

R E P U B L I C O F M A C E D O N I A

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**Literature of fact in Petre Nakovski's novels
- Master's thesis -**

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SUMMARY

The novels “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), “I kamenot e zemia” (A stone too is soil), “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline), “Golemata izmama” (The great lie), and “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time)”, written by Petre Nakovski, are in theme dedicated to the Macedonian national minority in Greece and its experience during the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). They cover events that took place prior to and during that turbulent and tragic period. The novels particularly deal with the fate of individual and collective consequences.

The above-mentioned novels depict the most essential historical and social events before and during the Greek Civil War with special attention given to the Macedonian participation.

The main feature of the above mentioned novels is the true representation of historically authentic events, which through facts, testimonies, historical documents, authentic occurrences and places have captured the truth about the perseverance and survival of the Macedonian people in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece) which should be known worldwide. The novels, through Petre Nakovski’s literary works, reveal the tragic individual and collective truth of the experience the Macedonians under Greece underwent which destroyed their human psyche. The novels are literature about the bitter truth, literature about Macedonian DAG fighter heroism, literature that defines the DAG fighters, the child exodus, the mobilization of the children’s parents in the war effort, the participation of Macedonian women in the Greek Civil War and DAG’s tragic defeat that led to the eradication and relocation of the Macedonian people from their place of origin without the possibility of ever returning to their homes.

With this master’s thesis, entitled “Literature of fact in Petre Nakovski’s novels”, the intent is to provide a deeper analytical penetration into the essence of the literature of fact in which the most important elements are the truth, the historical fact, the authentic event...

One of the aims in this paper is to emphasize Nakovski’s literary value which, through his novels, reveals the tragic fate of those who suffered during the Greek Civil War, from one side showing resilience while facing suffering and death, and from another demonstrating endless trust, faith, heroism and hope. For this reason, perhaps, there is a need to answer the following question:

“Did the traumas end for the Macedonian people who experienced the exodus?”

Keywords: **Greek Civil War, document, fact, exodus, suffering, truth, faith, hope.**

1. INTRODUCTION

After the conclusion of World War II and during the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), the status of the Macedonian national minority in Greece was not well represented in the Macedonian historiography and contemporary Macedonian literature. Although it was very interesting it was insufficiently researched, especially the experience of the Macedonian people under Greece. Macedonian contemporary literature for this period, however, is well reflected in Petre Nakovski's novels:

- "Postela za chemernite" (1985) (A bed for the wretched);
- "I kamenot e zemia" (1988) (A stone too is soil);
- "Golemata udolnitsa" (2003) (The great decline);
- "Golemata izmama" (2007) (The great lie);
- "Na pat so vremeto" (2010) (On the road of time);

as well as the two works "Makedonskite detsa vo Polska 1948-1968" (Macedonian children in Poland 1948-1968) and the collection of documents entitled "Makedonskite begaltsi vo Polska 1948-1975" (Macedonian refugees in Poland 1948-1975).

Without a doubt Petre Nakovski's novels can be viewed as testimony of the Greek Civil War, a document of the time, as well as a testament to the people who persevered. Among other things, the novels also contain evidence of antihumanism and crimes committed against the Macedonians. The novels authentically describe the tragedy experienced by the Macedonian people during the Greek Civil War. They are a historical record of human suffering, of people losing their hearth, of people being nationally and ideologically tormented and of betrayed illusions of the individual. The novels are a record of the historical tragedy and real life agony the Macedonian people experienced in Northern Greece. The novels are also a record of great suffering and of the years of self-sacrifice in the name of freedom and national and individual dignity.

Nakovski's aim in writing these novels was motivated by the need to expose the entire evil that the war imposed on the Macedonian people. The novels are abundant with descriptions of incidents and chronicles of cruelty, violence, ruthlessness, humiliation, and betrayal in this historical slaughter which the "pro-communist Greek generals and the then communist countries created for the Aegean Macedonian hermits who dreamed of their homeland and their altar of autocephaly."¹

The novels are the literature of the Greek Civil War, a peculiar judgment of the people, a picture of the behavior of the individual and the collective before the act of endangerment.

¹ See: Review of the novel "*Golemata udolnitsa*". - Petre Nakovski: Skopje, *Makavej*, 2003

They are literature of the destruction of the human psyche, literature of the bitter truth, literature of the distinctiveness of the boys and girls who fought in DAG.

Literature of the Macedonian tradition presented through the elements: folklore, faith, collective symbols, toponyms, etc.

They are literature that recounts the participation of Macedonian women in the Greek Civil War.

They are literature that describes tragic events - the exodus of children and the mobilization of their parents.

Petre Nakovski's novels have offered the reader the chance to uncover the truth about the Macedonians under Greece and to answer the question:

What truly happened to the Macedonians under Greece during the Greek Civil War and what does the modern Macedonian know about that?

In these novels we will look for answers to the following questions:

- Could the author of these novels forestall the fate of the people who were actors in those tragic events?

- Did the Macedonian people in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece) join the Greek Civil War as communists, i.e. as disciplined members of the CPG, or did they join the war looking for something other than what the communist idea offered?

- How much influence did the so-called "White terror"² have on the individual and on the Macedonian masses to join the resistance?

- What were the Greek state's motives to carry out the "white terror" against the Macedonians?

- What motivated the Macedonians to join en masse and participate in the Greek Civil War?

- Did the CPG, at the appointed time, exercise the Macedonian people's national rights?

- What were the Macedonians looking for?

- What did they gain?

- What did they lose?

² See: Έτσι αρχισε ο εμφυλιος, Εκδοσεις Γλαρος, 1987 (This is how the Civil War began).

- Were they criminals or heroes?
- Could their behaviour and posture deserve to be condemned “post factum” morally from the point of view of the time in which the novels were written?
- Should we modern Macedonians erase the image of the Greek Civil War from our personal and national memory?

The consequences of the Greek Civil War have been uncovered through analysis of the novels over: *facts, testimonies, historical documents, authentic events and places*. The Greek Civil War ended with the defeat of the Macedonian national aspirations and the physical extermination of the Macedonian people in this region – a destroyed Macedonian economy in the Kostur-Lerin Region, many villages destroyed, people evicted and exiled from their homes, their properties confiscated, their homes looted, the Macedonian family destroyed through the child collection program and through the taking of children to Eastern European countries.

And now we will attempt to answer the following questions:

- “How much did the Greek Civil War contribute to the survival of the Macedonians?”
- “What were the consequences for the cultural and ordinary life?”
- “What ways and means did the Greek State use to assimilate the Macedonian population? What was its position in regards to education, administration, ban on the use of the Macedonian language, denial of the Macedonian national identity, forced changes to personal names, surnames and toponyms?”

Two words were most often used in the communist propaganda that was supposed to attract the Macedonian population; they were “fascism” and “monarcho-fascism”. Fascism was a remnant of the Italian, German and Bulgarian occupations, and monarcho-fascism was derived from the restoration of the monarchy in Greece and from the “white terror” and “anti-communism” imposed on the Macedonian people.

The answers to these questions are at the heart of Nakovski’s novels, which will also be the subject of this research.

The novels are a testimony to the tragic fate of those who suffered in the Greek Civil War, who, on the one hand demonstrated their perseverance in the face of suffering and death, and on the other, their endless heroism.

The Greek Civil War ended in defeat for the resistance.

“Did the trauma end for the Macedonian people who survived the exodus?”

The title “**Literature of fact in Petre Nakovski’s novels**” of this master’s thesis was chosen for the need of deeper analysis through: *facts, testimonies, historical documents, authentic events and places...* There was a need to know the truth about the survival and perseverance of the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece).

Petre Nakovski’s above-mentioned novels deal with the very essential historical and social events that took place before and during the Greek Civil War with special reference to the participation of the Macedonian people.

The main feature of the above-mentioned novels is that they all refer to the Greek Civil War. It is noteworthy to mention that they all serve as source material for the Greek State’s terror against the Macedonian population. They chronicle the Macedonian participation in the Greek Civil War; the Macedonian commitment, courage and self-sacrifice for national liberation and for defense of the Macedonian identity and human dignity. The most essential part of the novels is the truth; the historical authentic events which provide the reader with a wide opportunity for learning the truth about those difficult, dramatic and sad times.

2. MACEDONIAN LITERARY CRITIQUE OF THE “AEGEAN THEME” AND PETRE NAKOVSKI’S CREATION

In Macedonia there are several authors who, in part, are involved in documenting the “Aegean theme” in their works, paying particular attention to the fate of the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia. They have provided testimony in a traditional documentary fashion (memoirs), focusing primarily on the people who were exiled and in their exodus; a theme that requires relevance to historical facts and a well-developed historical memory; a theme of history and ideology that covers the political and moral ideas of the time.

According to Professor Miodrag Drugovac, as mentioned in his work “Istoria na Makedonskata knizhevnost XX vek” (History of Macedonian Literature XX Century), included among the authors who undertook the task of researching this subject are: Tashko Georgievski and Petar Shirilov. Included among other authors who wrote about this topic are: Kata Rumenova-Misirkova, Ivan Chapovski, Paskal Gilevski, Risto Jachev and Kole Mangov.³

According to Professor Miodrag Drugovac, included among the authors who introduced elements in their literary works, known as “prose of the document”⁴, is Tashko Georgievski, about whom Professor Drugovac said: “the data is also important for literary history, the fact that he undertook certain research (...), which should strengthen the authenticity”⁵ Poet Rade Siljan in his reviews of the cycle of novels under the common name “Black Seed”, among other things, said that Tashko Georgievski in his works has introduced an “honest documentary portrait”.⁶

Similarly, Professor Drugovac has also singled out writer Petar Shirilov who he says is a “documentary filmmaker, who, through legends, has actively contributed testimony on the historical Golgotha of his people.”⁷

Similarly, from a literary, historiographical and social aspect, Kica Bardžieva-Kolbe, in her work “Aegeans”⁸ has provided a significantly exceptional amount of testimony about the personal dramas and about the forced exodus of hundreds of

³ Miodrag Drugovac: *Istoria na Makedonskata knizhevnost XX vek*. - Skopje: *Misla*, 1990, pp. 572-576

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 625

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 572

⁶ Tashko Georgievski: *Tsrno seme; Zmiski vetar; Vreme na molchenie*. - Skopje: *Matica Makedonska*, 2008, p. 378

⁷ Miodrag Drugovac: *Istoria na Makedonskata knizhevnost XX vek*. - Skopje: *Misla*, 1990, p. 576

⁸ Kica B. Kolbe: *Egejci*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1999

thousands of Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia, and about those who were persecuted in the whirlwind of the Greek Civil War.

On the occasion of the Greek-Italian War's 70th anniversary, at the exhibition of books and photographs entitled "Confession of the Damned", organized by the Union of Macedonians from Aegean "MACEDON", during his address, well-known poet, Rade Siljan said: "The Macedonian people have retained their autonomy and centuries-old recognizability through the rich Macedonian cultural heritage, through oral creativity and especially through the high literary achievements of contemporary Macedonian writers. Despite all the individual and collective tragedies, tortures, persecutions, intimidation, forced exiles, anti-Macedonian laws introduced by Greece to change our personal and family names and our toponyms..., thanks to the literary contribution of writers born in Aegean Macedonia, we have convincingly preserved a record of our space in our consciousness, with a sense of literary invention and rich lexical expression. In our memory we have preserved the ancestral names of our cities, villages, rivers, mountains and all the places and landmarks that were called by our centuries-old names. We have done this through the works of Tashko Georgievski, Petar Shirilov, Ivan Chapovski, Paskal Gilevski, Kata Misirkova, Petre Nakovski, Metodija Toshevski, Risto Jachev, Petre Bicevski, Stojan Kocov, Kica Bardzieva-Kolbe, Jovan Parlapanov, Kole Mangov and others. We have preserved authentic names such as Kroncelevo, Setina, Krušodari, Krčišta, Sveti German, Gorničevo, Setoma, Čegan, Požarsko, Kostur, Voden, Rodevo, Pela, Kukuš, Banitsa, Lerin, D`mbeni, Bapčor, Kajlari, Ranci, Trsje, Zhupanoshta, Shesteovo, Zagorichani, Gabresh, Cheresnitsa, Ovcharani, Tiolishta and many other settlements that are inhabited by ethnic Macedonians. The work of this group of writers is a kind of recognizable emblem for the Macedonian existence and a way of recognizing the geographical names, toponyms and personal names and surnames in Aegean Macedonia." ⁹

Petre Nakovski and his works, undoubtedly, have been singled out as the subject of analysis in this master's thesis. His works have been reviewed by academics Gane Todorovski, Dimitar Solev, Branko Cvetkovski, and Rade Siljan. He has dedicated his entire literary work to one historical time frame, the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). His work has been developed through the prism of the Macedonian identity for which he has struggled to preserve and safeguard. All his writings contain elements of *literature of fact* and are valuable for answering questions that are still relevant today for Macedonia and for the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia. Answers to many questions can be found in his research, testimonies and documents contained in these works.

In his novel, "Na pat so vremeto" (On the road of time), Petre Nakovski wrote: "...our survival and existence which, as the wise minds once said, is a component of much past and little present." ¹⁰

⁹ radiolav.com.mk »News» Macedonia, Union of Macedonians from the Aegean "MACEDON" 70 years

¹⁰ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica Makedonska*, 2010, p. 10

In this sense, it is characteristic of the author to retain the attention of the audience. It is important that he or she leave a legacy for the younger generation to study from and pass it on to future generations so that the past can be remembered and permanently preserved on paper.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The expression “**literature of fact**” was introduced by literary critics between the two world wars as a substitute for the 1930s prose narrative; it is in fact a contemporary literature narrative whose main purpose is to reliably embody authentic events utilizing reporting or memoir terminology characteristics for the contemporary novel.

In the Dictionary of literary terms (Słownik terminów literackich), edited by Janusz Slavinski, the expression “**literature of fact**” is defined as: “Contemporary narrative literature based on the document containing literary works, such as: novels, reports, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs...” At the heart of “literature of fact” lies the novel - reportage, which is defined as “a novel that, through the creation of novelist fiction, strives to form, let’s say, a kind of documentary that relates to events, phenomena, experiences... in a particular environment or historical process.”¹¹

In the book “General theory of literature” by Ljuben Andreev, it is pointed out that: “literary-scientific works are a kind of work that by their internal and external features are closely related to lyrical, epic and dramatic works, as well as to scientific literature. The literary-scientific type includes: *travelogues, reports, diaries, journals, memoirs, etc.*”¹²

In his book “General theory of literature”, Ljuben Andreev defines the term “**travelogue**” as: “A work that describes the impressions and experiences of traveling to unknown, little known or very famous settlements, regions and countries.”¹³ (1991: 277) He believes that the travelogue provides a description of nature, of the journey, and of the people’s way of life, both in the past and present. The travelogues describe people’s culture, customs, historical data and the impressions they left on the travel writer.

Ljuben Andreev defines the term “**reportage**” as “work in which impressions of people and events from real, everyday life, are captured in a lively, dynamic, diverse style.” (1991: 284) He distinguishes between two types of reporting: journalistic and artistic. In the journalistic style with journalistic reporting, facts are drafted with short outlines and impressions of people and events are generally described, whereas in artistic journalism, impressions of people are described vividly, in more detail, and with emotional style.

¹¹ Janusz Sławiński, M. Głowiński, T. Kostkiewiczowa: *Słownik terminów literackich*. - Warszawa; Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich -Wydaw, 2008

¹² Ljuben Andreev: *Opshta teoria na literaurata*. - Skopje: Prosveten rabotnik, 1991, p. 274

¹³ Ibid., p. 277)

The purpose of both types of reporting is to present impressions more vividly and more impressively, in order to attract the reader's interest.

A **journal** or a daily log is distinguished by its rich factual data that can serve as a source of information for studying the history of a nation, a society or a certain period of time. It keeps a record of impressions and events according to their chronology. According to Ljuben Andreev, "a **journal** is a kind of work in which the most important events are recorded chronologically in order by day, month, year." (1991: 279)

In **memoirs**, through remembering the author recollects and writes down events and experiences in which he or she participated. Contained within those memories are also recorded some important personalities from the person's social life. Hence in the work "General theory of literature" by Ljuben Andreev, we find the following definition: "**Memoirs** are literary-scientific works in which, by remembering, the author describes not only his life, but also the memories of other people's lives, events and the time during which the person lived and worked." (1991: 280) An attribute of memoirs is that they not only have historical but also artistic value.

A **novel** is a long epic work which deals with topics like society, history, or people's everyday lives. The novel usually has several characters, among whom are the main characters and around whom the action is concentrated. They are the bearers of the directions the main action takes and attract the reader's attention. There are also supporting characters in the novel.

In portraying the characters in the novel, a writer strives to describe their external appearance and internal experiences, thoughts, emotions, actions, etc., as vivid, malleable and embossed as possible. The novel usually deals with a single main theme but there may also be secondary themes that are related to the main theme. It usually covers a wide period of time and has a socio-historical basis. Hence, the novel, according to Ljuben Andreev, is defined as: "a great epic work in prose or verse, which comprehensively deals with events and the life of one or more people, or an entire society, over a long period of time." ¹⁴ (1991: 213)

Chronotope literally means "*time-space*". ¹⁵ In other words, the temporal and spatial connections are artistically expressed in literature in which the chronotope has essentially a genre connotation. According to the definition given by Kata Kjulafkova in her book "Poimnik na knizhenata teoria" (Glossary of book theory), "*the literary chronotope is a model of a world personified in a recognizable, stylistically and culturally codified whole of space, time, character and story*". ¹⁶

In the Macedonian language Digital dictionary, under the term "**symbol**" we find: "object, action, etc., which serves as a conditional sign for a notion, an idea, an artistic character that conditionally conveys a thought, a conditional sign, the embodiment of all

¹⁴ Ljuben Andreev: *Opshta teoria na literaurata*. - Skopje: Prosveten rabotnik, 1991

¹⁵ Mihail Bahtin: *Teorija romana*. - Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1982

¹⁶ Editor: Kata Kjulafkova: *Poimnik na knizhenata teoria*. - Skopje: MANU, 2007, 616

characteristics ”. ¹⁷ This is a motive or a group of motives that provide meaning in order to achieve greater imagery in an expression and to give a wider significance to a specific object.

A **fact** represents true information, event, and is indisputable truth.

In the “Dictionary of literary terms” (Słownik terminów literackich), edited by Janusz Sławiński, the term “**fact**” is defined as: “that which takes place in reality, an event, an occurrence, a certain state that occurs in a certain time and space.” ¹⁸

These concepts are crucial in the analysis of “**literature of fact**” in novels based on specific events, historical documents, and documentary literature.

¹⁷ <http://www.makedonski.info/show>

¹⁸ (Janusz Sławiński, M. Głowiński, T. Kostkiewiczowa: *Słownik terminów literackich*. - Warsaw; Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich -Wydaw, 2008

4. "LITERATURE OF FACT" (DEVELOPMENT)

*"When you read 'literature of fact',
you are reading about something that truly took place
- it is not an invented story." ¹⁹*

"Literature of fact" as an expression or direction in literature was introduced in Europe in the 1930s and reached its apogee after the Second World War in works that were primarily dedicated to the period following the Second World War.

"Literature of fact" during this period was mostly present in the contemporary literature originating in: Poland, Russia, Greece, Great Britain, France, USA.

The expression was introduced between the two world wars by literary critics as a substitute for the narrative prose of the 1930s, whose main purpose was to provide credible representation of authentic events using reporting or memoir expression characteristics for the contemporary novel.

The Dictionary of literary terms (Słownik terminów literackich), edited by Janusz Slavinski, defines **"literature of fact"** as:

"Contemporary narrative literature that is based on the document and contains literary genres, such as: novel, reportage, autobiography, biography, memoirs." (...)

At the heart of **"literature of fact"** lies: the novel-reportage, which is defined as "a novel that through the creation of novelist fiction seeks to create a so-called documentary relation of events, phenomena, experiences, in a particular environment or historical process." ²⁰

¹⁹ www.misshannigan.com/Genre/nonfiction/nonfictionnotes.html

²⁰ Janusz Sławiński, M. Głowiński, T. Kostkiewiczowa: *Słownik terminów literackich*. - Warsaw; Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich -Wydaw, 2008

In the novel-reportage the dominant role belongs to a verified (authentic) description of a certain event which typifies or corresponds to a usually great, significant societal, political, or military issue. In this sense, **“literature of fact”** is part of literacy (literature) which is dominated by current social, political, military, sociological and psychological issues.

In **“literature of fact”**, the most important points are the truth, the historical fact, the authentic event.

In other words, authors use original stories and in those cases they usually use:

*“Reports, essays, conversations, biographical novels, belletrist journals, memoirs, which are “very useful and often make a very important contribution to history, and of course their contribution depends on the personalities and their role in historical events.”*²¹

These works have major social and cultural worth. Namely, they can serve as a source of social, historical and political research, of life realities, of knowledge about people and their behavioural motivation, of the psyche, of current reality assessment.

Reports, diaries, journals, biographies are classic types of **“literature of fact”**.

The most important component in **“literature of fact”** is the truth, i.e. the historical fact grounded in the document, the authentic event transferred in a novel - report, essay, conversation. The outcome of such literary works is socially and culturally very important.

“Literature of fact” is writing prose that portrays and explains ideas, that talks about real people, places, objects and events. It is a description or interpretation of a subject that is presented as **fact**.

According to Croatian literary theorists Zdenko Skreb and Ante Stamac, *“... ‘literature of fact’ is based on authentic experiences and insists on nurturing authenticity. (...) Prose is based on documentary facts, so by this Danilo Kish, in his prose “Grobishta za Boris Davidovich” (Tomb for Boris Davidovich), has offered us fictional facts that the author had collected from documentary records at concentration camps during Stalin’s rule.”*²²

According to these critics, *“...this literature puts forward specific events and is based on historical documents and documentary literature. These kinds of works achieve greater success worldwide.”*²³

²¹ Lindon Baines Jonson: *Pogled unatrag 1963-1969*. - Zagreb: Globus, 1974, p. 8

²² Zdenko Skreb, Ante Stamac: *Uvod u književnost*. - Zagreb: Globus, 1986, p. 337

²³ Ibid., p. 548

According to numerous authors, **“literature of fact”** is a document of time.

Among others, the most prominent literary achievements of this kind are: “Medalioni” (Medallions) by Zofija Nalkovska, “Da se stigne pred Gospod Bog” (To arrive before God) by Hanna Kralj, “Razgovori so Dzhelatot” (Conversations with the executioner) by K. Mocharski, “Raskazi” (Stories) by T. Borovski, “Imperatorot” (The Emperor) by R. Kapuszczyński (Poland); “Doctor Faust” by Thomas Mann, “Opera za tri groshevi” (Opera for three pennies) by Bertolt Brecht and others (Germany); “Memoari 1963-1969” (Memoirs 1963-1969) by L.B. Johnson (America); “Eden den na Ivan Denisovich” (A day of Ivan Denisovich), “Arhipelagot Gulak” (The Gulag Archipelago) by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, “Majstorot I Margarita” (The craftsman and Margarita) by Mikhail Bulgakov.

Melchior Vankowicz (1892-1974) was a Polish author who was viewed as a classic “literature of fact” writer in the 1960s. His writing activities were primarily limited to the World War II period. Other authors whose works are characteristic as Polish “literature of fact” are: Stanisław Cat-Mackiewicz, Kazimierz Dąbrowski, Richard Kapuszczyński, Jan Józef Szchepański and others.²⁴

Janusz Slavinski and Michał Głowiński, editors of the Glossary of literary terms (Słownik terminów literackich), point out that “the handbook dictionary of literary terms defines ‘literature of fact’ as a documentary novel or a large narrative work whose content or plot marked as a novel is a reconstruction of events that have taken place in the life of authentic contemporary or historical figures. It relies on documentary knowledge taken from archival, media sources, historiography, or material collected by the author.

The narrative technique that is closest to the reportage freely uses many traditional types of novels, especially from the socially ordinary biographical sphere.”²⁵

The genesis of **“literature of fact”** is found in the war period, at the time when references were made to narrative works written in prose, primarily those that had a documentary and biographical makeup and as such was repositioned to the body of contemporary literature.

²⁴ Ryszard Matuszewski: *Literatura polska 1939-1991*. - Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1996, p. 137

²⁵ wspolczesnosc.klp.pl/a-9339.html

4.1. “LITERATURE OF FACT” CHARACTERISTICS

“**Literature of fact**” works differ from those of fiction in several ways:

- People, events, places and ideas presented in “*literature of fact*” are real; they are not invented.
- “*Literature of fact*” is narrated by an author who, in some way, participated in the events or was first hand, directly informed by a source.
- “*Literature of fact*” deals with facts, describes real life experiences, or explains ideas.
- “*Literature of fact*” is written for a specific **audience**, or for a group of readers. It refers to a clear **purpose**, or reason for writing. The audience and the purpose influence the type of information the writer includes.
- The **style** of presentation is determined by the way the writer uses language. The style reflects the personality of the author. Factors that influence the author’s style include: level of formality, use of metaphorical words, diction or choice of words, sentence patterns.
- The **tone** of presentation is reflected by the author’s attitude towards the topic and towards the readers or listeners. The tone of the speaker in a conversation can come out according to the way the words and phrases are pronounced. When we read, we “hear” the tone in the choice of words and details given by the author. The tone of a literary work can be described in a single word, for example: pompous, playful, serious, personal, sarcastic, or friendly.
- **Perspective** is the point of view or opinion that the author directly or indirectly expresses on the topic.
- **Bias** occurs when a writer presents only one side of the story (for example, by ignoring relevant facts or by using emotional language that unfairly influences the feelings of readers or listeners).
- With his or her writing the author has a **goal** to achieve. Common goals are: to inform, to persuade, to show respect, to entertain, to explain and to warn.

4.2. “LITERATURE OF FACT” TYPES

There are four types, or modules, of “**literature of fact**” defined by their purpose:

- **Narrative** “literature of fact” tells stories about real life events. Examples of this include autobiographies and memoirs. A type of factual narrative literature is reflective writing, which shares the writer’s thoughts and feelings about a personal experience, an idea, an event, or a question. Examples of this include reflective essays, personal essays and journals.

- **Explanatory** “literature of fact” informs or explains. Examples of this include analytical essays and research reports.

- **Persuasive** “literature of fact” provides reasons or evidence to persuade the reader to act or think in a certain way. Examples of this include articles and political speeches.

- **Descriptive** “literature of fact” uses details tied to feelings in order to create mental images for the reader. Examples of this include personality descriptions and scientific observations.²⁶

The challenges for writing these novels are important episodes and historical moments, archival documents and testimony of living participants in the depicted events, personal visits to the places where the events took place, which appeared post factum, i.e. after a certain time perspective and distance.

The above-mentioned novels, by Petre Nakovski, deal with the very essential historical and social events that took place before and during the Greek Civil War with special reference to the Macedonian people’s participation.

In his review of the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), prominent Macedonian writer Dimitar Solev, among other things, underlined the following:

“In this, it should be noted that Petre Nakovski is an obvious supporter of the ‘*literature of fact*’; a tendency in contemporary narrative culture, which requires a new balance between fact and imagination. Departing from the data of life, which has the character of a document or fact, it allows itself the freedom to arrange, intertwine, cross,

²⁶ See: www.misshannigan.com/Genre/nonfiction/nonfictionnotes.html

combine - everything around the basic idea. But in 'literature of fact', the fact is the occasion and the author is the creator."

The main feature of Petre's above-mentioned novels, is that they all refer to the Greek Civil War; they can serve as an important source of information about the Greek state's terror against the Macedonian population, as well as for the participation of the Macedonian people in the Greek Civil War, their commitment, courage and self-sacrifice for their national liberation and defense of their identity and human dignity. The most essential part in these novels is the truth; the description of historically authentic events. They provide the reader with a wide opportunity to learn the truth about what took place during that difficult dramatic and unfortunate time.

5. APPLICATIONS

5.1 “POSTELA ZA CHEMERNITE” (A BED FOR THE WRETCHED)

*“What do I say?
Nothing... We uprooted ourselves from our homeland for nothing...
And no one cares or wants to know about the uprooted ones and where their roots are
from...
Our stone, Numo, has been rolled where no grass grows...”²⁷*

The novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) was Petre Nakovski’s first novel. It was published in 1985. This was a novel about the national, historical, military, political and existential drama the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece) experienced.



Even though the symbolism of the novel title “A bed for the wretched” describes events contained in it, it only covers part of the tragedy the Macedonian people experienced during the Greek Civil War.

Temporally, the action described in the novel takes place between June 22, 1948 and August 1949. It begins with the relocation of the population from the Kostur Region villages who found themselves in the immediate vicinity of the heavy fighting in North Pind Region, popularly called Gramos.

Figure 1. Cover page of the novel
“Postela za chemernite”
(A bed for the wretched)

²⁷ Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1985, p. 56

The novel is a literary chronotope²⁸ and essentially embodies the temporal and spatial connections through which its action is woven. The described time in which the events take place is positioned within time boundaries. Thus, according to Roland Barthes, the novel “dwells in a ‘new code’, the code of space and time”.²⁹

Events described in the novel are arranged chronologically and, through the expressions of the characters, the author introduces us not only to the course of events, but also to the actions that took place in the past, which are historically related to the events that are the subject of the novel.

Hence, it is concluded that the author chronologically and retrospectively touches on the historiography, the Macedonian people’s national destiny and the historical catastrophe the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia experienced, “...a defeat that forever and ever blackened the existential perspective of the Macedonian nation..”³⁰

The following events are covered in the core content of the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched):

- Relocation of the population to the former Italian base Prenies in Albania.
- Organized evacuation of children from villages to Eastern European countries.
- Mobilization of children aged 15-16 as reserves for DAG.³¹
- Fate of the wounded DAG fighters.

The novel begins with a description of Prenies,³² where about 7-8 thousand exiled inhabitants from Kostur Region were housed in old, dilapidated barracks, horse stables and warehouses. DAG General Staff, in agreement with the Albanian government, decided to relocate part of the population from the Kostur villages closest to the front to this former Italian base. Their stay in Prenies is testimony to the difficult times and personal traumas the villagers from Kostur Region experienced. This included loneliness, abandonment and destruction and mutilation in this unfamiliar place described in the novel. Petre, through difficult and emotional images, paints a descriptive picture of “doubled over old people, widows of six wars and broken down women”³³ who were separated from their sons, daughters, husbands, who being sickly, wailed and prayed silent prayers, waiting for daily news from their loved ones who were on the battlefields or in hospitals. The novel describes terrible scenes of old and frail people running after

²⁸ “A literary chronotope is a model of a world personified in a recognizable, stylistically and culturally coded unity of space, time, character and story”

²⁹ Venko Andonovski: *Structura na Makedonskiot realistichen roman*. - Skopje: *Detska radost*, 1997, p. 123

³⁰ Stozher, January-March 2004, p. 42

³¹ Democratic Army of Greece

³² Prenjes - the first settlement in Albania, after crossing the border crossing Kafasan

³³ Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1985, p. 5

the trucks which transported the recovering and wounded to and from the battlefields of Vicho and Gramos, treated in the Albanian hospitals in Elbasan, Tirana, Durrës and Sukt. Old and frail people kept constantly looking for their loved ones or persistently waited for some news about them. “But in the flurry of shouting, neither name nor surname could be heard, only ‘o-o-o-a-a-a!!!’ and a lot of crying, praying, cursing, swearing and whining.”³⁴

The stay in Prenies was a difficult and cruel truth for the Macedonian people who were thrown out of their homes, alone, without their loved ones, without anything of their own, feeling miserable, helpless and dulled by pain. But in their minds they were secretly guided by a single thought that kept them alive, that thought was their homeland, their place of birth.

“Outside of the passing trucks, no one is allowed to leave the compound, but some do manage to sneak out without being seen. Those who do sneak out, climb up to Preval (pass) and look at the lake water, and in it they see the reflection of the high peaked gray mountains and they whisper to themselves and point with their finger saying: ‘There... over there is my home’...”³⁵



Figure 2. Mothers evacuating their children

In the novel “Postela na chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), through Kirche’s expressions, a mobilized boy, Petre introduced us to the systematic and organized action for evacuating the children to Eastern European countries. The goal was to provide a safe and secure place for children exposed to the dangers posed by the Greek Civil War. The scenes of the separation in Kirche’s narration are tragic: “Our mother hugged us silently

³⁴ Ibid., p. 6

³⁵ Ibid., p. 7

and kept us in her arms for a long time. All three of us found ourselves in the tight but gentle grasp of her short arms. She kept squeezing us and her tears kept dripping down her cheeks. It seemed that we remained that way, as one, for a long time. Mother then loosened her embrace and, like a hen in fear of losing her scattered chicks, she spread her arms and pushed us into the crowd of children.”³⁶

Accordingly, after spending an uncertain night in the border area, children from the Kostur Region villages, such as Kosinets, Lobanitsa, Krchishta, Dolno Papratsko, Ezerets, Galishta, Breshteni and several other villages from Kostenaria, were transported by trucks to Korcha where they were accommodated by Albanian families. Later they were transported to an area near Durres. The children were accompanied and cared for by women who were called “mothers”.³⁷ After an eight-month stay in Albania, the children were transferred to Poland.³⁸ More information on this can be found in the foreword of the political science study “Makedonski detsa vo Polska (1946-1968)” (Macedonian children in Poland) (1946-1968)) by Dr. Petre Nakovski and in his second novel “I kamenot e zemia” (A stone too is soil).

The collection and evacuation of the children was undoubtedly of humane nature, but there were other goals with tragic consequences. Freed from having to look after them, parents were deployed to serve the needs of the war effort at the front lines. The child evacuation, without the possibility of return, led to the destruction of the Macedonian family. Participation of the general population in the war effort, which led to many deaths, along with the child exodus, was the beginning of the Macedonian people’s eradication from Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece).

In his novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), Petre Nakovski has also familiarized us with the mobilization of children aged 15-16 as reserves for DAG.

The children evacuated to Romania faced new challenges. DAG officials sent there began to urge the older children to return back to the war and fight at the front lines. Representatives from the Interim Democratic Government of Greece (IDGG), from the National Liberation Front (NOF) and from the Women’s Anti-Fascist Front (AFZH) used slogans to entice the older and enthusiastic children to return and fight. They used slogans such as: “Dear children of the freedom fighting heroic fathers and mothers...” They spoke like that for a long time, occasionally being interrupted by the children yelling “We are ready! We are ready! We are ready to go and fight!”³⁹

In consequence, the boys from Kostur, Lerin, Voden, Epirus and Thessaly were transferred by truck through Berkovica (Bulgaria) to Prespa, where they trained as soldiers. Even though they were children they were tasked the heavy burden the adults carried, but not without reactions from their relatives who said: “...they are crazy! They are mad! They brought our children back, dressed them like that and sent them to battle.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 95

³⁷ See: Petre Nakovski: *Makedonski detsa vo Polska*. - Skopje: Mlad Borec, 1987, p. 21

³⁸ Ibid., p. 27

³⁹ Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: Kultura, 1985, p. 156

What are those sons of bitches trying to do, eradicate us all down to our roots?! That's what my own grandfather said..."⁴⁰

The mobilization and return of minors aged 15-16 to the battlefield, to serve the needs of DAG at the front as a reserve army, caused a storm of protests⁴¹ from parents who pressured the authorities to withdraw them. These children were then sent to Prenies.

In his works "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched), the author also deals with the fate of the wounded fighters who took an active role in battles fighting on the side of DAG. Through time, space, emotions, mental state, he illustrates the despair and contentment of these heroes. The author talks about human destinies and the tragic consequences of the Greek Civil War. The Golgotha of the Macedonian people is exposed in the name of freedom, in the name of longing for the homeland, in hope of a better tomorrow. Wounded fighters taken from the Gramos battlefields were sent to Albania, to the hospitals in Korcha, Tirana, Elbasan and Sukt, and then returned to the frontlines before they had a chance to completely heal. There, knitted and woven together their bitter and wretched destiny begins to disintegrate and unravel – like it was cut with a sickle.

The novel, which is the subject of analysis in the most convincing way, describes the great evil that the Greek Civil War brought to the Macedonian people; the evil, whose perpetrators were people of various ideologies. It is challenging to answer the question: "How should a person who participated under conditions imposed by the Greek Civil War be labeled - a murderer or a hero?" The author does not provide an unambiguous answer, but leaves it open for readers to assess which characters and events deserve praise and which condemnation.

There is a scene in the novel in which a Macedonian manages to defend his dignity and respect for his humanity, which is of highest value. In this regard, the most powerful statement was made by Pando, the main character. While being tortured in police barracks, he said: "...I don't want communism and I don't need it. What I want is Macedonia and that's what I am looking for. They labeled me an autonomist and sent me to a dry island."⁴²

"They accused me of being a communist.)"⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 166

⁴¹ See: Petre Nakovski: *Makedonski detsa vo Polska*. - Skopje: Mlad borets, 1987, p. 23

⁴² Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: Kultura, 1985, p. 66

⁴³ Ibid., p. 46

The publishing commission at the SKM Central Committee, which also included five people from Aegean Macedonia (they were authorized to assess which and what texts referring to Aegean Macedonia may be published), disputed the publication of the novel "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched), demanding that the sentence be deleted. The author refused and asked the publisher "Kultura" to return the novel.

On the margin of this section we would like to point out the submissive and lackey "Aegean establishment", which after reading the novel did not forget this sentence: "...I don't want communism and I don't need it. What I want is Macedonia and that's what I am looking for. They labeled me an autonomist

After this expression more unbearable torture is revealed to us through the pages of the novel. From his research on torture of Macedonians in the Greek police barracks, the author, through Pando's words, has revealed the following methods of torture used in an attempt to denationalize the Macedonians.

Methods of torture:

- 1) Drinking castor oil
- 2) Sitting on ice
- 3) Beating
- 4) Pulling out finger and toe nails
- 5) Putting lit matches or hot eggs in the armpits
- 6) Tightening an iron hoop on the head
- 7) Putting a live cat under the shirt
- 8) Beating on the feet and genitals
- 9) Hot pepper in the mouth
10. Shearing a cross
11. Being imprisoned in camps ⁴⁴

After counting the methods of torture, Pando concluded: "They beat us but not to kill us. The rule was to maim, not to kill! Maim! Kill their spirit, their defiance, not them. Cripple them so others would be afraid of being crippled! This is what our Greek fatherland did to us. And who knows if tomorrow or the day after tomorrow they will not hang more disgusting names on us and scare their own children with us. And we, you see, still last and we are... Like the weed, right?" ⁴⁵

In fact, through the description and behaviour of characters, the author has shown that each character carries within himself or herself the destiny of the collective, a destiny full of tragic consequences. Their character traits are set apart by their highest virtue. They are the bearers of the truth and they incorporate the most positive human qualities: pride, endurance, perseverance, dignity and acts of heroism. Through their portrayal the author paints a picture of the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece), i.e. persons who are representatives of the typical Macedonian villager. The author then authentically describes the system aimed at destroying the family, displacing the people, separating family members, attacking human dignity,

and sent me to a dry island." Three former DAG fighters, otherwise deserters after the battle for Lerin, called the author for a conversation and in a long argument tried to get him to delete the sentence. "Delete it," they told the author, "because the locals will say that we Aegeans are against communism and that we want a Macedonia," which was contrary to the policy of the League of Communists. The author told them that he refused to delete it. Two of the people in the conversation were former UDBA agents who had retired after Rankovich's defeat. The third and more educated, worked as a research associate in the Archives of Macedonia. He only had a regular primary education in Greece. Nakovski left these people in revolt as they shouted at him: "Stay, stay with us, and you will go far and high."

⁴⁴ Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1985, p. 67

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 69

eradicating the Macedonian tradition, and exiling the Macedonian people from their ancestral homeland.

The novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), which is the subject of our analysis, contains a number of elements of “**literature of fact**” through which we learn the truth about places, times, events and people.

The **first element** that confirms that the work has “**literature of fact**” elements is the authenticity of space; names of settlements, i.e. toponyms.

The action takes place in Albania, in Prenies, which is the first settlement after the Kafasan border crossing. Here, mentioned in the novel, is the town Korcha, the village Dobrani and the Albanian towns Elbasan, Tirana, Durres and Sukt, in which wounded DAG fighters were treated during the Greek Civil War.

In the novel, the author references Macedonian names with unusually accurate topography of the villages, cities, mountains, rivers, which Greek governments, over time have Hellenized by law, i.e. these toponyms have been renamed and given Greek names. Through the analysis of the novel, the reader will find authentic Macedonian names of the toponyms in Aegean Macedonia such as:

Villages: Vrbnik, Bilishta, Krchishta, Dolno Papratsko, Novoseleni, Ezerets, Snicheni, Ludovo, Mantila, Dolneni, Breshteni, Galishta, Janovenski villages, Smrdes, Breznitsa, Vineni, Kosinets, Lobanitsa, Breznitsa, Zhelevo.

Cities: Lerin, Voden, Negush, Kostur.

Regions: Kostur Region, Voden Region, Lerin Region.

Mountains: Vicho, Gramos, Kamna, Sveti Ilija, Kopanche, Aljavitsa, Krusha, Tumba, Bela Voda, Bigla, Gorusha, Haro, Kleftis, Patomata, Orle, Odreto, Bel Kamen, Glavata, Kula, Jorgova Glava, Mali Madi, Butsi, Janova Glava, Plati, Kulkuturja, Bukovik, Baro, Jamata, Polenata, Vrbitsa, Stenite, Kajmakchalan, Shak, Sinadev Rid

The **second element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is time frames and real events that took place in that time period.

In the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), the author accurately observes the chronological order of the novelist action and describes the real facts and events that led to the destruction of the Macedonian family and to the forced eviction of the Macedonian people from their ancestral homes.

- The exact day was marked as June 22, 1948. This is when the mass migration of the population from the Kostur Region villages began. This was in the immediate vicinity where the heavy fighting in the area of North Pind, popularly called Gramos, began and lasted 70 days. This was when the villagers from Krchishta, Dolno Papratsko, Novoseleni,

from the so-called Kostaneria villages: Ezerets, Snicheni, Ludovo, Mantila, Dolneni, Breshteni, Galishta, Janovenski, were moved, as mentioned above, to the former Italian military camp in the small settlement called Prenies, in the territory of present-day Albania.

- When the villagers left their homes they took some of their property with them. Unfortunately most of this property was confiscated in support of DAG. The people, whose property was confiscated, in return, were given a written receipt.⁴⁶

- During the Greek Civil War, wounded fighters from the Gramos battlefields were taken to Albania, to hospitals in Elbasan, Tirana, Durres and Sukt. For more information on the existence of these hospitals, please refer to the novel “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time), which is also the subject of this analysis.

- An organized action was started in 1948, to collect and evacuate the children out of the country. The children were taken to Korcha and placed with Albanian families, as confirmed by the author and his wife (Petre and Ditta Nakovski), as well as many of their friends who spent their childhood separated from their parents and taken to boarding houses in Eastern European countries.



Figure 3. “Mother” Evgenia and children from the village Krchishta in Solice-Zdruj in May 1949

It is true that “mothers” did exist as represented through the character of “mother” Evgenia, who cared for the evacuated children in general as well as those who were

⁴⁶ See: Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1985, p. 243

eventually taken to Poland.⁴⁷ For more information on this see the study entitled “Makedonski detsa vo Polska (1946) -1968)” by Petre Nakovski.

- The total number of mobilized children ages 15-16 as reserves for DAG, numbered one thousand two hundred.⁴⁸

It is also a *fact* that, even though Greeks and Macedonians fought under one flag, Greek authorities made every effort to administratively assimilate the Macedonian population with decrees⁴⁹ to ban and eradicate all Macedonian basic national features such as: the spoken language, the written script, religion practiced by Macedonians, depriving the Macedonian people of their human dignity, property and Greek citizenship.

The novel also mentions names of camps, as well as historic figures, military and political organizations, anthems and poems which confirm the thesis of “*literature of fact*”:

Camp: Makronisos⁵⁰, a “re-education” centre in which 50,000 left-leaning soldiers were interned during the Greek Civil War. The basic point of “re-education” was to spread hatred against communism and Slavism:

Modest Makronisos, embracing the pioneers
you are the homeland of heroes with great glory
a great homeland, but not of the slaves
and fear and a grave of the Slav barbarians...

The first Makronisos battalion
Now hates Slavism...⁵¹

Historic figures: Metaxas, Velouhiotis, Venizelos, Pangalos-general, dictator and other famous Greek politicians.

Military and political organizations: DAG (Democratic Army of Greece), ELAS (Ellinikos Laikos Apellefterotikos Stratos) (National Liberation Army of Greece), UNRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)).

Songs: “Anakrisi tritu vathmu” (Interrogation of the third degree) - a song written by Andreas Leondaris, a prisoner in Macronissos (translated by P. Nakovski).

⁴⁷ See: Petre Nakovski: *Makedonski detsa vo Polska (1946-1968)*, (politikoloshka studia), Skopje: *Mlad borec*, 1987, p. 19

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 23

⁴⁹ We are talking about decrees 13 of 1947 and MN of 1947 and 1948

⁵⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makronisos>

⁵¹ See: Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1985, p. 27

- “Embros ELAS gia tin Elada”, (Forward ELAS for Greece). This was ELAS’s **anthem** with which radio station “Free Greece” began its broadcast.

The **third element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the testimony upon which the author bases his statements made about the fates of the main characters.

The novel is arranged as a system of narratives, which complement each other, and actions that are connected through the intertwined expressions of the main characters, Pando, Numo and Kirche. Pando - the gravedigger, who fought in several wars, fought for his country, for his homeland, and because he loved his homeland he was called a “stinking Slavophone” and was accused of being a communist. And regardless of who ruled Greece, whether it was Venizelos, Pangalos, or Metaxas, Pando’s character accurately describes the destinies of all those who sought and loved their Macedonia, i.e. those who refused to declare themselves Greek and who insisted on speaking their native Macedonian language. The punishment for these people began and ended with three cups of castor oil. And not only that: they were also beaten, had their finger and toe nails torn off and boiling hot eggs were placed in their armpits. But that too was not enough. The torturers and sick minds went even further by putting hot peppers in the mouths of the tormented and live cats under their shirts...

Numo Damovski, a Macedonian, was brought to Prenies from Suk to be punished. He had lost a leg. He lost it in the battle for Kamna. He too, through his life’s stories recounted his suffering, describing the fate of the Macedonians who fought for their Macedonia. In his stories he describes Charilaos, the character of all those Greeks and Macedonians who thought differently, were leftists, communists or simply Macedonians, who spoke the Macedonian language and refused to declare themselves Greek. They were all sent to the National Education Centre located on the island Makronisos. Together with Pando, Numo witnessed the destinies of these people and mourned with them, but his thoughts constantly weighed on him. Speaking about what the Macedonians desired, he said: “Should this not be the fruit of our dreams, our desires and beliefs? But what freedom have we brought to these people here? And who here can assure me that tomorrow our people will return to their ancestral homes happy and free? Why did this happen to us?”⁵²

Kirche’s character depicts a young fifteen-year-old boy, whose image represents the exiled Macedonian children from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece) who were taken to Eastern European countries. These children, barely young men, with rifles on their shoulders, with three pairs of military trousers, with heavy boots as long and wide as a shovel, but with a firm step, were being prepared to fight side by side with the other soldiers at the front. Kirche was one of those children who, in the whirlwind of the Greek Civil War, was taken away and separated from his parents and from his ancestral home.

⁵² Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1985, p. 148



Figure 4. Petre Nakovski
(Children being prepared to be future soldiers)

Through Kuze's character, who also appears in the novel "I kamenot e zemja" (A stone too is soil), the author portrays those who, during the Greek Civil War, profited from the sufferings of others by using deception, slander, betrayal, accusations and intimidation. Kuze is a negative character who persists in fulfilling orders from the NOF and AFZH leaders. The people call him the lizard. He is cowardly and humiliatingly helpful. "Can't you see that he is burning with desire to condemn someone? And someone said that he is a fellow countryman!"⁵³

Nakovski, in his novel "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched) has dedicated a special place to women. Women who suffered, mothers who were left without their children, women who were left without their husbands, lonely women, women expelled from their homes, young women who, instead of preparing to become brides, were mobilized and sent to the battlefields where they were often wounded, treated in military hospitals, ending up mutilated with arms and legs amputated, walking with crutches and some being brought back to fight at the front before their wounds fully healed.

What kind of dreams did these young women dream?

⁵³ Ibid., p. 93

The author also follows the life path of Donka – Kaleshata (Brunette) who is typical of a Macedonian girl. Kalesha is a symbol of a brave girl, whose long, black, heavy and lush hair braid was the pride of the entire battalion. Her character represents the rebellious youth, the feeling of personal dignity, the desire for life guided by the songs she sang and is representative of all the young girls who replaced their wedding gowns with military uniforms.

Through emotional images that will not leave the reader indifferent, Nakovski captures the situation well, in Prenies at that time. He describes the fate of the women, the mothers and the widows through the character Krstovitsa (Ristana)... who lost not only those who fought at the war front, but also her children, those taken away and those who remained with her, those who were swept away by the whirlwind of war, by evacuation, disease and by her inability to save them. The life of a child slowly fades away before their eyes: “She is dreadfully sick, the poor girl, and has not gotten out of bed for a month. She won’t eat...”⁵⁴ The fate of Kostovitsa, another woman in the camp, is difficult. She is representative of the Macedonian women from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece), whose child melts away before her eyes. She sits there helpless with a dull look nailed to the beams. “Sitting beside the freshly covered grave, Kostovitsa lit candles whose flames flickered in her palm...”⁵⁵ This was the fate of the women from Kostur Region, Aegean Macedonia, crying every day from pain and neglect, with eyes full of anticipation, with feelings of motherhood, torn, broken and anxious.

The characters in this novel are authentically presented with having deep and lifelong scars and deeply filled with sadness. For her grief of having to leave her homeland, Jasmina Mojsieva-Gusheva will write:

“Regardless of whether they left their homeland voluntarily or because they were persecuted, there was always a quiet sadness in their soul. It didn’t always have to be simple nostalgia for a particular place or time. It could appear as an inner dislike for loneliness, discomfort of not belonging to the environment, or simply stress due to one’s own emptiness. There are no specific rules in its appearance.”⁵⁶

The **fourth element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the Macedonians common code, “a traditional symbol”⁵⁷, that is a celebration of a name-day and *celebration of traditional Macedonian Orthodox holidays*. For example: Ilinden, St. George, Mitrovdan, Prechista, Spasovden, Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God, Crucifixion, Palm Sunday, holidays that express the true faith in God by praying to God and giving out food for the souls of the departed, which express a touching authenticity of Macedonian life and customs. *Macedonian dances and Macedonian folk songs* are proof of the Macedonian existence, songs and dances such as the “Beracheto”, “Chie e ona devojche”, “Narode Makedonski”, “Tsrnej goro”, etc. The

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 81

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 84

⁵⁶ Jasmina Mojsieva-Gusheva: *Imaginarni tatkovini*. - Rijec, 2006, no.3, p. 158

⁵⁷ See: Venko Andonovski: *Abduktia na teoria*. - Skopje, *Galikul*, 2011, p. 176

author's aim here was to preserve the truth, even the finest detail of it, and the tragedy of that time.

The **style and language** depend on the creative individuality of the author (local and literary language). His expressions show that he has the ability to express himself well. The author uses the *Macedonian literary language* in his work, but his writing is also enriched with authentic words from the *Kostur Region dialect*, words such as “jaska (I), chuzho (foreign), lavae (were speaking), d'mbja (oak trees), od de si (where are you from), de osh (where are you going), zve (took), r'ka (hand), odajka (room), puleshe (was looking at), usunatje (daybreak), vtasa (arrived), v'lchitsa (female wolf), p'to (mole), laf (word), vlegu (I entered), urva (I descended), ena (one), razbervam (I understand), liudie (people), s'ntse (sun), pominae (they passed by), nimi (them), neshcho (something), opitvam (I am asking), z'mbi (teeth), ami ka (and how), po'tpchi (sign), se uma (I am thinking), nashcho (one of us), balzosam (??), Gospu (my God), molia (begging), doidu (I arrived), o iaska zh'lnata (??), noshia (night), oidu (I went), reku (I said), spolai (thank). We also find *curses* in the novel such as: “May they too burn by fire and may God give them the eyes of a mother so that they can see what they are doing...”⁵⁸

All this shows that authenticity exists. It also demonstrates the modesty of the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece) who like to express themselves in a simple, non-politicized, ordinary language. This, however, does not prevent them from expressing their pain, sorrow, fears, expectations, hope, as well as condemnation and judgment in their own way. In order to capture the authenticity of time and space, the author also uses *Greek language* expressions in his work such as: “Ta podja mu! (My feet!) Ohi! (No!), Ipograpse atime! (Sign villain!), Kalo pedi! (Good boy), Palikari! (Hero!), Skopos, (Guard), grafio (office), katalaves (understand), asfalia (police), paliopedo (awful boy), pedia (boys), ekso (outside). We also find expressions in the *Romanian language* such as: “Shti Romasenashti?” and “Kunte kjama?”

Noted in the novel are also sensitive experiences such as: emotions and reflections, through which we would say ideally express the “*literature of fact*” present in the works.

The author has successfully connected the **symbolism** of the novel title with the fate of the collective. Similarly the novel is distinguished with the following *symbols*: the black scarf - symbolizing grief and mourning for the lost, the stone – symbolizing the homeland, the icon, the word, the language... are symbols of duration, survival of the nation and of the prayer - a personal religious experience based on a return to the thought of God or another object of worship in a state of worship and admiration.

The novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) is a testament to the people who went through and experienced the storm of the war, who, through no fault of their own, personally experienced its ugliness.

The elements of “**literature of fact**” are the best carriers of “life knowledge” as confirmed by this analysis. Nakovski, in this novel, has revealed a true concrete picture

⁵⁸ Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1985, p. 172

of the exiled. He has shown that they didn't lose their every day hope that, one day, they would return to their homeland. He has accurately captured their thoughts filled with memories and emptiness in their souls, sharing the same fate with others and sharing the days of loneliness.

This is what Petre Nakovski will say at an interview with the newspaper "Makedonija denes" (Macedonia today): "With this novel I am just trying to find the key to their souls. The voice of the soul appears when free thought is forcibly silenced. When one digs and digs long enough in time they will discover it. They will draw the knowledge from the depths of its core and reveal the truth about themselves and others."⁵⁹

In his review of the novel "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched) Dimitar Solev will write:

"In this, it should be noted that Petre Nakovski is an obvious supporter of the **"literature of fact"**. This is a trend in our modern storytelling culture, which requires a new balance between factography and imagination. Starting with the animal tax, which has the characteristics of a document or a fact, which allows itself the freedom to arrange the two, to intertwine them, to cross them, to combine them – to circle around the main idea. But, even in **"literature of fact"**, fact is an occasion, and the author is a creator..." "As for the idea, it is symbolically stated in the title itself, and in several other explicit or metaphorical places: Nashintsite (Our people), the Macedonians, have many fatherlands (Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania) or at least they fight under their flags" (Nume).⁶⁰

The novel ends with a scene that will make the reader sad and unable to hold back tears. We are referring to the traditional custom of "giving boiled wheat for the soul" which is demonstrated through Krstovitsa, who, on the ninth day after her son died, went out and collected wild wheat from an abandoned field but was accused of stealing it. Being humiliated, disgraced and sullen, she again went out and gathered wild plums. And instead of following the age-old custom of "giving out boiled wheat for the souls of the dead", she gave out wild plums while saying: "Take some, good people, eat some for the soul of Risto, my son..."⁶¹

But this was not the end of the Macedonian nightmare; the dreaded year 1949 brought with it the "Great lie".

This novel also carries a message for future generations. They are left with a legacy to study it and pass it on to the next generations. Whatever it is that needs to be remembered will need to be written down, so that it will last and not be forgotten.

⁵⁹ See: *Makedonija denes*, November 4, 2003, p. 15

⁶⁰ See: Dimitar Solev's review of the novel "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched) by Petre Nakovski, Skopje, *Kultura*, 1983

⁶¹ Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1985, p. 185

We believe that modern Macedonians living in a whole new age and under new conditions should draw their own conclusion about this tragic part of Macedonia and with a single goal: for this to never happen again.

5.2. "I KAMENOT E ZEMIA" (A STONE TOO IS SOIL)

*"Kire, my dear boy, wherever you go you must remember two things...
Your language and the road you took!
Only that way you will return, you will find your way home.
If you forget your language then you will forget who you are.
And if you forget who you are you would have forgotten the way that would lead you home.
And if you forgot your way home then you will wander the world forever...
Your language, my dear boy, is what makes you who you are.
If you forget your language then you will forget yourself.
If you forget the road back home, you will wander forever...
So protect your language and it will protect you.
If you don't forget your language then you will not forget your way home...
And then you will come home..."*⁶²

More of the Macedonian people's (from Aegean Macedonia) tragedy is presented in Petre Nakovski's second novel entitled "I kamenot e zemja" (A stone too is soil). This novel was published in 1988. Here the author talks about the condition of the population that lived within the war territory and was facing the whirlwind of a huge disaster brought on by the war.

A series of personality destinies flow along in a time frame within the core content of the novel "I kamenot e zemja" (A stone too is soil). The novel is a chronotope.⁶³ Described in the pages of this book is the time placed within the time limits in which the depicted events took place. According to Roland Barthes, the novel "inhabits a 'new code', the code of space and time."⁶⁴

⁶² Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 139

⁶³ In his works "Za romanot" (About the novel), Mihail Bakhtin set the initial theoretical postulates for the novel as a whole, but in his theoretical research he also refers to the importance of time and space in the novel. Chronotope literally means "time-space" that is, an essential connection between the temporal and spatial links that are artistically expressed in the literature.

⁶⁴ Venko Andonovski: *Struktura na makedonskiot realistichen roman*. - Skopje: *Detska radost*, 1997, p. 123

The facts offered in the given time period are arranged with a chronological composition of the course of events which provide gradual acquaintance with the points in time and with the population. In that the author builds on events that took place earlier, but are the beginning of the described time period expressed in the stated part of the novel:



“... But before the Solun front broke, it was cut in half by Serbian, French and English soldiers. And then before the Italian hit, the Greeks forced everyone to work for free and cut trees. On these hills they dug trenches, built bunkers in which the soldiers of all the armies shed blood, but none was loved.”⁶⁵

This kind of composition confirms the author’s creative mastery to use chronological and retrospective storytelling about his characters.

The time frame the story in the novel “I kamenot e zemja” (A stone too is soil) takes place in is covered by the period from May-June 1947 to May 4, 1948.

The novel is based on the following true events:

- Greek state instigates white terror
- DAG mobilizes young people in its ranks
- Villages are bombed
- Children are collected and evacuated

Mobilization of young people into DAG’s ranks, as presented by Nakovski, was an event through which there was forced mobilization. These young men and women from the village were forcibly mobilized (by order of the General Staff, not by law - there was no government at that time. The Provisional Government was formed on December 23, 1947 in Asamati, a village in Prespa.) The only people who were not mobilized in these villages were “widows, old women, nursing mothers, the elderly and children.” During the execution of this action, a conversation between father and son is captured. The following highlights the differences in understanding of what it means to participate in the war:

⁶⁵ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 10

“... ‘Father, I am leaving and going to fight at the front, to avenge my brother.’ That’s when Giorgi grabbed him by the collar, looked into his eyes and said: ‘I did not bring you up to be a revenge seeker. Revenge is best left to the savages. We are not like that... think about it. Are you sure this is what you want to do in these desperate times?’ But before Done had a chance to respond, Giorgi continued: ‘This is not a place for strangers. This is our place and every time we aspire to do something we end up with pools of blood. Think about it son, nothing can be done with a single step or with a single drop of blood. It is easy to say: ‘I am going!’ But why are you going, have you really thought about it? You know that this kind of storm took both your maternal and paternal grandfathers? And all that’s left of my father is his name engraved on the trunk of a thick beech tree. Remember? Like your grandfather Kiro said, Naum my son, your brother, lucky for us, was not left in the Albanian mountains. Fate wanted him to be returned to us so that we can lay him to rest under our skies. Our kind, my son, never wanted anyone with bad intentions to enter our yard. The gun that hangs on the wall there from the time of our great-great grandfathers, hangs there to prevent strangers with bad intentions from entering our yard. It was used the most when the Andarts came to our village. My grandfather Naum used it to drive them out. Any stranger that dared enter was met with a shot in the head... I don’t want to hear any more about any revenge... I will tell you again... nothing is solved with a single step, a single drop of blood or a single sigh. Never forget that...”⁶⁶

This confirms the morality and ethics between two generations.

With support from the Greek National Army the terror was carried out by armed paramilitary and military groups, primarily made up of Greek nationalists, the majority of whom collaborated with the occupiers: Italians, Bulgarians and Germans during World War II. The forms of terror (white terror)⁶⁷ consisted of: banning the Macedonian identity, various forms of punishing the left-leaning population or individual people, and looting houses and properties.⁶⁸

Due to the escalation of fighting, pressure from the community prompted organizers of the “save the children” program to expedite the evacuation process to take the children abroad...⁶⁹ A broader explanation of this event can be found in the foreword to the political science study *Makedonski detsa vo Polska* (1946-1968) (Macedonian Children in Poland (1946-1968)) by Dr. Petre Nakovski:

“The reason was the frequency of bombing Macedonian villages by government military units, especially those in which Macedonian schools were opened. On the other hand, as DAG’s food supplies and human needs kept growing, there was a need to provide safety for the tens of thousands of children whose lives had been in danger.

⁶⁶ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 28

⁶⁷ See: Stojan Kiselinovski: *Egejskiot del na Makedonija 1913-1989*. - Skopje, *Kultura*, 1990 p. 137

⁶⁸ See: Έτσι αρηίσε ο εφύλιος, Ατίνα, 1987

⁶⁹ See: Petre Nakovski: *Makedonski detsa vo Polska (1946-1968): (political science study)*. - Skopje, *Mlad Borec*, 1987, p. 18

Therefore, in 1947, the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece petitioned Eastern European governments to temporarily accept children from the liberated and semi-liberated territories of Northern Greece. A positive response activated the district and village people's boards to organize the necessary action to send the children abroad. The children were escorted by women called 'mothers', each of whom was responsible for groups of 20-25 children aged 2 to 14.”⁷⁰



Figure 6. Mothers carrying wounded

In the novel “I kamenot e zemja” (A stone too is soil) we find a vivid and emotional description of the departure of children and their separation from their parents:

“They began their departure... children, women, old men... all mixed together. First in one big bunch and then, slowly, in a column. They walked in two's, in fours, seven and even ten together... Families stuck together... Mothers intervened; whispering, comforting, teaching, holding hands tightly and keeping the children warm before they were separated... Step by step, they walked holding hands, holding their mothers' dresses...

‘Mothers and all others who escorted the children here please stand on this side. Say goodbye to them now.’”⁷¹

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 21

⁷¹ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje, *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 151

“The children moved on... frightened, crying, praying, looking back and yelling, hurting... they moved on... Their mothers stood there on the hill motionless and in silence... with tears running down their cheeks... which they did not wipe...”⁷²

After the children were evacuated their parents were relieved of their responsibilities of taking care of them, so the armed struggle gained a new influx of people, who were assigned to carry out background tasks, such as transporting wounded and ammunition, digging trenches, building bunkers, etc. The evacuation of the children and the mobilization of their parents for the needs of the war front led to the disintegration of the Macedonian family. This was the start of the eradication of the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece).

It is a fact that the people in their daily life constantly strived to preserve their individuality, freedom, dignity and faith in God. They expressed their belief, but with skepticism, in slogans repeated daily. They were convinced that the war waged by the left was just. These are facts that the author strived to preserve and he did that with his characteristically positive attitude especially towards the disadvantaged of both the individual and the collective.

And exactly in this we reveal the manner in which the author, as well as the people participating in the events, have expressed their moral judgment, resentment, deep humanism, as well as their solidarity with the oppressed. Hence, they are not indifferent but engaged observers and thus draw attention to the human destiny and its meaning. They made a connection with those who, living in an unjust political or state order, have nevertheless preserved their human dignity, value and consciousness worth fighting for and sacrificing their lives.

This is typical of the novel “I kamenot e zemja” (A stone too is soil) which is the subject of this analysis in which *facts* provide broader knowledge of *events, time, people and their views*.

The **first element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the authenticity of space, names of settlements, toponyms.

Namely, the action takes place in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece), in Kostur Region. The village in which the main event takes place is Krchishta, birthplace of the author. In his book “I kamenot e zemja” (A stone too is soil), the author uses centuries old Macedonian names with an unusually accurate topography of the villages, cities, mountains, rivers, which the Greeks have Hellenized by law, i.e. have renamed with Greek names. But by analyzing the novel we will be able to learn Macedonian geography.⁷³

⁷² Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje, *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 164

⁷³ See: Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje, *Ogledalo*, 1988, p.172 - description of Macedonia through settlements...

Well, from this it is obvious that there are villages in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece) called: Grleni, Chetirok, Nestram, Kosinets, V'mbel, Breznitsa, Maniak, Lobanitsa, Kosinets, Dolno Papratsko, Novoseleni, Shak, Revani, Gorno Papratsko, Ezerets, Krchishta, Dupiak, Lovrade, Snicheni, Osheni, Sveta Nedela, Galishcha, Dobrolishta, Mokreni, Konomladi, Medovo, German, Strkovo, Rudari, Kosinsko, Lobanitsko.

These are **toponyms** found in the novel which are key to events occurring in that time period: Virovite, Popole, Bei-bunar, Karchitsko pole, Klopotarei, Brezeto, Polenik, Nova Cheshma, Stara Livada, Sinadev Rid, Borovo, Vishomo, Tombite, Siniachka, Kore Koreshtata, Telok, Prespa.

Names of mountains: Gorusha, Odreto, Krusha, Mali Madi, Aliavitsa, Orleto, Nikoler and mountain peaks: Faltsata, Stenite, Vicho, Gramos, Kopanche, name of rivers: Belitsa.

Names of cities: Kozhani, Kostur, Rupishta, Solun.

Names of monasteries: Sveti Vrach, Sveti Ilia, etc.

The **second element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the time frame and the real events that took place in that time period.

Through his narration, the author lists all the events that took place and left a lasting mark on the Macedonian people in chronological order. He sticks to real facts when he presents events from the lives of certain individuals and social groups.

The Greek Civil War began on March 30, 1946, with the Greek partisans attacking the police station at Lithohori.

Dates: September and October 1947 - the population hid in the woods to escape Greek government troops attacking and bombing it. February 1948 – preparations are made to organize the collection of children. March 25, 1948 - 54 children accompanied by three women are evacuated from the village Krchishta. May 4 1948 - fourteen and fifteen-year-old children are returned from being mobilized who later, along with the youngest children, were sent to Prespa and from there to Yugoslavia.

A particularly important and historical event described in Nakovski's novel is the opening of a school ⁷⁴ in the village where a Macedonian teacher was teaching the children to learn in the Macedonian language. The following was presented through

⁷⁴ See: Σολων Ν. Γριγοριαδης: Ο εμφυλιος 1946-1949, τομος 2, σελ. 200 - 201 (Solon N. Grigoriadis: *The Civil War*. Volume two, pp. 200 - 201) “Schools were opened in the free territories by DAG General Staff for public education DECISION Article 5 of August 10, 1947”. Article 5 stipulates: “The people's councils should open separate schools for children belonging to national minorities. Teaching in the language of the minority”

Kole's character, a DAG fighter who assumed the role of a Macedonian teacher when the school opened:

“Know this and remember it that this day is also the day of your fathers, older sisters and brothers who are now fighting in the battlefields with weapons in hand, you should have your own, our, Macedonian school... in which you will learn the language of your grandparents, your mothers and fathers and no one will scold and beat you, embarrass you and belittle you because you will speak that language... And now I will give you one primer for every three children.”⁷⁵

Unfortunately the Monarcho-Fascists (Greek government) did not like the children learning in their Macedonian mother tongue. They saw danger in Macedonians gaining national rights through the Interim Government, which was allegedly attempting to recognize the existence of the Macedonian national minority in Greece. As a result, the village was bombed, killing seven children. This horrible event caused resentment as well as deliberation and assessments among the population. One of those assessments was made by Reverend Vasil, who said:

“... They attacked our children... The next time they may attack the children more severely, but let them attack them... This time they attacked us because of our written and spoken language...”⁷⁶

The novel also mentions newspaper headlines, names of camps, as well as historical figures and military and political organizations, which confirms the **“literature of fact”** thesis.

Newspapers: Eleftheria (Freedom).

Camps: Ai Strati, Gura, Macronissos, Trikeri, Aegina.

Historical figures: Georgios - King of Greece, Frederiki - Queen of Greece, Markos - General, DAG Commander-in-Chief, Pando Shiperkov – DAG Major, died in February 1948 at Sveti Vrach, Karavangelis - Greek Bishop in Kostur, Metaksas - introduced a military dictatorship in Greece on August 4, 1936, Chakalarov - Ilinden freedom fighter and band leader who organized the Ilinden uprising in Kostur region.

Military and political organizations: DAG - Democratic Army of Greece, EON - Greek Youth Organization, NOF – People's Liberation Front, ELAS - National Liberation Army of Greece, UNRA⁷⁷

⁷⁵ By DAG General Staff for public education DECISION Article 5 of August 10, 1947, the Macedonians were recognized as a people with national rights, and thus the right to study in their Macedonian language. See: Stojan Kiselinski: *Egejskiot del na Makedonija 1913- 1989*. - Skopje: *Kultura*, 1990 p. 137

⁷⁶ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 102

⁷⁷ United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)

The leading characters in the novel are actants ⁷⁸ Giorgi and Kiro. These two key figures are a typical representation of the Macedonian people from Kostur Region. Here the heroes are ordinary people. The novel also features the characters: Giorgevitsa (Lina), her sons Vasil, Done, Naum and Stavro, and his wife Stavrovitsa, with their children Lenka and Pande. There is also Miter, Mitrovitsa, Lazo, Kuze, Pop (reverend) Vasil, teacher Kire, Stefo, Laki the carpenter, Kirevitsa (Mara), and children Riste, Kosta, Mare, Iane, Sofka, Bisera, Vera, as well as Kostovitsa, Olga, Koliovitsa, grandfather Nake, and Lena Kostova. The novel depicts ordinary people who fight for their humanity and for the salvation of their moral values.

The **third element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” are the real characters such as Lazo, Kuze, Giorgi, his wife and sons. Reverend Vasil’s character is based on my own grandfather Sterio. Other characters are also representative of real people such as Vera, Kolio and Pando Shiperkov. The characters in the novel are heroes and are characterized by the way they themselves view events. They express themselves in their own simple, non-politicized, ordinary language, which does not prevent them from expressing their pain, fears, expectations, hopes, as well as condemnation and judgment in their own way. These characters represent the collective destiny which everyone has experienced:



Figure 7. Reverend Sterio and the author

⁷⁸ See: Venko Andonovski: *Abduksijata na teorijata*. - Skopje: Galikul, 2011, p. 31

“What are you going to do Mitre? Are you going to give up your grandchildren? I don’t know. I guess I will do what everyone else does, Kiro. If my son was here we would have thought about it together, now the decision will be mine alone. If I don’t give them I might make a mistake... if I do give them it will probably be a mistake... What to do? I don’t know! My idea is whatever everyone else does, I will do too. But I am telling you... this place here will become mute... that’s for sure, brothers...”⁷⁹

Similarly, characters like Kuze and Vera are recognized as negative characters in the novel. The first character, Kuze, who also appears in the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) is a profiteer who has benefited from the sufferings of others. He uses betrayal, lies, accusations, intimidation, etc., for his personal interest. Kuze is a negative character who persists in fulfilling orders from the NOF and AFZH leaders. The people call him the lizard. He is cowardly and humiliatingly helpful. Vera is a propagandist who supports the needs of the armed struggle and the communist movement. In one of her many speeches, she said:

“People, you should be happy because our democratic government and the Party, despite the heavy fighting that is taking place, are constantly thinking of the children. So please don’t ignore the Party that has extended its hand to you...”⁸⁰

The author here recounts the tragic fate of individuals who lived in Krchishta, through their suffering and pain and condemns the state system and the regime. But when looking at the novel’s pages, there is not a single word of hatred towards the Greeks who caused the suffering and towards the Greek people in general. The author found it emotionally difficult to write down the suffering, pain, anguish and horror from the conversations he had with the living participants of that time. But he did this in order to capture the authenticity of the characters so that he could recount the conditions in such a way that they would be understood by the reader.

In our estimation, the author’s aim was to characterize the powerlessness of individuals in the face of enormous disasters, the kind a war brings, which is led by a handful of fools against a powerful government army aided by the most powerful state in the world.

A **fourth element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the authentic description of home and family, through which the author captures the atmosphere and interior of the Macedonian house, a kind of “common code”⁸¹ in Kostur Region. Unfortunately, in times of war, the home becomes a place of suffering and tragic living because the family as the basic cell of society is destroyed. Instead of being a fortress of the family, of cohesion, the home in the novel is a place of mourning.

⁷⁹ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 126

⁸⁰ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 125

⁸¹ Venko Andonovski: *Struktura na makedonskiot realistichen roman*. - Skopje: *Detska radost*, 1997, p. 190

By analyzing this novel we get a vivid picture of the village streets, gardens, fields, the authenticity of the village house and the fireplace. All this represents the authentic soul of the Macedonian villager who is destroyed on a daily basis by the various war events.

The novel also touches on authentic Macedonian life, customs and true faith in God which are being destroyed day by day. But in every home there is a lamp in front of an icon which burns. Its shine glows in the souls of the people giving them hope that they will survive. There are also curses in the novel presented in an authentic way: "May the sausages you ate with your Comrades two nights ago turn into poison! And the wine you took from the church... may that too turn into poison..."⁸² As well as Christian Orthodox customs, such as: lighting a candle, whispering a prayer, family celebrations, giving a blessing, ringing a church bell, preparing a dead body, giving liturgy for the dead in the Old Slavic language (Church Slavonic) such as:

"Gospodi, s skorbi raspostranil mia iesi..."⁸³

We would say that the author's desire is to preserve even the smallest detail of truth of the tragedy of the time through the pages of his novel analyzed here.

The **style and language** depend on the creative individuality of the author (local and literary language). His expressions show that he has the ability to express himself precisely. The author uses the *Macedonian literary language* in his work, but his writing is also enriched with authentic words from the *Kostur Region dialect*. In order to capture the authenticity of time and space, the author also uses *Greek language* words. These are the kind of words that have crept into the population's speech. These are *Greek words* that have been introduced in the local Macedonian language referencing Greek administrative, legal and court terminology. Words such as: "sholio" (school), "katashesi" (confiscation), "politiki kathodigisi" (political leadership), "ethniko imno" (national anthem), etc. The language spoken by the village characters is a simple language devoid of the misery of slogans. On the other hand, the language spoken by activists, political and military organizations is often rhetoric incomprehensible to the ordinary Macedonian villager. In the novel we encounter sensible experiences such as emotions and reflections through which, we would say, the author has ideally expressed "**literature of fact**" in his work.

The **symbolism** in this novel is common and represents the warmth of a home through the fireplace: "For as long as there was a fire and someone to add fuel to it and stoke it, this household would remain alive... was what was going through Bisera's mind..."⁸⁴ The black head kerchief symbolizes grief and mourning for the lost. The overgrown colourless grass and weeds symbolize abandonment. The stone symbolizes the native land: "And the stone, look over there, to the right, at the end of Stenata, there is a boulder. It is naked, washed by the rain, beaten by the wind and baked by the sun. It has

⁸² Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 129

⁸³ Ibid., p. 92

⁸⁴ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 116

been that way since it became a stone. It has been standing there for centuries and you might say; so what it's only a stone? Yes, it's a stone but it is part of our soil, the same as our rivers, forests, source of water, fields, and... well... our faith... That's the way it is... The stones in our yard, on the road, in our foundations, in our walls, on the side of the road, in our fields... those stones too are soil. They are all part of the soil that makes up our country.”⁸⁵ The grey and black clouds symbolize the war. The set table symbolizes a full house in which the housewife maintains a ritual of waiting, hoping and memories. The *picturesqueness of this fact* is vivid in Bisera's character who maintains permanence in her lonely house without abandoning the usual Macedonian traditions practiced over time: “Two women; Bisera sitting in her husband's chair at the table seeming as if she was resting in her husband's strong arms and the Virgin Mary blackened with soot from burning candles with a child in her arms and with wide, sad eyes, looking at her. And between them a table arranged with nine more spaces... and an oil lamp with a flickering flame. They were waiting and each was feeling her own pain...”⁸⁶ Oak leaves on the table symbolize health. A twig of dogwood symbolizes health for all relatives and friends. A coin, whoever gets it, symbolizes wealth. The icons, the word, the speech existing in the novel are *symbols* of duration, survival of the nation and, at the same time, rebellion against violence. These are the *hallmarks of the Macedonian domestic tradition*.

MESSAGES

“A stone? That too is soil – a part of you... everything has its own roots and should be supported by them...”⁸⁷;

“I will not take the primer from you... From wherever you will be, you will talk to your people only with letters...”⁸⁸;

“... Kire my son, wherever you go, wherever you are, protect the language, protect our word... because life begins and ends with it...”⁸⁹

Through the words: stone, word, root, the author has sent a clear *message*⁹⁰ which is characterized by actuality. This means that the events described in the novel are not just an attempt to “capture” history, at the moment when the events take place, but to point out that the Greek Civil War was a great evil for the Macedonian people. This is a lesson we will learn from this novel. Actions such as white terror, poverty, hunger, fear, life lived in constant terror, death, personal and collective disasters, traumas in a marginalized environment, being forgotten, all left a great and lasting mark on the Macedonian people. At the same time there is also some hope in this social upheaval as promised by the communists. However, the most important thing in all this is the *truth*. Its significance stems from the *fact* that the more diligent it is, the more it is a source of

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 175

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 117

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 84

⁸⁸ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 144

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 174

⁹⁰ Temperature of message - See: Venko Andonovski: *Struktura na Makedonskiot realistischen roman*. - Skopje: *Detska radost*, 1997, p. 126

historical facts, realities taken from life, knowledge from people, motivation from their attitudes, relationships, acts, consciousness and the time in which they lived and acted.

There are two more events with their great *symbolism* in the novel that require our attention.

First: Reverend Vasil wrote down some information about certain historical events in the pages of the Holy Scriptures. Why? Because this information would be permanent and the truth would remain fixed through these entries on its pages.

Second: Old lonely Krstovitsa's request, living alone in the village Krchishta, leaves an unusually big impression in the epilogue:

“...to tell everyone... tell all our people that I am the last one to remain here... I am the only one left in our village... To protect the soil, to light candles, to burn wood in the fireplace. Tell them my chimney is the only chimney that smokes and my window is the only window that has light in the night that can be seen from Dishonor, Stenite, Telok, Borovo, Pratselo... so that the beasts don't get the idea that there is no life here...”⁹¹

This is not only a *message* but also a *symbol* that, despite all the mishaps, life still goes on in that region...

⁹¹ Petre Nakovski: *I kamenot e zemja*. - Skopje: *Ogledalo*, 1988, p. 180

5.3. “GOLEMATA UDOLNITSA” (THE GREAT DECLINE)

*“For as long as its smoulders,
for as long as a single spark exists,
for as long as you feel its warmth on your fingers,
then it is a part of life.
If it runs out of smouldering coals
then the fireplace becomes a simple ornament,
a simple memory
just like a distant childhood memory...”⁹²*



Figure 8. Cover page
of the novel
“Golemata udolnitsa”
(The great decline)

The novel “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline) by Petre Nakovski is a kind of chronicle and testament to the people who lived and experienced the war storm during the Greek Civil War. It was published in 2003 and is a continuation of the novel “I kamenot e zemja” (A stone too is soil). The novel follows the agony of life, the bitterness and harsh truth about the Macedonian burnt offering expressed through the fate of the characters that are sacrificed in the name of freedom and national and individual dignity.

Why the title “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline)?

About this, Academic Gane Todorovski will write: “This is a terrible allegory down our historical path - is it a fall into a metaphorical abyss or is it just an ugly illusion of a historically frightened people of whom none wholeheartedly offered a hand of support, at least so far?”⁹³

⁹² Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p. 64

⁹³ *Stozer*, January-March 2004, p. 42

The title “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline) carries the truth which is completely opposite to the model and to the message imbedded in the song that the Macedonians sang while going to fight at the front:

*“Vo borba, vo borba, vo borba (To struggle, to struggle, to struggle),
Makedonski narode (Macedonian people),
Za sveta narodna sloboda (For holy national freedom),
So pesni I rados se mre-e-e. (With songs and joy...”⁹⁴*

The ideal expressed in the song with the words: *Macedonian people to struggle for national freedom* was lost because, in place of the “ideal of liberating the Macedonian people”, the CPG dropped the slogan: “DAG fights against Anglo-American imperialism.” The moment the ideal of struggling for national rights and liberation was removed the Macedonian struggle was lost. All hope expressed in this verse was lost and hence the title of the novel “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline) a *symbol* for the lost ideal, aspiration and hope.

The action in the novel is set, in part, in Kostur Region and in the North Pind Region known as Gramos. The time frame is from August 1947 to August 1948 and is a *literary chronotope*, showing the essential connection between temporal and spatial relations, because “time and space are the strongest advocates of reality”⁹⁵ through which the author reconstructs the past from the testimonies given by the characters, who believe that after winning the war they will also win national rights. The novel is literature about the Greek Civil War, literature about the destruction of the human psyche, literature about the characteristics of the DAG fighters, young men and women and mostly literature about the Macedonian women’s participation in the Greek Civil War.

The chronological composition of the course of events is followed through the facts presented in the novel. It then gradually introduces us to *time*, to *military events* and follows the fate of the young Macedonian men and women, especially those from Kostur Region.

The following events are processed in the core content:

- Mobilization (by deception) of young ladies and their preparation for war.
- The courage of young men and women at the front and the civilian population in the background, logistical activities of the Greek Civil War.
- Mutual suspicion between the main communist characters regarding the way to conduct the armed movement and DAG’s combat tactics.

⁹⁴ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa* - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p. 7

⁹⁵ Venko Andonovski: *Struktura na Makedonskiot relistichen roman*. - Skopje: Detska radost, 1997, p. 147

Nakovski begins the novel with a description of a *real event* where AFZH activists use fraud in the Kostur region villages to mobilize women ages 16 to 20, assuring them that they are only needed in free Gramos to process wool into sweaters, socks, gloves, etc., for the needs of the DAG fighters. The words the AFZH activists used were convincing:

“Ladies, fall is coming and will soon be followed by winter which will bring cold, rain and snow. Our fighting brothers will need sweaters, socks, gloves. Who will give them these things if not we, their sisters? We need to knit day and night?”⁹⁶

Through a net of shameless suggestions, these young ladies were taken to the front to end up in circumstances unworthy of people. The young women were deceived and taken to the Gramos front, and instead of being given spindles and knitting needles, they were given rifles and were surrendered to the military for training. They were then rigorously trained by the political commissars. One of the things they insisted on was that: “Your rifle must always be clean... Your soul can be dirty but your rifle must be clean at all times!”⁹⁷ They were then taken to the front where they faced all the hardships imposed by the war. They were pushed into a military typhoon and thrown into the trenches where they fought side by side with other fighters.

In that ideal there was no chance to fulfill the dreams of the young people. There was no conscience and no love... everything was about destruction. And this is exactly what should be entrenched in our individual and collective memory. Not only were their joy and dreams killed, but they were instilled with the wrong mind-set; the feeling of hope that they were fighting for something magnificent, and that they were sacrificing their lives in the name of that magnificence. This novel also describes what war is really about. The author authentically describes the nightmare and evil taking place at that time.



Figure 9. Young ladies - DAG fighters

⁹⁶ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa* - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p. 5

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 18

Young people participating, especially Macedonian girls, in DAG's realization of military goals at the war front are vividly and dramatically presented throughout the pages of the novel "Golemata udolnitsa" (The great decline). The courage of these young men and women is shown through the authentic descriptions the author has included in his novel, derived from testimonies of people who were direct participants in the war front. Their courage is a consequence of the warmth in the family home and the Macedonian folk songs they sang in the trenches during breaks in the fighting. So, it is no surprise that a senior military commander, addressing the fighters, said: "Your songs are good... They grab you by the throat, by the heart, but they are not for these kinds of occasions. The following must be sung now: Vron dai o Olimbos, ke se stravti i Giona... (A Greek song)." ⁹⁸

While these young people were freezing in the trenches they tried to raise their morale by thinking and remembering how it was at home, the warmth of being at home in winter. The fire and the hearth - as they were at home were also present in the trenches. Memories of them warmed the fighters and brought them back to their homes. The author uses this *symbolism* to signify home, fire, family happiness. But the war destroyed and erased everything...

While serving in the trenches the fighters constantly looked back and thought of how nice it was when they were at home. Most characteristic of this were the statements made by Tsilka whose memories are also testimonies of her warm home in Krchishta: "Since I was very young I listened to my grandfather and remembered what he told me. I remember him saying: 'odeshchem, placheshchem...' And some words I memorized from the prayers. My grandfather often read the scriptures and I repeated them. 'Dear Lord, I call thee, to protect me, God; please hear my words... and then he would cross himself three times in front of the icon of the Virgin Mary... One day Dina, our neighbour, came inside our house. The woman had a habit of entering houses without knocking. She came over to borrow a cup of sugar and heard my grandfather praying. She had a big mouth and told many people about it. Ten days later the police came and took my grandparents away... they sent them into exile.'" ⁹⁹ "At home for Tsilka, above all, were her grandparents, her younger sisters and her brother... At home were the spindle and other instruments for processing wool... At home was also the old smoky icon of the Virgin Mary..." ¹⁰⁰

Family values were contrary to the communist ideal. Under this condition and behaviour, the morals acquired in family upbringing became devalued.

The greatness and courage possessed by the young Macedonian women are described by the author through these young women, who were forcibly mobilized into DAG's ranks, crossing paths under difficult climatic conditions, often hungry, thirsty, exhausted from marches, insomnia... Here he shows examples of courage, heroism and dedication. Macedonian DAG fighters together with their Greek comrades show high

⁹⁸ Ibid p. 156

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 122

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 183-186

morale and determination when performing their combat tasks. Macedonian fighters at the Sveti Ilia-Gorusha-Krusha-Gupata war front stood out and proved themselves worthy. The fighting there lasted from June 16 to August 20, 1948. About this General Zafiropoulos, in his book “Antibanditskata vojna 1945-1949” (Anti-Bandit war 1945-1949), wrote: “During the fighting Slavo-Macedonian units were deployed, whose fighters were characterized by firmness and strength in spirit and body.”¹⁰¹ The fighting spirit of DAG fighters is especially highlighted in the ninth chapter of the novel “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline), which features Iani’s expression, a DAG fighter who demonstrates commitment in the following way: “They are all dead, the hill is gone... the top of the hill is now a foot or two lower...”¹⁰²

The entire population was mobilized for the 70-day battle on Gramos. Entire villagers in the immediate front vicinity were evacuated and relocated to Albania. Nakovski followed their fate in the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched). The long battles at Gramos were called epic, about which the author, through Iani’s character said: “They became eternal guards at the front in Kopanche, Sveti Ilia, Koteltse, Gupata and Gorusha as well as in Bel Kamen and Krusha.” “Yesterday shamelessly brave and before birth they promised to be crowned in front of the altar...” “The crippled pines poured resin like tears...” “The wind weaved wreaths from the burning leaves and laid them on the burning earth...” “The flames in Gramos should have crowns and each of the tombs should have the image of a king...” “Church bells should ring and lamps lit for as long as the world shines, and for as long as life exists...”¹⁰³

Here we get the answer to the question: “Did the Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece) enter the Greek Civil War as communists, i.e. as disciplined members of the CPG or did they enter the war looking for something other than what the communist idea carried?”

All this necessitates the reader to pass on the message to future generations¹⁰⁴ to tell them the truth about everything that happened and in this we want to recall a thought expressed by Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz: “If I forget Them, You God in heaven forget me.”

In the novel “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline), the author vividly describes the characters of Markos and Zahariadis who had different opinions about how to lead the movement.

The author’s aim in this novel is to present the evil perpetrated against the Macedonian people, and in connection with this are described “scenes and chronicles of cruelty, ruthlessness, humiliation, betrayals and slaughter perpetrated by pro-communist Greek generals and later by the then communist countries who, as refugees, accepted the

¹⁰¹ See: Zafiropoulos: *Antibanditskata vojna 1945-1949*, p. 394

¹⁰² See: Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. - Skopje: *Makavej*, 2003, pp. 215-217

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217

¹⁰⁴ Venko Andonovski: *Abduksia na teoriata*. - Skopje: *Galikul*, 2011, p. 204

Macedonians from Aegean Macedonia who only dreamed of their homeland and of their altar of autocephaly...”¹⁰⁵

This war novel, which is the subject of our analysis, contains a series of elements of “**literature of fact**” through which we learn the truth about time, events, people and their views.

The **first element**, which confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**”, is the authenticity of *space, names of settlements, toponyms*. The author has accurately recorded the topography through the use of Macedonian names such as:

Villages: Krchishta, D’mbeni, Pilkati, Breznitsa, Slimnitsa, Kosinets, Lobanitsa, Smrdesht, Ianoveni, Kalevishta, Miroslavitsa, Tuhuli, Chetirok, Nestram, Kosinets, Dolno Papratsko, Zhelegozhe, Koteltse, Chuka, Grazhe, Sveta Ana, Ludovo, Ezerets, Visheni, Trstika, Sveta Nedela, Popli, Blatsa, Pozdivishta, Aetomilitsa and Gramoshta - Vlach villages, Kalevishta, Drenovo, Nivitsi, Stenie, Psoderi, Revani, Shak, Rabi, Medovo, Peroo, Vineni, Statitsa, Kleshtina, Rakovo, German, Bulkes, a village in Serbia¹⁰⁶, Sveti Ilia - monastery.

Cities: Sukt – a town in Albania near Durres, Konitsa, Kiuteza - a town in Albania, and Rupishta, Kostur, Solun.

Sveti Ahil - an island on Little Lake Prespa.

Mountains: Gramos, Vicho, Pind, Krastavets, Flamburo, Charno, Alevitsa, Amuda, Nikoler, Dolna Arena, Mali Madi, Morava Planina, Kopanche, Chuka, Bigla, Vrba, Ivan Planina, Siniachka, Gorusha, Krusha, Kopanche, Suva Gora, Vrba, Arena, (Gorna and Dolna) Bela Voda, Gupata, Bel Kamen, Lunzer, Vrba, Faltsata, Lisets, Kulikuturia, Iamata - name of a mountain hill, Baro and Roto.

Toponyms: Koreshtata, Bel Kamen, Kostursko Pole, Stara Livada, Bei Bunar, Shekaritsa, Preval, Polenata, Golinata, Misodagista.

Rivers: Bistritsa, Morava, Novoselska Reka.

Even though the Greek state today has renamed (Hellenized) all these villages, mountains, toponyms, rivers, and had given them Greek names, the reader can find their original and real names in this novel; the old names of places which existed in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece). Here the readers are given an opportunity to enrich their knowledge of the past, of history and all this should be preserved in the altar of our national memory.

¹⁰⁵ See: Branko Cvetkovski’s review of the novel “*Golemata udolnitsa*” by Petre Nakovski, Skopje: *Makavej*, 2003

¹⁰⁶ See: Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnina*. - Skopje: *Makavej*, 2003, p. 205

The **second element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the time frame and the events that took place during that time period.

In this novel the author accurately and chronologically presents the events which left a lasting mark on the Macedonian people. He has described facts and given us information on events that took place in the life of certain individuals and social groups that are key to shedding light on the fateful turmoil of the Macedonian people from Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece).

In the fall of 1947, while the Greek Civil War was raging on, the UN sent an international commission of inquiry to Greece to find out, through talks with DAG fighters and civilians, the reasons for its outbreak and whether or not the USSR and the Eastern Bloc countries were involved, especially the neighbouring countries: Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria.

One American journalist who went there independently in search of reasons for the outbreak, in a long conversation with a grandmother, learned many truths about the Macedonian situation. Also in a letter to his son, which his son never received, he expressed admiration for Macedonia, the Macedonian woman and her attachment to her country and home. At the same time, he expressed his protest against the US Congress decision to grant Greece 300 million dollars in military aid through the Truman Doctrine.¹⁰⁷

It was said on record that throughout the fighting the Greek National Army was using state-of-the-art American weapons, while DAG was using infantry weapons from World War II. While the Greek National Army was getting its American weapons and ammunition by truck loads, the DAG fighters were getting theirs by donkey, mule and horse. Most of the Prespa population and many villages in Kostur Region were engaged in delivering weapons and ammunition using 300 to 400 draft animals and traveling 50 km over dangerous terrain to Gramos at night on foot.

A description of the UN effort to confirm how the neighbouring countries were helping the communist side is given in the novel. It is correctly recorded that 11 thousand fighters of Macedonian origin fought on DAG's side. It is also confirmed that the entire civilian population was involved in the war providing logistical support.¹⁰⁸

As part of the general propaganda, NOF and AFZH used the slogan “All to arms - all everything for victory” repeatedly calling on the villagers of Kostur and Lerin Region to provide the DAG fighters with spiritual and material support in order to endure the difficult battles fought on Gramos. In connection with this, the Prespa villagers from the village German wrote an encouraging, characteristic of the times, letter to the DAG fighters.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p. 60

¹⁰⁸ See: Nikos Kiricis: *Dimokratikos Stratos Eladas Vasiki statmi tu agona*. - Athena: *Sinhroni epohi*, 2003

¹⁰⁹ See: *Egejska Makedonija vo NOB*, tombr. 5 Arhiv na RM

There is also an example of doubt expressed in the novel. This is what some DAG fighters said regarding the usefulness of the struggle: “Being Partisans for us Greeks, is not good. It is good for the Slavo-Macedonians because they defend their language...”¹¹⁰

All dates listed in the novel are accurate:

- Hundreds of government army artillery batteries simultaneously began firing from all over Pind at five-thirty in the morning on June 16, 1948.¹¹¹

- The battle for Gramos began and lasted 70 days and nights.

- With permission and orders from US General Van Fleet, Napalm bombs of American origin were used for the first time in war.¹¹²

The *description of battles* that took place at certain positions at the front is correct:

- Kleftis fell on August 2, 1948. This was a key position at the front. Dragan Kljakic wrote about the importance of this battle in his book “Izgubenata pobeda na general Markos” (General Markos’s lost victory). Before that, when Kleftis was taken and retaken, General Markos sent the following characteristic telegram to the defenders of this hill: “I am filled with enthusiasm now that you have re-taken Kleftis. Now you need to hang on to it at all costs. Holding Kleftis in your hands is the key to holding on to the entire southern front. Defend it heroically; defend it with your lives. I will tell you again, Kleftis must be held to the end. Kleftis is the backbone of Gramos; Kleftis is the fist of Gramos.”¹¹³

- After it was decided¹¹⁴ to leave Gramos on August 18, 1948, during the route planning, Markos and Zahariadis blamed each other for the failure. The novel “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline) has captured the essence of that blame¹¹⁵ The author based this on a number of written and published documents¹¹⁶ in history books dedicated to the Greek Civil War.

- On August 20 to 21, 1948, a decision was made to withdraw DAG fighters from Gramos, in the area of Vicho.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ See: Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p. 227

¹¹¹ See: Dragan Kljakic: *Izgubenata pobeda na general Markos*. - Belgrade: Narodna kniga, 1987, pp. 133 and 138

¹¹² See: Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p.247

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 253

¹¹⁴ See: Dragan Kljakic: *Izgubenata pobeda na general Markos*. - Belgrade: Narodna kniga, 1987, pp. 133 and 137

¹¹⁵ See: Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p. 271

¹¹⁶ See: Gorgi D. Kaculi: *Istoria tu Komunistiku Komatos Eladas*, tomos ST, 1946-1949, Athens: Nea Sinora

¹¹⁷ See: Dragan Kljakic: *Izgubenata pobeda na general Markos*. - Belgrade: Narodna kniga, 1987, p. 137

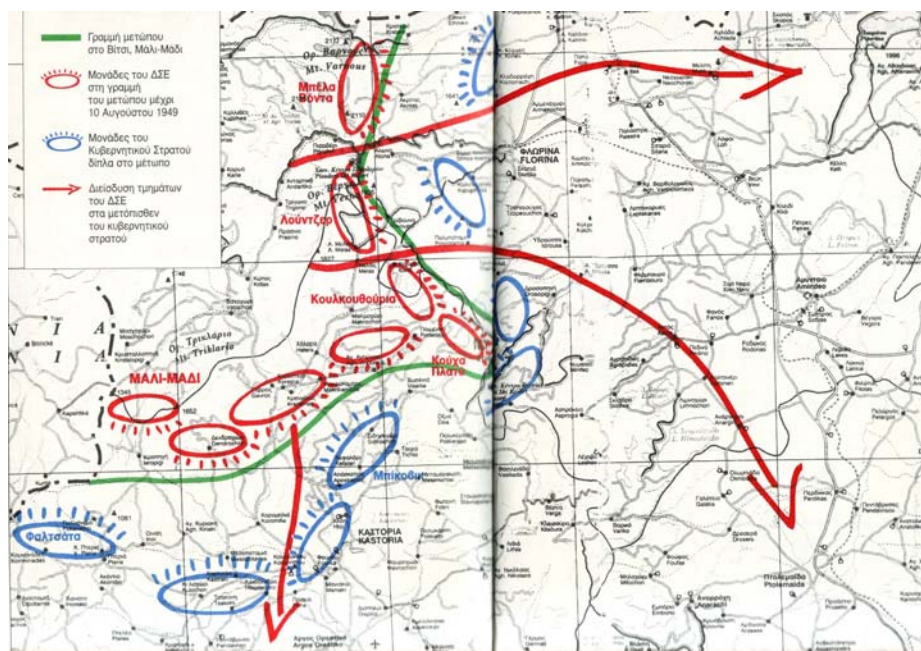


Figure 9. DAG and government army front in Vicho and Mali Madi
 Legend: The red lines represent DAG's positions; the blue lines represent the government army positions; the green line represents the front

In order to capture the authenticity of battles, author Petre Nakovski has introduced some precise military positions in reference to the combat sector on whose heights the most difficult and decisive battles took place. Here are some examples: Kleftis elevation 254, the front line Amuda - Nikoler - Petrepeleni - Buff, Golio - Kamenik - Tamburi, elevation 1957, the front line Buff - Amuda - Alevica, elevation 1435 and 1017.

Also mentioned in the novel are *names of camps*, as well as *historical figures and military and political organizations*, confirming the thesis of “**literature of fact**”.

In the novel we find authentic **character names** such as: Van Fleet - American general, Zahariadis, Tito, Stalin, Dimitrov, Kardelj, Rankovich, Marx, Metaxas, Zafiropoulos, Veluhiotis, Sarafis, Kikitsas, Bardzotas, Gusias, Vlandas, Vendiris.

Military and political organizations: CPG, ELAS, DAG, AFZH, NOF, OZNA, UDBA, Aegean Brigade.

The main female *characters* in the novel who participated in the military operations in Gramos were: Tsilka (Vasilka), Mita, Tsana, Iana, Zoia, Tinka, Leftera, Lenka, Marika, and Velika. They showed courage, heroism and dedication. Their male counterparts were: Mitre, Kole, Iani, Ilio, Stoian, Argir, Kolio, Traiko, Vane and Vasil. They were all Macedonian fighters who fought in DAG. These characters are ordinary regular people through whom the destiny of the collective is represented. The author

reveals the psychological depths of these characters who are bearers of painful destinies, persecuted, separated, but continue to last in and through time.

Here Nakovski also paints a *picture* of the ordinary villager represented through the characters: Dedo (grandfather) Kiro, Baba (grandmother) Kirevitsa, Pop (Reverend) Vasil, Giorgievitsa, Giorgi and Krstovitsa. This novel also features the characters Kuze and Lazo - members of the people's government, as well as Vera who plays a key role in the mobilization of the Macedonian population through agitation and propaganda and its efforts to destroy the Macedonian people by introducing and propagating the communist ideals that were practiced in the USSR and in Eastern European countries. The last three are the same characters who were mentioned in the novel "I kamenot e zemja" (A stone too is soil).

In building the characters, the author uses specific facts from true life situations, dramas and testimonies. Nakovski is a tireless researcher dedicated to revealing the tragic destinies of the Macedonian people from this part of Macedonia (Northern Greece).

The third **element** that confirms that the work has elements of "**literature of fact**" are the real characters such as Lazo, Kuze, Giorgi, Fimka (my own grandmother), Tsilka (my own aunt), whose testimonies are a certificate of personal defeats, of tragic fate, of broken families, of joy in subsequent reunions, of human dignity, of endurance, of burdens and of a series of destinies.

Through Tsilka's fate the author demonstrates the real tragedy that a war can bring. He also reveals the emotional depths in Fimka's character, whose crying is not unique to her but also relates to the entire collective. This novel gives you an idea about the eternal changes in the generations as a kind of confirmation of their indestructibility.

In this novel, too, the author takes us back to the situation of the exiled children collected and taken to Eastern European countries. In connection with this, characteristic are questions Tsilka asks and answers her mother Fimka provides: "Home, mother... How are things at home?"... "Home... My dear daughter... there is no home... Everything was burnt down... Turned to ash..."... "We have no home, my dear child... we have no home..."... "What about the children, mother? What happened to them?"... "They took them too..."... "What?! Who took them?!"... "Those from NOF (National Liberation Front) and AFZH (Women's Anti-Fascist Front). They came to the village, went from house to house and invited everyone to a meeting. They told us that a big battle was coming, everything was going to burn. The rivers and the wells were going to evaporate from the heat and the fire was going to reach the sky. It was difficult for us to give away our children... to strangers... Who knows what will happen to them... And who to trust..." "Oh, mother, mother... Why did you give them up?"... "What choice did I have? They took them..."... "They took you and they took Risto and Tashko... Do you think they asked me or any of the mothers if we wanted to give you up and how we felt? No! They gathered the little children and took them before we even understood what was happening..."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p. 188

The **fourth element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the common Macedonian code “traditional things that are symbolic”¹¹⁹, presented through authentic descriptions of *Macedonian dress* such as a maiden’s robe with silver buckles, money from different times, embroidery, hand-embroidered items with red thread on a white cloth; *Macedonian dances and Macedonian folk songs* such as Nevestinsko, Bairacheto, More chupi kosturchanki, Ne rusai prusai; *Macedonian dishes* such as: pita so presul (pita with ??), so pras (with leeks), so kastitsi (with walnuts), so kromid i svinsko (with onions and pork), so urda i pras (with cottage cheese and leeks)¹²⁰; old way of spinning wool; celebrating *traditional Macedonian holidays*, such as: Easter, St. George’s Day; celebrating *name days and holidays* such as: Mitrovden, and the Great Mother of God, praying in front of the Virgin Mary’s icon, saying prayers, praying on Sundays and holidays, keeping bridal clothes in a chest, *customs* of dressing friends for a wedding, welcoming guests with sweets and water. All this is valuable *evidence* of the essence of what it is to be Macedonian. The great importance here comes from the fact that the simpler it is, the more it is a source of factual information, a reality taken from time and life, knowledge of the people and the time in which they lived.

The author uses the *Macedonian literary language* in his work, but his writing is also enriched with authentic words from the *Kostur Region dialect* to capture the authenticity of *place and language*: “chupi” (girls), “zborvam” (I speak), “bratia” (brothers), “nimnio” (their), “grei” (sin), “doi” (come), “esti” (??), “prenesvate” (you transfer), “rekoe” (they said), “oite” (go), “doidi” (come), “tua” (here), “ke ojme” (we will go), “pulish”, (you’re looking), “zevaite” (take), “opitvam” (I am asking), “chendo” (my child), “vlegva” (enters), “liudieto” (the people), “izbegae” (left), “de” (where) “mnuchenishcha” (grandchildren), “zvee” (took), “volovoite” (oxen), “kolee” (slaughtering), “tepae” (beating), “palee” (burning), “poganee” (ruined), “sede” (sitting, staying), “nashche” (ours), “chuzh” (foreign), “vrne” (return), “roinini” (relatives), “pusfashe” (let go), “sendutsi” (chests), “liulka” (baby crib), “cheresha” (cherry), “nishcho” (nothing), “opuli” (look), “tsrno” (black), “ftasa” (arrived), “eziko” (the tongue), “reku” (I said), “zoshcho” (why), “kadro” (photograph), “eno” (one), “r’ka” (hand), “d’lga” (long), “pokazhva” (showing), “kosmata”, (??), “chezma” (fountain), “zentsko” (female), “tsrkvi” (churches), “spoliati” (thank you), “fasuli” (bean). There are also Greek words that have crept into Macedonian speech which the population uses, such as administrative, legal and court terminology. These are words accepted and Macedonian-ized in the local speech: “astinom” (ashtonomos) - chief of police, korofilak (Horofilakas) - police officer, “nipia” - preschool children, “epiteoritia” (epitheoritias) - inspector, “endopi” (enthopios) - indigenous, “apodiksi” (apothiksi) - confirmation.

The work being analyzed is ennobled with *symbolism*: a broken cradle - symbolizes abandonment, loneliness; embers in the hearth – symbolize existence; fire - symbolizes eternity, warmth, life. The author uses the colours red and black as *symbols* to connect to the Macedonian tradition where colours are used in embroidery which are also

¹¹⁹ See: Venko Andonovski: *Structura na Makedonskiot realistichen roman*. - Skopje: Detska radost, 1997, p. 176

¹²⁰ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2003, p. 185

symbols in the famous poem “Vezilka” (Embroidery) by Blazhe Koneski. Here red-black thread is used, where black symbolizes evil, fear, sorrow, disaster, destruction¹²¹, and red symbolizes courage, struggle. A black head kerchief symbolizes - sorrow, prayer - a personal religious experience based on thinking of God or another object of worship.

Nakovski here is an architect of artistic testimony who, by original means, enters the heart of the war and feels the pain of the individual and the collective population as it relates to the collective expulsion and displacement of the Macedonian people. His novel is a condemnation of the war and its destructive character, full of scenes of cruelty, ferocity and ugliness. It follows a chronological path and common places very vividly. It introduces drama in the imagery and through them follows a gradation of feelings. This is a book soaked with traumatic emotions and harsh truths. Through it the author has revealed and brought time closer to us, brought us closer to the then military, political, sociological and psychological situation. Academic Gane Todorovski wrote the following about this: “... this work is not just a chronicle; this is a blood transcript with a sound that captures the senses of Macedonia’s death... It is good to know that at the end of the novel the author made a remark in italics - instead of a stern warning – ‘this is not the end – that’s right. This is not the end, because the Macedonian darkness has no end’ ...”¹²²

Similarly the novel can also contain many answers to questions that are still relevant for Macedonia and the Macedonian people today and for our centuries-old struggle for self-discovery, respect and survival.

We find one such answer in publisher Branko Cvetkovski’s review, who wrote, among other things, the following on the back cover: “In his works ‘Golemata udolnitsa’ (The great decline), Petre Nakovski, in an unprecedented way, novelized the Macedonian Golgotha; the years of self-sacrifice in the name of freedom, national and individual dignity... This novel is also a respectable authorial replica of the historical massacre perpetrated in 1948 and 1949. This is a moral rebellion against the ‘trap’ that the pro-communist Greek generals and the then communist countries prepared for the Macedonian people from Aegean Macedonia, turning them into world drifters who could only dream about their homeland and about their altar of autocephaly.”¹²³

We would like to end our analysis of the novel “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline) with the words of academic Gane Todorovski who said: “...these are not questions that can arise from panic after a first or second reading of Petre Nakovski’s impressive novel thoughtfully entitled with strict symbolism. A book is good when it will not allow you to sleep peacefully. It is not just the title of the book, but our history is also horrifying, which, as it seems to us, only after reading it, demands, requires, commands a mentality framed in persistent naivety, in a historical curse and in hereditary gambling with happiness. (...) it should be made known that Macedonian contemporary literature in the field of prose fiction has been enriched and has acquired a work of special

¹²¹ Wladislaw Kopalinski: *Slownik simboli*. - Warszawa, 1990, p. 53

¹²² *Stozher*, January-March 2004, p. 44

¹²³ See: Branko Cvetkovski’s review of Petre Nakovski’s novel “*Golemata udolnitsa*”. Skopje: *Makavej*, 2003

significance.”¹²⁴ Professor Gane Todorovski believes that with this novel Macedonian literature has acquired a work of fiction that rises to the very top of critical realism in our fiction prose and recommends reading and re-reading this novel loaded with Macedonian illnesses.

¹²⁴ *Stozer*, January-March 2004, pp. 42-44

5.4 “GOLEMATA IZMAMA” (THE GREAT LIE)

*“... And refused to believe that the thread had somehow been broken,
that the loom no longer worked,
that the spring had dried up and that the streams had gone dry...
Then in the corner, in the place where the icon was,
a spider wove its web
and over the village a raven crowed foretelling its fate...
It hurts to know, it hurts even more and his heart aches
to imagine the narrow village cobblestone
blanketed with ash and debris from the ruins, a village laid waste
– it is even harder to accept that when the new sun sets
no human will be left to set foot in this place...”¹²⁵*



Figure 10. Cover page of the novel
“Golemata ismama” (The great lie)

The novel “Golemata izmama” (The great lie) by Petre Nakovski was published in 2007 and is a continuation of the novel “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline). This novel sheds light on the dark episodes of an unjust, absurd and mindless war (Greek Civil War). This war novel is testimony to the events that shaped the fate of the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece). The title is eerie and carries the truth about our historical catastrophe, about our lost and betrayed illusions, and about our eviction from our homeland.

The action in the novel is set in a specific time frame which covers the period from August 1948 to August 1949. The novel is a literary **chronotope** because it represents an entirety of *space, time, character* and *story*. It intertwines document with artistic narrative and portrays details about the then military, political, sociological and psychological condition of the general population and of the DAG fighters. This novel is also typically representative of “**literature of fact**” and is a literary reflection of the Greek Civil War, a factograph of the destruction of the family, of the uprooting and

¹²⁵ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. -Skopje: Makavej, 2007, p. 37

eviction of the Macedonian people from their ancestral homeland. It speaks the truth about the Macedonian people's catastrophic fate.

About this, Julia Kristeva will write the following in her work "Tokati i figi na drugosta": "As much as political and military cataclysms are horrifying and provoke the mind with the monstrosity and power of their destruction, so much is the shaking of spiritual identity, whose intensity is no less fierce, remains difficult to comprehend."¹²⁶

In his novel "Golemata izmama" (The great lie), Nakovski chronologically follows events that remain a permanent mark after the battles fought on Gramos and Vicho.

The following events are dealt within the content core:

- Visiting birth place and being reminding of the past
- Mobilizing the Kostur Region population to carry wounded, digging trenches and building bunkers
- Historical moments in DAG's activities



Figure 10. A destroyed house in the village Ezerets

The novel begins with a very sensitive picture of Giorgi's return to his native village during the war. This image of a devastated and exiled village with demolished houses gives a true picture of the state of the villages in Kostur Region during the last year of the Greek Civil War. "There wasn't a single house left intact in the upper neighbourhood, only wrecked black walls remained. 'So they burned the village', he

¹²⁶ Julia Kristeva: *Tokati i figi na drugosta*. - Skopje: *Templum*, 2003, p.158

thought to himself, as dark and sorrowful thoughts began to cross his mind. He spat a bitter spit.”¹²⁷

In his description of the village, the author unfolds Giorgi’s memories of his past village life, of his family, of the Macedonian customs, of the gatherings, of his joy with his newborn, of weddings, and of love. All of which has now been replaced with desolation, loneliness, pain, and hopelessness.

Typical and particularly striking is the description of the oak tree located at the outskirts of the village:



Figure 11. Oak tree located near the village Ezerets

“The hill looked naked and washed over by the rain, the great oak tree named D’MBOT stood mute, a witness to times past, with only three hacked up branches still standing and a trunk marred with dents of shrapnel... Stuck to it like lichen is the silence and pain of the times... They stood together – two muted loners, each weighed down with years of burden and with the grief of emptiness in them.”¹²⁸

The image of the oak tree - one trunk and three branches - is a symbol of a divided Macedonia.¹²⁹

The tragedy which Giorgi personally experienced is in fact a tragedy of the entire Macedonian nation. The devastated desolate village left an incredibly tragic impression, sublimated in the question:

¹²⁷ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2007, p.10

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.14

¹²⁹ The original photograph of the oak tree called “D’MBOT” has been preserved in the author’s personal archives.

“Who did all this to us and why?”¹³⁰

In the novel we find a description of the Kostur Region population being mobilized to dig trenches and build bunkers for defending Vicho.



Figure 12. Women carrying logs and stones to build bunkers

“Soldiers with mules and horses loaded with ammunition passed through Zhelevo all night long, singing and cheering with excitement. Behind them, 380 women followed from the Koreshtanski and Prespa villages - mobilized to carry the wounded.”¹³¹

“Women, mobilized to transport wounded during the Lerin battle, were detained and temporarily settled in an underground hangar dug in the shaded beech wood forest, located between Zhelevo and Psoderi. The night shift, consisting mostly of women, was tasked with carrying logs on their shoulders and transporting them over open space, over the bare hills where other women and men, escorted by DAG (Democratic Army of Greece) fighters, carried and placed the logs over dugout holes. The logs were piled over the holes in rows. First a row of logs, then a row of rocks and soil then a second perpendicular row of logs on top followed by more rocks and soil. The process was repeated five, six, seven, or eight times.”¹³² They silently carried the burden on their shoulders, under the slogan: “The enemy will not pass Vicho!”

¹³⁰ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2007, p.39

¹³¹ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2007, p.131

¹³² Ibid., pp. 167-168

The author has very faithfully and consistently documented DAG's activities carried out in 1948 and during the crucial period in 1949. The documents are based on the author's extensive knowledge and research of the situation in that time period.

Events in the novel "Golemata izmama" (The great lie) are *chronologically arranged* and supported by *authentic texts* from the various communication exchanges such as resolutions, proclamations, appeals, letters, many of which were translated from Greek. These can be found in official published materials as well as in documents in the Republic of Macedonia's archives.¹³³ This confirms that the military (documentary) novel "Golemata izmama" (The great lie) contains a number of "*literature of fact*" elements which we will be analyzing as follows.

A central *historical fact* in the novel "Golemata izmama" (The great lie) which refers to 1949 and from which the novel gets its title "Golemata izmama" (The great lie) brings to the surface two elements: military lies and political lies.

The military lie under the slogan: "The enemy will not pass Vicho" deceived the population and the fighting force (of less than 20,000) to believe that it could overpower and defeat almost 200,000 government troops, armed (at the time) with the latest American weapons.

The second element of the above-mentioned central historical fact is the CPG Resolution taken during the Fifth Plenum, which was an open political lie in order to mobilize the Macedonian population en masse with the promise that Macedonians in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece) will gain the right to self-determination after DAG's victory. Here is what was said in the resolution:

"In Northern Greece the Macedonian (Slavo-Macedonian) people gave their all in the struggle and fought with heroism and self-sacrifice, and deserve our respect and admiration... There should be no doubt that as a result of DAG's (Democratic Army of Greece) victory and the people's revolution, the Macedonian people will gain their national renewal as they want it and will get it, because today they are sacrificing their blood."¹³⁴

This great lie led to a sharp political reaction from the CPY, which, in addition to the Inform Bureau Resolution, led to an increase in disagreements between the two communist parties.

This is what Traian Petrovski said about this at the promotion of the novel "Golemata izmama" (The great lie) in Bitola:

"The Inform Bureau's infamous appearance, which, instead of providing freedom and democracy, dictated a new harsh reality with far-reaching consequences, especially

¹³³ See: *Egejska Makedonija vo NOB 1949*, volume 6, Skopje, 1981

¹³⁴ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: *Makavej*, 2007, p.74

in the wider international arena. This was the bloody axe that cut and shattered all hope.”
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The Fifth Plenum Resolution calling for the Macedonian people's self-determination by acclamation was accepted by the Second NOF Congress held in the village Nivitsi on March 25-26, 1949. To further manipulate the Macedonian communists Zahariadis created the organization KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia) in Greece. He created it to oppose the CPM (Communist Party of Macedonia) in the People's Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia.

Zahariadis and several of his CPG Central Committee supporters soon abandoned the resolution for the Macedonian people's self-determination and replaced it with the slogan "equality for minorities".

Zahariadis's decision to replace the Resolution "Macedonian people's self-determination" with "equality for minorities" coincided with the border closure with Yugoslavia, as per Tito's speech in Pula. This greatly disappointed the Macedonian people, the DAG fighters and especially members of DAG lower command.

It's a *historical fact* that the Greek Civil War ended on August 15, 1949 with DAG being catastrophically defeated and forced to leave Northern Greece and relocate to Albania. In fact all the Macedonian DAG fighters, Macedonian political organizations such as NOF and AFZH, along with almost the entire Macedonian civilian population in the war zone was forcibly evicted from its ancestral home and sent to Albania. The description of the exodus in the novel is typical of what really happened and is presented through the characters of an older DAG fighter and Krstovitsa who, while carrying the woolen bedcover everywhere with her, carried the fate of her entire family.

With intention to calm and encourage her to keep moving, the exhausted DAG fighter accompanying Krstovitsa on her exodus to the foreign land and said the following:

"Come, sit and let me see what you are hiding there in that spool. Let us open it up together. Don't hide it, let me see it. Let us put that reddish black string behind us, let us tie it to this rock or to that oak tree and along it, like blind people, tapping and feeling our way with a stick, we can find our way, hold on to the string so that we can both find our way to the source from which we were uprooted..."¹³⁶

The author here equates Krstovitsa's spool with that in the myth about Ariadne, daughter of Minos and Pasiphaë who gave Theseus the thread with which he found his way out of the Minotaur's labyrinth.¹³⁷ Ariadne and Theseus followed the unwrapped string from the spool, found their way out and returned to their home, but Krstovitsa and

¹³⁵ Trajan Petrovski's review of the novel "*Golemata izmama*" by Petre Nakovski given during the novel's promotion in Bitola on December 14, 2007

¹³⁶ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: *Makavej*, 2007, p. 356

¹³⁷ <http://www.stil-magazin.com/clanak/broj-82-21-jul-2008/cudesni-svet-bogova>

her generation of Macedonians never returned to their homes. They remained in foreign lands forever.

This war novel, the subject of our analysis, contains a series of elements of **“literature of fact”** through which we find the truth about *time, military actions, events, people and their destinies*.

The **first element** which confirms the work has elements of **“literature of fact”** is the authenticity of *space, names of settlements and toponyms*. The author uses accurate topography with Macedonian names for the sole purpose of preserving them in the individual and collective national memory:

Villages: Labanitsa, Breznitsa, Osheni, Borovo, Telok, D’mbeni, Orovo, Lagen, Dolno and Gorno Kotori, Krushoradi, Setina, Krontselevo, Dolno and Gorno Pozharsko, Psoderi, Zhelevo, Smrdesh, Oshchima, Trnaa, Rulia, Tikveni, Zhapunishta, Izglebi, Zhelin, Buf (Macedonian villages: Medovo, Shtrkovo), German, Nivitsi, Grazhdeno, Iamata, Aposkep, Tiolishta, Visheni, Bapchor, Konomladi, Gorno and Dolno Statitsa, Drenoveni, and L’k.

Cities: Kostur, Rupishta, Lerin, Voden, Kukush, S’botsko.

Mountains: Pind, Mali-Madi, Gramos, Vicho, Sinadev Rid, Stenite, Gorusha, Krusha, Aliavitsa, Tumbite, Bela Voda, Lisets, Dreniche, Dzvezda, Galichitsa, Odreto, Kaimakchalan, Moro, Lundzer, Golinata, Kulkuturia, Olenata, Baro, Roto, Glavata, Kresto, Plati, Nikoler, Amuda, Charno, Bigla, Dabche.

Peninsula: Sv. Ahil

Rivers: Bistritsa

Lakes: Mala Prespa, Golema Prespa

Toponyms: Devolsko Pole, Lerinsko Pole

The **second element** that confirms that the work has elements of **“literature of fact”** is *time frames, military actions and events* that took place in that time period.

Here the author accurately and *chronologically* portrays events and describes military actions that took place which left a lasting mark on the Macedonian people. He has used *facts* to present the life events of certain individuals and social groups in order to confirm the great lie that was committed against the Macedonian people.

The author takes us back to the past through Zahariadis’s chronological recollections in order to highlight the course of events that led to DAG’s defeat.

Events:

- In September 1947, while the Greek Civil War was still ongoing, the CPG Third Plenum was held in Prespa during which there was division of views between Zahariadis and Markos regarding how Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece) was going to be liberated. For that purpose, the plan “Limnes” (Lakes) was introduced.

- On October 14, 1946, an agreement was signed to unify NOF and the CPG.

- On November 21, 1946, all Macedonian detachments were placed under CPG leadership.

- On December 23, 1947, the Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, headed by Markos, was formed in Asamati.

- Voden was attacked at 3 o'clock on December 22, 1948.

- Lerin was attacked on February 10, 1949.

- KOEM was formed on March 27, 1949, in Nivitsi during a NOF Congress.

- Tito's speech given in Pula was broadcast over the airwaves on July 10, 1949.

- The attack on Vicho by the government army was started on August 10, 1949 at 5 o'clock.

The author has given us a precise description of the battles that took place in separate positions on the front lines prepared by the government army - front line: Kula-Plati; northern front line: Bela Voda - Bigla - Lundzer - Kulkuturia; central front line: Polenata - Plati - Kula - Roto; southern front line: Mali Madi.

The novel has authentically described precise military positions that refer to the combat sector on whose heights the most difficult and decisive battles took place: elevation 1186, elevation 1964, elevation 2156, elevation 1922 and elevation 1685.

The author has given us a complete picture of the government military arrangement such as divisions, brigades, battalions, reserves, artillery combat activities, tanks, government army and air force used to attack DAG. He has also given us a description of the four offensive phases carried out in the area in Vicho from August 10 to 16, 1949. After being acquainted with the operational plan, code named “Pirsos”, General Kozmas (from the government army) said:

“We are interested in one thing: victory! There will be no negotiations. Only our weapons will speak. No capitulation. There will only be defeat from which they will never recover! Gentlemen, it is my honour to tell you that the offensive will commence on August 10th at 5 am.”¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: *Makavej*, 2007, p. 258

The novel also *cites newspaper headlines* as well as *historical figures and military and political organizations* confirming the thesis of “**literature of fact**”.

Newspapers: “Nepokoren”¹³⁹

Authentic names of historical characters: King George, Zahariadis, Markos, Velouhiotis, Sarafis, ELAS Greek officers Gusias, Vlandas, Bardzotas, Ioannidis, Partsalidis, General Georgiadis - Commander of the 14th Brigade, Porfirogenis, Stringos, Kolishevski, Tito, Rankovich, Stalin, Vangel Aianovski-Oche, Keramidzhiev, General Van Fleet, Alexandros Papagos - commander-in-chief of the government army, Kozmas - general in the government army, Tsakalotos, Manidakis, Grigoropoulos – also commanders of the government army.

Military and political organizations: ELAS, NOF, AFZH, CPM Central Committee, KOEM (Communist Organization of Aegean Macedonia), LOC (special units for combat in mountainous conditions), Bureau A2 (military security and intelligence service).

The action in the novel “Golemata izmama” (The great lie) is continued following the action in the novels “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), “I kamenot e zemja” (A stone too is soil) and “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline) by following the fate of the main characters: Giorgi, Lazo, Numo, Pop Vasil, Tsilka, Mita, Kolio and Krstovitsa. The characters Mare, Ilia, Mitre, Krste, Evgenia, Kole, Krste, Risto and Labrovitsa are also found in the novel “Golemata izmama” (The great lie).

As the *characters* throughout this novel are analyzed, the truth about Macedonian life in Kostur and Lerin Region is revealed and followed. In its portrayal, the people’s collective destiny is characterized. The characters in the novel are heroes, fighters, villagers... who are characterized by their own way of evaluating things. Traumas are revealed through their expressions and psychological depths. They are bearers of a painful destiny, persecuted, separated, crippled and mentally and physically exhausted, but they continue through time with their troubles, fears, expectations and most importantly - hope.

Tsilka, Mita, Mare, Ilia, Mitre, Krste and Kolio are fighters from the 103rd DAG Brigade and participants in the military operations in Gramos and Vicho. Following their difficult existence, we learn about the grueling weather conditions, the long and exhausting marches, the deliveries of food and weapons, but also about heroism, courage, endurance and faith.

Giorgi, Numo, Krstovitsa and Labrovitsa are key characters who are typical representatives of the Macedonian people from Kostur Region. These are ordinary people who got lost in the whirlwind of the war.

¹³⁹ <http://www.rastko.rs/cms/files/books/4f344d3d7fb2d>

Evgenia is also a typical character. She is representative of the mobilized women. Simple, lonely, with nothing of her own, mobilized to dig trenches and build bunkers. But through her character the author reveals the courage, disobedience, fighting spirit and determination of all Macedonian women who struggled to oppose evil. Her simple speech is especially characteristic of a villager as was discovered when she was asked to addresses the Second NOF Congress through which a true picture of the situation was revealed. She tells the truth about her family, about the abducted children, about the mobilization of her older children, about carrying young wounded and maimed fighters, about carrying logs and digging trenches, about the ruined houses, the empty and desolate village, the uncertain future and the daily bad news. Her address - contrary to Vera's teachings - is an address to all Macedonian mothers and women:

“...when will the day come when I get the chance to meet and see, how do you say, our dear and beloved Zahariadis, so that I can ask this celebrated, clever and brave great son of ours, not only for myself, but for the many mothers out there, outside of our borders, in the mountains and on the battlefields who, before everything else brave the war to bring water, bread, ammunition and bombs high up the mountains and then to bring the wounded and dying back.’ I often thought of asking our great son Zahariadis, on behalf of all the mothers out there, who cried while burying the dead, especially the barely grown young men and women consumed by this war, the mothers who while burying someone else’s child receive bad news from whispers that ‘her child was just lost’. I would like to ask our esteemed guest: ‘Zahariadis, why must we carry such great fear, day and night, for our children, for our homes, for our crops, for our livestock, for our closest and most beloved?’ In front of us and behind us, dear Zahariadis, we see only mourning, only fear, only trembling and tightening of our hearts, only evil all around us. Did you not tell us to give everything for the struggle? We trusted you and we gave everything we had. You said all to arms and we all went to arms. We did exactly as you asked. Now our villages are desolate and our homes are empty, only spiders live there weaving their webs... We are in constant fear that we will receive bad news about our children, husbands, brothers, friends and every day more darkness falls on us. And now you tell us that victory is near? Near for whom? Who is going to remove the darkness from us? You say victory is near, but when it comes will there be anyone left to give birth, to make a home, to light a fire, to sing a song? Our fires have been put out, my dear Zahariadis... We are not what we used to be and what we want is no longer there for us, it is all gone...”¹⁴⁰

Evgenia paid for her courageous presentation of the truth by being arrested and sent to a concentration camp.

The **third element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the real characters: Lazo, Kuze, Giorgi, Tsilka and Krstovitsa. In building the characters, the author starts from specific life situations, drama, character testimonies, which are consistent with the truth. These are real characters whose testimonies are a document of personal failure and personal tragedy which turns into a tragedy of a nation,

¹⁴⁰ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2007, pp. 184-188

of the tragic fate of broken families, of ruined houses and devastated villages, and of uprooting and exile.

Similarly, the author follows the activities of the negative characters, Kuze and Vera, who also appear in previous novels. Kuze is a negative character who persists in fulfilling the orders of those in NOF and AFZH, and who is cowardly and humiliatingly helpful. Here is a small part of his character:

“Besides the seeds he was carrying in his sack, with him he also carried the awareness that the authorities had forbade him from speaking the Macedonian language which is why he spoke Greek to his oxen. Those passing by his fields would hear him yelling at the oxen “Pano Gaito. Kato Balio”! (Up Gaito. Down Balio)! Unfortunately Gaito and Balio stood there dozing, waving their tails and shaking their ears. Kuze, frustrated, kept yelling and poked the oxen with his poker, but all the oxen did was kick and jab one another. Kuze stood behind them then ran in front of them showed the oxen where up, down and forward were as he spoke to them in Greek. Unfortunately Balio and Gaito still stood there motionless, dozing away. When other plowmen or shepherds passed by his field, they would stop for a moment and greet him with the words: “Good luck plowman... and teacher!”¹⁴¹

Similarly, Vera too is a negative character, an ever-present propagandist and a spokesperson in the service of the armed struggle, its current needs and the communist movement. Characteristic is her helpfulness and devotion to the party, which is confirmed in Evgenia’s preparation on how to give a speech at the Second NOF Congress:

“First and foremost you should call out a slogan about our comrade Zahariadis, you should greet him first with a warm and sweet voice, tell him that he is the greatest and most beloved son of the Slavo-Macedonian people... And why, Vera, should I not say ‘Macedonian people’, are we not Macedonians? You will say what I tell you! We are what we are but Party politics and Zahariadis want us to be Slavo-Macedonians. Whatever Zahariadis says, goes.”¹⁴²

In this novel Nakovski has portrayed Zahariadis’s character as a man who wanted to establish a connection with the masses, while having a different vocabulary for individuals. He was able to grab them by the legs and sow into them the spirit of faith and hope and make them believe that he was indeed their saviour... and the masses placed their unquestionable trust in him. He knew how to stand before the masses and speak to them, he knew how to raise them up high and bring them down low. He knew how to converse with villagers even though he knew nothing about farming, about plowing, hoeing, or shoveling. He spoke with the workers as if he was a worker himself even though he had never been in a factory. He knew how to talk and dance with the fighters even though he had never held a gun in his hands... “With the help of the narrow-minded, boot-licking middle cadres, he was a villager, a worker and a soldier. And that is exactly how the individuals and masses wanted him to be – one from respect and others from fear.

¹⁴¹ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2007, p. 31

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 178

By words and by looks he knew how to reward, criticize, boast and penalize and by his suspicion he knew how to destroy...Such rarity was this Zahariadis, for whom songs were sung and miracles and legends told.”¹⁴³ Most villagers in the Kostur, Lerin and Voden Regions believed in those miracles and legends, which by the merit of his middle, low and lower cadres, their beliefs were turned into a ‘burnt offering’ and a ‘heroic suicide’...

Zahariadis’s perverted character is evidenced by the conversation he had in Moscow between himself and a fortune teller who, among other things, told him:

“You are handsome and clever but you have the character of a scoundrel. Are you by any chance not a communist?”¹⁴⁴

What the fortune teller told him came true about twenty years later. Unfortunately, the half-literate Macedonian cadres in NOF and AFZH (the likes of Vera) who believed in him, managed to introduce him as a principle among the Macedonians who then led them to one of the biggest Macedonian national defeats in Macedonian history.

The **fourth element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the Macedonian *common code*, “traditional things that are symbolic”¹⁴⁵, presented through authentic descriptions of *traditional Macedonian customs*: for giving food for the soul – giving out boiled wheat, zelnik (pita), mlechnik (pita with milk), pogacha (large round loaf of bread), wine, rakia (brandy); *Lamenting the dead*; Celebrating *traditional Macedonian religious holidays*: Mitrovden, Petrovden, Voditsi, Golema Bogoroditsa, Easter, St. George by gathering in the meadows; dancing *dances* such as: Bairacheto, Nevestinsko, Levoto; singing the *songs*: More chupi Kosturchanki, Eleno mome, Mlada partizanka, Na Vicho planina, Vo borba, vo borba; *kneading* homemade rye bread, *praying* in front of the icon of the Mother of God, baptism, saying a prayer. These are *sources of fact*, a reality taken from everyday life during that time, which confirms the real meaning of what it is to be Macedonian.

The author has also made reference to *surnames of families* such as: Nakovtsi, Zisovtsi, Mitrevtsi, Popovtsi, Petkovtsi, Pandovtsi...

This is what Traian Petrovski will say about this during the novel’s promotion:

“Nakovski’s narrative mastery is especially captivating, which is intertwined with impressive dialogues and the most shocking events. The melodious language and the rich vocabulary helped him in that. He consciously inserts parts of the Kostur speech in the epic work, in order to preserve the authenticity, and through that the mark of identity.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 195

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 63

¹⁴⁵ See: Venko Andonovski: *Abduksia na teoriata*. - Skopje: Galikul, 2011, p. 176

¹⁴⁶ Traian Petrovski’s review of the novel “*Golemata izmama*” (The great lie) by Petre Nakovski. The novel was promoted in Bitola on December 14, 2007

In addition to the *Macedonian literary language*, the author has also used words from the Kostur *dialect*, such as: “jastie” (??), “velentse” (woolen bedcover), “pliachki”, (clothes), “vidu” (I saw), “da vime” (we will see), “fustanite” (women’s dresses), “vagia” (??), “chupi” (girls), “kosma” (??), “cherven” (??), “kelku” (how much), “umo” (brain), “tua” (here), “ka sho me pulish” (the way you see me), “ogno” (the fire), “laf” (word), “shlukaa” (??), “opitvae” (were asking), “osh” (are you going), “godinieto” (the years), “grobishcha” (cemetery), “oide” (went), “kinee” (tearing), “krshee” (breaking), “palee” (burning), “geoite” (sins), “svite” (everyone), “z’mbi” (teeth), “grede” (coming), “dadome” (we gave), “tsrnitsa” (mulberry), “padinva” (??).

We also find *curses* in the novel: “... they have disappeared, the village has been burned down... they burned it, let the fire burn them...”¹⁴⁷ ... you’re teaching them to kill, may lightning strike you...”, “Well, they hardly grow and you collected them... may the evil collect you!”¹⁴⁸

In order to capture the authenticity of *space, time and circumstances*, Nakovski uses both *Greek and Russian words and expressions*: Ekso! Avrio sto tmima sas ta ertun i naftergates, Ma then te xerume, Keratades ta mathete, Omorfa, poli omorfa traguthia, Vot, smotri, milenkii, linia dorogi nikuda ne vedet.

The novel is rich with *symbolism*: a black head kerchief symbolizes sorrow, tears, pain. A prayer symbolizes a personal religious experience based on thinking of God or another object of worship. Silence symbolizes loneliness. A broken cradle symbolizes abandonment. The *icon, word, speech*, the *oak* tree are symbols of permanence and survival of the nation.

The story in the novel ended on the shores of the Prespa lakes. While the government’s victory over the communists was celebrated all over Greece, a white bearded priest stood on the ground at the great Prespa tomb dotted with tanks and bulldozers and, in a trembling and broken voice, whispered:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are those who fulfill His commandments, to have the right to life and to enter the city through the gates. And outside are the dogs, the damned, the prostitutes, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who wants to lie and deceive...”¹⁴⁹

At the same time, Giorgi rescued a child he found in the reeds by the lakeshore, and, while carrying it in his arms and holding it tightly against his chest “... he walked through the huge tomb and when, only for a moment, without interrupting his trembling step, he looked at the sky, it occurred to him that the stars were traveling with him.”

¹⁴⁷ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2007, p. 36

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 186

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 381

The novel ended with the centuries-old prayer and the traditional ringing of the village church bell - three times for the peace of the souls:

“Three times and all night dong-dong-dong... ringing three times for everyone in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, AMEN...”¹⁵⁰

After completing the analysis of the novel a question comes to mind: “What did the Macedonians gain and what did they lose by participating in the Greek Civil War en masse?”

The author did not provide an answer. He left that for the reader to decide. It is up to the reader to evaluate the situation and judge and evaluate what has been gained and what has been lost. The reader is left to decide what motivated the Macedonian people to enter the Greek Civil War en masse, which, half a century after it ended, is still looked at as a great adventure. The Greek Civil War was started after World War II ended and after the Great Powers had agreed on their strategic and political interests.

We would like to end our analysis of the novel “Golemata izmama” (The great lie) with Traian Petrovski’s assessment:

“Very few authors have such a grasp of matters associated with destiny and as good a sense of objective judgment... Nothing binds so strongly as what is written. That is why Petre Nakovski writes with understanding, with devotion to the truth and manages to give us a valuable novelistic reading of the Macedonian uneasiness...”¹⁵¹

It is worth repeating the question that Giorgi asked at the end of the first chapter in this novel when he returned from the cemetery:

“Who did all this to us and why?”¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 384

¹⁵¹ Traian Petrovski’s review of the novel “*Golemata izmama*” (The great lie) by Petre Nakovski. The novel was promoted in Bitola on December 14, 2007

¹⁵² Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: Makavej, 2007, p. 39

5.5 “NA PAT SO VREMETO” (ON THE ROAD OF TIME)

*Who will testify if not we,
about our pain and suffering, crying and lamenting,
prayers and tears, waiting without end,
about the fire, the shout and cry, the horrible defeat,
about our uprooting and exile,
that lead us so far away from home,
and hopefully the prophesy will come true,
that after years and the passing of time,
everything will be ours again?...”*¹⁵³

According to the expanded definition of “**literature of fact**”, the novel “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time), published in 2010 by “Matica Makedonska”, Skopje, is a typical novel-reportage.

This novel is about the author and his wife’s personal experiences of years later (60), having to follow the path they took during the child exodus while recalling the time when they were children and taken away from their homeland during the end of the Greek Civil War. While on the road they also visited many of the places in Kostur and Lerin Regions where the battles between DAG and the government army took place; in those places where the eradication and displacement of the Macedonians began and in the places in Southern Albania where the Macedonians were accommodated after the eviction, and the wounded fighters were treated. This novel is also based on testimonies of living participants and witnesses, archival documents, newspaper and magazine clippings, published memoirs, notes, and are a typical representation of the “**literature of fact**” whose elements will be analyzed below.



Figure 13. Cover page of the novel “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time)

And exactly this confirms the author’s thoughts that the novel has a bit of everything: “novel, travelogue, reportage, memoirs”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 2010, p. 7

Strongly realizing that he wanted to capture the truth from today's perspective, the author set himself a goal "...to preserve the entire experience. With a little bit of effort I was ready to brush off and clean the dust resting on the papers and allow the memories to flow regardless of how grievous and painful they might be..."¹⁵⁵

The novel begins with poetry, personal works, in which the author calls for the reconciliation of the nation, a reminder of the evil that drove out the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece) and exiled them from their ancestral homeland, demonstrating that part of the nation was in danger of being destroyed, damaged by dark forces and sick minds. The Macedonian syndrome which hovers over the Macedonian nation brings constant disunity and self-destruction. This novel sends a message of unity, harmony and a sense of survival:

Who will testify to the times
in which we have been immersed (...)
(...) Who will write that we live
a deeply rooted life
on our great grandfather's and grandfather's land
to which we are very much faithful? (...)

(...) For this great hope
and for everything, and for everyone who was lost to time,
may the glimmer of candlelight shine,
may animated and living embers for eternity glow,
may God will, that in all of us shine
the enlightenment we possess today
so that we will be smarter and wiser tomorrow. Amen!"¹⁵⁶

The novel is a chronotope and is segmented in space and time. The composition is based on the narrator moving in space, which is characteristic of *travelogues*. The plot of the novel is set in the present, in 2008. The author here confronts his own memories which he re-experiences 60 years after they took place at the end of the Greek Civil War. Facts presented in this time period are arranged in a retrospective composition, i.e. the author follows events by visiting the places through his memories and allows himself to gradually re-acquaint with past *times*, *events* and the fate of the population as seen from today's perspective. The author will write the following about this:

"Harnessed under the yoke of a great desire to document this past, we set off and took the road of time, following the footsteps of memories which are now part of our survival and existence which, as some wise men would say, are a large component of our past and a small component of our present..."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 2010, p. 9

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 9

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 7-8

¹⁵⁷ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: Matica makedonska, 2010, p. 10

The following events were dealt with in the content core:

- Visit Kostur and Lerin Regions
- Visit Southern Albania with special reference to Prenies, Korcha, Elbasan, Durres and Sukt
- Memories of survival

His desire to again walk the road of uprooting and eviction, his desire to be reminded again of what happened to his people, of the existence as things were - rooted in the land of their grandparents, the desire to see what remained in his memories, and not in reality, prompted the author to face his past again. "Encouraged by the thought that memories do fade over time we took a leap of faith to take a journey over the road of time carrying with us our destiny and our notes from statements about events and happenings made by many living participants, and set out once again to re-experience our uprooting and eviction."¹⁵⁸

In the course of his *documentary presentation*, possessing many authentic descriptions of places, the author started out his journey in Kostur and Lerin Regions. On his way, he consistently described the places he visited from a current perspective, and, through the memories of witnesses he spoke to, he shed light on the various events that transpired during the Greek Civil War and "managed to interpret the inner experiences, the tragedies, traumas and suffering that have remained deeply ingrained in the collective memory..."¹⁵⁹

While examining various *events*, he recorded the *time* and the *people* who were forced to leave their homes and go on a journey from which there was no return. Also typical in the novel are descriptions of the author's *place of birth*, his memories of *home*, *customs*, *faith*, *childhood memories* - everything that today seems like it was erased with an eraser, but still lives engraved in the memory of those who were evicted and exiled, and in the memory of their families and descendants. The author's depiction of his visits to his native village Krchishta is impressive and very emotional:

"On our way we made a stop at a place called Vishomo. Close to there, where the land rises and widens, is a church and all around the church there is nothing, only emptiness. The village Krchishta used to occupy that emptiness. As I stared at the desolate space where my village used to be, I was overwhelmed with a certain sickness and chills ran down my spine. The village was here but now it's gone; only its name remains... Here, I say, this emptiness was a village and this emptiness was full of life... And here, I say, where we stand now, was the house in which I was born."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 9

¹⁵⁹ From the promotion of the novel "Na pat so vremeto" (On the road of time) held in Shtip on December 4, 2010

¹⁶⁰ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p. 58

Remnants of foundations from demolished houses are a reminder that something bad happened in the Macedonian villages. The collapsed bare walls are a metaphor for absence.

During his journey through these parts and from his memories, Nakovski again captured and revived all the evil that the war did to the Macedonian people. There is no place, no stone where the war has not left a bloody mark.

“I am looking for families. They were here, they are gone. I am looking for houses, they were here, they are gone. I am looking for what once was. That too is now gone... In what unknown wide space in the world has time scattered them?”¹⁶¹

While visiting the village Lobanitsa, the author tried to remember what had happened to him in 1948, more precisely on March 25, 1948, when, together with other children from this and other villages in Kostur region, at the age eleven he was taken away from his mother's arms and sent to Eastern European countries.

From reading this novel the reader should have no problem capturing a picture of Kostur and Lerin Regions today, but also from the past. About this the author will write: “... we are here in the present without life... Now we only have time to remember the past and time not to forget it...”¹⁶²

The part devoted to the term “time” as described on pages 59-61 in the novel “*Na pat so vremeto*” (On the road of time) is unusually striking.

In the novel Nakovski describes nature, the roads, the churches, the modern cities, the new houses in the villages now inhabited by Asia Minor (Madzhiri) Christian Turkish settlers and colonists who built their houses with stones from the houses of the evicted Macedonians. Nakovski also made special reference to the current situation in Northern Greece and the attitude of the Greek border guards and Greek citizens towards the Macedonians.

Petre Nakovski and his wife Ditta's visit to Southern Albania was strictly for the purpose of locating the places where they were brought as children when the exodus took place and to find traces they had left in this foreign country. About this Petre wrote: “So that once again we can set foot on the same place from where we took a step on the road that took us to distant lands...”¹⁶³

Through his conversations and testimonies with the local population, especially with the older generation, the author searched for the house in which the residents of Korcha took the children in on March 26, 1948. The fate of the evacuated children is best

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 59

¹⁶² Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, pp. 60-61

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 124

described in the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) by Petre Nakovski, which is also the subject of analysis in this master’s thesis.

Also, through his travels from city to city, from Prenies, Korcha, Elbasan, Durres to Sukt, the author again followed the plot in his novels: “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), “I kamenot e zemja” (A stone too is soil) and “Golemata izmama” (The great lie).

Nakovski followed the path as he remembered it. He followed the same Macedonian geography, which the Greeks had changed, on which he experienced personal suffering, trauma and tragedy. And through encounters with the living, the horrors of war re-emerged. While passing through Prenies, he found the old barracks in which the Macedonian refugee population was accommodated, including his parents, about whom he will briefly write: “painful memories began to appear before my eyes. These were the memories I had inherited from my parents and from the many others who had spent a very difficult time in Prenies right after their purge from their birthplace.”¹⁶⁴

The novel is also based on testimonies given by the children who were mobilized and who had to relive the horrible events they had experienced. In long conversations with the author, they spoke about everything they had experienced as children separated from their parents and were left to a few “mothers” to be taken care of. Done’s story about meeting an Albanian woman is especially characteristic:

“... I put my hands over my eyes and imagined seeing my own mother in her. She had the same hand and body movements and walked with the same ease as my mother. There were movements in this woman that were very similar to those of my mother’s which gave me an irresistible desire to suddenly run to her... With her free hand she gave us the signal to sit down... from her sack she removed something wrapped in a towel. She then, gently, almost timidly, began to unwrap it... exposing a red pumpkin, full of aroma, slightly burned at the edges and still warm... She cut it into slices... and put a slice in everyone’s hand... I broke off a small piece and brought it to my lips. I left it glued there for a long time so that my lungs could be filled with its soothing aroma.”¹⁶⁵

Perhaps someone may think that the pumpkin (which is figuratively a symbol of stupidity and an empty mind) is not so important in this whole description, but exactly this useless detail¹⁶⁶ reveals the essence of memory. Namely, exactly the pumpkin and the thought of its aroma brings the children back home, to their village, to their mother, to their customs.

¹⁶⁴ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p 149

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 179

¹⁶⁶ Venko Andonovski: *Struktura na Makedonskiot realistichen roman*. - Skopje: *Detska radost*, 1997, p. 126

Undoubtedly, by choosing this detail, the author wanted to preserve this “segment of shared memory, a segment of family memory.”¹⁶⁷

During his trip through Southern Albania, the author visited places where thousands of wounded partisans were treated during the Greek Civil War. He again revisited those memories through the recollections of the surviving fighters who were wounded and treated at the hospitals in Korcha, Elbasan and Sukt.

Additional information on the fate of the wounded treated in these hospitals can be found in the book “Grchkata bolnitsa na ostrovot Volin” (The Greek hospital on the island Volin) by General Dr. Miechislav Barchikovski, a valuable record worthy of testimony.

The novel “Na pat so vremeto (On the road of time), through the memories of witnesses of these turbulent times, has provided us with descriptions of the roads taken during the Macedonian exodus to Eastern European countries, especially to Poland and Uzbekistan, in the former USSR. The conversations with Polish staff on the ship are particularly impressive. Here Macedonian words similar to Polish are intertwined. Also, horrible words have been spoken about the barracks in Tashkent where DAG fighters were housed, after World War II Japanese prisoners of war were evicted. The picture is shocking when a mother loses her child on the ship: “... my little girl, my child is gone, people look for her, help me, my child is gone... my little girl is gone...”¹⁶⁸ The child was eventually found, about whose fate Vancho Andonov wrote in the newspaper “Nova Makedonija”, 1973, and later in “Vecer”.

Similarly, described through testimonies are the stories of those who never returned home but remained in foreign countries and had families there. They too managed to preserve their Macedonian language, customs, songs and dances. “Exile as a condition is most strongly felt by those who personally experienced it, but also because of personal history...”¹⁶⁹ As a direct participant in the resettlement, the author gave a concrete picture of the situation in Skopje at the time, when he and his wife and many other Macedonians from Poland returned to Macedonia. He especially referred to the deep-rooted Macedonian discord and hatred, intolerance and disunity. This was true for the Aegeans but not for Macedonians from the other part of Macedonia. The Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece), who, after arriving in the Republic of Macedonia, spent days in the Idrizovo prison facilities, not to rest, but to be interrogated.

And by following this train of thought the author, as well as the people who participated in these events and who witnessed this war, expressed their moral judgment and resentment about the systematic and planned eviction from their homeland.

¹⁶⁷ (<http://www.blesok.com.mk/tekst.asp?lang=mac&tekst=1033&str=4#>, (Elizabeta Sheleva: *Romanot kako filosofia na sekiavanieto*))

¹⁶⁸ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p 238

¹⁶⁹ Vesna Mojsova-Chepishevskaja: *Chinot na pishuvanie kako chin na osloboduvanie*, *Igra I simila*. - Skopje: *Galikul*, 2011

“Without sorrow and with simple words, Nakovski has recorded the time and people who were forced to leave their homes and took to the various roads. Physically and mentally crippled they asked ‘where are we being led and to whom are we leaving our homeland’...”¹⁷⁰

Nevertheless, they managed to preserve their human dignity, pride and awareness of their national affiliation – their *Macedonian identity*.

The novel “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time), which is the subject of analysis, is a touch on the old wound and pain for Macedonia. It is no coincidence that the author quotes Seferis¹⁷¹ in the prologue: “The memory wherever you touch it hurts”¹⁷²

The **first element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the authenticity of *space, names of settlements, toponyms*.

The action in the novel takes place on the basis of movement, i.e. the journey through Kostur and Lerin Regions and Southern Albania.

The author has used centuries-old Macedonian names and topography with unusual accuracy. He has recorded the Macedonian topography of villages, towns, mountains, rivers, which by law¹⁷³ were Hellenized, i.e. renamed with Greek names. This novel fortunately has preserved the past, Macedonian history, Macedonian roots and Macedonian individual and collective memories.

Villages: Dolno Kaleshteni (Kato Kaliniki), Psoderi (Pisoderion), Vineni (Pili), Zhelevo (Andartikon), Lak (Mikrolimni), Orovnik (Karie), P’pli (Levkonas), Rudari (Kaliŧhea), Shtrkovo (Plati), Madovo (Milonas), Rabi (Lemos), German (Agios Germanos), Drenovo, Orovnik, Kulata, Pero, Nivitsi (Ptsarades), Orovo (Piksos), Grazhdeno (Vronderson), Osheni (Inoi), Sveta Nedela (Agia Kiriaki), Statitsa (Melas), Novo Gabresh (Neo Gavros), Ezerets (Petropulaki), Snicheni (Kastanofito), Koteltsi (Kotili), Kosinets (Ieropigi), Chetirok (Mesopotamia), D’mbeni, Lobanitsa (Agios Dimitrios), Smrdesh (Kristalopigi).

Cities: Kostur (Kastoria), Lerin (Florina), Voden (Ethesa), Rupishta (Argos Orestikon).

The author also mentions the towns and villages in Southern Albania where the evacuated children, evicted population and wounded fighters were housed:

¹⁷⁰ Words spoken at the promotion of the novel *Na pat so vremeto* held in Stip on December 4, 2010

¹⁷¹ Iorgos Seferis, Greek poet, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1963

¹⁷² Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p. 5

¹⁷³ In 1928 the Greek government passed a law to change the Macedonian names of settlements and toponyms to Greek ones

Cities in Albania: Bilishta, Kapestitsa, Korcha, Pogradets, Elbasan, Perenias (Prenies), Drach (Durres), Sukt, Bureli.

Villages in Albania: Trestenik, Visochishta, Vrnik, Zvezda and Poian.

Other **toponyms** found in the novel, where key events took place at that time period are: Lerinsko Pole, Prespa, Prevalot, Devolsko Pole.

Mountains: Lehovo, Vicho, Bigla, Bela Voda, Lundzer, Bazdrovitsa, Liupkata, Vrba, Drenicheto, Lisets, Moro, Chuka, Orle, Odre, Siniachka, Mali Madi, Kopanche, Sveti Ilia, Krusha, Gorusha, Kotelska Kula, Bel Kamen, Gorna i Dolna Arena, Charno, Krastavets, Aliavitsa, Pind, Petre Peleni, Amuda, Nikoler.

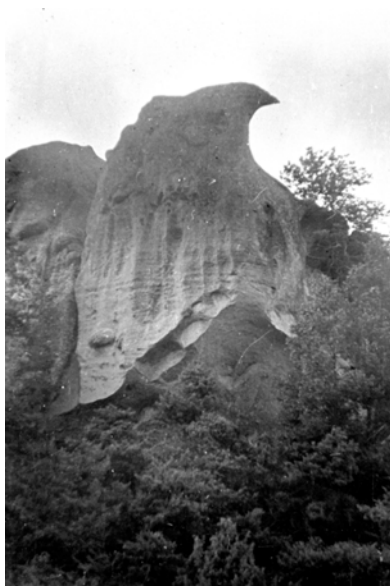


Figure 14. Mount Orle

Rivers: Morava.

Lakes: Lake Prespa, Lake Kostur.

Islands: Sveti Ahil.

Monasteries and churches: Sveta Troitsa, Sveta Petka, Sveti Atanas, Sveti Giorgi, Sveti Iovan, Sveti Ilia.

The **second element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the *time frame and the real events* that took place in that time period. Of course, it is important to mention that the very presence of the author in the places visited where these events took place, which were key to shedding light on the fateful turmoil and eviction of the Macedonian people from Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece), confirms the authenticity of time and events.

- In November 1947, military conditions were created to open the first course for Macedonian teachers in the village German. Eighty demobilized men and women who had completed primary education were ordered to learn to read and write in Macedonian Cyrillic within 15 days.

- From October 1947 to August 1949 a prison was set up in the village Drenovo where the people's government abducted and, without a trial, punished and jailed people. It abducted the families, fathers, mothers and even minor children of those who deserted the war and fled to the other side.

- Four hundred and fifty children, aged two to fourteen, were taken in March 1948, from the village German and sent, first to Dolno Dupeni, then to Liuboino and Bitola and from there to Eastern European countries.

- On February 11 and 12, 1949, an order was issued to capture Lerin where 360 mobilized women from the Prespa and Korestani villages were deployed to transport wounded from the front to the field hospitals.

- The Second NOF Congress was held on Sunday, March 25, 1949 in the village church in Nivitsi, at which time a decision was made to have greater Macedonian participation in the Greek Civil War where, in exchange, the Greek Communists would allow the Macedonian people to form their own Macedonian state. This was the biggest deception to date committed against the Macedonian people.

- On August 13 and 14, 1949, the Greek Air Force dropped 34 bombs weighing 250 kilograms, 530 bombs weighing 125 kilograms, 1900 bombs weighing 10 kilograms, 70 napalm bombs, 620 rockets, 26,000 20 mm grenades and 43,000 12.7 and 7.7 mm machine gun bullets in the area near the village Rabi in Prespa.¹⁷⁴

- There is a cave in the village Grazhdeno in which a partisan hospital was located.¹⁷⁵

- The Provisional Democratic Government of Greece, housed in village Vineni, was formed in December 1947 in the village Asamati in Prespa. "Zahariadis's Cave", a secure place located in the village Vineni was used to make political and military decisions such as: "to attack Voden, Negush and Lerin".¹⁷⁶

- The battles at Gramos lasted from June 14 to August 22, 1948.

- On July 7, 1959, the Greek newspaper "Eleftherotipia" carried a story in which it was said that all inhabitants in the village Tremino (Karidia) swore that in the future they would never speak that Slavic dialect again. They were cited as an example by Greek officials.

¹⁷⁴ See: *Istoria na grchkata gragianska voina*, p. 533

¹⁷⁵ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p. 50

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51



Figure 14. This is where the main DAG hospital was located

- On July 8, 1959, the Greek newspaper “To Vima” carried a story about the Slavo-Macedonian language, saying that it should have been banned a long time ago.

- On August 4, 1959, the Greek newspaper “Ellinikos Voras” reported that the inhabitants of the village Ludovo (Kria Nera), in Kostur Region, decided to swear that they would completely forget their mother tongue and that they would only speak Greek.

- On August 11, 1959, the Greek newspaper “Kathimerini” reported that the inhabitants of the village Krpeshina (Atrapos) swore that they would no longer speak their Slavic dialect.

- There is a hill fenced with barbed wire along the road Kostur-Bilishta-Korcha on which hangs a sign with the words “Mine Field”. DAG minefield experts planted these mines in 1949 and they have not been removed to this day.

- On March 24 and 25, 1948, children and mothers from the villages Bresteni, Galista, Ezerets, Novoseleni, Dolno Papratsko, Krchishta and Kosinets were brought to the village Lobanitsa.

- A government brigade attacked Lisets during the night between August 10 and 11, 1948.

- The children evacuated on March 26, 1948, were taken from Kostur Region to Korcha.

- In February 1948, after the unsuccessful battle to take Lerin, 1500 wounded fighters were placed in the hospital in Korcha.

- In 1948 the exiled Macedonian population from Kostur Region was settled in Prenies.

- From May to the end of November 1948, 1600 evacuated children from Kostur Region lived in a shelter in Drach (Durres).

- Members of the Macedonian leadership were declared enemies and Tito's agents by Zahariadis in Bureli. Zahariadis placed the entire blame for losing the Greek Civil War on the Macedonian leadership.

- Wounded fighters were transported by ship from the port of Durres to the Polish port Shvinouishte, and then transferred to hospital "250" on Volin Island. Other ships transported wounded to the ports Gdansk and Shchechin.

- On July 13, 1949, 750 wounded fighters were transported on the ship "Koshchushko" which sailed from Albania.

- The exiled people from the Kostur and Lerin Region villages were taken by ship from Durres to Poland.

- The exiled people from the Kostur and Lerin Region villages were taken to Tashkent on the ship "Michurin".

Also mentioned in the novel are names of *historical figures, military and political organizations and newspapers* which confirm the thesis of "*literature of fact*".

Historical characters: Porfirogenis - member of the CPG Central Committee, Gregorgiades, Zahariadis, Tito, Stalin, Khrushchev, Boleslav Beirut - first secretary of the PORP Central Committee, Dr. Miechislav Barchikowski – a general, Kshemien – a general, Vatslav Komar - main organizer and implementer of Greek policies in Poland, Dr. Bogdan Bednarski - Minister of Health of the then Poland.

Organizations: Vinozhito (Rainbow) - Political Party of the Macedonian Minority in Greece, PORP - Polish United Workers' Party; Ilinden - a national liberation and revolutionary organization of the Slavo-Macedonians, formed by Zahariadis in the Ukrainian village Kroschenko in Poland; Zdruzhenie na Egeitsite (Aegean Association) based in Skopje.

Newspapers: "Glasot na Kostur (Voice of Kostur)", "Eleftherotipia", "To Vima", "Ellinikos Voras", "Glas na Egeitsite" (Voice of the Aegeans).

Leading *characters* in the novel "Na pat so vremeto" (On the road of time) are the author, Petre Nakovski and his wife Ditta Nakovska, who represent the collective destiny of all the exiled children collected in 1948. Taking the paths they took sixty years ago

they rediscover the road of their exile and relocation and they relive the tragic events of their separation from their parents and homes:

“They collected us and took us away and behind us remained the unfinished story in a grandfather and grandmother’s voice... And we thought and asked ourselves: ‘Will there be anyone, where they were sending us, who would caress us with a warm hand like the hand of our mothers, who would kiss us goodnight before sleep, like our mothers kiss us, who would gently look at us like our mothers looked at us, who would smile at us with our mother’s smile, who would tell us a story, sing us a song, wipe our tears? Would there be anything there from our home? When will we return to our homes?’ We descended on the abandoned road in silence. We then crossed the road on foot that was once a parting road.”¹⁷⁷ It is also characteristic that, even though the author’s goal was to visit all the key places where the events took place during the Greek Civil War, he did more than that. From the darkness of oblivion to “save the pieces from the great whole of human suffering,”¹⁷⁸ in his remarks, and later in his novel, Nakovski provided an authentic description of the beauty of nature, of the villages, of the cities, of the modern trends and of the people’s attitude towards them. The author especially referred to the use of the Macedonian vernacular spoken in Lerin, but “quietly and carefully and only in his company.”¹⁷⁹

During his visit to Southern Albania, Nakovski provided an authentic description of the cities, the modern buildings, roads, but also of the Albanian people’s attitude towards them; their hospitality and customs.

“Which one of these houses is the house where I was looked after by strangers who always radiated warmth, gentle smiles and a lot of kindness? Which door should I knock on?”

Sadly, Nakovski found out that the house in which he had been looked after as a child was demolished and that a street now passed over it. In his novel he expresses his gratitude to these people whom he called “my good angels”¹⁸⁰ and regrets that he failed to thank them in person, saying: “I had in me a great desire to go to Korcha and in their language to say to those people ‘faleminderit’ (thank you!)”¹⁸¹

The **third element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**”, besides the author and his wife, are the real characters such as: Kole, Mita, Pop Sterio, Lena, Stoina, Stefo, Done, Leteris and others.

Testimonies given by these characters are a document depicting the irrational war, the tragic fate, the broken families, the homelessness, the human dignity and the endurance. The novel is composed as a system of narratives, which complement one

¹⁷⁷ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, pp. 105 and 106

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 10

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 12

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 136

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 136

another, and actions connected through the intertwined witness testimonies depicting the turbulent times; the children taken away and separated from their parents, the homelessness and the participants in the war. Each character brings out his or her own deeply engraved recollections, through which destinies and the collective destiny is characterized. Here we discover the psychological depths of these characters and bearers of painful experiences, persecuted, separated, but continue to last in and through time. The author has built the characters pictorially, based on their testimonies, specific life situations and drama; characteristics consistent with the truth.

Kole was a boy separated from his parents and taken away. He spent his childhood and part of his life in Poland. He introduces us to his destiny through his moving testimony, which is the destiny of all children taken away during the Greek Civil War.

“When we crossed the border and when the blasts of the bombs could not reach us, and when we could no longer hear the roar of the flying aircraft, that’s when I felt the greatest emptiness, the greatest pain. That’s when I realized how painful the forced abandonment of my home was... I realized that for us there was no other road except the road that led to our uprooting...”¹⁸²

Kole from the village German in Prespa was a shepherd before he was uprooted from his home. He said he was placed in a dormitory in Poland where the state allowed him to get an education. He said he finished primary, high school and college and then, with his family, returned to Macedonia as a civil engineer and participated in the construction of many buildings, such as: the Archives of Macedonia, the Institute of National History, the National and University Library and so on, which confirms that the Republic of Poland had invested in the upbringing and education of children who had been placed in children’s dormitories. More information on this can be found in the political science study entitled “Makedonski detsa vo Polska (1948-1968)” (Macedonian children in Poland (1948-1968)) by Dr. Petre Nakovski.

From the testimonies given by characters Mita and Lena, we learn about the partisans who fought in DAG’s ranks, battles fought in Gramos, the heroism of fighters, the difficult climatic and military conditions, the strong spirit and great physical endurance of Macedonians. They told the author their stories through tears and strong emotions, about how they lost their youth, about the images that they kept deep inside their consciousness, about what they remembered which had turned into incurable wounds.

“I remember the evening of the sixtieth day when the order was given to withdraw to new positions. These were the last positions. Behind us was Albania. In the night we took a count of how many of us were left. From the 460 men and women fighters aged 16 to 22, which was the number of fighters in our battalion before the battle started, 95 were left alive, 60 of which were wounded. Who can you patch up first and who can you carry

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 44

to the hospital? Some died in our arms...”¹⁸³ This confirms the high morale, the greatness and the courage and determination the young Macedonian women exercised in performing their combat duties.

On pages 108 and 109 we find a list of villages which kept a record of how many villagers were mobilized and killed fighting, which speaks very vividly about the large number of victims.

From the testimony given by Stefo, a ninety-year-old fighter and driver, we learn about the difficult fate of the wounded fighters whom he transported to the various hospitals. He had to face those young fighters, crippled from fighting, every day.

“I often secretly wiped my tears when, after a day, after a week and rarely after a month, I had to drive the same boys and girls to the same hospitals from which I had brought them back. Were they complaining? Were they bent over with pain? Were they praying?”¹⁸⁴

Ninety-year-old Stefo never did receive an answer to these questions. But the images of their faces, especially of those who did not survive the war, never faded from his memories.

When he was a young child Done was taken to Sinaia, a city in Romania, and placed in a dormitory. He testified to the fact that he was one of three hundred and fifty children returned to Prenies to become DAG fighters. His memories from that experience did not fade and he was able to convey many details from those events with deep feelings. Many of these children did not take part in battles mainly due to protests organized by their parents.

“And now, with the passing of time, I am often reminded of what I have experienced in Prenies. I see the trucks coming, the crowds dashing, the people rushing, I hear their shouts, cries, pleading and cursing... I see myself as a guard. I see myself and my friends in the middle of the night carrying dead bodies from the barracks and horse stables and burying them in shallow graves in the hard ground... That is exactly how it was... That is how it was and that is how it should be written...”¹⁸⁵

Let us note that Done and the other children from Prenies were airlifted to Poland. “They returned us to Prenies the same day. About twenty days later they put us on an airplane and sent us to Poland. There the Poles sat us down and told us that we could conquer the world by learning...”¹⁸⁶

A villager from Kostur Region who was held in the Greek prisons for a long time opens his soul and recounts his experiences with police brutality and harassment. From

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 87

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 221

¹⁸⁵ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p 180

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 179

his dusty shelves he pulls out clippings of excerpts from Greek newspapers that describe the oaths that the Macedonian people were forced to take in front of Greek officials, condemning their Macedonian language and promising that they would only speak Greek.

From the testimony given by Pop (Reverend) Sterio we learn about his village and about past events, more precisely about the event which, as he said: “only the old people spoke and only in secret.”¹⁸⁷

Namely, he testified that on March 17, 1905, Greek palikaria (policemen) entered the village to look for voivodi (Macedonian revolutionary leaders) but plundered the houses looking for gold.



Figure 15. This is the burial place of the villagers who were slaughtered by the Greek police on March 17, 1905
(Pictured here are Pop Sterio and his daughter Ditta)

Pop Sterio said the Greeks took six civilian men, tortured them, cut their jugular veins and left them to bleed to death. The villagers buried them at night and no one outside of the village spoke about where they were buried: “Anyone in the village can tell you what their names were, but no one will speak about where they were buried. We can’t tell because we know someone will come and desecrate their eternal resting place. One hundred years have passed and no one has muddled their dreams.”¹⁸⁸ During the author’s long conversation with Pop Sterio and his many testimonies about those times, especially about the collection of the children, Nakovski found that Sterio’s testimonies were very characteristic: “And what do you think if they had not collected the children, there wouldn’t have been a high school in Ezerets? There would have been one, even larger than that in Osheni, but someone thought it was not important to have a high school here.”¹⁸⁹

Also worth mentioning here is the author’s conversation with Pop Sterio about the current situation in Macedonia and its survival: “How will this tiny, poor country live and

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 90

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 91

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 92

survive? My dear Reverend Father, I said to him slowly and quietly, she is now like a tiny, lonely and poor bear cub... What?! he raised his voice sounding surprised. You say a tiny bear cub? A bear cub which one day will grow up to be a bear?! Well, what can you do Reverend Father, bear cubs do grow into big bears...”¹⁹⁰

Leteris was a refugee, brought with his family from Turkey to Kostur Region. He was a “prosfiga”¹⁹¹ whose family was given land to live on and work that had once belonged to a Macedonian family. Worth mentioning here is that Leteris did not call the house in which he lived with his family a home: “...how can you build a house on land that does not belong to you?”¹⁹²

“Namely, for some groups of people - such as victims, refugees, migrants, subalterns - memories play a particularly important role in legitimizing their uncertain identity (because it is strictly transitory). But, unfortunately, the right to remembrance is not acquired in a straightforward way, but goes in correlation with the socio-political, i.e. socio-cultural power to speak about one’s experience with one’s own voice and in one’s own name!”¹⁹³

Collective testimony is built through individual stories and testimonies. The life stories upon which this novel is based are presented as a journey through time and space with a starting and ending point. The end of the journey is people not returning home to their homeland. This confirms that Nakovski is a tireless researcher when it comes to revealing the Macedonian people’s tragic fate from this part of Macedonia.

It is also worth mentioning the Albanian characters whose names are Tahir, Ismet and Marieta, who helped the author find the places he was looking for relating to events from the Greek Civil War.

The **fourth element** that confirms that the work has elements of “**literature of fact**” is the Macedonian common *code*, “traditional things that are symbolic”¹⁹⁴ and those are celebrating *name days and traditional Macedonian holidays*, such as: Easter, St. George’s Day; celebrating name days and holidays such as: Mitrovdan and the Great Mother of God. It is characteristic that, even though they were separated, Macedonians in foreign countries did not forget the customs and respected the holidays that *marked* the Macedonian domestic tradition. This was evident from the testimony given by Stoina who said: “We continued to practice our own customs as we had practiced them at home. We quickly weaved baskets and placed boiled wheat, bread and a bit of fruit in them and went from house to house, from person to person to dispense some for the souls of those lost. Again and again we gathered in these strange and abandoned houses to mourn the dead and the living and our own fate. We had no priest to perform ceremonies and the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 92

¹⁹¹ Refugee

¹⁹² Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p. 67

¹⁹³ <http://www.blesok.com.mk/tekst.asp?lang=mac&tekst=1033> (Elizabeta Sheleva: “*Romanot na filosofia na sekiavanieto*”)

¹⁹⁴ See: Venko Andonovski: *Abduksia na teoriata*. - Skopje: *Galikul*, 2011, p. 176

churches and cemeteries around us were all Catholic...” This confirms the touching authenticity of Macedonian life and customs. As valuable proof of the Macedonian fighting spirit, are Macedonian folk songs such as: “Vo borba, vo borba, vo borba Makedonski narode” (To struggle, to struggle, to struggle Macedonian people) and “Napred, napred Makedontsi!” (Forward, forward Macedonians!)

The author’s goal in this novel too is to preserve the smallest detail of truth and tragedy from that time. The character testimonies are a source of facts, a reality taken from everyday life and the time in which they lived, which confirms the Macedonian people’s spirit.

In the novel we also find the *surnames of the families*: Nanovtsi, Damovtsi, Nakovtsi, Pudovtsi, Laskini, Popovtsi, Donovtsi, Liapovtsi, Penovtsi, Shkoklovtsi, Traikovtsi, Pandovtsi, Filiovtsi, Guliovtsi.

The author uses the *Macedonian literary language* in his work which is enriched with authentic words and statements from the *Kostur Region dialect*, i.e. he reliably presents witness statements and testimonies on which this novel is based, in order to capture the *authenticity of place and language*: “kadro” (photograph), “Grčki” (Greek), “peesh” (you sing), “puli” (watch/look), “Zaklame” (we slaughtered), “zborvame” (we are talking), “ka pominata” (how did you do), “sho storite” (what did you do), “klai da iaime” (place so we can eat) and others. In order to capture the authenticity of *space, time and occasions*, the author uses both *Greek and Albanian words and expressions*. Greek: “Stin patrida tus pigenun”, “Sto patriko tus homa”, “Etsi, day ine?”, “Vale, tria kafethakia”, “Milate Elinika?”, “Edo ine Elatha”, “Aftin ti glosa na mi tin milate”, “Na milate Elinika”. Albanian: “Mir dita”, “falemingerite”, “nane”, “mir”.

The novel is also enriched with *symbolism*: the title of the novel and the picture on the cover page, which depicts a burning fire in a lantern, symbolizes eternity, warmth, life, which the author connects with the fate of the collective. The stone - the homeland, the *icon, the word, the speech*, presented in the novel, are a symbol of permanence, survival of the nation and prayer - a personal religious experience based on a return to the thought of God or another cult object in a state of worship and admiration. We also find *symbolism* in the statements made by the author and by Pop Sterio when they talked about Macedonia: “You say a tiny bear cub? A bear cub which one day will grow to be a bear?! Well, what can you do Reverend Father, bear cubs do grow into big bears...”¹⁹⁵

With regards to symbolism, Roland Barthes pointed out that: “...a symbol remains, lasts, but what changes - with the change of social structure - is its interpretation.”¹⁹⁶

The author is characterized by the precision of his expression. The novel is filled with sensitive experiences: emotions and reflections, through which we would say ideally express the “**literature of the fact**” in the work.

¹⁹⁵ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p. 92

¹⁹⁶ Zoran Konstantinovich, *Uvod I uporedno prouchavanje knizhevnosti*, Belgrade, 1984, p. 149

Nakovski has created an artistic testimony in which he uncovers the core truth in an original way, revealing a concrete, true image about the exiled, filled with memories and emptiness in their souls. About this, Rade Silian in his review of the novel “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time) will write:

“Through a documentary, Nakovski has shed light on events and has presented a broad picture of the fateful days, and, by weaving the destinies of individuals, he has managed to interpret internal experiences, traumas and suffering that have become the sum of the collective tragedy.”¹⁹⁷

Elements of “**literature of fact**” bear information on the Macedonian experience which is confirmed by the content of this novel which in essence carries truth and is the conclusion of all of Nakovski’s previous novels.

At the end of the novel the author asked: “So what is there left for us and for future generations? My only wish is to leave you with the message that what happened on those roads must never be forgotten, must never be erased from our memories...”¹⁹⁸



Figure 16. Petre Nakovski and wife Ditta in Poland in 1995 when Petre was Republic of Macedonia’s (first) Ambassador to Poland

The author has left a legacy for future generations to not forget their roots, to learn and pass on those things that should not be forgotten, with a single goal: to never repeat them again.

¹⁹⁷ Rade Silian’s review of the novel “*Na pat so vremeto*” by Petre Nakovski

¹⁹⁸ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica makedonska*, 2010, p. 260

6. STATUS OF PETRE NAKOVSKI'S WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF MACEDONIAN CRITIQUE AND CONTEMPORARY MACEDONIAN LITERATURE

Petre Nakovski started writing when he was a high school student. He published his poems in the emigrant newspaper "Demokrat" in the Macedonian language in Wroclaw, and in the Republic of Macedonia. His first choices of poetry were published in "Sovremenost" (1957) and in "Razgledi" - five poems under one title (1962). After that, he published short stories in the daily press and periodicals (first short story entitled "Taa ne diode" (She did not come) was published in "Nova Makedonija" in 1963).

Petre Nakovski appeared as an author in 1985 with his first published novel "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched). In 1987 he published his doctorate thesis under the title "Makedonskite detsa vo Polska 1948-1968" (Macedonian children in Poland 1948-1968). In 1988 he published his novel "I kamenot e zemia" (A stone too is soil). In 2003 he published his novel "Golemata udolnitsa" (The great decline), in 2007 he published his novel "Golemata izmama" (The great lie), in 2008 he published a bilingual edition of documents about the Macedonian refugees in Poland 1948-1975 and in 2010 he published his novel "Na pat so vremeto" (On the road of time).

In addition to having the title graduate professor of the Macedonian language, Nakovski is also a doctor of political science. He defended his doctorate thesis, entitled "Makedonskite detsa vo Polska 1948-1968" (Macedonian children in Poland 1948-1968), on November 22, 1985 at the Institute of Political Science at the University "Boleslaw Beirut" in Wroclaw - Poland.

Nakovski has been a member of the Writers' Association of Macedonia since 1989. He is also a winner of the awards: "Golden Pen" and "Kiril Pejchinovich".

Seven of Petre Nakovski's novels, "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched), "I kamenot e zemia" (A stone too is soil), "Golemata udolnitsa" (The great decline), "Golemata izmama" (The great lie), "Na pat so vremeto" (On the road of time), "Kalina" (Kalina) and "Na patot kon nevratot" (On the road of no return) have been translated from Macedonian to English by Risto Stefov from Canada, free of charge, a donation for the Macedonian cause, and are available as e-books for free at this website under Petre Nakovski's name: <http://www.pollitecon.com/html/ebooks/Index.htm>

Nakovski was also involved in translating works of literary-historical significance, especially those from Polish to Macedonian, which have added to his special popularity.

In recent years, Nakovski has persistently and consistently worked to affirm Macedonian literature in Poland. He has published translations of poetry from Blazhe Koneski, Slavko Janevski, Atso Shopov, Mateia Matevski, Ante Popovski, Gane Todorovski, Iovan Pavlovski, Traian Petrovski, as well as from other Macedonian poets, for various Polish literary magazines and periodicals. On several occasions and on his own initiative he has actively participated as a mediator and Polish-Macedonian translator for various monthly literary magazines, which were reciprocally published, including “Sovremenost” and “Kulturen zhivot”.

By his own choice, in 1974, in Krakow, Nakovski published an anthology of Macedonian contemporary poetry entitled “Pesni od Ohrid” (Poems from Ohrid). With his engagement and with his linguistic translations from Macedonian to Polish (philologically edited by many Polish poets), selections of poetry by Blazhe Koneski, Mateia Matevski, Ante Popovski, Petre Bakevski, a panorama of Macedonian poetry entitled “Tsrveni grozdovi” (Red grapes), were published. By his own choice Nakovski also translated a set of poems into Polish, by Rade Silian, entitled “Tragi na vremeto” (Footsteps in time). It is important to mention the fact that Nakovski was both the initiator and mediator in establishing contacts and cooperation between the Macedonian and Polish theatres. It is also important to mention that his translation of the drama “Tsrnila” (Darkness), by Kole Chashule, directed by Liubisha Georgievski at the Vispianski Theatre in Katowice - Poland, was staged in 1973.

Currently Nakovski is still a prolific translator, translating Polish literature into Macedonian. His translation opus includes forty Polish classical works of contemporary Polish literature created by: Mickiewicz, Szenkiewicz, Prus, Zheromski, Raymond, Dombrowska, Gombrowicz, Shimborska, Vojtila (Pope John Paul II), Tvardowski, Ruzhevich (winner of the Golden Wreath at the Struga Poetry Evenings), Mrozhek, Gzheshchal, Herbert and others.

For Nakovski’s overall translation contributions and positive activities, the Polish state has recognized his effort and has awarded him a number of prizes including:

- Order of Merit praiseworthy of contributing to Polish Culture (Ministry of Culture, People’s Republic of Poland, Warsaw, September 29, 1976);
- Honorary decoration from the Association of Polish Authors “ZAIKS” (Warsaw, October 1, 1980);
- Order of Merit - Krzyż Komandorski Orderu Zasługi Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Warsaw, September 9, 1999);
- Order “BENE MERITO” (Warsaw, May 12, 2010).

In his rising creative path, Nakovski, with equal dedication, understanding, enthusiasm and charm, devoted himself to the novel, translation, journalism and

diplomacy, and behind him he left works worthy of respect and praise for all Macedonian literature, as well as for its affirmation abroad.

Patient, observant, inquisitive and carried away by the magic of language and the tragedy of historical events, especially the trauma the Greek Civil War left behind, with his literary works, Nakovski has already won a high and deserving place in Macedonian contemporary literature.

Nakovski, a fundamental author of contemporary Macedonian literature, has left an enviable stature of literary expressions, style and literary-historical persuasiveness for which a number of Macedonian literary critics have spoken, including: Dimitar Solev, academic Gane Todorovski, Traian Petrovski, Paskal Gilevski, Branko Tsvetkovski, Eftim Kletnikov, Rade Silian and Petre Bakevski.

About the beginnings of his poetry, in 1962, Professor Gane Todorovski wrote that Nakovski is one of the many Macedonians who were scattered around the world by the whirlwinds of the Greek Civil War when they were children. He and the others wandered around like strangers without a homeland, full of eternal longing and inexhaustible grief for their native soil. Their grief and unfulfilled dreams of returning home were incurable, a living wound in their hearts. He also emphasized:

“The poetry written by this young man is a demonstration of that pain, agitated, sizzling and very current today when, from many sides of the bad neighbourly anti-Macedonian actions, fear is rising like a sinister ghost (...) The fact that a young teacher from Politse in Szczecin, Poland, and many others, made a serious effort to contribute in their (Polish) language and literature, is enough proof of the Macedonian commitment (...)”¹⁹⁹

Professor Gane Todorovski gave Nakovski a high mark for his novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched). Namely, in a note to Nakovski, in part, he wrote:

“Dear friend,

The other day I read your wonderful novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) and liked the bitterness of the finale!...²⁰⁰

Professor Gane Todorovski also gave a lecture on the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) entitled “Aegean Theme in the Contemporary Macedonian Novel”, held on August 12, 1987, before an audience at the 20th Seminar on the Macedonian Language, Literature and Culture in Ohrid during which, among other things, he expressed the following:

(...) “Bitter and sad is the word in this original prose. It reveals its precious fictional potential again and, as this author’s debut book, it convinces us that this is not

¹⁹⁹ Views: “Kon pesnite na Petre Nakovski - Skopje: Nova Makedonija, 1962 p. 561

²⁰⁰ See: Handwritten note from Gane Todorovski to Petre Nakovski, written on January 21, 1986

just an announcement of a new novelist in our literature, but that this is a result that readers with a more refined taste can be satisfied with (...)" ²⁰¹

In his review of the novel "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched), Dimitar Solev gave a special overview of the characters who he regarded as narrators. Through the course of their living expression the narrators could multiply whereas the author remained the same, resilient and somewhat hidden.

With the steps taken in his storytelling, in which all the storytellers are accommodated except the author, as a novelist Petre Nakovski has achieved a relatively harmonious system of telling stories. His organized narration has turned to a certain theme and to a certain period of time, connected with a single idea, keeping his novel in a specific compositional consistency (...)

(...) In this, it should be noted that Petre Nakovski is an obvious supporter of "**literature of fact**"; a tendency in contemporary narrative culture, which requires a new balance between fact and imagination. Information about life has the characteristics of a document or a fact, which allows itself the freedom to arrange, to intertwine, to cross, to combine - everything around the basic idea. But also in "**literature of fact**", the fact is the occasion and the author is the creator.

As for the facts, everything seems to be authentic in the novel "Postela za chemernite" (A bed for the wretched), from naming places, through naming time, letters from the soldiers, notes to the exiled, to the names of the people. As for the idea, it is symbolically said in the title itself, and in several other explicit or metaphorical places: "Our people, the Macedonians, have more homelands or at least they fight under other people's flags" (Nume). "Our stone has rolled away and grass no longer grows on it." (Pando).

Continuing with the Aegean theme in contemporary Macedonian literature, in his first novel, Petre Nakovski seems to have incorporated his own contribution to its inspiration and value... ²⁰²

About the novel "Golemata udolnitsa" (The great decline), under the title *Uspeshna epska sinteza* (Successful epic synthesis), Professor Gane Todorovski expressed his thoughts about the message in the novel as follows:

"Petre Nakovski's novel 'Golemata udolnitsa' (The great decline) is a terrible allegory for our historical downfall - is it a fall into a metaphorical abyss or just an ugly illusion of a historically frightened people to whom no one has given earnest support, at least not so far? These are not questions that can arise from panic after a first or second reading of Petre Nakovski's impressive novel thoughtfully entitled with strict symbolism. A book is good when it will not allow you to sleep peacefully. It is not just the title of the book, but our history is also horrifying, which, as it seems to us, only after reading it

²⁰¹ DPM: *Stezher*. - Skopje: RI-Grafika, 2004, p. 42

²⁰² Petre Nakovski: *Postela za chemernite*. - Skopje: Kultura, 1983

demands, requires, commands a mentality framed in persistent naivety, in a historical curse and in hereditary gambling with happiness. (...) it should be made known that Macedonian contemporary literature in the field of prose fiction has been enriched and has acquired a work of special significance! (...) We have been blessed with a works of fiction that rises to the very top of critical realism in our prose fiction. (...) It is good to read and re-read this novel, this wonderful literary work, loaded with Macedonian illnesses (...). The author's insight into the Macedonian psychology in Kostur Region is very successful. Nakovski is a subtle observer of the soul and reasoning of our people. The superiority of his narrative grace is complemented by the ability to narrow in one living frame both the irony and the bitterness and the rough truth about the people and the time he describes (...) Petre Nakovski's novel is a work of gifted and well-prepared text through which he weaves a likable, successful and epic synthesis of literature, journalism and historiography. But this work is not a chronicle; this is a blood cry, perceived by all the senses (like synesthesia) of Macedonia's pre-death breath (...)

(...) It is good to know that at the end of the novel the author made a remark in italics - instead of a stern warning. He said "this is not the end – that's right. This is not the end, because the Macedonian darkness has no end." ²⁰³

Branko Tsvetkovski believes that with his novel "Golemata udolnitsa" (The great decline) Petre Nakovski, in a unique way, has harmonized the historical tragedy and real life agony of the Macedonian people in Aegean Macedonia, novelizing the Golgotha and the years of self-sacrifice in the name of freedom, national and individual dignity.

Branko Tsvetkovski singles out this novel as Nakovski's most successful novel, which abounds in scenes and chronicles of cruelty, violence, dishonesty, humiliation and betrayal... with impressive personal and dramatic events.

"Similarly, this novel is also a replica of the author's historical massacre that took place in 1948 and 1949, a moral revolt against the "trap" that the pro-communist Greek generals and the then communist states placed on the Aegean Macedonian wanderers, robbing them of their homeland and their altar of autocephaly..." ²⁰⁴

Branko Tsvetkovski gave Petre Nakovski high marks for his novel "Golemata izmama" (The great lie). Namely, he believes that with this novel Nakovski started a novelist saga about the tragedy of the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia, during the Greek Civil War. The novel continues with the severe wound of defeat and glorifies the writer's courage in discovering the truth. "The novel you have in your hands is a literary continuation of the research in the same historical and residential desolation, in the same national and ideological torment, in the same psychological hearth of the lost and betrayed illusions of the individual..."

The pages in this fictional testimony have cemented the knowledge that the DAG communist leaders and the then most influential parties completely manipulated and

²⁰³ "Stozher", DPM, *RI-Grafika*, Skopje, 2004, p. 44

²⁰⁴ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata udolnitsa*. -Skopje: *Makavej*, 2003

shamelessly butchered the Macedonian belief in elementary human and divine will to exist according to the principle of self-determination. Nakovski openly has condemned the historical protagonists of the crimes and has begrudged the nameless warriors who remain in the deep pits of the Aegean soil. The end of this work has announced a new sequel that may complete the most convincing trilogy on this unresolved topic in Macedonian history.²⁰⁵

In his review of the novel “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time), Rade Silian has pointed out that Nakovski’s work is interwoven with his own personal experiences, as well as with testimonies of numerous living witnesses and has covered the time from the end of the Greek Civil War until today. He believes that, with simple descriptions, the author has illustrated the time and people who were forced to leave their homes and, while traveling on various roads, visually and mentally crippled, ask where they were led and where was their homeland. “Through a documentary, Nakovski has illuminated many events and has shown a broad picture of the fateful days and, by weaving the destinies of individuals, has managed to interpret the internal experiences, traumas and sufferings that became a set of collective tragedies.

Here the author talks about the tragic events that relate to the mass expulsions. The clip of disturbing memories shines in this documentary prose, with authentic stories of people who personally experienced the Golgotha of the Greek Civil War.”²⁰⁶

Much has been written and said about Nakovski and his works in the print, radio and television media. There are excerpts of this preserved in newspapers such as the daily “Vecer” and “Nova Makedonija”, the weekly “Ogledalo”, the magazine “Makedonija” (belonging to the House of Immigrants from Macedonia), the weekly “Ekran”, “Stozher”, “8 Novosti (October 31, 1985)” the newspaper in which the book “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) stood out as a bestseller in Skopje, Macedonia, the Serbian newspaper “Borba” (July 6, 1988), the Polish newspaper “Da I ne” (1985) in which a fragment from the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) was translated by Eva Svizhevska and published, as well as guest appearances on Radio Skopje and TV Skopje.

Similarly, in an article entitled “Naibarani knigi” (The most popular books... and records), published in the newspaper “Nova Makedonija” on February 18, 1986, the reporter wrote: “Like we were informed in the bookstore, number one on the best sellers list is ‘Postela za chemernite’ (A bed for the wretched) by Petre Nakovski (700 dinars)...”²⁰⁷

In addition to appearing in print media, Nakovski’s novels have also appeared on the theatre stage.

²⁰⁵ Petre Nakovski: *Golemata izmama*. - Skopje: *Makavej*, 2007

²⁰⁶ Petre Nakovski: *Na pat so vremeto*. - Skopje: *Matica Makedonska*, 2010

²⁰⁷ See: *Nova Makedonija*, February 18, 1986

A monodrama play entitled “Egeiska fuga” (Aegean fugue/amnesia) was staged based on Petre Nakovski’s novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched). The monodrama was performed on July 4, 1988 in the “Salon 19.19” theatre in the Centre for Culture and Information building in Skopje, in honour of the event “Sredba na detsata begaltsi od Egeiskiot del na Makedonija” (Meeting of the refugee children from the Aegean part of Macedonia). The actors involved were Vukan Dinevski and Dushko Giorgioski.

On September 11, 1989, at 9:03 pm, the radio drama “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched), directed by Dushko Giorgioski, was broadcast by Radio Skopje on its first program, starring Vukan Dinevski, Joana Popovska, Petar Arsovski and others.

Source material used in Nakovski’s work can be found in manuscript form preserved in 20 notebooks in which the author has been collecting information for forty years. This includes his thoughts and assessments of the described events; excerpts from military memoirs authored by former DAG and Greek National Army commanders; excerpts from archival materials, notes from conversations with living participants in the described events, etc. This information was the basis of which all the novels were constructed.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In summarizing the most important parts of the study of “literature of fact” in Petre Nakovski’s novels, we can arrange our findings in the form of **conclusions**:

1. All of Nakovski’s novels contain elements of “*literature of fact*”. His novels refer to the period from before and during the Greek Civil War and are not literary fiction. Most essential in them is the truth based on historical events, testimonies, documents and documentary knowledge taken from archival, media, or historiographical sources. The novels, as representative of “literature of fact”, are narrated by the author who participated in the events and was informed by first-hand accounts. Nakovski’s novels intertwine *document* with *artistic narrative* in the literary reflection of the Greek Civil War.

2. Nakovski’s five novels *thematically* refer to the *national, historical, military, political and existential* drama experienced by the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece). All novels are literary *chronotopes* and represent the *temporal and spatial* connections through which action is woven. The described time in which the events take place is placed in time frames. All facts and events described in the novels are arranged chronologically, except in the novel-report “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time), where facts and events are arranged *retrospectively*. Temporally, the novels cover the period from May-June 1947 to August 1949, except the novel “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time), in which action takes place in the present time and is in conflict with memories after 61 years.

3. In terms of *content*, the novels cover all key moments that describe the *great evil* that the *Greek Civil War* unleashed on the Macedonian people. Nakovski is an excellent connoisseur of the situation and with a lot of knowledge, in an original way, enters the heart of the war and the pain of the population, individual and collective, relating to the collective exile and displacement. His novels are a *condemnation of the war and its destructive character*. It very vividly follows a chronological path; it brings drama into the descriptions, scenes of cruelty and ferocity and, through them, follows a progression of feelings. He has translated emotional truths from testimonies into emotional images and has described the real facts and events about the difficult experiences and personal traumas the villagers from Kostur Region underwent. His novels carry the harsh and cruel truth about the Macedonian people thrown out of their homes; about the systematic and organized action to take the children to Eastern European countries that led to the destruction of the Macedonian family; about the participation of the Macedonian population in the war; about the fighters who died; about the mobilization of children aged 15-16 as reserves for DAG; about the mobilization of

young people into DAG's ranks; about the *military and political fraud* perpetrated against the Macedonian people which led to their eradication and expulsion from their homes in the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece)...

4. All the *names, spaces, settlement names, toponyms, etc.*, in all the novels are authentic and are represented as elements of **“literature of the fact”**. The actions in the novels take place in Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece), in the Lerin and Kostur Region and in Southern Albania. The author uses the Macedonian (centuries-old) village, city, mountain, river, etc., names with unusually accurate topography for the sole purpose of preserving them as testimony in the individual and collective memory. Even though today all these villages, mountains, toponyms, rivers, etc., have Greek names, i.e. have been helenized by Greek law, we can still learn their real (Macedonian) names from the novels. This will help us enrich our knowledge of our past and our history. By writing them down they will be preserved in the altar of our national memory.

5. The author, through the chronological narration in his novels, has offered *real events* that took place and left a lasting mark on the fate of the Macedonian people. He has accurately observed the chronological order of action in the described events which led to the destruction of the Macedonian family and to the forced eviction of people from their homes. This confirms the great lie perpetrated against the Macedonian people as described by events that are key to shedding light on their fate and turmoil. Nakovski has based all described events on: *documents, memoirs, testimonies of living participants, archival documents, excerpts from newspapers and magazines, notes*, which confirm that his novels are based on real events that are authentically presented. Also, his mention of names such as *camps, historical figures, military and political organizations, newspapers, anthems, songs*, confirms the thesis of **“literature of fact.”**

6. The novels are *a testimony, a history textbook* about the Macedonian past, a documentary because through many years of research the author has precisely inserted in his novels military heights and positions relating to combat sectors on which the most difficult and decisive battles took place. He also provided a complete picture of the preparations of divisions, brigades, battalions, reserves, artillery combat activities, tanks, government army and air force responsible for attacking DAG.

7. *All the characters in the novels*, on which the author based actions, *are real* and, in addition to providing historical facts, their testimonies describe the collection and eviction of children, the eviction of civilians and the people who participated in the war. Each of these characters brings their own memories, and through their destinies the author embodies the destiny of the collective. He builds the characters pictorially based on their testimonies, specific life situations, drama, which are consistent with the truth. Their testimonies are authentic and full with lifelong scars deeply filled with sorrow. These characters, bearers of painful destinies, were persecuted, separated but still continue to last in and through time. They continue to move through time with their troubles, fears, expectations and most importantly - hope.

8. There is a style of artistic expression in the narration. The works are written in the *Macedonian literary language* but are also enriched with words and expressions from the *Kostur Region dialect*. The use of this rich vocabulary has preserved the authenticity of place and language and, through that, the *mark of the Macedonian identity*. In addition to the Macedonian literary language and Kostur dialect, the author has also used Greek, Russian and Albanian words in his works, and by doing so has confirmed the authenticity of *events, time and space*. The striking dialogues, witness testimonies and testimonies of the most shocking events have been expressed through emotions and reflections which shows that “*literature of fact*” has been expressed in the works.

9. The characters of Macedonian women in the novels have been authentically presented with having deep and lifelong scars deeply filled with sadness. But Macedonian women in the novels are the backbone of the family. Greatness and courage can be seen in their participation in the fighting, especially in DAG’s ranks, under severe climatic conditions, hunger, thirst, exhaustion from marches, insomnia. They are examples of courage, bravery, dedication, high morale and determination in performing their combat duties.

10. In order to preserve even the smallest detail of the truth and the tragedy of that time, *the author*, through the pages of his works, *has captured the essence of what it is to be Macedonian*, with authentic descriptions of the *Macedonian family and home*, which during the war became a place of suffering and tragic living, because the family as the basic cell of society was destroyed. Through the *descriptions of the interior* of the Macedonian house, the village streets and gardens, the author captured the soul of the Macedonian villager who, on a daily basis, was being destroyed by the military events. In the novels, the author especially refers to the celebration of Christian Orthodox customs: celebrating name days, traditional Macedonian Orthodox holidays and expressing the true faith in God by praying to the icon of the Mother of God, lighting candles and distributing food for the souls of the dead. This reveals the touching authenticity of Macedonian life and customs. As valuable *proof* of the existence of the Macedonian being, are the *Macedonian dances and Macedonian folk songs, the Macedonian clothes, the Macedonian village dishes and the customs practiced in the home*. The novels are a source of real facts taken from life and from the people’s understanding of the time in which they lived.

11. The novels are ennobled with *symbolism*. All the titles of the novels are symbolic; they are a symbol of duration and survival of the individual and the collective - the nation.

The title “I kamenot e zemia” (A stone too is soil) symbolizes attachment to the homeland, place of birth. The stone symbolizes permanence, existence, the messenger of truth (God’s truth was written on stone), guardian of property, the stone is earth and represents the homeland. The title of the novel “Postela za chemernite” (A bed for the wretched) symbolizes incurable sorrow for the birthplace, gloom of the soul of the evicted and exiled. The title “Golemata udolnitsa” (The great decline) symbolizes the loss of ideal. The title of the novel “Golemata izmama” (The great lie) symbolizes

Macedonians being deceived. The title of the novel “Na pat so vremeto” (On the road of time) symbolizes the image of a burning fire. The lantern symbolizes eternity, warmth, life, which the author has connected with the fate of the collective. The novels also contain other symbolisms such as the icon, the spoken word, the written word, the speech, the oak... which in the novels are symbols of permanence and the existence of the nation.

12. These novels also carry a *message* for our present and future generations. In his message, the author instructs and bequeaths our generation to study and learn our Macedonian history, the traumas and sufferings of our nation’s collective, and to pass it on to future generations. What happened on those roads in stormy weather should never be erased from our memory. The author’s message is clear: don’t forget what happened so that it’s never repeated. That is why the author proposes that everything important be put on paper in order to be preserved because, as Professor Gane Todorovski pointed out, “... The Macedonian darkness has no end...”²⁰⁸

13. In terms of knowledge about the “Aegean theme”, Nakovski deserves a special place in Macedonian literature because this theme is an attribute of his work. His novels are *evidence* that the Greek Civil War was real and took place, a document of the time. Petre Nakovski’s novels offer the reader the opportunity to learn the truth about the Macedonians under Greece and to find an answer to the question:

- What really happened to the Macedonians in the Greek Civil War and how much do modern Macedonians really know about it?

That’s why Nakovski’s novels should be “history textbooks”, sources of information for current and future students who, through literature, real facts and beautifully written words, can learn history and preserve the truth of our individual and collective memory, about those difficult and traumatic times.

²⁰⁸ Stezhor, January-March 2004, p. 44

NAKOVSKI'S LATEST NOVELS

KALINA

Seven years after I defended my master's degree, Petre Nakovski wrote two more novels based on verified historical facts. The first novel entitled "KALINA" was written in the first person. This novel depicts the tragic testimony of a Macedonian girl, a fighter in the Democratic Army of Greece.

Kalina is an old Slavic name, still present in the Macedonian onomastic. The name "Kalina" is derived from the fruiting plant "Klink" (pomegranate) and symbolizes power, victory, perfection, immortality, resurrection, a gift of God, virginity, femininity, purity, harmony, hope, fertility, blood, wisdom, fidelity, life... The main character in the novel entitled "Kalina" is called Kalina. KALINA is a young village girl, forcibly mobilized by DAG and plunged into the whirlwind of the Greek Civil War. Kalina had to endure the horrors of war and tragically suffered a terrible defeat - she was captured and imprisoned. Her future was smouldering in police cells and concentration camps in the Aegean (Greek) islands. During the war she was required to carry out orders at the cost of her life. But in prisons and in the camps the only thing that was required of her was her signature of remorse; which for her was a sign of depersonalization. In her limited freedom living in her birthplace, Kalina was required to give up her name, language and birthplace... In the war it was easy, she only had to die once, but in the prison camps her torturers killed her every day and every night. Kalina struggled with death everywhere but, in all attempts to crush her spirit, she survived. She endured. Kalina endured the bad weather but she did not remain a prisoner of evil. She did not separate herself from the thought that the past must not perish in darkness of oblivion and that it should permanently be preserved in our personal and collective memory.

KALINA is a novel about the defense and preservation of dignity, name, honour and pride.

NA PATOT KON NEVRATOT (ON THE ROAD OF NO RETURN)

Nakovski's last novel entitled "NA PATOT KON NEVRATOT" (ON THE ROAD OF NO RETURN) describes the fate of the Macedonian refugees in Poland after the tragic defeat of the communists in the Greek Civil War. The novel "Na patot kon nevratot" (On the road of no return) is the story of thousands of Macedonians who, after their defeat during the Greek Civil War, found themselves scattered in Eastern European countries - from the banks of the Oder River in the west of Poland to beyond the desert in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in the east. The drama of their eradication will continue there. Their doubt of whether they did well to enter the war and whether they did well to entrust their destiny to others, will continue to haunt them. Many questions will bother them, especially those about what was done during the war, about their losses, about the false promises, misconceptions, loneliness and great nostalgia for their homeland.

The attention the author gave in this novel is primarily focused and dedicated to the Macedonian refugees in Poland, where they eventually found peace. The author is a living witness of the events he described because he spent part of his childhood and youth in Poland and personally participated in those events. As refugees these Macedonians had a name and were able to slowly heal the wounds inflicted on them by bad times. They did not remain nameless and persistently and defiantly preserved their name, a name that belonged to their roots and national dignity - they remained what they were - Macedonians.

The novel "Na patot kon nevratot" (On the road of no return) is a novel about defeat, a novel about pain, bitterness, a lost homeland and faith in unfulfilled promises, about bitterness, doubt and defiance against all attempts at namelessness and persistence in defending and preserving the Macedonian name and the Macedonian national identity. The novel is about the grief people experienced longing for their place of birth, but also the desire, urge and aspiration to change their status with persistent effort, to study, to master professions, not to waste their lives empty and at someone else's expense, to earn a living by working hard and to overcome it, especially since the environment was very different from that of the birthplace.

None of the Macedonian refugees ever lost the desire and hope that, one day, those who survived would gather around the family table, all together in their home. Even though their houses were ruined and desolate they had good dreams about them. Their great attachment to their homeland and desire to see their birthplace kept them going but time was against them. With time and age the lives of the old were slowly extinguished. The images of the past life they carried with them were sometimes passed on with words but, at the same time, their memories were taken with them and buried in cemeteries in

foreign countries. Those who come after them, as long as their memories lasted, the bloody cross of martyrdom and eradication continued to hang over them.

In spite of everything they experienced, the light from the beacon of hope remained in their hearts and souls, spiritual food and support for them in all their troubles.

Slavka and Done, who escorted thousands of children to communist countries, as well as a number of younger refugees, as refugees completed secondary and higher education. With their degrees and diplomas in hand, they embarked on the turbulent waters of life with wide open sails. Many of them educated themselves and became engineers, doctors, architects, economists, historians, teachers, professors, writers and many defended master's and doctoral degrees. But, like their parents before them, on their way to their homeland they encountered a raised border ramp (they were unwelcome).

They forever remained on the road of no return, looking for new homelands...

THAT'S HOW IT WAS...

The most deserving person in the world for affirming Petre Nakovski's work and for bringing light to the fate of the Macedonian people from the Aegean part of Macedonia (Northern Greece) is Mr. Risto Stefov from Canada, who, in his work, has translated many works of Macedonian literature into English thus opening up the Macedonian tragic story to a wider audience.

8. BIO-BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE - PETRE NAKOVSKI



Figure 17. Petre Nakovski

Petre Nakovski was born on July 17, 1937, in the village Krchishta, Kostur Region, Aegean Macedonia (Northern Greece). He is the fifth child of a large family. His parents were Fimka and Rade.

On March 25, 1948, at age eleven, during the Greek Civil War, Petre along with about 1,500 children was collected from the Kostur Region villages and taken to Albania where he remained in the city Drach (Durrës) until November 28, 1948. He was then transferred through the then Yugoslavia to Romania, to the city Oradea, where he remained from December 1, 1948 to March 29, 1949.

On April 2, 1949 Petre was sent from Romania to Poland to the town Solitse-Zdrui where he continued his primary education in the Macedonian language which he

had started in November 1947, during the war. He resided in the State Educational Centre in Zgozelets from January 1, 1950 to June 30, 1951, where he continued with his primary education in Polish, Macedonian and Greek. On July 1, 1951, the State Education Centre was relocated to the town Politse, in northwestern Poland. Nakovski remained there until February 22, 1953. Then, during the second half of the school year, 1952/1953, he was transferred to Shchechin where he completed his primary education in a Polish school.

From August 31, 1953 to August 30, 1959, Petre lived in a dormitory in Wroclaw, where he graduated from the pedagogical lyceum. After graduating from high school he worked as a Macedonian language teacher in primary school number 4 in Politse, where he and his wife Ditta, also a teacher, met. They were married on June 29, 1959, and lived and worked there until February 5, 1962.

Ditta and Petre Nakovski moved to the Republic of Macedonia on February 7, 1962 and live in Skopje to this day.

In November 1966, Nakovski took on a job as a journalist working for the newspaper “Vecer”. Then, from January 1, 1973 to July 1, 1977, he worked for the newspaper “Nova Makedonija”, and in August of the same year he took on a job working for the Executive Council information editorial board of FR Macedonia. Then, from August 1, 1978 until his retirement in 2001, he worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, performing various functions.

From March 8, 1995 to October 8, 1999, Nakovski was appointed Ambassador from the Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of Poland. During his tenure as Ambassador, he developed noteworthy activities for the affirmation of the Republic of Macedonia in Poland and among the diplomatic corps. He organized a number of official, political delegation visits consisting of ministers and presidents of parliaments, in both directions, as well as an official visit by Kiro Gligorov, President of the Republic of Macedonia. Nakovski also organized cultural and artistic performances, professional choirs, tourist presentations, art exhibitions, literary meetings and numerous interviews on Polish television, radio, periodicals and daily press. He also organized reciprocal publication of Macedonian and Polish poetry and numerous translations of poetry by Macedonian poets into Polish.

For the successful diplomatic activities he demonstrated, and for the expansion and strengthening of Macedonian-Polish relation, Alexander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland, decorated Nakovski with high state honours.

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