

Ana Ashtalkovska Gajtanoska (Macedonia)  
Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, “Ss. Cyril and Methodius” University of Skopje  
e-mail: ashtalkovska@gmail.com

## ESSAY FOR THE CONTEMPORARY PATRIOTS IN MACEDONIA IN 2016!

**Abstract:** This note about the patriots in Macedonia in 2016 is referring to the political (miss)use of this term in contemporary situation marked by the protests that began on 12.04.2016. Two groups of Macedonian citizens protest thorough the streets in Macedonia – one group protests “against the regime” of the government, and the other group protests for “defending Macedonia” and the current government. The two groups, among other things disagree on the question of what the term patriotism represents to them and it seems that it is about completely different concepts on the relation of the individual towards one’s own state and the relation of the “people” towards the state (and vice versa). The second conception about patriotism is especially interesting and is regularly used by the “Civil Movement for Defense of Macedonia” and their rhetoric is very much alike the one that has been used in 19 centuries in the phases of nation building particularly in Southeast Europe. In that sense what is interesting is how this 19 century concept is still so popular in Macedonia in the 21 century!

**Key words:** protests, people, defense, traitors, professional patriots.

### Short introduction

Considering the fact that political happenings in Macedonia are going on with an enormous speed, especially in the last two years, this introduction will be exceptionally short and simplified in order to easily reach the topic of (miss)use of the term patriot in the current moment.

The political crisis in Macedonia lasts for a year and a half, and it started with a publication of the so-called “bombs” by the leader of the opposition Zoran Zaev. These “bombs” are represented by parts of wiretapped conversations of the politicians and officials of Macedonia with content that indicates serious criminal acts where highest state officials from the ruling political party VMRO-DPMNE were involved. This political party has been leading the country since 2006. The opposition claims that the government has been wiretapping around 20,000 people, while the government claims that the wiretapped conversations are the result of the foreign intelligence services. According to the great party control of almost all state institutions the processing of the crime allegations is strongly limited. Because of the political paralysis on the Public Prosecution and judiciary, a Special Public Prosecution was formed as a result of the Przhino agreement. This Special Public Prosecution is supposed to investigate the crime indications from the wiretapped conversations. SPP already published some information

about their investigations on several investigation cases where suspects are some high government officials. On April 12, 2016 the president of the Republic of Macedonia declared an abolition of 56 people and he explained this with his intention of easing the tensions between politicians so they can enter the election process unfettered by the investigations and possible prosecutions. 54 people out of the abolished 56 were government officials or their staff, and the other 2 were representatives of the opposition. Since that day, mass protests began in Skopje and other cities through Macedonia as a reaction to the president's abolition. The protests are known by the term "Colorful revolution"<sup>1</sup> led by civil society organizations and supported by the opposition. At the same time, consistent to the tradition of organizing contra protests, the "Civil Movement for Defense of Macedonia" (CMDM) also organized mass protests against the president's abolition but for the 2 representatives of the opposition which are considered to be paid by the foreign intelligence services and according to that are – traitors. At the beginning the protests of CMDM were organized at the same time with the ones of the "Colorful revolution". Later the supporters of CMDM concentrated on smaller cities in Macedonia and left Skopje for the oppositional expressions of discontent. The protesters from the "Colorful revolution" were gathering every day starting from 12.04.2016 till 06.06.2016, continually protesting on the streets of Skopje for 56 days. The gathering spot was in front of the office of SPP every day at 18h (except Sundays) as an expression of support for its work in investigating the crimes of the government. Since 06.06.2016 their activities were changed in streets blockades in Skopje and other cities in Macedonia, different "guerilla" actions and occasional protest marches with which they sent their messages and ultimatums.

Since there is a huge amount of material for analyzing this topic, this article will have to be limited to the happenings on the protests that started on April 12 as a reaction to the President's decision for abolition. For the aim of this article the most interesting part is the rhetoric of the citizens who are conjoined with the idea of "defending Macedonia". The main sources used here are the columns, several interviews and speeches of the movement supporters in this period of protests that have been published in two portals known as pro-government media: Kurir and Republika. Among cited columnists there are some that have not been explicitly identified as members or supporters of CMDM but they completely agree with this specific kind of patriotism of CMDM movement. On the other hand, the statements of several key figures of this movement, who are very often leading or guiding the thesis of others are missing here, but according to the fact that in this case the key spots of this kind of patriotism are important, we do not have to go into such details.

---

<sup>1</sup> The revolution was named "colorful" because of the practice of throwing color to some of the monuments placed within the government project "Skopje 2014" when many monuments and buildings were raised mainly in the city center of Skopje. This project in a short period of time almost completely changed the city's appearance to the level of being unrecognizable because of the interventions that included lots of baroque facades on the buildings and many monuments which were supposed to confirm and strengthen the feeling of long historical continuity of Macedonian people starting from the antique period.

## Patriotic mantras of CMDM movement – key spots

The “Civil Movement for Defense of Macedonia” appeared in February 2015 as a reaction to the publication of the “bombs” by the leader of the opposition. The wiretapped materials according to this movement are the result of the cooperation among the opposition and foreign intelligence services. Their main moto is that “the national interests should be the most important thing for everybody” (“After the great national support – CMDM starts with debates through the cities”, Press 24, 11.02.2015). The members of this movement in reference to their main moto are zealous supporters of the ruling party VMRO-DPMNE and in those emerging circumstances the indications of criminal activities in the wiretapped materials are treated in the same way as the leader of the party Nikola Gruevski. They are “cut, glued, edited” and considering this the materials are unreliable. Due to the sharing attitude about the sources of these “illegally gained wiretapped materials” where domestic traitors were paid by foreign secret intelligence, the movement CMDM and the party VMRO-DPMNE agree about the serious external threats to the existence of Macedonia that are coming from the outside through native traitors of the Macedonian people and state.

In that sense the distinguished representatives of CMDM are convinced that the patriotism is what connects them with the ruling party because according to them the biggest patriots are the members of VMRO-DPMNE and that is why it is worth defending the party also: “the true reasons for destabilization – completely destroy the most powerful party in the state which is the protector of the Macedonian people and their identity, forced change of the name of the country and federalization of the state” (Mirchevski Nenad. “The black screenplay is covered up with colorful lies”. Republika, 28.04.2016). Davorin Trpeski, in his book “Who owns the past? The cultural politics and the preservation of cultural heritage in post socialistic Macedonia”, offers a concise and short review of the history of the ruling party. The key identification marks are conservative and right. Although through its history the party have tried to move towards the civil western concept, the attempt is obviously unsuccessful since the key words that mark this party are still the following: ethnic and populist party with certain elements close to nationalism and religious fundamentalism, focus on national history and advocacy of traditional values (see more Trpeski 2013: 77-82). Since the actual political crisis is threatening the ruling party, the supporters of CMDM are constantly sending expressions of support for VMRO-DPMNE. The most illustrative are the ones coming from Milenko Nedelkovski who thinks that being a Macedonian means to be a Christian, VMRO, and a patriot which means to love your country and that is why you need to support the state leadership that has similar thesis about what it means to be a Macedonian: “*Now it is obvious who is a Macedonian, Christian, VMRO, patriot, who loves his country, who is antifascist (...) The only political and leading force in Macedonia is VMRO and Nikola Gruevski. There is no other in sight. And no matter if he or she is a member of VMRO or not, they feel it and know it. (...) Our leadership, I say there is no other in sight has chosen this martyr tactic, the tactic of patience and salvation, the tactic of Christian reconciliation...*” (Nedelkovski, Milenko. “*When was it easy for Macedonia?*” Kurir, 29.04.2016). “*VMRO, even DPMNE is not a party! It is not a political group of people. VMRO is an idea, philosophy, the way of life, history, present and the future...*”

*You don't vote for VMRO – VMRO is the whole race of Goce.* (my emphasis) *So this whole national movement with a historical name VMRO cannot be beaten by newbies, foreigners on temporary work assignments in Macedonia, servants, homosexuals, sons of informers, stupid people... (...) These are the people, THE PEOPLE. These people are VMRO. VMRO is an idea, philosophy, history, present, future, way of life, style of suffering...* (Nedelkovski, Milenko. “And now what?”. Kurir, 07.05.2016). According to this rhetoric of support for the party we can agree with the thesis that “regimes that play successfully on the nationalistic card can rule a long time even when their popularity is dropping” (Smit 1998: 259).

There are several points that are being repeated regularly in the statements of different supporters of CMDM expressed in similar style, which means that there is a strong consensus among the members for the “CMDM’s kind of patriotism”. Some of those key points are: highlighting the mission of the state and its institutions in strengthening of Macedonian national identity, highlighting the primordial capacities of their own people and their culture, religion as a base of the Macedonian national identity and respectively “damnation” of non-members on different grounds, mythologizing of history: myth for a fictitious lineage and presumed ancestors, attachment to the land, homeland; the symbols of national identity have an aura of holiness (land, ancestors, victims, name, historical happenings) etc. (see for example Smit 1998).

In the context of the support for the ruling party and in accordance to the state politics of the ruling party, the state institutions exist at the first place for creating and strengthening the feeling for national identity and statehood. According to one columnist the Macedonian radio and television service should act like that and its directors are differing on the question of awareness for this important duty of this national service: *“the soul Ordanovski once a director of MTV and from that position with all his strength he was supposed to strengthen the Macedonian national identity and statehood...”* (Andonov, Oliver. “Malice on the intellectual bottom or dark souls”. Kurir, 24.05.2016). This idea of the strong bond between the state institutions and the national identity is so logical that the insisting of dividing the party<sup>2</sup> and the state seems like a formality. That is why professor Dashtevski confidently states: *“At the very end I want to refer to the shabby premise about the need of dividing the party and the state. If it hasn't happened, it should happen immediately. Still I think that the foreign friends will face another problem in understanding of that 'distinction'. The state is divided from the party – yes, but the people from VMRO – Never!”* (Dashtevski, Aleksandar. “If Dutch are defending you – you must be in Srebrenica”. Kurir, 06.05.2016).

The opponents, the members of the opposition, the critics of the government are accused for lack of patriotism in the first place, often using personal disqualifications of named people who can be identified as for example: intellectual bottom, dark souls, full of hatred, who are humiliating and mocking their own people and nation (Andonov, Oliver. “Malice on the intellectual bottom or dark souls”. Kurir, 24.05.2016). The sexual orientation is also used for discrediting and according to the strong religious or orthodox Christian base of this kind of patriotism the participants or the supporters of the Colorful revolution are: *“homosexuals and promiscuous people”*, and can also be “junkies, fags,

---

2 In this case the bond is between the party VMRO-DPMNE as a protector of national interests and at the same time the ruling party that is accused of occupying the state institutions.

creatures with little brain, easily manipulated...” (Nedelkovski, Milenko. “It is not up to the people”. Kurir, 30.05.2016). According to the believer Oliver Andonov it is a blasphemous company that needs preaching for all kinds of sinners that are involved: “... *for the sinfulness of the outcasts from God, anarchism, rebellion against God, unnatural fornication and every kind of possible devastating influences of the enemy of human kind? (...) The rainbow that they took as their flag is a direct mocking on the covenant that God gave to people after the flood*” (Andonov, Oliver. “The face of a saint, the heart of a wolf”. Kurir, 04.05.2016).

One especially interesting compartment has been using the stereotypes about the Islamic state with all accompanying associations of violence, aggression, death, mascaras. Here I really have a problem in explaining these analogies as a strategy for intimidating the “masses” that have limited capacities so with them goes everything that scares. The dilemma here is whether this can be interpreted as belittling or humiliating of one’s own loving people or it is just self-humiliation of the author which is an inevitable consequence of this kind of thesis: “*The only counterpart in contemporary world for this revolutionaries, according to the concept of destroying and the degree of negative energy that they incorporate in their ‘fighting’ strategies, today are the members of the Islamic caliphate. (...) It is not an accident that among the ones who throw colors with catapults with which they throw preservatives filled with paint and the pilgrims of ISIL there is an undisguised sympathy and cooperation. ‘It’s paint now, and heads will be next’- there is something for everyone according to the preferences and style. Throwing on the architecture and art is only a substitute for the inability to attack living people. If they have an opportunity to establish power over the society, the facades and sculptures will soon be replaced with the massacre of the citizens who don’t think like them*” (Stankovski, Aco. “Intentional failures”. Republika, 29.05.2016).

The accusations of being unpatriotic almost always use the sacrifices of the ancestors for the homeland for whose “blood” they don’t show respect: “*for them the sacrifices of our ancestors are nothing, even the sacrifices of those who gave their lives for the homeland in present times*” (Andonov, Oliver. “Malice on the intellectual bottom or dark souls”. Kurir, 24.05.2016). The cult of the defenders of the people and the state identifies them as deeply human heroes, and dying and shedding blood for one’s own country are the high qualities that are incomprehensible for the non-patriots: “*they will never understand the words of a police officer – hero who sad to the migrants: ‘This is my country that I am ready to die for’. They cannot understand why thousands and thousands of Macedonians have died through centuries for us to have our own country (...) ...it is not to expect the name Macedonia to have a meaning for them, nor their Macedonian identity*” (Radovanovic, Irena. “May Kumanovo happen to you”. Kurir, 16.04.2016).

Since the “colorful revolutionists” are not fitting in the CMDM’s kind of patriotism it is logical that they are identified as traitors as a resume of not appreciating the main principle of this movement. Since the money is more important than the love for the homeland, these manipulated souls are susceptible to foreign influences and they work with them for destroying the country. Foreign secret services, SOROS and CANVAS are responsible for demolishing the foundations of the country, but the international community and the ambassadors in Macedonia can be equally responsible: “*criminal underground and ‘external friends’ including the ambassadors, SOROS, CANVAS, the members of foreign secret services... are determined to go all the way with the intention to overthrow*

*the whole system of the state to the ground, even if it costs causing an escalation of the crisis which may lead to bloody conflict between Macedonians*” (Mirchevski, Nenad. “Will the sanity win, or will we drown in our own blood?” Republika, 22.04.2016). The university professor Oliver Andonov who represents himself as an expert in security and a great orthodox Christian predicts a possible bloody sceneries and according to his religiosity the ones that should be blamed for that are those that have a lack of strong or relevant religious experiences – NGOs, Islam fundamentalists, LGBT, leftists: *“to continue with their bloody work wholeheartedly assisted by different nongovernment organizations, radical elements financed by obscure Islamic funds, the LGBT community, so-called leftists and other creatures”* (Andonov, Oliver. “The concrete results of the SPP’s work (life in hell)”. Kurir, 01.05.2016). This obsession with the domestic traitors and with the foreigners corresponds with the view that it is actually one of the most effective ways to unite people against outsiders (Хобсбаум 1993: 132).

The civil society together with the opposition are the identified domestic enemies of Macedonia: *“local NGOs and other associations under the guise of ‘humanity’ and social equality are working against the state”* (Mirchevski, Nenad. “The black screenplay covered up with colorful lies”. Republika, 28.04.2016). So it is not a coincidence that in one of the speeches of CMDM’s gatherings in this protest period Aleksandar Pandov asked the Constitutional Court to temporary repeal the civil associations and political parties which according to him are identified as traitors that work against the state interests.

It can be stated that the CMDM’s kind of patriotism is relying in great deal on the representations of the dangerous strangers – foreign intelligence services, ambassadors, SOROS, CANVAS etc. Ulrich Bielefeld in his book “Strangers: friends or enemies” broadly explores the phenomenon of fear of strangers. He says: *“the mixture of the real and imagined stranger is representing the image of the stranger which is exceptionally suitable in the processes of drawing boundaries along with the mixture of the imagination and the reality”*. The existence of strangers is not always necessary in order to *“create the stranger”*, neither it is necessary for developing a fear of strangers. *“The dangerous strangers’ are always numerous and powerful even when they are scarce and weak”* (Bilefeld 1998: 161). The actual treatment of the foreigners in Macedonian context probably would be a perfect illustration for his thesis.

The idea of the dangerous foreigners is suitable for exceptionally imaginative conspiracy theories in which the central spot is in fact the holy land of Macedonia: *“that Macedonia is one of the neuralgic centers on the planet and that everyone who tried to impose terror and injustice on this holy land will face the same impact from the Providence”* (Stankovski, Aco. “Cowards”. Republika, 18.04.2016). Respectively to the sanctity of Macedonia, the supernatural punishment is awaiting those who will treat this land inappropriately. Apart from this romantic effusions of love towards one’s own holy land, the conspiracy theories are there to provide an answer to the intentions of the foreigners that are clear for almost every patriot of this kind: *“easy mass for manipulating with and for seducing it to work on the script for destruction of Macedonia and erasing it from the map of the states. Such a scenario is present for a long time now”* (Radovanovic, Irena. “May Kumanovo happen to you”. Kurir, 16.04.2016).

Macedonian people are wise, tolerant and peace-loving (Mirchevski, Nenad. “Will the sanity win, or will we drown in our own blood?” Republika, 22.04.2016) that can handle the mistakes of the traitors of the national interests with the stoic tranquility (Stankovski,

Aco. "Run Bunny, run!". Republika, 09.05.2016). These people have their own genetic code or as Aleksandar Pandov often identifies Macedonians by birth, so among other goals for destroying like the name, the state etc., the traitors' intention is to destroy this special seed: *"for a long time they are trying in a violent manner to change the name, to erase the genetic code of Macedonians and to demolish the state"* (Mirchevski Nenad. "The black screenplay is covered up with colorful lies". Republika, 28.04.2016). This primordial concept of ethnic identification can be dangerously excluding in the frames of a state that at the same time is identified as multicultural. For some of those patriots the multicultural orientation is actually representing the danger for the Macedonian genetic code: *"the intention of redefining the social system which is a disguised attempt for federalization of the state, introducing bilingualism, the pressure for changing the name and erasing the identity of Macedonian people"* (Mirchevski, Nenad. "Let's count us all". Republika, 13.05.2016).

These special people who are the chosen one and victims at the same time, will eventually fight for themselves and for the state because: *"Macedonia is timeless no matter how hard are trying to destroy its spirit and pride those sold creatures"* (Andonov, Oliver. "For the methods and ways of functioning of the SPP". Kurir, 22.04.2016). Macedonian people that are loved so endlessly and most of all - have to be *"primordial"*. So the continuity according to the CMDM's kind of patriotism is exceptionally long and goes back at least to Alexander the Great. In one column dedicated to this critical period full of crises in Macedonia, Milenko Nedelkovski starts at that point: *"In Macedonia at the moment the situation is very hard and those times are extremely dangerous!!! That is correct. But let me ask all of you. WHEN WERE THINGS EASY FOR MACEDONIA???* *It's always been dangerous to live in Macedonia and be a proud Macedonian. When was it easy in Macedonia, relaxed, not dangerous, comfortable???* *When was it easy on this piece of land soaked with blood, tears and sweat???* *When? (...)* *Was it easy two and a half millennia ago when after the death of Alexander his kingdom started to break?"* (Nedelkovski, Milenko. "When was it easy for Macedonia?" Kurir, 29.04.2016). Starting from there and resumed through different historical characters and events with the intention to illustrate the harsh condition of Macedonians through centuries, he reaches the contemporary history: *"Was it easy when we were watching the dead and burned bodies of our soldiers and policemen that died in an ambush after being betrayed by Buchkovski and Trajkovski?! Was it easier in times of massacres in Vejce, Karpalak, Ljubotenski bachila? Was then easier than today? Was it easier when we watched three national traitors Boris Trajkovski, Lupcho Georgievski and Branko Crvenkovski signing the capitulation to a group of Albanian terrorists and a handful of foreign racketeers in Ohrid?"* (Nedelkovski, Milenko. "When was it easy for Macedonia". Kurir, 29.04.2016). It can be stated that the harshness is the essential condition for Macedonians or their usual condition that they are used to in that long continuity of injustice toward them. Still as the most expressive quote that resumes several theses of this kind of patriotism is the one about the burdens where Macedonian people and their innocence throughout history is represented with the Macedonian beautiful virgins overpowered by Turkish rapists: *"Was it easier under the Turkish burdens? Was it easier with the blood tax and violation of Macedonian beautiful virgins by the Turkish rapists? Was it easier when it was forbidden for the church to be higher than the mosque?"* (Nedelkovski, Milenko. "When was it easy for Macedonia". Kurir, 29.04.2016). This continuity is representing the Macedonian

people as a victim at the same time implying its stamina and according to that it can be stated the continuity of this Macedonian quality through centuries: *“Macedonian nation, the contemporary one shows every attribute of its ancestors. First of all, stamina”* (Nedelkovski, Milenko. “When was it easy for Macedonia?”. Kurir, 29.04.2016). In the present times when we have an independent state after 2350 years, the state is under a threat of its traitors, so the true Macedonians can be recognized in these times of crisis when one should sacrifice for this sacred name: *“Macedonia have been waiting for 2350 years to establish again its independent state. Waited for 5 centuries to see Turks leaving. Waited for 60 years to defeat the executioners of Chento and Panko. (...) Now, my dear contemporaries are the times for us to sacrifice for Macedonia. Now we can see who is a Macedonian. Now we can see who is sacrificing for this sacred name”* (Nedelkovski, Milenko. “When was it easy for Macedonia?”. Kurir, 29.04.2016). Anthony Smith explains this tendency in a following quote: *“...the nationalists were again revealing and often exaggerating the heroism of the past periods, the glorious achievements of previous civilizations (which often were not ‘their own’) and the feats of their great national heroes even when the heroes were more of a legend than history and even if they ever existed, they had no idea of the nation which is now so zealously bringing them alive from the darkness of oblivion”* (Smit 1998: 201).

The suffering through eternity is a special value when the outcome of that misery is the endurance through the centuries. According to this quality of Macedonians through a long historical continuity it can be concluded that: *“we are like Christ. People destined to suffer, but to hold on and to show the way to all the believers and nonbelievers”*. (Nedelkovski, Milenko. “When was it easy for Macedonia?”. Kurir, 29.04.2016). This kind of Christian rhetoric with its positive connotations is specific in the romantic expression of feelings towards one’s own people, ancestors, victims for the homeland. Another kind of Christian rhetoric is also typical and used to mark the opponents and nonbelievers. For example, when Tanja Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, a university professor was speaking about the opposition leader’s lack of loyalty towards the state, she identifies him as national Lucifer and Juda, and his supporters as national Lucifers and monsters: *“our national Lucifers. (...) The chief Lucifer who is the master of ceremonies of the local employees Lucifers has created a lot of monsters in the state system under the banner of the rule of law, and in fact it is the rule of foreigners. (...) This Juda of ours does not have a problem in destroying everything that belongs to everybody. For him nothing is sacred. Nothing is important for him except his own interest, his own ego and the ego of his father Lucifer”* (Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, Tanja. “Our national Lucifers”. Kurir, 04.05.2016).

Although most of the columnists often sound similar to the quote above, there is one among them who is distinguished by his faith in God and the ties that he manages to make between the political happenings and godlessness are amazing. The university professor Oliver Andonov thinks that for actions against the state the traitors will be judged by the people and the profane courts and especially they will be judged by the eternal judgement. They have a lack of this kind of awareness because they are communists who don’t believe in immortality and in Christ. The opposition leaders are cannibals, the princes of darkness and their followers are the retinue of cannibals that go after the souls of their compatriots. Accordingly, the opposition party is the embodiment of evil and the Macedonian people are the embodiment of the good. And finally the most interesting spiritual message

towards Macedonian people is the Easter joy that they should manifest for this great Christian feast as a defiance of one very earthly institution as a SPP: *“The answer of his actions against the state one day will have to be given to the people, and hopefully to the court, but the largest response about the ruined lives and souls sent to eternity will have to be given to the eternal judgement. Knowing their communist and godless spiritual state I know that my words will be mocked at, because they don’t believe in immortality and in Christ (...) and they are crucifying their own people. (...) Spilling of hatred, frustration, inhumanity and above all non-love toward their own people and homeland reaches the climax. The cannibal with his retinue of cannibals are after the souls of their compatriots. This is a fight between evil (SDSM) and the good (Macedonian people). (...) However, this will end. Macedonian people have had so much harder moments, so they will overcome these too. Inhuman special persecutors and their evil partners from SDSM will be ashamed and will sink like the Juda the traitor. At the end of all life conquered dead and Christ is a proof for that. Let’s enjoy life my Macedonian people, citizens of Macedonia, lets conquer death and its promoters encouraged by the prince of darkness. Let’s rejoice the eternal life of the eternal light on Easter as our defiance to the ‘results’ of SPP”* (Andonov, Oliver. “The concrete results from the SPP’s work (life in hell)”. Kurir, 01.05.2016). Finally, after such rhetoric the following conclusion of the same author is very dubious: *“Macedonian people although crucified through history, although they are crucified today, know how to forgive and love”* (Andonov, Oliver. “The face of a saint, the heart of a wolf”. Kurir, 05.04.2016).

As a summary of the mentioned key spots of this kind of patriotism and in the context of the actual situation in Macedonia, Anthony Smith provides the following features about the newly formed ethno-political demotic ethnic communities that fit perfectly in this respect: “peoples’ participation, not a civil and political rights; populistic organization more than a democratic parties; intervention of the national state rather than the protection of minorities and individuals from state interferences” (Smit 1998: 204).

## Professional patriots<sup>3</sup> in Macedonia

The Civil Movement for Defense of Macedonia is supported from different profiles of people. There are play writers, actors, musicians, political analysts, trade unionists, football legends, seniors, motor bikers, defenders... (“After the massive support from all over Macedonia – CMDM starts debates in several cities”. Press 24, 11.02.2015). Among the leaders of this movement there are some university professors. In some

---

3 The term “professional patriots” has been used by Ivan Kovacevic (see Ковачевић 2006: 110). Considering the transformation of the national sciences in Serbia Milosh Milenkovic states: “The ethnography in this serious and long inter-disciplinary war carries a heavy burden of being unscientific, of a primitive traditionalism almost as a signals for ethnology as a professional folkloristic patriotism contrasting the idea of a serious and responsible for the future of the community social and humanistic science” (Milenković 2010: 31). Finally, this kind of responsibility should be associated to the Macedonian national disciplines, not only in transforming their own scientists for these important questions, but even to act in an activist manner for changing the public discourse about the associations that exist concerning the duties of these disciplines.

media professor Violeta Achkovska is identified as one of the movement leaders. She is a full time professor at the Faculty of Philosophy at UKIM, and has a PhD in historical sciences. She has her own attitude about the Colorful revolution and the protests. Her position on that matter is apparently similar to the views of her colleagues in patriotism even considering the poetics in her expression when talking about historical events that are articulated using strong words: *“the violators trample the dignity of our ancestors, they spit on their graves and their sacrifices”*. Throwing balloons with paint on some of the monuments of the project “Skopje 2014” is interpreted as a tyranny: *“The gate Macedonia is a monument of all Macedonian battles through history. If you follow the reliefs you can see that it is about everything that was left to us from the ancient times, our name Macedonia until today’s Macedonian independence and freedom. For me it is a symbol of a fight that has been fought for centuries by Macedonian people for their statehood. Everyone who is trying to vandalize a monument that is a symbol of Macedonian statehood is destroying Macedonian statehood itself. It is a fact and I cannot deny that. I watched all those reliefs that are sprayed with ugly colors”*. According to her position as a PhD in historical sciences she has a call for an expert warning almost in a form of a curse that *“it should be remembered that people with no past and history, will not have a future”*. In the context of the damages of the Colorful revolution protests she is able to pull out numerous examples from Macedonian history of suffering using direct analogies that do not have to be based in reality. So in this narration some very strong historical scenes such as children refugees from the Greek civil war, Ilinden, partisans etc. are used in a very brazen manner: *“She says that the relief that represents the children persecuted by the civil war in Greece is desecrated: - Those prosecuted children who were violently taken away from their mothers’ arms and who have traumas in their souls even today when they are old, have never recovered from that time when they were taken away from their mothers’ arms. (...) The professor points out that the reliefs of fighters in Ilinden, that are mentioned in the anthem are damaged also. This behavior according to her is a great shame for all those who are desecrating the monuments”*. Since the quotes are from an interview with the professor for the portal Kurir, she can share with the audience her own esthetic norms about the monument in question. It is good to have in mind these values when we read her scientific texts: *“To damage parts of this beautiful monument which adorns Skopje and I hope that for the future generations it will be the symbol of the city, for me it is incomprehensible”*. Finally, the most illustrative in this context is the lesson in history that most directly connects the historian and the human in Achkovska. For her as a historian and as a human, the ancestors, their struggles and their need for freedom, the patriotism and the state are sacred things: *“I don’t speak only as a historian, but as a human that is deeply against every kind of aggression, as a human who believes that we should cherish our revolutionary, historical traditions because people with no past, will have no future. We have to learn the historical lesson, to respect the ancestors, to respect their fight, their need for freedom and with all our strength, with lots of love, with lots of patriotism to unite and protect our state from all others who are reaching to everything that is sacred for us”* (“The Ukraine scenario of SDSM and SOROS is a shame and betrayal of Macedonia”. Kurir, 19.04.2016). Here I will add two points that Anderson calls paradoxes, in the context of the quote above. The first paradox implies that the historian must necessary know about the objective modernity of nations contrary to the nationalists who subjectively count on the antiquity of nations. The second

paradox in this context is that nationalism has a “political” power but is philosophically poor and brings much of a confusion (Андерсон 1998: 18).

Among the supporters of CMDM is Tanja Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, professor of constitutional law and political system at the Faculty of law at UKIM. Her engagement is especially interesting because through “relaxed” expressions in a form of columns, her interventions and involvement in a very practical government policies can be seen. Tanja Karakamisheva-Jovanovska has a very special experience since she is able to identify the loyalty towards the state as a supreme human virtue. For her there is no other similar, replicable, comparable virtue to this. *“To be loyal to the country means above all to respect your own homeland and your own people. With all of their virtues and flaws. To respect the citizens as its inseparable part, but to respect its symbols also (anthem, flag, coat of arms), its name, political institutions, state bodies, judicial bodies and its economic and financial system, its history and tradition, its cultural monuments, memorials, natural resources and beauties, its successes and national pride. In short – it means respect for all that the homeland has”*. What happens with the other loyalties of the individual and where are those positioned on the scale of values if things are set this way it is an important issue. *“Those who really love the country know the primordial feeling of a pure love and pure emotions when the name Republic of Macedonia is mentioned. (...) If the main value of loyalty towards the homeland is to put the state interests over the individual, personal or foreign interests and pleasures, then there is no comparison.”*

Let’s say that those kinds of emotional expressions are currently encouraged, as when people share emotionally overloaded things under the influence of substances, pressures, situations, other people etc., so Karakamisheva continues: *“All the others don’t have that right, except if we let them to destroy our only birth soil, our one and only mother homeland...”* (Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, Tanja. “Our national Lucifers”. Kurir, 04.05.2016). I can agree that under the influence of this kind of patriotism people are willing to give their lives for the cause, for example for “defending Macedonia” in a poetical sense of the word and that is identified by Anderson as a sort of positive function of nationalism, having in mind not the dying itself, but the feelings: *“it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love and very often even deep self-sacrificing love”* (Андерсон 1998: 201). But the problem is certainly grandiose when a woman with such tender feelings towards her homeland feels comfortable to define the situation as a battle between the people and the citizens or a battle of civil associations against the people. Here in a very apparent manner her eventual professional qualifications are allied with her human characteristic of a zealous Macedonian patriot. She believes that the people engaged in civil associations are state and public enemies: *“who unfortunately swooped by the smell of money are turning against the state and their own people. Our civil associations that for decades are funded with this anti-state money have built a serious infrastructure of mostly young people involved in all kinds of projects and in that way they actually implement precise western instructions of how to change the government that doesn’t fit the ideas of a financier, to destroy the state in order to eliminate the majority of citizens from the processes of political decision-making”*. Is it a coincidence the use of offensive rhetoric towards young civil activist incapable of patriotic reasoning or is it about a higher politics of: “the processes for involvement of neo fascistic politics in the country directed against the interests of Macedonians”? The most crucial problem with professional patriotism is when these individual and personal

theories will interfere the professional calculations in order to disarm the opponent and that is why professor Karakamisheva because of higher patriotic purposes can interpret the Article 20 of Macedonian Constitution in a special way: *“when it becomes so obvious that the majority of civil associations in the country work and act against the state, against the constitutional order of the system and against the state stability, it comes the time to clear up these structures. We are obliged to do that by the Constitution of Republic of Macedonia where the Article 20 clearly states that the programs and activities of civil associations and of the political parties cannot be directed towards a violent overthrow of the constitutional order of the Republic and towards encouragement or incitement to military aggression or ethnic, racial or religious hatred or intolerance”*. Professor Karakamisheva cannot presume the likelihood of this Article from the Constitution to be interpreted from the opposing side in the same way, because there is a possibility the statements of these patriots to be understood as *“a violent overthrow of the constitutional order of the Republic and towards encouragement or incitement to military aggression or ethnic, racial or religious hatred or intolerance”*.

As she has done so far because she was given the opportunity, in this case also from the position of a professional patriot she can advise, urge, encourage the institutions of her state to act accordingly to her theory of things: *“it is now up to the state’s institutions that should clear up those negative processes and structures that are pulling down the country towards the abyss. The examples of Russian federation, Poland, Hungary and other countries should encourage Macedonian institutions for taking this step towards defending the homeland and the people”* (Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, Tanja. “The American melting pot on the Balkans”. Kurir, 12.05.2016). It is very dangerous that the institutions might actually listen to the professor Karakamisheva-Jovanovska.

Those are just two examples in the context of professional patriotism that illustrate the conflict between the “scientist” and the human. Those people (accidently or not women) are (ab)using their disciplines in a very obvious way in order to support their own idea of patriotism not having in mind the possibility of existing other ideas about what patriotism is in which other people believe in. Being insensitive about those issues can be dangerous in several respects when it comes to the current situation in *“our only birth soil, our one and only mother homeland...”* Since we can recognize those directions in some of the textbooks for primary and secondary education and since it can be assumed what kind of ideas are spreading these university professors, it becomes a serious indication of the flaws in the educational system when it comes to national disciplines such as history or the social sciences. At the end this ignorance is discrediting on a personal level because the professional patriots at least show methodological illiteracy. Lastly there is a very important question about the criteria of selecting these university professors. Can their views be recognized as important (or perhaps as important symptoms) by their colleagues from *“the top, the best and most renowned universities in the USA, England, France and Germany?”* According to what I read that kind of possibility is almost absurd.

This kind of patriotism lacks a bit more of a morality especially when it comes to professional patriots. As professionals they should know that in order to be called “nationalistic intellectuals” they should be indulged in a social and political activity more than an academic one because their mission is in fact purifying and activating the people (Smit 1998: 107, 8). Then according to the instrumental use of national identity in order

to maintain the authority of party strongmen, this kind of “nationalistic intellectuals” can also be treated as useful instruments in this context.

## **Reflexivity is a methodological lead**

The subjectivity in social sciences and humanities is often decisive in the research and the analysis of the researcher. That means they will strongly depend on the attitudes, values, feelings, personality etc. of the researcher. Because of this, I consider the reflexivity of the authors from these disciplines as a methodological necessity. In that way the author’s subjectivity when taken to light helps readers to get an objective idea of how conclusions are created/construed regarding the research topic.

My teachers and my education taught me that the primordial concept of national identity is a radical extreme, which is considered to be dangerous in Macedonian circumstances if it is used in the ways mentioned above. Accordingly, I do not think that my disciplines should participate in the “creation” of national identity. Rather I consider this agenda as a feature of unprofessionalism. The scientists who are (ab)using the alleged objective scientific truth to cover or specifically to support their strong love for the homeland are extremely suspicious since they are actually promoting nationalistic ideas disguised as patriotism. I believe that there are many truths, many stories and interpretations among which there are some that are convincing, and such that are dangerously superficial. The scientists from social sciences and humanities whose task is constantly to interpret and reinterpret should seriously consider this “side effect” of their scientific work. In that sense, to remain limited to the personal idea of the people is extremely unprofessional versus the critical approach in studying this processes of creating the people. For example, the question of how the idea for one’s own people is created or how one’s own people is imagined through history seems “much more of a scientific research topic”. Hobsbawm says that a “serious historian of nations and nationalism cannot be an executive political nationalist (...) Nationalism requires too much belief in what obviously is not the case” because from the position of a political activist the professional patriot as a historian inevitably is participating in a special “construction” of history for the needs of nationalistic politics (Хорсбавм 1993: 21-2). In that way the professional patriots are participating or are giving the directions in the process that Benedict Anderson identifies as creating an “imagined community”.

There is a stream in my disciplines known as activist anthropology. It is quite legitimate direction that is both highly contested by critics. Anthropologists or other researchers from social sciences and humanities have that luxury to support or even to represent the interests of certain groups. It is important that those groups that have a need of this kind of support or advocacy are always marginalized. That is why in this occasion we have to make a difference between the engagement of the “scientists” in the defense of power and the powerful and engagement of the “scientists” in representing the powerless. Due to this significant difference, activist anthropology draws its legitimacy. The other kind of political activism almost necessary implies instrumental use of the “people” and profession in the service of the struggle for power of the elites and “in that struggle ethnicity becomes a useful tool” (Smit 1998: 39).

## Conclusion

As an answer to the question from the abstract of this text about the phenomenon of (ab)using the 19 century concept about the patriotism moved in 21 century I will use two quotes. The author of the first quote is Milenko Nedelkovski, and his words can be used as an explanation for this interesting phenomenon. He says: *“No one has ever succeeded in crushing Macedonian people. These people didn’t have a state for almost two and a half centuries. The church has been torn apart for centuries. The language was appropriated. The historical characters and historical events were hijacked. Macedonian people didn’t have a state, borders, schooling system, their own clergy, coded language and marked territory, but still they ALWAYS managed to survive and outlive the enemy. Macedonian people have never made a mistake. Never took a Bulgarian identity, Serbian identity, never accepted Catholicism, didn’t enter the fascist alliance...”* (Nedelkovski, Milenko. “When was it easy for Macedonia”. Kurir, 29.04.2016).

The second quote is from the text of my colleague Davorin Trpevski who explains this as follows: *“in fact this party (referring to VMRO-DPMNE) is insisting on national history and traditional values, something that was utterly neglected and marginalized during the socialistic period. Apparently because of the long absence of this idea, today, in the transition period, that idea found a very suitable ground for its implementation in Macedonia (Трпески 2013: 82). We can probably conclude that it is about nationalistic immaturity. Related to the examples in his book about the Macedonian prayer, the central letter of the Rozeta stone and the Burushi language, the quotes used in this essay are also “part of the idea for constructing a national fervor, patriotism and the optimism connected to the future of the country where there are people whose name and identity have been disputed, their statehood have been challenged by the neighboring states and then the inability to join the international political, economic and military structures toward it goals. Also the attempts to revive or embellish the national consciousness of the people are usually done deliberately by some members of the society in order to create a new culture that will satisfy the national passions”* (Трпески 2013: 203-4).

Because of those socio-political circumstances highlighted in the two quotations which complement each other in explaining the reasons for this phenomenon, the power centers are able to perform such (ab)uses of “patriots”. Even though both complement in explaining this phenomenon the difference in their expression is very apparent which makes a clear distinction between amateurs and professionals on these issues.

## Sources

Андонов, Оливер. „За методите и начините на функционирање на СЈО“. Курир, 22.04.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/za-metodite-i-nachinite-na-funktsionirane-na-sjo/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Andonov, Oliver. For the methods and ways of functioning of the SPP”. Kurir, 22.04.2016

Андонов, Оливер. „Конкретните резултати од работата на СЈО (живот во пеколот)“. Курир, 01.05.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/konkretnite-rezultati-od-rabotata-na>

- sjo-zhivot-vo-pekolot/, accessed 15.06.2016. Andonov, Oliver. "The concrete results of SPP's work (life in hell)". Kurir, 01.05.2016.
- Андонов, Оливер. „В лице светци, в срце в'лци“. Курир, 04.05.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/v-litse-svettsi-v-srtse-v-ltsi/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Andonov, Oliver. "The face of a saint, the heart of a wolf". Kurir, 04.05.2016
- Андонов, Оливер. „Озлобеност на интелектуално дно или мрачни души“. Курир, 24.05.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/ozlobenost-na-intelektualno-dno-ili-mrachni-dushi/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Andonov, Oliver. "Malice on the intellectual bottom or dark souls". Kurir, 24.05.2016.
- Даштевски, Александар. „Ако те бранат Холанѓани – сигурно си во Сребреница“. Курир, 06.05.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/ako-te-branat-holangani-sigurno-si-vo-srebrenitsa/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Dashtevski, Aleksandar. "If Dutch are defending you – you must be in Srebrenica". Kurir, 06.05.2016
- Каракамишева-Јовановска, Тања. „Нашите национални Луцифери“. Курир, 04.05.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/nashite-natsionalni-lutsiferi/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, Tanja. "Our national Lucifers". Kurir, 04.05.2016.
- Каракамишева-Јовановска, Тања. „Американски мелтинг пот на Балканите“. Курир, 12.05.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/amerikanski-melting-pot-na-balkanite/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, Tanja. "The American melting pot on the Balkans". Kurir, 12.05.2016
- Мирчевски, Ненад. „Ќе победи ли разумот или ќе се удавиме во сопствената крв?“. Република, 22.04.2016: <http://republika.mk/?p=586719>, accessed 15.06.2016. Mirchevski, Nenand. "Will the sanity win, or will we drown in our own blood?". Republika, 22.04.2016.
- Мирчевски, Ненад. „Црното сценарио се прикрива со шарени лаги“. Република, 28.04.2016: <http://republika.mk/?p=589548>, accessed 15.06.2016. Mirchevski, Nenad. "The black screenplay is covered up with colorful lies". Република, 28.04.2016
- Мирчевски, Ненад. „Ајде да се преброиме“. Република, 13.05.2016: <http://republika.mk/?p=596527>, accessed 15.06.2016. Mirchevski, Nenad. "Let's count as all". Republika, 13.05.2016.
- Неделковски, Миленко. „Кога тоа и било лесно на Македонија“. Курир, 29.04.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/koga-toa-i-bilo-lesno-na-makedonija/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Nedelkovski, Milenko. "When was it easy for Macedonia". Курир, 29.04.2016.
- Неделковски, Миленко. „И сеа шо бе?“. Курир, 07.05.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/i-sea-sho-be/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Nedelkovski Milenko, "And now what?". Kurir, 07.05.2016.
- Неделковски, Миленко. „Не ќе да е до народот“. Курир, 30.05.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/ne-ke-da-e-do-narodot/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Nedelkovski, Milenko. "It is not up to the people". Kurir, 30.05.2016.

- „По масовната поддршка од цела Македонија - ГДОМ започнува со трибини низ повеќе градови“, Пресс 24, 11.02.2015: <http://www.press24.mk/po-masovnata-poddrshka-od-cela-makedonija-gdom-zapochnuva-so-tribini-niz-povekje-gradovi>, accessed 15.06.2016. “After the big support from all over Macedonia – CMDM starts with debates through the cities”, Press 24, 11.02.2015
- Радовановиќ, Ирена. „Да ви се ‘деси’ Куманово“. Курир, 16.04.2016: <http://kurir.mk/kolumni/da-vi-se-desi-kumanovo/>, accessed 15.06.2016. Radovanovic, Irena, “May Kumanovo happen to you”. Kurir, 16.04.2016.
- Станковски, Ацо. „Кукавици“. Република, 18.04.2016: <http://republika.mk/?p=584629>, accessed 15.06.2016. Stankovski, Aco. “Cowards”. Republika, 18.04.2016.
- Станковски, Ацо. „Бегај, Зајко, бегај!“. Република, 09.05.2016: <http://republika.mk/?p=594197>, accessed 15.06.2016. Stankovski, Aco. “Run Bunny, run!”. Republika, 09.05.2016.
- Станковски, Ацо. „Промашувања со умисла“. Република, 29.05.2016: <http://republika.mk/?p=603532>, accessed 15.06.2016. Stankovski, Aco. “Intentional failures”. Republika, 29.05.2016
- „Украинското сценарио на СДСМ и СОРОС е срам и предавство на Македонија“. Курир, 19.04.2016: <http://kurir.mk/makedonija/vesti/ukrainskoto-stsenario-na-sdsm-i-soros-e-sram-i-predavstvo-na-makedonija/>, accessed 15.06.2016. “The Ukraine scenario of SDSM and SOROS is a shame and betrayal of Macedonia”. Kurir, 19.04.2016.

## References

- Андерсон, Бенедикт. Замислени заедници. Скопје, Култура, 1998.
- Ковачевиќ, Иван. Традиција модерног: прилози историји савремене антропологије. Београд, Српски генеалогски центар, Одељење за етнологију и антропологију Филозофског факултета, 2006.
- Трпески, Даворин. Кој го поседува минатото? Културната политика и заштитата на културното наследство во постсоцијалистичка Македонија. Скопје, ИЕА 2013.
- Хобсбаум, Ерик. Нациите и национализмот по 1780, програма, мит, стварност. Скопје, Култура, 1993.
- Bilefeld, Ulrich. Stranci: prijatelji ili neprijatelji. Beograd, Biblioteka XX vek, 1998.
- Milenković, Miloš. Ka politici srpske antropologije za XXI vek. Odeljenje za etnologiju i antropologiju Filozofskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu i Srpski genealoški centar. Beograd, 2010: <http://www.anthroserbia.org/Content/PDF/Publications/8f888dfa89304ba4a05426069b0bc679.pdf>, accessed 21.09.2015.
- Smit, Antoni. Nacionalni identitet. Beograd, Biblioteka XX vek, 1998.