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TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL DEVIATIONS IN THEIR DURATION: CASE STUDY SRM/RM/RN MACEDONIA (CONTRIBUTION TO FURTHER RESEARCH)

Abstract

Through the presentation of a part of the deviations of the social life, which appeared in Yugoslavian socialism, we are actually returning to the deep roots of the disorientation and resignation of the common people towards the contemporary Macedonian social trends and towards the contemporary Macedonian political elite. All of these deviations in the social sphere appeared everywhere across the SFRY, but got a stronger hold over the consciousness of the common people in some republics more than in others. In the Socialist Republic of Macedonia/Republic of Macedonia/Republic of North Macedonia, another important factor added up to the economic underdevelopment: the previous historical inexperience in coping with its own national state.

Keywords: SFRY, Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Macedonia, Republic of North Macedonia, Alliance of the Communists of Yugoslavia, Alliance of Communists of Macedonia, workers' self-management, common property, delegation system, Basic Organization of Associated Labor (BOAL)

Introduction

The simplest but most banal interpretation of the processes of social deviations in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM by UUN 1991–2019) and now the Republic of North Macedonia can be reduced to the general circumstances of the 30 years of transition period in the country. The years of transformation from a socialist to a market economy, privatization of the public capital (i.e., “common property”), the transformation from a one-party to a multi-party system and the changes in the ideology enabled certain oligarchic structures in the government (at different levels) to seize a vast share of the



“common” goods. However, the processes of deviations are profound and we believe their roots run deep in the historical memory. To put it more precisely, there are past historic processes which survived dramatic social transformations. This disabled the development of stable, established institutions for a longer period, which directly influenced the low level of political culture in the Republic of North Macedonia. The historical circumstances didn’t allow for particular stable social stratification to continue. The tectonic social displacements with dramatic transformations of the social systems (Ottoman Empire, Kingdom of Serbia, Kingdom of SCS / Yugoslavia, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Macedonia) didn’t allow the continuing existence of indigenous social status groups. Even in the contemporary situation of accelerated societal stratification, there aren’t any particular consistent elite peaks. The current political and intellectual elite contains one or two of the necessary dimensions of consistency in itself (property – the amount of money and wealth the people possess, prestige – the degree of social honor or respect that people are accorded and power – extend to which people can impose their will on others)¹. The most common example in the Republic of North Macedonia is the inconsistent status, when the individual is ranked high according to one or two of the three dimensions but is ranked low according to the third. In addition, the relocation of the state power and goods are also very flexible regarding who won the elections. This really unstable and drastically changeable stratification in the Macedonian society directly influences comprehension of democracy and the civil society. Thus, sociologist J. Korubin rightfully claims:

The experiences of some countries which have also entered the same changes as we did, show that many things depend on the spiritual matrix which was the starting point of those changes. In those societies where the idea for civil society was, in a way, more mature and represented an important social criterion, there were no big moral turbulences on how to bring that idea to realization and the anomic conditions and deviations were weaker. In some other societies, as in ours, that idea was neither clearly defined nor generally accepted regarding its differentiation from what it used to be yesterday. As a declaration, the determination for civil society was not understood in the collective consciousness, so instead of bringing a positive connotation, it gained a negative sense that transformed into massive moral relativism. Nowadays, from a distance, the changes that took place could be defined as changes in reality but with a twisted representation of the civil society as a society in which only the bare personal interest should be realized and forced. We entered the market economy with egalitarian and self-managing psychology, according to which everything belongs to everyone and to no one, and above all that everything that belongs to everyone and to no one could be usurped by the position of the power. On the political field, pluralism appeared as an interest to use the opportunity of new allocation of the social treasure. Here the new and the old transformed political nomenclature met. The principles of the civil society mainly were not accepted as a radical change of the system and as a new social perspective, but as a momentary state that without any feeling for the future should be used only for self-benefit.²

¹ J.K. Galbraith, *The Anatomy of Power*, Boston 1983.

² J. Корубин, *Аномично општество*, Скопје 2004, pp. 24–27.

A brief historical overview of the phases in the development of the Macedonian parliamentary system shows that the ideas on the individual and the citizen, regardless of their religion, contained in the Constitution of TMORO (Secret Macedonian Odrin Revolutionary Organization) from 1896³, in the Manifesto of the Krushevo Republic from 1903 from the time of the Ilinden Uprising⁴, and in the program and statutory documents of TMORO after 1903⁵: stated only that – political ideas and ideals. The reason for this can be found in the fact that this indigenous national resistance movement of the Macedonian people from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century didn't manage to realize its main goal – the establishment of Macedonia as a separate state unit in the Balkans and thus didn't manage to incorporate its citizens' ideas for a state order in practice. The Ottoman Constitution, on the other hand, was adopted formally in 1875, and shortly entered into force in a revised shape after the Young Turkish Revolution in 1908. Although it introduced a multi-party system and the creation of political parties, it stays outside of the scope of our subject because of its factual short life⁶. The periods of military conflicts on the Balkan or global level (Balkan Wars, I World War and II World War) are also outside of our scope of interest because every military condition and regimes established afterward directly impacted the functioning of the democracy.

The end of the Second World War 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 *block division*. While a 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, also known as Tito's Yugoslavia, was built on the ruins of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia⁷. The current territory of the Republic of North Macedonia began building its statehood in the frames of this federation. As in the other socialist countries, Yugoslavia was also a mono-party and an ideological product, and the ideas had a central position in the state.

The political system was anticipated to be an 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 single party – the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later called the Alliance

³ *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-state, From the settlement of the Slavs in Macedonia up to the end of the First World War*, vol. I, Skopje 1985.

⁴ Крушевски манифест 2–3 август 1903г., Прокламација до турскиот народ во Крушовската револуционерна околија, Битола 1982; В. Весковиќ – Вангели, *Француската револуција и Крушевскиот манифест 1903*, Скопје 2002.

⁵ *Програмски и статутарни документи на Внатрешната македонска револуционерна организација (1904–1908)*, приредил Манол Пандевски, Скопје 1998.

⁶ М. Пандевски, *Македонското ослободително дело во XIX и XX век, Политичките партии и организации во Македонија (1908–1912)*, том четврти, Скопје 1987.

⁷ All names of the state are classified under the term Tito's Yugoslavia. On November 11, 1945 the first constitutional assembly was elected and on the first session held on November 29, 1945 the name of the country – the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia was substituted with the name the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia (*Enciklopedija Leksikografskog Zavoda*, 4, Zagreb MCMLIX, pp. 44–45). The constitutional Law adopted by the Federal assembly on January 31, 1953 The Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia was defined as federal state of sovereign equal nations (М. Режек, *Федерализмот во уставите на Социјалистичка Југославија (1946–1963)*, “Македонија во дваесетиот век”, Скопје 2003, p. 197). Analogously, the name of state changed, from Democratic Macedonia to People's Republic of Macedonia to Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

of the Communists of Yugoslavia) was an avant-garde political organization that wasn't legitimized during the elections, i.e., not through the depiction of the reality, but through the capability to look further and to interpret the vision of the social progress.⁸

The parliamentary life could only have been created in this framework – around the queen bee – the party. One of the main characteristics of Yugoslavian socialism was institutional perfectionism. The starting position of the Yugoslavian communists was that: the institutional system is “perfect” and it is constantly “improving”. Analytical observations confirmed that:

Perfection is an obsession of the architects of the system to regulate the total human behavior to its last detail, with the implicit presumption that the environment stays stable. Since human behavior can't always be completely predicted and integrated, there is always an effect of accidental factors and spontaneous forces which are realized as “natural flows” in the forever changeable environment, and that is why the system is constantly “improving”. We have “amendments and supplements” and changes to the regulations all the time – to put it short, the institutional system constantly runs after its own shadow and wants to catch it and put it in its drawers.⁹

The existence and functioning of only one party which wasn't verified at the elections, resulted in reducing the space and the potential of the political public, therefore, the whole political life was deprived of an important dimension which made it more democratic. However, not only the political public, but also the narrower public such as the party public, wasn't created and respected as an autonomous, active, and a critical instance in the control valorization of the public work and behavior of the officials, i.e., in the selection and promotion of the “cadres”¹⁰. The cadre politics was out of the reach of the public, closed in certain “cadre kitchens” whose institutional cover was the various cadre commissions, i.e. coordination bodies for cadre politics¹¹.

Just as the ruling party was protected from political competition in a great bureaucratic sense – by the Constitution, the laws, the police and the political mechanism, the same was the situation with the party cadres, which enjoyed the benefits of its monopoly and inviolable position, and were spared from both interior and exterior competition that would challenge them to a public debate and would compel them to a more active, public-oriented communication. In such circumstances, the Macedonian people (regardless of nationality or ethnicity) were again left without an experience of parliamentary life. The truth is that Macedonian people participated in elections that were pre-arranged procedures for already determined candidates. As the numbers show, as a self-manager, the Macedonian citizen participated as a delegate in many delegations. However, all that was done in these delegations was endless negotiating, compliance, and voting. There was only an illusion that views and directions were being decided which were to be passed on for discussion

⁸ D. Jović, *Jugoslavija – država koja je odumrla, Uspon, kriza i pad Četvrte Jugoslavije (1974–1990)*, Zagreb/Beograd 2003, pp. 102–103.

⁹ J. Županov, *Marginalije o društvenoj krizi*, Zagreb 1983, p. 57.

¹⁰ By the end of 1981, the number of members in the AC of Yugoslavia reached 2,177,083. This represented 9% of the population of SFRY. During 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.

¹¹ Ж. Неделковски, *Политиката како комуникација*, Скопје 1992, p. 160.

at higher instances. The final decisions were always passed in the agreements reached by the Macedonian political elite, adhered to by the Party, and isolated from the indications which came from the “base”. These centers of power worked under the system of *Tito's perpetuum mobile* (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 efforts for reforms in the socio-political and economic systems, the Yugoslavian political elite didn't manage to initiate a course of factual changes.

The Socialist Republic of Macedonia: Social Deviations in their Duration

Through the presentation of a part of the deviations of the social life, which appeared in Yugoslavian socialism, we are actually returning to the deep roots of the disorientation and resignation of the common people towards the contemporary Macedonian social trends and towards the contemporary Macedonian political elite. All of these deviations in the social sphere appeared everywhere across the SFRY, but got a stronger hold over the consciousness of the common people in some republics more than in others. In S.R. Macedonia, another important factor added up to the economic underdevelopment: the previous historical inexperience in coping with its own national state. The Alliance of Communists of Macedonia, which ruled for a long time (almost half a century), took the freedom to identify itself completely with the Macedonian state, with the Macedonian society, with the Macedonian nation, i.e., with the different entities. Under the domination of the ACM, all these entities lost a part of their subjective nature. These conditions left permanent marks on the social perception of many generations of Macedonian citizens raised in socialism, who identified the socialistic political elite with the state and the statehood. When the elite grew distant from the people at the end of socialism, the people also grew distant from the elite. Even more important: the people grew distant from their own state and especially from its institutions. The people began to perceive them as a product of the “Others” who were privileged and stayed privileged. This directly influenced people to become less conscious of the constitutive nation. To all of this, the inferiority (in certain establishments the servility) of the Macedonian political elite was added up in respect to the stronger republic elites and towards the highest elite on the federal level, which imposed a feeling of political, economic and other type of inferiority the Macedonian people, regardless of their ethnicity.

However, we need to begin with a short additional explanation of the specifics of Yugoslavian socialism and the social deviations that were its product; we will do this through a short interpretation of the terms: 1) workers' self-management, 2) common property, 3) delegation system, and 4) associated labor, i.e., *Basic Organization of Associated Labor* (BOAL).

1) The workers' self-management was a system that introduced the workers' administration and management of the means for production in the factories (enterprises). The plan was to abandon central state control and promote greater transparency and initiative in the production structure by introducing this system. The workers' self-management was mainly performed through the establishment of two institutions: Meeting of the working people (Workers' Meeting), which meant participation of all individuals employed in the enter-

prise/institution, and the Workers' Council, which was composed of an adequate number of representatives from all structures in the enterprise/institution, with an equal right to vote. A large part of the so-called collective decision-making on the work of the enterprise (factory) took place in the Workers' Councils. As a result of these changes, a certain business initiative was developed in the beginning; the production costs were reduced and this resulted in speedy economic progress. This encouraged the workers' demands to continue the social changes. The introduction of self-management was followed by a strong mechanism of propaganda activities. The workers were convinced throughout the years that the new society – *the association of free workers* – is their historic interest. They could feel that they were becoming influential in the decision-making process for the enterprises' work. This social transformation began in the frame of the economic activities during the 1960s. It later spread into all pores of the social structure. And really, self-management always gave precedence to the workers. No one could be either employed or fired from their job without the consent of the Workers council. If a manager wanted to introduce a new order in the company, it was more likely that the Council would change the manager rather than it would introduce new rules and working conditions. However, the anomaly soon surfaced: hypertrophy of the self-management as an institution on account of the atrophy of the self-management as a movement for raising the consciousness of the individual's responsibility for decision-making¹².

As an example: self-management was introduced in social activities, even in science. According to the new terminology, the scientists turned into science workers. This respectable synonym was incorporated in the various levels of science titles. Thus, all structures, from the representatives of the cleaning staff to the professors and academics, participated in the Workers' Council of educational or scientific institutions, naturally, with an equal right to vote. Consequently, there were absurd situations when they decided together on accepting or refusing certain scientific projects or research. This produced a feeling of great power and a false belief in one's knowledge and expertise for all types of problems and issues among the working class. On the other hand, the incompetence in the Workers' Councils was an excellent foundation for various manipulations, frauds, and boycotts towards certain individuals or projects. By encouraging basic instincts, everybody was able to carry out some sort of obstruction for their individual needs. Manipulation of ignorance and incompetence wasn't a complicated task.

The deviations in the self-management became even more profound. *Collective decision-making* was modified into a performance of collective compulsion. There were often situations when the Meeting of the Working People of a certain enterprise had to vote on the passing of a certain self-management agreement, under the threat that if they don't pass it, they will not get paid for the month or two...

This wasn't even a manipulation any longer, states Josip Zupanov, because manipulation is a hidden exercise of power; it is "directed self-management" – the replacement of autonomy with heteronomy. Instead of the workers executing the external order under a threat of state sanctions, they had to "pass" this order first as their "own" self-management act. Consequently, such distorted self-management led to mass apathy. This directed "collective

¹² J. Županov, *Marginalije o društvenoj krizi...*, p. 57.

decision-making” which doesn’t cover up the bare political compulsion, represented an absolute result of the forced progress of self-management – an institution, i.e., an extreme institutionalization of the system.¹³

2) The self-management resulted in the creation of a new type of property, which was a rare model of property in the world. This was the so-called: *common property over the means for production and over everything that was being produced*. In the case of Yugoslavia, common property actually meant property without an owner. The state was not the owner of this property, and it was thought that the *common property* was managed by the *freely associated workers* and controlled by the state. The contradiction is obvious because the “freely associated” workers were not able to produce freely but produced under the directions imposed by the state¹⁴.

Kardelj’s debate *The Directions of Development of the Political System of the Socialist Self-management* from 1977 was supposed to explain at least a part of the apparent controversies, but in fact, the study largely contained ideological nebulosity which allegedly offered “directions”, while they actually offered social disorientation. There were contradictions in almost all areas of social life and, therefore in the “common property” as well. It was further treated as everybody’s and nobody’s, which had difficult implications for further development.¹⁵

3) The Constitution of 1974 promoted the *delegation system* which did not only represent an electoral principle: “but was determined to be a universal principle of the organization and the functioning of the self-management system, as a foundation of the complete Yugoslavian socio-political system”¹⁶. This was how *self-management bargaining* and the *social contract* as new constitutional categories were introduced. Thus, *the consensus economy* was introduced in the economy of the state. One of the characteristics of this way of work was that the economic subjects grouped and negotiated what they were going to produce and by what price they were going to sell the products. In this situation, the more developed Yugoslavian republics managed to become pre-dominant quite easily, and took over the production processes of the final products. The less developed republics, among them Macedonia, were left mainly with the production of primary products for their capacities and to buy the final products. Another big disadvantage of the consensus economy was the slowness of the decision-making process. The procedure of agreement of the expert teams was so slow that, by the time something was agreed upon, the agreement was already outdated. The greatest disadvantage of *self-management bargaining* was the development of irresponsibility on account of the development of the so-called *collective responsibility*. When at least some of the bargaining gave results, it was everybody’s achievement, while nobody was responsible for the negative results.

The delegation system also produced institutional gigantism. The analysis in this context clarifies the actual situation:

¹³ Ibidem, p. 59.

¹⁴ Н. Велјановски, *Македонија 1945–1991, Државност и независност*, Скопје 2002, p. 129.

¹⁵ Ibidem, pp. 308, 316.

¹⁶ С. Михајловски, *Создавањето и развитокот на изборниот систем во Македонија*, Скопје 1977, pp. 83–105.

There are ten thousand sorts of delegations; millions of members, the number of laws and other state regulations (which contain hundreds of paragraphs) is reaching the thousands; about ten thousand self-management acts (some of which have 900 articles); the number of meetings are up in the millions; delegation materials weigh quite a bit, etc. The self-management institution was created according to the measures of ancient heroes and half-gods and not by the measure of the common workers and ordinary men. Only the institutions made according to the needs of men can be efficient; only they can possess an inner force to keep functioning as systems.¹⁷

4) Soon after the adoption of the Constitution of SFRY in 1974, preparations were made to adopt a so-called small Constitution, i.e., “The Law on Associated Labor” (1976). This law was treated as the “Workers’ Constitution” to “deliver the economic and political power in the country to the associated workers”. The main purpose of this law was to create the *Basic Organizations of Associated Labor* (BOALs). As a product of these regulations, an enormous number of BOALs was created in all areas, even in the social spheres. Their creation, which often involved humorous connotation, led to the dissolution of the enterprises and their economic completeness. All the separate parts of the enterprises and the organizations opened their own separate bank accounts, which raised the need for more capital than earlier. The enterprises were divided and practically made worthless¹⁸. On top of this, various and numerous massive administrative-bureaucratic services appeared, resulting in bureaucratization without rationalization. “The flood of regulations openly spoke about the bureaucratization of the social relations. With the growth of the bureaucracy, there was a growth of office-paperwork type of work, so that, for example, to produce a pair of shoes, one needed to waste tons on licenses and forms”¹⁹. The economy became dependent on loans. There was a decrease in production, productivity, in the accumulation and reproductive ability. Unemployment grew rapidly. All this influenced the technological regress in a time when the world was experiencing major technological innovations and changes which marked the new technological revolution²⁰. Meanwhile, the economy in Yugoslavia and particularly in Macedonia, was constantly sinking.

The traditional economic approach of the political analysis emphasizes the importance of the economic situation for the systems’ stability. All the parameters show that the economic situation of Yugoslavia’s population in the early 1980s was becoming dramatically worse. So the question arises: Why wasn’t there a revolt and open protest against the system? The answer to this question can be found in the appearance and the development of the deviation, which the Croatian sociologist Josip Zupanov called *the syndrome of radical egalitarianism*. This syndrome is a heavy burden that we bear even today.

Under the influence of ideology, equality in Yugoslavia was perceived literally as equality of “empty stomachs”, and not as equality of opportunities and equality before the law and responsibilities. Through its propaganda, the ideology developed a strong feeling among the citizens about this equality perceived in such a way. This is why, for all the people, it wasn’t a catastrophe if someone lived in poverty; the tragedy was if someone

¹⁷ J. Županov, *Marginalije o društvenoj krizi...*, p. 57.

¹⁸ H. Велјановски, *Македонија 1945–1991...*, p. 314.

¹⁹ J. Županov, *Marginalije o društvenoj krizi...*, p. 58.

²⁰ H. Велјановски, *Македонија 1945–1991...*, p. 314.

lived better than this. Therefore, the root of dissatisfaction in Yugoslavia was different from that in Poland and other countries with state socialism. The scientific elaboration of this syndrome is worked out by Dejan Jovic in his large study. He concludes:

the workers in Yugoslavia (and a large segment of the rest of the population) protested against the social and other differences and demanded greater equality. Equality was the promise which the Yugoslavian socialism didn't fulfill; the differences between the republics and the provinces and even between the different BOALs and the production branches only deepened. While the Eastern European workers demanded more opportunities to express their differences (and therefore, their primary value was pluralism), the Yugoslavian workers demanded greater equality (and less pluralism). The Yugoslavian state was weakening by transferring some of its basic functions to the society, while the society was more and more covered by a net of private interests, bonds and acquaintances; this was totally opposite of 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 economical point of view had worse consequences than the strikes. And really, instead of a 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 absence from work became massive. According to the Yugoslavian official statistics, as many as 700,000 people since 1983 were absent from work every day on 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 daily, instead of coming to work. The consequence was that (when you consider all the sorts of absences) instead of 8 hours of work per day, the average Yugoslavian worker worked for only 3 hours and 6 minutes per day... Socialism, both from ideological and practical reasons, developed a non-monetary exchange of goods and services. The solidarity among people was often tolerated (if it was against the law) or encouraged (if it was in accordance with the law), as a replacement of the exchange of money. The people got used to living without (enough) money, while they basically knew that they could have more than their income allowed. During the 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" like some networks: everybody had someone who was a doctor or an auto mechanic, a judge or a butcher.²¹

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 various type of connections and contacts for the provision of particular products. Even if the state was willing to break this chain, the question remains if it was able to do this at all.

The state also tolerated the mass rupture of the common property (especially in the construction and similar enterprises), and the black market jobs through which many of the lower-class citizens obtained material benefits. In S.R. Macedonia, for example, where the superficially created proletariat was torn in two, with one foot in the city and the other

²¹ D. Jović, *Jugoslavija – država...*, pp. 247–251.

in the nearby village, the sick leaves and the absences escalated during the season in agriculture. During the last decades of SFRY, the workers used to say publicly: “No one is able to pay us that little, as we are able to work as 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 worked abundantly: modesty, and even poverty had a class connotation and were valued positively on an ideological level, while privileges and making money in real life were becoming more popular. This is why the material existence conditions of the officials were taboo because if they were disclosed to the public, the (self)deceit that a professional career in politics was motivated only by a revolutionary rapture would disappear. In the biographies of the politicians, the social references were connected only to their past (that they originated from a worker or a rural family – but in any case, it had to be a poor family). Because of class legitimacy, any data on the actual living standard and the social condition of the former proletarians was excluded. With the deepening of the social crisis and the decrease of the living standard of the citizens, the authority of the policy and the politicians also dropped, and even their legitimacy was brought into question. The things that were kept hidden from the public for years – the many material and other privileges of the politicians – became a topic not only for curiosity but also of disapproval of the public.

In a society where the wealth is suspicious and where the origin of the property is being investigated, and not of the poverty, the politician who cares about their career will not boast their high living standard. Since they are not capable (as proven so far) of offering a political or an economic program that would help the people get out of poverty, i.e., would move the people closer to their standard, the politician uses an opposite maneuver – they present their standard in a more modest way to reduce the social gap which separates them from the people.²²

With the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, and the death of Edvard Kardelj a year before in 1979, the disorientation in SFRY grew bigger. The AC of Yugoslavia, endorsed 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 the number of adopted documents (analyses, information, recommendations, conclusions...), without taking care of their application. This disorientation enabled certain individuals, especially in the more developed republics, to realize the futility of the political and federal peak and build their own systems in the economy with the help of their own initiatives and economic activities – which wasn’t the case in S.R. Macedonia. It can be concluded for S.R. Macedonia that its leadership didn’t possess any stable views and initiatives but took over whatever came from the Federation without a critical attitude²³.

The long-term program for the stabilization of the Federation was adopted after long discussions and disputed. However, no special results were expected from it. It was becoming increasingly obvious that the Alliance of Communists of Yugoslavia was in a deep and dead-lock crisis. It was again confirmed that if a way couldn’t be found towards economic stabilization, if production didn’t enliven, no one would be able to live off of ideology

²² Ж. Неделковски, *Политиката како комуникација...*, pp. 174–175.

²³ Н. Велјановски, *Македонија 1945–1991...*, pp. 333–336.

anymore. SFRY managed to maintain a certain living standard stability through huge external debts. However, unemployment was constantly growing. The economic instability was adding up to the political one.

The constitutional amendments from April 1989 which defined S.R. Macedonia as the “national state of the Macedonian people” didn’t particularly excite the people, since the country was suffocating in economic and political problems. The issue of unemployment was especially popular. At the end of 1986, there were 141,147 registered unemployed people, and this number grew steadily.²⁴

The federative Prime Minister Ante Markovic did a devaluation of the dinar in 1991 (which reached enormous inflation before that) and froze its exchange rate. At the same time, the disintegration of SFRY was taking place. Throughout 1990, political parties were being created in R. Macedonia. Until the elections in November of that year, there were already 23 parties and organizations²⁵. The political parties in the R. Macedonia were constituted as a part of the process of constituting the civil society, expressed through the paradigm of political pluralism, free elections, and the functioning of the state ruled by law. However, none of these parties, although formally and statutory established as citizen parties and associations, was a de facto citizens’ party. Namely, only national/ethnic political parties were created on the Macedonian political scene. At the time of their creation, the bases taken for their classification were the political strategies of the different national identities. Consequently, only parties of the Macedonian nation and of the other national/ethnic communities were created. The common characteristic of the parties pleading for the positions of the national group, i.e., the membership of a certain ethnic group, is the legitimized foundation of every citizen. However, in the political philosophy, these systems are considered closed systems²⁶. As a result of this process, instead of the free and responsible citizen, the national/ethnic obedient subject appeared. Instead of being loyal to and responsible before the law and the state, they are loyal and responsible only to their own national/ethnic group, i.e., their own national/ethnic party. Therefore, instead of the citizen – party – state relationship, the obedient subject – ethnicity – national/ethnic party relationship appeared. The free citizen, like in the socialism, is still swallowed by the collective ideology and practice. The Western countries (with an experienced parliamentary democracy) have put the individual as the carrier of all freedoms and rights, but also of all the responsibilities and obligations in the state. Actually, only when every person is free to think and publicly express their opinion as an individual, then they are a citizen in the true meaning of the word, and only then can responsibility be demanded from them.

If this is not so, they will constantly avoid this citizen responsibility to be hidden in the “arms” of their ethnicity or religious community, certain that their co-members will protect them from the “Others”. Hence, instead of integration in a community of citizens, the Republic of Macedonia experienced the disintegration of the social layer on ethnic basis.²⁷

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 350–354.

²⁵ Ц. Мојановски, *Елементи на политичкиот идентитет на политичките партии во Македонија*, “Социолошка ревија”, 1/II, Скопје 1996, pp. 16–17.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 98.

²⁷ Д. Скаловски, *Писма до Македонците*, Скопје 1997, pp. 63–67.

Because of this specific of parliamentary communication in the country, the collective (ir)responsibility was revitalized, but not on the level of the various delegations and delegates, but on the level of the different national/ ethnic characteristics.

Republic of Macedonia/Republic of North Macedonia – the Process of Increasing the Social Deviations

The first multi-party parliamentary elections were held on November 11, 1990. Hoping that the change of the system and of the social relations will solve the problems in the economy and the deviations in the social order, the Republic of Macedonia, looking up to the western European countries, stepped with enthusiasm towards the creation of a plural society and a multi-party democracy. However, the tails of the deviations from the former system were well grafted on the existing dilemmas and transformations which the European parliamentary democracy contains. 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 crises”²⁸. The development of the Macedonian parliamentary democracy also found itself under the strike of the dilemmas and disputes which are popular in the European states with a rich tradition in parliamentary democracy. An-Sesil Rober wrote:

The work on establishing a 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 on 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 attack of the free market.²⁹

The deviations from the previous long-lasting socialistic system strongly affect many contemporary social spheres. Socialist self-management was a system that privileged the workers institutionally, and the chaos enabled them to avoid their work and other responsibilities towards the system. With the system change, the worker was suddenly exposed to the labor market. Therefore, their position in the self-management system was at once erased in their working experience. The worker became a “production factor” who can find themselves outside of the factory in case the situation of the enterprise in the market changes. This reality certainly represented a transition shock for the larger part of the population, which was indoctrinated (like self-managers) by the previous system and thought it was competent to solve all the problems and issues in its factory, enterprise... the state.

The transformation of the economies in the developed countries represents a transformation of the system – but without abandoning its essential characteristics, i.e., the system basically stays unchanged. The transition in the former socialist states represents an effort

²⁸ *Dignity and Truth; Civil Society and European Cooperation*, Report of the Wetenschappelijk Instituut voor het CDA, Hague 1996, p. 158.

²⁹ An-Sesil Rober, *Do naroda im nije stalo! Obrunata demokratija*, “LE MONDE diplomatique”, November, 2003, p. 6.

for passing 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 in R. Macedonia is, among other things, the introduction of the free market and its economic rules. All of this brought the closing or restructuring of the larger economic capacities in the country. This directly affected the number of unemployed, which reached about 360,000 by the end of 2000. The trend of its further increase and continuation (in the first decades of the new century)- became dangerously close to the number of the employed in the Republic. It had an obvious effect on the decrease of the living standard and the increase of the dissatisfaction among the people.

Unemployment leads to tension in the relations in the social structure because the poverty did not equally hit all layers and groups in the society. The ones who were most affected were production workers, the part of the administration that failed together with production, while the techno-structures were least affected, or not affected at all. The sharp differentiation of the position in the market changed the social correlation: the techno-structure connected with some parts of the political elite became the employer; the administration (what was left of it) became a privileged layer (it receives small but regular salaries), while the workers in the production became only hired laborers (often with no regular salaries). And what about the army of redundant workers that are "in limbo", i.e. some kind of illogical employment/unemployment status. Unemployment deepened the social differences. While there is normal stratification (continuum of leveled 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 in life; they can't even formally be a member of the Syndicate, because it is an organization of the employed). The social structure here is dichotomous, and not leveled.

During the last decades of the socialistic self-management period, vertical social mobility got tighter – a process which accelerated and continues today. Thus, the horizontal, i.e., the territorial mobility through the economic immigration of the young, highly qualified cadres is enormously increasing. Those who haven't left yet, and who successfully complete secondary school, even their studies, in certain professions whole generations cannot find a job. They can't make the final step in the mobility forward. Therefore, they stay outside the professional system for years, trying to pull bigger and smaller strings or use money to get to a specific job. As a consequence of the tightening of the social mobility, the social structure becomes less flexible, the layers close and the social distance increases. In the mind of an ordinary man (shaped by the past socialistic order where they got used to, among all the other equality, the equality of the "empty stomach") the disappointment grows bigger every year.

"Solidarity is the force which keeps the society together. E. Durkheim, the classic sociologist, differentiates two types of solidarity: mechanical and organic. The mechanical one is based on the collective attitudes, while the organic one is based on the interdependency of the roles which are a product of the social division of labor"³⁰. In the Republic of Macedonia, because of the increase of poverty, society returns to the mechanical solidarity typical for pre-modern societies. The family group not only kept the central position in the individual's life, but also means much more, to the level of comparison with the tradi-

³⁰ J. Županov, *Marginalije o društvenoj krizi...*, p. 53.

tionally 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 a particular faculty; it looks for employment and discretely corrupts or pays for it; it obtains a living space where very often few different generations live together; it takes over the burden of the costs of the student and the unemployed young person. Just the same as their peer who lived 200 years ago, the young person cannot rely on the other institutions in the state except for their family. They cannot emancipate from their family at an early age like their peers from developed countries can. The polls conducted by UNDP clearly prove this³¹. The question *Where do you see your future and that of your child in terms of employment?* was answered by 31.1% with *working abroad*, while a significant part, 20.8%, gave a very pessimistic answer *nowhere, there is no prosperity*. In December 2005 the percentage of the given answers was almost the same, but there was minimal improvement in 2006³². The overall answers brought the analyst to the following conclusion: “What prevails among the people is a general impression of disappointment and resignation, a sort of pessimism that has become part of the very perceptive masses, but without the elements of rebellion, or even calmer types of protest.”³³ Thus we should not be surprised that permanent emigration from the country became an ongoing process with highly negative repercussions on the whole population, regardless of the nation, ethnic, religious, or even social status. Even though some data shows that over 600,000 people (mainly young, able and educated people, as well as whole families) have permanently left the country, the exact number will be determined at the end of March 2022, when the data from the 2021 census will be published. On the other hand, the mechanical solidarity moves upwards in the collective and then further on the society groups such as the national community and the minorities. The development of the parallel system of contacts, connections and privileges created during socialism and which secure a 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 national relations. Both the political elite and the techno-structures are not immune to these deformations, so nepotism is an everyday occurrence in society.

Despite the possibilities for public boycotts and strikes to pressure the government (although these methods hardly ever work) and to solve at least some of the build-up prob-

³¹ One of the analytical tools which can be used for objective and impartial monitoring, and that can increase the likelihood that development opportunities/challenges in a country are identified promptly and appropriately addressed is a National Early Warning System. Early warning is not only about assessing the possibility of conflict but also identifying the possible resurgence of conflict and the opportunity for peace. Its goals are to identify and assess the most salient conflict indicators, to assess likely trends and scenarios, and to formulate conclusions based on the interaction of the dynamics. In response to the continuous and changing nature of conflicts, the Reports of early warning undergoes changes in approach and methodology in the search for the most suitable format. The UNDP's Early Warning Reports for Macedonia (EWR) were built upon official statistics, locally accessible data and primarily upon a public opinion polls. In order to develop these reports a people-centred approach has been used. Analysis of all of the early warning indicators cannot be possible without knowledge of how public perceive and are influenced by their immediate surroundings. Therefore, these reports are based on a public opinion polls conducted by BRIMA, the Macedonian branch of GALLUP International, associate of Taylor Nelson Software. UNDP, *Early Warning Report, Macedonia*, United Nation Development Programme, Skopje September 2005, p. 48.

³² UNDP, *Early Warning Report, Macedonia...*, September and December 2005, March and June 2006.

³³ UNDP, *Early Warning Report, Macedonia...*, June 2006, p. 15.

lems, the Macedonian citizen in the first decades after 1991 year, mostly continues to use quiet boycott as the means of expressing resistance and dissatisfaction. The citizen, unfortunately, has long decades of similar developed experience. That was also stated by the polls conducted by UNDP and according to the results that measure the activities of the opinion of the respondents, “69% of them would never participate in public protests against the political institutions”³⁴. But the Macedonian citizens are well known for their quiet boycott over the past decades. Due to the transformation of the capital from common into private, they cannot be absent from work because of sick leaves and endless meetings. Whenever they can (if they are not satisfied with the treatment in the company or the enterprise), they will quietly boycott the quality of their products or services. In this way, they are also sparing their strength for a private overtime job. As far as their own state is concerned, because it belongs only to the “Others”, the privileged ones, they see it as being distant. Consequently, whenever they have the opportunity, they use the principles of the Cunning Pejo wisdom: find a way around the law or turn the rules of the game in their favor³⁵. The rule: “everything that is not explicitly forbidden seems to be allowed” is valid in democratic societies. Therefore, in the country where the legislation is not yet completed (and suffered under the changes with the permanent changes from one to another political structure), one can always find “loops” in the laws and in the legal regulations. Socialism taught both the “important” and the “common” people to take advantage of the constant “amendments and supplements” of the legal provisions. That is why Korubin rightly says that: “The anomie we have entered into, is no longer a temporary event and it takes a long time to be removed. It has become a structural element of our society, even of the collective consciousness. And it is a well-known sociological truth that once the structures have been established, it is very hard to change them. Especially the structures of the consciousness. Consequently, when that consciousness turns into collective behavior and a certain lifestyle, those behaviors cannot be easily changed without the possibility of some sanctions.”³⁶

All of the above-mentioned statistics and pools demonstrate that

the socio-economic crisis is profoundly settled in the “perceptive mass” of society, which strongly influences results regarding the high doubts in the institutions of democracy, including the media. Results show that people are disappointed and unhappy both in numbers and intensity. If the results of the survey are compared for the last three or five years (and especially after the crisis of 2001), it is obvious that cynicism is deeply rooted in people’s attitudes and that their dissatisfaction is generalized. Some 47 percent of respondents think that their life is moving in the same (wrong) direction, while an additional 22 percent believe that the direction is worsening, plus 7 percent think it is getting much worse (unfortunately, in 2005 these worries were not far from social deviation processes that will follow in the next decades). Their hope seems to be fading, leaving space for “internalized dissatisfaction”. Once internalized, this negativity becomes part of the everyday “mechanism” for political assessment, where even clear successes on the part of the political leadership are judged as modest or unsatisfactory actions. These state affairs become clearly reflected in people’s attitudes towards political actors, both on personal

³⁴ UNDP, *Early Warning Report, Macedonia...*, December 2005, p. 18.

³⁵ 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 bypass the Ottoman law and tried to outsmart his rival, the Turk Nasradin – Odja.

³⁶ J. Корубин, *Аномично општество...*, pp. 24–27.

and on party/institutional levels. First of all, everyone is corrupted; everybody misuses public funds and abuses their position.³⁷

Therefore, we can conclude that not only the public has “lost its nerve” for most of its political institutions and representatives and, subsequently, has distanced itself from the political parties, but also it is highly critical to the whole process of democracy in the country, as such. Hence,

82 percent of respondents say that Macedonia is not governed by the will of the people, and 70 percent of the respondents do not feel that elections in Macedonia are free and fair. This represents a base for very high index of political instability, regardless of the high level of immobility of the Macedonian people (voters) for political or other forms of protests.³⁸

The conclusions in the EWR that: “However, the State is relatively stable politically, and, **at first glance**, in parallel to this has been successfully resisting **the realistic possibility for populism to conquer the Macedonian political scene and to crowd out the democratic, institutional paths for development**” was almost terrifyingly correct. The mise-en-scène was set for the Gruevski regime. In the next reports the warning can be found:

In this complex sphere, the negative sentiments of the ethnic Macedonians also influence their general political attitudes, reflecting higher general discontent and pessimism compared with the attitudes of the ethnic Albanians. This negative sentiment should not be easily underestimated or discarded, since its foundation is in the fear for the future (personal future, family future, as well as future of the wider national and state community) that still exists as part of the ethnic Macedonians and is politically articulated through a higher level of distrust, disappointment and pessimism.³⁹

Therefore, instead of a *Conclusion*, perhaps we should ask the question: could the Macedonian democratic processes be more optimistic and stable if the Republic becomes part of the European Union? The 17-year old Candidate status must have an influence over the deepening of the social deviations of this small European country. The answer to this may lay in a future comparative analysis together with other European countries (similar by size and population to the Republic of North Macedonia), which became a part of the European Union during a much shorter period.

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³⁷ UNDP, *Early Warning Report, Macedonia...*, December 2005, pp. 15–18.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 15–18.

³⁹ UNDP, *Early Warning Report, Macedonia...*, June 2006, p. 16.

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