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'Roles, Identities and Hybrids' fellow 2003 – 2004

**THE MEMBER OF THE PARLIAMENT: BETWEEN PERSONAL
PRESTIGE AND PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS
(PHASES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MACEDONIAN
PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM)**

Introduction

The research field is focused on the representative - public relationship. So far, in the field of science, the parliament has been less interesting as an institution than as a carrier of concentrated political power and authority for regulating social relations. Consequently, the political-sociological research, which is concerned with the power of society's groups, rarely addresses the question of the representatives separately; they are usually analyzed as part of the political elite or the elite of power. We shall try and make the necessary distinction and locate some of the specifics of the institution *representative*, because every social occurrence is connected to society's structure in one way or another.

If we take as a starting point the premise that a relation "between personal prestige and public expectations" exists, one question comes to mind: is there an established political culture in Macedonia in both of these directions? Is there a definite political awareness in the representative what is really expected of him/her during the mandate? As for the citizens, what do they expect from the representative in particular? The foggy cliché suggested as an answer is "to represent the interest of the people" (the phrase is even fuzzier considering the fact that every political party claims to be the only one doing it); this is an inherited stereotypical rhetoric lacking concise and clear meaning. On the one hand, there is the fact that a very high percentage of the Macedonian population (regardless of age, sex, religious faith or level of education) sincerely believes that achieving social valorisation through election to Parliament is an extraordinary success in one's career. Furthermore, it is considered an individual honour if the elected person is a member of the family, a close relative, a friend, a neighbour or a fellow citizen. On the other hand, these circumstances result in repulsion towards the elected representative; it is expected that the person will transform and distance himself/herself from their closest environment. From experience, both the representative's nearest and the broader public expect a change in behaviour. This change is thought to stem from the privileges and the power that go together with the new position in society. These anticipated projections of the representative's environment result in estimating all of his/her actions according to those stereotypes. Thus, this person loses his/her identity, and after the mandate is over (if he or she is not re-elected) gets the "ex-politician" identity (whether successful or not is a matter of individual criteria). Consequently, there are many examples of expressing fake respect and humbleness towards people in this position, but at the same time there are expressions of continuing repulsion, sarcasm, resignation and profound distrust.

The simplest, but most banal interpretation of these processes can be reduced to the general circumstances of the 14-15 -year Transition Period in Macedonia. The years of transformation from socialist to market economy, privatization of public capital (i.e. "common property") , transformation from a one-party to a multi-party system and the shifts in ideology, have enabled certain oligarchic structures in the government (at different levels) to seize a vast share of the "common" goods. However, the processes of

degeneration are profound and we believe their roots run deep in the historical memory. To put it more precisely, there are historical realities that have survived despite dramatic social transformations. This has disabled the development of stable, established institutions during a longer period of time, which has directly influenced the low level of political culture in Macedonia. The historical circumstances didn't allow for the settled existence of a particular stratification of certain stable status groups or established stable civil institutions in Macedonian society.

I. Macedonian parliamentary (in)experience (1913-2004)

The opening decades of the 20th century in Europe were marked by the period of disintegration of the Empires. Under the might of arms (the two Balkan wars in 1912/13) and after the efforts of diplomacy (the Bucharest Peace Treaty from 1913), the first one to disintegrate in Europe was the Ottoman Empire. With the Empire's withdrawal from the European territories, the ethno-geographical territory of Macedonia and its people, divided among the neighboring Balkan national states, was irreversibly disintegrated as well. The current territory of the Republic of Macedonia, in the wake of the Balkan Wars, fell under the rule of the Kingdom of Serbia.¹ The establishment and organization of the Serbian government in the Vardar part of Macedonia involved a short-term situation of a strict military rule. Only a few provisions of the Serbian Constitution from 1903 were applied. Soon followed World War I (1914-1918), and with it the collapse of the other two European Empires: the Austrian-Hungarian and the Russian. The great Empires were slowly disappearing from the historical horizon.

On December 1st, 1918, with the Act of Unification, the Yugoslavian state was created – the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (it was renamed into Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929). Consequently, the Vardar part of Macedonia, being part of the Kingdom of Serbia, became part of the newly created state. This new state, according to its characteristics, was a hereditary constitutional monarchy, ruled by the Karadjordjevic dynasty. The state was constitutionally created on the principles of agreed national union of the three ruling nations, which were the only recognized constitutive nations in the country: the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes.

A consequence of this type of constitutional arrangement was the status of a colony with an unrecognized national identity, assigned to the Vardar part of Macedonia, which led to a policy of assimilation and exile. This can be seen from the appellation of this territory – it was called “South Serbia” and its citizens “South Serbs”. A regime of special prerogatives was instituted. The institutions of the government, the police, the gendarmerie and the bureaucracy were mainly appointed from among the Serbs, who were expressly made to settle in this territory in order to perform these functions. Under such circumstances, organizing legal Macedonian political parties was impossible and participation in social life was limited. In order to obtain even a low bureaucratic position, a Macedonian had to learn well the new Serbian language (which wasn't easy to learn, due to vocabulary and grammatical differences). For peace- and order-keeping purposes, about 35.000 individuals (soldiers, gendarmes, state border soldiers and brigands) were engaged in this part of the state, and more than 70% of the Yugoslavian gendarmerie (12.000 out of the total of 17.000). (Cvetkovska, N., 2000.)

In the beginning, the socio-political life of the Kingdom of SCS was based on the so-called Vidovden Constitution adopted in 1921. According to the Constitution, the legislative power was in the hands of the King, the Cabinet that he appointed and the

¹ A minor exception for a short period of time is the Strumica Region, which was under the rule of the Principality of Bulgaria until the end of World War I.

National Assembly, i.e. the Parliament. There were two periods in the development of the Yugoslavian parliamentary system between the two World Wars: the first encompasses the period between 1919 and 1928, and the second spans between 1931 and 1939. These two periods are divided by the almost three-year-long personal dictatorship of King Aleksandar Karadjordjevic, established on January 6th 1929. The Yugoslavian parliamentary system was characterized by frequent parliamentary crises. Under such circumstances, parliamentary life took place in a very small maneuver space in the territorial-administrative Vardar unit (Banovina), which included the Vardar part of Macedonia. It was additionally limited with the “Declaration”(Obznana) from December 1920 and with the “Protection of the State Law” from 1921. These laws established strict court penalties for almost all political activity that could be associated with the social causes of the existing crisis². This political situation didn’t change much in the period following the abolishment of the dictatorship and the restoration of parliamentary life in the country in 1931. Predrag Milojevic, a prominent journalist from the then popular Belgrade newspaper “Politika” wrote: “Many still couldn’t outlive old Serbia, and many couldn’t live with the new Yugoslavia. And while the first ones believed that the state government was not theirs, the others acted as if it only existed because of them. The arrogant constituent powers of the former provoked the defiance of the latter. It proved that the harsh centralism contained in itself a motivation for separatism. The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes went through labor pains which it never got rid of. During that time, the situation in the country was getting worse: the further the country got from its beginnings, the more it approached its end. Existence slowly faded away.” (Milojevic, P.,1989.)

Within the limited space for political action in the country, and especially in the Vardar Unit, the only choice that the Macedonian people had was to vote for the Serbian political parties. The way in which the elections were conducted- the great abstinence of the voters, the terror during the election cycles, falsification of the election results - all these facts are registered in the minutes from the Parliament, in the disputes and the mutual accusations of the ruling parties and the opposition, in the print media of the time and in the memories of the people from that time³. It all indicates that holding parliamentary elections in such circumstances was only a farce and a see-through demagogy. The Vardar Unit was seen as a Mecca for all politicians, mainly from the capital, who wanted to obtain their MP mandates in an easy way. Therefore the majority of MPs, who won their mandates in this region, were candidates from the Serbian “citizen parties” and fell under the category of the so-called “renowned national activists”: individuals who were born in this part of Macedonia and then made it big on a “national” Serbian level; individuals who lived in Macedonia, although they were not born there; and also those who had previously been elected as MPs. On the other hand, the majority of the population traditionally belonged to the peasants, who weren’t represented in Parliament. Most MPs came from the Serbian intelligentsia – lawyers, state bureaucrats, professional politicians, teachers and priests. Most of these were professional politicians for whom electoral agitation was a profession; others were state bureaucrats in high positions (former ministers, former MPs) who were already integrated with the state mechanism. The Belgrade daily newspaper “Politika”, openly stated on 15.08.1927: “The negative results from the activities of the political parties show their similarity and the

² These two laws pronounced as illegal the Communist Party of Yugoslavia which, until then, operated as a legal political party and which won the largest number of seats in the general election in 1920.

³ State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia: Fund: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

instability of our future life. They all have an aim in common: to rule the country, to have power at any cost. In order to achieve this they make the most unnatural compromises. In the last few years, representatives from all parties were appointed ministers. Those appointed to this position considered it an infinite source of material wealth. There were even some of them whose place should have been in a courthouse or a madhouse and not in a ministerial position..." (Cvetkovska, N., 2004.)

It is difficult to determine which MP in the Yugoslavian Parliament from the Vardar Unit was of Macedonian origin, due to the fact that there was a tendency of general and forced alteration of Macedonian surnames. However, through a careful detection of the place of birth, compared with the specific Macedonian characteristics from the corpus of Macedonian personal names and surnames, it is possible to fairly precisely determine at least their minimum participation. Chronological tracking of the election results indicates a rapid drop in the number of MPs of Macedonian origin in the Yugoslavian Parliament⁴. For all these reasons, it is difficult to speak about an active participation of the Macedonian people in the social and political life of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Macedonians were on the margins of social life and therefore we cannot speak of any Macedonian experience in the parliamentary life of the state they lived in. Even if they gained any experience it was with repulsion to the elected and privileged - experience that attached a negative connotation to events taking place without any chance for Macedonians to exercise influence or participate in the true sense of the word.

The end of World War II in 1945 brought a new order in Europe and in the world. After the initial enthusiasm following the military conflict, Europe entered the period of a so-called block division. While part of its national states went back to the point of development which was interrupted by the war, a large part of the European states began to build a new type of state order – the socialist one. Socialist Yugoslavia, known also as Tito's Yugoslavia, was built on the ruins of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The current territory of the Republic of Macedonia began building its statehood within the frames of this federation.

The period between the first session of the ASNOM on 02.08.1944 and the adoption of the first Constitution can be considered as the first, ASNOM phase of the state and legal development of Macedonia⁵. The second phase of this development is characterized by the Constitution of the People's Republic of Macedonia (Narodna Republika Makedonija - NRM) from 1946 and its taking effect in 1947. This Constitution has a great constitutive historical and political value, since it is the first Constitutional act of the Macedonian state. Many critical remarks can be made about this Constitution, with respect to, say, the established electoral system, or to the position of Macedonia in the

⁴ We can register 11 MPs of Macedonian origin for the elections in 1920. As years passed, their number decreased. For example, in 1923 their number was 6, in 1925 – 4, and there were only two of them in 1927. For the elections from the second period of the parliamentary process in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, in 1931, 1935 and 1939, there was space only for the evident "Serbian patriots" on the governmental candidate lists. (Statistics, 1924; 1928; 1931; 1938 - Cvetkovska, N., 1996, 2000, 2004..)

⁵ The abbreviation ASNOM stands for the Antifascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (Antifashistichko Sobranie na Narodoto Osloboduvanje na Makedonija). The first phase in the creation of the state took place while there were still military conflicts going on in Europe. During this period, the electoral system was organized around the election of City, Village, District and County National Liberation Committees (these were the new bodies of the national government which were a product of the antifascist resistance movement) as the basis for election of delegates for the First meeting of ASNOM. A similar election structure is included in the decision for the announcement of election for City, Village, District and County National Liberation Committees, passed by the ASNOM Presidium in 1945. (Documents, vol.II, 1985.)

Yugoslavian federation. However, it remains primarily a constitutive feature of the transformation of the NRM into an entity on the Balkans. The period after 1946 in Yugoslavia is called “revolutionary etatism”, a term which actually depicts the centralization of power in the Yugoslavian federation. The federative organization from this period has the typical state and legal characteristics of territorial and vertical division of powers between the federation bodies and the bodies of the federal units. The republics were sovereign except for the rights that were transferred to the sovereignty of the federation. With the institution of socialism as a state order, property provisions were radically changed as well. On the one hand, the Constitution formally “guaranteed” private property, including the right to succession; on the other hand, it opened up opportunities for nationalization of property. It is true that the possibility for material compensation for the dispossessed proprietors was not excluded, but in practice it was reduced to a token act. (Veljanovski, N., 2002.)

In the first phase of the development of the election system (1945-1953), a uniform electoral right for all citizens of Yugoslavia above 18 years of age was introduced, as well as a general and equal electoral right for all citizens regardless of their sex, race, religion, nationality, education etc. There were certain restrictions to the general electoral right which concerned the so-called “enemies of the revolution”; a category of people that included citizens who acted as collaborationists during the war, military profiteers, and parts of the very small pre-war Macedonian bourgeoisie. However, the possibilities for participation in political life were significantly broadened for certain categories and individuals who, during the time of the previous system, belonged outside the public, and especially the political sphere (such as the female population). Under this electoral system, the role of the individual was expressed through, and reduced to, the acclamation of the nominated members of the political elite in power, without any opportunities to participate or influence their actual election or work. In short, the citizen was only a voter. The idea, however, of the Yugoslavian communists was to produce conditions for the “working human being to grow into a self-aware working individual, manager and citizen”. (Mihajlovski, S., 1977.)

Very much like the other socialist countries, Yugoslavia was also a mono-party ideological construct, and ideas had a central position in the state. “The political system was anticipated to be the instrument of a transition period, so it wasn’t expected to portray reality, but to amend it. The Marxist framework in which the political system was created gave precedence to the vision of the future over the description or the comprehension of the present. The sole party – the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later called the Association of the Communists of Yugoslavia) - was an avant-garde, a political organization which wasn’t legitimized in elections, i.e. not through the reflection of reality, but through its ability to look further and to interpret the vision of social progress.” (Jovic, D., 2003.) Parliamentary life could only be constituted in this framework – around the queen-bee – the party.

Following the period of “reconstruction and rebuilding of the country” in the 50’s, a new system of government was introduced – self-management. It was a unique example of state organization. In pursuit of this ideal, almost a decade is characterized with dynamic constant changes of the whole social, and therefore the electoral system. The political elite constantly made efforts to establish an “adequate” electoral system. In view of the premise that “socialism and democracy are an inseparable synthesis”, and that “there is no socialism without democracy, and socialism represents the widest social frame for the development of democracy” (Mihajlovski, S., 1977.), the electoral system, on the one hand, had to be democratic, and yet a mono-party system (?!). The aspirations

towards the realization of this illusion promising to resolve the obvious inner inconsistency of political practice resulted in constant elaborations, discussions, interpretations, supplements and amendments of the laws.

The leading ideologist and strategist of self-managing socialism was Edvard Kardelj (Kardelj, E., 1978.). This model of social organization differed in many elements from the state socialism which functioned in the other socialist countries. It was presented to the public as a “historical and a humanistic ideal” of socialist society. However, its implementation in reality proved that the system contained a large number of ideological confusions and megalomaniacal legal regulations. The Constitution from 1963 pronounced self-managing a “constitutional, inalienable and a guaranteed right of the working people”⁶. The self-management principles had to be integrated into the election system as well. In order to achieve this, a large set of election laws was adopted again, and the process spanned over the period from 1963 to 1974.

In short, the electoral system until 1974, with all the amendments and supplements, contained in its foundation electoral forms and principles for the election of representatives and delegates to the socio-political Assemblies of the Parliament and to the Assemblies of the Collectives of Workers. One of the participants in the candidacy procedure were the municipal assemblies. This is where the so-called “democratic course of the elections” was taken care of, especially the “prevention and elimination of individuals who don’t claim loyalty to the socialist course of development of our society; the provision of an appropriate social, national, age etc. structure” (Mihajlovski, S., 1977.).⁷

Envisaged “only” as a “corrector” of electoral activities, the municipal assemblies soon turned into centers of power which followed the directives of the Party. Following the idea for the development of a socialist democracy and the social character of the state, the Yugoslavian, and therefore the Macedonian political elite, continued to amend the system. The electoral principles had to be adequately amended as well. Naturally, this had to be done without abandoning the mono-party system, which presented an essential contradiction of the whole socio-political system.

The 70’s brought new fundamental changes to the SFRY system: the new Constitution of the SFRY – the Constitution from 1974 (which proved to be the last one) - included amendments to federative relations and to the economic system, and adopted the so-called delegation system as the basic electoral system and as a basic governmental system⁸. According to this Constitution, the Assembly of the Republic developed into a primary holder of its rights and responsibilities. Thus the unison of power and execution of laws was achieved under the constitutional authorities given to the Republic: constituent and legislative power, the power concerning the development of the state and its economy, budgeting powers, political-controlling powers etc.

⁶ Under the system of self-managing socialism, the Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia became the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Consequently, the People’s Republic of Macedonia became the Socialist Republic of Macedonia (SRM).

⁷ The municipal assemblies were responsible for providing an “appropriate social, national and age structure of the MPs”, which was called “election by the key”, according to the free interpretation of the people. This principle often overwhelmed the principles of competence, ability, and expertise. In the spirit of building the Yugoslavian ideal known as “brotherhood and unity”, the constant participation of the minorities in the political life of the republics was secured under this so-called “key”.

⁸ The SFRY Constitution from 1974 has often been analyzed in recent political thought, both in ex-Yugoslavia and overseas, in an attempt to find clues to the disintegration of Yugoslavia. In our case this constitutional act is interesting with respect to the institution and application of the new unique electoral model, i.e. the so-called delegation system.

The delegation system is too complicated to understand because it features institutions peculiar to Yugoslavia associated with a specific terminology that resists translation. Its basic characteristic is its disparity and the election of delegates and delegations on various levels, including the election of delegates and delegations to the Republic's Assembly. The organization of the Parliament also had its "self-management logic" as an integral part of the functioning of the complete "political system of socialist self-management" (Kardelj, E., 1978.). The Parliament's composition was the following: one half of the delegates belonged to the so-called Assembly of Associated Labor, and the other half - to the Assembly of the Municipalities and the Socio-Political Assembly. The Assemblies were authorized to equally decide on various issues, but the Socio-Political Assembly usually had precedence. This Assembly of the Parliament was composed of delegates from the political structure of the state (under the supervision of the Association of Communists-AC). In this way the AC functioned as a controller of all activities in the Parliament. Actually, the control was exercised as early as the candidacy procedure, as candidates would inevitably come from the highest positions in the Party. Namely, the candidates for the Socio-Political Assembly in the Parliament of the Republic could only have been nominated by the "Republic's Candidacy Conference of the Socialist Association of the Working People, who create the uniform candidates' list". Dejan Jovic rightfully claims: "The institution of the Socialist Association of the Working People (SAWP) was the roof construction of the system." According to its status, it was a pluralist organization with four main collective members: the Association of Communists, the Association of Unions, the Association of the Socialist Youth and the Association of the Fighters from the National Resistance Movement (and many other social organizations such as the Association of Pioneers, Association of Citizens etc.). The SAWP was (formally) the organizer of the election processes. This institution was envisaged as a forum where the communists would convince the citizens of the adequacy of their policy and ensure the formal acceptance of that policy on the grass roots level. In practice, however, "the SAWP was only a transmission of the Party" (Jovic, D., 2003.)⁹.

As a matter of fact, the theorists of the delegation system stumbled across the old controversy over and over again: the interrelation and the co-dependence between the imperative and the free mandate of the MPs, i.e. the delegates. They realized that: "the Constitution, on the one hand, emphasizes the responsibility of the delegate to comply with the directions of his/her local party organization and the views of his/her delegation, but on the other hand he/she should be independent in the decision-making and the voting", and so concluded that all this is "contradictory only at first sight" (?!). According to them, the delegation system could overcome this contradiction because it contained "mutual negotiation and compliance of interests among the different delegates and delegations". (Mihajlovski, S., 1977.) The question which is left open is whether in a liberal democracy there isn't negotiating and compliance of interests among different political parties? Undoubtedly, the delegation system was completely different from the parliamentary system of liberal capitalism. The difference was in the existence of only one party center and an enormous number of delegates and delegations. By way of illustration, we should cite the fact that according to the "Statistical Review No.56" from March 1975, the total number of delegation members in the socio-political organizations only in SR Macedonia was – 60,225. (Josifovski, J.; Seliu, S., 1978.)

⁹ Yet, the SAWP played an important role in the last days of socialism, since it served as a forum for discussions between the former elite and the future post-communist political elites. The new parties in 1989 and in 1990 could register only in case they promised to become members of the SAWP. (Jovic, D., 2003.)

This short retrospective of the electoral systems in SFRY and the systems in SR Macedonia respectively, proves that one of the main characteristics of Yugoslavian socialism was the so-called institutional perfectionism. The starting position of the Yugoslavian communists was that the institutional system is “perfect” and it is constantly “improving”. “Perfection is an obsession of the architects of the system designed to regulate human behavior to the minutest detail, with the implicit presumption that the environment stays stable. And since human behavior can’t always be completely predicted and integrated, since there is always the effect of accidental factors and spontaneous forces which are realized as ‘natural flows’ in the forever changeable environment, the system is constantly ‘improving’. We have ‘amendments and supplements’ and changes to the regulations all the time –in short, the institutional system constantly runs after its own shadow and wants to catch it and put it away in its drawers”. (Zupanov, J., 1983.)

The existence and functioning of only one party which wasn’t verified in the elections resulted in reducing the space and the potential of the political public; therefore the whole political sphere was deprived of an important dimension which could make it more democratic. However, not only the political public, but also the narrower public such as the party public, wasn’t conceived and respected as an autonomous, active and critical institution entrusted with the control and valorization of the public work and behavior of the officials, i.e. the selection and promotion of the “cadres”¹⁰. The cadre policy was out of the reach of the public, closed in certain “cadre niches” whose institutional cover were the various cadre commissions, i.e. coordination bodies for cadre politics. (Nedelkovski, @.,1992.)

Just as the ruling party was protected from political competition in the great bureaucratic sense – by the Constitution, the laws, the police and the political mechanism - the same applied to the party cadres, who enjoyed the benefits of the Party’s monopoly and inviolable position, and were spared the pains of both internal and external competition that would challenge them to a public debate and would compel a more active, public-oriented communication. In such circumstances, the Macedonian people were again left without any experience of parliamentary life. The truth is Macedonians participated in elections that were pre-arranged procedures for already determined candidates. As statistics show, the Macedonian citizen, as a self-manager, participated as a delegate in a large number of delegations. However, all that was done in these delegations was endless negotiating, compliance and voting, and so it was just an illusion that views and directions were being decided. Allegedly, these decisions were to be passed on for discussion on higher levels. In actuality, the final decisions were always made on the basis of the agreements reached by the Macedonian political elite. They were strictly enclosed within the Party and isolated from the indications which came from the people. These centers of power worked under the system of the so-called “Tito’s perpetuum mobile” (it kept functioning even after his death), i.e. the system of constant horizontal rotation of the Party cadres in the Republic or in the Federation. Despite the attempts at reforms in the socio-political and in the economic system, the Yugoslavian political elite didn’t manage to initiate a course of true changes.

The aberrations in the social sphere appeared everywhere across the SFRY, but got a stronger hold over the consciousness of the common people in some republics. In

¹⁰ By the end of 1981, the number of members of the AC of Yugoslavia reached 2,177,083. This accounted for 9% of the population of SFRY. In the same year, the number of the members of AC of Macedonia was 149.620, i.e. 7, 8% of the total population in SR Macedonia.

SR Macedonia, another important factor added up to the economic underdevelopment: the previous historical inexperience in building up the nation's own bourgeois state. The Association of Communists of Macedonia, which ruled for a long time (almost half a century), took the liberty to identify itself completely with the Macedonian state, with Macedonian society, with the Macedonian nation, i.e. with the different entities. All these entities, under the domination of the ACM, lost part of their subjectivism. These conditions left permanent marks on the social perception of many generations of Macedonian citizens brought up in the times of socialism. They would identify the political elite with the state and statehood. When the elite distanced itself from the people at the end of socialism, the people also distanced themselves from the elite. Even more importantly, the people distanced themselves from their own state. The people came to perceive it as a product of the "Others" that were privileged and stayed privileged in it. All of this caused the people to become less conscious of the constitutive nation, regardless of the ethnicity of the citizens. To all of this was added the sense of inferiority (in certain establishments the servility) of the Macedonian political elite to the stronger republican elites and to the highest elite on the federal level. The latter instilled in the Macedonian people, regardless of ethnicity, a feeling of political and economic inferiority.

Under the influence of ideology, equality in Yugoslavia was perceived literally as the equality of "empty stomachs", rather than as the equality of opportunities and in terms of the law. The ideology spread among the citizens, through its propaganda, this particular perception of equality. Therefore the root of dissatisfaction in Yugoslavia was different from the one that appeared in Poland and in the other socialist countries. The scientific interpretation of this syndrome is made by Dejan Jovic in his large study. He claims: "...the workers in Yugoslavia (and a large proportion of the rest of the population) protested against the social and other differences and demanded greater equality. Equality was the promise which Yugoslavian socialism didn't fulfill; the differences between the republics and the provinces and even between the different BOALs¹¹ and the production branches only deepened. While East European workers demanded more opportunities to express their differences (and therefore their primary value was pluralism), Yugoslavian workers demanded greater equality (and less pluralism). The Yugoslavian state was weakening by transferring some of its basic functions to society, while society was more and more covered by a net of private interests, bonds and acquaintances; this was exactly the opposite to developments in the countries with state socialism. The laws meant less and less, and there was also less will and strength to enforce them. One can't expect that those who perceive things in such a way will decide to strike. The dissatisfaction was manifested in another way: for example, in the form of a large number of sick leaves, which seen from an economic point of view had worse consequences than the strikes. And indeed, instead of political action to change the situation, the dissatisfied decided to go for a quiet boycott. The state tolerated the boycott because it was better than an active confrontation with the system. The grey economy was also tolerated, until the sick leaves and other forms of absenteeism became massive. According to Yugoslavian official statistics, as many as 700,000 people since 1983 were absent from work every day on a

¹¹ Soon after the adoption of the Constitution of SFRY in 1974, preparations were made to adopt the so-called Small Constitution, i.e. "The Law on Associated Labor" (1976). This law was treated as the "Workers' Constitution", designed to "deliver the economic and political power in the country to the associated workers". The main purpose of this law was to create the so-called Basic Organizations of Associated Labor (BOALs). As a product of these regulations, the creation of an enormous number of BOALs was initiated in all areas, even in the social spheres.

sick leave, 600,000 left their workplace every day for some kind of leave, and 400,000 went to various conferences and self-management meetings every day, instead of coming to work. The consequence of this was that (when you consider all the sorts of absences) instead of 8 hours of work per day, the average Yugoslavian worker would put in only 3 hours and 6 minutes per day... Socialism, both for ideological and practical reasons, developed a non-monetary exchange of goods and services, and the solidarity among people was often tolerated (if it was against the law), or it was encouraged (if it was in accordance with the law), as a replacement of monetary exchange. The people got used to living without (enough) money, while they basically knew that they could have more than their income allowed. In socialist times, one was able to get more without money (for example: state-owned apartments, enrollment at university, a privileged position in a hospital etc.) than one was able to buy with money in a capitalist system. The country was covered with a net of private 'connections': everybody would know their own doctor or mechanic, judge or butcher". (Jovic, D., 2003.) This net of private interests spread particularly in the time of the economic (and financial) crisis, when there wasn't enough money to pay for the goods and services, and especially when some products disappeared from the market. Then, for example, the sellers and the managers of the stores were the privileged individuals who were able to provide any type of connections and contacts to provide particular products. Even if the state was willing to break this chain, the question remains if it was able to do so at all.

The state also tolerated the widespread embezzlement of public property (especially in the construction business and similar enterprises), and the black market jobs through which many of the lower class citizens obtained material benefits. In SR Macedonia, for example, where the artificially created proletariat was torn in two, with one foot in the city and the other in the nearby village, the sick leaves and the absences escalated during the high season in agriculture. In the last decades of SFRY, the workers used to say publicly: "No one is able to pay us as little as we are able to work that little."

Only public corruption and the manifestations of luxury by the political elite could provoke social dissatisfaction. However, the Yugoslavian problem was that the elites succeeded in keeping their image of poor and modest people for a long time. This hypocrisy usually worked: modesty, and even poverty had a class connotation and were valued positively on the ideological level, while privileges and money making were getting more popular in real life. This is why the material status of the officials was a taboo. If it were disclosed to the public, the (self)deceit that a professional career in politics was motivated only by revolutionary dedication would disappear. In the biographies of politicians, the social references were connected only to their past (he/she comes from a workers' or a rural family: a poor family in any case). Because of class legitimacy, any data on the actual living standard and the social status of the former proletarians was excluded. With the deepening of the social crisis and the decrease in the living standard of the citizens, the authority of the policy and the politicians also dropped, and even their legitimacy was called into question. The things that were kept hidden from the public for years – the many material and other privileges of the politicians – became the target not only of public curiosity, but also of disapproval. "In a society where the sources of wealth are dubious and where the origin of property is being investigated, rather than that of poverty, the politician who cares about his/her career will not boast about his/her high living standard. Since he/she is not capable (as proven so far) of offering a political or an economic program which would help the people emerge from poverty, i.e. a program that would approach the people to his/her standard, the politician

uses the opposite maneuver - presents his/her standard in a more modest way in order to reduce the social gap which separates him/her from the people". (Nedelkovski, @.,1992.)

With the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, and the death of Edvard Kardelj a year before in 1979, the disorientation in SFRY was aggravated. The AC of Yugoslavia, perceived as a leading ideological force and constitutionally guaranteed, continued with the old practice even after Tito's death. Its results were measured by the number of sessions held and by the number of adopted documents (analyses, recommendations, conclusions...), with no regard for their application. This disorientation enabled certain individuals, especially in the more developed republics, to realize the futility of the political and state peak and build their own systems in the economy with the help of their own initiative and economic activities. This wasn't the case in Macedonia.

The federative Prime-Minister Ante Markovic carried out a devaluation of the dinar in 1991 (which had reached an enormous level of inflation before that) and fixed its rate. At the same time, the disintegration of SFRY was taking place. Throughout 1990, political parties were being created in Macedonia. Until the elections in November of that year, there were already 26 parties and organizations. However, none of these parties, although formally and legislatively established as citizen parties and associations, was a *de facto* citizens' party. Deciding on party affiliation went according to the national key. The first multi-party parliamentary elections were held on November 11, 1990. Hoping that the change of the system and of social relations would solve the problems in the economy and the aberrations in the social order, the Republic of Macedonia, looking up to the West European countries, embarked with enthusiasm upon the creation of a pluralistic society and a multi-party democracy. However, the tails of the aberrations from the former system were well grafted onto the existing dilemmas and transformations which characterize European parliamentary democracy. The confusion among the citizens grew when: "Europe turned out to be the continent in which power politics and national interest are still prominent features. It had never freed itself completely of nationalism and ethnic egoism. Politically, Europe remained divided. Economically, it never stopped struggling with crisis, budget deficits and unemployment". (Dignity and Truth; Civil Society and European Cooperation, 1996.) The development of Macedonian parliamentary democracy also found itself in the grip of the dilemmas and the disputes which typical of traditional European parliamentary democracies. An-Sesil Rober wrote: "The work on the establishment of true democracy has to begin immediately; a democracy where the central position will be allocated to the general voting right and the free, rational, public discussion of all problems. The gap which is widening in the western world before our eyes, between the social and the representative body, creates an area of insecurity in the freedoms which are already endangered by the assault of the free market". (Rober, A., 2003.)

At the first multi-party parliamentary elections in the Republic of Macedonia, there were 18 parties that nominated their candidates; there was one social organization and 43 independent candidates. The electoral battle involved mainly the following three blocks: the one led by the reformed communists from SKM – PDP, later called the Social-Democratic Alliance of Macedonia – SDSM (which won 31 MP seats); the national block, led by VMRO – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity – VMRO-DPMNE (won 38 MP seats); and the block of the Albanian parties, i.e. the Party for Democratic Prosperity – PDP and the National Democratic Party – NDP (won a total of 22 MP seats). The rest of the seats were taken by a few other parties and by independent candidates.

In accordance with legal provisions, preparations were being made for the second parliamentary elections in Macedonia in the fall of 1994. At the parliamentary election in 1994, the coalition Alliance for Macedonia, led by SDSM won over three thirds of MP seats, because the opposition block led by VMRO-DPMNE boycotted the elections. After winning the elections, Branko Crvenkovski was entrusted with making up the government again. The Parliamentary elections in 1998 were won by the coalition "For Changes", which included VMRO-DPMNE and the newly created Democratic Alternative (DA), while in the Albanian block the winner was the Democratic Party of the Albanians (DPA). The Prime Minister's position was appointed to the leader of VMRO-DPMNE Ljubco Georgievski. The last parliamentary elections were held in the fall of 2002, when the "Together for Macedonia" coalition won, led by SDSM and by the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI) in the Albanian block.¹²

The parliamentary life of every state has its specific features. At this point, we will look into two these features which we believe mark the parliamentary environment in the Republic of Macedonia:

1) The parliamentary compositions (if internal re-grouping doesn't take place) in accordance with the Constitution and the law have a guaranteed right to a four-year mandate, unless the Parliament decides to dissolve itself, i.e. when a two-thirds majority of the MPs vote for early elections. This constitutional and legal provision actually reduces the opportunity for early parliamentary elections. This can be seen from the functioning of Macedonian Parliament so far: four election cycles, four years each (this is also the case with the current composition: it was elected in 2002 and there are no conditions for its early dissolution). Therefore, we could presume from experience that the Macedonian MP is guaranteed a mandate of four years, regardless of the fact that the Macedonian public might want early elections, and might collect signatures in support of this alternative (as the situation was in 1995 or in cases when the social crisis might result in a military crisis, as in 2001). So far there is no opportunity for early parliamentary elections.

2) The political parties in the Republic of Macedonia were constituted as part of the process of constituting a civil society, expressed through the paradigm of political pluralism, free elections and functioning of the state ruled by law. However, only ethnic political parties were created on the Macedonian political scene¹³. At the time of their creation, they defined themselves through the political strategies of the different national identities. Consequently, only parties of the Macedonian people and of the minorities were created. The common characteristic of the parties involved defending the positions of the national group. In other words, belonging to a certain ethnic group proved the

¹² For the 2002 parliamentary election three new election laws were enacted. All elections since 1990 including the parliamentary elections of 1990 and 1994 were conducted in accordance with the election law of SRM. This law had numerous shortcomings. In 1998 a new election law was passed that substantially improved the entire election process but it was noticed that most instances of electoral violence used to occur between the two rounds of voting. For this reason the government started working in 2001 on introducing an electoral system that would provide for only one voting round. The new law is simplifying the election system by introducing a single method of proportional representation. All registered political parties had to right to propose party lists for each of the six electoral units. Each list contained 20 names of candidates, since electoral district elected 20 members of parliament. According to these laws the MPs have a professionalized MP function, meaning that this MP function demands complete dedication, because is not compatible with other function or professional engagement.

¹³ So far, out of the registered (68) political parties 39 are Macedonians, 10 are Albanians, 5 are Roma, 3 parties each have the Serbs and the Turks, and 2 parties each have the Vlachs and the Bosnians.

legitimized foundation of every citizen. However, in political philosophy these systems are considered to be closed systems (Mojanoski, C., 1996). As a result of this process, instead of the free and a responsible citizen the obedient ethnic subject appeared. Instead of being loyal and accountable to the law and the state, he/she is loyal and accountable only to his/her own ethnic group, i.e. his/her own ethnic party. Therefore instead of the relationship citizen – party – state, the relationship obedient subject – ethnicity – ethnic party emerged. The free citizen, as in the days socialism, is still swallowed by the collective ideology and practice. The Western countries (with a tradition of parliamentary democracy) have posited the individual as the carrier of all freedoms and rights, but also of all responsibilities and obligations in the state. Actually, only when every person is free to think and publicly express his/her opinion as an individual, is he/she a citizen in the true sense of the word, and only then can he/she be held accountable. “If this is not so, he/she will constantly avoid this civil responsibility and seek support in the ‘arms’ of his/her ethnicity or religious community, certain that his/her co-members will protect him/her from the ‘Others’. Hence, instead of integration into a community of citizens, the Republic of Macedonia experienced disintegration of the social layer on an ethnic basis”. (Skalovski, D., 1997). Because of this specific feature of parliamentary communication in Macedonia, collective (ir)responsibility was revitalized, but not on the level of the various delegations and delegates, but on the level of the different ethnic communities.

II. The Member of Parliament: between the identity and the social role.

In order to better understand and realize contemporary controversies, we need to go back first to defining the individual as part of either the political elite or the public, because the individual (the person) is the smallest element of society. An individual is inseparable, as Schelling has stated; he/she cannot be in two places at the same time and cannot be both superior and inferior in the same context...(Schelling T., 1978). The efforts to briefly disclose the essence of the individual’s functioning in a society have produced two very useful (based on a different approach, but quite similar) interpretations which come from two different quarters: anthropologist Mary Douglas and philosopher-political scientist Honi Fern Haber. In Douglas’s view, the individual does not represent a purely isolated rational subject that makes his/her choices independently; the individual finds himself/herself and his/her identity as an incorporated individual of a morally conscious social world consisting of communities preserved and articulated by their institutions. (Douglas M.,1986). Haber, on the other hand, believes that every one of us is a member of different communities and that those communities don’t institute a coherent or uniform, in the sense of essential or invariable, entity... “the subject is never singular or autonomous, but always exists as a member of a certain community; the subject is always ‘subject in a community ’... The idiom ‘subject in a community’ was not formulated to represent a static entity. Because the subject is a member of a number of communities and that is why it is essentially *pluralia tantum*, it is also subject to re-description.” (Haber F. H., 1994.). In this context, personal identity “is constructed by socially valid narratives that bind the life of the individual with that of the group. By the same token, identities are never completely stable but in conflicts, splits and flux - being at the same time an object of stabilization and of ‘naturalization’ by social and cultural institutions.” On the other hand, “the social role is based on the theatrical metaphor, which tries to present the patterns of behavior of social actors as role-playing in a certain conventionalized and usually also institutionalized context.” (Materials, Project “Roles, Identities and Hybrids”, 2003). While accepting the process of interaction between the

social role and the identity as inseparable segments of personality, it should be emphasized that their balance is in permanent fluctuation, which results in transformation both of the individual and of others' attitude towards him/her.

For our purposes, the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia (1991), as the highest expression of social agreement, will not be analyzed from a legal/normative aspect, but as one of the greatest social conventions/institutions. The Constitution provides the premises for parliamentary democracy and therefore the political parties and the Parliament are institutions "in a sense of legitimized social grouping" (Douglas, M., 1986.). They have their common (reciprocally habilitated and coordinated) patterns of action and interaction (specific communication, written and unwritten codes of behavior) as well as common patterns as mediators of symbolic, agreed rituals etc.(Materials Project Roles, Identities and Hybrids, 2003.) In this context, the mutual correlation between the social role and the identity of the individual who participates in the electoral process as a possible parliamentary candidate goes through several phases. In view of these transformations, public opinion regarding this individual is also transformed. When the political elite is in question (as in our case, the Members of Parliament (MPs) of the Republic of Macedonia), the individual goes through *four phases* in the electoral process typical of a parliamentary democracy.

In a narrow sense, politics represents striving for participation in and allocation of power, or participation in the distribution of power in the state. In the case of MPs, the goal is to obtain an MP mandate, i.e. a constitutionally defined social function of prestige and power. To put it in the language of simple symbolism, the goal is the power contained in the empty seat in the Parliament building. The individual tries to leave his/her name and mark on the chair for as long as possible. This is why the *first phase* represents the phase of facing the challenge: leaving the anonymity of everyday life and the facelessness of the mass behind. The length of this phase is individually determined and depends largely on the personal characteristics and the starting position in the social stratification. At this point we will list some of those personal characteristics typical of the Republic of Macedonia and we will try provisionally to list them in order of importance: the personal position in the party configurations, i.e. experience and activity in a certain political party and the party's rating in society; the ability to know the right people in the right places, i.e. family, friendly and professional ties; experience in political life; level of education, competency and expertise; eloquence; prestige of the family background; personal prestige and social respect; popularity; dedication to societal goals etc. (the last ones refer only to independent candidates for MPs).

The reasons for making a step towards becoming a possible MP candidate can be found in the individual's motives. Those motives can be as multiple, intertwined and diverse for each individual as there are individuals. Max Weber's theory says there are two basic types of motives for the individual decide to become an active politician: firstly, there are those that motivate people who "live 'for' politics", and secondly, those that motivate people who "live 'off' politics". Weber points out: "He who lives 'for' politics make politics his life, in an internal sense. He either enjoys the naked possession of the power he exerts, or he nourishes his inner balance and self-esteem with the consciousness that his life has meaning in terms of the service of a 'cause'. In this internal sense, every sincere man who lives for a cause also lives off this cause. The distinction hence refers to a much more substantial aspect of the matter, namely, to the economic. He who strives to make politics a permanent source of income lives 'off' politics as a vocation." (Weber, M., 1919.)

On the basis of Weber's primary distinction between types of politicians and their different primary motives, we will attempt to make an analysis of the structure of motives of the individual who embarks on a political career. We will try to introduce another distinction within the frame of Weber's paradigm, which we will only conditionally dub "idealistic" and "egoistic" motives. Hence, the first group of motives ("to live 'for' politics") contains two subgroups – those with "idealistic" and with "egoistic" motives. The motives where the "idealistic" perspective dominates involve: "the feeling of being an influential person, and above all the feeling of keeping one's hand on the pulse of historically important events; hope to do justice to this power (however narrowly circumscribed it may be in the individual case)" (Weber, M., 1919.); to be part of a country's development; to do something for one's community/fatherland; gaining society's recognition etc. The "egoistic" variant of the motives of those who "live 'for' politics" are connected to the fact that a career in politics grants a feeling of power. A feeling of self-activated value results from the context and performance of power. Therefore, the rituals of expressing respect and personal prestige, which go together with the social functions like speeches given to public applause, media presence, gaining a greater prestige as a V.I.P., protocols during official dinners and banquets, state privileges like an official car with a chauffeur, business trips, residences in elite parts of the town etc., can all be listed as some of those motives.

Those whose aim is to "live 'off' politics" can also be divided into two subtypes. We will, also, conditionally dub them "idealistic" and "egoistic". The former are related to the motives for providing a regular and reliable income that will accrue in the case of those in top political positions (prospects are as good as in any other prestigious successful career or position); career development (prospects are as good as in any other prestigious successful career or position); career change (if it is discovered later that there is talent and passion for politics); change of residence (mostly from the provinces to the metropolis, (prospects are as good as in any other prestigious career or position) etc. The second, "egoistic" type of motives, of those who want to "live 'off' politics", involve all types of opportunities for legal and illegal ways of making money.¹⁴ We can still differentiate between two categories even in this type of politician: one category includes those who do it for profit derived from investment in the domestic economy, which means that they will invest their own money, (without going into detail about its sources), in the economic capacities of the country and will expect profit and a feeling of power over the employees in return. Another category includes those who do it only for money. This distinction is very important. In a society at the stage of economic transition (such as Macedonian society), in a situation of privatization of large chunks of "public property", the country's economic turnover rises as the motives for obtaining bigger profit are realized. Consequently, there will be opportunities for development of the state sectors, which would result in new jobs (the gravest social problem in the Republic of Macedonia is the enormous percentage of unemployed). On the other hand, the race for money and personal wealth, deposited mostly in foreign banks, only leads to impoverishment of the country. The latter group, if they don't publicly manifest their own welfare, are still able to keep up the image of a modest individuals with the help of perfect mimicry. As Weber says: "To be certain, pure types are rarely found in reality: today we deal with the highly complex variants, transitions and combinations of these pure types." (Weber, M., 1919.)

¹⁴ In the Republic of Macedonia, these motives are often related to the MPs' taking advantage of his/her position at any cost in order to use it as a starting point towards a position in the executive branch, i.e. to get where the real power lies and where big money and opportunities for making money are in question.

The basic thread that connects all these groups and subgroups and their variants of motives is political power. Power is desired not only because it serves personal interests, values or social views, but also because of the power itself and the emotional and material rewards that are inherent to possessing and using it. (Galbraith, J.K., 1983).

The *second phase* in the metamorphosis of the individual that wants to enter politics as an MP is the phase when the appointed social function – candidate for MP from a certain political party - is inflicted on his personal identity. This phase is the shortest and is determined by legal regulations which announce the beginning and the end of the electoral process. In the meantime, an active election campaign takes place. From the perspective of role-theory, “the role becomes a category of social action and is defined in relation to the function of the actor who fulfills the role substance”. (Materials Project Roles, Identities and Hybrids, 2003.)

During the turbulent time of the election campaign, all registered political parties put forward their candidates for the 120 empty seats in Parliament. When there is a general voting right and when the electorate consists of thousands (and millions) of voters who are supposed to elect the representatives, the election procedure and the formation of public opinion turns into a complicated process. The political parties are assigned the task to try and make order out of the chaos of having a large number of voters. They should also be responsible for formulating the general or common will, i.e. the will of the majority. Throughout this process, they are focused on discovering and formulating the average public opinion on the basis of the individual, separate opinions and wills. In this way, the parties mobilize the citizens to accept common opinions, and tend to function as a strong factor for the organization of public opinion through different types of action (party rallies, conferences, congresses, media, demonstrations etc.). Therefore it can be assumed that the political parties are the most obvious example of institutions which “do the classifying for us”. During the election process and after its end, they actively try to perform what Douglas defined as: “squeezing each other’s ideas into common shape so that we can prove rightness by sheer numbers of independent assent” (Douglas, M. 1986).

In order to perform this, the political parties recruit (as far as their funding allows), besides their loyal followers and their candidates for MP’s, a large number of professionals who organize and orchestrate the political campaign of the party. These professionals belong to different professional categories: intellectuals, directors, advertising companies, photographers, actors, singers, composers, journalists, skilled and unskilled quill pens, mediators etc. The most important place belongs to all media which enliven the media propaganda. Throughout the villages and cities, we come across the faces of the candidates smiling from the posters which are marked with the party names, symbols and colors; in our mailboxes, we get leaflets with photos and perfect résumés of the candidates. In front of the TV cameras, the party leaders and candidates debate about possible solutions to the large number of problems born out of the transition and try to derogate the rival by distinguishing themselves. They all promise they are the only ones who know where the emergency exit from the crisis lies. In public, they all display “deep respect” and concerned understanding towards their own people and everyday troubles. All this process involves maximum use and enforcement of what Galbraith calls “conditional power”.

In Galbraith’s words, “conditional power is a result of the objective and a visibly constructed belief that a thing which a person in the social context has been forced to believe in, is by nature rightful” (Galbraith, J.K., 1983). Another aspect, highlighted by Michel Foucault, makes us aware that modern power is distinguished by all other forms of power, because it is “disciplinary” and “confessable” and its aim is to normalize and

create obedient and useful human beings. These approaches toward the general definition of the term power may also be used for the explanation of political power and its attempt during the election period to influence strongly all individuals by using all available tools and instruments.

During this process, a candidate who has been nominated for MP does not have his/her personal power, but uses abundantly the power of the organization, i.e. the political party which supports him. Hence, his identity is lost in the social role by transforming him into what might be called a synthetic, i.e. imaginary person. In their political speeches he and his leader (the President of the party) address the audience, which has to be already conditioned to believe in their capabilities and their solutions. Speech writers need only to adjust their thoughts and expressions to those things which are already part of the faith of the people. The power of this type of speaker is “the power of the prophet, who after analyzing the clouds, says the prayer for the rain”. When these types of people are successful in their work, they feign self-identification with the conditioned power of the people and then declare to them their own goals. The real power of a speaker is judged by the fact how successfully he can persuade the followers to accept his/her solutions to their problems and his method of accomplishing their goals. (Galbraith, J.K., 1983) Only time will show what facts lie behind the words.

In the election process, political parties are fundamental promoters of the election program and of the MP candidates, who are required to show loyalty to the political party by which they were nominated. From this constellation of relations between the party and its selected MPs derives the dilemma whether we can still talk about a free mandate to the Parliament, which is guaranteed by the Constitution and its provisions, or we should talk about an altered character of the political party mandate. German scholar Leibholz has come to the conclusion that “modern democracy has an attribute of partisan and state democracy, i.e. democracy built upon political parties as political operational units.” According to him, “this democracy is nothing more but a surrogate for immediate democracy in a modern state.” (Leibholz, G., 1966).

The pre-election campaign is a time when citizens' senses are bombarded with platforms and promises made by the political parties. In the first few years of Macedonia's independence, the candidates from the small parties (those who didn't have strong economic support) began to visit the houses of the voters from their area. But soon this practice was adopted by the bigger parties, too. Consequently, at the zenith of the campaign, everyone can become, albeit unintentionally, an actor in the pre-election reality show. The situation is the following: it is a pre-election night, after 9 p.m., and somebody unexpectedly rings the door bell. The “who is it?” question is answered by a local party activist: “Please open, this is not an intruder, you are safe. Our party candidate would like to speak with you”. Opening the door, (with the hairbrush in one hand, the hairdryer in the other and half-dried hair) we enter the world of the Nushic's comedies. On the other side of the door, the MP candidate introduces himself: “I am E.T.”, and his team laugh, confused, realizing they knocked at the door at the wrong time. After courteously closing the door, the following questions can be asked: What was expected from this “meeting” between the MP candidate and the people? Will he not, after he is elected, arrogantly make up for the humiliation he felt while knocking at people's doors? This is an example of the victory of the social role – MP candidate – that has completely overwhelmed the identity of the individual, who has the wish to become part of the political elite. The re-description of his/her identity is taking place.

The *third phase* in the change of the MP candidate, is the phase when the mandate is obtained.¹⁵ In any case, those MP's who have obtained an MP mandate from the political party that has won the election, or candidates from a political party that has an opportunity to participate in the governing coalition, are in a more powerful position.¹⁶ However, the political position of an opposition MP should not be underestimated, because political struggles don't amount to who gets control over the state or economic power; they can also be more precisely defined as struggles for the popular ways in which power is realized. In the third phase, the MP's social role represents a category of social communication which can be defined in relation to the expectations of the partners. In our specific case, we have the political parties that have nominated the MP candidates on the one hand, and on the other hand we have the citizens who have voted for the candidates.

In contemporary parliamentary democracies, from the perspective of constitutional-legal regulation, the representative, i.e. the "free" mandate is dominant. "The rights and duties of the MP's are not determined by the will of the voters, but are determined by the Constitution and the law, like the other state bodies; they get their position with the voters' help, and get their power with the help of the legislator" (Ristovska, M., 2002.). Therefore, in a legal sense, as long as their mandate lasts, the MP's are completely independent from the voters; they vote and speak at their own choice, and don't have to hold on to the voter's will. However, from the perspective of social determination it is not exactly true that there is no real dependency between the MP's and the voters: there is a mutual social and political bond. The necessity for renewal of the Parliament's composition should keep the MP attentive to the will and interests of the voters if he/she wants to be elected again. Verification of whether the MP's are doing their job properly is performed in periodical elections. Also, MP's dependence from the voters is influenced by the fact that, according to the Constitution, the representative body can be dismissed before the legal deadline; the bond also depends on how the opportunity for announcing early elections is regulated and how feasible it is.

However, today the free MP mandate displays certain characteristics of the so-called imperative mandate, where political parties are the institutions assigning the mandates. The domination of the political parties in the state sector and in political life has largely influenced the changes in the structure and functioning of Parliament. On the one hand, the Parliament's status of a central institution where political decisions are made is apparently unchanged, but in reality it has turned into an institution where the MP's make formal decisions as instructed by their parties. (Ristovska, M., 2002.) The political parties are those who provide the MPs' loyalty, discipline and accountability to the party which has nominated them¹⁷. Although the voters don't influence the candidacy procedure, they decide on one party and its electoral program, which at the same time means verification of the confirmed candidates for the Party Shortlist. The question whether the MP should be instructed by the will and interests of the voters is replaced by

¹⁵ Those who won't succeed to get elected are left with the option to either give up trying to obtain this function, or go back to the initial phase. Sometimes these individuals change their party colours by joining another, "more perspective" party. In case the party they belong to won the elections, but they are not on the MP list, then it is up to the party combinations to provide them a place in the first executive echelon, and even more certain in the second one. For loyal services today, party leaders give offices of all sorts - in parties, newspapers, co-operative societies, insurance, municipalities, as well as in the state.

¹⁶ Their position becomes even stronger in case they manage to transfer into the executive authorities, but in that case these officials are no longer MPs and are not an issue of our observation.

¹⁷ It is certain that introducing the proportional election system has a large influence on this occurrence, because the direct relationship between the voters and their representatives is diminished by voting for the Party Lists. The proportional system was introduced in the R. of Macedonia in 2002.

the question of the MP's responsibility to follow his party's line. The big political parties appear powerful enough to provide this in reality. In a situation where the MP's turn into disciplined party soldiers, the old dilemma of the nature of the relationship between an MP and the voters has more of an academic, than a practical political meaning.¹⁸

The relationship between the MP's and the political parties is also current from a constitutional-legal viewpoint. The question is to what extent the influence of the parties over their MP's should be balanced in a constitutional and legal sense. To put it in a different way, the measures of party discipline or forcefulness should be limited, but the constitutional provision of the free mandate should be adhered to at the same time. Party discipline can be enforced in different ways, which secure loyalty from the MP. Practice shows that the use of financial levers, i.e. the economic power on which the MP's depend as professional politicians, is quite common. There is a popular trend toward investing large amounts in each subsequent election cycle. The heaviest sanction against a disloyal MP is his exclusion from the party, by which he automatically loses the right to another mandate. According to the Law on Election of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, a candidate's mandate, if obtained in a legal election, cannot be lost as a result of conflict with or dissociation from the party that has nominated him/her.

On the other hand, there is an issue that needs to be solved regarding the lack of loyalty to the political party and the possibility of abandoning the party by the Members of Parliament, which may cause conflicts in Parliament and the formation of new parliamentary majorities. This kind of situation could lead to a continued political instability and parliamentary crisis. Switching party colors is usually followed by scandals, buying MP seats and corruption. There was a similar situation in the Republic of Macedonia when the governing coalition of VMRO-DPMNE and DA in 2000 dissolved and when both parties, weakened, began to lose their MP's. In such cases, the issue that is left open is to what extent the MP's are allowed to misuse the legal provisions related to the free mandate, i.e. switch parties without prior verification with the voters.

For those MP's who find themselves representatives of the parties in executive government, it is important that the party stays faithful to its pre-election platform and promises. It is clear that all pre-election promises are not always manageable in practice. But still, when there is complete disharmony between the promises and the political practice, and if this gap is added to the tough economic and social situation in the country (as in the case of the Republic of Macedonia), then the MP is left with the dilemma: should he/she follow the strategy of his/her party despite the fact that it violates the pre-election promises to the voters, or should he/she oppose the party's directives in a constructive way. It is a wider issue how much space the MP has for manipulation and maneuvering, i.e. performance. In this case, the qualities to which Weber refers, when he describes politicians, are displayed: "The 'strength' of a political 'personality' means in the first place, the possession of these qualities: passion, a feeling of responsibility and a sense of proportion. Therefore, daily and hourly the politician inwardly has to overcome a quite trivial and all-too-human enemy: a quite vulgar vanity, the deadly enemy of all matter of fact devotion to a cause, and of all distance, in this case, of distance towards one's self." (Weber, M., 1919.). However, not all MP's possess a part of these necessary

¹⁸ In this way, there is a possibility for the democratic process to go back to the beginning of the XX century. Weber wrote the following about this process: "Nowadays the Members of the Parliament, with the exemption of the few cabinet members (and the few insurgents) are normally nothing better than well-disciplined "Yes" man. The Member of the Parliament must only vote, not commit party treason. He must appear when the whips call him and do what cabinet or the leader of the opposition order". (Weber, M., 1919.).

prerogatives. In the Republic of Macedonia, where there are no traditions in parliamentary life, Weber's required qualities are truly a rarity.

From this perspective, the opposition MP is in a more relaxed position. His/her party makes constant efforts to foreground the mistakes of the governing party and use them for propaganda purposes. This is the most important role that the opposition should play in a parliamentary democracy. The problem with the opposition appears when, instead of criticizing the government for its objective or subjective mistakes, it criticizes without any foundation and at all costs (Macedonian parliamentary inexperience has a direct influence over this type of behavior by the opposition, regardless of party affiliation). In this situation also, the MP is compelled to choose between his/her opinion and the party directives. However, for both the opposition and the governing MP's, Douglas's conclusion is valid: "in the complex hierarchy, a combination of coercion multiple cross-ties, conventions, and interest explain a lot, but not everything about the commitment of individuals to the larger group. In most forms in society hidden sequences catch individuals in unforeseen traps and hurl them down paths they never chose." (Douglas, M., 1986).

The MP is appointed to a political position where he can take advantage of the institution's power: the Parliament and the political party. In the third phase, the crucial motives are the same as they are in the first phase, and have to do with a relationship between the individual and his/her social role: the personal motives for joining the political elite of the country. What is unsettling is the fact that in the recent 14 or 15 years of the development of parliamentary democracy in the Republic of Macedonia, a tendency can be noticed towards domination of "egoistic" motives over "idealistic" ones, in people who have decided to live "for" or "off" politics. To be even more accurate: even with those MP's who entered politics guided by different "idealistic" motives there is a transition towards "egoistic" motives. In a situation when the MP as an individual couldn't realize his/her own ideas and convictions, he/she tends to give up on them. In the small space for personal movement, the MP begins to see him/herself as deprived of the representative's character, and ends up executing party orders. The MP then sees the option of turning towards acquiring material possessions in order to better use the four-year mandate. Therefore, we agree that: "the rational individual is tied into a complex set of relations in which he must act trustfully because he has no choice. In the weak form, he has some choice and if he chooses against cooperation he will wreck the whole show. Then, the answer comes; social sanction will be applied to penalize uncooperative behavior." (Douglas, M., 1986). If this is not done by the political party, then the voters will certainly do it in the next election.

The *fourth phase* of the balancing between the MP's identity and the social role is the phase when the individual loses the MP mandate. The reasons can be plenty: the individual's party has lost the elections; reduction of the MP seats in Parliament; not getting a candidacy for the new election cycle; distrust expressed by the voters, the party; sometimes a personal choice not to enter a new election race etc. The synthetic person, separated from the power of the institution, dissolves and turns into the label "former MP".

In the case of Macedonia, we will focus on the fourth phase of the correlation between the identity and the social role on the basis of the so-called "Slobodan Danevski Law on MPs" (the name of the law comes from the name of the MP who has put it forward). Even the widest open poll among the MPs (both current and former ones) wouldn't be able to give such clear insights into the various unpleasant questions related to the privileged social position of the MP, as the provisions of this document do. This

specifically concerns the benefits derived by MPs in Macedonian society. Even more importantly, what this document represents are the benefits desired by the MPs after their mandate has expired. This law went through Parliament by a huge, two-to-one majority. However, this law has never become effective in practice. The reason for this inconsistency will be discussed further down as we look into the roots of the repulsion of the Macedonian citizens towards the MP position. But let us start from the beginning. Let us try to locate the motives behind the MP's need to vote for this law.

The detailed analysis of the four parliamentary compositions in Macedonia, in the past 14 or 15 years, indicates that out of the total of 480 MP mandates (four 4-year cycles which comprise 120 mandates), only one fifth includes a small number of individuals who were MPs in two, three and (very few) in the four parliamentary compositions. Very often these MPs belong to the highest leading positions of the political parties. The rest, i.e. approximately four fifths of all MP mandates in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, are temporarily taken by individuals who have had only one mandate. The candidate lists and the MP compositions show that a great majority of the MPs hardly ever appear as candidates of the political parties in the next election cycle, regardless of the popularity of the party and of its expectations concerning the election results. Thus, the political parties (both those that have been in power and those in opposition), "dissatisfied" with their parliamentary representatives, "put forward a new program", its only content being "the new MP candidates". Naturally, this involves no major changes in the leadership of the party. In this way the signals which the parties are sending to the public and public opinion are clear: the new election cycle will offer new "uncorrupted" individuals. Realizing the "MP faith" of the huge majority of their former colleagues, the MPs from the 1998-2002 parliamentary composition tried to effect fundamental changes in terms of their social position, i.e. in particular the position of a former MP. The law that we already mentioned, the "Slobodan Danevski Law on MPs", was submitted by the end of 2000.

What does this law actually involve? Besides its positive tendency to fully codify and professionalize the MP position through only one legislative act, it also comprises interesting provisions for state benefits for all former MPs (both for the previous two mandates in Parliament and for the future mandates). This legislative project openly provides: 1) the MPs will be entitled to an "MP pension" after only 25 years of service at the age of 50. For comparison, the regular retirement in Macedonia is obtained after 35-40 years of service or at the age of 60-63; 2) for those MPs who do not meet the requirements for this advantageous retirement plan, this act provides that the government is responsible for employing them in a state service, i.e. in state institutions; 3) MPs are granted the privilege to keep their diplomatic passport for life; and 4) MPs enjoy the benefits related to the free use of all types of transport (plane, bus or train) for life. Although, at first sight, if seen from the perspective of the parliamentary experience of the developed countries, the banality of their "wishes" may be astonishing, if they are analyzed one by one, in the context of Macedonian society, and in the light of the still present socialist mentality, they seem quite "logical". The first "wish" is to become a young retiree, and if it is impossible to realize this advantageous retirement plan (due to an insufficient number of years of service or age) then the goal is to secure a government service. This "wish" is directly connected to the increasing unemployment rate and the economic insecurity in the Republic, and therefore the "wish" is in accordance with the old socialist practice – existence is secure when transferred to a state account. The second "wish" is to keep the diplomatic passport after their mandate has expired. Without insinuating there is any misuse of these passports, it is a fact that in Macedonia, because

of the visa restrictions, every travel arrangement is extremely difficult to realize. Thus, the diplomatic passport represents a benefit which allows MPs to travel freely around the world. Some of the complicated visa procedures are extremely humiliating for the average citizen, and therefore the “logical consequence of events” is that such humiliation shouldn’t be experienced by the former MPs. According to the provisions of this law, the travels of the former MPs also should be free. This is particularly advantageous especially when air transport is concerned. In the developed states, air fares don’t take up a substantial part of the household budget, but in Macedonia, where there is unemployment and employees do not regularly receive their salaries, air fares are something to be considered.

It can be seen from this draft law that the social benefits which Macedonian MPs believe they should enjoy even after their mandate has expired, result not only from their greed but are also due to the fact they face a once-in-a-lifetime political opportunity. Therefore, through a law, they have made an attempt to obtain state privileges after their mandate has expired. This attempt had to be made while they still had the right to vote and decide. (This act was a manifestation of complete solidarity, not only among themselves but also with regard to their predecessors and successors in the MP position). Our attempt to present the position of the MP in Macedonian society doesn’t include the tendency to make them “victims of the system”. That is impossible, because they are part of the establishment, i.e. the political elite which creates the social order. The MPs, with their inability to undertake true reforms in the social, political and economic system of the Republic (which would result in new employments, economic and social security) are facing the fact that after their mandate has expired they will return to being wealthy yet “ordinary citizens”. So they have maneuvered reversely. Because they were unable to ensure these civil rights for their voters, they have tried to at least obtain them for themselves. The consequence is the resignation and the aversion of the population in the Republic of Macedonia towards the political elite in general, and towards the MPs in particular, i.e. the “representatives of the people”.

III. The Republic of Macedonia – the process of increasing social deviations.

The deviations from the previous long-lasting socialist system have a strong effect in many contemporary social spheres. For the purposes of this project, we will focus our attention on a few of them: those which are at the root of the deep resignation and aversion of the common people towards the political elite.

The socialist self-management was a system which privileged the workers institutionally, and the chaos enabled them to shirk their responsibilities. With the change of the system, the worker was suddenly exposed to the labor market. Therefore his position in the self-management system was at once erased from his/her record. The worker turned into a “production factor” that could find him/herself out of the factory in case the market situation of the company changes. This reality for sure represented a transition shock for the larger part of the population, which, indoctrinated by the previous system, thought it was competent in all issues in the factory, the company, the country.

The transformation of the economies in the developed countries represents a transformation of the system without abandoning its essential characteristics, i.e. the system stays basically unchanged. The transition in the former socialist states represents an effort to step into a completely new system without keeping any of the old characteristics: a situation that is closer to revolution than evolution. A result of this fundamental turnover, among other things, is the introduction of the free market and its economic rules. All of this brought the closing or restructuring of the larger economic

facilities in the Republic of Macedonia. This directly affected the rate of unemployment, the number reaching about 360.000 by the end of 2000. The number keeps going up and is getting dangerously close to the number of the employed in the Republic. This tendency has had an obvious effect on the fall in the living standard and the increase of people's dissatisfaction.

Unemployment has led to tension in the social structure, because the resulting poverty did not equally hit all strata and groups in society. The ones who were most affected were the workers and that part of the administration that was made redundant as a result of the failure of factory production; the technocratic structures were least affected, or not affected at all. The sharp differentiation in the market position changed the social correlation: the technocratic structure connected with some parts of the political elite became the employer; the administration (what was left of it) became a privileged stratum (it receives small but regular salaries), while the production workers became just hired laborers.

Unemployment has deepened social differences. While there is normal stratification (continuum of moderate differences) between the employees, the economic and social gap between the employed and the unemployed is vast (the unemployed are deprived of their rights in many important areas; they can't even formally be a member of the Syndicate (trade union), because it is an organization of the employed). The social structure here is dichotomous and based on inequality.

Over the last decades of the socialist self-management period, vertical social mobility got tougher: a process which accelerated progressively and is current today. Thus, the horizontal, i.e. the territorial mobility through economic emigration of young highly qualified staff is on the rise. Those who haven't left yet, and who successfully complete their studies, are not able to find a job in certain professions. They can't make the final step towards upward mobility. Therefore they stay outside of the professional system for years, trying to pull bigger and smaller strings, or use money to land a certain job. As a consequence of limited opportunities for social mobility, the social structure has become less flexible, the social strata have become hermetic and the social gap has widened. In the mind of an ordinary man (shaped by the past socialist order where he/she got used to the equality of the "empty stomach") the disappointment grows every year.

"Solidarity is the force which keeps society together. E. Durkheim, the classic sociologist, differentiates between two types of solidarity: mechanical and organic. The mechanical type is based on collective attitudes, while the organic one is based on the interdependency of the roles which are a product of the social division of labor". (Zupanov, J.,1983.) In the Republic of Macedonia, because of the increase of poverty, society has gone back to the mechanical solidarity typical of pre-modern societies. The family circle has not only occupied the central position in the individual's life, but it also means much more, so much so that it could be compared to the traditionally pre-modern family community. For example, the family looks for connections and obtains them in order to enroll the children in school; it tries to establish connections in order to enroll the children in college; it looks for employment and discreetly corrupts officials; it obtains accommodation, where very often different generations live together; it takes over the burden of the costs of the student and the unemployed young person. Just like his/her peer of 200 years ago, the young person cannot rely on the other institutions in the state except for his/her family. He/she cannot emancipate from the family at an early age as his/her peer from the developed countries can. This mechanical solidarity ensures upward mobility in the family collective, and then in society groups such as ethnic communities. The development of the parallel system of contacts, connections and privileges, created

during socialism and based on non-monetary exchange of goods and services, still functions in the shape of the principle “favor for favor”, and currently even more so on the level of family and ethnic relations. Both the political elite and the technocratic structures are not immune to these deformations, so nepotism is an everyday occurrence in society.

Despite the opportunities for public boycotts and strikes to press the government (in fact, these methods hardly ever work) and to solve at least some of the pressing problems, the Macedonian citizen continues to use the so-called quiet boycott as a means of putting up resistance and expressing dissatisfaction. The citizen, has had long decades of similar experience. Today, due to the transformation of capital from public into private, he/she cannot be absent from work through sick leaves and endless meetings. So when the opportunity arises, (if he/she is not satisfied with the treatment in the firm or the factory), he/she will quietly boycott the quality of the products or services. In this way he/she is also sparing his/her strength for the private overtime job. As far as his/her own State is concerned, because it belongs only to the “Others”, the privileged ones, he/she sees it as distant. Consequently, whenever he/she has the opportunity, he/she uses the principles of the Cunning Pejo wisdom: trying to find a way around the law or cracks in the rules of the game in his/her favor¹⁹. The rule “everything that is not explicitly forbidden seems to be allowed” is valid in democratic societies. Therefore in the Republic of Macedonia, in which the legislation is not yet complete, (and is marked by the permanent changes from one to another political structure) one can always find “loops” in the laws and in legal regulations. Socialism taught both the “important” and the “common” people to take advantage of the constant “amendments and supplements” of legal provisions.

As we are approaching the end of this work, we will review the dissatisfaction, resignation and the aversion of the public towards the political elite and its representatives through specific sources: through one article from the Macedonian press and through the surveys conducted by the Institute for Sociological Political and Juridical Research based in Skopje (as a national indicator), and the surveys of the International Republican Institute based in Washington (IRI) (as an international indicator).

We still need to make a short digression which concerns the phenomenon of rumours. The reason lies in the fact that among the Macedonian public, as a heritage from the previous systems, rumours still play an important role. Rumours are in the media and form the content of the so-called informal, spontaneous, institution-independent, illegal, parallel, alternative, or hidden public opinion. The oral version in which they are created, delivered or exchanged, the anonymity and the openness of their messages, the unpredictable variety of their content, the usual discretion or the conspiracy during the delivery, and a number of other additional difficulties, make research on them very hard and precarious. This problem can be partly solved by reducing the empirical material to rumours registered in the press or given in the declarations of the public officials, i.e. rumours which have passed through the field of public communication and left their trace²⁰. (Nedelkovski, Z.,1997.) We find this small digression to be necessary because it

¹⁹ Cunning Pejo is a popular character from the Macedonian folk stories from the period of the Ottoman rule in Macedonia. He constantly came up with ways to by pass the Turkish law and tried to outsmart his rival, the Turk Nasradin – Odja.

²⁰ “The truth is not foreign to the rumors and is not their weak side; it even happens, not rarely, that the truth transforms into a type of a rumor, because the media has closed its doors. Therefore it is not true that the rumor is a synonym for a lie and a fiction. If there weren’t true rumors, they wouldn’t exist. They would simply dry out and disappear because the people, taught by their negative experience, wouldn’t believe them and wouldn’t pass them on”. (Nedelkovski, Z., 1997.)

will round off the picture of Macedonian parliamentary experience. A large part of the misuses of power by the Macedonian political elite have been publicized in the form of rumours. Due to the dependent character of the third pillar of every state – the judiciary, i.e. the judicial system - everything related to Macedonian politicians contains an element of rumour: from exclusive declarations in the press to trials based on criminal charges. There are no settled court cases on the misuse of power by politicians. This is why the population turns to the media (much more to the tabloids), in order to look for confirmation of the rumours which are spread among the people.

In order to give a short presentation of the parts of the press, we have decided on a quotation from the daily newspaper “Vest” (Vest, no.650, from 09.07.2002.), which briefly and fairly objectively (the article is trying not to be affiliated to any party) reviews the years of Macedonian pluralism from the perspective suggested in the headline: “How Power Turns into Pure Benefit – the Ministers and the MPs in the Country Only Grab”. The reporter opens the article with the conclusion: “The eternal topic – how much each of our politicians had before he/she entered the system, and how much he/she has after leaving it – is avoided by every government and is the single thing that our politicians agree upon, regardless of their affiliation”. The article goes on to list the terms associated with political schemes: “Octopuses²¹, affairs, set up tenders, favourite contingents, suspicious public procurements, orchestrating the bankruptcy of companies in order to buy them for less than nothing, beating up members of executive boards, bidding on which party will be integrated into which alliance, under-the-counter privatization, threats in order to make workers sell their shares, employment on the basis of party membership, family favours and appointment to the most attractive positions, ignoring of the laws and the obligations to the state, making a fortune by the politicians and the death of common men on whose shoulders the country rests... The list seems endless, and has been extended throughout these pluralistic years, while the parties in power changed, but the methods and the manners even God couldn’t change...Every new establishment exposes the robbery committed by the ‘previous’ establishment, but only in the election campaign. After a while, they only mention it from time to time, in some announcement or an interview, as the alleged problem to be solved (on an alleged priority list), or at least until the voter forgets what was promised”. This article contains a separate part which talks about the MPs. It is entitled: “The MPs Live Luxuriously on a Minimum of 1.500 Euros per Month”²² (see Vest, no. 650, from 09.07.2002.)

For all these reasons, we shouldn’t be surprised by the headlines in the daily press which appeared on the morning after the second voting on the already mentioned “Law on MPs” in Parliament: “The MPs Obtain Fantastic Privileges” (Utrinski Vesnik, no. 778, from 26.01.2002); “The Parliament has adopted the repealed law – the MPs will become young retirees and eternal diplomats” (Dnevnik, no. 1760 from 26.01.2002). After some time papers wrote with obvious satisfaction: “The scandalous Law on MPs came up against a barrier for the second time in the President’s Cabinet” (Utrinski Vesnik, no.793

²¹ In this case the reporter indicates the certain affair with the pyramid saving's bank from 1997, which was publicly confessed by the Prime Minister of that time Branko Crvenkovski. In his expose to the Parliament he named the corruption that had entered the government an “octopus” which had stretched its pips all over the state.

²² Just for a comparison how much the monthly income in the amount of 1.500 euros is worth for the Macedonian standard and conditions, we will quote the data prepared by UNDP. According to UNDP report about economic conditions in Macedonia 12% of the polled citizens did not get any salary, 6% have a salary up to 50 EUR, 15% from 50 to 90 EUR and 32% from 90-130 EUR., which means that 63% of the Macedonian voters live in poverty or on the edge of poverty.

from 13.02.2002); “The Law on MPs: Trajkovski didn’t approve the MP privileges” (Dnevnik, no.1775, from 13.02.2002).

In order to move forward than the rumours and the headlines in the press, we will present some of the findings from the polls conducted by the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research and the International Republican Institute for Macedonia. In the poll of the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research on the question, “Who do you think is most responsible for the crisis in Macedonia?”, the respondents have answered: “Macedonian politicians (41%); Albanian politicians (20%); International community (19%).” (Barometer, Issue no. 3, December 2001)

The experts from the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research have concluded that: “Especially while tremendous economic restructuring takes place and the economic growth decreases, unemployment is mentioned as the gravest problem regardless of the respondent’s ethnic affiliation. This is the problem which is more than acute, and touches the entire population. Confirmation of this are the poll results on the question: ‘Which are the three largest problems our country is facing?’ The respondents believe that most worrying is unemployment (47% general average), poor economy (16%) and social problems (10, 14%). (Barometer, Issue no. 1, June 2001) As regards the direction in which society is progressing replies are mainly focused in three alternatives: almost in the right direction (29%), almost in the wrong direction (29%) and the absolutely wrong direction (29%). Those who thought that society is moving in the absolutely right direction were fewer (7%). (Barometer, Issue no.1, June 2001) On the other hand, this is how the interviewees answered the question on how they would vote in case the elections were held on one of the next days, in May 2001: “Shall not vote (14, 5%); Undecided (25,5%), Other (3,6%)”. (Barometer, Issue no.1, June 2001)²³

“According to the results of the recent polls on the most important issues which should be addressed by the government, 83% of respondents believe that it is the fight against corruption. Other priorities are the rule of law - 89%; restoring confidence in state institutions - 70%.”(Barometer, Issue no.7, December 2002). “According to the UNDP report about economic conditions in Macedonia, great (34%) or some (25%) insecurity about the possibility of losing their job feel a significant number of people”. (Barometer, Issue no.9, December 2003)

As early as October 2002, according to the International Republican Institute poll, over half of the respondents were dissatisfied with the work of the government (60%) and increased is the number of those who are disappointed with the election results (53%). There is a rise in the number of people who would not vote for any party (23%), and 25% do not know who to vote for. About half of the respondents still think that Macedonia is moving in the wrong direction.

“The polls demonstrated that for a large majority of Macedonian citizens, bread-and-butter issues related to employment, education and health care were of equal or greater importance than the polarizing issues related to ethnicity and nationalism”. (IRI, Election Observation Mission, Report and Recommendation, 2002). Due to unemployment, in every election campaign every political party “promises employment to the voter or of the voter’s family” (IRI, Election Observation Mission, Report and Recommendation, 2002). After some of them seize power, and when they are unable to fulfil their fake promises, the repulsion of the people grows year by year. This is why IRI rightfully concludes: “On the whole, trust in the system - in the electoral system, political

²³Nevertheless, in the period between writing and publishing this work the current parliamentary composition passed “more modest” version of the “Law of Slobodan Danevski”.

parties, parliament, the police, the judicial system, and the government in R. Macedonia - remains virtually nonexistent". (IRI, Election Observation Mission, Report and Recommendation, 2002).

IV By way of conclusion: Fama volat per urbes.

In his book "Political Myths and Mythologies", the French historian and political scientist Raul Ziarde wrote: "Very often, during great social turmoil, the myths of the 'Golden Time', the healing 'Revolution' or the ominous 'Plot' are born. All mythological systems are connected directly with the occurrences of the crisis: with the sudden and severe acceleration of historical flows and events, with the unexpected cracks in the social and cultural background, with the dissolution of the previous mechanisms of support which organized the life of the community. All political myths have appeared in a situation marked by emptiness, uncertainty, worries, fear and contestation. An important factor is that myths begin to emerge from the moment when in the collective conscious, resistance towards identification with the existing situation, is born. The established order suddenly seems distant, suspicious and unfriendly. The suggested forms of common life seem to lose their meaning and justification. The net of the previous shapes of collectiveness and methods of support seems to be splitting. Faithful following turns into resentment, servility turns into disgust. The former 'we' becomes 'they': instead of the group's further identification with the norms which used to bind it to society as a whole, it feels thrown away; begins to see and present itself as different from the community. It is painfully aware of its new difference. This is undoubtedly the drama of estrangement... a political myth is born at a time when social traumas turn into psychological ones. It is conceived in the hidden upsurge of anxiety and insecurity, in the dark space of failed desires and expectations. Thanks to the political myth, the strange chaos of events begins to be seen as a naturally created order of things." (Ziarde, R., 2000.) In the sphere of rumours in the Republic of Macedonia, the political myth of the "Ominous Plot" is slowly finding its way towards a wider majority of Macedonian citizens. Seen in the light of this myth, all support coming from Europe, which Macedonia receives as signals, is received with great distrust. When Europe openly supports a repulsive political establishment, then the man in the street sees it as direct confirmation of the popular myth spreading throughout the country: "Republic of Macedonia should be erased from the political map of Europe. That is what everybody wants, and what suits everybody". This is why the percentage of those trying to obtain a second, i.e. a foreign citizenship grows by the day (be it in Europe Australia, New Zealand, Canada or the USA). The people don't want to be unprepared. The many cases of forced emigration are still present in historical memory, and so the Macedonian people have a built-in code for accepting their "possible refugee destiny". The unsolved status of those internally displaced Macedonians after the 2001 conflict adds up to the picture lingering in the minds of the common people. Under such general socio-political conditions, unless there is specific and clear action from the Macedonian political and intellectual elite, which will show that it does indeed have political will for changes, it is difficult to speak about undertaking fundamental reforms of the system in the future.

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