

# *Macedonians and the Civil War in Greece*

**Volume 1**



**In the Deep Night, Dawn is Born**

**By  
Pavle Rakovski**

**(Translated from Macedonian to English and edited by Risto  
Stefov)**

**Macedonians and the Civil War in Greece**  
**Volume 1**  
In the Deep Night, Dawn is Born

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## PREFACE

The consequences of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) final outcome were of crucial importance for the status and position of the Macedonian people in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia. The new spark of hope for achieving their national aspirations, to which the Macedonian people devoted all their potential and deep confidence in their righteousness for their national ideals, was extinguished in August 1949, when the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) withdrew from its own territory.

Even though the Macedonian people entered the military conflict independently and were organized and led during the entire war by their own organization - the People's Liberation Front (NOF), they signed a joint action agreement with the Communist Party of Greece (CPG) in the second half of 1946 which limited their independence particularly the independence of the Macedonian National Liberation Movement, which since then was under CPG control. This agreement, in fact, was an open opportunity for the CPG to directly influence the Macedonian movement and to succeed in infiltrating NOF and creating a split in the top NOF leadership and ultimately, by using its power and great authority, to meddle in Macedonian affairs as well as to shield itself from its own doing and put the entire blame for DAG's defeat on the Macedonians – particularly on the NOF leadership and its management staff.

Taking into account the Macedonian National Question and the Informbiro narrowing conditions and constraints surrounding Yugoslavia (including the People's Republic of Macedonia, the Macedonian people's biggest supporter), the CPG, by accepting the Informbiro Resolution, brought discord to the Macedonian governing structure and at the same time blamed it for DAG's defeat.

The book “In the Deep Night Dawn is Born” (Memories, Reflections, Knowledge), by Pavle Rakovski, is an actual synthesis of the author's own authentic memories, thoughts and insights on events that took place during the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), but also on the circumstances under which they took place. Rakovski, as

a member of the CPG, and then as part of the NOF leadership, was a contemporary and direct participant in these events. Rakovski, in his book, has given us his personal consideration, knowledge and evaluation of all the important procedures and actions NOF had taken that has correlated them with the CPG's policies towards the Macedonian National Question.

The book begins with an introduction in which Rakovski lists the motives that prompted him to write it. The information in the book, which he himself says would be "interesting for historians" is a useful "source of data for everyone who is interested in the fate of our people in the Greek state". The book is divided into eleven chapters that are further broken down into a dozen or more delimited articles. The text is a series of interrelated events that take place in accordance with how the author understood the problems, and in some cases there are deviations from their chronological ordering. Namely, the entire content of the book is about proving the author's basic thesis, which is, as he himself qualifies it, "the policy of fully ignoring the Macedonian National Question", "the war against the Macedonian national ideal", the "opportunistic" CPG policies... all supported by his personal subjective analysis of events, decisions made and actions taken by the political cadres and confirmed by his personal conclusions in favour of the main thesis.

Referring to his autobiographical notes Rakovski tells his story based on his own life experience with the Communist movement in Greece, his organized activities in the CPG during the Second World War, and his activities as a leader in NOF during the Greek Civil War. In doing so, he cites authentic information of events in which he personally participated. In doing so he has revealed new and so far unknown information in our historiography but which still requires additional scientific confirmation. It should be noted that a significant part of the book refers to already discussed and processed questions about the history of the Macedonian people from the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia that deal with the most important internal and external political events from World War II and the Greek Civil War in Greece, as well as CPG agreements, meetings, plenums and congresses. All this is done in aid of confirming his main thesis.



In the last part of his book Rakovski talks about CPG accusations against the Macedonian NOF leaders, including himself, who were accused of being “Tito’s agents” and of cooperating with Yugoslavia to damage the revolution and to bring defeat to DAG during the Greek Civil War. Rakovski’s direct observations of this CPG planned scenario, whose final act was preceded by a whole series of events and resolutions, which gradually but surely led to the ultimate goal, causing a further disruption in relations among the Macedonian leaders themselves, seems to be Rakovski’s additional motive for writing his book, which Rakovski does not state openly.

Even though Rakovski, as a Soviet political prisoner in the years after the Greek Civil War, shared the same fate as the other Macedonian leaders arrested, unlike the others however, he continued to feel the consequences of the disrupted conditions within the Macedonian political leadership, after his return to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

This is why Rakovski was compelled to write his side of the story and offer it for publication in the mid-1970s. This is also why his several attempts to publish his side of the story were unsuccessful. Moreover, the logical explanation for the lack of success clearly follows from the fact that in his book Rakovski discloses new information that the then Macedonian historiography did not have, or contradicted the existing historiography. Rakovski here presented his personal subjective attitudes in relation to CPG policies regarding the Macedonian National Question which did not entirely coincide with the views of the official Macedonian historiography. Here Rakovski openly opposes the views of certain individuals from the ranks of the Macedonian leadership who, at the time, occupied state and other important positions in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

Interested readers who browse through these pages should remember that during communist rule deviation from official attitudes was unacceptable. This means that perception of integrity in a person, even the work of prominent figures, who did not follow the communist line was unacceptable.

Looking at it another way, the book “In the deep night dawn is born” was written by Pavle Rakovski who, during World War II and during the Greek Civil War, was a prominent figure and a leader in the Macedonian National Liberation Movement in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia. Here Rakovski opens new challenges that call for a more thorough scientific study of the personalities and activities of those Macedonians who our historiography has, so far, only touched upon and not fully studied. And this is not just one case, the case of the author of this book, but also many other prominent figures who deserve their own place in the Macedonian national history.

Dr. Katerina Mirchevska

## INTRODUCTION

People are not judged by their declared good intentions or promises, they are judged by their deeds which are evaluated according to their consequences.

My writing is built on this principle.

This principle, of course, does not exclude the possibility that some of my assessments and conclusions about the people and events of my time may be incomplete or even wrong. No one is insured against failure.

However, events have their own logic. An isolated event on its own can sometimes be explained in more than one way. But it can be understood more correctly if it is placed in a series of connected events that took place before and after it, as a practical expression of a particular policy.

Events in a given situation are inevitably interconnected like the elements in a given mathematical task. Searching for and fixing the mutual connection and common significance is the only path leading to the proper illumination of events.

In their own right these are events which, at first glance, can cause astonishment and bring gratitude to every Macedonian person because they look like coherent and courageous revolutionary acts undertaken by the Zahariadis leadership in favour of the completely disadvantaged Macedonian people in the Greek state.

Sometime in March 1948, for example, the newspaper “Apelevterotis”, an organ of DAG Paiak-Kaimakchalan Region Headquarters, began to appear in the Macedonian language. Then, during the CPG Central Committee 4<sup>th</sup> Plenum, held on July 28-29, 1948, Zahariadis and the CPG Central Committee declared that: “...The participation of the Slavo-Macedonian people in the liberation struggle is universal and total. With their struggle the Slavo-Macedonian people are firmly building their free and equal life. With the blood of their sons and daughters they are insuring and securing their people’s democratic future...” (CPG 1931-1952, CPG

Central Committee 1952, p. 175.) A little later a Macedonian printing house was procured and the newspaper “NEPOKOREN” and the magazine “NOVA MAKEDONKA” were published in a new and incomparably larger format. These were followed by the Macedonian newspaper “BILTEN” published regularly and with a much larger circulation...

On their own these publications were noble deeds indeed! However, if we were to take these “revolutionary acts” and relate them to a longer series of events that took place during the same period, especially to the event that involved CPG practices towards the Macedonian people, then we would inevitably come to the conclusion that these “revolutionary acts” were far from being revolutionary.

I personally experienced the following and made a note of it for our archives. While serving at DAG Paiak-Kaimakchalan Region Headquarters in the spring of 1947, I personally witnessed DAG Main Staff personnel registering Macedonian fighters as Greeks by nationality. The staff at DAG Headquarters treated our Macedonian fighters as “glorious Greeks” and addressed them exclusively in Greek (orders, leaflets, press). I challenged our Greek comrades on this, which eventually turned into a very unpleasant dispute. The only thing I accomplished, in their eyes, was that I was characterized as... a nationalist. Now we have the newspaper “Apelevterotis” an organ of DAG Paiak-Kaimakchalan Region Headquarters, the same Headquarters that registered Macedonians as Greeks, begin to appear in the Macedonian language. Does that mean that there was a change in policy towards the Macedonians...? No. According to the documents from that time, now located in our archives, DAG Headquarters staff continued to register and treat Macedonian fighters as members of the Greek nationality and the Macedonian people in general as part of the “glorious Greek people”.

On top of that, in early January 1948, Zahariadis, through the 1<sup>st</sup> NOF Congress, infiltrated the NOF leadership. Zahariadis injected “Grkomani” (Macedonians loyal to the Greek cause) into the highest NOF governing bodies. Then, during the 1<sup>st</sup> NOF Central Council Plenum, held in August 1948, Zahariadis completely stripped NOF of its founders who were the true organizers and NOF top leaders.

All Macedonians were removed and neutralized and then replaced with “Grkomani”. After that the NOF leadership was fully taken over by Macedonians who were strictly loyal to the Greek cause.

In the meantime Zahariadis made sure all important people in the Macedonian movement were liquidated. He especially targeted everything that was Macedonian, especially the Macedonians patriots who were active bearers of the Macedonian national idea. This included:

- The Macedonian elite battalions which Zahariadis withdrew from Macedonia and sent south into Greece where the Macedonian commanders were replaced by Greeks who then skillfully “pitted” the Macedonian fighters in battle against superior enemy units.
- The countless prominent activists and loyal Macedonians who Zahariadis picked off one by one and liquidated in various ways.
- The NOF Central Agitation and Propaganda Department which Zahariadis shut down in April 1948 and, through the Provisional Democratic Government, ordered its 38 activists to join various DAG units in the frontline. (Timeline of the National Liberation War in the Aegean part of Macedonia in the Board of the Social Democratic Party and the National Liberation of Macedonia, Skopje, 1973, p. 213.)
- Zahariadis dissolved the NOF cultural and artistic group (the group’s dissolution was decided by Zahariadis and the CPG Central Committee, and approved by the Provisional Democratic Government). (Ibid.)
- The Macedonian brass band, organized by director and musician Kara-Timio, was also liquidated.
- The Macedonian school for teachers was closed down and its courses abolished and replaced by the “Macedonian department” of the school for Greek teachers for which a course was soon formed in the village Zhelevo, Lerin Region.

There was also the incident of the Macedonian women from the Republic of Macedonia not allowed to visit the Macedonian women in Greek occupied Macedonia. During their 1<sup>st</sup> AFZH Congress, which took place at the end of April 1948, the women of AFZH in Greek occupied Macedonia invited a delegation of Macedonian women from the People's Republic of Macedonia. These women, however, were detained by the Greeks at the first checkpoint and forced to go back.

The CPG and its Greek patriots had declared and were waging a real war against the Macedonian patriots and active bearers of the Macedonian national ideal. In light of all these events, the “revolutionary acts”, or “noble deeds” mentioned earlier, tell a story of their own. They are no more than a tactical maneuver to blur and conceal Zahariadis's utterly anti-Macedonian and reactionary character and his real policy against the Macedonian people. These “noble acts” were done in order to facilitate and ensure a successful realization of his anti-Macedonian policy.

I am not writing history or artistic literature here, I am just putting down my thoughts just as if I am writing letters and with a little adjustment they could be letters I wrote to a friend. But be as they may, I am hopeful the material will be useful to historians. And not only to them... My letters are sources of information for everyone who is interested in the fate of our people in the Greek state, in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia...

Pavle Rakovski

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. Let us go in order

I was brought into this world by ordinary honest villagers. This took place in one of the Lerin Region villages called Dolno Kleshtina. While growing up I started my life as a cow herder. In our rural setting no one could have imagined or predicted that I would spend more than ten years of my life in prison as a political prisoner in the Soviet Union.

I have been a communist since I became politically aware. It seemed so natural to me like I was a born to be a communist. I became a member of OKNE (Communist Youth of Greece) and everything was fine. I was involved in many discussions about starting a revolution in the future and was waiting for conditions to “mature”.

And that too happened. When the fascist occupation took place national revolutions began to flourish in the neighbouring nations (Greece, Serbia, Albania, and Bulgaria). By then the Macedonian people’s national revolution also broke out and became unstoppable.

Destiny wanted me to be in the forefront of all of it but I ran into a problem. The CPG top leadership accused me of being “an agent of the international reactionaries”. As a result, I, along with most of the Macedonian revolutionary leaders of the Macedonian national liberation movement, was arrested.

I can only speculate as to why we found ourselves in the Moscow prisons (Lefortovski, then Butirski), and then in Siberia and Kazakhstan. Had we remained in Zahariadis’s hands we all would have been dead a long time ago. This is a good reason for me to write about it and to objectively tell my side of the story.

But, as time moves along things change and new information comes out. It appears that things were not the way they seemed at the time and the Yugoslav Communists, for whom we supposedly worked, did not turn out to be “international reactionaries”. After we served our sentences and were legally rehabilitated by the USSR Supreme

Court Military Collegium, we moved to Yugoslavia, that is, to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia.

But let us take things in order...

## **2. It all started for me here**

- After the fascists broke the Greek front line in Albania I returned home to Lerin (my parents left our village in 1926 and moved to Lerin). I had a good ten day rest. On April 26, 1941, a government was formed in Athens. It was headed by General Cholakoglu and, along with the police apparatus, was put in the service of the occupiers.

We had to make a living. The education workers returned to their jobs and I was able to do the same... go to Subotsko through Voden...

I had always been attracted to the city Voden with its natural beauty. Voden is located on a huge rocky terrace and water from Lake Ohrid runs through it. The waterfalls are beautiful. They emit billions of tiny bubbles that sparkle in the sun as they float in the air. There are always rainbows, here and there under the clear sky, that appear and then fade away and disappear. One can see the lush greenery of the fields below the city through the bluish translucent haze. There are orchards, vineyards and fig and cherry trees everywhere.

After finishing my education at the Solun Pedagogical Academy, I applied for a teaching job in Voden or Voden Region and was accepted. I arrived at my place of work on January 10, 1939. I was appointed headmaster of the school in Tsakoni - Bizhova Maala, located about three kilometres from the suburban district of Subotsko (or Ardea in Greek).

I should have reported there now.

Tsakoni (or Hrisa in Greek) is a rich Macedonian village connected to the Subotsko municipality and is considered an integral part of the town. This, of course, was an arbitrary act of the municipal fathers



who were paid big incomes without having to invest anything in the village. In common terms they were “robbing” it...

I began here in this Macedonian village in Meglen Borough (Karadzova) and in time I found myself a political prisoner in the Beria Siberian camps...

### **3. Embargo on news**

- Meglen Borough is geographically located away from the main communication and transportation lines and the only source of news we received here during the fascist occupation was what the ELAS and EAM Party press printed. Their pages were always full of news about the Greek people’s liberation struggle all throughout Greece, as well as events in the distant fronts in the East, the West, and in Africa.

That, of course, was very good.

But there was no news in Meglen Borough (Karadzova) about development in the Macedonian anti-fascist national liberation movement in the neighbouring regions such as Lerin and Kostur. There was a strange embargo placed on the news from those regions. And there could be no mistake about what that meant.

The very moment I found out about this, was the moment that marked the end of my romantic, naïve belief in the infallibility of the Party and its leadership... in the infallibility of their “collective mind”, and beyond that, in their principles...

### **4. The move**

- Vasilis was a stunningly sluggish fat man. He was an ELAS reserves instructor at the Party District Committee in Voden. Because they were having difficulties in the Ostrovo regional centre and in Ostrovo Region, Vasilis sent me a directive ordering me to leave Meglen Borough and the ELAS reserve unit there and go to Ostrovo Region.

The ELAS reserve unit that I was part of had successfully participated in the dislodgement of the Quisling Greek gendarmerie in Meglen Region. So, according to Vasilis's directive, I was ordered to create, organize and lead an ELAS reserve unit. This move was supposed to be a kind of recognition for me. I was to go there as a commander of an ELAS reserve battalion... which had to be created... and eventually act in that region.

It was a very cold November in 1943...

By coincidence or by luck I made it there... Ostrovo Region was the crossroads of a highway and a number of railway lines that connected Lerin with Voden and Solun. There were many people traveling from Kostur and Lerin to Solun through Ostrovo Region. On top of that people from Voden Region, especially fisherman with small private fishing boats, traveled through Ostrovo Lake and were in constant contact with the Lerin Region villages on the opposite side of the lake. They brought their fish to the market in the town Sorovich through the remote villages.

The first time I heard about the existence of a Macedonian political antifascist organization called SNOF, existing in Lerin and Kostur Region, was from these people here...

## **5. A meeting with the elders**

- About three months after my arrival in Ostrovo, during one of my meetings with some Macedonian village elders, the old people there decided to speak to me more openly. They told me the following:

- We the Macedonians have fought more than one time side by side with the Greeks, as Greeks, under the Greek name and flag. We lost many lives in vain. We fought for other people's interests and for other people's freedom. We had no other alternative or choice because we were mobilized by force. Now it's not like that. Now it's on a voluntary basis. Well, as you can see, our Macedonian fighters don't want to fight as Greeks in the ranks of EAM and ELAS under the Greek name and flag. The Communists have promised us that "after a victory", we Macedonians will get our freedom as a minority. But, as you know, we can't surrender our lives and our

blood for free without guarantees. Now let us remind you of the kind of communists you work with. Have a good look at our teacher Gusiopoulos, a Greek communist responsible for the EAM party line here in this region. When the dictator Metaxas was in power Gusiopoulos never missed an opportunity, a weekend or a holiday, to summon the villagers together by force to join him to celebrate and hear him speak about how good the fascist regime was. But now it's a sin to speak about that. Ask yourself what kind of communist can be a former fascist be...?? We the Macedonians in this region know Gusiopoulos too well and we cannot trust him. We also don't trust his leaders and all those above him. For example, why did he not allow SNOF, the Macedonian organization, to expand here in our villages...? Are we here in this region different from the Macedonians in Lerin and Kostur Regions? Why couldn't we and shouldn't we have fought on our own behalf, in the ranks of the Macedonian organization, as Macedonians...?

These elders were not only intelligent and wise but also impressed me with their logic, reasoning and very important questions. At the same time I did not want to convince them of the theories and tactics of the revolution we were leading because, first of all, I was not completely convinced that this was what we were doing. I believed, as a Macedonian, it was my natural right to organize and fight for my own freedom. This right I believed should have been accepted as a tactical question of our revolution. It was well-known to me that a person had the right to organize, develop and affirm the struggle for one's own freedom.

This was the primarily principled question and the legitimate right of a subjugated people in the world in general.

Recognition and freedom cannot be won without a strong development and broad affirmation of the struggle and sacrifices made therein. A revolution that is not decisively consistent with a democratically inclined people is not healthy and treachery is smoldering within it...

Instead of saying something to reassure the elders, that I was doing the right thing, I kept quiet. I guess the elders "figured me out" and were satisfied. I asked for an experienced rower to transfer me to the

opposite shore of the lake so that I could visit the village Pateli in Lerin Region. That job was given to Pando Georgievski, a young fisherman from the village Ostrovo, who after rowing for several hours delivered me to Pateli where I immediately came into contact with the SNOF activists... (Pando Georgievski is now an economist and works in a bank in Skopje).

## **6. Letter to the District Committee**

- I came back from Pateli a different man.

Until that time I followed the Party line even though sometimes it appeared to be anti-Macedonian. Now I began to fight for a consistent application of the Party line especially towards “full equality for minorities” particularly for the Macedonians.

And as the struggle heightened and became fiercer, the Macedonian people began to make gains... so we thought... The Party, under the slogan of the same equality for minorities as the Greeks, allowed the Macedonians to organize themselves in their own national organizations and develop their own struggle for their own freedom the same as the Greek people.

However, the top CPG Party leadership limited this right. The limit was set at creating SNOF for Lerin and Kostur Regions only. They did that behind the scenes and very quietly. And, of course, no explanation was given. But we all know that it was part of their oppression, discrimination and suppression policy.

Being full of bitterness, I thought: “They don’t want the name Macedonia and the Macedonian people being mentioned in the other region of Macedonia...!”

These were acts of desperation... of fear of losing Macedonia... They wanted to save Macedonia from the Macedonians...

The fact that the CPG did everything in its power to suppress and prevent a Macedonian revolutionary anti-fascist liberation struggle, instead of developing and affirming it, definitely qualified as an anti-Macedonian and anti-Party act, which was the policy of the

Greek bourgeoisie. This policy was now being carried out through the CPG.

That's when I wrote a letter to the Voden Party District Committee asking the Committee to invite the Macedonian population from Voden Region to join the struggle in the ranks of EAM and ELAS and nothing should be done to prevent the people from joining. This is what I wrote which was wrong and unrealistic, because the CPG was not going to depart from its current and historic position and neither were the Macedonian people. The Greeks have been committing genocide against the Macedonian people for decades and that had ruined every shred of sympathy and attachment the Macedonian people had to the Greek state and the Greek nation. This could not have been ignored and it would have been hopeless and a sin to ignore it.

Above all, EAM and ELAS were organizations belonging to the oppressing nation, with purely Greek national programs, which ignored the Macedonian people and their democratic rights. With what would you be able to attract them...?

This, of course, at a minimum, could be achieved if we had one Macedonia wide Macedonian organization, under the auspices of the Party which would then formulate the basic requirements such as elementary human and national rights for the Macedonians within the Greek state, which could then inspire the Macedonian population to actively participate in a joint national liberation struggle rather than stand aside in passive anticipation. This, of course, could be done here if the CPG were to take a radical turn and expand SNOF in our District (Voden Region).

Unfortunately, as I continued to work on this I did not take into consideration all the elements and factors that go into drafting the Party policy on this issue and, possibly, I made mistakes. If I made mistakes I would have liked to know... to be told that I made mistakes...

I gave my letter to my superior who at the time was Alekos Mitsakis, ELAS District Committee secretary of the ELAS reserve line.

But the District Committee decided to keep silent on the issue. Well, SNOF was not expanded in Voden Region... and that, I guess, told that I was wrong...

## **7. In Lerin**

- One March day in 1944, Ostrovo was drowning in a flood of SS (German) personnel. The yards and the threshing floors were filled with military trucks. Moving openly through the village I came upon the yard of one of the houses at the end of the village. The Germans had doubled their guards around the village. I had a regular identity card under the name Haisafis Stefanos, a Greek from the village Fufa. But I did not want to risk it so I went to see Giani Avgulata.

Giani was an immigrant from Turkey but was not home. According to his grandmother who was at home, he had run off to hide somewhere.

In a sad tone of voice the old woman said to me: "Run away, my dear... go hide. They told us that they are gathering all the people at the village square to make sure they are locals..."

A couple of SS soldiers showed up in the yard and began to talk to me in German. They were pointing at the bars on the staircase. I understood.

"Got mit unts, kom, kom!" (God is with us, come, come) I said to them and that was about all the German words I knew.

They laughed and the two followed me. We ran into two older Macedonian women on the way and I noticed that they were biting their lips while staring at me. I said hello to them to reassure them that everything was okay. I showed the Germans the store where they sold bars. It was located near the railway station.

They thanked me and left.

I stuck around and paced along the station platform. I don't remember how I got there. I was deep in my thoughts and was worried. But I felt no fear in my heart. That was a good sign, I thought. No matter how strange this may sound, it really proved to be a good sign.

All good rail cars and locomotives were confiscated by the occupiers. The people were left with only one old locomotive and several worn-out cars. The train traveled only once a week. On Friday it left Solun and an hour later, during the night, it arrived in Lerin. Then, on Saturday it left Lerin and returned back to Solun. And so on...

After pacing a while, I heard a train whistle. The train was coming to Voden. It was Friday and the train was traveling from Solun to Lerin. It pulled into the station. A large number of passengers descended from the cars and ran out to fill their bottles with clean lake water. I decided to join them and got on the train with them. The station master, a Macedonian, gave me a train ticket. The uncertainty did not last long. The train slowly moved off...

This is how I found myself at home in Lerin... for the last time. The next day I left again. Who would have known that I would never come back? Thirty years have passed since then...

## **8. The CPG Central Committee 10<sup>th</sup> Plenum and SNOF**

- The CPG was always a Greek national party and always acted that way in relation to the Macedonians. It was an expressive bearer of Greek state interests in Macedonia. During its CPG 10<sup>th</sup> Plenum, held in January 1944, the CPG declared that it was fighting not only for the liberation and territorial integrity of the Greek state, but also for "securing strategic borders." (The CPG in its forty years of struggling, 1918-1958, CPG Central Committee edition 1958, p. 504.)

This of course can be explained and even justified one way or another. Obviously the last part (securing strategic borders) was a request for widening the Greek state borders by appropriating new territories. In other words, in addition to holding onto the Greek

(occupied) part of Macedonia, the CPG was struggling to occupy and annex other parts of Macedonia. Establishing SNOF in Lerin and Kostur Regions, under these circumstances, was just an extravagant maneuver... a tactical deviation with an obvious dual purpose:

- a) Prevent the spread of Bulgarian influence and the enlargement of the autonomist movement, through which the Bulgarians, with German blessings, seriously jeopardized the “Greek positions and interests” here, and
- b) Relieve the pressure put on by the Macedonian national liberation movement. In other words, allow the Macedonian movement to slowly begin and ultimately suffocate it before it grew too big. The CPG had experience with the latter.

Namely, the CPG founded VMRO (United) in 1934 in order to remove external pressures coming from the Comintern and from the Balkan Communist Federation. The CPG basically created an impotent organization that not only satisfied its external requirements but left nothing behind to mark its existence. VMRO (United) was created as a hoax. It was a fraudulent, stillborn, and imaginary organization. It was never activated and had no statute. It had no program or political line. It did not have its own seal or its own voice. It had no political activities. For all practical purposes the organization did not exist... And that is exactly what the CPG wanted and had experience with.

The CPG later tried to use this experience with SNOF. It was by no accident that SNOF was restricted to only Lerin and Kostur regions. But this time it did not work because circumstances were different. This time the pressure did not come from the outside and from above, but from the inside... from the Macedonian people... Instead of being a formal and imaginary organization, SNOF rapidly developed into a dynamic people’s revolutionary organization. When SNOF appeared the Macedonian national liberation movement began to strengthen and organize into a true revolutionary movement.



This naturally created a tense and charged atmosphere causing growing nervousness among the CPG leadership. And, according to the logic of things, the CPG started an open attack against SNOF calling for its dissolution...

## **9 The politics of ignoring**

This response (attack against SNOF) did not begin or end with the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenum. Immediately after the “August 4<sup>th</sup> Regime” capitulated and disintegrated, a number of senior Party officials, by some means, were released from prison. Then, at their meeting in June 1941, known as the CPG Central Committee 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum, they announced: “The Communist Party of Greece calls on all the Greek people, on all its parties and organizations (as well as the bourgeois parties and organizations - P. R.) to join the national front and fight against the fascist occupation... for their national liberation... etc.” (CPG from 1931 to 1952, basic documents, the CPG Central Committee edition, 1952, p. 105.)

As you can see there is not a single word mentioned about the Macedonian people’s national liberation struggle in this announcement even though it was made during a critical time in history. This very important resolution, adopted to set the conditions of the struggle, has completely ignored the Macedonian people, especially the idea of Macedonians fighting side by side with Greeks.

This policy of completely ignoring the Macedonian people, that is, ignoring the Macedonian national question in the Greek state, should have been resolved there and then. This was, above all, a matter of recognizing and granting the Macedonian people their elementary human and national rights. This issue should not have been ignored or left to be resolved after the national liberation war.

Proof of this policy, of the CPG ignoring the Macedonian National Question, can be found in the documents from the 7<sup>th</sup> plenum, and in the EAM and ELAS program documents. In other words, the Macedonian people are not mentioned in any of them. There are no democratic rights and freedoms for the Macedonians mentioned or implemented in the “new Greece”. But there is more to it than that.

Publicly and officially the CPG always treated the Macedonian people as “Slavophone Greeks”. Here is what Rizospastis wrote on June 20, 1943: “After the exchange of populations, Macedonia is as Greek as Attica Region in Athens!” In his famous book entitled “ELAS”, ELAS Supreme Commander General Sarafis wrote that the 28<sup>th</sup> ELAS Brigade was composed of “Slavophone Greeks”. (p. 331.) He did this without a trace of hesitation as if it this was an accepted fact. He did this with a classic Phariseism, as if it were true as was done by the greats. He said that when he did his tour in the village Perivoli in Kostur Region, he inspected the Second Battalion of the 28<sup>th</sup> ELAS Brigade and found it to be composed of “Slavophone Greeks”. This, however, was the Lerin and Kostur Macedonian Battalion, led by Ilia Dimovski Gotse, a Macedonian from the village Statitsa.

There is also the case of General Bakirdzhis, Commander of the ELAS Group in Macedonia, who, in an interview with the Party newspaper “Laiki Foni”, said that the Macedonians were “Bugarophone Greeks”. (Collection: Aegean Macedonia in the national liberation war, AM 1971, p. 523, document number 191.)

However, the CPG wishes and plans were one thing, but the Macedonian reality proved to be something completely different...

## **10. Bulgarian fascist activities**

The Bulgarian Fascists arrived here with the arrival of Hitler’s Germans in 1941. Hitler promised to give them Eastern Macedonia and so they occupied it and joined it with “mother Bulgaria”. At the same time they sent their representatives and agents, the likes of Andom Kalchev, lieutenant of Bulgarian security, to Central and Western Macedonia.

As allies of “Great Germany”, the Bulgarians made great efforts to show themselves worthy. Their merit was a paradox: the black forces of the worst reactionaries in our epoch - the German Nazis, appeared in this part of Macedonia as liberators. Thousands of Macedonians, trapped in the Greek prisons and the dry islands of the Aegean Sea, were released. The CPG saw an open opportunity here and took it. It managed to convince the Germans that these prisoners

were in prison because they were Bulgarians. Twenty seven Party activists were released... These activists were jailed by the Greek Asphalia (security service) and then handed over to the Gestapo to have them killed because they were supposedly dangerous communists. After the German invasion and occupation the Macedonian language was no longer banned and the Macedonian people were allowed to speak it without fear of persecution. In fact all persecutions against the Macedonian people had stopped altogether. The Macedonian youth, especially in the villages, took advantage of this freedom and celebrated every evening and especially every Sunday like they were holidays. The villages came alive with Macedonian folk lyrics, instrumental music, folk dances and various other traditional Macedonian activities...

These Greek crimes and genocide against the Macedonian people were skillfully exploited by the Bulgarian fascists who strove to attract the Macedonian people, beckoning them to come to the German fascist side. The Bulgarian fascists worked wholeheartedly to serve the Germans by arming the Macedonian villages and putting them in their service. At the same time they made every effort, but very carefully of course, to get the greatest benefit for themselves. With the call to fight “for a proud autonomous Macedonia” under the protection of “mother Bulgaria”, that is within Bulgaria’s framework, they managed to attract a significant part of the Macedonian villagers. But, as is well-known, the fear created by the Greek genocides and the deep aspiration for freedom is what truly attracted the Macedonian people... But, nonetheless, the Bulgarians tried to use this to their advantage...

## **11. CPG slogans and “program” for the Macedonian national liberation struggle**

The Macedonian people, particularly the Macedonian communists, from this part of Macedonia (Greek occupied Macedonia) were faced with considerable difficulties in fighting against the spread of German and Bulgarian influence. The CPG, with its negative policy towards the Macedonian people, had disarmed them politically. Except for the CPG’s wishy-washy abstract and powerless slogan “full equality for minorities”, they had nothing...

In order to combat this Bulgarian fascist intrusion and to respond to the pressure put on by the Macedonian national liberation movement, led by the Macedonian communists, the CPG leadership was forced to re-think the existence of the Macedonian people in this part (Greek occupied) of Macedonia. After a long silence the CPG, in 1942, decided to say something about the Macedonians in Greece. It did this twice, the first time in January 1942, during its CPG Central Committee 8<sup>th</sup> Plenum, and the second time in December 1942, during a CPG Pan-Greek Conference. After a long silence, the CPG finally said something officially about the problems the “Slavo-Macedonians” were facing in their liberation struggle. This is what the CPG said:

“According to the Resolution adopted during the 8<sup>th</sup> Plenum, our Party needs to develop activities to educate the national minorities, especially the ‘Slavophone Macedonians’, to not be distracted by the Greek bourgeoisie oppression against them and by the current demagoguery of the occupiers, and especially by Bulgarian imperialism and chauvinism – Hitler and Mussolini’s satellites. The national minorities should unite their struggles with the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian people’s national liberation struggles, and fight against the gangster fascist yoke. They should fight for the victory of the Soviet Union and for the victory of all enslaved nations, because only that victory is a guarantee for their national and social liberation...” (Fourteen years of CPG struggle, p. 147.)

This is what was said at the CPG Pan-Greek Conference:

“Our Party is struggling for full equality for the national minorities and needs to make every effort to enlighten them on the danger of being used by the fascist axis... The national minorities should be organized on the basis of a common fraternal anti-fascist struggle with the Greek people. The struggle for victory by the Soviet Union and its allies is a guarantee for freedom and fraternal life for all nations...” (Ibid., p. 185.)

The following was written in the article “The Macedonian national question through the Politics of the CPG”, published by INI in Skopje in 1968 in the magazine “Glasnik”, number 3:

These slogans and... Party program were implemented in such a way that the Party activists in Macedonia made every effort to convince the Macedonian people to not only not demand more than “full equality”, but also that they should not expect “full equality” to “manifest itself into anything under today’s conditions...” Namely, they were told that there was no need for the Macedonian people to be organized en masse in their own national liberation organization, whose role was to carry out political work (agitation and propaganda) in Macedonia including organizing the armed struggle of the Macedonian people and creating a Macedonian revolutionary army (Macedonian units) within the framework of ELAS. The activists tried to convince the people that the Party, in its own program, would emphasize the Macedonian people’s basic national requirements, their revolutionary struggle and the like.

On top of that the Party activists demanded that the Macedonian people fight against the occupiers in the ranks of the Greek National Liberation Front - EAM, and in the ranks of the Greek People’s Liberation Army – ELAS. Unfortunately EAM and ELAS had nothing in their program documents about the Macedonian people and their democratic rights in new Greece. And, most importantly, the Party activists demanded that the Macedonian people not make any general demands on EAM and ELAS.

In fact this means that the Greeks, by their well-known tactics, were camouflaging the Macedonians with Greek national colours and the Macedonian struggle, coupled with the Greek struggle, remained not only non-affirmed but also invisible.

And that was not all.

The essence of this policy, under these circumstances, was far more ill-fated for the Macedonian people than one could have imagined. Namely, EAM, ELAS and PEEA (Political Commission for National Liberation) in their program documents did not actually ignore the Macedonian people, but treated them as Greek people...

**12. The National Council of the People’s Democratic Greece proclaimed...**

As is well-known, PEEA convened and chaired the first (and only) National Council of the People's Democratic Greece Session somewhere in the free territory, which took place on May 14-27, 1944. Among the Acts adopted was the following:

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL SENDS ITS GREETINGS TO THE  
MACEDONIAN AND THRACIAN PEOPLE

Listening with excitement to the reports given by the national councilors from Macedonia and Thrace exposing the suffering of the Macedonian and Thracian people under the double slavery of the Germans and the Bulgarians

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL HAS DECIDED to salute and, with admiration, honour the Macedonian and Thracian people for their contribution to the national liberation struggle of the nation

And is PROGRAMMING the Greek character of Macedonia and Western Thrace, which represent an undeniable part of Greece

AND CALLS FOR the Macedonian and Thracian people to continue their national struggle under the leadership of PEEA until the final victory and the final break-up of fascism.

Seconded by Korishadis at the third meeting today, May 16, 1944.

N. Grigoriadis  
President

K. Karageorgis  
Secretary

(See: St'armata, st'armata, Chronicle of the National Resistance 1940-1945, P.L.E. Edition, Publishing House Controlled by the CPG Central Committee, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1967, p. 328, Aegean Macedonia in the national liberation war 1944-1945, Volume I, AM 1971 edition, p. 117, document No. 104.)

There were also Macedonians among the National Council delegates. Included among them were Risto Turturev from Voden

Region, Kiro Piliaev from Lerin Region and Mihail Keramidzhiev from Kostur Region. Keramidzhiev was the only SNOF representative. But when he went before the tribune to remind the delegates that there were non-Greeks (Macedonians), besides the Greeks living in this part of Macedonia, who were now fighting together with the Greek people against the occupiers and whose equality in the new Greece needed to be recognized and guaranteed by this body, Keramidzhiev was prevented from speaking. CPG Politburo member Ianis Zevgos told Keramidzhiev that there were too many EAM delegates who would not appreciate his comments and this would damage the Party and its politics.

And so, for the National Council of “the People’s Democratic Greece”, there were no Macedonian people, only Greek people living in this part (Greek occupied) of Macedonia. And so the Greek character of Macedonia was proclaimed... It is unclear whether, accidentally or deliberately, this only applied to the Greek part of Macedonia or to Western Thrace as well. This same claim was made by “Rizospastis”, the CPG organ, almost a year ago, which told the world that after the population exchanges Macedonia became as Greek as Attica Region...

### **13. Fighter determination**

So, according to “Glasnik”, the Party, under pressure from developing events, decided to abandon its old tactics of ignoring the Macedonian people’s revolutionary struggle. It decided to do this not because it wanted to lead the struggle and not because it wanted to organize and develop it... Well, if one was to take a national organization away from its national ideological content and from its national liberation movement, as was done with the Macedonian liberation movement, then nothing will remain. If a person cannot see why they are fighting... well, they will not fight...” (Glasnik, INI Skopje, number 3/68, p. 111.)

So, the Macedonian communists and other patriots were obliged to fight against the influence of the Germans and Bulgarians... politically disarmed. The occupiers used the shortage of food and the hunger they themselves caused, as a means to spread their political influence on the hungry. They did this by providing them

with free corn and other foods. As a result the lists in the Bulgarian club in Solun grew long with the names of Macedonians and Greeks.

However, the Macedonian communists and other patriots fought stubbornly. They were the sons of the Macedonian nation and were recognized as such as they worked hard in their native villages and among their native people. Their influence worked...

The occupiers were forced to look for new ways to deflect the rural Macedonians from the influence of the Macedonian communists and other patriots. With help from the Kostur bishop and from other quislings, they organized a number of Greek fascist gangs, led by the likes of Kolaras, Kirtsidikis and others, who started attacking the Macedonian villages and killing unarmed and unprotected people.

On top of the Greek fascist gangs who targeted the Macedonian villages there were also ELAS activist groups, like the one led by Sevtelos, who were doing the same and whose attitude towards the Macedonian people was no different than that of Kolaras or Kirtsidakis. Sevtelos was responsible for organizing and carrying out mass tortures like the one in the village Sarakinovo, Meglen Region, while searching for weapons in the homes of unarmed villagers. These fierce attacks carried out by the Greek fascist gangs and by other various servants of the fascists was a real danger for the Macedonian villagers. As a result many of the villagers lowered their resistance and the occupiers, little by little, began to achieve their aims. By 1943 there were several village counter-bands operating in Kostur Region which were armed with German weapons. These kinds of counter-bands were also established in the villages in Sorovich, Kailari and Lerin Regions. In the summer of 1944, the counter-band unit in the city Voden numbered about 700 fighters... But the fact remains that these villagers, even though they were armed by the Bulgarians with German weapons, were waiting for the Red Army to come and save them from the Greek danger.

The Germans for their part gave the Macedonian villagers weapons in order prevent the development of the Macedonian national liberation movement which was struggling to drive them out of the



territory. Macedonia was an important strategic point for the occupiers and they tried their best to weaken the resistance there...

#### **14 SNOF, its founding and dissolution**

But, despite the appearance of these counter-bands, the Macedonian communists and other patriots continued to have contact with the villages, which needs to be emphasized, and began to change the situation radically and very quickly. So, it was not long before the counter-bands either abandoned the German weapons or turned them against the Germans and Bulgarians.

A wide Macedonian mass movement began to develop.

This put a lot of pressure on the CPG from the bottom and forced the Party leadership to agree to establish the Slavo-Macedonian People's Liberation Front (SNOF) in Lerin and Kostur Regions. This was done towards the end of 1943.

And as I already mentioned earlier, independent of and contrary to the CPG's intention to exploit the situation based on its experience with VMRO (United), SNOF turned out to be a huge and real revolutionary force. The Macedonian people's liberation struggle began to gain perspective with clear ideological and political content. The Macedonian people began to join the SNOF units en masse... which were part of ELAS but distinctly Macedonian. Even former members of the counter-band units, being directed by SNOF, joined ELAS.

What helped the Macedonian communists achieve this...? And what were the factors that caused this radical change...?

There was an entire series of factors, both internal and external. The external factors were the successes and victories the red army was having over the fascist armies in Moscow, Leningrad and Stalingrad. Closer to home were the magnificent victories the Yugoslav people were having with their liberation struggle. There were also the constant and extensive contacts between the Macedonians in the Greek (occupied) part of Macedonia and those in the Serbian part of Macedonia. The imposed and artificial borders that divided

Macedonia and separated the Macedonian people since 1913 were eliminated during the fascist occupation and the Macedonian people were able to cross them. As a result the Macedonian people sought to create a common liberation struggle, whose direct course in 1943 was, among other things, the creation of the People's Republic of Macedonia.

The extraordinary developments in the liberation struggle in Vardar Macedonia, twinned with the other Yugoslav people's struggles... the emergence and influence of the People's Republic of Macedonia... were factors that had a huge influence on the Macedonian people in the Greek (occupied) part of Macedonia which prompted them to organize and mobilize. In other words, the broader part of the Macedonian masses became well aware that "they were not alone...!"

The inevitable Macedonian national liberation movement in this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia erupted and became unstoppable.

This is why the Macedonian communists and other patriots had such great success in suppressing the German and Bulgarian influence and in organizing and developing the Macedonian national liberation movement.

However, this course of events the Macedonians took in (Greek occupied) Macedonia hardened the fundamental contradiction between the Great Greek chauvinist interests of the Greek state in (Greek occupied) Macedonia on the one hand, and the Macedonian people's national liberation movement on the other.

This forced the CPG to act. In striving at all costs to prevent the affirmation of the Macedonian national liberation movement, the CPG leadership began to openly attack SNOF. The CPG did this because there was no other party capable of doing it under the circumstances. The CPG proclaimed that SNOF was a "crypto-fascist and autonomist" organization and called for its disbandment. The CPG did this even though SNOF defeated the autonomist movement and its military forces. Six months after its formation, in May, 1944, SNOF was disbanded.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 1. An overpowering imperative

With a new directive issued by the District Committee, in May 1944, I was transferred back to the Meglen district, to Tresin Region where Bulgarian influence was high. Certain Macedonian families that were not afraid of me did not bother to hide the Bulgarian books that the Bulgarian agents handed out to Macedonian children for free.

“So what if they are Bulgarian books...?” The elderly in the family usually said, “Was it bad for you to have been educated with Greek books in Greek schools? It is easier to learn in Bulgarian than in Greek...!”

Every day, from one day to the next, young people freely left their villages in the occupied areas in Voden in order to join Comrade Dimchev’s (Bulgarian agent) units so that they could fight for an allegedly “free Macedonia”!

Concerned about all this, Party Secretary Barba Traiko (Nikos Papasermitsis, a Macedonian), one day asked me directly:

“What do you think, what is the way out of this situation...? What should we do to end this defection...?”

Having experience with this, this time I did not advise him to extend SNOF to these villages, (I did not know at this time that SNOF had already been dissolved). I said to Papasermitsis:

“Creating even one Macedonian military unit here in Kaimakchalan would make the place look like a Macedonian national revolutionary centre which then would attract the revolutionary Macedonian youth. The need for such a military unit can be justified as a counter to the Greek and Bulgarian expansion here. The presence of Bulgarian agent Dimchev together with the Greek gendarmerie here, under the same German wing, receiving weapons from the same German warehouse, will be sufficient reason to create such a unit

which then would stop the enemy units from growing and reverse their expanding influence.

To my great surprise, with certain reservations, my advice was taken seriously and immediately acted upon. But, it took me five years to find out why. On the night of June 19/20, 1949, Papasermitsis finally explained to me why he accepted my proposal and acted on it so easily and quickly. That night Zahariadis forced the leading Macedonian military and political cadres from the Party asset to step up the campaign against the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (in the spirit of the famous Informbureau resolution), and I, as a person who had allegedly fallen under the “leadership in Skopje”, was suspended from the NOF Presidency and from the World Peace League Committee. That’s when Papasermitsis acted against me and, among other things, with self-criticism, said the following:

“I activated and appointed him...” he said pointing at me with his finger. “What was I expected to do? The District Committee sent me there and told me that this man possessed special skills for working with the Macedonian population and that I should consult with him and follow his advice...?”

It is true. I brought Papasermitsis the letter from the District Committee when I went there. In other words, they sent me there as an “expert” to suppress the Bulgarian influence and Papasermitsis had to follow my advice.

However, even though he apparently was impressed and somewhat concerned by the weight and importance of my advice, despite his orders to accept it, Papasermitsis still expressed reservations by saying:

“We have no directive on this...!”

But then I reminded him that we were sent here just for that: to mobilize our people against the fascist occupation and against Bulgarian influence. We could only succeed in that, under those conditions, if we formed our own Macedonian military unit, that is, if we treated the Macedonian people as “equals” instead of just talking about it... The only thing we needed to do was have our

Regional Committee show willingness, revolutionary initiative and determination...

Given the weight of the argument Papasermitsis agreed with the Regional Committee that Macedonian military unit must be formed and personally went to get formal consent from the District Committee...

## **2. Establishing a Macedonian battalion...**

The Regional Committee met on June 15, 1944 in order to decide the establishment of a Macedonian military unit as an inevitable imperative.

In accordance with the decision made, the next day I, and Georgi Atanasov-Blaze, at my request, went to start the mobilization while Secretary Papasermitsis went to get approval from the District Committee. Georgi Atanasov-Blaze, like his father, was a very popular teacher and widely known in Meglen Region. That was also the first time I adopted and used my nickname “Gotse” in honour of Gotse Delchev and to continue his work.

At this point I would like to say that I did not know the following at the time. But now, as I write these lines, I know that there was a document... The Voden District Party leaders and ELAS 10<sup>th</sup> Division had made a decision, according to the document dated May 30, 1944, to form a Macedonian military unit “on request” from the Macedonian CPG members and activists. I also now know that there was a decision made by the Provincial Bureau, almost a year earlier, to form one unit with Macedonian soldiers in Lerin-Kostur and Voden Regions.

But these were only elements of a declarative policy implemented at the top, at the CPG governing level. They were formal concessions made in response to pressures and criticisms coming from the outside, in this case, from the “Skopje leaders” and from the CPY. These decisions were never revealed and were unknown to those working down in the field. But these CPG governing bodies who made these “formal” decisions were the same governing bodies which in practice were trying their best to prevent the Macedonian

national liberation movement and the creation of a Macedonian military force.

Of course, only an alleged or tendentious historian will believe and assert that the Party did implement this policy correctly and was consistent as shown by the written documents, however they will also assert that a large Macedonian military force was not created because, allegedly, there were no Macedonians, or not enough Macedonians, to create it with, as claimed by Rizospastis when it declared that “after the population exchanges Macedonia became as Greek as Attica...!” As was mentioned earlier, during the CPG 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, held in 1934, the CPG declared that “the Macedonian national question does not exist for the Party because the Macedonian people have already been assimilated into the Greek fold and do not exist as a separate people...”

In the evening we climbed up Mount Kaimakchalan with our first 52 Macedonian volunteer partisans. Georgi Atanasov-Blaze stayed behind in our newly organized camp located over the village Gorno Rodovo, while I followed the action, but only for another three days. After that I immediately became involved with the military organization and training the fighters. Every day new volunteers arrived. The news that a Macedonian army was being created reached everywhere in the Macedonian villages...

### **3. Why was this allowed?**

Petros (Hristos Moshos), a military Party instructor from ELAS 10<sup>th</sup> Division was the first to arrive to see what had happened.

We explained to him how it came about to form a unit of about three hundred fighters, that is, what happened after we received approval from the Regional Committee. This was the first time I understood the expression “wolf’s smile”, which I encountered several times in Gorky’s works. While exploding from rage on the inside, Petros tried to smile by only showing his teeth.

He left immediately but his visit left me with a difficult and painful impression.

The following document explains why the formation of the Voden battalion was not prevented:

RADIO TELEGRAM No. 94

To: The 10<sup>th</sup> Division

Information about Bulgarian formed political organizations in Voden.

The purpose of the Bulgarians arming the Macedonian villages is to create an autonomous Macedonia under the auspices of the Bulgarian government and with Hitler's consent. Head of the autonomist movement is Vancho Mihailov. Their actions are concealed in order to avoid disputes with the Greek reactionaries. Many Macedonians have been drawn in. The Macedonian political cadres also sympathize and are in favour of autonomy. The political organization in Voden with Panos has decided to form independent Macedonian groups with a sickle and a hammer and a red flag. We await your orders.

Petros.

Sent on May 30, 1944

Received on May 30, 1944

(Collection: Aegean Macedonia in the National Liberation War, Volume 1, 1944-1945, AM 1971, document number 115, page 416.)

This is what Todor Simovski, a senior expert of INI in Skopje, wrote:

“According to German archived material, which is now located in the Institute of National History in Skopje, appropriate initiatives for arming the Macedonian villages and creating autonomist military units were taken at Berlin. Leading these units in Voden Region from the city Voden, was Air force Lieutenant Dimchev. Dimchev was an ethnic Macedonian from the village Bozets, Enidzhevardar Region who, as a child, had immigrated to Bulgaria. Dimchev was directly subordinated to German command and followed orders issued to him by German command in Voden as stated in the order

in Berlin...” (Article: Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia at the National Liberation War, Nova Makedonija, January 8, 1972.)

Hence, the need to form a Macedonian battalion was in response to occupier activities and not to Macedonian needs.

Of course, this was not a policy of principle but just an extravagant maneuver. In other words the Party never did recognize the need of the Macedonian people to organize and fight for their own freedom. In fact it was quite the opposite; it was precisely at this time that the Party began its attacks against the Macedonian people, resulting in the dismantling of SNOF in Lerin and Kostur Regions and launching a hostile campaign against their activists. The Party did this to defend the “Greek national interests” in Macedonia whose success could only be achieved by using the Macedonians. Thus, our “Greeks brothers”, with no less determination and unscrupulousness than our “Bulgarian brothers”, tried to exploit the aspirations of the Macedonian people for their own special “Greater Greek” interests...

#### **4. Battalion Command**

Eighteen days after Secretary Papasermitsis left, he returned. Accompanying him were the Regional Committee First and Second Secretary and Petros. They suggested that I be appointed commander of the Macedonian unit but I did not accept. It was obvious to me that I would be given provocative orders and if I followed them or not, I would be destroyed as an activist, but also, with me at the helm, the battalion too would suffer greatly. I said that I did not feel I was capable of taking responsibility for the fate of the battalion and its fighters. This responsibility was finally entrusted to Georgi Urdov-Dzhodhzo, District Committee Second Secretary. As his military assistant they appointed a Greek man from Crete named Foundoulakis. I was left third in command responsible for educating the fighters on ideological and political matters. In fact, even though I was third in command, in practical terms the battalion remained in my hands. Namely, Foundoulakis was not popular and because he did not speak Macedonian he had little or no contact with the fighters. Dzhodhzo was almost illiterate and could barely sign his name. And, on top of that, he had a weak vocabulary and avoided appearing before assemblies...



## **5. Proclamation to the Macedonian people**

Similar to the Lerin Region villages; Buf being under Bulgarian influence and Rakovo being under Greek influence, the villages Pozharsko and Baovo in Meglen Region had also long been under similar influences. That is, Pozharsko being under Bulgarian and Baovo being under Greek influence.

According to my understanding, and not that of Petros's, one of the first basic tasks for the Macedonian battalion was to attract those Macedonians who had leanings towards the Greek and Bulgarian positions into the ranks of the Macedonian battalion and to cleanse them of those leanings.

I visited both Pozharsko and Baovo and, on the spot, did my due diligence in explaining our situation and called them to arms. Unfortunately it was not physically possible to visit all the Macedonian villages or to rally the people in Voden while the city was under occupation. That is why I made the following declaration to the Macedonian people:

**BROTHERS...!**

Please understand that this great struggle is not a Greek fight against the Bulgarians, it is not a Bulgarian fight against the Serbians here in the Balkans, but rather it is a struggle of all nations against the cursed Fascists. The same struggle is taking place all over the world. United with the USSR's Red Army all nations are fighting for life and death against the Fascist tyrants. For as long as Italian fascism was alive and German fascism was strong, the people's forces here in the Balkans fought only against them. But after the German fascist hordes were summoned to the fronts and the Italian Fascists fell, the German fascists began to arm the Greek fascists and, in order to attract our Macedonian children, they brought some fascist dogs, servants of fascism, the likes of Kalchev, Dimchev, and others like them to deceive our children. They filled their heads with dreams, gave them arms and turned them into servants of German fascism.

Our Macedonian People's Army, united with the Greek People's Army, is now fighting here against the German and Greek fascists and against our own children...!

The Greeks fascists and our tricked children are getting their weapons from the same warehouse...! We all know why the Greek fascists and the Greek gendarmes are fighting. Our children, lied to by Kalchev, Dimchev and others, united with the Greek fascists and gendarmes under the same German fascist wing, are fighting not for Macedonia but for fascism which is fighting against the Macedonian people's army and against the Macedonian people...!

DEAR MACEDONIANS!

Our path is not with the fascists. It is with the democratic people of the world. We will gain our rights and freedom only if we join the democratic Greek people and all the other democratic peoples in their struggles.

Fascism will die...! The Italian people have risen against it. The Romanians are doing the same and so are the Czechoslovakians, the French, the Finnish and the Bulgarians...!

Children of Macedonia!

Join the ranks of the Macedonian army and let's move forward against the fascists. We will fight together with the Greek people's army against the cursed Greek fascists and against all fascists...!

Grab the guns carried by your old fathers and become SOLDIERS of the Macedonian people. As a separate people, we should have our own people's army.

Forward...! Rifle in hand and forward...!

Macedonian fathers!

Donate your guns...! Don't be bad Macedonians by hiding your rifles, allowing them to rust, instead of donating them to the soldiers of our people...!

## DEATH TO THE FASCISTS - FREEDOM TO THE PEOPLE – LONG LIVE THE NAME MACEDONIA!

Leading the main headquarters of the Macedonian army are  
DZHODZHO, BLAZHE, GOTSE, GUSHI, SOTIR...

Understandably, I omitted the name Lefteris Foundoulakis, the Greek officer, for obvious reasons. I put Blazhe right after Dzhodzho because he was there and, as I already mentioned, widely known in Meglen Region. I was Gotse while Gushi was well-known in the villages Teovo, Nisia, and generally in Ostrovo Region, as well as in the city Voden because he was from Voden. Sotir was from Ber Region or from Solun, I am not sure which one.

Publicist Hristo Andonovski, among others, who at the time was a political worker, said the following in his own publication about this proclamation to the people:

“The first call for joining the Macedonian battalion, made in the Macedonian language, was made to the population in Meglen and Voden Regions, where the goals of the anti-fascist struggle were introduced... History has no record of such a massive turnout as was the case in the Meglen Region villages, Baovo and Pozharsko in particular, from which over one hundred fighters immediately emerged, and many of them with their relic weapons that their grandfathers had hidden in their homes...” (Hristo Andonovski: Macedonians under Greece in the struggle against fascism, INI Skopje 1968, p. 178.)

The battalion grew from hour to hour just like the stories told about it. There was such a great influx of new fighters coming from the villages and from the city Voden that it created concerns among the Greeks. So, in order to slow it down, even reverse its growth, a “medical commission” was appointed to examine the volunteer fighters. Petros made sure of that. In its great wisdom the commission began to turn back most fighters telling them that they were “unable to fight” because of medical reasons. But, even this scandal could not influence the rapid growth of the battalion. About a month and a half later, sometime at the end of July 1944, the

battalion had six complete units with their own organizations, seamstresses, shoemakers and weapons workshops. There were a total of about 750 fighters.

Then, the order from 10<sup>th</sup> Division (Petros) came ordering us to stop receiving volunteers...

This, under the circumstances of the time, actually meant to stop, or to prevent further mobilization of Macedonians into the army and to stop the creation of a Macedonian military force...!

In addition to the news embargo placed quietly on all news coming out of the Lerin and Kostur Regions about the development of the Macedonian anti-fascist national liberation movement there, there were also other limitations placed on us, such as:

SNOF being limited to only Lerin and Kostur Regions.

Not allowing SNOF to expand into Voden Region.

Dissolving SNOF in Lerin and Kostur Regions.

This order – the ban on receiving volunteers in the battalion, was yet another CPG anti-Macedonian act...!

## **6. The Macedonian alphabet**

The battalion stopped growing in numbers. Without seeking help from anywhere, and feeling the urgent need to do something, feeling it was my revolutionary obligation to somehow fend off this blow against the development and strengthening of our liberation movement, I decided to create a Macedonian alphabet. I decided to do this because of the existence of the six Macedonian units - in which the Macedonian fighters were craving to sing Macedonian combat songs everywhere, where the units appeared and acted admirably among our people.

I realized that their success would be even greater if, besides speaking and singing in Macedonian, they could also read and write in Macedonian with their own Macedonian letters instead of “borrowing” letters from the Greek and Bulgarian alphabets. It was

clear to me that neither the Greek nor the Bulgarian alphabets were acceptable to the entire Macedonian nation as their own.

After I created the new alphabet I began to first teach it to the fighters... to everyone. To make that easier and more accessible, I had the alphabet written on a large billboard in various colours and had the billboard hung on a beech tree in the centre of the camp. The billboard and colour idea was the work of my assistants Petre Sarakinov and Dinko Dielov, both of Voden. Each one of the fighters then wrote the alphabet down in their notebooks along with the combat songs. In other words, they wrote the songs using the new Macedonian alphabet. But that did not end there. They also began to write letters to their parents, friends, relatives, in the Macedonian villages using the Macedonian alphabet. On top of creating the billboard, I also printed and sent convenient leaflets to the villages with the alphabet and Macedonian combat songs. At the same time, I began to look for ways to find the necessary people and technical equipment for publishing a Macedonian newspaper...

I am not a linguist. But I knew what I wanted and how to achieve it. It is true that the Macedonian people from this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia, from the second half of the last century (1850-1900), found themselves under armed threat from Greek propaganda on one hand and from Bulgarian propaganda on the other. Even when I was a student in the gymnasium I knew that the churches St. Georgi and St. Nikola in Lerin were seized by the Greeks, and the church St. Panteleimon and the gymnasium building were seized by the Bulgarians. The school building in the village Buf was taken over by the “Bulgarians” and the people of Buf were mainly under Bulgarian influence. The village Rakovo, on the other hand, was mainly under Greek influence. Besides the large passive population living in our villages and towns in general, there were active rival groups commonly known as “Patriarchates” and “Exarchates” or as the Macedonian people called them “Grkomani” (Macedonians loyal to the Greek cause) and “Bugaromani” (Macedonians loyal to the Bulgarian cause) operating. And while being scornful of each other, they were mainly responsible for propagating Greek and Bulgarian propaganda. This was done mostly in the past but is still present to this day. Namely, apart from the elderly people, like it or not, the Macedonian people were forced to

learn the Greek alphabet. But, on the other hand, we can't underestimate the effort of the Bulgarian propaganda during the fascist occupation... The alphabet I compiled was tailored to combat this situation and remove the Greek and Bulgarian influences. The conditions during the struggle were right for the Macedonian alphabet to be easily and quickly accepted and adopted without too much resistance and thus be transformed into an instrument of the Macedonian antifascist national liberation movement...

At the same time, for the sake of quick and greater success, I started with the living Macedonian language, my mother tongue, to which I was introduced when I was a child in my own village, in the surrounding villages in Lerinsko Pole, in the city Lerin and later in Voden Region. Namely, the letters sounding: Б(B), З(Z), Ж(ZH) и H(N), C(S), Y(U), Ш(SH), Ч(CH) are sounds of the Macedonian language and, as Slavic letters, are also found in the Bulgarian alphabet. The rest of the letters: А В Г Д Е К Л И М О П Р Т Ф Х (14) (A V G D E K L M O P R T F H) are sounds of the Macedonian language, and are found in both the Greek and Bulgarian alphabets.

The Greek alphabet, of course, was more widespread in this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia. It was known everywhere, practically in every Macedonian home. But from it the letters Iota (ι), Epsilon (ε), tau (τ), Zeta (ζ), Ni (ν), Sigma (σ), psi (ψ), Omega (ω), I left as unnecessary for the Macedonian language and alphabet. Also, I left out the Greek letters (ξ) and (ψ), which could be replaced by the double letters (ks) and (ps).

I have included the letter (ь) in the alphabet, starting from the fact that this short silent sound is present in the Macedonian language, in many words. And as they say here in Voden Region and in Lerin Region in: K'lan, K'lkam, P'lnam, K'sam, G'ltam, M'lzam, V'lk, K'lk, S'lza, S'ntse, K'chevski, K'chishta, 'rsh, 'prgia, etc...

## **7. A Flyer sent with the alphabet**

The alphabet was printed on leaflets and distributed with a flyer in the Macedonian villages on behalf of the Voden ELAS Macedonian Battalion. The caption on the flier read:

BROTHER! The Macedonian army is the strength of the Macedonian people. The Macedonian army is struggling to provide freedom for the Macedonian people as a separate nation, with full rights where our mother tongue can be spoken in our churches and schools.

The Macedonian army is guarantee that our people will freely speak their native language forever. Our villages should now open Macedonian schools and teach Macedonian with Macedonian teachers.

The Macedonian army is fighting against the tyrants, not only with weapons in hand, but also with enlightenment. It brings self-awareness to our people and fights against other people's propaganda and influences.

We believe that all Macedonians want to read newspapers and proclamations written in their mother tongue. So we believe that they will immediately learn the following 24 letters:

А Б В Г Д Е З Ж И К Л М Н О П Р С Т Ф Х У Ч Ш Ъ.

This, for now, will be the Macedonian alphabet. It is very easy to learn. It is not too short for our language and it is not overloaded.

All Macedonians who want to read newspapers and leaflets in their mother tongue should learn the alphabet. Soon we will begin sending them to you...

Long live the name Macedonia!  
September 5, 1944

The above text was taken from my manuscript which has been preserved in the Macedonian archives in Skopje. The language it appears in here has been slightly changed to correspond to the modern Macedonian language. The original was written in the dialectal language corresponding to the Lerin and Voden Region dialects. You can say that it was written in my original "Slavophone" Greek language. Namely, it was written in a mixture

of words and expressions from the Lerin and Voden Region Macedonian dialects, which today linguists and historians will find very interesting...

## **8. We and the Bulgarians**

One day an old man, a parent of a fighter, came to the camp to see his son. He wanted to see what his son looked like as a partisan, as a soldier of the Macedonian army. While looking at the placard with the alphabet written on it he asked: “Why didn’t you use the entire Bulgarian alphabet, with all its letters? With it you could have written any Macedonian word.”

I explained to him as simply as I could that even though our two nations have much in common, there are some things that are different. The words “people” and “father”, for example, are basic words in the life of every particular nation. Every special nation, in its language has its own special names for them. The Bulgarians call “people” “hora” or “horata” and “father” “bashta”. Here they differ from us Macedonians. We Macedonians call “people” “lugie” and “father” “tатko”. Accordingly, even although both languages have common Slavic roots, our language and the Bulgarian are different branches... in other words they are different languages. This means that our and the Bulgarian language and our and the Bulgarian people have been individually developed and shaped.

Yes, indeed, the Bulgarians do say that we Macedonians are Bulgarians. But it’s just a policy for their ill-gotten gains. Can you imagine Bulgarians agreeing to partition their lands with their neighbours the Serbians and Greeks if those lands were indeed Bulgarian...? Of course not! There is no Bulgarian who will agree to that! However, the Bulgarians in 1912 did agree to divide Macedonia with the Serbians and Greeks after they snatched it from the Ottomans. Even then, during the division, they started the Second Balkan War and fought amongst one another... as a result of that division.

We are definitely a unique people, with our own unique language and therefore we should have our own separate Macedonian alphabet. The time will come when Macedonian scholars will



compile a complete Macedonian alphabet. This is only temporary, for now... I concluded.

The old man thought for a moment and then walked away...

Unfortunately my plans to further the spread of the Macedonia language did not come to fruition. The publication of the planned Macedonian newspaper never materialized. Soon afterwards, while I was absent, (I believe it was) Petros (Hristos Moshos), an ELAS and Party official, arrived at the camp and tore up the placard. After inquiring and finding out what the letters were he got very angry and ripped it up...

He then said: "Now is not the time for such things!"

On October 12, 1944, the same day the Germans were leaving Athens, I put myself in charge of the battalion and, through a number of maneuvers, managed to avoid colliding with the ELAS forces sent to disarm and dissolve our battalion. This took place on the night of October 12<sup>th</sup> to October 13<sup>th</sup>... On the morning of October 12<sup>th</sup>, Dzhodzho took it upon himself to "detach" himself from Levertis Foundoulakis, his Greek officer in charge of "assisting in military matters". Dzhodzho caught up with the battalion at Tikveshia at the Vatasha...

## **9. Rochko "the aficionado"**

Things went something like this:

On October 10, 1944, a villager took me aside to speak to me privately. I accepted. He told me that an official from that Macedonia behind Kozhuv Mountain was on vacation and for treatment in the free territory in Karadzhova, Meglen Region. He was now located in Sarakinovo. He rode on a strong and beautiful horse. He wanted to know if I would agree to secretly meet with him, to speak in private, without telling anyone anything...

It was very interesting and unusual. But what was all this about...?

I agreed.

Was it a provocation...? No. I did not think so. At that moment I was in Krontselevo, writer Tashko Georgievski's village. I needed to go to Sarakinovo, a neighbouring village, the village of Georgievski's hero, Done Kielavio the leading character from his book "Black Seed"... This was also the Battalion's place of birth and where it grew. The villagers and the Battalion of 750 fighters were one and the same. And I can tell that no provocateurs can survive here under these conditions. Neither Greek nor Bulgarian...

A got on a horse around midnight and took to the road for Sarakinovo. With a big stick in his hand, the villager led the way. When we arrived in Sarakinovo we went into his yard. We climbed up the stairs and went into a guest room. The lamp was lit and was shining bright. The official was sitting at the end of the long table.

It was Rochko from Vatasha.

The villager closed the door behind me and left. I sat at the other end of the table. We were alone sitting opposite to each other. He spoke slowly and carefully, in circles, a little like a diplomat. He was unsure; he did not know how I was going to react. Then it became clear to me that they, from that part of our homeland (Republic of Macedonia), were concerned about the fate of the Battalion and about our liberation movement in general...

It was wonderful to know that...!

And, as the expression goes, I decided to show him all my cards. Yes, I said, our relations with our Greek friends are not good at all. The Party leaders act like provocateurs... They are openly anti-Party and anti-Macedonian. There is no longer anything in the party line that supports equality. SNOF was dissolved last May and they have generally banned all Macedonian organizations. They rejected our new volunteers in the Battalion and stopped us from creating a Macedonian revolutionary military force. We now expect that they will dissolve the battalion any day. The trainers from Voden Region recently had a conference in Krontsedevo. They received a directive to open schools in the free territory. And only Greek schools... everywhere.... also in the Macedonian villages... The same way it

was before. In short: they are struggling with all their might to stifle the Macedonian national liberation movement. That's how things are here with us...!

We had no problem coming to an agreement. We decided it was best if the battalion temporarily took shelter in them (Republic of Macedonia). It will be well-armed, as much as possible, and, at a suitable moment it will come back and organize a mass Macedonian uprising against the occupiers and fight for the freedom of the Macedonian people.

This is how it was with Dzodzho. He was an ambitious person. He received directives and blindly followed them... without thinking. He was arbitrarily appointed in the wider composition as member of the Provincial Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace. His position was CPG District Committee organizing secretary for Voden Region. He would not even take a step without a directive, let alone secretly transfer the battalion to the other part of Macedonia (Republic of Macedonia) in the territory of another Party... I believe it was a good decision but, obviously, I was the one who had to find a solution. And I found it. I then asked Rochko if he could, as a member of the Macedonian National Liberation War Main Headquarters, see Dzhodzho and present him with the full directive:

- a) The battalion will be placed under the command of the Macedonian National Liberation War Headquarters and will be proclaimed as the 21<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the Macedonian National Liberation War,
- b) The battalion should immediately transfer to the territory of Vardar (Republic of) Macedonia, where it would be reorganized and properly armed,
- c) After it returned to its own territory, the battalion would organize a Macedonian general uprising...

Rochko said he would do it.

After our quick agreement was concluded I returned to Krontselevo. The next day the villager appeared again. He said he had something

important for Goche (Rakovski) and Dzhodzho. Dzhodzho and I went to see him together. When Dzhodzho found out what this was all about he began to turn his head. The conditions... the secret meeting with a representative from that part of Macedonia... were all a shock to him...

While the villager waited outside, Dzhodzho and I had a talk and decided it was unfair to deny the man the contact he requested. I said to him let us first hear him out and then we will see what happens...

We arrived in Sarakinovo around midnight. We went to the same house. Dzhodzho listened to Rochko very carefully. Not knowing how to answer, he asked me to go down to the courtyard with him and have a discussion. Rochko waited in the house...

It was not hard for me to convince Dzhodzho to accept the proposal. If we are going to start a revolution, I told him, then let us start a revolution and not follow this nonsense of a directive “not to accept volunteers...!” Think about it: We will go there and come back fully armed with good weapons and ammunition ready for a general uprising! In a short time we will have one, two brigades, and maybe an entire division. The Party has opted for an armed struggle against the occupiers. No one will hold it against us if we carry out the party line with much success. Obviously, the moment is right and critical for a revolution. The moment calls for an extraordinary revolutionary initiative and revolutionary consistency. If we accept, our Macedonian revolution will become massive. Our revolution will be able to break all restrictions imposed by the provocateurs. Our revolution will be recognized and affirmed... If we don't accept, there will be no revolution. SNOF was disbanded... they will also disband our battalion and there will be nothing else. Our people will be nowhere. The other side will not want to hear a word about any rights for the Macedonians. They will be saying where were you? Where did you disappear? Do you remember, nine years ago at the CPG V Congress they insisted that a Macedonian national question did not exist for the Party and that was because supposedly no Macedonians existed as a separate people?

So, I asked him: “Are we going to be revolutionaries and show everyone first, that we are here and, second, that we and those people behind Kuzhuv and Kaimakchalan Mountains (in the Republic of Macedonia) are one and the same people, or are we going to be cowards and, fearing the provocateurs, betray our own people...?!”

I had his ambition in mind when I said this. And I was not wrong... He obediently followed his ambition... But at a given moment, only revolutionary disobedience could have elevated him to become something and someone, even a historical figure.

We went back to the room where Rochko was and shook hands on it...

## **10. Commander Lefteris**

The next day, October 12, 1944, we concentrated all five units in the camp above the village Gorno Rodovo. (The first unit, the best one, was absent, detained at Paiak Mountain, under direct command of the 30<sup>th</sup> ELAS brigade). During the night, I spoke to all the commanders and commissars and told them:

“Without rushing I want you all to get the troops ready to leave in thirty minutes. The direction and goal will be communicated to you in time... Any question? No. You are dismissed...!”

I kept Giorgi Iakata-Gushi from Voden behind. Iakata was the commissar of the second unit. I told him that his troops will follow at the end of the column. The third line, the bottom one, will be strengthened by adding five or six fearless fighters and all the machine guns and automatic rifles from the other two lines. The other lines will remain with rifles only. Your task is to protect the column from enemy forces that may attempt to break us up.

Iakata smiled with understanding. He knew that under the given conditions the only enemy forces we would be encountering would be Greek ELAS units.

A detailed plan was worked out: What distance to follow behind the column, how long to protect it, how to maintain permanent contact with me personally, how long before abandoning his position and, in the end, how to get away and join the column above the village of Zborsko...

When we were returning from Sarakinovo, Dzhodzho asked me how were we going to handle his “assistant in military matters” Levertis Foundoulakis, the Greek officer. What will we do with him? We should not let him see anything, nor should we allow him to suspect anything. We should get away from him. Shall we kill him...? he asked. No. Far from it..., I said. It’s pure meanness. The man is an anti-fascist (Dzhodzho had confirmed that Foundoulakis was a Communist, a member of the Party) but we do have to get away from him.

I proposed a plan, and Dzhodzho accepted it:

## **11. Withdrawal of the battalion**

Dzhodzho was to call Foundoulakis in the morning (October 12) and inform him that he had received information that the Germans were planning to re-occupy Karadzova (Meglen Region). The Germans were planning to attack and destroy our units in order to secure the railway and the road passing through the Voden-Ostrovo pass and that we needed to give the Germans an appropriate welcome. For that purpose, both of them (Dzhodzho and Foundoulakis) needed to leave right away and spend the whole day looking for suitable places along the Voden-Supotsko road to organize an in depth resistance - three strong ambushes, one after another and some distance from each other.

In the evening they were to go to Supotsko for a well-deserved rest. Dzhodzho was to visit his fiancée Katina, and Foundoulakis’s his wife. The next morning they were to return to the camp... That was what they had to agree to. But while Foundoulakis was resting at night, Dzhodzho was to take Katina to the village Zborsko and from there travel over Kozhuv Mountain and join the battalion at Tikveshia...

This plan was hatched to the last detail without any difficulty ...

Transferring the battalion, however, was something completely different. Unbeknown to us, we had official enemy agents among our fighters who had joined the partisans as “volunteers”. One of those “volunteers” was a beautiful woman who had recently escaped to Voden. She had come together with a larger group of people from Voden Region. I believe she was the child of immigrant parents from the Turkish part of Thrace. All the time she tried to hang around headquarters, especially around me. One evening she asked me to explain the Macedonian alphabet to her. She wanted to know how I composed it and how each letter was pronounced. Then, with a seductive look, she asked:

“Please write it down for me, I want to have it as a souvenir from you!”

I did what she asked and immediately sent her to her unit. Whether she was frightened or simply finished her task, the next day she deserted and, through enemy channels or connections, found herself in Voden.

We also had many cases of “volunteers” reporting to the corresponding services such as the ELAS X Division, the XXX Brigade, the District Committee, etc. There was no escape from them so the only thing left for me to do was to hold off on informing the commanders of the battalion’s real motive.

First, I ordered a slow preparation for the movement...

If I ordered a more urgent preparation it could have led them to think that it was a more serious situation which needed to be performed unexpectedly, unnoticeably and under disguise.

I said nothing about the direction we were taking or about the purpose of this movement.

The officers and fighters were left uninformed. They had to wait a long time before they could figure out on their own which direction the battalion was headed and what its mission was.

Instead of going north, the initial heading for the battalion was south.

This, I figured, would undermine their vigilance, and suggest to them that we may be going to perform some kind of night action on the rail line or on the road at the Mauem An (Voden-Ostrovo) pass, or we were transferring the battalion to the opposite side of Mount Karakamen (Vermion).

The weather was cloudy which made the night very dark. I used the cover of darkness to change the battalion's direction which made it unnoticeable. We took to the southeast, then east, northeast and north, avoiding populated areas. We arrived in the village Zborsko at dawn on October 13, 1944. After a short break, we set off for the Tikveshia overpass...

Just as the fighters figured out where we were going some of them suddenly took "ill" and were unable to follow the column...

I decided to pace back and forth inside the column and somewhere under the village Baovo, in the flat area, I found a grouping of fighters who had stopped moving. The reason for that, I was told, was because of the hurdle they ran into attempting to cross a brook that had flooded from the rain. There was no bridge to cross, only two logs that substituted for a bridge. Everything was wet and very slippery. It was raining gently. It was also dark and visibility was very poor. The whole mission could have failed because of this so I decided to cross the brook myself by walking through the running water. It turned out to be knee high. I came back to the bank and ordered the fighters to march through it. We threw the two logs into the water and sent them down the torrent. They disappeared into the darkness...

We were wet for many hours. I knew that hardly anyone complaining of being sick was actually sick but I decided to "help" them anyway. I gave orders that each sick person be accompanied by his or her closest friend to help them go back...!

I was certain they would go back running.



I saw no harm in doing that. By the time these “sick” fighters informed the ELAS units, sent to disarm and dissolve the battalion, where the battalion was, it would be too late. They couldn’t even reach us or cut us off with motorized vehicles, if there was a way to do that...

We arrived at the first village under Mount Kozhuv in Tikveshia just before noon. I immediately prepared a leaflet informing everyone why we were withdrawing and that we were doing it in protest... I immediately sent back five fighters to the villages in Karadzova, Ostrovo Region in Voden to distribute them to the people.

I then called a special meeting with the unit commanders and commissars. Our Party, I said to them, is in support of an armed struggle against the occupiers. And in the name of the Party, we are forbidden from taking part in this struggle. Our volunteers who came to join our units were sent back to their villages. They (the Party) have disbanded SNOF in Lerin and Kostur Region and they were ready to disarm and dissolve our battalion. They have suppressed the Macedonian national liberation movement. This is a policy of discrimination and suppression, an anti-Macedonian and anti-Party policy. This is apparently being done by provocateurs. We withdrew here in this part of Macedonia in protest and to resist. So, for the time being, with help from Tito’s Macedonian Army, we will continue the struggle against the occupiers here. This is the only way we can safeguard our Macedonian battalion without bloodshed. Let the central party leadership consider our case. We believe the provocateurs will be exposed! And so on, in that spirit...

I then sent them to gather their fighters and bring them to the churchyard.

The fighters listened attentively while I told them what I had told the officers and finished my talk as follows:

We will expose the provocateurs in the ranks of the Party. Long live the Party. Long live the name Macedonia...!

The fighters were happy with the news and valiantly approved...

## 12. Three spies

As I looked through the crowd of fighters I noticed some sort of violent and artificial austerity visible in three of the battalion commanders. 1) Georgios Kondilis, unit commander; 2) Nikos Kantardzhis, unit commissar; and 3) Sotirios... (I forgot his surname), member of the headquarters.

These three were sent to us by Petros (Hristos Moshos) from ELAS X Division to help with the reinforcement of the battalion. Clearly, they were Petros's eyes and ears, that is, they worked for the Bureau at X division headquarters. I decided to let them see for themselves that we had nothing to hide. We demanded equality from them and we made our demands publicly. So it was only fair that we granted them the same. I appointed them to important but harmless command posts where they could not reject any of our young revolutionaries who strove to find themselves in the ranks of the battalion. But they could still pose danger in the new situation. EAM, CPG and ELAS provocateurs, through them could try to speculate, with a vague and problematic perspective, what the battalion was doing outside of Greece. And they did... But with others... with much smaller caliber... their agents...

Their agents worked against us spreading negative thoughts to our fighters: "Where have you gone...! Goche (Rakovski) sold you out to strangers. You will die for someone else's interests, as traitors. Goche is a traitor...!" And so on...

They tried to influence the fighters in the battalion with these and similar slogans but they were not effective because their agents were not influential fighters and, in time, I removed them from their posts. I called them in and "secretly" sent them back to Karadzhova with a "special task". I told them to inform the people of our battalion's "historical maneuver" so that they could "raise the morale" in the Macedonian villages. I then asked them to come back here about ten days later. I gave them fifty leaflets each to distribute. So, I got rid of them painlessly...

And as I was sure, they did not return. I did not hear from them or about them for decades. Only recently I found out what happened to them. They immediately went back to report to those who sent them to the battalion and... they were arrested. When those in Greek command found out that they had come from across the border and that Goche himself had sent them back, they arrested them. And as to why the battalion defected? They said nothing. They were charged for being part of the defection and suffered as if they were Goche's people who "sold out to the Serbians". And from how it looks, it appears that Sotir or Sotirios, as leader of this "group of spies", paid with his own head. He was gone and never heard of again... Georgios Kondilis on the other hand is still alive and, I believe, lives in Poland. A few years ago Nikos Kantardzhis moved to Skopje and now calls himself Kole Kantardziev. He came to possess an apartment and a high paying job incredibly fast and easy. He lived comfortably until recently when he died. Meanwhile, back in the village, Rochko informed me that everything was prepared for the battalion to be accepted and placed on rest in Batasha. We arrived there in the afternoon and organized the fighters to stay in the various houses.

Dzhodzho caught up with us and joined us there.

The next day, Lefteris Foundoulakis, Dzhodzho's "military assistant", arrived in the camp and saw that it was empty. He found out what had happened after the "sick" fighters caught up with him. After that he insisted and begged us to bring him with us and give him his old position...

We explained to him that we had nothing against him. But, at the same time, he could not be in command of Macedonian fighters. Even though he was one of those rare communists among us, we could not accept him. He had no psychological link to the vast majority of our fighters, which was understandable, because he belonged to the oppressive nation. He was... like an English officer who was appointed by the colonial authorities, commander of the Hindu soldiers. Like before, even now, after the clash with the people who appointed him here, his presence had specific meaning. We asked him if this was clear to him...

Lefteris Foundoulakis nodded his head. It was clear to him. Then, with a heavy heart, he climbed on his horse and left. After that things did not go well for him. He was a commander who had “lost” the confidence of his soldiers...

### **13. Dzhodzho Urdov’s sins**

Barba Nikos (Takis Papadopoulos), Secretary of the Voden Party District Committee arrived here in the afternoon of the same day. He brought with him Kiriakos, Karadzhova District Committee secretary, known for being a violent killer. He was responsible for murdering many people. His motto was: “Shoot first then ask questions...” There was another person with them.

They asked for Dzhodzho.

Dzhodzho came out and welcomed them. They requested a private audience with him and went inside a house to discuss the return of the battalion.

I was terribly anxious. I was amazed and shaken by Dzhodzho’s attitude. He completely ignored me...

He told me this was what the Greek comrades wanted and there was no need for me to know what was said between them...

Dzhodzho reverted back to his old self being accustomed to obedience and doing things without thinking...

This happened on October 14, 1944 and reminded me of something very sad and bitter that took place just a couple of weeks after the Macedonian battalion was formed in Voden Region, when the CPG, with quick action on the part of ELAS XXX Regiment in the Voden Region Macedonian villages, on the night between June 26 and 27, 1944, arrested many Macedonian villagers accused of possessing hidden weapons. Included among the villages attacked were Zhervi, Chegan, Rusilovo, Drushka, Gugovo, Nisia, Teovo, Vladovo and Mesimer. Most of these villages were organized by the resistance movement, especially Chegan, Zhervi, Rusilovo, Drusko, Teovo, Vladovo, which were organized 100 per cent by the Resistance

movement, and there was no doubt that there was anything suspicious going on, especially hidden weapons. Nevertheless, these people, most of whom were partisans, communists, members of the CPG, were taken hostage and many liquidated. Included among those liquidated were; Dimitar Leska from the village Chegan, an old communist who spent many years in the infamous Akronavlia prison, and Gele Popov, an old communist from the village Vladovo.

A small number of those captured and taken hostage were released.

According to Todor Simovski-Laki, former leader of the youth, in the above-mentioned villages in Voden Region: “The only thing that these people were guilty of is that they were Macedonians. They were primarily communists but felt more Macedonian than the CPG could tolerate.” I also learned the following from Simovski: During their last interrogation (torture) the Party made these people a promise that it would liquidate them to the last one... meaning it would liquidate the entire Macedonian battalion. One obvious thing that Dzhodzho could not see or perhaps did not want to see in all this was that the CPG wanted to discredit the battalion’s leaders in front of the Macedonian population, in addition to the “medical commission” turning back volunteers, it wanted to “completely” stop all volunteers from joining the battalion. There was even more... The CPG was sowing suspicion and distrust in the resistance movement in general, and thus minimizing the development of the Macedonian national liberation movement in comparison to the development in the democratic forces in Greece. Think about it... Because of what Dzhodzho said and did our Macedonian battalion was accused of torturing and liquidating respectable and patriotic Macedonians who were also old and loyal communists. Included among those we supposedly liquidated were Dimitar Leska and Gele Popov. We as leaders were made to look like a bunch of career-seeking political fools of the worst kind. I would never forgive Dzhodzho for what he did and if his “Greek friends” did not kill him I would have done it myself. (We will talk about him later, as we will show how his “Greek friends” took care of him and sent him to “swallow darkness”.)

While he was alive, Dzhodzho did not tell me a single word about his discussions with his “Greek friends”. Whatever he was told to do he did while he was in the hills of Mount Kaimakchalan and it was done within some of the people in his narrow circle. Obviously, he had to have received such a directive from the outside because no one knew anything about it while the entire battalion was being blackened and defamed. And it was no surprise that the volunteer fighters from these villages who joined the battalion could be counted on the fingers of one hand...!

But, towards the end, Dzhodzho left his obedience behind and began to think for himself. He must have realized that he could not pin the entire guilt on me for evacuating the battalion. After all he did lie and deceived Foundoulakis and then evacuated his own fiancé out of Supotsko. This proved that he was part of the conspiracy. He also did not believe the “guarantees” his “Greek friends” made him and refused to turn the battalion back. Otherwise, there is no doubt he would have done it... It is unpleasant to think what would have happened, even today four decades later, if the battalion had been turned back. In any case, it would have been very bad for everyone!

#### **14. In Bitola**

After several days of rest, the battalion began moving again and arrived in Prilep. I was summoned to go to the Macedonian NOV and POJ Headquarters where General Apostolski issued me twenty military trucks. The motorized column arrived in Bitola.

Unbeknown to us at that time the Lerin and Kostur Region battalion had also arrived in the Republic of Macedonia. Fearing the danger of being disarmed and dissolved, all the Macedonian partisan groups and units in Lerin and Kostur Regions did the same thing as the Voden battalion and retreated to the Republic of Macedonia. I was informed that they too were pursued and attacked by ELAS Greek units. When we arrived from Voden Region they were already here.

Bitola was boiling with partisans.

Of course, we were not guests here. We were in our own free Macedonian state, a federal unit of Federal Democratic Yugoslavia. The People’s Republic of Macedonia state and Party leadership was

our leadership, we accepted it as ours... The reputation of the governing people here, as were Tito's governing people, was enormous. We felt absolutely positive...

While we were still in Vatasha, Dzhodzho, with help from Rochko, came into contact with the Republic's senior military and party officials. When he came back, with a bitter tone of voice, he said to me:

“You know what? It is not exactly what Rochko told us! But now...” waving his hand in circles, “there is no going back, so let it be what it will be...!”

But later, in Bitola, I saw him holding his head up high. We were both inducted together into the Political Commission for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. I, as a simple member, and Dzhodzho as a member of the Secretariat...

At that time, a unit of Macedonian volunteers from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia arrived from Sofia. Then, during the first half of November 1944, the First Aegean Shock Brigade was formally created. Five battalions paraded in front of the Political Committee. I still have the photograph from Dzhodzho and I am saluting the battle flag at the tribute.

Ilo Dimovski-Gotse was Commander of the Brigade. Ilo was a working man and an old communist originally from the village Statitsa, but later lived in Lerin. Ilo was a good man with a big heart, smart, well aware of things and brave by nature.

Mihailo Keramidzhiev was Commissar of the Brigade and member of the Political Committee Secretariat. He was a low ranking officer from Kostur Region who kept his belt tight. His hair was always wrinkled. He had a strong voice and got excited when he spoke. When he spoke he clenched his fist and moved his right hand in wide sweeps. He was elected “national” adviser representing Kostur Region, as well as representing SNOF in the Greek national constitutional body - the National Council, but... without the right to speak. He was not allowed to speak.

Naum Peiov was Deputy Commander of the Brigade. He was a nice young man with clear blue eyes. His thoughts were clear and accurate. He spoke simply and without pomposity. He was decisive, sober, patient and persistent. He had a good ability to evaluate people and situations. He attended higher education but was unable to complete his schooling. He was also a member of the Political Committee Secretariat.

Vangel Aianovski-Oche was Deputy Commissar of the Brigade. Vangel was a factory worker from Voden and had a basic education. He had cunning, blue-green eyes and was constantly trying to see through the people he dealt with and read all kinds of meanings into their words and actions. He had a natural distrust... or perhaps that's what life experience had taught him...? Or perhaps both... He was an experienced strike organizer. He organized many political and economic worker strikes in Voden.

Paskal Mitrevski was a lawyer with a practice in Kostur. He was always calm and dignified. He was capable of speaking in all the nuances: from suggestive, to gently whispering lies, to talking down, to pretend angry shouting... He was capable of talking about one thing while thinking about another thing. He had a huge talent for acting and a strong will. He was confident and brave. When he stood at the head of the Political Committee he made sure he stood above all. Everyone and everything, people and principles, had much significance as they could be used for his personal gains. That was his life motto. He was a chameleon and a lion and had much success with it...

Georgi Urdov-Dzhodzho, having his own motto: "To succeed, always hold onto the one who is ahead of you...!" soon became Mitrevski's right-hand man.

Initially the Political Committee Secretariat consisted of seven members. The first four I already mentioned and the other three were Georgi Turundzhov, Naum Shupurkovski-Leon, both from Lerin Region, and a man named Ashlakov from the Macedonians who came to Sofia. But soon afterwards four of them disappeared and the Secretariat was left with Mitrevski, Keramidzhiev and Dzhodzho.



Several months later the Political Committee was disbanded. After some campaigning in the Western part of the Republic of Macedonia, including Kichevo, Gostivar and Debar, assisting in clearing the terrain of Balists (Albanian bands loyal to the Nazis), the Shock Brigade was also disbanded and the fighters demobilized. Resolving the issue of democratic rights, that is, the right to self-determination for the Macedonian people from Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, was postponed to when times became more favourable...

## CHAPTER THREE

### 1. Siantos declared a traitor

As it turned out the provocateurs, about whom I spoke earlier in front of the fighters from Voden and Voden Region, were inside the CPG and at the very top of the Party pyramid. Their hostile policy against the Macedonian people was an integral part of their global treachery against the democratic people and against the revolution in Greece. Although posthumously, but rightly and fairly so, it was during the 3<sup>rd</sup> CPG Conference, held in October, 1950, that Georgios Siantos, Central Committee First Secretary, was proclaimed a traitor. Here is what was said about that in the resolution:

“After the CPG Central Committee delegation heard the keynote address on the subject of ‘Ten years of struggling: Lessons learned, Conclusions made, Tasks completed...’ and after the problems that were addressed were discussed, the CPG Central Committee decided to accept that the assessments made were wrong and did not follow the basic Party line during the Fascist occupation 1941 to 1945 up to the CPG Central Committee’s 11<sup>th</sup> plenum.

As a consequence of this basically wrong policy and activities implemented by the CPG during the first occupation, we lost the revolution and our ability to govern, solely thanks to our mistakes. The actual betrayal against the revolution was consciously carried out solely by Georgios Siantos without the knowledge of the CPG leadership. Siantos was the one who set things in motion and created the line while the others simply followed it. Because of that, they bear a heavy responsibility...” (CPG from 1931-1952, p. 219. Neos Cosmos, number 10, 1950.)

That is all that was said. Past that the resolution talks about other things. I don’t know if the opening statement was published since I had no opportunity to examine it but I do know that both this and the revolution are Zahariadis’s doing. All resolutions and published introductory speeches from all the CPG Congresses and from the CPG Central Committee Plenums, including the one from the CPG Central Committee 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum, from Zahariadis’s time, are Zahariadis’s works written in his style and carry his seal. He set the

line and tasks and the others adopted them and followed them. It is a commonly known fact that our Greek friends often justified this because they were afraid of being charged with committing factionism!

I don't know how Siantos's betrayal was proven because it was not explained during the introductory speech given at the 3<sup>rd</sup> CPG Convention. I believe that Siantos did commit betrayal, which I need to explain, however, it is difficult to believe that the "others" in the CPG leadership of that time did not know about it and blindly continued doing business as usual. They are not as innocent and naïve as Zahariadis tried to make them. But he had no choice. He inherited these people when he took over the Party leadership after his return from Dachau.

It seems to me that Zahariadis allowed the "basically wrong policy" that "undermined" the people's revolution and the Party to continue to be implemented until things finally fell apart. No matter how unpredictable and unacceptable it may seem, the fact remains that it was Siantos who, together with those few around him, "eliminated" ELAS. And later it was Zahariadis who, together with those same few around him, "liquidated" DAG. In the mid-sixties (1960's), those same few broke the Party apart into rival camps. This created chaos in the communist movement in Greece resulting in its elimination of revolutionary activities and clearing the ground for the bourgeoisie to successfully establish the April 21, 1967 dictatorship.

But let us not get ahead of ourselves... Let us have a look at the basic elements of the "basically wrong policy" led by Siantos and the top CPG leadership of the time...

## **2. The proletariat was incapacitated**

When the party called on the Greek people to join the national front to liberate the nation from the fascist occupation, it did not arm them for a massive armed struggle, nor did it create a revolutionary army. All it did was initiate illegal struggles in cities that included economic and political strikes, demonstrations and fighting in the streets.

This actually reveals that:

The proletariat, which in the best case was only lightly armed, was constantly exposed to heavy blows from the numerically superior and heavily armed occupying forces which were concentrated in the cities. As a result of this, the proletariat had no chance of winning decisively over the occupier. The standpoint of such a policy was very clear:

The Party did not want Greece to be liberated by its own people and was counting on the allied armies to liberate it when they came from the West and Egypt and, most importantly, by doing this they knew that the bourgeoisie would be chosen over them to take power in Greece...

### **3. Changing tactics**

The fascist terror waged against the people was so severe that it forced many people to gradually leave for the mountains where they organized themselves into what eventually became ELAS, the revolutionary People's Liberation Army which, by the middle of 1943, was waging a general partisan war. Commanded mainly by communists on the ground, ELAS was already becoming an important military force with obvious opportunities to become a decisive factor in the liberation and social and political arrangements of the country.

The Party leadership at this point decided to change tactics. It left the cities and effectively took firm control of ELAS in the field. This is what General Srefanos Sarafis, then ELAS Supreme Commander, wrote about it in his famous book "ELAS":

"The Greek people, under EAM leadership, began their resistance in the cities with protests, strikes and other beleaguered actions, but eventually became organized in the partisan army..." (Stefanos Sarafis: ELAS, Athens 1946, p. 92.)

So, in brief, the General echoed the Party's policy. Further down in his book he wrote: "In early May 1943, EAM Central Committees

and ELAS decided to establish ELAS General Headquarters... In late July 1943, a Higher Military Council was convened to study the situation and decide on the imminent formation of an army and its structure... After analyzing the situation, as well as ELAS's capabilities, the number of cadres and its future needs, the Higher Council decided: 1) To convert the partisan army into a regular army and call it 'Arhigia', 'Imparahigia', etc., in divisions, brigades, etc..." (Sarafis: ELAS, pp. 294-295.)

But, despite what the General said, how the Party ultimately organized the partisan army does not answer what actually happened. This is what happened:

#### **4. The Union of the people's revolutions in the neighbouring nations was rejected**

Representatives from the communist parties of Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia met several times and signed a number of agreements. The agreement signed on June 20, 1943, among other things, said:

"The representatives from these countries have unanimously pointed out the fact that, given the significant rise in the national liberation struggle in the Balkans, today's conditions require the immediate establishment of mutual co-operation between the national liberation forces in all the Balkan countries in a patriotic struggle for the liberation of the oppressed Balkan peoples. The representatives agreed in principle that it is necessary not only to establish mutual cooperation but to also, above all, establish unity of action involving all the national liberation forces in the Balkan countries by creating a single command under one chief general staff. All the representatives are aware of the historical significance of forming a General Balkan Headquarters, which would amplify the struggle of the Balkan peoples who are fighting for their liberation. Forming one General Staff would make it possible to stamp out chauvinistic tendencies and will contribute to strengthening the convergence and twinning of the Balkan peoples. It will provide new forces in the struggle for a final and universal victory of true democracy in the Balkan countries. It will also eliminate all the difficulties and, after the fascist occupiers are expelled from the Balkans, will pave the way for the creation of a Balkan federation..." (The original

document, written in French, can be found in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia Archives in Skopje.)

However, shortly thereafter, the first CPG Central Committee secretary denounced the document and declared it invalid..., just like he did with the other agreed and signed documents...

## **5. ELAS placed under English command**

Instead of looking to the north, the Party decided to look towards England. Namely, the Party put ELAS under English control. ELAS was placed under the command of the Middle East English General Staff. According to G.D. Kiriakidis, (Civil War in Greece, p. 17), Sarafis, ELAS Supreme Commander, signed a joint declaration with Eddie Myers, Chief of the English military mission and representative of the English general headquarters for the Middle East, on July 5, 1943. In his book “ELAS”, Sarafis wrote: “We signed a Declaration that made ELAS an allied army and placed it under the command of the Middle East General Staff. The operations it will perform will be executed on orders given by English General Headquarters...” (Stefanos Sarafis: ELAS, p. 120.)

And, as we already know, all ELAS units were restricted from doing their functions and systematically prevented from growing and conducting combat engagements. According to Vasilis Bardzhotas, member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, “large ELAS units, ELAS divisions and groups of ELAS divisions, were all placed in the hands of the British Intelligence Service...” (Vasilis Bardzhotas, “CPG staffing policy during the National Liberation War”, Neos Cosmos, no. 9, 1950.)

## **6. Joint Headquarters**

Another, similar, Agreement was also signed on July 18, 1943, between Eddy Myers of Middle East General Headquarters, and Vasilis Samariniotis (A. Dzhimas), Stefanos Sarafis and Aris Velouhitis, representatives of EAM and ELAS.

Based on this Agreement, the EDES quisling forces, led by Colonel Napoleon Zervas, and those of EKKA, led by Colonel Psaros, were

to also be placed under English command. EDES and EKKA were organized by the bourgeoisie and the English to fight against EAM and ELAS. According to Sarafis: “On June 21, 1943, EDES units accompanied by English officers entered our territory around Gotista and Kalama-Filiates, and there, especially around Filiates, liquidated our organizations, arrested and abused EAM members and even committed murder... In my opinion, by doing this, Majors Chris and Miller, for political purposes, wanted to expand Zervas’s territory to include the whole of Epirus and, once reinforced, be used against ELAS. This English tendency and Zervas’s actions resulted in many ELAS - EDES clashes which ultimately led to their great collision in October 1943.” (Sarafis, ELAS, pp. 122-123.) Again, according to Sarafis: “These covert forces, which even cooperated with the occupiers against EAM and ELAS, were recognized by the English as forces that fought against the occupiers. And there was more to it than that. A joint headquarters was set up for all of them...” According to Sarafis: “ELAS even demanded that Colonel Eddie Myers create the joint headquarters with Sarafis, Aris, Samariniotis, Zervas, and Psaros.) (Ibid, p. 111)

But, as it turned out, the joint headquarters formed was of a somewhat different composition. Namely, on July 29, 1943, during the first English headquarters military mission meeting, the following was announced:

a) The English military mission was to consist of Colonel Eddie Myers - Head of the Mission, Lieutenant Colonel Chris - his assistant and deputy, Major Wallace - Political Adviser and England’s Foreign Ministry Representative, and Captain Ross – Eddie’s assistant.

b) ELAS: Colonel Sarafis, Comrade Aris Velouhiotis and Comrade Samariniotis.

c) EDES: Colonel Napoleon Zervas, Kominos Piromaglu as well as Colonel Mavromatis and Major Gikopoulos, who would continually be present and represent EDES in the joint Main Headquarters. (Sarafis, ELAS, p. 142.)

The representatives of EKKA joined the headquarters later.

By doing this, almost a year before the Lebanon Agreement was signed, the Party leadership officially and practically acknowledged the English right to lead the struggle in Greece and to interfere in Greece's internal affairs. Accordingly, to say that "an accidental error" was somehow made during the talks in Lebanon was completely pointless, and only served to blur and conceal the historical truth. The top CPG leadership was responsible for systematically implementing "treacherous policies" right from the very beginning...

## **7. Other characteristic facts**

a) The Party led only a "national struggle" (not a social struggle) through "national unity" together with the bourgeoisie. Here is what was said in the June 1941 CPG Central Committee 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum Resolution: "The Communist Party of Greece calls on all the Greek people, all its parties and organizations (bourgeois parties and organizations included), to join one national front... For their national liberation..." (CPG from 1931 to 1952, CPG Central Committee 1952 edition, p. 105.)

b) The Party refused to carry out a social revolution inside Greece which would have been in favour of the Greek people and especially the minorities living in Greece. This would have been the right course to take. This could have been done in cooperation with the neighbouring nations. Instead of doing that, the CPG placed ELAS, which by its nature was a people's army, under English control and prevented it from doing the function it was meant to do, start a social struggle in favour of the people. In other words, no matter what you call it and how you see it, the Party objectively prevented ELAS from doing its job and turned the social struggle into a national struggle.

The significance and function of the English officers in ELAS headquarters was made clear by Chris Gunthous, the new head of the British military mission in Greece, a person of authority, years after these events took place. Among other things, he made the following comments in a lecture held in Munich in 1957, before an astonished German audience:



“If there were no British officers involved in the resistance movement in Greece... not only Greek but also European history would have taken a different direction... The presence of the British mission in Greece prevented the communists from taking absolute control of Greece in 1943-1944. If the communists took power in September 1944, when the Germans withdrew, it would have been difficult to deprive them of that power before the international public, and today Greece would be behind the Iron Curtain...” (“The Secret Archives of Wehrmacht”, published by “To Vima”, July 11, 1963, fragment of ZZ, Andonovski: “Macedonians under Greece in the struggle against fascism”, INI 1968 edition, p. 214.)

“Waiting for the ultimate goal - socialism, the Party of the proletariat, the Communist Party of Greece, is today struggling for national liberation, and after the war is over it will struggle for a people’s democracy...” (Taken from the CPG Central Committee proclamation made on July 2, 1943, and issued on the occasion of the Third International dissolution.)

Accordingly, when the armed struggle was finished after the war ended, the governing top promised the revolutionary forces that the Party would start to lead a people’s liberation struggle, a struggle for a people’s government, for a people’s democracy...

c) The Party is leading a “national struggle” through “national unity with the bourgeoisie and its parties, but not only for the liberation and establishment of the territorial integrity of the state, but also for strategically securing its borders” with its neighbours. This meant, as I said earlier, expanding the Greek state borders at the expense of Greece’s neighbours. In other words expropriating new territories...

This was a Greek bourgeoisie policy implemented through the CPG...

## **8. The Lebanon Agreement**

According to the Lebanon Agreement, signed on May 20, 1944, the CPG leadership:

- Voluntarily relinquished all claims to power. It then recognized the bourgeois government in exile as the legitimate government of Greece, calling it the “Government of National Unity”.

- It condemned the struggle against fascism led by the Greek armed forces in the Middle East and, together with the bourgeoisie government, surrendered the Greek army to the English. By doing that the CPG top leadership objectively allowed the English imperialists to not only control all armed actions, but to also conceal the armed intervention against the democratic forces at home. This, in effect, placed the democratic fighters in a dangerous position.

- It agreed to create a non-party “national army” which was to remain under full authority of the bourgeoisie government in exile and under English Middle East General Headquarters control. With this, the CPG top leadership recognized the English imperialist regulatory role and its right to demand the dissolution of ELAS when it deemed it was appropriate.

- It accepted to fight a joint struggle with the bourgeoisie “to fully satisfy Greek national rights”, that is to expand the Greek state borders by annexing new and foreign territories. As I mentioned earlier, this line was imposed by the CPG leadership during the CPG Central Committee 10<sup>th</sup> Plenum, held in January 1944, and adopted as the official line “for strategic security of borders”.

By doing this the CPG leadership, once again, clearly betrayed the people’s revolution and the working people of Greece. (For a broader perspective see: *St’armata, st’armata*, chronicles of the national resistance 1940-1945, P.L.E., 1967, pp. 330-332.)

## **9. A leaflet spelling out Greek demands**

According to the Athens newspaper “Elevetria”, published on February 6, 1945, a leaflet entitled “Greece has the right!...” was distributed with the following demands:

a) Greece’s northern borders are to be extended to include Northern Epirus (Albanian territory) because this area was granted to Greece

during the 1915 secret London Treaty and during the 1919 Venizelos-Tigoni Treaty, when the division of Albania was planned.

b) The entire Rhodope Mountain massif and the Sultan Dere, Egri Dere, Dari Dere and Ali Chelebi Plains should be granted to Greece. In other words, Pirin (Bulgarian occupied) Macedonia should be given to Greece in order for Greece to “secure” its northern borders.

c) The Yugoslav-Greek border should be “regulated” in order to give Greece the opportunity to protect the flows through which the German forces invaded its territory in 1941. This would also extend to Solun occupied by Hitler’s forces.

d) Border issues with neighbouring and friendly Turkey have not been decided. But if questions are raised regarding the Dardanelles and Istanbul, Greece should not be ignored. Greece’s views on this issue have long been known.

e) All territories, such as the Dodecanese and Cyprus, which historically, ethnologically and socially have been part of the Greek people, which have not yet been liberated, should be included within the Greek borders...

The above were the Greek demands mentioned in the leaflet.

There was nothing wrong with the CPG making demands, like the accession of the Dodecanese and Cyprus to Greece, because these demands benefited the Greek people and supported their right to self-determination. But it was wrong for the CPG to make demands such as taking over foreign territories - a large part of Albania, part of the People’s Republic of Macedonia, and almost all of Pirin Macedonia, to simply satisfy Greece’s “strategic border security”.

By signing the Lebanon Agreement the CPG top leadership connected itself to the Greek bourgeoisie and publicly advocated its actions, positions and policies.

## **10. The Caserta Agreement**

The Caserta Agreement was signed on September 26, 1944, which not only opened the way for the bourgeois government in exile and its Fascist forces to return to Greece, but also placed the ELAS armed forces in jeopardy by surrendering them to the bourgeois government. But there was more to it than that. ELAS was placed under British General Skobi's direct command as were all the military forces in Greece.

The Caserta Agreement was yet another act which the CPG leadership committed against the Greek people and in favour of the Greek reactionaries and English imperialists. By accepting Skobi as the commander of all military forces operating in Greece, the CPG committed itself to following its orders, according to which ELAS was not allowed to act on or liberate certain major cities, especially Athens, and some of the more important strategic places. In other words, ELAS was forbidden from taking power. All actions taken by ELAS had to be approved by General Skobi himself.

By leaving the large cities and more important strategic places to the English, the CPG leadership actually secured the bourgeois government's success for a military intervention against ELAS, for which the English were intensely, openly and publicly preparing. (Chronicles of the struggle, to arms to arms, History of National Resistance, Gianakos, Volume 3, pp. 205-208. Naum Peiov, Macedonians and Civil War in Greece, INI 1968, p. 193-195.)

## **11. ELAS liquidated**

With the Lebanon and Caserta Agreements behind them, and with the German withdrawal from Athens on October 12 and 13, 1944, the bourgeois "national government" returned to Athens and, with English support, attempted to consolidate its power in Greece. Unfortunately for the government, armed military ELAS formations existed in almost all of Greece. Being a people's army by nature, ELAS was dangerous for the English imposed Greek "national government". To solve this problem the English pitted "Greeks against Greeks", it was the English thing to do, ordering ELAS to be liquidated. By using their secret agents the English began to finance the arming of various reactionary forces in Greece and to concentrate them in certain strategic places. Included among the

reactionary forces were EDES, EKKA, PAO, IBE led by the likes of General Hrisohou, Colonel Poulos, Anton Chaush, who earlier cooperated with the occupiers, etc., which then led to the “great collision” in October-November, 1944 during which the “treacherous forces” were easily crushed.

The EKKA forces, led by Colonel Psaras, were surrounded and liquidated and so were the combined forces led by Colonel Poulos and those led by Anton Chaush. The EDES forces in Epirus, led by Colonel Zervas, were also smashed. The survivors fled towards the sea and were rescued by the English navy.

Even though this one-sided strike against ELAS, aided from the outside, was a failure for the English, they soon organized and ordered a combined strike from both inside and outside. The outside strike was provoked by the English which manifested itself as the Athens December 1944 collision. It was done to bring attention to the need to disarm and dissolve ELAS as per the Lebanon Agreement. This was followed by a strike from the inside provoked by Mitsos Patsalidis, CPG Central Committee first secretary and member of the Politburo when he signed the Varkiza Agreement on February 12, 1945, allowing all ELAS units in Greece to be liquidated. The Athens strike however, unleashed by the combined English and Greek government in exile forces, was not a success and managed to defeat only some of the ELAS units in Athens...

## **12. Treachery**

If one looks at each action committed by the CPG top leadership independently of other actions, they may conclude that these actions are likely due to policy mistakes. But it would be a mistake to reach such a conclusion. One needs to look at the entire series of events and how they are interconnected in order to come to the right conclusion; which is high treason. The people’s revolution was led by bourgeoisie agents or a kind of people who were emotionally and spiritually connected to the bourgeoisie. This was a well-executed masterful plan which not only controlled events and prevented them from running away, but eventually brought the entire struggle to capitulation...

The undeclared war the CPG waged against the Macedonian national liberation movement was only an integral part of this high treason against the worker and communist movements, against the social revolution, and against the people living in the Greek state in general...

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 1. Forming TOMO

After being well-rested from inactivity in Bitola I spoke to my supervisor Dzhodzho, who at the time was secretary of the Political Committee. I met with him with the intent of being sent back into the field so that I could personally talk to the people there, see how they were doing, what they were thinking and the like.

Dzhodzho approved.

As soon as the weather improved, sometime in mid-February 1945, I left for the village Staravina. I needed several days to get to know the situation at the border. On February 21, 1945, I arrived at the village Dolno Pozharsko (Gorno Pozharsko was abandoned and completely empty). I spoke with my host and told him:

“Bring over about a dozen people... your choice. Tell them Goche (Rakovski) is here and wants to talk to them...!”

About half an hour later they arrived. I knew them from before and they knew me because, some time ago, I had recruited over one hundred volunteers here, partisans who were willing to join the battalion. The people were happy to see me again and looked at me curiously from top to bottom because I was wearing a Bulgarian officer's overcoat, English pants and an English jacket. My legs were grey from the mud and I was wearing “opintsi” (slippers made of pigskin) for shoes.

“What kind of an army are you... wearing opintsi...?” one of them asked me jokingly.

When one of my escorts heard the joke he brought me my shiny black boots.

I knew our people very well and deliberately took my boots with me. They were made from a thick, hard sole and could not be used for long traveling through the deep snow over Kaimakchalan. I tied my boots with a string and placed them over my shoulder.

We had a long talk.

We split up in the morning. I promised them that we would soon see each other again. And I would answer their basic questions: “What should they be doing...? How should they be struggling...? When should they be starting and with what...?”

I remained in the village and allowed myself plenty of time to think. I recruited their sons into the battalion and then took them over the border to the People’s Republic of Macedonia. What was I going to do from here on...?

They needed answers... I had to answer them.

It was obvious: without a political organization on the ground, the withdrawal of the battalion seemed like an adventurous move. The very formation of a political organization (bringing our people together) would not only correct the isolated action taken by the battalion, but it would also give us political substance and an ultimate goal. So, it was necessary to do this... the sooner the better.

Then, on the other hand, we had our CPG comrades who fiercely attacked the battalion’s leadership, especially me and Dzhodzho. They accused us of being “adventurers”, “sell outs to alien agents”, “scoundrels”, “traitors” and so on and so forth... and that we would bring “ruin” to our people’s children...! In other words, they called the battalion’s withdrawal a savage adventure and a betrayal. So, it was necessary for us to dismantle these accusations and put things right. And that was only possible with the formation of a political and revolutionary organization.

So, instead of waiting for a directive from above, I decided to act alone in accordance with the imperative from below. I formed a political organization under the name: Secret Macedonian Liberation Organization - TOMO. Because I defied responsibility and decided on my own to transfer the battalion over the border to save it from being disarmed, dissolved and liquidated, I was now obligated to make a correction and take responsibility for establishing TOMO, in order to defend and justify this transfer. TOMO’s existence would



confirm in the consciousness of our people that the transfer of the battalion was done to save it and that what they were hearing from the other side was lies...

Before noon the same day (February 22, 1945) I sent some of my trusted people to the surrounding villages to make contact with the most trusted people there and ask them to come and see me...

One by one they gathered until late night. Fifteen in total came to see me. I appointed each TOMO board president of the TOMO organization in their village. In total thirteen villages joined TOMO. They were Pozharsko, Strupino, Baovo, Tsakoni, Tresino, Gorno Rodovo, Dolno Rodovo, Sarakinovo, Krontselevo, Teovo, Nisia and two more whose names I don't remember. After that I visited the terrain twice more, once during March and again during the first half of April 1945. At that time ELAS had not yet surrendered its arms. There was a garrison stationed in the town Supotsko and a two unit detachment in the village Tresino. One moonlit night I went to Tresino and visited the villages Dolno Rodovo and Sarakinovo. I stayed in Sarakinovo one day. Director Todor Anastasov and three fighters stayed with me. After that I went to the flatlands outside the village Tsakoni and met with Hristo Andonovski. At that time TOMO was spreading rapidly and approaching the city Voden...

Now I want to say a few words about the name TOMO.

The word "Secret" in TOMO corresponded to the situation on the ground. It pointed to the need for profound secrecy because it was illegal both in regards to the government in Athens and in regards to the CPG. On top of that it hid in itself a bit of revolutionary romance, necessary for the rebellious human soul.

The words "Macedonian" and "Organization" referred to the fact that TOMO was an exclusively Macedonian national organization.

The word "Liberation" pointed to the fact that it was an ideological organization. It carried the justification for the ultimate goal of our struggle. The liberation was led by our battalion and was expected to be led and supported by all our people.

I spent my entire time between my two field trips in Staravina. I did not want to go back to Bitola. For me it was not worth making the trip back. At that time Mitrevski was sent to attend a political course in Belgrade, Keramidzhiev was absent from the brigade and Dzhodzho hung around his important office. There was inactivity all round... The way things were going the Political Commission was headed on its way out... causing its own abolition...

I stayed in a single room in a home in Staravina with a window facing Kaimakchalan. I sat there looking outside, thinking and writing. I recorded many events in which I was directly and indirectly involved. I described the life of a Macedonian person and their existence under the Greek regimes. And, thanks to my friend Hristo Andonovski, I am now again in possession of the manuscript which I wrote at that time. I have been meaning to offer it for publication.

## **2. Forming NOF...**

About mid-April 1945, I received a message from Dzhodzho requesting that I immediately leave for Skopje. I did as he ordered and found out that the political commission was already dissolved. Then, at the end of April, the National Liberation Front - NOF for the Macedonians in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia was formed. Mitrevski was appointed its leader and given a free hand to choose four others and to assemble the central leadership body - a five-member Bureau. He called me in and told me the news himself. He then asked me for my opinion on which four he should choose to form the Bureau...

I suggested Georgi Urdov-Dzhodzho, Ilo Dimovski-Goche, Naum Peiov and Mihail Keramidzhiev.

He thanked me and went away. When it was formed the Bureau consisted of Paskal Mitrevski, Georgi Urdov-Dzhodzho, Mihail Keramidzhiev, Tanas Koroveshov and Pavle Rakovski.

As I mentioned earlier, at that time I had high regards for Mitrevski because of the trust the leadership of the Republic of Macedonia had placed in him. I appreciated and respected that simply and openly.

And that, it seemed to me, is why I too was appointed to NOF's top leadership body.

After the first session, the five of us were sent to the field to strike NOF's foundation on the ground in Kostur, Lerin, Voden, Enidzhe-Vardar and Seres Regions. I was sent to Voden Region because of my popularity there and because of the fact that I was well-known to most of the people.

“Do you see how well it turned out for you? You already have a ready-made organization there.... All you have to do now its change its name...” Dzhodzho said to me...

I was familiar with everything that I did in the field. We had long discussions about it. But, apparently, Dzhodzho said nothing to anyone about it. His idea was, when I came back from the field, I was to write my accomplishments about NOF's founding in my report, but to keep quiet about TOMO's existence. He said it was totally unnecessary to mention TOMO and its activities because they would cause unnecessary discussion.

During the first regional conference I nominated Vangel Aianovski – Oche as president to lead the new NOF District Board. Aianovski was already stationed in Voden with a number of people sent there to monitor developments in the field.

I remained in the field until May 25, 1945. Then, at the end of the month, the new main leadership (Bureau) held a meeting in Skopje which was also attended and led by Dimitar Aleksievich – Pekar from the CPM Central Committee. Everyone present read out their written reports and answered questions. Here is my report which described the situation in Voden Region:

### **3. FIRST REPORT**

The situation in Voden Region

By Pavle Rakovski

1. General remarks.

a) Our people in their entirety dislike the Greek reactionaries and are afraid of them.

b) The reactionaries are trying to force the people to join their organizations. Those who eventually do join are armed and 1) pompously try to influence and break the people's desire to join the Greek and Macedonian people's resistance movement, and 2) by use of arrests and other terror tactics try to disorganize and break the CPG and our front (NOF) resistance forces which we are trying to keep united and organized.

c) Almost the entire Macedonian population has joined the resistance movement where NOF is organized and has made its presence. This is a public condemnation of the CPG's anti-Front campaign, and its non-existence in many villages and neighbourhoods.

d) The CPG is still our fronts' (NOF) main opponent because it attacks and strikes not only from the front, but also from inside and outside. With its hostile campaign it prevents the masses from decisively moving along the path shown to them by our organization and reduces the people's willingness to fight.

## 2. The organization's position

a) Party: No Party has been organized so far but all NOF officials are strong Macedonian patriots and strong Communists.

b) Front (NOF): Front in each village is organized according to the village size. The boards consist of 3 to 6 individuals. There are 13 well-organized mountain villages in one group which also have a regional board. Our activists are also working in other regions, some more successfully and others less, but we continue to expand our organization in the Macedonian villages. We have already established a city board in Voden. During our last meeting with our activists, we decided to hold a NOF district conference and elect a district board. The district conference is scheduled for June, next month. The basic organizational units are not the same everywhere. In Voden we work in threes and fours while in the mountain villages

our meetings look like rallies where the entire population participates.

c) AFZH: We do not have an AFZH organization. We just appointed two women activists to start to organize it.

d) Youth: We have no separate youth organization. The young people are taking part in our movement together with the older people. We are now in the process of starting NOMS.

e) Groups: All armed groups are under one command and at the disposal of the political organizations. A group of five strong comrades is permanently located in the city Voden.

f) Reserve army: Fighters in each village are voluntarily organizing themselves into groups to form a reserve army, more specifically, to form reserve armed groups. Work is progressing well. A few days before my arrival, the reserve army from three villages moved to another region and occupied two villages there. It was well-intentioned and friendly, of course. It was like a military exercise, but it was much more than a simple military exercise. While it had the villages occupied, the reserve army gathered the people in the village square and talked to them about our movement. The other day, there was a rumour circulating that about 600 to 700 armed Macedonians appeared in that region. In reality that number was closer to 50...

g) Publishing: We have no equipment to publish anything. Our agitation and propaganda is still being done orally.

h) Economic issues: It would be a tactical mistake to start placing economic issues before the people. It is more important to first win over their confidence in our movement, to convince them that our movement is the correct way to go, that is, to disarm the slanderous CPG campaign. After that we can hope for economic help...

### 3. The reactionary forces

The reactionary forces are not always organized the same way. They can number anywhere from 30 to 100 troops and are permanently

located in certain villages. There are 150 to 300 in the city Voden. They are well-armed. Sometimes they are only Greeks or Arabs and Englishmen, and sometimes they are mixed. Next to them are the peasants who were armed by reactionaries but they are not many. It has been said that the Voulgaris government will call to arms three to four battalions.

#### 4. Forms of reactionary activities

Voulgaris is trying to organize the people into nationalist reactionary organizations, especially the youth. He is systematically organizing excursions, parades, riotous manifestations, theatrical festivities, feasts and parties with the young people who he has managed to win over. This is a psychological weapon...

There are also the arrests and terror. The villagers don't go to the cities anymore and don't sleep at home in their villages. More than three hundred people have been arrested and almost all of them in the city Voden. There were Greek colonists among them, but it is well-known that the vast majority were Macedonians. So far there is no burning of villages, plundering and assaults of women reported in Voden Region.

#### 5. NOF and the CPG

I will cite one characteristic case:

On Sunday, May 13, 1945, three Greek men arrived in the village Dolno Rodovo. They were the CPG instructor for that region (Karadzova), the secretary for Orma Region (Tresino), a man named Stavros, and an agitator for the same region. The three gathered all the villagers at the village square for a mass meeting. As it happened two of my friends and I had just arrived in the village when this was happening. When the people saw us coming they all left the meeting and ran down the street to greet us with applause and by singing Macedonian songs.

Surprised and looking sad, our Greek comrades were left standing all alone.

That evening we had a long and friendly talk with the Greeks and in the end all they wanted from us was “not to attack the reactionaries”. In fact they begged us not to attack the enemy because if we did attack them it would “ruin us! Everything would collapse over our heads!” This was the only serious requirement they had... that our organizations refrain from attacking the reactionaries... our and their worst enemy...

I will talk about the specifics of our movement in Voden Region and the tasks I set out for our activists there, during our Bureau meeting.

May 27, 1945  
(Signature).

#### **4. - A document on terror**

The situation was worse in other regions, especially in Kostur Region. A number of reports describing the orgy of terror committed by the armed reactionaries against the Macedonian villages were compiled and sent to the NOF main leadership. Following is one such report:

#### **REPORT**

From: The NOF leadership in Kostur Region  
To: The NOF main leadership  
Subject: Plundering the village Kumanichevo

On April 26, 1945, a gang of up to 60 armed bandits, led by Dimitar Minelis and Atanasios Psalmodakis, attacked the village Kumanichevo from all sides and began to loot the houses. On top of looting the houses they also stole 1,000 sheep and goats, 110 heads of cattle and 50 pigs.

On May 4, 1945 a group of armed bandits from the village Loshnitsa, led by the Monarcho-Fascist Giorgos Douflas, stole 1,500 sheep and 50 cattle. After invading Kumanichevo they raided the houses and stole wine and rakia and helped themselves to the people's food. They then took what was left and began to intimidate the unprotected population with their knives and swords yelling,

“We will kill you filthy Bulgarians and you will not be able to escape to Bulgaria and Yugoslavia...” The village was severely devastated... Doors and windows were broken... right in front of the people as they were watching. Many of the residents fled their homes and are now hiding in the mountains.

On May 5, 1945, Douflas’s gang returned to the village Kumanichevo and stole about 750 kilos of grain. After that they smashed the grain bins and storage barns, stole a number of chickens and eggs and left. A few days later they came back and went straight to the house belonging to Metodi, Toma and Giorgi Samara and plundered it. This house had not been plundered before.

Some time later a rumour was circulating that the government in Athens had ordered these gangs to return the plundered livestock and materials to the original owners. Following the rumour the gangs from the village Loshnitsa that committed the plunder informed the residents of Kumanichevo to go to Loshnitsa and take their belongings back. The people from Kumanichevo had a meeting to figure out what to do and decided that Damian Kiorkafa and Pandelis Papafilipos should go and be accompanied by all the older women and young children who had not been persecuted by the robbers because they were their servants. In the end 20 women and 10 children were selected to accompany the two men riding on mules.

When they arrived in the village Loshnitsa they met the robbers in the village square. Their first question was: “Where are your men...?” One of the women told them that the men were working. The gang of robbers then attacked the women and children and punished them. Their plan was to lure the men, capture them and put them in jail.

List of people robbed in the village Kumanichovo

- 1) Nikola Kutureli 2 oxen, 1 cow, 1 mule, 160 sheep.
- 2) Dimitar Kiosev 2 oxen, 70 sheep.
- 3) Methodi Samardzhiev 2 oxen, 1 cow, 150 sheep.
- 4) Pavle Samardzhiev 2 oxen, 1 cow, 160 sheep.
- 5) Ivan Cholakov 1 donkey, 40 sheep.



- 6) Ristidi Papataki 150 sheep.
- 7) Hristo Konukov 1 ox, 1 cow.
- 8) Dim. Papatnasi 2 oxen, 1 cow, 30 sheep.
- 9) Ilia Samardzhiev 1 cow, 1 donkey.
- 10) Blagoia Dinkov 3 cows, 20 sheep.
- 11) Filip Konukov 1 donkey.
- 12) Dimitar Duev 3 oxen, 1 cow, 2 donkeys, 170 sheep.
- 13) Hristo Samardziev 2 cows, 1 donkey, 100 sheep.
- 14) Nikola Goglev 20 sheep.
- 15) Nikola Popvasilev 1 cow, 1 donkey.
- 16) Slavko Panteliev 1 cow, 1 donkey.
- 17) Vangel Konukov 1 donkey, 15 sheep.
- 18) Ivan Popvasilev 1 cow, 130 sheep.
- 19) Vangel Engelana 2 cows, 1 donkey.
- 20) Giorgi Popvasilev 2 oxen, 1 cow, 1 donkey, 60 sheep.
- 21) Methodi Duev 1 ox, 2 cows.
- 22) Andon Dinkov 1 cow, 1 donkey.
- 23) Damianidi Angelia 1 ox, 2 cows, 1 donkey.
- 24) Vangel Penev 1 ox, 2 cows, 1 donkey, 40 sheep.
- 25) Diamidi Michov 2 oxen, 1 cow, 1 donkey, 8 sheep.
- 26) Dimitar Michov 2 oxen, 4 cows, 80 sheep, 1 horse.
- 27) Methodi Michov 2 oxen, 4 cows, 90 sheep, 1 horse.
- 28) Vasil Vlahov 1 cow, 1 donkey, 50 sheep.
- 29) Kosta Dinkov 3 cows, 3 donkeys, 90 sheep.
- 30) Dimitar Chinov 3 cows, 1 donkey.
- 31) Vasil Samardzhiev 5 oxen, 6 cows, 1 donkey, 160 sheep.
- 32) Nikola Ivanov 2 cows, 110 sheep.
- 33) Kosma Papagiorgi 2 oxen, 1 cow, 1 donkey.
- 34) Andrea Kanuntse 1 ox, 1 cow, 50 sheep.
- 35) Lambi Neshov 1 ox, 1 mule, 30 sheep.
- 36) Gorgi Neshov 1 ox, 1 mule, 20 sheep.
- 37) Hristo Karadzhev 1 cow.

## **5. Another document on looting**

Report on looting in the village Dobrolishta.

The first attack on Dobrolishta took place on March 17, 1945. The robbers were armed Madzhiri (Christian Turkish colonists from Asia Minor settled in Greek occupied Macedonia by the Greek

government) from the village Papratsko. Here is what they stole. They plundered Andon Kalimanov's house and stole 38 sheep. They robbed Hristo Kalimanov's house and stole 31 sheep. They stole 35 sheep from Spiro Vlahov, 20 sheep from Dimitar Vlahov, 28 sheep from Nikola Gapkovski, 25 sheep from Andon Poplazarov, and 12 sheep from Nikola T. Kalimanov. They also pillaged the Nikola T. Kalimanov home and brutally beat Nikola's mother and wife. They stole 8 sheep from Paraskeva Kotorkova, pillaged her house and brutally beat her. They stole 6 sheep from Kosta Hadzhiev, 5 sheep from Tome Hadzhiev, 5 sheep from Atanas Hadzhiev, 4 sheep from Zizo Kalimanov and pillaged his home, 7 sheep from Micho Kalimanov, 4 sheep from Sterio Kalimanov, 4 sheep from Iane Kalimanov, 14 sheep from Anastas Dimovski and pillaged his home, 10 sheep from Vangel Kalimanov, and 8 sheep and 15 chickens from Pavle Mitkovski and pillaged his house.

On April 4, 1945, the same armed Madzhiri from the village Papratsko and some from the village Sveta Nedela, led by spies Antonis and Giorgos, plundered Stavre Mirkovski's house and stole 15 sheep and all his furnishings. They then mercilessly beat his wife and aunt.

On April 15, 1945, Madzhiri from the village Zhelegozhe stole 7 sheep and 1 ox from Vasil Tashalukiv. They plundered Ilo Gubidenov's house and stole 6 sheep. They plundered Mihali Gubidenov's house and stole 5 sheep. They plundered Andrei Timiovsk's house and stole 8 sheep, 50,000 drachmas, 40 Albanian Napoleons, 2 liras and 500 kilos of tobacco. They stepped on and completely destroyed the tobacco on location. From Panaiot Timiovski they stole 5 sheep and 7 from Mihali Timiovski. They robbed Hristo Gapkovski's house and completely trashed it. They stole all of Katerina Evangelova's utensils and clothing and took her ox. They took everything from Damian Kirovski's house. They pillaged Nikola Petrovski's house and took his ox. They took everything from Iani Mirkovski's house. From Barbara Mirkovska they stole 6 sheep and all her furniture and clothing. From Todor Mirkovski they stole 13 sheep. They plundered Vasil Hristovski's house. They plundered Giorgi's house and stole 19 sheep. They stole 11 sheep from Nicholas D. Kalimanov and plundered his house. They stole 4 sheep from Argir Hristovski. This time they

completely robbed Mihail Kalimanov's house and tossed a hand grenade into it, wounding his son. They also beat Mihail, his daughter Kiratsa and his son Ziso.

All the stolen livestock was appropriated by the Madzhiri from the village Zhelegozhe. The household items and everything else was appropriated by the Madzhiri from the village Sveta Nedela...

## **6. One more document on looting**

Report on looting in the village Chetirok.

Every day from April 25 to April 30, 1945, there were multiple reports of looting and other crimes committed by the armed Madzhiri and the spies from the villages Chetirok, Sveta Nedela and Grleni. The Madzhiri attacked villages and turned them into wasteland. Leading the Madzhiri in these robberies and raping of women were Parharidis and Lazaridis. Apart from the Madzhiri committing crimes there were also the "Burandari" (Greek soldiers and policemen fighting for the Greek government against the people). The following women and girls were raped: 1) Maria Argirova, 2) Sofia Vlahova, 3) Constantina H. Vlahova. They tried to rape other women but failed.

The following people/households were looted:

- 1) Lazo Zabiev's house was plundered and he was beaten. Additionally the thieves stole 5 cattle and 45 sheep.
- 2) Giorgi Zabiev's house was plundered and he too was beaten. The thieves stole 2 cattle and 20 sheep.
- 3) Naum Shopov's house was looted and the thieves stole 3 cattle and 12 sheep.
- 4) Panaiot Shopov's house was robbed and the thieves stole 16 sheep.
- 5) Manio Svetonedoski's house was plundered and 1 ox and 20 sheep were stolen.

- 6) Ilo Tsapedov's house was plundered and the thieves stole 1 ox.
- 7) Argir Girovski's house was plundered and he was beaten. Additionally the thieves stole 1 ox and 7 sheep.
- 8) Giorgi Bachev's house was looted and 10 sheep were stolen.
- 9) Paskal Bachev lost 10 sheep.
- 10) Konstantin Iurukov's house was plundered and 12 sheep were stolen.
- 11) Argir Popdimitrovski's house was plundered and he lost 1 ox and 20 sheep.
- 12) Paskal Popdimovski's house was plundered and he lost 3 cattle and 3 sheep.
- 13) Nikola Papunchev's house was plundered and he was beaten. The thieves also stole 2 cattle and 10 sheep.
- 14) Lazar Papunchev's house was looted and the thieves stole 1 ox and 30 sheep.
- 15) Atanas Megas's house was plundered and 12 sheep were stolen.
- 16) Hristo Megas's house was plundered and 18 sheep were stolen.
- 17) Nikola Mega lost 6 sheep.
- 18) Kota Megas's house was plundered and 3 sheep were stolen.
- 19) Pando Anastasov's house was looted and 25 sheep were stolen. Pando was also beaten.
- 20) Ziso Trendafilov's house was looted and he was beaten. Additionally the thieves stole 25 sheep, and 2 cattle.
- 21) Argir Apulchev's house was plundered and 4 sheep were stolen.

- 22) Vangel Apulchev's house was looted and 20 sheep were stolen.
- 23) Andon Andonovski's house was plundered and 10 sheep were stolen.
- 24) Atanas Natsev's house was looted and 1 ox and ... sheep were stolen (the original text has no number for how many sheep were stolen).
- 25) Risto Kuzevski's house was looted.
- 26) Pando Karchov's house was plundered and 20 sheep were stolen.
- 27) Gligor Karchov's house was looted and he was beaten.
- 28) Vangel Karchev's house was plundered and the thieves stole 3 cattle and 25 sheep.
- 29) Ilo Michalchev's house was looted and 20 sheep were stolen.
- 30) Vasil Traikov's house was looted and Vasil was beaten. The thieves also stole 1 ox.
- 31) Vangel Deliev's house was looted and 5 sheep were stolen.
- 32) Konstantin Natsev's house was plundered and 1 ox and 8 sheep were stolen. Konstantin was beaten.
- 33) Anastas Vlahov's house was looted and Atanas was beaten, 2 cattle and 35 sheep were also stolen.
- 34) Tome Aleksiev's house was plundered and he was beaten. The thieves stole 1 ox and 15 sheep.
- 35) Rizo Karsho's house was robbed and he was beaten, the thieves also stole 2 cattle.
- 36) Andrea Girevski's house was plundered.

37) Andon Makrievski's house was looted and his was beaten. The thieves also took 1 ox.

38) Pando Makrievski's house was plundered and he lost 3 sheep.

39) Filip Vlahov's house was looted, he was beaten and 1 ox was stolen.

40) Gligor Novachev's house was plundered and 2 cattle and 20 sheep were stolen.

41) Nako Novachev's house was plundered and he lost 2 cattle and 20 sheep.

42) Foti Novachev's house was looted and he lost 2 cattle and 25 sheep.

43) Pando Deliev's house was plundered and 1 ox and 10 sheep were stolen.

44) Sideri Kachauani's house was plundered.

45) Pando Tipov's house was plundered.

46) Stati Naumov's house was plundered and he lost 10 sheep.

47) Sotir Shagarov's house was plundered.

48) Lazo Kiratsulev's house was plundered and the thieves stole 5 sheep.

49) Vangel Kalimanov's house was looted and he lost 1 ox and 15 sheep.

50) Trpe's ... (there is no last name in the original text), house was plundered and he was beaten. The thieves also stole 2 cattle and 20 sheep.

- 51) Pando Mihalchev's house was looted, he was beaten and the thieves took 8 sheep.
  - 52) Mihali Mihalchev's house was looted, Mihali was beaten and the thieves took 18 sheep.
  - 53) Atanas Tsapelov's house was plundered and he lost 1 ox.
  - 54) Stavro Lenov's house was plundered and Stavro was beaten. The thieves stole 5 cattle and 120 sheep.
  - 55) Panaiot Kariev's house was looted and he lost 12 sheep.
  - 56) Vangel Papratski's house was looted and he lost 10 sheep.
  - 57) Dimitar Papratski's house was plundered.
  - 58) Pavle Papratzki's house was plundered and he lost 2 cattle and 30 sheep.
  - 59) Nikola Papratski's house was looted.
  - 60) Lefter Natsev's house was plundered and the thieves stole 2 cattle and 10 sheep.
  - 61) Ilo Natsev's house was plundered and 10 sheep were stolen.
  - 62) Paskal Papuchiev's house was looted.
  - 63) Konstantin Dorovski's house was looted.
  - 64) Pavle Karev's house was looted.
  - 65) Dimitar Tsapelov's house was plundered and 15 sheep were stolen.
  - 66) Pando Dorovski's house was looted and 8 sheep were stolen.
- On March 7, 1945 the robbers killed Maria Goteva...

## 7. General condition of the democratic forces

Almost all the villages here in Kostur Region and many in other regions experienced a similar fate as the one's described above.

The democratic forces were no exception and they too suffered at the hands of the reactionaries. Their trouble started early in April 1945, as was indicated in a CPG Central Committee 11<sup>th</sup> Plenum report dated April 10, 1945:

“The resistance movement which rejoiced Greece... is under persecution. The fighters are being pursued, jailed and killed. Participation in the national liberation struggle is considered a crime and those participating are prosecuted. The ELAS fighters and officers are not being admitted to the new army, which is treated more like a class army of anti-national and fascist character. The abusive collaborators who cooperated with the occupiers are being rewarded for their treacherous activities. The entire state apparatus is dominated by people from the August 4<sup>th</sup> fascist regime and by collaborators from the fascist occupation. The treacherous security battalions are now integrated into the National Guard. The Fascist organizations are being armed and special armed fascist gangs are formed in the interior from occupier collaborators and these forces now represent the essential and true state...” (AM, collection: Aegean Macedonia in the national liberation war, 1945-1949, AE: 65.)

Shortly afterwards the EAM Central Committee sent a telegram to the three major power leaders, the Soviet Union, America and England, protesting over the terrorist orgy taking place in Greece. Within four months of the signing of the Varkiza Agreement more than 500 national resistance fighters were slain and more than 30,000 were sent to prisons. There were around 150 illegal armed terrorist gangs operating on the ground with over 20,000 armed right-wing terrorists. The EAM Central Committee telegram also emphasized that there was danger of a right-wing coup and sought to apply the Yalta decision in Greece with help from the Allied Commission. (Chronicles of War, CPG Central Committee edition 1952, p. 52.)



Chris Gunthouse, head of the English military mission in Greece, wrote a book entitled “Apple of discord”. Parts of this book were then published in the newspaper “Elevtheria” from June 1 to October 1, 1948. Despite the author’s wishes to the contrary, this book is a material document that reveals the political crimes committed by the English in Greece. Even this Intelligence Service Agent (Chris Gunthouse) acknowledges that, “thanks to London’s effort in Greece, ELAS and the former partisans primarily ended up in prisons, while battalions of soldiers who collaborated with the occupiers took their place in the armed forces on the ground...” (“Elevtheria”, October 9, 1948, G. Kiriakidis: Greek Civil War, p. 10.)

Wanting to gain power at any cost, the English puppet Greek bourgeois “government of national unity” was willing to publicly induct into military forces and organizations anyone who supported its cause, including yesterday’s German, Italian and Bulgarian collaborators. All fascist occupier agents, traitors, public and secret associates of the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers were welcome. They all rallied behind the English tanks, spent English money and resolutely and ferociously committed unprecedented terrorist crimes against the democratic forces in order to disorganize and eventually break them down. It was no wonder that on May 9, 1945, “Victory Day” over fascist Germany was not celebrated, especially in the Greek occupied part of Macedonia.

There was a period of “uncertainty” following the Varkiza Agreement and the dissolution of ELAS during which a “unilateral civil war” was waged. The first to feel its effects were our Greek comrades from the Party middle base... They were obliged not to resist and not to defend themselves so as not to “breach” the Varkiza Agreement. When I mentioned this to a Party instructor and his comrades, with whom I had a conversation in Dolno Rodovo, that the Greek people always mock this attitude of “kill me so that I can become a martyr saint...” he shrugged his shoulders confusingly and smiled. But he and his comrades did acknowledge that the opposing bourgeois party did nothing to honour that Agreement. The bourgeois had abandoned the Varkiza Agreement a long time ago. In fact, that Agreement never existed for them...

This attitude was very characteristic of the top CPG leadership even under extreme conditions such as these. They allowed ELAS to capitulate and become liquidated and called it a political victory. It was also characteristic of them to keep the people passive. They called on them to “endure” and remain calm and disciplined which, objectively, aided the murderous attack against the democratic forces and the people and helped the bourgeoisie consolidate their power.

At the same time the CPG top leadership decisively resumed its hostilities against the Macedonian national liberation movement that it had started during the fascist occupation. In other words the CPG had adopted the same policies against the Macedonian movement as had the Greek bourgeoisie...

## **8. Report - June 27, 1945**

On June 1, 1945, I was again in the field where I remained until June 25<sup>th</sup>. As per my June 27, 1945 report, the situation in Voden Region looked like this:

In the city Voden: Terror is raging. The police, the special security forces and the National Guard openly and officially persecute the Macedonian people and punish them for speaking the Macedonian language. Organs of the “Idiki Asfalia” (Special Security) tried to arrest Kosta Chornilov because he spoke Macedonian but he escaped. The same day Petre Zarakinchev was arrested on charges of publicly speaking the “Slavic language”. They held him for 24 hours, beat him up and let him go. On June 5, a police officer beat Marika Naleva because she spoke Macedonian. Another policeman insulted Kosta Nisiankov’s elderly mother in front of the entrance to her own house calling her an “ugly Bulgarian bitch!” Her niece responded in Greek and told the policemen that he was “rude” and that he should “have some respect for the 70 year old woman!”

The Burandari (Greek bourgeois armed forces) attacked L’got, the locality under the waterfalls, and attempted to detain Traian Sapunov and Anastas Akrepov, who at the time were working in their gardens. Akrepov was fired upon but managed to escape. Sapunov was captured and imprisoned. He was subjected to severe

torture for six days before he was released. He was severely mutilated but is now recovering in his own bed.

On June 2, a policeman attacked the children on the street “Almopia” near the “Kiupri” block, for speaking Macedonian while they were playing. Frightened, many of the women in the neighbourhood locked themselves in their homes. The children ran away. Angry, the policeman grabbed Maria Akrepova, as she was fleeing for shelter in a house, and ordered her to tell all the mothers to prohibit their children from speaking Macedonian.

On at least several documented occasions, special security agents Ioanis Pertsemlis and N. Gerimdzhis accompanied by the son of fascist Major Fotiadis, and some others, systematically and continuously provoked the ELAS fighters and, above all, ranted at the Macedonian people yelling: “Sofia-Moscow, that is our dream!”, “What are the Bulgarians doing in Macedonia...”, and kept yelling: “Get rid of the Slavs...! Let them go to Bulgaria and Yugoslavia...!”

The situation was tense and getting worse from day to day. Our people (the Macedonians) were afraid that the fascist Greeks would massacre them. There was also terrible news spreading that a list with 400 names of Macedonian people was drawn up in the city and they were to be arrested. The people no longer slept at home, they hid outside the city, in the fields and gardens. After a thorough investigation, the NOF City Council verified that such a list did exist but it was uncertain whether the arrests were to take place immediately or sometime later. Some suspected that these names were compiled so that these Macedonians could be arrested in the event the “Slavs started an uprising...”

In the villages: On June 14, 1945, an order was issued to the presidents of the village municipalities to submit lists of Macedonian people who were away from the village and had joined the Macedonian army, that is, the army of the People’s Republic of Macedonia. Many of the villages did not submit such lists. The lists were to be simultaneously forwarded to the district command and the National Guard command.

In order to spy on the Macedonian people, particularly on NOF and its activists, the reactionaries also began to employ well-known anti-people civil guards. These civil guards were responsible for aiding the frequent blockades of Gorno Rodovo, Sarakinovo and the frequent Burandari (Greek army) attacks in the Kronalevo and Teovo zones. Their aim was to capture one or more of our (NOF) activists or to ambush and capture one of our groups. These civil guards, with pistols in hand, also often attacked children walking on the road and forcibly searched them, thinking that the child may be carrying a written message. A NOF regional conference was held on June 20, 1945, during which NOF delegates and village representatives demanded that these civil guards be liquidated.

On June 16, 1945, four tanks, one armoured car carrying a number of Englishmen and three armed Greek civilians inspected the border at Kaimakchalan. On their way back they blockaded the village Zhervi, on the Ostrovo Region side, and arrested and took one person with them. The person was charged with allegedly delivering supplies to the “autonomist armed groups”.

On June 19, 1945, an armed unit of reactionaries from Lerin arrived and blockaded the village Ostrovo. The Burandari began to discharge their firearms from all sides, terrorizing the residents. Then after searched the houses and plundering them, they gathered the people in the village square and one of the officers, in an intimidating tone of voice, among other things, also said the following:

“If those people who left the village and joined the Macedonian army do not return to the village within ten days, their property will be confiscated. Tell them to desert from there and come back here...”

After leaving a platoon of soldiers in the village, the armed unit left and took the road along the border towards Kaimakchalan. With much protest the people managed to recover some of their things that were plundered but most of the gold items, including their jewelry and gold coins, had disappeared and were never returned.

A strong movement of Fascist organizations such as EPEN (All-Greek National Union of Youth), Scouts and other groups, has been present in the city Voden with members arriving from neighbouring cities such as Negush, Lerin and Solun. They come on trucks every Sunday decorated with Greek and English flags, singing monarchist and anti-Macedonian songs. They also, and most often, chant “Sofia-Moscow, that’s our dream...” They perform various manifestations throughout the day with aims at intimidating and scaring the Macedonian people. There is great pressure on the Voden youth to join these Fascist organizations. They will not leave them alone until the young sign up and join at least one of their nationalist organizations. According to the NOF City Council, our youth, with insignificant exceptions, are giving them strong resistance and stifling their Greek Fascist plans.

NOF and the CPG: Many CPG activists continue to consider our struggle as dishonest and treacherous. They see our activists as traitors and Trotskyites. In other words, the Party continues its fight against NOF, slandering our struggle and, above all, our activists.

“These people are half-wits, if you follow them they will lead you to ruin. Don’t trust them. Nobody trusts them!” This is what our CPG comrades used to say to people about NOF, its leaders and activists. It is also well-known that Macedonians by nature are not trusting and were especially afraid of coming to us voluntarily and alone. So, for that reason, on June 20, 1945, I convened and held a district meeting a few kilometres outside of Voden. We did not, however, get the desired attendance we expected. No delegates from Voden and Meglen Pole attended. Those from Voden could not attend because the city was blockaded. Those from Meglen Pole did not get the invitations on time because the courier had an incident along the road and was delayed. However, 125 delegates from 28 separate villages did attend. The meeting went well and took a serious and splendid tone being chaired by a grey-haired, old man from the Ilinden era.

This was the agenda:

- 1) The international situation in general (Hristo Andonovski-Simo).

- 2) The ideological foundations of our struggle and ways of leading it, organizational issues (Pavle Rakovski-Gotse).
- 3) Economic issues (Vangel Aianovski-Oche).
- 4) Options for the NOF District Board.
- 5) Miscellaneous.

The next morning all the delegates left for their villages full of faith in the justification of our struggle and in its sure success. After this the District Board undertook the following tasks:

- 1) Extend NOF everywhere in the Macedonian villages.
- 2) Establish national liberation boards everywhere where conditions exist and where they can function normally as an authority.
- 3) Organize NOMS.
- 4) Organize AFZH.
- 5) Organize actions to collect voluntary contributions for the economic needs of the organization.

A particularly important task to be performed by the District Board was to organize a Party organization inside NOF's ranks and, through NOMS activists, organize the communist youth within NOMS.

NOF has already formed the following leadership bodies: the District Board, the City Board in Voden, two regional boards and local boards in 34 villages. There are individual connections in the rest of the villages and they are on their way to forming local boards.

The NOMS activists have already set up local NOMS boards in 13 villages in the Krontselevo Region.

Mirka Ginova, a former CPG activist, approached our liberation movement and was appointed leader of the AFZH organization. We are sure that this well-known teacher and revolutionary will quickly create, and there are conditions for this, a sizable organization of Macedonian women.

From the activities of the NOF armed groups: On Sunday June 17, 1945, at 11 o'clock the fascist and nationalist groups from Voden,

Lerin and Solun had gathered together at the “Kupri” catering centre in Voden to celebrate the King. They cheered, yelled and sang fascist songs while eating their lunch. They were also ranting about “Sofia and Moscow” and that no “Slavic root should be left in Macedonia”. They did this to terrorize and frighten the Macedonian population.

At that very moment three of our NOF fighters suddenly attacked them with a strong barrage of gunfire and sent them running in panic. Some were killed and many were wounded. Fascist command was silent and nothing was published. It wanted to conceal the incident from the general public. But, in the end, it failed. Our people everywhere, even in the remote villages, found out about it.

While holding the district meeting just outside Voden, on the night of June 20-21, 1945, I received information that the English and Greek soldiers stationed in Subotsko, Tresino, Vladovo and Chegan were preparing to go out and liquidate “autonomist groups”. Because of that I made sure that the conference ended by early dawn, before we were attacked. I suggested to the delegates that they collect some firewood, load it up on their donkeys before returning to their villages and they had best do it alone or in two’s. And if anyone stopped them on the way to tell them they saw nothing and know nothing. It was only right that they return with a load of firewood because, before leaving their village to go to the meeting, they had left word that they were going to the mountains to collect firewood.

In order for us to avoid a clash with the English and Greek soldiers, especially near a village, we decided to retreat to Kaimakchalan Region, somewhere above the Tresenska Korja, at about 2,000 metres above sea level, where there were no trees and the terrain was naked. Then, during the morning of June 22, 1945, they suddenly appeared in front of us. They had climbed to the top of the mountain and had gone as far as the Greek-Yugoslav border and now they were returning. We clashed. The firefight lasted about 10 minutes before we had them surrounded in a half circle. Six soldiers surrendered and the rest fled. We seized 1 “Brent” machine gun, 2 automatic rifles, five English rifles, ammunition for all the guns, 13 new long English coats, 14 new English blankets, eight military

bags, bread and cans of meat, two summer coats, two pairs of summer trousers and three gas masks.

One of the captured soldiers handed me a document that identified him as an ELAS operative and member of the Party. He then went on to tell me that he was in charge of the 5<sup>th</sup> unit belonging to the 304-battalion stationed in Subotsko. He also said that the other five soldiers were members of the Party. After that I told them they were free to leave but they refused and said that if they returned they would be subjected to torture and something even worse might happen to them. I explained the goals of our struggle to them but they were afraid to stay with us. They preferred to go to Yugoslavia and claim asylum as political refugees. They gave us their military clothes and we gave them civilian ones and they left.

Later we encountered a small unit consisting of 14 Greek army soldiers led by the Tresino base commander. We were twice as many. After that, our armed group was divided into five smaller groups, which were sent in various directions through the forest.

Before I end this chapter I want to mention that the CPG Party organization in Voden bribed Comrade Aleko Pechinov, secretary of the NOF City Council. His family was in a very difficult financial situation and the CPG used this opportunity to “help” him under the condition that he abandon his position and leave NOF. They also made a similar proposition to Iani Chirkindzhiev. The CPG offered him 400,000 drachmas if he was to abandon the NOF City Committee, but he refused the bribe. He told them: “If I wanted money, I would have kept my own money, which was much more than what you are offering...!”

And this is one of the methods that the CPG used in the fight against NOF...



## CHAPTER FIVE

### 1. Zahariadis

Nikos Zahariadis was undoubtedly one of the most notable Greeks in recent modern Greek history. He was seen then and even later as a genius leader, a mischievous politician, a national hero, and a national traitor to Greece.

Since late 1931, being at the helm of the CPG, he was undoubtedly the most notable Greek in the history of the Macedonian national liberation movement in the Greek state.

Elevteros Stavridis was one of the most remarkable CPG leaders who led the CPG before Zahariadis entered the scene. He was a famous renegade and a provocateur who later told us that Zahariadis, early on, had fallen into the hands of the Gligaburg-Metaxas August 4 dictatorial regime, but settled down nicely in his new position. Stavridis told us this in his anti-party articles published in the “Ethnos” Athens newspaper. (There were a series of articles published in the newspaper “Ethnos” which appeared from May 14, 1951 until April 12, 1952, and which in 1953 appeared as a book entitled “Behind the CPG scenes”.) Namely, Maniadakis, a then Greek Minister of the Interior, discreetly arranged “special evenings” during which he invited his most prominent agents... hunters of the communists. Zahariadis also participated in these “special evenings”, and after the feasts gave lectures on how the CPG works and how effective the struggle with communism in Greece can be.

When the Nazi Germans occupied Greece the Greek Asfalia (police) handed him over to the Gestapo and Zahariadis was then taken to the infamous Nazi camp Dachau. According to Stavridis, there too “Zahariadis lived and worked perfectly”. Namely, he “worked” at the Nazi camp headquarters as an interpreter.

After Nazi Germany was defeated the Nazis surrendered him to the Western allies, and they returned him to Greece on a special English air plane, where he immediately became the head of the CPG as CPG Secretary General.

Because Stavridis was a renegade and a provocateur it appears that no one was obliged to take the information about CPG Secretary General Zahariadis seriously. However, a person has to wonder, with admiration, about the fact that this CPG Secretary General, a well-known communist, survived for years in a Nazi camp and managed to return to office? This becomes even more bizarre when one considers the fact that the Nazis, the Gestapo and the SS furiously pursued all communists and shot them on the spot. What Zahariadis accomplished is indeed a feat worthy of a genius (according to some) and a traitor (according to others).

One cannot write something about this and keep quiet and not talk about the unusual man behind it. His work proved to be significant and far-reaching both to the Greek people, the people's revolution, as well as to the Macedonian people and the Macedonian revolutionary movement in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

People, of course, cannot be judged by their declared good intentions alone. Their work must be valued according to the consequences it created. I will try to build my story about this most magnificent of the modern Greeks and about his works based on this principle...

## **2. Verbal policy**

During the several years before Zahariadis arrived back in Greece, the CPG was experiencing its third phase of internal crisis. "There was unprincipled conduct, division, and an internal power struggle in which the class enemy had a role... This was a type of struggle that caused great damage to the Party..." (Chronicle of a struggle, 1878-1951, CPG Central Committee 1952, p. 27.)

With help from the Comintern, things settled down in the Party and the new leadership, headed by Zahariadis, started to do its work. There was a significant rise in the worker and communist movements. Zahariadis himself led the Central Committee and the Party, and therefore attributed all this success to himself. As a contemporary, I believed that was true but a little later a series of events took place, which made me doubt that. I will talk about them

later. The first half of the 1930s was a sign of a general rise in the worker and communist movements all across Europe and not just in Greece. The reactionaries were forced to take extreme measures, establishing fascist dictatorships wherever these movements were a danger to them, like in Germany, Greece and Spain.

Now let us have a closer look at events in Greece, especially those which directly influenced the fate of the Macedonian people. Let us have a look at what the famous Comintern document, entitled “Appeal to the members of the CPG”, published by “Rizospastis” on November 1, 1931, had to say regarding the national question in Greece:

“The CPG has stayed away from the revolutionary struggle carried out by the people who are mostly suppressed by the Greeks. The CPG failed to take the situation into its own hands, to stabilize it, and to implement organizational measures. The CPG failed to take advantage of the great sympathy enjoyed by the communist movement among the repressed nationalities (Macedonians, Turks, Albanians, Jews) - a fact that helped the reactionaries in their endeavours to isolate and alienate the Communists from the masses and to terrorize the revolutionaries from the oppressed nations... The CPG must, without delay, lead the struggle against national oppression and for the right to freedom and to self-determination and secession from Greece... The CPG must lead the struggle against the national oppression of the Macedonians... etc...” (The CPG in its forty years of struggling. p. 307.)

The following was said soon after the CPG Central Committee 4<sup>th</sup> Plenum was held in December, 1931:

“The formal recognition (as was the case before then) of the Comintern’s remarks, will lead to a vigorous conduct of deeds...” (Ibid., p. 311.) Clearly, this slogan referred to more than just what was quoted about the national question.

Then, in 1932, during the CPG Central Committee 5<sup>th</sup> Plenum, the following was said regarding the work done on the national question: “The struggle of the national minorities has made practically no progress, even though the economic impoverishment

of the national minorities has prompted them to take part in the revolutionary struggle and, thereby creating the most favourable conditions for a successful outcome..." (Five Years of struggling, 1931-1936, CPG Central Committee edition, 1946, p. 139.)

During the 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum, held in January 1934, it was again said: "The national districts are the most left out sectors in the work of the Party despite the favourable objective conditions... The Party did not set tasks for itself to upgrade the Party organizations in the national districts and to help organize mass national revolutionary organizations..." (CPG 1931-1952, CPG Central Committee edition, 1952, p. 40.)

During the CPG Central Committee 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, held in March 1934, K. Vermitis, a delegate representing Western (Greek occupied) Macedonia, once again mentioned that, to this day, the Party "has not done any work with the national minorities". The only thing the CPG has done so far is talk about "an independent Macedonia" from high above. But, it was also characteristic of K. Vermitis to mention that members of the Party representing Western Macedonia believed that there should not have been a "national question in Macedonia" for the Party because, allegedly, the Macedonian people have already been assimilated into the Greek fold and do not exist as a separate people. ("Marxitiki Vivliothiki", a CPG organ, No. 6, 1934.) In reality however Macedonians did and do exist and have preserved their identity in Western Macedonia in compact masses. Obviously, this was a calculated move on the part of the CPG in order to mislead and pass false information to the foreign delegations and to people abroad, and above all to misinform the Comintern and the Balkan Communist Federation circles that the situation in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia was quite different than what they believed. This was definitely false in those days and it is false today. All one has to do to prove that Macedonians exist in Greek occupied Macedonia is to visit one or more Macedonian villages in Lerin, Voden, Meglen or Kostur Regions and see for themselves. See what Macedonians wear during celebrations and listen to them speak Macedonian, their mother tongue. All one has to do is speak to them in Greek and listen to how they pronounce the Greek language (pronouncing it like foreigners). It should take no more than five minutes to be convinced that there are no Greeks

among these people, and they themselves are far from being assimilated.

If there were no Macedonians existing in Western Macedonia then why criticize the CPG for “not doing anything” to aid the Macedonian cause? This sharp condemnation from the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress as well as all other previous self-criticisms was an expression underlining the CPG’s revolution and consistency. It was done to silence or moderate the criticisms coming from the Comintern and from the Balkan Communist Federation regarding the CPG’s opportunistic actions and inconsistencies regarding the national question...

### **3. CPG and VMRO (United)**

The CPG accepted the well-known 1924 initiative to establish a political organization in the three parts of divided Macedonia under the name “Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United)”, abbreviated as VMRO (United), but only in principle and without taking any action, except for the above-mentioned false self-criticisms. Only under the influence of the above-mentioned criticisms and pressures from abroad did the CPG, in mid-1933, authorize Sklavenas, one of its officials, to engage in the creation of such an organization. However, the entire effort was masterfully reduced to only a few formal and frustrated meetings, held before and after the CPG 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, that is, at the same time when the CPG made the statement that “Macedonians as a separate people no longer exist in Greece”. So this grand CPG initiative disappeared without a trace, here in the Greek occupied part of Macedonia, like water being poured on sand. And, as I have already mentioned, VMRO (United) remained a nominal, imaginary organization without a statute and program, without a political line and without political action. The stillborn VMRO (United) Central Committee, based in Solun, did not lead, and did not control or manage anything. Not only did it not do anything but no trace was left of its existence. It did not even have a voice or the means to publish a newspaper or even a flyer to stir the scattered Macedonian masses and to manage their resistance and struggle for survival, through which its voice would have been heard and affirmed inside and outside of the Greek occupied part of Macedonia.

There is no doubt that Andreia Chipov and his comrades, who made-up the VMRO (United) Central Committee, had a great desire to have the ability and the means to publish material in their native Macedonian language that directly touched the hearts and aroused the minds of the Macedonian people. And for that purpose, they acquired an old printing press that could print Cyrillic letters and rented an antique shop in Solun from an old Jew... (See: History of the Macedonian people, INI 1969, Book 3, page 267.) But, like I said before, nothing depended on them. They were not allowed to print anything... But, failing that, Chipov and his Committee made an attempt to bring already published Macedonian material from abroad, like the newspapers “Balkan Federation” and “Macedonian Composition”, but the CPG barely tolerated them at first and eventually banned them and prohibited both their import and dissemination. On top of that, Giorgi Krontselchev from Voden, the man who embraced the idea of importing the newspapers and who was responsible for spreading them in Solun, was arrested and liquidated on the spot by the police...

#### **4. Attacks against the democratic rights of the Macedonians**

The plotting against the Macedonian people, long hidden behind the smouldering veil of revolutionary phraseology (for the need of principled democracy in the politics and relations of the minorities), soon acquired a form of open attack against the democratic rights of the Macedonian people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

Namely, during the CPG Central Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenum, held one year after the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress, the CPG, in place of continuing with the line “the right to self-determination to secession” adopted the line “full equality for minorities”.

This was confirmed during the CPG 6<sup>th</sup> Congress held in December 1935, as follows: “This change does not mean that we are abandoning the Marxist-Leninist principle of self-determination of nations... The population in the Greek part of Macedonia today is Greek in its majority and the Marxist-Leninist principle of self-determination requires that the old slogan and line be replaced to coincide with today’s conditions...” (CPG 1931-1952, p. 74.) And of

course, this was done only in the interest of the workers movement and in the interest of the revolution in Greece (according to the official interpretation).

It is not difficult to see the brutal injustice committed by the CPG leadership against the Macedonian people in the name of this so-called concern for the interests of the workers movement and the revolution. The Macedonian people were a natural ally of the workers movement and the revolution in Greece but that, it seems, did not matter to the CPG. Here is what was said about that in an article entitled “The Macedonian National Question through CPG Politics”, published by the Institute of National History - INI in “GLASNIK” in 1964 in Skopje:

“The CPG turned around one hundred and eighty degrees and accepted a line that was in direct negation of the past. Up to now the CPG had acknowledged that Macedonia is not only a geographical region but also an entire ethnic whole, occupied by the three Balkan bourgeoisies. It had recognized the Macedonian people’s right to self-determination to secession from Greece and their right to establish a separate independent state to include all parts of Macedonia occupied by the neighbouring bourgeois states...” (CPG, official documents, P.L.E. edition, 1964, vol. 1, p. 517.)

The CPG is no longer willing to recognize the Macedonian people as a unique ethnic entity and acknowledge the fact that their country has been brutally occupied and portioned. On top of that the CPG has openly and unequivocally accepted Greek bourgeois imperialist policies proclaiming that the occupied parts of Macedonia by other states are part of the Greek homeland. The CPG has also accepted the persistent persecution and, in general, the genocidal policies aimed against the Macedonian people on the one hand, and occupying Macedonian territories with so-called Greek settlers and colonists on the other, with aims at artificially changing the national composition of the population in favour of the Greek element.

With its new line declaring that the population in this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia, in its majority, is Greek, the CPG began to make demands that the Marxist-Leninist principle of self-

determination be applied in favour of the Greek majority and only minority rights in favour of the Macedonian people. In other words continue Macedonia's annexation but under a Marxist mask.

After proclaiming that the Macedonian people are only a national minority in their own homeland, the CPG and the Zahariadis leadership began to treat (Greek occupied) Macedonia as a country belonging to the Greek population, which in fact meant that this part of Macedonia was viewed only as part of the Greek homeland.

By doing this, the CPG in effect denied or ignored the fact that the Macedonian people and their Macedonian homeland represented an ethnic whole fragmented and occupied by the three neighbouring bourgeois states. With this, the CPG openly and unequivocally accepted and confirmed the imperialist policies applied by the Greek bourgeoisie and the consequences associated with them.

So, with Zahariadis at the helm, the CPG, in the name of the workers movement and in the name of the revolution in Greece, openly changed direction in the service of greater Greek national interests..." This, of course, could not be anything other than Greek bourgeoisie policies implemented through the CPG...

The Party work at the national districts relating to the Macedonian people during the period after the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress, characterized by the long series of self-critical excesses, was definitely interrupted.

On top of that, the question of democratic rights and freedoms for the Macedonian people was also removed from the governing body agenda. Also, nowhere in the official texts was there any mention of an "oppressed" Greek people living in Macedonia whose struggle for elementary democratic rights should be protected... Terms and expressions such as these completely disappeared from the CPG political vocabulary. The one thing the term "full equality for national minorities" served was to readily respond to outside criticism. No support was given to assist the Macedonian people. Also, the alleged request issued by the communists of Western Macedonia, advising the Party to remove the Macedonian national question from its agenda, although never formally adopted, began to be implemented...



## 5. Over 300,000 Macedonians

After the 1912 and 1913 mass attacks, persecutions, burning of houses and genocide committed by the Greek army against the Macedonian people in many Macedonian settlements (the villages in Kukush Region and in Kukush itself, etc.) and after many Macedonian people were violently evicted as per the Greek-Bulgarian 1919 and 1924 Agreements on “population exchange”, it was interesting and important to know how closely the Macedonian people still remained “Macedonian” in this part of Greek occupied Macedonia.

Note: French Colonel Lamush, member of the Commission on Minorities at the Committee of Nations, on November 10, 1928, at the Session in Geneva, submitted a report which, among other things, said: “The 1913 and 1919 Agreements made the situation in Macedonia even more difficult, because the majority of the people in this region was placed under the power of nations hostile to the Macedonians. These nations have proven themselves to be more hostile than the Ottomans. The Ottomans never tried to deprive them (the Macedonians) of their language, culture and national sense. The voluntary exchange of population in Greece, according to the 1919 Agreement, turned into a forced eviction of Macedonians...” / See: “Nova Makedonija”, October 2, 1971, published under the column entitled “No comment!”

The above-mentioned 1919 Agreement was renewed in 1924 and signed by Kafantaris and Molov. Although not officially ratified by the Greek government, this Agreement was enforced even after its expiration date in 1928. I can personally attest to this because, while being present at the Sorovich railway station in March 1939, for one thing or another, I personally witnessed the Greek authorities forcibly expelling the Mitredinov family from Sorovich.

As I mentioned earlier, I needed to know how many of the Macedonian people from Greek occupied Macedonia were still Macedonian. I got my opportunity in Skopje and Bitola, two cities teeming with refugees from that region. I patiently and systematically collected information by personally becoming in

touch with hundreds and hundreds of people from many regions and villages. I asked questions such as: “How many houses were there in your village...? How many families...?” After that I asked people to tell me how many houses were there in their neighbouring villages? And so on.

By doing this I received multiple answers, sometimes from as many as 10 per village. I then assumed 5 people to a family on average and came up with a total number of over 250,000 Macedonian people. Since I did not have data on the Macedonian people living in the Solun Region villages and city or other cities in Greece, I concluded that the total number of Macedonians having lived in Greece after the so-called population exchanges should certainly have been over 300,000...

## **6. The CPG and Zahariadis’s first move**

My uncle Iovan, my father’s brother, had a horse and cart of the sort that was turned over to unload. Iovan delivered sand to the new buildings being built in Lerin. I went with him to help him speed up his work. I was not even fourteen years old at the time. I recall it was November 1926 and the election campaign for the parliamentary elections was already under way.

One day when we were somewhere outside of the city looking for sand to dig on the riverbed along the road, Uncle Iovan stopped the cart and took a bunch of leaflets out of his breast pocket. The leaflets had a large red sickle and hammer stamped over the text. He then placed a number of those leaflets in my hand and said:

“Run up over there, spread them around and leave them. Put a pebble on each so that the wind doesn’t blow them away...!”

The place where he sent me to leave the leaflets was a sandpit, where some other workers who were digging sand had just left with their load of sand.

“This is our Party,” he said to me while tapping his index finger on the red sickle and hammer on the leaflet. “This is a party for all the

poor people... It will be good if we get one of our candidates elected in the Greek parliament ...!”

Just seven months ago, my uncle Iovan and my father were living in the village. They were plowing the fields in Dolno Kleshtina. When they moved to Lerin they took on general labour work. They were the most ordinary people, more ordinary than most Macedonians living in the city. They were not communists. Far from it...! But they, like many others, instinctively strove to attach themselves to the Party of the oppressed and exploited and that was the CPG. They did this regardless of the CPG leadership’s provocative and treacherous maneuvers towards the Macedonians. Namely, as was well-known, the CPG entered the pre-election campaign with a program or official document in which not a single word was mentioned about the completely disadvantaged Macedonians. Under the leadership of Elefterios Stavridis, a famous provocateur, the CPG postponed the struggle for the democratic rights of the Macedonian people.

However, out of the ten communist MP’s elected, six were elected in Macedonia and the other four in all of Greece...

The CPG received about 60,000 votes in the September 25, 1932 elections and contributed ten parliamentary seats. The Left leaning Agricultural Party received about 70,000 votes and contributed eleven parliamentary seats. In total, about 130,000 votes and 21 seats were attributed to the Left. Most of these votes were received in Macedonia. In the upcoming elections held on July 9, 1935, the CPG alone received around 100,000 votes or about 10% of the total number of votes in Greece. Again, most of these votes were received in Macedonia. (History of the Macedonian People, Book Three, p. 263.)

One hundred thousand votes amounted to over one hundred thousand members and supporters that included adult men and women as well as young people who had the right to vote. This was a real army of supporters, the majority of whom were in Macedonia.

This kind of force behind the CPG, and still growing, represented a mortal danger to the bourgeoisie. It soon became obvious that Macedonia was becoming the main focus of the revolution...

It was a symbol of dominance of the times, which inevitably and decisively influenced and determined the policies the Greek “patriots” at the top of the CPG leadership and the domestic bourgeoisie would adopt...

On the one hand, the bourgeoisie side decisively took intensive preparations to organize a coup through the establishment of an open dictatorship and through abolishing the people’s democratic rights and freedoms in order to prevent the existence and spread of the revolutionary movement in the Greek state...

On the other hand, the Greek “patriots” at the top of the CPG leadership, led by Nikos Zahariadis, through the CPG Central Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenum and through the CPG Central Committee VI Congress, held in March and December 1935, in a demonstrative manner, put down the democratic rights of the Macedonian people by treating Greek occupied Macedonia as an integral part of the old Greek state and the Macedonian people as an ethnic minority in Greece, thus robbing them of their right to self-determination. This naturally was a blow for the Macedonian people given the conditions that the CPG was growing stronger and more influential primarily because of their support in Macedonia. There is no logical explanation for this except to slow down and even reverse the Macedonian people’s support for the CPG. This naturally stifled the workers’ movement and, with it, the revolution in Greece. The top CPG leadership’s goal was, as it turned out, to break the hefty sympathy and adherence of the Macedonian people to the CPG, and turn them against the CPG, so that the CPG in Macedonia would be isolated and weakened...

## **7. Sklavenas’s performance in parliament**

The next move that Zahariadis made was very characteristic of him.

About four months after the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress had taken place, during a parliamentary meeting held on April 25, 1936, Stilianos Sklavenas,

head of the Group of Communist MPs in the Greek Parliament, member of the CPG Central Committee and member of the Politburo, announced in the Greek parliament, all over Greece and to the world, that the CPG would fight for the Macedonian nation's recognition and for the Macedonian people's self-determination! That is, for the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia! Here is what he said, referring mainly to the Macedonian people:

“One more question, which the Government has ignored in its declarations, is the question of giving full equality to minorities living in Greece with the Greek population.

Anyone who has traveled through Macedonia, especially in those districts that are inhabited by compact masses of Macedonian people, must surely have felt the extraordinary pressure on them. The right to have schools, to use the Macedonian language and their customs... all this is strictly forbidden. This situation has forced the Macedonian people to organize themselves to fight for their rights and we need to support them.

The winners of the Great War and the League of Nations have proclaimed that suppressed nationalities must be given the right to self-determination.

We fully recognize this right for the Macedonian nation...”

The above was published in the Party press, (see Rizospastis, April 26, 1936. History of the Macedonian people, book 3, page 268). The bourgeois propaganda machine did not waste much time before jumping on this and with its loud propaganda campaign, accusing the CPG of committing high treason against the Greek homeland.

But then, when we consider that:

a) Nothing was done to “support the Macedonian nation”. In other words the CPG did nothing before or after Sklavenas's theatrical performance. It did not take any organizational or technical measures to support the Macedonians in a practical manner and help

them, as Sklavenas said, to organize a struggle and fight for their elementary human, civil and national democratic rights.

b) The Zahariadis leadership used Sklavenas and through him masterfully implemented the initiative to organize VMRO (United) in the Greek part of Macedonia so that it could evaporate without leaving any trace.

c) Only about 4 months earlier the same CPG, during its 6<sup>th</sup> Congress, proclaimed that Macedonia and the Macedonian people were part of the Greek homeland, a minority living in the Greek homeland. By making this claim the CPG deprived the Macedonian people of their rights to self-determination. The same CPG, before the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress, had proclaimed that Macedonia was occupied by foreign nations and the Macedonian people were an enslaved nation...

When we take all this into account, one would have to inevitably conclude that what Sklavenas did for the Macedonian people in the Greek parliament was a “pure theatrical performance”, empty words. And yet again in practice nothing was done to aid the Macedonian people.

## **8. Provocation**

It is, however, naïve to think that Sklavenas was just throwing empty words into the wind. The move made by Zahariadis and his top leadership, which included Sklavenas, a member of the CPG Politburo, was not as meaningless and unpredictable as it may have seemed. Given the political reality in Greece and the conditions under which this move was made, it had a certain special sense and weight.

Even before the CPG was fearsome and influential in Greece, the dark reactionary forces, headed by the Gligzburg-Metaxas tandem, saw it as a looming danger and resolutely decided to organize a means to abolish it and all democratic freedoms, and to suppress the democratic development in the country with a coup.

But, as it turned out, the then plutocrats did not have sufficient understanding of the situation and felt that there was need for it. They did not show a willingness to fund this venture by a non-negotiable means. The modern press (especially the Party organs) often wrote and warned the public about the reactionaries preparing for a coup.

Metaxas did his best to convince the capitalists to “give a little now so that they don’t lose everything later...” Being a contemporary, I was fascinated by the idea.

But the capitalists found it difficult to buy into it and part with their money.

Then, at the most convenient time and in the most suitable place, there was that April 25, 1936 debate in the Greek Parliament, during which the patriot Zahariadis, on behalf of the Party, through Sklavenas, declared that the CPG will fight for the recognition of the Macedonian nation and for the self-determination of the Macedonian people in Greece.

And, as I already mentioned earlier, this theatrical performance was not done or intended for the Macedonian people and it did not apply to them. What applied to the Macedonian people was what was already adopted during the CPG 6<sup>th</sup> Congress and that was “minority rights” only.

So, what can we really conclude from Sklavenas’s performance?

Given that it was timed to coincide with the fascist move preparing to organize a counter-revolution, and given the fact that it took place in the Greek parliament, Sklavenas’s performance was done to convince the capitalists to finance the fascist coup. The enormous, intimidating CPG power and influence behind Sklavenas carried a terrible sense and weight in the eyes of the Greek capitalists. They now had a reason to finance the fascist coup... to save capitalist Greece and Macedonia...

## 9. Another opinion

Some people believe Sklavenas's speech was a reflection, or a consequence of the April 1934 Comintern decision regarding the Macedonian national question. If this were true then:

a) Why did the Comintern decision not affect the CPG official line regarding the Macedonian Question? Why did the CPG still remain anti-Macedonian?

b) Why did the Comintern decision not affect any of the CPG's party policies? And by that I mean the policies the CPG practiced in regards to the rights of the Macedonian people? For example, why was VMRO (United) not given its rights to organize a political program, perform political actions, publish and disseminate Macedonian revolutionary information, and so on?

c) Why would the CPG hold onto the Comintern decision made in April 1934, for two whole years and then adopt it in April 1936, just at the time when Sklavenas appeared in the Greek parliament? Why would the Comintern decision have no influence on CPG theory and practice on the Macedonian question for two years and then, suddenly, at a particular moment in time, have influence? Why bring up this issue in the Greek bourgeois parliament instead of giving it up to the CPG Central Committee to handle it? Why did this issue arise precisely at the right time when Metaxas was in need to prove that a coup to establish a dictatorship was necessary?

On top of that we could not ignore the fact that Sklavenas, one of the most popular CPG leaders, the leader of the group of communist MPs in the Greek parliament, was further exploited by the reactionaries in the struggle against communism in Greece, that is, against the CPG. According to Stavridis, when Zahariadis was in jail Sklavenas gave lectures to Greek Asfalia (secret police) agents. He also filed a written report denouncing and condemning the CPG because it was allegedly leading a treacherous anti-national policy.

But this was calculated in order to influence and break the broad Party membership and the middle Party cadres's will to resist and to strengthen the dictatorship. But let's not run ahead of ourselves.



This happened later, after the coup took place on August 4, 1936 and after the Fascist dictatorship was established.

## **10. The May 1936 events in Solun**

Two weeks after Sklavenas appeared in the Greek Parliament, the Zahariadis leadership made a new move in Solun. The great May 1936 demonstrations erupted...

At that time, strikes and demonstrations all throughout Greece were common and frequent. But this particular demonstration in Solun was powerful and quite exceptional. The whole city of about 490,000 people took to the streets. Even the army that was sent to push back the demonstrators joined it. The police was forced to retreat and barricade itself in the police stations (May 8-9, 1936).

It was a terrible moment in time which led to the killing of many protesters by the police, including the murder of a young girl - sister of the Major who led the army.

According to his own accounts, renegade Klefterios Stavridis, former secretary general and CPG deputy in the Greek parliament, in an article published in the newspaper "To Ethnos" said that these demonstrations were deliberately organized so that the "united people and army" would have victory over the police. Metaxas, therefore, masterfully proved that there was need for a "strong hand" regime, and at the same time received a convincing reason to strike against the workers and against the communist movement and pursue widespread purging in Solun and in all of (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

But, regardless of what Stavridis said and regardless of the fact that both the choice of the major and the murder of his sister looked like they were planned, and the way things turned out, the fact remains that:

Solun, the second largest city in Greece, fell into the hands of the rebellious people and the army, and the police, surrounded and barricaded in its own stations, was forced to defend itself.

Stavridis also argued that, while the large demonstrations in Solun were deliberately left to develop until the people united and rose victoriously over the police forces, other major military forces were stationed somewhere outside the city, ready to intervene at a moments notice...

This would have been completely normal, if it were true. But no other military forces intervened. The people's victory was destroyed and turned into a triumph for the reactionary forces in a more efficient and safe way. In other words Zahariadis, the same person who, through the CPG leadership, pushed the masses onto the streets and managed its activities, not only in Solun but everywhere in Greece, also ordered them to stand down and disburse, and handed them over to Metaxas's Asfalia and police...

After that a massive hunt for communists followed and many were captured, even as they slept in their beds. CPG cells and Party organizations in Solun and all over Greek occupied Macedonia were thoroughly cleaned out...

Metaxas's counter-attack, according to Stavridis (and others), was very successful mainly thanks to the infiltrators, like Stavridis himself who managed to occupy a high position in the CPG, but who also worked as an extended arm of the bourgeoisie...

The communist leaders at the demonstrations and at the rebellion received suggestions to retreat and return the people to their houses and workplaces.

A person cannot help but think that if the CPG was not ready and did not intend to take power in Greece then why pursue it? Instead of preventing it, why did it allow it to "take place"? A person cannot help but think that if the CPG did not intend to change its line already adopted during the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress regarding the Macedonian question, then why send Sklavenas to the Greek parliament to declare before everyone that the CPG recognizes the Macedonian nation and will fight for its right to self-determination...?

Shortly after these events, on August 4, 1936, the reactionaries carried out their coup and established their own fascist dictatorship. The funds they required came in abundance.

This was a skillful maneuver worthy of respect... that we can all learn from.

After this, everyone could see how powerful a class enemy the CPG was... with this leadership at its peak. But, in order to strengthen the dictatorial regime, there was a need to destroy the organized revolutionary forces, that is, the CPG. Then, strangely, the CPG top leadership did crumble and from its pieces emerged a rival central leadership which brought disagreements and quarrels into the Party. This the Interior Ministry of the dictatorial regime exploited for its own gains.

This is how the CPG's top leadership organizational pyramid was broken. And with unusually frequent and wide breakthroughs, the base and middle Party cadres were also crushed.

However, soon afterwards, the dictatorial regime itself was broken by Hitler's armies. Greece came under the triple German-Italian-Bulgarian occupation. As a result, several high-ranking CPG officials, somehow, managed to get out of prison. At its CPG Central Committee 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum, held in June 1941, it was concluded that:

“Through bribes..., bad advice and the permeation of fascist agents in the governing bodies, the dictatorship was able to infiltrate and deliver heavy blows on the Party...” Then the Party called on:

“All loyal Party forces, cadres and members, wherever they may be... be they in the so-called ‘Central Committee’ camp or in the ‘Provisional Directorate’ camp, or in any other camp, to leave the various camps and disassociate themselves from all their activities and then come and help clean up and recover the Greek communist movement...” (CPG from 1931 to 1952, p. 103)

## CHAPTER SIX

### 1. Zahariadis and NOF

As soon as Zahariadis returned from Dachau he immediately put himself in charge of the Party as secretary general.

The fierce terror gradually and inevitably forced many of the people's fighters to flee to the mountains and create a revolutionary army - the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG).

And, as I mentioned earlier, the People's Liberation Front (NOF) was created in Macedonia in April 1945, and armed units consisting of veteran Macedonian fighters began to assemble and act on the Vicho, Kaimakchalan and Paiak Mountain massifs.

Given the terrible situation at the time, the main highlight in Greece during this period was DAG's growing power and influence.

In parallel with that, the main hallmark in the situation in Macedonia was NOF's growing power and influence.

But the CPG leadership, led by Zahariadis, was not happy about NOF and reacted.

Two months after NOF was founded, during its CPG Central Committee 12<sup>th</sup> plenum, the CPG proclaimed that: "It is resolutely opposed to any party making any territorial claims against Greece. The preservation of the state territorial integrity is the first task of every Greek patriot..." (CPG 1931-1952, p. 110)

As a person can gather from reading the party newspapers of that time, and as the Zahariadis Politburo later confirmed at its September 12, 1951, meeting, the CPG feared that: "Tito, through NOF, was preparing to annex Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and join it to Yugoslavia..." (CPG 1931-1952, p. 271.) This fear was also made known during the CPG Central Committee 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum, held in October 1949, when Zahariadis and the others spoke about some "war plans and... Tito, against Greek Macedonia..." (Ibid., p. 205) involving NOF and the Macedonian revolutionary movement.

This fear and concern from NOF's growth and importance, whether Zahariadis liked it or not, was a sincere acknowledgment of NOF's value, that is, the value of the Macedonian national liberation movement. Thinking about this, somehow, at this point in time made me think of the following false claims that were made against the Macedonian people:

“Rizospastis”: After the exchange of populations, Macedonia is as Greek as the Athens district of Attica...!

“Komunistiki Epitheorisi”: The Slavo-Macedonian population is non-existent. While the National Council of the “People's Democratic Greece”, born from the struggle of the Greek people, as a newborn, was suffocated by the presidential policy of the Party's top leadership, and, with the Caserta and Varkiza Agreements, was buried, it was claimed that the Macedonian people are only Greek people, as we have seen, proclaimed by the Greek character of Macedonia.

As it turned out these claims were only wishes, that is, a policy of keeping eyes closed before the Macedonian reality.

Zahariadis said that he was in fear looking at the Macedonian national liberation movement growing. This tells us that the policies his Party practiced were hostile to NOF and the Macedonian movement. If Zahariadis and the CPG were in favour of the Macedonian liberation movement they would have been happy and would have had nothing to fear. The CPG was afraid of the Macedonian movement because it felt it would jeopardize Greek interests in Macedonia. By recognizing the fact that the Macedonian people were and are a separate and unique nation... a subjugated nation in the Greek state... which deserved to have democratic rights and the fundamental right to self-determination, and admitting that would have meant that Zahariadis and the CPG would endanger “Greek national interests and the Greek position” in Macedonia. This kind of thinking, obviously, tells us that Zahariadis was looking at the Macedonian national question not from a Macedonian perspective but from a perspective that would only satisfy greater Greek interests in Macedonia. This was the exact same policy

practiced by the Greek bourgeoisie. It then should be no surprise to anyone that the bourgeoisie and the CPG were equally and resolutely against the Macedonian nation and were making every effort to keep the Macedonian people subjugated and in a humiliating and completely disadvantaged position...

## **2. Why it was necessary to have an English presence in Greece**

It was very characteristic of the reactionaries and the Zahariadis leadership in the rise of the new revolutionary movement to have an English presence in Greece. This was confirmed during the CPG Central Committee 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum when it was declared that England was a “great friend” of the Greek people and its presence and “support” in Greece was a necessary factor for securing the “peaceful development of the country”. This is what was actually said:

“The Plenum proclaims that with our presence and with support from our two great friends - England and Russia, our peaceful development depends on the Greek brotherly agreement and democratic cooperation with the northern Balkan democracies...”  
(CPG 1931-1952, p. 111)

Here Russia was mentioned after England. But this was just diplomatic courtesy designed to blur and conceal the truth. Namely, in his opening statement Zahariadis, as I already mentioned, was very specific about the English presence in Greece as being necessary “to ensure our positions and our borders to the north...” (see: Brochure APOFASIS TIS 12 Olomelias, telikos logos Nikos Zahariadis - 12<sup>th</sup> PLENUM DECISION, opening statement and conclusion by Nikos Zahariadis, CPG Central Committee 1946 edition, p. 21. OR: FORTY YEARS OF CPG, p. 645)...

The above was also the exact line the Greek bourgeoisie followed.

In fact just a few months earlier the English army intervened against ELAS which led to ELAS’s desolation and to the disarming of the resistance movement.

As was stated during the CPG Central Committee 12<sup>th</sup> Plenum, England financed the plutocratic neo-fascist orgy of the one-sided civil war against the democratic forces. Having examined a number of facts, this Plenum found that English circles from abroad were responsible for the financing and support of the reactionary forces and terrorist gangs inside Greece who, radically and definitely, in the shortest possible time, within one to two weeks, were trying to improve the internal situation for themselves...!” (12<sup>th</sup> Plenum Resolution, CPG 1931-1952, p. 109.)

Life experience in general proved that an English presence in Greece strengthened the power of the reactionaries, broke up the democratic forces and abolished the democratic rights and freedoms of the common people.

The CPG request to have the “friendly presence and support” of England “a great friend” to Greece, to ensure the Greek position in the Greek northern borders was exactly what the Greek bourgeoisie wanted. And the CPG gave it to them without asking for anything in return. The CPG, as the bourgeoisie often did when faced with difficulties and crises, used the patriotic feelings of the Greek people and tried to distract their attention from internal problems, by waving the familiar and fanciful scare flag of the “Slavic danger” from the north...

### **3. In anticipation of Sofoulis**

The economic chaos and political crisis in Greece widened and deepened as a consequence of the terrorist orgy committed by the “plutocratic neo-fascists” and the people resisting.

The English appointed bourgeois Greek governments kept falling one after another. The first government, Georgios Papandreou’s government in exile in Cairo, which arrived in Athens on October 18, 1944, fell right after two reorganizations, one on October 24 and the other on November 2, 1944.

After being in power for less than two months the newly English appointed government, headed by Nikolaos Plastiras, also fell. It was replaced by a newly formed “administrative government”

headed by a naval officer named Petros Vulgaris. This government too was reorganized on August 11, 1945 and Petros Vulgaris was forced to step down in October 1945.

This government was then headed by the Regent Archbishop Damaskinos but lasted only three weeks.

On November 1, 1945, headed by Georgios Kanelopoulos, a new government was formed which lasted only three months before it too fell. (Naum Peiov, *Macedonians and the Civil War in Greece*, p. 50.)

Obviously the English appointed bourgeoisie governments were not working out and there was a need for a “legal” government to be “elected” but it was imperative that the bourgeoisies win so that they could strengthen their power in Greece. To that end, the English used their trump card and brought the Liberals, headed by Themistoklis Sofoulis, to power.

At this crucial moment, the CPG came out in favour of the Liberals and put its support behind the Sofoulis’s cabinet. According to a November 25, 1945, CPG Politburo announcement: “The entire democratic world consisting of both citizens and those in the armed forces, has a supreme national debt, by all means possible, to prevent the Political Right from taking power. The entire democratic world must pay attention and follow the directives issued by Sofoulis...!” (Komunistiki Epiteorisi, No. 12. 1945.)

With the CPG and EAM’s support, this cabinet was put in office when it was most needed and because it was generally supported by “all sides”, unlike previous bourgeois governments, it was able to allow the bourgeoisie to forge the March 31, 1946 elections.

The abstention from the elections, which the CPG and EAM had caused, held back a large number of voters outside of the electoral struggle and thus prevented any undesirable outcome for the bourgeoisie, ensuring an objective victory.

Understandably, the “electoral victory” granted by the CPG to the monarchists of the populist party, “legalized” the way for the



restoration of the monarchy and opened the door for the counterrevolution in Greece to consolidate its power...

#### **4. With England, not against England**

In the meantime, during the CPG Central Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum, held in February, 1946, Zahariadis called on EAM to “urgently take all organizational and technical measures to acquire weapons. The state of unilateral war and the criminality of the plutocratic neo-fascists perpetrated against the people, from today forward, must not be tolerated. We need to respond to our enemies with the same fierce means, decisively and victoriously.” (CPG 1931-1952, p. 146.)

But there was more... So as not to lag far behind the events and, above all, to not call to arms against the English, the chief organizers and financiers of this “unilateral war” against the people, the EAM was urged to acquire weapons but not use them or “upset relations with England... And to do it without pleading, because that was not in harmony with our national dignity...!” (Ibid., p. 146.)

By doing this Zahariadis’s top leadership did everything in its power to prevent the new uprising that was building up, unremittingly, from being directed against “England”, our “great friend”, and orient it towards “cooperating” with England...

#### **5. A crucial unbridled moment was missed**

However, England seemed to be working against itself when it forced a unilateral war against the country’s still huge democratic forces, attacking a strong opponent which naturally counteracted with strong resistance.

This brutal English sponsored assault gradually led to strong and frequent counterattacks from the democratic forces (DAG) all across Greece. In April 1947, the Greek royal general staff was forced to issue orders to withdraw all royal garrisons and gendarmes from the field and station them in the cities.

And as morale was declining in the bourgeoisie forces it was rising in the general population and the DAG fighters.

In the period that followed there was a strong influx of fighters joining DAG and a strong swing towards an armed uprising. Slowly, but inevitably, the crisis in the bourgeois camps kept rising and reached its peak in August 1947 when it was left without a government and a civil war looming. The English were unable not find a suitable person who could form a new government.

With the general strikes, the demonstrations and the street fighting going on, the CPG could have paralyzed its opponent, at least in the cities.

A strong revolutionary military force could have easily been created with a wide mobilization and the revolutionary forces could have achieved supremacy over their opponent and could have restored peace and democratic development in the country.

But the CPG chose not to do any of those things, not even to coordinate the general strikes and demonstrations when the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) began its general offensive.

The CPG also abstained from conducting broad mobilization to turn DAG from a small rebel army into a major revolutionary army.

The Zahariadis leadership did nothing and took no measure against its opponent at this critical and decisive juncture. It failed to resolve the crisis and it failed to lead the people while resisting. The CPG allowed this crucial decisive moment to pass it by and did nothing...

## **6. Was the armed struggle a bluff?!**

Let us have a look at some of the remarks made about this:

General Markos: “The period from March 31, 1946 (the day the elections were forged) to September 1947 was the most suitable time to bolster the armed uprising and even take power... It seemed like almost all throughout 1946, the CPG leadership showed apathy to the drama committed against ordinary CPG members and former

fighters of ELAS. Even during the first months in 1947, when CPG activists from field committees raised the issue of seizing power in the country, Zahariadis's position was: 'We are not going to take power for now, we will see, perhaps in 1948...'

During this time the CPG leadership insisted that the primary tasks of the Party were to solve economic problems and bring reconciliation. The CPG forbade ELAS fighters from joining the partisans, and those who insisted on doing it, because of the unbearable terror perpetrated against them by the monarchists, were labeled cowards, suspicious characters and provocateurs. It was during this period that all conditions were perfect for recruiting fighters into DAG and DAG could have easily grown into an army of over 60,000..." (Markos's discussion regarding what was said at the CPG Central Committee 7<sup>th</sup> Plenum held in April 1957. See: Neos Cosmos, number 4-5 (April-May), 1957. Hristo Andonovski, "The Truth about Aegean Macedonia", Mislra 1971 edition, p. 226.)

Politburo member Leonidas Stringos: "If during 1946-1947 our Party opted for an armed struggle, it would have resolved the reserve issue successfully and well-timed, one of the most important issues, and with a single skillful manipulation of things and a firm mobilization policy, we could have increased DAG's military effectiveness... But then, Zahariadis told us that we don't need a force of more than 2,000 fighters in Macedonia..." (Stringos's discussion regarding what was said at the CPG Central Committee 7<sup>th</sup> Plenum held in April 1957. See: Neos Cosmos, number 4-5 (April-May), 1957. Hristo Andonovski, "The Truth about Aegean Macedonia", Mislra 1971 edition, p. 226.)

CPG Central Committee member for Macedonia and Thrace Panaiotis Mavromatis: "Here I would like to point out the fact that, after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum (held in February 1946), we received instructions from the Politburo to study the situation in Macedonia in order to see how much time and what kind of force we can mobilize. However, when the Provincial Bureau informed Zahariadis that we can mobilize 20-25,000 fighters within a month, he told us to stop, because he regarded the armed struggle as... a bluff..." (Mavromatis's discussion regarding what was said at the CPG Central Committee 7<sup>th</sup> Plenum held in April 1957. See: Neos

Cosmos, number 4-5 (April-May), 1957. Hristo Andonovski, “The Truth about Aegean Macedonia”, Mislja 1971 edition, p. 197.)

## **7. Destruction of the Macedonian battalions**

By doing nothing to aid the revolution in Greece, the CPG in effect gave its opponent the time and opportunity it needed to overcome its crisis. But it was more than that. The Zahariadis leadership also actively helped its opponent. Namely, the Zahariadis leadership ordered the “Slavophone” Macedonian battalions to go into Greece where they were exposed to the Greek population which was unaware that Macedonians existed in Greece. To the uninformed Greeks the appearance of the Macedonians with their speech, songs and dances, was a provocation and their thinking was that the CPG was receiving military assistance from its northern neighbours in exchange for giving (Greek occupied) Macedonia away. The uninformed Greek people quickly responded with defiance against the CPG. This was a blow to the Macedonian people and the CPG which only aided its opponent.

I should also mention at this point that in February 1946, the following was said during the CPG 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum: “In order to conceal their real plans and to deceive and divide the people, the Monarcho-Fascist reactionaries, together with the united plutocracy and their foreign leaders, constantly and relentlessly cultivated and spread slander against the CPG. They claimed that the CPG supposedly wanted autonomy for Macedonia, that is, it wanted to give Macedonia to foreigners... At the same time the reactionaries panicked the people by constantly pointing out that Pan-Slavism was a mortal danger to Hellenism...” (CPG 1931-1952, p. 149)

Even the villagers in central and southern Greece, who had heard that other people, Macedonians who spoke a Slavic language, lived in the Greek state, were against the Macedonians and not only used slanderous comments when referring to them but ran away when the Macedonians came to their villages. They treated the Macedonian units like they were units of their “eternal enemies” the Bulgarians, or members of some foreign “international brigade”.

Naturally, anyone who knew even the slightest thing about the situation in Greece could have easily predicted this was going to happen. The CPG should have known that this was going to happen, yet it sent the Macedonian battalions into the Greek south. Ironically, the reason the CPG sent the Macedonian battalions south into Greece, as was explained to us, was to intensify the popular revolution there. This, unfortunately, was not possible even in the best of circumstances. This would have been an impossible task for the Macedonian units to accomplish and the CPG was well aware of that...

But, by doing this, both the CPG and DAG were compromised to the extent that massive masses of uninformed people, who were DAG, EAM, and CPG supporters, in fury or in panic, depending on the conditions, fled to the cities and to enemy camps turning from reserves for the revolution into reserves for the counterrevolution. Because of this, DAG 8<sup>th</sup> Division command in Epirus went as far as ordering the Macedonian soldiers to stop speaking and singing in Macedonian and present themselves, not as Macedonians, but as Greeks.

By doing this the top Zahariadis leadership also weakened the revolutionary movement in Macedonia and demoralized the Macedonian people. The withdrawal of the Macedonian battalions from (Greek occupied) Macedonia took away the direct influence they had on the Macedonian people with their presence and activities. While in the Greek south, the Macedonian battalions were exposed to fighting uneven battles with the numerically superior and modern armed Royal Army which slowly and successfully “wasted” them like they were an organized military force.

It is a fact that the top Zahariadis leadership was successful in destroying more Macedonian young people than the bourgeois government in Athens ever did. It was monstrous.

This was an unconditionally huge and real help for the opponent...

## 8. A different evaluation

There was a meeting held in Skopje some time ago attended first by the former Party Secretary of ELAS 30<sup>th</sup> regiment and later by Atanasios Mitsiopoulos-Stavros from DAG Kaimakchalan headquarters. After I informed them of my assessment of events, the latter said:

“That’s right... The Macedonian units were sent down to the Greek south... Away from the dangerous events taking place in Macedonia... so that they could be destroyed... that’s it...” but did not finish what he wanted to say.

What I understood from this is that he wanted to say he did not know about this at the time or it was not this way at all.

There is also another opinion: Some people believe that DAG General Headquarters predicted its opponent’s moves against the partisans associated with the 1947 spring offensive. DAG General Headquarters anticipated that the opponent would push the partisans to Greece’s northern borders and force them to move to the neighbouring popular democracy countries. If the opponent did this, at least in part, the Athens government would have “reasons” to justify to the world and to the Greek public why it would be impossible to liquidate the partisan movement. How could partisans be liquidated if they were fleeing to the neighbouring countries where, besides seeking asylum, they would reorganize, arm themselves and return to the Greek territory to fight? DAG General Headquarters understood Athens’s intentions and, in order to deprive Athens of its coveted “reasons”, in early February 1947, ordered the battalions to relocate to the south of Greece. All battalions stationed in the Paiak, Kaimakchalan, Karakamen and Vicho Mountain Regions were ordered to go to Thessaly and move south into Greece proper. On top of that, this move to the south also had other aims according to DAG General Headquarters, it was made to bolster the guerrilla movement in southern Greece, which at that time was lagging behind the one in Macedonia. However, none of these operations were explained to the Macedonian fighters or to the Macedonian population in the Paiak, Kaimakchalan, Karakamen and Vicho Mountain Regions and left the people to wonder and,

given past Greek intentions against the Macedonians, to fear for the worst. But looking at the timing of this, the orders to move the Macedonian battalions south into Greece were issued just after the Macedonian and Greek partisan units were unified. Moreover, once these units arrived in Greece proper, the Macedonian leaders were immediately replaced with Greek leaders, which caused bitterness among the Macedonian fighters. Some of the fighters who openly manifested their disagreement were shot, as was the case with Giorgi Milev from the village of Tsakoni, Meglen Region. Some of the DAG fighters and officers who could not bear the humiliation deserted, as was the case with Major Adramanov from the village Pateli, Lerin Region. Adramanov was a DAG major and served in Kaimakchalan. He deserted in April 1947 while serving in Thessaly and surrendered to the regular units.

I decided to “expose” this opinion, about which Hristo Andonovski had written on page 219 in his book “The Truth about Aegean Macedonia” Mislra edition, 1971, because many Macedonians, including NOF activists, believe it to be the truth. But, I can assure you that there is a lot more to it and the historical truth is surely different.

This unfounded opinion, above all, ignores some basic results that were achieved by the Macedonian battalion move to the Greek south, such as:

a) After they entered purely Greek territory in the south of Greece, the Macedonian battalions ceased to exist as an organized military force and the Macedonian national liberation movement lost its armed forces, that is, it was disarmed. Afterwards NOF no longer had any such units within DAG, even though thousands and thousands of new Macedonian fighters were, according to NOF’s directives, recruited into DAG’s ranks. The Macedonians continued to fight as DAG units and much blood was shed, but... for foreign affirmation. It is true that the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade, formed later, consisted of only Macedonian units, but this was another of Zahariadis’s maneuvers to fool the Macedonian people and to calm down the spirit of the Macedonian fighters. Even though it consisted of Macedonian units, the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade was not led by Macedonians.

Zahariadis made sure its leaders were carefully chosen and consisted of anti-NOF and anti-Macedonian elements.

b) The presence and activities of the Macedonian battalions in Macedonia bolstered the Macedonian people's armed struggle. Each battalion served and acted in the region where it originated. It had a revolutionary centre in which much of the youth from that region gravitated. When the Macedonian battalions were removed, the revolutionary centres, where much of the mobilization of Macedonian youth took place, were liquidated.

Moving the Macedonian battalions out of Macedonia essentially resulted in the suppression of the Macedonian revolutionary struggle. This was done in the spirit of Zahariadis's directive to the Provincial Bureau: "There will not be more than two thousand fighters in Macedonia..." (Taken from the discussion regarding what was said at the CPG Central Committee 7<sup>th</sup> Plenum held in April 1957. See: Neos Cosmos, number 4-5 (April-May), 1957. Hristo Andonovski, "The Truth about Aegean Macedonia", Mislja 1971 edition, p. 196.)

c) Naturally there were also other significant consequences such as:

- The terrible compromises made by the CPG and DAG.
- The massive defection of villagers from the villages to the cities and to the camps of the opponent.
- The utter perplexity of orders given demanding that Macedonians not speak and sing in their own language and present themselves as Greeks... These are well-known things... and no one should keep silent about them.

Above all, it is wrong to think that:

a) The move of Macedonian battalions, as the main strike force, south into purely Greek territory was made to "bolster the partisan movement".

According to P. Mavromatis, when in 1946, the Provincial Bureau informed Zahariadis that 20-25 thousand partisan fighters could be recruited in Macedonia within a month, the Bureau was ordered "to stop, because the armed struggle was conceived as only a bluff, as a



fake tactical maneuver for political needs, that is, to achieve political goals...” (Taken from the discussion regarding what was said at the CPG Central Committee 7<sup>th</sup> Plenum held in April 1957. See: Neos Cosmos, number 4-5 (April-May), 1957. Hristo Andonovski, “The Truth about Aegean Macedonia”, Mislra 1971 edition, p. 198.)

The suppression of the Macedonian people’s revolutionary struggle and the liquidation of the Macedonian battalion in the 1947 spring and summer were obviously measures that were executed in the spirit of Zahariadis’s policy. There is nothing wrong with using a bluff to prevent an armed struggle from becoming a tactical reality. It is a basic tool in politics. But when we take into account what was done in Macedonia, that is, taking measures that were not feasible, it becomes clear why the battalions were sent south to purely Greek territory.

If Zahariadis and the CPG truly wanted to “bolster the partisan movement” in Greece, they would have acted accordingly. Namely, they would have sent Greek units to implement their plans, and not Macedonian units to give the impression that they were “foreign” units. They would have left the Macedonian battalions to continue with their work in (Greek occupied) Macedonia, that is, to spread and strengthen the armed struggle in (Greek occupied) Macedonia.

The most basic and significant results DAG achieved by sending the Macedonian battalions south into Greece was to have them disarm and have the Macedonian revolutionary movement deprived of NOF and its elite fighters. Of course, this did not happen by accident. It was carefully planned and systematically implemented. That was DAG’s main goal for sending the Macedonian battalions south.

It is also wrong to think that:

b) All these “operations” were performed without preparing the Macedonian fighters and the Macedonian population so that “it would have negative thoughts regarding DAG and the CPG leadership’s intentions in relation to the Macedonians...”

Things, however, were a bit different. Preparations were carried out in Macedonia with the participation of several Macedonian NOF

main and regional leaders. But these Macedonian leaders were quickly replaced with Greeks the moment the battalions arrived on a purely Greek terrain.

There were also those Macedonians who were shot and killed for publicly daring to oppose the removal of the Macedonian leaders. I already mentioned Giorgi Milev as an example of this. Giorgi was a good acquaintance and a neighbour of Hristo Andonovski. These people were killed to prevent the Macedonians from finding out the real Greek intentions, but no prior “preparation” could stop them from finding out the criminality and treacherous character of these measures, as well as the purpose for which they were taken south into Greece.

c) DAG General Headquarters ordering the battalions to go south into Greece, far from the northern border, just to rob the Athens government of its “excuse”, mentioned earlier, was also hard to believe.

It is hard to believe because everywhere in the world where partisans struggled and fought they were often squeezed into a ring against a larger opponent, but they always knew how to break into its opponent’s head and come out winners. In 1948 our partisans were pressed against a border in Malimadi, above Kostur, by an opponent ten times larger but did not see it necessary to end the battle and flee across the border. They fought back and defeated their opponent. Another instance of this took place in 1949, and then too the partisans did not see it necessary to flee across the border even though they were pinned down and endured heavy blows from the opponent’s military machine until they were crushed. Only after they were defeated did the survivors retreat across the border and end the battle. They were then disarmed and disbanded. All this proves that in this battle DAG was inferior to the government army. There was also no evidence of Greece’s neighbours interfering in Greece’s affairs, as the Athens government often claimed.

So, this could not have been the only reason why the Macedonian battalions were ordered to go south. All the events and situations mentioned earlier are interconnected and finding out how they are

interconnected will lead us to the right answer. So, as far as we are concerned, things are not always what they seem...

Let us go back and revisit the main events.

## **9. Markos's removal**

Things were not going as expected and time seemed to work against the bourgeoisie and the English in Greece. Namely, economic and political instability was chronic despite the help Greece received from England, and the people's resistance and DAG were getting stronger and more dangerous by the day.

Zahariadis and his top CPG leaders did the best they could and, during the CPG Central Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenum, held in September 1947, offered the following: "The stronger, more decisive and victorious the people and DAG will be in the struggle against the foreign occupiers and their domestic servants, the more certainly they will be forced to agree on a democratic solution to the Greek question, as EAM proposes..." (CPG 1931-1952, p. 167.)

We need to acknowledge here that this verbal acrobatics was masterfully performed. Instead of forcibly taking power from the bourgeoisie and the English in Greece while he could, Zahariadis basically left it to them to make the final decision by giving them another chance to strengthen the counter-revolution. He basically said we will struggle "not against England, but with England... to solve the Greek problems by forcing England to consent..."

So, once again, we hear Zahariadis say: "Don't fight against England, Greece's 'good friend'..."

In other words, instead of removing the Greek bourgeoisie and its patrons from power when the time was ripe and the situation had matured, Zahariadis and his top CPG leaders crowned the bourgeoisie and "foreign occupiers" by giving them responsibility in the basic conflict between the Greek bourgeoisie, headed by the monarchists and their Anglo-American patrons, on the one hand, and by the people's democratic masses, headed by the CPG, on the other.

Again, instead of jumping at the chance of bringing victory to the people, Zahariadis and his top CPG leaders decided to remove Markos from his command, especially when DAG was proving to be victorious. Namely, Zahariadis removed General Markos from his position as supreme commander of the Democratic Army of Greece (DAG). The reason for this was because Markos was in favour of partisan warfare. Partisan warfare at the time was most suitable for a small rebel army such as DAG, which was able to achieve success against even a superior, modern-armed power. DAG units were everywhere and nowhere at all times and very difficult to pin down. They had initiative and the ability to deliver surprise attacks very quickly. With their favourable attitude, unexpected and rapid concentrations, the partisans were capable of attacking an opponent ten times larger and still bring tactical victories.

This is how the People's Revolution in Yugoslavia and China were won.

Had Zahariadis coordinated DAG's growth and fighting style with the general strikes, demonstrations and street fighting in the cities, he would inevitably have brought down the reactionaries. The will of the people to fight was there but the CPG did not take advantage of it... it looked the other way.

After removing Markos from his command, Zahariadis ended DAG's guerrilla style warfare and pinned DAG's main forces down to fight frontal and positional warfare.

This, naturally, was the beginning of the end for the uprising and DAG...

## **10. DAG's destruction**

General Markos: "DAG could not be turned into a regular army through giving speeches and writing articles about it or by simply desiring it to be a 'regular army'. Zahariadis's idea of turning a hit and run rebel army into a frontal attack army not only put DAG into a stationary defensive position but also created a terrible danger for its very existence and the existence of the democratic armed

movement in general...” (Neos Cosmos, No. 4-5 (April-May) 1957, p. 60.) Markos was absolutely right because at all times the opponent knew exactly where DAG’s basic forces were and always had the initiative and ability to attack them. The lightly armed rebel army was now faced with defending itself against a ten times larger opponent heavily armed with modern arms, aviation, heavy artillery and tanks.

Shortly after DAG was defeated, one of the generals from the opposition said the following: “The good God of Greece (meaning the bourgeoisie) wanted Zahariadis to win over Markos...! Otherwise today Greece (meaning the bourgeoisie in Greece) would not exist!”

That is correct. It is not difficult to recognize the many known dark, earthly forces hiding behind the good God of the bourgeoisie. There was a very strong smell behind all this and it smelled of the Intelligence Service and the CIA...

How did DAG’s defeat come about? The decisive blow delivered against DAG was carefully planned and prepared for a long time both on a military and a psychological basis. After holding its meeting on January 15, 1948, the military counsel sent Stefanos Giouzelis, a member of the CPG Central Committee, to implement Zahariadis’s line in the Peloponnesus. At that time, DAG controlled two thirds of the territory in the Peloponnesus that included 1,200 villages and smaller towns such as Kalavrita and others. DAG achieved this success because of its tactics, about which Nikos Beloianis, one of its commanders and national Greek heroes, wrote: “The tactics based on continuous movement, maneuvers and unexpected attacks were nicely adapted to the local conditions and peculiarities. Instead of concentrating in one place where the opponent could encircle them, the partisans were constantly on the move, suddenly appearing in various regions occupied by the enemy, inflicting losses on them and forcing them to run...” (Demokratikos Stratos, number 6, 1948, eg 200, Kiriakidis, cited work, p. 288.)

With its hit and run tactics, DAG’s main task was to keep the enemy forces in the Peloponnesus busy and where they could be constantly

attacked and wasted. DAG was very successful in doing this. Obviously, the situation DAG was in, both militarily and psychologically, was a major advantage for it and prevented the enemy from delivering a decisive blow against it, especially in Vicho and Gramos where its major forces were located. The Peloponnesus was a real psychological second front for the opponent.

Upon his arrival, Stefanos Giouzelis, immediately united the smaller separate partisan units into brigades and assigned them the task of liberating a number of cities.

This led to the concentration of DAG fighters in several places which gave the opponent the opportunity to surround them and, with its much larger forces, slowly but surely destroy them... (Kiriakidis). This took place after the heroic month-long resistance in June 1949.

There was also the February 1948 incident. The plan here was to destroy a column of over 1,000 fighters which had both military and psychological significance. About 1,600 newly recruited DAG fighters were dispatched unarmed from Rumeli to Gramos. They were to be armed upon their arrival in Gramos and then engage in the fighting against the government forces. The column was dispatched from Rumeli on February 18, 1948 without enough provisions to last the trip. The trek led the fighters along a difficult terrain and over almost impassable mountains coated with half a metre of thick snow. They arrived exhausted and starving in Pieria in mid-March where they were welcomed by the 16<sup>th</sup> brigade, which had traveled by a different but equally difficult passage around Grevena to get there. The 16<sup>th</sup> Brigade was initially tasked with initiating an offensive near Solun to distract the enemy but later received new orders to join the column of new fighters and go back to Gramos. To stave off starvation the Brigade redistributed its food supplies and supplied the unarmed fighters. The two columns left Pieria during the night on March 15, 1948 and headed for Gramos. But, as it turned out, the enemy was aware of this plan and knew what path the columns were going to take and greeted them with an ambush while they were still in Pieria.

The partisans ran back to Pieria, regrouped at the peak of Mount Pente Pirgi (1770 m above sea level) and at the adjacent heights and organized a defensive position. However, being short of food and ammunition they could not hold out for long and the number of wounded and frozen grew from day to day.

About six days later, during the night of March 21, 1948, the 16<sup>th</sup> brigade, which now included the unarmed fighters, decided to run. The fighters hid the two mountain cannons and a set of heavy machine guns and set off along the Pieria main cliff. The road was frozen and covered with a layer of snow a metre deep. They eventually reached the peaks of Mounts Arvanitis (1,995m) and Flamburo (2,199m), and with all their might descended down on the enemy and broke the ring. But they still had to make their way to safety which exposed them to enemy tanks and aerial attacks. Finally, during the night, they managed to cross the Solun-Larisa highway and arrived in Amarbey. But as soon as they thought they had escaped they were attacked again. The enemy caught up to them and, on March 25, 1948, attacked them again near the village Sina Kerasia. At this point the brigade was running out of ammunition and would have been decimated if it were not for Ipsilantis's Brigade which arrived just in time to rescue it. The whole incident was a real drama.

I should point out at this point that during the 38 days of marching most of the losses the unarmed column sustained were not due to the enemy attacks but rather due to hunger and cold which, in my opinion, was due to the treacherous activities to which these unarmed DAG fighters were intentionally exposed... (Demokratikos Stratos, number 4, 1948, pages 137-138. Kiriakidis, quoted work, p. 291.)

Another thing that I need to mention here is the loss of the partisan light artillery which in DAG's hands was very effective and devastating against the enemy in the hills.

On December 24, 1948, DAG's artillery was ordered to assemble somewhere near Solun and bombard targets inside the city where there were large concentrations of enemy units. But just as the attack began the enemy units disbursed and were on the move. But even

though the targets were gone the partisan artillery was not allowed to retreat and, according to its orders, continued with its bombardment. This, according to Kiriakidis (p. 327 of his cited work) continued well into the next day, December 25, 1948, until the enemy units surrounded the artillery and seized all cannons and artillery pieces.

DAG was hard hit by this both militarily and psychologically, especially psychologically...

There was also the battle for the city Lerin, which had been intentionally and openly prepared for a long time.

Everyone talked about it; fighters and civilians. Even the enemy was well-aware of it and the details of the planned attacks. The DAG attacks were anticipated and wherever they came from they were welcomed with well-prepared counter-attacks and ambushes.

The enemy commanders knew everything... all the details. According to the accounts of a Vlach from Lerin, now my relative: “exactly that evening of that February night in 1948, our unit was informed that the partisans would be attacking from there, from there and from there... Many partisans were killed. We recognized many of the women fighters; they were from the Prespa villages...” At the time the Vlach was mobilized in the reserves by the enemy as a non-commissioned officer. Later he married a Macedonian, a relative of my wife’s. I learned more about the battle for Lerin from him when he and his wife came to visit us in Skopje on their way back to Greece from Germany.

Here is what Hristo Andonovski had to say: “All NOF cadres were mobilized into DAG in 1948. Even the wives of the Macedonian fighters in the liberated territory of Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia were forcibly mobilized into DAG. Children, ages 14 and 15, evacuated to the people’s republics, were mobilized and returned to fight at the fronts... It was a criminal act directed against the Macedonian people to force children to fight against the fully trained battle seasoned Monarcho-fascist soldiers from a regular army, or to force the wives of the Macedonian fighters, who have been in the ranks of DAG for many years, to abandon their



homes...” (Hristo Andonovski, The truth about Aegean Macedonia, p. 237.)

But that’s how it was and Andonovski is certainly correct to point it out.

It was amazing how the Macedonians fought and under the most difficult conditions. Even when they felt completely hopeless they did not surrender and fought on to their last breath!

Those of us Macedonians who served with the Greeks had the opportunity to hear this comment from many of our Greek comrades and from DAG’s command structure. This tenacious kind of Macedonian style fighting was what worried the opponent the most and something had to be done. The Macedonian morale had to be broken and, according to the logic of things, the battle for Lerin was the way to do it. The result: a huge number of Macedonian young people, girls and boys, were massacred to prove how “dreaded” the power of the opponent was. It was necessary to do this in order to sow fear and hopelessness in the ranks of the Macedonian people and to break their will to fight. Because, as was well-known, the Macedonian people were DAG’s basis here in the north. They not only composed the bulk of its fighters but also supported DAG in every respect...

## **11. Breaking the CPG**

As the British were materially exhausted and weak from fighting in the liberation war (WW II) they decided to pass their responsibility to the Americans in Greece. In the course of 1948 the Americans replaced the British and began to prepare the Greek imperialist and Monarcho-fascist armed forces to include an army, national guard, gendarmerie, MAI, and so on, consisting of over 300,000 armed personnel. These forces were trained by the best means and armed and equipped with the best and most modern weapons and military equipment the US military could provide. At the same time, to reduce DAG’s ability to recruit new fighters, over 700,000 villagers were evacuated from their villages and moved to fortified cities where they were then used as reserves for the Monarcho-fascists.

(See CPG Central Committee 5<sup>th</sup> Plenum Resolution, from January 30-31, 1949, also see CPG 1931-1952, page 181.)

This was the reality DAG was about to face with only about 40,000 lightly armed personnel, armed with enough infantry weapons but without any heavy artillery, tanks or aircraft. The only advantage DAG had was that its forces were mobile and located in the mountains where they were difficult to reach.

But even with this ratio of forces, the opponent could still not uproot DAG because of its mobility and surprise hit and run tactics. Even if the opponent captured a position it could not completely defend it and DAG would eventually re-capture it. But, thanks to the bourgeoisie “good god”, DAG was ordered to stay still and fight at a front. With DAG’s mobile ability removed it was no longer hit-and-miss fighting for the opponent. Knowing where DAG’s forces were at all times the opponent was now given the advantage of attacking stationary targets and bombing the partisans exactly where they stood. The result was devastating for DAG...

By mid-1949, the opponent had crushed the DAG units stationed in the Peloponnesus, Rumeli and Thessaly and had concentrated its forces in preparation for attacking Macedonia, Epirus and Thrace. Then, with just a few days of heavy fighting, DAG’s units were crushed and thrown out from their defensive positions in Paiak and Kaimakchalan. After this the opponent concentrated all its forces in preparation for attacking DAG’s two main strongholds, Vicho and Gramos.

While all this was going on, Zahariadis was throwing dust in the air attempting to blur and conceal the true situation taking place on the ground. In an article entitled “In a decisive super-strain”, among other things, he wrote:

“Big battles are coming close to Vicho. If the Monarcho-fascists do not openly recognize their bankruptcy, then they will be forced to make their big offensive stand on Vicho. Otherwise they will lose. They will lose the war – they will lose the peace. The moment they want to show themselves as omnipotent and as winners, they will have to admit that they are incapable of dealing with DAG at Vicho.

They are forced to come to Vicho because they are pressured by their political, military, and moral inevitable need. Therefore, whether they want to or not they will have to drink from the bitter cup called Vicho...!" ("Pros ti niki", organ of DAG, June 10, 1949. Naum Peiov, Macedonians and the Civil War in Greece, p. 90.)

Later on in another article entitled "The enemy will not set foot on Vicho!" Zahariadis exclaimed demagogically:

"Our slogan is: 'The enemy will not set foot on Vicho! We will break his wings at Vicho. We will bring a decisive victory at Vicho in 1949!'..." ("Pros ti niki", July 6, 1949. Naum Peiov, Macedonians and the Civil War in Greece, p. 91.)

Unfortunately, during August 1949, only after several days of heavy fighting at Vicho then at Gramos, all DAG units were crushed and thrown out of their positions. Their main forces were ordered to flee across the Greek border ending the armed struggle.

But it was not until 1956, during the CPG Central Committee 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum held in March of that year, that finally Zahariadis's policy was condemned as a policy that undermined DAG's victory. Unfortunately only Zahariadis was blamed for this. His associates who were also Siantos's former associates and who also accepted ELAS's liquidation, now accepted DAG's liquidation but refused to accept responsibility for it. Zahariadis's associates who dominated this Plenum and made all the decisions were now claiming that they were working under a conductive wand and Zahariadis was the only one waving it. The same excuse was used earlier when ELAS was eliminated and only Siantos was blamed for it. However, they themselves remained on the governing edge of the Party, and now were crying foul about DAG's devastation. They refused to accept responsibility for delivering DAG to the Anglo-American military machine to destroy it as they refused to accept responsibility for ELAS being liquidated.

But, as it turned out, even though DAG was eliminated the democratic movement among the broad masses was not broken. Party organizations that acted (albeit illegally) were not crushed. The reactionaries and its foreign patrons soon realized that their

“bourgeois democracy” would not be able to survive for too long. So they had to take more extreme measures. In other words they had to abolish the bourgeois democracy and resolutely attack and break the popular democratic movement.

This was done once before, in 1936, when the August 4, 1936 bourgeois dictatorship was introduced in order for the fascists to consolidate their power and break the CPG, the avant-garde of the People’s democratic and revolutionary movement.

It worked then and it should work now - the CPG must be inevitably broken. And, however unlikely and unacceptable this may seem, here we have witnessed history repeating itself:

The Party leadership soon began to fall apart and the CPG broke up into rival camps. Intolerance and hatred prevailed with frequent quarrels and physical fights. There was chaos in the Communist movement and most revolutionary activities were neglected or omitted completely.

By mid-1960 the ground was cleared and a reactionary offensive was ensured with the creation of the military dictatorship of the colonels, established on April 21, 1967.

To this day the work that was done to achieve this is still a secret. The reactionary camp generally does not keep such secrets and publicly points out its military victory over DAG calling it a great success, but it was an even greater success that they managed to break the Communist Party of Greece...

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 1. A provocative stand

At this point it is important to review how the Macedonian people were seen by the CPG in the period after Zahariadis returned to Greece.

Let us point out that during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum, held in February 1946, Zahariadis proclaimed that the Macedonian people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia were treated like an incomplete “Slavophone national mass living in Greek Macedonia in the landscapes of the Greek state” which, in EAM and CPG circles, were publicly referred to as being Greeks with a “diminished national feeling” or, simply, as “Slavophone Greeks”. (CPG 1931-1952, p. 149.)

So, from being an enslaved nation with the right to self-determination, as the Macedonian people in Aegean Macedonia were recognized by the CPG during its 3<sup>rd</sup> CPG Extraordinary Congress in 1924, they were simply reduced to an incomplete Slavophone national mass living on Greek lands. (CPG, official documents, vol. 1, p. 517.) Also, as I mentioned before, the CPG while headed by Zahariadis in 1935 proclaimed that the Macedonian people were a “national minority in the Greek homeland.” (CPG 1931-1952, p. 74.) And now, again under Zahariadis’s leadership, the CPG treated the Macedonian people as if they were a nationally “unformed mass” without a national conscience and without aspirations.

This is how the Greek bourgeoisie treated the Macedonian people since the Greeks occupied Macedonia in 1912 and now this is how the CPG is treating them. There is no difference in their policies when it comes to the Macedonian people.

This has always been the Greek stand, provocative and full of wrath and fury.

This is why the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia were denied their recognition, rights, national freedom

and statehood. Unlike those Macedonians living in the Yugoslav part of Macedonia who achieved all that.

The Macedonian people never expected this from the CPG and had high hopes that finally their age-long dreams and aspirations would be fulfilled. That is why every Macedonian, from the youngest to the oldest, became organized in NOF and persistently strived to win the CPG's recognition and approval to struggle in order to get out of the humiliating position of being completely oppressed and a subjugated people.

Unfortunately, in practical terms, the CPG did not want freedom for the Macedonian people. All it wanted to do was continue with the previous hostile Greek policies to keep the Macedonian people down and in essence to rob them of their rights. In practical terms, the CPG implemented policies that were against the Macedonian national liberation movement, and indirectly against Macedonian national ideals and interests.

## **2. Trojan horse tactics**

But despite all that, and the extreme conditions they were put under, the Macedonian people continued to build their revolutionary struggle in Greece. NOF's military and political power continued to grow despite the persecution it received from the Athens governments and the hostilities from the CPG. It soon became clear to everyone that the Macedonian national liberation movement could not be destroyed by open frontal attacks such as those utilized to date.

Zahariadis was forced to use different tactics.

Using the Macedonian people's natural aspirations Zahariadis decided to offer the Macedonian people a partnership, which was to be led by the Macedonian Communists, to join the Greek people's revolutionary struggle. The first act was to join forces, and by doing this Zahariadis declaratively recognized NOF. Unfortunately this was not Zahariadis's true intention. His true intention was to infiltrate the NOF fortress, like some kind of Trojan horse, and

destroy it from within by taking it over and by taking over its military forces.

This took place on November 21, 1946.

After a few preliminary meetings between CPG and NOF representatives, it was decided that a meeting should be held between the NOF leadership, the CPG and DAG. After the meeting was held in the village Turie, Lerin Region with NOF's immediate leadership on one side and Skotidas representing the CPG and DAG on the other, it was decided that NOF should merge with the CPG and its battalions stationed in Paiak, Kaimakchalan and Vicho should merge with DAG. But, as it turned out, NOF was subordinated to the CPG and the Macedonian battalions were placed under DAG's command.

It was also decided to make some changes to NOF's leadership. It was decided to reduce the number of members in the NOF executive council from five to three. The three member executive council now consisted of Mihailo Keramidzhiev, myself (Pavle Rakovski) and Kicha Nikolova-Vera who was also AFZH president. Removed were Paskal Mitrevski and Giorgi Urdov-Dzhodzho. Mitrevski was appointed instructor of the NOF provincial bureau and Urdov was sent to DAG Headquarters for Central and Western Macedonia, to represent NOF.

After getting inside NOF, Zahariadis and his top CPG leaders replaced the external and frontal aggression towards NOF and began to implement an internal but devastating struggle. I will devote some time in the following paragraphs to the end of this chapter to explain how this was done and its effects on NOF.

### **3. A grave crime**

Soon after establishing "unity" (joining NOF and the CPG and combining armed forces), as I mentioned earlier, the Macedonian battalions were withdrawn from Macedonia and sent deep into the Greek south. As soon as they reached "purely Greek terrain", they were "reorganized". Namely, all Macedonian commanders were replaced with "more experienced" Greek commanders. Then, while

stationed in the Greek south, these battalions were ordered to fight against a larger and more organized foe in uneven battles against overwhelming odds. This resulted in the Macedonian battalions being decimated.

Here Zahariadis and the top CPG leaders committed a grave crime against the Macedonian people. The battalions which they sent to the south to be decimated, and there is no doubt about that, were composed of exclusively first-rate, elite Macedonian revolutionary fighters. This was a devastating blow to the Macedonian people which could have been avoided, unfortunately the NOF leadership did not show the necessary vigilance and care to save the fighters and for that they bear a heavy responsibility.

But this was nothing new. By now abuse of the Macedonian people by Greeks in Greece had become a well-known tradition. The Greek bourgeoisie had always employed genocidal policies against the Macedonian people. Their practice had been to physically exterminate the most conscious, the most resistant and the most revolutionary Macedonian elements. And now these same policies were practiced by the same Greeks but through the CPG.

#### **4. Political killings**

At the same time the Macedonian battalions were destroyed, a large number of Macedonian individuals, mostly prominent activists associated with the Macedonian national liberation movement, were murdered.

While sent to execute an order, Giorgi Urdov-Dzhodzho then NOF representative at DAG Headquarters for Central and Western Macedonia, found himself surrounded by an enemy unit. He was sent there knowing he would not return. Dzhodzho used his last bullet on himself. His personal courier, who barely managed to “escape” alive, corroborated this story.

But, as it turned out, the “enemy unit” was not an enemy unit but a number of “executioners”, confidential persons sent there to ambush and liquidate Dzhodzho. I found out about this many years later from a conversation that took place between several inmates in a



Solun prison. Among those inmates was G.K. a former “counter-band” member from Dimchev’s unit in Voden. He had moved to the ELAS Macedonian battalion in Kaimakchalan and while serving a prison sentence in Solun he met up with several ex-ELAS officers who were serving in DAG. In this particular conversation they were talking about events of that time and about the withdrawal of the Macedonian battalion to the People’s Republic of Macedonia and about Dzhodzho being responsible to the Party for the fate of the battalion.

Today G.K. lives in Skopje. He told me that the ex-ELAS officers serving in DAG told him that Dzhodzho had to pay with his life for some sins that he had committed against the Party and that it was the Party that ordered his execution.

Another Macedonian executed was Vangel Shamardanov from the village Krontselevo, Voden Region. Shamardanov was commissar of the DAG battalion and former chairman of the Voden Region NOF District Committee. He was shot in the back and killed. Shortly before this happened, Sharmardanov confidentially confessed to me that he was afraid of his Greek “comrades” around him and suspected that one day they would “eliminate” him... This happened under the following, otherwise very characteristic, circumstances: Sometime in March-April 1947, I was on my way to Kaimakchalan when I ran into a group of Macedonian fighters. They were reading a Greek flyer written in Greek issued by a DAG affiliate exclusively to the Greek people. There was not a word in it about the Macedonian people, about the Macedonian fighters even though 80 to 85% of the DAG fighters and DAG’s basic forces in this region were Macedonians. And not just that! I learned from the fighters that when they joined DAG they too were registered as Greeks. In other words the commander, a man named Stathis and the commissar a man named Alekos, in charge of this DAG affiliate headquarters did not recognize the existence of the Macedonian people. This, apparently, was done in the spirit of Zahariadis’s new line adopted during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum in 1946. By this line the Macedonian people were regarded as Greeks “with a reduced national sense” or simply as “Slavophone Greeks”. And this was their reason for publishing the flyer in Greek which addressed all

people as “Greeks” with the lines “Greek people!” and “Greek brothers!”

When I found out that this particular group of fighters belonged to the battalion whose commissar was Vangel Shamardanov, otherwise a very good and valued comrade of mine, I was surprised. I wanted to talk to Shamardanov in person and, with the help of these fighters, I found him. We spoke alone and the question I had for him was “why put up with all this...? After a long silence and with a painful facial expression he said: “Because I am afraid! One day they will eliminate me!”

From there I went to find Aspromalis (Takis Papadopoulos), EAM Committee Secretary for Central Macedonia, Tasios Gusiopoulos, CPG city committee secretary for the city Voden, and Aleksos, commissar of the affiliate DAG headquarters. When I got the four of us together we had a meeting...

They listened to what I had to say with hypocritical generosity and compassion and with smiles on their faces. These were the executioners of the Macedonian people, the deliverers of Greek chauvinism... they sat there covered by the CPG mask smiling at me! Yes, they were confident in their own strength, that is, in the success of their calculation with regards to our Macedonian liberation movement. They let me speak... they listened to me without objection and... smiled...

Ignoring their hypocrisy I kept throwing facts in their faces.

I also told them the following. I said to them:

“Yesterday during a NOF activist gathering, a Greek DAG captain asked one of our associates a man named Foti Ilkovski, member of the NOF Central Committee working for the Central Agitation and Propaganda Department, who was just passing by him, ‘who are those people there?’

Foti replied ‘they are NOF activists!’

The Greek captain then swore and said: ‘Hmm! After we finish with the Monarcho-Fascists, we will start with them’...!’”

I then decisively said: “This kind of flower only flourishes in this kind of climate... A threshing thistle flourishes only in a climate that suits it...!”

Not only were they not interested in finding out who this captain was but saw only my nationalism in my words of protest. Of course, they quickly informed those above them who said that I was simply an “incurable nationalist”. Petris, organizing secretary of the Provincial Bureau, later told Keramidzhiev that:

“And after all this, Rakovski said to me that he had a Greek education and that he was a Greek educated worker...!”

Sometime later Vangel Shamardanov was shot in the back and the Macedonian fighters were sent to the south of Greece to be slaughtered...

In my presence Giorgi Kalkov, a prominent activist from Kostur Region, told Keramidzhiev that he was convinced that he would be killed if he returned to his unit. He begged Keramidzhiev to do something, to keep him in NOF, at least temporarily. But it was not that simple. Keramidzhiev had no authority to arbitrarily detain an officer and told Kalkov to go back to his unit while Keramidzhiev tried to do something from his end.

Kalkov, like Shamardanov, was not wrong in his assessment of the matter and he too was killed. There was no investigation and the matter was closed because “this was war and people get killed during a war...”

Lazo Koroveshov was also murdered. Lazo was a gun repair specialist and operated a shop in Lerin before he joined the resistance. He was a cheerful and well-built man, a good fighter, loved by the people and influential among the Macedonian DAG fighters. He was shot from the distance in the middle of a guarded camp near the cauldron while trying to get his food. A single “stray”

bullet left him dead on the spot. The shooter was never found and the incident was pinned on the enemy...

In reality no one knows or has the means to find out how many Macedonians were murdered this way while serving in DAG's ranks...

### **5. Political murders committed by Siantos's leadership**

Todor Simovski, a senior expert in the Institute for National History, provided the following information in one of his articles:

About Tashko Karadzha's murder;

Some of the cadres and part of the population in Kostur Region believe that Tashko Karadzha's capture on April 8, 1942, was not a coincidence. Tashko, a Macedonian Communist, was holding an illegal meeting which was also attended by the top CPG leaders for Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia but only he was captured. Many believe that it was not by chance that only this man was caught in the raid and then executed by the Gestapo in Solun on May 25, 1942... (See Nova Makedonija, December 29, 1971.)

About Lazo Trpovski's murder;

Sometime in March or April 1943, a group of partisans wearing ELAS markings, attacked several Macedonian villages in Kostur Region including Dobroslava, Zagoricheni, Staricheni, and Mokreni, for no other reason except to murder Macedonians. Having had prior bad experiences with ELAS and with some chauvinistic Greek CPG leaders, the Macedonian cadres and the Macedonian population in that region suspected that Lazo was killed by betrayal. New published documents show that the enemy knew exactly which route Lazo was going to take on his way to Solun. This information could only have come from the higher level in the Greek resistance leadership. (Ibid.)

About Pando Dzhikata's murder;

After the organization MAO and its organ the “Red Star” were banned in a rough manner, the Macedonian people were forced to join EAM and other Greek anti-fascist organizations. MAO was formed in response to persistent demands and pressure from the Macedonian communists in Voden who felt there was a need to neutralize the intensified Bulgarian propaganda. As a result, in the summer of 1942, the CPG formed MAO (Macedonian Liberation Organization) in Voden and placed it under the direct leadership of the CPG District Committee in Voden. The following were decided during the MAO founding meeting:

- 1) The MAO leadership will consist of five members.
- 2) The MAO organ will be called “Red Star” and will be published in the Macedonian language, as will be a newsletter in the newspaper.
- 3) MAO will act in the city and in its district; and
- 4) MAO will receive its guidance and directives from the CPG District Committee.

Thanks to the MAO, Bulgarian and German propaganda in Voden failed to achieve its objectives of winning over the Macedonian people or arming a single Macedonian before 1943 and during first half of 1944. This, however, was not true with the Greek population. Many Greek villagers, especially those from the flatlands, began to massively arm themselves on the side of the Germans... (Todor Simovski, Nova Makedonija, December 26, 1971.)

Unfortunately MAO’s rapid growth and influence on the Macedonian people deterred the Greek leaders and in the summer of 1943 they dissolved MAO and abolished the “Red Star”.

The CPG, it appears, was not completely satisfied with just dissolving MAO and abolishing the “Red Star”. It also went after Pando Dzhikata from the village Chegan, Voden Region. Pando was one of MAO’s leaders and during MAO’s existence, among other things, he had written an article published in the “Red Star” that had Macedonian national content about Ilinden and the road that the Macedonian people should follow. There was also another serious reason for his capture and that was because Pando maintained close ties and close contact with the Partisans from Vardar (Republic of

Macedonia. And this had been going on for a long time. The CPG captured Pando in mid-October 1943, following an order from the CPG supreme leadership. A special delegate was specifically dispatched to capture him on the spot and soon afterwards they had him executed... (Nova Makedonija, December 26, 1971.)

About the murder of other Macedonian cadres from the village Chegan;

There were other active communists from Chegan who suffered the same fate as Pando. Included among them were Krste Mingov, responsible for the organization National Solidarity, Kosta Popstoikov, responsible for supplying the Partisans, and Lazo Duichev, in charge of EPON the youth organization. They were chosen as delegates and dispatched to ELAS headquarters in Kaimakchalan to protest Pando's arrest and seek his release. But they too were captured and taken to ELAS 16<sup>th</sup> Regiment Headquarters in Katsufliani in late October 1943, and executed... (Nova Makedonija, December 26, 1971.)

In the above-referenced article Todor Simovski also talks about the murder of other communists including Dimitar Leskata and Gale Popov. All these Macedonians who the CPG murdered were guilty of one and only one thing; "They were guilty of being Macedonian and felt more Macedonian than the CPG could allow to exist in the Macedonian battalion..."

Further on in the article, Simovski also talks about the "repulsive murder of the patriotic Macedonians from the city Gumendzhe..." etc. ... (Nova Makedonija, January 9, 1972.)

From everything that was said above we can see that the CPG, during Siantos's time, even before Zahariadis took it over, had implemented policies of physical extermination of the most conscious, most resistant and revolutionary elements of the Macedonian population.

Let us now return to Zahariadis.

## **6. A happy coincidence**

While the Macedonian battalions were fighting uneven battles and being decimated in the Greek south during the summer of 1947, because of a treacherous Greek policy, a telegram signed by Zahariadis was received at the NOF Central Council headquarters. The full composition of NOF, which included the central secretariat (Keramidzhiev, Rakovski, Nikolova), the NOF regional bureau instructor (Mitrevski), the NOMS president (Fotev) and the entire staff of the NOF agitation and propaganda department, were ordered to leave immediately in order to attend a meeting with Zahariadis at DAG headquarters in Epirus, located somewhere above the village Likorahi. There was a pre-determined route that they were to follow which would take them through the villages Prekopana, Kostarazi, Pesiak, the church on the hill, etc., to Gramos and from there to the village Likorahi.

As it happened all the people had gathered together for a meeting which had just ended and together they were immediately sent off on their way. Around 1 to 2 past midnight the group, consisting of about fifteen people, arrived in the village Pesiak and decided to take a break.

When an elderly Macedonian man heard us speaking Macedonian he came out of his house and told us that an armed enemy unit visited his village four days ago and every night after that it came back around midnight and took up positions on the hills above the village. Even tonight the soldiers are there, said the old man and pointed at their position with his hand...

This was a happy coincidence for us because if we had continued on the road we would have fallen into their hands...

## **7. The Greek model of “supremacy”**

This failure to behead the Macedonian national liberation movement obviously influenced Zahariadis to do it differently.

His alternate plan was put in place during the 1<sup>st</sup> NOF Congress held in January 1948, and during the 1<sup>st</sup> NOF Central Council Plenum

held in August 1948, when the CPG prepared and carried out the removal of the immediate NOF leadership. Rakovski was removed during the 1<sup>st</sup> Congress and Keramdzhiev and Mitrevski were removed during the 1<sup>st</sup> NOF Central Committee Plenum. A “new leadership” was selected to replace them which consisted of people who in the past were known NOF opponents.

Gradually the entire NOF top leadership was replaced and taken over by people who were loyal to the Greek cause. Eventually NOF was taken away from the Macedonian people and put in the hands of the “Slavophones” who had no national features and no aspiration and who just happened to live in the lands of the Greek state, as Zahariadis described them during CPG Central Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum.

And as far as I am aware, this was the first time the CPG top leadership publicly raised its “supremacist” head regarding the Macedonian question and exposed its support for the “Megali idea” (the Greek model of supremacy).

The agitation and propaganda department was also liquidated with an open and direct blow. It received orders to disband and its members to go to various DAG units and fight at the front as ordinary fighters.

I protested this with a letter addressed to Vasilis Bardzhotas, then member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo, but nothing was done...

I too was “mobilized” into the army...

## **8. Dissolving KUG**

The cultural and artistic group KUG, formed by the agitation and propaganda department, which had recruited girls 14 to 16 years old to sing, dance, act, perform, etc., all dressed in folk costumes, was also dissolved. This group had performed for the fighters and for the people everywhere. One time it performed an opera in the church of the village Zhelevo, Lerin Region, which was representative of the struggle.



KUG's performances for the fighters and the Macedonian villagers were representative of an extraordinary manifestation of the folk culture of the Macedonian nation which, while in the fire of breaking its bonds of slavery, was rebuilding its liberation struggle, which gave the Macedonian people profound pleasure, optimism and determination...

KUG also played a huge role in the mobilization of people in the struggle. It not only inspired people to join en masse but on top of that it boosted the morale of the already mobilized Macedonian people.

It was natural and logical to have more KUG groups in the revolution, at least one per district but Zahariadis not only dismissed the idea but demobilized the only group we had and sent Foti Ilkovski, its artistic director and agitation and propaganda associate, to the army to fight as a common fighter. The girls became an integral part of the Greek KUG called "The Ioanidis Group", and as all Macedonians here (in Greek occupied Macedonia) they became an integral part of the Greek people, just like Macedonia itself for the CPG was an "inseparable" part of the Greek homeland. All this was done in the spirit of the CPG line taken during the 1935 CPG 6<sup>th</sup> Congress and during the February 1946, CPG 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum...

## **9. Disbanding the Orchestra**

Kar-Timio, or simply Timio, was a popular and enthusiastic folk musician who, with his comrades, formed a Macedonian folk brass band. Macedonian folk melodies roared everywhere where this band appeared which most often played very popular songs including "A, bre, Makedonche! Kade se spremash... Borba te cheka" (Oh Macedonian! Where are you preparing... Fighting awaits you...) reworked in a triumphal march.

This orchestra was first incorporated into the 18<sup>th</sup> DAG Brigade, under the watchful eye of the infamous Tasios Gusiopoulos-Makis, then, under orders, it was placed directly under DAG Headquarters and eventually it was dissolved...

This naturally insulted and embittered Timio who later was shot and killed.

## **10. Two phases of the same policy**

All of these acts, and many other similar ones that were committed by the CPG against patriotic Macedonians, towards the end of 1948 were done in the name of the revolution but their real intentions were not easy to hide. While this “policy was being realized” the Macedonian people began to lose their enthusiasm for their struggle because it was becoming obvious to them that it was a futile and meaningless effort, especially after the top NOF leadership was removed and replaced with people that were anti-Macedonian. Almost all activity in the Macedonian villages came to a grinding halt and a wave of hundreds of Macedonian fighters, including prominent ones, began to desert. A tense and dangerous situation was created during which the “new NOF leadership” remained completely isolated and superficial...

In other words, this great Greek chauvinistic policy that Zahariadis undertook in the name of the revolution was aimed against the revolution and worked against the Macedonian national ideal, against the Macedonian cadres and activists and against the Macedonian people in general.

Like the open, frontal external attacks the CPG was waging against NOF before “unity” was established, these attacks were waged from within NOF and directed exclusively against the most patriotic Macedonian activists. In fact, these were two phases of the same chauvinist policy stemming from the famous Greek chauvinistic thesis as follows:

“There is no Macedonian nation, but only ‘Slavophones’ living in Greek Macedonia in the lands of the Greek state.” “There is no Macedonian national movement, but only some ‘adventurous elements’ that sow ‘discord’ in the peaceful ‘Slavophone’ villages.” “If they are neutralized or ‘isolated’, i.e. ‘removed’, there will be order and peace everywhere...”

And this is exactly how the CPG acted during the first phase.

This was evident by their publication in the CPG press, as well as in the EAM and ELAS presses. The CPG tried to “isolate” the Macedonian leaders of the rebellion by vilifying them claiming that they are “adventurers”, “traitors”, “secessionists”, etc.

One cannot help but notice that the entire open frontal struggle waged during the external or first phase is hypocritically hinged on some certain Macedonian “adventurous elements” being the cause for “secession” while persistently being silent on the real reason, which is the CPG not recognizing the Macedonian people’s legitimate right to organize themselves and fight for their own freedom.

What it failed to do during the first phase the CPG succeeded doing during the second phase. By infiltrating NOF, the CPG managed to physically “remove” a large part of the “dangerous nationalists” and replace them with people loyal to the Greek cause. But where was their “peace and order”? It was nowhere to be found. A tense and dangerous situation developed, during which, as I mentioned earlier, “the new leadership” remained completely helpless and redundant.

The Greek chauvinists were finally forced to admit that this was not the work of some sort of artificial act, allegedly sprinkled among the villagers by word of mouth by a few adventurous elements. They had to recognize that this was a genuine Macedonian national liberation movement.

But Zahariadis did not end his malicious campaign; he just took it in a different direction.

## **11. A malicious maneuver**

First, during the CPG Central Committee 5<sup>th</sup> Plenum, held on January 30-31, 1949, Zahariadis decisively returned the CPG position and terminology back to where it had been in 1924, as was set at the CPG 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress.

In other words, Zahariadis decided to recognize the Macedonian people here, in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, as they were

recognized back to a point in time when they were seen as a servile part of another nation, with appropriate rights to self-determination until secession from Greece. “There should be no doubt, according to the relevant resolution, that as a result of DAG’s victory and the people’s revolution, the Macedonian people will fully achieve their national rights the way they want them...” (CPG 1931-1952, p. 195. Dimokratikos Stratos, number 2, 1949)

A few days later, during the NOF Central Council 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum, held on February 3-4, 1949, which Zahariadis personally led, he proposed a resolution which was then adopted by raising a hand. Among other things, the Resolution said:

“The 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum has decided to convene the 2<sup>nd</sup> NOF Congress to be held in March 1949... The Second NOF Congress will proclaim the new NOF programming principles that represent the century-long aspiration of our people. The Second Congress will declare the unification of the Macedonian people in a single independent Macedonian state within the Balkan People’s Democratic Federation...” (Nepokoren, February 15, 1949)

The CPG adopted this position exactly when the People’s democratic Republic of Bulgaria began to deny the national existence of the Macedonian people. This was the time when, in the spirit of the Informburo Resolution, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and others ran a hostile campaign against the CPY and Yugoslavia. This was also the time when DAG was treacherously set up to be defeated by its opponent supported by the Anglo-American military machine. But the Party itself did not have its own general position on this issue.

Accordingly, this position was taken quite independently and outside of the Balkan reality and, of course, it was absurd and not true. Here Zahariadis was publicly speculating playing on emotions and on centuries-old Macedonian aspirations with a specific goal in mind. This position, or resolution, was also published in DAG’s organ “Pros ti niki”, number 12, on March 27, 1949 and even more spectacularly announced through the radio program “Free Greece”. Thus, given the current situation in the Balkans, the announcement caused vivid public interest and a sharp reaction from the Athens

government. (Naum Peiov, *Macedonians and the Greek Civil War*, p. 160.) Because of this, or perhaps because of someone else's complaint, Zahariadis called me in, gave me an article and told me to publish it in the next issue of "Nepokoren" as well as in "Pros ti niki" issue number 23, on March 10, 1949. In this article Zahariadis denied that such a resolution was ever made during NOF's 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum and that this was an enemy fabrication. Among other things, this is what was specifically said:

"There are rumours that the 2<sup>nd</sup> NOF Congress is expected to declare the creation of a single Macedonian state, and that this state will then join Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, or the Balkan Communist or Democratic Federation. Our enemies always choose to say what they think is better for them.

The truth, however, is different. The 2<sup>nd</sup> NOF Congress is a military congress, a congress for further strengthening and not breaking our unity. This is a congress that will organize our victory... To expel the foreigners, destroy the Monarcho-fascist killers and ensure a free and independent life for our people's democracy.

That is the goal of our congress. No hostile slander and splintering can deviate us from this goal..." (Ibid., p. 161.)

During the same plenum Zahariadis also "proposed" that the NOF Central Council executive be expanded from three to five members, and that the two new members be Rakovski and Mitrevski.

During the NOF 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress, held on March 25-26, 1949, attended by an invited delegation of Macedonians, members of Macedonian organizations from Pirin (Bulgarian occupied) Macedonia, the CPG laid out the newly established right to self-determination to secession from Greece. Not knowing that this was another one of Zahariadis's malicious maneuvers and despite the mistrust I had for him, I presented the abstract on the topic "NOF's ideological foundations" with some vigour. Sounding loud and somewhat victorious, in part, this is what I said:

"And now, we here, hundreds of representatives of the Macedonian people... proclaim to the entire world our new basic benefit - the

right to our self-determination, the right to organize our Macedonian national and state life, the way we want to..." (From the brochure: "NOF's ideological foundations", NOF edition 1949, p. 24.)

And in its declaration, the Congress proclaimed the following:

"The seven hundred NOF delegates who take part in the work of the Second NOF Congress, expressing the will of the entire Macedonian people from Aegean Macedonia

Proclaim

The Macedonian people, with their struggle and their sacrifices, today demonstrate their decision to struggle for their national liberation and the realization of their free life, the way they themselves want it..." (Pros ti niki, March 31, 1949)

And one more thing: The next day, March 27, 1949, Zahariadis formed a separate Macedonian communist organization in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia and called it KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia). This was done for the first time since the CPG was established in 1918.

Obviously Zahariadis did all this to show sincerity and to remove all suspicions from the anti-Macedonian acts he and his Central Committee had committed against the Macedonian movement and people. He wanted the Macedonian people to remain in DAG's ranks, the small rebel army which he himself insisted remain small, and to become cannon fodder for the opponent's mighty war machine. Even though DAG was already bleeding profusely, instead on negotiating a peace deal, Zahariadis preferred his small rebel army to fight on, at the front, so that it could be milled one hundred percent, to the last man, in an absolutely uneven battle, under a single catastrophic disaster.

It was by no accident that Zahariadis, this late in the war, carried out a wide mobilization which included all remaining Macedonian women and minors. This was his plan all along, a necessary move to create a necessary psychological and political ambience.

And he succeeded.

His mobilization was successfully carried out so much so that nothing, except some wild bear, was left in the villages.

## **12. This was a policy of the Greek bourgeoisie**

Given that this act of granting the Macedonian people “the right to self-determination to secession from Greece” was not a principle CPG policy, but only a malicious maneuver, confirms in general that what Zahariadis did, both before and after the 5<sup>th</sup> Plenum, was a criminal act. Then, a few months later, he changed his mind and abolished the right to self-determination to secession. Zahariadis did this during the CPG Central Committee 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum held in October 1949, when he abolished “the right to self-determination to secession of the enslaved people in their own homeland”, proclaiming that “the Macedonian people, here in Aegean Macedonia, were a minority living in the Greek homeland...” (CPG 1931-1952, p. 205.)

By this act, i.e. robbing the Macedonian people of the right to self-determination to secession, Zahariadis set the stage for a new, great open offensive against the Macedonian people’s democratic rights, that is, he began a new series of political crimes against the Macedonian people.

In other words, Zahariadis masterfully planned and carried out another far-reaching act of genocide against the Macedonian people. He did this because our Macedonian existence here in Greek (occupied) Macedonia, in some way, is an ever-present danger to, as he himself put it, “our positions and our borders to the north...”

With the commitments and resolutions he made during the CPG Central Committee 5<sup>th</sup> Plenum, the NOF Central Council 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum, the NOF 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress and by establishing KOEM and appointing one NOF representative in DAG main headquarters and one NOF representative in the provisional democratic government, Zahariadis put a lot of psychological and political pressure on the Macedonian people to support the struggle. As we know, Zahariadis did not do this to strengthen the Macedonian struggle but rather to

carry out a massive mobilization for the sole purpose of emptying the Macedonian villages in the liberated territory near the border and to have the Macedonian people and DAG liquidated, fighting en masse at the fronts.

I don't think you can find enough reasoning to conclude that Zahariadis took all these steps to just provide reserves for DAG in order to bring it victory, as is often claimed. If Zahariadis really thought about what was best for DAG and how DAG could have been victorious, he would not have declared "England", DAG's worst enemy, as Greece's "great friend".

The least Zahariadis could have done is object to English interference in Greek internal affairs. He would have tried to put a stop to all outside interference rather than propagate and justify England's presence in Greece. He would have objected to England financing and organizing DAG's enemy, the reactionaries.

He would not have said that "our position and borders to the north were uncertain without English support..." He would not have stirred Greek patriotic sentiments by claiming that Greece was in danger from the north...

Zahariadis would not have restricted DAG's growth when the time was right and would not have allowed the enemy to move the people from the villages to the cities and thus cutoff DAG from its reserves and supplies.

Zahariadis would not have worked against the Macedonian liberation movement. The Macedonian liberation movement was Zahariadis's natural ally, provider of reserves for DAG and supporter in every respect.

He would not have helped his opponent passively, actively, openly and in secret lay low when he was weak and needed time to gain strength.

And finally, Zahariadis would not have allowed his opponent to destroy DAG, by forcing DAG's core forces to remain stationary in



fronts so that the enemy military machine - artillery, tanks, aviation, etc., could pummel them to pulp...

Bearing all this in mind, as well as all the political crimes that followed, one cannot help but wonder what was the point of all these moves, what was the point of this war, other than to exterminate the Macedonian people in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia? What other important reason could there have been to justify all this bloodshed and suffering...?

This, of course, was always the aim of the Greek bourgeoisie which, this time, was carried out through the CPG...

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### **1. The NOF Central Committee agitation and propaganda department stops working**

Following the agreement reached at the unification meeting on November 21, 1946, I was assigned the task to find the necessary people and technical means to organize the NOF Central Council Agitation and Propaganda department. Our main task in this department was to prepare and publish NOF and AFZH's newspapers "NEPOKOREN" and "BILTEN" and the magazine "NOVA MAKEDONKA" as well as print flyers, leaflets, brochures and propaganda material.

This was the first time that a central Macedonian publication was realized since this part of Macedonia was occupied and came under Greek rule. It undoubtedly had immense historical and political significance.

However, as I mentioned earlier, this too was one of Zahariadis's maneuvers. The newly established agitation and propaganda department was systematically prevented from starting work and working normally after it was formed and capable of doing such work.

Under the pretext that it was to be located near the CPG leadership headquarters for Macedonia, "in order to have invaluable CPG assistance", the agitation and propaganda department was kept in isolation. It was first moved to the village Kotili located on Mount Voios, that is, far from the basic NOF organizations. After drifting for a while on the road, it was then moved to the village Likorahi in Epirus. It stayed here in anticipation, waiting to find out where the CPG leadership headquarters was to be finally located. This was done, we were told, so that we can create connections with the distant NOF organizations... If Kotili was far beyond the areas where NOF operated, Likorahi was not even in Macedonia at all. But here we were told we would have "immediate party assistance", and we would receive materials for our work through Party channels.

## **2. Stringos in the role of an Olympic god**

However, days, weeks and months passed by and no “party assistance” or materials arrived! But to be honest, I had no illusions about any of this...

Located in the woods not far above the village Likorahi was DAG’s General Headquarters. I went there to see Stringos who I met for the first time. He received me in his office, a spacious barracks made of planks. I assume he had invited me there to see what I looked like. He probably wanted to see what the “traitor” who “stole” the ELAS Macedonian battalion from Kaimakchalan looked like. I must have inconvenienced him when he was secretary of the Bureau for Macedonia. He was sitting in front of his massive table drinking coffee. He had a hardened face looking like it was made of grey clay. After a quick inquisitive glance at me his eyes drifted towards the window. I greeted him but he ignored my greeting. I looked right at his face but he continued to look through the window with “devastating” indifference, completely “ignoring” my presence. He gave me the impression that the branches in front of his window were more important than me. He held himself more superior than any of the gods of Olympus could, before an ordinary mortal. Obviously, by doing this he wanted to let me know that for him I was nothing and nobody. He continued to drink coffee, watching the branches in front of his window, without saying a single word. He did not even ask me to sit down...

Sometime later during a meeting with Zahariadis, we proposed to separate the Macedonian fighters from the common units and create unique Macedonian DAG units. The idea was to have Greek and Macedonian units compete against each other to see who would have greater success, which would contribute more to their fighting skills and so on. By doing so, we would strengthen and improve our combat activities in all of DAG.

He thought about it for a few seconds and said no! He then went on to say that all current battalions and brigades need to be disbanded because this is no good!

And that was the end of that point, which got me thinking. Why is this “no good”? Competition is always good and will achieve much more in DAG than what we currently have.

Then I found the answer:

It is “no good” because there were Greek fears that the Macedonian side of the struggle would be strongly promoted, with the addition of many new volunteers and, above all, would be widely promoted in the entire world. With such a struggle the Macedonian people would write their own Macedonian history, as it happened, fighting together with their Greek comrades in a common struggle, and the Macedonian struggle could no longer be hidden or presented as a Greek struggle. This, it seems to me, is why Zahariadis so quickly gave up on the competition idea in general and on reinforcing DAG in particular. Only later, especially after the conclusion of the CPG Central Committee VI Extended Plenum held in March 1956, I finally and slowly came to the realization that Zahariadis was generally responsible for “undermining DAG’s victory”...

Anyway, Zahariadis was right in this case. Namely, if we were to separate the Macedonian fighters from the common units and create unique Macedonian units it would have meant that there were no uniquely “GREEK” battalions and brigades in the main revolutionary hotspot in Greek occupied Macedonia. After “unity” was established, and according to the NOF directive, Macedonian fighters began to join DAG en masse. So, there is no other way to describe this than to say that these battalions and brigades were created with Macedonians... So here we were and this bloated man named Stringos, standing in front of me, in reality looked like a hilarious caricature. Why was he posturing like a god? Was he that ignorant? I don’t know. I briefly said, what he already knew, “I don’t have any work here... I am leaving!”

He did not even try to stop me. In his superior tone of voice he lazily mumbled:

“So, go then!”

With this unique blurt of three words, this man from the Party of Olympus started and ended his conversation with me... a mere mortal man...

The NOF central agitation and propaganda department returned to Macedonia and, on May 1, 1947, LONG AFTER “UNITY” WAS ESTABLISHED, we managed to publish the first issue of “Nepokoren” with barely one hundred copies and in a very small format the size of a math exercise book. We had no paper!

We were only allowed to obtain paper from the regional Party organs and from nowhere else. Why was this, I don’t know? I tried to convince Keramidzhiev to organize the purchase of the bulk of our paper independently from Lerin, Kostur, Voden or Solun, but he disagreed. He said this would violate the Party’s directive which stated that: “Paper supplies must be obtained only through the party...” This was ridiculous... It would have made more sense if he had said he simply did not want to spend the organization’s money on paper...

We did our best and utilized our resources to the maximum to continue to operate the Macedonian press. In the second issue of “Nepokoren” we included information on the 1<sup>st</sup> NOF Conference Resolution and managed to print 70 copies of which 20 were sent to Voden Region. Unfortunately, during their delivery the courier was arrested and the newspapers were destroyed. The newspapers were destroyed and the courier was arrested by Tasios Gusiopoulos-Makis, a Party committee secretary in Voden.

### **3. Tasios Gusiopoulos-Makis**

Tasios Gusiopoulos-Makis was from village Dolno Gramatiko, Voden Region. He was a former Greek teacher who proved to be one of the bitterest enemies of the Macedonian national liberation movement. I have in my hands an article written by Andrea Chipov, a VMRO (United) leader, that says Tasios Gusiopoulos-Makis ruined many Macedonian fighters in 1945, accusing them of committing “high treason” against Greece, while the real traitors, the Greek collaborators working with the fascist occupiers arrested by ELAS, he managed to free.

The following are the most serious crimes directly or indirectly committed by Tasios Gusiopoulos-Makis:

He was responsible for ELAS liquidating the Macedonian patriot and activist Pando Dzhikata from the village Chegan, Voden Region.

He was also responsible for the liquidation of three other people from Chegan, Krste Mingov, Kosta Popstoikov and Lazo Duiev, sent from the village as a commission, as I mentioned earlier, to protest Pando's arrest and seek his release. All four were killed during the second half of October 1943.

He was involved in the ELAS night terror attack against the Macedonian people in the villages Zhervi, Chagan, Rusilovo, Drushka, Gugovo, Nisia, Teovo, Mesimer and Vladovo. Gusiopoulos was familiar with these villages and their people because he grew up in this area. And, as I mentioned earlier, ELAS took "hostages" from these villages many of whom were then liquidated in July, 1944. Included among those murdered were Dimitar Leskata and Gele Popov.

According to Simovski, all these victims "felt more Macedonian than the CPG could have allowed", that is, what local leaders like Gusiopoulos could have allowed. Gusiopoulos was a fanatic Grkoman (Macedonian loyal to the Greek cause), a true janissary, who did not hesitate to point a finger at any Macedonian who was an active bearer of the Macedonian national ideal. So, it was by no accident that Zahariadis appointed him Commissar of the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade, composed exclusively of Macedonian fighters. Here is something more about Gusiopoulos:

"According to a statement made by the CPG Central Committee, published in the newspaper 'Avgi', Tasios Gusiopoulos-Makis, who reportedly was a representative of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace, has allegedly been in the services of the Greek Asphalia (secret police) since 1955... The organization headed by Gusiopoulos is located in Solun and is a provocative organization created to undermine the unity of the people..." This quote comes

from a telegram issued by the Soviet agency TASS from Istanbul, published in Moscow's newspaper Pravda on October 27, 1956. We know that after DAG was defeated, Gusiopoulos, as DAG Commissar of the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade, fled to Albania and from there moved to one of the European socialist countries, most likely to Romania, where he supposedly is still an immigrant to this day. After his return to Solun his entire involvement was explained in detail... According to him Zahariadis sent him to Solun to do "Party work" which, of course, no one disputes, during which time he confessed that the Greek intelligence, counter-terror service and the Asphalia were "played". And indeed they themselves admitted to being "played" because their people were in constant contact with Gusiopoulos who continuously informed them. They then helped him return to Greece.

However, who was who and who played who, among other things, became evident by the actions taken. Zahariadis did not "play" the Athens authorities, the facts clearly show that Zahariadis "played" the Macedonian people when he placed DAG, the small rebel army of about 40,000 (half of whom were Macedonian men and women), under the blows of an incomparably overpowering enemy, to destroy them. Zahariadis "played" the CPG itself from within, making sure it slowly but surely collapsed and became incapable of supporting the revolution. By doing this Zahariadis effectively "cleared the terrain" for the new planned Greek bourgeoisie major offensive ensuring its success, which finally led to the establishment of the military junta dictatorship on April 21, 1967. Gusiopoulos was the human connection. His job was to take information on the CPG's position and adopt directives for provocateur activities in its ranks.

#### **4. NEPOKOREN – NOF's ideological and political organ**

There were many problems, ideological, political, organizational and technical facing the Macedonian revolutionary press in general and, "Nepokoren" in particular, from becoming NOF's central ideological and political organ.

Another problem was its circulation, which was successfully resolved by hand to hand deliveries. This way the publication was

read at meetings, conferences, in the villages, in the hospitals were the DAG wounded were recovering and by groups of DAG fighters.

In order to obtain as wide a circle of readers as possible, as well as to spread the Macedonian alphabet and Macedonian literacy more easily and faster, the most important material was printed in both Macedonian and Greek.

In other words “NEPOKOREN” served as a primer to teach Macedonians to read Macedonian, as well as a national ideological and political aid, a weapon for the Macedonian people. The Greek text was helpful in that respect.

As the leading Macedonian information service, the tasks placed before “NEPOKOREN” were both important and difficult.

The closeness of the Bulgarian language and Bulgarian propaganda promoting hatred, especially aimed at Greek genocides, was dividing the people and attracting some Macedonians to the Bulgarian fascist camp. There was also the great deadly famine, caused by the occupation, which attracted many Greeks in the Bulgarian clubs in Solun.

It was “NEPOKOREN’s” job to fix these problems and point to the fact that the Macedonian people’s national liberation movement here in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia was formed to oppose the Bulgarian presence and politics. This was contrary to the autonomist movement organized by the Germans and Bulgarians.

What was a lot more difficult, delicate and even dangerous was the resistance against the new CPG line regarding the Macedonian National Question which proclaimed that the Macedonian people were a nationally “unformed mass” of “Slavophones” who lived in the Greek part of Macedonia (CPG Central Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum, February 1946).

This, in general, was an open denial of the national existence of the Macedonian nation, a serious offense to the democratic rights of the Macedonian people living in Greek occupied Macedonia who were now, in fact, proclaimed as a Greek people, a group of



“Slavophone” Greeks, who existed until they were assimilated or otherwise disappeared.

Carefully avoiding to speak directly about this, “NEPOKOREN” initiated the struggle by following the publication of Blazhe Koneski’s book “Macedonian Literature and the Macedonian Literary Language”. Blazhe Koneski was a Macedonian academician and professor at the Skopje University.

At the same time “NEPOKOREN”, through appropriate articles, tried to show that the Macedonian national liberation movement is a natural fruit of a historic process, an inevitable consequence of the historical necessity for the Macedonian people to express the real needs... This was our answer to the CPG’s “claims”, mentioned earlier, that a real Macedonian national movement does not exist and that the “open hostilities” observed here are the acts of something “artificial”, part of someone else’s “agents” and “mercenaries”, etc.

“NEPOKOREN” also carried the message that those Macedonians who are familiar with Macedonian history know that, by following the path we have taken, under today’s conditions, our people’s liberation front (NOF) will become the successor of VMRO and of our most vibrant traditions, following our hero Gotse Delchev’s path, and that our struggles today are an extension of the battles our fathers and grandfathers fought in the 1903 Macedonian Uprising against the Ottoman empire...” (NEPOKOREN number 5, December 25, 1947)

## **5. The brochure “NOF”**

In a separate brochure entitled “NOF” I tried, in the Greek language, to summarize the social, national and ideological foundation of the Macedonian national liberation movement. In the short preface, I wrote:

“The national liberation struggle led by the Slavo-Macedonian people, alongside the Greek people, has been slandered and systematically distorted by the reactionary propaganda here and abroad.

There is a lot of confusion and vagueness. Many of our Greek friends who do not live among us know nothing at all about us and about the birth and development of our Slavo-Macedonian people's liberation movement inside the Greek state and practically know nothing about the existence and activities of the Slavo-Macedonian people's liberation Front (NOF).

Like our many Greek friends, there are also Hellenized Slavo-Macedonians who, even though they live in the NOF environment, still do not understand why NOF exists within the general framework of the democratic movement in Greece.

So, we find it necessary to explain and correctly interpret the Slavo-Macedonian liberation movement within the framework of the democratic movement in general in Greece and to reaffirm this necessity for the new NOF cadres who are constantly shaping themselves, as well as for the Slavo-Macedonian people in general.

This is our reason for publishing this brochure.

But please understand that this is our first attempt. The information in this brochure has been written in the mountains without the necessary aids, and - it does not exhaustively cover the entire topic. But whether and how much it serves the purpose for which it was written, will depend on those who read it and ponder over it.

Any and all criticism will be welcomed..."

The brochure was printed and ready at the end of 1947 at the planning stages of the Congress and we expected to have it distributed during the NOF 1<sup>st</sup> Congress scheduled for January 11, 1948, through the delegates, as well as through the regional and foreign NOF leaders.

But it did not come to that.

At the last moment before the brochure was about to be distributed "someone" put a stop to it because they felt the information in it was too "nationalistic". All the copies were destroyed, except for the few our activists managed to hide in their pockets. Paskal Mitrevski was

the one who delivered the “verdict”. He was the only one from the NOF Secretariat to speak up and call the content in the brochure nationalistic and to ask for its destruction. CPG Politburo members Ioanidis and Stringos, who at the time were present in the meeting, agreed with Mitrevski and obliged Stavros Kochopoulos to collect and burn all the copies. Ioanidis then took me back to the altar of the church where the Congress was held, and gave me the NOF Executive Committee candidate list. According to this list the proposed NOF Executive Committee was to consist of Mitrevski, Keramidzhiev, Rakovski, Kochev (Kochopoulos turned into Kochev like a chameleon) and Nikolova. Ioannidis also told me that Mitrevski objected to my candidacy and I would have to temporarily step down while the Party reviewed my case.

I did not say anything. I kept quiet. It was a done deal! That was clear to me now... They (CPG) took the first step to take over NOF by infiltrating its top leadership with their own people and by removing the “nationalists”. They removed me at their first opportunity and replaced me with Kochopoulos, a Grkoman, loyal to the Greek cause. Soon the NOF Executive Council will be infiltrated by more anti-Macedonians the likes of Vainas, Gusiopoulos and other “opouloses” who, until yesterday, were NOF’s staunchest opponents and today... oh, well... they are NOF’s leaders. There is no doubt that the purpose for putting these people in charge of NOF and the Macedonian national liberation movement was to destroy them from within. The worst thing about all this is the fact that Mitrevski, one of NOF’s founders and its first presidents, appeared to be on board with this plan. In a short time NOF was turned from a Macedonian liberation organization into a political organization serving the Greek cause. When I got my chance I said this to Mitrevski:

“You are fooling yourself...! You are fooling yourself if you think that you will be accepted and you will prosper if you surround yourself with “opouloses”! You too will get what’s coming to you...!”

I will talk about what happened to Mitrevski somewhere else...

## 6. The readers who could not read

The staff that comprised NOF's agitation and propaganda department was completely inexperienced and had never dealt with journalism before. Similarly, NOF's governing staff was also inexperienced and had never dealt with politics. Both of these occupations seemed impossible to carry out for the Macedonians in these positions. On top of that, according to the Greek authorities, the Macedonian people did not exist as a separate, non-Greek nation.

But, like everything else concerning the Macedonians, these newly appointed and inexperienced journalists working for the NOF agitation and propaganda department were expected to overcome these enormous difficulties just like that. Also, it should be well-known to the reader that the Macedonian language here, in the Greek (occupied) part of Macedonia, was banned and illegal to be spoken anywhere and as a result of that the Macedonian people did not know how to read and write in Macedonian. While we were in Lerin, in the summer of 1938, my mother went out to purchase some peppers. The market was very close, just in front of our house, but she returned home very late, a few hours later. I thought she had gone to see a friend. When she came back I sarcastically asked her: "How much did it cost you to purchase these few peppers?"

"Three hundred and five drachmas!" she replied.

"What!? What are you talking about?" I asked.

"May he burn in hell; I did not see that cursed policeman there. I know he is always hovering around but this time he was in civilian clothing and I did not notice him. I looked to my left and to my right and then asked the vendor: "How much for the peppers?" The policeman was there... behind me. He took me to the police station and after a long wait he charged me three hundred drachmas. A young boy paid five hundred and was beaten badly..."

It was very common for our (Macedonian) people to receive summonses for speaking Macedonian. Here is a sample:

## THE KINGDOM OF GREECE - SUMMONS

Number 6

On the basis of Articles 143-145, the public prosecutor of the village Dolno Kotori, Lerin Region, calls on Georgios I. Mitrushi, a resident of the village Nered, to appear in person before this court, on Monday May 15, 1939, at 9 am, to be tried because on February 19 of this year he was caught by the police speaking to other persons in the Slavic language.

For violating Article 697 n.n. in connection with police Decree No. 15/36.

If he does not appear, he will be tried in absentia.

Village Nered, April 24, 1939, Public Prosecutor

Seal:

/Signature illegible/

Public Prosecutor of Dolno Kotori.

(Hristo Andonovski, "The truth about Aegean Macedonia", p. 81. This document was also published in one of the 1971 October editions of the Skopje based newspaper Nova Makedonija).

Given the fact that for decades successive Greek governments made every attempt to eradicate the Macedonian language, it was important to bring it back. This was one the main reasons why the group of journalists from the central and district agitation and propaganda departments wanted to publish Macedonian newspapers and address the readers who did not know how to read Macedonian. What also prompted us to do this is the fact that an official Macedonian alphabet, although created quite recently, after our people won national freedom and statehood in the Yugoslav part of Macedonia, now existed.

However, what seemed like a great hurdle unexpectedly turned out to be a small bump for the agitation and propaganda groups. As it turned out the Macedonian people had a strong desire to learn to read Macedonian and were able to quickly read Macedonian newspapers and books. (It must be noted at this point that the Macedonian alphabet is phonetic. To be able to read and write all one has to do is just learn the sound of the letters in the alphabet). Initially Macedonian newspapers were printed in both Macedonian and Greek. This was important because, among other things, it was the first step in the process of moving forward...

## **7. A school for teachers**

Among the special measures the NOF's agitation and propaganda department took was to, as soon as possible, implement Macedonian literacy. The approach taken to implement this was as follows:

- a) Open a school for teachers with a twenty-day teacher training reading and writing course using the Macedonian alphabet, and
- b) Create a Macedonian primer with pictures and texts that reflected the Macedonian national liberation struggle in this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia and emphasize the Macedonian people's unity with the Greek people in this struggle.

Among other things, the teachers' course was designed to teach the future teachers how to read and write Macedonian using the Macedonian alphabet, several important grammatical rules (from Kepeski's grammar), some arithmetic, important moments from the Macedonian people's national history, the NOF march as well as other revolutionary songs, and to listen to and be able to analyze the news coming from the fronts.

Associates from the agitation and propaganda department worked closely with Paskal Paskalevski who, besides leading and teaching the lectures, also served as manager of the course.

NEPOKOREN: "The Macedonian people, for the first time in a long time, have earned the right to learn in their own language about which until now they could only dream... Last month (November,

1947) NOF organized a 20-day course designed to prepare teachers to teach Macedonian. The first 49 teachers to graduate were sent to open schools in the liberated Macedonian villages, which they did successfully.

The children have shown much perseverance in their learning and in about 20 to 30 days, all have learned to read and write. And they did this without primers or books. They also continuously demanded of their teachers that they continue teaching so that they could learn more and continue their education. This shows that they hunger for learning. This is a natural hunger of a nation that has yet to be freed.

Our people have begun to be reborn!” (NEPOKOREN Number 5, December 25, 1947)

Prompted by the need to do this, in the fall of 1947, I took the initiative, without being asked or helped by anyone, and approached the CPG asking for “full equality for the minorities”.

Zahariadis, however, did not waste much time before ordering NOF’s agitation and propaganda department dissolved and sending its entire staff, including myself, to various DAG units to serve as common soldiers. By doing this he also liquidated the Macedonian teacher’s school; he took it away from Macedonian hands. The school itself continued to exist... in name only... but in practical terms it became an integral part of the Greek teachers’ school which, in the meantime, was rushed to start classes in the village Zhelevo, Lerin Region.

That was done in the spirit of Zahariadis’s policy towards the Macedonian national question. If Macedonia, after the population exchange, became as Greek as the regions around Athens (Risospastis) and is an integral part of... the Greek homeland (CPG 6<sup>th</sup> Congress), and the Macedonian people here are an exclusively Greek group, without a national consciousness and without aspirations (in the spirit of the 1946 CPG Central Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum), then the Macedonian teachers’ school could not exist except as an integral part of a Greek teachers’ school.

Naturally this school or “Macedonian department” could hardly be Macedonian while it was led and administered by the choice of a Greek administrator and Greek lecturers.

## **8. A Macedonian primer**

It was also my initiative to create and introduce the Macedonian primer. (As I mentioned earlier, I had some vocational training and experience in my time, during and after I graduated from the Solun Pedagogical Academy).

On Zahariadis’s insistence that NOF isolate itself and have no relations whatsoever with the Macedonian people in the People’s Republic of Macedonia, I saw the need to create our own primer and to connect it with our Macedonian uprising here in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia, and the way it related to unity with the Greek people. In other words, we had to create a new primer because we were not allowed to use the Macedonian primer used in the People’s Republic of Macedonia.

While creating the new primer I received significant help from Paskal Paskalevski, Foti Ilkovski and Tanas Gitovski. After explaining to them what I needed, they helped with writing the text and creating the images through which both Macedonian children and adults would get acquainted with the letters of the Macedonian alphabet.

When Zahariadis found out about our initiative to produce our own Macedonian primer, he approved and ordered the NOF agitation and propaganda department to continue developing it. A while later when the first part of the primer was ready, he suddenly ordered someone else to take it over immediately. Zahariadis did not want me to work on the second part. That job was given to a Greek man named Kostas Siaperas who happened to be a friend of mine from my school days in the Lerin Gymnasium. Siaperas was familiar with Macedonian, as well as other Slavic languages. The new layout began with an image of Zahariadis. He also had artists from Sofia paint the pictures. The primer itself was printed in Romania in 1949 and was used for teaching the Macedonian children who were



evacuated in 1948, as well as the adult Macedonians who immigrated there in 1949 and to other European socialist countries...

## **9. Every evil, for good**

But, as Zahariadis continued to implement his anti-Macedonian policy, the Macedonian people's struggle became hopeless and meaningless and the atmosphere became more and more electrically charged. A wave of desertions, Macedonian fighters leaving DAG, followed with the changes made to the top NOF leadership and, as I mentioned earlier, a tense situation began to develop which the new NOF leadership was unable to handle. In other words, NOF's new "leadership" was utterly helpless and redundant.

But before the situation was allowed to become even worse, the CPG decided to bring back the agitation and propaganda department. So, in addition to taking all the measures I spoke about earlier, we were also given the opportunity to immediately purchase a hand cranked printing machine capable of printing Macedonian letters. We were able to find skilled printers in the ranks of DAG (Macedonians of course) and we were back in operation.

Besides myself and my old collaborators, Hristo Andonovski, Paskal Paskalevski and Urania Alilomova, more people were recruited and added to the project including Kole Simidzhiev and a network of correspondents. I would like to mention at this point that Hristo Andonovski is now a publicist living in Skopje, Paskal Paskalevski is the author of "NOV" and the poetry for the newspaper NEPOKOREN, entitled "Nepokoren" and many other interesting poems. He now lives in Sofia. Urania Alilomova is editor of "Nova Makedonija". Kole Simidzhiev is now living in Poland.

Of the remaining collaborators, missing were Tanas Gitovski, who was absent due to illness, and Foti Ilkovski who, as the artistic director of the cultural group KUG, proved to be, according to Zahariadis, a very dangerous "nationalist", and was kept in DAG. Foti now lives in Romania.

The newspapers NEPOKOREN, NOVA MAKEDONKA and BILTEN began to emerge regularly, in triple format and more than

four times the usual circulation. Namely, 2,000 copies of each page were printed separately. The command centres of all DAG units were obliged to supply the Macedonian fighters with these newspapers for group reading. The Macedonian commandos in DAG were also tasked with spreading Macedonian newspapers in even the most remote Macedonian villages.

It was well said: every evil, for good.

Wanting to maintain and consolidate the “new top NOF leadership” at any cost, and at the same time prepare for total mobilization, i.e. empty the Macedonian villages at the border zone, Zahariadis made an unprecedented leap forward with the central Macedonian press. He wanted Kochopoulos and the other “opouloses” to run the agitation and propaganda department but they couldn’t because even though most understood some Macedonian and a few spoke the Macedonian language, no one could read and write. So Zahariadis decided to put us under Kochopoulos’s control. I had many “official” discussions and clashes with him about the content in the papers but was unable to convince him to allow us to print material about our national past, about the current struggle for freedom, that is, our struggle for social, national and democratic rights and about the future of our people.

As I mentioned earlier, when Zahariadis decided to expand NOF’s Central Council from three to five and made this “proposal” during the NOF Central Council 2<sup>nd</sup> Plenum, held on February 3-4, 1949, I was again appointed to the immediate NOF leadership. That allowed me to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> NOF Congress, held on March 25-26, 1949, and present a paper which I called “Ideas for NOF”. Zahariadis obviously did not expect me to do this, so when he found out he thought I was going to talk about the agitation and propaganda department’s work and further tasks and did not review the text in advance. But he did review the political paper prepared by Mitrevski and gave it to “Kochev” to read it. Poor Kochev, it was torture for him, not only because he had a hard time reading Macedonian but also because he did not know what he was reading. In actual fact, the text Kochev was struggling to read was Kolishevski’s speech which he had read out at the last SSRNM Congress in Skopje, which Mitrevski simply copied.

Finally, thanks to Mitrevski's "objections", after a year of being banned from the NOF leadership for my "nationalistic" understanding of the Macedonian Liberation Movement, I was now again publicly speaking and getting great applause from the seven hundred or so Congress delegates.

But, as soon as I got off the stage, Zahariadis had a man waiting for me to take me to him. Zahariadis immediately asked me for my manuscript and looked at it very carefully. He but made no remarks or speeches to counter what I said. Of course, nobody else dared to either.

NEPOKOREN carried in its pages these "nationalistic" understandings:

- That the Macedonian people are a distinct individual nation.
- That the Macedonian people have a national history that includes many bloody liberation struggles and insurrections.
- That the Macedonian people's current struggle has its own driving forces and character.
- That the Macedonian people's ultimate goal is national liberation and the establishment of their freedom on the basis of the principle of self-determination, and
- That the Macedonian people's closer goals are to achieve nationwide unity with the revolutionary forces of the Greek people and to gain democratic rights through a joint struggle against the reactionaries in Greece.

These "understandings" were published in NEPOKOREN and sent to every Macedonian village and to all the Macedonian fighters in DAG's ranks. They were presented as the material that was discussed during the Congress. After the contents in this paper were adopted at the Congress, the material was printed as a separate book entitled "Ideological Fundamentals of NOF". I also want to mention at this point that one of the delegates, a woman from the delegation

of five from the Macedonian organizations from Pirin (Bulgarian occupied) Macedonia, genuinely applauded the document and the ideological focus on the struggle of the Macedonians here in Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia. This reference was made during the joint welcoming speech read by Hristo Kalaidziev.

НЕПОКОРЕН also served as a primer for learning to read Macedonian. I compiled the three following short texts to serve as examples. They truly reflect the situation and, as documents, had meaning.

NOF's march

Плод славен си на славна борба (You are the celebrated fruit of a glorious struggle),

Ко феникс роден в буен плам (Like the phoenix born in thick flame).

На народ славен син си – творба (You are a glorious son of the people - a creation),

Во село, поле или град (In the village, field or city).

За нација гордост в нас НОФ раѓаш (For a nation of pride, NOF is born in us),

Ни велиш: “Милвај Гркот - брат” (You tell us: “Love your Greek – brother”);

И вера в победа создаваш (And you create faith in victory),

И мржња против општиот враг (And march against the common devil).

На Илинден си НОФ наследник (To Ilinden NOF you are an heir),

И негов продолжител днес (And its extender in this day).

Смрт сееш за секој изедник (You sow death to every murderer),

Предавник народен и пес (Traitor and dog).

Ги електризираш жени и мажи (You electrify women and men),

Со негасива вера – жар (With ever burning belief – energy).

Од секој правиш верен стража (From everyone you make a faithful sentry),

И борбен војник и чувар (A fighting soldier and guard).

За тебе наши жртви и крвои (For you, our sacrifices and our blood),  
Се скапа радост – светол дар (Are an expensive joy - a bright gift).  
Се стремиме кој прв од први (We strive to be first of the first),  
За тебе живот си да дај (To give our life for you).

Го полниш с вера-пламен, сила (You fill with faith-flame, power),  
Ти секој потчинет и роб (Every submissive and slave),  
И од него ти правиш сидар (And from him you make a builder),  
На живот слободен и нов (With free life renewed).

А патот ти од светлост блеска (And your way shines bright),  
Крв нова лееш в живот нов (New blood spilled and new life),  
По градој, села, еква песна (In cities, villages, echoes the song),  
Пеј народ: - Да живее НОФ! (Sing people: Long live NOF!)...

Paskal Paskalevski

(НЕПОКОРЕН, Number 4, September 10, 1948)

The courier

In the past the village Gornichovo was busy like a beehive. Everyone lived complex lives. Today the mountain paths are covered with lush grass. The horses and mules that dragged beech tree trunks from “Osovo” are no longer there. Only when the “Deri Koza” blows, leaving no twig untouched, one can see the thousands of foot paths left there from the past, spanning in all directions of the Gornichovo mountains where the lumberjacks used to be like ants.

No axes cutting and no lumberjacks singing can be heard in the forest...

One early morning, lost in his own thoughts, 12-year-old Traiko and his old donkey were headed for the hills to collect firewood. Hanging on the saddle was an old, patched bag with a little bit of dry bread and some onions. Traiko has been coming and going for two days without taking a bite.

Wrapped in an old coat and wearing a pair of torn pigskin sandals, unconstrained, from time to time he prompted his little donkey to continue moving. Only his eyes glowed. One can see his strong determination reflected in his pale face.

From as long as he can remember he does not remember being at peace, not even for a single day. The pages of his life are filled only with violence and suffering. His father was persecuted by the Greek regime and, in order not to have the same fate as thousands of other Macedonians, one cool January evening two years ago, he kissed his three young children, grabbed his rifle and left to join the struggle.

Traiko, being the oldest, became the main provider.

There was no day that passed without fear and the dreadful drama that was played before him one night in his modest and wretched dwelling. Every time he dragged his feet towards his home he relived that dreaded winter night that he experienced a few days after his father left. That night the dog was barking in the yard. Someone knocked at the gate. His mother covered her children and struggled to calm them down. She could not hide her fear and anxiety.

The knocking continued and became stronger. There was a crash and one part of the gate fell down. Flashlight beams were seen in the dark. They entered the house. Three Monarcho-fascist gendarmes entered the bedroom and, with their beastly eyes, mocked the poor Macedonian woman. They said something to each other.

That's when she grabbed her children as if asking for help.

One of the gendarmeries grabbed her and attacked her, and in front her crying children, shaking in fear like leaves, he raped her. The other two did the same. Like rabid beasts they continued to take turns over the half-dead Macedonian woman until dawn.

Traiko broke into tears every time he recalled this tragedy.

When he arrived in the forest, Traiko stretched out on top of some tall green grass to forget his troubles. That's when something

happened that he would never forget. A group of partisans jumped him. When he realized they were partisans Traiko was so happy to see them that he was born again. He clasped his hands and waited for all of DAG's might to flow through his veins. He was ready to join them and fight...

"How would you like to be our courier, little pioneer?" one of them asked.

"Wouldn't it be better if I could come with you and join my father...?" Traiko replied.

"You are too young for that but the work you will be doing will serve the struggle a lot..." replied the partisan.

Traiko loaded his donkey and hid the newspapers and newsletters the partisans gave him in the saddle. They scheduled a new meeting and left him to do his delivery...

The next day three little children came out of the village. They were all crying... The two smaller ones, Iane and Mile, were holding Traiko's hands. On one hand they were sad because they were going to be separated and on the other they were happy because they were going to be saved. They were going to the People's Republics where they would attend school and learn things. They would live as children all dressed up in good clothing and be well fed. Every summer they would ride luxury cars and, along with their parents, would travel from Solun to Lerin for a summer vacation.

They would no longer have to fear the roar of the aero-planes like dogs above their heads, and the bombs exploding. They would return only after DAG descends from Vicho to Athens.

Traiko returned to the same place he met the partisans the day before. He whistled and two of the DAG partisans he met the day before appeared.

"These are my brothers. My mother told me to give them to you so that you can take them and send them to the People's Republics. I will stay and fight..." said Traiko.

He then kissed and hugged his brothers tightly and told them: “It will only be for a short time before you are back and when you return our father, a winner, will be with us... you will see”.

Several months passed and it was now fall. Every morning Traiko and his donkey made fresh tracks in the thick frost... and in the snow.

Traiko’s secret donkey express delivered thousands of documents. Some of them were glued to the water fountains, even images of comrades Zahariadis and Markos. They were put up during the night so that the police and gendarmes would find them early in the morning when they went out to wash up.

They tried to find out who was doing this but were unsuccessful. They would never find out who was breaching their Monarcho-fascist ring. Traiko was a conspirator and an excellent strategist. Either he or his donkey loaded with fire wood, would return home alone first and never the same way.

He even delivered letters from his own brothers. And there was no one happier than Traiko at the time...

K. Simidzhiev.

(NEPOKOREN, Number 17, December 10, 1948)

For democracy

From centuries of slavery,  
with strength and a roar  
on the Balkan gallery,  
young and old,  
dead and alive  
in a summer’s struggle  
a call to all  
the ensuing song  
in length  
- wide:



To arms  
for freedom,  
rights  
and peace!

Above the heads of lions,  
the battle flag  
flies  
and sings  
and swirls  
with a spinning landing!  
It angers  
and enrages  
the Fascist World...  
In the first rows  
without a break they arrive,  
queuing,  
queuing,  
from a wrinkled old man,  
to a bright young man  
and a bright young woman  
- from all of Hellas -  
from a village  
from a city,  
brother next to brother,  
tortured,  
ailing  
and naked  
with a rifle,  
with a shovel  
and a rod...

.....  
.....

The sons of the people,  
the masses  
- all our people -  
with this  
they threw themselves into battle...

.....  
.....

In the sea of fire  
The fascists burn  
and the Throne  
crumbles  
and falls.  
A new world is born.  
- A New Hellas -  
powerful and young  
- Democratic!

Paskal Paskalevski

(NEPOKOREN, number 17, December 10, 1948)

#### **10. Acting body of KOEM (June 19-20, 1949)**

Less than three months after NOF's 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress was convened, Zahariadis convened a general conference to be held at DAG and the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece's Headquarters. All Macedonian political and military personnel and members of KOEM were invited to attend.

Then on the night between June 19 and 20, 1949, the Macedonian activists who attended the general conference, surrounded by a Greek special unit with soldiers armed with automatic weapons, were asked to embrace Zahariadis's "proposed" draft resolution.

So, Zahariadis's imposed isolation of NOF from the People's Republic of Macedonia, mentioned earlier, began to turn into an open policy of hostilities against Yugoslavia, that is, against the People's Republic of Macedonia and its leaders.

That evening, as I already mentioned, I was again removed from the NOF leadership and from being a member of the all-Greek league of fighters for peace in the world. The reason for my removal: I had supposedly fallen under CPY influence, that is, I had fallen under

the influence of the “Skopje leaders”. I was immediately sent to the Arapades front in Gramos to fight as an ordinary fighter, where twice I managed to avoid my unsuccessfully planned physical liquidation.

At the same time, NEPOKOREN, the tiny organ of the Macedonian national liberation movement, now in the hands of Kochopoulos and Gusiopoulos, was turned into Zahariadis’s anti-Yugoslav and anti-Macedonian organ.

It is worthwhile mentioning at this point that when DAG withdrew from the front lines, the NEPOKOREN editorial office, consisting of several metal boxes, seemingly like it was the editorial office of the front lines, was left behind for the monarchist army to find and make it available to the Athens government propaganda machine.

## CHAPTER NINE

(A few characteristic moments)

### **1. The essence of the British intervention**

Churchill said:

“One late night, at that time, I sent a telegram to our General Skobi, who arrived in Athens with three thousand soldiers, in which I told him that he should not consider himself neutral in the struggle of the Greek parties, but on the contrary he should support Prime Minister Papandreou and not narrow himself down to only the Communists who are involved in the attacks. (NOTE: The December 1944 events had already begun in Athens and the local ELAS units had crushed Papandreou’s neo-fascists). This order was sent on December 6, 1944 around 2 am and arrived precisely in time. The British troops, with few units, moved forward and opened fire against the communists who attacked...” (See: “Life”, April 23, 1947.)

And here we gave our CPG leadership trying hard to convince us that the English armies, which came to Athens to stay, had not come here to interfere in Greece’s internal affairs but... to help with the internal tranquility and order...!

Paul Porter, a spokesman of the former US mission, said:

“In such cases, the British always cooperate with the domestic ruling classes. Buying the support of these classes by recognizing and confirming their rights to exploit the masses and relying on them to suppress the people with the help of their gendarmerie and the whip...!” (See: US “Colliers” journal, September 20, 1947.)

But, as is well-known, the people in Greece did not succumb to “the gendarmerie and the whip”, or to the cannons and the bombers. This struggle led to England’s bankruptcy and to the bankruptcy of a long string of pseudo-governments and exploiting tyrants. Then the Americans came to replace the English.

The English bitterly insisted that:

“The United States, support Greece’s economy and armaments; contribute to the training of the Greek army; and take Greek issues into defense at international forums and make them the main driving force of Greek politics...!” (See: “The Economist”, July 1947, article entitled “Greece at the blade’s edge”.)

And it is true, English bitterness became justifiable.

We will just say here that the “Greek issues on international forums”, as the English say, and the general Greek conscience, can be “handled” by foreigners, outsiders and strangers. The same is true of Greek internal affairs. And here we have foreigners, outsiders and strangers going everywhere and doing everything for Greece. Everything is dependent of these foreigners, outsiders and strangers. For example, foreign spies participate in the work of the Greek national defense council. Foreigners are continuously present at the Greek authority consultations on practically every issue. On top of that we have a foreigner managing the ministry of “national defense”. Foreigners are present at every Greek authority consultation on all issues. We also have a foreigner heading the Greek ministry of economy. Foreign trade is headed by a foreigner and he has allowed foreigners to become members of a committee that regulates foreign trade. A foreigner manages the Greek state treasury. A foreigner regulates the country’s budgetary issues and a foreigner regulates issues related to the wages and operation of state-owned enterprises. The Monarcho-Fascist army wears a foreign uniform, uses foreign weapons and is led by foreigners... etc... etc...

Are all these foreigners actually working for Greece...?

According to the “sold out” Athens government: “YES! The English and the Americans are our generous friends who help us with the restoration of our economy...!”

Even though it was announced that only fifty million dollars of the total US “aid” would be spent on the foreign sponsored Greek army in Gligsburg’s plan to rebuild the country, only the reorganization of the ports in Piraeus, Solun and Volos and some of the airports was

envisaged. So, it appears that the money spent was not really a matter of rebuilding the economy of the country, but a matter of turning Greece into a military base for the Anglo-Saxons. And here are the consequences of one-year's worth of US "aid":

Greece was constantly rolling deeper and deeper into inflation chaos. Wages and salaries were falling. The drakma was falling and, so far, had lost 50-75% of its value. The price indicator was constantly climbing. The most needed items were increasingly disappearing from the market and passed on to the hands of speculators and the black markets. About 60% of workers were unemployed. Misery among the people was constantly growing. And in parallel with this was the terror, more venerable than that of Hitler's, and all this was happening under the direction of foreigners, outsiders and strangers, "competent people", competent advisers. With the US Law on "Goodness", thousands of civil servants were thrown out on the street. Over 10,000 were people killed, 50,000 were put in jail and over 400,000 were already in prison and internment. Over half a million people, mostly farmers, were forced to become economic refugees. The military courts worked continuously and non-stop to exterminate people nationwide. The Greek government mobilized the gendarmes MAI, battalions of them into the "National Guard", and continued to mobilize new recruits in preparation for the "spring", "summer", etc., offensives in Thrace, Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Rumelia, Peloponnesus, Crete, Samos, Chios...

These are all facts which eloquently speak about what the Americans did in Greece. But they failed. They went bankrupt much faster than the English. They did not help Greece, they just pushed it further down the pit, much more than the English did. And yet, the Anglo-American installed Athens government, provocatively, continues singing the same old song:

"Our neighbours to the north are guilty... of interfering in our internal affairs...!"

Right from the start when the titanic struggle against the British and American invaders began inside Greece, the Macedonian people, as loyal comrades, stood side by side with the Greek people. They

resolutely set off and marched beside them in a long and difficult joint liberation struggle...

And here today, after receiving help from the Americans for a year, the traitorous, domestic clique is still helpless and the liberation movement is stronger than ever. The American architects in Athens were not at all happy about this and began looking at new ways to approach the problem. The foreign advisors in Athens began to carefully prepare a new military operation and named it “Campaign 1948”, but that campaign too was unsuccessful. Their “glorious” retreat, which ended their start in Epirus, demonstrated how “Campaign 1948” was going to end.

The liberation movement at the time was invincible and I had absolutely no reason to doubt Zahariadis’s ability to lead the Party and DAG. I couldn’t have known that later, by treacherous tactics and strategies, he was going to destroy DAG and the people’s revolution. By opposing the policy of national unity and by not giving the people what they really wanted, to live freely and without the “patronage” of international imperialist agents, he weakened the struggle and allowed the shameless foreign intervention to take hold and grow stronger.

At the time when I wrote the following I did not know that: Believing in the revolution the men and women in NOF and AFZH, as well as all the Macedonian people in the liberated and non liberated territories, decisively jumped into the struggle fighting side by side with the heroic Greek people. Let national unity be expanded and strengthened on the basis of Law No. 3 of the Democratic Government for amnesty. Let the misguided Macedonian people see that they serve a world of betrayal and blood, they serve those who organize their physical extermination and let them come to us – a world of victims who struggle for democracy and national rights, within an independent and democratic Greece.

The Macedonian heroes of DAG: As fighters, let them learn how to shoot a rifle, a machine gun, a mortar or cannon. As military cadres, let them learn the art of fighting. All to arms and fight with all our might! Force the stubborn Anglo-Saxon neo-colonialists to admit

that the good old times, when they easily subjugated peoples by giving them “generous” patronages, or “help” as they call it nowadays, are over forever...! (Introduction, NEPOKOREN, Number 7, March 20, 1948)

## **2. Statutory Acts enacted by DAG Supreme Headquarters**

August 10, 1948, was the first anniversary of DAG Supreme Headquarters enacting Acts number 1 and 2 with statutory orders to destroy the Greek reactionary police and other reactionary security services and give power to the people in the liberated territories.

At the same time we Macedonians were recognized as Macedonians with the right to speak and learn our Macedonian mother tongue in school. We were free to basically develop our national culture.

The statutory orders freed all Macedonian farmers and workers to own and operate their farms and businesses, free from their masters, just like the Greeks. All issues including people’s health, social welfare, children’s education, product development, etc., were to be settled by the local and village governments. The highest local government in the village was the General Assembly. People’s boards were elected by a general election and, if members did not perform accordingly, the General Assembly had the right to expel them.

There was also a District Board chosen by the people to manage district affairs.

This justice for the people by the people gave our (Macedonian) people the opportunity to tackle all their problems, from the smallest to the most serious, right in their village and without suffering, without arguing and without having to run to the authorities in the cities.

Women became equal to men and rose as comrades in all things including the army, the people’s government and business.

The people’s government tackled the agrarian question in the most equitable manner. The many thousands of fields in which people



worked but did not own were divided up and given to those who did not own their own fields. (NEPOKOREN, number 12, August 23, 1948)

### **3. Behind the scenes activities**

There were also organized teams, consisting mostly of old people, whose job was to harvest the grain growing in the fields and supply the struggle. One such team, consisting of 52 white-bearded men, 46 women and 50 ox carts, led by Comrade Krste Mangov, chairman of the people's district committee for Kostur Region, was sent to harvest Manakidis's (Elmi Bei's) fields in Kostur Region. The harvesters were accompanied by a unit from the People's Militia to protect them in case they were attacked.

The harvest was expected to be completed in one night as the harvesters worked very hard in silence under the light of the moon knowing that their work was invaluable to the struggle. They cut the grain and immediately loaded it directly onto the wagons to be able to run at a moment's notice.

By dawn the entire field was harvested and 5,200 oki (about 10,000 kilos) of grain was delivered to Gramos to feed the victorious fighters...

Another example:

There was much praise for the people of Shtrkovo, Lerin Region, from the Provisional Democratic Government's Ministry of Internal Affairs for their part in harvesting grain and donating it to the struggle, a gift for the DAG fighters in Gramos. "This village is an example of how every village in free Greece should be..."

But, no one had to say that to us, we Macedonians very well knew that every village in (Greek occupied) Macedonia was like Shtrkovo.

Our (Macedonian) people, male and female, young and old, as a whole were dedicated to the struggle and, being thrown in the struggle together with the Greek people, were fully confident in

DAG's heroic strength and were completely devoted to the beloved General Markos, the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece and to NOF, being fully confident that the ultimate victory would be ours.

With this ultimate victory, paid for with their suffering and blood, our people were certain they would achieve their rights and earn their national and social freedom..." (NEPOKOREN, number 12, August 23, 1948.)

#### **4. My comments**

After eight years had passed, in 1956, while interned in the Kazakh capital Alma-Ata, I wrote the following:

As leaders in their village Shtrkovo, brothers Pando and Mihailo Kostovski contributed greatly by supplying DAG with food, warm clothing and bed covers.

The provisional democratic government noted their contribution to DAG with a special announcement. Pando was also given a "Government commendation" for being President of the village people's board.

Pando was then killed...

After that Shtrkovo, headed by Mihailo, remained as an avant-garde village to the end.

Today, July 1956, Mihailo is located somewhere in Poland, thrown away and forgotten by all those who, of course, were obliged not to forget him...

Another example:

Bogoia from the village Medovo in Prespa was well-known to everyone. No one passed through Medovo without visiting him at his house. Everything that Bogoia had, his property and his children, he gave to the struggle, to the common Macedonian and Greek people's liberation struggle.

While collecting materials and supplies such as underwear, sweaters, socks and covers for the DAG fighters, an AFZH activist, as she was telling the story herself, did not know how much Bogoia had already given to the struggle and went to him and asked him to donate something. Without saying a word, Bogoia stopped to think what else he could give. He thought for only a second before he reached out for his scissors and cut off half of his bed cover, the only thing that he still had which was used to cover himself and his wife, and gave it to her.

The “story” of how Bogoia enlisted his two daughters in DAG’s ranks was even carried by “BILTEN”, the DAG Supreme Headquarters newspaper.

One day he showed up at DAG unit headquarters in Besfina, Prespa Region, with the two girls, and said to the officer on duty:

“Take them! They are my gift to the struggle!”

And today, July 1956, the same Bogoia is somewhere in Poland, sick and without his daughters, they were both killed during the struggle. And like Mihailo, Bogoia too was thrown away and forgotten by all those who, of course, were obliged not to forget him...

And those are not the only two who were “thrown away and forgotten”! How many more? One can only imagine!

I found out about this from letters that I received from Poland. As a Macedonian I was greatly offended and finished my writing as follows:

Those Macedonians who knew what they wanted and were prepared to fight for it, and fought for it, i.e. the most conscious and revolutionary Macedonians, were isolated by the Greek authorities and sent to prison, to the Greek island concentration camps to be destroyed. Those conscious and revolutionary Macedonians, who left Greece and were drifting in the world as political refugees, were also isolated and conditions were created for them so that they felt

lonely, rejected, forgotten and lost in the world... This was done to destroy their moral spirit and leave them alive to walk the earth as living corpses...

Those Macedonians who felt less Macedonian and were loyal to the Greek cause were supported. The janissaries among us not only enjoyed full support from the CPG leadership but were also distinguished and rewarded by being appointed to leadership and managerial positions which allegedly served the Macedonian people...

Today, as I write these lines, I know Bogoia, the great little man, just like Mihailo Kostovski and thousands of other Macedonians like him, managed to save himself from the jurisdiction and “concerns” of the Greek leadership “comrades” and returned to die in the free part of our homeland (Republic of Macedonia). When Bogoia was repatriated his lungs were ruined. He had contracted tuberculosis and was in the last stages when he died in the Bitola hospital. Mihailo Kostovski, to this day, is okay. He got his old age pension and lives peacefully in Skopje...

## **5. Villagers suffering**

The drama played by the Americans, the “white terror”, the persecutions that plagued our country..., clearly showed that there was no trace of democracy left in Greece. Not only were the reactionaries, with American help, slaughtering and interning people by the thousands, they were doing it indiscriminately putting fear in all including the very young and very old. Fear of being killed forced everyone including the very young children and the very old men and women to leave and abandon their native villages and towns, rendering them desolate. There were many and different ways of putting pressure on these people to leave. Over 500,000 villagers left their homes in the village and ended up in the cities homeless and hungry. There are no words to describe the tragedy committed by the Monarcho-Fascist regime against these people. In Voden Region alone, over 40,000 people were evicted. The majority of them were Macedonians. Thousands were also expelled from Lerin and Kostur Regions.

Their life was terrible to say the least.

Over 300 villagers were forced to sleep practically on top of each other in a school in Kostur. The situation was similar or even worse in Rupishta and Kailari. There was no law that stopped these fascist criminals from tormenting our people. We should have never allowed the people to flee their native villages. They should not have been sent to the cities. Our people should have resolutely fought united for their return to their homes in the villages. None of them should have been sent anywhere where the Monarcho-fascists could have taken advantage of them. These acts were not committed by accident, they were planned measures designed to remove the villagers from the environments where they could rebel and fight for their independence and for democracy.

We need to stop the exodus... (NEPOKOREN, number 7, March 20, 1948)

## **6. Life in the prisons**

Part of our people, the best of our sons and daughters are slowly being exterminated in the prisons on the islands of death. The Monarcho-fascists, through various schemes intrigues and trumped up charges, have thrown them in jail only because they are Democrats.

Life in the prison camps was very bad. The prisoners were the recipients of all the American-fascist rage and frustration caused by the struggle. The prisoners were examples that showed that no basic human rights existed in this country and human culture was shaken to its core.

Here is what a person from the village Zupanishta told us a few days after he came from there:

“Over 8,000 tried and untried prisoners were serving sentences in the “Iura” prison on Siros Island, surrounded with barbed wire. We were guarded by about 600 soldiers, dogs well-chosen for their fascist ways of dealing with us. Two out of seven days they kept us hungry. They forced us to carry 60 to 80 oki stones from one place

to another. Those who couldn't do it were beaten badly. Many died from the abuse. They forced us to build walls and immediately tear them down. They did everything they could to us to torment us without repercussion on their part.

But, even though they suffered badly, the prisoners believed that the ultimate victory was going to be theirs...!

This was the promised paradise, Truman's Garden of Eden, where their bloody democracy was flourishing. But the prisoners knew that these "criminals" will be destroyed. They believed that the Macedonian people would not forget their own children who have been interned in these prisons and eventually would help them by every means possible.

They will never forget their own children... and their tormentors... (NEPOKOREN, number 7, March 20, 1948)

## **7. Renewal of our villages**

There were 38 people's boards elected by democratic means in Kostur Region. These boards practically and resolutely took on all basic problems that the people were concerned with. They even took on construction projects in the liberated villages and built about twenty bridges with the help of over 750 volunteers. Over 22 km's of road was fixed with about 700 volunteers. They even took on water supply projects and built over 10 public drinking fountains, with about 60 volunteers.

In the village German in Prespa, Lerin Region, for example, 2 bridges and two fountains were built and 200 metres of road were widened for cars to travel.

In the village Robi in Prespa, Lerin Region, a 200 metre stretch of road was built to accommodate automobile traffic.

In the village Bukovik in Prespa, Lerin Region, several irrigation ditches were dug.

The schools in practically every village, that needed repair, were repaired... (NEPOKOREN, number 6, February 20, 1948)

## **8. A people's hospital**

Living proof of what people can do when they are determined to live free and hold power in their own hands was the founding of a people's hospital in one of the free villages.

The Lerin and Kostur Region people's district boards helped the local people build the hospital, with much joy and enthusiasm. Everyone, rich and poor, helped as much as they could to acquire everything that was needed from beds to lighting fixtures and quickly made the hospital operational.

The hospital was officially opened on February 5, 1948, with ceremonies and in the presence of Minister Dr. Kolakis and other ministers and representatives of the people's government and organizations. Many ordinary people also attended the opening ceremony.

Our people's hospital was both modest and impressive. Everything was clean and bright. The house that it was located in was tall and hygienic. There were 25 beds with all the necessary covers. The beds and tables were donated by the people and the cooperative workshops. There were 10 nurses available to the hospital, three of them, one director and a doctor were present and working at all times.

The Democratic Army helped the hospital with medical supplies. The hospital also included a pathology department and a medical clinic.

This was the first step the people took to safeguard their own health, independent of the fascist government. This was also another blow against fascism, which now was fighting tooth and nail to destroy the people... (NEPOKOREN, number 6, February 20, 1948)

## 9. Conclusions

About three hundred thousand Macedonian people, organized in NOF from the youngest to the oldest, were actively involved in this titanic struggle between the democratic forces of Greece and the domestic and international reactionaries.

Three and a half thousand Macedonian women dedicated their lives to building fortifications on Mount Vicho under enemy artillery shelling and air bombardments. There were thousands of Macedonian women who supplied the DAG fighters with food and ammunition carried in bags and sacks around their waist or on their backs, from Lerin and Kostur to the Gramos front. There were also Macedonian women, and even young girls, mobilized into DAG through several mobilizations who, after a short preparation, were sent to the front to fight in the frontlines. Tens of thousands of Macedonian children were evacuated alone and without their parents and sent to friendly European socialist countries.

The first woman to be sentenced to death by a Greek military court and executed was a Macedonian. Her name was Mirka Ginova, an AFZH activist during this struggle.

The men who served in DAG's ranks from the villages in the border territory were all Macedonian. More than ten thousand fighters who fell at the front were Macedonians.

According to official statistics from the 1940 and 1951 Greek censuses, the Macedonian population in 179 Macedonian villages dropped in half, while 46 other Macedonian villages were completely devastated during the Greek Civil War and were not even mentioned in the 1951 census.

Over sixty thousand Macedonians were forced to flee to Yugoslavia and other European socialist countries.

The only people that experienced similar devastation, compared to the Macedonian people, were the Spanish and Vietnamese people. The Spanish people fought epic battles against fascism and the Vietnamese people fought epic battles against imperialism and neo-



colonialism. During the Greek Civil War, the Macedonian fighters represented about half of DAG's effective forces. At its peak DAG numbered about 40,000 fighters. And if we compare this to the total Macedonian and Greek population, it turns out that, percentage wise, seventeen or eighteen times more Macedonians fought in the war than Greeks.

It was one of the most massive revolutionary movements in the recent history of our people...

## **10. File Peiov's Bapchor**

"Everything is forgotten... But my parents, relatives, friends, our customs, songs, dances, weddings, my native Bapchor, hanging from the chest of Vicho Mountain, is never forgotten, is not lost. Like the sun in the sky that warms the earth, it warms my soul. The two or three storey houses built with stone and mortar were as white as the snow on Vicho. But most beautiful of all were the green meadows around the four rivers with clear water which made the women look like fairies... And now Bapchor is erased from the map, it is all black and desolate. There were 320 families living there before the war and now there is not a soul alive, the people have been scattered all over the world. Those who were left alive fled to the Republic of Macedonia, Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Canada, the United States of America and Australia.

Oh, you, poor Bapchor...!

Here, in Perth, there are about 105 families. There are 55 in Manchester and 82 in Melbourne. All those who fled are still alive. But I have a hard time believing that what happened is true. It seems very strange to me that the people of Bapchor are spread all over the world...!"

(At this point File stopped talking, got up and went to look for his flute.)

"Forgive me," he said, "when I was young I often spoke with my flute!"

He then continued with the legend of Bapchor.

“Oh Vicho, old Vicho,  
you know, Vicho,  
the kind of village Bapchor was,  
and the many people it had...  
Oh Vicho, old Vicho,  
you are a tall mountain,  
that can see into the distance,  
look for your people  
where they are scattered.  
Oh Vicho...!”

File felt there was much more to say about Bapchor when he asked:

“Do you want me to sing the song I composed about Bapchor?”

We then listened to the song old man File Peiov sang about his native village and, yes, it was full of passion, mercy and great pain...

“Do you know how many people from Bapchor died in the last war...? I have written down their names here... look, everyone is here in my list, everyone...” he said and began to read. I began to count them.

“1. Petre R. Tsigul, born in 1915, died on May 2, 1947 in Neveska, served in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.

2. Iovan Per. Bogdanov, born in 1924, was killed on March 29, 1948, at Kolumb while serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.

3. Giorgi Per. Bogdanov, born in 1924, (twin brother to Iovan), died one year after Iovan, on February 14, 1949 in Lerin, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.

4. Sotir Per. Bogdanov, born in 1929, was killed on January 10, 1949, in the battle for Larisa, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.

5. Vasil T. Bogdanov, born in 1912, was killed on August 18, 1949, fighting in Prespa, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
6. Strati T. Bogdanov, born in 1914, was killed December 15, 1948, during the battle for Negosh, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
7. Stati Kume Kopov, born in 1926, was killed in December 1948, at Vicho, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
8. Vasil Iovan Sarin, born in 1924, was killed on February 25, 1947, fighting at Sheshtovo, serving with the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
9. Mitre Tanas Sarin, born in 1926, was killed October 22, 1948, at Vicho, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
10. Blaze Tanas Sarin, (brother of Mitre) born in 1929, died on February 20, 1947 in Gramos, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
11. Boris Peno Zaikov, born in 1924, was killed on August 10, 1948, fighting at Hasia, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
12. Vasil Mume Grkin, born in 1926, was killed on October 15, 1948, shot at Sheshtevska Buka, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
13. Boris St. Donev, born in 1914, died on February 14, 1949, in the battle for Lerin, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
14. Kosta Ris. Endriov, born in 1939, died on September 12, 1949, in Gramos, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
15. Tanas K. Manov, born in 1927, was killed on October 11, 1948, at Malimadi, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
16. Tanas Iovan Krstev, born in 1929, was killed on January 18, 1948, at Kaimakchalan, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
17. Vasil Iovan Krstev, (Tanas's older brother) born in 1927, was killed on March 20, 1948, in Gramos, serving with the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.

18. Risto T. Belchev, born in 1924, died April 26, 1948, at Shestevska Buka, serving with the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
19. Tanas Iovan Ognenov, born in 1914, died on June 6, 1948, in Gramos.
20. Mitre Iovan Ognenov, born in 1923, died on March 20, 1949, in Hasia, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
21. Kole Tanas Sternov, born in 1923, died on May 5, 1948, in Gramos, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
22. Mihale Koste Kochov, born in 1922, was killed on August 5, 1949, in Hasia, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
23. Georgi Tanas Hanzol, born in 1913, died on March 2, 1949, in Kaimakchalan.
24. Stase Naume Rimpalov, born in 1929, was killed on November 2, 1948, in the battle for Konitsa, serving in the 10<sup>th</sup> brigade.
25. Iovan Kole Stoichev, born in 1921, was killed on September 15, 1948, in Vicho Mountain, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
26. Nome Risto Peikov, born in 1918, was killed on March 16, 1949, in Gramos, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
27. Sotir Vasil Peikov, born in 1928, died on July 28, 1948, in Gramos, serving in the 10<sup>th</sup> brigade.
28. Vasil Stoiche Iankov, born in 1924, died on May 14, 1948, in Gramos, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
29. Tanas Kole Palasin, born in 1922, was killed on August 8, 1948, in Gramos, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
30. Risto Mitre Sopov, born in 1923, was killed on May 12, 1948, in Gramos, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.

31. Naum Tanas Risin, born in 1925, died on April 1, 1948, in Hasia, serving in the 10<sup>th</sup> brigade.
32. Iovan Lade Milenkoy, born in 1919, was killed on July 17, 1948, in Vicho, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
33. Iovan Stase Kochov, born in 1924, was killed date unknown. Where he was buried unknown.
34. Stase Mitre Enoriev, born in 1925, died on August 8, 1948, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade in the cavalry.
35. Risto Mikali Borshov, born in 1923, was killed on March 10, 1948, in Gramos, serving in the 10<sup>th</sup> brigade.
36. Lecha Mikali Borshova, (Risto's sister born two years after Risto) born in 1925, died in 1948 day unknown, in Vicho, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
37. Giorgi Iovan Margin, born in 1924, was killed on October 10, 1948, in Kostur, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
38. Iote Tome Kiandov, born in 1914, was killed on May 15, 1948, in Kaimakchalan, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
39. Iovan Mano Manov, born 1926, was killed on November 8, 1947, in Gramos, serving in the 104<sup>th</sup> brigade.
40. Vasil Stase Kuluvet, born in 1910, died on February 15, 1947, in Kostur, serving in the 10<sup>th</sup> shock brigade.
41. Kuzo Mitre Kuluvet, born in 1924, died, date and place of burial unknown.
42. Kosta Mitre Kuluvet, (Kuzo's twin brother), born 1924, died in 1948, day unknown, in Vicho, serving in the 14<sup>th</sup> brigade.
43. Mikali Trpin, born in 1914, was killed on July 16, 1947, in Vicho, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.

44. Iovan Giorgi Dimkov, born in 1923, was killed on the 16<sup>th</sup> in 1947, month unknown, in Vicho, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
45. Georgi Nume Endriev, born in 1924, died on July 13, 1948, in Hasia, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
46. Mano Risto Manov, born in 1924, was killed on July 13, 1948, in Gramos, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
47. Tanas Risto Manov, born in 1926, died on August 15, 1948, at Konitsa, serving in the 105<sup>th</sup> brigade.
48. Kocha Ilo Peiov, born in 1929, died February 14, 1949, in the battle for Lerin, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
49. Slavka Mile Rimpalova, born in 1925, was killed on December 15, 1948, in Vicho, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
50. Dosta Stase Delianova, born in 1914, was killed on December 12, 1948, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
51. Krisa Nume Irina, born in 1924, was killed on September 22, 1948, in Malimadi, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
52. Elena Kosta Pop-Vasileva, born in 1924, was killed on December 15, 1948, place unknown, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
53. Lisa Mane Pachakoska, born in 1926, was killed on August 1, 1949, in Prespa, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
54. Vasil Kole Tanin, born in 1923, died in 1946 as a courier, in Vicho Mountain.
55. Tanas Kuzo Gelevichin, born in 1925, died in 1946 as a courier, in Lagen.
56. Georgi Risto Kanzev, born in 1921, was killed on December 15, 1948, during the battle for Negush, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.

57. Iovan Kosta Stavre, born in 1930, died on March 20, 1949, in Bukata.
58. Risto Mitre Sternov, born in 1923, died on December 14, 1948, in Bukata.
59. Iana Kole Dimova, born in 1902, was killed by a fascist bomb, in Bapchor.
60. Stasa Kole Dimova, born in 1926, also died by a fascist bomb in 1947, in Bapchor.
61. Todora Risto Milena, born in 1887, died 1947 from a bomb.
62. Risto Mile Ognenov, born in 1885, killed in 1946 by a German bullet, in Bachchor.
63. Naum Iovan Vishin, born in 1906, killed in 1946 by a German bullet.
64. Kata Tome Zisova, died in 1946, in Pozdovishta.
65. Vasil Iovan Enrikov, died in 1946, in Pozdovishta.
66. Risto Vasil Iovkov, died in 1946, in Pozdovishta.
67. Dosta Risto Iovkova, born in 1924, died in Bapchor.
68. Lena Tanas Doneva, born in 1925, died on May 25, 1948, in Vicho, serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> brigade.
69. Kosta Risto Martin,
70. Kole Kuze Karshov,
71. Tanas Iankov ...

How many more should I read? Let us now say something about Bapchor through a song!” he said and began to play his flute.

“What a village Bapchor was, there are no tears...”

(The above text was published in the weekly issue of Nova Makedonija on May 14, 1972, without the name of its author. I decided to publish it here because it has the strength of an authentic document.)



## CHAPTER TEN

### 1. Political acrobatics

The Macedonian mother tongue, well-preserved over the ages, became the key rallying factor for unifying the subjugated Macedonian people in seeking their freedom. And as the Macedonian printed word began to spread far and wide it became the most effective driving force in the mobilization of the Macedonian people in the struggle for their liberation.

By taking away the Macedonian people's native language in Greek occupied Macedonia through Greek chauvinistic policies, the Greek bourgeoisie tried to strip the Macedonian people of their key rallying factor in their attempt to liberate themselves. By taking away their language their aim was to turn them into a completely oppressed and subjugated people.

But there were times, mainly due to external pressures, when Greek governments were forced to recognize the Macedonian people:

One time they recognized them as a Bulgarian minority when about 95,000 Macedonians were expelled to Bulgaria on the basis of the Greek-Bulgarian "voluntary population exchange" convention.

Another time was when they recognized them as a Yugoslav minority in accordance with a respective agreement between Greece and Yugoslavia.

A third time was when the Macedonian people were recognized as a Slavo-Macedonian minority. This was at the time when Greece, as a member of the League of Nations and a signatory to the Convention for the Protection of Minorities, and in accordance with the Seville Agreement, was forced to begin preparations for opening Macedonian schools. The Greek Ministry of Education established a special Commission which, among others, included Papazahariou, Lazarou and Shaikdzhis, people who knew the Macedonian language and who apparently were of Macedonian origin. These people created a Macedonian primer. The book was published in 1925 in Athens. The text in it was neither Serbian nor Bulgarian.

The text was written in the Macedonian language using the Lerin-Bitola dialect but not with Cyrillic letters. The text was written using the Latin alphabet. The book was called “Abecedar”. Here is a sample text from the “Abecedar”:

### LENKA, THE BAD GIRL

Petre and Giorgi went to the field to play with their friends. Petre’s little sister Lenka wanted to play with them. Petre would not let her. Lenka cried, yelled and threw herself to the ground and began to kick. Her dress became dirty.

Her grandmother, who at the time was in the barn feeding the oxen hay, heard her crying. She ran to her, picked her up, brushed the dirt off her dress and gave her a red apple. Lenka stopped crying and began to eat the apple... (See May 1962, Testimonies: International Agreements and Bilateral Conventions between Greece and Bulgaria and Greece and Yugoslavia, article by Hristo Andonovski.)

But, as the “Abecedar” was being prepared, the bourgeois governments in Belgrade and Sofia reacted sharply and condemned the Greek government’s initiative. The Serbians vigorously demanded that the language of instruction for the Macedonians be Serbian. The Bulgarians demanded that it be Bulgarian.

The Greek government, however, refused to be influenced by either and used their “opposition” to not open any Macedonian schools. All copies of the “Abecedar” were destroyed...

There was also the series of articles entitled “Minorities” published by the Athens newspaper “Eleftheria” from October 9 to 12, in 1954, in which Greek publicist Dioniskos Romas wrote about this Greek attempt to give the Macedonians minority rights, that is, to open schools for Macedonian children so that they could learn in their native language. This is what Romas wrote: “As was generally agreed upon at the First Balkan Congress in Athens in 1929, the Slavo-Macedonian minority would have their own schools, just like the Turks, Vlachs, and Jews. After several discussions, the Greek government accepted and ordered a commission to compile books for the four lower grades for the Slavo-Macedonian minority schools

in the new areas (newly annexed Greek occupied Macedonia), of course, in the Slavo-Macedonian linguistic idiom. But then, both the Bulgarians and Serbians protested and demanded that the books be written in the Bulgarian and Serbian language respectively. It was completely unacceptable for us, quite naturally. For we had no intention of becoming the bearers of their propaganda...”  
(Andonovski)

## **2. Imperialist division of Macedonia**

Regarding the resolution on the national question, the following was proclaimed during the CPG's 3<sup>rd</sup> Extraordinary Congress, 26.12. - 3/12/1924:

“...the significance of the struggle against national oppression is very strong. The oppressed nationalities, subjugated by the Balkan bourgeois, belong mostly to the agricultural social composition and the struggle for their national liberation is at the same time a struggle for poor agricultural masses against foreign wholesalers and capitalists.

The only front for workers, peasants and oppressed nationalities in the fight against the oppressive bourgeoisie, and the right to true self-determination of nationalities, is the unification of the Balkan peoples in a Balkan Federation, and that is the basic slogan of the Communist Party of Greece.

The CPG consistently strives to implement the Macedonian and Thracian question following this line...

The imperialist wars in the Balkans and the peace treaties that followed not only did not resolve but, on the contrary, they further complicated the national question in Macedonia and Thrace. After many years of being subject to the warring battles of the bourgeoisie from neighbouring countries, many of the people of these two countries were exterminated in the long-standing wars. On top of that they were economically devastated and then divided between Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece. This division of Macedonia and Thrace was carried out by the political and military forces of the opposing Balkan bourgeois which supported the imperialistic

interests of the Western European powers. By this division the Western European Imperialists created small and weak nations and secured their bases for their conquests and counterrevolutionary plans in the Balkans and the Middle East. By this division the Great Powers not only enslaved the Macedonian people by putting them under the yoke of the opposing bourgeoisie, but at the same time intensified the antagonism and rhetoric between them (bourgeoisie) and intimidated them with the threat of new wars...

The danger of war becomes even greater with the intensified antagonism between the imperialist Great Powers themselves, for hegemony over the Balkans and the Black Sea, as well as with their plans to turn the Balkans into a base for military operations against the Soviet Union...

Despite all the Balkan bourgeoisie efforts to cause cleavage in the Macedonian and Thracian people, sowing and cultivating national hatred in their midst, both of these nations were constantly striving and struggling to get rid of their foreign yoke...

The Bulgarian chauvinist bourgeoisie never stopped trying to infiltrate Macedonian organizations and use the Macedonian people's liberation struggle to their advantage by sabotaging it. The Yugoslav and Greek bourgeoisie, on the other hand, employed policies of forced deportation and denationalization, as well as by depositing colonists and settlers on Macedonian territories in order to 'solve' the Macedonian National Question and present this solution to the world.

Even before they acquired their parts of Macedonia and Thrace the Greek bourgeoisie openly showed their hypocritical character when they declared that they were there to 'liberate their enslaved brothers'...

With their adventurous imperialist politics in Asia Minor and their shameful exchange of populations, the Greek bourgeoisie managed to uproot more than a million people from their homeland so that they could expediently colonize parts of Macedonia and Thrace (they occupied). They used violent and inhuman methods to strengthen their power and have future recruits in the wars they were

preparing against their opponents and use these people as cannon fodder.” (Rizospastis, February 6 and 7, 1925, CPG, official texts, Volume 1, PLE edition, 1964, pp. 514-516.)

I decided to include the above document in this book because life has confirmed that there is truth in it and this “truth” is valid even today. The ever present interests of the foreign-bourgeois forces are preventing the Balkan people from coming together. And we know why. If the Balkan people unite it will be the end of dubious, bourgeois interests and the end of Great Power plans for hegemony over the Balkan states. By enforcing Macedonia’s division they have created an “obstacle” for the unification of the Balkan nations...

### **3. Chauvinistic rage**

It is well-known that the so-called “voluntary population exchange” Agreements signed between Bulgaria and Greece and between Turkey and Greece were well placed international actions committed by Greece to change the ethnological composition of the population in the Greek (occupied) part of Macedonia in favour of the Greek element.

And we, of course, know exactly how this was done. The Greek authorities forcefully expelled the Macedonian people who resisted the Greek occupation the most to Bulgaria. I mentioned something about this earlier in my book, especially the testimony given by the French Colonel Lamush. As a member of the Commission for Minorities in the League of Nations, Lamush, in his report to this Commission during the November 10, 1928 session, stressed that the 1913 and 1919 peace agreements made the situation in Macedonia even more difficult because the majority of the people in these regions are Macedonian and are under the rule of regimes that are hostile to them. These regimes are proving to be even harsher than the Turks who never tried to strip their language, culture and national sense. In addition, Greece has turned the “voluntary” exchange of populations, envisaged by the 1919 convention, into “a forcible” eviction of Macedonians...

By his comments, this League of Nations high official unveiled Greece’s true face to the world. Greece being an English semi-

colony in England's embrace, however, found no obstacles in strengthening its "national interests" in Macedonia. And forced evictions of Macedonians from Greece became a common practice which has not ceased to this day.

I should mention at this point that Greece's population exchange with Turkey was not based on an "ethnic" basis, but on a religious one. The Greek authorities expelled Macedonians from Macedonia because they were Muslims and accepted people from Turkey because they were Christians. Included among the Christians from Turkey were Turks, Armenians and others with absolutely no connection to Greece.

The Macedonian people too have no linguistic, ethnic or historic connection to Greece. They are a separate and unique Slavic speaking nation with its own traditions, customs and culture. Unfortunately the Greek chauvinists refuse to recognize them as such and hypocritically declare that the Macedonian people are part of the Greek people and that only Greeks exist in Macedonia! Of course, these are lies so that Greece can make claims to Macedonian lands. If these Macedonians do not exist then why are they being belittled, persecuted and exiled en masse?

As mentioned earlier, if Macedonians do not exist then why did Sklavenas stand before the Greek Parliament and say:

"If one happens to pass through Macedonia, especially in those districts inhabited by compact masses of Macedonians, they will certainly feel the extraordinary pressure put on them. The rights to have their own schools, to use their Macedonian language and to practice their own customs, have been strictly forbidden..."

Even though Sklavenas said all this he did not say everything.

He did not say that the Greek chauvinists enacted a law to change all the names in Macedonia from Macedonian to Greek in order to erase everything that was Macedonian including the people's names, the names of villages, cities, mountains, rivers, and so on. This law was published in the official Greek government gazette "Efimeris tis kivernisseos", number 332 dated November 21, 1926. The new

Greek names were then published in the same official gazette, that is, “Efimeris tis kivernisseos”, number 346. (Peiov, cited work, p. 100. Lazar Moïsov, regarding the question of the Macedonian national minority in Greece, Skopje 1954, p. 231.)

In a footnote on pages 235 and 236 of the same book mentioned above, in connection with the attitude of the Greek authorities towards the Macedonians, Lazar Moïsov quoted the Englishman V. Hill saying:

“The Greeks persecute not only the living Slavs (Macedonians), who at one time they called “Bulgarophiles”, and another time “Slavophones”, but also the dead Slavs (Macedonians), whose graves are destroyed all throughout Macedonia. They don’t give them any peace even in their graves. They have wiped out all Slavic inscriptions on the crosses and removed their bones from their graves and burned them...” (Peiov, 204)

In 1929, Eleftherios Venizelos’s Liberal government surpassed all the chauvinistic rage of previous Greek governments when it enacted a “special” law for making it a “criminal offence” and high treason to recognize the right to self-determination until secession from Greece. This was done to target the communists and their ideologies on the right to self-determination for other nationalities living in Greece.

This law was enacted to end all talks about the self-determination of the Macedonians who... did not exist! Obviously, it was a special law directed against the Communist Party of Greece and against the Macedonians, who from then on had no right to express themselves as Macedonians.

The fascist dictatorship that came to power on August 4, 1936, went even further. It completely banned the use of the Macedonian language everywhere, even in the privacy of the home. I visited my native village during the summer of 1938 or 1939, and on several tables I found papers in the church and village café with orders ordering the Macedonian people to:

“Speak Greek!” and

“Foreign languages are prohibited!”

But the Greek authorities had no problem with Turks, Vlachs, Albanians and Roma (Gypsies) openly speaking their languages in the market in Lerin. On top of that all kinds of foreign languages (English, French, etc) were taught everywhere in the respective schools all throughout the Greek state. Only the Macedonian language was banned.

Another benefit that resulted from banning the Macedonian language, which we should not forget to mention, is the financial benefits for the Greek state, a huge, new source of revenue, a new way of robbing the Macedonian people with fines because they were caught speaking to each other in Macedonian, they only language they knew.

But that was not all. Every Greek person everywhere in Macedonia, of their own will and at any moment, had the right to accuse any Macedonian of anything which could then land them in the prison camps in the Aegean islands. And, there was a lot of abuse!

Evening classes were opened for the older generation of Macedonians, both men and women, who spoke Greek very badly or did not speak Greek at all. After a day's hard work people were ordered to attend evening school. Those who missed classes were fined and even sent to jail.

#### **4. In the deep night, dawn is born**

The following is a summery of a longer story of an event that took place one evening at one of those evening classes. Any similarities to an actual event or actual people are purely coincidental...

He usually stopped working by the end of the day but this day Mile decided to continue working until it was dark and could no longer see out in the open. It was pitch black when he returned to the village. After passing through the village square he noticed the light inside the school. The evening classes for adults were still ongoing...



“They are tormenting the people! Those evildoers...!” he said to himself.

That same evening it had rained hard and the dust on the road had turned into sticky mud. Walking through the mud with his pigskin slippers getting soft and soggy, Mile stepped up his pace to get away from the school as fast as possible. With the school behind him, Mile turned into the familiar lane and was home.

But, before he had a chance to get inside the policeman Mitsotakis jumped in front of him. “What the devil is this guy doing here?” Mile thought.

“Hey you! Why aren’t you in school, eh?!” yelled the policeman.

“I don’t go to school!” responded Mile in broken Greek.

“What???!!” said the policeman angrily, surprised that the villager dared to speak so easily and calmly about this. “And may I ask why not?!” continued the policeman with a wolf’s smile.

“I am not on the list, I’m not in the list...!” replied Mile in broken Greek.

“You’re lying...!” yelled the policeman, cutting him off. “Even if you are not on the list, you are coming with me and I will put you in the list!” he added imitating Mile’s broken Greek and then yelled: “Now move!”

Mile did not move.

“I know enough Greek. It’s enough for me. I am not a lawyer...!” said Mile, trying to make light of the matter but without much success.

“You know nothing...! March, fool!” yelled the policeman and grabbed Mile by the sleeve. Mile went along and did not resist...

When they reached the school gate the policeman pushed Mile into the schoolyard and, in an intimidating tone of voice, said:

“I had better not catch you doing this again! And if you are not really registered, tell the teacher to register you!”

Mile did not say anything as he quietly approached the school entrance, opened the front door and entered the corridor. He then went through another door to the right and entered a large hall crowded with people. Being out in the open fields and breathing fresh air all day he found the atmosphere in the room hot and full of odors. It stunk of dirty feet and sour sweat mixed with garlic. It literally stunk like a toilet.

Sitting on the benches on the right side of the hall were many of the mothers, aunts and grandmothers from the village. One of the mothers was changing her baby’s diaper and wiping the baby’s butt. Sitting on the left side were the students... eighty-year olds. Without constraint, some uncontrollably farted. But that was nothing! There was a rifle shot outside and no one reacted.

There were many people in the room. Some were constantly coughing and others constantly talking. There was a cheerful two-year-old giggling and playing with the woman sitting next to his mother. The baby who had his diaper changed was now crying. These were mothers who had no one to leave their children with. The poor teacher, Ms Melpo, had a severe toothache and was distorting her face from the pain while yelling with all her might hoping that everyone would hear her.

“What did I just do now?” Ms Melpo yelled out as she handed Vasilka, standing next to her, a long ruler.

Vasilka Puiova was a 30 year old woman who was there to assist Ms Melpo. The teacher was addressing Tane Petkovski but Tane stood there silent and unable to answer her because he did not know the right Greek words. Feeling the need to help him out, his wife Taneitsa Petkovska, butted in and said:

“Endose (instead of ethos) i karaka (instead of ton haraka) na Vasilka! (You gave the ruler to Vasilka)” proudly finishing the sentence in Macedonian.

Taneitsa's pronunciation of the Greek words was so ridiculously distorted that it brought on cheers and an outburst of laughter from a few of the women and a lot of hee hee and ha ha and smiles under their mustaches from the men.

The poor woman had no idea this was going to happen; all she wanted to do was help out her husband for whom she felt sorry because he was very tired from loading sacks of grain to take to the market.

Sixty-five year old Spiro Temelkov, who was constantly coughing, sweating, red in the face and eyes tearing, stood up and headed for the exit. Mile, who at the time was sitting near the exit, where he was seated when he came in, followed Spiro Temelkov out of the hall. While Spiro waited in the corridor until his cough calmed down, Mile went out into the yard and visited the school toilet. After spending a short time outside the two men set off for home.

As it turned out the teacher did not see Mile at all. Neither when he entered, nor when he left the school.

The next day when the policeman came to the school to inquire about Mile, the teacher said: "I did not see any Mihalis Saropoulos here last night..."

The policeman then pulled the little black book out of his pocket and wrote Mile's name in it. Mile was now blacklisted. After the Macedonian language was banned from being spoken anywhere, the Greek authorities specifically opened the evening schools for Macedonians to learn Greek, especially for those who did not speak the Greek language at all. And here was Mile defying them. That is why Mile's name was now entered in the long list of those who dared to resist this Greek policy.

The Greek authorities did not react and Mile was not immediately punished for skipping school. And as the days went by, Mile figured his incident with the policeman was forgotten. Then, about a month and a half later, when the Greek authorities were carrying out "cleansing acts" against the scourge in the Lerin Region villages,

Mile too was arrested. Mile Sariovski, or Mihalis Saropoulos as the Greeks called him, was arrested among sixty-three “communists and their sympathizers”. The Greek authorities descended on the villages around midnight and captured them in their beds while they slept. They were all taken away.

After a short stay in jail Mile was charged with being “an active Slavo-communist” and sentenced to forty-two months in prison, being deprived of his personal liberty.

Since Mile was never really told why he was arrested, especially since he was not a communist, he made it his obsession to wonder what he had really done to deserve the heavy sentence that was handed down.

“Why, why, why, why... ah?” he kept thinking while feeling bitter and extremely upset.

For a long time Mile did not know that the Greek authorities had “singled him out” because they believed he was part of the Macedonian people’s avant-garde, in other words, they believed that he was part of the most conscious, revolutionary and resistant element that needed to be crushed and destroyed. Clearly, this was the work of Mitsotakis, the local policeman, who wanted him punished for defying him.

This all became clear to Mile but only after going through hell in the various island prison camps, only after he lived there with other prisoners, including many old and experienced Communist revolutionaries, who knew the Greek chauvinist score very well. Only after being accepted by an organized group of communists in the Akronavlia Prison, did Mile slowly, slowly begin to see things clearly, to understand what was happening to him and, with clenched teeth and squeezed fists, focus his rage against the bourgeois chauvinist dogs who were doing this!

This is how Mile ended up being a determined soldier of the popular resistance, and a member of the Communist Party...

## **5. The Greek Bourgeois “Megali Idea” (Great Idea)**

There was never a “Greek Empire” with Constantinople as its capital... it never existed. Yet here were books intended for children in which the Mother of God is incredulously crying for fourteen decades because... the Greeks lost Constantinople and the temple of St. Sophia to the Turks. And the young Greek bourgeois comfort the infamous Mother of God with the words:

“Min Kles, Kira Despina...! Pali me xronia, me kerous, pali thika mas tha ine!” (Don’t cry Mrs Despina...! After years, in time, they will be ours again!)

This, of course, is treated like it was a folk song.

The “Megali Idea” (Great Idea) is a modern Greek ambition to create a Greek Empire in place of the old Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. This has been Greece’s distant and final goal, both internally and as a foreign policy of the Bourgeois, since the time Greece became a state for the first time in 1830.

Intoxicated by the easy success they had in the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) when Greece expanded to the north, occupying and annexing the larger and richest part of Macedonia, immediately after the First World War, the Greek bourgeoisie decisively turned their attention to the near east. The Greek army began its Asia Minor campaign (1919-1922) with high hopes that it would finally realize the “Megali Idea”. But this very ambitious Greek dream quickly turned into a catastrophe. The campaign failed miserably and revealed that the “Megali Idea” was nothing more than an illusion. But did the bourgeoisie learn anything from this? No! The Mother of God is still crying... to this day...

## **6. Hegemony over all minds**

Let us now have a quick glance at one of the many Greek propaganda books written in the spirit of the “Megali Idea”. This particular book, entitled “I blame the Greek Communist Party as its own witness”, was written by Georgios Kanelakis and published in Athens in 1953.

Kanelakis did everything possible to prove that in principle the CPG recognized the democratic rights of the Macedonian people and by doing so it committed national treason against the Greek nation. And according to Ahilas Kirou, head of the Athens newspaper “Estia”, in a letter he sent to Kanelakis which Kanelakis included in his book, this was “the biggest betrayal that Greek history can reveal...”

Among other things, the book claims that the Slavs created their states in the Balkans on top of “Greek territories” (see: Volume 1, p. 33), and at the end of the book, “instead of an epilogue”, he has included two maps of the European part of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. One depicted the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD and the other depicted the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, with the map titles “The Greek state in 527-565” and “The Greek state in 668-685”. In the first map it also says “Our borders then extended to the Danube River and the Black Sea!” On the second map it says “the white plains between the Danube River and Mount Emos (Stara Planina) represent the first Bulgarian state that was founded on our soil and then expanded through annexing Greek territories.” (See: Volume 1, p. 155.)

Kanelakis very clearly identified the borders of Greater Greece. The northern borders started at the Black Sea in the east, followed the Danube River across, right through Belgrade, and ended at the Adriatic Sea in the west.

This book was officially approved for publication by the Ministry of Public Order under Act number E. 1021 F.D. on April 14, 1950 (signed by A. Vahliotis, Minister) and by the Greek army general staff Act number 60316/848793 OAM (3<sup>rd</sup> Bureau) dated November 23, 1949 (signed by G. Bairaktaris, OAM General Staff Director General). These acts were also included in Kanelakis’s book.

According to Zahariadis: “Cultivated for decades, the ‘Megali Idea’ became so strong that it prevailed everywhere and, with its tortuous and monopolistic hegemony over all the minds, forced every other movement to be placed under its wing...” (Nikos Zahariadis: “Thesis on the history of the CPG”, CPG Central Committee edition, 1944, p. 22.)

## **7. Chauvinism – today an essential manifestation of the “Megali Idea”**

The Democratic Army of Greece (DAG) was defeated in August 1949. About 60,000 Macedonians were forced to leave their ancestral homes. They fled to Yugoslavia, Poland, the USSR and other European socialist countries. Many of the abandoned Macedonian villages were burned down, some were left in ruins as a reminder of what had taken place and others were settled by Greek families from Epirus and Thessaly.

The Macedonian people who did not flee their ancestral homeland immediately became the targets of a systematic, large-scale, denationalization process. An army of Greek teachers, priests and police officers flooded the Macedonian landscape. New school buildings and police stations sprang up almost everywhere in the Macedonian villages. The Greek authorities began to regulate the previously neglected village centres and mobilized the villagers to volunteer both their labour and materials for building projects. In some villages they built a water supply network and brought water to the village from far away springs. In others they installed electrical lighting. And everywhere in the arranged settlements and other convenient places, they erected monuments of the “Greek national heroes”, who, like Pavlos Melas, laid down their lives during the Ottoman occupation in the struggle to “liberate” Macedonia. Of course, all this was always followed by festivities and demagogy, in conditions of intensified propaganda that never ceased.

Even the most respected bishop, Bishop Augustinos, the bishop of Lerin, was very active in all this. Like the district governor Tsaktsiras, Bishop Augustinos managed to collect millions in “voluntary contributions” from the poor Macedonian population. According to witnesses he did this by threatening people that if they did not donate they would be blacklisted.

But unlike Tsaktsiras, Bishop Augustinos did not spend the money to support the “royal military aviation”. Not because today Greece is a republic without a king but because, as he himself said in an

interview with Georgios Lianis for the magazine “Epiker”, he is not interested in “politics”. Namely, for about forty years now, he has been consistently staying out of the political party struggles be it pro or anti-monarchal. Let the state take care of the state military aviation. Bishop Augustinos spent part of the money doing God’s work. He forcibly baptized all the Roma (Gypsies) in the region. In an ambient and markedly festive atmosphere he lured all the Roma and baptized them in the waters of the river near St. Nicholas Church. He turned them into Christians against their will and gave them Greek names and surnames, and each family was given a house as a gift in the Chiflik settlement of Lerin.

By turning Gypsies into pure Greeks, Bishop Augustinos helped the Greek nation receive new blood and intensified the Greek-ness of Lerin and the entire county. He did all this with the help of money he had appropriated from the Macedonian people.

Besides baptizing the Gypsies, the good Bishop Augustinos put his financial support behind some orphanages and educational establishments, where children were brought up and educated in the good Greek patriotic spirit.

But most of the money he collected he used to build new Patriarchate churches at the site of the demolished Exarchate churches. Among the many churches that the Bishop destroyed were: the Sveti Pantaleimon Cathedral in Lerin, the church in Sorovich (destroyed with bulldozers) and what remained of Tsar Samoil’s church on Ail (St. Achilles) Island, in Lake Mala Prespa. The Bishop hired labourers and leveled the Exarchate churches to the ground because... according to him; they were built “by Bulgarian hands”. This tells me that the Bishop indeed engaged in politics.

These churches were indeed “Exarchate” churches but they were sponsored and built by the Macedonian people. Since the Ottoman authorities would not allow the Macedonian people to have their own Macedonian church, they had no choice but to go to foreign churches such as the Patriarchate or Exarchate, both of which at that time operated inside Macedonia. On top of that, the Exarchate church, through its own bishops, similar to Augustinos, also



collected so-called “voluntary contributions” and erected some of these churches. They were built in exactly the same way the Patriarchic churches were built with Macedonian money and they belonged to the Macedonian people. They were monuments of Macedonia’s dramatic history and demolishing them was considered vandalism. Unfortunately, this is the bitter truth: the antagonism between neighbours continues to undermine the Macedonian people even today.

I have seen Tsar Samoil’s church on Ail Island with my own eyes. One sunny, spring day in 1948, while visiting Prespa with my associates from the NOF central council agitation and propaganda department, we boarded a fishing boat and visited the island. We also located the remnants of the old church. It was surrounded by blackberry bushes and nettles. Bare walls stuck out of them all eroded by the wind and rains. There was no roof; it had collapsed a long time ago. We went inside and noticed the saints on the walls were painted on two layers. On the first layer, made of mortar about an inch thick, the saints were still well-preserved as well as the inscriptions, which were in Greek (Greek script). However, different saints peeped from under this layer where the plaster had been scratched or crumbled over time. These icons were inscribed with Cyrillic letters (Slavic script). This, no doubt, was an attempt by the Greek Patriarchy to glorify Tsar Samoil’s Church and make it look like it was a Greek church. Time, however, has revealed the truth and put things in their right place.

Like the veneer that was put on Samoil’s church to make it look like a Greek church when in fact it wasn’t, something similar was also done to the Macedonian people, including to those who were with me that day on the island.

Among us there was a professor of philology, two teachers, graduates from the pedagogical academy, two students, one proletarian poet, etc., all with a Greek education and upbringing. I still remember the time in the schoolyard when I was standing in the first row with other children, dressed in a long village shirt and long pants made of white linen, barefoot, proudly singing (in Greek) in the dust:

“I am Greek! And I am proud!  
And I know my origin!  
I have a Greek soul!  
And I live free!”

I mentioned the song to my comrades and one of them recited the entire song exactly as I remembered it. However, there came a time when this Greek veneer began to wear off and the Macedonian in us woke up. And not just in glimpses, like that of the Slavic saints, the veneer completely shattered and cast off the entire Greek layer and we were off fighting for our rights and our survival!

Now let us return to Augustinos, the respected Bishop of Lerin. This Bishop went way beyond the Greek Patriarchy and did more for the Greek cause than was expected from him. He completely demolished Tsar Samoil’s church in Ail, with all the saints in it. Bishop Augustinos is now at peace because there are no longer Slavic saints to peek at him. He replaced Tsar Samoil’s church with a new Greek church, with Greek saints and Greek inscriptions.

From what I remember, St. Achilles in his day was a bishop in the city Larissa, Thessaly, in central Greece, which at that time was a Byzantine province. Also at that time, Tsar Samoil was king of the Macedonian people in Macedonia and soon after conquered parts of the Byzantine Empire including Thessaly. He had freed the people who were paying unbearable taxes and as a result Samoil’s regime became very popular. In comparison to the Byzantine regime, it was almost libertarian and populist and that is why the people of Thessaly, through their bishop Achilios (i.e. St. Achilles), accepted and supported this regime. Samoil as the king of the Macedonians and Achilios as the bishop of Larissa cooperated well and became good friends. History has shown how sincere and profound their cooperation and friendship was through Samoil’s deeds. When Bishop Achilios died at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Tsar Samoil had his remains brought to Macedonia, to his imperial residence in Prespa. Bishop Achilios’s remains were buried on the island with great honour. To further honour the bishop, Samoil built a church on top of his grave and honoured his name by naming the church “Sveti Ail” (St. Achilles). This is also how the island became known as “Ail” (Achilles). And with this Achilios became a Slavic

saint. Both the saint and the church became parts of the centuries-old Macedonian history and Macedonian culture. By destroying St. Achilles' "Slavic church", Bishop Augustinos assassinated St. Achilles. He did this in vain, however, because time has a tendency to bring out the truth which will finally put things in their place. This is how it has always been...

## **8. The CPG and the "Megali Idea"**

According to Zahariadis, as per the document entitled "thesis of CPG history" mentioned earlier, the period of "the tortuous and monopolistic hegemony of the Megali Idea over all the Greek minds" ended when World War I started, that is when the Communist Party of Greece was established.

Life however proved otherwise.

The worker and communist movements and the CPG, their fighting avant-garde, still remained under the influence of bourgeois ideology and politics which hid in the shadows of the "Megali Idea". The consequences of this were catastrophic, both for the Greek people and for the Macedonian people in the Greek state, especially for the Macedonian people.

We have seen that during one decisive, critical and fateful historic moment, the CPG leadership renounced all alliances and military and political plans with their northern neighbours and people's revolutions and threw itself into the arms of England.

I would say this was an incredible move... an unbelievable move...

What makes this even more interesting is the fact that the "Megali Idea", according to Zahariadis, was dead and buried, it reared its ugly head when Zahariadis's very leadership declared that it needed England to be its strategic partner in order to "strategically secure Greece's northern borders", which meant - taking parts of Macedonia from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania. Clearly this was only possible with English help.

It is also well-known that during the Greek Civil War the CPG leadership pursued a policy of permanent political flirtation with England, a policy which “undermined DAG’s victory” and brought its demise. (This was noted at the CPG Central Committee 6<sup>th</sup> General Plenary Meeting in March 1956.)

And this too was absolutely incredible and unbelievable...

However, it seems to me that the practical policies the CPG leadership practiced quite convincingly and exhaustively explain the CPG’s “real” motives. It is a fact that the CPG at its Party’s headquarters declared that it was seeking and was prepared to fight for “strategically securing Greece’s northern borders”, which means that it was prepared to take Macedonian territories from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania as well as Northern Epirus from Albania. Clearly, the CPG and Greece could not do this alone without English help and without an English presence in Greece. This was only possible if Greece worked together with England and its western allies...

Also, it seems to me, that the CPG leadership itself, in its own authoritarian way, utterly convincingly and exhaustively explained all this through its own actions. Namely, the CPG was afraid that it was going to lose the Greek (occupied) part of Macedonia to Yugoslavia. It was convinced that given the situation in Yugoslavia, that is the existence of the People’s Republic of Macedonia in the Yugoslav Federation and given that the Macedonians here, in this part of (Greek occupied) Macedonia, were all organized in NOF and massively armed in DAG’s ranks, victory for DAG would be imminent. England would then be driven out of Greece, which would lead to the loss of (Greek occupied) Macedonia. “Tito would join Aegean (Greek occupied) Macedonia with the People’s Republic of Macedonia and place it in the Yugoslav federation!” (CPG 1931-1952, p. 271.)

From very young the Greek people are all brainwashed to believe in the “Megali Idea”, at least in relation to Macedonia and the Macedonian National Question, and this is reflected in their daily practical politics including in those of the CPG since the day the

CPG was formed. Let us now have a look at some basic facts and events regarding this.

During the first six years after its inception in November 1918, the CPG ignored the Macedonian national question. It ignored the idea that the completely disadvantaged Macedonian people in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia had no rights at all and refused to take steps to recognize them as Macedonians.

There was nothing in the CPG's program, not even a mention of Macedonians.

The CPG leaders not only kept their eyes shut with regards to rights for the Macedonian people, but they kept very quiet as the Greek bourgeois authorities exterminated them and committed cultural genocide against them, including forced assimilation and denationalization.

The CPG would have done nothing and would have never included anything about the Macedonians in its program had it not been initially for the Balkan Communist Federation in 1923 (6<sup>th</sup> Balkan Communist Conference), and a year later for the Communist International (5<sup>th</sup> Congress held in Moscow), to prompt it to make the decisions to include the Macedonian national question in its program.

“The Balkan Communist Federation and the Communist International in 1923-1924, adopted the thesis of an independent Macedonia and so on... that expressed the Macedonian principle line on the national question...” (See Party documents in the book: “The CPG 1918-1932”, Volume 2, p. 41.)

At the end of 1924, during the CPG's 3<sup>rd</sup> Extraordinary Congress, the CPG proclaimed that “The Party supports all the national and political demands of the oppressed Macedonians in the Greek state and recognizes their right to freedom and self-determination, until secession from Greece and the formation of a single and independent state, including this and the other parts of their country occupied by the three Balkan bourgeois...” (CPG, official texts, Volume 1, p. 517.)

## 9. Verbal revolution and opportunism

But, as it turned out, the “proclamation” the CPG made was made in principle only... empty words to appease the Communist International, which imposed this need externally and did not follow up to determine if it was applied internally.

From that moment on the CPG followed a dual policy on the Macedonian national question, a declarative and practical policy. While at the leadership peak the CPG consistently employed revolutionary words, down below, in its work with the masses, it employed opportunistic and counterrevolutionary practices.

The fact that the CPG did not care to equitably tackle the Macedonian national question, was made quite clear during the next Greek parliamentary elections held in November, 1926. Here again there was nothing mentioned about the Macedonian people in the CPG program it developed during the pre-election campaign. And yet again the elementary human rights as well as the civil and national rights of the Macedonian people were ignored.

This was how the CPG operated in practice.

Then, during the 3<sup>rd</sup> regular Party congress, soon after the March 1927 elections, the CPG strongly emphasized that:

“The Congress believes that the views of those comrades who are proposing that we abandon the idea of ‘a unique and independent Macedonia...’ are wrong. The principle for free self-determination before secession of the oppressed nations should be loudly expressed in the Party slogans and in the Party line on national issues. Keeping silent about the idea of ‘an independent Macedonia’, etc., during the last parliamentary election, this Congress deems improper. This Congress would like to underline the need for intensified international propaganda that identifies this struggle as a struggle against the nationalist and chauvinist propaganda of the bourgeoisie...” (CPG, official texts, Volume 2, p. 208.)

Yet again empty words...

After strongly verbally emphasizing its support for the national minorities in Greece during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress, the CPG did nothing practical. There was absolutely no work done to recognize the rights of the Macedonian people. The CPG stayed as far away from the Macedonian people's struggle as possible while they were fighting for their survival. It could, for example, have helped the Macedonian people organize a broad Macedonian revolutionary organization. It could have helped the Macedonian people develop a Macedonian revolutionary press, which would have undoubtedly promoted and affirmed the struggle of the Macedonian people as a struggle for their human and democratic rights. But the CPG did not do any of those things. The Party leaders remained blind and deaf to the drama that was playing against the Macedonian people in the northern part of Greece (in Greek occupied Macedonia).

With no one to oppose them, the bourgeois reactionary authorities persistently, systematically and quietly continued with their "cleansing" activities, eliminating the most resistant and revolutionary elements among the Macedonian people. Arrests, imprisonments, internment in the desolate Aegean Islands, confiscation of property, exiling... All these were common practices perpetrated by the Greek authorities against the Macedonian people.

Of course, not all of those people who were doing this had a reason to do so. One of those people who had no reason to hide and torment the Macedonian people was Colonel Lamush, a top French official in the League of Nations. As we mentioned earlier, while in Geneva in 1928, Lamush publicly accused Greece of trying to deprive the Macedonian people of their language, culture, national sense, etc... He also highlighted the fact that the so-called "voluntary exchange of populations" negotiated between Greece and Bulgaria, was turned into a violent eviction of Macedonians by Greece...

## **10. Comintern intervention**

This negative attitude taken by the Greek leaders against the Macedonian people in the Aegean (Greek occupied) part of Macedonia, and regarding the Macedonian national question in general, naturally, did not go unnoticed by circles in the Comintern.

This and the fact that the CPG was infiltrated by its enemy... (Chronicle of the struggle, p. 27), left the Comintern Executive Council with no other choice but to intervene.

Let us now have another look at the famous Comintern document mentioned earlier, entitled "Appeal to the members of the CPG", published by "Rizospastis" on November 1, 1931, regarding the national question in Greece:

"The CPG has stayed away from the revolutionary struggle carried out by the people who are mostly suppressed by the Greeks. The CPG failed to take the situation into its own hands, stabilize it and implement organizational measures. The CPG failed to take advantage of the great sympathy enjoyed by the communist movement among the repressed nationalities (Macedonians, Turks, Albanians, Jews) - a fact that helped the reactionaries in their endeavours to isolate and alienate the Communists from the masses and terrorize the revolutionaries from the oppressed nations... Not including the Macedonians in the Party program and keeping silent on the issue of recognizing the democratic rights of the disadvantaged Macedonians during the 1926 parliamentary elections, cannot be dismissed as a simple delay in the struggle waiting for more favourable times. The CPG must, without delay, lead the struggle against national oppression and for the right to freedom and self-determination and secession from Greece... The CPG must lead the struggle against the national oppression of the Macedonians... etc..." (The CPG in its forty years of struggling. p. 307.)

The old CPG leadership was removed and a new one, headed by Nikos Zahariadis, was appointed. But, as we have seen, anti-Macedonian sentiments still remained ingrained in the CPG and in fact got worse and took a criminal form...



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

Opportunities and misadventures on the inside

### 1. A categorical moment

Personal ambitions and a struggle for supremacy are an accompanying occurrence in almost every movement. The difference between one case and another is the intensity...

This kind of phenomenon, personal ambitions and a struggle for supremacy, also existed in the ranks of our Macedonian anti-fascist liberation movement. I prepared a brochure entitled “NOF” (1947), with Keramidziev’s knowledge and some cooperation. The brochure was intended for the delegates of the 1<sup>st</sup> NOF Congress. In it I wrote about NOF’s ideological foundations and the struggle our people were leading alongside the Greek people. Mitrevski made an “objection” exactly on the same day the congress was held. Our Greek friends, understandably, were expecting that. It turned out that Keramidziev too was expecting it, and then accepted Mitrevski’s “objection”. Maybe I am wrong, but it looked to me like both of them were afraid that I was becoming too popular. The brochure was scrapped for allegedly having “nationalistic” content. In other words, it was not given out to the delegates and almost all the samples were burned by Kotsopoulos. In the brochure’s introduction I wrote:

“The Slavo-Macedonian National Liberation Movement is a reality. Its beginning is merging with the beginning of the national resistance movement of the Greek people.

Organizationally – the movement is forming under NOF.

Politically - its goals are formed in NOF’s political program.

Extremism, of course, is not absent - but it will be successfully eradicated in time.

Today the movement is imposed on the consciousness of all - even in the consciousness of our enemies. It exists, acts and puts its own

stamp on the situation here in Macedonia. ‘Elections’ and ‘referendum’ - these are confirming examples that appear before our eyes. Regarding the case of ‘election’ from 100% abstinence, they did not fall below 70% regionally. In the case of the ‘referendum’, the same percentage of people who had the opportunity to vote, voted with white (blank) ballots. This was all NOF’s work:

The movement has friends... the Greek democratic people are its friends.

The movement has its enemies - they are the enemies of democracy in Greece. But the movement has friends and enemies outside of Greece. They are the friends and enemies of Greek people abroad. But:

How did this happen? ... What are the causes?”

This was the introduction in the brochure. Then, immediately under number 1, the title of the next paragraph, was the answer to the question asked:

**“IT EXPRESSES THE TRUE NEEDS FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THE SLAVO-MACEDONIAN PEOPLE!**

The aforementioned struggle for supremacy had no relation to the character of our Macedonian anti-fascist movement. The movement itself was always clean, temperate and strong because it was universal and unique. This, indeed, was a very characteristic moment. The struggle for supremacy in NOF did not take place at the ground level with the participation of the masses, but mainly up at the top leadership level with the assistance of external factors such as the CPG and CPM leaderships. The first to take advantage of their differences was the CPG which hijacked the struggle for its own special purposes. The CPM too, skillfully dragged along and used it for its special purposes. Given my personal experience with both I have no doubt about this at all. The events themselves, as we experienced them, confirm this bitter truth about us...

In November 1946, NOF was placed under the CPG leadership while its military formations in the mountains Paiaç, Kaimakçalan

and Vicho were placed under the command of DAG. This is what was said about this in the famous INI edition entitled “Aegean Storms”: “The NOF leadership in Voden Region was charged with having made an agreement with the CPG to betray the expectations of the Macedonian people. This was a ‘second Varkiza (betrayal) for the Macedonians’ ... The activists in Voden Region pointed out that this was a wrong move that would negatively affect the development of the Macedonian liberation movement and the struggle against the Monarcho-fascists in Greece...” (“Aegean Macedonia at the national liberation war”, vol. III, p. 378, 380 and 381, or document number 171.)

After all, let’s say that the events themselves speak about this...

## **2. Darkness**

The crossing of the ELAS Macedonian battalions into Yugoslavia or more accurately into the People’s Republic of Macedonia, of course was an event of great historical and political significance. Above all, this was a Macedonian revolutionary act against the discrimination, suppression and hindrance perpetrated by the CPG leadership “patriots” against the Macedonian anti-fascist national liberation movement. But this was nothing new. The Greeks from the entire Greek political spectrum, on the one hand, have been oppressing the Macedonian people since Macedonia’s illegal invasion, occupation and partition in 1912, 1913. And ever since then, the Macedonian people, on the other hand, have been trying to re-gain what they lost. So, there is absolutely nothing wrong with the Macedonian people trying to regain their independence and trying to reunite their Macedonia, which is an act of self-determination of a people clearly expressing a desire to live unified.... even if they have to live with the other Yugoslav nations.

The Greeks, of course, had no illusions about this Greek-Macedonian relationship. As early as 1945, my father received an official document from a Greek military court. It was my “death sentence”. I was accused and found guilty of “high treason” against the Greek state and sentenced to death.

One time, my comrades and members of NOF sent me copies of the Solun Greek newspapers “To fos” and “Makedonia” as well as a book entitled “The Macedonian Question From the Aspect of Events in Almopia” (the old Greek name of Meglen Region), in which my activities among the “native people” were deemed as high treason against the Greek state and nation.

Years later in Lerin, my father received another document with a new death sentence against me from another Greek military court. I was again accused of treason against Greece. It happened again later, for a third time...

This negative Greek attitude taken against me confirms that I was doing the right thing for the Macedonian cause and for the people, which gave me great pleasure and made me proud. It was recognition of my work and came directly from my opponent!

But, at the same time, I truly believe that my political, and possibly my physical liquidation, was planned here in Skopje. One of my neighbours from Lerin, going by the name Hadzhi-Iliev, was sent here to keep an eye on me... to provoke me into doing something I would later regret. It is too long of a story for me to tackle it all here so I will only say a couple basic things about it.

a) I spoke about him with Dimitar Aleksievski-Pekar, then head of OZNA for Macedonia. He said nothing! But then the person who followed me like a shadow, a constant companion, suddenly disappeared forever... just like that! And Pekar miraculously forgot about it...

b) One day Hadzi-Iliev approached me and told me something provocative. He said: “Because you are a good friend I will tell you something very important. A group of Skopje chemists from Afion are making hashish. You often cross the border and no one searches you. All you need to do is transfer some hashish to Voden. You know there is a channel that links Voden, Solun, Alexandria, Cairo. There is plenty of money... brother... gold! Kilograms of gold! For the organization (meaning for NOF), and some for yourself... What do you say, huh?”

Hadzi-Iliev was well-aware that I always gave my all to the struggle and I would have given even more if I had the chance. My wife Niki Kachorova was tortured in the ELAS camps together with the prostitutes, spies, and collaborators of the Italian, German and Bulgarian fascists. She did not endure and died before her time... Our son also died a little earlier. I lost them both and here I was still fighting in the struggle. In other words, I was not in this struggle for myself and for profit. Of course he emphasized that the “gold” would be for NOF, however he couldn’t help himself but say that “some of it would be for me!”

It was a very interesting proposal! I told him I would think about it and get back to him later...

But, instead of getting back to him, I went straight to Pekar and, low and behold, Hadzi-Iliev disappeared...

I was shaken and deeply offended. Apparently I had a powerful enemy who had the power to influence OZNA...

### **3. Consequences**

I went from Enidzh-Vardar, through Gevgelia, to Kostur Region where I attended a NOF leadership meeting. While passing through Gevgelia, Aleko Kiaev, head of the local OZNA, told me that the people in Skopje were looking for me and wanted me to get in touch with OZNA in Skopje. But I did not want to meet with those people so I asked Aleko to convey my message and tell them that I wasn’t going to Skopje, I had no work there. In other words I defied their orders. THAT WAS THE FIRST INCIDENT when the “blackness” in our ranks directly affected my actions.

In October 1949, on Zahariadis’s orders and on those of the CPG and DAG leaderships, I was arrested as a Yugoslav agent. Vlantas, then a member of the CPG Central Committee Politburo and a DAG General, gave me half a pad of paper and three newly sharpened pencils and said:

“Write! Write down your betrayals from the start, from the time when you became Tito’s agent in Skopje!”

I barely wrote two and a half pages. I focused mainly on the following three most fundamental things in my life:

a) Doing my work. I worked with my heart all the time, to organize our people en masse to become involved in the joint struggle with the Greek people against the reactionaries and their foreign patrons.

b) Being in the field. I felt free and at home among our people... but not when I was wasting my time in Skopje.

c) Being in Skopje. In Skopje I was treated like an alien, a suspicious element, for which I have material evidence. In other words I saw for myself that I was an undesirable element, which had to be removed, even by some insidious manner, if necessary. And so on and so forth, in that spirit...

Of course what I wrote was completely unnecessary. But what Vlantas said to me rubbed me the wrong way. And so, this was the **SECOND INCIDENT**, when the “blackness” in our ranks directly affected my actions.

Back in Skopje I did nothing to expose the provocateur or those who sent the provocateur after me, and neither did I abandon what I was doing for our Macedonia. The provocations and provocateurs were just another occurrence in my everyday life with the movement. I continued with my active participation in leading our people in the revolutionary struggle, as if nothing had happened...

Something else also happened worth noting at this point. At different times and under different circumstances it was pointed out to me by a couple of comrades, that the “Security Services” allegedly and “in an official capacity” needed to “conduct security checks” on the various cadres. So, I ask myself, was this done to find dirt on them and prepare them for their grave if necessary...? This cannot be dismissed. I find this humiliating to have to point it out... but I am forced to.

As I mentioned earlier my enemies sentenced me to death three times... I am assuming here for working for our movement's interests, which was contrary to our enemy's interests.

The crossing over of the ELAS Voden Macedonian Battalion to the People's Republic of Macedonia, i.e. to Federal Yugoslavia, was an act of great political and historical significance and it was carried out under my command and initiative.

My activities as a member of the NOF top leadership and one of its founders, without a doubt have their value and importance...

These values, I mention here, have been perceived even by our opponent, and yet here I am having been set aside and accused of wrong-doing, of things I have not done... invented things. They created a trap for me and tried to push me into it. Who needed this trap and why was it necessary? The provocateur, who also had influence in OZNA, kept trying to get rid of me and by doing so allowed me to find out for myself that I was being politically liquidated, i.e. removed. As it turned out, there were some comrades who believed I too had the "dangerous" weakness just like the many comrades like Ilia Dimovski-Gotse, Lazo Oshenski, Naum Peiov, Dzhodzho, Turundzov, Trifko Popov, Naum Shupurkovski-Leon, etc., who had been removed from our Macedonian national liberation movement. In particular, it turned out that, as they had, I also managed to see Mitrevski's true character and, as a consequence, without hesitation, "I was allowed" to have different opinions from his, that is, to oppose him...

Let the events themselves speak about this...

#### **4. In the name of personal ambitions**

Leading the Voden battalion I arrived in Bitola at the end of October 1944. The Political Commission for Aegean Macedonia had already been established and was headed by Paskal Mitrevski.

I did not know Mitrevski and I had not heard anything about him. The fact that he had the trust and authority of Tito's people, that is, the governing factors here in Macedonia raised him high in my eyes.

The fact that the CPM (CPY) leadership recognized and appointed Paskal Mitrevski as the top leader in our movement said a lot to me but, at the same time, I knew nothing about him. A little later Vera gave me an overseas newspaper with an article about Mitrevski in which he exclusively talked about himself and his involvement in matters in which he was never involved. Dzhodzho was the most important Party figure among us. Dzhodzho was appointed second secretary of the CPG District Committee and member of the CPG Bureau for Macedonia and Thrace (in the widest composition). There was not a word about Dzhodzho in the article... So I thought to myself for a person to act this way, to credit himself with everything, especially with the work of others, this person must lack dignity and good principles.

I then found out that Mitrevski wanted to remove some “objectionable” activists who were inclined to support Peiov and Keramidzhiev. Being seen as “neutral”, in the summer of 1946, I was sent to investigate matters on the ground. There I met with the “objectionable” activists who Mitrevski wanted to remove and found them to be competent, responsible and respected by the people. The only mistake they made was to show their care for Peiov and Keramidzhiev which apparently Mitrevski did not like and figured they were working against him.

After this I too became “objectionable” for Mitrevski.

There was also the case with his brother-in-law Mincho Fotev. Fotev’s biographical note, which was to be submitted to the CPM Central Committee, was supposed to be signed by all NOF Central Office members. But, even though some of us did not agree with all the things written in the note, Mitrevski insisted that the note remain as is. There were a number of things in the note that were simply not true. For example, the note said that when Fotev was a child he was a mature revolutionary and performed important and courageous deeds. I openly demanded that the “autobiography” be rewritten and made more modest because otherwise I was not going to sign it. Fotev found out about this, of course, and I believe never forgot this “injustice” that I had committed against him and never forgave me for it.



I felt uncomfortable pleasing people and did not want or ask anyone to please me, and I did not want anyone to distort the truth. But, that's not how Mitrevski worked... he constantly demanded to be pleased. One evening while we were dining alone in the "Moscow" restaurant (it was later destroyed by the earthquake) I decided to ask him if I could speak with him frankly. The fact that he was the "number one" figure in our movement has always been the object of our attention. As his associate and comrade, I thought that I should be open with him and tell him what I thought was negative about him. Of course, I wanted to help him with this, not turn him into an enemy. I said: "If you are prepared to listen to me without getting angry, I will start!" He sat there quietly and calmly as he assured me that he would listen with interest and would not get angry. That evening I tried to convince him that he needed to act much more convincingly as the leader of our movement. I told him that he needed to stop putting his own alleged interests and his own career above the interests of the movement. I gave him examples of what I meant and what he was doing wrong. That evening I brought up the name Machiavelli in our conversation for the first time. I told him that he had no principles... And that the only single principle he had was to ignore the principles of his people. I told him that morals and honesty for him seemed like foolish things. I told him that he honoured nothing and no one. I told him he needed to show deep respect and modesty in front of his people even if he had to act while doing it. I told him that his inability to be convincing and persuasive was harmful to our movement. I told him that because of that capable comrades and leaders like Ilo Dimakov-Goche, Naum Shupurkovski-Leon, Lazo Oshenski, Naum Peiov, Trifko Popov, Dzhodzho Turundzov and others were alienated. I told him that he constantly strived to surround himself with people who thought like him, etc... He calmly listened to me without saying a word. In the end he shook my hand and thanked me. He looked frank. But I knew he was acting...

Nothing changed after I had my talk with Mitrevski at the "Moscow" restaurant. His attitude towards his people remained the same. But, as his uncompromising associate, I felt it was my duty to defend the interests of the movement. I decided to write a summary report about the "shortcomings in our movement" and forwarded it

to the CPM Central Committee. The Central Committee (Tsvetko Uzunovski-Abas), however, rejected it and informed me that the summary report would have to be reviewed and accepted by our leadership bureau before anything could be done. At a glance it seemed like it was the right thing to do. Unfortunately no action was taken to “correct” the situation. This, by itself, tells me that Mitrevski was occupying a privileged position which allowed him to influence the leadership in Skopje. When the issue finally surfaced, Mitrevski naturally repented with much sincerity and self-criticism, which I believe was just an act and seized the opportunity to put it to rest. And, while still playing the role of my sincere comrade, he found ways to provoke me.

## **5. Masterful intrigue**

The problems that Greece was experiencing at the time were under consideration at the UN. The Soviet delegation had proposed reconciliation, general amnesty and general elections. One evening when we went for a walk Mitrevski asked me: “What do you think will happen to NOF if there is reconciliation, if we are given a general amnesty and if we are allowed to go back home?”

“There can be no reconciliation if NOF is liquidated!” I replied.

“But what if NOF is recognized as a democratic organization and then they find reasons to dissolve it!...” he said.

“What reasons could they possibly find after they recognize it...?” I asked.

“They will accuse all the NOF cadres of being agents of OZNA and spies. They will make claims that NOF is not a democratic organization but a spy ring, etc. They will then find someone who will admit to that...” Mitrevski explained.

I couldn't disagree.

During one of our meetings, in the presence of Nikola Minchev, we asked if we could request from OZNA not to convert NOF's

apparatus into its own, but to orient itself towards the creation of a special apparatus.

At the next Bureau meeting I spoke about this and some other issues. Mitrevski did not say anything about this. Later he apologized...

I was not called in to provide an explanation. Obviously my “suspicious” loyalty or, more precisely, my “disloyalty” was self-evident. Or perhaps instead of me, Mitrevski himself, under his own authority as head of the Bureau, gave them enough of an explanation...

One more example:

I worked with the local residents collecting information on the Macedonian population for a long time, which included how many Macedonian families lived in each village, in each district and so on, in Greek occupied Macedonia. When I was finished and after I had the information systematized, I had to travel to Belgrade and hand it over to the Yugoslav authorities as well as answer questions if required.

One day Mitrevski came to the bureau office. I was on duty sitting there. He looked around for a bit and then went out. It seemed to me like he was checking to see if I was there. About half an hour later he came back and told me to go and see Kolishevski, he was waiting for me.

I went immediately. His office was about three hundred metres away.

Kolishevski was not happy to see me. He was angry and yelled at me in a high tone of voice. He said he had been waiting for me for a long time... But he had no right to behave like that and humiliate me. But I grinned and kept quiet. To his question if the material was ready...I said: “Yes!” Unfortunately someone else was sent to Belgrade to take credit for my work.

There isn't and there can be no doubt that with this kind of masterful intrigue, which must be recognized, Mitrevski managed to draw and use the CPM leadership to remove many of our capable comrades from their positions. As for me, I was just stunned, but not completely knocked out...

With these examples given above there is sufficient information to show that a masterful intrigue was at play here with which the CPM factors were influenced.

I don't know the specifics of how Mitrevski managed to politically remove Ilia Dimovski-Gotse, Naum Peiov and the others but he failed to remove me, that is, to politically liquidate me.

But he kept working on it...

## **6. Abuse of responsibility**

As I mentioned earlier, after my visit with Leonidas Stringos, member of the CPG Politburo, my isolation in the agitation and propaganda department ended. Then, I believe it was at the end of March 1947, at a NOF Executive Committee meeting I proposed the following which were later adopted:

That we immediately organize an all front Conference to include all NOF-AFZH-NOMS activists and members of the district and regional leadership.

That we initiate a campaign to find 20 young girls ages 14-16 to form a cultural and artistic group as part of the agitation and propaganda department.

Before that, I would say since November 1946, after we had the meeting in Turie to establish "unity", the NOF Secretariat consisting of Keramdzhiev, Rakovski and Vera became detached from Paskal Mitrevski, then NOF National Bureau instructor. Mitrevski went to Skopje and stayed there while maintaining contact with the Greek CPG representatives at home. I have no idea what he was doing for more than half a year. However, Mitrevski did not break his connections with the field. After our decision to convene an all front

Conference of activists, Mincho Fotev, together with Lambro Cholakov, came in contact with him. In his capacity as NOF instructor, Mitrevski, among other things, gave them the following directive:

“At the all front Conference you are to reorganize the NOF leadership as follows: You are to remove Rakovski and Vera as members of the Secretariat and replace them with Mincho Fotev and Urania Iurukova...” I don’t remember what position Poplazarov was holding but Mitrevski instructed that he be removed and replaced with Lambro Cholakov.

Clearly, by doing this, Mitrevski was abusing his position of power. He ordered the removal of Rakovski, Vera and Poplazarov, without explaining why. He ordered the appointment and promotion of Fotev, Iurukova and Cholakov knowing full well that they were not qualified for those responsibilities. By attempting to do this, Mitrevski, in effect, caused a split in the group. The secretariat could not agree.

Fotev, in his endeavours to implement Mitrevski’s directive became vocal and abrasive forcing Keramidzhiev to go outside of the group and bring the problem to the attention of Petris (Georgios Eritriadis), CPG Bureau Organizational Secretary.

“This is just Mitrevski’s wish” replied Petris, “it has nothing to do with Provincial Bureau policies... If Fotev is in the way, you either tolerate him or you remove him...!”

Fotev was removed from his post as NOF representative, that is as NOMS representative in the Bureau of EPON for Macedonia, and remained hanging “at its disposal”.

Instead of myself accepting the position as NOF organizational secretary, during the May 20, 1947 Conference, I proposed appointing Vangel Aianovski-Oche, which was then accepted. I consulted with Keramidzhiev about this first and convinced him that the movement’s interests would be better served if I devoted my entire effort to the agitation and propaganda department, running the central Macedonian press and developing a Macedonian-cultural-

educational movement by organizing a Macedonian teachers' course, opening Macedonian schools, preparing and publishing Macedonian textbooks, forming Macedonian cultural and artistic groups (central and regional) and the like, and let Oche take care of the organizational issues.

But after my proposal was accepted, and Oche was appointed NOF organizing secretary, Keramidzhiev surprised me when he said:

“I don't understand... why you would want to elevate someone else above you?!”

“It would be in the interest of our struggle!” I replied.

Keramidzhiev just shrugged his shoulders and said nothing.

But Oche's appointment as NOF organizing secretary was brief. A month later, at the end of June 1947, when Mitrevski came back, he had Oche suspended. I never did find out the real reason for this but I suspect that he was suspended because I recommended him for the position. Mitrevski must have figured Oche was “my man” on the inside, which is not true at all. I have never thought of creating my “own” group, that is, my own faction. By doing this Mitrevski undermined the power of the movement from within, destroying its cohesion. Looking at this another way, Oche never did like me. On the contrary, it was hard for him to bear the fact that, here in Voden Region, an “outsider” like me, not a person from Voden Region, stood at the head of the Voden Region movement, “leading” the people of Voden Region. As mentioned earlier, Oche came to the Voden ELAS Macedonian Battalion the last day before the battalion was retired in the People's Republic of Macedonia...

Anyway, the old secretariat remained intact, that is, I remained in the Secretariat. And Mitrevski did not succeed in his attempts to do what he wanted to do... this time...

## 7. Greek supremacists

One January evening in 1948, Mitrevski and the NOF Executive Council secretariat held a meeting in one of the Prespa villages to make preparations for the NOF 1<sup>st</sup> Congress.

Everything was going well except we could not agree on the composition of the governing bodies (Secretariat, Executive Council, Central Council, etc.). Mitrevski demanded that Kochopoulos join the Secretariat, whom he was now calling Kochev. He also insisted that the Executive Council include Gusiopoulos (Makis), Vainas, Koithis (now Koichev), Malios and some others, a total of seven people.

We could not let this happen! So I decided to speak out. I said:

Does that mean that an equal number of proven NOF activists will be cast aside from the leadership? This is unfair...! More than unfair... it is dangerous. We are not talking about changing a bunch of shepherds here. Our people are well-aware of what kind of people these Kochopouloses and Gousiopouloses are. NOF's self-proclaimed enemies cannot be its leaders. It is okay to include these "kind" of Macedonians who are members of EAM, AKE, EA, EPON, etc., in NOF but that's not the point. If our Greek comrades respected the unity of the Macedonian people, they would not have established these Greek national organizations (EAM, AKE, EA, EPON, etc.) in the Macedonian villages. They would not have, for years, led an open hostility against the Macedonian anti-fascist national liberation movement. Unfortunately, the facts are such that the Macedonian revolutionary national liberation movement was developed not with the help of our Greek leadership comrades, but by struggling against them and by defending itself from Greek attacks.

I can understand that they have now embraced NOF so that we can establish "unity". The motive for this, in the public eye is clear and sends a message that unity is necessary in the struggle against our common enemy - the Greek reactionaries and their foreign interventionists. However, the fact remains that they embraced NOF only after it became clear that they had not achieved anything by an

open frontal struggle against NOF. Obviously, they are not honest about this. I was barely able to extract the agitation and propaganda department, and myself, from their isolation. For more than a year now, after “unity” was established, they have systematically prevented the emergence and spread of a central Macedonian press. Until now we have barely managed to publish NEPOKOREN only five times. The first time we printed only 100 copies in small format. The second time we printed 70 copies, of which 20 we sent to Voden where they were seized and destroyed by Gousiopoulos. The third time we printed 200 copies, the fourth time 300, and the fifth time 400 copies. That was it! Despite all the persistent effort we made to achieve something more. In fact, we still don’t have a central press... and this is because of them. Let us not be naïve here. Today these “Greek supremacists” are infiltrating the NOF leadership in the name of “unity”. Tomorrow they will replace us all...!

This is what I counter-proposed:

Let us open vice-president and president positions in the NOF district boards and offer them to the people of EAM. Let us give them the opportunity to work for NOF for some time while we monitor their activities. Let them demonstrate and prove to us that they are trustworthy before we give them wider membership in NOF. Then accept one of them in the NOF Presidency in accordance with their merit. I also wrote my counter-offer in a letter and sent it to Ioanidis who then was member of the Politburo and CPG Central Committee secretary. When I made my counter-offer at our meeting, I also said that this way we all gain some time and the opportunity to examine Zahariadis’s true intentions.

But, after all that, nothing happened. We held three more meetings without an agreement. While Keramidzhiev and Vera accepted my counter-proposal, Mitrevski continued to insist on following the “Party line”.

Following what “Party line”? Each one of us knew very well that there was no “Party line”. Surely this was done to “get rid” of NOF as was pre-planned all along. Some time ago the “Party line” was the dissolution of SNOF, as well as the planned liquidation of the



ELAS Macedonian battalions and now the “Party line” was to liquidate NOF. I said all this to Mitrevski but he refused to accept it. He was told what to do by the Skopje leaders and he accepted; now he was told what to do by the Greek leaders and that too he accepted, without question. But, I guess he figured that with Kochopoulos-Gousiopoulos around him, he could achieve what he really wanted. He ignored the fact that these Macedonian speaking “Opouloses” did not have the best interest of our people in their hearts.

But, it seems to me, this has been Mitrevski’s attitude all along.

I couldn’t help myself but accuse him of being blind and emphasizing to him that the CPG’s real intention was to dismantle and destroy NOF from the inside and that he was helping the CPG do this. Mitrevski then accused me of being an “anti-Party” and an “anti-people” element, and therefore was committing treason. Our argument was so heated that we almost had a fist fight. During the extreme tension, Keramidzhiev and Vera yielded to Mitrevski’s will and embraced the “party line”, which for me was anti-Party and provocative. I was left alone...

## **8. You were right!**

As I mentioned earlier, Mitrevski managed to ban my brochure entitled “NOF” during the 1st NOF Congress in January 1948. All the samples were destroyed, and my candidacy for membership in the Presidency, that is, in the NOF Executive Council Secretariat was dropped, “while Ioanidis and the Party were reviewing my case”.

However, as much as it was true that the Politburo compiled the list of candidates and included my name in it, it was also true that the Politburo, I have no doubt, had me removed from the list. It was the Politburo and not Mitrevski who removed me. Mitrevski only made their work easier. Ioanidis, pretending that Mitrevski was the culprit for my removal, was simply “hoping” that I would work against him. He was simply trying to heat up the battle between the “nationalists”.

Everyone was working for their own aims. In my case the Greek leaders and Mitrevski were helping each other first to neutralize me as a dangerous “nationalist”, and second to get rid of an uncompromising and therefore inconvenient co-worker.

But that was not all. Deprived of the easy victory against me, Mitrevski soon turned to taking care of Keramidzhiev. He produced a letter written by a woman named Lenche from the village Dobrolishta, Kostur Region, in which she claimed that Keramidzhiev was planning to physically liquidate the Greek leaders Kochopoulos and Koitsis. Apparently, Mitrevski decided that the moment was right to settle the score with Keramidzhiev by officially making the letter public during the NOF Central Council 1<sup>st</sup> Plenum held on August 8, 1948.

However, this time Greek plans did not follow Mitrevski’s plans. Before Mitrevski had a chance to make a “splash” with his letter Ioanidis and Stringos, Politburo members who attended the Plenum, had a resolution of their own, compiled by Zahariadis. They “proposed” the following which was then accepted by raising of hands:

“...The factional struggle between Keramidzhiev and Paskal (Mitrevski) has the sole goal of personally appointing themselves leaders of the Slavo-Macedonian people, each striving for egoistic, personal, political and material benefits, now and in the future. These comrades, counting themselves as irreplaceable and natural leaders of the Slavo-Macedonian people, proved to be irreconcilable factionists who have caused damage to NOF and the democratic movement.

Therefore the NOF Central Council Plenum has to put an end to this factional struggle without principles... by suspending comrades Paskal and Keramidzhiev from the Secretariat and electing a new Secretariat...” (NEPOKOREN number 12, August 23, 1948)

And this is how the top “new NOF leadership” was grafted.

Only Vera remained a member of the old Secretariat. This brave Macedonian woman, who usually considered the “tailoring” of

politics as the work of her older comrades, was now there with a special function; to make NOF still look like it was Macedonian from the outside. With her in the new group the “new leadership” was able to “externally” preserve NOF’s Macedonian national colour. Vera was there to hide and cover the “supremacist” and treacherous character of NOF’s “new leadership”.

One time, by chance, I happened to be standing next to Mitrevski when, with a tone of resentment and remorse in his voice, he began talk to me. Among the things he said were the words:

“You were right...!”

Yes, I predicted that we all would be removed from NOF and indeed we were. As it turned out everything in that drama was staged.

First Mitrevski was “encouraged” to reorganize NOF’s immediate leadership, that is, to remove Rakovski, Vera and Poplazarov and replace them with Fotev, Iurukova and Cholakov. Then when we couldn’t agree on the re-organization, Petris “encouraged” the Secretariat, that is, Keramidzhiev, Rakovski and Vera, to remove Fotev from all functions. Then when Mitrevski agreed to bring Kochopoulos, Gousiopoulos, Vaines and the others into NOF’s top management body, Petris “assured him” that the CPG leadership and the CPG Politburo were behind him all the way. But instead of supporting him, the CPG threw him out.

This was “divide and conquer”... pure and simple! The stronger ruling over the weaker! In our case this attack was directed primarily against the Macedonian people, that is, against the Macedonian national ideal... in order to defeat it and destroy it. Pure genocide! It is true that, here and now, this was not a physical extermination of the Macedonian people but it was a form of profound inhumanity: the destruction of the Macedonian soul... which is still a form of genocide...

## **9. Party loyalty and vigilance**

There are some people who refuse to see things the way I have described them. They are totally against reaching such conclusions.

These people say that it is “wrong” to say things like that about the Party. The Party cannot be compared to the Greek bourgeoisie, who waged a war against the Macedonian people and against its revolutionary movement and committed genocide against the Macedonian people in this part of Macedonia. It is absolutely “wrong”...!

It is clear to me that these people refuse to see the reality of the situation... they lack understanding...

I did not write this book to blame the workers’ movement, its avant-garde struggle or the Party’s Marxist and Leninist principles. The Party and its principles are not to blame for the political right’s opportunism or for the “mistakes” and “betrayals” the various CPG leaders committed against the revolutionary struggle they led.

It is well-known that, on an international level, various “Marxists” or “Marxologists” have long tried and tried, to overthrow and destroy Marxism in the name of Marxism and with the help of Marxism. There is nothing strange about the fact that, under these conditions, here at home there were “Marxists”, that is, “CPG communist leaders” who, in the name of the workers’ movement and in the name of the people’s revolution, tried to destroy the revolution. With their help the tide was turned in favour of the domestic and international reactionaries where they successively destroyed the people’s revolution twice.

Similarly there is nothing strange about “communist leaders” leading a struggle against the Macedonian people, their natural ally and reserve in the workers’ movement and in the revolution in the Greek state, in the name of the workers’ movement and in the name of the people’s revolution.

Being in favour of the Party, as my critics are, is not synonymous with being apathetic and blind. It is a sign of being vigilant, meaning, being in an active relationship with everything and everyone. I am not here to challenge anyone’s Party membership. But I am here to demand the truth be revealed. I am here to reveal the truth... to reveal the real names of those leaders who committed betrayal against the Party, against the people’s revolution and

against the Macedonian people. I am here to reveal the serious crimes they committed against the Party and the against the workers' movement while being in their service.

It seems to me that something has happened to my critics. Consciously or not, deliberately or not, they are placing the workers' movement and the Party, its avant-garde, alongside the leading figures who "sinned" and committed treason.

What can we do! This is how people are. Everyone has their own way and, for their own special reasons, understands the world a certain way...

Skopje, 1978.