on two grounds: make an attempt to avoid the war and ongoing complications in its territory on one hand, and prepare its population for the option: the very independence. The Macedonians were not able to decide whether all options, or, at least, those for loose economic ties among the former Yugoslav republics, had been depleted. Such situation was also seen in the debates of that period made in the political circles in Macedonia, while the plan of then Macedonian president, depicted in the so-called Gligorov-Izetbegovic project,

expressed such situation as well. According to my written files from those meetings and various expert exchanges of ideas with other teams (about 150 pages of different projects and authorized minutes of the meetings), the plan itself was merely a sketch of a loose confederation (not elaborated in detail), where the republics would acquire international recognition, while the economic field would be placed under the context of some kind of common market. Naturally, the Serbians made a strong emphasis on “the unity of the very army”; still this was too controversial for the others. The said plan is not so important per se; it is of use to show us in the text the policy of adopting the idea about independence on the part of Macedonia. Furthermore, to show us how Macedonia in phases learned of the inevitability of the definite dissolution of the former federation and had to free itself of the illusion about “fraternity and unity”, especially with the Serbs.

The gradual making the Macedonian separation legitimate and legal (“disassociation” was then the popular though ironical word of the day, in light of the forthcoming war and its high number about 300000 casualties) was executed consequently to the very end even in the last stage of those finishing processes in the other republics. It should be noted that the Macedonian Parliament adopted its Declaration of Independence, followed by independence referendum (asking a question that, although clear, still had an addition reflecting the need to diminish the risk of failure and to show unambiguosness in voting for own independence). The last stage related to the proclamation of the new Constitution in 1991, thus finishing this process.

Like in all stages in Macedonia, which chose the road of making a compromise with its political elites of different provenience, there were opinions that publicly opposed the legalistic moment of proclaiming the independence; by doing so, they advocated the “Serbian” position on the dissolution of former Yugoslavia. The entire legacy and burden of the former system and the pro-Yugoslav options maintained to survive for a long time in independent Macedonia; however, they were gradually put aside and eliminated by the events to follow. The withdrawal of the Yugoslav federal army from Macedonia and introduction of taking care of own state borders and security were successfully executed.

This stage was followed by the second major decision: to make a strategic alliance with the American security services and offering them a base in Macedonia on the eve of the war escalation in Bosnia. The CIA regional headquarters were located in Macedonia in early 1992. This definitely set the course of events for us and the strategic cooperation with the USA.

This cooperation has demonstrated to be vital for us from several aspects: basic balance along the east-west strategic line, or Corridor 8 (Via Egnatia), which in turn enabled us to survive and withstand the pressure upon the blockades imposed by Greece in the 1990s.

The control of the so-called Albanian question that was not directed at Macedonia for a long time was kept outside of the scope of the Macedonian independence. Even when the military conflict started in 2001 (mostly because of the spillover of the military provocations from Kosovo), the consequences of this conflict were mitigated and so it was kept at low-risk level. This, in turn, enabled its easier controlled absorption by the institutions of the Macedonian democracy by means of the so-called Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA). It is important to note the role that neighboring Bulgaria had during the blockades imposed by Greece being our most dependable supply route. If the Bulgarian policy had not been set in such manner, our problems would have been more serious. It is also important to note the American tolerance of the organized violation of the UN imposed a blockade on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), a violation that was conducted to the benefit of the vitality of the Macedonian economy in those hard times.

This line of action and alliance has helped the position of Macedonia to survive as important cross-land country in the region and has prevented it not to succumb again (in different conditions) into the situation in which SFRY had maintained Macedonia as the dead-end street of the southern Balkans, by the irrationally disrupted communication along the east-west line.

This line of cooperation with the Americans has survived to this day as shown by the American recognition of the constitutional name of Macedonia in 2004; this has defined and sent messages

into several directions: 1) to the Albanians in the region: that Macedonia has definite borders and exists as it is; 2) to Greece: with regard to the pressure made against our identity as Macedonians; and finally, 3) again to Serbia: that Macedonia would not be treated as a possible zone for compensation in context of the ongoing debates and decentralization process in Kosovo.

By means of this alliance (which has been often controversially accepted in the country), Macedonia has learned to see or consider its own position, its own geostrategy, at a distance. From the aspect of what Macedonia has to do to become definitely stabilized and from the aspect of the directions the country must always control and govern, in order not to make the neighboring countries “nervous.” In this matter, the neighboring countries could not help us, genuinely. Regardless of how much they wanted to do it (mainly they did not want), indeed, it would be a too great expectation from them to put aside their prejudices about Macedonia, as well as their national interests that overlap in our country. To forget their rather ambivalent love for us, their love and bear hug that might choke us.

I would like to stress this line of geostrategic cooperation with the USA, because it was conducted in a period when cooperation with our “natural” allies, the Europeans, was very painful and fully disappointing for us.

In contrast to the arrogance of a superpower, brutal pragmatism, and interest in geostrategy, the Europeans are much more cynical, irrationally arrogant, and traditionally adhering to their centuries-old diplomatic lines and connections. Such generalization would be unjustified toward certain European countries that had shown constant friendship and support for our country; however, the global picture became part of such stereotype. The collective memory of their Balkan-related diplomacies did not include us. Their diplomacies had already been busy in engaging with various local lobby groups and well-established circles. We were not present at their formal celebrations and gatherings, which dealt with traditional friendships, connections, and odium in the Balkan countries. Every neighboring country had other interests that were different from ours; this, in turn, made the idea to help us and lend “their

lobby” for at least one political issue of our concern impossible. In the 1991-1995 period, Macedonia was “the most sovereign” country in the world. Nobody wanted to help us; we only got verbal and/or moral support, in addition to the previously mentioned alliance. Nobody had any clear and definitive position about us. We appeared as “Balkan bastard” that nobody was able to place in his library and academic and university halls. A country that is sufficiently tough to survive two blockades along the vital transversal line introduced by a neighboring country that is also an EU member; a country that maintains cultural diversity in the worst part of Europe as far as cultural tolerance is concerned; a country that has had a relatively peaceful democratic progress at the Balkan crossroads and has the arrogance to fight for its own Macedonian identity!

In its own confusion during the Yugoslav dissolution, the European Community made many mistakes and inconsistencies, which made everybody pay a very high price. First, it was not able to predict the outcome of the crises and so for a long time was blocked being unable to take any action, nursing the idea of keeping SFRY. When the war erupted, the European Community did not have intelligence information about what was happening in the field. It let the television pictures shown on European television stations force it to take action. Furthermore, the European Community insisted that it was mostly a European issue. After the Hague International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and the Carrington plan (namely, upon its failure), the European Community finally gave up and proclaimed collapse.

In legalist sense, the EU tried to propose principles relating to the breakup of former Yugoslavia. It established the so-called Badinter Commission to assess the legal and political “maturity” of the constituent republics to be internationally recognized as independent countries. Basically, this was alright! However, the EU countries did not show any respect for the result of work made by this respectable commission. The result was unambiguous: Slovenia and Macedonia fully met the independence criteria; Croatia by revising its constitution and regulating its relations with local minorities there; other republics had greater problems.



This was the last common decision made by the EU on this issue. Upon failure of all EU countries to accept the recommendations expressed by the Badinter Commission, the EU entered the next phase that was very risky for it: lines of division and competition among its members to take a side in the Yugoslav conflict. Eventually, Slovenia and Croatia were recognized internationally, while Germany was sponsoring the latter. Macedonia was left alone and aside; upon the failure of the Carrington plan (at the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia), war seemed inevitable. After such fiasco, the EU saw the American involvement as a way out. The Americans could not allow cracks and internal sinking of the EU on lines of division over the crises from the Yugoslav dissolution process. However it might seem different, the Dayton Agreement actually was saving the EU rather than saving Bosnia as such.

Macedonia was also lucky in the case of the Serbian greater-state policy, which greatly contributed to the Yugoslav federation dissolution. At that time, Serbia primarily focused on the so-called western Serbians living in Bosnia and Croatia (unlike earlier Serbian politician and Prime Minister Pasic who had focused heavily on the regions south of Serbia proper). Probably it was thought that it would be easy to deal with Macedonia afterward. Actually, this gave Macedonia time to definitely consolidate its independence and to go through the stages after which there would be no return.

As an independent country, Macedonia was able to finally verify its independence vis-à-vis Serbia (i.e., then still FRY) only after mutual recognition and defining the character of the mutual borderlines as international boundaries, by means of the bilateral agreement that I had signed in the spring of 1996 as the then Macedonian Foreign Minister. Upon signing the agreement, I had a meeting with Slobodan Milosevic in Karadjordjevo. His conclusion was that it was not important we had a dispute with Greece; according to him, this act of recognition of Macedonia by Serbia was important for Macedonian genuine independence (probably, he was damn right). In the context of the Serbian and Greek “imperialness” in the Balkans and their self-perception, and understanding the own position, this indeed seems so. After 1996, Macedonia was

finally able to take a break, at least in the context of its possible deconstruction and separation from “the older brothers” of the former federal state. From the tense continuations that express the fundamental, in some way historical, relation toward us, the Serbians have kept the problem of formal recognition of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and few calculations relating to and surrounding the possible division of Kosovo, as the final solution for its status. Namely, an option is still on standby in the Serbian political circles that the division of Kosovo would be easier and more realistic to execute if it is suggested to the Kosovo Albanians to seek, in return, territorial compensation from the neighboring Macedonia. This plan, otherwise never mentioned publicly, had to be taken into account when considering our positions about the international dimensions and implications of defining the status of Kosovo and the guarantees that had to be received and established for the region (which indeed happened later by means of the so-called Ahtisaari Plan on Kosovo).

One of the constituents of the Macedonian independence and sovereignty certainly is the relationship toward the ethnic community of the local Albanians, considered from two aspects. The first one implies learning and implementing the minority rights standards in the corpus of human rights. For this, Macedonia was given a positive assessment (especially for its new Constitution of 1991) by the aforementioned Badinter Commission; this is rare, perhaps the only international acclaim on the roads of legal implementations of the human rights standards in the constitutions of the emerging democracies in Europe. The second aspect implies the formation of a multicultural society that is reflected in the institutions of the political system (institutional balance between the individual and group/cultural rights), offering high tolerance for cultural diversity, formally higher than the levels of minority protection found in the European countries.

This has created a policy of inclusion or involving the Albanians living in Macedonia in the institutions of the system (which was absolute rarity in the Balkans, a region that has been inspired by a different nation-building policy or the Balkan “melting pot” approach) and has neutralized the possible secessionist plans and conspiracies to create greater states in the Balkans.

This meant a significant Macedonian contribution to the definite pacification of the region.

The question that is often raised, relating to the legalistic level of this project (i.e., to the Macedonian independence through the legalistic aspect of the new Constitution of 1991), is: Was the new Constitution able from the very beginning to possibly incorporate also the amendments that were later imposed by OFA in 2001, relating to partial expanding of the minority rights, thus avoiding the 2001 crisis in the country?

My personal answer is that the question is naïve, while the answer as such is a flat NO.

Namely, every successful constitutional act represents an act of corresponding ideological standards (in this case, liberal and democratic), an act of the place and the act of the time (tradition and future). An act of time involves two dimensions: to absorb the traditions of the place, to “become rooted” in the country for which it has been made, while at the same time it should be also an act of the future, in the sense that it should basically anticipate and guide the development of the political system. Hence, not only to regulate the existing static relations among the institutions but also to anticipate a development direction. A constitutional act must have such capacity in order to be successful. Hence, the Macedonian Constitution is a brief constitution, with accent on basic clear regulation of the fundamental institutions and rights, offering opportunities to the institutions, especially the Constitutional Court, to start interpretation (by its decisions and making initiatives for decisions) of the provisions of the Constitution, and by means of such process to the adaptation of numerous pragmatic changes in the corpus of the constitution and constitutionality. Whether this was done or whether this is being done is another problem, which does not concern this text. Nevertheless, it is a fact that this act has shown to be exceptionally persistent, verified by the Badinter Commission in all its essential provisions. In the segment of human rights, it appeared as the founder of the development to come.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution was drafted on democratic and liberal bases (this was a first-class success for a state that did not have any previous liberal experience; a state that even today suffers from collectivistic and nationalistic mythologies). The Constitution is civic-orientated in all of its text. (National memory and similar stuff are enshrined in the

OFA imposed amendments to the Constitution. Actually, this introduced a procedure of a double vote in the Macedonian Parliament, expanding the use of the languages used by the ethnic communities, and agenda of their inclusion in the state administration (additional enhancement of the local democracy by means of a system of local self-government).

Why was it impossible and unnecessary to anticipate these additions to the rights of the ethnic communities while drafting the Constitution in 1991?

Firstly, because it would not have prevented per se the conflict in 2001. All analyses of the global strategic institutes (such as the Texas Institute for Strategic Analyses, the Stanford Institute for Strategic Analyses, the International Crises Group, the Carnegie Commission, etc.) have now confirmed that this conflict had mostly been provoked from Kosovo and by an attempt “to export revolution” from there.

Had we enshrined the rights stemming from OFA as early as in 1991, then what further were we to add? In that case, perhaps federalization or cantonization of the country would have been added. We had maneuvering space in the Constitution to expand the minority rights and still keep the unitary character of the country intact. In this regard, the 1991 Constitutional design showed itself to be successful and sufficient. The second issue is that at the moment of adopting the Constitution in 1991, it was impossible and there was no political likelihood to go further with the minority rights. Even about the very civic character of the Constitution, a ditch war was conducted within the left parties as well, such as SDSM (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia).

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Preamble, which is not part of the operative text that defines RIGHTS. It represented a masterful, salvage compromise (especially taking into consideration the period and the atmosphere in the country in 1991 when it was adopted).

The Constitution as such was highly praised by the Badinter Commission (the strongest ever commission made by EU, consisting of seven constitutional judges). This helped very much Macedonia at international level for its recognition .

This has been the most durable Macedonian Constitution, whereby there have been no grounds to make any changes (The amendments arising from OFA have been the only justified change. The other existing constitutional amendments actually represent constitutional digression, especially the one on detention). The next required amendments would be several at the moment of the formal accession of the Republic of Macedonia to EU. Such formal reconsideration of the Constitution should also be used to get rid of a dozen of current amendments that are per se normative and ideological disaster.

In a word, the Constitution verified and developed the experience of civic status of all nationals of Macedonia with an addition, which is significantly higher than the European standards for minority rights, of what is called “group justice,” or “group rights for protection and promotion of cultural identity of ethnic communities,” as grounds for the legalist solution of inclusion. Such institutional inclusion of non-majority ethnic communities was seminal for the real Macedonian democracy, stabilization, and independence.

Macedonia was engaged in its last, sideline independence endeavor with Bulgaria as regards the identity and origin of its own nation and language.

The farthest point Bulgaria had taken in “recognition of the Macedonian nation” (an institute that by the way is unknown in international law) was that it was a “new” nation with same roots as the Bulgarian nation and whose language is derived as dialect of the Bulgarian language.

Bulgaria also had a domestic problem by not recognizing the existence of a Macedonian minority there, which indicated a wider problem of the identity of the Bulgarians of Macedonian origin in Bulgaria proper. But, concurrent with this, in political context Bulgaria made several important and positive strategic movements to our benefit.

Firstly, it recognized Macedonia under its constitutional name. Secondly, Bulgaria was the only door open to Macedonia during the time of two Greek-imposed embargoes on Macedonia and the UN-imposed embargo on FRY (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). In that period, Macedonia could have suffered unpredictably greater losses if this door leading to the rest of the world and energy supply had not been opened up.

According to some of the prominent Bulgarian analysts, the so-called Macedonian question in Bulgaria gradually has started to recede from the main agenda of the Bulgarian politics in the country and toward us, due to the fact that the influential Bulgarian families of Macedonian origin started to lose their weight in the Bulgarian politics and in local science circles. Gradually, in

the 1993-2000 period, the Bulgarians put aside their rigid denial of the Macedonian nation and this question was moved away from the foreground of the political scene. Hence, this created room to have a solution about the language issue, which was ready during the second mandate of Macedonian President K. Gligorov in 1997. Of reasons unknown to me, President Gligorov postponed the solution. Finally, during the mandate of Macedonian Prime Minister Lj. Georgievski, this question was solved using the same formula: "...agreements shall be signed in the official languages in accordance with the Constitutions of the two countries..." By this, the question of the language was overcome.

In 2004, at sessions of the different commissions of the Council of Europe, the Bulgarians finally admitted that a Macedonian minority existed in their country (ECRI - European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Report on Bulgaria), whereby they insisted that only the group of persons who had declared themselves as "Macedonians" during the population census in Bulgaria should be considered so. In other words, without opening the question of the Bulgarians of Macedonian origin (it is alright from international law aspect), we managed to reach the goal. By means of this, it is important that the term and entity of "Macedonian minority," distinctively different from the Bulgarians, be verified as existing (competent population censuses are used to additionally establish the exact number of persons belonging to this minority in the field).

Questions about the freedom of association in Bulgaria and formal recognition of Macedonian political organizations there remain open. Still it is just a matter of "days" when this issue would be regulated in a standard EU manner, because Bulgaria has been involved in several cases relating to the problem before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France.

In conclusion, we can confirm that the road to gaining real independence of the Republic of Macedonia took a longer time to walk than the time foreseen by the formal acts of "gaining" independence. This independence was refracted through several important geostrategic relations, which the emerging country

had to solve the hard way and which were definitely solved as such (or we thought so, until the moment of the political de-evolution in 2008).

The name dispute with Greece remains an open question, which with time (because of our strategic orientation to NATO and EU) will further encumber our international prospects, and maybe our internal stability. Hence, I intend to discuss this issue in a more detailed manner later in the text.

Finally, finishing and putting in operation the Corridor 8 connectivity infrastructure (along the east-west line of Via Egnatia) would represent, not as a challenge but more as the permanent battle for enduring our national interests. It is an important geostrategic line that makes Macedonia definitely significant and unavoidable country at crossroads. Only by control of this crossroad and servicing it in all directions, Macedonia attains its definitive stabilization and significance in the region.

Let me conclude. It is a very fact that twenty years ago, on 8 September, Macedonia became an independent country! That it was an absolute act of virtue, complete pronouncement, an act of birth of historical necessity (to paraphrase Hegel), followed by silence. That it was the culmination of our dreams and those of our prominent historical figures and fighters for the freedom of Macedonia. That Macedonia is again on the map of the world, which would be incomplete without it.

### **1.1. NATURE OF THE NAME DISPUTE BETWEEN MACEDONIA AND GREECE AND IDENTITY IMPLICATIONS**

I have heard and seen, as a minister or professor in the role of a consultant, a variety of interpretations, opinions, and analysis about the bizarreness, the absurdity, the improbability of a dispute over name differences between the Republic of

Macedonia and the Republic of Greece after it was articulated internationally in 1991 until today.

That was done by politicians or experts, domestic and foreign, benevolent and restrained, that, from today's point of view, it seems that they lacked part of the overall framework for good assessment. Namely, they could not recognize the nature of the dispute and subsequently to assess why that dispute, in respect of its anecdotal "absurdity," exists and develops into the literary theme of textbooks on international law and international relations.

Parallel to that, the dispute has political implications in the prevention of the development of overall relations in the region, especially for Macedonia. Its most obvious dimension is the distortion of NATO enlargement with the so-called "Adriatic Group" countries (Croatia, Macedonia, and Albania), where only Macedonia has been stopped at the first attempt by the Greek veto.

That blockade has lasted to this day with the same or greater intensity.

This dispute, as we have seen, succeeded to violate the rules of procedure for the admission of new members in the United Nations Charter and the procedure before the Security Council. Today, the case of Macedonia in the United Nations is studied as an example of the violation of the Charter during admission of a Member State.

This dispute also managed to capture the European Union, and previously the Council of Europe and NATO, in a procedural maze of abuse of their procedures regarding the use of the veto by a Member State during admission of new members in those organizations.

The dispute has affected the Greek-US relations on plans for the development of the Region and there are chances that this would continue to become further complicated, especially if Macedonia remains isolated from the Euro-Atlantic integration processes and, given its complicated social multicultural composition, enters into long-term stagnation.

Therefore, it would be a serious "absurdity" of the dispute, which deserves detailed analysis.



The first important thing to know is that this dispute is not of a strategic policy (realpolitik), in terms of those definitions of disputes over competing political interests of actors to gain access to certain resources. Namely, Macedonia and Greece are not the countries competing for the same resources, but conversely, are complementary. Their quiet but successful economic cooperation following the signing of the Interim Accord in the UN in 1995 showed that. Greece became the first foreign-policy partner of Macedonia and the biggest foreign investor. However, the successful economic cooperation failed to resolve the dispute (by itself), as hoped by political “modernists.” On the contrary, on top of that cooperation the dispute “exploded” into a new phase and negative energy (in the 2004-2008 period, and then to a climax lasting today).

This is because the main feature of the name dispute between Macedonia and Greece is its symbolism, “sign connotation.” It is a dispute over the use and control of symbols that signify identity, and are associated with the words “Macedonia and Macedonian.” For this, both countries, for different reasons, pleaded “ownership,” control, or participation in the meaning. In that sense, this dispute is very postmodern, a dispute over symbols; it is ironical and constructs simulacra of interpretations of history. Marking by name and its recognition (in the words of Charles Taylor), recognition of group identity in the Balkans, and in the contemporary world, increasingly becomes the basis for conflicts and disputes.

This type of disputes is not directly affected by economic cooperation and interaction of the actors involved. It is “vaccinated” against modernist, enlightenment optimism that claims development (“industrialization”) will solve or mitigate any problem.

By this, I do not mean that economic cooperation does not create friendlier atmosphere and better understanding, but in the end, it is necessary to make bridging, or division of meanings for and about the basic symbol - a sign as a leap toward a solution. Without that step, it is a smoldering dispute or cyclically escalating.

If this is not understood, one then cannot understand the dispute argumentation used by both sides, with all its exaggerations and at times, with Balkan saloon-type rhetoric. Understanding the rationale and nature of the dispute is the basis for its resolution and it is vital, and not additional literature for the involved diplomats.

One cannot understand, for example, the Greek coinage “stealing of history” which is made allegedly by “the Skopians,” or the Macedonian paranoia that the Greeks actually do not like even the very existence of the Macedonians and Macedonia.

If, however, one puts aside the baroque ornaments and arrogance of the small Balkan imperialisms such as the Greek one, there are theses, which would help to finally come to the reduction of “Greek position” in the dispute in this respect. For example, one could then see the “Greek fear” that if the Greeks recognize us, then there will be a wider acknowledgement of a country named Macedonia and people with exactly the same name (no matter how inside Greece the Greeks will use the word “Macedonia” for the Greek Macedonians and for the northern Greek province of the same name), while the terms “Macedonia and Macedonian” in international relations will go with us, the Macedonians in Macedonia.

Greece cannot, even if it wants to, internationally use the term Macedonia and Macedonians for its citizens, because it has hysterically ethno-homogeneous orientation toward a single Greek nation and ethnicity. Therefore, Greece only uses internally and geographically the term Macedonia and Greek Macedonians.

This means that internationally, de facto, we will be only Macedonians and our country only Macedonia. For the Greeks, it is a nightmare, which they try to prevent by all possible means.

The latest variation of such “impeding” reasoning is that the Greek position is built on the theme that the Macedonians, if they have that name for their identity, will provoke confusion with most of the so-called Macedonian identities in the Region. These are, according to this position, several: Greek Macedonians

(a Macedonian), Bulgarian Macedonians, Albanian Macedonians, and Slavomacedonians in the Republic of Macedonia. This position certainly makes the willful mistake of mixing secondary population identity, drawn from part of the territory of the countries where they live (in that sense even the Prime Minister of Greece can be a Macedonian, but with Greek national identity) and the primary ethnic, national identity of the Macedonians in Macedonia.

There remains a fundamental question to the Greek side that is important for understanding the dispute: why the separation of meaning and use of symbols Macedonians and Macedonia is so important for the Greeks in order to maintain the monopoly, thus risking to be disgraced internationally and opening the prolonged crisis of low intensity in the region?

That question cannot be understood if one does not know the history of “Greek success” to become part of the European Union on the basis of “control” of the licenses of ancient Greek democracy and culture, and not on the basis of the fulfillment of the economic criteria for membership (at the time when Greece joined the European Union, Yugoslavia had far better economic and financial performances for membership than Greece had). Regardless of this, Greece has become prominent and “profitable” part of the EU, just acting on the basis of “obligation” of European countries to accept a new member that controls the territory of the ancient Greek and Latin foundations of European civilization. That experience is built into the collective perception of Greek culture in relation to the outside world.

Now since there is “risk” that a part of such culture needs to be shared with a neighboring country, the instincts of defense, based on the experience of high profitability from the culture licenses, transpire in hysterical outburst. Particularly irritating for the Greeks is that this can happen to a small country, which according to the old Balkan principles must be subordinate to “obey” major regional powers.

This farce of local “imperial cultures” and their rhetoric represents the kitsch side to this dispute to this day.

For the Macedonian side, the dispute not only relates to the dimension of the name of the country, but is also connected with the identity of a small nation that if deprived of the opportunity to call itself “Macedonian” and as such recognized on the international scene, there is the danger of opening the old thesis of “the Macedonian salad”, of inexistence of particular ethnicity called “Macedonian”, which is a substrate of the country with the same name. Then, the census of citizens who live in Macedonia, and are part of other major nations in the neighborhood will include: Albanians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks, Vlachs, Roma, Turks, but the majority people in the country will be unable to call themselves “Macedonian.” Such absurdity in the medium term realistically will open the assimilation process by the neighboring Slavic peoples, primarily the Serbs and Bulgarians, towards the Macedonians.

Because of this, the dispute for the Macedonians appears as extremely important and possibly “lethal” and is particularly difficult to solve by means of techniques of usual seeking “compromise” and diplomatic pressure. Finally, because of this, the dispute lasts so long.

In the conflict dynamics of the dispute, each party develops and constructs cultural positions that were not present at the beginning and are used to equip the conflicting rhetoric. For example, the Macedonians developed a narrative about a possible link with the ancient Macedonians of Philip and Alexander of Macedonia. This goes so far even to the denial of the Slavic character of the nation. This thesis was not present in Macedonia prior to the late 1990s. In the Macedonian emigration circles, it appeared much earlier and through this discourse, the emigration had a greater influence on internal political relations in Macedonia.

The country had no special benefit of it, but rather got caricatured forms that have exacerbated the country’s position in the international arena. However, in the “movie” about cultural identity confrontation, such constructs about missions of ethnicity become a replacement for reality. The Macedonian right-wing political elites have played that strategy disastrously, with several own goals in their net.

A second feature of the dispute between Macedonia and Greece is its lack of balance.

This dispute, namely, is radically unbalanced. In the name issue, Greece from the beginning ignored the very existence of an international subject in the form of the state of Macedonia, which it eventually has to negotiate with. Scandalizing this, according to Greek words, “stealing of history” (like in the movies about Indiana Jones), Greece has always been addressing this issue over the head of Macedonia, to someone behind: the European countries, USA, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Russia, or its domestic public, but never the state which it has a dispute with.

That certainly is part of the historical Balkan complex of imperial/local cultures (such as the role played by the Serbian and Greek cultures), of clientelism, arrogance, and resentment, but this dispute has assumed a concretized diplomatic form.

This feature of the dispute is important to note because it determines the entire set of diplomatic techniques of mediation that would not be required to such extent, if this trait of utter lack of balance were not present.

From the beginning, the dispute has been going on in the triangle: the two involved sides and a rather strong mediator. The mediator sometimes was “doubled”: the mediator as designated by the UN Secretary General, initially Cyrus Vance, later Matthew Nimetz (according to Resolution 917) and the Americans in the background.

The positions of the sides concerning such mediation were also different, but with time, the position of ‘double mediation’ was accepted as such.

Greece, for example, always felt rather uncomfortable when Americans are mediators. Greece considered them biased towards the Macedonian side, and in a wider context, Greece wanted them to be out of the Region, so that it can be left to the EU and, of course, to the crucial position that Greece would have had in such a case.

This was also the outcome of the strong anti-American sentiment in Greece, which was far more comfortable with Russia

in the Region than with America in it. This may be surprising only to someone who does not know the history of the positions of Russia, Serbia and Greece as regards the Macedonian question, as opposed to the United States, Britain, and Italy at the beginning of 20th century in the so-called “Eastern crisis” and later.

Of course, these forms of odium and alliances now were conducted in a subtle manner, softly highlighted in the background of the main stage. On the main stage, in the context of exerting pressure on the “nameless partner” Macedonia, Greece, in the meantime (1991-1995), tried to do everything except make a direct military intervention. Greece imposed a full economic blockade against Macedonia in 1992 and 1994, intending to make Macedonia surrender. The forecast was that the line of Corridor 10 (Via Militaria): Thessaloniki - Skopje - Belgrade - Central Europe, is the vital artery for Macedonia and its blockade would have fatal consequences for Macedonia. Along with this economic effect, the Greek security services helped and supported their Serbian counterparts to promote in Macedonia inter-ethnic instability, to raise fear among the local Christian Orthodox population of Albanian aspirations and so Serbia, with Greece in the background, to appear as the savior of the local Slavic Orthodox population. This policy of Serbia was welcomed by Greece, while some of its politicians (like Samaras) were involved in its active propagation.

The goal in such international circumstances was to see whether the state of Macedonia would be able to survive, and only then to negotiate anything.

The first option raised by Greece was to create a kind of “corridor” along the Vardar valley involving completely controlled population toward Serbia (a population that would be later given some name), at the cost of dividing Macedonia into Macedonian and Albanian parts.

If this was to fail (Bulgaria had its own reasons against such a rigid plan; still Milosevic in 1993 proposed such an option to Mitsotakis), then there was to have a weak and controlled state that was to be under blackmail by Greece, making thus any negotiations irrelevant, especially about the name.

I think that Greece did not want to have complete disappearance of Macedonia as a buffer state between Greece on one hand, and Albania and Bulgaria on the other; nevertheless, Greece indeed preferred to see a weak, controlled and blackmailed Macedonia, which would be deprived of its name and identity as such.

This rather rigid position has changed since Macedonia had survived the blockade and did not yield. Meanwhile, for us, a very constructive position of Bulgaria and the Government of Zhelyu Zhelev existed, which opened along Corridor 8 complete alternative (much more expensive, of course) supply of oil and energy-generating products. The price that Macedonia had to pay was very high, as reflected in economic stagnation and the creation of the gray economy sector that survived the blockade.

The contribution was “passing the survival test,” getting a brand new self-confidence of the nation, which went through temptation and did not give in. It reflected internationally as well. Cooperation with major partners and getting concrete help were started. In the 1992-1994 period, a stable cooperation with security services of the United States was initiated in Macedonia and so joint actions in third countries were started. Recognition of the country under its constitutional name began (starting with Russia, China, all the way to the 132 countries that have recognized us under the constitutional name). Still serious economic aid was lacking; nevertheless, Macedonia in that period, regardless of blockades, and having not participated in the wars of the former Yugoslavia, had the best living standard in the Region (excluding Greece) with an average salary of DM 250 (when Bulgaria had only 14 US dollars, 20 dollars in Serbia, 40 dollars in Croatia, etc.).

Meanwhile, in 1994, Greece was sued by the EU at the Court in Luxembourg for breaking the rules of the EU by imposing a blockade against a third country.

After these blockades and survival in extreme conditions, especially for the maintenance of interethnic coherence and inclusiveness, Macedonia somehow acquired the position to be a partner at international level. One could increasingly notice the presence of Macedonia at the international negotiation table.

Macedonian friends had already cited the country as an example, while the situation began to improve, but again in the context of the triangle of name dispute negotiations.

The third feature of the dispute between Macedonia and Greece refers to the character of the states and their societies. We would call it a dispute of different “narratives.”

In fact, depending on the similarity or dissimilarity of states in dispute, a given dispute gets additional conflict energy, or vice versa, it becomes smoother. In our case, we have a dispute between two countries that have completely different, I would say, conflictingly different societies and countries.

Notwithstanding the fact that both are democracies, in the case of Greece, it is about an almost schizophrenic obsession with building ethnically homogenous Greek society with a single culture, involving hard suppression of diversity and minorities, to the limit of unlaw. It is about, in European terms, atypical harshness toward cultural diversity and minority rights and insistence on ethnic homogeneity, which is seen as an absolute condition for the stability and functionality of the Greek state.

On the other hand, Macedonia is the opposite in every detail of such picture. It is a multicultural society with high inclusion of different cultures in the political system and with all the problems that this brings. This involves a rather slow internal negotiating political system of making decisions that sometimes blocks itself and requires international support and mediation. Macedonia is a society open to the extreme level to the participation of international experts from the Council of Europe, the EU, and the USA in some domestic decision-making processes. Macedonia has by far the highest standards for minority rights at European level, standards that go beyond the minority context and grow into something more, creating a rare multicultural society and democratic political system. In that regard, Macedonia is a unique case in the hard Balkan environment.

When Greece sees Macedonia, it sees its very “nightmare”! It sees everything it does not want to be and everything it is



afraid of becoming. Fear is projected in excessive aggression and intolerance towards Macedonia. Foreign experts cannot understand the origin of Greek fear from a small peaceful country like Macedonia, if they fail to understand this perspective.

Greece perceives Macedonia as the “contagion” of uncontrollable ethnic demands, which could spill over and spread to Greece, easily and predictably. If Macedonia succeeds and builds a functioning democratic political system with such pluralistic society, it would then represent a great challenge for ethnically closed societies such as Greece.

For Greece, the best solution would be to show that such a system, as the Macedonian one, is dysfunctional, weak, and vulnerably prone to blackmail and constantly on the verge of collapse and blockage. To have such a weak Macedonia on the Greek northern border is probably a desirable, hidden, if not the best solution for such Greece.

## PHASES OF DISPUTE

Chronologically, the name dispute between Macedonia and Greece has three phases, including this one in which we are today.

*The first phase* is from 1991, when the modern Macedonian state was formed, until 1995, when at the United Nations was signed the *Interim Accord* between the two countries;

*The second phase* is from 1995, up until about the Bucharest Summit of NATO enlargement in 2008; and

*The third phase* is where we are today and is called the resolution phase - agony.

**The first phase** is what I call a phase of the “great denial”. It is time, in part described above, in which Greece started to practice its total negation and denial of the new state, leaving

the impression that the most dramatic upheavals are under consideration. An important feature of this stage is two economic blockades against Macedonia in 1992 and 1994.

At this early stage of the dispute, there was perhaps the only serious attempt to resolve the dispute, a compromise suggested by the British diplomat Robert O'Neil, sponsored by Britain and the United States. He proposed for international use the following formula: Republic of Macedonia (Skopje). This was accepted by the Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov and the Macedonian Parliament in early 1992. But after refusal by Greece, the only serious attempt failed.

The second characteristic of this stage is the success of Greece to "colonize" the climate within the European Union on the issue of recognition of Macedonia. It culminated with the EU summit in Lisbon in 1992 (26-27 June), and the so-called Lisbon Declaration. In it, the EU says, "it is prepared to recognize Macedonia, but under the name that will not contain the word Macedonia".

The Macedonian Parliament rejected that proposal and the resolution, and relations were frozen.

This rude intrusion by Greece and abuse of solidarity within the EU very soon proved to be short-term success for Greece, especially because as a prerequisite for the Lisbon resolution Greece made a wider legal usurpation or denying the Badinter Report on Macedonia (Part 6) of 1991. In it, the most prominent commission of experts and politicians which EU has ever produced, headed by Robert Badinter, on the occasion of meeting the criteria for recognition of new states formed from the breakup of Yugoslavia, precisely states: "... the name Republic of Macedonia cannot be treated as a basis for any territorial claims and irredentism... and thus an obstacle to recognition of the new state."

The reversal occurred under the presidency of Great Britain in the EU, in the fall of that year, at the Edinburgh Summit of the Union. By the so-called Edinburgh Declaration, the EU concluded that it cannot resolve the so-called name dispute and would

send the procedure to the UN for the admission of the candidate country - Macedonia. By this, the EU unblocked Macedonia's admission to the UN.

Further at this stage, Greece in the UN managed to make a situation of de facto violation of the UN Charter for the admission of new members, because it dramatized the issue of safety and security, if the UN was to accept the country with such a name (Macedonia). Greece managed to impose the question of admission of a new member as a security threat to the region. For a while it was successful, because there was great fear in the international community and the UN, that the Bosnian war might spread to other parts of the region. Blackmail and falsified allegations of Greece were successful on the grounds of that fear.

UN violated the procedure for admission, introducing an additional requirement beyond the Article 4 of the Charter, that the country be admitted under the designation provisionally referred to within the UN - the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and conduct negotiations under the auspices of the UN Secretary General on this issue (for its own name) with Greece, in accordance with Resolution 817 and Resolution 845. Negotiations continue until today.

After Macedonian admission to the UN in 1993, Greece continued to make tensions toward Macedonia, and in 1994 introduced a second economic blockade. Other EU member states sued Greece before the Court in Luxembourg, for infringement of the Union Treaties. This situation was resolved by agreement between the two countries on good neighborly relations, a.k.a. the Interim Accord in 1995, concluded under the auspices of the UN Secretary General and the Americans.

In the Accord, Article 11 defines that Greece will not block Macedonian membership in international organizations if Macedonia applies under the designation provisionally referred to within the UN (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

**The second phase** of the dispute came after the signing of the Interim Accord in 1995 and the basic normalization of economic cooperation and diplomatic relations between the two countries. Characteristic of this phase is the recognition at the

beginning of the text that the normalized economic relations have not contributed to solving the essence of the dispute alone, not even for its mitigation. I call this phase - the phase of consolidating positions, and a phase in which Macedonia had a partially damaged recognition and fixation for the acronym FYROM.

At this stage, Macedonia fought for the wider legalization of its constitutional name in the international community. This effort was successful because all major powers (US, Russia, China) recognized us under the constitutional name, and eventually (by 2007), we had 132 countries that did it. It is practically two-thirds of the composition of the UN General Assembly.

It did not matter just whether the dispute would be resolved by this and whether we would abandon the negotiations in the UN, but simply, it was important to become “visible” and consolidate our international position. This phase was also a major diplomatic defeat for Greece, regardless of how Greece explains it.

To the question whether there was a time and place during these phases that the dispute be resolved by compromise, my answer would be NO. In these phases, which had to pass, both states showed their muscles and were exhausted in the effort to consolidate and get the most out of their positions. Proposals to solve the compromise were met with a radical rejection, so even the solutions that in the last stage are considered a reasonable compromise (such as Northern Macedonia as a replacement for FYROM), then were outright rejected, while their proposers were stigmatized.

This second phase was exhausted at the doors of the two organizations that were crucial for us, and in which Greece has the right to veto: NATO and the European Union.

This in turn has opened the last, third stage, which I called the phase of agony/unraveling.

This phase began classically: with a Greek scandal in NATO. Indeed, Greece has decided to block Macedonia, despite the obligations from the Interim Accord. Macedonia was prepared to apply under the UN-designation of FYROM to join NATO (consideration was also made of a final compromise solution such

as the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje) to replace that FYROM). NATO members concluded that Macedonia has met all other conditions, but Greece even in such situation threatened to veto just because of the unresolved name dispute. It was a surprise to the Americans as well, and was probably intended for them. A way out was the NATO unanimous decision that invitation for Macedonia is definite and guaranteed if the name dispute is resolved. Greece once again managed by usurpation of procedures to enforce its national interest and position as a general one. And so the name for Macedonia becomes an extra criterion for admission to NATO.

It is subject of the lawsuit filed by Macedonia before the International Court in The Hague, which was won by Macedonia in triumphant manner; this unequivocally strengthens our position of “being right” in the procedural fight of the dispute, whatever that means in international relations.

In such a situation, the latest proposal of UN mediator Nimetz is in danger of collapsing; it offers serious steps towards a reasonable compromise that could be acceptable to both sides. This proposal that Nimetz submitted to the parties in August 2008 is still “on the table”, in addition to any details tailored in the meantime about naming, application of the new international name, and application of the attribute “Macedonian” in a political and economic sense.

The proposal contained several important decisions: a name internationally for Macedonia would be Northern Republic of Macedonia, which in the meantime has been fixed nevertheless as Republic of Northern Macedonia (geographical qualifier for the name, according to Greek demands); recommendation to the countries that have recognized us under the constitutional name to use the new name (only a recommendation, again upon Greek insistence); the passport would have three names: Northern Republic of Macedonia (in English and French language) and Republic of Macedonia (in Cyrillic alphabet, in Macedonian language?); citizenship would be: citizens of the Republic of Northern Macedonia; and the language would be Macedonian (last options that Nimitz aligned with the Germans and the Americans).

Because of political circumstances, this whole package of possibilities for negotiations at this point is frozen, while at this moment it is not known how things would move forward in this delicate final phase. It would be a pity if this avenue is not used, because of the impression that if attributes for naming my people and their language “Macedonian” are provided - a solution for a name for international use then can be found far more easily.

## 2. GEOSTRATEGY OF MACEDONIA AND MACEDONIAN NATIONALISM

Would still be Macedonia considered a successful case of transition of a post-communist country towards democracy especially in very difficult circumstances?

These circumstances are particularly difficult for the following reasons: it is a multicultural country that makes the transition most difficult case, both in terms of institution building and in terms of conflict management. In this context Macedonia tried to develop a political system that equally offers a good balance between protection of individual human rights and representation of group cultural rights of ethnic communities (that is, I dare say, the only such case in countries in transition).

Especially difficult is the geostrategic position of Macedonia as a cross-land country, which also makes it exposed as a specific case of interwoven interests in geostrategic context. In that context, the country quickly resolved almost all outstanding issues with its neighbors (and there were such issues with all neighbors).

Macedonian independence stems from the disintegration of the previous Yugoslav federation; likewise, Macedonia avoided war by very procedurally correct, politically powerful, and wise management of its internal affairs.

The hardest struggle (fully in the spirit of European realpolitik - blackmail and unscrupulously denied the right to its own name) is conducted by Macedonia courageously and in accordance with international law and customs. In this context, the country survived two major blockades on its two borders, southern and northern, which are very important for Macedonian international trade.

Macedonia was able to overcome a war that was largely provoked from Kosovo, by transformation of the conflict in institutions and the legalistic changes that followed.

The country did it all by itself, left alone in the world, with various forms of verbal and moral backing, but without (until recently) serious political and any other necessary support. The country did it with all the victories and defeats of its governments and politicians.

In the logic of its position and political stabilization, Macedonia becomes what it is geographically: political crossroads of the southern line of Europe with the Middle East and Asia, or a cross-land country.

Such an important crossroads context creates the known syndrome and political model with a reduction of their political alternatives. Such countries are especially vulnerable to pressure from neighbors and other commercial and political forces, because all have an interest, at least, that the crossroads be open and fair to all. This in turn exposes "cross-land countries" to only two options for development policies: either these countries in stable manner control their situation and thus the intersection is in favor of all or are targeted by a constant threat of divisions among their neighbors; i.e., all interested parties fight and try to divide such cross-land countries for and among themselves!

It is precisely the history of Macedonia: when it was not able to build its own state at the crossroads and have a such state function in stable manner - it was then divided and foreign powers fought wars over it (certainly the population of Macedonia had suffered in these conflicts).

Now that we have our own state in that territory - it is important for our state to function in a stable manner in order to export stability around it. For the stability of the region, Macedonia is far more important than the other countries.

International actors (mostly the Americans) understand it better than others and this has resulted in our strategic partnership with them.

The history of this lies in the very fact that their intelligence potentials were located in Macedonia since 1992 and from here, the Americans conducted their operations in Bosnia and Kosovo.



Among other things, this also lay down the grounds for opulent political support as well.

What Macedonia needs to learn from its history as a cross-land country: it must allow passing in all directions smoothly and without blockades! Only then stability returns to the country and there is the opportunity to prosper. It is not possible to block any of the directions (as in the former Yugoslavia to Albania and Bulgaria) and to make Macedonia stable and important country! Macedonia then turns into “a blind alley” full of problems and instability and a place of heightened anxiety for the neighbors who remained isolated from the junction. So we have an imperative to service the junction and normally to profit from it by our stability and economic development. Skopje, in this perspective, becomes the main “valve” of the regional flow of oil and gas (transport and telecommunications). From Burgas to Skopje and from Skopje to Thessaloniki in the south (and vice versa, of course), and from Skopje to Pristina, to southern Serbia, and finally to Albania and Durres. Kosovo has to refer to our country for its energy communication. Hence, the Albanians are generally interested in Skopje to such extent.

In this regard, our imperative in the next period is the development of the severed east - west transversal line! Who understands this better than we do? Maybe the Americans when they become interested in the region; hence this is the next possible overlapping of interests with them! What is their special interest? The line of securing oil and gas from the Caucasus via Turkey, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania to international sea routes. Therefore, to our pleasure they showed renewed interest in and have stimulated the “AMBO” project consortium for the construction of the transversal communication.

Who is our objective adversary in the context of such stabilizing strategic commitment? Perhaps only Greece, because its strategic interest is to become a crossroad of the region, not Macedonia.

It is our only strategic conflict with this neighboring country, not “the identity-related conflict.” Indeed, Greece has an interest to see Macedonia, as in former Yugoslavia, now with help from Serbia - become stuck in “sandwich,” like a traffic tunnel

on the north - south communication road. Probably because of this, Greece has intensively blocked the development of Corridor 8 through us and has partially succeeded in this effort within the EU institutions. With European money Greece restored the line that it wants to bypass us completely: from Igoumenitsa to Alexandroupoli (their version of Via Egnatia); similarly Greece has tried to add the Alexandroupoli - Burgas pipeline to this, by which the Greek plan to bypass Macedonia and so make Macedonia fully dependent on Greece in the context of energy and other needs would be completely successful.

When this plan was somewhat upset by the recognition of our constitutional name by the United States and its persistent effort to rebuild the AMBO project, Greece started to exert rough pressure and blackmail through the procedures of the EU towards Macedonia: a threat to block Macedonian membership if there is no Macedonian concession about the name! It was finally realized at the Bucharest Summit in the context of Macedonia's accession to NATO.

This concept of a blockade imposed by Greece is additionally dangerous for us because of another reason! Namely, the Greeks are not at all interested in how we treat our Albanians. Even Greece pursues a game of tension in this context, in order to weaken our international positions. On the other hand, we have a policy of **inclusion** of our Albanians in the institutions of the system; for us, this is a further important aspect of that Corridor 8 (East - West), because it boosts the integration of the regions inhabited by the Albanians in Macedonia, with the entirety of the country and its very institutions. Development only of corridor 10 (north - south), i.e., what Greece actually wants, in some way would bring ghettoization to the Albanians in Macedonia and would cause additional tension in our country. For us, the balance between the two corridors 8 and 10 is crucial; for the Greeks, having Macedonia depend on them and the north - south corridor is the only thing that matters!

Here, to a certain degree, we have different strategic interests than the Greeks have, while only by strengthening our international position we can parry the Greeks.

## 2.1. MEMENTO 1

A small flashback would be of benefit to this theme, to and from the point of national trauma from a historical perspective, namely the partition of Macedonia by the Budapest Treaty of 1913 and the consequences of the Second Balkan War in terms of perception of our strategic position and attitude of the then world powers towards the idea of an independent Macedonian state.

That would put in place the continuity of the struggle for recognition of Macedonia and its positioning towards these same countries and powers later when Macedonia was finally able to become an independent state. This geo-strategic exercise in a way sheds light on the continuity of these international relations and attitudes concerning Macedonia and indicates what has changed in the meantime.

Namely, the policy of the European powers concerning Macedonia can roughly be divided into two stages: the first stage during the Eastern Crisis, 1875 to 1897; and the second stage, 1909-1913.

In the first period, world powers and key regional players like France, Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Russia (with Ottoman Turkey being more the object or target rather than the subject of changes and reforms) related to the possibility of another Slavic state in the Balkans in the following manner. Austria-Hungary showed readiness to accept such possibility.<sup>2</sup> Great Britain seemed serious supporter of such a possibility (with backing and idea coming from the United States of America for such stance). France, also believing that such a new Slavic state would be under its influence, showed support. Imperial Russia, on the other hand, showed rather strong opposition.

When we say “support” in this context, it should certainly be read as an opportunity or conditionality - if circumstances and struggles of the local Slavic population and its national liberation

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<sup>2</sup> In the secret provisions of the Reichstadt Agreement, signed with Russia in 1876, Austria-Hungary inserted a clause for the possibility of having autonomy for the Ottoman province of Rumelia, which concerned Macedonia. Certainly, having its own interest in penetrating into such Macedonia and getting access to the Aegean Sea. See: Кознмењко И.В., Сборник договоров России с другими государствами, 1856-1917, Moscow, 1952, p. 144-148 (in Russian).

organizations gain such momentum that the creation of such state would be possible, such position of these countries would only then become operational. Support in this context does not mean extra efforts or special assistance to the freedom fighters of the native population, made up of Macedonian Slavs, for their national liberation struggle.

This question stood high on the geopolitical agenda of the then major powers because Austria-Hungary and Germany saw the region as a European bridge to Central Asia (the Balkans was conceived as a railway transversal line, since both countries were connected with their national railways to the set of Balkan railways), while, on the other hand, Russia carried out more than 60% of its foreign trade through the strategically important Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

When circumstances had changed due to the divisions among the local Slavic population on the ground (due to foreign propaganda, and as outcome of population separation by means of establishment of three millets in Ottoman Europe) and the repression made by the neighboring countries that had aspirations for dividing the region, and the strong Russo-Ottoman repression against VMRO, the positions of the aforementioned international players of that time changed as well.

Austria-Hungary changed its position because of the millet-based pluralization of the local Macedonian population, while Russian influence also changed through its support to the neighboring countries to partition Macedonia; and finally, through an agreement with Russia, Austria-Hungary hoped that, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, by offering Macedonia as a victim to be partitioned, it would be able to be in position to carve out an independent Albania under its influence (a plan that ultimately was successful).

France also backed Russia over the partition, finally being joined by Great Britain in that context, despite American opposition, until the last moment, to such a reversal.

Otherwise, in the period of 1895-1897, Great Britain showed a clear position: Macedonia to the Macedonians.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See: Документи за борбата на македонскиот народ, op. cit., pp. 373-374 (in Macedonian).

That attitude evolved in 1908-1909, supporting the application of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin and the Mürzsteg Reform Programs in Macedonia as the best solution for it.

However, this proposal was ignored by Russia and Austria-Hungary, which proposed another one: to divide Macedonia.

The position of Great Britain towards Macedonia changed because of penetration of Germany in the region and the risk for Great Britain, while supporting a non-viable option (as autonomy for Macedonia seemed to Great Britain then), to lose its influence in the small Balkan states.

Interestingly, despite small influence, the position of America, exerted mainly through Great Britain, remained to the very end the same: support for two new independent states in the Balkans - Albania and Macedonia.<sup>4</sup>

Bad karma concerning the partition of Macedonia and disabling its independence or autonomy was mainly the outcome of Russia's policy in the region and its resolute rejection of such option, and later its fierce policy to curb VMRO.

Russia's policy was inspired by the imperative of influence in the region and its penetration to strategic "warm seas"; such imperial Russian policy was translated into options of possible execution on the scale of two possible scenarios all leading to the same goal: to create a great Balkan state clearly under Russian influence (first through Greece with the so-called Megali-Idea and the second through the San Stefano Bulgaria). When such policy had failed due to circumstances of European and local influences and resistance, the second option for Russia was to forge out a loose alliance of Balkan states under Russian influence (against the Ottoman Empire, but still opposed to the Austro-Hungarian penetration in the Balkans).

In this policy there was no room for another new, mainly Slavic state such as Macedonia, because Macedonia did not show Slavic ethnic unity and homogeneity that would have guaranteed

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<sup>4</sup> Special illustration is the note by American President Theodore Roosevelt sent to the British Government in 1903 by US Secretary of State John Hay, which supported Great Britain in its efforts to have autonomy for Macedonia. See: Weibel Ernest, *Histoire et geopolitique des Balkans de 1800 a nos jours*, Paris, 2002, pp. 231; Пољански Христо, *Македонското прашање*, Скопје, 1990, p. 326 (in Macedonian).

the successful outcome of state-making idea and influence of Russia (for the creation of such a state it was not possible to avoid the European powers and their presence, while this, on the other hand, opened possibility for the new state to fall under the Austro-Hungarian or British influence). For Russia, the fact that supporting a Macedonian state would have compromised Russian position and influence with other Balkan states already constituted, was a problem and an unacceptable risk.

Russia transposed this into further fierce agitation and diplomacy in the effort to shatter the name Macedonia (anonymization, as a symbolic discouragement of the struggle of the Macedonians and their organization) for the local population and the territory and to smash the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) to smithereens (that in the meantime had proved unequivocally tenacious in fighting for a separate, autonomous polity).<sup>5</sup>

The Russian operative policy along these lines was especially devastating in leaving and promoting a free hand in the reprisals carried out by the Ottoman Turkish authorities against the local civilian population upon the Ilinden (St. Elias' Day) Uprising (1903) and in the processes of constant campaigns to kill the Macedonian revolutionary and bourgeois intelligentsia (a kind of extermination of the then Macedonian elite), which was mediated by this Russian policy (during the 1905-1908 period, more than 5,000 Macedonian revolutionaries and intelligentsia were killed).

This homage can be of use and instructive, to indicate where and how continuity of these historical traces of geopolitics

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<sup>5</sup> For illustration of this point, the letters by Russian Foreign Minister Count Vladimir Nikolayevich Lamsdorf dated 7 February 1903 sent to Prince Urusov in Paris represent the clearest evidence of this, when the Russian Foreign Minister says... "One should not use the name Macedonia for the region, but only the name Three Turkish Vilayets... and that instead of the term Macedonians, one should use 'the Christian population of the Three Turkish Vilayets' for the population..." (АВПРИ, Ф.151, Оп. Д. 1008, 84-85).

Secondly, in this context, the Russian Ambassador in Vienna Count Kapsis also notes: "...the vicious circle of the Balkan politics must be settled by the sword... by the destruction of the Three Vilayets and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO)." (АВПРИ, Ф. 151, Оп. 582, 34-36).

Thirdly, for the sake of the entire implementation of that goal, the Russian diplomacy prepared a Program, which included: prohibition to mention Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin as a solution to Macedonia; not to create a polity out of Three Turkish Vilayets and not to use the word Macedonia for them; to create a Srb-Millet; in addition to the Turkish language, to formally also recognize the language of such millet, but not of the native population, i.e., the Macedonian.

This is historically the very first attempt for denomination of the Macedonians and Macedonia, as a separate state and nation.

concerning Macedonia was established, to show the underlying reasons for confusion and delay in the recognition of Macedonia by some of these countries, to show where a radical discontinuity with previous policies had been made, and where and how the energies and resentments with the neighboring countries got their roots.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, this may be the pretext-memento in the theory of Macedonian geopolitics.

## 2.2. SECURITY BEFORE DEMOCRACY

Perhaps one of the clearest conclusions made by transition analysts dealing with the theory of the transition to democracy in the communist countries - is that security issues are shown to be priority for control and stabilization in the transition process, particularly in its initial establishment stages. This parameter is driven further, by these sources and their claim that security issues in their internal and external aspects (inter-ethnic relations and minority issues, relations with neighboring countries, etc.) have even higher priority meanings from the basic ideological stands of transition such as: democracy and human rights.

Why is it so? To what extent does our experience confirm this viewpoint? And finally, what are the risks of blindly considering only the delivery of security, in terms of building democracy and the rule of law in those countries?

My opinion is that our experience of a transition of twenty years, unequivocally supports this conclusion as such. Unfortunately, also in terms of appropriate sacrificing democracy in favor of a populist authoritarian system that has managed to build in Macedonia (since 2008) because of the blind consideration and obsessive interest of

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<sup>6</sup> Namely, one is able to especially note the Russian discontinuity concerning Macedonia, following the recognition of the constitutional name of Macedonia by Russia. If one believes the memoirs of Zhelyu Zhelev, how he persuaded Russian President Yeltsin to recognize us, despite the opposition shown later by the then Russian Foreign Minister and Russian Parliament (Duma). All this took place while Yeltsin was riding a train to Romania. Likewise, the continuation of American support and, later, the strategic partnership with USA have been of crucial important for us; clear indications of such American support can be also traced in the American policy in early 20th century.

foreigners only for security arrangements that Macedonia can and should deliver.

The first conclusion is supported at two important points: security is primarily important because states arising after the dissolution of other major, complex states, in the logic of the basic principle of self-preservation and self-help, in the anarchic relations of the international community - have predominant “instinct” to consolidate and address security challenges and arrangements of their own existence.

Such a degree of coherence of internal resources and diplomatic means and connections suppresses into the background some of the important ideological schemes of internal political relations and the building of democracy. It certainly does not mean that this will necessarily develop into authoritarian political forms (later this is exactly what had happened), but it only means that the democratic program and institutions will suffer “pressure” from other priorities and will probably be placed under the imperative of efficient, quickly responding to possible external challenges.

Second, in Macedonia the issues of self-preservation and security of the state were also stressed because of some important domestic political reasons, among which the most important were inter-ethnic relations and the general system of addressing individual human rights with individual and group rights of ethnic communities that are not majority. Especially the way to set up and protect the “right” of cultural diversity. In a word, the functioning of liberal democracy in a multi-ethnic and multicultural society such as Macedonian.

Several facts are very important in the field of external factors in depiction of pushing and inhibiting the security paradigm in the Macedonian society.<sup>7</sup> Almost a stressful feeling of inhibited fear and danger: from the Serbian megalomaniac militaristic hysteria (1989-1992); from the possible pan-Albanian (now without the control of the army of federal Yugoslavia) idea

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<sup>7</sup> Macedonia's road to independence was very “procedural”: First ever democratic and multiparty elections in 1990; Declaration of Independence; Independence Referendum; the 1991 new Constitution confirmed by the so-called Badinter Commission; political “mastership” in negotiating a peaceful withdrawal of the then federal Yugoslav army (JNA).



and project; from the Bulgarian national frustration with the Macedonian identity; and finally, from the Greek arrogance and its blinded policy toward us (1991-1994).

The security paradox for Macedonia was that as a new state it could not defend itself from such aggressive neighbors by closing itself and relying on its military, police and intelligence potentials - but only by a radical opening towards the international community and the military potential of serious Western countries like the USA (NATO) - whose presence in Macedonian territory and in the region neutralizes the military potential and superiority of the neighboring countries. The Macedonian political leadership of that time well perceived that fact and pursued a policy for opening of the country, a policy completely opposite from the one pursued by most of the neighbors at the time. However, the internal political effect in the short term of such openness of the country was the instant boosting of the feeling of vulnerability and being unprotected among the population. It cannot directly and easily be seen that the instinct of isolating oneself when in danger should be replaced with the opposite: a radical opening when under threat. Moreover, at that time there was no open offer for the presence of foreign troops (US, NATO) in our territory, but only verbal support and assistance from friendly countries. It only increased the security frustration of the population.

What is very important and also hard to understand by foreign security experts is: why in such circumstances the reactions of the population were not a hysterical conflict on inter-ethnic basis or political instability followed by conflict of that kind - but the opposite, a subtle coherence, being aligned around the basic political ideas for the development of democracy, system institutions, and political leadership (which was then symbolized by Kiro Gligorov and a young group of politicians around him previously engaged at the university), demonstrating referential stability and elasticity in resolving conflict situations?

Such an unraveling of the security frustration and uncertainty in Macedonia was due to several factors.

First is the different political history and experience of inter-ethnic relations and the struggle for survival of the Macedonian

people, respectively. In Macedonia there have never been ethnic wars of serious proportions and negative collective memory that would be perceived through “the graveyards and blood revenge” between ethnic communities. Even in times of tensions, different local communities learned to live with each other.<sup>8</sup> The majority-minority(minorities) relationship has had a capacity for tolerance. In the context of inter-ethnic relations that are significantly influenced by mutual prejudices and stereotypes, it is important to distinguish between the following (the difference in the political experience of Macedonia is based on this): between the very existence of ethnic and religious prejudices and stereotypes on one side, and willingness to base social confliction on them. Namely, when they are the main driving force for the inter-ethnic conflicting correlations.

If the inter-ethnic “stereotype” is defined as: a set of attitudes and beliefs about the personal characteristics of the person or group of people from other ethnic, racial, religious or gender affiliation that are often negative or inferior qualifications for “others” and are the result of the need for classification, simplified views, half-truths. They, incidentally, speak more about those making such stereotypes than about those for whom they are intended - then it is important to distinguish the existence of stereotypes or even demonization of the other on one hand, from a situation of “active stereotype” or behavior, political and social action that is motivated on basis on such stereotype, on the other hand. For example, the Macedonians have approximately the same stereotypes and distrust of fellow Muslims, especially of the Albanians, as the Bulgarians have distrust of the Turks as a minority in Bulgaria, the Serbs for the Albanians of Kosovo or the Greeks for the local Turks in Greece. That ethnic distance varies in all these cases with lack of confidence from 60 to 68%. However, when respondents were asked the question (involving active prejudice) whether they would become politically activated based on this prejudice, mistrust and distance, members of different nations differently answered or gave even dramatically different answers: even 48% of the Serbs said YES, and so on. The

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<sup>8</sup> This is shown in almost all documents or state-making projects of the historical VMRO.

Macedonians showed a drastic decline in that possible engagement based on prejudice with only 12% of respondents saying YES.

The latter shows the extent of the actual conflict in a society. In this case, even if they have similar stereotypes and prejudices about Muslims, the Macedonians still show great inertia, caution, and slowness in motivating social action towards “others” based on stereotypes about them. A cynical assessment would claim that the Macedonians are inclined to have the government solve every problem including the aforementioned rather than take own individual responsibility; but, in the context of that gap, a small but important difference, one can rest the whole different experience of more tolerant inter-ethnic relations in Macedonia and even toward the other, neighboring countries.

Second, there is considerable difference in cultural notions of the local ethnic communities in the country (the Macedonian, the Albanian, respectively) than those in the neighborhood. The Albanians in Macedonia are economically better situated and have a more developed political culture and a smoother relationship with the Macedonians than other groups of the Albanians living in Kosovo or Albania have (with the Serbs or among themselves). On the other hand, the Macedonian people, as a relatively small Slavic nation, developed properties of cohabitation and cultural survival and existence, which is specifically reflected in the position of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. Although one of the oldest, it is still unrecognized by the family of Orthodox Churches - which creates a special instinct for survival by making alliances with the Vatican (closer relations than those with the Russian Orthodox Church, the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, or with the neighboring churches). Its position forces it to make complex political maneuvers and learn of political compromise and cohabitation. Because of this (and it is important for the culture of the Orthodox population) liberal values and democratic institutions that come from Western countries after the fall of communism, relatively easily become rooted in Macedonia than in other “Orthodox countries.”

Third, there was something I call “a balance of fear about Macedonia” in the region. The overburdened history of conflicts and wars in the Balkans is related to Macedonia and

the geopolitical space of Macedonia. It was part of the history of each of the neighboring countries as well. This created restraint from easily reaching for renewed destabilization of Macedonia. Such typical Macedonian “discourse of Balkan crossroads,” or of “a Balkan cross-land country” in this case was realized through non-intervention and balance in stability of Macedonia (and the region as such).

The result of the conjuncture of the aforementioned cultural/political factors and geopolitical elements enabled overcoming the inhibitory fear as expressed by the population in Macedonia for their own safety and that of the new state. Finally, crossing into an entirely new phase of consolidation and stabilization of the country.

Modern challenges to the stability of the state and refraction of all that in the “sense of security” among citizens, consist of the following situations: the intervention of the international community in Kosovo and FRY and the repercussions of “the Albanian question” on Macedonia after the Kosovo crisis; the process of opening of the Macedonian economy and strategic privatizations - which has been refracted around the issue of aggressive Greek economic presence in the country (anti-Greek sentiment is much higher today than during the “Greek blockades” imposed on us?); general rise in social insecurity and especially various crimes and the classical sense of security in life.

In my opinion, the first question is most neuralgic and mostly contributes to the “feeling of insecurity,” which has general, hazy acute form but represents a constant threat. It consists of a string of conclusions, which have sometimes rather simplified form, but are very strong as widely accepted stereotypes: the international military intervention has “upset the balance” in favor of the Albanians in the region - by eliminating the “Serbian control” over Kosovo. For the local Macedonian population this creates uncertainty about the future conduct of the Albanians in the region and especially about the intensity of their “demands” to be delivered to the Macedonian state. That suppressed fear and anxiety actually gave rise to NATO skepticism in some political parties and political circles.

This feeling was further promoted by the inability of the then Macedonian government to “control” duly its relationship with the NATO partners during the refugee crisis and their legal status in Macedonia. The picture about the complete paralysis in relation to the demands of the Albanian “partner” in the then ruling government coalition - the DPA party and its freedom of action.

The entirety of such “feeling of uncertainty” was intensified among the ordinary people by their view that the Macedonian government “did not govern,” but they were supposedly left to the accidental concatenation of circumstances (“fortunately, no one acutely is threatening us”) while some (the Albanians in general, as prevalent stereotype) constantly “were undermining the system” and pushing their national interests and agendas before the very eyes of the blocked and corrupt government.

This would be a very dangerous mood if it takes epidemic proportions because it acts (degradingly) in anomic manner upon the cohesion and motivating forces within society. It also spreads fear and uncertainty for the very future of the country and personal destinies of people - which is the basis for every authoritarian and populist manipulation.

In Macedonia, as well as probably in every multicultural society, every politics must be careful as to “how it looks,” how a political action and made compromise are perceived and accepted in the context of various sensitive ethnic stereotypes. Regardless if such pictures are real or not, they still are a political fact that in the worst case can push the joke and rationality too far, never to return. Cultural identities of individual ethnic segments are in a higher stage of sensitivity when they are daily confronted with the “other” cultures and practices in the same society. They feel their uniqueness in sharper way and so emphasize and defend it in a more forceful manner. There is stronger political motivation and mobilization in such situations of cultural plurality. State guarantee for the protection of cultural practices from hegemony of other local cultures is especially important in this context.

It must be foreseen and then provided by the political decision-makers.

The consensus in such societies of a radical cultural segmentation is not a condition/basis (value) to be used as a point of departure in the construction of society - but a method, willingness and capacity to continuously and constantly deal with cultural clashes and competitiveness. Consensus is so transformed from (self-)value - into the procedural capacity/method to resolve conflicts. From given, it becomes assigned! We can also call it - a minimum procedural consensus under constant construction.

I think the suppressed basis for the specified fear is the still unsubdued, unraised to level of awareness and acceptance, security paradox. Namely, we still do not see clearly the very reason for our relative stability: in our fragility, resilience, dynamism, and tolerance. These are values that have been “diagnosed” but not yet internalized or accepted in our political culture. Still, when mentioning the word “security,” our first association implies the very state, army, police, borders, the Albanians, etc., as hegemonic cultural supremacy, that guards the tribal “fire.”

Regardless of our experience, we have not accepted the thesis to build our stability as a system of tolerance and openness of society. Therefore, we still have “stress” in the face of contact with the “others” without such security guarantee from the state hegemon. Such stress is emphasized in circumstances of existence of other social crises as well.

We are not ready, at least not to the very end, to accept the state of constant fragility and resilience and constantly redefining the consensus and balance (so important for multicultural societies) as our stability. We must constantly defuse the different levels of social confliction through dynamic inclusion or the involvement of social actors in the hubs that “cook” social consensus.

A condition for success in this delicate project, which is new even for established democracies, is the effective functioning of a small but strong central state administration. It must ensure the neutrality of rules and procedures for the contacts among the great variety of cultural actors. It should provide “the market” and rules of peaceful interaction. Its role must be as neutral as possible, but extremely effective.

Such a function of the central administration relaxes the suppressed aggression and fear of endangering one's own cultural identity.

### **2.3. WHAT IS REALLY “ANTI-MACEDONIAN CONSPIRACY”?**

The anti-Macedonian conspiracy, with the force of the Hegelian objective idea, indestructibly progresses and countervailingly explains many things in the phantasms of the Macedonian political actors. It is a general matrix of hiding and suppressing our frustrations. As the Macedonians belong to the proposed group of nations “prone to conspiracy” who previously identify themselves as victims of history, the process of opening toward the EU, NATO and similarly is always considered by the Macedonians to have a conspiratorial background narration, a substratum that follows the project as a shadow.

Most of these conspiratorial narratives represent a low-intelligence ideological material that appeals to the lowest national sentiments. About the same time, people are not able to see a real challenge, which could expose them to turbulences.

Namely, these turbulences can develop even during the best or the most favorable scenario of our future. The paradox of our success to join NATO and integrate into the EU. It would be soft, with hugs and recognition, and yet “disappearance” of Macedonia's specific culture. On the other hand, the same challenge can be an opportunity for development, to make the culture of the nation shine. That challenge, however, as some high mountain, is set straight before our cultural survival in the near future.

In the most optimistic scenario of the outcome of our integration ordeals and in general love atmosphere of exchange with the big (for us) national populations: six million Albanians (in the west), ten million Serbs (in the north), seven or eight

million Bulgarians (in the east) and ten million Greeks (in the south) - implying a future where we are recognized, accepted and supported by all, we are in the midst of the maelstrom of “exchange” of these nations in the region: a million and a half ethnic Macedonians, with a little distracted look.

At the same time, by this maelstrom and boiling embrace, we instinctively feel that the road to NATO and EU necessarily makes the protectionist role of our country in the safeguard of our national and cultural identity rather relative. This implies that we will not be able clearly and for long time to call for protectionist interventions and to close our own cultural, economic and every other type of market.

It is necessary to prepare for completely new fields of struggle for our own survival and the production of our own culture and specifics.

Countries in Southeast Europe have been unavoidably placed in the process of “opening up” and regionalizing before their Europeanization. For a country like ours, which is multiethnic and multicultural, we will not be able (will be not allowed) to perform the “closing of the state” for mitigating the challenge of larger cultural groups and nations - aimed at us. That effort for us would be equal to instant defeat and outright defensive stance at the start.

Therefore, over time we need to get used to depending less on the instinct of “the protectiveness” of the Macedonian state for the Macedonian culture. Sure, some of the major promotional functions of the state for the Macedonian culture will be of lasting character, but they will be far from sufficient to meet the challenge of facing off the regional cultures of other nations. The Macedonian state gradually will become more ethnically neutral and hopefully effective, while the Macedonian cultural production and creativity and therefore the reproduction of Macedonian cultural identity must become increasingly elite and more independent from the state to maintain its visibility.

If we fail to understand this on time - we will then become members of the club of losers. We will demand constantly that



the state protect our cultural values, while it will not be able to do it only for us. We will become accused as “the nationalistic majority” and will collect increasingly negative points within the international community and all that stuff as “losers.” Our country will have to open itself more than ever (although thus far, the policy of Macedonia was in the right direction - opening the country to foreign monitoring and presence).

What does it mean for a million and a half Macedonians? What is challenging? Either we will be able to organize ourselves in a way that our cultural production and dynamism become better than everyone else’s, and that we will be able to maintain an elite production, self-support, and self-protection (to be “Jews” in this region) - or we would jeopardize our own existence as such. Others will “flood and wash” us; we will then become mere “spice” in their “casseroles.” For this, no particular conspiracy theory and special conspiratorial activity are needed; the numbers themselves and the dynamic forces of the market will do the finishing job.

Our short-term and long-term political strategy should organize the project, and not just “playing the role of a dupe fighting” for crumbs and other leftovers from the present government.

The right wing (whatever that means today in Macedonia) instinctively feels this situation with the opening of the country as a danger to itself and its own rule in a closed-traditional society, while its strategy is resistance or delay of NATO and the EU integration of the country. If it cannot be done openly, then only by retaining the rhetoric of integration-oriented policy, efforts are made for such policy to collapse de facto and be postponed indefinitely. In this context, the right wing abundantly exploits the already tested ideology of fear of extinction of the nation and conspiracy theories against us, the Macedonians, as if everyone in the world were our own enemy. This policy should not be underestimated, because in the short run is rather successful.

The left, in contrast, has no strategy or political utopia to which it aspires in the context of the post-integration process of Macedonia. It seems as if the left believes that things concerning the national question and cultural production per se will come

into place, if liberal opening to “European values” and the process of economic integration are enabled. The left has a policy only to the level of the struggle for democracy and rule of law against the right authoritarian nationalism. However, in the context of a free and possible, future integrated, Macedonia, culture and cultural production, which for us mean national survival, visibility and creation, seem as if they were a taboo subject for the left. It seems as if there is no decision by the left about what to do in a situation of “cultural competition among nations” when our substrate of million and a half Macedonians is faced with cultural productions by so many neighboring nations around us and with globalization as well.

Defensive in nature and fatal in the end, the rightist utopia of a closed country at this position in the Balkans, for Macedonia, is certainly wrong. However, the leftist utopia should be born out of hope and strategy to survive, implying policies of diversity and identities. It involves upgrading and investing in the social capital of the Macedonians in some key areas as political priority. It has to fulfill the electoral and program offer of the Macedonian left. The leftist utopia should be promoted in daily political battles and should determine the reforms when the left gains power. Moreover, what are those priority pillars that enable our cultural reproduction and national visibility?

Primarily it involves elite education and elite emancipatory radical cultural production, which allows our people to be the best in the huge crowd who apply for any projects and solutions, who compete or simply create in the open region and in the cultural competition that is also conducted in our territory being open to all.

Our sciences (architecture, construction, medicine, humanities, and their logistics) must be the best in the region, or we will be doomed to disappear together with them, as the Khazars had done. We must be the best to even be visible in the relations involving four and more against one, as they are at the national-level competitions in the region. For us as Macedonians, the real conspiracy is development of a bad populist education (as it is now), squandering of the public health-care system (which

now takes place), distasteful public architecture dictated by government politics, and so on. Such poor production is death for our cultural survival and is a real threat in the medium term. For us, it is a matter of survival to be the best, not a prestige or whim. Only as the best, we are visible and exist; otherwise, we are doomed to perish.

### **3. POLITICAL PLURALIZATION IN TERMS OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS NATIONAL IDENTITY**

In the early 1990s, the political scene was formed under the superego of democratic pluralism, multiparty system and under the shadow and fear (justified or not, whatever) of a pluralization in the Albanian political bloc. On one hand, there was the fear whether we would succeed “alone,” and on the other hand, there was the dilemma of how to organize multiculturalism in democracy, so that such a process would not affect the stability of the country. It was about creating a security paradigm. That was the dilemma of the decade and of the recent history of the Macedonians!

The initial multiparty establishment and momentum was monopolized by the formation of VMRO-DPMNE as a party of the rightist nationalistic, hazily referred to as, Christian Democratic bloc. It monopolized the use of the “brand” of the Macedonian historical revolutionary movement of VMRO, together with all its demons.

On the other hand, the League of Communists transformed itself on two occasions (first as SKM - PDP and then as SDSM), but continued to bear inhibition as the vanishing mediator (Lacan), due to its previous party sins from the time of the one-party socialist system.

The left, *de facto*, was doing the works related to the introduction of the multiparty system and organized the first democratic and free elections, and simultaneously bore the stigma

and the accusation that it was the successor of totalitarianism and communism.

The multiparty system introduction among the Albanians in Macedonia took place having different experience. It was dominated by two vectors. The first, which was largely violent, was solidarity with the wider Albanian bloc in the region, with particular emphasis on Kosovo proper. The second vector related to the initial learning of cohabitation with the Macedonian political elites on a new basis.

Initially the role of “the vanishing mediator” belonged to PDP (Party for Democratic Prosperity), which disappeared before the onslaught of the Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA) in the middle of the transition period. These two parties were then “replaced” by the present Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), as the major Albanian political representative after the 2001 conflict.

Regardless of their internal dynamics and mutual accusations about who had been formed by the police and their agents provocateurs and who was an authentic representative of the Albanians, all Albanian parties (that later would be seen more clearly) showed high readiness for participation in the political system and life in Macedonia and high level of cooperation in its governments.

The relationship of such political pluralism to identity-related issues of the Macedonians was recoiling in the political struggle between SDSM and VMRO-DPMNE. Both parties, in serious, extensive and stable manner, swept most of the social structure of the Macedonian population, so there was no real space for the appearance of a third serious option that would replace them. It shows that the political mythology, ideology and operating policies of these parties fit into patterns and social expectations of the Macedonian population, consistently expressing and representing them. From that aspect, the relationship to the issue of identity and nationalism among these parties can be said to be suitable to the broader social metaphors and views and important to our interest in the text.

SDSM (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) used two lines from the tradition of the Communist Party. The first concerned the national identification of the Macedonians as Slavic and modern,

which was implied. The latter in terms of its establishment, notably the anti-fascist struggle for freedom and own state (that they interpreted narrowly as a communist), which was on the trail of national awareness-related, the so-called state-making Macedonian struggles in history, in the late 19th and early 20th century.

SDSM perceived (which later proved incorrect) that the nation had a chance to be stabilized as modern, almost solely through economic consolidation and integration of the country into NATO and the EU. Their cultural policy on national identity was suppressed by these priorities and the entirety of culture as a field of political struggle was not seen as crucial. Culture as a politics or political arena was not understood by the left and was so abandoned to the new rightist parties, especially VMRO-DPMNE. It proved to be a grave mistake for the left and fundamentally flawed policy, which cost it a series of defeats, leading to a confrontation with a settled authoritarian system that is almost impossible to beat in elections, because free and fair elections can no longer be held in the country.

In this segment SDSM repeated the mistake in the last thirty years, so characteristic for the social democratic parties of Europe, which is indicated by Zygmunt Bauman saying they lose political battles exactly in the field of culture, unable to understand and to be reformed in a way that the culture will be accepted as a primary field of political struggle in times of globalization and wild neoliberalism on the rampage. Also, these left parties fail to see that the modern and industrialization are phases that are bygone and that will not return to the stage in the same way awaited, without having to assume cultural identity forms of struggle. Such background matrix, which formulates new struggles, represents new particularism, tribalism, flourishing of fictional group identities and fundamentalisms, and finally, politics of metaphors of identity phantasms, those that are filled with fears, symbolic closures, heterophobia and cultural racism, as “the selected ones”, and governed through national-level politics.

In addition, the decline in “the enlightenment paradigm” hit the left and SDSM, even though they lack such awareness. The manner of formulation of political speech, struggle and language always goes through metaphors and phantasms by which voters

identify themselves and so form their own individual viewpoint. It happens not through the “rational debate” about all aspects of the problem, but always through the ideology of what we want to see in the problem, as we want to see ourselves in it (the “big screen” theories). The left still fails to recreate such language, ideology of liberation and emancipation, which are characteristic of the enlightenment, through said political metaphors and, therefore, fails in confronting the rightist utopias for the nation and traditionalism (which are rotting but still persist because there is nothing to replace them).

SDSM - together with the left in general, not only the transitional - totally unprepared and off-guard, rushed into these new fields of political struggle and largely was unable to take advantage, losing a series of elections, not because of better alternatives offered by the rightist politics, but rather because of the misunderstood ideology of the emerging political struggle. The new struggles invisible to the left hurt it and dispersed the coherence of viewing it as a political alternative.

On the other hand, SDSM, as transition left party, had to bear a special burden. Namely, according to the textbook on the superego of transition, it voluntarily bore the brunt of the general, collective guilt for the previous one-party system. When it increasingly tried to be democratic, open, liberal, it then received more blame for totalitarianism and communism.<sup>9</sup>

In the later development of party ideological relations, another transitional bizarreness took place. VMRO-DPMNE started completing itself de facto as a Bolshevik, para-Communist party of the nationalistic right wing (Bolsheviks with ethnic nationalistic sign), and, serially, began to show classic (leftist) tendencies of reaching for distributive justice and emphasizing

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<sup>9</sup> Conducting the first multiparty free elections in 1991 showed such inhibition: after a poor showing of VMRO-DPMNE in the first election round, the party executed simple ethnic-based mobilization by spreading false news and rumors about plans of others to construct a series of mosques in western Macedonia; this resulted in turnabout among the Macedonian voters in the second round and the final election results were in favor of (very tightly) VMRO-DPMNE. Its obsessive odium against the Albanian parties did not enable it to form a majority government with them, giving rise to the first Macedonian multiparty-system government, the so-called government of experts (i.e., a technocratic government). The then reformed League of Communists (a.k.a. SKM-PDP, now SDSM) at the time did nothing to counter such manipulation as if simply wishing election defeat and change of power. Only the inter-ethnic crisis, which erupted then, and the initiatives by Macedonian President K. Gligorov made this party show support for the government of experts.

the role of the state. DPMNE began to develop itself as a party with a super hierarchy (a.k.a. “Sultan party,” a party with a very authoritarian party leader) with no tolerance to any intraparty factions and different opinions and with elements of the mobilization of para-military organization. They started building a racketeering state (during periods when they were in power) that interferes in everything and does not tolerate any other center of social and political power. It is seen through their attacks on and interference in public health care system, education and the university, through the suppression of independent media, the business sector, etc... Also, and perhaps most tragically, we can observe these trends with the creation of ethnic-nationalistic ideology of mobilization of fear and historical frustration among the Macedonians in all directions rhizomatically.

Thus SDSM got a strange role to represent and defend the liberal values of the legal order together with the individual rights and the free market, something that, basically, would initially fit the liberal centrist and center-right parties. Social Democratic parties primarily in their agendas stick to social justice, the role of the state in the distribution of wealth or “the state that cares” for solidarity as a fundamental value, this most often being against neoliberal capital, especially against ethnic nationalism!

SDSM has moved to the right of the political center (unaware of it), while VMRO-DPMNE, has taken radical left and radical right positions as the party that has the ambition to become a movement, the party that wants to collect and control everything.

This bizarreness lasts to this day.

Returning to the baseline of interest in the topic - the attitude towards the Macedonian identity and its conceptualization in the newly independent Macedonia, the main story takes place almost exclusively on the side of the ethnic danse macabre by “the right” versus the inert and vague position of SDSM, which probably considers that everything has already been decided, clearly and unequivocally.

SDSM is focused only on circumstances which should verify and promote the nation and define the identity of the Macedonians such as the international name recognition and international acceptance of the state. The complication brought about with



postponement of membership in NATO and the blockade by Greece emphasize the fragility of the strategy and bring up the topic in which the question of doubting the identity repressed in the Macedonians (which is very high on the agenda of and heavily exploited by VMRO-DPMNE), will get a critical opportunity to become highly politicized and increasingly extremist in the relationship between the political blocs on the question of the Macedonian identity.

VMRO-DPMNE, at the level of its ideological leaders in the party, has always had a problem with the Macedonian identity as such. In the version of Ljubco Georgievski and Dosta Dimovska, it was shown in relation to the so-called Bulgarian roots of the Macedonians (they left at least a chance that the Macedonian people and identity would be modern having common roots with the Bulgarians). Given this latest generation of politicians belonging to the party, and their construction of ideology about the so-called Ancient Macedonian identity of modern Macedonians, they have left the previous Bulgarian narrative and an attempt is made for a new mythology establishment and, at the same time, denying the present Slavic identity of the Macedonians.

Basically, this party never showed honestly and clearly any concern about “Macedonism” in the classical sense of the meaning, as a distinct Slavic identity and people (in the ethnic sense of the word).

It is important to connect this experience with the theoretical concept that we follow in the text and ask the question: how to deliver what (according to Lacan and Žižek) is called the “ideology of the vanishing subject” (decentered subject)? This theory paradigm suggests that it is possible, even effective in a historical context, to form a strong ideology based on the myth of self-denial, the ideology of the “Grand absence” - the subject that should be historically established has vanished; it has denied itself!

The subject of the Macedonian identity is absent in the places where VMRO-DPMNE looks for it.

In the historical VMRO of the 19th and early 20th century, it was missing or was not present enough, because in those struggles despite the sincere desire for statehood, and as we saw

a real concept for the Macedonian political nation, still a critical force to create the Macedonian state was missing. Statehood was achieved by the other revolutionary generation, that of anti-fascists, which VMRO-DPMNE, at all costs, wants to avoid as basis because this party constitutes the opposite of it. Additionally leftover elements of the VMRO movement, during the WW II Nazi occupation and the liberation struggle, were mainly on the side of the occupying forces, which is a problem for the party in independent Macedonia, a state that is considered to have been created precisely by the antifascists.

Hence, the jump toward own identity - in the period, so to call it, of the historic VMRO - actually was jump into the void, into the hole. Over there, the very subject of identity is missing or is present in the state-building trail and so one needs a lot of mythological effort to construct it!

After this attempt which suffered serious resistance by the Macedonians, because it was treated as a pro-Bulgarian deviation, the second generation VMRO-DPMNE leadership, mostly composed of runaways from other parties, decided to opt for another operation in the quest of identity leverage, that of Ancient Macedonia and of Alexander III of Macedonia - operation known as “antiquization.”

Again, it is an attempt for establishing the subject in its absence and in/out of the hole. Establishing in the presence of large “absence” of the culture and subject certainly represents the attempt by means of the ancient hero Alexander of Macedonia and everything he represents, especially in culture, to establish a modern Macedonian identity as such. Alexander III of Macedonia basically took over the Hellenic culture as his own and tried to “globalize” the world by spreading it. That fact is insurmountable for the DPMNE attempt to perform an identity alchemy. VMRO-DPMNE has additionally created a new problem for itself: first it is not able to skip the separate Slavic being of the modern Macedonians, and now additionally it collides with the Hellenism of Alexander the Great.

The attempt for disfigurement and finding a new identity symptomatically has failed. However, it becomes clear that this is still a durable concept of this political party.

It is interesting to note - as shown by the aforementioned thesis by authors Lacan and Zizek - that the ideology of identity, regardless of such substantial lack of content and subject to be identified, still, can be a powerful ideology. It can become a strong opiate for political action because people want to see themselves so or because they accept to modify themselves and their society in mythological manner. The ideological view of oneself only tangentially touches historical facts and events; namely, it can very comfortably construct itself based on various phantasms.

Ideology operates independently of the facts and all the worse for them if they do not fit into it.

This excess by DPMNE confirms this theory and proves something more: that overcoming and opposing this ideology can be implemented not through science and critical, rational debate on “facts,” not through a substrate of enlightened “blind” belief in science as such, but only through another ideology. Perhaps, also an enlightened one, but an ideology, phantasms of self-perception that will be more attractive for the majority of the nation, and will be possibly emancipatory and liberating.

Normally, at the end of the day, the question arises: Is it possible for this identity alchemy, super-construction of identity to succeed at all, even if the whole nation believes in it, even such an operation is sponsored by an authoritarian populist government, which controls everything it needs for such an operation: money, media, culture, and education?

Of course, it cannot, and the answer would be NO! But it does not exclude a tragedy for such nation! A great damage, a large scar that such an attempt would certainly leave (in this case) on “the face with so many scars” - the Macedonian very identity!

It will show historical infantilism, being immature as to the very moment one lives in, or as Blaze Koneski says: “being ripe for the days, being unripe for the very day” in much of the national body.<sup>10</sup> It would underestimate and ridicule the nation; and however one tries to turn it around, it will collide with its true place in the perception of the “others,” of those of the international community.

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<sup>10</sup> What “foreigners” call “wet dreams of dictators, a phantasmagoric project, the Las Vegas of authoritarianism” when seeing the ongoing “Skopje 2014” project.

### 3.1. MIRE

Why does the nationalism of the right-wing utopia conspire against its own country and nation, by means of a state of affairs whose ideological profile is described above, a state of affairs that because of the right-wing victory at several consecutive elections starts bordering the “new reality,” which I would call “the mire”?

First, the Macedonian populist political elite, as opposed to the ballot and media support it gets, fails to solve and fails to set the resolving of the most pressing national problems that historical time places before it and thus fails to allow its own country to go forward, to develop. As the most obvious is the example of the stalled integration process. In that sense, the defeat is not that we have a dispute with Greece blocking our entry into NATO and the EU (as if it were our choice) but political inability to set coordinates for its resolution. Right-wing populists, being blocked, do not know how to deal with it. They claim that others are to blame for this, suggesting a referendum, which is a rejection of political responsibility and negotiations because they feel insecure and are afraid of such a process. What they have exploited as political parasites thus far - Macedonian illusion of intransigence, nationalistic rhetoric, and “dignity” - will now have to go down the drain, while opening a process of dispute negotiation where such jingoist rhetoric will be definitely questioned. That is what blocks them additionally.

Consequence is that Macedonia has fallen on the scale of the international rating way down, without end in sight. Isolation will have consequences on the internal stability and inter-ethnic relations. Macedonia does not have money and any serious investments. Strategic priorities exist only as rhetoric.

In contrast, the populist political leadership exploits the current problems like parasites, “sucking juices” from the Macedonian nation succumbed under the encumbrance of the unsolved problems, boosting its party rating and its party coffers through the fears and suffering of the Macedonian nation.

The paradox is the growth and enrichment of the ruling party, and weakening of the state, its institutions, and the very nation. Until the moment of their common destruction by the dead-drive of the contemporary Macedonians.

The political elite has failed to “protect” the nation by covering it with the NATO umbrella and allowing its internal multicultural relaxation by this. On the contrary, the populist political elite exposes the nation to the bleakness of its fragile stability by ruining the international reputation of the country, which is essentially important in solving international problems and international positioning.

Using rhetoric that is unviable and whose consequence is steady erosion of the state - is not a position. If, using the vocabulary of a diplomat, some years ago, all EU member states thought that Greece was 80% to blame for the name issue, today thanks to the internal and foreign policy of the current political elite, the situation is at least 50-50% (the diplomat was even polite with me when noting this!). It is the outcome of this right-wing political utopia that I call: suicidal conspiratorial and mired!

After 20 years of independence of Macedonia, this political elite even has initiated the issue of what Macedonians are - thus shocking all our friends in the world, and the domestic public as well. How others can perceive a nation that after 20 years of own independent state and centuries-long struggle for statehood now asks itself, “Who am I” and “How do others perceive me”? Such a clownish turnabout has made us hit the very ground! Those reckless cheaters at the top of the ruling party, authoritarian enough to impose such immense ad hoc improvisations unconditionally on the public scene, were devastating for the Macedonian international position. Since then we are bent and cannot stand upright. That gift for our opponents could not be better.

Therefore, I think this right-wing policy is stuck in the mire or mired.

The same political elite does not know to read the history of its own nation and state and interpret in a manner that will ensure the reproduction and development of such nation as a modern European nation. Because of reasons unknown to me,

this populist rightist elite cannot face and consider the most significant moment in the history of the Macedonian statehood - the anti-fascist struggle, in which 150000 armed men from Macedonia, mostly made up of ethnic Macedonians, created their own first state. That anti-fascist program and struggle for/of the Macedonians is constitutive of the state, and its political orientation in the family of modern European nations. This perhaps does not have the same meaning for the Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Italians, and all other nations that had their own states before the anti-fascist struggle. For us it is the cornerstone of a new stage where we are not only a state-building nation but also create a state of our own. Even much larger nations in their struggle for a state never had such historical circumstances of luck and providence. If the nation and political elite do not know (due to the ideological barriers, fears, perverse pleasure-in-the-nation, which ends in the dead-drive (Lacan)) to set themselves to such a fundamental contribution in their own history, then there is a crisis for the nation and its very identity. This failed elite is a “recycle bin” for the dirty subconsciousness of everything dropped in the historical purgatory of the Macedonian people and seriously jeopardizes its historical establishment as a modern European nation. Because of such considerations I think the politics and nationalism of the right-wing utopia is conspiracy against its own nation.

Such political elite in the struggle for supremacy of its own party is ready to sacrifice the Macedonians as citizens and as a historical nation, whom it should serve and make free. It develops and exploits gloomy stereotypes about who the Macedonian is and what his “destiny” is!

In order to feed on fear and inferiority of the Macedonian, this elite creates, develops and exploits picture of him as a true and authentic if he is hated and surrounded by enemies (the archetype for the Macedonian Red Riding Hood and the four wolves). It puts itself and its people as an object of hatred and conspiracy by its fellow citizens, the Albanians, from whom the Macedonians need to constantly defend themselves and so hate them by “keeping them under control!” (By this, it seriously diminishes the benefits arising from the Framework Agreement without responsibility

for the stability of the state from this process, then as a nation divided from the inside that is on permanent alert and looking for internal traitors (who dared to think freely and were disgusted with rightist archetype of “the Macedonian with special needs”). All this represents the fertilizer of the ideology of the populist right-wing utopia for and about what “the authentic Macedonian” should be, used by this party to feed itself and gain political profit. This party advertises itself as the only party defending this “Macedonian with special needs” from all the above-mentioned monsters! This ideological project succeeds to intoxicate a significant voting segment of the Macedonian population, which together with the questionable elections in recent years has brought serious political crisis, which I therefore call “the mire.”

How seriously dangerous the opiate of such ideological project is, experimentally can be examined in context of emergence of a critical affair of the system, the so-called mass wiretapping. Wiretapping more than 22000 people since 2011, documented by making the wiretapped materials public!<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> It is said that opposition leader Zoran Zaev has in his possession about 680000 wiretapped conversations involving more than 22000 people!?! Of which the Macedonian public by now has heard barely a tenth or maybe even less, while the shock has become increasingly huge and blocking. Their authenticity is not disputed (although the government has blamed the opposition leader for “created” telephone calls, not explaining what it meant by that and has filed criminal charges with vague content against the opposition leader, in the so-called Putsch affair). All involved actors have recognized themselves in these wiretapped telephone conversations. These telephone conversations indicate the existence of mainly three types of mass violations of human rights: the large-scale wiretapping (violation of the right to privacy and related rights); violation of electoral rights (recognition of electoral fraud through a series of abuse); violation of constitutional division of power through rigging and criminalization of the courts and prosecutors; series of lucrative thefts by the “family in power”, and a series of fraudulent trials and obstruction of justice related to serious crimes (murder, the so-called “Monster” affair).

It is clear to the Macedonians and the international community that the institutions are PART OF THE PROBLEM rather than part of the solution. It is not possible to have effective and final judicial outcome of this mega-affair through the legal institutions in Macedonia today.

A political outcome is possible first, and then to have a judicial or legal outcome. In this regard, it implies a political agreement for a transitional government (with robust involvement of the international community, mainly USA and EU), which will set some of the institutions in place (such as special domestic/foreign prosecutor's office and special court or at least a special court chamber for processing this affair). This would also involve some of the key institutions like the Public-Service Broadcaster (Macedonian Radio and Television), and so on, until the drafting of the new electoral law for fair and democratic elections, etc.

The reaction of the ruling elites and the entire media and expert circles, which these elites organize and control, is a shock and denial. However, the initial shock has been replaced gradually by reaction of a pervert: I know it is so, but I believe in what the leader will say - that we are an instrument/victim of a higher conspiracy that we do not see. There is "higher truth" in relation to which the forensic truth that I am confronted with, and that shows that my party officials were lying, stealing and abusing power - is still a lie?!? That fascination with the word of the leader that heals and establishes the reality, what is and what is not reality - is the climax of the disease of ideological reality as the only reality that can be perceived by the populist mob.

The fascinus in context of full disclosure of government corruption represents digression to the schismatic discipline of repeating the same mantra: "created," cut, put together, redacted materials - that is intended to be a more sophisticated denial of obviousness. The last strongholds of this ideology in such a direct, sensory punch in the head - is mechanical, almost Pavlovian behavioral repetition of the mantra of denial or negation.

The danger for this ideology imposed by such frontal impact of the disclosure is still imminent; it consists of the disappearance of the stronghold binomial that allows its virtual reality to function - and that is the formal public law-secret law link, or hiding obscenity behind the true reality. This is what Hegel calls the law of the day covering the law of the night.

Such hiding that everybody is aware of, nevertheless is fading now, while obscene reality, excess pleasure, and the law of the night are becoming fully exposed, thus facing serious crisis!

Given the climax of the affair driving the authoritarian populism in Macedonia into a deep political crisis, in the spring of 2015 we have again been mired in the binomial: all people know that they cannot continue like this and such, but cannot imagine how the leader will fall and how all the obscenity of the particular "pleasures-in-the-nation" among the Macedonians above all, will disappear or get transformed, along with the very leader?





# **PART TWO**

## **MACEDONIAN NATIONALISM AND MACEDONIAN IDENTITY**



## 4. MACEDONIAN NATION IN CONCEPTS OF NATIONS

Jacques Derrida once said that deconstructionist reading of history and historical meta-narratives are actually undermining the system of differences, binary oppositions (true-false, good-bad, order-chaos, hatred-love, etc.). Such approach leads to detecting a third “member”/element that is out of the discourse, that reinterprets the historical work, saving it from the defined boundaries and placing it in the area of pure imagination.

Richard Rorty, however, claims that history is selfness, a being not centered, implying irony in its interpretation, rather than hard conclusion. On the other hand, with all reservation about irony, which, incidentally, I adore, nevertheless what constitutes a nation are memory and history. The desire of the nation to constitute itself reversibly constructs the memory, re-reads history, forms the “archives” (J. Derrida) and the archeology of knowledge (M. Foucault) for itself, as a separate nation. Such a process, as we learned from Lacan and Žižek, is not linear; rather, it is based on the facts and on neutral, objective chronology; and it goes through the notion of the fantasies that organize the *jouissance-in-the-nation* and political and ideological constructs of what will be remembered, and what should be forgotten.

In spite of everything, in spite of the saturatedness and compromising of historical memories, in the Balkans, in spite of the meanest bloody abuse of history for bloodbath and butchery among the nations of the Balkans, still history is necessary for all of us. Even in spite of the historians, otherwise a terribly boring, conservative and susceptible to political manipulation

coterie, history is necessary. For the Macedonians, it is further functionally important and bears topical political dimension.

It is not possible to support the thesis (promoted again by these historians) that we had enough of history - whatever happened now is over, and we need to move forward. Such blunt starting forward, and deleting everything behind bears a presumption of an already-read history. Absolutely fresh start is not possible. Each beginning contains a memory tailored with imagination, which means somehow ideology. In this sense, Peter Sloterdijk makes a point that we have to understand that history always begins in our absence. Hence, we can never aspire toward great historical narrations that are exclusively in “our” possession, that have begun with us. In relation to our yearning for confirmation of our own meaning in them, history and time are only trauma caused by our helplessness to have “the event” or “the spectacle” begin with us. “The very event” has begun before our presence there. “My history begins in my own absence; in other words, in absence of my memory and the slip of my consciousness to be present at that act”.<sup>12</sup> But such ideology perhaps also for us is vitally important to be emancipatory ideology of the free Macedonian and the modern Macedonian nation.

The most radical negation of tradition in form of modernism, which had been constituted in an attempt for radical discontinuity, a specific *oblivion* to reach a new beginning - the “real present time”, has not been fully successful in that attempt. Its rhetoric and strategy of forgetting just recovers what historicism wants to forget, which is returned to postmodernism. Postmodernism, however, recovers memory in the form of pastiche. The state of affairs on the Macedonian “national highway” can be treated as mute texture made up of the unrealized modernism and violently embedded postmodernism, all that immersed in the framework of a provincial small town environment - as described by Serbian author Konstantinović. Both in his works and in general, such provincial

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<sup>12</sup> Sloterdijk, Peter, *Zur Welt kommen – Zur Sprache kommen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M., 1988.

In his text “Poetics of beginning”, Sloterdijk treats the ontological perspective of our yearning for “beginnings”; this yearning has been raised to level of a cult in relation to the new tabooing and “packing” in the envelope of the mythological hermeneutics that insists on oblivion of what had happened as archive data, raising it only to ephemeral, almost literature-like metaphor. In this light, he insists that in our perception of the world, thought, and language - there is entire mental corpus that has its own poetics.

small town environment is not marked by special qualities of the content and values of modernism and postmodernism; on the contrary, fear from Otherness, xenophobia, oddity, and the suffocating collective spirit are prevalent.<sup>13</sup>

In the ritual of repeating segments of the tradition, the people / and the individual make them re-appear in life. Even though we do not like that idea, or it is not politically useful, we have to live with it. It is true that memory is a construction, and not always and insignificantly reconstruction of events. But it is not construction out of anything. To remember means to recall events as isolated sequences of narration. We construct schemes, distinguish, thereby allowing memory. That involves individual sequences about Ilinden Uprising, Goce Delcev, Dame Gruev, Jane Sandanski, the Boatmen of Thessaloniki (a.k.a. the Thessaloniki Bombers), ASNOM (Anti-fascist Assembly of National Liberation of Macedonia), partisans, freedom, liberation.

Rites of celebration of heroes and events of history, religious-national rituals are formalized acts, stylized, stereotyped and repetitive for establishing continuity between the present and the past. The ritual is action that repeats the act of history in ritual canon. It defines the confidence of the nation; it defines its path.

But also social memory is a type of political power. Namely, the definition of what is remembered and in what way it defines hierarchy of values and power, defines the present and future even more (J. Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 1966). Control of social memory determines the hierarchy.

It is in this field the Macedonians still struggle with themselves. Among them, open ritualization takes place of denial that they are for the state, that they have history. Internal de-contextualization of memory takes place, the memory of *their* rituals. That identification baton constantly sways. The discussions on de-contextualization are not so shocking, even those about the treason made by Mihailov, Aleksadrov, and others. What brings confusion and anxiety is the reference that betrayal is happening from inside. It is very hard to explain how a politician “from your files and ranks” can develop fully deforming thesis on the division of the Macedonian state. Or after 20 years of an independent state to begin debate on changing

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<sup>13</sup> Радомир Константиновић, Филозофија паланке, Нолит, Београд, 1989 (in Serbian).

the identity of the majority Macedonian nation from Slavic into ancient Macedonian. It is treason “from inside” made by the political elites of the newly independent Macedonian state, which you fail to explain how it is possible to reach the central public policy agenda (to remain there). It does not involve calls for historical debates and classifications in textbooks. It is not someone’s personal opinion. At this point I must recall Nietzsche: the ability to become disgusted by something is a good basis for a new beginning.

Each state creates point “from which to measure time.” It is a date that is important for it. Our independence is one such point. Such Archimedean point defines the gravity of all politicians in Macedonia, regardless of their political profile. But more importantly, it is a starting point for identity and nationalism of the Macedonians. The rest is war and defining of other countries. Our politicians take the “rattle” from us, the history of self-definition. No one else can take it from us. We establish a perverse ritual of self-denial, as replacement for the notion of open debate or democratic dialogue.

There are three collective-psychological self-perceptions of the Balkan nations that even “the stranger” of Albert Camus cannot synthesize and clearly present, but that can still be distinguished from our knowledge of ourselves. The first group of pathological self-perception would be called a problem with the size, power and civilizationedness. The Americans call it a problem with attitude and geography; i.e., the state is under obsession and considers itself in preference to other Balkan nations, or that it is not a Balkan country, that is historically and currently more powerful and that is a leader in some sense before the others, which it considers to be behind it and always have been. Such a local imperialism was displayed by Serbia and Greece.

The second syndrome is stress of conspiracy and self-conspiracy. This is most pronouncedly seen in the case of Macedonia. The state is under constant examination of its self-confidence and has doubts about a possible conspiracy against it by neighbors, minorities and the international community.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Conspiracy, and conspiracy theories, manipulate the psychotic certainty that something terrible has happened, which is determinative of our destiny. Such theories tell us that the evidence for that horror is right here before us, if we want to see it, of course. It is like the never-ending tape of revelation that continually invites believers and

The thesis is that everybody is against its existence on the key strategic place where it exists. Proof is the history and current wars and problems, not recognizing the name and so on. Such syndrome is not just related to struggle and expressed only in readiness to struggle for existence and proof of the undeniable fact of existence on one hand; it is also altered perversely into psychological syndrome of not being convinced in ourselves and into internalized (from us to us) conspiracy assumptions about the division of the state and self-destruction.

Third pathology of self-perception is the syndrome of the victim, feeling constant cheating by the others. Counter-position of this is the use of violence to stop it, and it is the syndrome of the awakened victim. Such is the case with the Albanians in the region and it is also displayed by the Macedonians. The Albanians constantly feel cheated: by the history and the drawing of borders, by the laws on minority rights, by the Italians, by the Germans, and even, by the Americans. If you ask them a question, why they are always cheated, they skip the direct answer and transform themselves into regular victims of the region. The victim makes repeated demands; however, the victim is also simultaneously trapped by the so-called syndrome of the passive victim. This is manifested by hazy plans and global liberation projects of the 19th century and earlier, and the method is violent and romantic rhetoric.

By means of the Euro-Atlantic integration, they all together think that they will solve their own problem primarily, which they perceive in the above categories; they then transpose it into a shared EU-related idea that there they will ethnically be united, followed by their empty rhetoric about development and EU values. Actually all they want to do is “get hospitalized” in NATO and the EU, rather than get integrated.

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listeners to share such secret with the revealers of conspiracy, in order to acquire this secret knowledge about political violence and obscenity / fraud / ephemerality behind the stage of history. Everything is related to everything else and such revealers develop specific pleasure (drive) in the constant discovery of never-ending new pieces of evidence, having them interconnected, documented, indicating the details and specifics. According to Lacan, the conspiracy revealers are in the discourse of the hysteric and his obsession with security/predictability. Also see in: Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*, Duke University Press, London, 2009, pp. 150-170.



#### **4.1. DEFINITIONS OF NATION AND NATIONALISM**

Contrary to the said localisms, in theory there are several groups of definitions of the nation, around which everything revolves. Let me only briefly mention them, in order to situate my thesis on the manner and the way of constitution of the Macedonian nation today.

For historical definitions, it is characteristic that the nation is reduced to only some of its properties that chronologically recur in a group of people. This definition is divided into two groups: generic definitions and structural definitions of the nation.

Generic definitions list more chronological characteristics of the group, cumulating them one over other.

Structural definitions single out only “timeless” characteristics that are essential to the concept of nation (or at least according to the very authors representing them as essential). For example, a generic definition is one that emphasizes the historicity of the formation of the nation, the time sequence of the creation of a permanent community of people linked by common language, economic life, culture (Claude Willard), territory and manifestation of national consciousness.

Structural definition of the nation is one that singles out from this group of benchmarks a so-called “a significant benchmark” more important than others in the very sequence. For example, Hegel’s definition, which says that “there is no nation without a state, everything else is just ethnic material, not a nation.” In case of Diderot, we also see structural definition. Or Thomas Paine, who underlines the benchmark of sovereignty as important to the nation; i.e., the nation only possesses sovereignty. From these definitions it appears that the nation is a sovereign political community or state. In this case, the notion of state is superior to the notions of national consciousness, a common territory or culture.

An important type of structural definitions are those that distinguish the quality of collective consciousness or shared national consciousness (Otto Bauer, Hugh-Seton Watson, Max Weber, Benedict Anderson). For these authors, the nation is a

community of sentiments, aspiring to become a state, a community of people who have a specific sense of solidarity and national consciousness. In a concluding formulation: The nation is historically shaped permanent community of people, created on the basis of a sense of belonging to a particular state - as a basic element of the group, solidarity consciousness.

In the recent reviews, addition to this definition is made by Benedict Anderson<sup>15</sup>, saying that the nation is “imagined” community, meaning that people who feel solidarity on national basis do not personally know each other (like a real community) but imagine that they have a common origin (and without personal contact).<sup>16</sup>

The line of modernity of the nation is also seen in the definition made by Eric Hobsbawm when he says that it is undeniably a modern political creation, different from all previous forms of association. Hobsbawm notes that the nation does not grow naturally; on the contrary it is the result of social engineering, which is practiced by nationalism as an ideology and using the political movement that is able to transform, reconstruct and re-discover old cultures, entirely inventing them or deleting them. The nation, according to this author, is definitely a product of nationalism, and the key factor is political.<sup>17</sup>

Nationalism and nation grow among modernizing political elites and are typical political responses to the symbolic “threats”, such as modernization and industrialization are for the traditional cultures and identities .

There is nothing “natural” in creating a nation is especially stressed by Will Kymlicka, when he says that all political operations in that direction are a political decision of an individual ruling elite; they take place in the following frameworks: adoption of an official language; national system of compulsory education; centralization of political power and the abolition of the earlier

<sup>15</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London 1992.

<sup>16</sup> The contemporary debate on that old theme has impressive names on the referential list: Anthony Smith, Percy Cohen, Ernest Gellner, following the same line as previous authors: Eric Hobsbawm, Michael Hechter, Benedict Anderson, Karl Deutsch, Walker Connor, Paul Brass. In the book by Alphonso Lingiz, *The Community of Those Who Have Nothing in Common*, Indiana University Press, 1994, the author makes irony of such definition by B. Anderson.

<sup>17</sup> Ерик Хобсбаум, *Нациите и национализмот, Култура, Скопје*, 1993, pp. 29, 35, 269 (in Macedonian).

forms of autonomy and local self-government enjoyed by minorities and indigenous peoples; diffusion of the majority official language through cultural institutions; adoption of state symbols that celebrate the culture of the majority community; construction of a single legal and judicial system; reforms for control of immigration policy, ownership of land and so on. Something that is called “nation building” or “nationalism as politics.”<sup>18</sup>

But by no means one could find banality in the historical bond between the “nation” (community of people with a sense of solidarity, a common culture and national consciousness, Seton-Watson) and the “state” as a legal and political organization, which has monopoly power and which expects loyalty from its citizens - when it results into the nation-state, which is not culturally neutral and de facto enables dominance of the majority culture. This is so even in the form of a “democratic version” of the nation, when it is seen as synonymous with a group of individuals living under the same laws. These individuals have cultures and the right to form in those cultures, and when the state is at their own disposal, they convert it into an instrument of imposing their own culture on other cultures. This vicious circle of repression of nation-states has been mitigated recently in historical terms, by means of multicultural patterns of democracy and liberalism, through minority and other group rights in the framework of liberal multiculturalism. But later we would go into detail on this.

The literature lists five stages as a basic chronology of nationalism and nations according to E. H. Carr (E.H. Carr, *Nationalism and After*, 1945)<sup>19</sup> The first involves the creation of sovereign nations as the basis of international order after the Peace of Westphalia, 17th century; the second stage is bourgeois and popular participation in the constitution of states. This system was established when the states consolidated themselves in the period after 1815, and it caused fragmentation of the then prevalent international system. The third phase, according to Carr, started from 1870, specifically to develop after 1914, with socialization of the nation and of the relations between socialism and nationalism,

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<sup>18</sup> See in: Will Kumlicka, *Muticultural Odysseys*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, pp. 62-64.

<sup>19</sup> Also see in: Carr, E.H., *Nationalism, A Report By Study Group of Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Oxford University Press, 1939.

ending with the emergence of national irredentism. In this first stage nationalism was successful right after the First World War. This was followed by the fourth phase, which Carr denotes with the Nazi slogan “Nacht und Nebel”. Phase when for the first time the nationalist principle established strong links with the culture and required the state to become a strong defender of those links. Citizenship became only possible through participation in the culture of the very nation. Because this principle was incredibly difficult to achieve in situations of great cultural differences, hence violence, genocide, pogroms, exchanges of population became issue of everyday politics. Everything was turned against universalism and enlightenment especially, deeply rooted in *Gesellschaft* and closed in *Gemeinschaft*; certainly, the fifth phase took place after World War II, with the triumph of liberalism and democracy, in the western part of the world, industrialization, further establishment of communism and the cold war.

The European liberal experience of the nation (in the 1830-1880 period as the beginning) was determined by two watersheds the first was mirrored in the elitist nationalism of Manzini, Hamilton, Liszt, and was based on the stand “we created a state now let us create a nation” that is like Hegel’s principle.

Later, between 1880-1919, the predominant was the principle of cultural heritage or ethnicity. Culture and language became central themes for the formation of the nation. So each nation has the right to self-determination and statehood. As such they become the very drama of the First and Second World War.<sup>20</sup> Contemporary matrix of nationalism in Europe is classified again on the same basis, but with less dramatic elements. The French model is building the nation in a single state by all its citizens. The German model is based on the concept that the nation should be determined by “blood” or ethno-cultural similarity. Although, formally, this model is like the French as well, as the German nation is made up of all citizens of Germany.

If in this context we would like to further build upon the phases mentioned above by Carr, we would normally add the sixth stage of nationalism: the collapse of communism and the creation

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<sup>20</sup> Expressed in the shortest manner by the slogan of Giuseppe Mazzini: “Every nation a state, only one state for entire nation.” Cited in Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge, 1990, p. 101.

of many new countries with the ambition to transit to democracy. It began somewhere after 1981, with the triumph of liberalism and democracy globally (which made F. Fukuyama to formulate the phrase “end of history”, understood as a tension between major political alternatives), but also prompted Huntington to view it in terms of new clashes between civilizations but now seen as finalized different cultures per se. Seen from later aspect, this phase of the different “triumphs” has been displayed only as a triumph of the neoliberalist wild capitalism, understood as communication capitalism (Jody Dean), but whatever!

In the process of crises in modern democracy, then multiculturalism through the integration of immigrant communities, and especially the “fall of communism” and transition, which then opened - it was nationalism that exploded in its “starkness”, (as further argumentation of our thesis about its unprincipled coalition with liberalism) as clearly negative response to the vacuum of values displayed with the fall of authoritarian systems. There was a general “flight” into the irrational fundamentalism in the forgotten histories of nations as an imaginary response to the difficulties of transition. The lack of liberal democratic traditions and responsible leadership have given rise to very nationalist form of legitimacy of the government. Nationalism has played in some of these states the role of massive promoter of the newly established democratic political system (as a huge shadow hanging over local liberal constitutions). “War” broke out between the political quasi-elites over who will prevail in the dominant “suprapolitical” culture of nationalism and statehood.

In the developed part of the world nationalism reappeared at both ends of the crisis spectrum: among the oppressed and excluded, as a struggle for the “right to culture” and diversity, and in the other end of the spectrum of the dominant and mainstream cultures, as new cultural racism and right-wing nationalist and jingoist reaction.

Nationalism in the period of globalization persists in a new controversy. It has given its signature (in the form of ethno-nationalism) to new hybrid regimes of ex-communist countries transiting to democracy. Its very signature (ethnocide, genocide, mass crimes against humanity) has also been seen in more than 53 civil

and ethnic wars with huge casualties. Similarly, it has also marked the discussions on collapse of the concept of cultural integration (discourses on multicultural democracy) of immigrants in the democratic countries situated in the Western political hemisphere .

Nationalism, in other words, has appeared as the dark side of globalization (other flip of the coin), now assuming the very form of new tribalism and identity paradigm in the cultural pluralization of mass capitalist societies and in developing societies.

International law now uses a double coded formula of nation and nationalism.

According to the first basic definition, a nation represents all the citizens of a given country. Cultural and ethnic similarity can be assumed, but is not in the foreground; now in the very foreground is the citizenship status of individuals.

For an explanation of cultural identities and roots, one uses the second definition, namely the term ethnic nation. This term refers to a group of people with the same cultural, historical, ethnic and linguistic features and common origin.

This means in practice that a nation can be made up of more parts of ethnic nations, or predominantly one ethnic nation with small parts of others in all sizes. On the other hand, an ethnic nation can be disseminated in several nations or countries in a region. Only about 12% of the countries in the world can be called ethnically homogeneous or predominantly composed of one ethnic nation, which coincides with the nation as such. Provisional criterion is at least 85% of the population to be culturally homogeneous.

In the scientific discourse on the nation, there has been a somewhat nervous debate about whether nationalism as a sentiment and ideology, even together with its “sacralisation”, is a necessary condition for the creation very nations (Conor, Cruise, O’Brien) as opposed to the overwhelming standpoint, that such feeling is only one piece of the social adhesion used in nation building (Hobsbawm, Hekter, Cohen, Anderson, Deutsch and many other authors that follow the track of Hugh Seton-Watson).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See in: Ernest Gellner, *Encounters with Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford 1994, p. 61.

## 4.2. NATIONALISM AS IDEOLOGY

The phenomenological side of the definition of nationalism will take us to another direction that we need. Namely to the essence of that Janus-faced phenomenon.

The list of controversial epithets will briefly display the top dramatic nature and uncertainty in the definitions of key terms and valuations. Namely about nationalism we can hear and read as follows:

1. it is atavistic response to the contemporary antagonisms and crises and contrary, that is to the notion of modernity and industrialization, meaning a modern political concept;
2. that there is soft and hard nationalist association of individuals with this idea;
3. that is progressive and self-emancipatory, associated with the right of nations to self-determination and decolonization and that is evil, regressive and encourages hatred and genocide.
4. that there is a good (benevolent) and bad (repressive) nationalism, and in this connection that is the basis of legitimacy in the modern system of international relations, and opposite that is the source of their delegitimizing by causing the most brutal international wars (First and Second World War among other things);
5. that most of democratic states emerged and developed in the framework of their modern nationalism, and the opposite that nationalism always ends up in authoritarian and dictatorship political systems;
6. that there is liberal, social-democratic, communist, Jacobinic, Whig or conservative nationalism.
7. Nationalism stands on both ends of the ethnic conflict and discrimination - both those who are discriminated invoke nationalism in the struggle to not be discriminated against, and those who discriminate and repress invoke nationalism in such politics of theirs!<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Erik Hobsbaum defines it along the line E. Gellner as a political movement that aims to match the ethnic and political entity, and thus to distinguish themselves from the others. *Op.cit.* pp. 270, 269, 29.

8. Is nationalism necessarily exclusive, tending to exclude, chauvinistic, or is it an emotion that springs from deep and human needs for mutual understanding and sharing values and social life?
9. Is nationalism an ideology or only a sentiment?
10. Is nationalism a radical particularism, or it has universalist values?
11. Is nationalism a sentiment of the masses or just an idea of elite modernization groups?

There is almost no concept in political theory that has so clearly the face of Janus as nationalism, having so many radically different qualifications as nationalism.

The definition that helped make a career in the area and that we prefer is that of Ernest Gellner (on this track is also Eric Hobsbawm): Nationalism is a political principle (an idea, ideology) that believes the political community (the state) should fully co-occur with the ethnic community.<sup>23</sup>

Or as we say, the state should be “ethnically pure” or culturally homogeneous.<sup>24</sup>

In this sense, as a political principle, idea or ideology - nationalism thus defined is normative theory that sets requirements in the form of regulations and priorities on how the state should be regulated, in order to be good! In this perspective, nationalism, from ideology, becomes movement as such.

At value-related level, nationalism determines, as norm, what the primary community of man is - it is the ethnic community that shares the same culture, insisting that loyalty to it transcends all other loyalties. Second, it suggests how, in accordance with the previously mentioned, a country should be governed and how the rights of its citizens should be allocated. And, thirdly, it insists

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<sup>23</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983, p.1. Also see in: Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1991, p. 72; John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1994, p.3.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Glover, “Nation Identity and Conflicts”, in *Morality and Nationalism*, ed. by McKin and McMahan, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 13, says that ideal type of community for nationalism is a tribal nation where people are homogeneous tribe, language and culture are completely the same, boundaries are clear and are not a matter of one and undivided territory, while culture includes one religion as well.



that international relations should be solely determined by the relationship between these nation-states.<sup>25</sup>

The first value-related and moral determination (at normative level) means it is moral and good to pursue and fight for mankind divided into nations, and that they should coincide with the existing states (the surplus should be assimilated, integrated, melted). According to this viewpoint, every nation has its own special character and culture and the difference, not similarity, defines them. The source of all political power and legitimacy of the latter are located in the nation as a collective (and not in the individual as a citizen, or other source). For a man to be free and realized, he should fit fully into the nation and identify with it. Loyalty to the nation transcends all other loyalties.<sup>26</sup>

In short, nationalism is a normative theory of how people should live and theory of political legitimacy of the government. This theory is basically corporatist and organismic and, of course, ends up in appropriate political systems belonging to authoritarian populist or complete dictatorships.<sup>27</sup>

All others, and there are many historical systems, including democracy, partly developed with the vocabulary of nationalism (even it is “liberal”), mixed with enlightenment liberal creeds, actually represent only inconsistently followed nationalist cause, not universal liberal or progressive nationalism.<sup>28</sup> They represent junctures, which

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<sup>25</sup> Anthony Giddens in op. cit., p. 312, says the Welfare peace in Europe is dominated by inconsistency in the relationship liberalism-nationalism in the so-called nation-state, which is defined as, a political apparatus that has recognized sovereign rights within its borders, in a demarcated territory. Apparatus capable to support its demands for sovereignty by means of control of the police and military forces (monopoly of power lies in its hands). Most of the citizens of such country have positive feelings towards that national identity (legitimacy). We would add that such an entity believes it has the right to self-determination in the international arena.

<sup>26</sup> See also: Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, London, Duckworth, 1983, p. 21; *Современи политички теории*, Љубомир Д. Фрчкоски, Г. Иванов, Правен факултет, Скопје, 2003, pp. 714-718 (in Macedonian); as well as cited works in the previous footnote.

<sup>27</sup> The same author in the book *National Identity*, Penguin, London, 1991, lists five characteristics of nationalism: historical territory (real or imagined); common myths and historical memories; common mass, public culture; common legal rights and duties; common economy... While Daniel Bell, *Nationalism or Class*, The Student Zionist, ed. by Moynihan, says: nationalism is a powerful sense because psychologically it revives the family structure of blood and belonging - there is authority, sovereign and protection of the members of the nation...

<sup>28</sup> Michael Ignatieff divides nationalism as follows: civic or “good” and ethnic or “bad”. This is very debatable division based on pragmatic considerations and relations of forces. Namely, nationalism can assume and get merged with different ideologies and political orientations, but it has always maintained its dominant segregationist energies alive and dominant, so in times of crisis they predominate on the ideological scene and in the battle in politics.

in utilitarian manner led to coalitions, mainly unprincipled and still successful for stabilization of democratic and predominantly liberal systems. In such context, these principles never produced a new synthesis; they have separated upon the stabilization of liberal democracy, to clash again in periods of crises of democracy and its economy. As it is said in different way: authoritarian populism and nationalism are shadows of democracy. Every democracy has redemptive, renewing and populist hunger that in a way should be satisfied (and if you are lucky, to keep under control).

Probably the strongest side of nationalism is the symbolic one relating to cultural identity - collective and individual. About this, Yael Tamir says it is like “time machine”; nationalism is a “movement through time” based on the transmission of language, traditions and norms from one generation to another. From this perspective the duty of each generation is to honor obligations to the ancestors as it would remain within the same cultural matrix.<sup>29</sup> The need for culture, situated selfness of social and individual human formation, is politically exploited by nationalism, by making it the structure of power and manipulation (often through the myths of the chosen nation, nations with missions or sacred rights of a country and name, and through a network of fear, endangerment and conspiracy, as avenue of manipulation).

Margaret Moore calls this same argument “argument from fairness”. She namely believes nationalism is a powerful source of identity in the modern world and should be accommodated (mutually adjusted) in the modern democratic state, but in a way that does not endanger other cultural identities and individual civil rights (indeed, it is a problem). Furthermore, Moore says, because culture through national identity means a lot to individuals, it is important for individual self-determination and prosperity - the modern state cannot be neutral to the national identity. But from that point Moore takes another track and attacks the nation-state assuming that the state should provide space for accommodation, mutual adjustment of all cultures, not just for the majority.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Jael Tamir, *Liberalni nacionalizam*, Filip Visnic, Belgrade, 2002, pp. 85-87 (in Serbian).

<sup>30</sup> See: Margaret Moor, *The Ethics of Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2001, p. 72. Also in this work, see further about the debate on the primordality or construction of national emotions and identities, (p. 9 and onward).

From all this, several types of arguments can be summarized in defense of nationalism as a political ideology:

- argument for flourishing;
- self-determination as an argument;<sup>31</sup>
- argument for historical reparations;
- argument for particularity as a virtue;
- argument for the value-in-culture as virtue.<sup>32</sup>

The first, fourth and fifth connect social well-being and identity path fully with nationalism. According to them, the whole development of the individual takes place through the collective of nation and nationalism as identity self-determination, while divided, particular cultures/nations are something valuable to civilization, which should be promoted and protected.

The second argument considers that ethnic nation has the inalienable right to establish a state, and international order should be built on the principle of a globe divided among nation-states. On the other hand, the third argument is the process of inventing traditions and history, mythological feast of false memories where a nation is reconstructed backwards as necessary and fundamental. A nation, as such, believes that by now it has been everybody's victim and is entitled to historical reparations, return of suffering in the form of various compensations for future flourishing. A nice comment on the latter is given by Ernest Renan when he says: "To be a nationalist by definition means to read history wrong."<sup>33</sup>

I will finish with several comments about the same side of nationalism, which I consider to shed special light on the topic.

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<sup>31</sup> Defensive definition of nationalism in this version is given by Michael Ignatieff when he says that people want nation-state thinking that it would protect them from injuries and attacks from their neighbors... they can reasonably require their own state when they believe that it will secure their own future... See in: Michael Ignatieff, *Boundaries of Pain*, New Republic, November 1, p. 38.

<sup>32</sup> This includes the famous thesis of Yael Tamir that nationalism, in its determining cultural level, more than in its political level, is still connectable with liberalism... because it does not focus on the nation and its relationship with the territory... See: Jael Tamir, *Liberalni nacionalizam*, Filip Visnic, Beograd, 2002, pp. 58-61 (in Serbain).

<sup>33</sup> Similarly: Judith Lichtenberg, *Nationalism, For and Against*, pp. 160-164, in *The Morality of Nationalism*, Robert McKim, Jeff McMahan, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997.

Namely, first with Lacan's attitude toward nationalist particularism, when he says it is a response to hysterical division of contemporary capitalism. The desire for national unity grows with the distance of its satisfaction in globalization. Overcoming of this hysterical division takes place through the discourse of "the master." The master is the ideology of nationalism which is to establish the disturbed balance and set new points of satisfaction and stability for individual and group identity of the nation.

Slavoj Zizek complements this thesis with the definition which says that nationalism is particularly developed discourse of collective satisfaction of the nation, a paranoid super-identification, which tries to maintain the unity of the group identity as opposed to global capitalism.

Finally, Gilles Deleuze defines "super-ego" of nationalism as a false unity. Namely not as an exchange between individuals but as an exchange between empty spaces, in light of the "death of the subject." Nationalist communication is communication between emotional states, structures, empty spaces where the subject was. It remained defined only as empty space and is not an actor in that communication exchange.<sup>34</sup>

Peter Sloterdijk offers my preferred definition of psychoanalytic condition of nationalism, defining it as a permanent plebiscite, referendum, which is a hysterical construct that must constantly reproduce itself. For him, nationalism is hysterical, panic-based information system, which constantly irritates itself, leads itself in a state of stress, terrorizes itself and has panic attacks to convince itself that it really exists to confirm its existence.<sup>35</sup>

1.1. If we would like, on the other hand, to make a historical line (genealogy) of political philosophies that determine our position on the topic of ideology of authoritarian populism and nationalism today (such reference is always afterwards *ex ante*) toward "the roots" - then the closest would be the line that starts with Wilhelm Reich in his collectivization of desire in the

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<sup>34</sup> Quoted according to Slavoj Zizek, *Enjoy Your Nation as Yourself*, New York, 1993.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Sloterdijk, *Gnev i vreme*, Fedon, Beograd, 2013 (in Serbian).

establishment of the ideology of mass obsessions of the crowd or the ability to manipulate large portions of the population. It implies the inclusion of a mass psychosis of creating consent that manipulates and influences the reasoning and conscience of the people and thereby normalizes the deformed forms of subjection and violence. Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze first note that Wilhelm Reich refused to equate the cause of manipulation and behavior of the crowd with ignorance and lack of information for decisions to be taken and connected it with the desire, with the drive (the point which Lacan and Zizek also relate to, as we have shown above) to be considered for a real explanation.

However, the instrumentation of the desire by forms of communication upgrades changes the relationship involving presented-presenter, content-form, namely the quality and depth of that relationship of manipulation, and so creates what Guy Debord calls “society of the spectacle.” Namely, it establishes the notion of “spectacle” as a screen through which the masses see and perceive the desired. This instrument, as mentioned, changes the quality and intensity of the politically manifested desire or ideology in which it is packaged in a way that in late capitalism such spectacle is promoted on basis of mass consumption through mass media, creating new forms of power. Spectacle, Debord says, transforms into “...value more important than the content it conveys... the spectacle becomes a dream of modern society fettered in chains... that wants only to continue to sleep and dream... the spectacle is a soft form of violence that creates cultural conformity, passivity, pressure on critical thinking, openly criminalizing education and critical pedagogy...”<sup>36</sup>

Debord could not foresee, from the then perspective, all aggression and development of multimedia network aggregates and various forms of consumption that they create and mediate; but that development has only confirmed his basic thesis. In addition, what is especially important for the forms that we are interested in: authoritarianism, populism, and nationalism is that they fit and improve the prospect of capital and its ambition to rule the whole social sphere, not just the economy as such.

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<sup>36</sup> Guy Debord, *Drustvo spektakla, Anarhija, Blok 45*, Beograd, 2003 (in Serbian). Also in: *Culture of Cruelty, Disposable Futures*, Brad Evans and Henry A. Giroux, City Lights Book, 2014, pp. 23-28.

Namely, the spectacle at this stage takes over the social order in favor of authoritarian forms of politics.<sup>37</sup>

1.2. Our propensity to psychoanalytic definitions of nationalism at the end will be supported by some thesis from the file of Richard Koenigsberg and Norman O. Brown.<sup>38</sup>

Koenigsberg considers that the notion of “nation” is a fundamental assumption, omnipotent or sublime object (Zizek), through which modern man internalizes his experiences in society and social reality. There is some absolute confidence in the reality of the nation, according to this author, and such trust is located in the infantile fantasy of the human subconscious about the so-called mother who suffers, and about a strong, omnipotent mother.

The mother in this case stands for the people who suffer, but who have the power and duty to liberate themselves through the ideology and politics of nationalism and its action.

Zizek develops this argument a step further, saying that the sublime object of the nation is one that allows the subject not only to perceive realities through it, but also to transgress/go beyond realities “on behalf of the nation, to violate the conventional restrictions on rights and morality if they serve a higher cause.” For example, people do heroic deeds and sacrifices for the sake of their nation, committing even the meanest/most horrible mass atrocities with the idea of doing something to save their own nation, while on the other hand such small repulsive things are not anymore repulsive things because they “serve a higher cause.” The nation protects individuals, in this perspective, from the harshness of reality; the nation is “mother” suffering for them, a dying or sick “mother”, thus inviting such individuals to return the debt of that protection through aggression of nationalism.

The second constituent/constitutive desire of the individual, linked to the previous imagination about “the suffering mother nation”, is to keep it clean!

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<sup>37</sup> Guy Debord. Gilles Deleuze, Susan Sontag, Jean Baudrillard, Francois Debrix and Douglas Kellner, are important for our knowledge of the role of spectacle as indoctrination, and its promotion of repression and violence.

<sup>38</sup> The Psychoanalysis of Racism, Revolution and Nationalism, Richard A. Koenigsberg, The Library of Social Science, New York, 1977.

Identifying the sources of pollution of the nation, badness in the boundaries of the nation - are a constant neurosis of this nationalistic or racist position. In a word, the nation is treated as a living organism (organicistic position) that suffers, wakes up powerfully, is polluted and gets cleaned up, calls to defense and achievement of mission of great size and splendor, and so on.

The third position associated with this concept is a fight against the passivity of the people and call to the dynamism and action (a call that is cry and response to "the suffering mother nation"). This imagination for the sake of a neurotic dynamism, according to these authors, represents a particularly destructive instinct, which in itself convulses actions on the very edge: criminal operations promote incentive for demolition of opiate of passivity among the people with their awakening in shock, to the very act of government takeover. Operations are justified by the necessary measures to combat the disease nestling in the body of the nation, basically a disease of neurosis. It is the well-known nationalistic revolution or revival! Its promoters are ready to conduct extreme and bizarre engagements, in order to make "breakthrough" against inaction and make contact with "reality."

Interesting observations are offered by some of the above authors on the function of the nation in substitution of "person-to-person" communities (although we explained some important elements of this process in context of Debord): Evolution from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft community. In my view, these observations are important for the way the ideology of nationalism operates.

Namely, the familiarity of pre-national "person-to-person" communities is replaced by "familiarity" within the nation that has been construed by means of the mass media and communication. Familiarity with the people and events that you do not meet directly, that you do not experience "live." This situation is then upgraded into the basic framework for processing dynamics in the nation (the thesis of "imagined community" of B. Anderson and "society of the spectacle" of Guy Debord). Actually going deeper than that - the national community, Gesellschaft, operates to cover a cleft, a gap and a fundamental fear. Cleft and separation from the primary group and its morality, which presses on the

individual wanting to avoid, but not completely to lose it. This cleft creates anxiety of emptiness, nostalgia for the intimate, now betrayed in some way, primary community. The construct of the nation, at that point, enables the individual to be part of the group (much wider now), but not completely under the constraints present in its parochial morality. Thus, the nation is generated as a community under conditions of individualization. With this construct, the individual somehow is freed from the burden of separation/cleavage from the intimate primary groups, while a satisfied sense of cultural belonging remains in place.

The ideology of nationalism “attacks” such balance in modern nations between individualization and feeling of “belonging” to a specific cultural group. Nationalism unbalances this delicate relationship through pathological insisting on re-melting into the group, on achieving a general whole; moreover, it would mean, according to this view, attaining a genuine and complete freedom for the individual. This denial of the reality of separation, of individualization of the citizen, should lead to the disappearance of anxiety and to instilling the confidence/sense of belonging, while de facto in extreme form it takes nationalism toward denying the existence of a private sphere separated from the state; at the same time, the public sphere becomes colonized by the state and well-known and already seen totalitarian experiences start gaining ground.

### 4.3. NATIONALISM AND WRATH

Nationalism as an ideology creates wrath as sentiment among its supporters, if the desired order is not exercised for any reason. That wreath, euphemistically, is called nationalist feeling. Why wrath, not simple pleasure? Because rarely, almost never there is neutral nationalism, concerned and looking only to its values and features - a pure narcissist.<sup>39</sup> It is always relational,

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<sup>39</sup> George Orwell is right when he says that love of one's own nation means nothing if it does not mean that I love some people more than others. And finally I do not love some at all. Relations on Gandhi, George Orwell, *The Collected Essays*, Vol. 4, 1945-50, ed. Sonia Orwell, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 527.



staring at other nations' features and from them back to its own. In that context, love of "its own" is always instrumentalized. Such love is aimed at individual well-being through the stability of its own identity, while the comparisons that it constantly makes concerning the situation of the others are rarely fair and objective but are always full of resentment and custom-painted with own national ascents and understatement and stereotyping of the others.

Anthony Giddens says that stereotyping and prejudice towards others can be misleading in positive terms as well (such as the English towards the Americans and vice versa, or the Macedonians towards the Serbs and the Russians, but not vice versa)<sup>40</sup> but as a rule are negative and underestimating. Our point lies in another direction; namely, a comparison/comparing is always on the scene and in the light of the findings of Lacan, and subsequently of Žižek, such comparing is substantially determined by the economy of pleasure in the nation or by fear of "pleasure stolen" from the other.<sup>41</sup>

In summary, this means that nationalism is not a freely floating feeling or sentiment of love and devotion to one's own nation. It is not only that; it cannot be separated from feelings and cognitive operation constantly to make differentiation and separation from the "other". Such operation, in turn, is valued and is almost always followed by a feeling of superiority, imagining cultural superiority or at least arbitrarily higher valuation of "one's own" only because it is own.

#### 4.4. NATIONALISM AND DEATH

When you think of your own death, you think of your inconsolable conclusion in solitude! Everyone dies alone. Inability to perceive the very end, death, again and again points out the terrible solitude while dying. Heidegger often mentions it as the ultimate individualization of being "alone-in-it" (the very death)!

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<sup>40</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 255-257.

<sup>41</sup> There is a series of referential and fascinating theses on nationalism. I only mention those I consider essential.

But there is a secret in relation to the death mediated by nationalism! Death which is mediated by nationalism wants to get collectivized, become shared with/in hope, and so “terminated”! When you die in this phantasm, you die hoping to see your fellow tribesmen around the national fire in the “other world.”

Nationalism steals this story from religion and makes it become collectivized and “secularized”, connecting it with the very nation. Identifying in death with the homogenous or your own tribesmen, that you expect to encounter after the “transition”, establishes the darkest fire of the nationalist repression. Ensuring this transition as mediated by nationalism requires strong purification of the nation and its rituals and taboos. It is always associated with stressed distancing from “the others”! That implicit and explicit reinforcement of the distance towards the other is followed by repression. Such a process makes your induction into the national order and ritual. While dying, you are expecting! By excluding absolutely “the other”, he goes “elsewhere”. He goes and leaves the question of whose God and whose Eden are the real ones.

You try to suppress that question or stigma through nationalistic pre-death, but it always remains to erode you. By rigidity and aggression towards the other, you try to compensate for the uncertainty!

Images of death are clearest and comforting at the same time if you are the party who controls the very death! Such eerie necrophilia, present with the fascists and communists, who at the same time “do not recognize” and also glorify death, is related to the operation of a manipulated hope.

### **4.5. CONTEMPT OR EXIT FROM NATIONALISM TOWARD RIGHT TO CULTURE**

I would begin with the deconstruction of the key point of nationalism, perhaps its strongest side, the need for cultural

identity and situated selfness for group entity of the people, the group, and through this, for the individual.<sup>42</sup>

Yael Tamir, Bhikhu Parekh and Will Kymlicka (and Charles Taylor), John Gray and Richard Rorty, from their own respective angle, follow the line that I prefer and will try to synthesize as the right to culture which is “refracted” through the nation. Primacy is given to the right of culture, while the organization of that right through the nation - state, by means of nationalism as an ideology, is secondary and possible to avoid! In the equation of nationalism and right to culture, the latter is constant, unchanging (X), while the form in which it is expressed (through nationalism, among others) is changing variable (Y).

The right to culture, says Kymlicka, should be accepted, because “membership” in culture is an intrinsic characteristic of individuals and their identity; they do not choose it (at least not until a certain time of development and education). Hence, the freedom of conscience as a fundamental human right is not (although it is included) freedom of choice of culture or religion, but freedom of the way of practicing it and conditions of achieving this in a state context.

On the other hand, cultural plurality should be valued not only because it offers a diversity of lifestyles, but because it is a way to improve our special lifestyle, inside our distinct culture.

The right to culture, therefore, means the right of individuals to choose the culture where they want to get accomplished as individuals (individual right), continually to conceive it and to redefine its borders (the presentation of culture in the public sphere, where conflicts appear).<sup>43</sup>

In this second operation or presenting the right to culture in the public sphere as social communication - it conflicts with the right to culture of the others or of the majority and conflicts are born here. Therefore, there is a need for a liberal cohabitation.

It is not feasible for every nation to have its own state. The vast majority of nations internally are multicultural, admit it or not. It is the paradox of nationalism: it is impossible globally, and is not possible (without violence and repression) either locally.

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<sup>42</sup> For ‘the unladen and situated selfness’ especially see in: Jael Tamir. *Liberalni nacionalizam*, Filip Visnic, Belgrade, 2002, pp. 70-81 (in Serbian).

<sup>43</sup> See also in: Yael Tamir, *op.cit*, p. 59.

The state, however, which is nationally and culturally neutral, is also difficult to achieve ideal for the liberals, because the practice of cultures and cultural diversities is an integral part of politics. The state simply is forced to make priorities and to take a position on political, economic, and even moral questions - making decisions that have consequences. The state apparatus has a sense of creating its own ideology and values that it defends and so deforms the desired role of neutral arbiter and intermediary in the accommodation of different cultures.

In order to avoid the maze of Rawls' theory of procedural, minimal state behind the "veil of ignorance" and justice as fairness, we should conclude that even the minimum procedural state (the one of the liberals) minimally shares an ideal of justice, which it sets as a basic, thin, but a definite consensus.<sup>44</sup> Hence, the prospect of engagement of the state is not based on ideological, false cultural neutrality, but on the layers of separated and shared public areas. It is a mosaic state of plural cultural practices and differentiated citizenship.

The search for the basic consensus is inherently Rorty's quest.<sup>45</sup> Namely, the minimum institutional, procedural and value-based consensus could only be to foster culture and education about social practice, which develops power and recognizes/feels the pain and suffering of fellow citizens. The engagement of politics is to weave a network of solidarity, whereby the pain and suffering will be minimized or avoided completely. The ability of Richard Rorty for empathy seems to me as a last resort for the liberalism of modern times and basis for the only possible universalistic establishment of human rights. It is the last face of man that remains and politics that is beneficial to society.

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<sup>44</sup> The topic is otherwise brought through a fascinating polemics between: Bhikhu Parekh, Will Kumlika, John Gray, on the line of Isaiah Berlin and a series of other referential names - in opposition to Rawls' theory of procedural justice as fairness. See for example in: Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, Maccmillan Press, London, 2000; Will Kumlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, Oxford University Press, 2007 and *Multicultural Citizenship*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995; John Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, The New Press, New York, 2000; Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, Methuen, Political Studies, London, 1965; Isaiah Berlin, *From Hope and Fear Set Free*, in *The Proper Study of Mankind*; John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1993; *Theory of Justice*, Oxford University Press, 1972; H.L.A. Hart, *Rawls on Liberty and Its Priority*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1983, etc.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Rorty. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Templum, Skopje, 2001 (in Macedonian).

Empathy and ability to recognize and avoid or minimize the pain of a fellow citizen, defines the value of the excluded, the value of the victim and its worldview as an ideology of liberation. It is the only truth, the only remaining liberalism. There is no other truth.<sup>46</sup>

The thesis would seem paradoxical in light of the “success” of nationalism during all this time to organize political systems in democracies and authoritarian states. But the amount of violence and political energy used to enforce the majority rule principle against the local minority cultures, which is consumed in these systems - makes the project, in the current, near and medium term, seem like a dinosaur in extinction, a vanishing mediator (Lacan).

However, what does not die is the very RIGHT TO CULTURE!

All nations have the right to social space, a public sphere in which they constitute their culture as “belonging to the majority”. This sphere does not have to be and increasingly will not be the state.

Becoming a man is to build individuality on the references of cultural forms/templates/formats, historically created systems of meaning, which would give life the form of a system, so that it can have order, form, and direction... (Clifford Geertz)<sup>47</sup>. This is repeated force of the right to culture as identity-wise determinative. But Geertz goes on to make a key point: Understanding the culture of a nation exposes its *normalcy* without reducing its uniqueness.<sup>48</sup>

It is the price that a nation is willing to pay in politics to ensure its culture and allow cohabitation with other cultures. The cost of maintaining the normality: acceptance of otherness as a necessity of social life and sharing public space with it; resistance and rationalization of the use of violence through the political dominance of the majority culture in different contexts. It is seen in the creation of civilian public as a separate body which resonates public interest, defines normality, regulates it in situations of conflict, especially in conflict of primordial and civil loyalties.

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<sup>46</sup> In the best sense of what Badiou calls “event” of the era that determines its absolute truth, which is just one.

<sup>47</sup> Толкување на културите, Клифорд Гирц, Магор, Скопје, 2007, p. 23 (in Macedonian).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

To sum up toward the outcomes we prefer!

The conflict between liberals and nationalists today, like a century ago, is reflected in the definition of the process by which individuals acquire “membership” in the particular social group - the nation, as well as in the links between this “membership” and personal identity.

Cultural nationalism (ethnic) preaches a closed society, forcing authoritarian uniformity between state and religion and spreads heterophobia and xenophobia. The nation is treated as political unity created around an irrationally constructed pre-civilization notion of people. Nothing is to be added to such definition by Kohn and Snyder, made in 1954.<sup>49</sup>

Liberals suffer more in the conception of their cause about democracy and nationalism. They advocate social values that will depend on the choice by the individual (ethical individualism), but at the same time his choice will not be able to be imposed on minority cultures and all together will end up in plural, permissive society of multicultural democracy. It must primarily respect fundamental individual rights.<sup>50</sup>

Liberal concept is far more vulnerable and open, certainly far more valuable to political engagement and thinking about freedom. In context of such liberal concept, a viewpoint is developed about states as apparatuses that will not support only one set of values and culture, civil, and social rights and rights of civism but will also accept various additional group rights and policies that recognize and include other, diverse identities of ethno-cultural groups. It is true that every political society requires and produces position on its national identity. But the identity of the political community should be located in its political structure,

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<sup>49</sup> Snyder L.L., *The Meaning of Nationalism*, Westport, Greenwood Press, 1954, and *The Dynamic of Nationalism*, Princeton, New York, 1964.

This can be expanded by the comment of Kumlicka that the claims and the pursuit of cultural authenticity and purity are always attempts for hiding the real hybridity and creating a false picture of an irreconcilable gap between the cultures of two or more groups... *Multicultural Odysseys*, op.cit., p. 150.

<sup>50</sup> Let us remind that Kumlicka, for example, considers reasonably that AUTONOMY is the central liberal value and cultures should be judged primarily on the ability to provide for its members reasonable and valuable options that cultivate the ability for autonomy: Will Kumlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 100.

not in shared individual characteristics of its citizens (ethnic, cultural, etc.). It should be defined by political and institutional, rather than by ethnic cultural mark. Such dominant view of national identity should allow different ethnic identities to be reproduced in an open and inclusive manner and in the process to ensure a satisfactory level of harmony (primarily based on respect for fundamental individual rights of its members).

In value terms, however, the triumph of hybridity and fluidity over essentialism of cultural identity is a victory for human rights over ethnic tribalism and nationalism. It is an important outcome that is worth supporting.

## 5. MACEDONIA THROUGH CATEGORIES AND MACEDONIAN NATIONALISM

Macedonia, still, in that crowded set of categories, rights, violence and dreams - has never had a real concept nor practice of ethnically homogeneous state.

Actually, Macedonia had no concept at all, except for the period of establishment of the 1991 Constitution and a series of politically concluding moves around that time. This could be more evaluated as liberal incident imposed from above, rather than a self-realized process of “nation-for-itself”.

And again, as inevitably notes Clifford Geertz: “The state’s policy reflects the nature of its culture.”<sup>51</sup>

Macedonia has not been up to the level of its implicit multicultural reality, nor the level of its, so to speak, possible, cultural paradigm. There was lack of final political move of the transfer of these cultural potentials to what means a civilization completed, attitude toward oneself (nation-for-itself) and setting priorities for development.

Repeated narratives about the concept of Krushevo Manifesto, the uprisings and constitutions of VMRO and later about the Macedonian state in Yugoslavia, remained empty phrases that never became an integral part of building a genuine political identity of the Macedonians, nor multicultural democracy. In addition, multiculturalism were seen as a curse, as abnormality that should be suppressed, if not abolished by repression.

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<sup>51</sup> Same, op.cit. 1973.



Although history had its own paths (which remained largely unread and undiscovered) something of that latent experience had been realized in practice. The direction always went towards creating a Macedonian nation, from different parts of ethnic nations, but also the driving force of this movement always was the Macedonian ethnic nation. It is clear that the Macedonian ethnic nation did not want this path or road, and if it had been taking this path, it did so in “bad faith.” Hence, we understand the genesis of the non-implementation or poor implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement today.

The Macedonians, in their processes of self-conceiving, saw little benefit of forgetting the historical lines of cooperation with the Albanians and their national liberation movements in the 19th century and early 20th century. And certainly it was not of help either that the Macedonians in the former Yugoslavia took “the Serbian way,” in the attitude towards the Albanians. It gave rise to period of tension and creating distrust and practices of discrimination that remain as a legacy after gaining independence.

With time becoming ripe for the realization of the concept of a multicultural state and layered divided identity, within the now Macedonian independent state, two types of further problems emerged: one is found with the cultural minority communities, especially with the most numerous Albanian, while the other is found with Macedonians.

The need for consolidation and stabilization of the Macedonian state exposes the loyalty of persons belonging to various ethnations towards the state institutions and towards the predominant majority culture that dominates the state public sphere.

The Macedonians will necessarily have to redefine the strong identity matrix of the term MACEDONIAN, by dual encoding of its meanings. The term Macedonian first needs to gain the meaning of a citizen of Macedonia, and then to have the meaning and identification of specific ethnic nation of Macedonians as such. So, some citizens of Macedonia will be Macedonians of Albanian or other ethnic origin (parts of other ethnic nations), while others will be Macedonians with Macedonian ethnic origin.

The Macedonians of Macedonian ethnic origin will lose exclusivity of the term Macedonian. It is, however, smaller

handicap for attaining the objective pursued: the consolidation of the Macedonian nation as the basis of a Macedonian state.

The ability of a state and nation to define itself depends on the ability to see itself “from the outside”, from the external perspective. It is similar in individuals and is called “mastery of an outside perspective.” Certainly, magical formulas in self-perception and self-definition processes are not possible, but working “on oneself” in terms of cognitive priorities of development and importance of the nation is very important. So important that it changes the history of the nation and the state.

Much, if not most of the states, civilizations and people enter the globalization process, in that semantic and value vortex, only by their own cultural and civilizational backgrounds and yet have to work on their own current “value.” Cultural identity is not meltable; it is self-reproductive, stubborn and powerful. It becomes even more pronounced and powerful right through the matrices of globalization and is so called “new particularism” or explosion of self-awareness in cultural diversity.

Culture, whose heritage is our responsibility to keep and live it, does not create our very civilization. Our civilization and civilizedness is something other than bare possession of historical culture or cultures. Civilization and culture include organization of priorities on different grounds of people’s daily lives and the very nation.

How we behave and how we construct our cultural signs again, our history - is part of our civilization on which we work, here and now! We are yet to be civilized at one substantially new level of the MACEDONIAN STATE. That civilizing means conceptualization, self-knowledge, of our identity on two levels: the first refers to the cultural identity of the Macedonian people and other ethnic communities in Macedonia; the second level is building social solidarity (social adhesive) of the country as a nation of citizens, through the notion of “a Macedonian” as a citizen of Macedonia, or a person belonging to the “political and legal nation” of all citizens of the country.

We are, by definition, a postmodern nation. We must interiorize such postmodern discourse in a layered identity. In this regard, I do not hesitate to call the constitutional patriotism of

the multicultural democracy a liberal virtue, and call the ethnic nationalism a refuge for political nogoodniks as such.

### **5.1. HIDDEN HISTORY OF MACEDONIANS OR PROBLEM WITH SELF-DETERMINATION**

Macedonia and Macedonian nationalism can be an essential reference and an example of the formation of such a model in multicultural societies, which features a process that emphasizes the separation of the ideological and mythological basis of the same. It is about the development of nationalisms and identities of the involved ethnic communities in conditions defined by democratic parameters, but they do not overlap through the process of so-called history sharing, of the roots and myths; on the contrary, they use fantasies and ideologies of “pure history.” Such history that can be used for our or for their foundation. It is absurd flashback, but at the same time, it is interesting to ask why there is compulsive repetition of such an attempt to re-reading of history for possible interventions in it. Why borders are drawn back so persistently and aggressively where they did not exist and where they cannot be drawn. At the same time, even more interesting is the political incompetence of not being able to move the situation to a history-sharing project. On the contrary, such a project is treated as a threat to individual national identities. That is the theme of the Macedonian nation and its identity through the lens of contemporary political elites in the country.

This is important to all nationalisms in the region, the Balkans; still it is crucial for the formation of Macedonian nationalism. Two things are fundamental for its appearance: sharing history, which is common with neighboring nations or other ethnic communities in Macedonia; and the opposite phantasm, the resistance to such a process turned into “drive” for constantly inventing or a desire for an ethnically pure history.

My main thesis is that the process of sharing history is fundamental for this type of nationalisms and identities and

should be placed in central referential cultural practices, policies and institutions. For example, the history books at all levels of education, political books on history, epistolary “validators” of history - encyclopedias and projects by civil society - all that soft power or micro-power nature (M. Foucault) must reason out these values for the project to be successfully stabilized.

My second, parallel thesis is that the success of this process depends essentially on reasonable, responsible, and courageous political elites. It is those who understand the importance of this venture and are willing to invest in it, especially in the construction of the nation and of the institutions.

I will also explore the theses by means of two distances or time frames. One is the 10 years since the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA), which helped end the 2001 conflict in Macedonia. And a longer time distance, which includes the historical events in the period of 100 years, linked to the legacy of Macedonian-Albanian cooperation in almost all the decisive moments of the struggle for the independent states of these two nations. It is history and memory that disappeared from our collective recall after 1945, which we desperately need right now.

By the way, the text will also consider “the presence of an absence.” It is the absence of a true reconciliation process between these two nations followed by successful political and legal agreement that resolved the conflict. This absence, in my view, should be seen in context the reasons for the constant restless or unfinished peace and volatile democracy in Macedonia. That absence of reconciliation is impossible to compensate for without a revolutionary approach to re-opening history through the concept for its share.

### **5.2. OHRID FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT - SUCCESS WITH MISSING PART**

From a distance of ten years since the 2001 conflict in Macedonia and the process of signing of the Ohrid Framework

Agreement (OFA), the same year - by which the conflict was resolved, and the processes of change were transposed into the Constitution and the institutions of the political system of the country, it can be concluded that one of the elements (at least in theory) for stable resolution of conflicts of identity, ethnic, religious character in the case of Macedonia seems to be lacking. Namely, we are missing a plan for deliberate reconciliation between actors or communities that were in conflict.

Although controversial and somewhat ironically, the reason for this may be the low intensity of hostilities and the lack of “memories of blood”. The conflict in Macedonia ranks in those with low intensity (up to 1000 victims; actually there were about 200 - 300 casualties and small-scale destruction). However, it is indispensable to emphasize the intense, robust international intervention followed by the strong mediation to resolve the conflict with the assistance of the US and EU mediators (James Pardew, François Léotard, with a group of three key experts) that put the emphasis on negotiating an agreement and its effective implementation. Such circumstances narrowed the time for a thorough rethinking and development of long term reconciliation, which at that moment seemed as insufficiently important or, even less, an urgent strategy and activity.

The implementation of the OFA went relatively well and in the meantime it made a “career” as the best deal in the region on which basis “a country is built” and not dissolved.

The process of structurally deliberated and led reconciliation, in this period, was again neglected and suppressed by the spectacularity of the political coalition in power between the major Macedonian parties (initially SDSM - the Social Democrats and then VMRO-DPMNE) with rebel leader Ali Ahmeti and his party DUI.

But as political coalitions get into long crises, and the longer Macedonia, for various reasons, remains outside NATO and EU integration, the political stability of the country becomes also dependent on the stability of inter-ethnic relations and the success of healed wounds of conflict. That, in turn, restores the importance of fundamental reconciliation back on the main

stage.<sup>52</sup> The Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) is a political act of domestic character, with legal considerations in those segments that it wants to define precisely.<sup>53</sup>

It is not an international agreement and a peace treaty. It is not international because of the very parties involved in its creation and signing. At the same time, regardless of the strong guarantee participation of intermediaries, it is basically an internal act.

It is not peace agreement, or not primarily, although there are provisions relating to cessation of military actions and regulating the consequences, as in Macedonia there was no war, martial law and state of emergency during the very conflict. From international aspect, it is ranked as low intense internal conflict in the legal sense, something between rebellion and insurgency.

The intensity of foreign interference is due to the importance of peace, to which Macedonia is a reference to the region in the eyes of the international community involved, and not the result of the ferocity of the clashes. It clearly accepted that it would not give legitimacy to NLA just sitting on the negotiating table. Such gesture was intended to enhance the legitimacy of the Albanian parties politically registered and active in Macedonia.

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<sup>52</sup> Reconciliation is a long-term process of essentially resolving antagonisms which formed the basis of a cultural identity conflict. Reconciliation is establishing cooperative relations between the people and groups who participated in the previous conflict. It involves transition from competition to cooperation, which includes reconstruction of society, creating conditions for normal cooperation and life.

Some authors call this institute "transforming" (Lederach) or peacemaking (Curle).

Their definition of conflict transformation is: it is such a solution containing the long-term forms of turning hostile relations into relations of mutual acceptance and cooperation between the actors of the conflict.

These forms include a reduction in violence, creating conditions for effective justice and direct connection to social structures that solve everyday problems.

First the term was used by Galtung (1996) and follows the line of K. Popper's "utopian engineering" (1961).

This process of transforming has something of Joseph Nye's concept of "soft power": to impose priorities in such way for the actors to adopt them as their own...

Typically reconciliation process covers three elements of the solution: emotional, cognitive and behavioral.

<sup>53</sup> Professor Vlado Popovski and I were involved in the Ohrid negotiations and the creation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, as experts suggested by the late Macedonian President, Boris Trajkovski. We were joined by three international experts - an American lady and two gentlemen from EU. Some preliminary draft of the agreement was the concept of two pages suggested by the French constitutional judge and law professor, Robert Badinter...

International guarantors took on themselves the burden of “rationalizing or articulation” of the rebel demands, ranging from open racism (in the beginning of the conflict), all in the direction of the human rights agenda. All this demonstrates clearly the inner nature of the agreement and its impact on strengthening unity of the state.

The Ohrid Agreement stems mainly from two principles of minority rights: deterritorialization of ethnic rights, their functionalization (except for local government where it certainly cannot and should not be avoided) and their functionalizing regarding the presentation of identity of the holders (not as an instrument for political institutional reshaping of the Macedonian democracy). The first means that any kind of territorial solution for ethnic rights leading to federalization or cantonization is consciously and decisively abandoned. This is due to the deplorable effects experienced in Bosnia because of such a model embodied by the Dayton Agreement, which led to encouraging further ethnic cleansing instead of democratic development.

The model that will implement these principles in the political system consisted of three basic pillars and a new procedure.

The focus of the first pillar was expanding the use of languages of minority ethnic communities (to the level of clear avoiding language federalization). Therefore, the modality of language use and the principles of relations between majority and minority languages were precisely (in that segment the agreement has legal provisions) defined. The focal point is the decision to follow the principle of “expression of the identity of the holder,” not symmetrical linguistic federalization. This meant that, for example, persons belonging to minority communities would be provided the opportunity and the right to speak their language in parliament and its working bodies, but the administration of parliament would be conducted in one language, Macedonian. Laws are published also in the languages of minority communities; courts adjudicate in proceedings that compulsory provide translation; and local governments have mandatory bilingualism if minority communities are at least 20%.

The second pillar is creating an agenda for equitable representation of minorities in state administration. In addition,

special priority are segments of the police, military, diplomacy and finance. The purpose of this decision was to emphasize the principle of inclusiveness of politics as basic in the agreement even where not specifically stated.

The third pillar is local democracy (term introduced by Badinter) or local government, within which the major portion of “ventilation gases” of the ethno-energy is distributed.

Additionally we established a “defensive” procedure of voting in parliament on laws that relate directly to ethnic rights - a.k.a. “Badinter majority”. This procedure insists that such laws, which were later levelled to 46 including the Constitution, be voted by overlapping of two majorities: once by all MPs (123), and further by a majority of MPs belonging to minority communities (32 ). Contrary to fears of ethnicization threat to law and politics by introducing this “passive veto” (as you can call this procedure), such criticism proved groundless, and its introduction justified and there was no example of its abuse in the practice made in all these years.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement contains an obligation to “disarm the rebels,” their resocialization (without specific measures for this) and finally - amnesty law for participants in the conflict, but not a special plan and commitments to thorough reconciliation.

It is some minimalist program for rapid reintegration, which, though basically functional, proved insufficient, and in some points controversial even today.

In the OFA itself, the inclusiveness principle opens a scrupulous opportunity for reconciliation for the purpose of (and specifically contained in section 1.4 in the introduction of the agreement) “the multicultural nature of society being constantly reflected in the Constitution and laws”. One of these features, for example, is the element of equitable representation and fairness in the visibility and recognition of the cultures of non-majority (using that term) communities as cultures that have equal chances of development.

This provision refers to creating a climate of social harmonization in terms of chances of progress and recognition of the cultures of ethnic communities. That, in turn, is impossible without a thorough realized reconciliation and formalizing the viewpoints of the last conflict, the fulfillment of the principles



of justice, without which a more thorough perspective of the community as a whole is impossible.

The last Annex (C) of the agreement refers to ongoing cooperation with the international forums in the direction of achieving the stated objectives in the agreement.

After the 2001 conflict in Macedonia, “the harder” part of “transitional justice”, such as war crimes trials, were undertaken by the Tribunal in The Hague, set up primarily to administer justice in relation to crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia. But in the opinion of most experts the Tribunal made it rather selectively. The only persons accused were from the state security services (Interior Minister and an officer). The former was released after the court proceedings and detention of four years and the latter was sentenced to imprisonment of 12 years.

In addition to these two cases, four cases of crimes involving members of the NLA, ethnic Albanians, were processed as well. The Hague Tribunal considered them irrelevant to its competence and returned for trial in domestic courts. That decision created tensions in Macedonia and a sense of selectivity by international justice. That feeling (especially among the majority ethnic Macedonian population) rather than facilitate, has narrowed the possibilities for reconciliation between the actors of the conflict.

Moreover, these cases returned for trial in Macedonia caused tension between the government coalition partners of Macedonian and Albanian provenance as how to process them further. The Albanian parties demanded they be closed and treated under the amnesty law, while the Macedonian parties insisted that they be further processed until a final judgment for the perpetrators of the crimes is rendered; since the Macedonian parties made this in inconsistent manner, they finally withdraw from their position.

Tension was further made by the overall assessment of partisanship and incompetence of the Macedonian judiciary. The problem of the four Hague Tribunal cases was solved under the amnesty law as a political deal. At least two cases of them under international law may not be covered by any amnesty. The very fact that these cases would be treated under some “political deal” is an aggravating circumstance for processing them in a spirit of future reconciliation between the communities. Namely for

justice there may be no deal. It should be administered even “if heaven is to fall on us.”

The opinion of the author of this text is that they should be treated on a case-by-case basis and legally be qualified as follows: the cases in which the NLA leadership was accused for some offenses need to come under the amnesty law (2 cases). For cases (2) where victims are civilians, mandatory proceedings should continue and end with a verdict. War crimes against civilians definitely may not come under the amnesty law or to have a political deal of any kind for them. This is the only way justice will be felt, and it is the basis for reconciliation. The families of the victims and the families of the missing (Macedonians and Albanians) should be approached with a program of reconciliation or forgiveness, once the procedure of transitional justice is completed. Any delay is an aggravating circumstance for the process of reconciliation in Macedonia after the conflict and the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The return of internally displaced persons from the 2001 conflict has also remained a confusing, unsolved problem! Namely, 700 ethnic Macedonians have remained out of their homes, mostly involving villages with a local majority Albanian population and today they live in shelters for such internally displaced persons (Kumanovo and Skopje). It is unclear how the state has failed to find a way to solve the problem and compensate for their accommodation. This fact, however small, stands as a problem over the process of reconciliation, because members of only one ethnic community (Macedonians) feel to be the victims, and the moral effect of state neglect has had devastating effect beyond the endangered group.

One gets the impression that the process of reconciliation in Macedonia has become “victim” of the successful and rapid normative and institutional implementation of OFA.

Is it possible to have such a scenario? This contradicts the usual view that normative and institutional arrangement of the peace agreement between parties in conflict is a prerequisite for a successful process of reconciliation, does not it? It seems that this assumption is not entirely accurate and is somehow not enough. Macedonia’s experience clearly shows that the project of reconciliation between communities in conflict, must be separately designed and implemented. Reconciliation does not

happen automatically, as a result of successful normative and institutional arrangement of the peace agreement. Beneath the surface of the success of the agreement, an interethnic tension and intolerance, with their own dynamics, may be smoldering. For prejudice to rest unresolved or even to ignite. It is uneasy peace!

Macedonia's example is instructive. Namely, there was no specific plan for reconciliation; the communities had their own plan for compensation of their perception of the conflict (regardless of the signed Ohrid Framework Agreement).

The majority of the Macedonians felt "offended" by the OFA and reacted resignedly to its implementation.

In the longer term, this sense was politically projected in support of a populist, nationalist political "elite" (VMRO-DPMNE, 2006-2014...) such as Macedonia has never seen until then. This elite collected the discontent shown by the Macedonians projecting it into "an object of hatred" towards the international community that "harasses us and pushes us", towards the Albanians who "constantly want something and are never satisfied"; and towards the Greeks (the name issue), who want us to disappear and not exist as Macedonians. Such irrational nationalistic projection of being hurt is self-inflictive for the Macedonians and is also determined by other moments of Macedonian transition, still it is a political fact that should be considered. That is why I think it is partly a consequence based on the fact that there is no project of reconciliation with the Albanians after the 2001 conflict.

Second, the lack of reconciliation project wildly has erupted in the years that followed the 2001 conflict, in the form of uncontrolled symbolic nationalism and national self-assertiveness among the Macedonians. It is a symptom of "the project of antiquization" of the Macedonian identity that would cement a history redefined according to their conceived nationalistic template. This reactive nationalist process among the Macedonians was further followed by a series of printed publications of school textbooks that glorify the shadowy historic materials of ancient Macedonian identity, emphasizing the historic events through which one randomly draws boundaries of what is supposed to be "heroic, pure belonging to us" as opposed to the dirty "yours" - completely contrary to the spirit of sharing the history, so basic for reconciliation.

Regardless of the participation of the Albanian party in government, the budget is spent in rather unbalanced manner in favor of the Macedonian symbolic revolution for national self-assertiveness. It disturbs and destabilizes interethnic relations and is contrary to the principles of the OFA.

It was the "Macedonian reaction" to the sense of being hurt and lack of channels for the community to handle it through a process of reconciliation (with others and with itself).

What was the Albanian reaction after their post-OFA euphoria?

The Albanians in Macedonia believed that OFA was an expression of their "victory" in the fight to improve their status. Their approval for OFA reached as high as 90%. They were not inclined to make other "concessions" and to reconcile with anyone, considering that they had achieved the projected goals, or at least close to it through the institutional and normative framework of the OFA. As mediators from the United States and the EU did not insist on a project of reconciliation, the Albanian side had already forgotten it. Emphasis was only made on full implementation of OFA, although with the passage of the time there were different interpretations of what it meant to fully implement the agreement and whether it has been implemented at all or not.

Meanwhile for the Albanians changes took place as well. Their status has not changed significantly as expected and were found uncomfortable and surprised with the bursting of the delayed Macedonian nationalism. Not everything was achieved, as it seemed at the beginning in the early years after the conflict. Something was missing. Although participating in government (DUI, the very party that originated from the rebel movement), this party was placed in a position of rather minor partner in the government, which only approves and has no real influence on the political processes. The processes of systematic reconciliation were missing and there was no basis for pressure of the Macedonian side for policies that would be substantially different and would lead to sharing history, balanced historical narratives of all ethnic communities, official history of the conflict and of other historical events, etc.

Consequently the support for OFA dropped among the Albanians, although still remaining high: 80%, from previous 90%.

Meanwhile, among the Macedonians, as time passed by, their support for OFA grew from 1.5% to 62%.

### 5.3. MEMENTO 2

Which trace does the Ohrid Framework Agreement further build upon in context of the Macedonian struggle for own state, as opposed to the theses, once dominant among the Macedonians, that the process of blackmail by the unprincipled “international factor” is imposed and unfair?

It is about political and ideological trace that, unfortunately, and traditionally for us, has neither been researched nor singled out by the Macedonian intelligentsia, including the history professionals. With few exceptions, perhaps only one, no one spoke publicly about the direct conceptual connection and hence about the political maturity of the Macedonian voivodes who conceived at least two documents of importance to state-building, which represent directly the foundations of the logic on which the Ohrid Framework Agreement relies as well. Here we deal with documents that are written using legal vocabulary and instruments and that offer conception of a political vision/decision as to what country Macedonia would be and what the Macedonian identity is (both as state and ethnic)!

These are the Rules(Constitution)drafted by the Macedonian Revolutionary Committee (1878-1879) during the Kresna Uprising and the Constitution of the future polity of Macedonia that was prepared by the Macedonian League in 1880.<sup>54</sup>

The first document, more modestly, but from the beginning clearly, defines Macedonia as: “a land of glorious Slavic educators and teachers Cyril and Methodius” whose liberation process can involve all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion and ethnicity, if they love freedom.

The second document in legal manner regulates in detail the type of state that today we would call a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional, and the political system as a republic.

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<sup>54</sup> See details in: Владо Поповски, Борбата за создавање македонска држава во периодот на Источната криза; Христо Андонов Пољански, Европските држави и Македонското прашање, Историја, 1, 1972 ; Македонија во Источната криза, Зборник, Скопје, 1978; Славко Димевски, Востанички проект, устав и други акти за создавање на македонската држава по Берлинскиот конгрес, Годишник на ИСППИ, 1, 1975; Иван Катарџиев, Кресненско востание, Скопје, 1978 (in Macedonian); etc.

The authors of the documents had no doubt (and it never existed) that Macedonia is possible only as a multi-ethnic state and never as a nation-state only of the Macedonians. On such a basis the Constitution drafted by the Macedonian League of 1880 defined Macedonia as a state of the Macedonians, Turks, Albanians, Jews, Greeks, Vlachs and others who live in Macedonia...

It established principles of non-discrimination, equal rights, and equality of languages.

The entire structure of the state authority (state council, parliament, government, administration, judiciary, etc.) was to rely on a multinational basis and principle of proportionality.

This constitution sets the archetype of the so-called “Badinter majority”, saying that, upon blockade of the parliament on intra-ethnic basis, decisions would not be made by outvoting or by a majority vote, but the debate would be stopped and the decision would be referred to the state council to be made, in which there would be a representative from each ethnic group.

On multinational grounds education would be set up as well, while it would be prohibited and punishable by law to spread hatred on national or religious grounds.

Comitadjis and revolutionary activists who had drawn up this document clearly were aware that the Macedonian people can form a state and preserve its uniqueness if such state is multicultural (then called multinational). This shows a mature and responsible political factor whose political solutions were related to progressive liberal political systems. It seems those had been generations that would understand the “spirit of the Ohrid Framework Agreement” much better than some of our contemporaries do.

If we sum up, the Macedonian liberation movement conceived two viewpoints relating to the Macedonian nation as a basis for the Macedonian state. The one we described was the result of the struggle and fight by the first generation of this movement that was formed in context of the Eastern Crisis (1875-1880), a generation which initiated the movement and postulated in these documents and practices the concept of the Macedonian nation as a political multicultural nation of all the inhabitants in

the territory of Macedonia.<sup>55</sup> In this concept, the double code for the term Macedonian is defined as ethnic (ethnic Macedonians as Slavs) and political (all inhabitants relating to the same government of an independent Macedonia).<sup>56</sup>

After the defeat of that first wave of liberation concepts, the Macedonian liberation movement regressed only to consider the ethnic national concept of a Macedonian nation under a pro-Bulgarian influence and profiling.

Namely, after 1908 and the split of the VMRO (Macedonian Internal Revolutionary Organization) into two rival groups, the bigger group relied on the support of the Bulgarian state in its political actions. That led to the gradual replacement of the concepts of an independent Macedonian state and nation with the idea of autonomy within Bulgaria proper. This should have been the first stage of unification with Bulgaria into a single country.<sup>57</sup> This concept basically maintains the view that the Macedonian nation ethnically belongs to the “Bulgarian tribe”; in other words, it is a Bulgarian ethnic nation.

As can be seen, the modern concepts of nation and state, which develop in independent Macedonia as a multicultural society and multicultural democracy, are in line with those initial national liberation traces of the Macedonian state-building movement and struggle. These traces were given renewed relevance but were not further developed, by being kept in a semi-dormant state (to paraphrase a term by Marx: they were not self-set) during the first Macedonian state as a republic within federal Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, they were hibernated with the potential to further develop in context of the definite and complete independent setting of the Macedonian state.

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<sup>55</sup> It is interesting to note that this generation also tries to offer a context for and so underline the “ancient Macedonian character from antiquity” of the modern Macedonians, but from another point of view and different needs. Namely, for the purpose of making distance and difference from the surrounding nations in identity context of the struggle that had been going on, some of these actors consider the character of Macedonian identity to be unequivocally both Slavic and ancient, arguing that ancient Macedonians were indeed “Slavs.” Creating thus a boundary line against the Greeks that the Macedonians as such are Slavs, and against the Serbs and the Bulgarians that the Macedonians as such are of ancient origin? For more details see: *Документи за борбата .... Бр. 188, pp. 265-267 (in Macedonian); како и кај Владо Појовски, Поразот на идејата за Македонија во Балканските војни, МАНУ, 2013, pp. 77, 78 (in Macedonian).*

<sup>56</sup> V. Popovski, in the quoted work, p. 82, calls this concept: a political (state-run) Macedonian nationalism.

<sup>57</sup> See in: *Мемоарот на ТМОРО, 1904; and especially in: Писмото на Тодор Александров до Панајот Карамфилов (нејубликувани документи за Т. Александров и ВМОРО 1910-1919, Крсто Герзинов, Цоцо Биларски), кн. 2, 1987, p. 184-217.*

#### **5.4. MACEDONIAN-ALBANIAN COOPERATION AS “HIDDEN HISTORY”**

The thesis that we defend by means of the previous assumptions is that without a political decision to open some key collaborations that have occurred throughout the Macedonian and Albanian national revival of the 19th and 20th centuries, our multicultural present cannot be established comfortably, or, it will not be able to accommodate naturally.

We will not encompass all aspects of the approach that the Macedonians would otherwise have to do also, for example in context of the Macedonian and Bulgarian history, but will focus on the main historical facts and conclusions about relations with the Albanians as such. They are considered historic defining moments and certainly would have an impact today on our current multicultural democracy.

We will start with the point that Macedonian - Albanian cooperation is the most significant political cooperation the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO, in all variants of the name) had with any of the neighboring peoples and their revolutionary organizations in the 19th and early 20th century.

Only in this cooperation VMRO was the very subject of decisions and their implementation, and not an object of interest or sabotage, infiltration, boycott or blockade (as perceived by its relations with Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece).

History abounds with records of such cooperation, and by opening of the Turkish and Russian archives we get data (indirect and direct) on the activities of the Albanian secret revolutionary committees and on cooperation with Macedonian revolutionary organizations and individuals.

Let us begin by listing the important groundbreaking fact of creating the Albanian - Macedonian League in 1887 and the two declarations that the League made in 1889 and 1902.<sup>58</sup> The League defined a position to support the establishment of united Macedonian state and a united Albanian state (including Kosovo and Chameria), that would also have a defined shared borderline,

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<sup>58</sup> See: Документи, УКИМ, Скопје, 1981, Том 1, 274, 341, 355 (in Macedonian).



which is almost the same as today's borderline between Macedonia and Kosovo and between Macedonia and Albania. That borderline, which is extremely important, shows the maturity of cooperation and was formally defined at a meeting in Tirana in 1921, between representatives of VMRO and MFO (Macedonian Federative Organization) Aleksandar Protogerov and Dr. Filip Atanasov from the Macedonian side, on one hand, and from the Albanian side (as representatives of the Albanian committees) Rexhep Mitrovica (Minister of Education in the Albanian government) and Professor Bedri Peani (a priest and a member of the Kosovo Committee), on the other hand.

This ceremony was attended from the Albanian side also by Ahmed Zogu, Hasan Prishtina, Avni Rustemi, Bajram Curri, Jashar Erebara, Zija Dibra, and others.<sup>59</sup>

On 24 April 1933, again an agreement was concluded that confirmed this borderline and again expressed the intention to cooperate in context of the agreed plan, now between Hasan Prishtina and Vanco Mihajlov.

It is interesting to note in this context that the then maps of United Albania did not include the Macedonian lands (only Kosovo and Chameria). Today these maps indeed look different. It was the result of cooperation which was then founded and later abandoned in 1945.

Significant and continuous field of cooperation between Macedonian and Albanian revolutionary organizations was joint preparation for an uprising against Ottoman rule, and even against other Balkan countries that had ignored the Macedonian and Albanian demands for independence. This is an important moment for showing the width of the foundations on which cooperation was based not only against the Turks but also against other Balkan peoples and states which had hegemonic aspirations toward that territory.

Here we will mention only some of the most significant moves (because there are a lot of data)<sup>60</sup>.

Stojan Vezenkov and Sali Marku, in Debar, in 1867, made arrangements for collecting money and weapons for the

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<sup>59</sup> For more, see in: Владо Поповски, Албанското националноослободително движење (1830 –1912), МЦСП, 2012, pp. 32, 53, 61, 93, 98, 109-128 (in Macedonian).

<sup>60</sup> For details, see in: В. Поповски, op.cit.

preparation of a joint uprising against the Turks. This initiative was supported by a number of prominent Albanians from the region such as Husein Beg, Duleman Beg, Ali-Cani Demiri, Elez Murli, Sulejman Kuleza, and Zer Kulija.

These preparations for joint uprising and joint guerrilla troops were intensified especially after the Young Turk Revolution and the pressure that followed in the region.

At that time the Albanian League opposed sending local Albanians as recruits (as per the demands by the Ottoman authorities) to reinforce regular Turkish army units to fight the Macedonian guerrilla troops in the region of South Macedonia (as evidenced in documents dated from 1881).

At that time, Mihail Gremeno and Shefqet Agolli advocated official cooperation only with VMRO and the local Vlachs in the region, jointly organizing armed guerrilla troops.

At the Elbasan Congress in 1910, the Albanian secret committees again officially decided to cooperate only with the Macedonian organizations (it was especially agreed upon at meeting later in Debar, in the house of Kenan Daci).

It laid down intensive collaboration and defining common interests in the creation of own independent states. Such cooperation with different intensities run until World War II and establishment of the Republic of Macedonia as part of then socialist and federal Yugoslavia in 1945. The Macedonians took another track, and so forgot the centuries of cooperation, while taking the Serbian “glasses” to view the Albanians. The history of Serbian relations with the Albanians is full of conflicts and it is not part of the Macedonian history. Hence tension was born in relations between the Macedonians and the Albanians within Yugoslavia and immediately after the independence of Macedonia. The Macedonians should “return” to their own history; they should not be journeymen and marginal actors in foreign histories of the Balkan peoples. At the same time, this is also necessary for them if they want to stabilize their own independent state. For the process of stabilization of the real multicultural society and the state in Macedonia, in addition to the political agreement transposed into the Constitution (or into the Ohrid Agreement), it is necessary to have a thorough process of re-opening of own

history of cooperation between the Macedonians and Albanians as a base for a second process of real “reconciliation”. It is a process that is not easy to open. Some of the issues were already mentioned in the text, while additional two will be considered below. The first issue concerns the need for formalization of this new view of cooperation and to move it into the mainstream of official history and education literature. The second problem is that all this requires extremely capable and qualified (statesmanship) political elite, qualified historians, not just party junk commonly found in the offer to the public.

In this context it is to be noted that every reading of history is a political decision that will define what is important in the forensic history of facts, events and personalities. Every fact appears with unique interpretation; it is never just as cruel fact, as bare obviousness (Michel Foucault). Each collective memory of each nation contains a mix of alternative counter memories. It cannot be understood without the conflict, the struggle of memories and it becomes a field of struggle for control (again M. Foucault).

By deciding what historical memory contains, we decide how and where we develop our nation and which fields of struggle it will have. The control of the dynamism of a nation goes through controlling memory, or fields of fight of the memories of that nation.

Transient young democracies in the region have to make those decisions. These decisions await them.

I am willing to say that today in the region we are no more able to pretend meeting the European standards for good neighborliness, only on formal criteria. It takes a serious descent below the surface; it requires a deeper groove! Most of the countries have met the formal criteria of good neighborliness of the EU or are close to it. But still, tectonic instability, hate speech, lack of minority rights, acts of hatred, prejudice and incidents are repeated cyclically and so maintained. A new cycle of progress is possible with a new and braver concept and bolder political elites. Strange, but that path leads through reopening of history, not running from it, but now with the concept for its sharing!

Macedonia is just the specially sensitive part of the region, like its erogenous zone; Macedonia with its fragile multicultu-

ralism serves as a litmus indicator of cultural struggles and the use and abuse of history, and today as a possible place to promote the idea of sharing the history as a kind of social project to stabilize the region.

I would be very happy if Macedonia or its political elites understand the call of the day and of the forthcoming decade: make decisions about what our history - shared with the neighbors and with the cultural communities within the country - is.<sup>61</sup>

If they could direct their role, power and responsibility to preventing politics to take the easier track of ethnic nationalism, populism and probable collapse ultimately. Living side by side in one state is highly adrenaline-stressed condition and can easily divert communities to ethnocentric narratives and conflict situations. To fill the space with political mythology of “clean national histories” that confront each other, full of traditional friends and enemies. Their primal quasi heroic discourses are always in oppositio/tension/collision with compatriots from other cultures and religions and offer bad equilibrium.

Political decisions should take their proper place in the center of public discourse. That means in history textbooks, at all levels of education, in the specific symbols of official history such as the Encyclopedia of MANU (Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts) and in the debate in the media. Joint projects that can be implemented by regional non-governmental organizations in this field would be of great help. We are flesh and blood of that process of sharing history as the basis of our identity and a functional multicultural democracy.

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<sup>61</sup> A survey by the Open Society Institute and the King Boudin Foundation made in 2009, claims that the most influential sectors in inter-ethnic and intercultural relations are political parties, the media, the judiciary and the police. And in a similar research made by CIVICUS in 2012, it is said that the greatest degree of public confidence in matters of inter-ethnic relations is entrusted to: educators 67% , religious leaders 65%, army 65%, trade unions 27%, and political parties 24%. (p. 229).

## 6. IDENTITY

The term **identity** broken down, and re-assembled in definition, should answer the question why it is so important for the individual, for the individual in his social context<sup>62</sup> and why is it important in internalized context of self-perception, self-acknowledgment that takes place in the space of intimacy.

This term can be broken down within several requirements that lead through the track of social accommodating, of individual adjusting.

First, we would emphasize the need for building the semantic value of *meaning or sense* as to what they are as individuals, entities and what is their place in society. The need to give meaning to everything they do, to all their activeness and everything they sacrifice for. It is a necessity, in a word, of culture and history.

The second necessity regards the specific sense of community and being together with defined, specific part of the whole of humanity, similar in ethnic roots, language, history of rituals, religion - in a word, **culture**. This is a special kind of “intimacy” among members of a group, a special kind of relationship between them, who do not have to know each other. This intergroup “intimacy” is the next necessity that satisfies the term identity. The intimacy that is considered here is expressed through specific **autonomy** for managing “one’s own things”, mainly without interference from wider community and other groups. It stimulates the group spirit and team energy in action and wants to be respected as different.

Charles Taylor defines identity as self-interpreting action of the individual. It is such action, which develops and builds

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<sup>62</sup> This is usually called ‘group justice’ or fair treatment for various cultural groups.

identity through self-reflection, as opposed to the thesis that identity is fixed set of meanings at some point in time and space.<sup>63</sup>

Following this, Richard Rorty and Wong emphasize that in the process of construction of identity, through self-reflection, one can pursue different levels of meanings, desires and values that form it. The identity of man is formed by a group of “core needs and values” that have meaning for him thoroughly. According to these authors, these would include: somatic dispositions of the individual; psychological parameters and temperament; social roles, social group identities, and cultural narratives; and the ideal identity (as a project-optional).<sup>64</sup> Again following this line, another group of authors draw attention that, in the case of defining identity, major role is played by conflicts and moral dilemmas that an individual resolves and faces, and thus, these processes become founding in identity formation. Four types of conflicts are differentiated:

1. conflicts of obligations;
2. conflicts of objectives;
3. conflict between moral codes or views of the world;  
and
4. views between different moral requirements.

Some authors specifically single out the need for identity to be recognized, as demand for recognition.<sup>65</sup> Demand for recognition, for one's own, can be predominant, often for an individual as emotion, over other perceptions about similarities among his fellow citizens. To be “recognized” according C. Taylor is to be accepted in a specific way - with dignity. This means to be perceived and accepted in one's own authenticity with positive social recognition and respect.

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<sup>63</sup> Чарлс Тејлор, Изворите на себството, Или-Или, 2013, Скопје, pp. 15-43 (in Macedonian). Same in: Politics of recognition, op.cit. below.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Rorty, Philosophy as Cultural Politics, Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<sup>65</sup> Charles Taylor, The Politics of Recognition, Gutman (ed) 1994; Чарлс Тејлор, Мултикултурализам, огледи за политиката на признавање, Евро-Балкан, 2004, Скопје, pp. 25-57 (in Macedonian). Ch. Taylor says that identity is formed in part by the recognition or the absence or the erroneous recognition... In fact, recognition of identity is part of the basic human rights as a universal basis - everybody has his own identity... and universal requirement allows the recognition of the specificity... Of course, every identity has or implies dialogue character, sometimes by fighting the others...

The demand to recognize equal value for different cultures is a reflection of the deep human need to be unconditionally accepted. The sense of such acceptance, which implies acknowledgment of ethnic particularity and the universal potential of individuals - is an essential part of a sense of identity. The policy of equal dignity is based on the idea that all people deserve equal respect.

For this topic that is opened in relation to the Macedonian identity, there is a very important remark by Taylor that the absence of recognition or even more erroneous recognition of identity inflicts “wounds”, creates harm, generates a form of subordination and keeps man in reduced and limited form of existence. Sometimes the wrong forms of recognition also represent techniques of submission, if subordinated groups accept underrated pictures of themselves and their culture.

Exactly at this point the identity of the Macedonian individual is a paradigm. His struggle to be recognized, defined and different from others is the struggle for the recognition of the dignity with which one can only live, i.e., without which one cannot live. Conversely, the attempt to deny in any context (the name, the nation, or the language) is a technique of establishing a ruling policy over the Macedonians as a separate nation.

Herman Van Gunsteren says, that so-called deep groups, as he calls them, or societal identities (as Will Kymlicka calls them) dominate the social perception of its members, their social relationships and, ultimately, their self-perception.

Membership in these identity groups becomes “primary reality” that determines everything else and is a challenge for the civil consensus achieved. This reality is further seen as “obvious”, “natural” and thus has indisputable advantage over other socially constructed pacts and consensus.

Confliction of self-defining and social activity of the group IDENTITY is, according to some authors, universal human tendency.<sup>66</sup> It is much easier and more efficient to predict the reactions of others when basing them on their group characteristics rather than on the individual characteristics

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<sup>66</sup> See especially in: Brewer MB and Miller N (1996). *Intergroup Relations*, NY Brooks/Cole, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, pp. 68, 403-412; and also in: Tajfel H and Turner JC (1986). *The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior*, (ed) Worchel S and Austin W. Chicago, IL, Nelson-Hall, USA.

of their members. Such slipping into templates of group qualities, grossly simplifying or demonizing the other, is called stereotyping. The same phenomenon is called by Sumner (1906) “ethnocentrism”.<sup>67</sup> Ethnocentrism is such ideological viewpoint according to which my group is the center of everything and everything is measured/levelled against it. This phenomenon not only favors the internal relations within a given group, but tends to discriminate everything else out of it.

The desire to increase our value/importance is pathologically related to stereotyping and denigration of the different views. Just a step from this is “demonization of the other,” something that is called remembering blood and injustice committed in history. Operational sense which this memory of injustice is transformed into, is revenge or rather collective revenge. It is indiscriminate violence against members of a given group considered to have dealt “injustice.” It is interesting to note that individual revenge is punishable in most of the known political systems, but collective revenge somehow “is tolerated.”

Such intergroup tolerance and justification of revenge offer moral defense for act of vengeance, sometimes leading to extreme acts such as genocide.

The collective memory of injustice and revenge often lead to feelings of hatred (as sustained “cultural” determinant of group behavior), or rather, as collectively remembered hatred towards members of certain groups. This situation is recognized by: obsessive focus on the hated members of the groups in the belief that hated groups have criminal features per se; that all members of such group are equally bad and guilty; and by the need for revenge that creates motivating arguments for humiliation and destruction of that group.

If you create this “dance of negative emotions” and stereotyping, it could be and has been a good basis for a number of ethnic conflicts and their escalation to genocide.

Perhaps paradoxically with this tendency, identity, as mentioned, is a relational concept. It always depends on the

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<sup>67</sup> Sumner WG (1906). *The Role of Evil, The Origins of Genocide*, NY, Cambridge University Press.



relationship with and toward other. Identity is always constituted in relation to the other, as opposed to the other, “in the view of the other.” (St. Augustine observes: “I exist only while the other dreams me.”) In no other manner it can be constructed and constituted as a term nor any such practice.

The construction of identity, we can conclude, is a process that occurs by permanent exclusion, differentiation, negative evaluations of others, and even by a permanent establishment of points of contact and relations or “friction” with them. Such a process varies according to social conditions in the respective societies, particularly to the extent of the crisis and stressful situations for groups.

In other words, the individual is always and again “thrown” into society (to use the existentialist term of J. P. Sartre); and in that “hell” of being thrown toward the others that are a constant threat to our identity, lies the very pathology of identity conflicts as such.

Next important feature of identity is the conclusion of a group of authors - that identity is not a “given, primordial or natural”, as often seems to us, but constantly subjected to CONSTRUCTION, namely a given/assigned term. Ethnicity and identity based on it, is an entity which is constantly in construction and reconstruction. Similar to the old, huge temples and cathedrals where reconstructions of some parts are constantly in progress and one never sees them fully reconstructed. Ethnicity and identity derived from it is a process and a project rather than structure or “hard body” of meanings.

## **6.1. MACEDONIAN IDENTITY WITH DUAL CODE AND SLAVIC SIGN MARK**

Here we will stop with the theoretical review of the term identity and focus on Macedonian identity in context of its contemporary challenge of creating a Macedonian national, multi-coded, plurivocal, or rather meta-identity.

Macedonian ethnic identity, the identity of the Macedonian people, as usually defined, for all of us is not controversial, while the opening of this debate must not imply its possible challenge, at any level. But objectively it is caused by the existence of an independent Macedonian state, which necessarily needs, requires construction of political meta-identity of the Macedonian nation, of all citizens being connected by their Macedonian citizenship on one hand, and on the other hand, particularly the ethnic Macedonian identity of the majority Macedonian ethnic nation. This construction (as everywhere in every state) cannot be based only on political and legal considerations, assumptions (all citizens of the Republic of Macedonia), but requires at least a minimum cultural basis. It is exactly this, which creates problems in overlapping the ethnic identities of other peoples living as ethnic communities in Macedonia with the need for double coding of the word Macedonian in the former and latter meaning. What cultural basis will dominate the Macedonian political nation of citizens and is dominance the true word for such “construction”?

Second, the Macedonian ethnic identity is challenged also by the open denial of its recognition as separate one (according to the definition of C. Taylor) or by the very attempts for wrong recognition (which is just another form of attempted domination over the Macedonians).

Both debates open stressful perspective. The first is a classic postmodern debate about complex, overlapping identities in one state, and the second is the diplomatic struggle for recognition of identity through the name, language and specificity of the nation.

Such stress is reflected in the debates (which are, in point of fact, a real rarity) through the dominance of topics, ranging in scope of one-line ethnic history, collective fears, stereotypes, mythomania, all the way to conspiratorial security threats.

Naturally there is also the identity-related “counter-reformation” popularly called antiquization (nation-building in ancient Macedonian style), which followed up on the multitude of dilemmas with its destructive serious threat to the identity of the Macedonians.

From such pile of ethnic narratives, one cannot see the real problem and perspective.

Of course the issue of the Macedonian identity also suffers from the irrelevance of actors that debate and the scarcity of theses at their disposal. Hence the Macedonian identity, together with its conscious concept, lags behind the fact of the very existence of the Macedonian state.

I would like to present a thesis on the setup of the problem, which in spite of intentional simplification I consider to be precise in its main line. I will intentionally expose it only from the point of view of the majority people, because I think they are the most responsible for the success of this project. Also deliberately I intend to keep “the collectivist perspective” of the problem, because there it is most strongly recoiled. I do not intend to underestimate the individualist perspective of the citizens. On the contrary, I consider it irreplaceable general framework of liberal justice in respect of which “righteousness to the groups” is only possible. But I have no intention to especially consider the last one in this context. For the Macedonians - despite the multitude of directions in the internal dynamics of identity, which is recoiled through the issues that are within a vast history of cultural facts in respect of which they will refer to as “their” in the foundation for establishing - still, ethnic identity is stable and defined. It was obtained in the dramatic and historically unambiguous way, through cultural struggle and survival without their own state, in terms of enslaving and negation politics of denationalization by others. When you survive and win in such an unequal fight, no one can deny so acquired identity of the people/nation.

In its presence-already-here, in what Marx would call identity-in-itself, the Macedonian identity shows still to be below the level of identity-for-itself! In fact, it is its paradox! In such position of the Macedonian identity, and for purposes of our analysis, we will apply the libidinal leverage of identity formation which follows the line of Lacan and Žižek.

The Macedonian identity is formed around two axes of absence or two traumas, if you want: emphasized relational connection with close identities and late *différance* from them - which increases to a collective neurosis the issue of recognition of the specificity (C. Taylor); and secondly, libidinal organizing of

the satisfaction-in-the-nation takes the form and dynamics of a nation-victim!

Because, as mentioned, the identity of every nation is the result of the operation of differentiation from the “other” and of internalization of the difference in its own dynamics of self-identification - this is dramatically perceived in the way we experience our “national-pleasure-in-nation”. Without creating such a distinction or differentiation, self-identification is not possible; and secondly, when it is difficult to distinguish and goes through extensive shared history and linguistic similarities, which actually represents the body of folk culture that exists relationally with cultures of some neighboring nations or ethnic groups, distinguishing then gets frustrating, violent, narcissistic or internalized-violent forms.

The differentiation is necessary, but the exclusion is xenophobic reaction in the process of self-identification of the nation and shows the existence of a crisis. Normally, we should always have in mind that in all this it is a matter of symbolic constitutively thought-related operation, which according to Benedict Anderson is called “imagining” of the nation.<sup>68</sup>

The problem of opening the antagonisms of self-identification, paradoxically gets intensifying in a completely unexpected way and in unforeseen time - when the Macedonians create their own state.

Due to circumstances that are not in their domain of influence, the Macedonians are not able, in context of their country, to experimentally pass / overcome the period of “the modern” or the period of national liberal revolutions embodied in the construct of “a nation-state”. They were immediately “dumped” in the postmodern discourse of plural identities in a state where they are mixed with other ethnic identities, and in a state that they cannot “use” only for the protection and promotion of “their own” cultural identity.

You can imagine the extent of the frustration of a nation that cannot be on its own “in its own state”? To rely on defense mechanisms to protect “only its own” state and acting to promote “its own culture”!? Hence the Macedonians show signs of

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<sup>68</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London, 1992

confusion arising from “the lack of experience of the modern” and the direct leap: from the premodern to the postmodern. We would conclude that it is about “being unrealized” in and through relationship with one’s own state!

But frustration for some, is a challenge and an opportunity for others.

The Macedonians must clearly understand that if they love “their” state, they then will have to define it as a civil and free - as a state and community that creates a “Macedonian nation” composed of all its citizens. It is an inevitable path. Everything else is gambling with its stability.

It also means that the Macedonians should create dual identity semantics of the word “Macedonian”. It is essential that this word “get rid” of exclusive ethnic sign marks and meanings associated with only the ethnic Macedonians, to create in itself an extra space to accommodate the other meaning as well. To give it a polyvalent, altered semantics that will provide a “reading” through which the rest of the citizens of the state will feel it like their own attribute which they can belong to and identify with.

This in turn will the term “Macedonian” in the meaning of belonging to the Republic of Macedonia and its history as a state, and the term “Macedonian” as narrower ethnic meaning of the Macedonian people and of its members as an ethnic community.

It can be done in the present, by means of a neutral state emancipatory politics of development and stabilization of the everyday, through the emphasis on national identity associated with (as Bhikhu Parekh notes<sup>69</sup>) the structure of political institutions and values that they involve, imply, and found. It is a necessity and urgency of minimum culture of consensus. Complementing would be diving into the uniqueness of ethnic groups, but with the decision to read history in a way that will define what “matters” and is founding decisively in the uniqueness, and simultaneously it will build bridges to others in the history of Macedonia. That history cannot only be the history of the Macedonian people as ethnic nation. It is the history of the Macedonian state.

The Macedonians fear that building of this meta-identity of the nation, will endanger the purity of ethnic historical idea and

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<sup>69</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, Macmillan Press, London, 2000.

the concept of identity of the Macedonians and that we will move to (forcedly, construing) deadpan cosmopolitan position. This, in turn, will be imposed only on the Macedonians, and not on the other nations in the Balkans.

All this stems from a thorough misunderstanding of the project. First, the option of building a meta Macedonian identity in Macedonia has no alternative (if the state wants to survive and stabilize). The Macedonians have no capacity (much larger Balkan nations are without capacity as well) for the assimilation of other smaller nations in their civil structure. The way out is the struggle for establishing “politics of differences”. It is a politics which has replaced the somewhat vague and hidden assimilation politics of “integration” and should be based on civil, political foundation and cultural standards of strict protection of human and minority rights. A new level of integration and balance between the individual fundamental rights, classic minority rights, but also a step forward - justice for group cultural practices and their visibility.

When we talk of justice we mean balance that enables visibility, representation, and social space for development.

This forms the cultural basis of the meta identity of the term MACEDONIAN, as value that preserves and develops the aforementioned moral credos and practices basing its memory which rests on myths.

It does not jeopardize the ethnic identity of the majority Macedonian people and other ethnic communities. On the contrary, this meta-identity implies and requires that they be clearly defined, developed and reproduced. It just assumes that ethnic identities are not closed, fixed, frozen stones without the ability to evolve and change, and that each of them has liberal elements of freedom and dignity that can interfere, complement and mutually inspire. So there is a chance to create a thin placenta of procedural and minimum value-based cultural consensus as the basis of the political system.

Also there is need for an atmosphere, circumstances that will become part of liberally designed and expected environment in which identities feel unthreatened, relaxed and are prepared for cooperation and communication. Together with the previously

defined meta-identity, this creates an umbrella (rainbow), which covers the ideology of the nation of the Macedonian citizens.

A condition for the process to obtain a stable acceleration is efficient state administration, which needs to be kept neutral to the maximum possible level from direct cultural patronage.

How this process is dependent on responsible political elites who lead it and who must believe in it, is shown by the experience with “the political adventure,” which runs from 2008 until today, and by which an effort to question our own identity by ourselves has been made. As a consequence of such a rather aggressive daily politics in discourses of the public, it has become almost embarrassing to utter that the Macedonians are Slavs and that they have a Slavic language and culture!

This happens because of a lunatic political campaign of the current political elite that has developed an attempt to historically uproot the Macedonians, by peeling off their authentic historical layers through the ideological project called “antiquization.”

The current government develops it for the sake of the political mobilization and control of the Macedonian electorate. A body that is put in the constant stress of the economic and security crisis, which is now further converted into quasi-identity crisis as well. It is a crisis that this populist authoritarian elite in Macedonia creates and manages, while offering itself for abstract solution of such crisis.

Project identity uprooting, or antiquization, is executed:

- in public space of the state (the “Skopje 2014” government project),
- through the media and their educational program,
- by trying to change the history and civic education textbooks, in primary, secondary and higher education, and so on;
- through an ideologically indoctrinated group of politico-historians in debate happening in the public discourse.

The latter earn their living by pursuing partisan politics and ideology in historical science and they, unfortunately, are the most vocal and most comical. It can be said they are a replica of

the Bulgarian pro-government historians of the time when they were associated with the Bulgarian secret police and served the Bulgarian historical propaganda intended against Macedonia. Now, unfortunately, we face the same kind of domestic provocateurs and are never able to get rid of them, and leave history really to historians.

The project is intended to abolish the identity of the Macedonians as Slavic and replace it with some ancient one (antique/antiquization). To pursue this, the said project exploits by creating a frivolous political, national myth. This populist elite believes that this new and “rooted” identity in antiquity in the ancient Macedonians of Alexander III of Macedonia - is more dignified, more stable, prouder, stronger and more resistant to attacks and denial. Also in this context it is suggested that “the return of dignity to the Macedonians” is under the direction of precisely this new leadership, by which an obvious metaphorical bridge, linking the associations and similarities of today’s and the then glorious leadership of Macedonians, is constructed.

This operation is scientifically and politically impossible for real execution, and is further counterproductive to the already stabilized Macedonian national identity and state.

This project is based on the chthonic gigantic ignorance about the history of the creation of national identities and their national states.

“The ancient Macedonian” identity is not the basis on which you can graft the identity of the contemporary Macedonian nation. Especially not just one, even it is called Macedonian, because other Balkan nations desire that heritage as well. A special problem is that in the cultural sense that identity is dominantly Hellenic. Namely, Alexander of Macedonia, like a “janissary”, submissively adopted the Hellenic culture as dominant and as “own”, spreading it by means of his spears and shields around the world, more than the Hellenes themselves. His roots, other than Hellenic, became wholly irrelevant to his identity - through the Hellenic culture he “globalized” the ancient world.

It is an insoluble problem for our modern alchemists of antiquization and will remain unsolved in context of trying to get Alexander the Great connected with the present-day Macedonians.



But it could open doors to unexpected denouement - Hellenization of contemporary Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia.<sup>70</sup>

Second, modern national identities that we can reasonably discuss, and which occurred in the 19th century, were established through the kaleidoscope of ethnic groups, traditional cultures and “cultures in fragments.” It goes through the great moves of the codification of literary language and code set to read its history. These moves are made by the elite, civic intelligence of a nation having potentials. It is people/population, who can survive on their traditional cultural practices, but not people in modern sense. It is “a floating mass’ (Cvijic) which can be the raw material for creating and joining another nation and its elite culture. It is therefore meaningless “to search for roots” before the creation of an elite, civic culture of a nation that creates its identity. Finding ancient or prehistoric roots of a nation, except scientific nonsense, does not offer any guarantee that the population will become - people, nation and create a state. It is like when on a tree root you graft other fruit. You will have the new fruit in the crown and in the fruits of the new tree. The roots are not guarantees of becoming a nation. They are only potentials, traditional culture, which may differently, very differently develop or not develop in a nation.

We were lucky and had strength that the Macedonian civic intelligence, after all ordeals and crushing murders, though late, still was able to execute two key nation-making operations (according to Max Weber): to codify the language and decide what would be the history of the Macedonians, namely how it would read.

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<sup>70</sup> That is the question also raised by Denko Maleski in his article “Hellenization of Macedonia” (portal “Plus Info”, 2014), having slight conspiratorial note when he says... “How did the abandonment of the authentic Macedonian politics and its replacement with the old Greek politics come about? Years ago, when everybody thought that a new political team was about to start the battle against Greece, the whisper of the mouths of the ideologists of ‘antiquization’ said the opposite: ‘We are going with Greece!’ This whisper captured my attention, because I heard it earlier from a representative of the older generation of Macedonian politicians in 1991, who thought he had the formula without difficulty to join the EU: a federation between Macedonia and Greece. I questioned his logic, but he thought it was possible to do it without losing our Slavic identity. Fifteen years later, a new generation of Macedonian politicians and intellectuals were ready to go even further, to change our very identity. For this to happen it was necessary to bury the modern idea of our state and nation into heaps of unexplained and misunderstood history so well symbolized by accumulated statues on the square in Skopje, which, not coincidentally, is dominated by the largest monument of Alexander the Great in the world!”

Those are constituent operations for creating people in identity sense. Max Weber further adds that in this language a layer should be set aside as well, which he calls “bureaucratic language” or “language that creates the state.” A bloody fight/battle for the state then is always added to this.

For us, the Macedonians, this act of identity construction is made in the Slavic cultural code. Today we are Macedonians that have Slavic language and Slavic culture, not Slavo-Macedonians as a new construct...

Language codifications follows a wider trail that weaves from the time of Cyril and Methodius, through Misirkov to Blaze Koneski (“Language is our homeland”).

The state-forming struggle, however, follows the path of a series of statehood uprisings culminating in the anti-fascist struggle, which creates the state. In this diachronic perspective one can see the efforts and desires of a part of VMRO as a movement.

All this takes place upon the historical process of dominant overlapping of Slavic culture, which absorbs in itself the pieces, fragments of traditional cultures and parts of the mega cultures (for instance, the Byzantine) of the indigenous population in the historical course of fifteen centuries backwards. Slavic culture (which was created and recreated) and Slavic language prove dominantly strong with capacity to integrate, convert and institute their own Slavic identities, to established also those non-Slavic identities as Slavic (for instance, the Bulgarians who have non-Slavic ethnic origin through language and culture define themselves as Slavic identity).

Such identity roots are extremely tight because they are based/deep-rooted, sharp-forged through many battles; they endured struggles through which they developed internal pluralism, but remained Slavic.

Longing to discover deeper, new roots even older and “more eternal” is not further strengthened and entrenched rooting but quite the opposite - uprooting. Instead of strengthening the identity, one enters the whirlpool of its denial.

In the simple minds of the promoters of the antiquization and authoritarian populist political elite, it is possible to amend

the ancient Slavic identity of the Macedonians into the so-called aborted identity or turbo-identity. But the result is quite the opposite; they actually only have released Macedonia and the Macedonians as raft through the turbulent identity waters in the Balkans and the world.

Such antiquization project, because of its radical arbitrariness, even for creating fantasies - has to resort to violence, paternalism and lies. To create a radically "false memory" of our roots in the ancient past. Moreover, the hardness to persevere in the battle lost in advance increases skyhigh the very price we pay for the stupidity.

We collide daily with the reasonable definition of what we are and who we are in the eyes of others and of our place in international relations. This policy even as short lunatic flash has inflicted great damage to the reputation and has divided Macedonia once again.

The series of nonsense things, which have been imposed as "debate" about our alleged identity using unparalleled force, undoubtedly represent evidence to our national shame.

## 7. ENJOYING THE NATION

The final part will raise the issue of nationalisms in terms of their internal energy of compulsive repetition, mainly of the worst sides and phantasms. In this regard we are missing one of the tools for explaining the connective tissue in each, and in our nationalistic ideology, the one that goes further and deeper than enumerating the positive characteristics and features of each nation. It is a dimension of libidinal economy of the ideology embodied in the “enjoying the nation”.

It is that line of Lacan that S. Žižek puts creatively in political theory as criticism of ideology. It is about that surplus (excess) energy in enjoyment (*jouissance*) and how it stands behind the action of the nationalism of a national identity.<sup>71</sup>

Let us start with the basic thesis of this discourse which implies that any policy, especially that of nationalism, is based on and manipulates the economy of enjoyment<sup>72</sup>. “(...) Every nation exists until it continuously materializes the specific satisfaction in a set of social practices and that nationalism is privileged

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<sup>71</sup> The principle of pleasure in the symbolic order: language, right and everyday life, becomes compensation for the genuine satisfaction of the desire which is always missing. It is a process of sublimation through which individuals learn to control the devastating power of the REAL and its residue in the symbolic small. But the subject, according to Lacan, always tries to pass the borderline that determines the principle of pleasure and so reach ultimate satisfaction. But this passage is no more pleasure but pain and suffering. “*Jouissance*” is painful pleasure, suffering. This primeval passage is what Lacan calls the dead-drive. *An Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, Dylan Evans, Routledge, London, 2006, pp. 93-94; Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, Continuum, New York, 2005.

<sup>72</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil*, 2012; *Tarrying With The Negative*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1993; *Žižek Dictionary*, Rex Butler; See also: Jodi Dean, *Žižek Politics*, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006; Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*, Duke University Press, London, 2009; and certainly in: Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, London, 1996; Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966.

social practice of such enjoyment, its eruption in the social field.” Libidinal support of national identity and its nationalism allows us to follow it not so much through positive legal norms and order in a country where it is manifested, but through its underside, dark side, through “the collective dirty little secrets” of a given ethnic group (be it a majority or minority). The emphasis would be on ethnic rituals only available to us, on the infringement of law (what Hegel calls “the right of the night”, the dark side). Positive law of a country applies to all: domestic residents, foreigners, immigrants, but forms of its obscene infringement are available and are tolerated only to the members of the dominant cultural majority that controls the system and power.

In addition, the strength of the national connecting among individuals becomes ideologically leveled with the position of a victim of conspiracy. Nation and nationalism are always buffer for the shocks that social and economic imbalances create. But not directly, but through the mythology of conspiracy. Ethnic unity and fantasy of stable, homogeneous social body are always “disrupted” by some enemies that are actually synonymous with the situation of imbalance, contradiction, tearing and devastating tensions, which prevent the former! National myths always serve to organize a community which they address in respect of any or some external/internal threats. In that sense, nationalism is always in need of “others”, hence it is essentially relational. It is mostly in the form of qualifications, networks of prejudice all the way to demonization of others, especially by means of an institute that S. Žižek introduces: theft of our “pleasure-in-the-nation” committed by others.<sup>73</sup>

To conclude, because a nation is not a biological formation but a contingent and discursive construction, as its base it has a non-discursive anchor, the anchor of enjoyment. It must exist for the nation to establish ontological consistency<sup>74</sup>. The nation itself is organized around the myth of the original national trauma about “the loss of unity, the primordial whole”, which - as an impossible desire to reconquer, or “objet petit a” of G. Lacan - constantly scatters the current political and social milieu and its harmony.

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<sup>73</sup> Especially see in: Jodi Dean, *Žižek Politics*, Routledge, New York, 2006, pp. 112-113.

<sup>74</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative*, Duke University Press, 1993, p. 201.

The nation seems to be organized around the constant decay, failure to reach the renewed harmony, around the antagonism of that radical negativity. On the other hand, the exit from the vicious circle and getting anchored in the stabilization and consolidation - something that we would call finally a calm nationalism - is not avoiding the intrusion of the REAL that refuses symbolization in language and politics, its avoidance (which is impossible) but a *modus vivendi* with that contradiction, facing it, articulation through its sublimation in the best practices of tolerance and creation.

Second thesis important for our analysis is the one that is set among others by Hayden White: that every history or every historical narrative is prose that is built on facts. It never consists only of the facts, but it is a story built on them. Historians never “reveal history” but take events and make a story out of them representing them as a model that explains, as logic of any development that they desire. They decide what is important to remember and to forget from the chronology of the facts in the context of their story.<sup>75</sup>

At the moment of such decision on how to make the selection of historical material, what is important and what narrative should be woven and developed, the historian becomes a politician who creates an ideological milieu. That decision is subject to ideological motives and rules that have, as we will see, also libidinal matrices, not only direct historical. It intends to explain why today we are in a situation in which we are and how accordingly we need to act.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, the ideological intervention cannot be deprived of the confliction of interpretations, and so becomes antagonistic. Further in the confliction Lacan places the emergence of what cannot be symbolized, but is felt exactly in such interruptions - THE REAL - the traumatic beginning, the fundamental antagonism of that beginning of each nation and identity. Also among the Macedonians, such traumatic moment prevents stabilization of the community in total harmony and establishment of a harmonic/whole unity.

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<sup>75</sup> Hayden White, *Metahistory*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1973.

<sup>76</sup> At the same place Hayden says such ideological reactions, interventions into and by history can be of four types: conservative, liberal, radical, and anarchist...

On the other hand, the historical review in question, according to the famous remark of Hegel, is always rewriting, or writing of history from the perspective of the present; it means intervention that finds historical roots and ‘necessity’ for current relations. It retroactively repudiates the former relations and gives legitimacy to the new dominant relations of power. When something new appears, this new retrospectively constructs its historical “necessity”. There are never “bare facts”; always these narratives “have already been set by us.” Tradition is tradition only if it is established by us.

A fundamental paradox of rediscovery of tradition, returning to the roots and similar policies to create a national identity - is that they are tautological, self-referential - they reveal themselves as already-present-in-tradition!

When Hegel uses the word “oblivion” (*docta ignorantia*), he does it in a way to enable the absolute knowledge to absorb the essence of historical truth, to get rid of the layers of historical memory, which is not “essential.” Sometimes I think that such an overlap of memory and forgetting the “phenomenal self” is needed for the Macedonians to be able to extract from themselves the real essence, as a modern European nation.<sup>77</sup>

This retroactive memory/forgetting is always ideological and always builds and is built upon the libidinal economy of the nation (that is the contribution of Lacan and Žižek in this story). It is not expressed through the neutral and scrupulous, scientific analysis, but always and without exception through the fantasies of the nation. Fantasies about the trauma of the breakup of the former imaginary unity (which never actually existed) in the divisions and fighting that followed and the constant desire to rebuild it and to dream one’s own dreams.

Fantasy is a network of meanings through which a social content, object, person is shown to us as the destination of our desire or as an obstacle to satisfying it. It explains why our fundamental desire (achieving primordial unity, final harmony) cannot be reached and so offers us alternatives, compensations through the pleasure principle. It offers us sublimation,

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<sup>77</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History, Philosophy of Rights, Philosophy of Mind*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992; *Philosophy of Religion*, Clarendon Press, 2007.

suppression, transgression; it keeps open the possibility of satisfaction and explains why basic frustration of not being able to be completely pleased actually is such, as it is - unattainable.

Basically, this is what Lacan implies when he says: fantasy is the ultimate leverage for reality and that reality is stabilized when framed in a fantasy (which controls the influence of the chaos of the REAL), and that, most radically, fantasy constitutes the reality, not vice versa, and that we receive the reality only through the filter of fantasy.<sup>78</sup>

We mentioned earlier that one of the features of nationalist and patrioter mobilization is creating notion of external threat to the very nation. Hegel calls the operation “the illusion of deliberating outside”, when unity or identity of the nation is the result of deliberations that it is threatened from the outside, from someone or something that threatens to swallow it. Hegel goes a step further when he says that sometimes these threats create identity.<sup>79</sup>

Such illusion, raised to level of fantasy - serves for legitimization of politics as action in realizing the dream/fantasy about protection from attacks and attaining unity.

The problem may not be so in the way that is shown by this powerful explanatory theory of sources and driving forces of the ideology of nationalism - but in the fact that it points out that one ends up in vicious circle of alienation, the capture of the nationalist spirit in the economy of the collective “libido.” Whenever the nation would attain what appears to satisfy the desire of rebuilding chthonic primordial unity (creating independent state such as, for example, the Macedonians), it is immediately concluded “this is not it” and the desire is renewed in its constant failure to be satisfied.

Very important note for the organization of fantasies in nationalism is given by Slavoj Zizek, when he says that human desire mediated by fantasy is never organized around the notion of genuine interest to the individual but otherwise even against his real interest.<sup>80</sup> This is because such enjoyment is completely

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<sup>78</sup> J. Lacan, Seminar II, *Ecrits*, op.cit.

<sup>79</sup> See also in: Slavoj Zizek, *Tarrying With The Negative*, Duke University Press, USA1998 p. 116.

<sup>80</sup> See also in: Jodi Dean, op.cit.



irrational. Desire is clean only when directed to pathological object (primordial unity, which never was), object that never existed and whose conceived traces remain as our construction. The desire and enjoyment based on it (in the form of fantasy) rely on the illusion of direct contact with the essence of our “national thing” and institutes the fanaticism of politics, which is based on national myths.

Such pleasure-in-the-nation, only available to us, which can never come true (to reach the primordial unity that is lost, stolen from us) is transformed (according to Lacan and Žižek) into a drive. It is compulsive repetition of trying to achieve enjoyment, which we know will fail, but the failed attempt turns into a ritual that creates unique and specific satisfaction!

The Macedonians constantly repeat that “...Macedonia, from three parts, will become whole... so that everyone knows it... “. But it is not happening, nor ever happened in past, for Macedonia as a country to be made up of those three parts - whole and independent. But such drive of the Macedonians repeats itself and is mentioned in songs as a special kind of pleasure in repeating failure.

However, according to Lacan, it becomes dangerous when these drives are converted into DEAD-DRIVE, drives of death! When a nation is dominated or a greater part of it, by an ideology that reaches for the impossible satisfaction. Towards the desire for de-subjectivization in merging with the “fate”, which is interpreted as extinction by becoming one with the whole and achieving harmony. Such so-called passage à l’acte (Lacan) by which it is desired to reach the full, ultimate satisfaction is fatal for the nation as such.

It is expressed in the form of radical political actions of self-harm, civil wars and genocides, wars of exhaustion, disputes that lead to divisions and so on; especially in smaller nations it is a dangerous road.

To sacrifice life and autonomy for reaching of ultimate pleasure in what is considered secret and de-subjectivization of the nation, leads to its disappearance and is the second side of the coin of estheticism, glorification of the nation in dictatorships.

Among the Macedonians, this dead-drive is associated with the curse of Macedonia proper being divided into three parts and inter-Macedonian divisions, and is irrationally realized in the current proposals for divisions or politics of identity self-denial: ... if we are not of three parts, let us not be, let them divide us again... Macedonia may disappear, but VMRO will still exist, and similar irrationalities of the dead-drive.<sup>81</sup>

Funny complication of analysis of nationalism based on the economy of the collective libido is the introduction to the discourse of the “other,” the competitive otherness in the process of self-determination. That is done in a way and through the category of “stolen pleasure” and “dangers to our way of life” and so on. According to libidinal support of nationalism, it can be considered that nationalism creates its fantasy of own missions in context of trying to possess something that we have never had (primordial harmonious unity of the nation), and which in the discourse of the other is “stolen from us.” So actually, we cannot enjoy it. That theft is a burden for the other near us (multicultural societies) or for the other which is across borders (the Balkan region, Europe, etc.). What we have previously mentioned quoting Hegel here is established; i.e., the feeling of danger, now as stolen pleasure, the too close presence of an intruder, a stranger, the “other” establish identity and nationalism.

Another point is interesting and fascinating for us the Macedonians, in the theory of libidinal support of identity and nationalism - it is the explanation about the deep attraction that some models of ethnic identity and nationalism have in terms of dominance, collective guilt, anxiety and addiction, attraction of the authoritarian model of existence and social organization.

We begin with the question: where is our enjoyment situated? Where is and what constitutes our specific collective fulfillment that we are Macedonians? What kind of a pleasure is that - never achieved, but constantly desirable, on the edge of pain and defeat - which exists as compulsive repeated attempt to reach? How is it turned into jouissance, just ours, which only we

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<sup>81</sup> Lacan J., *Desire and the Interpretation of Desire*, Yale French Studies 55/56, 11-52, 1977; also in: Lewis A. Kirshner, *Rethinking Desire*, PRF, ghd, 2004.

can understand? Who are those seeking to “steal” our pleasure? How are we motivated against them? How do we envision the history of our very community?

I want to set the thesis of our self-construction as nation versus “objet le petit a” of this process, the part that is missing and permanently disturbs the order and its harmony.

Who will be the one to pronounce, to us the Macedonians, the ecumenical words said by Pope Wojtyla in Poland: “Do not be afraid... you, Poles”? Kiro Gligorov tried, but uttered the wrong words: “Do not leave me alone”

Those words would later feed the “beast in us.” The beast of our super ego which takes away our self-confidence. Feed the beast and get rid of fear. We have to get rid of the stereotypical image of ourselves, to open our episteme, and face our pleasures-in-the-nation, in ideology, which manipulates such pleasure in the now dominant myth of the Macedonians that is instrumentalized by the right.

Our history of struggle that failed to produce an independent country for a long time, and our witness to the creation of the neighboring states in our territory as well by the decision of international conferences - create a feeling of injustice. Recalling that bitterness under new conditions with the new role of the international community in the contemporary crises in Macedonia seems to confirm the very injustice and disappointment.

And then the very conditions for penetration of the right-wing myth of “the reborn and proud Macedonian” are created. In this the manner in which the pleasure-in-the-nation is recoiled, of a victim nation?

Register of reactions that nations with the victim syndrome have (with all the risks of this scandalous generalization) can be divided into three levels.

First, such nations consider that all others owe them and that now is the time for all those others to give them something, while refusing to give anything to them, because for too long these nations have been the victims and object of third-party conflicts. This engenders a political culture in which there is inability to make, adjust and recognize one’s own interest in compromise.

Second, these victimized nations tend to be very rigid to minority groups in their immediate environment. We are talking about a compromise in the design of the democratic system and group rights for minorities that victimized nations consider weakness, which are not allowed by the history and suffering that they have gone through as nations. They do not want to recognize or learn from their own history and suffering - they do not learn about solidarity, respect and compromise, but manifest cruelty (if allowed, of course).

Third, the international community is perceived as a great manipulator, a prostitute, a place of constant conspiracy, place of moral doubt and of dangerous ordeals for the national macho spirit (tendency towards conspiracy).

In fact, the decline of values in transition- which is part of the decline in the efficiency of symbolic norms in neoliberal capitalism in general, in societies that have rather illiberal tradition and political culture - is further strongly manifested as a sense of insecurity, rising anxiety, fear, feeling guilty, actually as need someone else to bear responsibility in all that mess!

All this, combined with the above elements of the constitution of pleasure-in-the-nation of victimized peoples, is manifested towards a violent dead-drive (the drive to flee from hardship by means of irrational plunge into the satisfaction that cannot be reached, into de-subjectivization through merging with the primordial whole of the nation, if necessary by its disappearance). It is enslavement under authoritarianism, violence and disorientation, in which Macedonian nationalism is a classic example and paradigm per se.

The collapse of the "Big Other," as Lacan calls it, results in new forms of submission and domination. Enthusiasm towards order and law (law with zero tolerance for violations) - that creates the illusion that it controls everything; that establishes an order that is not, that is actually missing - allows avoidance of responsibility for political decisions that determine the system and future. It is an open call to the leader to adopt the decisions that are needed, while we offer our submissiveness and obedience in exchange for the illusion of security.

## 7.1. WHAT IS OUR SECRET?

Our secret is something that is out of reach for the “other” and at the same time it is threatened. And then what is left? The Macedonians have heated debates on the currently predominant myth about them as “people-in-shelter”.

In fact, the Macedonian discourse about being in shelter or “the Macedonians in the hole” can be tricky as typical Lacanian structure: when a person loses something that never existed - the loss then takes the form of phantasm. That is his lost object, which is the basis of “the impossible desire”, that of the abolishment of any subjectivity and melting into the holistic primordial being together of the nation as the ultimate pleasure.

After that loss, the community constantly is in sorrow for such loss, by showing lamentation for the lost primordial being together, while such sentiment is exploited in populist manner to spin a political crochet. It is the humus of the identity of the community: how it sees itself, what it wants, whom it supports, and how it struggles. Namely its identity is more like relationship with its phantasms than attitude towards rational understanding and mastering the world around it. It feeds on and it is built on this. It also organizes the Macedonian nationalism of the political right, its political utopia as “our dirty little secret.”

Their dirty secret is that we, the Macedonians, love ourselves only dismembered, divided, repressed! Our false newly acquired ancient pride and shouting a big NO to the Greeks, Albanians and the international community is a smokescreen hiding the satisfaction of the pervert, and his secret is that he wants to be besmeared, divided, and as such to be a tool in the hand of a bestiality of others.

The attitude of VMRO - that Macedonia may disappear but VMRO always will exist - refers to “having” such ideological consciousness in the head.

Their problem is that we still managed to establish an independent state. Now the light is turned on in the the pervert’s room! How to remain a pervert, while feigning sovereignty?

The people are forced in a constant state of convulsion, being constantly on the alert and vigilant of conspiracy. Something is always insisted on, asking people to endure and withstand, as if it were normal that everyone else be against the Macedonian people, as historically accurst. As if the Macedonian people waited for a vague flash from the future - which would free and realize them as harmonic and united people.

In our context as Macedonians, this is clearly expressed by the delivered architectural and monumental kitsch and horror through the project called "Skopje 2014", through textbooks at all levels of education, media campaigns, especially through that quasi elite, cultural, literary-theatrological "Plevnesh-like" rubbish such as: the Macedonian is a fantastic being, who only needs to be abused enough strongly and for long, to be buried deep enough in a hole so that he can demonstrate his ability to withstand everything, and then abstractly to rise sometime in the future, in whatever circumstances and whatever values, and to make his cry: "I exist. Look everyone!" It is rather interesting to note in this context that his own, now independent state, democracy, and human individual rights are not enough for such realization.

To understand the kind of step that is made backward and downward by such implanting right-wing suicidal identity matrix on the Macedonian through the micro-power of education and the mass popular culture, we can make a counterpart to "The Pervert's Guide to Cinema" (2006) by Slavoj Zizek, now through the verses of social and patriotic songs of the Macedonians from the early twentieth century with those newly composed of today.

For example in "Pour, Pour," a song about the love between Macedonian Ottoman revolutionaries born in Veles and, in their exile, living in Paris and a French inn hostess in the dark streets of Paris, the Macedonian revolutionaries sing for a decent and standard life in their Macedonia as in the then other European nations, when they say: "We are also children of Macedonia and we are also entitled to live, like others living... in freedom...". It is the leitmotif of almost every similar song about freedom of Macedonia, similarly like with all other civilized nations and peoples. Let us recall the motive of Clifford Geertz when he says

that a culture of a nation exposes its normality without reducing its specificity<sup>82</sup>.

Today, the leitmotif of the Macedonian in his free state is a trace of a different direction under the influence of right-wing national utopia. Macedonian newly-composed songs express the Macedonian dead drive; likewise iconoclastic songs have texts of this kind: "Slice it, divide it, it will be our dearest; say the name of that partitioned mother(land) of Macedonia."

The song says that "Macedonia that is our dearest" is partitioned and divided. Therefore, this current, the Republic of Macedonia, is not our dearest, but the imaginary partitioned and probably never again united Macedonia is precisely the "dear mother", which we are called to mention, as during a memorial a mention is made of the dead. The necrophiliac nationalism of the right wing sets its target on the imaginary, never achieved in the past and never achievable in the future, identification of "a mother/ethnic Macedonia", which is probably closest to the territory of the Rumelia region of Ottoman Turkey in the Balkans in the late 18th century.

This in clear manner describes the already mentioned procedure of identity formation, where what is missing, the void, the implicit, is also part of the identity.

In the case of Macedonia, the right-wing identity of the Macedonian is formed around the lack, emptiness, partitioning, and phantasm of being united about imaginary unification of that partitioned national body. Identity is formed upon the hole, the void that remains from the subject of the nation, which is de-subjectivized.

Something that turns into special pleasure, as we see it described in the songs, the constant failure of reaching it, namely - a drive.

This right-wing nationalism ends in a fascinating paradox: **MACEDONIAN NON-RECOGNITION OF MACEDONIA!**

Before even facing and hassling with the "Greek or Bulgarian" non-recognition, we have a problem with the Macedonian non-recognition of Macedonia!

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<sup>82</sup> Толкување на културите, Клифорд Гирц, Магор, Скопје, 2007, p 23 (in Macedonian).

Opposite to this paradox, the success of and adhesion to the right-wing ideological myth by the Macedonians is because it works out in context of a historic trail, of a trauma that it elevates to the level of definition, of identity. For the populists, the only Macedonian is actually the divided Macedonian! There is no other; the other is a suspicious clone! Only a divided Macedonian, placed in the hole (like pickled cabbage that ferments) with a stone upon himself, who always has to withstand any conspiracy against him - is the true Macedonian who, paradoxically, tries to establish himself today as well, in his own independent state. Only the right-wing populist elite can always abstractly make him become reborn again, by maintaining him unfree, divided, and trampled. To be reborn, he must be previously made "fallen". To be reborn again and again, he must be constantly fallen! It is the paradox of the very rebirth as offered by the populist right-wing utopia.

So the success of the right is not only through violence and imposition. The populists, still, practice a model for the Macedonian as unfree and divided that rests in the memory of the nation. Like a vampire, they renew it by creating conditions for its success in the political quagmire of constant threats and conspiracies.

The historical matrix and mythological narrative of this operation is particularly interesting. The technique is almost identical as used by the authoritarian populist regimes in the region: seeking the "zero point" of national harmony in the distant past. A policy of selective memory often falsified is used to build a network of political mythology, which becomes a right-wing utopia and, finally, political action<sup>83</sup>. The intention is to reinterpret history because of the confirmation of the role of authoritarianism in the present and the future. Control of archives, books and education gives power to reread and offer new revaluation of national history. All that action to "control archives" is recorded accurately in the practices of these countries.

Such populist right-wing myth represents a specific focus, flash back in history, which combines two conflicting myths: a heroic myth and another myth of the victim.

The heroic myth involves conceiving the imaginary start, when the unity of the nation (in fact the ethnic group) under the

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<sup>83</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1966.



leadership, for example, of Alexander III of Macedon (Alexander the Great), was established. Afterwards, it would be lost through a long period of suffering of the nation (the myth of victim). Today suggestion is made of the possibility of reopening the winning myth under the new leadership of the populist right-wing leader (victorious Macedonians, new Macedonians, transition from “a tiny macedonian” to “the very Macedonian”, and so on). In this operation, history is arbitrary and frivolous chopped into pieces and it is politically decided which of these parts and how will be considered important and will be glorified, which ones will be neglected, and which will be completely deleted. All that is a mix of ultimate fantasies.

The current authoritarian populist politics imperatively must do everything to have discontinuity with all previous things and become established in the aforementioned imaginary zero point of national harmony, somewhere in the distant past.<sup>84</sup> Then a mystical bridge from that period to today’s “rebirth” dictatorship is constructed with mild suggestion in the background, indicating that it is an extension or restoration (rebirth) of the heroic age. This construct represents the very ideological tool of the populist dictatorship.

It is interesting to note that all these dictatorial phantasms have anti-European profile (although the involved countries have European history as well). No phantasm is from European history. These nationalist and populist phantasms spring and express the drive for clean heroic macho primordial civilizations, which create their nations literally from nothing (*ab nihilo*).

Implicitly these phantasms, politically processed and wrapped by the local populist dictatorship, retain contempt for the present European, and, especially, for the liberal discourse. They repeat the suppressed dream of penetrating the Babylonian whore, or Europe, crushing it, showing its true place and getting what it deserves (a classic porn dream).

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<sup>84</sup> With the DPMNE leadership in context with Alexander the Great; with Orban in context of the Hungarian tribes and the myth of the Four Fathers of the Asian Hungarians; and with Erdogan in context of the famous Sultans of the historic Ottoman Empire and so on. Always as a rule recent local history is skipped or deleted; in our country, it is the antifascist fight during WW II and sometimes the VMRO period of late 19th and early 20th century; with Orban, it is Hungary during the Austro-Hungarian Empire; and with Erdogan, it is Turkey of Kemal Atatürk.

## 7.2. EMANCIPATED MACEDONIAN AS LEFTIST UTOPIA

Contrary to all this darkness brought about by dominance of the described right-wing ideological and nationalist utopia about the identity of the Macedonians, my thesis is that the counter-utopia of the left-wing must be also ideology, but ideology of emancipation. Nothing else is possible in relation to reality, especially politics. In defining the notion of reality, of great help is the Lacanian approach to the relationship between reality and fantasy, and the explanatory concept, as used by Žižek, of the triad: fantasy-reality-ideology.

The reality is a subjective process mediated by the desire and placed in the framework of fantasy! Fantasy is the framework by means of which the subject begins to desire and perceive reality. Reality by itself does not exist! Fantasy serves the politics in a way that each political group organizes its positions and views as a convenient ideology and only thus approaches social reality, including politics. Only through fantasies, political subjects and individual subjects experience what is called *jouissance* and thus perceive reality. Definition of key idea of enjoying the nation (Žižek) or *jouissance*, according to Lacan, is intense pleasure-and-pain that transforms ordinary pleasure into fascination with unbearable intensity. Thus, the enjoyment, in Lacanian terms, is something more than the given, measurable, rational criteria relating to pleasure. The pleasure of this kind is always on the verge of irrational and cannot be approached directly. One cannot explain all that pleasure by means of the language and symbols of speech. It always goes through the symbolic order toward the primordial genesis of the REAL. And because of that fact, such pleasure is recognized through the holes or gaps in the symbolic, the excesses, not through its positivity. Our relationship with such pleasure is never innocent and straightforward; it always goes through pathological forms of guilt, inhibitions, suspensions, subordination or perverse activity.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Lacan says that this enjoyment is at odds with the principle of pleasure, which is expressed in our figurative speech (hedonistic compensation). Namely, enjoyment or *jouissance* pushes the individual to go beyond, to exceed the principle of pleasure and

Therefore Žizek says that enjoyment in the nation is not realized by respecting its laws and regulations, but within the dark sub-reality of their ritual violation by the persons belonging to the nation, by means of the excesses, which only they are allowed to commit, on the obscene side of what means to be a Macedonian, in our case, unlike the foreigners that are not allowed to do it. Only positive norms are in force for them. An individual completely belongs to the community or the nation, only when he is ready to break its rules, participating in those unwritten, obscene rules of such nation.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, when we say that there is a special order for the members of the party in power, rules that do not apply to all the rest of us, we point out that sub-reality, which is excessively enjoyed by the members of the Macedonian DPMNE party in tacit manner. Only they may spread ethnic and religious hatred on social networks and go unpunished; only they may find pleasure in the violence against “fagots” and go unpunished; only they may receive in advance admission tests for employment in the state administration or tomorrow the answers for the external testing in state schools - because they are part of the order/system of “intense pleasure-in-the-nation”; that very Dance Macabre of hate, violence and obscenity, which are additions to public law, which is enjoyed by and which identifies and unites the members of the DPMNE party - as Macedonians!

This “pleasure-in-the-nation” is transformed and materialized by the ruling political party of rightist populism into a set of social practices and is then transposed through the national myths and fantasies that are provided by these practices.

A special question is: Why such domination is willingly accepted by a serious segment of the population? Why and how the denial of freedom and self-induction into repression are transformed into a special kind of pleasure?

In the short story by Franz Kafka, “The Problem of Our Laws,” he says that laws are not known to anyone, but, instinctively,

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pass beyond, to the other side where it turns into suffering and pain. Therefore Lacan says that *jouissance* is irrational enjoying the pain and suffering or painful indulgence... Dylan Evans, *op.cit.*, pp. 93-94.

<sup>86</sup> Žizek calls it: inherent transgression of the community, or in other place: obscene transgression of the law of the night, which unites the community of the homogenous .... See Rex Butler, *op.cit.*, page 136; and in: Jodi Dean, *Žizek Politics*, Routledge, New York, 2006, p.174.

the people respect them as if they know the laws; and anyone can be charged regardless of the fact that the law is not known to him. This is part of showing what psychoanalysis calls transferring responsibility and expectation that the Big Other, the symbolic order - would know what and how should be done. Individuals captured in this ideology transpose their own responsibility into a blind, neurotic respect and enforcement of laws which - they assume - are as they should be. Obsessive enforcement of laws (harsh penal policy, zero tolerance for offenders, etc.) is converted into special, perverse pleasure (once the libidinal satisfaction with fulfilled freedom and creation has vanished or has been suspended). This obsessive connection to dictum of law allows the subjects to get rid of the knowledge that they cannot or do not dare to reach freedom. But beware, this practice, its repetition, blind following of the law and thus release of any individual responsibility, turns into a special compensatory satisfaction.

The ideology of every, and even of this right-wing speech, according to Žižek, is always a set of social attitudes and practices that organize excessive pleasure-in-the-nation and create a program through which individuals and groups have access to such pleasure.<sup>87</sup>

If ideology is the form which metaphorically contains “the cause” or the ideal of the tribe, nation, class, then its criticism denotes entering another ideology. The criticism of a given ideology is possible only from a position of another ideology. Never in terms of scientific objective knowledge as “false” because ideology is not a matter of knowledge or science, but of social action and the manipulation of excess pleasure-in-the-nation (libidinal economy of the nation).

The struggle in the political field is conducted for ideological hegemony of such viewpoints and practices upon the entirety of

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<sup>87</sup> Rex Butler, *Žižek Dictionary*, op.cit., pp. 128, 130, 131, 140-143.

Žižek Slavoj, *Tarrying With The Negative*, Duke University Press, 1998, op.cit., pp. 36, 136, 211;

*Mapping Ideology*, London, Verso, 1995; *The Plague of Fantasies*, London, Verso, 1997;

*The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London, Verso, 1989; Dylan Evans, *Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 93, 94;

society (to become the Master Signifier, the great supra-master signifier, or as Laclau says: to fill the empty signifier with them, to become universal).<sup>88</sup>

In recent decades the right-wing ideologies are more successful in this struggle and are particularly robust and harsh in this “victory” of theirs in transition countries.

The position that we need for leftist ideology of emancipation is that of criticism of the very ideology. Namely, the one that will make the deconstruction of what the right-wing wants to impose as usual opinion about things and identities. A criticism that will extract to the foreground the special manipulative way used in construction of rightist pleasure-in-the-nation (by means of a forged historic mitomania and how such construction is perceived through the law in everyday life). So, the criticism will help us to explain how the objects presented in the right-wing ideology of authoritarian populism are not any “real social relations” but constructions of pleasure-in-the-nation, or imaginary fantasies inserted as social relations in reality.

In doing so, our position would be that ideology is not only “a false consciousness” about reality or lack of truth, but it also contains an excess of reality, excess of truth, or imaginary constructions through which reality is perceived.

Such excess of truth should be confronted and replaced, and then filled, in a political struggle, with the new Signifier, the Master Signifier; i.e., one that will signify the emancipatory politics of liberation. We are not replacing ideology with the “truth” because such one does not exist outside of ideology in context of politics, but with a new and different ideology of emancipation.<sup>89</sup>

By this ideological move (authentic act, event, according to A. Badiou) of emancipatory politics, the existing symbolic order

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<sup>88</sup> Laclau Ernesto, Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, London, Verso; *On Populist Reason*, London, Verso, 2005

<sup>89</sup> Also in: Rex Butler, *op.cit.*, page 143.

About the same issue of speech of ideology and politics: George Lakoff, *Know Your Values and Frames*, Debate, Chelsea Green Publishers, 2004, says that...Fantasies, identity (imagined) and hopes are the frames for believing the lies of politics... and for voting. This does not necessarily fit into the objective interests of the members of classes and individuals... METAPHOR is the central figure of political opinion... exposing facts, “truth” does not release by itself, it is not enough... it requires MORAL PERSPECTIVE, expressed in metaphors and offered as an a model of some political option. That moral perspective can contain the very truth, but there are “extras” as well...

is pierced by changing expectations of actors and an opportunity to change the identity matrix is opened. That means in this case: the ideological matrix of emancipated Macedonian and the Macedonian people as a modern European nation.

In order to build it as an ideological utopia, it requires the presence of the Master of the order and of the emancipation, in the form of responsible political elites and the public sector, dedicated to the emancipation and freedom. It must provide the nation a passage through the phantasm in the liberal praetorian way.

It seems it is neither as simple nor easy. The problem of formulating a “leftist, radical, or emancipatory utopia” has a dimension, which we can call a general handicap of liberalism and its value-based formation, while part of the problem also lies in the actual national demotivation of the leftist political option.

Emmanuel Levinas once said that the problem of liberalism has always been its difficulty to transpose its universalist principles, its universalism, and rationalism into national discourse, into something that lives daily, in one's history. In this sense, he notes, populism and fascism were always winning. Zygmunt Bauman, in this context, states that in the last fifty years the left has lost most of its political battles because of its failure in and around culture, while Georges Bataille raised this issue as early as in the 30s and 40s of the last century: How can one establish anti-fascist policy that does not fall under the motivational deficit of liberalism? How such policy would look?

According to the previously mentioned (Lacan), the path of its creation, in my opinion, should take its sublime stage, which in our case would be:

- Entrance into the historical and memory hole about insufficiency-of-the-state, which presents the history of VMRO (which as drive is recreated through pleasure in the failure and pleasure in being divided and divisions);
- Facing the impossibility of organic unity in the concept of nation-state (which the revolutionary generation of VMRO also knew during the period of the so-called Eastern Crisis, but in the meantime was forgotten);

- Re-conceptualization of the anti-fascist fight as the Piedmont of the state;
- Modernity of the Macedonian nation and emancipation of the Macedonian as way out.

Sublimation phase also represents “confronting-for-the-sake-of leaving” or re-conceptualization of our nationalism as:

- nationalism of the victim or reactive, passive nationalism;
- violent towards the weak, submissive and servile toward the stronger;
- prone to conspiracy and prone to slippage in the “dead drive” as a collective depression in the form of destructive desire for unity, to the point of extinction and de-subjectivization in divisions (if it is not whole - then let it be not).

### **7.3. CRUMBS AND LEFTOVERS OF EMANCIPATION**

In the post-sublimate stage, the social praxis on which we can base the ideology of emancipation and freedom, with good arguments, is that, despite everything, despite all the barbarism, Macedonia brings an experience into European culture, which, until now, has been only the result of a successful democracy in a truly multicultural society. That experience is something more, and concept-wise is different from the known terms of minority-majority, and from the integration of minorities into mainstream cultures of European countries. In fact, it is an experience that Europe knows not of: liberalism together with ethnic and cultural homogeneity, plus minority and cultural diversity on the margins of the system. In Macedonia it is a matter of considerably greater project of inclusiveness of cultural differences by means of classical instruments and values of liberal democracy. It is a postmodern situation and tense connection, but that model is not without chances in Macedonia.

Certainly most of the Macedonian intelligence is unaware of this condition, or treats it as a problem/handicap. It does not conceptualize this situation; it does not make a theory-for-itself out of this either. The situation of multiculturalism in Macedonia, to use Hegel's wording, is a situation by itself, and not yet for itself. It becomes such when intelligence and political elites become clearly aware of what kind of state they manage and where such state stands on the scale of democratic systems. From the condition to make a theory transition is made towards negativity of the phase called nation-for-itself. Today most of our intelligence (whatever is meant by this) laments over our evil fate, as wonder country that "experiments." That deep ignorance can never be upgraded by empty phrases and repeated compulsive patterns of liberal classics.

Macedonia is in a position (however it does not understand its own situation, as in the song, ...Look you, Macedonian people, you do not know who you are and what you are...) to create a history of democracy, while the success of the Macedonian experience in democracy building a multicultural society is important element in the European debate being waged "now and there." Specifically, it is the collapse of the policy of integration of the various ethnic groups in European societies and the need to replace the current policy of integration with the so-called policy of differences.

Heidegger once said that speech talks, or that speech is the home of being. Speech - let us make a simplification of such theses - sometimes is all that we have to nest our uniqueness, our understanding of what is happening and simultaneously merge with the categories, with the big waves of the recent history of the region.

Sometimes, in a small place, in a small case, on trial is mankind, for its gout. Macedonian democracy, in a multiethnic society, is not a small case in a small place. It is almost the only case of the European experience where, in a unitary state, an ethnically heterogeneous society, having majority and minority ethnic communities, functioned with a decent parliamentary democracy, at least for a while. It was a system whose institutions were able (with a little help from the outside) also to absorb a military conflict in 2001. And that means being exposed to the hardest examination in politics.



Europe has no experience of multiculturalism in a political system. European experiences are based on the classic principle of John Stuart Mill: homogeneous culture and parliamentary democracy, multiculturalism only in international relations at inter-European level. Religious wars and post-war agreements are agreements about tolerance of religious minorities in a homogenous culture. They are more evidence of the fundamental principle rather than evidence of multicultural experiences.

Examples cited as Belgium, Switzerland and so on, are more evidence of the division according to the territorial basis where there was multiculturalism; they are federations. Some of them exist as federal states only because of their membership in the European Union and the lack of prospects for divisions within it. But their linguistic disputes are strong and immersed in prejudice. In a word, they are not examples for us, but more of negative examples for a unitary state such as Macedonia.

The weight and importance for Europe (actually for the Atlantic logocentric philosophical circle) - considering our example, regardless of how a small country we are - lies in the following: the true drama and weight of tolerance and integration, of living multiculturalism is when different cultures are in daily contact, in hot contact in context of a single political, economic and cultural space and market... It is really hot work. Such Macedonian speech - provided we understand it ourselves - can represent a European being in the most substantial way that you can imagine, while taking the most important avenue of approach in their recent discussion of democracy and cultural identities in postmodern Europe.

However, the Macedonians do need to understand and establish themselves as a modern European nation in their own country, which enables their speech and cultural and any other development while tolerating other "speeches." We are not on the way to repeating the creation of nation-states after the Balkan Wars. We face another challenge to history, our history, which specifies the term **multicultural civism** or absorption of cultural diversions, under a single umbrella of civil sovereignty, which makes the cultural profile general and soft of having formal citizenship of Macedonia.

The second part of that challenge, its “blood circulation”, involves the political elite and their responsibility as representatives or agents of the public to be “the master of the order” of releasing the Macedonians from their own quagmires of right-wing utopias of divisions as a being! Masters, because we, the people, cannot reach our freedom directly, so we need a push and vision in ideology of liberation.

To be an authentic master of that order, you do not have to be a leader in any way. According to M. Gandhi: “You must be the change you wish to see (done in society)! Someone needs to stand up there at the junction of the ordeals and just TOBE, to say, to fight. Our being there - would free the people! Our message is YOU CAN. From a sense of duty we do the work, which we believe is right. The awareness of our duties, our destiny, liberates us. It is difficult freedom, but a real beginning!”

## 8. DICTATORSHIP AND NATION OR ON MACEDONIAN BIOPOLITICS

Contrary to the potentials for emancipation, the situation in which Macedonia embarked upon 20 years of transition is **devolution**. It is a sharp turn back toward dictatorship, of the kind of authoritarian populism. This means a dictatorship which uses the election facade for hiding and an operation of the system that is basically based on autocracy of party oligarchy, with the abolition of rule law.

Why and how could this happen, is the daily question we ask ourselves. How to leave that authoritarian turn and go on to win again the freedom and constitutional democracy - is a difficult question that follows.

This situation in Macedonia has been outrageously tolerated by our international friends who are obsessed with “security paradigm” (security-before-democracy, rather than security-through-democracy). For them it is crucial that in Macedonia there is multi-ethnic coalition government which, regardless how it is made up and what motives it uses to function, delivers superficial **peace** while the rest is a matter of secondary interest.

The issues of democracy, human rights and freedoms, and the rule of law are hopelessly left to us, the Macedonian citizens (whatever that means) and to our experience in fighting for them and our constitutional democracy. The international community can be expected to show reaction only if we put it in a position to have to react because of our strategy of fight. It will not cause the changes by itself, which summarized means that in Macedonia

things will get **worse** before possibly becoming better! Hence, in this framework, I will expose the conclusions about the nature of the regime and the foundations for fighting it, in order to restore freedom and constitutional democracy!

The Macedonian variant of authoritarian populism has been constituted by creating and strengthening a party that has pretensions to represent itself as an essential expression of the Macedonian people, who are under siege, under threat from outside and from within. The VMRO-DPMNE party has turned into a “defensive formation” of the endangered people and asks the people at elections to give the party a legitimacy to define and administer the behavior in the country beyond and above the constitutional limitations of government in a democracy under the 1991 Constitution. By means of violent elections<sup>90</sup>, the party has succeeded in obtaining such a mandate for the fourth consecutive time.

The main tool for this operation for usurpation of power is constant promotion and building ideology about political construct of the organic unity of the people, rather than political and ideological pluralism in democracy. The sovereign, in our case the Party, has abolished all other political antagonisms, all political struggles; the Party has abolished politics as antagonization to the conflict of interests and ideologies through procedures of a representative and deliberative democracy and has declared only one meta-fight with the enemies of Macedonia. It is organized into phantasm of a homogeneous organic-developed political space - directed to the outside in context of the neighboring countries “that want us to disappear” and inwards in context of the domestic traitors and fifth columnists who try to weaken us by their imposed and imported liberal ideas about freedom and rights.

The very usurper of democracy, the DPMNE party leader - is not a leader in the true sense of the word that Lacan and Žižek call master-signifier, one that defines things with an act, on the contrary this party leader is a servant of the essential organic

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<sup>90</sup> In context of the gross affair of mass wiretapping illegally conducted by the present populist regime that was revealed in January and February 2015 (involving more than 20000 wiretapped individuals), one can also see evident election fraud on part of the present populist government and the ruling party, by using forged identity cards for the 2011 general elections; hence, the legitimacy of the present government since then has been seriously challenged, but it remains in power).

Macedonian. He serves the organic unity of the people and protects them from internal and external conspiracies. From there he draws power that abolishes democracy and pluralism, violates individual human rights, and abolishes the independent institutions of the system.

In fact, he abolishes the political element, his authentic plurality of antagonistic interests, by replacing it with a super-fight, a meta-contradiction, super-war by the Macedonian against the eternal and hideous enemies inside and outside. It certainly ends in farce with the Macedonian being in conflict with himself. So actually there is militarization of politics, in which every individual right may be sacrificed at any moment on the altar of the motherland, for the sake of imaginary organic unity and prosperity of the nation. Total master and total policy are possible only in this space of meta-politics with a single meta-fight. It is known from the literature as “political aesthetics” that is done by fascism: the establishment of new organic order, which abolishes modern individuality.

The consequence is that our civism is abolished, prohibited, and we are merely reduced to homo-sacer (J. Agamben), capable of living bare life. We are people who are deprived of their civil rights and forced into life, which is not actually human, but only seems to be so. We are the only a fertile soil for the nation, which is a source of unlimited power of the Party that is actually reduced to the leader himself. It establishes our Schmittian sovereignty, a constant political crisis and constant emergency.

The definition of emergency, determined by the sovereign, is that the law is abolished and reduced to managing the chaos, the space arising from/in its disappearance. In authoritarian populism there is no law (regulations based on the tenets and principles that are permanent and unchangeable, such as human rights, freedom, division of power, justice, etc.), but everything is administered by voluntaristic interpretation and changing laws by the administration or by the Party that has occupied it. So, paradoxically the decor of the “legal order” is maintained through the suspension of this order.

In such a situation, that everyone in Macedonia witnesses, through a series of examples (in context of the current position

of the Constitutional Court, the entire judicial system, the parliament and separation of power, the independence of the media etc.), everything is possible and everything is prohibited. Nothing is predictable, except that everything will be finally decided by the sovereign, i.e., the Party.

One should pay attention to a special feature in the chaos that is administered by the dictatorship, and it is the explosion of irrational violence and hatred. They become present in a form that Žižek calls “id-evil”: dysfunctional cruelty, irrational violence for banal disputes, hatred of the “other” that has no reason, nor is caused by anything. It is about evil and violence, which consist of the most basic unsublimated phantasms about pleasure in the whole of the nation, which are impaired pursuant to the rhetoric of the dictatorship; a dictatorship that by stimulating such evil and violence to go into the streets and our homes, then administers them, thus establishing and maintaining hegemony in politics (Ernesto Laclau).

That is the definition of condition that practically and theoretically is called dictatorship based on bio-political division in the life of the citizens and its reduction to a mere bare life, deprived from all rights that belong to it and from the dignity of the citizens. It is the Macedonian state converted into a concentration camp and the Macedonian citizen as *homo sacer* in it.

Potentially, we are left alone with our people. We cannot change people, but we can try to destroy the instruments of usurpation and manipulation.

Start of such revolutionary free-shooting change is offered, for example, by Alain Badiou and Giorgio Agamben, with a thesis on inoperativity between law and institutions. I would add, also, by connecting the islands of autonomy into a land of the newly-conquered freedom. But it implies the struggle by the Macedonians in the time left to them.

Authoritarian populism in Macedonia is accelerated film and danger of complete deformation directed against young democratic institutions in the beginning of their establishment. Fifteen years of transition to liberal democracy based on the 1991

Constitution was to be a fragile liberal experiment imposed from above, by the liberal elite, before the gust of unlimited domination of populism happened in 2008 and afterwards.

Several shared themes between this populism of ours and the one in Europe: immigration, minorities (“resistance to the other”), nationalism, anti-Europe sentiment and the like - are not sufficient reason not to see the big picture of the substantial difference and different strength of each of them separately, to threaten the institutions of democracy in their own countries.

Well known are the foundations on which the authoritarian populism in Macedonia stands:

- Our illiberal social tradition burdened by communism and one-party culture of statism, often connected with nationalism, and bad history toward minorities and ethno-religious diversity (the Macedonians in former Yugoslavia often played the role of “being bigger Catholics, than the Pope himself” and were especially rigid toward the Albanians and liberal tendencies in the Yugoslav Communist Party);
- The coming to power of an extremely irresponsible political elite, which takes the easy way to political mobilization in line of ethnic homogenization (syndrome of riding the tiger instead civism). This involves manipulation of fear and conspiracy, historical mythologies aimed at finding concrete imaginary enemy in the form of other ethnic groups;
- Permanent economic crisis, corruption, and collective culture of letting everything go into the hands of the government, which should decide for us;
- Economic markets deformed by the penetration of the ruling party and the state, corruption and the absence of any foreseeable legal certainty and lack of entrepreneurial culture and initiative;
- Cynicism of the ruling elites to democratic values and especially to human rights. There is bizarre practice to increase, and not to reduce this cynicism in context of EU accession process. Furthermore, there is evolving practice of creating a dual reality in Macedonia and cheating in the process of adopting EU legislation. In that context, we see its skillful

exploitation in getting time and space, while in practice the government is busy building a closed system of authoritarian populism (perverted anti-European Europeanism).

- Breaking the civil sector by organized state intrusion into it and transferring the ideological debate of authoritarianism inside it, to meet the need for disclosure of internal 'traitors'. The new-age dictators, which includes the Macedonian one, quickly learned that civil society is important for the support of populism and smashing the opposition and so developed a system of duplication, or counteracting. It is delivered through a system of creating quangos, quasi non-governmental organizations covering "the original civic NGOs" by counter actions for supporting the government and competing at calls for foreign donations. This system operates even on social networks in form of duplication of government policy of ethnic hatred, spreading hate speech, an alter ego of the government's political correctness with the partner DUI in power. It's the hidden, but in fact the actual language of the government's phalanx, by which every member of the ruling DPMNE party identifies himself. It is a secret code of winking among the party supporters by saying: we have to do like that in the government, but truly we are right here on the networks.
- Obsession with the media because of conceived policies of populism. In the populist context, media become a constituent part of the organization of power, not only its instrument (Giorgio Agamben).

Macedonian authoritarian populism, like populism in wider context, does not involve the concept of coherent policies, but it is eclectic. It is more like a bag that collects imagined policies mostly from the left on the political scene because of the economic misery and political culture of the population. In this assemblage of plastered policies and views, the connecting cord and ideological dogma is the thesis that the populist leader is close to his people. That is the key and connective tissue of the different political operations to be able to put them into a program and look coherently.



The second part of this political dogma is also known: anti-elitism and anti-intellectualism or claims that elites have buried themselves in trenches and are corrupt and do not listen to the voice of the people. But in this respect, today's Macedonian authoritarian populism is shrewder than its historical predecessors. It does not offer direct resistance to the pressure to which it is necessarily exposed by the EU and NATO policies, but on the contrary it is extremely polite and submissive to the requirements of the EU, and fully procedural. Thus this populism does now allow the opposition to make easy attacks, especially the Macedonian social democracy, which is procedural in the history of its creation.

In this its new strategy of adapting and buying time and space for establishing dictatorship, the Macedonian populism develops a so-called undemocratic proceduralism, authoritarian or empty proceduralism. It is a new feature that shows to be especially obscene and powerful in ideological terms. In the new dictatorships, everything is in accordance with the law, and the law is in accordance with them. Authoritarian legalism opposes the legitimacy of the Constitution and the previous liberal political system.

This objective is achieved so that procedures and laws are made by two combined techniques. The first is the enormous production of laws, muddled legislation, legal fog that is often internally contradictory, which is, in fact, the intention of the very legislator. In such a situation of general uncertainty and insecurity, the instrument of application and interpretation of laws is entirely in the hands of the administration and the very government. Thus, the presumption of innocence and honesty of citizens disappears. Everyone is potentially guilty because he probably violates some law somewhere, but is not yet processed and depends on the mercy of the administration when will be done. A classic Kafkian situation.

The second technique is ambiguity of the key legislation. What is legal and what is offense is rather ambiguous and with time changes are made in this context. Again the fundamental demiurge of implementation is the government and the administration. Their power is constantly growing and remains completely unchecked.

The ability of the leaders of this authoritarianism to draw money from European funds for legislative projects, and thereby maintain the same or even intensify their authoritarian power - makes them cynical toward European values while openly calling for the legitimacy of their political program as Eurosceptic or even anti-European. The result that we have on the ground of these authoritarian operations is creating a dual reality: the existence of a legal haze of pro-European formal legislation, which is to be shown to the foreigners, along with the existence of the entire universe of sub-rules that are actually important and serve to solve the life problems of citizens (the very biting reality). These sub-rules say who is the boss, where in the ruling party one should report to fix a problem and how to interpret the formal legislation to the foreigners.

However, the basic litmus feature of such authoritarian populism, by which one can undoubtedly recognize and distinguish it, is the very attack on the independent institutions of constitutionalism and especially the Constitution. Here it is lethally consistent and efficient. He creates mirror room or echo room, while at the same time fully destroying the independence of other government and state institutions and thus making them movable mirrors that portray the image of an authoritarian leader. The outcome is complete arbitrariness of decisions and procedures of such institutions, a completely executed reality of the dictatorship.

Special devastating attack is carried out (in case of Macedonia - finalized) on the judiciary. It is completely unqualified and highly partisan. It is to be noted here that, not by chance, the Constitutional Court is a special target of such devastation.

The third clear or even major difference between the historical antecedents and the current authoritarian populism is the great obsession with the media outlets.

The policies are simulacrum-like, imagined. Such policies ultimately depend on their grandiose and constant display to the public through the media; they do not depend on their level of accomplishment. Hence the media are key to this policy and its power. For such authoritarian politics and policy, media outlets (according to J. Agamben) are not just an instrument of power,

but a constitutive pillar through which power and authority are executed. Without them, the power of the authoritarian populism rapidly erodes. Consequently, such authoritarian systems are obsessed and aimed at making control and pressure on the freedom of all possible media outlets. No compromise whatsoever!

Fourthly, such authoritarian populism does not believe in elections as such. Although it seems obsessed with them and all public political life has been transformed into perpetual election campaign (election paradox), still it treats them as an unavoidable residue of democracy and pluralism, jeopardizing the phantasm of homogeneity of the newly constituted people.

The authoritarian populist believes only in verification of himself and his policies through elections; he would not believe in any other result. Especially not in the pluralism of options and alternatives. Therefore, he finds it rather easy to make abuse of the police for election purposes, abuse of electoral rolls, corruption and blackmail of the administration for elections (by blackmailing the administration employees under short-term working contract) involving also other electoral underworld.

In order to achieve success, the authoritarian populist executes the following dangerous operation: he occupies the public space and fully contaminates it with partisan and abrasive speech, creating a permanent division of the citizens (and when it is not necessary) along party lines, which become “bloodthirsty”. Thus, the public space is full of “adrenaline” in constant conflict mode which the populist regime channels and controls. In this context, basic tool used by this populist regime is the classic operation of producing enemies, threats, conspiracy, and division of the citizens: those who are traitors, foreign agents, spies, infidels, fifth columnists, commies, reds, and those who are patriots and love their current government and country at the same time.

In context of the aforementioned, the conceptualization of populism would include: constructing “its own people” and appealing to them; anti-institutional rhetoric and antagonism (political, not a post-political); and rhetoric of direct democracy, mediated by special leadership.

To say that some politicians in a democracy, and even in ours, are “of the people, by the people, for the people” has become

rather trivial! What is important to realize is how populists construct the term people, apart from the known definitions and notions.

Our populist variant “of, by, for the Macedonian people” and its appeals to the people are typically ideological. It is a message in the room with historical echoes; it is illusive, a simulacrum. It calls for the bridge towards the source, a return to the zero point of establishing the sovereignty of our people.

The relationship between the populist leader and his “our people” is complex and ambivalent. That desire that the populist leader creates in his people, a desire later to be imposed on the democratic institutions, is actually a construction by populist leader inserted “into the people.” The people, in this sense, become zombified crowds, i.e., political zombies of the populist leader. People who intentionally want what they are told to want.

This ideological moment in the construction of “the wishes of the people” and their sovereignty is an outburst of collective phantasm. This moment is always strictly manipulatively designed, projected, and constructed and has connection with the pleasure to be a member of a separate and unique people.

I will therefore propose a view of our dictatorship that relies on the ideas of three authors in the field of collective ideological formulation of the will: Michel Foucault, Alain Badiou, and Slavoj Žižek.

If we start from the working thesis that populism is a political dimension which constructs and gives meaning to the term “people”, of such kind that has never existed nor corresponded with a similar concept, this thesis then builds on the position of Michel Foucault that: “collective memory of the people is subject to a struggle for control; control of the memory of the people and groups is social control.” There is a struggle of competing memories. By managing the memory and deciding what it contains, the dynamism of given people is determined. The facts are never truly obvious; they are mediated and interpreted and are basis of collectivist memory narratives.”<sup>91</sup>

This thesis appears important for us because of the memory construct by our populism and its struggle to incorporate its

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<sup>91</sup> Michel Foucault, *Dits et Ecrits, 1954-1988*, Vol I-II, Gallimard, Paris, 2001.

memory as the dominant element into the new identity of the present Macedonians. This narrative contains phantasms about how sovereignty was stolen, how people were deceived and how national unity will come back, while it is precisely the kind of competitive memory which has become the main political tool for populism.

If we want to be sincere, we would notice that this narrative is not at all historical memory, but is a construct, mostly “false memory”; which, like a mythological product inserted in history, is basically a simplification of social antagonisms and acts as political mobilization in the present and in the future.

In the center is always a phantasm (often present in the imagined communities of nations, B. Anderson) that imagines the existence of zero point in history where modern sovereignty and state have been founded (contract on democracy) of our people and where sovereignty has been initially transferred to ruling elites, by which democracy has been founded as such. This point is turned into constant desire by populism, and then into drive of its people. The desire to achieve satisfaction in attaining of the whole again (which has never been true, meaning the desire for something that never existed) and then the drive/pleasure in repetitive, compulsive enjoyment of failure in achieving the desire. In this case, it the special pleasure to be Macedonian.

The imaginary target point, or the phantasm of the basic agreement (Ernesto Laclau calls it: empty signifier<sup>92</sup>) is presented

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<sup>92</sup> Ernesto Laclau, *Populism: What's in 'a Name*, ed, Panizza, ibidem, pp. 38-46;  
Lacan Jacques, *Desire and Interpretation of Desire*, Yale, France, Studies 1977, pp. 11-52;

Encore, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Book XX, ed J.A. Miller, New York 1975.

According to Lacan and interpretation offered by Kirchner and Zizek, *Lost Object* or *Petit A* is a fantasy that is the basis of the wishes. Such fantasy bridges the gap toward the primordial order (the REAL, according to Lacan) that is lost through a subjectivization of the nation (in other words, the very zero point of origin when the nation was fully in harmony with itself, a point that disappeared through the nation's history and its contemporary conception) and stems from the inability for such subjectivization and symbolic order of language to fully express the loss during the very transformation. This excess of loss is sublimated in the collective unconscious sense of loss which produces a desire for gratification. This desire is satisfied with the pleasure principle within the symbolic order of culture and language, BUT has the potential to overcome it in direction of “the impossible desire”, a desire that cannot be satisfied in the previous frames and continues moving towards a holistic self-abolishment as a subject - in the phantasm for complete melting with the primordial unity and absolute pleasure. That act of de-subjectivization is called by Lacan the dangerous passage: *jouissance* beyond, or, *passage à l'acte*.

by the populist rhetoric as lost due to the fraud made by the elites and such rhetoric makes calls that this be returned to the people by means of political action.

Liberals say the cost of our present freedom and liberation is the loss of (phantasm of) initial unity of the nation. But communitarians and populists certainly do say that such price of modernity is too high, while they reclaim the unity of the people.

Such closed libidinal circle of the Macedonian dictatorial drive is constantly in action, and its ideological basis, let us not forget, is completely fictional historiography - mythology, which proves to be extremely effective opiate in crisis situations. A transition is always, by definition, a crisis.

In this sense, our authoritarian populism is anti-liberal, anti-individualist, anti-democratic, irrational, culturally regressive, depending on history falsifications and, of course -- making people become its zombies by mobilizing them.

The Macedonian ruling party of authoritarian populism (VMRO-DPMNE) seeks (if successful) to turn itself into the movement of the lost unity of the nation, especially in the sense as pointed by G. Agamben - a movement that represents a crisis of political pluralism, death of the political (the one presently considered democratic) and renewal of a new antagonizing policy of conflict between the new governing populist elite and everything else.

Populists, including Macedonian ones, very often define politics as a 'dirty game', by trying to give it a redemption or at least to get it purified. They reject politics as it is known presently and do intensive moralizing; they want to inject a moralizing discourse in present politics as we know it. I deliberately say moralizing, not ethics, morality in politics, because it is just that: simplistic, sometimes pathetic messages against corruption, the decline of public morality, deformation of the being of the nation, the betrayal by the intellectuals and the like - between "us, the good ones" and "them, the others, the evil ones", leaving no room for compromise of interests or even lifestyles, moral standpoints, something that is substantial for democratic pluralism and politics. The use of tabloid vocabulary and general oversimplification in displaying relations and politics represent

a tool that should give the impression of directness, closeness to “the speech used by the people” and expresses indirect contempt for language of the intellectuals. What is important to understand in context of the success of this “linguistic overturn” is that the Macedonian populist policy does not address the problems as such (does not solve them) but radically redefines their status and symbolically mediates them. Moral signifiers, which we have mentioned as a lever of political qualifications, act differently, become more “murderous” and more annihilating if they are framed in political rhetoric that is essentially antagonistic and confrontational. They create internal frontiers, new divisions, or so-called internal periphery!<sup>93</sup>

Thus, according to F. Panizza, populism destroys the boundary between the private and the public, by exposing the public domain, the space itself, res-public, of the private desires, fantasies and fears.<sup>94</sup>

This conclusion seems to me especially important because the Macedonians have touched the rock bottom in this context! In this context one can see the real drama of the Macedonian dictatorship through the transformation of the political discourse and rhetoric about collective phantasms that people experience, while populism represents them as a cultural revolution and collective catharsis. So, people can openly express great hatred with impunity, propagate openly xenophobic ideas, show demonizing and despise for the other cultures, engage in unlimited and uncritical political mythology of glorification of own nation and so on. Multiculturalism, for example, is indicated in such speech as a fraud made and imposed by intellectuals.<sup>95</sup>

Whether this new identity unity is shared based on what Oscar Reyes calls “our dirty little secrets” or C. Zizek calls “the forbidden and shared, only ours, collective enjoyment in the nation” - it must be ours (as opposed to theirs) and must be cathartic discharge rather than deliberative policy. Necessary consequence is moralization of politics and moralizing in politics,

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<sup>93</sup> See: Benjamin Arditi, Populism as an Internal Periphery of Democracy, in Panizza eds, p. 98.

<sup>94</sup> F. Panizza, eds, op.cit., 2005, p. 24.

<sup>95</sup> Regularly in that discourse there is clear anti-EU stance as a project imposed by the elites.

between the “us, the good guys” and “them, the evil others” and hence an agonistic perspective of this politics (Chantal Mouffe). By this democracy suffers because it is treated as a “zero sum game” while reducing the possibility of democratic deliberation and compromise.<sup>96</sup>

What is important in both processes and determines the strength of the Macedonian populist initiative is what Alain Badiou calls the syndrome of the master in organizing political action and collective motivation credos that push forward.

Badiou says that the masses are politically activated and organized through an appeal to **the master** (the leader) who should know what they want! Their populist leader, as Baron Munchausen with the ducks, should get them out of the mire. The populist master is the one who helps the individual and the masses become subject or actor. The crowd needs a mediation in the form and face of authority to advance on the path of political action and defining what exactly they want from politics and what that are (the collective subjectivity). Badiou believes (and S. Žizek agrees) it is impossible to execute such political mobilization without the role of the authority neither on the emancipation track nor on the populist-manipulative track.<sup>97</sup> Žizek has pushed this argument further, saying, “we think that people know what they want! They do not know and, more tragically, do not want to know. This requires an elite by which people find out what in fact they really want (sic?).”<sup>98</sup>

In this point the strength of the Macedonian populist ideology lies. Not in the very content of the political platform,

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<sup>96</sup> Oscar Reyes, *Skinhead Populism, Failed Populist Project*, Panizza eds, 2005, pp. 99-117.

<sup>97</sup> Both authors build on the thesis of Lacan that it is not possible to have direct access to reality; namely, that such approach is mediated through phantasms of the individual or the collective. Through these phantasms and metaphorical speech, through identification with it, the collective understands the given political action and becomes motivated for it. The collective understands itself in relation to such political action. Certainly the populist political leadership draws its dominant power from this point and by organizing and interpreting this function. Žizek further elaborates this thesis saying that “the fatigue” of the masses or their disorganization after waves of protest and violent actions is not only psychological but ontological fact. Without leadership as such, the protest becomes disorganized and even melts, disappears.

<sup>98</sup> Alain Badiou, *The Courage of the Present*, La Monde, and *An Essential Philosophical Thesis: “It Is Right to Rebel against the Reactionaries”*, MUSE, Duke University Press, 2005, pp. 669;

Slavoj Žizek, *Brave Decision* (in Serbian), *BUKA Magazin* 4/23/13, [www.buka.com](http://www.buka.com).



which is eclectic, but in how one approaches the relationship: leader-people - by direct action, in shaping the political identity of the newly constructed people and their wishes.<sup>99</sup>

The fierceness of the crisis addressed to the institutions and their inability to absorb and transform it into legislative actions may in the medium term disappear, become diluted if it is not claimed by the interpretive political rhetoric of the leaderships that are built on it, that reinforce it, and explain it in historical and value-related perspectives and finally use it to overthrow the government.

Populist leaders believe that they maintain direct/non-mediated relationship with their own people and that they transmit the will of the people directly into politics! Gramsci, Laclau, and Mouffe call this an established hegemony. These populist leaders represent themselves as internally coherent and transcendent representatives of the only truth of the people - as - one. Macedonian populism, and standards of this kind, depend on the sense of internal homogeneity - demonizing heterogeneity and pluralism, which this homogeneity is formed against. In that sense antagonism towards "others" is its key political tool.<sup>100</sup>

The main action, or the only impetus of such constructed people under the leadership of such "lone leader" - is to seek and exterminate enemies outside and inside. Everything else is metaphysical peace and status quo of the very dictatorship.

What I find most dangerous in sociological, psychological and ultimately political context, is the very ability of authoritarian populism in Macedonia to create its own people. Indeed, to be able to change the matrix of political pluralism in the country and not depend on the free will of the voters but to create "its own voters", who as living-dead, zombies, consonantly have only one goal/wish.

The road of the populist dictatorship to success is through violence and manipulation of fear (Zygmunt Bauman), through

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<sup>99</sup> Also in: Margaret Canovan, *Populism as the Ideology of Democracy*, in Many Y. And Y. Surel, eds, *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, Houndmills: Palgrave, pp. 25-40.

<sup>100</sup> Especially see: Ernesto Laclau, *Towards a Theory of Populism and Populist Rupture in Democracy*, Screen Education, 1981.

historical falsifications and myths of winners and victims to internalized libidinal drives of death. It is the “alien” (like in the horror SF movie of the same title) in the belly of the stuffed part of the crowd/the people who vote in transitional democracies for populist dictatorships. It enables reproduction of such populism in the long run, making the zombified crowds enjoying it as if it were their own authentic - Macedonian. This type of populism manages to sell its very story by linking it with history and fear! To exalt such story to the level of the metaphorical speech of political utopia of the right: the fear of lost unity!

To conclude: Macedonian authoritarian populism is dangerous because of its ability for internalization of crime and repression (human security rather than democracy and freedom) as values of the zombified individual/zombified masses. Thus Macedonian populism provides its “own people” and its own reproduction. The first result of this trend is the very dissatisfaction as shown by “these people” and their abandoning European values, things that are clearly shown by opinion polls and elections. This creates absurd; actually it closes the vicious circle of the absurd: there exists the populist regime and the perversion that it has created. There is no credible democratic alternative.

Autocrats of this type in the Western Balkans, especially in Macedonia, in this regard manage to sell their politics surprisingly well to the Eurocrats, working together on the enlargement policy of the EU? They seem to have discovered the famous G-spot of the EU policy in the Balkan region: security before democracy! The result is stabilocracy which they offer the Eurocrats in exchange for EU tolerance for human rights violations and the destruction of the rule of law in their own countries!

\* \* \*

What to say as “signing off”, at the end, while trying to avoid erecting the empty morality pillar that has little to do with reality and stays clean as regards its desperate twists? Let me relate you to Richard Rorty and his liberal utopia which I share and which I think will be a real option for Macedonia. He sees it

on the horizon of hope. Rorty believes that change is possible even by avoiding: the revolutionary method, the scholastic method, and the nihilistic, nationalistic method. That it is not in vain or foolish to persuade people to become free and to recognize freedom as a value. That if we are lucky future society will be a multicultural cosmopolitanism, where culture will not affect politics, while in the latter there will be only one "tradition", of such type protecting the poor from being exploited by the rich, the weak from being abused, and establishing egalitarian language (contrary to the non-egalitarian language of the different cultural traditions). That the major political decisions will be built on egalitarian paradigm.

According to Rorty, this is possible as shown by the experience saying that in every cultural tradition there are narratives or stories about mixing between members of different groups, overcoming hatred, compassion towards the suffering of fellow citizens, dignity of the individual. Such material can be woven into utopian images of planetary or national multicultural democratic community, one which he calls Liberal Utopia. It is also possible in Macedonia; at the same time, given all the experience of authoritarian "sickness," whereby we take seriously the desperate public consciousness that is raised as a spirit from such an experience in the light of day, nevertheless, we stand before such a utopia, which is possible to deliver.

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